

- Meghan M. Biro: Welcome to The WorkTrends Podcast from TalentCulture. I'm your host, Meghan M. Biro. Every week, we interview interesting people who are re-imagining work. Join us on Twitter every Wednesday, 1:30 PM Eastern, using the hashtag #WorkTrends.
- Meghan M. Biro: Hello, WorkTrends listeners. It's me, your host, Meghan [00:00:30] M. Biro. This week, we're bringing you a special bonus episode. If you're like me, you're looking ahead to the fall conference season and you can't wait to mix and mingle and dance and compare the appetizer plates and cocktails at vendor parties, but if you're also like me, your head and your inbox are swimming with HR tech vendors right now. How does everybody keep them all straight?
- Meghan M. Biro: In this episode, we're flashing back to HR Transform 2019, [00:01:00] where Kevin W. Grossman and I talked to some of the leading HR tech vendors today. And they are people you should definitely put on your agenda for this fall's conference season. If you're ready to look ahead to next year's conference season, be sure to register for HR Transform 2020, which is being held March 23rd through the 25th. You can register at transform.us, so check it out.
- Meghan M. Biro: [00:01:30] First, we talk to Devon Barnhard, who works at HR tech startup Cloverleaf. We started talking by discussing what challenges they're helping HR organizations overcome.
- Devon Barnhard: We are all about helping people build better teams, so within organizations we found that some teams just naturally clicked really well and produced amazing results and are super productive and [00:02:00] truly understand each other, and then there are the teams that don't. We think that if everyone had kind of the advantage of being able to understand each other better, whether it's their personality, workplace preferences, communication style, that kind of keeping that emotional intelligence at the forefront can only improve your team and productivity and culture and all of that.
- Kevin W. G: Tell us then exactly, how does it work? Meaning, I'm [00:02:30] Customer X, I'm signing up for your platform, your solution. What is it going to help me do from early stage to continuing?
- Devon Barnhard: Company X would decide if they wanted their whole company or certain teams. Say we were just starting with your leadership team, though, we would onboard your leadership team, which would look like everyone creating a profile on Cloverleaf through your own personal landing page and it would be totally set [00:03:00] up for you, so we would have already picked out what assessments you want to include. We're assessment agnostics, so we include Myers-Briggs, DISC, StrengthsFinder, VIA. We have our own culture survey. Some companies want them all, they're all included, but some are very strict and only want DISC, and then we can turn the others off. We would decide that ahead of time and then the team would onboard, take all of the assessments, and from there you would basically be set up.

Devon Barnhard: Then, there is [00:03:30] the dashboard, which includes everyone's individual profile, but then also the team dashboard, which is really the exciting part because you're seeing where everyone maps out in different assessments and you can really drill down and everything is clickable. You can learn about each aspect of each assessment. But my favorite part is that most companies don't want their employees to sign onto another platform, so we send [00:04:00] emails twice a week that would be like, "Hi, you work best this way. You communicate like this in a stressful situation." It will be someone random from your team, always different insights every time, and so it would say, "Tim communicates like this", and it kind of compares you. It's always kind of at the forefront of your mind without having to really sign into anything unless you want to.

Kevin W. G: Based on even what you've shared so far and what differentiates [00:04:30] you, there comes to assessments, whether it's for culture fit, team fit, the list goes on and even relates to what you're doing and how you're approaching the market today. How else are you differentiating in regards to... there are a lot of assessment providers out there that now have some vestige of an online platform that they can deliver these things in. Is it because you're aggregating all the different kinds of assessments that they can choose from? How else do you differentiate?

Devon Barnhard: I think we [00:05:00] really love the fact that we don't have to be behind just one single assessment because we don't really believe that anyone is like completely mapped out by one assessment. Having a combination of them is always helpful and also you can kind of combine which ones you like. And then I would say the online factor is super important, but like you said, assessments companies do have an online portal, but I would say the fact that we're sending an aggregation [00:05:30] of different results that are constantly changing, and then our integrations we're really excited about.

Devon Barnhard: In a couple of weeks we are launching our calendar integration, via Google Calendar and soon after, Outlook. At the beginning of the day, basically, you'll get a little digest of everyone you're meeting with that has a Cloverleaf profile. And so in your inbox again it will be a little digest. And then we also have a Slack integration. In real time, you [00:06:00] can just in Slack while you're working where you're working, you can type in /cloverleaf@devon if you want to see... then, you can choose between five categories. Say you're really curious about my motivation in the workplace, you can go to Slack, type in that command, and get a little live update right then.

Meghan M. Biro: So there are a lot of fun [00:06:30] events at HR Transform some of which might be 'pull a Jason,' anyone, you know where I'm going with this. That's where I met Yulkendy Valdez and Josuel Plasencia, the co-founders of Forefront. They're doing amazing work to build more inclusive organizations.

Meghan M. Biro: Well, Hey, everyone, we're here live at HR Transform for WorkTrends. And true story, [00:07:00] I actually danced with both of these guys last night. And boy oh boy did I have fun!

Kevin W. G: What was the dance about?

Meghan M. Biro: It was a dance party on steroids. We rocked it right by the pool. I was showing off my Latin moves. And I think you know what? I mean, these guys said, they could tell I've done it before. So there you go, if these guys are saying it, that's for real. You're in a really crowded market. Talk to us a little bit about how you differentiate [00:07:30] yourself, and what major challenges are you solving. So two questions.

Yulkendy: For us, diversity inclusion is vast, and a lot of our approaches are needed. We ended up in the corporate learning side of things. And what we're trying to disrupt is the traditional diversity training. You hear that and you'd like want to run away when you hear unconscious bias training. It's acceptable. It's been around for 20 years or more, and it's hasn't gotten us the results we're looking [00:08:00] for. It hasn't moved the needle, hasn't driven the behavioral change. Now we're actually more scared to go in, in the room.

Yulkendy: And Harvard says, three reasons; is because it's usually, one, tied to law and compliance going there. And I can't say anything wrong. I don't I don't feel safe. It's usually specific to managers. And so managers feel a lot of responsibility and the employees don't feel like they're part of that puzzle and want to be, training happens in silos.

Yulkendy: And third, this usually happens on our onboarding, [00:08:30] it's a two hour training, and then you're done. And you're like, "What do I do for the rest of the year?"

Yulkendy: How we differentiate ourselves is by building more continuous and accessible cultural competency training that you can actually get throughout the year to help you guide you on that journey, and leverage AI and machine learning to actually give you a more customized, the way that meditation mindfulness training has been democratized and been made accessible through apps like Calm and Headspace. The way [00:09:00] language learning has been democratized through Duolingo and other platforms. We can do the same for diversity training and that's what we're doing at Forefront.

Meghan M. Biro: Cool stuff. I want to hear from you as well. What kind of challenges do you feel like you're approaching and attacking next? Because there's lots of them.

Josuel P.: Absolutely. So, you think of your good old diversity training. You'd have to fly in say 30 people or more somewhere from all over the country, and you pay a trainer [00:09:30] lots of money to do this training, and it's one day or three

days. So you need a hotel and usually people go out at night, it's expensive and then it's over. And then that's it.

Josuel P.: As Yulkendy has said, there has been a lot of research to see what is the effectiveness of that approach. And we really think that the future is continuous as one where you're constantly interacting with content, and it's not a one off experience. And this is what we're really passionate about in terms [00:10:00] of what we're building, is that, you could have the conference, you can have the workshop, but when it's over, this can be a great way to continue those conversations and live that experience and connect with your colleagues outside of this event. So it's really finding a way to make this learning experience cheaper, more efficient, and more automated.

Kevin W. G: Tell us more about how the AI part of this works. I mean, how is the machine learning helping me to [00:10:30] better, I guess, modify and put a program together for me on the training side. How does that work?

Yulkendy: I think what's cool, this is the right time AI it's been integrated in corporate learning. All of the corporate education companies are looking at it because it can make it personalized. It can help us collect a lot more data analytics or where the learner is at and how can we take them from point A to point B. So that's exactly what we can do for cultural competency.

Yulkendy: [00:11:00] We can start with a baseline assessment of where you are and over time collect. Maybe you learn best through audio or video, and then our algorithms can send you the right learning journey for you so we can actually meet you at the right time and we can take you through the next step in your learning journey.

Yulkendy: For us, what's really special in how we're really leveraging visual intelligence, we're actually building algorithms to match you to other people at your company's [00:11:30] on monthly basis so you can have conversations about it. So we're actually expanding the network at your company through this learning experience. So it's not, "I'm just learning. I'm actually getting to learn colleagues, I mean, future companies that actually might help me get my next job, my next project." And we're standing that base because at the end of the day, people want to learn through other people. They don't want to learn any more through a lecture or someone talking at you. And that's where the AI could be really powerful in really bringing your company closer [00:12:00] together.

Meghan M. Biro: Okay. So, we're going to look into the future. I'm getting out my crystal ball. I want you to tell us about an upcoming product or service, an update. What's on your roadmap right now?

Yulkendy: I think what we're really excited about Forefront, is we're looking for more pioneering partners to help do early pilots for our Forefront software. So if you're a company ready to go beyond your diversity training and make

[00:12:30] it more accessible for folks, please contact us. And our website is forefrontcultures.com. You can follow us on social media [_forefront](#), and we will love to design a future of work that works for all. Because right now, if you look at by 2025 we're looking at 75% of millennials in the workforce. Millennials are the most diverse generation ever. If you look even more further in the future, the workforce is going to get more [00:13:00] multigenerational, multiracial, multiethnic, multi gender. So how do you bring these people together? It should be a lot of fun, it should be a lot of dancing. It should be about living that culture and that's what our platform can really help do. Normalize these conversations and make it human again. Diversity doesn't have to be this scary topic.

Meghan M. Biro: Word up.

Meghan M. Biro: It's pretty great what technology can do, right? Think about how so many things in [00:13:30] HR have changed over the years, especially recruiting. There are new solutions coming every day from different organizations. And our next guest is the CEO of one of those businesses trying to make hiring just a little bit easier.

Kevin W. G: Daniel, thank you so much for joining us on WorkTrends. Before we dive into the rest of this podcast that we're pre-recording live from HR Transform, tell us a little bit [00:14:00] about who you are and what you do today?

Daniel Ash: I am the CEO. My name's Daniel Ash. I'm the CEO of Journeyfront. Journeyfront is a closed loop hiring software. Basically what that means is, basically the state of hiring today is we make our hiring decisions, we use data, sometimes we don't call it data, sometimes it's in our head or it's in a note pad, or it's in an Excel sheet, but it's data. And then we make our decisions of who we hire and then we see later after the hire whether they actually perform, whether they fit the culture, whether we had turnover [00:14:30] or not. But there's not really a close loop that connects those two sets of data, if that makes sense. So we never know really if what we thought was true, we don't have a way to connect it back to what we thought was true and whether we got it right or not, and where we got it wrong. Does that make sense?

Kevin W. G: It does. Along those same lines then keep running with that theme. What are you helping? What are the challenges then that you're helping HR overcome in this closed loop environment?

Daniel Ash: We are helping companies know what's working and not working in their hiring process.

Kevin W. G: Based on performance?

Daniel Ash: Based on [00:15:00] performance.

Kevin W. G: After post hire?

- Daniel Ash: Performance and turnover and cultural fit.
- Kevin W. G: And culture fit.
- Daniel Ash: That's kind of the trifecta of job fit, all three of those things really need to hit for it to be a good hire.
- Kevin W. G: How are you... I want to talk about the culture fit part. How does that fit into the equation then? What are you basically analyzing and extracting from that part?
- Daniel Ash: It's actually, from a closed loop standpoint, the culture fit piece is even a little bit more simple, at least at the beginning when companies start working with us, [00:15:30] it's just being deliberate about actually screening for culture and actually being deliberate about what that means. Luckily, companies are progressing in these areas. Now companies have core values that they hold dear, that comprises who they are and who they want their employees to be. So it's being deliberate about actually screening for those tenets or those traits that they want all their employees to have at the onset, as opposed to having it be kind of fluffy where you don't exactly know what cultural fit is. And often it's just more bias driven and you're not really measuring something specific, [00:16:00] right?
- Kevin W. G: But it's an assessment though, is it?
- Daniel Ash: It's however you want to measure it. One of the aspects of Journeyfront system is that it can handle assessment data, reference call data, interview data, work sample or role play job simulation data. Depending on what trait you're measuring, obviously you'll use different techniques to get at that. Often for cultural fit, that's typically kind of an interview where you're trying to gauge whether they have the traits that would make them fit the culture. But we can also measure that through assessments and other mechanisms.
- Kevin W. G: Are there specific roles that are your sweet spot [00:16:30] or is it just across job dives and job roles for a particular customer?
- Daniel Ash: The system is role agnostic. It can work for any role. However, the roles that really should be using something like this are high volume roles, where you either have high turnover, or you have high variability in performance, or you get it wrong from a cultural standpoint a lot. You're collecting so much data whether you realize it or not on these roles you're hiring again and again and again. And using a system like Journeyfront, you can really zero in really fast on what's working and not working just due to the sheer volume of those roles.
- Kevin W. G: [00:17:00] Is there any other aspect of machine learning that's involved in your platform? So throwing in more of the smart technology.

Daniel Ash: Yeah, there is. There's a couple things. The system itself, when it comes to connecting that loop or closing that loop and hiring, will automatically track what interview questions, what traits that you're measuring correlate most strongly with performance, retention, et cetera; however, there is an AI add-on that we provide to certain companies that are ready for it, where we can actually use assessment [00:17:30] data and other screening data, build predictive models on a company's own existing call center or existing sales org, et cetera. Tie those models to their performance data, their turnover data, what have you, and start to let the algorithm make statistical predictions of performance retention on candidate, on their candidate pools.

Kevin W. G: And that's where you... I mean, you have some competitors in this space that are focused on that aspect too. So then how, let's say I'm company X and I need help with this call center, getting the targeting [00:18:00] better and improving retention, how am I going to work with you? And how do you differentiate compared to some of those other competitors? What happens next once I say, "I need your help?"

Daniel Ash: That question would be easier to answer if I knew which competitors you're referring to. There's a lot of solutions out there, right?

Kevin W. G: No, I mean, I know similar ones like Pymetrics metrics does parts of this from a statistical standpoint and others. Because, I mean, you've got a mix of things that are in your platform.

Daniel Ash: Sure.

Kevin W. G: And that's the beauty of this phase today is that there's... [00:18:30] I'm not going to use the word fragmented, but I'm going to use... there's a lot of players that are doing certain things combining or recombining aspects. So there may not be a direct competitor that I'm even aware of for what you're doing, but there are indirect competitors.

Daniel Ash: Sure. And you said that there are a mix of things in your platform and that's the beauty of it?

Kevin W. G: Right.

Daniel Ash: Every single... We are all about how do you measure the traits that actually matter when it comes to cultural fit, retention and performance at your company with all the nuance that matters there. And the truth of the matter is there are many ways to measure traits. You can use assessments, you can [00:19:00] use games like Pymetrics. You can use structured interviews. There's a lot of research around that. You can use roleplayers or work samples, reference calls. Every one of these methods has pros and cons, right?

Kevin W. G: Sure.

Daniel Ash: There are strengths and weaknesses to them. And that's the power of the system, is that the system doesn't care what method you're using. I mean, we in fact do integrate with some of these third party tools. Our goal is to help you know what exactly is working and not working in your hiring process and see that in your own data.

Kevin W. G: It's a combination of those data points.

Daniel Ash: That's right. And [00:19:30] that's a big deal. We have companies for example, that have been using traditional preemployment assessments for example, first seven to 10 years. And I ask them, "Do you know if it's working or not?" And they have no idea. And don't get me started-

Kevin W. G: Not surprised.

Daniel Ash: ... Right. Don't get me started on interview questions that people have been using for years.

Kevin W. G: I know, exactly.

Daniel Ash: Hiring is so crucial just to know what, if you're hiring and what the traits you're measuring and the ways that you're measuring those are actually correlated with the post hire outcomes you're seeking. That's the value that we bring.

Kevin W. G: Excellent. Daniel, [00:20:00] what's coming on the roadmap then? What's something exciting, top secret that you can tell me, and I won't tell anybody else?

Daniel Ash: I'm sure, on a podcast, right? It's funny, one of the things that keeps coming on the roadmap very quickly, is right now there's a lot of do it yourself in the product, which companies love, because they can customize, they can bake, basically bring their own hiring process into Journeyfront. You don't have to change anything, but we have a team of IO psychologists that have built out a library of questions, and we will actually start to provide predictive insights around, "These are questions that have worked in your industry for [00:20:30] this type of role, and it's tied to actual data, actual data collected at call centers or sales orders, et cetera." It's all anonymized of course, but it's tied to actual data.

Daniel Ash: Right now, if you go for example and Google, 'the best five interview questions' or 'the three traits. You'll see blog after or article after article with zero data tied to it. It's all opinions and without data, that's all it is.

Kevin W. G: Oh yeah, I hear you, absolutely.

Daniel Ash: That's one of the new things that's coming, is all this thing tied to data, there is power in that. This is moneyball [00:21:00] for hiring, and the same power that you saw in that industry, we are bringing in higher to the hiring process.

Kevin W. G: That's great. I like that analogy of moneyball in our industry. That's good. Well, Daniel, thank you so much for being on the WorkTrends podcast. Pleasure meeting you.

Meghan M. Biro: When it comes to recruiting, some things don't go away like phone screening. Our next guest talked to us about how they are making phone screening a much better experience for everybody. [00:21:30] Here's Kevin's conversation with Nick Livingston co founder of Honeit.

Kevin W. G: Nick, thank you so much for joining us on WorkTrends. Before we dive into the rest of this podcast, why don't you tell us a little bit more about who you are and what you do today.

Nick L.: Sure. Thank you. I was recruited for about 15 years, both external and internal; companies like MTV, Viacom, [Mongo DB 00:21:56] in the Bay area. But ultimately I came, showed up at work. I eventually found out [00:22:00] that I was tired of scribbling interview notes. And it basically took business school in the evenings to come back to my day job and realized, "What are we doing as recruiters? We're spending our day on the telephone having wonderful conversations, yet we're scribbling notes, our neck's crooked. And then even when we hang up the telephone with someone, it's really a difficult to articulate why that person's great to somebody else, who didn't get to hear that great answer or wasn't on that conversation."

Nick L.: So, we built phone interview technology to focus on the conversations we already have every day with candidates, but to turn those into insights [00:22:30] to cooperatively assess talent from a single conversation.

Kevin W. G: That's awesome. And before we did this podcast, we were talking, and I kind of coined the phrase, that phone screen strikes back, right?

Nick L.: Right.

Kevin W. G: Because we've been doing phone screens for decades and recruiting and it's still a viable part of... In fact, in our research for talent board that we do, still 60% of the companies say that they're employing phone screens at their organization. And candidates are saying that's one of the primary areas too, besides that face to face interview on their screening side. [00:23:00] So that said, and you highlighted a little bit in the beginning here, but let's talk more about how you're really are... What are the challenges you're helping recruiting overcome and how you're doing that with your platform? You touched on a few things, but dig a little deeper for us.

Nick L.: Sure. We fundamentally believe that the conversation still counts and conversations probably matter more than ever. We can automate everything else around the conversation, scheduling, smiting cooperatively assessing data, but at the end of the day, I think it's conversations that count. And I would [00:23:30] argue that the medium doesn't really matter. Video's great, there's opportunity for video. We've seen video interviews over the last 10 years. But I would argue most of the... the one way versus two way is the real conversation. Are you asking candidates to record themselves and do much of homework at the top end of the process? Or are you going to engage, have a quick conversation, sell the opportunity to company answer some questions, build rapport, and then accelerate next steps? And we still [00:24:00] think the conversation counts. So either phone versus video, I don't think that's the conversation. I think the conversation is the conversation.

Nick L.: And so I was also just frustrated with the any one way tools I was seeing, that I couldn't put into play. I didn't want to give candidates homework, I didn't see how that really improved the candidate experience. I felt fundamentally candidates want to have a good conversation with someone and then meet the team. And the faster companies can do that, that is a competitive recruiting advantage.

Nick L.: Our system, it basically records calls, it transcribes calls, there's interview [00:24:30] guides built in where now hiring managers can say, "Hey, these are the four technical questions or rec specific questions I'd like you to ask." Now any junior or nontechnical recruiter can actually ask those questions. So not only are we cutting the interview time in half by 30 minutes to 15 minutes, we're, empowering the recruiters to now perform structured technical phone screens for any record roll by asking the questions they're usually asked three steps later.

Nick L.: Now recruiting on the front end can impress the candidate, like coming across much more knowledgeable than just [00:25:00] to say, "What are you working on?" And then hang up the telephone. And a hiring team can quickly hear the highlights. Listen to one or two technical answers and say, "That's a great answer. Resume's a little bit light, but I don't need two more phone interviews with Jill to hear it." And so we're really excited to now empower companies to go from a single phone screen to onsite interviews, removing weeks from the process.

Kevin W. G.: And time is such a huge factor, well, and especially in... well any job market for that matter. And a tight one, [00:25:30] especially when there's even a higher incidence of candidates ghosting employers now, unfortunately. But time is really important to collapse between that phone screen and if you're going to pull them in for the interview, it also helps with candidate experience, right? And that's one of the things that I'm a big proponent of at the end of the day. You've highlighted some of the advantages for the recruiter side. So as a candidate in the process, but I mean, obviously the structured interviewing in

the phone screen side, having the questions [00:26:00] standardize for the hiring manager, the recruiter, whoever is going to be involved in that phone screen, that's important. What else is going to the candidates, how are they going to benefit from doing a phone screen via your system?

Nick L.: Great question. We focus on three steps of the process that I felt was a part of my workflow as a recruiter, but what's kind of missing from many ATS and CRM systems. One is, schedule, screen, submit. We designed the system around a lightweight scheduling link, you can throw that into your emails, chatbots, LinkedIn [00:26:30] and mail templates. And basically says, "Hey candidate, if you're interested, select a convenient time to chat." Companies are already using Calendly and these other third party scheduling tools, Honeit just starts with A link. It's a lightweight link, which makes it easy for candidates to select the time that works for them. And then at the time they can step out and have that convenient conversation. Nothing to download, nothing to install, it's just a natural phone conversation. I think that's helpful for candidates, is just giving them a convenient time.

Nick L.: The second is again a more efficient interview conversation. It doesn't take 40 minutes, it can [00:27:00] take 15 minutes with the right structured questions by cutting it to the chase, "Let's dig to your knowledge about web analytics, let's go a little deeper on that particular topic."

Nick L.: And then I think ultimately what we're really excited and where candidates are seeing a real value is now it doesn't take three separate phone interviews with three separate people over two weeks. It's like, hang up the phone, share a little insight and say, "Wow, that candidate sounds very knowledgeable about that particular domain, and I don't need another 45 minutes phone conversation." So candidates love it because [00:27:30] it's a more compelling conversations, it's a quicker conversation, and they get to meet the hiring manager and the hiring team faster. And I think if you're born in this day and age, active candidates, if they apply, I appreciate that, and especially passive candidates. You reach out to somebody on LinkedIn, you can't give them a one way interview, you're not going to send them homework. If you're selling them on an opportunity when they're happy at their job, and they've got an opportunity that's compelling already, you need to [00:28:00] sell them on the opportunity and get them in front of the potential hiring manager. And the faster you can do that, you win.

Kevin W. G: Great. And I think putting, again, some more structure around the old school phone screen is a big win for the, not only for the companies that are going to leverage your platform, but again for the candidates, because anything that improves their overall level of their perception of fairness in the process. At the end of the day, it's not about [00:28:30] making candidates happier. I love when I hear companies aspire to that, 'happy candidates make happy customers.' I love that sentiment. But at the end of the day, it's just about perceived fairness. And if I feel like, "Hey, wow, this was really well organized phone screen and at

the end of the day, that's that level of perceived fairness. That's what goes a long way whether a candidate may want to apply again or refer others and make purchases if and when applicable.

Kevin W. G: So Nick, tell me what's coming with the product and the platform [00:29:00] is. Tell me something top secret, I promise I'm not going to tell anybody. But not really, what else is coming that you can share?

Nick L.: Happy to share a little kind of the product roadmap. But just to your point about fairness, I think that's a powerful topic and I think it's a very important topic. There's a reason, at least in the United States, we don't have photos on resumes. And so if the first step of your application process is an application and then you're following that up with the one-way video interview, I think that speaks volumes. So we're trying to say, video is great, employer branding, [00:29:30] put a video on your... et cetera. Video is great in so many ways and maybe for later stages if a candidate can't meet the team and fly out or whatnot.

Nick L.: But I would say at the top of the funnel, including can introduce additional bias and discrimination at the earliest stages. So we do think voice goes well beyond text and scribbled notes and a cover letter, but it might not introduce some of the discrimination or bias that a video might at that early stage.

Nick L.: So we're excited because I think one of the challenges, even when a recruiter [00:30:00] hears a great candidate and they talk to a great candidate and they hear that enthusiasm, and that personality, and that aspiration, and that motivation, all those soft skills and qualities that we're looking for, you can't articulate to the next person, but you can through voice. And so a few audio highlights, you wouldn't believe how far that goes to be able to articulate why someone's a good fit beyond just the resume.

Nick L.: In terms of the product roadmap, people can see that the system was designed by recruiters, schedule screens submit. And as soon as they start using it, they realize [00:30:30] it's optimized for the recruiter experience as well as the candidate and the hiring manager experience. But we're tired of fighting this like phone versus video conversation. I'd read much rather fight the one way versus two way conversation.

Nick L.: And so, we actually built a system for video and audio and voice. In the beginning we pulled video back because phones conversations are just that much more convenient. Candidates don't have to book a conference room at their employer. They can step out and take a phone call from anywhere. But I think it's time we reintroduced the video side of it for a live two way [00:31:00] video conversation of which we can share either the audio highlights after the call or potentially the video highlights as well.

- Kevin W. G: It's cool and I appreciate that. Because as I told you before the podcast, I'm still a big proponent of a video screening, but you now resold me on the power of the phone screen based on what your platform is. So well done Nick. Thanks again for being on WorkTrends.
- Meghan M. Biro: Hey, the phone screen might be making a comeback, but you know what might be on the way [00:31:30] out, the first round interview. Sometimes it can feel like a cattle call where you're just sitting around thinking about all the work you have to do and wondering, "Wait, isn't there a better way to do this?" It turns out there is.
- Kevin W. G: Sheilin, thank you so much for being on WorkTrends. Before we dive into the rest of this podcast that we're pre-recording live at HR Transform, tell us a little bit more about who you are and what you do today.
- Sheilin Herrick: Thanks [00:32:00] very much for having me, Kevin. My name is Sheilin Herrick. I run marketing at Karat. And what Karat does is first round technical interviews for companies that are hiring software engineers so that their team can unburden themselves from the amount of time that they're spending on those first round technical interviews, and spend their time coding, innovating and bringing product to market.
- Kevin W. G: That's huge. We talked a little bit before the podcast about what you do at Karat. And as I told you, I run a research organization all about improving candidate experience. So, I [00:32:30] liked a lot of what I heard as it relates to what you're helping to help talent acquisition leaders solve for when they're hiring engineers. So dig a little bit more into those challenges that we have today with identifying and interviewing those engineers that we're trying to hire in organizations and what you're helping to solve for?
- Sheilin Herrick: Yeah, absolutely. A lot of the companies that we work with just simply do not have the time to interview the engineers that they need to hire in order to grow their organizations. So they may be companies [00:33:00] that have 40 engineers today and within a quarter they want to grow to have a team of 80 or 100 software engineers. They simply cannot do that.
- Sheilin Herrick: Sometimes they try, and when they do, they often find that the candidate experience that they are creating isn't necessarily an ideal one. And that can of course affect their employer brand at the same time because they don't necessarily have the time to do all of these interviews and do them with consistency and structure. They're probably not going to reach their hiring targets. We tend to [00:33:30] hear clients say things like, "My engineers are exhausted. They're completely exhausted from interviewing." And that's not going to make them necessarily do a great interview, nor should they really be expected to because they don't have experience in training and interviewing.

- Sheilin Herrick: So that's where we come in to bring that fairness structure and consistency to the first round technical interview, all while providing an amazing candidate experience that those candidates will write home about and hopefully tell all their friends and improve that brand.
- Kevin W. G: That's awesome. Dig even a little bit further. [00:34:00] In that first round that you're talking about, I'm company X and I need help with interviewing these engineers, how do we work together? How does that work and what are the steps that are involved?
- Sheilin Herrick: Client that we work with will spend their time doing their sourcing. That could be the recruiting coordinator, whomever. They'll select those candidates, bring them to us, literally send them to our platform. That candidate then gets an email that says, "Hey, schedule your interview through Karat. You're interviewing with X company, Pinterest, whomever." [00:34:30] They can then schedule 24 seven, which obviously accelerates the process.
- Sheilin Herrick: Then when they do their interview with a professional interview engineer, this is a network of ours have over 100 interview engineers that are actually software developers that we've trained and equipped to do interviewing. It's approximately an hour. They end up with a recorded interview and structured feedback and a recommendation that they can view in our platform and use that information to choose to bring that candidate onsite and hopefully close them and get them in the team.
- Kevin W. G: Oh, are you [00:35:00] vetting the interviewers that are part of your ecosystem? How are you vetting those individuals and are they being compensated to do that?
- Sheilin Herrick: Yeah. Interestingly of all the applicants that we get, technical skills is not really the challenge that we find in screening, actually the challenge is really empathy, which goes back to how we're able to improve candidate experience. We want people who are really passionate about interviewing and they themselves understand how that can highlight a candidate strengths in the interview. Of those that apply, [00:35:30] actually only about 2% end up becoming interview engineers on our platform. Once they do an interview engineer, they go through just shy of about 30 hours of onboarding and practice interviews so that they're kind of like embedded and coached with the Karat way and that they can bring that to life when they do interviews with candidates.
- Kevin W. G: How does that take you to develop the vetting and training process for those interviewers that are part of your platform? How was that process?
- Sheilin Herrick: We have this amazing [00:36:00] human being named Lus Mendel who is our director of interview engineering. And Lus actually started at the company as an interview engineer, and was so passionate about improving the interviewing process that over the last say two to three-ish years, they have been working on

improving the interview themselves. We also have a number of software engineers who work on what we call content creation. And content really just means like the questions in the formats that are relevant to the role.

Kevin W. G: [00:36:30] That's awesome. How else, besides everything that you've already outlined for me, what else is like a key differentiator what your offering is, that either relates to improving the recruiters' life at the end of the day after the first round? How else do you differentiate?

Sheilin Herrick: It's definitely about improving the recruiters' life, but it's also about improving morale on the software engineering team when they are having to spend, I don't know, a quarter half depending on the growth rate of the company, of their time doing interviewing, they're not spending their time solving [00:37:00] problems, which is really what they became software engineers to do. And we want them to feel like they're innovating, like they're bringing something to market and that they can then put their stamp on the organization. I mean, that's about building morale, that's about building the culture within the company and ensuring that it's in place to help scale, help the company innovate and move forward in the future.

Kevin W. G: Absolutely. And I'm all about the candidate and the employee experience, are inextricably linked at the end of the day because we are also having [00:37:30] to constantly re-recruit to retain our individuals.

Kevin W. G: What's coming up with the platform? Tell me something top secret. I'm not going to tell anybody. No, it doesn't have to be top secret, but what's going on with the roadmap? What's exciting in the next six, nine, 12 months?

Sheilin Herrick: We're definitely excited about scale and growth. Something that our co-founder Mohit Bhende talked about yesterday on the panel 'Surviving and Thriving and Hypergrowth,' was how incredibly important it is to help keep building trust within our community of interview engineers. Like I've [00:38:00] already said, they're a very very passionate group about what it is that they do, which we're very very lucky for. And so we're doing things like creating more opportunities for them to get together at summits. They are doing dinners in their hometown, like we have a number of them that are actually in London and they did dinners together and things like that. They'll meet up in Singapore, Denver, wherever. The growth of that team and the passion and trust that they're building and best practice sharing with each other is [00:38:30] definitely something that we are focusing on in the near future to scale our growth and also help our clients.

Kevin W. G: That's great, Sheilin. Thank you so much for doing the WorkTrends podcast with me and I wish you the best of luck.

Meghan M. Biro: But what about the logistics of talent acquisition? When you're hiring for high profile positions, travel costs often become part of that equation. Enter the folks at Pana.

Alex Boulden: [00:39:00] Yeah, absolutely. My name's Alex Borden from Pana, and at Pana we focus exclusively on the non-employee or guests travel portion of a business's corporate travel program. That has a pretty heavy involvement in recruiting and interviewee travel, hence us being here today.

Kevin W. G: Why don't you tell us a little bit more, Alex, about the challenges that you're helping talent acquisition teams solve [00:39:30] today? Because it can be a cumbersome activity, right? When candidates are being interviewed, they're being flown across the country or even just brought down the street. And there's a lot of things that they may be on the hook for, travel wise, expenses, parking, you name it, that may be a struggle for them to recover that money. So how are you helping the candidates and the company?

Alex Boulden: Absolutely. And I think this has become more and more of a popular topic as we talk about candidate experience. And extending that candidate experience outside of the doors of your office [00:40:00] and actually into the travel coordination process that the candidate is going to be subject to. When they're first exposed to your brand, often times it's in the travel coordination piece, we want that to be organized, we want it to be clean. We don't want them to be uncomfortable fronting what could be thousands of dollars simply to set foot in the door before they even know if they're going to be hired. So we'll actually proactively create a linear process for your coordinators. They spend minimal amount of time. Generally, coordinators involvement with inviting a guest through Pana is about a minute and a half. And then we have an almost perfect five-star traveler [00:40:30] rating doing things like customizing recommendations, never requiring the candidate to front money for their interview and having a 365 27/7 concierge available for their entire travel experience.

Kevin W. G: You've definitely named some of the differentiators right there that you're offering on your platform. There are other providers that are helping organizations better to track travel expenses from their candidates and to get them reimbursed. But you're saying that you're helping really to make it more seamless to the candidates so there's no need for them [00:41:00] to actually pay out of pocket. Is that correct?

Alex Boulden: Yeah, absolutely. So for all of the common travel expenses, things like air, hotel and ground transportation, we can centrally bill right through Pana, through to the company, candidate never floats a penny. For things that are more variable, like a meal, we actually have a full reimbursement product that will have money in the candidates hand under five days.

Kevin W. G: How does that work on the integration side with your platform and your system with all the other systems that maybe the TA teams that you're working with and the companies you're working with? Because a lot of the larger more complex organizations, [00:41:30] they're going to have lots of systems, ATS, et cetera. How does that work with your platform exchanging data back and forth?

Alex Boulden: We have some high level integrations with ATS systems today to pull critical details that are needed. We also do not require integrations with a lot of the common players because we are a standalone product. We partner well with your traditional TMCs. We work with all of the major TMCs, we can do a free rate load and partner with them for reporting purposes, but Pana in itself can walk alongside them [00:42:00] as opposed to needing a very tight integration.

Kevin W. G: This is my co-host.

Meghan M. Biro: Hi.

Kevin W. G: Megan M. Biro., this is Alex and Jason from Pana.

Meghan M. Biro: Well, it's really exciting to meet you both and I guess I'm all about the future of work. So talk to us about what's next in terms of your product roadmap.

Alex Boulden: Yeah, absolutely. So as Pana develops, we take a lot of product feedback from our clients. One of the things that we've built in the past year has been our bulk upload form for candidate experiences. We see a lot of large hiring classes [00:42:30] coming through, especially with enterprise organizations. That product is being used far more than we even expected it to be. And so as we look into the next year, continuing to streamline that bulk upload process, handle classes of hundreds of people, that's definitely a priority for us. We'll also be continuing to make improvements on the guest invite form for coordinators. So while it's a minute and a half now, we continue to add efficiency to that process, build in more policy, represent policy groups, things that make their lives easier. Because we do want to keep our eye on those [00:43:00] two different value threads. One, adding efficiency for the coordinator and then two, delivering the world class experience for the traveler.

Kevin W. G: Excellent. Alex from Pana, thank you so much for being on WorkTrends, and Megan and I, really glad that you were on the show.

Meghan M. Biro: We will see you real soon.

Meghan M. Biro: As you can see there's a lot of technology helping with recruiting. But what about the candidates? Tim Yandel of Hired, told us his company is [00:43:30] empowering the candidate, creating a better experience for everyone involved.

Tim Yandel: In the talent community in particular, there's a lack of transparency in terms of what recruiters do on a daily basis. It's a hard job for many reasons. So we bring visibility into the metrics that they do on a daily basis. So analytics and all that kind of stuff. But the platform itself is a curated marketplace for available tech talent. So think of LinkedIn, except LinkedIn, you and I have access to LinkedIn. [00:44:00] Everyone does this, the entire world is on that, but we don't know if they're looking for a job, what they're looking for if they were looking for a job, and what kind of salary benchmarks.

Tim Yandel: So Hired is basically a job board in reverse. The candidates post themselves on there and list their requirements and the companies reach out to them to interview.

Kevin W. G: That's fascinating. So let's talk about the candidate experience. That's something's very very close to my heart and the organization that I run. So what else is involved around really making that [00:44:30] a really good experience for the candidates. So they're posting... kind of putting themselves up in this talent community, for lack of a better term for that, right? How else are you helping to improve the candidate experience with the platform?

Tim Yandel: It's been said many times that you can apply to jobs yourself. But it's always one of those things that's freeing for the candidate to say, "I would have companies come after me and apply to me." So the transparency in what companies offer. So they basically, for lack of a better way of saying it, they bid for your ability [00:45:00] to interview with the company. So we believe that transparency in recruiting has to start from the beginning. That's why salary data is forthcoming at the beginning of the interview process, equity, your perks, all that kind of stuff. So, all the stuff that are like the nuts and bolts of, of what a job really does, because you don't do this for free, gets out of the way at the beginning. So the candidate experience is truly one of the reasons why we've scaled at the magnificent velocity that we have in the past eight years.

Kevin W. G: That's fantastic. What else differentiates you then besides what you've already shared from [00:45:30] direct or even more so indirect competitors? Because there's a lot of little bits of what you just shared of other vendors and other solution providers provide. Even the traditional ATSs are in our space too, right? So how else do you differentiate?

Tim Yandel: Outside of the platform and AI and all that kind of stuff, I can tell you about behind it are the people. So we have, every candidate has a talent advocate that sits with the candidate themselves to make sure that they help them out in the decision making, making sure that they kind of, other career coach when needed. And it's very, very hands off on that approach. We also [00:46:00] have another person on the other end, which is more traditional, like a CSM, Customer Success Manager, that does the same coaching for the recruiter. So sometimes it's, "Hey, you're losing candidates at this stage because of this message or your process based on the marketplace needs to be adjusted this way and that way.

Kevin W. G: How are these talented advisors? How are they vetted on your side? How are they identified and vetted and put into those roles.

Tim Yandel: They're basically technical recruiters. We recruit recruiters to fill that seat. Usually they're probably like anywhere from three to five years of experience that can do that. [00:46:30] And then we're also looking into a package that we're pretty excited about on having those recruiters on the marketplace work

specifically for companies. And so if like a company that's an S and B company of 50 people doesn't necessarily-

Kevin W. G: On contract?

Tim Yandel: ... On retainer, if you will.

Kevin W. G: On retainer.

Tim Yandel: Right, exactly. And they would just recruit on their behalf on the platform itself. So it's pretty interesting stuff that we're pioneering here.

Kevin W. G: Tell us just really briefly a little bit more about the smart technology, the AI side of Hired. What does that include?

Tim Yandel: When you are on Hired as a company, you post your positions, [00:47:00] and then when you reach out to a candidate, those positions get put forefront to make sure the candidate's interested and accept the interview requests or not. After 10 interview requests, our AI basically understands what you're really looking for. And so we'll be able to find different trends and analysis through our semantic learning model that basically says like, "Hey, you're looking for people at this salary band that are coming from Brown." And so those people will be surfaced at the top of your list when you go into your position itself.

Tim Yandel: The other thing we also do is we have report on diversity inclusion. So [00:47:30] if you only reached out to a certain demographic, we report on that to make sure that we have conscious, responsible hiring and recruiting practices that the tech industry is not necessarily known for. So we'd like to be the change you want to see in the world.

Kevin W. G: That's awesome, Tim. And besides the one thing you did mention that's coming, what else is something the next six to nine 12 months that we can expect from Hired?

Tim Yandel: Well, one thing I think that is pretty interesting is we just acquired a company called PI, which is an assessments' company. And now we're building standalone technical assessments for you to use, but also the ability [00:48:00] to have pre-vetted candidates on the platform themselves. So if you think about all the candidates you're looking at as opposed to what they're looking for, you can see the test results. You can do live play back of what they did and how they performed in that test results before even reaching out to them, which is really really great.

Tim Yandel: And it also encourages back to the point of unbiased hiring. You can almost block the user name and picture and just see the results of what they're looking for. So you can really really consciously not bias your recruiting process.

Kevin W. G: That's very cool. That sounds like a great acquisition on higher side. That's great [00:48:30] for your customers and for future customers too. So Tim, thank you so much for being on the WorkTrends podcast and the best of luck to you.

Tim Yandel: Thank you very much.

Meghan M. Biro: How do you even know it's time to apply for a new job. It's tough out there to get career advice. Our next guest, Courtney Brand of The Lighthouse is trying to make that easier.

Courtney Brand: I'm Courtney Brand and I'm the founder and CEO [00:49:00] of The Lighthouse. We are a career marketplace that connects millennial professionals that are looking for career advice and guidance with industry insiders to have one on one conversations about their career growth.

Kevin W. G: That's awesome. What about us older gen-xers, Courtney? Come on.

Courtney Brand: We're staying focused on the millennial group, but we actually see huge opportunity to go both younger and older.

Kevin W. G: I don't worry. I'll forgive you on this one right now. Let's talk a little bit more about what are you helping right now? So from a candidate perspective, from the millennial candidate perspective, what are you helping [00:49:30] them to solve for and overcome to better prep for it? And that was kind of a softball, but what are you helping them do?

Courtney Brand: I think the best way to answer this question is to tell the story that inspired The Lighthouse because it's candidates, but it's also people that are employees already at business.

Courtney Brand: So my background, I was working in management consulting for a huge firm for a few years in both New York and in Shanghai. And had a couple of what I'll call now career intersection points. And the biggest one was I was going up for promotion at work and [00:50:00] I wanted to prepare my promotion case and was really frustrated in that moment that despite having a bunch of LinkedIn connections and working in a big company and a bunch of sponsors, ultimately when it came down to who can I call right now for career advice and guidance, it was in my case, my mom, my sister, and my friends. All of whom are brilliant, they're professionals, I'm lucky to have them but none of whom had worked in my industry and a lot of wasted time explaining, "No mom, a director does that, and a manager does this." Or like, "No Julia, you have to do client work too." And it was [00:50:30] super frustrating.

Courtney Brand: And this is something that was huge to me. When you are in your mid to late twenties, your career is your number one focus, and it was really frustrating. And that was the original inspiration for The Lighthouse, and that's what we try to do today, is really make sure that everyone, no matter what their network

looks like, has this network that they can go to, to get career advice that is personalized to them, that's rooted in real industry experience and that's delivered by someone who just went through it and they can relate to.

Kevin W. G: That's awesome. I love my family too, but don't tell them, I'm not going [00:51:00] to ask them for career advice. But let's talk a little bit more about, so I am a millennial professional, and I want some career advice, right? The individuals that you're going to connect me with in The Lighthouse, how were those individuals chosen, vetted, et cetera, then become part of that network?

Courtney Brand: That's a great question. So we call them insiders and our insider community, every single one of them is vetted by The Lighthouse. They actually go through an application process and we vet on two different criteria. The first thing is that [00:51:30] we want to make sure that they actually have the industry experience and they are experts in their roles and we know what they can speak to.

Courtney Brand: And then the second thing is that we vet for coaching and guiding skills, that you could be really great at your job, but you could be terrible at explaining, helping someone else to do that. So we really look for strong listeners or people who can analyze quickly, ask the right questions. And those are skills that people are developing in the workplace and this is a way for them to exercise them outside of the workplace too.

Kevin W. G: Are those individuals, those career coaches, [00:52:00] are they being compensated for their time?

Courtney Brand: Yeah.

Kevin W. G: Okay.

Courtney Brand: Our insiders are motivated by three different things in this order. The first one is that they love The Lighthouse, and they believe in our mission and want to be part of it and pay it forward.

Courtney Brand: The second thing is that in the rise of the personal brand, they're looking for activities and things to get involved in outside of work. So this is now something they can put on their LinkedIn, put on their resume and say, "Hey, I have this industry experience, I had these coaching skills and I'm applying them outside of work."

Courtney Brand: And then the final bit is they get compensated. [00:52:30] This is the big kind of, you know, it's bringing them into the gig economy. And a big insight that I had, you know I was working at PwC making a strong salary, but I was still living in New York city and felt very poor. So, that financial incentive makes them approach it in a professional manner, but also as an additional incentive to really go into the hard work with our customers.

Kevin W. G: How many, approximately, how many bake up that career coach network right now? How many people total?

Courtney Brand: We have hundreds on the platform and we have a growing wait list. [00:53:00] This conference has been really great actually to grow that wait list on both sides. We've had hundreds of matches happen to date and our community size is around 3000.

Kevin W. G: And then for the candidate right now, for the candidates interested in getting that coaching career advice, they also... it's a pay model for them, right?

Courtney Brand: Yeah.

Kevin W. G: How does that work if I'm a candidate, and I want to sign up for your platform, is it a monthly fee? How does that work?

Courtney Brand: We are experimenting with that. Our current pricing is one session is \$95 and then there's packages [00:53:30] that make that less expensive. What we really compare it to is that's one third of the price of a traditional career coach. So it's more affordable for the individual user. But that's why we're really excited to be here at HR Transform because we've started to get approached by businesses to actually offer this as an employee benefit, which is really exciting because that means that the employer is looking for ways to support their talent. And that means that we can broaden who can use The Lighthouse and who can benefit to The Lighthouse, because they don't have to dip into their own personal savings to use it.

Kevin W. G: Yeah. And like [00:54:00] we were talking about before we did this podcast, that's also gonna help with retention and with recruiting as well at that end. So with the candidates, right now as the model exists and the pay model and the candidates are paying, you said \$95 for a session, what is the feedback so far? Is it really positive? Is it a win for them for paying for it? Are you hearing that in the... Are you asking for feedback from your candidates? What's that looking like?

Courtney Brand: The reactions have been incredible. We have a net promoter score of 9.6, which is super high. [00:54:30] 55% of our customers who have used the product ones come back for followup sessions, which shows that they're getting incredible impact from it. The stats I was just pulling up, we've been now trying to measure like where are they getting impact from? And what we've found is 98% have more clarity and direction on their career path, which is super important because we are navigating an unprecedented amount of change, and there's a lot of anxiety around our career. So having that clarity from millennials is key.

Courtney Brand: The second thing is that 97% learn something new that will help them achieve their career goals. [00:55:00] So they're now empowered with more

information, more insight, more advice that they can actually then take back to work and achieve what they're working towards, which is super exciting.

Kevin W. G: That's very exciting. Is it across industries and job roles and job types that you're providing? What are some of the top careers that candidates or millennial candidates are asking for advice on? Do you have that data?

Courtney Brand: Yeah, we do. Marketing is very popular. Product management is the sexiest [00:55:30] term of the year I think. People are really interested in venture capital. But then also the most interesting thing is when people have... Oh, social impact. We just did a... we're having an event coming up in New York on careers and social impact and we sent out a newsletter to our audience highlighting our insiders and social impact, and got an incredible amount of response. So people, I mean, again, that goes back to purpose and people are really interested in that career path.

Kevin W. G: That's awesome. And it was also exciting for you to share what is coming that employers [00:56:00] are starting to get interested about offering this as an employee benefit. Is there anything else that you got, like on the roadmap that you can share with us in the next six, nine, 12 months that's going on?

Courtney Brand: I think our main-

Kevin W. G: Got to be something top secret and I won't tell anybody. Kidding.

Courtney Brand: ... Well I mean top secret, I mean b2b for us and selling to enterprises that's new and very exciting. This is kind of like our launch for that here at HR Transform. So with that we're really just looking for innovative partners [00:56:30] who are looking to invest in their people. And those conversations are fascinating to me because I'm learning a lot about HR and how it all works. And we know that what we're doing is incredibly valuable for the end user. And now it's figuring out, "Okay, how do we also help the business reach their goals?"

Courtney Brand: One thing that I find really interesting is the insights' aspect to it that most companies right now are collecting data by doing these annual surveys, and if they're super on top of it, at quarterly surveys. With The Lighthouse, we collect data [00:57:00] both before and after the session. And we're now exploring how we can use emerging technologies like natural language processing to actually be collecting insights from the sessions themselves. And of course doing so in a compliant, aggregated, anonymized way to share real-time authentic insights on an ongoing basis with businesses.

Meghan M. Biro: So, we've been talking a lot about hiring technology in automation today. But one of the biggest issues in the workplace [00:57:30] is wellness. And if you're not living well, you're going to have a lot of trouble getting work done. But managing that can be difficult for any organization. Our final guest, Heather Waibel is the CEO and founder of Welnys, spelled W-E-L-N-Y-S. Kind of cool,

right? She told us how her organization is making wellness programs easier for businesses to maintain.

Heather Waibel: We [00:58:00] actually work with companies that already offer onsite wellness programs to their employees. And their pain point is really around managing all the logistics. So especially multi location organizations, they could be dealing with dozens or hundreds of health wellness vendors and they get dozens and hundreds of invoices and it's kind of a mess, nobody really knows what's going on.

Heather Waibel: So we come in, we streamline that whole process. Employers get one invoice, but they get access to over a thousand vendors through us. They also only have one point of contact for customer service and [00:58:30] their employees get an app where they can engage with their programs, so they also have a streamlined interface.

Kevin W. G: Then how does that work with the other wellness providers then that you're... So you're basically running everything through your platform to make it easier and seamless for your customers. They're not paying you a fee, meaning the other wellness companies and firms, are they paying you a fee to be part of that ecosystem or am I missing something there?

Heather Waibel: So we're what's called a managed marketplace. We have over a thousand vendors on the platform. What a managed marketplace means is we're [00:59:00] sort of middleman and we handle all the customer service aspects of it. So our vendors get paid up, they get paid at very competitive rates, but our employers end up with a higher level of service and a software solution on top of the service itself.

Kevin W. G: You have wellness vendors coming and going from your marketplace as well then? Are there new ones that come in? How do they become part of your marketplace then?

Heather Waibel: We have two sections. One is our core services; those are things like fitness classes, massage, [00:59:30] et cetera. In that category we have hundreds and hundreds of different practitioners that we can work with. But then we also have speakers and workshop providers. And these are even maybe celebrities who have a very specific chalk that they do.

Kevin W. G: Like who?

Heather Waibel: We have a New York times bestselling author, we have a UFC fighter. And so employers in that case would actually pick a specific individual that they want to bring into their organization. So we're always adding more of these speakers. We add about three a week to the platform right now.

Kevin W. G: Do you [01:00:00] know off the top of your head what is hot with your customers right now? And what I mean by that is, what are some of like the key main wellness programs, whether that's yoga or whatever the case is that you're seeing employees are utilizing more of? Do you have any metrics around that?

Heather Waibel: The most popular, no surprise is chair massage. Employees love it. Employers love it. So it's by far most popular service. But after that we have seen a big surge this year in requests for mental health [01:00:30] programming. And what we do in the mental health space is we work with licensed mental health counselors that come in and do educational seminars on topics like anxiety, stress, depression. It's not therapy, it's educational. We also do some mindfulness workshops, meditation, et cetera. And so that's quickly becoming our number two most requested product.

Kevin W. G: That's awesome because my wife and I meditate regularly together now. And it's exciting to hear that it's starting to kind of seep more into the workplace. What are [01:01:00] the... your core customers that you work with, are they big and small across industries? What does that make up look like on the customer side?

Heather Waibel: It's really interesting. When I first started the company, I definitely thought this would be mostly tech companies bringing in these types of services. But today half of our customers are non tech companies. We work with distribution centers, laboratories, even laundry facilities and call centers. So we have about half and half split. This is great because those are really challenging environments for health and wellness, and to see employers making that investment in those types of locations [01:01:30] as well, and really caring about their employee health and looking for solutions in that space, I think it's wonderful. Today we're actually live in about 40 markets. We work with PayPal, we work with jet.com, Mongo DB, and then two of our largest non-tech companies, UniFirst uniform manufacturing and IDEXX, which is veterinary labs.

Kevin W. G: That's awesome. What's coming then with... is there something new on the horizon, something on the roadmap that you're going to change with the service?

Heather Waibel: Today really our niche is a health and wellness programming that's done in-person. But we want to become a resource [01:02:00] where HR can bring in any type of in-person service or training that they want. We're looking to branch out into sexual harassment training, active shooter training and things like this. That's what you can expect to see later on this year.

Kevin W. G: Heather, thank you so much for being on the WorkTrends podcast. Appreciate your time and best of luck to you.

Meghan M. Biro: Wow! Big shout out to Kevin for heading onto the HR Transform floor with a microphone while I was hanging out at the pool. [01:02:30] Just kidding. I was more poolside pull a Jason, come on. But seriously, what a great group of guests. The future of HR tech is brighter than ever. Don't you feel lucky? I know, I do.

Meghan M. Biro: Thanks again for listening to WorkTrends from TalentCulture. If you haven't spread the word yet, we'd love to have you go outside and scream to the world, subscribe to WorkTrends, or maybe just subscribe to wherever you listen to podcasts. And if you've got the time, leave us a rating and a review on iTunes, share WorkTrends with your coworkers and friends. We'll see [01:03:00] you on Friday for a regularly scheduled programming.

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