Ep3.02 - Dawn Hines

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SPEAKERS

Announcer, Ed Clemente, Dawn Hines

A **Announcer** 00:01

Welcome to The Michigan Opportunity, an economic development podcast featuring candid conversations with business leaders across Michigan. You'll hear firsthand accounts from Michigan business leaders and innovators about how the state is driving job growth and business investment, supporting a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem, building vibrant communities and helping to attract and retain one of the most diverse and significant workforces in the nation.

E **Ed Clemente** 00:29

Hello, I'm your host today Ed Clemente. We're fortunate to have as a guest, Don Hines, she's the CEO of Hines Industries. Welcome to the show, Dawn.

D **Dawn Hines** 00:38

Hello, Ed, thanks very much for having me. And I'd also like to thank the Michigan Economic Development Corporation for their support of this. I'm really looking forward to it.

E **Ed Clemente** 00:48

Yeah, it's funny. I'll be honest that this came from your own staff for you to be on the show today. And they recommended you and then obviously reading your bio and what your company does. You were an easy ask to be on the show. So thanks to your staff for highlighting you to us. We appreciate it.

D **Dawn Hines** 01:07

Thanks very much. That means I have an excellent marketing person, Chelsea Givens.

E **Ed Clemente** 01:12

Yeah, yeah, no, we appreciate it. And so, you know, the one thing I think that's the most important is, can you tell people sort of what, if they don't know anything about Hines industries? Because you have kind of a really unique sort of manufacturing process there. Can you tell people what you do?

D **Dawn Hines** 01:30

Yes, Hines Industries is probably one of those small, midsize businesses that are not well known, because we're very much of a niche provider. We manufacture highly engineered, highly customized and highly automated test machinery. So we're testing and improving the quality of many components used in the automotive industry and the aerospace and defense industries, as well as a number of other industrial sectors. So our machinery is testing quality control equipment.

E **Ed Clemente** 02:05

And I would imagine with defense, you have to go through a lot of hoops too, right, for security, and all those kinds of things do we do?

D **Dawn Hines** 02:12

There's a lot of security, we have to be quite confidential about a lot of our customers. And we usually sign NDAs before we even start serious discussions about purchase of equipment.

E **Ed Clemente** 02:24

Yeah, I would imagine you couldn't even bid until you probably had background checks, I guess on some of these things. Yeah, we've interviewed quite a few people actually up in Macomb, that have had the same, you know, same kind of manufacturing. So we're glad you're here in the state. And it's a dimension, obviously, that doesn't get a lot of publicity, but it's obviously, Michigan is a state that still makes a lot of things. And you guys are very involved in that. And I know you touched on it a little bit. But you know, your background is sort of pretty interesting to me. You grew up in Ann Arbor, right?

D **Dawn Hines** 03:00

Yep. I grew up in Ann Arbor, left when I was 17. With no plans to return. So after I finished school on the East Coast, I headed over to Europe, where I spent about 15 years. I started in Paris. And then I was in Geneva for a short time in Frankfurt, and then spent a number of years in Amsterdam, before coming back to Michigan.

E Ed Clemente 03:22

Yeah, I mean, honestly, I know, you're sort of, you know, you don't want to spend too much time on that. Maybe. But I think it's fascinating, at least one of your jobs, because first of all, you went to Wharton School, obviously one of the best universities in the country. And did you get both an undergrad and grad degree from there. Is that right?

D Dawn Hines 03:42

I did. Undergrad was economics and mathematics. And my graduate degree was an MBA.

E Ed Clemente 03:47

Wow. But then you did a unique turn. And you worked for Reuters. In Germany, right?

D Dawn Hines 03:56

Yeah. In Switzerland and Germany. Yeah. [It was Switzerland too, okay, okay.] Yeah. Geneva was their European headquarters, not including the UK. So continental Europe, Middle East and Africa. That was their headquarters. So I started there. And then I was transferred to Frankfurt, I was part of that team. I was working more on the business information side of the business. So it was very interested in financial information and how that was being collected and transferred. And used in an electronic way and in a mobile way. And actually, I was working with a new business development group on mobile products for financial information. So it was it was interesting.

E Ed Clemente 04:42

Yeah, and I would imagine I forgot you said you speak at least three languages.

D Dawn Hines 04:47

Five. Almost perfectly English.

E Ed Clemente 04:52

I know I don't. But yeah, so what else German and French and Dutch. Okay, wow, that's impressive. And one other, you know, maybe you might want to talk about this a little bit further back, but I know you're still active with Aventura. What you do with Africa?

D Dawn Hines 05:15

Right. Aventura is a company that I started before joining Hines, and I've continued it on on a part-time basis. And actually Hines has also been involved in contributing to it, to one of our ventures. We provide machinery services to small older farmers and also other agricultural services to mango farmers. We export fresh and dried mango, we provide plowing and harvesting services to rice farmers. This is what I would call an impact initiative, an impact company where we're trying to assist, enable small older farmers in West Africa to improve their yields and thereby increase their annual incomes from agriculture.

E **Ed Clemente** 06:07

How did you decide to get into that? Did you just-

D **Dawn Hines** 06:11

One of my, by chance, one of my Wharton classmates had gone down to work for an international organization, I went on a vacation to visit became intrigued with the economy and maybe the lack of companies in business, and realized after doing some fundraising there for entrepreneurs, that there was huge potential to have an impact economically and socially, with relatively small investments in the agricultural and service areas, and I guess I'd become passionate about the potential to create an impact in the lives of many people who just by the chance of, you know, by the chance of life, were born into circumstances, with less means than most of us here in Michigan have.

E **Ed Clemente** 07:07

Yeah, you know, geography plays such a big role in everyone's upbringing. And a lot of times you have no control over those things. Yeah, and why don't you mention too a little bit how you migrated back to the company and how it kind of started even if you want a little bit with your father.

D **Dawn Hines** 07:24

My father founded the company back in 1979. And ran it. And up until shortly before he passed away about 10 years ago, I came over to help out after that, and have been working here since then, for now, over 10 years. So I've jumped in. I knew balancing because that's what we heard about around the dinner table when I was growing up. And I had done some work in international sales for short periods. But I've really enjoyed the challenge of bringing the company into, you know, bringing the company through the last decade, growing and building our strengths in automation. And actually, we've now entered into Industry 4.0 and providing a lot of remote intelligence and support to our customers, using Internet of Things and data analysis, and it's been a it's been a very exciting road. And it's nice to be back in Michigan.

A **Announcer** 08:40

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business leaders on what makes Michigan a leading state to live, work and play. Listen to more episodes at michiganbusiness.org/podcast.

E **Ed Clemente** 08:56

Can you break down a little bit at least in your definition of for you? What is Industry 4.0. And I also think it's always nice to have somebody else to explain their view of like the Internet of Things, if you don't mind.

D **Dawn Hines** 09:08

Right. So for us Industry 4.0 really is looking at the data that our machines are collecting, or have the potential to collect and how this data can be used both to help support our customers in their maintenance needs. But also to help them in improving the quality and collecting more information about the quality of their parts, the quality of their suppliers. There's huge power in data collected in large amounts and being analyzed. We are now developing a method of not only doing preventative maintenance with our customers, but collecting data and analyzing it in order to do what we call predictive maintenance, which is being able to tell our customer, this is the amount of time we think will pass until you need to replace some components, we see that you're going to need some maintenance on the machine within the next three months, you need to replace some of these components or a drill bit, there's wear on that, we see a difference in quality of some parts that you're putting through the machine. This is, I think, especially in light of what people are calling the great resignation, the need for predictive and preventative maintenance and remote support to factories is becoming more and more important. And for us, analyzing baseline data, and then predictive and preventative data can help us to serve our customers and help them potentially to save hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars from downtime of their machinery in automated lines. And I'm talking about, you know, the automotive industry, which is very automated today.

E **Ed Clemente** 11:11

Well, you know, I would even go a step further, it also would provide some sort of best way to practice for budgeting too, because if you can anticipate, you know, cash flow, we think this machine is going to need X parts, because of the algorithm showing this thing's going to wear down soon. You know, it's kind of like the accounting practice to right, you can show out how that will help them out financially, even before a part's down. Right?

D **Dawn Hines** 11:39

Right. They can use it for budgeting service purposes. But I think that there's there's huge value in avoiding any machine shutdowns or line shutdowns. And I'm talking about our machinery. But I'm talking also about factory systems in general. All of these large plants have ventilation fans, they have conveyors, if any of these break down, they can shut down a line and in some cases, oblige the company legally to shut down the that area of the plant, if there's a ventilation fan in the area of the paint, legally, if the fan shuts down, they have to shut down.

E **Ed Clemente** 12:30

Wow, yeah, it'd be nice to be able to anticipate that problem. Does that sort of blend into the Internet of Things of how you're collecting the data, the sort of like, overlapping with each other.

D **Dawn Hines** 12:41

Yes, we're using sensors to analyze different operations going on in the machine, we can sense temperature changes, we can sense vibration changes, we're looking at the quality of a part when it arrives in our machine, and then the outgoing quality. So how has the quality been improved? What were the ways in which the quality was improved. So all of this data that is collected, is then available to us to analyze for the customer, or available for us to configure in a way that the customer can use it within their data broker. And this is what we call Industry 4.0. It's gathering and usage of data to increase the efficiency and productivity in an industrial environment.

E **Ed Clemente** 13:47

And it's in real-time. A lot of times if it's the Internet of Things, right? [Yes.] You find out pretty quick if that's going to be an issue.

D **Dawn Hines** 13:54

In many cases are our programmers and technicians here are remotely troubleshooting, and helping customers with programs on machines that are running on their plant floors. And we're able to react to customers within a few minutes, rather than scheduling a visit and a flight potentially to reach the customer. So customers love this ability we have now to remotely serve and help them with their troubleshooting.

E **Ed Clemente** 14:29

The one question this sort of blends into is, are there other trends, you know, you identify for your industry and beyond what you've already mentioned. And secondly, like you're located in Ann Arbor, has it helped for talent for you to people that work for you or is it is it other value to be you know, location-wise?

D **Dawn Hines** 14:52

It's very valuable to us to be in Michigan. We're very close to a lot of our automotive customers. Many of our aerospace and defense customers are also within a five- or six-hour drive from us. We have customers in other sectors that we serve such as agriculture construction, John Deere comes to mind, in Illinois. We have a lot of customers across the border in Ontario, Magna,

Linamar. We also serve the US locations of many Fortune 500 equivalent international companies such as Weir, GKN, ZEDDEFF. So being here, lets us be close to our customers operations in the Great Lakes and Midwest area. And Michigan has a large pool of manufacturing and engineering expertise that we can draw from, to recruit employees. Very strong.

E Ed Clemente 16:00

And it's wonderful to hear. And I know that, you know, as you go through this process, obviously, you're getting more and more, so that is like sort of, you just kind of gave us a laundry list of potentially who your clients are without having to get too specific except on some of the international ones. But that's wonderful, what you're doing there. So we're down to the last couple of questions, even. I told you it would go by fast. But this one is simply, I mean, I'm sorry, I'm gonna give you another question even, that you also talked about the MEDC, but you've had some interactions with the MEDC historically too or with Michigan as well, right?

D Dawn Hines 16:41

Yes, we have. Michigan has Michigan Works!, worker training is something that we've had access to. We've also participated in Manufacturing Day, and had students both from the college level and high school level, and the general public coming through our plant. We've also found that Michigan has some excellent sector-specific grant programs for small and mid-sized companies that have really been invaluable to us.

E Ed Clemente 17:12

Now that you kind of touched that a little bit. So I know, we talked about this before, but you have had a very unique career path compared to most people. So any advice you, cuz you really, I mean, I'm sort of semi-jealous of your path. But any advice you would give yourself back in high school before you kind of got on this track?

D Dawn Hines 17:34

I guess one of the things I would say to high school students is, you know, you're going to be making a lot of decisions in the next four or five, six years, you'll start on one career, you most likely within 10 years will be in a different career, or have a different career path. So the world is your oyster, believe in yourself, because one of the very few impediments that anyone has is doubting themselves. So work hard, believe the world is your oyster. Go after your passion. And don't be too worried about short term setbacks, or decisions that you make. You'll make many decisions in your life. And you don't need to look at them as having been a mistake or not a mistake. Because, yes, decisions set the direction of your life, but your life is very open-ended and will continue to be for many, many years.

E Ed Clemente 18:36

Yeah, that's even more true. I think that when I graduated from high school, we didn't have the

Yeah, that's even more true. I think that when I graduated from high school, we didn't have the internet. So there's a lot more options for you today.

D Dawn Hines 18:45

Yeah. And the other thing I would say to them is, look at this Internet of Things, and Industry 4.0. Think about high-tech manufacturing. Because automation is going to be huge. It will have probably as big of an impact, I've heard from some forecasters, as the internet did, it's going to change all of our lives and already has. So take a look at that.

E Ed Clemente 19:12

So your last question, because you've lived all around the world. What do you like still about living in Michigan? You said you're glad to be back.

D Dawn Hines 19:20

I love the open spaces of Michigan and the easy access to nature and outdoors. We enjoy skiing up North, we've been to the Sleeping Bear Dunes, Lake Michigan. One of the things I love about Michigan is you're never more than about 10 miles from a body of water. And it's a lot of fun to be outdoors here.

E Ed Clemente 19:47

Yeah, no, no, I couldn't agree more. Well, anyway, thanks, Dawn, for doing the show today, first. [Thank you for having me.] Yeah. And once again, our guests was Dawn hein. She's the CEO of Hines industries and thanks again for taking time out of your busy schedule and keep up the good work there. And we're glad you're here in the state.

D Dawn Hines 20:05

It was a pleasure and thanks very much Ed, and thanks MEDC.

E Ed Clemente 20:09

Join us next week where our guest is going to be Diana PÃ¡ez. She's the senior director of Energy & Mobility at the William Davidson Institute, housed at the University of Michigan.

A Announcer 20:21

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