E5: How can we future-proof tomorrow's workforce?

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SPEAKERS

Karen Kirton, Lachy Gray

Lachy Gray
So we've been talking about the modern workplace and how it's being shaped in in real time, and I guess a key part of that is, how do we, future proof, our, our employees to adapt and thrive in this environment of change and uncertainty and how do we instill a culture of continuous learning and and create leaders who, who can inspire and therefore future proof our businesses. So these are some pretty big questions Karen, looking forward to diving into them on today's episode.

Karen Kirton
Yeah absolutely and I think when I was looking at this topic, I went back to what we referenced previously as is future jobs survey from the World Economic Forum and I was looking at those top 15 skills that they've identified that people will need to 2025 So it's not that far away. And when you look at that list and we can make it available in the show notes. You know they're all things that we would

normally consider soft skills like analytical thinking and innovation, active learning and learning strategies which I thought was really interesting particularly considering your business, you know, the third one is complex problem solving skills so even just looking at those top three. Yeah, this is, like you're saying how do we future proof. Our employees so that they are actually gaining those skills to help them stay competitive in the marketplace long term but also, if we're not investing in them in these types of skills. Surely that means that our business is going to start to go backwards as well because we're not going to be keeping up with the pace of our competitors. So I think one of the things I wanted to ask you about was the idea of having a culture of continual learning what does that mean to you.

Lachy Gray
It's a it's a great question, isn't it, and I've been thinking about this a lot, because on my Yarno journey I've been researching how we learn, and I've learned so much that I wish I knew at school and uni. That crabbing doesn't work. Spacing learning out over time is, is superior for embedding knowledge and just little things like that and for some reason, how we learn, is, is very traditional, and I think very inflexible. And so, when it comes up against this period of changing flexibility and we need to clean out old knowledge and ways of doing things, replace it with new ways that can be really challenging. So, for me, it's really thinking about how, how we learn. And I think, in creating the right mindset is, is really important because I think that that mindset is something that can guide you, no matter what happens, so it's a way of making sense of information and events, and a mindset of learning and experimentation, you know, says, I don't know everything. I'm going to make mistakes, that's okay, because I'm committed to, to learning and growing. I'm going to ask a ton of questions, and I think it can be incredibly liberating, as opposed to feeling sort of constrained and boxed in, and only if I make a mistake and will I be punished and will reflect poorly on me. So I think this ability to, to have this right mindset is going to be a critical path forward so that we can help our people and leaders leaders, adapt to this changing, changing information. And one of the people that I really like. I follow a lot is the Adam Grant to organizational psychologist, and he got a book called Think again, which is a really great read. And he is essentially encouraging us to identify our core beliefs and and think over them again because it's really easy to get stuck in a rut, often with very little information, and believe things really passionately, and he gives the example of the startup founders in Italy so we got 100 startup founders in Italy doing an entrepreneurship training program and have two groups a scientific thinking group and a control group. And the training was the same, except the scientific group were encouraged to think like a scientist, so their strategy was a theory, customer interviews, help them to develop hypotheses, and then they would test the hypotheses, and they were continually doubting, you know what they knew and they were willing to change their mind, if they needed to. Then over a year. The control group averaged under $255 in revenue. While the scientific group average is about $12,000. And he reckons one of the reasons is that the control group became wedded to their original strategies and products, and they, they really had trouble changing course, from what they originally believed was true, because the scientific group were more comfortable pivoting, they didn't feel as anchored to what they originally thought they were happy to change their minds. And, yeah, Mark and I had a similar experience, starting Yano and I don't know if I've shared this with you but our first attempt at Yana was a failure. And in hindsight I wish is on site to wonderful thing. We made a classic mistake of not doing any customer research and believing that we were the customer, and that if it solves our problem that it would obviously solve our potential customers problems too and that was totally incorrect. And it was only after that experience, which was devastating because we both just left our jobs, we had young

families. We were really all standing on the edge of a cliff that we went back and did a whole bunch of research about well, how do you actually approach. The startup running a startup. I went and read a whole bunch of stuff about learning about learning principles and so on. And it was that experience and then the work that we did from that point, that sort of catalyzed into Yano as it is today. But as much as it created the product I think it created a mindset that we still think of everything like an experiment, and that we're going to make mistakes and we want to make mistakes because that means we're learning, and then we want to be giving feedback and so on. So, this is very real to me both in terms of the fact that we're a learning product but also like how we learn as a business, and will hopefully continue to do so, I think it's a real, I actually think it's a competitive advantage. What are your thoughts. Yeah, I'd love to

Karen Kirton
learn more about your failure which sounds awful but that is how we learn, right, we learn through making mistakes and, you know, in hindsight it's always a wonderful thing and so what did we actually do that we should have done better. But I think the other thing, you know, when you're talking about the Think again. I just had me considering I how do we encourage others to think again, because in every organization. There are always, you know, some employees that see the job as a job. So, you know, they're not really interested in, in going outside of that box line, and that can be a real challenge for the leader or the owner of the business so if we're trying to create a culture of learning, and we value that learning we value learning from mistakes but we have people within a team that actually don't. So, what would your advice be if you were talking to another business owner and they said, Well, look, this is all well and good to be talking about a culture of learning when I have people in my team that, you know, they don't care. they just want to come in and, you know, do their nine to five and go again, how would you go about encouraging someone that's got that mindset to change that into think again.

Lachy Gray
Well, I would, I would suggest to the, to the business owner, like it's identifying what's important. Like how important is a healthy culture to. How important is a learning culture to, and if it is important. Great. Then there's probably going to be some hard decisions to make. And one of the ways I think about this is, you need the right, like, as Jim Collins says, the author of Good to Great are always prolific and a bunch of books. You got to have the right people on the bus. Yeah, I could. And I really think right people, integral. So if you don't have the right people, Then areas to think about, well, do they have a place in this organization going forward, can they contribute to the culture do they want to contribute to the culture, or are they actually going to be a handbrake and negatively impacts not only their own work, but also the team around them. And I think everyone's probably worked with somewhere like this and hopefully you don't work with someone like this now but passive aggressive. A de motivator. Just sort of can suck the energy out of the room. Well, are they going to change. And if they're not, yeah, did I have a place. Going forward I think that's really hard, really hard. However, so important. Yeah. And it's really

Karen Kirton
hard cuz I think the thing is as well. You don't know what you don't know. So sometimes those people actually just haven't had a leader above them that has enabled them to be able to think differently, and of course they're going to be instances where people just don't want to. So if you say, do you actually

need a seat on the bus then. But you know, is there an onus on the leader to really uncover and work out well, you know, would this person be interested in being on the bus. You know if I can really demonstrate why this monster set shift is important and it's something that I do find continually challenging in organizations but it's always one of the top things that employees will say whenever you do an engagement survey they don't get enough development. But I also hear managers, whenever they see those results say, Well, hey, once again, you know we have development plans and we meet with our staff one on one, and when we try and craft a development plan with them we get nothing. But we know from, you know like this world economic forum survey, it says that the most competitive businesses will focus on upgrading their workers skills. So if someone's gonna remain a role for the next five years, nearly half will need retraining for their core skills. That's a huge onus on business isn't it.

And so that takes me then to well above a small or medium sized business owner. Is it worth my while.

Lachy Gray
What do you think, well, maybe that comes back to that classy quote, You know what happens if I train someone and they leave. And the response is what happens if you don't and they stay. I think that if you want to survive and thrive into the future. This is a necessity, both in terms of keeping up to date with the change, and also with engaging gauging your staff, I mean, we hear it a lot that people want to develop personally and professionally. And work is a fantastic vehicle for that, if it's done right, spend so much time there, we come up against all sorts of different personalities and situations where our skills will be tested and gaps will be identified. So, is a great place to, to learn. And yeah, it can take time. However, I think, again, if you look at it through the mindset of as an investment, rather than a cost. I think that's really important, as is in the roles and functions and skills that we need to help develop that. And then where are the gaps right now. And then just Cheapside to chip away at them. And I think a part of that is, is having that culture that's we're comfortable talking about it, and it might just be with our with our lead or our manager and putting some developmental goals in place. Now, that example that you gave before. Yeah, I think, well yeah, there's, there's, there's a mismatch isn't there. Yeah, there's a mismatch there for sure so. So let's dig into that, let's understand. Where's that coming from the employees clear about the business's vision and strategies and mission do they buy into it, do they care about it or not. Do they feel like they're being dictated to do they have any ownership or autonomy. Are they incentivized to want to work on their developmental goals, or are not. So, for me, I think we've talked about this before the importance of just communication in the business, and people having asking questions and checking in, is I understand that you want to be more engaged in housing developmental goals, but it's just not happening like let's talk about that. And yeah, I think there's a big onus on the leadership to to own that and say well, how can I support you to do that, what am I not doing right now, or Am I blocking you in some way. Now that's true, that's challenging, because you got to you got to bring a, we call it a beginner's mind to those conversations where it's like suspending judgment. And, and staying curious and resisting that urge. Yeah, but you're wrong, and this and this or this and these reasons, it's like, no, no, it's just, just hold that back, and they their perspective is, is valid right like we, everyone has a different perspective on these things so it's about digging into it and understanding what those perspectives are and then across the teams in the business, what are the

themes that we're hearing, and then can we identify those ones that if we are improved we'll have the highest impact with the least amount of effort. And then let's just get stuck in.

Karen Kirton
Yeah and I think you're so right about the communication pace because now as you were talking I was sitting here thinking, why aren't you, an HR person looking. Because if you don't have the vision for the business, so you don't have that strategy and those goals, or even if you do have it but you're not communicating it and you're so right if people aren't tied into that, and they're not excited by it, then they're not going to want to develop themselves because they're not going to actually see where that pathway lies. And yeah and it is something that I do see again and again is employee saying they're not being developed enough in here that there's lots and lots of surveys out there and I was having a look at someone in preparation for this episode today, because you know Gallup which is all about employee engagement. It's 87% Was there a survey of millennials, say that professional development or career growth is important. Now some people might hear that girl that's just because the millennials well we need to remember that millennials, can be now 35 So millennials are actually a really large part of our workforce. So if you've got 87%, saying, professional development or career growth is important. Then, just providing a blank development plan and saying, Oh, here you go, just go and fill it out, that's not going to cut it is it. No or had a look at the HR industry in America, because it's a much bigger one that sh RM, and, and one of the engagement surveys, had less than 30% of employees being very satisfied with the advancement opportunities available to them. So then I thought well, Is there anything in Australia so there was something from Gallup in Australia, and it said only 14% of employees in Australia are engaged in their jobs. So, you know, so that there's, there's a direct link between learning and development and engagement in our role so, and even though I threw out the idea because there is always people that will say, Oh, my person just doesn't want to develop and I've certainly had people in my teams that are like that and that's usually for personal reasons they're at a stage in their career where whether it's having young children or whether it's getting ready to retire, but they're just like you know what I'm just happy to do my job, and I'll get on with it and I'll do my thing but that's all I want to do. And, you know, at some point as a leader, you do need to respect that. But at the same time. You know I think that we know that the vast majority of people are looking for learning and development, and that as our businesses. We are not going to be able to survive or thrive, if we're not continually developing our people because if we don't develop our people. Then, our business is not going to be intermediate, you know, we're not going to start, like, you know, with your example was a $12,000 of revenue compared to $250 like, yeah, that's just a great sort of insight into what this can look like if you do have people focused on how to do things differently which comes back to that learning and development.

Lachy Gray
Yeah, absolutely. And I do think that in some ways were set up, perhaps, set up to fail that might be too strong but just the way water certainly when I went to school and university how structured and formal, it was. It makes it very difficult when you get into a workplace where, like my job didn't exist like I went to a digital agency, as my first real job, and when I finished my degree, which was an art IT degree, I said, Well, what we're working on what jobs can I get. And they're like, Oh, I don't know I guess you could you could apply to Accenture. Yeah. And I thought, perhaps that was a bit late to be asking that question. But yeah, so. So if I've wrote learned all this knowledge and facts, and I go into a role that

didn't exist a couple of years ago. It's going to be very, very hard for me to succeed. And if the business doesn't have a culture of acknowledging that and saying hey that's okay we're going to onboard you, and we're going to invest time in training you and showing you the ropes so that set you up for success, then it's very very hard the employees, unhappy and frustrated and employers and I've been frustrated, nobody wins. So, one of my favorite books on this topic is called turn the ship around. And it's written by an ex us submarine commander. David Marquette, and he got tasked with turning around the worst performing submarine in the fleet. And I really like this book, because I think the odds were really stacked against him, and I think of the military and they're so traditionally top down, hierarchical, the commanding officer has absolute command. So, on the outside sounds like a terrible environment, and one that I guess in the workplace. We tried to shift away from for many years. So he's different though he, he takes on the job of trying to chase performance of his crew, and He does it by changing the culture, and his primary goal was to divest control to the officers in the crew. So, away from him as the commanding officer to his crew, which was pretty much unheard of. And he thought the best place to start would be middle management, and because he thought that I would have the biggest impact, and that I would be able to set the example for their subordinates. So I think from memory, there's probably three or 400 people on a summary, it's like, it's amazing how big they are. So, so, in order to get up to that point. The top down hierarchy was seen as critical for maintaining discipline and order right it's a potentially life and death environment. So to make a decision crew members were required to ask for permission from their senior, so he changed that. He wanted everyone in his crew to be a leader. And so he wanted them to be able to make their own decisions. So he started by giving them ownership over their, their leave. So, and rather than them, asking for permission. They were to replace it with stating an intention. So rather than say, can I take leave next Friday, they would say I intend to take leave next Friday. And if their crew mates are happy, give them a thumbs up if there are concerns or questions, the conversation happens, Then in there before alerting the wider team. And when I read that this a couple years ago, I thought this is a great idea. So we implemented that at Yano. So for our leave requests, which used to be approved by me. And I remember thinking at the time, I, this is kind of, kind of ridiculous, because that I've been asked to review and approve something, I don't actually have all the information on the ground, like their team will probably be best placed to know whether that is a good time for them to take leave. Is it going to negatively impact the team that's much harder for me to know I just didn't have the Intel. So the way we, we do it, then we still doing now, is that if the Yano wants to take some leaf I asked the teammates, I say hey I'm intend to take this days off or this week have is cool any concerns they talked about it as a team, if that's all good. Then it comes up to the wider team, hey I intend to take this week off, let me know if there are any concerns. Most of the time. There are no none, and off they go they booked in the holiday calendar. I don't need to be involved in that at all. And yeah cuz, because I think it's a simple thing right. But then, if you think about how that flows through all the other things in, in the day to day, where you would ordinarily have to say, Oh, is it okay if or can I, or are you okay if no, no, I intend to do this. Yeah, so what do you think about that.

Karen Kirton
Oh I love it, I think, like, in a larger organization that becomes very unwieldy. So, you know, if I, I was taking myself back to my last corporate job, where we had over 3000 employees, and I was trying to imagine that working. And it was a very hierarchical organization so it probably wouldn't but however I was then thinking about my team which there was about 25 of us. And yet when someone would take

leave from memory that that's something that we would discuss it a team meeting. Because usually school holidays are obviously the time that everyone wants to take leave so although we weren't doing it from, you know that very much as you've described it, you know, I intend to take leave. We did have open conversations about, you know, How you're going to take the school holidays off which week are you doing okay, we're going to cover you. So I think maybe in a lot of organizations that might happen but maybe not quite as, obviously. And then I think well why not, like, I think that's actually such a good idea to, because that is what happens usually people do need to talk to their team and say well, you know, is this gonna work for you. And if you're not comfortable with doing that then something's really wrong with your team isn't it. So I think that's a good flag, like if you think oh gosh, now I couldn't ask my teammates. You know if my lane is going to impact on them, then that's a big red flag that needs to be, to be worked on. So, now I really like it I think it's a great idea. I think there's probably a lot of HRIS companies that wouldn't like that because their systems are built on, you know hierarchy and going up through the chain to be approved. But, but it is an example, I think as well of how you've taken your own personal learning because you do a lot of reading and then say okay let's implement that into the organization, the fact that you've done that, I think well then encourage other people within your organization, to say, Hey, Lucky here's an idea that I got out of this book. So, and that's part of creating that learning culture isn't it, like we're not just talking about sending people off on to courses, it's about how our behaviors are demonstrated on a day to day basis and the things that we do within our teams that encourage that continual growth mindset. And that is one of the things I was considering with this topic was for small or medium sized businesses. They might just think that, you know, developing their employees is completely out of reach because it's just too expensive. So, what would be the things that you would say well, these are things that you can do on a day to day basis within your business that actually I'm not going to cost you any money but we hope to bring that learning culture, and I'm putting you on the spot, but I'm asking you because it's you know this is obviously a topic that's a bit more of your bread and butter and it's something that I think, you know, you've really been quite successful with with your own business at Yano,

Lachy Gray
also has very kind of you to say, Well, firstly, I would, I would question that premise that that assumption that that's been made there, but it's expensive. And I think that's important to do right so if I think back to this book do you think again, I think it's okay to question assumptions if it's done in a way where you're trying to align and collaborate with the person rather than be adversarial so for me it's like okay, so the counter position to the fact that it's expensive to invest in your people as expensive when, when they leave. It's expensive to hire onboard, continue to train and then they leave. And you probably know those stats better than I do but I think it's up to can be up to 150% of the salary, you know the cost and the time. So I would first of all challenge that assumption second reading. I'm doing at the moment suggests that people are changing jobs. If they're not getting what they want, and perhaps that's always happened and we're just a bit more sensitive to it now because we're looking for it because it's like oh, if, if, businesses and remote or for businesses and in person or people going to move jobs and so I don't know what all the various reasons are, but it does seem like there's a lot of movement. At the moment I keep getting these emails is staff turnover a problem for you. You're trying to retain your stuff and I think wow like this must be a real theme at the moment. So, I think, to, to answer your question, I think I would start with. Yeah, what does success look like for you in the business in 12 to 24 months time. Does everybody know, has that been communicated with the team.

And then working backwards from there to identify roles and functions so what do you want to achieve, what are the key milestones, what are the key work practices and knowledge and skills, knowledge and skills that you were going to need along with the biggest gaps and barriers. There might be some people in the organization, holding you back and they can tackle that sort of separately, and then identifying those one or two key areas to focus on. And this is the thing that I think is really important is to, to pick only just pick one or two things I do, they're practical, and that's what I love about that. David market example. Right, it's, it's very achievable, and in isolation is very small change, really. However, I think the, the outcomes and the results can be exponential. So I think it's trying to identify a few things like that, where can we give the people, our team a little bit more autonomy, there'll be more ownership. And that might be yeah no, like, leave requests, or how they progress to work from home even, can they make those decisions themselves if they're still sort of doing hybrid. Also, if there's a few people who are really interested in this. Create a you know a bit of a committee or just a group to get them together, and they can represent the everyone else in the organization, and try and make it happen. And one way to think about this is it's to think of it like as a as an experiment. And even as r&d. So, put a little bit of budget against it, even if it's like, you know 1000 bucks, with some budget against it put a timeline against it and give it a go and give it to that group and say hey, this is an experiment. And I'd like you to come back in three months time, and, and tell me your findings. And I think that's already a big step forward, and potentially I'll learn a lot off the back of that alone. And then the other thing, which is something that we did is actually creating a handbook for culture, especially if, if you've had to go hybrid. So, what are the what are the values in the business, how are they practiced, day to day so not just values sticking on the wall like integrity, respect, honesty and transparency. That's great. How are they, how are we going to know if that's actually happening. Dates today. How do we communicate with each other. What's everyone's expectations of each other at work, and how do we use tools like Microsoft Teams or slack, Zoom, so we're all on the same page. How do we have difficult conversations with each other, how do we check in our well being. So, I think, I don't know that for us. Having gone fully remote, we've been forced to do this we've been forced to write it down, because there's something about the office where some of these things are just present that like you walk in, you've got things on the wall, how you set up the office, it communicates culture. When you're fully remote, you've got none of that you've got to create it from scratch, it's intangible. But as much as the outcome of that, I think, is powerful, it's actually the, the journey it's like it's the work doing it, there's conversations that you're having, it's like, Oh, is that how you think about that. Okay. And so why are we spending so much time talking about how we run a meeting. Well, because we'd run a lot of meetings. And we want to run them as productivity as well as possible. To maximize the time, so we write an agenda prior, and everyone reads it, ideally we everyone adds notes to it, I synchronously. So the meeting itself is more of a discussion than everyone comes in just arrives and then looks at everything for the first time and thinks off the top of their head about what they want to say. So just, just things like that so I think it's actually, it's often the, I think for my experiences the process. That's really powerful and getting people to buy into that. If they will, if they want to know because they have to because they want to. And then they've got ownership over the the outcomes, and then when new people start, they're the ones who are onboarding the new people say hey, this is how we communicate at Yano, for example, and I, personally, I get a massive kick out of that, because that's staff lead. Yeah.

Karen Kirton

Yeah and I think, you know what I picked up on your what you've been talking about is, firstly the idea of meaningful work, so you know if we're if we're working out what are the skills that we need in the business and then we're developing people to those skills and you know, like you said having staff lead onboarding processes, you know, in meaningful work is going to drive engagement and that's going to stop you from doing that emails while you're caring about the emails teenager type stuff because you won't need those emails because you're retaining stuff, and also the idea of how do we actually get like minded people together. And, you know, having them bounce off each other because there will be people that are more interested in continual learning than others. And it made me think, one of the things that I used to do with my team meetings. When I had a much larger team is, I would actually just have a section of that monthly meeting where it was open to anyone was basically like an open mic, so you know you had to tell me beforehand and nominate the meeting but you know what, what do you want to come and talk to us about can be anything you want. And one of them that really stuck in my head and actually changed my behavior as well as one of my team members and she won't mind me saying she's a very left wing hippie dippie kind of person fantastic woman. And we're still great friends. But, you know, she came to the meeting to talk to us about plastic soft plastic recycling the shopping centers and Coles and because back then, none of us, even knew that that was a thing. And so you know it was it was a topic completely unrelated to our business or what we were doing but that was the idea of it, it was just about bringing something to the meeting and presenting to the rest of the team, something that you had a lot of interest and passion in. And then we all got some learning out of something different. So, you know, so that's a, another way that people can can do this it's just put it out to the team and just, you know, see what bubbles up because I do remember laughing quite hard because she would wash all of her glad wrap. Yeah, which I just found crazy but over time I've become more and more guilty about single use plastics. But I still think about her every time I use glad wrap and, you know, when I get beeswax wrap so you know we're talking, this was over 10 years ago, that that would have happened so that really stuck in my mind so I think that's the way to do it as well I think you're talking about just having conversations with people, and, yeah, it's that classic. Everyone's heard I think of you know the Hawthorne effect which is here that experiment from way back in the 20s, where the Hawthorne plant of this electric company spent five years studying 1000s of workers to try and work out what was going to impact on productivity and they changed the lighting rest periods coffee breaks, together free lunches at shorter workdays different locations I tried everything. But what they found was that it was just when the workers were given special attention was when their productivity increased so the fact that they knew they were being watched is what caused the productivity to go up so you know though it's an extreme example I think what it does show is that, you know, as people we do like people to notice what we're doing. So, so you know that's another way that we can develop staff is by actually giving them that attention and having those conversations and, you know, having those one on ones or or really digging down if they've got a blank development plan, then saying I will you know, why is it blank. And, you know, and I totally agree with you, you should only be concentrating on one or two things because any more than that you're just not going to do it. So I try to encourage people to, you know, have one thing that they're going to do over the next two weeks and that could just be listening to a TED talk, you know, reading a chapter of a book or it could just be talking to someone in the business that they haven't spoken to in a while, like, it doesn't have to be anything that takes a little time or is expensive. And then once you've done that for the two weeks then okay they pick something else that you're gonna do over the next three weeks and generally over time people will build up what they're doing. So rather than just doing that one hour TED Talk, all of a sudden like oh, actually I'm gonna, you

know, Go and do this LinkedIn online training course. It'll take me an hour a week and I'm gonna do it over three weeks and then that's gonna be my development goal so I think sometimes it's, it's also just helping people to understand what development is and what you say was just, yeah, just really I thought was so insightful about the way that we learn at school and university then we go into the workplace and that's why we're so stuck this idea that I must do a training course in order to develop, you know, and it's got to be actually sitting down in a classroom with a workbook, which we know that's not really going to help. It takes a lot more than you know, just a short training course to to get any change but. But I think you're right, that is where it comes from this idea about how we develop ourselves.

Lachy Gray
Yeah, Yeah, and I have got young kids and, and this has been just highlighted to me in such bright lights, watching them learn. They, they're not afraid of being wrong. They're not following any rules, they ask a lot of questions, they try stuff, they make mistakes, and I get feedback, and they try again. And it's wonderful to watch isn't it because I guess the ego is not online yet as well. Yeah. And then that changes so fast. The ego comes online, and we become a little bit more self conscious about not knowing something. And to your point before about the growth mindset yeah you, the opposite of that is to have that fixed mindset. And I think in that growth mindset book they talk about kids as young as four. Having that fixed. Well, demonstrating that fixed mindset already when they're playing with toys and that's, it's just, wow, blows me away. And so if that's not identified. That's potentially for life. Oh yeah, it goes through, and then

Karen Kirton
to break as well, especially if you don't even know, like if you don't even know what fixed mindset and growth mindset is like you're not even coming from a base of knowing that you potentially have a problem.

Lachy Gray
And then you go to a workplace with a potentially unhealthy culture very rigid, and you are not being set up for success. So, I think, yeah, thinking about how we learn, and coming back to the mindset. I think that's really important. So, I really love you. I love you example, and I think that's it it's like showing up at work. Well, for it to be okay to show up at work. I think that's the key thing isn't it so it's got to come from leadership. And ideally, not just by through words, but through actions that its latest it's okay for a leader to be vulnerable to say that they don't know the answer to something, but we're going to find out together. I think that can be incredibly liberating because, again, it's a it's a, it's a nuance so language tweak, but it's really powerful because then a thing. Oh, so that means if I'm doing something and I don't know. That's okay. And therefore I'm more likely to ask my colleagues to help, ask questions, and probably produce better work as a result. And I think this for me one of the key things in a healthy culture and a learning culture is feedback, because I think it's a foundational element of learning. You need feedback to know where you're at. You don't get any feedback. How do you know how you're going. And I think, like from my experiences I was never taught how to give or receive feedback. And most of the feedback that I received was negative. And it was General. Oh, we don't do like that. Oh, that's that's not how we do oh that's, You didn't do a good job on that. Okay. So, if I were to do it differently in the future. Which part of my changing. I had no idea. So, one of the things I'm really

passionate about is, is feedback in the workplace, and actually practicing how to give and receive feedback. So we've got a framework was very simple really. We take everybody through. And in a nutshell. It's. Think about the feedback in terms of what's the behavior that you observed. What's the impact. And then, was trying to assume positive intent, so that the person wasn't doing it to be malicious and ask for their permission to give them the feedback Hey Is now a good time and let them know we want to talk about that I'd like to give you some feedback so they've got. They've they have permission to say no, now's not the best time. Can we talk about later. And then we roleplay at once a month. As a team, I now it's online used to be in person. Now it's online, we pick a couple of scenarios and we actually talk through it. So we talked through a scenario we identify all those outsiders went through as a team, which is really fun because one of the things with, with, When we talk about behavior. So for example, Sally has been lights the last few meetings. What's the behavior that we identified there. The behavior is that she's like, it's really easy to add on some judgment. So, well that's because she's a squishy lazy. She can't manage your time off Sally She's hopeless. Now, what's the behavior, she's like, what's the impact. Well, that sends us as a signal that signals to the rest of people in the meeting that Sally doesn't respect their time perhaps. And I think it's really powerful, just even talking through that as a team and we would catch it every time that that judgment are coming. Oh, is that, is that a behavior judgment, oh yeah that's actually judgment, all we can say is that the behavior is this. And then, we, we practice it so someone gives the feedback, and someone receives it and then we swap them then we talk about that experience which is super awkward at the start. But, and now in zoom we actually use breakout rooms, so we just, we break out, we automatically get paid, or randomly get assigned into the rooms, biser, so we just do it in pairs, so it's good, so it's a little bit of a safe space, it's only two people. And then we come back in as a group, and then talk about it. And then, we, we try and we try and really encourage that we're giving and receiving feedback within the next four weeks until we do the next roleplay. So we've got a thanks channel in Slack, where we regularly shout out each other things that we've done that we appreciate. And the amazing thing is, it feels good to receive it. Or, of course, to give it, but then just a witnessing. It's crazy, I we all, we talk about all the time, right, just to watch someone else giving and receiving positive feedback, feels good.

Karen Kirton
Yeah. And I think it'd be a bit dopamine hit wouldn't you even. Yeah, you just watching someone else achieved their goal but you're still getting that.

Lachy Gray
And even when we roleplay. Right, and someone gives you positive feedback, it's just based on a made up scenario, it still feels good. Yeah, like, it's like the body receives it in the same way. Even though the mind knows that it's, it's false. Yeah. And, and I think it helps to build trust. You know we've talked about trust before I think trust is fundamental, but it's like okay great, Lucky. How do we just create trust. And I do think trust has to be earned. And I think this is one way to do it. And, also, that we try to practice we try to give positive feedback to negative in a ratio of five to one. So at least five pieces of positive feedback to one negative, Or can we actually call them negative constructive feedback, so it doesn't have that label. And I actually got that ratio from relationship counseling. When I was reading about it. And they would. The study was, they could look at a conversation that a couple was having until you how healthy that relationship was just based on that ratio, because what we found is, because you need to build up the trust through the positive feedback, and through knowing that the person has

your back. So that when it comes to giving that having that difficult conversation. It's a little bit easier for you to assume positive intent on their behalf, rather than, are they saying that to put me down, or to put them ahead and make them look great in front of our boss. So I think it's

Karen Kirton
harder to find the positive I know that sounds weird but just the way that we're wired as humans. When you actually have to sit down and say okay, you know I need to think of five positive things it's not gonna be that difficult, but we don't often sit down and think about that, whereas the negative causes us pain which is why we're more likely to give the negative.

Lachy Gray
Absolutely. So there's a great quote around this which is Teflon is for the positive and Velcro for the negative. Where, positive, positive feedback and compliments and so on. I seem to just slide right by that one negative thing, And I know this. If I have a negative experience, you know, when I'm doing my shopping so for example if someone, I don't know something or glares at me or whatever, I remember that. Why, it just is not beneficial to me in no way. Yeah, but I remember that and the five positive things that I had at work with the kids or whatever. It's hard for me to remember it so just being mindful of that I think is powerful, but they're fragile as human beings. We're so fragile, especially this time where there's so much change. But then, and I've experienced this myself is often, I think we, we can assume that if someone's doing something well, that they know that they're doing it well, yes. Thatcher said I think is false, like they, we don't know it, unless we let them know. Yeah. So, especially for people who are I don't know maybe really confident presenting or they really, they manage their time really well they write really well it's like oh well, they've been doing it for years. You know that's probably that's just who they are. But what happens if they've never received positive feedback on.

Karen Kirton
Oh and so lately happens, you know, I've come across people like that I remember someone I worked with who's actually still a friend of mine and she was such a great presenter. And I remember saying to her, like I just I love the way that you present like because even, you know, and I do a lot of presenting but I still get that feeling of nervousness And she said, Oh, are you kidding me, she's like, Look at my hands are shaking I'm covered in sweat. Yeah and it was just me just say, Oh, wow, like, I would never pick that up in a million years I think you did such a great job for these reasons. And I think because she was such a good presented no one had actually told her that, like, here are the good things that you're doing, which is why you're doing so well so, and I, I've always kept that in my head because you just, you just don't know Do you like sometimes you think people are great at something, but you don't actually realize that they don't realize or they might think they're terrible at it. Yeah, it's really, humans that are interesting creatures,

Lachy Gray
but we are interesting. Yeah. And, but the thing is that we've got some idea of, of how our brains work, but we don't always practice it, and it's funny but my, my business partner Mark has his own personal Slack channel. I think it's called Mark happy, or something like that. And any positive feedback that he gets that via slack, he puts in there for when he's having a bad day. And he's a bit down he goes and reads it, love it, and it can just reframe. His current perspective, which can feel all consuming, and then

it's like, hold on. Yesterday, I was on top of the world. Yeah, which means tomorrow. I'm probably going to be okay. And it's little things like that, that we're not so I've got my own channel now. And that I use works it's another little simple thing. It sounds super funny and silly but I love it.

Karen Kirton
It's really powerful think about like Master salesperson, and, you know, is there any job in the world where you just get knocked about the head everything could say other than a salesperson like you know so, so I can say, yeah, for a salesperson to have a mock happy channel Oh, absolutely, I guess, they're probably every second day, but also for you as a business owner, like you know we're often the people that we're not going to get that feedback so sometimes it's good to go back and go, Oh no, actually I am doing okay. He, you know, because you don't have that someone above you, that has to do it. So, yeah.

Lachy Gray
Well that's right, and Adam grants done some research on this, he's that organizational psych, I mentioned before about leaders in the business, asking for feedback. So, in this business, they wanted to have more more feedback between the teams and from the leaders, and so they tested the leaders asking or requesting feedback, which we've worked for a little short time and then disappeared again that effect disappeared. And what they found was most beneficial and actually long lasting, was when they excuse me was when the leader, actually criticized themselves. Here's something that I've not so good at, here's something that I'm working on, and I would love your feedback on it. And the reason why they think that worked was, because there is that element of fee. If you're short your leader can ask you for feedback. What happens if they don't like it. Yeah. What does that mean for you in your role like is it safe. So, if the leader criticizes themself. Then, the signal there is that they're probably okay to receive it as well. Yeah, the comfortable there. The ego is balanced. So I've really taken that on board and I'm trying to make a habit of doing that because I asked for feedback a lot but it's, it's often general like, I'd love to. I'd love your feedback on this and I think that's really hard.

Karen Kirton
Yeah, I love that I'm gonna give that a go because I'm terrible at lots of things so that's that's not difficult.

Lachy Gray
So where do we start. Here's my list of 100 things.

Karen Kirton
And it just made me think, actually, on that and then also when you're saying before about, you know, leaders, kind of like pulling back and letting their employees make mistakes and you're giving that ownership because I suppose I'm funny that happened this week we have a client who Elaine in my team is her main consultant, but I work with her as well and I've known her for a long time, and she was sending some emails this week to Elaine but copying me. And I have a thing that if something sent to someone else and I'm just copied then I, you know, I look over it but I don't actually go into any detail. Um, and then a couple of days later I spoke to Elaine and she said, Did you think my response was right and I said I'm sure it was, she's like, What do you mean?! she's like I thought you were checking

what I was doing I thought that you would jump in if I was incorrect. I was like, No, was the email was to you, and I know that you can do this, I don't need to check your stuff, if you aren't sure then, you know, just ask me because don't assume that I'm actually looking at it, and that was a bit of a wake up call to me because I have always been probably a little bit too hands off. And it has been, you know, a criticism of me as a leader over time is that, you know, I, I do just let people go. And I probably shouldn't do that as much as I do, or I need to communicate that better, what I'm doing. So, yeah, so you've just basically given me that as my homework. You know I need to think about. Yeah, those sorts of instances and how do I communicate better to my team about well, actually, this is the way that that I work so if you, if you do actually need help or feedback was something that I need you to actually like, tell me that it lady because I don't get the hint. So, but yeah I love that you're doing that practicing of negative and positive feedback as well and you're trying to keep that ratio of five to one. When you first started talking about it, I just thought off the level of discomfort is like super high for most people walking into that, I think, but because you're doing it every month, like, I can see that it would become fun. It's just Yes. Yeah, but as a new person walking in it's like wow really this is what we're doing.

Lachy Gray
Yeah, what am I signed up for. Yeah, isn't that the thing though, it becomes normalized, yes. So, and because you're being vulnerable. Yes. So, some of these things that we're talking about, it's actually a vehicle to achieve them whilst learning at the same time. Yeah, so it's really powerful and I've only come to realize this, the more that we've done it, we've done it for a couple of years now. And I now look at it as one of our key foundations, you know, on our culture, because it takes so many boxes and we've evolved a lot as well. And actually, we did on Monday. This week, I had a scenario in there was more about checking in on someone's well being. Because my assumption is that often the desire is there to check in on someone, but we might not know what to say. Yeah, I don't know have the words I know how to approach it, and especially when you're remote because you've got to be explicit about you can't just walk past and say, Oh hey, here you go, are you okay. And my concern is, if we're thinking. So and so it looks a little bit withdrawn or a little bit quieter than usual. I wonder if they're okay, probably okay, I'll check in with him tomorrow. But what if they not. Okay, so we had a scenario in there that we talked through. And it was use a very similar framework, but it was just about checking in and saying yeah, like you don't seem to be your usual self. How are you going, and then we're going to do some more work on that which is giving some guidance as to what happens if they say that they're not okay. Yeah.

Karen Kirton
Mental Health First Aiders can really be important in those situations if you have people on the team that I'm particularly interested in, being skilled up in that kind of area, because that there'll be people that just are not comfortable with those types of conversations at all. And there'll be others that are actually really super keen to help their colleagues.

Lachy Gray
Yeah, well my, my hope with my sort of ultimate goal with feedback is that it becomes such a normal part of our culture that we don't even call it feedback. Yeah. It's just what we do. Yeah. And the same we're checking in. I think I'm going to check in now and have a chat. And we've got those frameworks there, which again comes back to the mindset like mindset and frameworks for me are very similar,

because they're things that are really quite simple. They may change over time, they probably should change over time, As we think again, but they can be applied to whole bunch different scenarios and situations. So they're not fixed. So it's not like knowledge. For example, which might be out of date very quickly. And that's as I go on in my in my career, I actually put a lot more emphasis and value on on frameworks, just tell me a couple of frameworks and it can be applied. And what I love about things like feedback. I probably use it more in my personal life and in my professional life. Because conversations with family say are arguably harder, because you're all the history and emotional context and then your family. Yeah, you don't leave in that conversation, it's definitely, yeah. So, and I was always say to the team like yeah this is, this is for you as a person. And yeah, you, you, you will use it at Ghana, but you're just as likely, and more more likely to use it outside of work. And as well, and also take it with them. So, how cool would that be is a measure of success. If somebody in a couple years tell us they're Yana within their lives gonna go somewhere else. A couple of years later and they, if they hit me up and say, hey, hey lucky I, I had a really difficult conversation. But that framework that we practice with it helped me. Wow. That would feel amazing. Well,

Karen Kirton
I think you're creating leaders of the future looking because you know there's a lot of people that don't do this are uncomfortable with their little organizations that don't do these. So, you know, and that goes back to what we're talking about today, which is that learning culture so what you're doing, by having that learning cultures you, you're building people up to be better people in their personal lives as well as their work lives but you're also building your organization future proofing that as well. So, and just talking about learning culture do we want to go to our article. So because I did some Googling, that's you do. Oh actually bringing because I'm going away from Google, not that I'm saying that Microsoft much better but I'm trying to do what I can to, to stay away from Google. So I did some digging, and I found there was a lot of articles about learning culture that were related to the agile methodology which I wasn't expecting that. So what it sort of tells me is that maybe this idea of learning culture again, you know, as we've been talking about remote working is this more aligned to businesses that are in the tech space. These days, has a, you know, fallen off the agenda for other organizations but. But I did find one that talked about some statistics about a strong learning culture so it said if you have a strong learning culture, you're fixed 46% more likely to be first to market. And I think that makes sense because if you're a learning culture then you're, you're going to be more attuned to your market and what they need. And so you're going to be building products and services that suit that they have 37% greater employee productivity. So I know it's just a number, but if you think about 37%. So if you have 10 people basically compared to the organization next to you that has 10 people well they actually 13.7. So I think that that's actually a lot. And you're 58% more prepared to meet future demands so and then it kind of goes into a couple what is a learning culture and, you know, how do you actually put that into place because that's what I was more interested in, and it said that the steps to take is to evaluate the engagement and motivation of learners, the kind of what we've talked about is you know, how do we know if people are actually interested in this anyway, allowing employees to learn at their own pace, and just being able to work out what they want to do so it's not a one size fits all, providing opportunities for learners to control their own learning. Doing the large scale learning still as personalized so I think you know still bringing it back to what are you actually trying to get as the outcome in the organization, and to have a look at what are the measures of success so if we're going to do this type of training and we're going to traditional training. Then what are we looking at in terms of the measures of them

actually bringing that back to the job, and being able to apply it or not, so I thought that was like it was a good, I guess, overview of a learning culture but I still interestingly found it difficult to find something that gave me kind of practical steps. As an organization, but I'm not sure if you found something similar or whether you went down a completely different path in what you're looking for in terms of articles.

Lachy Gray
It's interesting, isn't it, I don't think there is a, there's no silver bullet with this stuff. I see. I went back to my notes for an article from 1991, from dinosaurs in HBr, teaching, smart people how to learn. And this is a topic that I find quite interesting that that smart people, so those based on IQ, are often the easiest to fraud. And they often they've been shown to have trouble changing their beliefs, because they find patterns really fast, very fast, but then they have trouble updating them, or they believe that because they're an expert in one thing that they're an expert in other domains, which is not true, and they don't like to be seen as not knowing, so they'll go along with something. And so apparently, especially medical professionals have favorite targets for for scammers for that reason, because they want, they're less likely to say, I don't know I'm not comfortable about this it's like, oh yeah, they want to be staying like they know. Yeah. So anyway, that was a massive tangent but. So the author talks to his research that the smartest and most successful. Successful people often find learning difficult, because they can be self because of their self defensiveness, because he says, Many professionals are almost always successful at what they do they really experienced failure. And because they really failed. They've never learned how to learn from failure. Yes. So, when things do go wrong. They can be defensive, they screen out criticism, they put the blame on anyone and everyone but themselves. And he says, in short, their ability to learn shuts down and precisely at the moment when they need it most. And I think this is true. I think this is very true and I know for me, I'm not saying that I'm smart, but I know I've struggled with feedback, which might sound ironic, especially constructive feedback because I think you'll have in my mind, like the where I'm at and I find it. I found it in our past very difficult to hear otherwise. Yeah. Because yeah, it hurts my ego. And it might be means extra work. I have to do something again, but I'm starting to accept the fact that by not leaning into that feedback are mostly if I don't do this, then I'm going to start my own growth. Yeah. So, he talks about. He says that companies often think motivation is the key to learning, you know, whether that's bonuses or, or whatever. He says it's. He said it's not just about how staff feel it's how they think, so it's about teaching people how to raise and reflect on their behavior, which is more important in some jobs than others so in knowledge work, really important, Really important. And so he says, How do you change, he says. He says really hard. It takes time but it's quite a start of the leadership and his suggestion is that you use a difficult decision or a topic with a lot of disagreement. As an example, and you get everyone to write down their assumptions and what they believe, and then you discuss it as a group, and people can examine their own role the difficulties that came up, and especially sort of examples of assertions like you always or the client always just acknowledging those and saying, Well, that's one way of looking at it. What are some others, which is actually very similar to the whole thing I think again, idea is like, there's so many different perspectives on things, but often were presented with a binary in the office or fully remote. Right, wrong, hot, cold, like we'd love to do it because it makes it easier to, to buy information and make sense of a ton of information, but it's, it's kind of inaccurate. So I think this this kind of idea where you get together and you actually break apart, something that's been challenging. He's an interesting one. I think to do so you'd probably need to have some trust there, and a fairly healthy culture because I'm imagining it could go south pretty quickly.

Karen Kirton

Yeah, I think you're right, and those absolutes are always dangerous yeah and you hear people say you know this person never or they always and yeah it's it's hard because you do have to stop and say okay well, so when you say always really think that through. Is it always, because I'm sure it's not, but it is what we naturally do and it can be really damaging. But I do like that idea of getting something really difficult and saying hey let's break this apart look at it, it was all different angles because, yeah, that is a great way to learn.

Lachy Gray

Yeah, because I guess it's sometimes referred to as a post mortem. We do them for non tech bodies on our projects, do a post mortem and we say well what worked, what didn't work. The other thing that we've, we've experimented with is assigning a devil's advocate. So, especially when we're doing our strategy sessions, because I'm really, we're not concerned I'm mindful of us being an echo chamber. We will start to think the same way. So, we will often just randomly assigned someone devil's advocate, they have to take the counter position, or whatever, everyone is talking about, talking about or even better really excited about, oh, we should go down we should do this feature. Okay, well that's not going to work. I'm gonna tell you why. And it's, it's hard, it's sad it's so interesting because it's so hard when someone starts to pull apart, something that you're in love with. Even though I bought him only thought about five minutes ago. Yeah, but it was, it forces us to really like dive into well why do I believe that like why am I excited about it. And on the other side, learning to try to see, yeah, the counter position on something, even if we believe in the thing, which is a part of being a critical thinking, I guess. And one reason why I get so excited about that apart from the fact of hopefully leveling up how we think, is, I think it's a really critical skill, as we're trying to digest, like all these news and media information. Trying to think about if we start to form a belief on something, so like the vaccinations now for example is a good one. Yeah. What's the counter view on that. And it might be easier if we really, we strongly believe in, in vaccination, it might be, that's ridiculous like How could you think otherwise, I'm not even going to bother. Well, but people do. People firmly believe that the vaccination is a bad idea for a whole bunch of reasons. So, at least familiarising. So in this case myself with those arguments, so that I can be certain of my physician. I find that really interesting, because again it's learning isn't it like it's, it's learning about well how did I get to what I believe, have I actually done the work to have that opinion.

Karen Kirton

Yeah levels of discomfort in that too, because you may want to reassess what you thought your position was

Lachy Gray

massive. Warren Buffett's investment partner, Charlie Munger, he talks to this he said, you've got to do the work to have an opinion. And if you don't know the other side's position, better than they do. You haven't done the work, like you don't deserve to have an opinion on it, which is, which is fine to say, it takes a huge amount of time I've found to do that right you can't do it with everything just takes too much time, but I think as a concept it's agree. Maybe you can listen,

Karen Kirton

I guess that's the point isn't it if you don't have the time to learn the other position then you can just listen to the other person. So, which is

Lachy Gray

exactly, yeah, it's gonna help you as well. Yeah.

Karen Kirton

I like the idea of the devil's advocate that did remind me of reverse brainstorming as well I don't know if you've ever given that ago, but rather than saying, you know, how do we get 20,000 in revenue this month you say how do we lose 20,000 in revenue this month. I like it because it'll just give you really different ideas and things that you go, oh yeah, actually, that will make us lose revenue, why are we doing that. Yeah. Anyway, another idea.

Lachy Gray

That's great. Write that one down.

Karen Kirton

Other idea for the other day. Now our question without notice I actually, I cheated a little bit because I went to someone that's been listening to this podcast that I know quite well. And I said to her, you know, if you had to ask lucky your question what would it be. It's a bit double barreled, but I'm just going to ask it as she's written it so she said how do you prevent unconscious biases in your hiring practices if you're hiring for culture. So, you know, are you actually preventing diversity or inclusion through hiring for a particular culture. And if you don't hire for culture then how do you foster your culture.

Lachy Gray

Thanks so much. I do appreciate you saying it prior because it's yeah it's it's a B. Yeah. So I guess in regards to preventing unconscious bias. I would argue that, I don't think you can prevent it entirely. My understanding of biases is that they're hard coded into our brain. And one of the preeminent researchers in this space, Daniel Kahneman, who kind of wrote the book about biases in Thinking Fast and Slow says he still falls victim to them. A number of times and I love that, because he's human. Yeah. So I think there's some steps that know those steps that way take. So, firstly, familiarizing everyone who's hiring for a role, about biases. Like, did they exist, what are they, how they can manifest what they look like. And I actually, I use a document that Google, I don't know if they still use it but they used to give it to hiring managers before they interviewed it's got a whole list of biases in it. So I think just being aware of it. In the same way that we call that a few biases before we do our 360 feedback cycles for example, like recency bias that you're being asked to give feedback, the last six months you can probably only remember the last two months maybe one month you're lucky. Yeah, it's not representative. So I think talking just talking about it prior and just trying to get everyone to think about it. I think talking about diversity. What does that mean for us. And not just in culture, but also of perspectives. And, you know, to the point before about being worried about an echo chamber, it's something that we talk about a lot. So, we, we like to look for people from a variety of backgrounds, we're not hiring an accountant for example that needs to have started accounting and then be chartered accountant. Not at all. We actually, we hire quite broadly. I think being clear about how the

candidate will be assessed and ranked. Before we start, so it's pre some criteria together. And then using that throughout and actually ranking against it so each of us doesn't know we talk through those so if it's out of five. I've put it through you've put a four, it gives us some quantitative data to discuss, yeah. I try to ask all the candidates, the same questions. So we write them all out prior. We've got a script we follow it quite closely. Which I struggle with. I love interviewing and I love just going off and rambling, asking a lot of questions because I like learning about people. Then I find it's actually really hard to compare people because then it's just based on how much I like them.

Karen Kirton
how good you chat was

Lachy Gray
how good the chat was. Yeah. And I remember reading some research while ago that, that, that suggested that when we're meeting people for the first time so say an interview, we make a decision about them in the first 10 seconds, and then spend the rest of the time, looking for information to confirm that decision. Yes, whether we like them or we don't like them and I think about that a lot because I think it's so true, it's really hard I find it really hard not to not to do that. Yeah. And then going remote has been interesting for our hiring so we interview on Zoom, and we record the interview we asked obviously for the candidates permission. So that other Yadavas can watch later on and, and what we do we actually recommend that they just listen. Rather than watching the video into really focusing on what the person saying and how they say it, rather than what they look like, and more commonly, what's in their background. Yeah, they got their laundry there, what what the books on the bookshelf, and I admit to this when I'm actually if I'm interviewing assume I often minimize the window myself. I'm just listening, because I find it too much information coming at me. So I really want to focus on what person is saying. So, this some of the things that, that we, that we do are we preventing unconscious bias I don't think so. But we're trying to. And I think trying to be clear about what does hiring for cultural fit mean. And I think it's for us it's more about attitude. And how someone thinks, rather than their particular experience or or so on, in a role, because again, like that mindset is what they're going to bring. And if they've already got it. So stay comfortable learning comfortable making mistakes, asking questions that we're not so worried about their domain specific expertise because they can learn that, because they just showed us they got the framework. So, what did you think I mean it's, man this is such a tough question. What do you think about this question.

Karen Kirton
Which is why I know this segment is a question without notice, but I did send it to Lachy in advance because I, yeah, I knew that would be unfair to just lob that on you. But I think it's something that I, I have been personally thinking a lot about and we've started to look into different AI, providers, because although we're not a recruitment agency and we don't offer recruitment as a core service offering, but we do help our clients out with recruitment when they ask us to. So, I was looking at it from that perspective is can we actually, you know, get a subscription for one of these platforms that then we can utilize across many of our clients so they don't need to pay for it themselves. And so, you know, it just becomes a lot more cost effective then and. And the reason I started to look at it again so I've always kind of shied away from it because at the end of the day, AI is only as good as the person that's you know, putting that AI together like there's still going to be bias you can't get rid of it 100% But a couple

that I'm actually demoing at the moment, that are actually quite large ones, Australian, and, you know, you're basically identifying well these are the skills that I need for the job so I need analytical thinking I need problem solving. You know those types of skills, I'm not talking about I need, you know, Microsoft Excel or Trello or whatever. And then you identify these are skills I need for the job, and you're pushing that into the AI, and then they basically do skills tests with the candidates before you ever even speak to them or see their resume or anything. So that's the first step is they do these skills test and that pulls out okay these are the ones that you actually need to look at so you don't even have to look at a resume. I love the idea of that because I think that original is only as good as the person that wrote it. And there are a lot of professional resume writers out there. So you're either picking someone because they've paid the money to someone to write a really good resume, or they're a good copywriter themselves which is often not the job that you're actually hiring for. So there's that one. There's another one, which is actually an AI that interviews the candidate. So the candidate can call into a number it's available 24 seven, and they have a 10 minute interview with an AI, and what the interview goes through his you know questions which are obviously selected about the job. And then the AI, then compares the person's responses to everyone else in the internet really goes through the AWS, Amazon Web Services data, it goes through the Google Data, and says, Okay, this is where we think this person lands in terms of you know their assertiveness or their creativity, etc. And, and you know and that cost you $10 An interview. So I'm looking at those kinds of things at the moment because I, I actually think is that a better way to shortlist, so let's just use the technology that's available to get a shortlist that will then tell me okay these are the three people that you should interview, and then you can go through the behavioral based interview and like you said, you know, use the same questions with every person you make ratings you make sure you got more than one person during the interview you know all of those things which will help. And then you also may do some pre employment testing at the end because we know that you know integrity tests and cognitive ability, the biggest predictors and I think that if you're going to go through the AI process or behavioral based interview, and you're going to then do some appropriate testing, You're going to be able to predict or statistically you'll be able to predict much better over 70% Whether that person will be successful in the job versus about, it's less than 20% If you don't, so. Yeah, so do I think there's ever going to be a perfect solution no but you know we've actually come a long way I think with with AI we've got a real opportunity at the moment to try and use that in different ways so. And you know, and the results may not suit, some people like some business owners may just think note that that person needs to have x y and Zed experience. And if you have that mindset that this kind of process won't work for you because you actually need to have the mindset of I need someone with these skills that are transferable into my business rather than I need this particular experience because that way I don't have to train them as much or you know that they'll kick off from day one, whereas the reality is is if you have those transferable skills, you will be able to kick off from day one, even if you haven't, you know, worked in that exact job before.

Lachy Gray
It's really interesting. Yeah, I'm often busy with stuff out that's that's really cool. I'd love to hear how you go with that,

Karen Kirton
I'll definitely let you know. Yeah, because yeah we're testing it out at the moment so we can say okay we think this is the best way to go and then we can share that with our clients to be able to use

Lachy Gray

Amazing basically isn't that interesting, because I do think that, that for knowledge work roles where it is, as you say more focus on transferable skills. What does that mean for the traditional university degree. And does it still have relevance. Because it's, it's, we don't really put much weight on it anymore. Because, yeah, it's more about how you think. He said transferable skills and how you've applied in different roles like almost your life experience. Yes, rather than what you did or didn't learn in three or four years, while your party.

Karen Kirton

Still, is obviously a big argument about whether university degrees are even valid by the time you finish it, I think, yeah, they do have other aspects to them which make them valuable to actually have a sense of the person can be dedicated to something and you know study and all that kind of stuff but I agree with you at the end of the day, you know at the moment you can go and do a Salesforce certification and earn as much money as you could being more probably more than being a teacher where you spent four years at uni so it's definitely a mismatch in in what's happening at the moment with whether, you know, these university courses are valuable in meeting the requirements that are actually needed by businesses right now

Lachy Gray

Absolutely. That's a no. So my question for you. I was going to share this because I thought that would be fair but then I did it so. Yeah. Yeah, I know. I don't think it's too cheeky but you can be the judge. So if you could implement one thing at businesses around Australia, to improve their workplace culture, what would it be and then how would you measure success.

Karen Kirton

Yeah that is tricky because there's obviously a lot of components to culture, but one thing, what's the one thing that's going to make a difference. I think the one thing that's going to make a difference would be to actually talk and listen to their employees so I think if there's one thing that I would say. You can do it would be put out a confidential anonymous staff satisfaction engagement survey, get the results back and then do something with the results, I think, yeah, there's only one thing you can do to me that's the one thing that would then help you to drive your workplace culture. Because, similar to what you're saying about the echo chamber. If you're any thinking to yourself, and I've definitely seen this in business owners that the organization is fantastic, and it might be fantastic from their perspective but there might be a bunch of people in the organization that actually completely disagree with that and therefore engaging in counterproductive behaviors, which sometimes you may not see the results of that for months or years. And then all of a sudden, you start to lose people or your biggest clients walk away, you end up with bullying claims like a lot of this stuff is slow burn. So I think the more that you can engage with the people that are actually in your business because they are your business at the end of the day, your business is not your product or services, your business is your people that are providing those to the more you can engage with them and understand how they're thinking and feeling and what they want from the workplace and try and work to achieve that. Then, I think that's going to have the biggest impact on your culture and your, your business success.

Lachy Gray
 Awesome.

Karen Kirton
Thanks, I'll pay you back for that

Lachy Gray
Maybe. Well, thanks so much. I really enjoyed this conversation. As always, I've learned a lot and I've written a bunch of things down so really looking forward to continuing the conversation with you.