

# Employee Retention in a Difficult Employment Market with Ter...

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, team members, company, hiring, train, position, team, job, pay, living, care, feel, supervisor, business, national guard, work, retention, paycheck, employees, growing

## SPEAKERS

Terell Weg, Halie Morris

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- H** Halie Morris 00:00  
The business of cleaning the podcast that brings cleaning industry expertise straight to your ears Hello everyone and welcome to the business of cleaning. My name is Hayley Morris, and I'm your podcast coordinator and host today I have with me Terrell, and I'm gonna let her go ahead and introduce herself.
- T** Terell Weg 00:22  
Hi there I am Terell wag. I am the president and CEO of MSNW Group. We are headquartered in Washington State and service the tri state area; Washington, Oregon and Idaho.
- H** Halie Morris 00:35  
you guys have quite a large range, don't you, that you service?
- T** Terell Weg 00:39  
We do. Yeah, absolutely. We naturally, just organically went into three states, our clients kept on expanding their business with us. And so it wasn't necessarily something that we thought was going to happen. But when you have good customers and you make business decisions to grow with them.
- H** Halie Morris 00:58  
That's I mean, that's super cool to be in a position where you've built such a relationship that you can do that.

**T** Terell Weg 01:05  
So absolutely, yeah.

**H** Halie Morris 01:08  
So how long have you been doing this in particular?

**T** Terell Weg 01:12  
So MSNW is my family company. So I have grown up in it my whole life, my parents bought what was then called management services in Northwest back in 1995. And if my age away a little bit if you do the math, but I was 10 years old at the time, and my little sister was just born. And this was kind of a side hustle for my parents, I thought it would be a good opportunity to have some extra income come in without having to devote a whole lot of time. And what happened was we just kept growing and so it ended up becoming their main job. And that that happened pretty quick. I went from being a side hustle and 95 to being both of my parents full time job in 9697. So I fondly remember going with my parents to our local State Farm Insurance and my little sister's and the baby carrier. And she's sitting in the lobby area. And I'm running up and down the hallways with a vacuum cleaner, because we were trying to do a quick clean because one of our janitors wasn't able to show up for the job. So in the business since I was 10 years old, doing a multitude of different things really cleaning was the the main thing from 10 to 14, and then started working in the administrative side, on school holidays, and during the summer time to help my mom out as we were as we were growing. So it was in the accounting systems and all of that, and then would help my dad out on weekends where needed when we were having some coverage issues. And when I turned 16 I got my own janitorial route. And after school, I would go clean. One of the local financial institutions and my parents, once I started having my own job, my parents decided they didn't they didn't want to be my boss anymore. So they put a supervisor in charge of me and so a supervisor pretended like I was a new employee and trained me how to, you know, clean properly. And all of that which I had already known because I had grown up in the business. But the funny thing was I started working at this financial institution and my supervisor came to me one day and he said, Hey, you're really good at this. I think that you could train other people. And so here's a 16 year old kid who was then promoted to essentially an associate supervisor training other team members and doing inspections. So I very quickly moved up in the company. And had Yeah, that was kind of my my high school years and then I didn't really think that I would work in the company at all coming back in the summers I thought I would do other things. And I did i had some other jobs but still ended up helping out here and there in the company. And going into my senior year of college. We had the opportunity to grow with one of our clients in Washington and got 90 financial institutions down the i Five quarter which is the main highway here. From where we're located. Our headquarters are in Ferndale, Washington all the way down to Olympia Washington, which is about a three and a half hour jaunt. And so our operations manager we had at the time it was just it was a lot because we were just concentrated in our little community for such a long time and then to all of a sudden have this additional responsibility 90 new locations without drive time was tough. So I approached my mom and I said, you know, I think I can do this, I think I can do this startup, I feel really confident about it. I'm excited to do it. And I had organized all of the routes. This was before having GPS. So you had to like map it out online, and use a map to go to all the different locations. But I remember going and training people and meeting them and doing interviews and you know, the whole process. So it really gave me a huge overview of how to run a large setup. And it felt like how to run a little company. So I did that the summer of my senior year, went back to how I trained somebody to do my job, before I went back to college, I continue to do customer service, I checking in with that client while I was at college, just over the phone. And so this was 2007. And I had a very serious boyfriend at the time. And so I decided I was going

to move back home. And I talked to my mom and asked if she thought that there was a position for me long term in the company that I could come into. And she really was not interested in that at all. She wanted me to get experience outside of our company, and but she thought about it. And we were at a point where we really needed to hire a human resource person. And we really need to hire a salesperson, but we couldn't necessarily afford both of those positions. And so she hired me on starting I graduated early, I graduated in December. So I came on as of January and did a split role of human resources and sales. And my degree in college was business with a concentration in marketing and sociology. And so sales was kind of my, where, where I was fit best. But human resources was something that I got to learn and really dive deep in. And it was awesome. We grew from January to June and then decided to hire a full time human resource person. And so then I was able to step out of that role and concentrate entirely on sales. And then the rest is kind of history. I grew in the company, I had many different roles. Never thought I was going to actually run this business, I got married, I had kids. And I thought that being a mom was I was thought I was gonna be a stay at home mom and be put on his so I was like, Okay, I'm done with this whole work deal. But I had five months off for my maternity leave. And I have started volunteering for 40 hours a week, and my husband was like, Maybe you should just go back to work. It doesn't seem like you're really into this stay at home lifestyle. And at the time, there was just something happening at the company. And my mom had wanted me to come back. And so I came back and was working in sales had the opportunity to that we had an opening in the president position because at that time, my mom had stepped back. And I approached her and I said, you know, I think I can run the company. I think that I've got what it takes. And I would love the opportunity and went through some things with the board. And here I am today. So that's kind of the the history of me in and listen W

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Halie Morris 08:30

it's incredible for one you know, where I had a I had a strange childhood, but I think the of where I was at like 10 to 14 to 16 years old. And I like to think that it was a unique and incredible experience. But like, the skill set I'm sure you had and that you gained throughout those years are just incredible. Like I can imagine how all those things built you up to be ready for the to be a president by the time you stepped into that position. So

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Terell Weg 09:04

Wow. Yeah, yeah, I mean, it's really interesting looking back to see what prepared me for where I am today and definitely got the experience at an early age but lead which led me to being in this position at an earlier age and what you typically would be and I do feel like my my oldest son is 11 years old right now the laws for child labor have changed in Washington state since I was young. And so now you have to be 14 years old to be able to to work so I do think it's a disadvantage a little bit for him to not be able to get that experience earlier on because there's definitely capabilities there. That could be utilized. So yeah.

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Halie Morris 09:53

It's different than like I've seen, like foster parents and stuff like have all of their Kids and foster kids like working for them in their pizza shop. And where it's like a situation where like the kids probably shouldn't be there because like a lot of like the stuff is dangerous. But also, it doesn't sound it sounds like what you gained was hard work. And it's kind of funny to think that you, you thought you were going to be a stay at home mom, after working from such a young age

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Terell Weg 10:25

was one of those things where I didn't, I didn't have a stay at home mom and I and I saw my friends with stay at home moms. And so I thought like, oh, wow, like, that's such a nice lifestyle to have to give to your children. And in retrospect, because my mom worked, and she showed me and demonstrated how it was done and how to have balance and all of that it prepared me to be more successful as a working parent, then had she not been working all that time. Yeah, I don't know. I mean, it can be done both ways. Right. But it is. Yeah, that was what I thought that I was. Yeah.

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Halie Morris 11:02

And then you ended up working anyways? Yeah, exactly. Um, no, I mean, you just have to commend you've not only worked hard and developed such an incredible skill set that you have worked your way all the way from the bottom up, you know, what it takes to work all of those positions straight up through your company, which you never want to miss. Because then if you lose that, or you don't have that coming into a seat like yours, it's going to be very hard to connect with your people and understand what it's what actually working on the team is like,

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Terell Weg 11:38

yeah, absolutely. And that's part of our training, whenever we bring in leadership positions in our company is, we say you're never too good to clean a toilet. And so the expectation is, is that you're learning on the frontlines with our team, and you're doing the same things that they're doing. That way they feel supported. And it's not somebody coming down and you know, telling them what to do. But it's somebody coming alongside of them and working to take care but for our clients.

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Halie Morris 12:08

No, that's a, that's a big thing. And I've seen others express that. But I don't know that I've seen as many live it quite as well, I you know, as you have so which actually is one of the perfect segues into today's topic, or this month's topic, and that is talking about employee retention. And really, like developing and caring for your employees. This is something we talked about when we talked the first time. And I think it's a great topic right now, especially because if you're losing team members like flies, there's just nobody out there applying. So I don't think you can look at too many places in the world, and especially in this country right now and be like, oh, yeah, they are having no problems hiring, if that's tough market. So when you have valuable employees, you want to keep them and you want to show them how much they mean to you, not just now, but at any point in your company's timeline. You want to be able to do that. So

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Terell Weg 13:11

yeah, absolutely. It is a tough market, and it doesn't feel like you're going to get better. And that's kind of the conundrum that we're in is where is the workforce? And what is stopping them from coming back to work? And how do we adjust appropriately with the lack of labor that's out there. I mean, it's a little mind boggling. And I'm not going to say that we're doing it perfect. But we're definitely looking at our team member retainage rates and breaking it down by operations manager and supervisor and trying to figure out what the supervisors who have really low retention rates, what they're doing differently or what dynamics are within those contracts that are keeping people there. And some things that we've noticed

are the supervisors, it's all about their boss, it's 100%, about who they're who they're working for. And so if that supervisor is exemplifying, the MSN w will take care of it. We care about you mentality, which is checking in with them, making sure that they have the tools to do the job, making sure they're trained appropriately, giving them the time that they need to feel successful, and ensuring that they feel heard when there are obstacles. If that supervisor is executing all of those, well, it is it just it pays dividends in regards to the retainage and the other side of that is also the pay and we're just So we're in a different market where minimum wage doesn't exist anymore, it's gone. It's, at least in Washington, Oregon, good luck, you're not hiring anybody for minimum wage. So it's going to your customers and having those really honest conversations as to, if we can, if you want us to continue to take care of you, and to continue to have the consistent service that we are offering, then we have to pay a very competitive wage to our team members, because we can't afford and neither can our client to have them leave us for a 25% difference in pay somewhere else. And when McDonald's down the street is hiring people for \$16 An hour starting, we have to be hiring that or better in order to get the people and keep them. So it's a conundrum we can I it's it's almost caring is definitely one part of making a difference in our team's lives and making sure that they're supported, and well rounded support. But it also coincides directly with the wages and benefits that we're supplying with our team as well. And just with this kind of competitive, competitive marketplace, you have to have both, it can't just be one or the other anymore. So you can't pay well and expect to keep people either because there's another company that's going to pay them just as well, but maybe treat them better. And so you have to be the best. That makes sense.

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Halie Morris 16:36

No, and I was gonna say what you see, a lot of times as the company will adopt one side or the other, they'll really work on like taking care of and engaging their employees, and they'll let that wage sick kind of at the bottom of the market. And they'll wonder why no one's applying. Or they'll wonder why they can't get people through the interview process or get them to stay. Even though the culture is great, it's a lot of fun to work for that, you know, those type of things are in place. But you're right, if you can't deliver and compensate compensation all across the board, as well, like you can't meet that need, especially with inflation, I feel like we've seen inflation disproportionately rise to wages in the last like 4050 years. So people need and want to have comfortable lifestyles. So they will seek out a higher wage even if they love you. But on the flip side, a wage isn't enough. I know a lot of people I've seen people on the restaurant side, flip over to factories and people in the factories run somewhere else. And sometimes they're running to a lower wage. Because the culture like nobody's paid attention to how they're being supervised or making sure there's adequate training, or check ins or things like that you have to have both, because they're always going to run from the thing that makes them unhappy. And I feel like those are pretty even on the board, you know, with what you need to kind of be successful. So I would agree like

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Terell Weg 18:18

that well rounded approach

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Halie Morris 18:21

it in kind of going back to the conundrum of just like nobody applying to positions, but everybody's leaving jobs right now. So it is a question of where they've gone. I haven't looked at the unemployment rate in a little while. But people were talking about the it had, you know, started to drop quite a bit since people were able to go back to work and things that open back up. But then like, you still can't find anybody. I don't know if everybody if a lot of people are going and starting their own businesses or going to smaller

spark startups are, how it's working. But even, you know, on the administration side, it seems like it's hard to hire, whether you're you're looking at your front line, or you're looking at your back of house, that it's hard to get people into both positions, at least, that's what I've seen in our area. We're up in Ohio. So I feel like it's a pretty, pretty similar market across the country.

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Terell Weg 19:24

Yeah, I mean, it's we're our biggest struggle is frontline. Frontline. And I would say with administrative and managerial positions. Most of the good people aren't necessarily looking for a job because they're, you know, they found a place where they're happy and because of the you know, it's interesting though, because I did hear some report about those upper management positions, be cut because of COVID burnout. A lot of them are looking are going to start looking for other jobs, potentially. So I haven't seen that yet. But I've heard that that's something that is supposed to be happening and COVID, burnout is a real thing, it's then just a mandate, that continued mandate having to hold people accountable for things that nobody wants to hold them accountable for. It's exhausting. And now, especially with the vaccine mandates on top of everything else, we're already having a hard time finding people. And then having clients who are requiring it for people to be at their locations, especially in the healthcare field, it just feels a little bit like beating a dead horse, because we're, you know, we're already like, putting them into certain parameters to get them to perform the job in a certain way by all the training and PPE requirements that we have. But then the added thing of now we have to make sure they've got a vaccine, and it's just feels very intrusive to that person holistically. And managers are just fed up with it, they're like, I'm done. This is not my jam, I don't want to have to be somebody's doctor and tell him what to do you on top of everything else. So I just I empathize with business owners and management. And administrators who have had to combat this in the last 90 days, because it's just an another burden. And it's, it's so hard, it's really not great. So caring for those people, you know, I mean, caring for frontline is one thing in the bank caring for your your management and administrative team as as another and making sure that they have the balance they need, that they can be restored and come back to work and be able to do their job the way that it needs to be done. And, you know, sometimes it feels like everything is an emergency and you you're constantly working to get things taken care of and taking that step back to say, No, this can wait till tomorrow, and I don't need to work till seven o'clock every night just to get my job done. I can take a step back and and really have focused attention in that time going to be best in my job. So yeah, yeah,

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Halie Morris 22:18

it's not easy. It's no matter what your view is, we were just talking about the kids in schools and wearing masks and no one's wearing them, right. And there's all like, you know, even in an environment where it's stricter, and kids are expected to listen to their teachers, it's hard. And in the last like several years, the workplace has relaxed across like industries, and where there's less expectation for specific uniforms and everybody to match and work and be exactly the same way. workplaces have backed off breathing down the neck. And the only times that they really do have certain requirements is when they're necessary. So like, having to go and get back in our space and say, especially on something where it does feel that like, big honor just passed it off onto businesses to do they just kind of gave us the

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Terell Weg 23:14

shortcut. We're gonna we why what am I just done and now do responsibility? Yeah.

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Halie Morris 23:20

My dad's in HR, and he came home. And he's like, Peggy just absolutely said they didn't want to do it, and pass it off. So that it's like you said, it feels invasive, when workplaces are trying to, you know, give their team members the benefit of the doubt and the ability to work within. Like, you know, for example, not having a structure of uniforms. I think we see that. It used to be everybody had to match and do things a certain way, even if it didn't apply to their job. Business was whatever industry was tied with uniformity. And that's not the case anymore. So yeah, it gets, it's tensed. And you're right, like there's a burnout from every side of having to just deal with one thing after the other and Isn't it over yet? Like, when's it going to be over? When are we going to be back to how things were? So like, when when can we have our freedom again, and I think everybody seen that. I think on top of it, one thing I've noticed, I've seen friends shift positions and things like that no matter what, what level they're in entry level, somewhere in the middle man, you know, their big thing is they're a lot less tolerant of certain management styles or certain ways that companies present themselves. And so there's a huge push for like, finding that workplace that fits you better. So I saw posts the other day, for example, that when they weren't remote, their company said you have to have your cameras on the entire time.

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Terell Weg 24:54

Oh my god, I saw that. Yeah. Oh my word

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Halie Morris 24:58

How intrusive Yeah, like less than I would have picked any other job in the world and I would have been out there, I don't care, like I know, I would have, I don't know, I would have asked me or something, I wouldn't have been able to do it, I wouldn't have been making back and eventually found another job because like, what you don't realize sometimes, because you just done it so long as like how a company manages, you just get used to it. And then over COVID people realize, like, really quickly that their tolerance for stuff like that had dropped, because there's just too much going on to have to worry about bad managers or stressful situations that aren't necessary all the time.

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Terell Weg 25:41

Right. Oh, right. And I mean, that's just a key point to creating a work environment where people want to stay, right, if you're, if you've ticked all the other box, that all boxes off, that you're competitive with wages, you provide benefits and whatever else and you're at an even playing level with every other company out there, then it's providing the workplace where the team feels supported, and has the resources and tools to do their job successfully, and feels like they can accomplish that and go home at the end of the day and have success. So that is something that we were working, I mean, it's not perfect at all. And I think that you're never going to attain perfection. It's always a work in process, because this world is constantly changing. But to continually be keeping that at the top of the mind of how can we take care of our teams better. So they can take care of our clients, the way that we're promising, we're going to take care of them. So one thing that has not changed in our company, but I do think is really amazing and different. And I would love it if other companies did this to our we have a care fund, actually, that we developed about a decade ago to support our team members who needed a hand up. So what that looks like is we well, I guess I'll start from the beginning. Because the reason that we started the Care Fund is we had a lot of team members, not a lot, but a few team members on the frontline where it seemed like a recurring thing where they didn't have enough money to put gas in their car to go service, their accounts

that they were they were going to or somebody electric electricity got turned off, because they just didn't have enough fun. Because they had, let's just say, an urgent medical issue that came up that they had to go, the funding that was going to pay for their electrical bill ended up going towards this medical bill over here. So whatever scenario you can think of, that's what what's happening. And a lot of these frontline workers don't have the luxury of savings. They're living paycheck to paycheck. And so we were constantly doing things as a company to provide assistance to those people like giving them a \$50 gift card to help her they're paying their electrical bill, etc. And we noticed that our team at the corporate office at the time, all wanted to pitch in and help and so we kind of had a pass the hat going on where people were putting in money to help with X, Y, or Z maybe with a medical bill. And so we had a team meeting. And we talked about what if we actually had a fund put together for to be able to help our team like specific fun that was just for our team members. And so that's how we developed the Care Fund. And what it is now is a team member can put in a certain amount of money into the care fund each pay period. So a lot of times it's just ends up being a recurring payment. And a lot of people give \$1 some people give five, we've had one person in the past who did \$100 per paycheck. Pretty crazy, I know. But every dollar that goes in is 100% match by MF NW. And so then that fund is utilized to care for whomever in our company that has a need arise. And we now have a committee that gets these requests, and then does the approval process and etc. But it's really cool. And we've been able to help numerous individuals, and it's empowered our team and it lets them know that it's just not a lip service that we care that we really actually do. And this is something that we put into place to show it. So an example that happened in the last year was we had a gal who was escaping a domestic violence situation and she wanted to leave the situation and so we helped her get a hotel to be able to withstand and she was trying to figure out how she could get permanent housing away from her spouse and she had saved in that have money for a she could pay rent, she was making enough salary that she could pay rent, but she did not have a down payment. And that's where she was falling short. And if she didn't have a down payment, then she was never gonna be able to get into permanent housing. So we were able to front her the down payment and get her out of that domestic violence situation and set her up to be successful. And I mean, this is where homelessness comes into play here, right? If we went to stepped in, her funding would have run out for the hotel, then she wouldn't have even had enough money for the month to month rent, she would have never gotten the or maybe maybe it would have just taken a lot longer to get that deposit. Funding put together. But she could have been one of these situations where she was on the streets because she didn't have the funding. And that was women and children specifically, that's a lot of times what happens is that the breadwinner of the family, something happens. And so then these women and children end up being homeless. And so what we're trying to do is stop that cycle. And if we can do it within our team, where there are a lot of frontline workers who are living paycheck to paycheck, that's what we're going to do. And so that's what we're empowering our supervisors and our operations managers to have a relationship with our team. So we know that when these situations arise, that they can come to us and tell us so we can help them. Because if we don't have the relationship, they're not going to feel comfortable coming and asking. And so that's, that's really our mission, and we want to take care of our people, we want to make a difference in this world by taking care of the team that we have. And so, you know, it's a little piece but that's that's our piece that we're we're trying to do. Well,

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Halie Morris 31:45

that's like one of those things when you're living paycheck to paycheck. And when you need help. It's such a big thing to have enough trust to ask somebody, for it, even like someone that you know, so well. I think even no matter who we are, even if we're not living paycheck to paycheck, if you need help. That's like a really, like, really difficult thing to do to actually like acknowledge that enough to ask somebody, because you always feel like, No, I should be able to do this, or whatever. I feel like there's a lot of pressure even sometimes we don't know where it comes from to handle it ourselves, especially when it comes to like our living or living in situations. So I mean, to get to a point where you can have your team come and say, I'm



in a situation that's unsafe, and I need help. Or I need help with this electric bill, or that's monumental, because there has to be so much trust all the way along the line for that person to feel full comfortable enough coming to you guys for that.

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Terell Weg 32:49

Yeah, I agree. Yeah.

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Halie Morris 32:54

Yeah, I have to say to like that, I've talked to people for the podcast I do in for work. And one of the biggest things people say for like company culture and be in a workplace that you enjoy, that you call me work hard, and you want to return through each day, is that trust, as a foundation is one of the most important things and if it's gone, it's gone. And I've had people ask, Well, how do I build that? Or how do I get that? Like, they can go pluck it off the shelf. But you're showing, like how you've worked over time, how something a decade long program has been supported, and aided by trust, and the other things that you've done to get there and build that. That's incredible.

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Terell Weg 33:44

Thank you. Yeah, it's definitely something that helps with the culture of MSW. And I think for companies who are looking to build that trust. A challenge I would give is, What's your why why are you in business? If you're in business just to make money? I mean, okay, but that's not gonna that's your team. That's how hard thing that's a hard thing to sell. I mean, money doesn't give happiness. That's not it's it's here today gone tomorrow, right? And so what what is your why that's going to be impactful to the community that you live in to the to the team that you employ, what What's your why and figuring that out to where it impacts your team at something that they can get behind? I think is is one of the keys to building trust and then actually you know, obviously actually doing what you say you're going to do, also builds trust but I think the Y thing is is really important. And for us our Why is we want to take care of it for our team and then our clients and taking care of it is a really a a huge thing that ultimately has to do with providing for our team to make sure they feel supported and can do their jobs effectively and work and have a successful home life as well. And however we can do that to be most impactful. We're going to try and other things that we're doing to work on that to be able to give them more of a holistic, balanced life is we're looking at right now, MSNW university training, we've been we've been doing this, but we're focusing more on how do we how do we train team members for upward mobility? Because we know we've got a really great talent pool, and there are people who have never been given the opportunity, or never even been asked like, what do you really want to do? Maybe you don't want to be a landscaper cutting lawns, your your whole life? Maybe, maybe you want to be an accountant, maybe you're fantastic with numbers. And if you were just given the opportunity, you could be an amazing accountant. Right? And so how do we support people and move them in that trajectory to, to get into the sweet spot to where they can succeed and feel like they have value? Right. And so we're creating a training program, we also want, we're trying to figure out how we can come alongside people who want to get specialized training, who maybe want to go to college and get a four year degree that said, don't have may not have the resources, you know, how can we help them with that path, and then, you know, circling back to MSNW, we need to be able to create the growth to be able to place these people in additional positions within our company. So that's another aspect we're looking to really hone in and grow with as our our training program for upward mobility in our company. The second thing is, which was just brought to us this summer, and I'm so excited about it is the National Guard has a program now where they can help people get residency citizenship within the United

States. So with our company, we verify because we're a government contractor, and if you're a government contractor, you have to verify you have to verify all of your team. And that has been a little bit of a downfall in the past, because there are a lot of illegal residents who have lived here their whole lives and simply can't work because maybe their parents crossed the border illegally back in the day, right. At this point, there's no pathway to citizenship. They're there, they're stuck. So I know we have some team members who maybe their parents are illegal aliens, but because they were born in the United States, then their bare legal, right. So part of this National Guard program is that if you enlist in the National Guard, it creates a pathway to citizenship for your entire family. And, yeah, it's, it's phenomenal. And there are no strings attached. It it like, gives me shivers, I'm shivering right now, because it just, it's, there's nothing like it. And we've we've had team members who work for the National Guard before with us. And so we know what that looks like, we know what the time commitment is all of that. And it's a great way to be able to serve your nation and also, you know, continue to have a career. And now that they're offering this new program, which I think has been around for maybe a year or two, this is something that we can bring to our team and say, you know, there aren't a lot of other pathways here. But this is something that could be really amazing for your family and would create, I mean, if you can think about the amount of stress on somebody's shoulders, knowing that their parents can be scooped up by ice at any minute. I mean, I can't even imagine the burden. But that must feel like and so it's just another way that we can bring a resource to our team that can take away some of that burden. And another way we can care for them in a really holistic way.

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Halie Morris 39:09

I adopted and part of my family, several generations ago came from Mexico. And then I just I have lots of incredible diverse friends who have all kinds of different backgrounds, especially just come from university we had a lot of international students in so it's not an easy process to become a citizen when you do it through all of the open channels from your home country. But I think some people come because they need to come to this country. And like you said there were generations that came illegally and didn't have like the same means as others. So no, that's incredible. I didn't realize that program existed either. So Wow.

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Terell Weg 39:55

Yeah, cool. I want to tell everybody about it because it's amazing. I've never heard of anything like like it before, and the fact that you can't in your protected like, once you're in the National Guard, you and your family are under this wing of protection. And so ice can't come in at that point and do anything. So that really the court that's another cool aspect of it. Because I do think that that's a huge concern for people. And why they wouldn't want to do that is because of that thing in the back of their head. So I don't know, I think the Army or the Navy, I know of some other parts of the government have similar programs for individuals who are illegal alien, like for themselves, but the National Guard is unique, because it's for the whole family. So

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Halie Morris 40:43

yeah, you imagine like, if your sibling or somebody else wasn't born on US soil, and that's, that's really cool. Now, are they able, like if they're here, and they're trying to figure out how to get their family over? Does that allow

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Terell Weg 40:57

them to? Yeah, part of the whole thing?

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Halie Morris 41:00

Wow, that's really cool. I mean, not only are you helping your team members become aware, but you're helping them figure out how to get there to how to utilize that. So in you know, there's a question of well, I think with all of this with the, the enabling them to go to college and complete degrees, and doing all these other pathways, that what if I set them up for success, and they leave? I feel like that's huge question in the back of people's mind, why they're afraid to encourage their employees to get better sometimes is that they'll go find a different opportunity and leave. So what's your response to that?

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Terell Weg 41:44

I mean, I don't necessarily have a good answer for it. But I think empowering people is never wrong. And it's, that's a negative. That's a negative mindset. And that's not how I live, I live in a positive mindset. And you know, what, if we train somebody up, and they're awesome, and they leave, and they live a big life, I can't fault them on that. I mean, that's amazing. And the fact that we paid played a part and getting them there. I mean, I, I think we, we did our job. And I, I mean, I think it would be it would definitely be sad to train somebody and put all that time and energy into someone and then have them leave. But I also think maybe we didn't have the spot for them at the time that they that they wanted or needed. And that's part of us growing enough, so we can provide these positions for individuals that were growing up in our company. So if we don't have the space for them at the particular time that they're ready, then I can't fault them on finding another position. And if they choose to leave, even if the position is there, then it's the intersection of, well, what could we have done differently? And what's lacking that they felt like they had to go somewhere else other than where they've been? Right? And sometimes it's said there's a non answer, you know, sometimes they knew or whatever the situation may be, but I do always think it's good to ask those questions as to the why behind. Motivation.

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Halie Morris 43:13

Yeah, and it's, there's a mind like a mindset that I'm seeing with you, as we talk in this like it, almost treating your employees like your customer, to like caring for them in the way that we word a customer, you're trying to meet their needs, versus seeing them as like, you know, an extension of yourself, because I feel like sometimes we're not as nice to ourselves as we could be. We're just there to get the work done. It's it's like you were saying, with the working till seven o'clock, you don't necessarily need to do it, you can stop earlier, get the rest and come back room or rejuvenate? Well, when we treat our employees like an extension of ourselves, sometimes we beat them up like we do ourselves to get the job done. So like the way you you look at your team members and your, your company as a whole. I feel like that has to play a huge part, and your employee satisfaction and why people do choose to stay with you.

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Terell Weg 44:17

Yeah, no, I would, I would I mean that that's, and that's where our, I mean, I'm not I'm not having that direct communication with each team member in our company. And so it's making sure that the culture I want and exhibit is also being carried out by each management and administrative person in our

organization so that the team member that's working for them has the same experience as they would if they are working directly for me. And so that's what we're trying to instill. And that's what we're trying to train by. And like I said, We're not doing it perfect by any means. But we're, we're taking steps to do it better each day. And so that's what matters.

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Halie Morris 45:08

Wait, you have set the precedent at the top. And you're making efforts to make sure it works all the way through. And it's not just like, it's not just in your mission statement and forgotten or something like that. It's this, like you said before, a continuous effort, you know, it's a work in progress, to get it where you want it to be.

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Terell Weg 45:34

Exactly.

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Halie Morris 45:36

So what are, I guess we've talked a lot about, like, what are the really great ways to focus on your team, those things that are in the end, going to drive up your attention and make people want to stay with you. But what are some of the things that you feel really drive people away the quickest are things that businesses should take a look at right now, that could be harming their retention?

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Terell Weg 46:01

Well, the number one thing is just taking bodies and putting them in position versus making sure that they actually fit the culture of your organization and are a team member who's committed to being there. Long term, if, especially on the janitorial side, if we can, if we commoditize the position, then that's what we're going to get, right. But if we actually take the time to make sure we're hiring the correct person for our organization that fits, who understands the job, understand our culture, understands and has the tools made to them to be able to be successful, then I think that's where you're going to have a benefit to the retention, a positive retention. I, yeah, it's the hiring bodies, not really caring who they are, is about a pollster. And that's the main thing. The other thing is, is not renegotiating contracts, because I think a lot of us are living within budgets that are last year, even I mean, they, the cost of living, the cost of hiring team members has changed in the last 90 days, even dramatically. And so making sure we're going back to our customers, and we're getting the cost of living increase necessary in order to be able to pay people competitively, if you don't do that, you're not going to be able to do, you're not going to be able to pay competitively. And then you're going to have that continual turnover happen, because you're paying \$1 below everybody else, or whatever it may be. So making sure you have the right partnerships with clients, that they understand that and are willing to work with you to ensure that you've got the proper personnel in place. So I think those are really the two main things is not commoditizing the position and making sure your client is not commoditizing. You and making sure there are partnerships on both on both levels.

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Halie Morris 47:58

With the customer thing, I've heard that in a couple of avenues, but it's interesting to see it pulled into the

retention of your employees as well. And that when you're looking at bringing new customers on making sure that it's almost like you're bringing on a new team member you're looking for that fit that compatibility that they align with your business, and there's somebody you can work with, versus just taking the contract, because it's there. And you're showing that like not even to get a good customer lifelong retention, and everything there but also to have, so you can have that relationship for your employees sake, and that that's going to help impact a retention and a positive way to write. So I'm trying to think, as far as what some other questions I had for you, or we've covered so much. And I mean you know, I've worked in HR. And I have to say I've had like where you're supposed to people meet certain requirements, you're supposed to hire them into a position, it was a call center position. And I remember I never liked it, because if you just hired somebody whether they were going to stay or not, we asked them how long do you plan on staying? And somebody would say six months or three oh, gosh,

**T** Terell Weg 49:19

they really said that you hired them anyway.

**H** Halie Morris 49:23

There was a really like, our, like the people who oversaw us, like above my boss would tell us like they have asked the question, but they really didn't want us to exclude them because they answered that way. Like that wasn't a deciding question. And I get people people get get on me a couple times because I would turn somebody down. I wouldn't offer somebody if they seem like even if I can judge from the conversation like oh, I plan on working here for as long as possible and they give that vague answer. And then as I'm talking to them, I can kind of tell that they're just one Want to get in get out of like the places a hole? And I wouldn't offer them? And they'd be like, well, they scored perfect on this assessment. And they answered every other question perfectly. I was like, Yeah, but they're gonna be gone next week, right? They're gonna be gone the week after, you know, they're not going to be a good fit for us. And then, but then the people I did bring in, I didn't bring out too much crap. Because the people I brought in then, and this was a horrible job. Like they were reading scripts on the phone, and they weren't allowed to veer from the scripts. It wasn't fun.

**T** Terell Weg 50:30

It was a call center to in college. It was not fun. I can

**H** Halie Morris 50:35

not find, oh, there are people who are

**T** Terell Weg 50:39

good. You know, you're building that tenacity. And people have no do you all to die?

**H** Halie Morris 50:45

Yeah, it's hard to find people who actually stay in a job like that you have people come in with the best intentions and they think they can do it. And I sat down and they started doing it. It is two days later. And they're like, I can't do this. No. And it's not like they're not. Yeah, it is. And so I had someone come Hi, and used to be a t shirt constantly movie, she actually was one of our best fits for the position. But she'd come in to do the shorter shifts, the four hour shifts, she was a ball of energy, she actually affected like, all of that energy into our row. People loved working on her shift in her role with her. And I can't remember what it was. But I could tell when I talked to her that she actually needed a position like that, because she just needed something where she didn't have to think. And then yeah, others, you're like, they're gonna be gone. But the people I offered tended to stay longer. And they most of them I was in internships, I was there for like eight months. Most of them were still there when I left of all the people I offered, so I never got too much crap for for being the difficult one that didn't do as I was told. But yeah, like, you can't just put bodies into a position, especially a position that's hard right now. And these people are living paycheck to paycheck, it's a hard job. And if you just treat it like, they're just a warm body to plug in Go, then

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Terell Weg 52:10

you're gonna get Yeah, that's what you're gonna get. Yeah. So,

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Halie Morris 52:14

um, and, you know, it's hard because I went, I only did recruitment for a couple years. And I feel like I can never train amply until I'm extremely comfortable with something. But identifying like, what are those towels for somebody who just wants to come in and get out, they just need to fill their paycheck, like their wallet until they can get a different job, versus somebody who's coming in and just kind of needs this pace right now who's this is where they're ready for what they need. Or the it's, you know, sometimes it's not always like the the verbal signs, sometimes it's their body language in the interview or things like that, like they don't want to be there. And you can tell. So it goes back, like, resonate with that deeply. But also, I wouldn't want to work for anybody who Drees treated me like a number, they could plug in and go like, right? I love to be challenged. I love to see what I can do. And while everybody might not be the same, I appreciate when somebody supports those things that make me passionate. So

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Terell Weg 53:23

that's why having communication with your superior is so important, just to make sure that you guys are on the same page and you're feeling cared for getting your needs met, right? Yep.

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Halie Morris 53:36

My favorite boss I had would pull me in, pull our team and because we were very like minded people, very driven, she'd show us things outside our responsibilities that we might later do in our in a different job. And she would teach us about it, how she does things, she would teach us the like, off the record things like they come in like this, and you're supposed to file them like this. But you kind of know how it's gonna go based on blah, blah, blah. So it was into I liked that because like I like learning I like thriving. So now it goes a long way. It doesn't matter what position you are in. You like that support. So

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Terell Weg 54:18

exactly.

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Halie Morris 54:20

What are is there? I guess for me, is there anything else that you would like to add? Or note for companies when it comes to caring for your employees and ultimately, increasing your retention like that you would like to tell our listeners?

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Terell Weg 54:39

I think it's really important to sit down with your team and identify who what the personality of your brand is. Who are you? What is what does that mean when you're hiring people what what is the ideal team member look like? And and really just be aligned in that vision, because that's how you're going to be able to identify who the correct people are to come in and be a part of your team. And then it's accountability. It's making sure that your management team who's responsible for the frontline staff is meeting with them on a regular basis that they they are doing the training that they're supposed to be doing that they're giving the reviews, the 90 day reviews, that there is a regular check in that's happening, and that you as a manager are making sure that those supervisors are having that check in and whatever that may look like whether it's an Excel spreadsheet, or if it's just like boarding a text string on so we know we know what's happening. I don't know you have to do whatever works best for you. But I just think having those checks and balances, having the accountability, putting goals around it, making it fun. I whatever you do make it fun. Right? If you're going to have a competition, what what empowers your people? What gets a kick? What's exciting to them? You know, is it \$100? Or is it a bowling or going golfing or whatever it may be. So I think competitions are always a great way to get every the team involved in on the same page and looking at best practices of the people within your organization are who are doing it better. So doing trend reports and really analyzing the data so you know where to start. And if you have somebody on a team is doing it very well then it's a train the trainer kind of situation, mimicking it mimicking what's worked, what's working. So that's that's my tidbit my advice that I have, it's never going to be perfect. But you have to continually be looking at it and making improvements and striving for you asking the questions, pulling your team pulling your entire team as a whole and asking them for feedback. It's uncomfortable to do and some answers you may not like, but it's showing them that you actually care. They're getting that feedback and then doing something about it, not just getting it and seeing it and then letting it live. But actually taking it and putting actions behind it. And that's what you can really build with your management team is okay, this is our feedback. What are we going to do different and then building those competitions that fun thing off of that. So there you go.

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Halie Morris 57:26

All right. Well, thank you. Terell, I want to thank you for coming on and joining us on the show. I've really liked this episode. And I think it comes at a great time. And then, you know, just also give me your me your time. I know you guys are really busy over on your side. So thank you again for joining us. Of course. Thanks

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Terell Weg 57:45

for having me. It's been very fun.



Halie Morris 57:48

Of course, thank you for coming on. And then to everybody who's tuned in this month so far. Thank you for listening. I'll be typing up a blog post on what we just covered that coordinates with it very well. We'll also have a transcription. So if you miss something, you can go back and listen again or you can read it. It's up to you. And then if you guys want to reach out, feel free to reach out we can answer any additional questions that you have. Thank you