

Giving Back to your Community: It's Time to Get Involved

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SPEAKERS

Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler, Halie Morris

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- H** Halie Morris 00:32
Hello, everyone and welcome back. My name is Halie. As you might know me, I've been in a couple episodes so far. And today I have with me one of my favorite co workers and a great guest someone hopefully you recognize, and this is Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler.
- J** Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 00:48
Hi, Halie, how are you today?
- H** Halie Morris 00:49
I'm good. How are you?
- J** Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 00:50
A little bit nervous a little bit, Yeah,
- H** Halie Morris 00:53
I'm shocked



Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 00:54

but I know you'll make it comfortable and wonderful. So



Halie Morris 00:58

you're like a little social butterfly. Everybody knows Jill. So



Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 01:01

I don't know that could be a good thing or a bad thing at times. But yeah,



Halie Morris 01:06

I just assume it's good. And everybody will believe it. Right?



Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 01:09

We'll go with that.



Halie Morris 01:12

All right. So Jill, we brought you on today, because like, the one thing that's really great about the seasons of connections, and the benefits that can have for your businesses, that we're really looking at different ways to connect to our communities, to our employees, to our team members, to our customers, and the different things that we could do with that. And one of those things is a lot of how we can get involved to connect beyond our business and the benefits that it brings back to us. And so you have introduced me to a lot of industry professionals and industry groups and things like that. And you're the exact person that we can really dive in and open up that can of worms and say, okay, yes, like networking and connecting and driving those relationships is important. But here's where you could do it. And here's why it's important. So to start off with, I'm gonna ask you to just for those people who don't know Jill already, can you give us a little bit of your background and why I brought you on particularly today.



Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 02:14

All right. Well, Halie, I could probably take up the next hour given the background because I like to talk a lot. Actually, I think you know that about me, but I'll try and keep it brief. I grew up in the janitorial industry. My dad and my uncle, actually my grandfather had

started a distribution company for cleaning supplies. My dad, my uncle then founded a building service contractor, Kellermeyer Building Services. I never grew up thinking that I wanted to sell toilet paper and toilet bowl cleaner as a living. When I graduated from college, I did decide that I wanted to join the family business, I did go on the distribution side. So I did that for about 25 years, I started in sales, opening up a territory and worked my way up until I was president. In 2017, I needed to take a step back and thought I wanted to get out of the industry. I had some family things going on. And I became a real estate agent. So I completely did a huge transition in my life became a real estate agent. And then in 2018, I met Archie at Double A Solutions. He said, I've got this janitorial software, and I went with him as a consultant to our annual trade show I walked in and when I'm home, I realized how much I really did love the industry. And I really love what Archie brought to the cleaning world and it was just kind of a match. So that's the overview of my background, how it comes to networking and community engagement throughout my time as a salesperson with kellermeyer and then leading the company, obviously with real estate. I wanted to get involved in the community and give back I'm a big believer in the Northwest Ohio community. Currently, I kind of have the I can't say no disease. So I'm currently on the Toledo area Small Business Association Board. I'm on the Government Affairs Committee and the leadership fund with the Toledo chamber. I'm chairman of the board of United Way of greater Toledo and I am a Habitat Pro and on the weekends I do a lot of work with habitat and try and make a difference to the community as a lot but you know, I'm very blessed that I have the ability to do that. And throughout my entire career. I do it because it's the right thing to do for our community. I want to get back I really do love Northwest Ohio but I get So much benefit out of doing these different activities. It's a great mental health break, to kind of get away from the everyday business and get a chance to meet people see what's going on in the community. Give back. It's been a phenomenal learning experience. And yeah, it's just really cool. Some of the things that I've gotten to see and do and learn, it's doing the right thing. But there's so many benefits that come of it.



Halie Morris 05:42

It is. I mentioned this to you before, I think before we started this recording, and that is I also have sat with Debbie Sardone



Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 05:52

She's a great lady.



Halie Morris 05:53

Yes, our listeners will probably just listen to her episode, or we'll be going back to listen to it if they haven't already [Debbie's episode will be coming out next week due to a last minute change in schedule]. And that was one of the things that we talked about with where she started with her cause and taking all of this good bringing it to cancer patients and wrapping it up and things like that, is that just that feel good feeling sometimes, like the extra boost of energy, you need to get through like a long work day, or just making a workday not seem like work. Because you know what you're you're kind of doing like, it makes you feel good about life in general.



Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 06:26

yeah, a lot of gratitude. When I go out and see what others are dealing with in their lives and be able to make a difference. When the pandemic hit, you know, food insecurity. in Northwest Ohio, a lot of the kids were getting their meals through their schools, and United Way, really sprung into action, and started building meal kits and grabbing volunteers. And I was able to go and help give out meal kits, build meal kits and get out milk kids to get to might not have a chance to eat and making that difference and helping beat the food insecurity. You know, learning real quick, we'll pivoted when the pandemic started. How were we going to help out in the digital strategy committee with United Way too? How are we going to quickly get students that are learning from home? The technology they need to stay active in their school? How are we going to help the teacher sometimes teachers don't have home computers? How are we going to help them get connected, and it's the things that we might take for granted. And just a couple hours of time will make a huge service. Yeah, I could go on and on about things that I've learned about the community, but it really is making a difference. And yeah, there's a huge business benefit, it clears my mind, I like to recommend to business leaders, you know, a great incentive for your employees. And a great way to give back is give your employees paid time off for a volunteer opportunity. It will give them a refresher in their head to get out. And you know, it's hard to this. It's such a balance that, you know, I give back and I'm involved in all of these entities. Because it's the right thing to do. And I know it makes a huge impact on the community. For me, personally, I like it because again, I get to learn I get to meet people. I remember one time Habitat for Humanity. I was allowed to go loud. I got to volunteer for a demo day. And this was a Monday and they had a house that they bought and refurbished. Or they were in the process of refurbishing. Anyways, the day of volunteer It was a Monday morning and I was given a sledgehammer and a crowbar. It was a demo day and we went in with a group of volunteers and we got to tear this house down to the original wall studs. Now I had had a really bad weekend in extremely stressful weekend in my personal life. I was never so happy as to be given a sledgehammer and a crowbar. Go tear this thing down, it was the biggest mental break I could get. It was wonderful. So for me, volunteering everything from a mental break to just that inside

feeling good is wonderful. And you know what, there is a huge business component as well. So it started this whole rambling on, you know, it's wonderful to give paid time off to employees to have them go out. Number one, employees are generally pretty happy. They feel good about themselves, giving back. And guess what your company is getting recognition out in the marketplace, people are becoming aware of your company, it's an added benefit. You know, let me be honest, I originally did get involved with Habitat for Humanity, because I like houses. That's why I became a real estate agent. Um, it looked really cool. I was trying to find something to do. And I thought, ooh, I could meet people, I could meet people who someday might be wanting to buy or sell a house. And sure enough, the very first volunteer opportunity I went to with Habitat at lunchtime, we're all sitting down, you know, who are you? What do you do? in you know, What's your job? And I mentioned, I was a real estate agent. And a girl sitting next to me goes, Oh, my fiance and I are just starting to look for a house. I said, Oh, are you working with a realtor? Oh, no, we haven't gone that far at all. I'd be happy to help you out. And I did end up getting a client. So yes, was it in the back of my head, I want to meet people and develop my customer base. It was. But you know what, I stayed active with Habitat, I still probably a little bit limited. Now. I can only do Saturdays with them. have I gotten any more clients? No, not really, I don't care, it's still to me means a lot to go and make a difference. But overall, for business, there's a lot of good things that volunteering in your community can give back, obviously, a lot of networking.

H

Halie Morris 12:10

You know, for my side, one of the things that I'm looking for, as actually I probably hopefully buy a house in about a year speaking of is, hopefully in a year, year and a half, I'm hoping to buy a house, I want to stay in my community I'm at. And it's because I started to build connections, whether that's just taking my sister to gymnastics, or the local ice cream shop owner is one of my friends, she works with the Sylvania chamber. And I'm sorry, I meet people are involved into this community that it's just become important to me. But then people are also starting to know my name. No, it's only a couple people right now. But it's cool, because, you know, like, our neighbors are always calling me. And then they are doing cool things. They're opening up a bar downtown. Or they just did with off. So I know the there's three owners, right? My neighbor, his brother in another guy. I know the kids are the other guy like my mind, like once you, you start to get intertwined and like your community, it feels good, you feel included. And there's just a certain side of people that wants to feel included and validated at our core. And so like it gives you that satisfaction to be part of it. But then my next goal is to start getting involved start volunteering and doing things and you're one of my inspirations. I always wonder like how you actually get everything done, because you are so involved in so connected to so many people. But I've only seen you thrive because of it. I think you know,

even when you're busy, you seem happy and energized and ready to be doing it. And when you have your stressful moments, I think we all do. Oh, yeah, there, it seems like it's worth it for you. And then to bring all of that back to your business at the end of the day, of course is something that we strive to do because it is a time commitment. So people want to make sure that they can make it worth their time. And that like all around it sounds like it will do that it can it can make your business tip here it can make your footing and the community and like your reputation, you can build it up so that you're the reliable person. You're that person that people wants to come to. But then also at the end of the day you like satisfied after you just help demo and renovate a house and do things for people who might be otherwise struggling.

J

Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 14:32

Yeah. It is. I mean it is enjoyable. And do you mentioned about your neighbors and all getting together in the small world. Toledo itself. I know we've got listeners around the country probably hopefully one of these days around the world. But Toledo itself is a very small community and it is amazing how intertwined different businesses and different individuals are. But you know, being out, I get to meet new people all the time and learn their stories. And, again, helping and giving back is a huge benefit. It just makes our entire community stronger as a whole. And it attracts more businesses to our community. And I see so many links between things that United Way is doing to really strengthen our community that are going to bring businesses, hey, look at all Toledo does to strengthen their community. I want to move my business here, which is going to result in more jobs. I mean, everything is all intertwined with the value. And I've just met the coolest people and the coolest leaders of our community. I mean, I like people that I just so value and respect that, you know, this blew my mind, I feel so small compared to a lot of people. And I know, I'm no better, no worse than anybody else. But there's just some people that are just rock stars out there. And I'm very thankful that I get a chance to meet them.

H

Halie Morris 16:21

I've had that feeling so many times lately, like, as I've connected to people for this podcast for the other one, just like when you meet someone, you connect, and you start to realize, like all that they've accomplished, and all that they've done, and you're like, wow, I'm taking some inspiration while I'm sitting here. And I definitely feel that and you know, like the Toledo community, Toledo Area Community, I guess you're right, it's small. And it's the same thing anywhere is that view, the people who are involved and engaged are so tight knit and so close. And then we do have a rising Academy here. I mean, obviously, everybody's affected by the virus and the shutdowns. But like I said, our neighbors just opened a business and downtown, as well as still doing really well, it's still coming up and

having they're doing construction on Adams Street, driving us all crazy for a reason. So, you know, like, there is all this stuff that started to return to the dog, when I moved up here at the start of high school, till you know, was quiet, it was dark, like, you know, nobody went downtown, nobody went to that. Our Sylvania community was smaller. And they didn't really have as much going on. Now, if you want to go to a farmers market, and it's like a whole festival. Every Tuesday, sometimes there's like music, they're shaped eyes, there's food, all this good stuff. And then when we do have a festival downtown, the streets are packed with people. And they're you're always running into people email, and things like that. And those are a lot of times, you have a lot of business owners and people for like, that might be customers, like you said, you might mean customers in there, or people that you could use for your business there. And the thing about business is you do business with those, you know,



Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 18:12

so do business people do business with those they know and they like Excel, and it never hurts to make connections. Because you don't know where it's gonna lead to my whole thing is, how can I help other people? And I try not to do it to get anything in return. It happens. I mean, that's, I'm human. Yeah. But really, it's how can I help and connect other people? Um, you know, anything from my child needs to do service hours. Okay, well, here's some places I volunteer at that need volunteers. And here's the people to contact. There's others. As somebody who's moving out of a house, what do I do with my furniture? Call habitat. They'll take it. There was another one and I'm it's, I'll think of it in a second. But it's really getting the connections and helping others solve their problems. Again, it's doing the right thing and it feels good. And it does make connections for your business.



Halie Morris 19:35

Well, my friend literally close today for her first house. I mean, she's talking about she's like, Oh, we connected to a realtor. She's like, but we didn't realize who she had her own real estate board was like, Yeah, I was like, I know people too. Yeah, I know all these people and I could have hooked her up but she you know, it worked out really well for them. But every step of the way now she'll be talking to me and I'm like, oh, Well, you know from our experiences that that that that and it helped clarify this. You know that homeownership the different things like running a business homeownership all these things are so big and vast and people rely on their community and their friends and their family to help them get over the hurdles that could be a lot simpler. Like some of those things like the things that she had questions about was panicking about I was like, Oh, no, it's not a big deal, like, and I've explained it, and she's like, Oh, my gosh, and her stress from three days is so and now I think I might be painting some murals and doing some interior

designer for her. But it is like those those relationships and those connections and like you said, coming at it from a selfless angle coming at it from How can I add value to them? How can I bring value to to the table this relationship and you're not going to be best friends with everybody?

J Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 20:55

Not at all. And I mean, again, it's we're all human. We're all in. You know, I'm not 100%, selfish, selfish, little, whatever you say that word. You know, I try and do the right thing. I'm not perfect at it. Yeah, there always isn't. You know, I'm not gonna happen. But you know, it is. I do it because it's the right thing to do it. It feels good. And it's good for business as a whole. So those three things together. That's definitely I said three things. And I'm like, four. Okay, I need another coffee today. But that's okay.

H Halie Morris 21:33

I So my question for you is because as somebody who is starting to get into my professional career, starting to really see what I can do, a lot of times it's, it's overwhelming. If you've not done it before, it's so overwhelming. So how does a person approach it? How do you figure out what to get involved with? where to put your energy? And what makes sense?

J Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 21:57

That's a good question. Um, I've been doing this for a while, much longer. The first thing I'm going to say is find something that you're extremely passionate about, you know, that you really have a feel and a calling, because again, the first thing you're doing is you're helping others. So finding something that it really tugs at your heartstrings. And you can start small, you know, there's different committees, you might not be on a board or some glamorous job, but really finding, where can I volunteer and give back. And that's probably the first thing volunteer, get to know people through volunteering. And from there, you learn what you'd like to do, the people you're involved with, and it'll get noticed, as long as your heart's in what you're doing. Eventually, people will start calling and say, Hey, we'd really like your help with this, or Hey, we'd really like your help with this. And you know, if you're like me, and you have the I can't say no disease. Sure, I'd be happy to and I'm like, oh, what have I done? But no, it's all I it has to be something that you're definitely passionate about.

H Halie Morris 23:16

I got I had that disease in college.

J

Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 23:18

Yes. Yeah. It's a fun disease to have. But yeah, yeah. And I can burn myself out, you know, there are times that okay, you know, what, I'm not gonna volunteer this weekend, because I do need a weekend to clean my house or just to get away for a little bit, or, you know, and then that challenge between, hey, I've got this committee meeting, but I've got a big work thing work does always take priority. So but most people understand that that's a big deal. Now, I wouldn't be I wouldn't be available to do volume, volunteering are the committee work that I do without an absolutely phenomenal Boston company. But Boston company come first? You know, if I had to say no, but yeah, up until this point, it's been pretty okay. So

H

Halie Morris 24:10

it's that idea of prioritization. Like, you have to figure out what are your glass balls? And what are your plastic balls, man is by far my favorite metaphor ever. Yeah. But yeah, when you're juggling all these balls, you have to figure out which ones you can afford a job and which ones you can't. And work is usually that thing that you can afford to drop.

J

Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 24:27

So I can't I can't afford to drop work. I have to make sure when volunteering, doing it or you know, out there in freezer areas. I not to fry myself, I sort of take care of yourself. Yeah, I get a lot of enjoyment from what I do in the community, but I can burn myself out pretty quickly. So I'm slowly starting to learn how to take care of myself as well and not pry myself too much. That's one of those things. It's an ongoing progress over perfection. For me.

H

Halie Morris 25:05

That's like a reoccurring theme with like all of us. Yes. But it is one of those things, then you look back and you realize, you get that excited, because you're passionate, you get to that point, because you're passionate. And then you almost want to give yourself the time to refresh so that you can go back at it with the right energy to So yeah, that's a great way to look at it. So it sounds like you know, start a little smaller, take off what you know, you can chew and then grow with it, instead of just trying to be like,



Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 25:35

I'm going to do everything for everybody. Because I can do it all. I want it all I want it now and I'm going to do everything. Exactly. When they're done that it doesn't work. It pops up in my head occasionally I can do that. I can do that. No, I can't. I learned how to say no,



Halie Morris 25:51

I'm learning boundaries now that I've graduated, because he used to be somebody. I like learning. And one of my biggest things is I can learn quickly. So somebody would hand me something I've never done before I did. Okay, and I figured out and I do it. But that meant I was constantly taking on projects. And so the big thing I did since college isn't that mindset is taking on podcast. Yeah, I controlled now how many new things I'm introducing to my life and what kind of workload I have. And I'm not perfect at it. Like he said, I still like, there are weeks where I'm like, Okay, do too much, Haley, you gotta back off on something, something's burning you out along the way. But no, like, that is one of those things. You know, getting involved, too. You're doing it a lot at a personal level. But as a business owner, they can do it with their company, too. There are ways to pull in the company.



Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 26:40

Oh, well, Okay, perfect. Great lead in there, Haley. Thank you. So habitat does project Playhouse. Every year they little houses build big houses. It's a great fundraiser. It's play houses for children to teach them about home ownership. There's a giant build every year at the third field, I do a lot of priming and painting and helping when I can, I wish I could give more time to it. But Saturday is kind of helping with that. But I got our company involved in Project Play House, great team building activity, you know, we all get together, I get to be the habitat Pro. So I'm not technically part of our team, but I get assigned to our company. But you know, there's a team of people here that get together design, how they're going to decorate and build the house. And we all get together, you know, what a great team building activity. And it does something phenomenal for the community. And it's really fun. So I'm glad you brought that up. Yeah, to put teams together to go out and volunteer, you know, where his Day of Caring, I used to do that with my old company where we would, you know, we can't leave the company completely unattended with people. But you can get small groups of people to say, hey, you need to go to this nonprofit, they really need landscaping. So we're going to go out on a beautiful summer day and go do some landscaping. Volunteers are needed everywhere. yeah, it's a great team building activity to get your employees together. It's a great gift you can give to your employees and give to the community.



Halie Morris 28:20

There's like one thing that you know, when we're talking about employees, you're talking about retention as important, creating a great team dynamic and a desire to participate and be part of the company, as well as communicating your strategy and your goals. And a lot of that, it comes back to engagement, how engaged and passionate do the employees feel, and like a volunteering opportunity or getting involved? Once you know once in a while even taking and sectioning off volunteer days for portions of your company or certain teams go out and volunteer at specific times, can help you increase that engagement, that passion can help you teach them to work together better, because suddenly they're doing it in a different environment. And they're learning more about each other.



Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 29:05

Oh, without a doubt. Yes,



Halie Morris 29:07

it is cool, because I haven't had it's always project Playhouse last couple years has popped up on days where I'm not able to go bums me out. But it was really cool to see the people who do go and the way they work together and the excitement that they bring back. And it doesn't have to be like, you know, that was like, what they're not working. I was like, Well, what if they're not working one day, but their productivity for the next month is much, much higher? How much money do you save? How much money do you make? What kind of culture are you cultivating then what what are the benefits that you reap from a little downtime? It's that same principle of sometimes adding in games and brakes and changing the way that work during work environment is can actually create increased productivity, despite the fact that they may be physically at their desk less.



Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 29:57

Exactly.



Halie Morris 29:58

I know for sure I can sometimes get more done in one hour than I can get an entire day if I'm motivated,



Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 30:04

if you're motivated. Yeah, and that's the big thing. It's a huge thing.



Halie Morris 30:10

I, like I said, the the ability to get involved and do more. It is, it's, it sounds like it's extremely refreshing from your perspective, just at the personal level, but then what you bring back to like our company, and what a business leader can bring back by getting everybody involved. It's huge. And there's the marketing side to the brand awareness.



Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 30:31

It's the brand awareness, again, the basics, it's the right thing to do. Giving back to those you're passionate about that are making a change in the community. It's the right thing to do. following up with that, it's the personal satisfaction and growth. But tying it to the business, it helps your business as you said, you know, employee retention, employee engagement, employee interest, and then yes, brand recognition, and potentially referrals, because you get to know a lot of people and somebody is like, yeah, I'm having this trouble with my CRM software. Oh, really, I might have a solution for you. Going out and giving solutions I don't know how to, you know, I'm having a hard time with my janitorial staff showing up on time, I might have a solution for that as well. It's getting to know people in the core is it's the right thing to do. But there's so many benefits on the back end of that of people. No, I didn't know about your company yet. And then making the connections. Oh, you know, it might not even be for my product. But somebody is like, Oh, well, I need to know, I'm having this thing. Oh, well, let me connect you with this person. And it's remembered, yeah, there's so many good things to do.



Halie Morris 31:59

It's really easy for people to bring up the negative. That's why when you go online, the written reviews tend to be the one stars versus like positive. Sometimes you have to pull and referrals, word of mouth referrals throughout your community and just getting people, whether it's for people knowing you personally and like when you can do for people or your company and what you sell his product or



32:20

service,

H Halie Morris 32:22
that when they are friends with you people like to talk and brag about the people that feel they're close to and they know, right? And it's the same thing. Like I go out somewhere. I can brag about Jill, I know Jill, she's one of my friends, right? But then that has the added benefit. They need somebody that does what you do. Oh, well, Jill,

J Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 32:43
I know somebody. Yeah, you want to sell a house. I know somebody who can do that for you. Right? Yeah. So that's

H Halie Morris 32:49
the same thing because they want to help their friends. They want to do the same thing that you want to do. They want to help their friends. They want to help people. But also they have good feelings and stuff that they associate with you because of the good things that you do so. Yeah. Alright, so I would ask though, as we wrap up, do you have any advice that you would like to give to anybody who might be listening right now?

J Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 33:13
Start small. You know, business owners, it definitely pays to get engaged. The business dividends will be enormous. Definitely. Again, find something that you're extremely passionate about. That really tugs at your heartstrings, where end and start small. But just do something. You know. Find out what your passion is. Do something start small and go make a difference?

H Halie Morris 33:50
Yes, exactly. Thank you so much. I would say you know, don't bite off more than you can chew. But Don't make excuses not to start.

J Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 33:57
Exactly. I like that phrase who that works. And thank you for making this a comfortable event. I do a lot of videos. And yeah, I was a little bit nervous today. So thank you for making it easy.



Halie Morris 34:10

Well, I'm glad you're not nervous anymore. Thank you for coming on. I'm very glad to have you. Oh, glad we get to finally



Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 34:18

finally! I put it off. But



Halie Morris 34:20

I think you spread the word about our podcast. So I'm sure quite a few.



Jill Kellermeyer-Kegler 34:23

I do



Halie Morris 34:23

remember you Yeah. But yes, thank you, Jill for coming on. And thank you everybody for tuning in. And we will see you again next week.