With nonprofit’s assistance, WKU Innovation Campus-based startup lands $3 million investment

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David Horowitz September 4, 2025



Jeremy Jacobs presents about his startup, UnDesked, on Aug. 20 at a lunch-and-learn hosted by the WKU Innovation Campus and the region nonprofit CREATE — a chance for community members to meet three entrepreneurs and ask about starting a company.

DAVID MAMARIL HOROWITZ

david.horowitz@bgdailynews.com

Recent work at the Western Kentucky University Innovation Campus has led to a $3 million investment into a local startup offering a service used by half a million employees globally — money the startup plans to use for marketing and expansion.

The campus-based company, UnDesked, provides a digital one-stop shop of productivity tools to support operations, human resources, maintenance, production and environmental health and safety. It's designed for deskless employees: those whose companies span manufacturing, construction, utilities, oil and gas, mining, retail, hospitality and so on.

Support from a nonprofit also based at the campus — the Central Region Ecosystem for Arts, Technology, and Entrepreneurship — made nearly the entire investment possible, Jacobs said.

Better known as CREATE, the nonprofit aims to help entrepreneurs who have what are called tech, tech-enabled or innovation-led companies across the 10-county Barren River Area Development District as well as Ohio and Hancock counties, CREATE Innovation Fellow Sam Ford said.

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Largely through connections, it supports entrepreneurs with consultation, resources, events, programs and introductions, including with mentors, entrepreneurs in their areas of interest, attorneys and investors, Ford said. Guidance spans business models, pitch decks, introductions and other areas — with all services are provided at no cost to entrepreneurs, Ford said.

Formerly known as the Central Region Innovation and Commercialization Center (CRICC), CREATE is one of six "innovation hubs" under the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development and funded by the cabinet primarily as well as Warren County and Bowling Green.

It aims to resonate with and support talented entrepreneurs and those who work with them wanting to live in the region, the nonprofit Programs Director Buddy Steen said. Bringing them and their companies to the area, he added, can create hundreds of jobs where people can support themselves and their families through roles from software engineering to higher-level management.

The nonprofit aspires for the region to become a technological district of northern Nashville — still maintaining Bowling Green's charm and identity, but with an acceptance that the proximity to Nashville can be a mutual blessing, Steen said.

To do so, CREATE aims to develop an ecosystem with the requisite infrastructure where that happens — one that, true to the acronym, provides an environment that fosters both emerging "Technology" and the creativity of the "Arts" to fuel modern-day "Entrepreneurship" for companies growing and scaling with a national and international market, Steen and Ford said.

“(It’s) more like a biological system than it is some 10-year strategic plan or something you could write,” Steen said. “It changes depending upon the world around it.”

A part of that system, for example, is fiber-based internet throughout the WKU Innovation Campus that’s some of the fastest and most stable globally, Steen said. Bringing and keeping companies here is also critical, he said, to retaining very talented people — those sometimes being entrepreneurs who had left the area and are particularly open to returning if the environment is right, according to Steen.

For UnDesked, CREATE made the introductions needed for last month’s investment, its founder Jacobs said.

The software product, which Jacobs has supported with about $3 million from his own pocket, has reached 500,000 employees across hundreds of locations with virtually no marketing, including at giants such as Berry Global, he said.

The new investment will enable his company to have a very aggressive go-to-market strategy and spend a tremendous amount on marketing and sales to grow his client base.

And the potential for growth is there: About 80% of the global workforce, 2.7 billion, doesn’t sit at desks — which is where the company fills a gap in available technology, he said.

He described Undesked as a cohesive system to manage and execute tasks designed for teams working on foot, broken down by customizable menus within menus called “hubs.” A company executive, for instance, can quickly create a “hub” to manage assigning a supervisor to walking specific areas of a factory to touch base with on-the-ground operators — where tasks, communication and other aspects of work are addressable via the UnDesked system. Or, employees on foot may use company tablets or their cell phone to efficiently indicate to inventory staff that an item is low — clickable to notify another employee, via text, email or other system, that it needs to be stocked.

“We looked at the challenges they had, and we said, ‘Well, clearly you can’t give them Excel and PowerPoint and Word — that’s not going to help somebody on a factory floor, right?” Jacobs said. “We’re in a construction county. So, what are the challenges they face? And what are the tools that would empower these people …?

We analyzed the problem. We solved it.”

Those interested in CREATE can go to cocreate-ic.com

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