

# Grow Hiring and Retention in the Blue Collar Market

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## SPEAKERS

Ken Rusk, Halie Morris

**H** Halie Morris 00:00  
Welcome back to Everyday Business Solutions. My name is Halie Morris, I'm your podcast coordinator and hosts. And today I have with me Ken Rusk. And he's going to tell us a bit more about what he does and his background. Because today, we're going to dive into the entrepreneurial employee and the blue collar workers and what they're really doing for our business environment. So Ken, if you don't mind introducing yourself?

**K** Ken Rusk 00:25  
Yeah, I'm Ken Ruskin, I'm the owner of Rusk industries here in Toledo, Ohio. And that is a company that has several different construction concerns within it. And we, as you said, we do a lot of hiring and a lot of recruiting we, we seek out, you know, a lot of sometimes even first time job seekers or second third time job seekers, maybe more on the younger side. And we we started our company back in 1986. And we've been here ever since. And one of the companies you might have heard of is EverDry Waterproofing, that's one of the things that we do. And we, that company has grown from six people to 200. Now, and it's been quite the journey. So it's all about trying to find the right people and, and make things happen for them.

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Halie Morris 01:16

So you're really familiar with the business climate, especially here in the Toledo area, which is very close to home. And with that being said, You've probably worked with, like every type of person at this point, I'm sure. And one thing that us being a smaller business, I think we're just over 100 employees now as well, that we used to stress a lot. And I think we still do, I'm not in the recruitment side, unfortunately anymore, but was employees who have an entrepreneurial mindset, and bringing in these go getters to our company to help us grow and continue to scale. And so my question for you is, what is the entrepreneurial employee? Like? What is that mindset? Before we get too far into this question to this discussion?

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Ken Rusk 02:03

Well, that's a great question. And it's easy to it's easy to kind of pick them out amongst a group of potential employees that are, or applicants that come to your office. See, it seemed like years ago, when you came to an interview, the interview was kind of imbalanced, where it was, you know, Boss person had the ability to control the conversation with applicants, and you really needed the job. So you came in there, and maybe you were even a smidge timid. And you could only get as aggressive as you thought he would he or she would want you to get. But those kind of tables have turned a little bit. You know, we live in a world now where there's so much demand for the workers that that we're looking for. And that's just a supply and demand issue, which we can talk about a little bit here. But what what what happens is, you almost have this, this, this new position now where somebody can come in, and almost look at you and say, you know, Mr. Job person, what's in it for me to work here? And and that's, that's something that I, you know, some people back in the day would probably kind of like, you know, shrug at that, like, Well, you know, who are you to ask me that question. But I actually embrace that, because you have to remember, I mean, just as an example, between my office and the highway, which is only a couple of miles, there's probably 25 Help Wanted signs on the road there. So I know people have choices. I know they can job shop me all day long. And that's okay. So if somebody comes in and says, Well, hey, what's in it for me to work here? Can I'm going to embrace that question? And I'm going to really show them how we are different and unique, you know, within our culture within our organization from other job opportunities, and I'm okay with that.

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Halie Morris 03:53

I would say to we've had low unemployment it you know, excluding recent times event, low unemployment for a while. And that's, for me, that's all I've known is, employees don't need you specifically, it's like you said they have options. And obviously, people are

getting jobs. So it's a lot more pressure on the employer now to provide value even from the early application stage, as far as what you have to pick to put in there to learn in a candidate and how transparent you need to be upfront as far as salary, requirements, opportunities for growth. All of those things for any level of employee have to be alarming. And I would say even during current times, it's perhaps more so and of course, I'm not job searching. So I can't speak for those who are but a huge thing right now is job security. Like how well is the company doing? How secure is the job? What are the benefits going to be the support? How are they handling leave of absences right now? With all the current guidelines that are set out, things like that are important, and an employer has to prove those on top of the other things right now. So it's definitely true. Like, you have to be able to provide value. And now you want those applicants to come in, and almost like seek to know it, like they have to come in ready to ask those questions. And if they don't, it's almost a red flag for the applicant, like they're not really interested in the job.

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Ken Rusk 05:28

Yeah, I think what's really important as an employer these days, as you said, you have to differentiate yourself from these other places. And one of the things that we work really hard on is the culture, we work very hard to get that culture to be really attractive the moment somebody hits the door. And you know, you know, you can talk about, you know, a firm handshake, and a good smile, and all the things that are traditional things that that you look for. But one of the things we talked about is, what does your four year look like? What does what does the people who are talking about onboarding you? What are they like? how friendly are they? What's the atmosphere like is, is there color? Is there sounds? Is there music is, is there a good feel? Even even, you know, people don't forget that they're judging you, the minute they hit that door. And if people are walking around, and they have a smile on their face, and there's some positive energy, one of the things we get a lot of is, man, I really wanted to come work here, because as soon as I hit the door, it was like this huge energetic field that just hit me. And that's something that isn't, that isn't by happenstance, I mean, that's actually cultivated. You know, you talk about things like recognition, and anniversaries, and motivation, and discipline, and a goal oriented culture, and accountability towards hitting those goals. But all of those things tie into the main focus, which is, I can't get what I want, nor can my company, get what it wants, or needs, until all of you get what you need first. And if you can make that that case, in a very believable way where the people own it, that come to work in your organization, they're going to know that you are intrinsically focused on what makes their world better. I don't mean, just from a business standpoint, I mean, from a personal goal standpoint, we spend a lot of time getting involved in the lives of those who who want to help who I mean, who are willing to put themselves out there. But we spend a lot of time in getting involved in their personal lives, their personal goals for one month, six month, three year 510 year kind

of scenario, even long term investing. So I think it's really, really important that once you have this person in your organization, you show them that, yeah, you need to be here. And here's why.

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Halie Morris 07:50

It's interesting talking about that, just because we talked about like what the efforts to retain people and not how important those are. And you're right, like the color and just that first impression when you walk through almost like that atmosphere is so vital and important for retention. But it seems to me like retention has gone down, or at least longevity of employment has gone down on average, I've noticed a lot more people amongst my age group, maybe only working a couple years at a place like two to five years before seeking new employment or looking for bigger things. So what do you have to say to that for those almost working with employees that maybe are seeking like their long term is not it's no longer 10 years to 15? two to five?

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Ken Rusk 08:39

Well, I look at it this way. The reason that people change jobs is typically because they don't feel like they can make the life that they want for themselves happen within your organization. So we always try to answer that question. Okay. Can you get the life that you want? The way you've designed it for yourself? specific and custom to you? Can you create that life within through our organization? And do you feel like, as you're working there, you are approaching those goals. You know, in the book, blue collar cash that I wrote, we talked about comfort, peace and freedom, and how that's everybody's individual Nirvana. You know, we're not all going to change or we're not all going to chase, you know, mega yachts and big houses and 15 cars. We all have our version of what our comfort, peace and freedom triangle looks like. And that really is the end game for most people. You don't really live to work you work to live well. What does that look like? Can I draw that on a piece of paper with, you know, some crayons and show you what my world is supposed to be for me. So if somebody comes into your company, and they have that picture in mind, and that's a really important point, because we actually asked people to draw that out for us, I mean, physically so we can see what they're after. And then we chopped those goals into a lot of little pieces. And we have them chase those things, one goal two to three goals at a time and see real progress. If somebody believes that their life is progressing, again, within through your organization, they're going to stay there. I mean, I've been here 35 years now. And just the other day, I gave out a 30 Year Award, a 25 Year Award, it's one year award, we have a lot of longevity. And it's simply because I allow them to say, what's my life gonna look like? can I build it here? can I control my own input? can I control my own output, and therefore my income, and then

make my life happened the way I want it, regardless of what you tell me to do, Ken. So that's kind of the goal here to get people to be self driven, goal oriented people.

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Halie Morris 10:46

So do you think maybe the reason we're seeing some lower retention is because employers, maybe they're asking about these goals, but they're not really delving into those personal goals and how to align it with the work climate anymore.

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Ken Rusk 11:01

The real important thing, when you're talking about goals is the actual mechanics of it, you know, a goal is nothing more than a wish or a dream or a hope, if it's not written down somewhere, if it's not clearly defined, dissected into small pieces that you can get one at a time. And then your progression is shown and experienced, and being held accountable and having other people share that with you and wish you on. So one of the things that we do is we have this giant black glass board, it's similar to one of those boards, you'd see out in front of a, of a restaurant with the drink of the day written on it and color. And we have these people, they'll they'll come up with a goal, let's say, you know, it's a 20 \$500 goal that they have. Okay, well, how long do you want to take to accomplish this goal, based on what I can afford, okay, \$48 a week gets that done in a year, 24 hours a week gets that done in two years, whatever you do, and we chat, those goals have been up into pieces, we have them document that path in that plan on the board, and they have a beginning date and an end date. And then everybody else in the organization can walk by that board and see what they're up to. And when they see him in the hallway, they can pat him on the back and say, Wow, looks like you're halfway there. Well done. And then as soon as they finished one of those, everybody celebrates it. And they go right, another one.

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Halie Morris 12:24

So my next question is, as an employer, say they've gotten this figured out what the goals, they know that they need to go in now and actually start to break down help employees line up goals, even looking at those as early as the application stage to make sure the alignment is close enough at the beginning that as they develop, they can actually do it through the company, right.

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Ken Rusk 12:50

Yeah, I think, you know, this is almost an exercise that every employer should go

through. And that is, does what you say to them in the interview match their experience, one week, three weeks, a month after they've been hired in your company, because so many times, it's like, you know, you tell them all the awesome things that happened in your company. And you're the only one that kind of owns that. And the people that they're working with are like, Yeah, whatever. And it's just not quite the same. So if the people that are involved in their first 30-60-90 days aren't perfectly in line with you, and in lockstep, you're going to have some issues where somebody said, Ken, I know you said this, but I, I experienced that. And that's why very quickly, we try to get them involved in, you know, some of the long term planning some of the things like 401k planning and investing and, and, and again, visualizing their goals and helping them to understand that this is a place where you can make things happen for yourself. So I agree with you 100%. If that if that beginning phase doesn't match the first, you know, what they call the acclimation period, okay, where somebody kind of like test driving your job, you're going to have an issue with that. So you got to make sure you spend some time with the people that are that are, you know, taking them further into the company to make sure that they have the same thing going.

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Halie Morris 14:16

Yeah, I know one thing that I had a problem with when I was recruiting as I first recruited for a call center for a part time position, it was scripted, and it was very, very dry. And we of course had to still recruit people and we did people from the ages of 16 all the way through well and retired and just needed a little something to do with the rest of their time, right because they weren't used to not working. And so I heard a large variety people and some people it was just a little extra cash flow while they worked other jobs. And they really didn't want us to deter people from how monotonous it could be. They want us to mention it but kind of gloss over it. And I always had a problem with that because that's like if I were to come in and somebody would be like, Oh, yeah, it can get boring sometimes. Well, anything I do can get boring sometimes because I'm a very high energy person. And my attention span is like 10 seconds long. My brothers and sisters are all diagnosed with a DD ADHD, I'm the only one diagnosed. And I don't think that means I'm the only one not there, I just, I think they skipped person. Because I very much have a short attention span, easily distracted, always thinking of two or three things. And for me, if somebody did that in a job, and I said, Oh, yeah, it's checked out sounds good, I would be miserable. And I'd be out of there in a couple weeks, maybe a couple months, just depending on how quickly I found a different job. So I was always very upfront and said, it gets dry, monotonous, here's exactly what you do. And here's some of the things people do to combat it, just being upfront and honest. And I used to get a little criticism at the beginning. And then they saw that the people I was offering and who were accepting, were staying longer, because it was the retired teacher who actually really loved the

scripted work. And she had fun seeing if she could inflect enough, you know, joy in her tone to change the course of that call, even though she couldn't deviate from script at all. And then she brightened up our entire row, because she was just a very bubbly personality. And I would kind of vet people out, I would say up front, like, this is a dry job. If you're used to moving around frequently, that's not an option here. And you know, the other thing to the caveat, if you're not, and you know, call center jobs, that gets a little boring after a while, and you're in a more engaging job, and they're in there asking you for the entrepreneur or employee, right? We want an entrepreneurial mindset, that's a popular thing to ask for. That's something that we tend to look for people and a lot of businesses, especially those in a growth phase will look for it, they'll say we have a lot of opportunities for growth, but then you get into the company and you sit in the same position for four or five years, even though you're working hard, you're pulling ahead of your goals. And you start to wonder where that growth opportunity is. It comes back to what you said about like not being transparent, or making sure that the follow through is there with the promises that you make at the application and hiring stages. So

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Ken Rusk 17:20

yeah, I think there's there's an important, there's an important point there, you know, obviously, as any business owner would be, if you see that you have certain employees that are really shining, I mean, that's kind of like the vortex that brings them up through your company to help your company grow and to help your company become, you know, bigger than you can make it on your own. I just think for me, you know, we have a lot of people that are in the ditch digging business here. I mean, I started ditch digging for this company when I was 15. And I'm still here. And I think the reason that is, is because I knew that I could control my input, my output and therefore my income. And, you know, there was a lot of, there's a lot of discussion in our company today about, okay, yeah, you're gonna be out there, and you know, you're gonna be doing this type of job. And this is the income you're gonna make. But let's talk about what you do with that income. Because, you know, this is rather controversial sometimes. But it's sometimes it's not so important. What you do for a living is what you do with what you do for a living. And people have a hard time grasping that until they really sit down and think about it. You know, the ditch taking visitors probably wasn't the first of my 99 things on my list that I wanted to do for a living. But once I realized that I could surround myself with amazing people, I could share in the joys of their development and their growth. I could control my own income and therefore control what what my life look like, That all changed. So, you know, one of the things that we do here is, you know, we call this the 20 minute, 20 minute millionaire. I mean, I can show you how, in 20 minutes, you can be in a 401k program. And without spending a lot of money. You can be on track to becoming a millionaire when you're when you retire. And and for a 21 year old to come in here and grab a shovel and go, thanks,



man. I don't have to worry about my retirement. I mean, that's a pretty amazing, you know, thing off of their shoulders, because a lot of people think about their retirement when they're 20 620-830-3540. And it's almost too late by then to build a lot of wealth that way. So we talked about the time value of money. We talked about Young Money. We talked about the opportunities that people have in the control they have over their own life and I think that's the biggest thing is you can be honest with somebody about what the job's gonna what the job is going to entail. As long as you're like you did as long as you're talking about the benefits to them working that hard and what they are You're going to find long term employees that way, because they're they're thinking about, you're teaching them to think in a way that a lot of times their school, their friends, their relatives, and their parents don't teach them how to think that way. So you might be the first one that talks about something that's going to happen 1015 years from now. And that's really valuable information for them.

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Halie Morris 20:23

The school thing makes me laugh. And even, you know, just my dad is now helping me I'm very fortunate, I've got my dad, one of my friends here is the CFO. So I've got a lot of people financially are giving me a lot of useful insight. And I'm 24 now and I feel like that's extremely valuable, because a lot of my friends are figuring it out entirely for themselves. Now, my friend, she's doing an amazing job. But it's, it's just her figuring it out. It's she doesn't have anybody else's influence to guide her along the way, she doesn't have anybody to talk through. She's a teacher, so how their retirement works, how their savings, how to deal with the school loans.

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Ken Rusk 21:01

And this, this is an interesting point. You know, if somebody comes into your organization, and I always, I always say this, if somebody offers you, let's say, \$40,000 a year to work at their company, the first thing I want you to say is, thank you for paying me \$37,000 because I want you to forget about that first 3000 is so it never happened, you never had it. It's never in your pocket, it was never on your paycheck, you're being paid \$37,000. So why do I say that, because you can't miss what you never had, you can't stop spending what you never spent, okay, you can't get used to that extra money and then cut it back when you're having to save for your retirement because it's never been there. So what what most people don't realize, and this is simple, Young Money math, which is what I love, you take that first \$60 a week that you make, every week, you put that into a 401k program, the company matches it, which most companies do ours does, you're gonna make at least 10% on your money, if with the it with the improvement in the in the prices of the shares that you own. And also with the match that you get from the company, well,



you can literally stop saving money, let's say you started 21 years of age, you can stop saving money at 31 years of age, that's 10 years, and never put another nickel in there. And you're going to have over a million dollars when you retire. Now, I would say you might as well just keep saving it if you're used to saving it already. But literally you could stop and have that kind of money in there. And that's never taught in high school that's never taught. And I mean, nobody. It's like the best kept secret in the world. And that's why we push it so much here because I wish I had been told that when I was 21. I didn't start till I was 30. The good news is I started when I was 30. But so many people, they wait, oh my god, I'm 45 I better start thinking about my retirement. you've blown so much opportunity by that period of time. So I agree with you, it's it's a it's a great thing to get started and started early.

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Halie Morris 23:03

I think one of the most useful things and this is probably back in Early Middle School or late elementary school, we had a math teacher who sat down with us, we picked a job. And that we looked at the average salary for that job in our area, or the area that we desire to live for pretty much everybody was local, but then you pick the lower into that average just to be safe. And then you've looked at you put the taxes on that at the time, what kind of car you want, to what kind of house you want. And we looked at what the market was going for, and all this other stuff. And we just did it. I mean, even then it was probably really basic and stuff. But she would help us like we pick something she'd help us figure out what that would cost. And I think we looked at it on a monthly basis. Yeah, we broke down the cost. And she was she was like, Okay, here's your paycheck. And then here's what comes out. And we calculated that and she's like, how much do you have left? And you know, as kids, we were all like, I'm gonna have this nice little Ferrari. If I'm an artist, right? And then she would say, Okay, well, let's go back and look at it because almost everybody was negative at this point, except for that one smart kid over there in the corner who listened to their parents and their parents told them this stuff. But then she would go back and like, Okay, what do you think you wasted some money on maybe the Ferrari? Maybe? Maybe the Ferrari, I picked the most blue one and everything. I remember that but we should go back and that was the only time we ever did anything like that. Yeah, never. And I probably fifth or sixth grade never did anything like that ever again. And we did it probably I think it took us about a week. because she'd send you home to look up stuff. And if you wanted a particular house or you wanted a particular car, you had to bring in this page for like the printout of where you were going to get that and everything,

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Ken Rusk 24:56

right. I know and the other thing is, it's The opposite side of that is, they don't tell you how to manage money, yet your mailbox fills up with credit card applications when you're 18 years old. So that's a scary thing. And, you know, there's also the the responsible use of money, which we teach about in the book. We talked about building credit in the book, which is an amazing, simple way to do it. Long term investing as a young person, which most people don't think about. And then we talk about the ability to, to set goals in a five step way that will make your goals absolutely bulletproof. Okay? If you're going to commit to a goal, and you go through these five steps, you can't help but hit it. So, you know, again, it's that mentorship type of thing, that that these younger people, they don't even know they're missing it. Because, you know, it's not like, well, this person got mentored, and he didn't, it's like, nobody's getting mentored as to how to how to learn these things. So that that's really one of the reasons that we wrote the book was to say, hey, first off timeout, you know, it's not all about college, it's not all about go to college or fail, okay? It could be a blue collar job, it could be a trade of skill and apprenticeship, it could be working right out of school, getting experience, avoiding some of the college debt, at least, at least, you need to begin to think better before you make those choices like I want, I want you to have some real life skill thinking before you decide what path you're going to take. Because they all can end up in the same place for you. So don't think you're only going to have one path to success. There's multiple ways to get there, as long as you have those goals firmly in your head to begin with.

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Halie Morris 26:47

Well, too, it's it's interesting to think about, if you start to figure out and set goals and start to consider, like, the impact of your spending before you go to college and commit to I mean, I think at UT you're looking at at least like 40 to \$50,000 a day if you don't have any grants or anything like that. Sure. And if you go to a bigger, more expensive school, like a nice little price tag on it. I mean, there's doctors who still can't pay back their debt, and they are making a nice paycheck. Sure. So and just the craziest thing is maybe they still wanted to go to college, or maybe they didn't, but how do they face that decision in the first place? Could be so crazy different if they just had some of these skills that should be basic, I think,

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Ken Rusk 27:32

well look at it this way, you know, because of the supply and demand, and in what I call the it's actually a crisis of the blue collar workforce. As far as you know, there's so little supply and so much demand for them right now, you know, obviously, if you know anything about supply and demand, where supply is low and demand is high, that's where the prices go, they start to rise, or that's where the wages start to rise. So now we're in a

position where you've got finished carpenters making as much as lawyers, okay. The only difference is, if I went to school for four, or five or six years, I might amass a 200 \$240,000 debt there. Now, if I'm working right out of college, or I'm sorry, right out of high school, and I go to one of these trades, I could actually be earning 40 or \$50,000 a year. So you might have in a four year period of \$400,000, swing between the two towards the positive side in your asset base, if you chose to go that route. And here's the other thing. You know, when I was in high school, a teacher said, raise your hand, if you're going to college, only about half of us did, because that was what was balanced. Okay, the American economy requires 165 million jobs, about half of those are something that you do with your hands. So if everybody went to college, who would build bridges, who would, you know, do the things you need to do like carpentry, plumbing, electricians, you know, hairdressers, and estheticians, bakery owners and flower shop owners and all those things. So who would do those things if everybody went to school, so when you have that in balance there, you you at least need to show them the potential and say, look at all your options before you make this decision. And that's what the book tries to do.

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Halie Morris 29:23

Yeah, man, I think that's so helpful, because it's, like I said, I think it should be like a basic skill set that we gain earlier in life than what we do. I mean, you know, when you're considering all this stuff, there is a huge push for my brother to go to college too. And he started last fall, and he stopped in December. He's like, it didn't fit him. You know, he could get good grades. He was kind of like me. Like I could get good grades, but sometimes I just didn't try. He didn't care. He didn't But he can get pretty decent grades. And he's, he hated the college, especially with virtual world that it was completely online for him. He had no engagement. And he's not like the most extroverted person. In fact, he's slightly autistic. So he's very introverted, too much overwhelmed, but he likes good one on one interaction. He does like to see that Professor whoever in person, if he's going to have that type of setting, he dropped out, he just got his first job that's not fast food or something like that. And he's making more than I am. So right off the bat, and he's, he's doing outside sales for a long company. And he's rocking, it made two sales in his first day. And that was his week, one goal. So like, yep. And he's very fortunate because his mom, when he was ready to drive, she helped him get his license. And she's like, the car is yours, you pay for it. You want this, like, you have to pay for the insurance, you have to pay for this. And she was started giving him that responsibility. So he started learning. And then if he would want to do something else, you'd be like, Okay, did you think about this, this and this, because that's you that's on you. So when he dropped out of college, he's like, Okay, you got a month to get a big boy job. And he did. So. But it's, you know, even then, you know, now the conversation comes, when does he start saving for retirement? Because that's he's 19. I think it hasn't grown too fast. I remember him being five. So I'm still a little

shocked.



Ken Rusk 31:31

23 year old daughter, and she was like eight years old yesterday. So



Halie Morris 31:34

Right. Right. It doesn't help that, you know, he got down Georgia and I got adopted up here. So I literally, like he was five and short. And now he's like, six foot tall. And I'm the shortest in the family. The oldest and the shortest, I guess. But yeah, and this is like one of the things like I'm trying to all these things that I've just picked up probably in the last year start to show him from my side because he's, he's hitting real life. And



Ken Rusk 32:05

well, in and that's, that's an important point. Because, you know, I think, I think if you look it up, there's probably a half a dozen different ways that people learn, learn new things. One of them is just being tactful, you know, like, you know, grab it, give it to me, let me take it apart, let me put it back together. It's crazy how some people just have that, that knack to do that. And and I think, I think the, the, you know, years ago, and I'm gonna say this is gonna make me sound a little old. But back in the late 70s, in high school and 80s they had shop class, where you could go in, and you could accidentally discover carpentry, plumbing, you know, pipe fitting electricians, Home Economics, mechanics, for cars, whatever, woodworking, whatever. They took those classes out in the 80s and replaced all those classrooms with computers. Well, we all needed to learn computers, I get that that's fine. But why did it have to be a binary choice? Meaning one or the other? Why couldn't they have coexisted? Because now you have millions of kids who would have discovered these things like your brother, and he might not have been able to discover that because he was funneled through the prep school program, where all these high schools are now calling themselves college prep schools. And that's, that's a shame, because, you know, we're, we're leaving out a whole sector of people who might be happier, not being in a cubicle, and being outside, you know, being a stonemason, or, you know, building a house or whatever it might be. And that's something that we have to be very careful, because is that pendulum swing so far, too, one way, you know, for every five electricians that are retiring today, only one new one comes online. So you can tell real quickly what's going to happen to the prices of those people to the availability of those people, you're going to be waiting months for an electrician, and you're going to pay like, like a doctor to have this guy or gal come over. So I just want to make sure that everyone is aware that, you know, you know, there's two sides to this story here. And I think you

need to have all sides in front of you before you make that lifelong decision.

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Halie Morris 34:23

I am an interesting person that I like academics. I like learning and stuff like that. And I love the type of work I do now. But I'm also extremely hands on like when I was younger I was I could look at something figured out how it worked. And I think my school had something along the lines of that. And then we also had like a, I can't remember what it's called. But for those who want to go into like hair and stuff, they could get certified cosmetology licenses on their way out the door from high school is a two year program which was pretty cool. And we had a salon right there in the school and all of these other things. Our school did offer. But I remember, you weren't really encouraged to take them in high school like, yeah, stiffened off, like, the people. And then I noticed like, I took a loan or honors and AP classes, I had to have a class that challenged me, I wouldn't do well in it because I was there. And all of the kids in my classes, were going to college and during APS and stuff like that, which I liked a few classes, because again, they were harder. So it never seemed like an option to go do these more technical base classes and that type of thing. Even though I love building and creating, we do stuff at home all the time. And I'm like, I could look this up, or I could just do you go. Um, and then I did do a homework class back in middle school, which was like my favorite thing ever. I watched, we just saw a pair of shorts, I came in two days late, watched how she taught somebody did it and got like, the highest grade in the class and finished early because I just was like, Oh, I can see it. And I can do it.

K

Ken Rusk 35:55

And we'll see that, that that's the thing I you know, I took AP Calculus in high school, okay, and I turned out to be a ditch digger. So the difference though, is I like your brother, I went, I tried to go to school. And I was like, You know what, I'm missing out on an opportunity to start my life here. And I liked working with my hands, I like to be outside building things, creating things, you know, fixing improving things, whatever it was. So we just have to make sure that we that we offer that opportunity to people and let them experience it. Because, again, you're going to have this issue where so many people are going to be sitting in these. Now I always call it you're on the 15th floor, you're in a cubicle and you're thinking, Man, I can't wait to go home this weekend and work on that, that table that I want to build Well, how do you know that the table that you want to build isn't an internet side gig just waiting for you to turn into a full time gig, and all of a sudden, now you build furniture for all your friends and neighbors and you love it? Okay. So we just have to be really careful that, that we don't place a stigma on people who don't go to college because, I mean, I was at a party. This is a few years ago. And you know, all the parents

love to talk about their kids and what college they're going to are my son's going to Ohio State or my daughter's going to Michigan or whatever. Okay. And and that's all fine. One of the gals said, Well, I think I think what's her What's her name? Son? I think Yeah, he's not really, I think he's just going to be a plumber. And I'm sitting there thinking to myself, okay, that kid has five vans, and he has half a dozen employees, and he's just killing it right now, being a plumber. So you just got to be careful, even with what the parents do with this stigmatization of that side of the world. It's so funny, because a lot of times I'll say to some of the some of the parents and, you know, they're saying, I have four kids, and some of them aren't, maybe they're not really college related, whatever. I'll say, well, there's \$52 an hour sound okay, for your, for your son or daughter. And they're like, what? And and we talked about? Yeah, that's what you're getting for millwrights, and carpenters. And some of these people, God forbid, they have helpers, and then they, they double that. And all of a sudden, they're like, Whoa, Why didn't anybody tell me this? I've been shoving all my kids into college, and maybe I shouldn't have. So that's something we really got to watch as well.

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Halie Morris 38:23

Yeah. Like I said, My brother is making more than me right now. And he just started his base is more than my, my entire salary. And he gets commissioned. So it's, it's one thing like I always, especially now that I've gone through college, and I'm like, if I knew I was going to end up in business, because I started pre med, and I think it makes sense for pre med if I was gonna stay, stick it out through biology, because oh my gosh, those terms are very, like, if it doesn't relate, it's hard for me to retain.

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Ken Rusk 38:53

Oh, for sure.

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Halie Morris 38:54

They throw you that way. They throw you the big words before they actually get to the relevant stuff. And biology is that's my field. I love bio lab. It made sense. It was bought, like practical applicable. I did really good with chemistry. If I had just talked it out retook the class, which to biochem pre meds, took chemistry, I would have been smooth, I would have been in med school and probably enjoying myself. I switched to business because I hated biology. And I was pre med so I felt biology and I thought that was the end of the world. My grades were a lot better back then. But I say if I had known I was going to finish with business, I probably wouldn't have gone I just would have gone straight into business. Because it It didn't seem like i like i said i graduated with an HR degree. under a year ago.

I'm doing marketing. I have no formal training in marketing whatsoever. I'm just picking up as I go. And I did the same one. I did recruitment for two years before I graduated. I picked it up on the job. That's how I got my classes. I was like, Well, yeah, I know this already. Or No. My staffing class was mostly a dated material. So I was sitting there like Yeah, why are you talking about newspapers? Right now when you're talking, like he was like he was talking about newspapers, like even for like jobs where people are still reading like physical media, your paper newspaper is not going to get to anybody, at least they're not going to be looking at the jobs because everybody's gone to indeed now. And so they're gonna follow the they're gonna follow the wave, they're gonna go to a deed. And so it was just kind of funny, because we'd have to pull our classmates back. And we're like, nope, in the real world, it doesn't work like that anymore. We moved. Yeah, moved on. But, you know, I wouldn't have gone to college if I knew I was going to end up in business, because I'd rather just jumped in and started doing it.

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Ken Rusk 40:34

Well, yeah, you know, again, I always say this, because I am absolutely not an anti college guy. If you're going to operate on my shoulder, or if you're going to build a tall building, design it architect, whatever, if you're going to teach people, if you're going to manage money, if you're going to do these types of things, I'm going to want you to know, if you're inventing a medicine, I want you to know everything you should know about that before you start knifing nmi, am I show my shoulder, okay? However, having said that, we need to make college a lot more efficient. Because if 40% of the people go to college, not knowing why they're there, which is true. And then 25% of them, once they get there, change their mind halfway through, which is true. And then 31% of them graduate, and never use their degree ever. That's a wholly inefficient system right there. Unless, again, you're into, like, I want to learn beer pong and get really good at it, you know what I mean? So you just have to be careful going through that process. Because if we are over producing, you know, these bland business degree people, then that means we're under producing people that know how to use a hammer, or some other tool that's going to create this imbalance that we have. And that's not going to go away anytime soon. I mean, you know, kids used to go to the backyard with a hammer nails and make a tree fort. Now they're building that same thing on their Minecraft game, okay? That's not the same. It isn't, trust me, it's not the same. So that's going to continue. And we're going to have this this imbalance that if you're willing to stick it out, work with your hands, man, you're going to be able to take advantage of some serious opportunity. And, again, I hope people would would would read the book and understand what I'm trying to say, because it's, it's an important message right now.



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Halie Morris 42:33

No, I, I would agree. It's, I wish I had actually, like considered that an option. Because I wonder what I'd be doing. Like, I think one of my curiosities right now is like, I do want to build furniture, I don't have any particular experience with it, but I like putting things together, I've sanded things and repurpose them. But I'm like, I want to build something, I'm determined, when I get my own house, I'm gonna build my own dining room table, and it's gonna be huge, monstrous, lovely slaps. Wood that I'm going to make look pretty. And yeah, dad, as I said on it, so Mike, it might, it might be empty for a little bit. But like, I wish I was that option, because I like doing things with my hands. And in fact, I get bored A lot of times, and I want to go do things with my hands, I want to do physical things. Because when I just sitting in front of a computer all day, it does get a little monotonous. But it never seemed like an option, because I drew and I'm creative. So I need to go do design, or I need to go into this or I need to do business because I'm smart. And I can do science and math. So I had that pressure.

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Ken Rusk 43:37

One of the things that's really important about and this is another one of those on scene benefits to having a job in a blue collar field is what I call the stand back moment. And that is, let's assume that you do get that hunk of wood and you spin some legs out of it on a lathe, or you you run the top of that piece of wood, which is going to be the surface of the table through a planer. And then you sand it and you varnish it or whatever you end up doing to make that finish happen. And now you've hammered everything together, and you've got that table, you can literally stand back from that and look at that and say, Wow, I did that from start to finish. My, the the the efficacy of me as a human being shows itself from beginning to end. Whereas sometimes in jobs that, again, are in an office or whatever, you don't often get the full circle of, you know, beginning to end of the mission of the company. Okay, why are we here and what are we doing? And that's why whenever we have somebody come into our office, we have whoever it is, go see every department and they have to experience every single department so they know what a full circle service company we are and they know what from beginning to end looks like and what they're part of Mission is. So I think the stand back moment, that proud moment where you can say, Wow, look at that fence, I just built that beautiful stone fence or look at how look at how I improve that person's looks. If it's a cosmetology thing, or look at this beautiful wedding cake I made for the memories that they're going to last a lifetime, or whatever it might be, you get to experience that. And some of these other jobs don't often have that. So just another thing for the employers out there, make sure if that's the job you have, involve everybody in everything so that they can be part of the greater mission.

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Halie Morris 45:33

All right, well, thank you. I'm looking at the time right now. And I'm thinking we should go ahead and start wrapping up. But did you have any last advice that you would just like to give to our listeners, based on what we've talked about today?

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Ken Rusk 45:45

Just if you're someone who is hiring somebody, okay? Make sure that they feel like they're in control of their life. Because I can tell you this, the more people around you, that you can gather, that feel like they can get what they want with them through your company, and therefore control the trajectory and the progression of their own lives, the more your company is going to grow, whether you want it to or not, I mean, you're going to have to get out of the way and let them go. And your your company is going to grow to levels that you never expected. Because a lot of times as bosses, we try to be like the Answer Man, where we control everything, and we know everything, we have all the answers, and I'm going to lead you to the promised land. Forget all that. Let go the ego, let go of the control, allow these folks to work with and for you and make things happen for themselves. And your company is going to be way further ahead than you could ever take it by yourself.

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Halie Morris 46:45

All right, well, thank you for that, Ken. And thank you everyone for tuning in this week for Everyday Business Solutions. We're going to leave you here but don't forget to check out the blog post that has our audio and our video as well as a brief synopsis of what you just heard. So thank you once again, and have a great week. And thank you can