

PK 135 CLA Dave Hickman and Sarah Conroy

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SPEAKERS

Sarah Conroy, Matt Hunckler, Erika Edwards, Dave Hickman



Matt Hunckler 00:13

Hey powderkeg fans This is Episode 135 of the powderkeg podcast, the show for entrepreneurs, leaders and innovators building remarkable tech companies in areas decidedly outside of Silicon Valley. I'm your host, Matt Hunckler. And today, we are sharing a recent interview and live q&a that we hosted with special guests Dave Hickman and Sarah Conroy. Now, Dave is the managing principal of professional search at CLA. And Sarah is the HCR o consultant at CLA. And CLA is an amazing professional services organization. And we'll talk more about that in a minute. But first, let's talk about what we get into in this episode. In this episode, I speak with Dave and Sarah about how to engage and motivate current and potential talent during chaotic times. I'm recording this in In May of 2020, during the pandemic, so we get into some very important topics here. We also talk about how to establish clear goals recognize employee efforts and create a positive culture. We get into some great questions from the community on the focus topic of building and managing teams in difficult situations. We have a bunch of great guests lined up for future virtual events like this one that you're about to listen to, so be sure to check out the live virtual event versions of the podcast. With open q&a. It's a lot of fun to participate in those live. You can find out all about those opportunities and the ways to jump into the community here at Powder Keg at Powder Keg comm slash events. Our first guest today is Dave Hickman, he is the managing principal of professional search for Clifton Larson Allen or CLA after 20 years as an entrepreneur with fast growth domestic

and international companies. Dave joined CLA in 2017 for the opportunity to be part of a transformational company leader in professional services. He believes that we before me is the right mindset for a very foundational leadership style and is great for teams to best serve clients solve the problems and improve outcomes. I love working with Dave and he is definitely someone I turned to frequently for advice on how to build teams. Next up, we have Sarah Conroy out of Washington DC, greenbelt area. Sarah is an HDR consultant at CLA, and has more than 30 years of human resource experience serving as Director of Human Resources for higher education, government contracting healthcare and technology organizations, as well as the consulting that she does. She's got a ton of experience working with tech companies, and has scaled the team at a geospatial tech company in Maine so you'll hear some of that experience come through. In this interview. Her focus areas include employee relations, performance management, workforce, strategic planning and compensation and benefits. I hope you enjoy this episode, and gain some thoughtful and valuable advice from Dave and Sarah, as they share the best ways to continue engaging and motivating both current and potential talent during a crisis, that we're experiencing what we're experiencing right now with COVID-19. I hope you're well and safe. And I hope you enjoy this episode. Really great to have both of you here. And Sarah, welcome to the show.



Sarah Conroy 03:21

Thank you.



Matt Hunckler 03:22

Thank you. Absolutely. It's really good to have you both here. This is a very crazy time. And I'm sure you're hearing a lot from your clients that you're working with. We're hearing it from the companies in the powder keg community, many of whom are represented here on the livestream, and they're introducing themselves here in the chat as we speak. But I wanted to kick off the conversation, but by just kind of giving the opportunity to let you talk about what you're seeing, Sarah, I know, in particular, you've been working with a lot of different companies. And I've heard you say it's it's a different world. There's pre COVID and post COVID Can you talk just a little bit about what your day to day has been like, since this was declared a pandemic?



Sarah Conroy 04:06

I'm sure and you're right. I'm not sure we're quite post COVID yet, but we all hope we're gonna get there soon. Right? Right. So yeah, it's a lot because we're a, you know, a client

...serving organization. Of course, all our clients want our advice on things. So it's been quite busy. It really started with since I, I not only do consulting, but I also do direct HR effort in for clients, where I'm the outsourced HR director. So I'm doing both right now. And so, um, you know, it started off with a lot of, gee, what is this and believe it or not more OSHA than you might have expected because really helping employers understand their obligations under the general duty clause of OSHA and how that fits with their employer responsibilities, versus you know, ensuring that employees are, are happy in their jobs and able to perform effectively. So that was kind of new for some people. So it was a whole lot of okay. My goodness, what is what are our duties? And how do we not violated confidentiality and employee rights, but while also protecting everybody else in the organization. So went through quite a bit of that, you know, restricting business travel, new policies, all of that sort of thing, which I'm sure many of the companies on this call have been going through, and then just morphing into Oh, my goodness, what are the stimulus packages look like? And how do we, we digest all this new information and try to operationalize it for our clients to help them effectively not only optimize, operationalize the stuff on the HR side, like the FCRA, but also, you know, helping companies apply for SBA loans and basically take advantage of what's available in the stimulus package right now. So it's been a lot of that and not as much time to think about everything else except for obviously, retention is always important and ensuring that people are comfortable in their jobs, not you know, generally calming their fear. So lots of efforts at EAP involvement potentially And then also just how do you when people start to who are not used to working remotely? How do you keep the team? And how do you keep people jazzed about the work and not divided? And then also, there's been all kinds of concerns about schools being closed, and how do you manage work life balance, when all of a sudden you're a teacher, and whatever your day job was? So a lot of challenges there, we've kind of been in the thick of all of it. And, you know, a lot of a lot of really interesting, it's been a joy actually a lot of interesting, dedicated people out there really trying to do everything and actually doing quite well at it. I think, frankly, being busy has maybe helped people not focus so much on what's going on, you know, on TV right now, but obviously, companies we encourage companies to make sure that employees are safe and comfortable and you know, that they're sharing what they need to share with their employees. So I don't hold whole lot of info but ya



Matt Hunckler 06:57

know, so much there that we can dig into To hear and I have a lot of questions on a lot of those topics. And if you're tuning in here on zoom, go ahead and ask some questions. And we'll get those queued up. We'll transition here pretty quickly, because we've got a lot of people here on the live stream right now want to get your questions answered. But also wanted to give you Dave, the opportunity to talk a little bit about what you're seeing on

the professional services side, particularly in sort of the the talent and talent optimization side of things that you're working on.



Dave Hickman 07:30

Yeah, so the talent optimization side of it, I think it's, it's, it's what everybody's already experienced. The first thing is that pre COVID-19, you've got we're all going full bore, everything was happening pretty quickly. There was a lot of hiring, there's a supply and demand issue. It's 2% unemployment rate. And for white collar workers, it's less than that. So once the obviously this all happened. It's really been kind of fascinating. You know, we haven't we've been down this path before. And I think what's interesting to me is that we got from For different generations that's going through this, some of us have been through this before, we kind of know what to expect it was different in 2009. It was different, even in 911. But we're going through the different stages. And I think that, you know, postcode or drink over the right now. It's you've seen a range of emotions, the emotions from through all different generations, emotions from their perspectives based on you know, what's the not denial at first like, I can't believe this is happening. And then moving it's almost like the five stages of grieving is that moving through all those different stages and getting to the point of acceptance. And what we found is I think is really interesting is that those who have come to acceptance faster, are the ones who actually have been able to adjust to the challenges in the market, and they start making choices and decisions on Okay, are we going to put this on hold? Are we going to actually continue on for critical roles? And are we still in growth mode and they start making better decisions as a team all the way from the executive? is through the organization to figure out what they need to do and, and pivot and adjust as quickly as possible. So I find it really fascinating. Unfortunately, it's during this time, but it's we're seeing some really great organizations, figure out what to do quickly and move on to the next step.



Matt Hunckler 09:18

What would you recommend to leaders, whether it's the CEO or the head of HR or talent at a tech company, to help their employees move through the stages of grief? Obviously, not. Not every one of those leaders is going to have, you know, a license in mental health counseling, necessarily to work through that. So how can these tech leaders help in this situation?



Dave Hickman 09:44

I'll kick off Sara then you can you can join in too because I know you see it frontline too, is

that you know, it starts with you know, there's usually denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. All of this can be it's really about caring About your people. And if you care about your people, and you respect who they are, and what they've been the value that they bring the organization into their families, and really understanding that it really takes a lot of communication. I think we see it on our own firm on anytime that people are stuck in the fear mode. It's really around communicating to them. You know, it being transparent, for instance of if you don't know the answers, let's be transparent about that. That's okay. People understand that they just want to be respected, that someone's not selling them a bill of goods, that everything's gonna be okay, which is really denial, or that, you know, everything's going down the tubes, and it's more of a, we're thinking this through, we're talking it through getting their input. I think that's really it's about the basic human needs of really understanding because you have tremendously loyal people for you. They care about the organization, they care about each other. They just want to be informed and go through this together as a team.



Sarah Conroy 10:59

I don't know that I And add much to that because I don't think I could have said it better myself. So, um, but yeah, I guess I would simply add ways to support that include not just transparency and communication, you know, specifics that my clients are doing right now or increased town halls remotely like if they used to have an in person townhall. You know, they've now moved back completely remotely and just making sure that you are continuing the Mojo that you had going on on site. How do you bring that into the completely virtual realm and not lose anybody along the way? And I will just put in a plug for if you do have a sitting HR person in your organization, yeah, they they care, they can help not only with sort of spearheading some of this, but also they are the person that is responsible for handling all of the confidential stuff because there's a whole lot going on with, you know, if there's an illness involved, if someone is infected, you know, there's confidentiality rules around that and a lot of support that they need to provide To those individuals, and they can not only deal with the individual themselves, but help, you know entrepreneurs and those who are running the organization to temper the messages effectively and ensure not only that they're well received, because HR really does a lot of culture curation, as well as you know, everything else we do. But also just making sure that it's, you know, compliant, because frankly, you want to make sure from a risk management perspective that you're not sharing confidential information or that you're fully aware of, of what you need to do as a CEO or leader in an organization.



Matt Hunckler 12:36

Are there any good resources online to go and look up? What all those confidentiality

rules are, at least maybe some of the main ones to be paying attention to during this COVID experience?



Sarah Conroy 12:50

Sure. I mean, I, I can probably put something together for you. I mean, we can certainly help with that. But in general, most of the HR folks on this call probably are familiar with belong to Sherm, which is has an excellent portal right now, there are a lot of very specific HR groups out there too. There are regional and smaller HR groups. And now that you know, it's everywhere you can there's very good information. The other thing that I would recommend I've seen a lot of good literature and an easily digestible information coming out of Employee Benefit brokerages as well. So if you have if you don't have an HR department, but you do have an employee benefits broker, they're probably a good resource for you as well. But yeah, I would definitely say Sherm is a good place that would have, hey, this this applies. This doesn't for example, everybody, most people have heard of the term HIPAA, but they don't necessarily understand how it applies. And it doesn't necessarily apply to everything medical or confidential. So understanding some of those nuances is important.



Matt Hunckler 13:49

That's really helpful. Sarah, you both mentioned just keeping the team communicating, keeping the team cohesive. Give me advice for good all hands. meetings are good town halls in this all virtual experience.



Sarah Conroy 14:07

I guess I'll start, I guess, first of all, for me, it's always understanding the culture of the organization. First and foremost, whenever I engaged with a new client, it really spent a lot of time trying to understand. Number one, do you like your culture? So are you trying to preserve that as you scale up? Or are you trying to shift your culture so really understanding that and how to either preserve that or evolve it is important. And so I'm, I'm not sure there's a one size fits all I would look at what you've done in the past. Like, it's always been about, we start off with a game, you know, how do you replicate that online? Or we start off with Hey, what happened to me this week, you know, so basically trying to replicate what was working on the ground, for starters, and then encouraging ideas from people, you know, because it's different. It's, you know, right now, we're kind of seeing everyone go through the phase of Whoo, let's do 27 Virtual happy hours a week. Which, which is how we're all gonna make it through this crisis, apparently. So. So but I think

there's more and more ideas that will come from your own people about what makes us interesting and engaging and brings them back to the, quote unquote, table.



Dave Hickman 15:17

Yeah, the only thing I would add, this is all great, the only thing I would add is just allow them the opportunity to be able to share their feelings, what they're feeling what they're going through in those townhall meetings. So you know, everything Sarah said, ideal and then add to it, just allow them to express how they're feeling and how they're getting through it. And allowing them to support one another through this time.



Sarah Conroy 15:37

If I could just add to that, not necessarily in a town hall, but other things we're seeing about, you know, how to engage people remotely, and maybe when people can't be quite as productive as they might have been in their role of pre COVID. You know, this is a nice opportunity to do that training you haven't gotten around to write and so since so much is available online, you know, go get certification if you haven't started that yet, and it's been on your to do list for a while. So however companies might be able to support that or look at that, I think is a good idea. And then again, there's just stuff out there that you don't necessarily think of. And once you start to look around, and there's more content and more things being created every day, I mean, you know, turns out the world is crazy resourceful, and they're creating all kinds of new products right now. Good. Oh, so even just keeping up with that has been interesting.



Matt Hunckler 16:30

Absolutely. I have really appreciate those tips. I know a lot of companies right now have gone on hiring freezes, although you read the headlines in the tech, tech trade, blogs and even the Wall Street Journal had a headline to the effects of big tech is capitalizing on the talent that's out on the market right now and is hiring like crazy. So I know some tech companies are downsizing and some tech Companies are scaling up for those tech companies that are having to do layoffs right now. What are some of the pieces of advice that you give most frequently to those HR leaders or those CEOs or other tech leaders on how to in a very human sort of way? make those decisions or those those people and at the same time, communicate that to the rest of the team?



Sarah Conroy 17:27

I guess I'll start this one if that's okay, dude. So again, I think it's it's, it is culture specific and organization specific, but in general, to Dave's earlier point about having, being very transparent as an organization and have inviting people to come along as we as this unfolds, and preserving talent. On the other side, we want to make sure that people come through this with us and want to be with us in the future. You know, companies are doing different things like Not you know, a few years ago would have been maybe the uncreative layoff, right? So now it's not now it's maybe a furlough of some kind either a short term, which is a, it's got a couple different definitions to it. But basically could be a short term layoff very short term with lots of preservation of benefits and insurances for return. Or it could be basically a salary haircut, you know, high you're going to your salary is going to be reduced for this period of time, you know, you're going to come back after this period of time. So I think what you definitely want to ensure that you are being non discriminatory in the process, you know, you want to make sure that, especially in a case like this, I think, if you look at your if you instill in your employees that you're absolutely looking at what's available to preserve the capital of company and to preserve the human resources of the company and to come through this process, whichever solution you come up with, as long as you can demonstrate that it's been well thought out and that it has, you know, the ramifications have been considered and that you will come out of sustainable organization on the other side, I think employees are very likely to come with you. Because I don't see a lot of people right now looking to job hop. And that's another thing that I think is different, or will be different post coven. Because people who might have never been through something like this before, never had to learn that it isn't always about chasing the next dollar, right? It is about do Where do I see myself with a company is the right company for me?



Matt Hunckler 19:30

So are you saying that post COVID meaning once people kind of go back into the offices, you're anticipating that maybe there's a lot, that there might be a marked decrease in the amount of job hopping?



Sarah Conroy 19:45

I don't know. I guess what I'm saying is I think maybe people have been asked to think about this in a way that they haven't before, when they're looking at, okay, I can't necessarily leave because this other company is offering jobs right now. Or my dream company. Now just you know, is downsized significantly, or whatever their plans might have been if they had any, they're probably going to be looking at that in a different way. And figuring out, is it really just about going to the next job and building my career based

on the next rung in the ladder, which probably isn't here, it's probably somewhere else. And looking at, could it be here? And how could it be here? You know, and if you are a company that can be that engaging and that transparent with your employees, I think those are conversations that could be had.



Matt Hunckler 20:29

Yeah, that's really helpful. Yeah, sorry. Go ahead. I



Dave Hickman 20:32

was gonna say it just it can't it's an opportunity to be able to increase the loyalty factor. And I think if we look back at 2008 2009, and I don't have the data in front of me, but I've looked at it before with regards to the quit rate. You know, the quit rate is something that the government measures with regards to how fast that you know, what's the rate of people that take a job and then how long they stay and when they quit? You know, it was at the an all time high here, pre COVID because of the fact that There were so many opportunities out there and not enough talent, that people would quit for whatever reason, and to Sarah's point is, once you go through this process, and if a CEO or team decides that they want to keep those key employees, and they treat them through all this process, it increases the loyalty factor that after 2008 2009, we saw that the quit the quit rate actually, you know, decreased quite a bit. It also didn't accelerate that much for a few years, because people remember the fact that they were they were taking care of if they stay with their company, they were going to stay there through a while, then it started to pick back up as the economy really started to grow. So it truly is an opportunity if done properly and done with respect and done with a kind of a family or team approach that you have the opportunity to retain, as well as bring those people back from a boomerang standpoint, when the economy starts to kick back in.



21:55

The other thing I would add to that, if I might is that it all comes down to knowing yourself. Employees demographically, you know, because some of this is cyclical, you know, if I'm now ready to have a family, you know, I'm likely to look to stay, right. And so just know whether we're pre COVID COVID, post COVID, it's always good to know that about your organization as well, you know, understanding who they are and what they need. Because at different points in any employee's life at an organization, they're going to have different needs for benefits and things like that. So even when you begin to look at your total compensation package, it depends on the demographics of your

organization. So, you know, food for thought, I guess.



Matt Hunckler 22:38

Yeah, that's really great. And I'm going to switch over to community questions here in just a minute. So go ahead and type your questions in if you're on zoom in the q&a box, and if you're on YouTube or Facebook, you can just drop it right there in the comments. And even if we catch this later, we will definitely follow up with both Sarah and hopefully get some answers to your questions. But I wanted to transition a little bit on the opposite side of that claim we were just talking about. Dave, if you don't mind talking a little bit about the companies that are still hiring right now. And I, as I mentioned, there's some headlines of a lot of companies that are still hiring, we're still seeing a lot of companies hiring in the powder keg community. The talent that is on the market right now is sort of unprecedented, in my experience of just really talented, full stack developers, very talented executives that you wouldn't normally see on the job market, at least publicly.



D Dave Hickman 23:38

Yeah, I think, exactly. I mean, you know, what it was a month and a half ago is totally different than what it is today. And so yeah, we're seeing a lot of talent with a great talent that's on the market. And the supply and demand, you think of those terms are starting to balance out quite a bit. And so, you know, organizations that are looking At this and saying, okay, we're going to be neutral to neutral, positive or positive coming out of this, there's an opportunity for them to find the future leaders, the future talent of their organization. So I think that those that are doing that are thinking about strategies that they can be more targeted, and also be a little bit cast a wide net to I mean, there's opportunity to, you know, improve your brand and to demonstrate the confidence in your brand and employer brand, that will attract talent to your organization. I think that's what we're saying, is it back too early, that you know, those that have accepted the reality have really figured out what's going on inside the organization, how it's impacting their own clients, which impacts their business, have accepted that are the ones that are already you know, taking advantage of that in the market and very short period of time.



Matt Hunckler 24:55

Do you mind talking a little bit about employer brand during this time, I know A lot of times employer brands can be made and broken during crisis times like these. And Dave, I was wondering if you had any advice on that front?



Dave Hickman 25:11

Yeah, so employer brands, like anytime there's a crisis, that it's always, you know, it can be an opportunity, right? If you have to look at it in those ways, if you're in that kind of environment that you can take advantage of it. And I think the employer brands, one of those areas that it's an opportunity to further you'd be able to kind of what I call polish and promote the brand. So when you look at your brand, one, you got to look under the hood, you got to polish it and make it better, you know, what are some of those adjustments that you maybe wanted to make, that you haven't been able to make, you know, are assessed the behaviors and the values that that maybe that, you know, you have before that? Are they aligned with your vision? Are they aligned with your mission? Do they still align? I mean, these are the questions that you need to be asking yourself, or your organization and does it align Your culture, the culture that you've been wanting to establish that you had before, that may have gotten off kilter? Because you're running so fast that those are easy for those things to get behind. So can it be tweaked? Can it be improved? That's the first thing on the polish. And then we kind of promote it. And they all kind of mean, opportunities like with, with powder, keg, it's, it's kind of a shameless plug. But the reality is, is that it's a great place for people to promote their brand, and to really demonstrate to the world and instill confidence that, you know, our company is here, our company is moving forward, we have a great place to be. And we're excited about it. And we want to be able to promote that to the world. So I think when you think of the, you know, the polishing, promote, build strategies around that and you'll come out of this ahead versus your competitors.



Sarah Conroy 26:51

If I can add something, I would say this, just make sure that it's all true, right? Because sometimes those things get out of whack when I mentioned a few minutes ago. about culture curation having a connection between certainly whoever's, you know, doing your talent acquisition and whoever's doing, you know, ongoing employee relations and things like that should be in sync. And so I think that's very important. And then, you know, make sure someone's looking at Glassdoor, and things like that, because you want to make sure that someone else isn't telling your tale or if they are, and there's something that needs to be addressed. It gets addressed so that your brand, the brand you're projecting continues to be true.



Matt Hunckler 27:28

Yeah, I think that's a really great piece to add there. Sarah, I really think of employer brand is just a lagging indicator of the company culture, in a lot of ways, and I'm

wondering if there are some ways are there other tools you would recommend? There's lots of employee engagement software's out there. They're even just general practices that you can do without any special piece of software. Anything that you're recommending your clients do right now to really engage their employee base and not wait till it's just goes up on glass door?



Sarah Conroy 28:02

Well, um, yeah, I'm not sure I'm gonna go with that I'm gonna actually answer your question slightly differently if I might. So I based on my own client experience, because, and, you know, take it for what it's worth. But I find even when I go in and do the things that have never been done before, it makes a huge difference. You'd be amazed how few people actually have something called the job description. And once you explain the actual reasons why it's important, not just it's this icky compliance thing that nobody wants to spend time on, it actually determines your future pay, and helps people like me figure out how to test you to market and ensure that you're paid properly, and that there's equity across the organization. Because all of those things go to employee trust, right? What I want to do as an HR professional is to say, I got your back, you know, I don't want you to have to be hired here and have to worry about negotiating your own package because nobody's already taken care of you. I want you to come into an organization that understands where to get it and that you can trust that You know, so and so didn't get more money because they asked for more money that we have, you know, appropriate banding and that we've made sure that we're non discriminatory in our benefits program and things like that. So, you know, I think if you're going to, you know, go to the trouble of having an HR person, it's about really making sure that that's the message that you're sending. You're, you're fully supportive and that if you free up everybody that you hire to actually do, what you hired them to do, and not anything beyond that.



Matt Hunckler 29:30

That's really great advice. I'm glad you answered it the way you wanted to answer it. I have our first question here is from an attendee who's actually on the other side of the coin. Sounds like they're a candidate looking for a job. So the question I'll ask it here, since it's from an anonymous attendee, the question is, what can a candidate looking for a job whether they're just unhappy or unemployed dude, and out to hiring managers and recruiters right now. Any advice from That candidate.



Dave Hickman 30:04

either or Yeah, I mean, to stand out in today's market, I mean, there's there's a lot of resources and you'd be able to go to to be able to say, Okay, what does my resume What is my LinkedIn profile look at? So it looks like there's best practices that are out there. I still believe that, you know, you're gonna find it probably look very similar to everybody else. Although the things that can make you look out is what value if there's a way that you can demonstrate what value you brought to the organization, either through leadership or the development that you went through or from a business perspective of if you're in the, you know, an SDR what, how did you do with regards to the results that you did? That's gonna stand out and someone just says, here's what skills I have in the organization. And so that's one area that we look at the other To is I think that this is becomes a full time. As we all know, it's a full time job that you're now networking with people. And the networking piece is absolutely critical. So you're building your own brand? And how does that how does your brand look into the marketplace? And if you were sitting on the other side, I always ask people like, what are sitting on the other side? If you're sitting on the other side? What would you look for? What would you look for, that's going to create value, and it's going to fit inside my culture or going to fit inside the skills that I need or the value that I bring to the organization and then who am I going to target and start building relationships and sharing that personal brand of who I am. So that's the other part too is if you want to stand out, bring your message about who you are concisely down to a few things that really make you unique and different in the marketplace that you can share that consistently with multiple different people.

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Sarah Conroy 31:57

And I would add to that a couple of things, one Do your research show me that you're really interested in this organization? And you know a lot about it. Right? Um, and if there's an ad, follow the instructions on the ad, because so many people just immediately try to go around whatever it is and just prove that they didn't read anything. Right. So doesn't make the greatest first impression. So I definitely think those two things are helpful. Yeah, and then I guess I would also comment kind of from the employer side, as well, because I think post kovan in particular, we're going to see a lot of people looking for work as you mentioned, and so I am encouraging my clients from the employer perspective, and I would anyway COVID or no COVID to ensure that they are getting the smallest, most talented applicant pool they can possibly get. Which means a lot of the work has to happen up front. I expect the candidates to do the research. I expect the candidates to be able to you know answer to this very specific thing. And so that, frankly, a lot of people are going to be knocked out. And so focus on making sure you're one of that select few, because no company is going to have time. I mean, you're just going to end up, you know, going in the recycle bin, right? because nobody's going to take the time to look at the second page, your resume all the way at the bottom where he did something kind of

great. Right? So



Matt Hunckler 33:26

that's really good advice. extrapolating on that a little bit. How are companies adapting their hiring process right now? Men, maybe there's building the talent pipeline instead of actually filling the roles? How are how are people adapting to this new remote world that we work in?



Sarah Conroy 33:48

Certainly start with Oh, well, no, actually, I was gonna have no thought on the previous question. Okay, is that okay, I just wanted to add one more thing on that, I think absolutely. As is already been evidenced, I think by the Our call today fix your LinkedIn profile. You know, because that's where everybody's going to go, whether you submit a resume, they're going to look at look for you on LinkedIn. So make sure they match and make sure it's accurate and up to date.



Matt Hunckler 34:14

So that's great, great advice. That's really great advice. I'm glad you added that. Yeah. Dave, how are people changing their hiring process now that people are fully remote?



Dave Hickman 34:25

Yeah. So it really comes down to twofold The interview is going to be more virtual now, it's not going to be face to face, which also includes frozen some challenges with regards to the different stages of the interview. So for instance, the first call could be with a recruiter and or the hiring manager. And then there's other people that need to be involved and they're used to doing a panel interview. So now you've got to add the virtual component to a panel interview, which then, you know, we just got to get used to. I think the second thing is, is that the onboarding process So we've had a lot of clients that they're continuing hiring, but what they need advice on is, is that how do we do the onboarding process? Because we can still have them work from home? And then they aren't they're already incorporating, how do we do the training virtual as well. So companies had to rethink the number one the interview process of doing virtually. And secondly is how to do the onboarding. But I have a third in there real quickly is that from a recruiting standpoint, and to the, to the point you were saying earlier about building a talent pipeline, you know, let's get creative as as Sarah mentioned, now, let's get creative. And do you know virtual

coffee interviews or virtual coffee, just building relationships with those top 10 talent and folks that you want to start to target and that may come down to, you know, a small group of people that when you are ready to pull the trigger, when you are ready to bring them into the fold or start within the recruiting process. They're ready to go. They've already had a relationship with you. No one else is doing that type of thing. Or he's very few Are and you'll be ahead of the game.



Matt Hunckler 36:03

Guys, sorry. Go ahead, sir.



Sarah Conroy 36:05

I was just going to add to that, that I've kind of been in the throes of this recently with, because I have number of hires and process and people starting during this time period and my clients, and so I've been rethinking the process with them and helping them do that. But I think as far as recruiting is concerned, one of the bigger challenges and things to keep in mind is, look at this from the candidates perspective, right? You're making a life decision. Do you want to come there based on you know, one interview or even three virtual interviews, most people kind of want to visit the organization if they can. So, you know, whatever you can do virtually to make someone leave even if someone's walking around the ghost office with a laptop camera. You know, work with your candidate to find out what would make them comfortable, because the other challenge I think, is not just not being able to necessarily pick your picture yourself yet in the organization. It's also just the General concern about leaping during a time like this. And so However, you can make them more comfortable with that. I think the better.



Matt Hunckler 37:09

So, thank you. No, I appreciate you sharing that. It's really interesting. On this particular show, I've seen an unprecedented low number of public questions. Everything's being asked anonymously. Which makes me think people have questions, but maybe aren't comfortable putting your name next to it, which is totally okay. And you can still drop your questions below. I did see some public comments that I wanted to call out here from people who are here live with us on zoom. I see Keegan Giles here from hc one who dropped a comment in the chat section that just said, I think kind of riffing off what you were saying Sarah? Keegan shared that the site resumes has been a huge topic for him in the last few weeks, and he's been offering as coaching and resume tips to those within his network. So he wanted to extend Offer to anyone here as well. And so if you're interested

in connecting with Keegan definitely chat him up there. Or if you're watching on YouTube or one of the other platforms, you can drop a comment below. And of course, if you're listening to this on the podcast, we'll have Keegan linked up in the show notes as well. I also wanted to give a shout out to Josh Jones over at job vite. He wanted to share that job vite which is one of the leading ATMs is in the industry right now that if there any sort of, let's see, he said he's keeping an updated blog posts with companies who are hiring. So if we know of any instructions to submit the post can be found on the blog, so Java comm slash blog. So if you know of companies, we certainly have a few dozen within our network that I that I know are still hiring. So Josh will get those over to you. But if anyone wants to take Josh up on that offer, I encourage you to connect with Josh over at job bite. We did just have a question. Come in and I'm gonna go ahead and ask Erica onto the show. She has some questions to elaborate on one of the things that you both were talking about Dave and Sarah. So, Erica, welcome to the show. We might introduce yourself and letting us know where you're dialing in from.



Erika Edwards 39:16

Yes, I'm Erika Edwards, I am dialing in from sensor Health Solutions in the Raleigh Durham area of North Carolina. So I wanted to ask either of our panelists to chime in or elaborate a little bit further on how companies are onboarding flash training during this pandemic. I mean, we have a couple of people that we keep pushing out their their start dates based on the fact that the entire team is working remotely. And we are a small startup organization. So um, you know, the sea level is frankly nervous about trying To start individuals when a company is basically working remote except for one or two essential staff, so



Matt Hunckler 40:09

great question, Erica. Thanks for asking that. Sarah, do you mind maybe weighing in first?



Sarah Conroy 40:14

Sure. Thank you, Erica. So yeah, again, my number one thought all the time is depends on the organization. And it depends on the job, right? Because, you know, if it's a job that can be done fully remotely, then the challenge is how do you make someone feel welcome? How do you get them appropriately trained, as you've already identified? And how do you make it stick because that's the other concern, you could bring someone on board and you may not be able to retain them if you can't, kind of show them the love and the first you know, three months, right, and so, what I've been doing with clients is just putting

extra special care in before they're hired while they're hired. And the behind the scenes have been working on converting the you know, the onboarding process including employee benefits, orientation. And training and all that stuff to fully virtual, and trying to make it interesting. And I'm not suggesting I get everything right the first time around, we're all human. But I think as long as, as long as people feel engaged, and I think you if you are, you know, the person responsible for this, you're a really important person in your company right now, because you're like the sink or swim for this person, probably, you know, just understanding that they feel welcome. And that you are, you know, asking them to kind of come with you and understand that this was unexpected, and that, you know, we're going to have more fully virtual approaches in the future, and perhaps do they want to be a part of that solution depending on the job that they're fulfilling for your company? But again, I'm seeing people go ahead, you know, because we're all in this together. And you know, if a company is financially sound and can weather this and is not considering layoffs at the same time, they're hiring people, you know, that's, that's a horse of a different color, I think but if you are You know, fully, financially sound and we're going to hire anyway, I wouldn't necessarily Let this be a stumbling block to it because I think you can successfully bring those people in. And they're probably frankly, if they were close to an offer or had an offer, they might be feeling very discouraged right now. And you want them to continue to have a really good feeling about your organization. And I think probably there's no better way to say we want you now is creating that loyalty that Dave was talking about, if you can.



Matt Hunckler 42:28

Anything you'd add there, Dave? No, nothing that that was great. I agree. That was great. Sarah. Thank you. Keegan. Looks like he's got a question. So first of all, Keegan, thank you very much for your your offer to help with resume coaching. And Keegan. Welcome to the show. We'd love to answer your question. Hello, can you hear me okay. Sure can. Yeah.



42:50

Well, I appreciate you having me on. So yeah, actually, Sarah, you you kind of touched on my question a little bit there. especially towards the end, but I guess want to paint a scenario? So we are we're certainly still hiring. But there are positions that when we find the right candidate we're willing to hire a little bit earlier. However, if those candidates are not looking, they're currently not affected by this, would you suggest? Or I guess what, what are your thoughts around, you know, go ahead and hire while the hiring is good, which is typically my philosophy, you know, but considering onboarding now, they're going to have a much, much different experience and how they interview and perceive

our interview and how they're on boarded. Well,



43:43

yeah, thank you. I would recommend that you, frankly, ask the candidate, you know, because they are going to know what they're comfortable with. They're not comfortable with so oftentimes, I will just go, here's what it's gonna look like. Here's what is different than how we would have done in the past. Are you comfortable with them? And most of them and you want to make sure you get beyond there, you know, I'm an applicant voice there. I'm an applicant voices. Yes, yes, yes, of course, of course, of course, you want real answers, right? You want to make sure that they're, they really want to work for your organization that they would rather come sooner than later, and that they're comfortable making that leap. Like I said, I don't see any reason to wait, if, if that's all true. But you are the, you know, you're in charge of your requisitions and your bottom line, and you know, when you are budgeted to hire for this position. So, you know, certainly let that be your guide. But I like I said, I wouldn't necessarily say here's a hard rule that says, Don't do anything until you know, we're all able to return to the workplace. Because I think that's the candidates decision. And frankly, you can make it up to them later. You know, I mean, you can say, Great, so glad you came with us. Now. You know, here's what we're all going to do as a team when we can be back in shared space. And that's when you're going to really meet people and kind of have what you would have had in the first week. And it'll be even better because usually you get the firehose the first week and you don't remember anything, any Right. So this is sort of a more gentle way to step into an organization, I think, and I think you can present it that way. Sand can be successful.



Matt Hunckler 45:10

Good advice, Sarah. I, I, a lot of companies right now that are on a hiring freeze. And it sounds like that's not the case with Keegan. In fact, I know it's not the case with Keegan because we're helping them find some key key filson key roles there. But I know a lot of companies right now their budgets, frozen. And a lot of that has come from the VCs who have funded a lot of these tech companies, just encouraging tech companies to wait a while. And that doesn't mean necessarily that they can't use the talent, and that they wouldn't love to have more people on the team to keep keep that team growing. Any advice to those companies that need to continue to build their talent pipeline and keep those candidates engaged for when they get greenlighted on the budget? How should they Communicating with candidates, how often? And any advice on even just what to communicate? Dave, any thoughts on that?



46:07

Yeah, I mean, communication is key. I mean, it's all about continuing that relationship with them. And so what we've seen is that, I mean, we've seen weekly updates, just communicating on a weekly basis, just pinging them, how you doing, how things holding up what's going on your world. You know, you figure that you know, what the audience is, the size of the company is, it's not like you've got 5000 people to stay in contact with every week, right? So if it's like 20 to 30, and you're just making a conscious effort to have weekly communication with them in some form, or fashion through email, or, you know, maybe once every two to three weeks to a 15 or 20 minute video communication, then you're demonstrating that they're important, you're demonstrating that you care about them and you demonstrate that they're that you're looking you're trying to continue to build that relationship. And and you're You're just I think that's where we've seen the most success. I mean, and actually, quite frankly, I don't know how much different that is, during good times, if they're doing their process, right. I know people would say, well, we don't have time to do that during the process. But when you really identify talent, that you know, that's going to make a huge impact in the organization, it's worth the investment is absolutely worth the investment and the resources to be able to do those types of those little things that will make you stand apart.



Matt Hunckler 47:26

That's really great advice. Anything to add there. Sarah,



Sarah Conroy 47:29

have you met me? So? No, I think I would add to that, that, as you can tell, from hearing from me today, I'm probably a little bit more, go with my gut. And you know, if this person's already in your heart, a part of your team, right? And so from there, I wouldn't necessarily go It's Tuesday at three o'clock I need to call this person you know, if you thought this thing happened and they would appreciate hearing about it, call them you know, whatever works for you guys and dependent On your organization and how sure you are about the hire, you know, I don't see why you can't begin to introduce them to other people. I don't mean as a formal Hey, you're hired. But you know, hey, this you know that you might have such something in common with so and so we're, you know, we're we're going to have a zoom would you want to join us just like if you were local and you would have gone for coffee, you know, I don't see anything wrong with that.



Matt Hunckler 48:22

That's it for today's show. Thank you so much for listening. Also, a huge thanks to Dave Hickman and Sarah Conroy from CLA. Check them out at CLA Connect COMM And for links to their social profiles and the other people, companies and resources mentioned in this episode, head on over to powder keg calm and check out the show notes. We're going to be doing a lot more of these and we have some killer people that we're going to be bringing on the show here shortly. very experienced people that know their their stuff inside and out. So to be able to participate in those live. Be sure to check out all of those guests coming up on Powder Keg calm. You can find that at Powder Keg calm. slash events. And if you're currently in the market for finding a new role and want to be connected to cutting edge companies that are really changing the game in areas all over the world, join our matches platform. We just announced that we're opening that up for early access to people who have been affected by layoffs during the pandemic crisis. You can check that out at Powder Keg comm slash jobs. And if you're currently still hiring, there are many companies in tech that are still hiring right now. And if you're looking for ways to get connected to great talent, some of the most talented tech professionals in the world join the powder keg matches platform and sign up for your company culture profile at Powder Keg comm slash sign up, it's totally free to get started connecting with extraordinary talent today. Again, that's Powder Keg comm slash sign up, sign up is all one word. And to be among the first to hear the stories about entrepreneurs, investors and other tech leaders in areas outside of Silicon Valley, subscribe to us on iTunes at Powder keg.com slash iTunes. We'll catch you next time on the powderkeg podcast.