

Speech at p4, Pittsburgh April 16 2015

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Steel worker by day. Exotic dancer by night. With big dreams to become a ballet dancer.

Alex Owens. From the blockbuster *Flashdance*. I guess I am not the first person to say so, but this great city of yours was first presented to me through the eyes of Alex Owens.

I was eight years old when it came out, and it has followed me ever since. Not mainly because of the plot. But the streets of Pittsburgh. The ambiance. The roughness. The dynamic feel of the city.

When I flew in for this conference yesterday, I felt as if Alex Owens was close by, riding her bicycle over the bridges to the steel mill.

I know. It's cheesy for you Yinzers.

Anyway.

I really like Pittsburgh.

Ten years ago, I had the privilege to come here for the first time and see your city with my own eyes.

Here in Pittsburgh, of course I couldn't miss the Andy Warhol Museum. And the Carnegie Mellon University.

Being back. Now as CEO of the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce. One of Sweden's leading business organizations, founded in 1902. And to meet all of you. Is a great honour.

I am intrigued by the journey that Pittsburgh has made since my last visit. And even more curious about where you are headed in the years to come.

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But before I talk more about you. I want to talk about me.

With the risk of sounding overly boastful of my own home town: Stockholm is one of the greatest cities in the world.

Ok, ok. I know that's what everybody says about their home town. But trust me, it REALLY is!

Green, clean and cool. That's Stockholm.

It's modern, but with a history that goes all the way back to the 13th century - and even further, to the era of the Vikings.

It's urban, but hop on one of the many boats at one of our waterfronts and the archipelago is just minutes away.

We are about one million people in the city and 2.2 million in the county.

And we're growing. We are the fastest growing capital in the European Union.

So what is our key to success?

Talented people flourish in Stockholm. Headquarters of big multinationals flourish in Stockholm. Startups flourish in Stockholm.

Not just Spotify, but also the companies behind Minecraft and CandyCrush Saga. Just to mention a few. Stockholm is home to the second strongest tech startup cluster per capita in the world. That is nothing less than sensational if you ask me.

A dense urban environment drives innovation. It's true for Stockholm, Pittsburgh and a lot of other places around the world. A dense city combines and connects labour, capital and - not the least - ideas.

In essence Stockholm is a factory of ideas.

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As you all know. When people meet. Like we do here. When they interact. Like we will do during the p4 event. Things happen.

And good things have happened in Stockholm for sure.

The Stockholm Chamber of Commerce is a frontrunner. I dare to say that we are not like most other Chambers.

We don't focus on taxes. Taxes don't build success. People do.

Let me give you a few examples of ideas we have had and together with others been able to realize.

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First, the Stockholm subway.

I love the subway. It's a world of its own down there.

The subway system allows large amounts of people to travel in a very short time. Without disturbing any other traffic systems. No wonder it's the most popular means of transportation in Stockholm. Every week day four Pittsburghs use the subway. Everyone uses it. Students, politicians and workers rubbing shoulders with investment bankers.

The Stockholm subway was established in the 1950's. And for many years, it expanded alongside our growing population.

And then the expansion stopped. But the population kept growing.

Today, we're one third more than we were in 1985. But we have to rely on the same subway system as we had then.

To me, this is beyond comprehension.

And so, the chamber has done quite its share of campaigning and lobbying over the years. Finally, in the fall of 2013, we had a breakthrough. The politicians struck a deal to expand the existing subway system and along with that comes massive new housing opportunities.

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As I said, Stockholm is one of the fastest growing cities in Europe. And as you all know, you can't grow on an empty stomach. Which brings me to my second example: **The food truck invasion.**

Every city with self-respect also has great street food. Here in the US, you clearly understood this many years ago, but it was not until recently that we in Stockholm discovered the wonders of the taco truck. High quality street food was not a common sight in Stockholm until just a few years ago.

At the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce, we partnered with a small street food network and introduced our local government to the idea of food truck and the need for appropriate permits.

A simple idea that lead to more businesses, which means more jobs and more good food.

Let me elaborate.

Starting a street food business comes more easily than a café or restaurant. In other words, it lowers the thresholds for new entrepreneurs to find their place in the labour market.

In only a few years, the food truck invasion will have created about 800 new jobs. Real jobs.

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Now, on to another burning issue for Stockholm. An issue where my organisation has been very active in speeding up the change we have seen over the last years.

More museums. More private museums.

It's as easy as this: big cities need great culture to attract people, business and investments. This is true all over the world.

Take the Andy Warhol Museum, for instance. A great example of making Pittsburgh even more interesting and culturally rewarding.

During the last decade, we have witnessed the establishment of eight new private museums in Stockholm. Like the ABBA Museum. The photographic museum.

And the modern art gallery Artipelag, an amazing art hall out in the archipelago. It was actually created by the man who invented BabyBjörn. Do you know? The baby carrier?

Those are just a few examples.

It's clear that Stockholm has become a start-up hub also when it comes to culture and creative businesses.

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Moving on to another example where the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce has been a driving force in recent development.

This one is about embracing the digital revolution.

Yes, I am talking about the same digital revolution that has been going on for many years now. But it is also the same

digital revolution that is spinning faster and faster. Digital development is getting more and more advanced. With more complex solutions to more complex challenges.

Innovation and technology is big in Sweden. We're a country of engineers.

Do you know what the single most common profession in Stockholm is today? No?

Computer programmer.

I find this quite surprising, and very promising. But it is also a challenge.

If Latin was the universal language you simply had to master to be successful in ancient Europe, and English the language of the first wave of globalization. What is the universal language of the modern economy?

Programming.

In February, I presented a project together with the mayor of Stockholm and the founder of Spotify. This fall, children in Stockholm schools will start learning the most universal language in the world. They will have programming on their school curriculum.

This is one important step in making sure that Stockholm will be able to defend and develop its entrepreneurial and digital top position also in the future.

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So what can Pittsburgh learn from us? What does Pittsburgh have to build on?

Well, there is no stronger foundation than steel, right?

About a month ago, I attended the SXSW Interactive in Austin, Texas. I had the pleasure to listen to AOL co-founder Steve Case. He visited Pittsburgh himself last summer. And you seem to have made quite an impression on him. He was excited to say the least.

He made references to your long history and compared Pittsburgh to Silicon Valley.

He said that "Pittsburgh powered the industrial revolution - it was the Silicon Valley of its time". And he complimented Carnegie Mellon. Of course. Who wouldn't?

The interesting thing about Pittsburgh these days seems to be that you are really up and coming. Promising. Full of life. Of ambition. And with hopes for the future.

But you are also quite too humble. Not really making too much fuzz about it.

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We talk a lot about sustainability these days.

Our Stockholm experience has taught us that to achieve sustainability in the true sense, we have to see it as not only an environmental issue. In the future, there simply will

be no place for growth unless it is sustainable and inclusive. Economic, social, and environmental needs must be simultaneously addressed.

The burning question is: How do we act and plan ahead?

For me, better conditions for entrepreneurship and innovation are key in achieving sustainability.

I am happy to see that you are onto this here in Pittsburgh as well. I hope that more people will. Because when more people see this connection, we will see more dynamic cities throughout the world. More creative hubs that attract skilled people and create more jobs and more growth.

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To conclude, ladies and gentlemen.

I wanted to share some of our experiences with you. What we have achieved so far. As inspiration. So that you can continue to build on all the great things you already have. To make Pittsburgh even more fantastic.

So here goes, from Stockholm with love. Three concrete pieces of advice.

My first point: Brag.

Lift your heads high. Be proud of your amazing city.

Let the rest of the US - the rest of the world! - let them know about your journey. Where you come from. What you have become. And where you want to be in the future.

Brag about your entrepreneurs. Your experience. Your knowledge. Brag about the steps you have taken and are about to take to truly compete with other great cities.

Second: Establish more creative clusters.

Make sure that you do all you can to make it easier for entrepreneurs to take the next step and make their ideas come to life.

What we have seen in Stockholm is that these creative hubs, with a high density of innovative start-up businesses, become some sort of self-playing piano.

They attract more start-ups. More entrepreneurs.

They attract knowledge. Expertise. Highly educated people. Who in turn will contribute to society and to local business life.

Third: Encourage urbanization.

For Pittsburgh to continue to grow. And to become a truly sustainable city. A city that welcomes more people and more businesses. Urbanization is key.

I am talking about smart urbanization. Taking advantage of the new technology in order to build a dense and dynamic city. New infrastructure - including public transportation - that makes it easy to commute. Residential areas that are connected so that people can easily interact with one another. Where they can exchange ideas, break social patterns and meet people with other ways of living.

We have to embrace this. Act and plan ahead. It's the only way for cities to reach their full potential.

Thank you!