

Speaker 0 00:00:05 Welcome to the Clear Impact Podcast brought to you by PTI University. Thanks for joining us today. My name is Sherri Connor, and I am your host.

Speaker 1 00:00:19 When you focus on people, your people are going to focus on your business, and that's really, what's going to lead to your ultimate success. Most

Speaker 2 00:00:28 Most of us work with others, and that is where solid human resource strategies come into play. We chat today with two of our HR rock stars, Kelly Detter and Rachel Evans. Kelly is our HR manager here at PGT, and Rachel is our VP of Human Resources for the Southeast Business Unit of PGT Innovations. This quick and energetic conversation provides some helpful reminders when it comes to taking care of the people on your team.

Good afternoon, we are here on the Clear Impact Podcast today, and this is our first time having two guests at the same time. So this is an exciting time for us. Welcome to Kelly Detter and Rachel Evans. Thank you. Thank you. Yeah, this is exciting. So, um, Kelly, we'll start with you. Can you give us a little bit of information about what your role is here, maybe how long you've been with the company and just kind of a general idea, because I actually don't know all that much about you. We've only met just briefly.

Speaker 2 00:01:20 So, yeah. I actually just celebrated my two-year anniversary with the company just last week. So I relocated here from Indiana and have been with the company for, like I said, two years. And so it's been a fun ride. I've met some really great people and, um, I'm currently working as the HR manager for our Venice location. So I get to work very closely with Rachel Evans who is here today with us.

Awesome. Good. So do you like Florida better than Indiana? Even in July? I do. Actually. I don't miss. Oh my gosh. I don't even remember the name anymore. Snow blowing. I don't miss that at all. The first thing I sold on the way on my trip down here was the snowblower. Smart. Yep. Nice. Okay. Rachel, tell us a little bit about you.

Speaker 2 00:02:04 Well, hello. Yes, my name is Rachel Evans and I am the Vice President of Human Resources for PGT. I support the Southeast Business Unit, so all of our locations in Miami, all of our New South Window locations and all of our PGT locations. So right now the only areas that I do not have responsibility for are out west. So from an HR standpoint, it's all things, people in really just focus on how we can make things better for all of our employees across the board, whether it's benefits, training, how we're bringing people into the organization and all the fun things we're going to talk about today.

Awesome. How long have you been here?

Speaker 2 00:02:51 Actually, just over two years. It was two years in March. I got here in 2019. So just before, you know, COVID hit and everything else. So still learning my way around Florida. I also moved here from the Midwest, Ohio, so I am a born and raised in Indiana. So I'm a Hoosier, but also I support the Ohio state Buckeyes. So there's a lot of that around here.

Yeah. Well, I'm a Midwest girl as well. I grew up in Iowa - Go Hawks. Yeah, yeah. Go Hawks. So big 10, big 10. There's nothing else to do in the Midwest, so you have to be a college sports fan. You have to watch sports. Yeah, exactly. Because all you do in the winter is hibernate. Exactly. Yeah.

So today, we are in the series running a successful business. And one of the key elements in making things, hum well, are the people and who better to address that topic than you guys. So I'm glad that you're here. I know that there are a lot of, you know, trends and people do a lot of hype and you know, there's a lot of catchy ways to fill the empty seats on the bench, but what are some just tried and true principles that our dealers could follow when it comes to hiring.

Sure, well, we have definitely done a lot of hiring this year and I know Kelly and her team has felt that the most, especially in our Venice locations, I think we've hired over a thousand people this year alone and, it's not an easy feat to do.

Speaker 2 00:04:02 I think, um, one of the first things you need to do is really just understand what does your business need? What are the skill sets that you're looking for to help compliment your organization? So understanding what those organizational strategic initiatives are, is really critical in order to build an accurate job description because when you go out to market and you're trying to find the right person to fill a role without having a very clear and precise job description, it makes that feat a little more challenging for whoever's doing your recruiting in the, in the feedback loop, you know, from the hiring managers, um, what exactly do you need? How is it going to compliment your business and what type of skill set are you, are you really looking for? So between that, and then the final piece is, you know, the culture fit. You really can't put enough emphasis on the culture fit, you know, a lot of skills you can teach and you can learn on the job and, you know, PGT we're, we're known for, you know, our, on the job training and making sure that employees, you know, with very limited experience and background can come in and learn something and can kind of grow from that.

Speaker 2 00:05:03 But that cultural fit, getting the right person, is really what's gonna contribute to the long term success. So I don't know, Kelly, if you want to talk a little bit more about how much hiring we've done and what we've learned from that, oh my gosh. So much hiring. It's been very exciting. And so we have hired over 500 people this year, actually close to a thousand just this year. So the team has, has done a great job working cross-functionally across the organization. We pulled in a lot of different resources, marketing, to socialize. Hey we have jobs and this is a great place to work. And the biggest, uh, we use Facebook, LinkedIn, indeed, but we really had to utilize and lean on social media to get the word out because that's how people look for jobs today. And, and we had to make it easy for them to apply because if you make the process complex or complicated or too lengthy, they'll go somewhere else where it's easier.

Speaker 2 00:05:51 So we had to make it simple, clean and clear and quick, you know, we have a workforce that wants results quickly. They grew up with internet and social media and answers at the right, at the tip of their fingers. And so they expect those same things from us is quick, right?

So if I'm a mom and pop dealer and I, I know that I'm strapped and I know that my phone is ringing off the hook, and I know that I need to hire someone. The key is just to, maybe, even though you feel pressure of bringing someone in immediately, just to kind of take your time and go through the process carefully and make sure it's a good fit, because otherwise you're just wasting everyone's time and energy, right?

Yeah. Well, even it goes back to communication. That's the biggest piece. Maybe you need to follow a process to make sure that you have that cultural fit and you're doing your due diligence to find that that fit, that's going to really bring that strength to your bench.

Speaker 2 00:06:41 But it just goes back to communication. Just don't let too much time lapse because otherwise the candidate will look elsewhere.

So it has to become like ahead of the priority list. If you've got an opening, you need to be very diligent about following up and following through and returning emails and responding back. Yep. Those are some really good principles. COVID obviously was a big challenge and still is in some respects. I know things are beginning to open and, and some of the things are becoming a little more relaxed than they have been. What are some things that a dealer needs to keep in mind as they're hiring in this, in this time and space?

The biggest thing, I go back to communication again, and in defining those clear safety protocols that you're doing to make sure that you're maintaining a safe and comfortable work environment, whether that means establishing a clear process and visual on your cleaning measures, your facility, having a contact tracing procedure.

Speaker 2 00:07:33 So you can ensure that anyone who maybe was exposed is notified and takes the proper protocols to make sure that they maintain healthy working environment. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, you think about COVID, it rattled all of us really quickly, and who would have thought that it would have lasted more than two weeks, right. But it did. And employees, they need to feel like the employer cares. They care about their safety and they care about keeping them away from any signs of COVID. So that means, you know, installing the temperature checks, you know, we did that early on and that was something that all of the employees felt right away. Um, they saw, we were taking measures...

Speaker 1 00:08:11 Be sure to tune in for upcoming episodes to help you understand the fenestration industry, what you need to know when buying windows and doors and other related topics. You can find out more about us at [pgtiuniversity.com](http://pgtiuniversity.com). You can also find us on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Speaker 2 00:08:34 So we ramped up all of our cleaning initiatives out on the floor, we equipped all of our employees with sanitizer and bottles of spray so that they can wipe down their workstations and whatnot, as often as they felt like they needed to. And even just social distancing. Masks were not fun. Right? I mean, we're getting to a point now where, you know, because of the vaccinations, we're kind of becoming more relaxed on wearing of the masks, but it was something that we did. And it was, you know, it was tough for our environment just to put those masks on, but after a while it became standard habit. And it's really just that constant communication across the board and staying on top of what's happening with COVID and the CDC, and to Kelly's point, that constant communication.

It was ever changing for a while there, it was as a leader, it was, it was hard because you had to react to the unknown quickly, quickly.

Speaker 2 00:09:21 And so as a leader, being able to maintain that sense of calm in your team, even though you're probably thinking I have a family and kids to take care of and you know, but I got to make sure I instill the calm for my team too, it was challenging. We had to show that, Hey, we've got this, we're going to work through it. We're going to keep you safe. And we're going to do everything in our power to do that through all of these initiatives that we did, social distancing, mass cleaning, all those things.

And our leaders stepped up. They really did. And you know, it's interesting now to kind of have some of those conversations with the leaders, know, what did you do different to make sure that your team felt

safe? And you heard a lot of stories, um, of what employees went through during that time period and that leadership so important.

Speaker 2 00:10:04 Well, I know I started in January and so my interview time was in December and you know, it was full masks and, you know, it was really hard to have a job interview when you're wearing a mask. Like it was tricky. And then to go on a tour of the facility when you've got your plugs in and you can't hear, and you can't read lips. And so it was very challenging to communicate. Uh, so I'm glad that some of that is being lifted and that, uh, you know, we're semi normal these days.

When we started wearing masks, I forgot how much we communicate through non-verbals and your, you know, you, you wear a mask and cover up half your face. And I'm like, what are you saying? Like, I, like, I know you're talking.

Speaker 2 00:10:48 I hired someone during that period. And I had never seen his full face until recently. I'm like, oh, that's what you look like underneath that mask. I had no idea. It never matches, it never matches. It's you're like, wait a second. I have to remember what you look like now. Yeah. It's, it's definitely tricky is so this series that we're doing is running a successful business and we've all learned advice from one place or another beyond, making sure people are a good fit. Really communicate well, really know what you're looking for in terms of the next employee, um, maybe engaging in some social media or different practices in order to recruit, what is maybe one piece of advice you could give to a dealer around keeping a solid employee?

I think it goes all about back to building relationships. There's statistics all over out there that explain that people don't leave companies, they leave their boss. And so that relationship is so important.

Speaker 2 00:11:34 The way we led 20 years ago is so different than how we effectively lead today. And as a leader, you have to evolve and change with the times to make sure that you're adjusting your leadership style to fit the needs of those that you lead. And so you have to lead with compassion and you have to lead with empathy and you have to be humble and, and display courage all at the same time.

That's not a small bill.

Oh no.

You know, we work in human resources. And so we're all about people. Everything we do is, you know, to make sure that not only the business is successful, but we've got people tied into that, you know, that goal, that overall goal. And when you focus on people, your people are going to focus on your business and that's really, what's going to lead to your ultimate success.

Speaker 2 00:12:16 And so, you know, no one really likes to recruit, but I'll tell you if you can retain, you can stay out of that, that recruiting element a lot easier. In retention, and let's face it. You know, there's a lot of statistics out there right now because in 2020 due to COVID, there, wasn't a lot of people making job moves, but you can look at any article out there on labor, in the labor market, in, in, you're going to see there's doors that are opening up. And if you really want to focus on keeping your people, make sure you're talking to them, what drives them? What motivates them? What, what are they looking for? What do they need out of their employer and make sure that you're responding and you get to Kelly's point, you've gotta be quick. You've gotta be agile. The market is changing.

Speaker 2 00:12:54 What people want out of their employer is changing all the time. So we've got to make sure that we're staying on top of that.

So you can't just assume that everybody wants a dollar an hour raise or \$2 an hour raise. Maybe they just need a little extra time off, or maybe they need a more flexible schedule to accommodate their family, or maybe they just need a better work van and they don't actually need more money. Maybe they're just tired of driving a van that doesn't have air conditioning anymore or whatever. I don't know. I'm just making up stuff. I'm sure none of our dealers expect their installers to drive without air conditioning. That would be heartless, especially in Florida, especially in Florida. Do you have a good piece of advice that was given to you that you could share around an HR topic?

Speaker 2 00:13:36 If we're talking about retention, a good piece of advice is stay close to your people. Um, we have a program is called creating open relationships every day. It's CORE. And it really all starts with, you know, the way that you communicate and set that expectation. And then from there, you know, you can hold accountable. I mean, we, we all are accountable to something or someone, or we even hold ourselves accountable. And from there being fair, celebrating pride, you know, taking pride in your organization and celebrating those wins and successes. And when you do all those things in the right way with a servant heart, with a servant leadership approach, you're going to get employees that are loyal to your organization. They're going to feel included, engaged and affiliated. And at the end of the day, that affiliation is like a marriage, right? You don't want to divorce, or you don't want to, you know, have that broken in any way.

Speaker 2 00:14:21 And that's really what it, when it all comes down to. It's back to the basics, it's simple. Um, but sometimes we forget, you know how to do those things. We just need reminders. Right?

How about you, Kelly? I second, everything Rachel says.

That's a smart woman. Well, that's awesome. Well, I am so glad that we had a little bit of time today to just kick around some ideas around hiring and retention and just good HR principles. And I'm sure we'll have you back in one form or another, maybe both of you who knows. Well, we'll see what the podcast leads us to, but thanks so much for joining us today.

Speaker 1 00:14:54 Thank you. Thank you for having us.

Speaker 0 00:14:56 PGTI University is the customer education team for an entire family of brands. We began with the original, Eze-Breeze porch enclosure line, then became PGT, America's leading brand of impact resistant windows and doors. We then added CGI, CGIC, WinDoor, Western Windows, New South Windows and Eco Windows and Doors. We create products built to withstand major storms, keeping people safe, secure, and prepared. Our exceptional brands give you the protection you need without compromising design or functionality. PGTI University is here to educate you, our listener, so that you can be a more informed consumer of window and door products.