

## Transcript of Interview with Mike Michalski by Alexander Michalski

**Interviewee:** Mike Michalski

**Interviewer:** Alexander Michalski

**Date:** 05/26/2020

**Location (Interviewee):** Pewaukee, Wisconsin

**Location (Interviewer):** Pewaukee, Wisconsin

**Abstract:** In this oral history interview, Alexander Michalski interviews Mike Michalski in Pewaukee, Wisconsin. Mike discusses his job and how it was affected by covid, the impact the virus has had on his friends and family, and home life. He touches on media and how the news is covering the virus. He also discusses local and federal government responses to the virus as well as his hopes for the future.

**Alexander Michalski** 00:00

Okay, so today's date is May 26 2020. And it is five o'clock PM, would you care to introduce yourself, tell us your name, what you do for job, work.

**Mike Michalski** 00:11

So my name is Mike McKowski. And we'll be Pewaukee Wisconsin. And my role. My position is a branch manager for a company called migratory bird management. And we primarily work. We exclusively work in management of nuisance birds like Eastern dolls, and we also do other things to protect buildings from bird damage, so our work is really related to health and safety.

**Alexander Michalski** 00:41

Okay. Um, so how has COVID-19 affected your job and in what ways? has affected job?

**Mike Michalski** 00:49

Well, fortunately, it hasn't affected us greatly. As far as in loss of revenue. We've had a few customers that we've had to they've had to save money and not utilize our services. But ultimately, it's made us be more stringent in and health and safety regulations. We as a company had adopted a COVID-19 strategy and provide that information to our customers. And certainly, on a personal level, hand sanitation, washing your hands using a mask. All of our employees have to wear masks when they're inside, in outside. In, there's a lot of protocols we need to follow with our customers for related health and safety in the COVID-19. Okay,

**Alexander Michalski** 01:41

So I know that you had to kind of work with state with local government, state government to get your your business considered essential. What was that? What was that? Like? What was that fight? Like? Was it difficult? Was it an easy process?

**Mike Michalski** 01:55

Yeah, so we really Fortunately, our business is considered an essential business, because what we do on a daily basis is protect properties from as I mentioned, nuisance birds. And that can be in the spring with nesting geese that are very aggressive, and can cause conflict with people. And then it's also related to droppings from geese, geese, droppings, or have a host of issues with unrelated health and safety, like ecoli. So really, what we needed to do was just make certain by reaching out to a couple of agencies to see if we were considered an essential business, which we were. So that process was actually relatively easy. For us getting the work done, it's been a little more difficult to church because of getting into properties and some of the restrictions were related to that.

**Alexander Michalski** 02:51

Okay. Um, so, has the pandemic affected the employment of people that you know, and in what ways?

**Mike Michalski** 03:04

Well, it's affected. You know, some people I know, like, my brother in law has been furloughed, because his businesses related to travel and design and trade shows, and that's obviously been canceled because of the pandemic. So yeah, we've had friends of our family and myself that have either been laid off or furloughed because of the lack of work, so it has hit hit pretty close to home with some of the people we know.

**Alexander Michalski** 03:39

Yeah. Um, so what for you? What have been the biggest challenges that you have faced in during the COVID 19 outbreak?

**Mike Michalski** 03:52

Um, I think it's just continuing to be making sure that you haven't gotten lackadaisical. So making certain that you are washing your hands and you are using hand sanitizers making certain that you do utilize your mask and you practice social distancing. Excuse me. Sorry. Practice social distancing. In that get complacent, I think is the longer this goes in weather starts getting nicer and and, you know, you start to think that maybe you don't need to do those things. But until they come up with a vaccine, I think we're going to have to some degree continue to do this. And it's been also on a business level, making certain that our employees haven't gotten lackadaisical because, you know, with one of us get sick, you know, it could cause our business to be suspended for a while.

**Alexander Michalski** 04:55

Okay. So I know recently with the During the Wisconsin courts, striking down the safer at home order. I know you still practice, you know, the regulations that were put in place earlier. I'm seeing people around you, when you go to stores, when you go out for work, not practicing this, how does that make you feel?

**Mike Michalski** 05:21

Well is is, you know, it's concerning. Because it's just so much of the unknown. We don't know, typically, you know, if you relate this COVID-19 to the flu, as it gets warmer flu symptoms, likely heard of people getting the flu diminishes historically, but you just don't know what this new virus so it is frustrating at times to go to the grocery store and see people who don't have masks on and, you know, on are working in working with numerous people, whether it's building engineers, or property managers, sometimes can be frustrating when you're, you know, when you're doing the six foot social distancing. And people you see people are kind of coming closer or

not. So you just, it's just, you have to be vigilant, and you just hope you can only control what you can do. And you just hope that the other people around you are doing the same.

**Alexander Michalski** 06:20

Sure. So I'm kind of piggybacking off of that, how have your concerns with the COVID 19 pandemic kind of changed since you first heard about it to where we're at now? Or I guess I should say, what concerns did you have to start with? And then how did they evolve?

**Mike Michalski** 06:38

Well, I think with most people, at first you thought it was it was not that big a deal. And I think it was a you know, a lot of people may include that was a lot about nothing. But as the weeks gone by, and you start to see more and more of the country be affected, you start seeing a number of people, not just in the United States, but across the country. And you start you know, watching TV, and you start to see people who are, you know, definitely dying from this and suffering from this, it becomes real to you. And, you know, so it's really evolved, you know, it's gone from one to a nine one level of concern for myself and for people that I know.

**Alexander Michalski** 07:23

Okay. Yeah. Um, how have municipal leaders and government officials in your community responded to the outbreak?

**Mike Michalski** 07:34

Well, I think, you know, there's always seems like in this day and age, there's always politics involved. You know, on a state level, our governor, I've felt has taken appropriate action. And it's easy to be critical of him. But, you know, certainly, he's a Democrat, and certainly Republicans have pushed back against this. So I feel, you know, it's, it's something that I feel comfortable with the governor eavers has done. And, you know, I think it's, it's easy to throw stones at somebody to do these things where, you know, it's closing on businesses and shops, again, unfortunate our business is working, you know, maybe my attitude, we like different if I was a small business owner was laid off from furloughed, so. And I think on a national level, it's just, you know, it's politics as usual.

**Alexander Michalski** 08:34

Sure. Do you have any thoughts on how local state or federal leaders are responding to the crisis differently? What do you mean? Um, I mean, with the different reactions that we've seen with like, no, Governor eavers Taking it really seriously and other local leaders, and then on that kind of national level, you see that?

**Mike Michalski** 09:00

Well, you know, I think, I think I think most, you know, most government, people have taken it seriously. Some were slower, you know, a case could mean that a president was slow to take this and fully embrace it. And certainly, you know, he's eager to get things back on because it's an election year. I don't know. You know, I think that it was it was disappointing, that it had to be disappointing, that in Wisconsin that the two parties couldn't talk about a resolution and or compromise, right. I had to go to a court level. I think it's just a sad commentary.

**Alexander Michalski** 09:50

Yeah, I agree. I think it's difficult because you depending on where you sit, you want to criticize the other side. Their decision and it's very easy to but it's also very easy to understand where both sides are coming from because personally, like you mentioned, I agree with that safer home. I agree with the extension. I thought that was a good idea. But I can also understand where other people are coming from wanting to get back to work.

**Mike Michalski** 10:16

Right.

**Alexander Michalski** 10:16

Get that, because with small business owners, I mean,

**Mike Michalski** 10:20

Yeah, I mean, you know, walk a day in somebody's shoes or mile in somebody's shoes, whatever the saying is, it's easy for us to sit here in this household. When, when, you know, my wife and I are working and still supporting us. And, you know, and say, Well, it's, you know, it's an overreaction by other people to say that we should just open up the businesses and open the country back up. Again, if I was not working in, you know, the bills, remounting, I think I probably would sing a different tune.

**Alexander Michalski** 10:52

Okay. So has the pandemic affected how you associate and communicate with friends and family? And what are some of those ways?

**Mike Michalski** 11:02

Well, certainly we're not, you know, seeing many people are very young people in our family. I don't know how it's going, you know, I think, I don't know what the new normal, it's going to be. Right? You know, I don't know if anybody's ever going to shake anybody's hand. And I don't know, if you're ever it's, it's going to, I think could be a long time before you have, you know, big events, concerts, and, you know, basketball games and football games and things without, you know, people being reserved about going have reservations about going to it. But yeah, I mean, I think, you know, obviously, with this COVID, you know, we're not, you know, we're not leaving the house or not having people over to the house, so it has affected us socially.

**Alexander Michalski** 11:52

Okay. You may not have an answer to this question. But in what ways, do you think that COVID-19 is affecting people's mental and or physical? Health? I think that's a pretty complex question, because we don't have all the details.

**Mike Michalski** 12:09

Right? Well, I you know, I think, you know, I do believe that it's, it's affecting people, you know, people are tired of being in the house, people want to get out, they want to go, you know, I think it's good that they open up some of the state parks. So I think at one level, it's people are eager to get out. So now that we're able to do some of that, I think that's good. I think that there's also just that level of uncertainty. Right. You know, as you mentioned earlier question, you go out to a store, and you see people who don't have a mask? Am I close enough? Am I too far, my far enough away. But I, I do think that this is not something that we can, we can't indefinitely, you know, be stuck at home, right? I mean, there is going to be concerns with people's mental stability, this, and things of

that nature. If it doesn't get in game better, and I think until there is a vaccine, as you know, even if the, you know, the doctors and the experts say you're free to go, you're free to do whatever you used to do, or that's go to a football game, or go to a concert or shake someone's hand, give someone a hug. I think until there is an actual vaccine that works. And people are going to be reluctant to do that some people can be reluctant to do that. Right?

**Alexander Michalski** 13:28

I think just kind of do address this question myself. I think with affecting people's mental health, I really, really think it depends on what your living condition is. Because I think with us, being four of us, in the house, there's someone else that you can talk to face to face. And then if you're living alone, I think that would have a significant impact,

**Mike Michalski** 13:49

You know, people who have elderly parents or relatives like in nursing homes, I can't see them. You know, obviously, with technology now, you can do zoom calls and Skype and things of that nature. But I think it's gotta be harder on older generational people who may not be you know, that tech savvy, who are really, really isolated who may need to count on somebody to take them somewhere or someplace. Yeah.

**Alexander Michalski** 14:17

But on the other hand, I'm just seeing what's going on in the neighborhood here. I think it's really improving. It might be improving people's physical health, because when they can't go places, right, a lot of people are taking walks, long walks.

**Mike Michalski** 14:31

Getting more exercise than ever in your life.

**Alexander Michalski** 14:34

Yeah. Um, so what have been your primary sources of news during the pandemic, and how have they changed or have the change?

**Mike Michalski** 14:47

So, I mean, primarily, you know, my news comes from, you know, cable news. And, you know, and the phone so that really hasn't changed. I don't think anything about this coverage has made me change my opinion about the media or made me consider, you know, changing my primary cable news or local news to a different channel because of the coverage. So I don't think it's really impacted me at all.

**Alexander Michalski** 15:19

Okay. What do you think are important issues from watching the news that the media may or may not be covering, or may not be covering effectively enough?

**Mike Michalski** 15:30

You mean, non COVID issues are related to COVID?

**Alexander Michalski** 15:34

Related to COVID. Non COVID. Anything that you think is something that should be getting more attention from the media, but isn't?

**Mike Michalski** 15:45

I don't think I can think of anything. I mean, let's, me I believe that in our new show, probably, two thirds of it is COVID. related. I don't think they've missed much. Sure. So, no, I don't think there's anything that I think they've missed, you know, probably case can be made that there's too much coverage. Okay, getting too redundant.

**Alexander Michalski** 16:11

Okay. Okay. Um, so just a couple more questions here. Um, has your experience transformed how you think about your family, your friends and your community? And how so?

**Mike Michalski** 16:26

Um, well, I think when it comes to our family, I think anytime we go through something like this, you're you're thankful that everybody's healthy and safe. And I think, you know, we've spent a lot more time of course, calm. And I don't know, if we've necessarily spent, we spent more time in the house, I don't know, if we've necessarily spent more time together because of, you know, teenage, young young men. And, you know, so I think, I hope we've gotten to, you know, appreciate each other a little bit more. In certainly, you know, I think there's a level of concern for our extended family that everybody is healthy and safe. You know, as far as a community, I think sometimes I get more, you know, with people who are, you know, breaking the law or breaking the rules. You know, it's disappointing when you see, you know, people in big gatherings not wearing masks and all that I think that's really, that's something that's just disrespectful to people, and they've had some protests where people have gotten together. And, you know, I think that is, I think that's just shows a lack of respect for people in general. Sure.

**Alexander Michalski** 17:53

Knowing what you know, now, what do you think that individuals, communities or governments need keep in mind for the future? One, one of the things that I noticed, that I think should be kept in mind, personally, I'm going forward is what kind of surprised me was how underprepared. We were for something like this. So I think it's important to keep in mind that these words can happen. We need to

**Mike Michalski** 18:19

Well, I think, on a good side is I think, as a society, we're probably hopefully more conscious of being handed, you know, personal hygiene. And I hope that that doesn't, you know, that doesn't wane as we hopefully get a vaccine.

**Alexander Michalski** 18:39

Right.

**Mike Michalski** 18:39

You know, I think just in general, I think people are more conscious, whether it's going to be a business, or, you know, store or whatever the case may be that, you know, we need to practice better hygiene, we need to wash our hands, we need a hand sanitizer. And I think I think that's going to be something that's going to be a concern. I think if people go to a restaurant or a store or wherever the case may be, and they don't feel that there's a you

know, an adequate. There's not a hand sanitizer or someplace to wash your hands. I think that's going to affect that business moving forward.

**Alexander Michalski** 19:13

Yeah. Okay. Well, that is all the questions I have for you. Do you have any finishing thoughts?

**Mike Michalski** 19:19

Nope. I do not

**Alexander Michalski** 19:20

All right. Excellent. Thank you.

**Mike Michalski** 19:21

You're welcome

**Alexander Michalski** 19:21

Appreciate it.