

How to Stand Out As a Leader in the Workforce with Tracy Levine of Advantage Talent

SPEAKERS

Tracy Levine, Lara Schmoisman

Lara Schmoisman

This is Coffee N° 5. I'm your host, Lara Schmoisman. Welcome back to coffee. Number five. Do you remember what do you want to be when you grew up? Does your career looks similar to what you dream as a kid. Probably not. Or maybe it does. The path to your dream career is always in the making. You can always reach where you want to be. Today, we're talking all about careers with my guest, Tracy Levine. Tracy, empowers coaches and trains students and professionals to create careers that enabled them to succeed beyond their original dreams. Tracy's keynote speech and corporate training includes easy to implement actions that empower corporate leaders to create authentic team engagement, that point to place retention and attracts top talent and next gen leaders. She creates leaders that are talent magnets. And every time I talk to Tracy, I can talk to her for hours. She has so much experience, and she knows how to guide you to what's next. Tracy, thank you so much for having coffee with me, I love to have you here. And I I love to bring our conversation here. Because every time that I talk to you, I feel like we're going deeper and deeper. And I value this opportunity to share it with all this audience. So hi.

Tracy Levine

Hi, Lara. And thank you so much for inviting me to be part of your coffee.

Lara Schmoisman

Yeah, well, you can never have too much coffee. But I want to talk to you. I mean, I just feel your input. So valuable. And we talk a lot about generations. I'm Generation X and I, we have the millennials and Generation Z. And I mean, the wall of oil have changed so much since I went into the marketplace. And I made a lot of mistakes in my life. And I took a path in careers that later on, I realized that that's not what I wanted. And I mean, I regret at the time, maybe why did I do this, but later on, I found out that I learn in everything I did. So why I'm here. And, and I think it's okay. And that's what I want to teach my kids that it's okay to change your mind as long as you're a hard worker and you're not giving up. But it's okay to move on the side.

Tracy Levine

I totally agree with you, because occurs and adventure. And success comes at the end of the adventure. And along the adventure. And along the way you hope that you make great friends, like I

met you at a mastermind, who you can bring along that adventure with you on that adventure. So when you're afraid to do something, they may be the person who jumps out and does it so that you're brave enough to follow them. And you get to do that for somebody else to support them. And I think to your point, we do a lot of things because we live other people's visions. And I remember growing up in a generation where there wasn't a lot of options. And I went to Wall Street. But when I was growing up, that was not the childhood dream in kindergarten, because that wasn't something women did. And so I think to your point, you know, we sort of wind our way around to where we're going. But we eventually find our purpose driven career if we are happy. And the further we get away from that purpose driven career, the more unhappy we become, and the less successful. And I don't know about you, Lara, what did you want to be when you were in kindergarten?

Lara Schmoisman

Oh, my God, I don't know, you remember, but the probably I want to be a lawyer like my family or a teacher. And, and I couldn't go any farther than that. But you know what, I had to learn how to deal with contracts along my life. And I had, I mean, I started being in a radio, I look at me, I'm doing a podcast three years later. So it's something that I learned along the way. And then I went in television, and this was I'm doing I mean, I have a degree in screenwriting, and I'm writing and now I have a degree in direction. Oh, yeah, I can do some videos and I have an agency that I need to have that I for videos. So everything that you learn is cumulative. And that's what is fascinating.

Tracy Levine

So I'm going to ask you a question. So with your path because you have such a really interesting background, do you think a lot

Lara Schmoisman

is... looking to your background? Mine is nothing.

Tracy Levine

Well, but it is really interesting to how you got to this podcast. And I, when I think back, I don't know about you, I remembered how much I love writing. And writing created great opportunity for me. And at a very young age, I won a national writing contest from Time Magazine. And I remember being 14 years old, but I was told that that's not a career for Smart Girls. And it took me until this last year to write my first book. And it was so rewarding, because, but when I think about it, the careers that I picked, I was living somebody else's vision.

Lara Schmoisman

Yeah

Tracy Levine

And I've never been happier than I have in this past year, even though it's 2020. Because I'm now living my vision of what success, one ampac goals.

Lara Schmoisman

And on top of that you are impacting other people's life, and you're helping others to find their dream career.

Tracy Levine

And I think you know, what's really empowering Lara is people like you, and people like me, who we actually when we talk about finding your dream career that matches your mission, vision and values, we had to do it because we were at a time for us at least, there was no career path for Lara being famous and being the podcaster. And doing The Darl and having this wonderful show. And there was no career path for me to do what I do now. And so we're, I feel like we're very authentic as we coach people on finding their purpose driven career.

Lara Schmoisman

Yeah, but let's talk a little bit more about these young people that they go and find their first job, which is not easy. It's very, very challenging to go from their bubble of school or college, they even tell you in what size font you need to write, to go to a real world and to have to meet deadlines. It's stressful. And not not everyone is going to go and find the first job, I'm just going to be their dream job.

Tracy Levine

I guess, as someone who's been in therecruiting business for years, who's placed over 3000 people, and last year, I sold my recruiting firm, I have a different view about the millennials. They're just the first responders to a disruptive market. And we've been very hard on them. There was a reason for me to hit a deadline, because there was a path to the next step. And so you can stay motivated and do those jobs that weren't really fun. But what happened looked back at 2018, when the World Economic Forum did their research of 11,000, top employers in the world, only 42% of those employers in 2018 have more than 50% of their employees full time, I really want you to think about that. That's from the janitor to the CEO, and they didn't have training programs. So it's hard to stay motivated. And really put in that hard work because there's not going to be an outcome. There's not the hierarchy that you're going to get to go out for. And I understand. We talked about hard work and value. But I think there is a disconnect to what you said, yes, there's a disconnect in the skills and aligning them for the jobs they need to do and the reality of the work market. But there's also a disconnect on the employer side, the work relationship is broken, the employer employee relationship is incredibly broken, and it's going to stay broken. And by night, by 2027 97% of all US citizens will be freelancers. So they are being dumped in a different world but expected to have our values that were based on the company given us values, and I understand the paychecks a value and I get what you're saying but I want to give them a little...

Lara Schmoisman

That's that's not what I'm saying. That's not what I'm saying at all. I love the fact that I love to work with young people I absolutely love and I think that there is a huge failure from the company from the bosses that they believe that the paycheck is everything. I think that that's not everything is that's just part but you need to invest in your team. You need to give them the mentorship and the knowledge you cannot just throw your team and say figure it out. I'm I truly believe in teamwork on I believe that being a leader is to be there for your team. And I think that we're failing on this. But at the same time, I, I

know that as a young person, you need to make mistakes, you need to learn, you need to find out what's your right place in the world. And if you don't try, you won't know.

Tracy Levine

And something that you picked up on, just say, you know, it's a common of feedback among employers, because hitting deadlines, and you know, doing what you say you're going to do. And I think, by not having the training programs, and having 24 hour contact through cell phones and computers, deadlines have not kept up with what is important and what isn't important. I think sometimes people have a hard time figuring out what is a real deadline, what is an arbitrary deadline, and there's this real lack of work life balance that I remember, even on Wall Street, when I started, guess what, the market closed at five o'clock, I went home. And if you want to call me, you could call me on the landline. And there's no email and there's nothing and I think, to your point, Lara, and it was a really spot on point, people have a real hard time with this time management is everything blends over and bleeds. And the end, it hasn't done well for the millennials and being a trusted partner sometimes, and it hasn't done well for the employer to hire them. And we need to figure out how to bring all that together so that it gets back into some balance.

Lara Schmoisman

So yeah, absolutely. And I know that you're mentoring and teaching a lot of people into finding their dream job, their dream career. So what's the path to find your dream job or your dream career? How do you do that?

Tracy Levine

Well, to get to your dream career, or your dream career path, you have to understand what motivates you. And so I would have the first question I asked him, and I would love to hear your answer. In reality, most people are motivated by three things. And it may be a combination of those three things are, but we always have one that motivates us the most. And those three things are, you know, people, some people are motivated by stability. Some people are motivated by solving problems. And then there's another group that are the disruptors who want to be at the front, they want to lead the trends. And the first step in getting your career job is choosing one of those, which is your motivator. And just out of curiosity, which one would you pick?

Lara Schmoisman

I chose I just C, no, no. And I didn't know a little bit of everything. I I am a person who is...a glass always half full, I learned just to deal with what I have. And to keep moving forward. So I always learned how to be motivated what I have around, find the best out of it.

Tracy Levine

But beyond that, like when I look at you, and what you do for people, you're a problem solver. It motivates you first, because if money and stability was first, you would not be an entrepreneur. So you're willing to take the risk to help solve problems for people and get quality outcomes.

Lara Schmoisman

Yeah,

Tracy Levine

And so that's, you know, your dream career has to have that component, and then everybody wants to get paid and pay their bills.

Lara Schmoisman

Uh huh.

Tracy Levine

But some people are more comfortable with that instability. And the reason why I've always gone to careers, like Wall Street, quitting high school to go to college, and do non traditional careers is because I like leading trends and disrupting and solving the big problems. How do we get a path to income for everybody? So we can have a dignity economy?

Lara Schmoisman

Yep.

Tracy Levine

And so while I want to get paid, it's not the main motivator. So the jobs I've always picked have been cutting edge. And that's the first step. And figuring out how to get your dream career because what motivates you that core thing that first thing, when you're misaligned with that is what makes you miserable. And when you know that first thing, you can write your mission statement. And my mission statement is to create a path to income for everyone so that they can spend time with their family and have great careers that match their Purpose Driven Life. And when you have that roadmap, which is your action statement mission, that your mission is, then what does that look like? My vision is when all have work life balance because we have enough money. And we're happy because we were able to have a purpose driven career. So every decision I make I bring it back to, is this decision around my career going to fit with my mission road back map action item? And is it going to get me closer to my vision, and those are the people who have great careers and have great success, because they have a roadmap, they have a target, and they know what it looks like when they get there.

Lara Schmoisman

Yeah, something that I just picked up from what you were saying is about work life balance. And there's this notion about work life balance, and that I don't know what percentage that needs to be for each one. And I believe that every person needs a different work life balance, it's not the same for everyone.

Tracy Levine

And I would agree with you

Lara Schmoisman

I love my work, I love what I do. So I don't mind in my free time to keep writing because I really love it. I want to spend time with my kids, right? I mean, they're teenagers, and they don't want to spend so much time with me. So I get that free time. And with that free time is I go back to the drawing board and to grow my brand and to go pro, do what I love. Because I mean, I don't know if I will have a nine to five

job if I will be doing that. If I was, I would be passionate. But my goal is that my team feels passionate about what we do.

Tracy Levine

And I loved your answer, because I always tell everybody that work life balance is like the Word Perfect, there is no definition. And so for one person work life balance is that their life doesn't interfere with their passion work that they do. And for another person you have to work is just, I just want stability. So I could have a nice house in a nice neighborhood and a new car every four years. work life balance to them is something very different. It's having the money to vacation or do whatever they want, whether it's charity, but for somebody who's passionate about the work like you who solves problems, or who wants to lead trends or disrupt the world work life balance is almost flipped. It's my life not interfere with my passion.

Lara Schmoisman

Like, I could not say I mean, I never thought in kindergarten, oh, I gotta be an entrepreneur. First of all, they didn't, I didn't have that notion. Second, being a woman in business. I mean, still is kind of odd in some places to look at a woman running a business, and I do not have a partner. So it's only and of course I have my husband supports me, my kids, I have my parents, which I love, but they have no clue what I do. But being an entrepreneur is such a vague concept, but also is a career driven. And so how do you help entrepreneurs see say, No, honey, you don't fit in a nine to five job, you need to go and be an entrepreneur? How How does it work for someone who is looking into into the recovery here?

Tracy Levine

It's a great question. Because, you know, the dream of the entrepreneur and being on the front of Entrepreneur Magazine, and being famous is what I think some people buy into and being an entrepreneur is risky. And it's dirty work is hard.

Lara Schmoisman

Oh my god so much work. Believe me, I spent months I'm paying bills I'm going toxic, stuck it to that count on is not only people only see the fun parts.

Tracy Levine

And so to answer your question, as the workforce changes, people need to ask themselves, do I want to be an entrepreneur? Or do I which has a business? Or do I want to be a freelancer who does work through a platform and somebody else negotiates my contracts, make sure that I get paid? And that's like being on Fiverr, Upwork, LinkedIn profinder? Or are you really an entrepreneur who understands that bills have to be paid, you have to do the work you're gonna have to pivot you have to have flexibility with yourself and everything is in pencil. Because you can you know, are talking about when I started our firm and the first 10 months, we are on a million dollar revenue run and guess what the recession hit? That's a little bit of a reality check about what's going on

Lara Schmoisman

Also so many people that they want to be an entrepreneur nowadays, I see Oh, you need to get an investor you need to get financial, but there's a lot of ways to be an entrepreneur and self financed your work. You just need to be creative.

Tracy Levine

I agree because I think about you know, the firm I sold at the end of 2019, when we started, you know, like I said the recession came. So what do you do? And when you talk about financing, do you sit around and say, Okay, do I finances? How do I get out of this rut? My thing is, you find an answer that makes you move forward. And because I'm a risk taker, and I'm a disrupter, I went International. So without the recession, I would never have gone International, because I will go to your point, you go find the money, you go find the customers, you go make it happen. And you rearrange to what the reality around you is, because your passion is still there, but you find the path to the money. And people who are really passionate, find the path to how to get financing, how to get money. And we each have different things that we have bandwidth that we can do. But I knew very, very quickly that I had to expand my market because in a smaller, you know, smaller amount of jobs, I had to go to multiple countries to get more job opportunities to work on. And that's the difference between an entrepreneur and a freelancer, an entrepreneur is somebody who has that risk profile, but is also brutally honest with themselves and say, You know what, it's time to pivot.

Lara Schmoisman

But you know what being a freelancer helped me a lot to be an entrepreneur, there were a lot of lessons that I learned learned they are because of being a freelancer, you need to manage your invoices, your payment, your taxes, you need to do a lot of things by yourself. So you'll become a lot less self sufficient in that regard, you learn skills, that then you're going to use a lot more as an intrapreneur.

Tracy Levine

Well, and I guess I define entrepreneur differently, because... Freelancer differently, because what you are is what they call in the United States a micro business because you were still a business and you're a solopreneur. And a freelancer typically goes to somebody else to get the work, somebody else knows for them. They do it contract. And before it used to be more manual, but it's more on platforms. And so to your point, being a solopreneur prepares you to run a bigger business, because you've got to make mistakes in a smaller bubble.

Lara Schmoisman

Yeah. But also, I mean, I have this thing that I always say that I expect everyone in my team, to act as an entrepreneur, I want them that they have that mentality of taking risks, too, to bring things to the table to from what they know, and just contribute. And I treat each one of them as the future leaders. And this is something that I believe that you talk a lot about creating leadership. And it's something that I I, honestly, from the bottom of my heart, believe that you own you learn from good leaders and from bad leaders. But and you remember both in your life is not that you're gonna sometimes you repent, remember the bad leaders more than the good ones. But I, how can you help your team because I think being an entrepreneur being I feel like being a leader, you need to teach others how to be a leader. So you can grow and scale but only if you learn how to trust your leaders. So how can

Tracy Levine

I agree

Lara Schmoisman

someone to be a leader? How can you create that leadership?

Tracy Levine

I think the first part of teaching somebody to be a leader is the feedback you give them. And what I mean by that is the greatest gift you can give a leader is how to model appropriate feedback. So think about the feedback that normally comes in corporations that are once a year. And you get this feedback and it's out of context. Great leaders let you fail, but also your failures. They react to it differently than bad leaders, good leaders put in context. Yes, that was irritating, we had to run around. And we had to still hit the deadline. But it didn't hit the balance sheet. It wasn't nobody's lying on the side of the road. And so your emotions when you give feedback empowers them to take risks and be that leader and learn from their mistakes. And also learn how to give the appropriate feedback with the appropriate motions and make it timely when it happens and don't if don't make it bigger than it is unless it really is big. And that's what I tell people. That's the best part of training a new leader is training them how to give feedback to others in order to empower them to do more.

Lara Schmoisman

Something that I do with my team. And I think it took me years to do this. I mean, everyone, I've been a project manager producer for many years. And that means that you deal with stressful situations. And you not everyone is ready for that not everyone is ready for that role. And that's okay. Because you need a little bit of everyone. And it's just something natural to me to be able to be a project manager, because that's how my mind works. And not everyone needs to be like that. But also you need to, you need to deal with crisis. And when you have a crisis, what do you do, you don't go into crisis mode, you step back, you see the solution from your step back, you resolve the problem, and then you address the problem. After his fix, you don't try to fix a problem. And because you bring drama, and I do not like drama. But I think that's one of the things that you can help and leadership is how you react to situations. And that's how you can prepare and help people how reactive you are.

Tracy Levine

I agree. And I'm laughing at you are because I worked on Wall Street. And I have spent a long time managing very strong willed people. So I'm, you know, when I think about when there's crisis, my whole thing is, you know, what, what problem are you trying to solve? Why, why why, why is this a problem until you get to the point that you can answer the question, what can I can control? What can't I control, and start taking action to do what you need to do to create an answer? And I do believe people who are able to take that moment and think about what's the problem. That's why, why, why. And get to what you can control don't typically have emotional responses. When there is something going on, you can be stressed, because it's a deadline, but you're typically not lashing out at people. You're in problem solving mode. And when I go in and train people, I tried to get their whole team to get certified in design thinking. So that when crisis comes about, or when you are...

Lara Schmoisman

Oh, I love, can I use that phrase? I love design thinking. I love that. It's it's empowering is totally if you can, like I always say that I design my work culture for my team.

Tracy Levine

Yeah

Lara Schmoisman

I think that things are by design, totally, could trace it that and

Tracy Levine

I think lead by design, you lead by design, you solve problems by design. And you could have that word because you use it every day. I've been in enough meetings with you. So it's your word of mouth.

Lara Schmoisman

Thank you. Well, we share it, we will definitely share it. Well. Thank you so much, Tracy, I gonna have to bring you back. We're gonna have to do a live or something because we need to keep talking. I mean, you're an incredible woman with an incredible tragic story. And thank you for being in my life. I love you to have you here.

Tracy Levine

I'm so happy that we met this month. This has been an exciting month and learning about you and being on this podcast. Thank you so much for inviting me. It's been a pleasure.

Lara Schmoisman

It was so good to have you here today. See you next time. catch you on the flip side. Ciao ciao.