**Sunshine Sports Introduction**

**Program Transcript**

BENJAMIN JONES: Hi, I'm Benjamin Jones co-founder of Walden Sports. Come on in. Thank you for coming in today. As you know, I want to make some changes that will benefit our employees, and I'm really looking forward to hearing from you how you might be able to help. There's a lot to go over. I think I'll just start by giving you the lay of the land.

Walden Sports was founded just over 12 years ago. And we've expanded our product line to include everything that adventurous travelers demand from sleeping bags, to tents, to guide books, maps, even insurance. Our clothing and equipment sales are $1,420,000 per year with a gross profit of $202,400. We employ 70 people part-time and full-time distributed over a variety of departments, including finance, marketing, and operations.

And really exciting, we've recently started a mail order division through our website which has required our establishing a mail order fulfillment department and an IT department. Business has been so good the last few years we're able to donate 5% of our gross profit to charity. Last year, Walden acquired an agency called Earth Travelers, one of the most respected tour operators in the market, and we began selling their services in our stores. In the six months that we've been selling these travel agency services we've sold 200 vacation packages at an average cost of $3,340. Walden Sports is 10% commission on the sales has been $66,800.

In addition, 35 insurance policies have been sold at an average price of $167 yielding $1,754 from a 30% commission. This growth which at first seemed like a blessing, has caused some major challenges for us though. In the past six months, we've seen a sharp decrease in productivity and an increase in turnover and absenteeism. Moreover, people don't seem as energized and motivated as they once were. There was once a time when our employees would not only work late but reach out and offer assistance to other employees who are falling behind in their workload. We don't see that anymore.

We used to have social activities and happy hour at least once a month to boost employee morale. Now hardly anybody comes to those activities. Until now, employees would take great pride in what they did and with whom they worked. They even took every opportunity to wear the company's clothing as often as they could. But not anymore. And all of that is why we've asked you here today. We really need somebody from the outside to come in and find out what's going on and tell us what we can do to make things better. Do you think you can help?

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**Focus Group**

**Program Transcript**

MALE SPEAKER: Alrighty, let's go ahead and get started. I want to thank you all for taking time away from your work and joining me here this afternoon. As you know, my firm has been hired by your CEO, Benjamin Jones, to take the temperature of the company and give him some recommendations on how we can make this a better place to work. We're meeting with you all in small groups just like this to hear your concerns, but above all, your thoughts on how to make things better.

You can rest assured, though, that everything you tell me will be confidential and will only be reported to Mr. Jones as a part of general recommendations at the end of my firm's assessment. So please feel free to speak candidly. So why don't we start the process off by going around the room. Just say your name and how long you've been with Walden Sports. We'll start here.

BURT: Well, I'm Burt. You all know me. I've been in charge of the fishing department since Ben opened the first shop 12 years ago.

MALE SPEAKER: Thanks, Burt. KIM: Oh hi, I'm Kim. I've been with the company for about six years now in the shipping department.

MARTIN: I'm Martin. Hard to believe, but I've been almost 10 years now. Five of which underneath Burt there in the fishing department. Now I just try to keep the warehouse running smoothly.

JULIET: Hi, my name is Juliet. And I work up in payroll. So I think everyone here will thank me for making sure you've all gotten paid the last four years.

BURT: Oh, so you're the one to blame for those measly checks, huh?

JULIET: Yep, been skimming a little off the top of yours for years now.

STACEY: Hi, I'm Stacey. I started working on the sales floor during college eight years ago. And now, I work up in HR.

MALE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Seems like we have a pretty seasoned group here which is fantastic. So I want to start this process off by taking out the dirty laundry, as it were. It's come to my attention that there is a certain level of employee dissatisfaction, and I want to get a sense of what that looks like here. So let's just open it up to the whole table. If you have been dissatisfied with your job here at Walden Sports, why don't you shed some light on why it is that you stay?

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BURT: Well, I've been here so long it don't seem to make any sense to look for anything else. I mean, I'd like to. But I may be 10 years away from retirement now, and no one wants to hire an old guy like me. And heck, even if they did, I can't risk taking any kind of pay cut and throwing off my savings plan. No sir, I've got to stay put.

MALE SPEAKER: I see. Anyone else?

STACEY: Well, I have to admit that I've had the desire to start looking for jobs elsewhere for a while now. But Walden just finished paying off my college loans as part of an incentive program, so I, sort of, feel obligated to stay.

MALE SPEAKER: You know, you wouldn't be the first person to do it, but I can see how that might make you feel uncomfortable. What about you, Kim? Have you ever thought about leaving? KIM: I don't know. I mean, yes. I've been looking at job listings for a while now, but I think I've decided to give up the search.

MALE SPEAKER: Why is that?

KIM: There's no jobs out there. I look every day but come up with nothing. It's hopeless, so I guess I'm stuck here.

MALE SPEAKER: I'm sorry to hear that, Kim. But I've run into a lot of people lately who are in the same boat as you. What about you, Martin? Juliet? Have you looked for another job but run into road blocks like Kim has?

MARTIN: Well I haven't actually done any job searching yet, but more and more I find my commitment to the company slipping. I mean, I love my coworkers and my supervisor has done so much for me over the years, I just don't feel like anybody above them cares about me. I mean, it used to be that we felt like we were a part of the success of the company. And the executives would come down and make sure that we have the resources that we needed to do our job. But now, it just seems like they nickel and dime us to death, and I can't get excited about working here anymore.

JULIET: You know, it's actually the opposite for me. I still enjoy the day to day work, but ever since the merger with the travel agency, I feel like I'm out of touch with everyone. That so many new people came in and everything got so corporatized that I just don't feel like we're all one big happy family anymore. Sorry. Which is how it used to be. It's become a lifeless office to work in, and I honestly find it really depressing.

MALE SPEAKER: Yeah, I understand. I'm really sorry to hear that. Sounds like there are some big changes that need to be made in order to make this a better

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place to work. But you know what? We're going to work very hard to make that happen. I promise.

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