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Cale

Welcome to Grin + Bare It. A show that uncovers the remarkable stories from one of the most demanding industries in the world -Healthcare. From inventors and trailblazers to frontline workers and scientific experts, we explore the biggest challenges faced in health care and how these brilliant people have solved them. I'm your host, Cale Donovan, an award-winning entrepreneur and co-founder of Bare, one of Australia's largest end of life providers.

00;00;29;01 - 00;00;54;08

Cale

Today's episode focuses on the topic of employee wellbeing. Historically, employee wellbeing has been a throwaway line for organisations. But over the past decade, this is really changing. Great companies now are measuring and managing their employee wellbeing and taking a much more active role in supporting their teams. As an industry, healthcare is really lagging. It's also an industry that needs it the most.

00;00;54;10 - 00;01;21;14

Cale

In healthcare, workers are five times more likely to suffer workplace violence, and they make up over 70% of all workplace incidents like this. People in the industry suffer from higher rates of burnout and trauma, which poses the question who cares for the carer? Now, a warning for folks this episode contains content which may be alarming to some listeners, and it does include the topic of suicide.

00;01;21;16 - 00;01;43;19

Cale

Please check the show notes for more detailed descriptions and links to helpful resources, so you can take care of yourself. I'm joined today by Craig Cowdrey, the CEO and co-founder of Sonder, a lawyer turned entrepreneur. Craig was an officer in the Australian Army for a decade, spending time in the Solomon Islands, as well as working with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

00;01;43;21 - 00;02;12;12

Cale

He launched his business, Sonder, with two friends in 2017. And with their combined military backgrounds, they initially focused on assisting students with their personal safety. Fast forward to today, and Sonder provides real time, 24/7 access to teams of safety, medical and mental health professionals to over 1 million members. In this episode, we cover why employee wellbeing and safety are fundamental for personal growth.

00;02;12;18 - 00;02;27;26

Cale

How the organisations can immediately improve their employee wellbeing and the ripple effect of having poor wellbeing with any individual in your team. A really interesting episode. This one. I hope you enjoy it.

00;02;27;29 - 00;02;53;09

Cale

Craig. So thank you so much for joining. Welcome to the pod.

Craig

Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Cale

For those that aren't familiar, what does Sonder do?

Craig

So Sonder, we're an early intervention platform that spans personal safety, medical and mental health that works with organisations of all sizes to reduce their paper related risks and costs, specifically for frontline workers.

00;02;53;09 - 00;03;19;09

Craig

Lone workers. Think retail quick-service restaurants like McDonald's as customer-based, Woolworths in the retail space as two examples. Lone workers, but costs related to absenteeism, sick days, staff turnover, and worker's compensation claims. So really, organisations are engaging with us so that their people can utilise our platform to go on an active care journey to take control of their health, safety, and wellbeing. Use the variety of tools, content, features within our apps, but also through those apps to connect to Sonders' 24/7 operations centres, notably run those in Sydney, Auckland, and London - have launched in the United Kingdom last year. To gain access to care specialists, nurses, doctors, psychologists as required to really assist them as needed, and also to get access to our in-field responders who can get out on the site rapidly as well.

00;03;47;13 - 00;04;11;25

Craig

So we're now supporting nearly a million employees across Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, many hundreds of organisations across all industries. But, but really, a strong use case and focus for frontline worker organisations as well as second to that really sort of white collar organisations, professional services where they're really confronting a lot of challenges around mental health, resilience and high performance as well.

00;04;11;27 - 00;04;35;03

Cale

I find those operation centres, by the way, both super impressive and super interesting. I know that in your background, you've been vocal about improving personal safety, and that's a

passion for you. You do actually have a really interesting background from law, and then spent some time in the military and then with government, and now obviously on this entrepreneurial journey.

00;04;35;05 - 00;05;00;08

Cale

I'd love to hear your background and why you are committing all of your time and energy to effectively employee wellbeing. What's been your journey to this point?

Craig

Yeah, so I grew up in a country, Western Australia, up, up north in a little town called Broome, and my father was a police officer. My mum worked in indigenous health, so I had a strong upbringing, around service and purpose driven roles, and I served in the Army Reserve

00;05;00;09 - 00;05;19;09

Craig

After working initially as a corporate lawyer and then wanting to go into the full-time army for a period. So I did that, then moved into, as you said, government and worked as a diplomatic officer for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, was fortunate to work at the UN Security Council briefly in New York and then in Hong Kong for a number of years. And two good mates of mine - Peter Burnheim, Christopher Marr, both of whom spent careers as special forces officers in the Army during, you know, a very busy period for the military and served many tours through the Middle East, through the hot of the most recent conflicts that Australia was involved in. We came together about seven years ago, really with that shared ambition to take the skills and experiences that we had gained to combine that with technology and to scale support and care to millions of people around the world. That originally manifested as a personal safety platform to support international students in Australia.

00;05;57;03 - 00;06;24;00

Craig

And we scaled our support, our model of care to to hundreds of thousands of international students through partnerships with house insurance, for example, through partnerships with universities and other education providers, and really supporting those people with, getting around the city safely, intervening in cases of assault, sexual assault and domestic abuse and violence, certainly gauge of it is really vulnerable often young cohort, who works really with with the local environment.

00;06;24;03 - 00;06;57;02

Craig

And in doing that. So we started to also really build trust with people. So safety has been a really valuable way for us to build a relationship with our members, to then open up the opportunity for broader support that can be provided to them, which is what we've evolved to since 2020.

Cale

On this part as well. I think it's important to understand the so what, you know, like that story is incredibly impressive and obvious after you speak about it, but we'd love to hear your thoughts on the value of this improved employee wellbeing.

00;06;57;02 - 00;07;16;11

Cale

It might be quantifiable for companies. It may be obvious, it might be not obvious. There might be social benefit to it. But how do you think about the value that you're actually providing in improving employee wellbeing?

Craig

Yeah, so that's the value we think about at the end user level. First, first and foremost at the member level, as we call them, the employee or the student.

00;07;16;11 - 00;07;37;00

Craig

Yeah. And really our core belief is that good health and wellbeing is a right, not a privilege. Everyone should have access to the right care at the right time. And so much of what we work to solve for is facilitating people to understand their own health, safety and wellbeing circumstances and then to take proactive action to engage with changing those circumstances as they see fit.

00;07;37;00 - 00;07;57;15

Craig

And that includes engaging with support through Sonder, whether it's psychological support, access to medical staff, engagement with different internet cognitive behavioural therapies. And that really is the fundamental foundation of a life where somebody can really achieve their potential, they can pursue a career they want to pursue. They can be the best version of themselves and their relationships at home, in the community.

00;07;57;15 - 00;08;26;08

Craig

and so on. So it's really that core foundational element. know Maslow's hierarchy of needs, if you think about that framework, sort of not a perfect framework, of course, but it's hard to reach the tip of that pyramid of self-actualization, fulfilling your potential if you're not in a safe environment at home. If you're not able to feel comfortable in your workplace when it comes to psychological safety or psychosocial hazards that you might be confronting around, poor job design or bullying, harassment, or even just having a manager who's not particularly interested in supporting you.

00;08;26;11 - 00;08;52;07

Craig

So for the individual having access to those to the support they need when they need it, we believe there's a lot of privilege in the world and should be. And for the organisation, the benefits they receive is having a team member who's more engaged, more productive, takes less sick days for medical or mental health reasons, engages more proactively and productively in meetings, less presenteeism, as it's called, turnover at low rates and chairs less from those organisations.

00;08;52;07 - 00;09;14;29

Craig

Particularly when you think about high turnover industries like quick service restaurants, like retail, contact centres, people often burnout, fatigue, stress, a real increase in customer aggression and hostility, whether it's through contact centres or whether it's in stores or in restaurants, these are these are challenges that people are confronting that causes a real cost to them and a real cost to the business.

00;09;14;29 - 00;09;48;25

Craig

So organisations that work with us are really interested in supporting that people, first and foremost. It's the right thing to do. It's good for their employee value proposition, but it also allows them to, to rate the rewards of lower turnover, lower sick days, and as well as actually lower compensation claims, because our platform is really serving to drive early intervention, holistic assessments of people's needs and which detects issues that are potentially at their earliest stage of development. And then get people into the right intervention, the right care pathway before it gets serious and, and results in their cost to them and to that company.

00;09;49;00 - 00;10;07;05

Cale

I love that, by the way. The way you phrase it – personal safety and well-being is a right. And it actually is the foundation for improvement. And a lot of people actually don't have that, which is tough to consider when it's put in front of me like that. I'm interested in a topic called the ripple effect in companies.

00;10;07;05 - 00;10;28;09

Cale

I see Sonder wrote a report on that. Can you explain a little bit more what the ripple effect is?

Craig

So any team organisation, group of people is designed to work in a certain way together. And if you remove one of those pieces from the team or if one of those pieces is not performing this role, then it's going to impact those people that are around them and the efficiency and effectiveness of that organisation.

00;10;28;09 - 00;10;48;21

Craig

So if you have, a crew member in a quick service restaurant that's operating on a really fantastic set of processes that have been built up over decades, then if you remove a team member from that environment because they don't arrive at work because they're sick that day, they've paid up or not with a relationship issue, they're suffering depression or anxiety, perhaps they're anxious about going back to work because they've had an incident where a customer has been hostile, has threatened the staff members. That is not only going to affect that individual, it's going to affect the team members who need to continue on with that shift. They still deliver the outcomes, the business needs. That's the first level of that ripple effect.

00;11;06;10 - 00;11;27;24

Craig

The next is the actual cost to managers, who then need to actually think about, take action to support that individual, which is taking time away for them from doing their core job, which is really, whether that's running a cinema, running a restaurant, running a grocery store, or running a team in a white-collar environment, they're actually having to be drawn into something which in many instances could have been avoided.

00;11;27;29 - 00;12;01;23

Craig

And it's not to say that a platform like Sonder is outsourcing leadership and management; in fact, it's the opposite. It's really enabling and supporting leaders, managers to get on the front foot and be active and proactive in supporting their people. It's including through encouraging the use of social media, but also in helping to enable them to better manage their people when those scenarios occur, and then ideally, to hand them off to Sonder or to other parts of their programs, services, which are better placed to assist so they can get back to what they primarily been hired to do, which is to manage their organisation.

00;12;01;26 - 00;12;22;16

Cale

Yeah. I mean, I want to translate some of this for a lot of our audience as well. We should've people working in healthcare. And I think a lot of what we've described applies where burnout is a huge component, mostly because of the environment that a lot of people who work in healthcare work under. Do you have any insights around burnout from all of the data and all of the businesses that you're working with via Sonder?

Craig

I mean, burnout is certainly on the rise, and I think all of your listeners would agree with that, just anecdotally, if nothing else. But the statistics certainly bear burnout. And it does vary by industry. But in healthcare, we're seeing huge challenges because of the load that's been placed on, especially public care infrastructure and infrastructure that's often having to deal with issues that they weren't designed to deal with.

00;12;50;05 - 00;13;07;10

Craig

And so a lot of what we do is actually serve to lift the load off those cases and those challenges that that turn up at the emergency room door that often don't need to be there. We know that when people engage with our platform, 35% of the time, they're not going to a GP when that was their plan prior.

00;13;07;10 - 00;13;25;16

Craig

And 25% of the time they're not going to an emergency department room. And that was their plan prior. And the reason is because there often an access block for people and engaging with support traditionally at odd hours in vocations where there might not be immediate access to lower forms of treatment pathways. And so they're going to that higher form.

00;13;25;16 - 00;13;44;00

Craig

And often that's a poor experience for everybody. I think if you, if you've gone to the emergency room on a Saturday night, you'll see these really incredible team members, clinicians, administrators working super hard to deal with those high priority cases. But you'll see a lot of people waiting long periods of time because they've got issues that that system wasn't designed to deal with.

00;13;44;00 - 00;14;06;06

Craig

So that's a big part of how we're working to support that industry. And in doing so, hopefully part of the solution of taking the load of these, these team members, which as you say, are often facing burnout through that load.

Cale

Yeah, there's some stats that I read earlier today and this is from the US, Craig, so I know it has applicability to Australia.

00;14;06;06 - 00;14;33;01

Cale

I read that healthcare workers account for 73%. So close to three quarters of all non-fatal workplace injuries and illnesses due to violence in their environment. You know, the work environment. They are five times as likely to suffer a workplace injury because of their environment and the people that they interact with day to day. And a lot of that actually happens in home, healthcare settings or social work.

00;14;33;04 - 00;14;57;12

Cale

I would love to hear someone who is building systems around trying to improve employee wellbeing. How do you envisage this could be improved?

Craig

I think you know, the explosion in home hospital care, but in home care for, for non-urgent matters has been a really positive trend and really enabling support to be gained in line with our core philosophy, which is that you're meeting people at the point they're at.

00;14;57;14 - 00;15;13;21

Craig

It does come with risks, of course, and that includes what you speak to, which is in part the safety of those workers. There was a horrific case a couple of years ago where there was an in-home care worker who was murdered by the patient, the client in Balmain, in Sydney. And that's, of course, at the more extreme end.

00;15;13;21 - 00;15;35;09

Craig

But below that level, there's also just common workplace injuries. Whether they be physical injuries, whether they be psychological injuries because of the nature of that really challenging work. So what we are working to do, particularly on the personal safety side, is for those workers to be able to access our personal safety features. For example, a check on me feature, which is time-based, location-based meeting monitoring.

00;15;35;13 - 00;15;52;12

Craig

We have lone workers who utilise this already in other use cases. For example, mobile mortgage brokers who are going into people's homes in the evening to sell them a mortgage product. The same use case supply to, to those individuals caring for people in their homes and, and enables there to be somebody who is a guardian angel looking over their shoulder.

00;15;52;12 - 00;16;17;13

Craig

And if there's something that occurs, for example, I'd be overdue for that check in for the person hitting that to help alert on the Sonder app, they were able to take immediate action, including engaging with the authorities as well. So it's really up to these organisations, I think, who are doing fantastic work serving the vast majority of businesses to make sure they've got those protocols, those processes and those partners, if required in place, to be able to support the safety of their people.

00;16;17;16 - 00;16;36;29

Craig

And then, of course, to have the wraparound medical and mental health support is required for them as well, especially to detect issues that might have been caused by a workplace incident. As early as possible, to put in place intervention before it becomes more serious.

Cale

Yeah, I, I think that's a really critical point, which is kind of who cares for the carer.



00;16;37;01 - 00;16;57;07

Cale

And, you know, we even find it at Bare at times where we need better systems to make sure that people – , if they do face a particularly challenging environment in their professional life or even their personal life, they're supported well enough to be able to then serve the families that we serve. And so healthcare faces a similar challenge, which is it's incredibly gruelling.

00;16;57;09 - 00;17;16;18

Cale

It can be very, very taxing and often traumatic. But at times those people are expected to be the carer.

Craig

It's the old analogy of you put the oxygen mask on yourself before anyone else. If it's an emergency on a plane ride or in, first aid, you know, it's always about danger – danger to the person impacted by application of first aid but danger to yourself as well.

00;17;16;18 - 00;17;33;05

Craig

Because yeah, if you're not caring for yourself, it's hard to care for others. And these women and men, they put themselves into this position. Just like in your organisation of the fantastic work you do to that end of life support for all involved people as first responders, healthcare workers, as you say, they're under such a toll, physical and mental, emotional.

00;17;33;07 - 00;17;58;28

Craig

And so caring for themselves is absolutely critical for them. But it's also critical for the people they assist as well

Cale

Within Sonder itself. You again, get a lot of insights. We spoke about burnout, which seems like a very obvious one certainly in healthcare and other industries. Within healthcare or adjacent industries, do you see other specific insights, i.e. what people are using the Sonder platform for?

00;17;59;00 - 00;18;24;19

Cale

What type of issues?

Caig

Yeah, we do see it and we see it across different geographies as well. It probably won't surprise you to hear that in the United Kingdom, engagement all of our medical related features and capability is much higher than here. And that's because of the, the really significant challenges

in accessing the NHS. A fantastic 70 year plus older system, but which is under a really significant strain, and it is a space that we need to be careful in this country.

00;18;24;19 - 00;18;56;29

Craig

We don't get into it so that the usage of our medical, much, much higher, I'd say three times higher in the UK than it is here. And then in Australia, we're seeing different engagement of different parts by different industries. So, what we see in our younger cohorts, more casual workforces aged, sort of, sort of 16 to 25, is more engagement with mental health content and tools and programs and engagement with our counsellors and psychologists because they're confronting real issues that people are faced for generations at that age, but, of course, have been exacerbated in many circumstances through that.

00;18;56;29 - 00;19;25;14

Craig

The rapid societal change, although we find generally in Australia, is more medical related and perhaps also financial stress related, noting about 35% of Australians under sort of moderate to high financial stress. And that's only going up given, given the cost of living crisis that's happening.

Cale

Very interesting. I would consider you an expert on employee wellbeing. And so I would love to get two pieces of advice for two different types of category of people.

00;19;25;16 - 00;19;52;06

Cale

The first category which we would love advice for is you're an executive or a manager in a healthcare setting. What advice would you provide to improve employee wellbeing? What are the steps that they should be taking?

Craig

So I think the, the biggest opportunity for leverage in an organisation is middle management. So if I was an executive, I would be investing into sharpening up and improving middle management.

00;19;52;08 - 00;20;15;14

Craig

even if it's already considered to be quite strong. We know that most people don't leave organisations, they leave managers, as expression goes. And often that's because there might have been the psychosocial hazards in place to an unacceptable level to that employee. And there might be poor job design, might be not being empowered, it might not be enough autonomy, poor resourcing, a set of measures of success for that role.

00;20;15;14 - 00;20;37;19

Craig

And that comes back to management. So if I'm an executive, I'm investing into levelling up that, that management team, investing into training them, supporting them, putting in place the programs and the tools to be able to really get them a far in those cylinders. And that will then, we've seen lift up the entire organisation.

Cale

Second to that, how would you articulate that as an employee or a person who's wanting more active care, they just want some more support. How would they or how should they articulate that? Do you have any advice on how they can approach that with an organisation?

Craig

Yeah, absolutely. Of course, it's dependent on a specific dynamic between that individual and their manager, and in the broader company. But if they start that conversation by just voicing their concerns or the opportunities that they have to improve their wellbeing as they relate to that improving their job performance and improving the organisation's performance, I will say that people find a much more receptive audience.

00;21;08;20 - 00;21;27;07

Craig

It's fair to say that most people putting managers and executives that they want to support their people, they want them to be well because they're good people and they want their people to, to enjoy their life, enjoy their work. By framing these things in a more hardest business case manner, will help to avoid any negative reactions, especially from an intergenerational perspective.

00;21;27;10 - 00;21;46;28

Craig

The reality is we do see a lot of older managers, perhaps being a bit cynical about the younger generation. I think that's happened in every generation, and they can't. So if you're able to open up that conversation in a way where it's framed around, if I can get the support that I need to be better, be well, then I'm going to give more and I'm going to give more to the business.

00;21;46;29 - 00;22;24;17

Craig

I'm going to be more productive. I'm going to be more effective. And what you will find, the vast majority of cases is once you open up that dialog, you'll find a receptive audience. It might be a bit scary at first, but just, just open a conversation, and I think it'd be pleasantly surprised by the response.

Cale

I really like the piece of advice around businesses focusing heavily on levelling up their middle management, so to speak, because a really, really common attribute, I would say, of in the healthcare setting is that you have clinicians and practitioners who know exactly what they're

doing, they're expert, they're fantastic at it, and they can be managed by people who are now a step removed from the day to day. And that creates this disconnect between the work that's actually meaningful and productive, and the spreadsheet of which the executive team may be working out of. And so I think it's such a critical point that you've hit on there about making that middle management the real conduit in an organisation to effectively improve the employee wellbeing overall. It's a great point.

00;22;45;11 - 00;23;01;24

Craig

And it's wild when you think about these amazing people who are subject matter experts in a particular discipline, who are then expected to somehow be fantastic managers of people when that's not their discipline, that's not what they've been hired to do, and then they're not given the training and support to be able to take that step.

00;23;01;24 - 00;23;18;06

Craig

And it happens in all sorts of industries. You get amazing individual contributor whos, was put into a manager position without those tools. How could you expect them to be good at that job? It's a discipline in and of itself. It's an expertise in and of itself. So you need to be trained and invested in to appropriately.

00;23;18;07 - 00;23;42;22

Cale

Totally. I referenced your operation centres earlier. they run with military precision, and that's no exaggeration. They're incredibly impressive. You, as a business, often deal with really urgent and often complicated circumstances. Do you have a story that stands out that really kind of exemplifies the power of having an active care platform in a company?

00;23;42;23 - 00;24;02;04

Craig

Yeah, I can give you two. One that has always stuck with me is, is a suicidal intervention. It was an employee of an organisation I won't name that I had engaged with us through chatting around a medical issue, then the clinician then identified that suicidal ideation. And because we have people's permission, their location based on using the app, we could say that person was actually at an infamous cliff top.

00;24;02;04 - 00;24;24;14

Craig

And as the conversation progressed and we were able to open up more, it was clear that they were about to proceed that, that suicide plan that, that [was] made. We were able to deploy one of our Sonder responders who are typically chief, police, fire, ambulance, social workers, counsellors, a whole bunch of different profiles, amazing people with a lot of professions and lived experience. Then we were able to send one of those responders to that location, letting the person know they are coming.

00;24;24;19 - 00;24;53;29

Craig

They were able to, to get that person to the hospital to be admitted for treatment. So that's a real accommodation of that rapid response in person [and] technology combined as well [as] the holistic assessment that I identified it. More recently, the horrendous stabbing attack in the West Group on that junction. We were using our intelligence software that we developed, able to identify that that was happening and send an alert to, to hundreds of our members, including those who are on duty, in organisations, in the centre, but also people who were just visiting or about to visit.

00;24;53;29 - 00;25;13;09

Craig

We're able to send out ten minutes before it broke on, on mainstream media and were able to, in doing so, move a lot of people away from the area where the, where it was happening. We had remember a professional services firm customer, one of the partners there, a personal partner, whose family's often entitled to Sonder as well under our arrangements.

00;25;13;12 - 00;25;46;25

Craig

She reported back that she was literally walking into the shopping centre when she got the Sonder alert that this was happening, and she was able to turn around and walk straight back out. Otherwise, she wouldn't have known. Sonder's able to deploy three of responders who were there within minutes. They were able to get in immediately because the police operation was still cordoned and continuing. But we are available immediately afterwards when able to get access to help those members on the ground, including some of the directly impacted, and those organisations, including the managers, to help guide them, and support them, and then to proactively identify who would need ongoing support and then were able to get them into to different pathways, including psychology treatment. We had follow up, followed up in that circumstance, as we did for any critical incident and the preceding days, to really then identify those people who may have seemed like they were handling it okay at the time, but had a delayed reaction. And that's often what we saw.

00;26;05;04 - 00;26;29;11

Craig

Some people at a time may not seem, they handle it well, but their natural resilience kicks in until they fall. And actually a few days later, others have the opposite. So that follow up is really important as well. So having being able to, bring to bear that capability is part of the operation centre, our software, in-field responder network and a really holistic approach that is end to end, dealing with issues of all different types.

00;26;29;11 - 00;26;52;00

Craig

And in those circumstances, suicide attempts in progress and, the critical incident, horrific events in the Westfield Bondi Junction mass stabbing before.

Cale

That's incredible. The, that mobilisation piece I think is just vital because one of the comments on things around telehealth and early triage and using technology as a tool only is exactly that, which is kind of it feels third party. So the just the ability to be out there very quickly with a team of trained, experienced folks is, is really remarkable.

Craig

Telehealth providers did a fantastic part of this growing landscape of care to to reduce access blocks. And by personalization, we did remote as well through our app. But to your point, we found that sometimes nothing beats getting boots on the ground, so to speak, to the impact in the real world in those more critical scenarios, certainly.

00;27;20;11 - 00;27;36;20

Cale

On emergency situations, I would love to get your advice. You have built a company to deal with emergencies, literally.

Craig

First of all, the way we specialise - If you think about the spectrum of critical events or events that could occur and ten is critical. Call the police in. One is call your mom or call a friend. And we're really in that two to nine spectrum.

00;27;36;20 - 00;27;55;15

Craig

And we certainly don't want to get in the way of the emergency services. And if it's at that threshold of ten, then we're going to engage them immediately. If it happens to have come through us and then provide wraparound support around them. And after that, they'll be able to specialise in that sub10 category. But for organisations, the advice I'd give them is to have been proactive and put in place a critical incident management framework for when an event occurs. Because there's an expression in the military: 'Train Hard, Fight Easy, and the time you put into training and preparation, of course, when they specialise is prior preparation. And planning prevents fiscal performance. So putting time into it to invest into a protocol, thinking through the different scenarios, running training drills and rehearsals that are appropriate for your type of business and at the appropriate cadence for the risk of your business.

00;28;20;22 - 00;28;38;08

Craig

So having the right risk management framework, having the right management framework will enable you to, if something occurs, to be able to have that muscle memory kick in and the training kick in and everyone knows who's doing what. If you need to convene a critical incident

management team, which you should have identified previously, and then they could kick into gear and manage things.

00;28;38;09 - 00;28;56;16

Craig

Any event, of course, it's about having those clear roles and responsibilities. Everyone taking a deep breath, thinking you really deliberately, clearly, and making decisions with speed, and you know, taking a view, we found the most success. It varies, of course, that action over perfection is a really great way to go, because – throwing out lots of expressions here, a good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow.

00;28;56;16 - 00;29;23;02

Craig

It's the final one I'd leave you with on that point.

Cale

Okay, keep rolling. We'll have you have another ten minutes of just expression after expression. It's classic. No, it's great. It's very, very valuable. One of the pieces of feedback on a tool like Sonder or using a digital platform to try and have early prevention or early identification of any issues that are coming up, is that people are still possibly distrusting of these types of services.

00;29;23;05 - 00;29;46;21

Cale

I would love to hear the biggest challenges that you're finding that prevents the members using the tool, or companies adopting it more broadly, because it's obvious that it can provide really helpful support to wellbeing. What's the roadblock to people using this tool?

Craig

I mean, we consider ourselves a trust business, actually. So the core to our business and our platform, our product being affected is trust.

00;29;46;21 - 00;30;04;10

Craig

So it's interesting you hit on that point because if you are able to unlock that trust and that relationship with that individual, then you are going to unlock the ability for them to open up and disclose issues that they might not otherwise. And then you could actually be armed with the information needed to actually put in place intervention and help.

00;30;04;10 - 00;30;25;01

Craig

So the way that we do that with the organisation is to be very clear with them that data protection and governance rules and procedures and a platform is at the highest of standards with all of the accreditations you'd expect. And given the organisations we work with, they're

banks and professional services and very large grocery retailers, quick service restaurants and so on, we are those standards.

00;30;25;01 - 00;30;42;00

Craig

So they need to have that confidence. They also need to know that when we engage with their people, it's going to be confidential. It's going to be anonymous reporting that comes back. It's important they know that because that's what we got to tell the individual that they're going to understand from the first point of information about Sonder, everything here about Sonder - this is an organisation that you can trust with the information. When they start engaging with us, it's incrementally building that trust. Like any relationship, there's a sort of courtship-like process where there's, you're building a relationship with them. And for us that's about in our context, providing value. So if somebody is engaged with us about using track by journey for them, we've gotten them help, get them home safe.

00;31;03;21 - 00;31;17;04

Craig

They've gotten a little exchange of value right there. They've trusted us a lot because we've said we've delivered what we said we were going to tell you. Then it might go to the next stage where they contact us in the middle of the night and speak to one of our nurses within a second to help them with a sick child.

00;31;17;07 - 00;31;40;03

Craig

We've given them advice that's helped them, put them on A's, and avoided an all night trip to the hospital. Two weeks later, they engage with us. They then speak to us about a domestic abuse situation that they're in, which they've never told anyone about before. And that's a great accelerator example. But it starts with value exchange, incremental, often don't stigmatised, a matter that they wouldn't hesitate to gauge around mental health even these days.

00;31;40;03 - 00;31;58;24

Craig

But the vast majority of people are not going to go from 0 to 100. But the first time they speak to somebody, they've got to disclose a childhood trauma that's, that they've never told anyone about. So for us, it's all about building a trust, in that fashion, to then open up the opportunity to have a shot at helping them with a serious matter that they've never told anyone.

00;31;58;24 - 00;32;26;18

Craig

I mean, 70% of our members that we assist have said that if not for us, they wouldn't have got help anyway. So, you know, we're really tapping into that. Those people that would not otherwise engage. Yeah, everything's about trust.

Cale



I mean, it's a really interesting point. I think for practitioners more broadly, actually, anyone who's trying to build a relationship in light of the fact that my alternate was probably saying nothing to anyone, like, I've never done this before, so why would I tell you?

00;32;26;18 - 00;32;47;23

Cale

Basically, it's the proactive ways that you can almost instigate that meeting of the minds. So they have a reason to reach out. And I speak from almost personal experiences. It wouldn't be the first thing that came to mind if I did have an issue. Although I know all the value, like I know everything that it can provide and I really should use it.

00;32;47;28 - 00;33;13;14

Cale

So I'm just wondering, is there lessons learned there in how to create interactions which are meaningful, which set the bedrock for the trust to become top of mind, to become the, the platform, that is used when you need it.

Craig

So in many aspects, we're presenting product features and, capabilities to people that have no relation to mental health at all, and nothing that has stigma around it at all.

00;33;13;17 - 00;33;37;05

Craig

They're often more everyday use cases about things that could occur to them, not something that is about them, and that immediately repositions the dynamic such that people are not thinking, you know, defensively, they're thinking more objectively. So the use case might be, isn't it great to have Sonder, because we're going to send you alerts about fires and floods when you are on holiday with your family driving in the country?

00;33;37;06 - 00;33;56;03

Craig

Well, who wouldn't want that? That's really handy. Or download, I'll engage it. And in some respects I mean that is valuable that that feature about it's a Trojan horse to then start building that relationship of trust. We're then starting to send, we don't give away all our secrets, targeted personalised notifications and content to keep building that trust in that relationship.

00;33;56;05 - 00;34;21;12

Craig

But then combining that with a digital platform and expert clinicians that sit behind that, they have curiosity at the core of their design and the core of their character, respectively, so that when we have an opportunity to touchpoint, to engage, it might be contacting somebody about making sure they're okay driving through a fire zone, but they're going to pull on a thread that presents itself to open up a conversation about something that could be completely unrelated.

00;34;21;16 - 00;34;46;00

Craig

And that's up to days, weeks, months, years of building trust, building a relationship. And you get people at that point in time and want to talk. We've found that they're going to talk, and that's when they start disclosing things to us that, that they would never have otherwise spoken about.

Cale

I really like that. The concept of obviously providing value, that's a given, but almost working from a third party perspective. So it doesn't become immediately confronting. And you then have to not only bridge the trust, you also have to bridge the like - why are you asking me this? You know, you've put me on the spot here. So it's a really interesting way of thinking about how to, how to work through with any sort of patient, any person, any user, if you're in technology to spark that initial bit of conversation. Super interesting. I'm interested in the future and what so if we've coined the phrase active care, what that looks like for you, and any trends that you're seeing in people using services like yours, how does it all come together in a 5 or 10 year horizon year?

00;35;28;12 - 00;35;55;01

Craig

Wider - we're seeing why people use our platform, I think is aligned with the general trend in society, in that people want and expect a seamless experience that is providing them what they want, when they want to, and that revolution started with, you know, Netflix, Uber, the explosion of consumer products, digital, digitally driven or digital tech enabled services that are really providing that level of support, a point in time, food, content, whatever it is.

00;35;55;05 - 00;36;32;03

Craig

And we're seeing that in the world of care as well. When you combine that with the movement that way, say, I would like to think we're helping to drive of connected care, being able to look at the person holistically, but then look at the interventions in a connected fashion as well. That's a big direction that we're moving in from a data and analytics perspective, giving the person back that connected view of themselves and the connected impact of the different interventions and pathways they might be engaging with across. For example, mental health, medical, the financial that really enables them to be more active and proactive around habit changing plan formulation and execution and then tracking their

00;36;32;03 - 00;36;51;07

Craig

progress against it. Yeah, this is just a real hunger for data that we've seen, especially in the younger generation, day one and day to day to data on, on health and fitness, lifestyle. And so when you combine this real movement for on demand, on my terms, when I want it with I wanted to have a whole view of of things that they're engaged with and connected approach.

00;36;51;07 - 00;37;17;14

Craig

That's the trend that we're seeing amongst our user base, and it's certainly a big part of our roadmap going forward.

Cale

So there's the full point of this proactive, personalised, holistic and convenient. Yeah, that's, that's the model of care that you're seeing. And that's largely like many things – it's driven by macro tailwinds. It's just consumers what they're looking for and the application of that to in your case, general wellbeing, personal safety, mental health, all these other things.

00;37;17;14 - 00;37;35;14

Craig

Yeah. It's what we're saying. It's a table stakes expectation that that is how products will be designed and how they will be provided. And that's why there's been so much success, I think, with telehealth providers, of which we're not, you know, we conduct a level of triage and assessment and often that removes the need for any further intervention.

00;37;35;14 - 00;37;59;13

Craig

But by then sending people down, in different, path, care ways that arrived to them but the provision of of, you know, telehealth, you know, virtual health more generally in other other forms I think is, you know, is a sign of that trend and is a response to that demand and base expectation.

Cale

So, you, as you talk about it, you speak with a sense of inevitability, like this is how people want any service really delivered. But do you see any challenges to realising that future that you've described?

Craig

Yeah, I think there are multiple challenges, some of which sort of legitimate, including the appropriate regulation and oversight and governance of, especially healthcare, the aggregation and the synthesis of data that can then be used for harm, especially if hacked and put into the hands of malicious actors.

00;38;20;20 - 00;38;45;15

Craig

So I think with every evolution in history, it's presented opportunities for exploitation. And unfortunately, the way in which commercial driver's work, it's often those nefarious actors, malicious actors and outfits who can leverage it most rapidly. And you see that right now with the explosion of recent AI machines, tools, data faking, who are using it most rapidly, or those who have those commercial drivers and don't have the regulation oversight that the scammy outfits of the world.

00;38;45;15 - 00;39;06;19

Craig

So I think with the movement I'm talking about, it does come with those risks and challenges. It also just comes with the challenges of trying to cut through a traditional system. And any industry faces this when it disrupts itself or someone else tries to disrupt it more commonly. And that's no more the case than healthcare. And as a touch, I think often for good reasons, because we need to step carefully.

00;39;06;21 - 00;39;29;12

Craig

You know, one of our values I used this phrase before in the company is action over perfection. Another value is we navigate the minefields because there are mines that are there that we must avoid in protection of data in anonymity and confidentiality, when appropriate for reporting to customers and dealing with members, respectively. And it includes making sure that they see appropriate governance and oversight over care quality when it's provided through more modern means.

00;39;29;12 - 00;39;51;06

Cale

And rounding out the reason the podcast called Grin + Bare It is because it's often the piece of advice given to people when they're faced with a challenge or something that seemingly insurmountable. I would love to end the pod with you providing a single piece of advice when faced with a challenge.

00;39;51;06 - 00;40;08;03

Craig

Well, I try and fit in two pieces of advice if I can. I'd say, just breathe in one step at a time and that potentially be a cliché and a bit common, but I think they are so for a reason. Because if you just stop, breathe in a critical incident, or to challenge your life and try to think clearly, to map your way through it, and then once you've got that, that mapped in that plan, then just take one step at a time.

00;40;08;03 - 00;40;29;15

Craig

I mean, I've been in scenarios where I'm thinking one week ahead, I've been in others where I'm thinking breath to breath because it's really that challenging. In different jobs, I've had in Sonder as well. So yeah, I think if you break things down incrementally, things start to become a lot more achievable. So not particularly groundbreaking advice, but I think advice that have certainly helped me simplify is often the best tried.

00;40;29;18 - 00;40;49;26

Cale

Thank you so much for joining. It's been an absolute pleasure. I could have talked for hours. All the best with Sonder and I agree, you're on this real precipice of how people want their care delivered, and it seems like corporate Australia and overseas are actually realising the value of this also. So wishing you well and look forward to speaking with you soon.

00;40;50;00 - 00;40;56;16

Craig

Thank you so much and same to you.

00;40;56;18 - 00;41;17;09

Cale

Thank you so much for listening to this week's episode. Hope you enjoyed it. As always, I would love your feedback, questions, or any suggestions that you have to someone that I should be speaking to next as our guest. You can find me on LinkedIn, or you can find the Grin + Bare It podcast on TikTok and Instagram.

00;41;17;09 - 00;41;34;20

Cale

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