

The Changed Candidate Experience Is the Next Big Thing

Description: In this episode with MRA Vice President of Workforce Strategies, Jim Morgan, we begin the employee experience conversation by talking about how the candidate experience has changed, and how organizations need to adapt to that change! We cover the initial candidate contact point, interview best practices, and individualizing your candidate process.

Listen to Discover:

- Leading up to the pandemic, we were starting to see the labor shortage. And now coming out of it, it is here in full force.
- It's a shift in mindset: As much as organizations might want to say, "Oh, you're lucky to have a job with us", the truth is that's been turned around. And so it's "We'd be lucky to have you."
- Have someone go through your candidate experience, whether that's you, your kid or just an employee. Know what the process looks like.

Transcript:

INTRO | 00;00;00;03 - 00;00;23;04

Hello, hello, everybody, and welcome to 30 minute THRIVE, your go-to podcast for anything and everything HR, powered by MRA - The Management Association. Looking to stay on top of the ever-changing world of HR? MRA has got you covered. We'll be the first to tell you what's hot and what's not. I'm your host, Sophie Boler, and we are so glad you're here. Now, it's time to thrive.

Sophie Boler | 00;00;23;18 - 00;00;46;27

Hello, everybody. I am here with Jim Morgan. He's our Workforce Strategies Vice President here at MRA. And a lot of you are probably familiar with Jim already, as he does a lot of traveling on the key points of the talent shortage issue. And he's really been working on this issue for the last 30 years, which is pretty impressive.

Sophie Boler | 00;00;47;22 - 00;01;02;12

But Jim really makes organizations take a step back and think about their candidate experience plans and how they should be adapting to the current times. So thanks for joining me on the show today, Jim. I'm really excited to talk about this issue.

Jim Morgan | 00;01;02;21 - 00;01;04;24

It's my pleasure to be in front of MRA Nation.

Sophie Boler | 00;01;04;28 - 00;01;18;16

Oh, of course. But I think we'll just dive into the first question and really talk about the candidate experience as a whole. So could you just tell me what candidate experience means and what it all includes?

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Jim Morgan | 00;01;18;20 - 00;01;40;13

Sure. You know, really, as you're trying to find talent, that begins with the first contact that you have with whomever your candidate might be. And so companies are spending a lot more time now from that first contact until the moment that they offer them a job and they hire them. Everything that happens between that first contact and the first day of work is really the candidate experience.

Jim Morgan | 00;01;40;26 - 00;02;04;01

And we haven't had to really think about that in the past because if we had 200 people applying for a job, we just zipped them through and we took the best one possible. But now when you can't find anyone and you're in this competitive marketplace, that candidate experience really becomes a big deal. So if I'm trying to hire you, I want to make sure that from the moment we meet right up to when you start that you're thinking "this is a cool place to work.

Jim Morgan | 00;02;04;01 - 00;02;22;06

And they seem like good people to work with. This is the kind of place I could see myself at." So it's become a new, new thing really for employers. I'd say, you know, leading up to the pandemic, we were starting to see the labor shortage. And now coming out of it, it is here in full force. So that's become kind of a big deal for us.

Sophie Boler | 00;02;22;12 - 00;02;30;11

Absolutely. And I mean, well, it seems to me that there have been candidates for as long as there have been jobs. So can you tell us what's really different?

Jim Morgan | 00;02;30;11 - 00;02;45;06

Yeah, and that's a really good point. People like well, you know, we've always been able to give candidates and give people a start. But I think the world has changed a little bit. So I'm going to stump the host here and turn some of these questions back on you a little bit. But okay, so you're looking for your first job. Where are you looking? How are you finding out, "hey, where do I want to go next?"

Sophie Boler | 00;02;50;16 - 00;03;02;27

My first instinct would be to go on Google and search up the company I'm looking for, kind of take a look at their website, learn a little bit more on the company through their social media and website.

Jim Morgan | 00;03;03;08 - 00;03;11;14

And what what would you be looking for that you'd think, "wow, that's that looks pretty cool. Yeah, I think I want to go there." What would strike you and leave an impression on you?

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Sophie Boler | 00;03;12;12 - 00;03;28;15

You know, I'd look at their mission from their website and I would just kind of look at their company culture as a whole, which I would probably get from social media and see if I would kind of fit in with that culture and see what professional opportunities they have for me there.

Jim Morgan | 00;03;28;15 - 00;03;34;09

So are there certain types of pictures or videos or something that you would look at that you would say, Yeah, that's what I'm looking for?

Sophie Boler | 00;03;35;09 - 00;03;53;20

I mean, I'm a big picture person and video person myself. So I would say if it's a fun culture and I see that they do a lot of good work inside and outside of the company and they post about it frequently or, you know, feature things on their website that would have a good look for me. Yeah.

Jim Morgan | 00;03;53;25 - 00;04;06;09

So now you've decided, "hey, this looks pretty good, I'm going to go find their careers page." So now I get to their careers page. I'm looking for a job that's of interest to me. What are you looking for in that in that job description or whatever they might have on?

Sophie Boler | 00;04;06;09 - 00;04;28;11

I would be looking for probably at this point in time some flexibility. I mean, now we're kind of in a remote environment, hybrid situation. So I'd be looking for benefits that are for people more my age and things that I see as a benefit, not necessarily for everybody else, but. Yeah.

Jim Morgan | 00;04;28;28 - 00;04;29;02

Okay.

Jim Morgan | 00;04;30;09 - 00;04;40;16

All right. Yeah. So you found us. You found the job you're looking for. You make contact with us. How long do you think you should have to wait for me to get back to you?

Sophie Boler | 00;04;41;04 - 00;04;58;27

Oh, gosh, well, I'm a little picky, so I would say a couple days at the most. I mean, anything after a couple of days, it makes me feel like, "oh, maybe they didn't look at my resume or maybe they're not interested. Why aren't they getting back to me?" You know, I think we expect more fast responses.

Jim Morgan | 00;04;59;15 - 00;05;14;06

And just couple more and then I'm almost done with you. Okay, so now we said, okay, come on in. How long would you be willing to wait between first contact and starting the job? What's your expectation of how fast a company would move?

Sophie Boler | 00;05;14;06 - 00;05;20;15

I would say a week would be a good time from first contact to being hired.

Jim Morgan | 00;05;20;28 - 00;05;27;06

And in that week, would you stop looking or are you are you still sort of searching around the world?

Sophie Boler | 00;05;27;13 - 00;05;44;01

No, I would definitely keep searching. I mean, I wouldn't want to limit myself and put all my eggs in one basket. But yeah, definitely be searching for other opportunities. You never know what's going to come up. I mean, maybe the day before they want to hire me, I find another company, so.

Jim Morgan | 00;05;44;15 - 00;05;46;04

Okay, well, that's helpful.

Sophie Boler | 00;05;46;05 - 00;05;46;13

Did I pass?

Jim Morgan | 00;05;46;13 - 00;06;09;00

You did pass. And you just freaked out every hiring manager that's probably listening today because they're thinking "A week? Why is she nuts? You know, we can't get that done that quickly." This is sort of the seismic shift in power that's taking place now that you really, you know, you hold all the cards, you can pretty much decide how fast you want it, whether you're going to keep looking, what else is going on out there.

Jim Morgan | 00;06;09;00 - 00;06;25;28

And as a result, that's really what's causing a lot of the consternation for the employers is because you've grown up in a time where, you know, I don't know that much about your family, but I'll bet you've been in charge of your family just about since the day you were born. You decide when we go on vacation, you decide where we go on vacation.

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Jim Morgan | 00;06;26;09 - 00;06;53;09

And everybody is, you know, sort of complaining about all these kids, these kids, all these young kids. And I would say, well, these parents, you know, I mean, we're the ones that the baby boomers raised our kids saying, "you make all the decisions." And so you're you're used to being sort of in charge of everything. You've also walked into an Amazon world where you can order a pair of sunglasses and watch it go from the manufacturing line into the box end of the truck to the distribution center.

Jim Morgan | 00;06;53;16 - 00;07;09;28

And you know exactly when it's going to show up. And that becomes the expectation of a candidate to say, "I want to know when I'm being interviewed. I want to know when you're going to hire. I want to know how quickly this whole thing is going to move." So in terms of candidate experience, those are all things that employers have not had to worry about in the past.

Jim Morgan | 00;07;10;07 - 00;07;21;11

And your expectations, the speed at which especially younger generations move is a whole new dynamic for for companies. So as a result, this candidate experience has become a bigger deal.

Sophie Boler | 00;07;21;11 - 00;07;31;14

Mhm absolutely. And I agree with everything you said, and it's a little scary, but this all seems like a newer phenomenon. So what can you tell us why that is?

Jim Morgan | 00;07;31;24 - 00;07;54;06

You know, it's really a simple numbers game and it doesn't get much more complicated than that. We've got companies in Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin's 3000 employers. And I spend most of my time going around talking them about talent attraction, talent retention, how do you go and find people. And at the end of the day, in the upper Midwest and actually in the Northeast, people are not moving here.

Jim Morgan | 00;07;54;06 - 00;08;18;21

This is not a destination for most folks. It's more west and it's more south. We're not having a lot of kids. And so you don't have a natural growth of people. We're not an international destination place. We have a lot of 25 year olds that are deciding to go somewhere else. One thing we've learned in this whole thing is if you're a 25 year old, where do you want to go where the other 25 year olds are?

Jim Morgan | 00;08;18;22 - 00;08;38;08

It's pretty simple. And we're not really a destination like Austin or the Carolinas or Portland. So all of those things are working against us. And so as a result, that's where we get to the point that we don't have very many bodies. And so now companies are having to adjust everything that they do in order to attract you.

Jim Morgan | 00;08;38;08 - 00;08;50;29

And so they want you to stay here, they want you to work here, but they've got to compete for you now because you have everything at your fingertips. You can go wherever you want to go. So now we've got to work a little bit harder. And that's what's driven this, I think, to the to the forefront.

Sophie Boler | 00;08;51;06 - 00;09;09;18

Right. So now moving into more of your employer recommendations and advice for how they can handle this kind of situation, what are you exactly telling employers to consider to make the candidate experience a positive one, make sure they're adapting to these times?

Jim Morgan | 00;09;09;20 - 00;09;27;14

Yeah. I basically tell them to go back and listen to what you said in the first 3 minutes of the show, because those are really the answers. The first stop is going to be technologic. They're going to go to your website and they're probably going to do it from there forward. So one your website look online. How quickly can they navigate it?

Jim Morgan | 00;09;28;08 - 00;09;45;27

You know, we joke that, oh, you know, if on your front page you have this 15 minute video of where the company started 120 years ago, nobody cares. And I don't mean that to sound rough. The companies that are very proud of their tradition. But there's one thing, especially about the younger generations, they're not going to watch a 50-minute video and there's a reason.

Jim Morgan | 00;09;45;27 - 00;10;05;21

Tik Tok, ass you know is 2 minutes, one minute, and there's a reason. Twitter is 240 characters or whatever it is, that it's got to be fast. They're also going to see how quickly they can navigate through your website because that's sort of the first indication of whether or not this is a company that gets it because, you know, you don't want to show up and you won't even know what this is.

Jim Morgan | 00;10;05;21 - 00;10;27;27

But you show up and there's a Commodore 64 computer from RadioShack on your desk, that said, you know, you're out of there. So it's got to be quick. It's got to be personalized, it's got to be easy. And I think that's another one that a lot of HR people don't understand is, you know, there are software packages now that if you've got your resume on your laptop, you hit the easy button and it uploads your resume.

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Jim Morgan | 00;10;27;27 - 00;10;51;14

It puts the answers into the right questions. You know, it does everything. So if they're asking you to fill out a PDF and print it out and fax it in, that's a pretty good indication of that's not, you know, probably where you're going to end up. So that easiness, that quickness, all of that matters. And the last thing I think that they have to do is keep in mind that they're trying to wow you there, they're selling you, they need you to come work for them.

Jim Morgan | 00;10;51;26 - 00;11;07;16

And so as much as they might want to say, "oh, you're lucky to have a job with us", the truth is that's been turned out. And so it's "we'd be lucky to have you." And that's a mindset that I'm not sure everybody's gotten yet. But it's is there a wow factor in this so that when you leave, you're like, that's the place that I want to go?

Sophie Boler | 00;11;07;27 - 00;11;27;29

Mhm. I was just on LinkedIn earlier this morning, and I saw all of the easy job applicants you can do where you literally press the button and it uploads your resume. And that can be a little scary because then how many people are actually changing their resume in their cover letters for different jobs?

Jim Morgan | 00;11;27;29 - 00;11;46;14

And I would say that's a good warning for people looking to that. Yeah, that's convenient as heck. But if you're not even taking the 2 minutes to say, does my resume even match what the job expectations are or do I have them in the right order? So at least what's most important to the company I put first right.

Jim Morgan | 00;11;46;14 - 00;11;47;24

You can get pretty lazy with it.

Sophie Boler | 00;11;48;02 - 00;11;54;12

Right? So how about the people doing the interviewing? I mean, how do they fit into this whole experience?

Jim Morgan | 00;11;55;06 - 00;12;14;20

They've got to understand, especially, you know, I don't want to spend all the time on the younger generation of folks, but those are probably most of the people that are being interviewed. And they've got to understand your expectations. And again, it becomes this generational clash that, oh, you know, they want to work when they want, where they want, how they want and all of that.

Jim Morgan | 00;12;15;01 - 00;12;35;00

And it's true. And people look at that as, oh, lack of work ethic or they're lazy and that's not got anything to do with it. It's been in your DNA. It's the way you've grown up. And so some of that has to come across. You said you're interested in flexibility and, you know, in a lot of places now if you walk in and, you know, you say, hey, I'd like to be able to work from home two days a week.

Jim Morgan | 00;12;35;07 - 00;12;52;09

But companies certainly have the right to just say, no, you can't. But then they also need to know if there's going to be a certain part of the population that they're going to lose. So I think you've got to start those interviews armed with what do we have that's going to be attractive to this person so we can be selling while they're in here.

Jim Morgan | 00;12;52;29 - 00;13;10;24

The second part of it is, I think you've got to be ready for the questions that you are going to ask. You know, you were looking, you wanted pictures, you wanted to see different things. What's the diversity of the company? Diversity in all different you know, whether that's age or ideas or color or sexuality, whatever it might be.

Jim Morgan | 00;13;11;00 - 00;13;27;17

I want to go to a place where there's a lot of people, not everybody who looks just like me. Are we ready for that? What's the culture in this company? And if the people that are sitting there interviewing you are looking at each other like, geez, culture, I don't know quite how I describe it. Well, now you're in a little bit of trouble.

Jim Morgan | 00;13;27;17 - 00;13;44;08

Again, younger people especially want to know what's my learning and development plan? Because if I start here, my expectation is in six months I'm going to be somewhere else and six months later I'll be somewhere. I'm not here for 30 years. You'll have me for 3 to 5. And I want to know what that looks like. How are you going to train me?

Jim Morgan | 00;13;44;08 - 00;13;59;27

What is it that I need to get done? You know, what's my growth strategy here? Because you might be hiring me as a marketing assistant, but I want to be the marketing director and then the vice president of marketing. What is it going to take for me to get there? Lastly, I would say they got to be selling.

Jim Morgan | 00;14;00;04 - 00;14;22;28

I mean, they really need to be selling that. They want you and they think you're important. They can always turn you down later. But for the purpose of the interview and bringing you in, they should have their A-game that says, we're trying to get as many people into this pipeline as we possibly can. So I think there's got to be that excitement, there's got to be the interest, and they got to be looking at it from the interviewee's point of view.

Sophie Boler | 00;14;23;11 - 00;14;36;06

And you just talked about this, but are there any other differences that you can point out and what younger workers are really interested in or looking for that companies should be implementing in their candidate process?

Jim Morgan | 00;14;36;12 - 00;14;54;03

I think, you know, the what you mentioned is a lot of it, the flexibility is a big one. You know, and I think what people have sort of lost in all of this is, you know, especially if you're 23, four or five years older, you've never worked in an office in a lot of cases. And now they're saying, come back to the office.

Jim Morgan | 00;14;54;04 - 00;15;09;19

I like, I want to go to the office. Here's what I've been, you know, for three years. I think you have to prove yourself. I think, you know, that all goes with it. But if there isn't a reason to be there and it's something that people want, how do we begin to, you know, allowing that flexibility to take place?

Jim Morgan | 00;15;10;06 - 00;15;36;24

I would look at the benefits that you're offering and what is it that a 25 year old wants versus a 45 year old versus a 65 year old? And those are very different things. And we've been talking to companies quite a bit about if I've got \$40,000 in student loans, that means more to me. If you would match that and help me pay for it, I want that more than I want a 401k, if I've got a couple of kids, for heaven's sakes, give me health care.

Jim Morgan | 00;15;37;07 - 00;16;11;27

Right? I got kids and they get hurt. And I, you know, I got to have a place to go. And so those matter. And so you're even seeing companies now get to the point where they're using their benefits to differentiate themselves. So if I'm going after you and I'm looking at a younger workforce, I'm thinking about student loans, flexibility, the types of jobs that we have here, and then the opportunities that may not just be traditional learning and development, but it might be, hey, so if you want to sit in on our executive team meeting and learn more about, hey, there's this project that we want to get done, can you help us with it? We want you to serve on some volunteer boards and we'll that can be on company time. Go do that. Find the things that matter to people.

Sophie Boler | 00;16;21;06 - 00;16;36;04

You know, I mean, Debbie, in her last episode, she talked about companies now offering pet insurance, which is just funny to me. But a lot of people really care about that. So you can see how employers are getting really creative with their benefits.

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Jim Morgan | 00;16;36;04 - 00;16;53;00

Yeah, and we've had lots of discussions about it, we had one guy the other day said, you know, we offer Netflix subscriptions to our employees and they value it more than their health care insurance. Yeah, but I mean, every time someone turns on their television and oh, my gosh, there's Netflix, it's like, oh, I can thank the ABC company for that.

Jim Morgan | 00;16;53;00 - 00;17;10;23

So things like that, that mean a lot to people. Reward programs mean a lot to people. On the pet insurance, you mentioned cybersecurity and you know, all the different blocks and your own data and things like that. Again, they're trying to listen to their employees and say, you know, we'll offer A for one and we'll offer health insurance.

Jim Morgan | 00;17;10;23 - 00;17;24;24

And that's kind of an expectation. But if we can start throwing in some of these things that really aren't even necessarily that expensive, but someone's thinking, well, that's pretty cool. I just got my subscription paid for. Yeah. So, you know, I think there's a lot of that's going on as well.

Sophie Boler | 00;17;24;24 - 00;17;35;15

Yeah. And we'll be discussing this employee experience topic the next couple of episodes, but do you have any last thoughts you can share with our MRA Nation.

Jim Morgan | 00;17;36;14 - 00;18;03;23

Our you know, I guess I would go with probably three things. One, I think we're still having a hard time in a lot of cases. And again, it's a lot of people who look like me. And for those of you on the radio, you know, 62 years old, not getting this yet and not accepting the fact that it's a it's a different world and different things are happening and people want to rush to judgment that, oh, it's a generational thing, or it's this or that or this will pass.

Jim Morgan | 00;18;04;09 - 00;18;20;13

And, you know, I can pretty much tell you demographically, it's not going to pass. And generationally I don't I don't think it's going to pass. So we've got to we got to figure out some new strategies in terms of of how we're doing things. The second thing is, is, you know, you can say, well, I don't think we need to do this or whatever.

Jim Morgan | 00;18;20;13 - 00;18;46;07

And that's true. You know, as an employer, you can decide to do whatever you want. But I would encourage you to look at what everybody around you is doing, what's your industry doing? What are the people in the industrial park that you're in doing? Because, you know, we're seeing just a ton of well, if you're offering \$15 a week or \$15 an hour here and they're offering 16 there and 17 there and 18 there, that person's just going to bump, you know, to wherever they're going.

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Jim Morgan | 00;18;46;08 - 00;19;06;16

So it becomes a matter of in this interview, what are we offering to you that you say, yeah, you know, it might be a dollar less an hour, but, boy, that flexibility are Friday, you know, dress down or cook out every Tuesday. All kinds of things might be, you know, what, someone was looking for. And they're they're willing to accept.

Jim Morgan | 00;19;06;16 - 00;19;28;27

And I think the third one that I would say is, you know, candidates talk to each other. And if somebody has a bad experience at a company going through the interview process or they never called them back or they never heard from them again or whatever it might be, they talk to each other. And so if you're not providing a positive experience, it's not only that one person that you've talked to.

Jim Morgan | 00;19;28;27 - 00;19;47;05

It's going to be several others. So at the end of the day, I guess if I could give one piece of advice, I would say, have someone go through your candidate experience, whether that's you, your kid or you just get an employee. Maybe that's new and say, we're going to go through this again, take notes. We want to know what this process looks like.

Jim Morgan | 00;19;47;29 - 00;20;03;05

Have a hiring manager go through it and see what it is that you're doing because those people will be really honest with you and say, you know, first of all, I can't believe this happened. And second of all, I can't believe it took three weeks for this to happen. And third, I can't believe no one was here when I showed up for the interview.

Jim Morgan | 00;20;03;18 - 00;20;21;20

Those are the kinds of things that are in this market that you can't have that type of misstep or you're going to be in trouble because now they're going to go someplace else. As you said at the beginning, even when you've maybe got a job interview or you've got a job offer, you're still looking. So, you know this game isn't over until we get there.

Jim Morgan | 00;20;21;26 - 00;20;51;04

So the candidate experience and what you're going to talk about next week with the employee experience, I think they're really starting to almost meld into each other because I'll I'll leave you with two to examples of that. One, we were doing some recruiting for nurses, and the demand for nurses is very high right now. And as people were being interviewed and they would leave, we were texting them before they got to their car to say, congratulations, you got the job, come on back in.

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Jim Morgan | 00;20;51;04 - 00;21;21;20

We want to wrap this thing up because they didn't want to give them the opportunity to go out, see more people. So the candidate experience became the employee experience almost instantaneously. The other one similar to that was a manufacturing facility and they're hiring some CMC operators and what they did was they interviewed them, they took them out onto the floor, they were showing them everything that was going on and while they were getting the tour of the facility, the hiring team was deciding whether they wanted to keep them or whether they did well and they were keeping the offer letter on the table when they got back from the tour and they just said, congratulations, we'd like you to start, you know, on Monday, here's the offer letter and, you know, encourage them to say yes right there, because again, they're going to go home and there could be a message. It could be something else. So we got to move quickly.

Jim Morgan | 00;21;38;17 - 00;21;41;00

And you told everybody at the beginning, you're giving them a week. There's the challenge right there.

Sophie Boler | 00;21;44;01 - 00;22;06;11

Right. Well, Jim, you gave us a lot of great pieces of advice that I hope organizations really take into account. But that just about wraps up the time we have for today, unfortunately. But Jim, thank you so much for joining us today and really making it apparent to employers that they can't be doing the same thing that they've been doing for the past 20 years, ten years, even five years.

Sophie Boler | 00;22;07;07 - 00;22;18;26

But we've added Jim's LinkedIn profile to the show notes. So if you'd like to connect with him and talk to him a little bit more about his knowledge, I'm sure he'd be happy to chat and connect with you.

Jim Morgan | 00;22;18;26 - 00;22;31;12

More than happy to. And it's a lot of fun right now because, as I said, we're helping people understand the shortage. We're helping them with the recruitment, the employee experience. So any of those things, give me a call and conversation about it.

Sophie Boler | 00;22;31;18 - 00;22;52;29

Absolutely. So make sure to connect with him there. But otherwise, we will be continuing the conversation next week when our VP of HR at MRA, James McDevitt, joins us to talk about the onboarding experience. So you won't want to miss that, but thank you again, Jim. I had a lot of fun and we talked about a lot of great stuff.

Sophie Boler | 00;22;52;29 - 00;22;55;03

So hope to see you again soon.



EPISODE 6

The Changed Candidate Experience Is the Next Big Thing

Jim Morgan | 00;22;55;04 - 00;22;56;08

Alright. Anytime.

OUTRO | 00;22;57;05 - 00;23;19;13

And that wraps up our content for this episode. Be sure to reference the show notes where you can sign up to connect. For more podcast updates, check out other episodes on your favorite podcast platform and as always, make sure to follow MRA's 30 minute THRIVE so you don't miss out. Thanks for tuning in and we'll see you next Wednesday to carry on the conversation.