

Meghan M. Biro: Recruiting and retention, sitting in a tree.

Yup. You got it. Today on Worktrends, we're talking about the love fest between recruiting candidates and keeping them happy at work. You're going to want to stick around for this one, folks.

Today's episode is brought to you by AllyO, the end to end AI recruiter.

Welcome to the Worktrends podcast from Talent Culture. I'm your host, Meghan M. Biro. Every week we interview interesting people who are re-imagining work, and join us on Twitter every Wednesday, 1:30 pm Eastern, using the hashtag #worktrends.

Love is in the air everywhere I look around ... except for recruiting and retention.

Kevin Grossman: Well ...

Meghan M. Biro: But it's not-

Kevin Grossman: It is a little bit though, right? [inaudible] love, by the way, I want you to sing that whole song. Can you do that ,right now for us? The whole thing.

Meghan M. Biro: Because it's every sight and every sound.

Kevin Grossman: Nice. You know, you used to call me your work husband.

Meghan M. Biro: Well, I used to, but you know, that was a while ago.

Kevin Grossman: That was that. Wow.

Meghan M. Biro: That was then, this is now. You still are though. You still are a very important person in my life.

Kevin Grossman: Wow. That's like I'm saying I'm a neato kid. Okay. So you know what? Here's the thing. It is actually almost that magical day though, right? Valentine's Day. And although we're talking today about the magical love of recruiting, hiring, and retention ... something that doesn't always happen, but when it does, it can be magical, right? Yes? What do you think?

Meghan M. Biro: So are unicorns and rainbows, and the list goes on. The proof is in the pudding when you talk about relationships, right?

Kevin Grossman: Yes, it is. So let's be more realistic then. It's less about the magical and the happy and it's more about this high degree of perceived fairness throughout the

recruiting process that continues well into employment. And since we're all perpetual candidates, we have to always be re-recruited to be retained. Right?

Meghan M. Biro: No question about it. As a former recruiter, I know the pain of spending all that time recruiting someone and have them bail right after they're hired or even 6, 12 months after. I'm really happy, actually, that we're having this discussion today because retention, that's culture. That's the end goal. It's all good, but we got to get there.

Kevin Grossman: Absolutely. Well, let's get to the news.

The hot news this week is that our latest Talent [inaudible] North American research is out. We're still working on the other regions, EMEA and APAC, but when the candidate experience is fair throughout the process and communication and feedback are consistent all the way through onboarding, we see that that definitely has an impact on retention, at least out of the gate.

Some other quick highlights, which ... this actually, Meghan, aligns with our guest that we're talking with today, and that 69 percent increase we saw in our data of employers using and utilizing chatbots on their career site in 2018. A big jump, big spike in that. More employers are realizing this is definitely a differentiator. Help to fill communication gaps where there were none before, don't you think?

Meghan M. Biro: I do, and I love having this data at our fingertips.

Kevin Grossman: Absolutely. So then there was candidates who were interviewed in and given job related feedback by the end of the same day after they were interviewed. We find that 52 percent of those folks are more likely to increase the relationship with the employer, which means that they're willing to apply again for another job at some point, maybe internally, refer others, make purchases if and when applicable, i.e., making retention a little bit more sticky. That's good news.

Meghan M. Biro: Totally good news. Agreed.

Kevin Grossman: A couple more. Another one is positive candidate ratings jump upwards of almost 30 percent when the candidates receive a phone call at the point of interview rejection as opposed to an automated email rejection. Obviously, we all know that goes a long way. Getting the phone call's a lot different than getting an automated email. Right, right?

Meghan M. Biro: Pick up the phone. That's what I've been saying and it's so true. I know it's uncool to think about picking up a phone, but you got to do it. Just get your smart phone going because it ... I'm doing it more. As somebody who's been living social for a long, long time, I'm finding it really refreshing just to pick up

that phone and scare people a little bit, frankly, because they're not expecting to hear from me. It's fun. So try it.

Kevin Grossman: And what we find, Megan, is that there's an internal click that goes on and when companies and talent acquisition teams, when they realized that hey, this is a strategic task versus an administrative burden, even with even with a large volume of people, it definitely can pay off dividends.

The last one I want to share with you real quick ... and then we'll move on with the rest of the show ... has to do with the onboarding process. And there's a lot of things that happened with candidates after they've been made the offer they accept and they're gonna get ready to start on day one with their company. One of the things that we find fascinating is that when the candidates are given multiple options to communicate goals, to meet key team members, to get questions answered all before their start date, they are 72 percent more likely to increase that relationship with their employer again.

This, we find, is potentially some cement ... again, ensuring retention and building that bridge from candidate to employer experience. But a caveat to this is that it's actually one of the few things that candidates say they're actually getting. So if more companies did that, that could really pay off.

Meghan M. Biro: Make the effort. Don't be lazy about love, everyone. Come on.

Kevin Grossman: Right. It's in the air.

Meghan M. Biro: Do the work. Do the work.

Kevin Grossman: I should do some Barry White for you. No. Okay. So let's move it. Let's move on. What do you think?

Meghan M. Biro: I am so excited to talk with Ankit Somani. He has a degree in ... get this, everyone ... fluid sciences, and has had such a fascinating career with stints at the EPA, GE, Oracle, and a little company called Google. You may have heard that and he and I both share that in common. I did a lot of work with Google earlier in my career. These days, he's really pushing the limits of AI for recruiting and retention and I can't wait to hear more. So welcome to Worktrends.

Ankit Somani: Thank you, Megan. Very excited to be here.

Meghan M. Biro: Where are you today?

Ankit Somani: I am in what usually is sunny, but not today, in Mountain View, California.

Meghan M. Biro: I'm jealous, because it usually is sunny there.

Ankit Somani: Yeah. Yeah, I'm just happy I'm not in the Midwest right now.

Meghan M. Biro: Right? That polar vortex is scary stuff. When you look at the aftermath, it's astounding.

Ankit Somani: Yeah, it's pretty crazy. It's pretty crazy.

Meghan M. Biro: I have to ask you something. Fluid sciences. Why and what is this? Please unfold this for our audience.

Ankit Somani: It's an interesting combination of mechanical engineering and thermal dynamics, but applied in the area of fluids. So to give an example, my undergraduate thesis was on high speed trains and what happens when two high speed trains cross each other at 300, 400 miles per hour and there is wind blowing from a direction at a certain velocity. I remember reading the newspaper article on how that has led to accidents and I was fascinated by it. So modeling all of that, understanding what exactly happens, it's just a bunch of complex math and physics.

Meghan M. Biro: All good. So you've worked for a bunch of high tech companies. How did you get into recruiting?

Ankit Somani: It's a great question. 10 years ago if you would've asked me if I'm going to get into recruiting, I would have said, "I have no idea. Probably not." But it's just the way things unfolded. I was working at Google, as you pointed out in applying ai solutions to bunch of interesting products in both energy and enterprise collaboration space, and my co-founder, Sahil, who's been a good friend of mine for 15 years, he was working on the business side, was consulting strategy consulting company called McKinsey and he was working with retail companies as well. So we just got to talk a lot about recruitment. We were very interested in our own experiences, what was it to get hired in these companies, what we are seeing out in the market.

Recruitment is a fascinating space. It's one of the oldest market that exists. It has existed for thousands of years, probably will exist for the same amount. It seemed to us that technology is actually making it more and more complex in the spirit of making it web first, mobile first. We've just created so many systems and we wanted to see how do you make it go back to how it was 100 years ago when you could walk up to a store, say, "I want a job," get tested right there, and if you were a good fit, they'd hire you. How do you make it that simple, but at scale?

All of this high level thinking is fine, but both of us were experiential, and you can't really do this unless you know the pain of a recruiter. That's what we really wanted to experience.

Meghan M. Biro: I have to tell you, that is why you're here today, because I found out this story about you and the various levels and passion that you have to actually feel the pain of a recruiter. As you know, I'm a former one myself. I've walked that walk and it is painful and it still is.

Ankit Somani: Yeah. I don't want to be a recruiter. It's a really hard job. It's not an easy job. The only way for us to learn was we literally started a staffing company in the Bay Area and [inaudible] in malls, restaurants, hospitals, trying to talk to people and understand how do they get jobs? What happens? What is the first step? How do they ideally like to get it? And we are banned from so many places. Like there's a Whole Foods store close by, there is malls ... we just got banned from so many places doing that.

Meghan M. Biro: Good for you, though. I mean, talk about shaking it up and just saying, "I need to feel the pain. I cannot start a company unless I know what the issues are," because so often we talk in these big, broad based terms around recruiting and this and that and the other thing, but I'm so impressed with you wanting to help solve a problem, and when we're talking about the big challenges in recruiting now, what are those challenges that you really want to solve today?

Ankit Somani: Yeah, I think it's a combination of two things and they really go hand in hand. The first thing is experience. I think candidates are facing a lot of ... it's a very disjointed experience. It's unresponsive and people really don't feel like they're taken care of that well. So I think there's the whole experience, but if you look at the recruiter or the hiring manager side, one of the statements that our head of partnerships says is so many things happen in talent acquisition. Very little of those are truly recruiting.

That is so true. So many administrative [inaudible] tasks that could be easily automated, and we wanted to solve it, one single solution. How do you make sure that the experience of everybody involved is best while you automate all the administrative tasks around there so that people can get to what's most important to them and make that conversation happen? That's what we're looking to solve.

Meghan M. Biro: You're giving it this real personal feel, right? Like hire a buddy, and you're living proof. Your co-founder is a friend of yours. Do you actually really believe that that's possible? Because I was brought up in the world of like, "Don't hire anybody your friends with. You know what's going to happen." That's kind of old school, right? Are we beyond that now?

Ankit Somani: I think if you had asked me question 10 years ago, "What do I think about a big company?", like the visual in my mind as this is this giant [inaudible] on big walls that I can't penetrate. I can't go talk to somebody. It feels untouchable in some ways. I think that's changing, and that is the beauty of it. You want to convert it to a real, personal conversation. It's the feeling of that conversation [inaudible]

and making sure you're spending the time in the right way. That's the buddy nature that needs to come out more.

Meghan M. Biro: Ankit, tell us about the creative way you landed your first customer.

Ankit Somani: Yeah. This was fascinating the same time when we had the staffing company. We used to fudge our way into career fairs to get more people who would be interested in applying for jobs, and one such barrier was [inaudible] really large telecom company. We wanted to tell them what our solution was like, but they wouldn't listen to us. So my co-founder literally applied for that job right there in the career fair. There were three rounds of interviews. He went through that in the next one hour and then his last round, within the first five minutes he finished his interview, but spent the next 25 minutes talking about the solution that we are working towards. Little did we know, a week later we're talking to the SVP of talent acquisition from that company was impressed with what we had built, and we had a contract in our hands. It was the most amazing [inaudible] for us.

Meghan M. Biro: That's awesome. I love it. You hear that, everybody? If you're out there listening in on Worktrends, tell us your story. This is bravery, right? We can all go undercover. That's today's lesson, right? Never be afraid to put yourself out there.

Ankit Somani: Yeah, that probably is one of the biggest learnings, that people are ready to help. People are ready to tell you things and you just need to ask.

Meghan M. Biro: All right, so we're gonna switch gears just a little bit. It's February. Love is in the air, but when we think about classic couples and love and feelings, recruiting and retention ain't really coming to mind. So why do you think recruiting and retention should have this closer relationship?

Ankit Somani: I would have just flipped the question of, "Why not?" If you think from a candidate perspective, it doesn't make sense. They don't care. There's a talent acquisition organization, there's a talent management organization. They don't care and neither does a hiring manager care.

By the way, if you've spent so much effort in getting the right individual and you just hand them over to somebody else who knows nothing about them and give them a fresh start, you've lost all of that knowledge. You have lost all the good value you've created. So the big opportunity that lies is recruiting needs to become hiring, plus retention, because first of all, you're making a great hire. Let's build a good relationship. Second, the best hire you make is a good employee you don't lose, right? That needs to happen more and more, and I think it needs to happen ... especially from a candidate standpoint, it should be the same individual, if it was possible, ideally in the world of technology, who has helped hire them and they're so happy and thankful to them, who helps

them get through the first few days, which are nerve wracking for most people, and slowly become the most productive person in that organization. So I think that is really required in the industry right now.

Meghan M. Biro: Oh, we're feeling the pain on retention and I keep talking about it and I think it's going to get worse before it gets better. That's the scary part.

Ankit Somani: Yeah. People these days want to work for companies that really care about them. It's not just millennials, it's just how the entire world is treating us. Every service, every product wants to show they care about you and where you work for 12 hours a day, 10 hours a day. If they don't share how they care about you ...

Meghan M. Biro: Nobody cares. We're in a busy world these days and we'd rather be looking at a video on Snapchat. There's a lot of gazillion other things we can be doing at any given time. You're right. Let's talk about an example of an employer you've helped. How have they actually tied recruiting and retention together? It's one thing to talk about it. You and I can blather on today, but let's talk case studies. What's happening out there?

Ankit Somani: Absolutely. I think it doesn't become real until you've seen it happen somewhere. So I'll talk about a restaurant chain that actually exists in our backyard as well, but it is broadly available across I think maybe like 12 different states in the country. It's Maggiano's Little Italy. It's part of the broader Brinker organization that owns Chili's. When we started with them, they had big problems on the recruiting side. There were just one or two people in that team, and they were trying to support so many hiring managers, so many requisitions. So literally, AllyO was the first thing that they had done from a technology leap standpoint. AllyO became the single source for 80 percent of applicants going through the system. So all of those applicants were chatting with AllyO to go all the way from, "Hi, I'm interested in a job," to when they get hired. But the retention problem was also super high and they were losing people left and right. Also, they were paying so many people over time.

So there's real impact to business and real impact to cost to sustain those restaurants. So we implemented these check ins, called new hire check ins, right after somebody gets hired at the five day, 30 day, 60 Day, 90 day mark, to really understand what is lacking. Have they been trained? How's the hiring manager treating them? How are their coworkers treating them? If they were to apply again, how would they change that experience?

We brought not only those insights, but also comparison between different locations, to figure out who are the best hiring managers? What were they doing that was so unique? That is what Maggiano's really took to heart and implemented to change processes to make the system much much better. Mostly because initially there was a lack of people in the HR department there,

they saw the advantage of having technology run through a candidate who then becomes an employee experience. We found those employees responding to AllyO 50 percent more than they would have responded that if we had reached out to them cold.

Meghan M. Biro: It's pretty related to staff when you start saying we're in a high turnover vertical. If you can start getting into those hot spots ... and that's what you're really talking about, is this 30, 60, 90, as we know, and beyond ... what's really going on in that person's mind and heart? So I have to ask you this and I know it's taken me a while to build up to it, but why the name AllyO? I'm confused, but in a good way.

Ankit Somani: Yeah, no, I think it's very interesting. There's a combination of reasons which got us there. First, going back to the buddy part, we wanted to appear as an ally and so we wanted to have the word ally in there. When we started, we were purely texting because we were really trying to cut through all the noise and get straight to people's inboxes where they respond easily. That's where the [inaudible] had come from and so AllyO ... and AllyO is gender neutral. Our bot's name is AllyO, and when people see it, they remember it. They don't call it he or she, and that helps. So it was a combination of a bunch of factors that got us here.

Meghan M. Biro: I think a lot of people are confused about AI right now, to say the least, and what it really means. Everybody's got their own definition of it at the moment. What would you say about how bots and people can actually work together?

Ankit Somani: Yeah, absolutely. First, just like the symbol, people think of AI as this black box thing and it is true. That's how this industry is progressing, but really inside the box there are three things that are happening. The system is trying to understand the input, it's to reason, and then take action based on that. That's what really AI is at the end of the day. To me, about how bots and people should work, people have this negative connotation every time a new technology comes about. It was the same for industrial revolution, it was same for when maybe even the wheel was first discovered. But human beings are great at building tools and they make the productivity better every time they invent a new tool.

AI is just a new tool. It's about applying that tool where it could be most impactful. That is, make sure every candidate is reached out to, make sure you're taking care of all rote tasks and giving the candidate the best experience in that process, but then take all of the conversation when you need to add the human element, whether it is to convince somebody to join a job ... you said you were to tech industry recruiter. So much convincing that needs to happen. Bots can't do that and that's where recruiters need to bring in that human element.

I think there's there's a piece around recruiters being able to use what they are great at ... the empathetic human conversation ... and bots can take care of what they are good at, which is automating repetitive tasks and ensuring everybody gets a consistent experience.

Meghan M. Biro: Because then the bots don't complain either. Bonus round. So you've been kind of living the dream, right? Talk to us about what you've learned from building your own company. It's not always easy, right? There's bumps, there's ups, there's downs. Tell us about that story a little bit.

Ankit Somani: Yeah, I think the thing that's stayed with me, if I look back the last few years of building this company, that's been just so many learnings. One of the points you had already touched, which is you just have to ask, and a lot of people are willing to help, especially in the HR space. A lot of people are willing to help.

But the thing that stuck with me the most is what it takes to hire a team and make it functional. Everybody's so different and you have to really think about who to hire, how to hire, how to make them happy, and you need to tailor it to an individual. But the way to get there, how you want to engage them, what questions to ask ... that is the opportunity where systems can come in and do a better job with it. So to me, the ability to define a culture, but then relate it to individuals' motivation and make sure the experience you're giving them as an employee makes it feel like it's special for them ...same things: personal care, attention. That is what makes companies tick and we are on that path. That is the thing that I'm trying to solve for everyday. It's the hardest thing to solve for, to be honest.

Meghan M. Biro: Yeah, it is. I was going to say we can have that bot and the bot's really cool and sexy, but if you can create a positive culture where you actually care about your people ... and I'm getting the sense through this discussion ... and I've done my homework on you ... that you really do care. You are very attention to detail. You go deep, you see people in 3D, and kudos to you, because the more you care, the more we feel that, and then the rest of the world starts going, "Who is this guy? He went through all of these leaps and bounds to actually start a staffing agency to then create a product?" I mean, pretty cool stuff.

Ankit Somani: I appreciate that. It's been a hell of a ride. It's been super fun. I'm enjoying it.

Meghan M. Biro: All right, Ankit. We've got some prediction time. Let's you and I look into our crystal ball together. What big changes are coming to recruiting and HR in the next few years?

Ankit Somani: I think I'm super bullish about both candidates who then ultimately become employees, finding tools that make them feel that they're really well taken care of. I think every company needs to adopt it. It's a slower adoption phase. People realize it more than others, but making sure you're building the right talent,

you're caring for them, you're growing them, all the tools around that which combine that experience and make it feel like that candidate gets that single experience throughout that process. That is what I believe is the single biggest change that will happen and when we look back 20 years, we'll see that big difference in what an employee fields now versus what they used to feel.

Meghan M. Biro: Because we're collecting data. You hear that everybody? We actually know what's happening in their hearts and minds. That's the exciting part. When we start linking recruiting and retention, which we got to do ... we're late to this party but we still have a chance to do so. What are you most excited about? You got any travel coming up? What's going on over there and in your world as you look ahead?

Ankit Somani: Yeah, I think last year was a breakout success year for us. We won four talent acquisition awards. We got to go to a bunch of conferences and meet people. This year, we're gonna add the personal touch that we talked about in this conversation with all of the potentials. We're going out doing road shows.

Meghan M. Biro: I heard about that. That sounds cool.

Ankit Somani: Yeah, we're going to to all the different cities and meet a lot of people. I'm very excited about it.

Meghan M. Biro: Because you know what? At the end of the day ... and yes, that I said at the end of the day. I promised I wouldn't do that today, but I did it. No worries. It's all about getting in front of people and human to human.

Ankit Somani: Couldn't agree more.

Meghan M. Biro: Thanks for stopping by.

Ankit Somani: Thank you, Meghan. This was really fun,

Kevin Grossman: Meghan, that was great. Super excited about what AllyO is bringing to recruitment and retention. Smart technologies, they really help fill those communication gaps for candidates, that improved their fairness overall, their willingness to keep doing and to do business, whatever that means to them with the employer, whether they're hired or not. I also talked with Jean Meister, the founding partner of Future Workplace.

Meghan M. Biro: Oh, very cool. It's always great to hear from her and what she's doing.

Kevin Grossman: Jean, thank you so much for being on Worktrends. The first thing I want to ask you is what do you think the biggest recruiting challenge is today out there in 2019?

Jean Meister: I think for sure it's how to close that infamous black hole and really improving the overall candidate experience. I see, from our point of view, many more companies adopting and leveraging the power of artificial intelligence to do just that, increase the speed of the recruiting process, increase the diversity of the talent pool, and do a better job at finding in demand job skills.

Kevin Grossman: There's a couple of areas that I want to explore on that, because I completely concur with you, and one of the things that I do find fascinating ... although sometimes I run into an organization that has mixed results, but I still have got a positive outlook on chatbots. The reason why I'm bringing that up first is because ... and I run a research organization all about candidate experience, and usually in the front end of the process, there's not a lot of communication and slash or even feedback from the employers. A, it's a sheer volume issue and usually you're not going to engage folks until post application anyway, when it comes to the recruiting side. So that said, what I found ... and I'd like to hear your thoughts on this too ... is that communicating with candidates via chatbots, via AI, smart technologies before they even apply, is actually kind of filling a place, a gap that has existed for a long time. Candidates know that they're not talking to a human, but they're still getting questions answered. That's huge, don't you think?

Jean Meister: I totally think it's huge, yes, and I think that it helps them with their overall perception of the employer. We're also finding a lot more research which says that if I as a job candidate do not have, let's say, an optimal experience with an employer, that's going to impact my purchasing decision, and that's going to impact my view of this company as a potential customer where I want to buy products and services from.

Kevin Grossman: Oh, absolutely. In fact, Jean, where our latest North American talent board research is coming out ... and I'll make sure to share that with you. They were still working on the rest of the EMEA and APAC, but every year, we find exactly what you just said. There is a greater aggregate impact over time, potentially, on a business and its brand, with those individuals that don't get hired because the numbers are just the sheer volume of people that are being said no to, that are exploring maybe opportunities and don't get an opportunity at that organization, can totally eat away at a brand, or it can be more positive and candidates tell us every year, "Yes, I'll apply again or I won't." "Yes, I'll refer others or I won't, and yes, I'll make and slash or influence purchases or I won't," for consumer based businesses. It's huge.

Jean Meister: It really is, and I think it shows that all this focus on improving the candidate experience is not really just an HR issue, but it's a business issue. It's impacting the brand of the company. That's why I think there's increased focus on how are we going to do a better job here?

Kevin Grossman: Exactly, and that leads me to segue to the next question and topic that I want to ask, and that is we also find when you look at internal candidates, we're all actually perpetual candidates, even those that are gainfully employed. My take on this is that you have to constantly recruit to retain. So how, Jean, do we do a better job connecting, recruiting and retention today?

Jean Meister: Well, I think the notion of internal talent mobility, I've seen as one of increasing importance this year and in the future, and the reason is that as organizations get flatter, people stay in their jobs longer, that are employed, and for those people, companies want to retain them and they decided ... a growing number of employers have decided that the way to retain them is to do a better job proposing other roles to them and providing them with internal mobility opportunities, and hence it's coming back to really creating and leveraging a platform with AI capabilities that gets to know you, Kevin, for the skills you have, that aggregates all your credentials and certifications, and then proposes some new opportunities inside the company which may be roles that you never even considered before. So I think this connection between the employees you have and the opportunity to identify new careers and roles for them will have an impact on retention.

Kevin Grossman: Completely concur. One of the things that we hear from the candidates in our research every year, especially the past few more than ever ... and I think that part of this is also there's a growing population of millennials and Gen Z now in the workforce that are also wanting to know more about what the career opportunities are. In fact, that's what they tell us. They want to know more about ... and across job roles to whether from hourly to salary to, eventually, management positions. What is those development opportunities for me in the longterm? And I agree that AI and related technology that's going beyond just engaging initially with potential candidates. But once they're in the pipeline and keeping them moving along, it's really helping us to make better decisions, don't you think? It's not that AI ... true AI today in HR and recruiting, it's not making these decisions for us, but it's helping us be better decision makers, right?

Jean Meister: Yeah, and it really has an impact on the overall employee. If your company is proposing some roles that you never considered ... let's say you're in marketing and you might have an opportunity to join a team and learn more about data science or digital marketing. This really adds to your personal brand and your skills and it's another reason to stay with an employer.

Kevin Grossman: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. I think that's the thing. Something else that's interesting from our research is that there's a lot of things that happen with a new hire before they start on day one, right? It's forms getting filled out, a lot of different prepping work that's happening, etc., before they start. One of the things on the list of things that we asked the candidates at the new hires at that point is getting more communications, being introduced to their new employees and teammates and peers at the organization and just more engagement even

before they start. That's actually one of the things that happens the least with new hires, at least in our data, but for those that it does happen with ... and by the way, AI can play a role here, too. 72 percent of those folks say that they're willing to increase the relationship more, which will help with retention. That's a huge difference right there.

Jean Meister: Oh, that's tremendous difference. Yes.

Kevin Grossman: What else do you think then, besides everything else that we've talked about, that you've seen in the work that you do and with the organizations that you work with, how else can we better bridge that gap between candidate and employee experience, which really are inextricably linked anyway. What else are you seeing that's happening there?

Jean Meister: Well, one of the big things that I'm seeing is that the media, I think, is getting it all wrong and that they're scaring all of us by saying jobs will be displaced, job automation is coming. If you really deep dig deep down, the latest predictions from Gardner is actually looking at AI will create more jobs than it eliminates by the year 2020. So what I see emerging is a new team that has to know how to work together: a full time employee, a contract worker, and a bot and how these three team members figure out their roles, their responsibilities, and how they're going to delegate to each other and work together as an intact team will really create, I think, a big competitive advantage in the marketplace. So I see this new blended workforce emerging. We used to think of the blended workforce as the full time and the contract workers. I think the new blended workforce that I'm seeing are full time contract and bots.

Kevin Grossman: Agreed with you on that. I don't know if you saw, there was a recent New York times article about the great skills divide, and we've heard this a lot, too, but it just as it relates to what we're talking about, because I agree with you. I do think that what is going to behoove organizations to do more of are those individuals that are being affected, that don't have the right skills in order to be part of this new blended workforce that you're referring to, that we do need to [inaudible] those that are being displaced because there is still a portion of it, but I think that there's an opportunity, though, for those jobs that are being created for people to better prepare for those jobs too, don't you think?

Jean Meister: Yeah. No, absolutely. It definitely requires an upscaling and rescaling and an expansion of roles, and I think that that's key. If part of your job ... let's say 25 or 30 percent of your job ... is routine activities that can be handed over to a chat bot or an AI solution, really the employer needs to identify where are these roles. They have an obligation, I believe, to upscale the employee to use and develop more uniquely human skills to add more value to the organization. They do, and yes, a certain percentage may go away, but I think that the vast majority of the numbers that are being thrown out are not focusing on the real issue, which is how do employees better work with AI side by side?

Kevin Grossman: Yeah, I agree with you on that for sure. Jean, always a pleasure. Thank you so much for being on Worktrends and look forward to seeing you in person again very, very soon.

Meghan M. Biro: It's always great to hear from her and what she's doing. Let's keep the conversation moving, shall we? You want to join us for Worktrends on the Twitters. We are going to be there with Ankit Somani from AllyO on Wednesday, February 13th, 1:30 PM Eastern, 10:30 AM Pacific, and whatever you are around the globe. Join us and tell us what you've learned about hiring. If you'd like to get our Twitter chat questions in advance, sign up for our newsletter at talentculture.com to get all the skinny.

Thanks to listening to Worktrends from Talent Culture. Join us every Wednesday at 1:30 PM Eastern for it live Twitter chat with our podcast guests. To learn more about guests featured on today's show, visit the show notes for this episode at talentculture.com, and help us spread the word. Subscribe to work trends, wherever you listen to podcasts. Leave us a rating review on iTunes, share Worktrends with your coworkers, your friends. Look forward to it. See you next time.