Improve Your Employee Retention with Jason Morris

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SPEAKERS

Jason Morris, Halie Morris

H **Halie Morris**   00:10

Hello, everyone, and welcome to the business of cleaning. My name is Halie Morris. And welcome back to our show. This is our first episode of our once a month release, and I am excited to announce that I brought on Jason Morris. He is the director of HR at Owens Community College up here in the Toledo area of Ohio. And we are going to be broaching the very broad, very obscure topic of retention today because I know it's something that we struggle a lot with in the industry. And we're here to shed some light. So Jason, if you don't mind, can you introduce yourself?

J **Jason Morris**   00:47

Sure, Halie, thank you for having me. retention is a great topic that a lot of people are heavily discussing right now, with the lack of employees out there, and many, many openings. So as Haley mentioned, my name is Jason Morris, I'm executive director of HR for Owens Community College. I've been in the human resource field for close to 20 years. Most recently, I was at a hollywood casino here in Toledo, where we did have close to a 50% turnover rate. So retention was a very, at the tip of the mind concept and something we were talking about very heavily. And prior to that I spent some time in HR in the architectural engineering world, as well as the finance road as well, too.

Halie Morris 01:34

Thank you, I'm excited to have you on it. Like I said, it's a very important topic in the industry right now, especially with all of the large and sweeping changes. I know every time the CDC announces something, it affects the industry, which means it affects the jobs, and how people are cleaning or what products they're using, or this or that. And with the virus and safety being a big concern. And the things that had happened last year and how things are shifting this year, there's a lot of things happening. And like you said, the applicant poll is feeling pretty dry. But retention is an ongoing topic. And I know this is one that's been important for a while and will continue to be important for a while because it's something that, like you said, You worked at hollywood casino for a while and it was still just as important when you left as when you started. It doesn't stop being a conversation starter.

Jason Morris 02:28

Right. Yeah. And I think that's important, too. retention is not a easy fix. And it's not something that you roll out a fix for and expect it to be done retention. And the concept of retaining talent has to be an ongoing, consistent and constant mechanism. And you know, it is going to be ever changing. And as you just mentioned, COVID-19 brought different challenges. You had to remember for the last year and a half folks have been working from home, predominantly, right. So now we as we start to go back into the office place, we have a whole new retention issue that we've never had before, which is do I want to go back into an office and work do I want to go back into the environment of work around people. There's also the concept right now that maybe folks don't want to work. You know, there's a lot of government assistance type things out right now with stimulus and increased unemployment rates, it make things a little bit easier for people to say, I don't know if I want to go back into that. So retention cannot be a stagnant plan, you have to continue to looking at it, and what is the social factors affecting it every day?

Halie Morris 03:33

Yeah, I know, that's been a question because we're starting to bring people back into the office, and I'm hearing a lot of people do. So your administrators of your business like your executives, and you yourself. If you have a physical office environment, you might be questioning, are we going back in? How many people do we have in this office environment? You might be talking about your in person trainings and things like that, for your staff? How hands on are you how hands on Have you been able to be with social distancing and everything else in play? We're cleaning buildings and other environments. So generally, it is one of the cleaner jobs at the end of the day. But there is always a concern of there's a lot of questions on how this virus spread, who's vaccinated who's not,

is it safe? Who's getting tested, so coming back, and things like that are still scary and like you said, some people don't want to don't want to work while they're comfortable right now financially.

J Jason Morris 04:38

Right and think about this too, with COVID-19 as you just mentioned, going in and cleaning the buildings I mean, they're at risk, right there's there's anybody walking into it any kind of building is at risk for any potential there's still a lot we don't know about this, this virus. The thing with pretension though is can you retain talent, and can you get them the Feel comfortable in that decision to come back and be a part of that your organization, you know, because that's really the job of leaders is to say, Hey, I'm going to do the best I can to provide you the safest and cleanest environment I can for you to work in and do your job. And I think that's where it starts with that communication. And that's what helps retention if folks know that you're being black and white with stuff, this is what's going on. This is our protocols, here's what we're doing, here's how we're going to help protect you, here's how we're going to keep you safe. That starts, you know, but I've heard of companies that have been very quiet or COVID-19, you know, we're not, here's what we're doing are giving updates, well, you know, those folks feel a little like left out, what's my exposure? What's my risk here, certainly, if another opportunity, your job comes up, they're gonna want to jump on that different risks. So number one, really for retention, especially in this environment is being very transparent about what's going on what we're doing to keep you safe, and making that first person feel comfortable coming back into that environment.

H Halie Morris 06:04

Well, the other thing I think I've noticed, just across the board with businesses is that communication and transparency with customers is sometimes better or stronger than it is with your own employees. Because customers sorta demand it. And they're the paycheck, they're the ones who are making sure you get paid, but their first time an employee hears about a change, or something that's happening within the company, it shouldn't be when you're telling your customers or at least I wouldn't think it should be like, they should know, first, they should feel comfortable. And then it moves outside the company, whatever decision you're making.

J Jason Morris 06:42

Right? Yeah. And cop communication has always it's always a struggle, right? What do we share? What don't we share. But you know, a long time ago, I had a mentor who said the

phrase happy employees equal happy clients, right. And what she meant by that is, if we keep our talent, happy, engaged, and communicated with, they're gonna turn around and spread that out to their customers and their clients and the people they interact with. And as you just mentioned, if you if you're not aware of a change, or process, or a policy change, or change in the way we do things, and you're finding that out at the last minute, you might have your own opinion, you may feel differently about that. And you may not be able to sell that idea or be so happy about it. So 100%, it really involves top down communication, making sure people are aware, especially now with what we're dealing with, with this COVID-19 rule is people need to be aware and feel safe and feel comfortable.

H Halie Morris   07:38

Yeah, the I think with that communication, like you said that the radio silence from certain people is that it's that in, it feels like more and more companies, at least their public facing communication has gotten quieter this year. Now that people are like sort of fed up with the virus more and like ready to transition back. Some companies are just kind of, Oh, I feel like their policies sound like they're less strict or they're not communicated or they don't have one. And I know that, you know, as we're bringing people back, it's like you said, it is so much more important, because we are still dealing with this especially is like the business owners and leaders within these companies, they're still dealing with this, even if maybe the employees are fed up of hearing about COVID, or things like that, like they still want to know they're safe.

J Jason Morris   08:27

Right? I think any company who's not used the last year and a half to read, look at the way they do things. It's a big mistake, you really should look at your policies, your procedures, the way you communicate, the way you're set up. This is this has been a great opportunity. You know, and I always say there's some good and the bad sometimes they're really look at how we do things. You know, the former employer, I was with we every Wednesday had been a town hall meeting, and we took questions from employees. That's kind of a that's a risky move with the times, right? I mean, you open and let people call in and ask questions. But, you know, we allowed our folks to ask the questions that were on their mind. And so you have to change a little bit, you have to look at how how things function and how you want to be and, you know, people are going to remember how the company comes out of these kind of these these moments they're going to remember, you know, did you take care of them? Did you communicate with them? Did you keep them safe? Did you do your best to be a good employer, or they're going to remember the employers who, you know, didn't communicate, they weren't radio silent,

but people are gonna remember that. And that's right. That's a key to retention as well.

H Halie Morris   09:38

So we kind of mentioned before that there's more to retention than just the obvious. So what are some of the other things besides the transparency and communication that you know are really been highlighted with everything that's happened this last year?

J Jason Morris   09:58

Well, let's let's Back to the core of retention, right? So retention is the concept of how to retain talent, keep your talent pool, live and flourishing and, you know, developing leaders and developing great talent. So retention to me starts even before the employee walks in the door. And to me, when you really look at retention is looking at your company culture and saying, what are we who do we want to be? Because that is what our future employees are going to see, you know, if they see a company that's connected in the community, or developing great processes or products, or, you know, their word of mouth, says, Man, I'd love to work at this place. I mean, you know, sometimes you hear people joke, and let's use Amazon, for example, right? So people are like, man, I heard Amazon's coming to town and they do this, they do that love the work there. That's what that's all word of mouth. I mean, you don't see a lot of Amazon versus you saying, Come work here. It's, you know, it's people talking about it. And so it's really developing a culture and you as a leader need to understand what your culture is. And if you don't, that's step one is understanding who we are, and what we want to be. And then from there, you'd know the folks that will work within that culture, you know, so if you are a innovative, and you know, high tech, innovative culture, or if you are hard working culture, then you know, the kind of folks you're looking for. And that's how you develop your job descriptions. That's how you develop your interview process. You know, one of the examples that I'll use is when we used to hire dishwashers, right? That's a industry, you would wash dishes for eight hours a day. That's not something a lot of people can do, right? However, you look for the personal fit in that culture, who's willing to roll their sleeves up, work hard, but part of our interview process was bringing that person into the kitchen, and showing them the environment. This is where you'll spend your seven or eight hours a day, you'll be in here dishwashing, and they saw people having a good time and laughing and joking. They saw the managers, you know, their sleeves rolled up helping when things get busy. And they saw what the environment was. You compare that to an interview where you pull the person to a closed office and say, hey, you're going to be a dishwasher. And they go, Okay, I'll do this, and they walk out. And then, you know, three weeks later, their job like this is not what I thought it was right? So you lose that person. So first, you know, like I just mentioned, you got to get your culture set up, you got to know what will fit what works here environment,

ask the right questions, do the appropriate interview, have the appropriate people per the interview process, right? You know, tell the stories and get people excited about wanting to come work for you, you know, be excited about what you have to offer. If you make a product, this is what we do. And this is good. This is how we are this is we're excited about. So once you get them in the door, then we have this common mistake, right, which is okay, we hired this person, and now they're good. They're here. They're good forever, right? Well, no, because the moment they walk in the door, they do that unnatural thing? Let me ask you when you first started your job, right, and you sat down at the desk that one day, probably asked yourself this question, what did I get myself into? Right? Do I know this place? Did I make the right choice I pick somewhere else, it's natural. Everybody does. And I do and every time I take a new decision, and that's okay. And that's normal. But you want to make sure that you've made the experience so positive for that person they go Yes, I have in that involves checking in on that involves making sure that that person's managers there that first day, you know, if you do something like give them a free t shirt, you have the teacher, they're available for the first day, if their name tags ready, or they're set up in the system, nothing is worse for someone, when you start your job the first day, you're not in a system, you don't have an ID, nobody's there to tell you what you're to do. I guarantee you that if that's the that's the first interaction that person has, they're already thinking that I pick the right place that I take the right job, and it doesn't matter if you're an executive to you know, you're a cleaning crew member, you need to feel like you've made the right choice. And so once you get through that first day, then it's important that you're checking in. And those check ins are so crucial, right? You're talking to the person, how are things going, what's working, but you as the leader should be asking a couple important questions. Number one, did I tell you or did I describe the job, right? Because if the person says, Yeah, this is exactly what you told me, then you know, you're doing the right thing. But if that person goes, No, you didn't tell me I was on my feet for eight hours a day doing this. Okay, we got to change that process up, right. We got to make sure we're asking the right questions. You know, are you you know, do you have the tools and resources, do your job? If you expect someone to be cleaning all day long and all day they're getting new product changing this having to get this out? Okay, well, what would you recommend? So get them involved, get them engaged in that process? You know, and then you follow up and say, What can I do for you? What do you need? What You're missing, that interaction needs to continue. And it needs to be important that that's part of that person's career with you. You don't want to wait till the exit interview. And a lot of people think retention means, hey, you know, john smith is leaving the company, let's find out why Jon's leaving. Well, if you had a really good retention plan, you wouldn't have to wait to win jobs, even you would have been connecting with him through the process. And you may have stopped him from leaving, too.

Halie Morris 15:30

You know, I think back in December or November or something, we were talking about this same topic. We had done previous content for the show, and I actually came to you we were on the first people I did. And I was asking your opinion. And you said something about the exit interview back then. And I think you said something along the lines of if the first time you know, they're leaving, as when like, they walk out the door, then you've done something wrong. Yeah, I think it was something along that line.

Jason Morris 16:02

Yep, shame, shame on you. At that point, if the first time that you truly learned that, you know, your employees unhappy and they're leaving is through that exit interview, then you don't have enough of those self checkpoints, you know, you. And it doesn't have to be elaborate meetings. It could be comfortable supervisors, walking up to their new employees, or the employees who've been there for a while and say how things are going, but have three or four of those questions that you're always checking in on, you know, how are things going? Do you have what you need to be successful? Do you have any ideas or suggestions for improvement? What can I offer you? You know, those three or four things constantly ask those things? Because then, you know, if that person says, Well, you know, I'm getting a little tired of working this, or I'm getting tired of doing this, or, you know, let's use an example. Every day, I have to go do this and fill this this product up, and it takes it extra time for me to go do it right? Well, you might say, Hey, did you know that you could do this that you just saw that person from? But that little issue then could fester into so much more? If it's like, well, you know, this company doesn't care about me, I have to do this. nobody's listening to me. Nobody's hearing me. Nobody wants to hear my you know, my thoughts or suggestions. So you eliminate all those points. And then you help to retention. Right? That. But again, like you just said, if the first time you're hearing about it is during the next interview, that's a it's a lost cause. I mean, exit interviews typically produce the same results. I'm leaving, because I want more money I leaving because someone offered me a different job. I'm leaving, because the truth is money. Yes. While important. Different hours, while important, you leave because you're not connected or not the culture is not there, you're not, you don't feel a part of that organization. We all work jobs, we've all done things that we don't really want to do at times, right. But we do it because there's a greater reason for it, we feel connected, we want to be a part of that team.

Halie Morris 18:00

And speaking of like that culture that, you know, really is employee centered and so important, where that connection. Earlier you mentioned something about the dishwasher

job, right? You said that not everyone could do that job. And I think that's important and you know, in the cleaning industry to is to realize, not everybody can do those cleaning jobs, right? There's this misconception that because it's easy to train the skill to do it because or it's easier to say, this is how you wipe something down, or this is how you clean this floor. That because somebody can learn to do that, that they can actually do the job for eight hours or so a day. And that they can fit into that role is almost sometimes there's almost this belittlement in the public does this a lot with the cleaning industry, there's been a highlight and hire expressions of important for those types of jobs. But we still see it where employers say, we can put anybody in this job, we can train them, they can do it. Right. But that's not true. Is it?

Jason Morris 19:08

Right? No. And I think one of the best programs I was ever involved in was a program called walk them out, right? And so you would take some of your your senior leadership members or your executive team members, and they would spend a couple days working the shift or doing the job of what people consider, as you just described, oh, it's an easy job. It's a dishwasher or it's a house cleaning position, right? And you learned that eight or nine hours doing that is not as easy as you may think. And it gives you an appreciation. Now there's a flip side is you're only doing it for a couple of days. But you know, part of it is understanding that, you know, those jobs are tough, they're not easy jobs. And so you've got to get the person to feel part of your organization and feel appreciated and and feel engaged because, like you said, I mean those jobs are not easy and it's very easy to go find Something else, especially in this job market right now with, you know, the unemployment number so low and so many jobs. I mean, you can't drive around right now without someone offering you a job, right. And I've seen signs now saying, we'll pay your college or we'll give you this or, you know, these kinds of discounts. There's always something better out there. And so you got to take these core jobs that are sometimes the tough is, and make those folks feel appreciated and recognized. And sometimes it means pulling up your own sleeves and getting in there and spending a day with them and saying, Man, this is, this is some hard work, maybe we should try to do this. Or maybe we should spend a little bit money here, you know, you have some great ideas, but connect with people, if you're going to sit there and spend eight hours and just not do anything and interact, it's not going to benefit. But if you spend the eight hours really seeing the, you know, seeing it through someone else's eyes and hearing the feedback and hearing the suggestions that that'll have a change.

Halie Morris 20:55

Or one of the things that we do at our company is we offer a software solution, there are

suppliers for chemicals, or equipment or things like that. And business makers are making these decisions on what they want. But if they're to do something like that, to go actually work with the employee every so often, or a day or so, and understanding that job, they could make a decision to say we need this type of equipment, right? Because it's you know, it's like you said you can make their job a bit easier and take the burden off a certain aspect that doesn't need to be there.

Jason Morris 21:27

So think of this right? One of my departments. We had a as a dishwasher that wasn't working wouldn't be new, right? So we had this very expensive piece of equipment that wasn't working, because the employees and having the opportunity to provide that update, and they didn't get a chance to give that feedback. So we just didn't, we didn't run that piece of equipment, it took a manager doing a walk come out one day to ask the question, why? Why aren't we using that dishwasher over there. It's What's all that hasn't worked for five years. So bring a new piece of equipment that cost a lot of money hasn't been working for many, many years, simple fix got replaced and put in there. But you see the conversation and you have to get there. You know, and that's the connection. And really, when you talk about retention, it's also making sure that your leadership is connected with the employees, they should feel comfortable enough to come to you and say that dishwasher is not working, we need to get this fixed, or that chemical is not working, or the chemical that you keep ordering or the project reporting is not working. Because, you know, I one of my one of my former supervisors, he always said it's great when always sit in our offices and make these great decisions, right. But it's a little bit different when we're actually out there doing. We have great ideas in these offices. And all these things I'm good on paper about actually doing it and being a part of an experience. And that's the difference.

Halie Morris 22:48

Exactly. And it's one of those things like I've heard people mentioned that like employees just won't out they say, Oh, well, the employees don't tell me about this, then tell me that dishwasher is breaking broken, they didn't tell me that they were actually spending two hours cleaning these floors when a machine would do it a lot quicker. And then they could get to those rooms they missed, right? There's this well, they didn't tell me. And you're you're talking about actually going to the employees making yourself open and not just expecting them to put in the work to come to you first.

Jason Morris 23:22

Right? You know, think about this right? Now what, what is the difference between any other job is hiring right now any other cleaning job or any other similar title? Right? what the difference is, is how that person feels and engagement they have? Does the person that they work for generally caring and concerned about their thoughts, opinions or suggestions? Or are you just Oh, another employee to them? Who's serving a purpose. And that's the difference. That's, that's the key to retention right there. And that's the cultural change that, you know, my senior leadership, my leadership team, cares about my thoughts. They make sure I have the tools or resources I do they want to know my opinions on things. And and I'm comfortable enough in an environment where I can go and tell them those kind of things, and obviously respectful way. But you know, we have that dialogue, you start taking those parts out, what's the difference between you and any other company down the street?

H   Halie Morris   24:19

It is one of those things too, you have to prioritize making that environment. You know, you can't say as a boss, okay, I want to be I want to be able to communicate with my employees and then tell me what's wrong. And then maybe just like occasionally asking for, like, you know, what doesn't work or what's your problem areas and never doing anything else? Like it's it's more than just a thought and like one small change. It's a continuous effort. And we mentioned like managers and supervisors and these people that are working directly with your team members every or you know, quite frequently it depends on the type of job But they're part of that same chain of command, right? They're part of that same line of communication open or otherwise?

J   Jason Morris   25:09

Well, in what you described as a common mistake a lot of places do. So they have an employee survey, right? So let's say a company a, they say, Hey, you know what, we have these employees, we're going to do a survey, and they do a survey once a year. They ask their employees, how they feel about things, they take the results, a group of people sit around the room, look through results and say, gather feedback, here's what we should do. Maybe we shouldn't do this. And we're done with it, right? And then they wait to the following year, they asked the same questions all over again. And the employees go, Wow, that really doesn't matter, I guess. Because if I said, we should stop doing this, and a year later, we're still doing that. So I think you have to remember that it's employee surveys are great. But it's also the other things and engagement and retention isn't just something that you can plug in once a year, or on a routine basis. It's it's a process. It's an interactive thing. So one of the best things with engagement surveys or employee surveys is ask questions, but then do something with the results. Tell people, here's what you ranked us

on a survey, here's some action items, and here's what we're going to do to fix us. So if an employee says, you know, it's really tough to do this job task, alright, we have a, we formed a committee, we found a better way to do and here's how we're going to do it. That's a simple ways those employees know they heard your feedback. You know, the, the other part of it is, is a simple Thank you sometimes, you know, some people take away the value of walking up to someone and say, thank you. And they think Well, I think you know, I have to do pizza parties, and I have to give them shirts, I have to give them bonuses and all that stuff. Well, yeah, I mean, that's just helpful, right? We all like those kinds of things. But the value of walk up to someone and saying, Thank you, Miss Miss points so much anymore.

H **Halie Morris**   26:59

I think I said something like, it was a teacher, actually, which a lot of times, you know, when you're working with a group, like you've got one supervisors, and they got multiple people that report to them, it's very easy to point out what they are not doing or what they're missing on or complain that they're just not listening. Right. But then the other thing that she mentioned is that she had a one on one, you know, like we said those touch bases, like actually sitting down with employees and seeing where they're at, she did that with her students. And if they were just rocking it, or had some really good stuff they were doing, even if not everything was going right, she made sure that she recognized that and I said, Oh my gosh, wouldn't that make a difference if like employees and their office places, just on a regular basis, had their supervisor acknowledge what they're doing? Well,

J **Jason Morris**   27:52

think of the The, the, how you feel, when you're recognized, you know, one of the things to being recognized, is, I would recommend allowing you not only the supervisor or your senior leadership to be able to do what employees employees feel recognize each other. And that's just as important to be able to feel connected to the culture, and being able to say, hey, hands up, or high five, or whatever, you did a great job on this. You know, those are those are powerful moments, you know, I think back in through my career, and I walked in with a proposal, and I walked into our general manager's office, and we went through it. And he said, I love the idea. And we walked out and my, my supervisors had we walked on, she gave me a high five, that's all she did. And it was so powerful, because it was like, you know, I had her support. And I knew that she was proud of me for doing what, you know, what we just did. And what we just accomplished, you know, when I was a was a high five walking down the hallway, but it just was powerful, you know, because you felt like I was, this person cared enough about me to do that, you know, worse, we're so caught up in trying to meet quarters, meet numbers, and, you know, COVID, and

everything else, sometimes, I think we forget sometimes the value of that the importance of each other in being a team and being part of that team. And that's, that's sadly, one of the things I think it's really been hurt by COVID-19 is, we've all kind of left when we want to enter our own offices where we went from work from home, and we forgotten about being a part of that team or that collaboration. It doesn't matter what job you are, I mean, you could be, you know, cleaning or dishwashing or whatever. But if you feel part of something you feel proud of the team. I think that that changes the way you look at your position or your job.

H Halie Morris   29:37

We've started to do team meetings recently. Not that we wouldn't talk before but it was always kind of broken up in different project meetings and different things like that. So we started to do just our team meetings and like the first part of the call is literally just catching up on stuff like boss's new cat or this or that. And then we get in and we start talking there's always jokes and movie references and things As we go, we get it done. And I can't tell you like how much of an impact that has on my week, especially right there in the middle where you're trying to get through the week. So another little thing, that's, that's where like the recognition for what projects we're working on how much we're getting done comes up. And it is one of those things when you're part of that group, and you feel like you're working towards things together. And, you know, sometimes when we have this stuff going on, too, we can help each other and we don't realize it, and you get a little like, rewarding feeling that you can offer like advice, or you can offer a tip to make an employee's and other employees or team members life easier. It also feels good. That's the kind of stuff that you want to be doing. And like you said, it was kind of forgotten when everybody just went remote and forgot that video chat was used more than just the necessary meetings and like to just contact clients and things like that, that you've lost each other a little bit in the shuffle.

J Jason Morris   31:03

Yeah, so I'm gonna go back real far in history. And I'm gonna go back to third grade for me, right. And I had a third grade teacher who I'll tell you, she understood the concept of rewards recognition way better than a lot of HR professionals, right. So she did this thing that every morning, the first person who had all their stuff put away or at their desk, who had their pencil ready, had their book ready, open to the appropriate chapter, the people that were done first, you'd walk up and see him his little blue, little paper, right. And a little blue paper, if you had enough room got you a little piece of candy or something like that, I mean, insignificant, right. But you should have saw the effect. And I remember this so distinctively in third grade sitting there ready to go into my spot, organize books ready

backpack went away, hoping I was going to get that little blue piece of paper and a little blue piece of paper, right? And how it felt when she would walk up to you and hand you that little blue piece of paper. And I mean, you just burst it. And I think you know that concept, bring it towards stage just something as small as a little Thank you, or you're the rock star this week, or the MVP this week, or, hey, Haley, great job on that project, we're working on how important that little thing is. I mean, you know, many, many years later now, I still think I mean, that's how powerful that was just, I just think tively remember that little blue piece of paper, but being recognized for whatever and it was simply this thing about all she wanted to do was not have to tell us be quiet and be get ready it was get in your seat and he's ready to go. And we did it, we complied, we got done. And we were all eager. And we fought to see who could be the first one there. But it was so important to be recognized. And if you're not recognizing or recognizing your talent, that that's that's one of the biggest effects on your retention, too.

H **Halie Morris** 32:55
It was fun, because it made it a little bit of a competition. It got you guys like not necessarily interacting. But I'm trying to be better than the other one in something friendly, not like intense either. I had a teacher in high school bring back the sticker charts for when you got certain grades to get sticker on your test when it was above a 90. And then you get to put one on the sticker chart for everybody to see. And I can't tell you how many people had stickers all the way across the row and probably did better in French class than any other class because of a sticker chart. And how pleased you were you know, and we were high schoolers. You think like, oh, high schoolers think they're too old for that. And like adults don't get into that. And I would have loved it. Actually, I had somebody do it in college too. Just as effective then, but like, it's the same thing with employees, it seems like such a small thing. And you think, oh, like, they don't need that to do their job. But simple, like little things of recognition, like the use of the thank yous or just like highlights, like who's really just knocking it out of the park this week with their job that can make somebody feel so recognized. And then like there's a little bit of commodity of who's doing well this week, can I get to that point? You know, can I get recognized for for cleaning super well or for getting, you know, more than expected done or things like that?

J **Jason Morris** 34:23
Well, it would have been recognized even a little bit of step further, right? Are your company policies, recognizing the employees? Are they centered around the folks there? Right? So if you have a scenario where you have a little one at home and they're sick, is your company allow you to be able to call off an appropriate way and do that or is your

company said that you know what we don't care about your family life, don't care about what's outside of here. And so being recognized isn't just sometimes also just the little little blue piece of paper, but it's also the way you set up your culture and the policies and the reward mechanism. And the way you treat people, you know, do We reward people with bonuses? Or increases? Do we reward people for doing a job well done, do we give people the appropriate time off so they can relax and recharge, you know. So it's also the way we operate. It's how we recognize people to. And if we recognize people, if we operate the same way, we've operated for the last 20 years, so let's say a company has been around for 20 years. And if we do everything, the way we've done it for the last 20 years have not made any changes. That could be a problem, too. You know, we things have changed, technology changes the way people interact. This is last year's changed the way we think, you know, some of the organizations I'm closely involved with right now we're saying how do we work from home some days a week, you know, we've allowed that to happen. So we have to be fluid with the way we operate too.

H Halie Morris 35:51

Well, and you know, things have changed, your team members are often completely different people and 20 years than what they were when you started your business. Especially for, you know, a smaller business that has seen good growth, like some businesses did very well during that pandemic, and continue to grow or see growth that they didn't expect. So with that growth, and with like, the changing environment of your team is bigger, has different people, your culture is going to shift on its own, like the tone and needs of your people is going to shift. So are you acknowledging that and moving with it versus just trying to make it what you want it to be?

J Jason Morris 36:28

Right? And do you have the leaders and supervisors who are embracing that, and encouraging that culture? You know, when you go to hire folks, are you looking for people that will fit in that cultural fit now? And do they have the knowledge, they have the skills? Do they have the abilities? But do they also, are they going to be successful in organization, nobody wants to bring someone into organizations that can be successful, right? You know, if you're just hiring to fill a spot, then then you're that's why your turnovers varied. I mean, I've been in part of organizations, I've seen turnover rates as high as 50%. Now we've hired 400 people, and we've turned 400 people every year and and you know, that affects your culture. But you really like you just said you have to embrace the culture and understand that shifts and changes and major life events, major changes in products or advancements are going to change our culture, major waves of technology is going to change it.

Halie Morris 37:21

Yeah, it's like you said high turnover itself impacts culture in a negative way, if people are constantly coming and going, it does create a sense of being just a number to the company of not being important because oh, well, am I going to be one of the people that leave, they don't think about those people choosing to leave or if they weren't suited for the job, they think about those people that were that were let go. Or they think about their job being at risk. And then you know, they don't have time sometimes to build relationships, if their team is always changing.

Jason Morris 37:56

Think about where you work at is, most of the time, the second, most of your time being spent, right, your family's number one typically spend the most time there, but outside of that your work family, as you may call it is where you're spending second most your time. And so yeah, when people are coming in now the doors, it's it's not healthy, it's it's, you know, it makes you question things it makes you wonder, you typically don't know why the last employee just left it may maybe because they're moving or whatever, but it's just to you another person leaving the organization, another new face. So what else we're going to have to train someone else we're going to have to personality we're gonna have to deal with, right. And that affects and for some of your long term employees after a while that gets tired. So how many times you have to keep retraining? How many times do I have to show the new kid how to do something right or the new person to do something. So you got to really take in mind that that turnover does affect and in the lower left hand corner, it's gonna be helpful. But when you get that high turnover, it is a constant change.

Halie Morris 39:03

And it's one of those things like employee mental health is a rising like concern, I think across well, mental health in general, I it's trending topic on social media and everywhere, but talking about like, the high turnover or the interaction when it's so much of your life, and you're doing it, it could have a huge impact on your mood and your mindset and things like that. And how the employee is able to work and embrace their day can be determined just by the team that they're on. And how many people are moving through that team? Or is it a steady team that they feel like they can rely on do they feel appreciated? You know, when they start to feel these things, all these things make if you do them, right, make a happy employee and a happy person is gonna get the job done. They're going to support the company at the end of the day, but if they're not happy, it kind of starts to fall apart. You If they're not happy their team members feel it. And it just kind of multiplies.

J **Jason Morris** 40:07

Yeah, I think it's important to recognize that, you know, in the last couple of years, there's a lot of things going on that's outside the workplace that we don't always know about. We don't know if someone's facing eviction or foreclosure or if they're struggling to make ends meet. And you know, and I understand a lot of employers will say, well, that's not my problem. That's not my fault. I don't care if you know, my employee, that's, that's their own issue, they can't balance their money. We don't know the circumstances, we don't know the things that happen for that. And so it's 100% accurate for you to say that if someone is feeling that pressure at home, it's gonna come into the workplace, and they're feeling stressed. And so it's important to offer, you know, your employees your heavy plea in putting an EAP employee assistance programs, do you have numbers for folks that call? Do you have resources for them? Because people go through a lot of stuff? And you know, and that's another? That's another key retention? Were you there for them when they had tough times? Did you give them solutions, and, you know, you may not be able to give them a lot, but it might be a phone call, or it might be Hey, you know, I see some stuff going on right now, here's our employee assistance program. I love those those providers, I mean, are very incident in cost, you can get connected with different providers for those. But they're trained professionals that pick up the phone and answer your employees concerns and give them counseling or whatever items they have, you know, take a look at your benefits right now. Do you have those wellness type things in there? Do you have, you know, is a wellness initiatives Do you have, you know, are you encouraging folks to get physicals every year are encouraging folks to make healthy choices each time. Those are the things that are most most important right now, because there is there's a lot of stress right now. And then I don't know if I see it going away for a while because, you know, unfortunate COVID-19 will result in something else will become stressful for people. But you need to be compassionate to the folks and understand there's a lot, a lot of things going on. And some folks in mind sometimes.

H **Halie Morris** 42:00

Well, and a lot of people have dealt with, like, you know, depression, depression from the lack of interaction is your employees are coming back to the office or coming back to interacting more, there are a lot of times coming back from just being at home all the time and not interacting with people. And they're going to be different than when they you know, left, you know, there. It's like you said, You have all of these things that you can't always see as an employer, but you should be supporting them so that if they have stuff like this, they can get through it so that they can actually be present at their job, like they're not concerned about if they're getting dinner on the table when they get home, you know, things like that if wherever possible. And then, you know, you mentioned before, the days off, and sick days, and vacations and things like that is such a big thing, because

people are so worried to take days off, like a lot of a lot of companies, I've noticed that vacation and sick are wrapped together in PTO. Now I'm seeing that more. So I know, like one concern is like, if I'm sick, that's also my vacation day, you know, employees don't want to take off because they're sick, which is kind of alarming right now, when we're trying to be, you know, clean, unhealthy and environments that employer, employees might come in anyways, so that they don't have to use those days. If they don't have enough, that's a high risk.

J   Jason Morris   43:28
Right, I think if COVID-19 taught us anything was if you're you're sick, he needs to be home, right, you need to take care of. So I know that's a policy, a lot of companies are really sad, as you know, before, we didn't really get into that area. But now we're telling you if you're sick, stay home, take care of yourself get better. And it's important. I know their staffing shortages, and we have to be able to operate. But you know, we also need to make sure our folks are healthy too. We got to take care of our own team. You know, and really hear things and you just mentioned something that's really important. A lot of folks have been sitting at home for the last year and a half working at their desk by themselves in their basement or whatever office they've set up right. And now they're all ready to come back into the room. They so they went from the corner little Nike PJ's and you know, doing zoom meetings to now I'm back in the office or I'm back in work or I'm brown 2030 people again, it's going to be stressed the thought of for some people going back into that environment has to be super stressful for a lot of people. And so you got to make sure you have the tools and resources that are available for them but allow them to be able to go in back into an a carpool way. You know, I think a lot of companies who are able to offer hybrid schedules are some benefit to that not not everybody can. I mean there are areas where you need the people back and I completely support that. But there's some opportunity to be a little bit flexible. I think this this situation last year and a half has taught us that we need to look at things the way we operate a little Little bit differently to treat people a little bit different, we need to be better partners with our with our folks are our team members, our customers, our clients, all of that we have to partner better.

H   Halie Morris   45:11
Yeah, and even if you're like, if you're a cleaning position where these people have been working all along, and they have to be in person, cuz you have to be on a location to clean a location. But one of the things is, you might have caught people back to part time, and they might have been able to do that with some of the assistance and other things, or, you know, they might have been, might have been completely laid off for this time, and

they're just all coming back is I got used to at home, being able to, if I'm getting antsy, because I'm very like, all over the place, I could be very ADHD and I need to move sometimes and change my scenery, that I could do that at home, I could go work in a different room for an hour, and get a breather from my space and come back where I could get up and take the dog out or do something and come back, and it refreshes and recharges. versus if they're on the job. You know, to come back to the way things were before were the opportunity to sometimes just get up and stretch your legs or take a breather, and you know, kind of refresh your mind. They're limited, that's hard for somebody to do especially all at once, if they're coming back to a full time in person environment.

J **Jason Morris** 46:26

Yeah, agreed. You know, I think you have to look the way you operate. And, you know, step back a little bit and say, whatever expectations, and we've been able to change some of those are we a little bit more flexible with the way we do things. And I've heard of some of my colleagues in different industries. So you know, we realized that we could get the same job done in six hours, we don't need that person sitting there doing it for eight hours and wasting two hours every day, that other person appreciates not having to waste some of their time there. So, you know, part time schedules are great right now, if you have the flexibility to do some of those things, if it's switching from program the full time, you know, having those conversations, what's different, what's changed a little bit. So I think, yeah, you really need to look at your operating procedures right now and see how you can maximize your potential there, too.

H **Halie Morris** 47:17

Yep. All right. So as we're kind of coming to the end of our conversation here, what are some of the biggest things that somebody listening to this episode should take home with them or take back, I guess, back to the office with them, as they're really looking to implement change, and actually make a difference in their retention? Right? Well,

J **Jason Morris** 47:39

I think it starts with, you know, starting the concept of retention before the person walks in the door. And making sure you as the leader or the operator of the business owner, know your culture, understand your culture, understand the way things work, look at your communication methods, look at the way you reward and recognize people, you know, and make the changes there. And then as you bring new talent in, you make sure that they fit within that environment, and they're going to be successful, you know, and then

you have your follow ups and you have your if you choose to do his surveys, or if you choose to do your check ins or one on one meetings, that you have those you'd have them regularly and then you follow up with those and put some meaning or put some power behind those those those moments. And then it says checkins is do you have the tools or resources? Do you have feedback? Do you have suggestions, believing the open door open communication policies open there? And then you know, the biggest thing of change is being recognized that, you know, we've done something one way we might need to change it. So keeping your procedures or policies or your the way you do things is kind of fluid right now, and being open to maybe looking at things a little bit differently. You know, like we said the boot, we started off with saying the first time you know someone's leaving is the exit interview. If you walk away today and say, well, we're still going to do our exit interview. That's great. Probably should still do an exit interview. But there should be a lot more steps to get you there. And hopefully, if you do it right, you won't need those exit interviews.

H **Halie Morris** 49:09
A lot more steps before you even bring them in the door.

J **Jason Morris** 49:12
Correct?

H **Halie Morris** 49:13
Oh, all right. Well, I think that is an fantastic place to wrap it up. This is a huge, like I said, a huge talking point for this industry. And you really need to like think through if you have to listen to the episode multiple times, that's fine. But Jason's brought a lot of great things up and a lot of great points. And so no matter what position your employees and whether they're, you know, doing your marketing, or they're, they're your supervisors, or they're out there actually cleaning. Remember that they're important, not everybody can do that job. And that if you really want to keep the people in that position, which you should, then you might have to change things and this is a perfect time to start doing So thank you for coming on and joining us, Jason.

J **Jason Morris** 50:04
Thank you for having me. All right.

Halie Morris 50:06

Thank you, everyone. We'll see you in about a month but keep an eye on all of our social media and our landing pages and an eye out for email if you're not getting it already. We'll have updates and more information coming as we go. Thank you.