

**Speaker 1:** 0:04

Hey everybody, this is Mark Mitford , uh, c e o and founder of HR Catalyst Consulting. And I'm really excited about the conversation we're gonna have today with , uh, with a friend and co and professional colleague of mine, Jolene Re. So Jolene , thank you so much for joining us today.

**Speaker 2:** 0:20

Thanks. Thanks for having me, mark .

**Speaker 1:** 0:21

Yeah, so, so I'm just, I'm really looking forward to this conversation. So why don't you start out for our audience, why don't you tell us a little bit about your business and how you got started?

**Speaker 2:** 0:31

Yeah, sure. Okay. So Rich Results is, we're a recruiting firm and, and we offer retained search and fractional or, or outsource recruiting services. The small and mid-market businesses, a lot of the same kind of businesses that you work with in HR and these companies are, are looking for talent. And that's where we come in. Um, I have over 25 years of experience in the people industry. I started in consulting at ey , um, and about 15 years doing recruiting. Um, and, you know, I was at EY and, and my son was turned three. I'd been there several years and , um, I, I decided I was going to take a leave of absence. Um, and I thought, you know what? I'm gonna start my own business. So instead of going back to ey, I said, let me, let me try something on my own. Um, and around oh 7, 0 8 , um, if you remember, we had very high unemployment, right ? And companies would post a job and honestly they would get a sea of candidates, right? Mm-hmm . <affirmative> , right ? But it was difficult for them to be able to choose the right one, and it was taking a lot of time. And so, honestly, that's when we started our business. That's how I started my search firm during that time, helping companies find the right talent.

**Speaker 1:** 1:56

Okay. Interesting. So, was the Dr , what was, was the driving force because you wanted to get away from the grind at a , at a , at a huge company like ey? Or was it the, you just had a passion to, was it on your wishlist to actually at some point start your own business?

**Speaker 2:** 2:15

Never, never thought about it, actually. I mean, I , I don't, I didn't, there was no one in my family who had actually started their own business. Um, you know, I, I actually loved working at ey. Um, I had two of my three sons while I was working there. They were wonderful with me. Um, well, at the time I had three young kids and I wanted some flexibility in my schedule. Um, but I still wanted to continue working in the people industry, and this gave me an opportunity to work in the people industry, semi-new area.

I wasn't doing recruiting at ey. Um, so I was just consistently refining the business and looking for ways to do it better.

**Speaker 1:** 2:57

Okay . That's great. It's always fascinating when I have these conversations. I , I learned so much about people that I interview and some of 'em I've known for 10, 15, 20 years. And it's just fascinating how everybody got to the point to where they're going out on their own and they become , and they take that deep plunge into becoming an entrepreneur. Yeah.

**Speaker 2:** 3:14

That crazy, crazy plunge. <laugh>

**Speaker 1:** 3:17

<laugh> . So can we, 'cause we're here to talk today, you know, you're, you're an expert in recruiting, so can you just share like a baseline for, for the audience today, Jolene , can you, can you share a baseline definition of what a good recruiting process really looks like?

**Speaker 2:** 3:33

Sure. Yeah. I'm, I'm glad you asked that question. You know, the problem that many businesses probably don't know they have is that too often what happens in recruiting is they leave it for the last minute. Mm-hmm . Um, it becomes a reactive, not even process, right? It's just reactive and it, and it's not a process, it's just really what they have time for. And I get it, we're busy bus business owners are, are right . And business leaders , um, are super busy and it, and it feels like the last thing that we can focus on. Um, so, you know, that's, that's why we help with that. So I would say my, a good definition of recruiting process is one that's strategic , um, repeatable, right, organized equitable, that's really important. And ultimately finds the best talent for the company , um, considering skills, experience, culture, and values . It's , um, I would say it's , it's really expensive to hire the wrong person and also expensive not to hire someone <laugh> . And so having a repeatable process , um, is the best way to do recruiting, and you'll end up with the best talent.

**Speaker 1:** 4:50

That's great. So if we take that to one more granular step from, I , I love that definition by the way. So if we take it one more granular step, what are, and I'm sure there's , there's so many components to recruiting, but what would you say are the key components for a good , um, recruiting process you , that you'd like to share ?

**Speaker 2:** 5:11

Yeah. So one of the most challenging things about the employment market, at least right now, is that we have low unemployment candidates are a lot more discerning for the most part. And, you know, previously you remember when you could think about a

candidate for a week or two, kind of him and how a little bit. And obviously that's not the case right now. And so the best way to start, and I think the most important thing, step one, facet number one, is really think about and consider what's most important to you from the start. Because I think the single hardest decision to make is pulling the trigger, extending an offer, right? And it's normal, I get it. 'cause you're always thinking, oh, there must be more people out there, right? <laugh>. Um, and it's, and it's an investment. It takes, it takes time. But we have to remember that, you know, if we think about what's most important to us, instead of looking for 100% right, we're gonna be able to key in on the best person for our firm. So I think that's important. Focus on what's most important. Um, of course you need a job description, you need it, you need it documented, right? Um, and then the way we used to fill positions, I think doesn't work anymore. Most people start by looking at people who are either actively looking and, and answering posts, right? Or people in our network. And, and that's a great start. Um, but I think a facet of a good recruiting process is extending past that point, um, to people who are not in your network and not necessarily looking. So that's another important step, I would say another important facet or the questions you're asking during the screening and interview process. Okay. Um, I think that often hiring managers don't know what to ask, how to ask it, and how to get a little bit deeper into, you know, do they really know how to do this job? And will they really be a fit? Um, we offer a hiring, really just an interview workshop for hiring managers. Okay. We've found it helpful. I think our clients have found it helpful. Um, yeah, and I would, I would say the, the last part of, of really good recruiting process is a clear and defined decision makers, right? Because, you know, we found that when a decision maker gets brought into the recruiting process too late, sometimes it'll derail the process. Um, so I would say define your decision makers from from the start, right? So those are, I know there are more, but I would say those are some really important parts of the recruiting process.

**Speaker 1:** 8:15

Yeah, that sounds great. Um, I was gonna ask you one other question on that too, as we got into some of the components, and this one of course, could we, we could sit here and talk about this one for a couple of hours, but how, because so many companies are focused on the, there's a big push within a lot of companies, especially those that are innovative, cutting edge companies around, around really having a driving force behind culture. Hmm. So how do you, from a recruiting, from your perspective as a recruiting firm and an expert in recruiting, how do you balance between the technical competencies that you really need to have to be successful and the good cultural fit components? How do you balance that in when you're actually trying to find the right candidate for an organization?

**Speaker 2:** 9:06

Yeah, so a lot of it depends on the position. A lot of it depends on the level of the position. Um, there definitely should be a balance, like you said, I would say, again, back to the kind of questions you're asking interview, not just for skills and experience, but also interview for culture. So one way to do that is the same kind of behavioral questions

that you might ask about, you know, some kind of skill they have and how they've used it in the past. You can do that with their values. So we always wanna know, well , what are the values of the company that we're working with? So we can weave those in to our screening and interview process.

**Speaker 1:** 9:50

That's great. That's great. So, no , this is, this is really a , an interesting conversation. I know we've got several other questions, but what we're gonna do now is we're just gonna take a short break.

**Speaker 3:** 10:01

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**Speaker 1:** 10:49

So , Jolene, we just took a quick break, so thank you so much for your time so far, because you just a lot of insightful things and it's amazing because I've worked in the HR field for a long time, and , um, every time I interview somebody like yourself, I learn something new. So it's a fascinating conversation. I've already, I've already, you've already shared a couple of really nice golden nuggets with me, so I appreciate it.

**Speaker 2:** 11:10

Awesome, thank you.

**Speaker 1:** 11:13

Um, you're welcome. So, and so, next, next thing I wanted to ask you is about, because the area that , um, we at HR Catalyst focus on is we focus on middle market size companies mm-hmm . <affirmative> , so middle market size , maybe, you know, 500 employees and below, maybe a little bit bigger than that, but in your opinion, yeah . How well do middle market size companies actually do the recruiting process?

**Speaker 2:** 11:36

Yeah, that's a a really good question. Um, I mean, honestly, a lot of companies that we work with , um, also in middle market , I mean, they have a really good recruiting process. I would say that the biggest issue that I'm seeing is that companies aren't necessarily adapting to the changing market. You know, and like I, I listened to you on a panel a few months ago and we were talking about compensation. And you even said that as a

leader, you really have to know what's going on in the market, right? You have to know your industry, you have to know your geography, right? That's important for a leader to know that. And that's a big part of, um, the recruiting process is knowing that upfront. Um, you certainly will be able to hold on to candidates really good talent if you know that upfront. Um, I would say, um, the other thing that business leaders I think need to stay informed about, um, even if they have a really good process, I would say is their own unconscious biases. That's where I see sometimes the process being derailed a little bit. And what ends up happening is what could have been a bigger pool of candidates is smaller because of unconscious thoughts and how we grew up and you know, what we've read all our lives. And so I think addressing that also could help the recruiting process.

**Speaker 1:** 13:09

Right, right. So when you talked about areas for improvement or maybe getting things really down pat to where, um, you know, some of the much larger companies out there do probably do pretty well. Um, why do you think middle market size companies struggle with that a little bit? What are some of your thoughts there?

**Speaker 2:** 13:28

Leaders are very busy. Um, things are changing very quickly. I mean, look at the last three years and how quickly things have changed. I mean, even just from 2020, right when there were so many layoffs and then all of a sudden the great resignation where it was the other way around. And now, you know, things are starting to even out, but things are changing quickly and, and frankly, I don't think leaders always have the time to stay, um, abreast of what's going on in, in the market. Right.

**Speaker 1:** 14:00

Yeah. That's a great thought. Now those are, yeah, those are, those are interesting comments. So, um, how about when you think about from a recruiting perspective, um, and as somebody who owns their own firm, so is recruiting a system, is it a process? Is it both? What are your thoughts there? Well,

**Speaker 2:** 14:19

I get, I, I guess I would say it's both, you know, maybe just to be fair, <laugh>, um, but really it, I think it's both because recruiting is, I, I would say it's a system because there are things that we need to invest in that every recruiting process should have sort of built over it, right? It's kinda like a house, I think of it like a house, like what should every house have, you know? And, you know, a kitchen, a bathroom, all of the h need this. So you need technology, right? You need to know, um, how you're gonna find talent. There are things that you just need to know in advance. And then in terms of process, it's how you're putting things together, right? It's in, it's, you know, are you going to start with, um, you know, casting a wide net from the start? Are you going to, how are you gonna go about it? And also the interview, what's your interview process gonna look like? It

looks different for every company and , um, who's involved, what level of position is. So I think it's a mixture of both.

**Speaker 1:** 15:29

Okay . Great. Um, how about when you think about it, what are , what are, in your opinion, what are the 2, 3, 4 keys to success? What do those look like for the process? To really have a, to really have a well honed machine around the recruiting process?

**Speaker 2:** 15:47

Well, we talked about knowing your market. Mm-hmm . <affirmative> , um, we talked about addressing your unconscious biases. I would say another point is understanding the candidate experience. I think that's really important now in this social media obsessed world that we live in , um, is thinking about the candidate experience and how they're going to be treated when they walk in for the interview. How you prepare them for the interview. Where do you park, you know, what the dress code is, et cetera. We want people to leave our clients, the companies feeling really, really good about the whole experience.

**Speaker 1:** 16:28

Right. That's great too. And then , and have you seen , uh, have you seen that , has that changed in the last year, in the last three years, the last five years? What are your , what are your thoughts there about really, really looking at the candidate? 'cause I know a lot of times companies were so, they used to be so focused on you , you have to prove yourself to me and you have to tell me why you're so great. And now with the way the job market is Yeah . That now it's really, I said, you know, whenever I talk to one of our clients too , I said , you know , you have to make sure that you remember you are selling and marketing to the candidates. So when do you think that that little shift of, you know, that shift of that tide and that changing of the tides, when do you think that occurred?

**Speaker 2:** 17:17

Well, I would say end of 2021, when we also started shifting to a more , uh, you know, the great resignation where a lot of people realized after coming out of a, you know, global time , I mean global challenging time, right? Um, I would say they came out of that and realized , you know what, there's a lot of things important to me right now. Not only work, they started to have re they started to reevaluate what their priorities were . And so you had people leaving the workforce, but also their companies for other companies, and it became really hard to find talent. And that was about when we've started speaking to our clients more about exactly what you just said. It's not just let me wait and see what the candidate can sell to me. Right ? But it's a dance, right? An interview is a dance, and it includes asking questions so you can learn more about the candidate, but also making sure that you're telling them all the great things about your company, the values, what it's like to work there, somebody who's been there for 5, 10, 15 years, what did

they say about the company? Right? So that needs to be a part of the interview process for sure.

**Speaker 1:** 18:34

That's great. Now those are, that's really fascinating from your perspective, since you're, since this is what you do on a daily basis. So just making sure you have informed, um, informed companies and clients that you work for, that they've gotta be really thinking. There's a little bit of a changing of where the balance is in the experience, and yeah, there's gonna be that balancing act between what the company needs and also what the, what the candidate is and the, the candidate is looking for. So, um, so what do you think the process itself, the recruiting process, where do you think that can get, um, what can happen to screw it up in essence? You know, what can happen to derail the process or where the process find, you know, really fails when you're working with the clients that you do?

**Speaker 2:** 19:20

I would say back to what I was saying at the beginning, is having perfection in mind and not focusing enough on the behaviors that people bring to the table. So yes, I'd love someone with eight to 10 experiences in name, wherever you're going to put them in the company. That's great. Oh, what if they have a few less years than that? Or their, you know, their, their range is a little bit over what you had in mind, or they don't have quite the education you were looking for. Let's now look at the behaviors the person brings to the table, and let's look to see if they have the values, the same kind of values that we have at our company. I think that's a big place where companies, they just fixate on one type of person.

**Speaker 1:** 20:11

Right. Okay. That's wonderful. That's wonderful. So, um, so I know you, you're a recruiting expert and this is what your company does. What's, what are some ideal when you're looking at ideal clients for you, what does an ideal client look for for, um, your organization?

**Speaker 2:** 20:29

Yeah, well, like you, I mean, we work with small and mid-market companies that are looking for the best talent. Often they've tried finding the best talent on their own, um, but they need to get outside of their network, right? And they need to be looking at passive candidates. So those clients who are ready to look at a wide pool of people and be considering passive candidates who aren't asking, you know, or aren't answering their posts. Um, those are clients that, that we'd like to work with, whether they have one or two positions, whether they have consistent positions over the year, um, those are the clients. We're looking for various industries. Uh, we do a lot of work in construction, manufacturing, lot of professional service clients, as well as nonprofit.

**Speaker 1:** 21:20



Okay. That's great. That's great. So thanks. So anything, I know we're gonna get ready to wrap up here in a couple of minutes, but thanks. First of all, thanks so much, Jillian . This has been really good . Thanks

**Speaker 2:** 21:28

For having me.

**Speaker 1:** 21:29

Yeah, you're welcome. You're welcome. So really insightful as always. Whenever I do this, this is kind of the fun part of, of , you know, one of the fun aspects of doing what we do too is as actually having our own businesses. But , uh, yeah, any final thoughts, any final golden nuggets you wanna share with our audience today?

**Speaker 2:** 21:47

I would say the one golden nugget maybe to , um, leave the audience with is consider unconscious bias training , um, because I think it's gonna help in the recruiting process, but I also think it's gonna help in retention and belonging and, and the culture of your organization. So I would probably lead , leave our audience with, with that thought.

**Speaker 1:** 22:14

Yeah , no, and that's so smart. Like you said, we all have, we all have , uh, we, everyone has a subconscious or everyone unconscious bias, so, you know, we really need to be cognizant of that with, especially when companies are , um, when they're hiring for various positions, they need to make sure that they, yeah , they do everything they can to give everybody, have a , have a fair playing field for everybody that, that they're talking to. So, yeah. Um, so we'll , let's, let's go ahead and wrap up. We always, we always like to find out . It's fascinating, whatever . One of the ways we find out a little bit more about you as a person is we wanna ask you some fun questions about , uh, so the first we're gonna ask you just kind of round robin , quick, quick shot here is , um, what are three books, three books that you would recommend for our audience and why?

**Speaker 2:** 23:01

Well, the last book I read , um, I actually just posted on it was the new book by Adam Grant. I'm kind of a super fan of Adam Grant. He is a psychologist at , um, Penn Graduate School , um, m b A program. And he wrote a book called Think Again. And the the whole idea is, you know, we need to be more curious. We need to be have open minds because sometimes we get so fixated on one process or one way of doing things or how I've always thought about this, right? That, you know, in the end we're losing out. Um, it's a great book. Um, the other book I read this summer, my son told me to read it, is Kitchen Confidential by Anthony Bourdain. Okay . Um , no , I'm not a great cook at all. <laugh>, I love it because it's, it gives like this inside look at what goes on in restaurants and I'm, I love group process and group dynamics. So it's, it's kind of a , a fun way of, of interesting way of looking at what's going on behind the scenes. Um, and then my favorite book of last year was, you've been chosen by St . Marshall and St . Marshall is the c e o of the



Mavs. And this was just an amazing book. The Audible is actually her voice and it's even better . Yeah.

**Speaker 1:** 24:22

Interesting. That's good . Yeah , it's kind of funny when you, when you say that, because , um, I worked in restaurants for six years, really actually, college and grad school. And , and the one thing I would say there , and I'll keep it quick here, but you know, you , when , you know on a Friday night , you know, within the first 30 minutes, if it's gonna be a really long shift, <laugh> because everything's going wrong and the kitchen's are already slow, or whether the shift is gonna be like a smooth silt. So, so much of it has to be with the , you know, they , they call it the front of the house and the back of the house and rent the restaurant lingo. So the back of the house is the backbone and the back of the house is messed up. It's gonna be a long, arduous , uh, arduous evening. So, yeah. Um, couple of other questions for you. So two podcasts. What are you listening to , uh, sound like? You, you , you're , you're , you love podcasts, so what are, what are two of your popular podcasts you're listening to currently?

**Speaker 2:** 25:14

Yeah, well I'm definitely, definitely gonna start listening to yours. Um, <laugh> . So I love, obviously I love Adam Grant's podcast, work life . Um, there's one called Hidden Brain. I also really like , um, he is , uh, Shankar Vedantam and I just wanna shout out to a really good friend who has a great podcast. Also Chanel Davis. Um, she, do you know Chanel ? She is with Davis . Davis . I've

**Speaker 1:** 25:39

Heard the names though .

**Speaker 2:** 25:39

Yeah, Davis, Davis and Harmon. She has a podcast called Follow the Leader and there are so many interesting interviews on her podcast. Um , I've always enjoyed listening to them. She , it's really good. It's great. Okay ,

**Speaker 1:** 25:52

<laugh> , so last question for you. So , so given where you are today , um, what would you tell your 16 year old self if you were, if you could wind back the clock and be 16 year old, a 16 year old again, what would you tell yourself ,

**Speaker 2:** 26:06

Uh , to be 16? Well , um, <laugh> probably stay curious and ask lots of questions and listen, right. Learn how to listen well. I think that's so important. Um, don't be afraid to fail, right? I mean, sometimes, especially when we're young, we think, oh gosh, you know, life is over. Well, it's actually just a learning experience and I just wish we could

learn that earlier, at least me at 16 , um, take a business class in college. I didn't start taking business classes until my master's , um, and en enjoy the journey.

**Speaker 1:** 26:43

Yeah , that is great. So, so why don't you tell us, 'cause I'm sure people are , some, a lot of people are out there kind of intrigued with your background and what you do. So where can people find you online?

**Speaker 2:** 26:54

Um, rich results.com is our website. I am pretty active on LinkedIn and uh, yeah, if , I mean you can follow me on LinkedIn , um, well connect with me on LinkedIn for sure. So that we can communicate.

**Speaker 1:** 27:09

That sounds great. Well thank you so much again for your time, Jolene . Thank you . This is , uh, this has been a very insightful for me and I hope it's been insightful for our audience too. So that will let you go, we'll let you get back to your day. Thank you so much.

**Speaker 2:** 27:21

Thanks Mark .