



Compilation of Regional Peer RoundTable Calls 10.19.2021

Attendees:

- Yvette Hernandez, Achieve Staffing
- Sandra Guadagnoli, AlliedUP
- Bruce Grant, Ally Thornton and Faith Keller, Beyond Talent
- Charlotte Hammond, Challenge Unlimited
- Venois Peebles, Community Staffing Solutions
- Kevin Vandebosch, EMBERS Staffing
- Clarence Scott, GoodWork Staffing
- Suzy Murphy, Action Associates
- Amelia Nickerson, First Step Staffing
- Paul Thompson, Purpose Workforce Solutions
- Tim Rettig, Staffanation
- Christine Rylko & Lee Humason, Uplift Northwest
- Mickey Wiles, Working Fields
- Willie Davis, Right Time
- Mark Winter, WinSource

Topic: **5 Critical Considerations to a Successful Digital Transformation**

Guest facilitator and Supplier Partner: **Jay Mattern, CEO, [TerraFirma Marketing](#)**

Guest presenter and Supplier Partner: **Lauren Jones**, Founder of [LEAP Consulting Solutions](#)

Introduction: LEAP is an acronym for my family – Lauren, Emily, Allison, and Peter. I've been in the staffing industry 24 years and dedicated to HR tech for the last decade. I have a passion for small firms and making sure they're well-informed, and I'm obsessed with technology.

There's so much innovation going on right now and I'm very much a change advocate. A favorite quote from Kevin Akeroyd, CEO, PRO Unlimited at [SIA's] recent Gig Economy conference – "**The ability to change will be a competitive weapon.**" I think he's right.

What we learned in 2020:

We are rethinking the way "work" works in 2020-21. Going remote, going hybrid, rethinking where you have to be geographically, with more focus on desired outcomes than traditional job descriptions and hiring a single person to fill one role for a long period of time.

We have the pain of the Great Resignation. I think it's more the Great Migration. Employers are particularly challenged to attract and keep employees at the moment as people seek more flexibility and look for companies that reflect their values. Key will be how we empower workers and how we leverage digital marketing as we navigate forward. Another quote from the Gig Economy conference:

“The ability to digitally market internally and externally will be a required core competency as we move forward.” – Matt Fischer, CIO of Bullhorn

We need to sell as much internally as externally. Our salespeople and recruiters are consumers, too. That requires automation, and one of the challenges is adoption. How do you get buy-in? You have to market.

- Jay: It's interesting that you use the word consumer. That's cutting edge. Staffing firms have always used a B2B approach. Now the pendulum has swung from clients to candidates, and the marketing model for candidates is B2C. That's so important! Consumers have choices. There are lots of other places they can go.

What's ahead of us? The resume was invented in 1482. Are we beyond that? I hope so. It's an inefficient way to see the value of a candidate. We're seeing TikTok resumes, simple profiles in lieu of requiring resumes on the light industrial side, setting aside degree requirements for functional skills as a value-add. We need to be screening people in, not out.

There are other more interesting ways than a bulleted job description to get our job opportunities in front of people and stand out in the crowd. [Voyse](#), company out of the UK, is doing video job descriptions, e.g.

One trend noticed most this past year and a requirement in our industry going forward: ***willingness to change***

- The staffing industry has tended to lag in adopting new technology – I often hear “we're a relationship business.”
- Pandemic taught us that we know how to adapt and adopt and overcome quickly. As new technology comes out, we'll be required to continue doing that.

In building our tech stacks, I believe we can ***lead with empathy***:

- Understanding what the job seeker goes through, we can make it as frictionless and transparent as possible and contribute in a meaningful way to the job seeker's experience.
- The technology you choose can reflect your company's vision, mission, values, and culture and bring people back because they understand who they're engaging with and want to return.

Your technology should (1) preserve revenue or (2) generate revenue. Categorize your tech investments accordingly to hold vendors accountable and ensure you get the ROI you're paying for.

Most common issues I see:

- Agencies that have NO technological requirements! They've never asked themselves, what will I require the tech to do and what are the desired outcomes? Smaller firms in particular fail to plan. Having basic requirements for how technology should function to represent your brand is part of that plan.
- Failing to plan results in band-aid buying, i.e., reactively buying tech without doing an inventory of your current technology. I see a LOT of overspending on duplicative function technology. Keep yourself informed on the technology you already have.
- Band-aid buying turns into the swivel chair effect. If a new technology isn't integrated into your core system, recruiters and salespeople are going back and forth between different technologies, slowing them down when they could be billing and filling if things were more integrated.

- Then, with all of this happening, we get further and further away from the voice of the customer, meaning feedback from candidates and recruiters about their experiences.

All of these are compound issues that can make for a really inefficient tech stack.

Digital transformation is not going to slow down. Investment in HR technology has gone from \$1.7 billion to over \$5 billion. It's important to stay knowledgeable about new tech and understand what's noise and what you need to innovate to stay competitive.

Disruption and change needs to be an organic part of your business moving forward. As we innovate and disrupt technologically, we also need to ensure we support those technical advances.

- New positions are being created to manage and navigate adoption and vendor partnerships.
- We need to change structurally to support the tech we're implementing. It's an ongoing process we need to nurture.

5 Critical Considerations to an Effective Digital Transformation:

1. Tolerance and Timing

- a. What is your organization's tolerance for change? Do you have a culture where employees are excited to change and welcome new tech development?
- b. Scope and change fatigue are related. We don't have to "eat the whole elephant." You don't have to implement all the new tech right now. Pick the technologies that are "closest to the dollar" and create an effective, pragmatic road map.
- c. Timing of when you implement change – never a great time, but there are more ideal times for you and your organization.
- d. Roadmap should be well-communicated across your company so that your employees are prepared – what to expect, timing of changes, how you'll hold them accountable, what's in it for them.
- e. Making sure you have enough lead time to build buy-in.

2. Resources

- a. On the people side, who are your organization's subject matter experts, brand evangelists, end users who get excited about tech or will champion a new technology? Excitement begets excitement and helps with adoption, so change is less disruptive.

3. Process

- a. You need to have a formal process of looking at current key processes and evaluating whether they're relevant in your new digital world. I challenge each of you to revisit your current processes.
- b. Configuration – *all the time*, to work for your workflow and your business!
 - i. Change your process as your technology continues to update.
 - ii. Keep the same key words and language so that your employees know how to use the updated process.
- c. Customization – *only when absolutely necessary*
 - i. Often the thought is "this technology doesn't do what I want today, so let's force the issue."
 - ii. Don't get engrained into a technology that inhibits you and your company from changing. If you tweak it too much, you may get to a point where you won't be able to update it.

4. Metrics and Rewards

- a. How will you track the technology, internally and externally? If you're going to buy it, you need to understand how you'll define and track its benefits.
 - i. Ask your vendors: How do people hold you accountable? What is the metric of success for you? How are you making us more efficient?
- b. Defined metrics are a huge part of success with vendor partners and will help you reward great behavior on the vendor's part. If you go into a vendor partnership with zero expectations, you'll come out with a zero-sum product.
- c. Defined metrics are a huge part of successful internal adoption, too. They will help you define incentives for recruiters and salespeople and help share how you're going to hold your end users accountable.

5. Well-Communicated and Well-Articulated Training Plan!

- a. For implementing any technology, I use 8-week lead time, for example:
 - i. Week 1: Tell people what's happening
 - ii. Week 2: Give them a little more detail about the product and process
 - iii. Week 3: Share how you're going to hold them accountable.
 - iv. Week 4: Preview what the training pace will be; who the subject matter experts are
 - v. Week 5: Do some pre-training, etc.
- b. Use small snippets of content
 - i. Suggested reading: "*Hook Point: How to Stand Out in a 3-Second World*"
- c. Use multiple touch points to communicate with end users – primary, secondary and tertiary levels, e.g., website, email, and text, so the message is received where users typically live. You need to bring content to them. Meet end users where they are, where they will see and absorb the message.
- d. Consider training as ongoing maintenance to optimize performance of your digital transformation investment. It's an ongoing investment.

How do you innovate and disrupt on a budget?

- Be creative
 - Negotiate with your vendor partners about Beta opportunities, offer to test things, grab a small pilot.
 - Go to startups – ask questions on how they use technology, how they advance their tech practices, get in on the ground floor
- You can build an innovation team regardless of your organization's size. It's about finding the people who are passionate about innovation in technology and willing to add this to their job description.
- Remember, there is innovation without new technology – be sure to optimize the tech you have!

Resources to innovate and inform:

There are A LOT of resources out there that you can use to further your education about current and upcoming technology

- Talent Tech Labs
- Leap Consulting Solutions – [You Own the Experience podcast](#)
- Maurice Fuller from StaffingTec – podcast: StackVantage
- Staffing Hub

Questions – Middle U.S. region

Mickey: How does someone like us [currently converting to Bullhorn] stay on top of tech changes and trends in the industry without doing hours of research every month?

- Lauren: Bullhorn does a monthly upgrade email. Also, manage your account manager – check in with your vendor partners once a month, send an agenda of what you want to talk about, and have them present it back to you.
- Jay: Stay up to date, but don't be a hammer looking for nails.

Questions – Eastern U.S. region

Amelia: We are dealing with a population that has VERY limited access to technology on a consistent/daily basis

- Lauren: As a relationship business, we're really good at recognizing when technology is not the answer, and when we need to go out and meet people f2f. One suggestion is to look at how might we leverage technology to make the process easier for our staff who are having those f2f interactions. There's always a way to insert technology to make the process easier; the question is, who's the end user?
- Jay: Sometimes it's not an "either/or" solution.

Janet: You mentioned the importance of evaluating internal processes as a first step. Are there **best practices for evaluating your processes**?

- Lauren: Yes! Do a reverse demo – have your recruiters or salespeople or operations people demo to you how things are being done. What is the job seeker experience, what is the customer experience, what is the job experience? That's what I do first as a consultant. This perspective brings objectivity, and you'll see where the inefficiencies lie in your process.
- Jay: In my former company, we hired a firm to do "secret shopping." They sent people to apply and report back. You get the good, the bad and the ugly. You get right to the heart of the matter to learn where your system is broken.

Questions – Western U.S. region

Kevin: How do I know that I'm getting ROI on Avionte? How do I get the team to really utilize all of Avionte?

- Lauren: Address the problems as they come up, one at a time. Do a reverse demo: hire a temp for a day to go through the process and report back to you their experience; have your recruiters walk you through their process (from the employee, client and job perspective).

Next RoundTable: November 16, 2021

Topic: Quarterly Business Reviews