Nhien: Hello, my name is Nhien Cao I’m here with another edition of Career Cast. I’m joined again today by Patrick Sbarra with New Creature and Alan Slindie. I’m going to go ahead and hand it over to Alan for a moment and let him talk for a little bit.

Alan: Patrick, I wanted you to expand a little bit further on your answer in podcast one. About 14 years ago you seen the opportunity in Northwest Arkansas and trying perhaps to get between some of the suppliers and consumer packaged goods companies and Walmart by selling them picks and forks and helmets. Right now in the state of the economy in Northwest Arkansas, what are some opportunities that you are seeing for people that want to come this area to further their education.

Patrick: That’s a great question. 14 years ago when we got here, there were a few critical components to the economy: Walmart, Tyson and everything poultry, JB Hunt and everything transportation, and the University itself was part of the economy cause we are up here where the University is located and that is a big driver of the economy. Since then, what has emerged? XNA, the airport everything aeronautic, there are new jobs in town because there is a major regional airport in town. What else has expanded in the last decade? Healthcare, we have four really good hospitals here which one of them just opened up two Decembers ago. So healthcare is emerging as a great career opportunity. The management of clinics, the management of hazmat, the management of a hospital, the management of any company that serves the healthcare, software, billing, insurance, so certainly healthcare has emerged, restaurants, hotels, so there are the hospitality industry has grown dramatically. All of that’s driven by the population that came in with the first wave of all those vendors and suppliers that come in to serve Walmart. Now the population needed healthcare, transportation, restaurants, hotels, etc. etc. Also there is a second and third wave that’s helping even the suppliers in fact New Creature in many ways is one of those. You have Walmart, the suppliers, and my company New Creature might be called a supplier to a suppliers. And then there’s even suppliers to us as we all feed upstream: products, services, software, materials, recruiting, everything required to feed that. Real estate, which I know is down in the country at large, but that will swing back. Real estate development, home, shopping centers, entertainment and that’s going to be another wave. We’re seeing more entertainment and arts coming together. The Crystal Bridges museum is going to be a world class museum of American art in Northwest Arkansas. And if you had gone to get your masters in museum studies, how could you have come back to Northwest Arkansas years ago and applied that? Soon you will be able to. Lots of opportunity here and more on the horizon.

Nhien: So examining the Northwest Arkansas economy and specifically New Creature, do you see this growth to continue and have you seen this even in the economic slowdown, have you seen growth in your business?

Patrick: We’ve seen it flatten out. I think in general terms, Northwest Arkansas has been flat, which is good because flat is the new up. Where other places are down, just to be flat or slightly up is actually quantumsly better than what’s happening in other parts of the country which are significantly down. So its all relative to other parts of the country. And when the economy rebounds, and it will... and it will. This will be one that will take advantage of the first wave even better. And once again what’s here? Walmart who serves the masses, transportation which will move the goods and services across the
country, healthcare is definitely doing well across the country, and the University is always going to remain strong. We’re in position take on the burden of the economy and in position to expand on the growth times.

Nhiem: Ok, I’m going to switch gears a little bit. What career advice would you give to the graduating undergraduate business students, and what advice would you give and MBA student, or would it be one and the same?

Patrick: It might be one in the same. This going to sound like a cliché, but it is so true. The intelligent selection of mentors, no one gets ahead without the help of someone else giving them a leg up. And really choosing mentors with intent. Let me give you an example, once your on the job then we’ll work backwards to school. Once your on the job you would want to get three mentors. Someone in the company who’s higher up or further along that could shepherd you through the company. Someone in the industry, but outside of the company, who could shepherd you through the industry, but also someone you could call when you don’t want to call someone inside the company: I need your help, I need your advice, I have an obstacle. And then someone that’s outside the company and outside the industry, could be a father, could be a pastor, could be a coach, could be an old professor as a mentor you could call. Now in college or in a master’s program, nothing like having a wise professor guiding you. Like George Bernard Shaw said, “I’m just a fellow traveler pointing the way.” You need a fellow traveler pointing the way. At the undergraduate level I would say get into the best program you can, and then find a way to finance it. Don’t let the financing of it, stop you from getting in. Get in and then figure out a way to finance it. By the way, especially if you’re going for an MBA that’s part of what you’ll do in the business world anyway. If you want to move into a new space, and we need resources to get there and if I don’t have the resources, I need to remove those obstacles. That is the job of an MBA.

Nhiem: That’s some great advice there Patrick. Thank you for your time. We really enjoyed having you. In closing I’m going to give you an open-ended question that I’d like for you to answer and extrapolate on in any way you’d like. I’d like to say in closing, do you have any words of wisdom you’d like to share?

Patrick: Have fun. Take the work seriously, but do not take yourself seriously at all.

Nhiem: Alright, do you have anything else to add Alan?

Alan: No. I appreciate it Patrick.

Nhiem: Alright, well again that was Patrick Sbarra with New Creature out of Northwest Arkansas. I was joined along with Alan, and this has been a very informative session. We thank you for your time. Look for future Career Cast, we’ll be looking for some more business leaders in the Northwest Arkansas area so be looking for that. So again in closing this is Nhiem Cao telling you to stay safe and stay focused.