

PAUL ORFALEA BIOGRAPHY

Paul Orfalea founded Kinko's, Inc. in 1970 using a \$5,000 loan, cosigned by his parents. After identifying a need near the University of California Santa Barbara campus – students needed copies, pens, papers and pencils at affordable rates – he opened up the very first Kinko's shop in Isla Vista. Clearly, Paul's small idea grew into one of the most successful American businesses, but the path to success was not perfectly paved for Paul.

From a young age, Paul struggled in school. It wasn't until later in life that Paul was diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD, but the ramifications were clear at a young age as Paul struggled to assimilate to a school system designed for a specific kind of learner. He self-proclaims, "I'm a horrible reader," and as a result, he flunked second grade. But Paul's unprecedented success, despite such adversity, has become one of the topics about which he is most well-known and speaks most passionately.

Paul attended University of Southern California. Following graduation, he moved to Santa Barbara, opening the first Kinko's store. He paid a mere \$100 to rent his first store, a single office space. But within ten years, Kinko's had grown to more than 80 locations.

Paul's leadership style is unique. He claims that he never learned how to use the machines in his stores but instead spent his time traveling to the different Kinko's stores, getting acquainted with the staff and learning what worked best within each store. He then made an effort to implement successful practices across the board. His ADHD actually worked toward his advantage – he got bored easily, so he learned to get his hands dirty and really be involved in the goings-on of Kinko's as it grew. Paul implemented generous incentive programs, spurring on employee creativity, as well as hosting elaborate parties for his employees. As a result, Kinko's was named one of the "100 Best Companies to Work with in America," for three consecutive years. Under his leadership, Kinko's also earned other titles including, "Forbes 500 Biggest Companies," and one of the, "Best Companies for Working Mothers."

Following Paul's retirement in 2000, he began to focus his time, energy, and resources toward philanthropic ventures. He and his family have especially targeted educational initiatives, child development programs, and programs for under-resourced youth. They began the Orfalea Family Foundation in 2000. In addition to his philanthropy – the Cal Poly Business School sports the Orfalea name as a result of his generous donations – Paul has become an impassioned speaker. He has spoken at Stanford Graduate School of Business, NYU, Princeton, Harvard, UCLA, and Wharton School of Business among others. Paul regularly teaches at his alma mater, University of Southern California, as well as UC Davis, UC Santa Barbara, and additional state schools.

Paul is the author of two books, *Copy This!: Lessons from a Hyperactive Dyslexic Who Turned a Bright Idea Into One of America's Best Companies* and *Two Billion Dollars in Nickels*. His books delve into his creative approach to business, how he has learned to turn obstacles into opportunities, and how he used an unorthodox approach to business that resulted in success far beyond what he could have ever imagined.

Paul resides in Santa Barbara, California, where he invests his energy and time in philanthropy. Especially passionate about empowering children with learning disabilities to see their disabilities as *opportunities*, Paul will do a tour in 2016, speaking at elementary schools across the nation.