

Description: The employee experience is a never-ending process. What are you doing to ensure your employees are happy and engaged every single day? MRA's Senior Recruiting and Retention Business Partner, Kristin Noack, sits down with us to explain how to get the most out of your employee experience, while setting you up as an employer of choice.

Listen to Discover:

- Employee engagement is actually the destination, and the employee experience is the roadmap.
- It's important to understand, both at a macro level and micro level, what your employees are saying. Do this through engagement surveys, one-on-one meetings, etc.
- A happy employee is an engaged employee, and a smooth and rewarding employee experience gives time back to managers!

Transcript:

Sophie Boler | 00:00:00:03 - 00:00:23:05

Hello hello, everybody and welcome to 30 minute Thrive, your go-to podcast for anything and everything H.R., powered by MRA, the Management Association. Looking to stay on top of the ever-changing world of H.R.? 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.

Sophie Boler | 00:00:23:17 - 00:00:53:04

Now it's time to thrive. Hello, everybody. I am joined with Kirsten Noack today. She's our senior recruiting and retention business partner here at MRA and comes with over 15 years of experience. So she knows a lot. But she's hired, onboarded, trained and supported hundreds of employees throughout her career and is really here today to share that knowledge with all of you as we focus on employee experience as our main topic for today.

Sophie Boler | 00:00:53:13 - 00:00:57:18

So welcome to the show, Kristin. I'm excited to talk to you today.

Kristin Noack | 00:00:57:23 - 00:01:02:01

Thank you, Sophie. And so glad to be here to talk about a topic that I know well.

Sophie Boler | 00:01:02:10 - 00:01:13:11

Absolutely. Well, let's dive right into the first question. We're going to start a little broad. So could you tell me what the employee experience really means in your eyes?

Kristin Noack | 00:01:13;23 - 00:01:38;03

Absolutely. The employee experience to me really is the experience the employee encounters when they're engaged with your organization. Sounds pretty simplistic. Actually, a colleague of mine says it even in a more defined way that I like to talk about, and that is that the employee engagement is actually the destination, and the employee experience is the roadmap.

Sophie Boler | 00:01:38;19 - 00:01:57;18

I love that. Thanks. Well, in the previous two podcasts, we really went into the first steps of the employee experience, which talked about attracting talent and onboarding and all that fun stuff. So what are the next steps to creating a good employee experience?

Kristin Noack | 00:01:58;11 - 00:02:14;11

I'm glad you asked that. But Sophie we're going to take a step back because I know you recently talked to Jim Morgan about the candidate experience. And for those of you out there who have not been able to hear that podcast yet, I highly encourage it. There's a lot of similarities here between the candidate experience and the employee experience.

Kristin Noack | 00:02:15;02 - 00:02:39;28

And so I would say if you think back to what Jim was speaking with you about being a candidate, you really turn some tables. So he asked you a couple of questions about your candidate experience. And so if I remember correctly, I'm paraphrasing and recapping here, you talked quite a bit about when you were looking for employment, you looked at the culture of the organization, most likely by the Internet.

Kristin Noack | 00:02:39;28 - 00:03:05;25

You go to you trying to find articles, whatever that case may be. You thought about the culture. Would that be potentially of interest to you? Could that fit with who you are and what you were looking for? And then you had those discussions and you probably dug a little bit deeper. But those are the same things we actually talk about with an employee experience, because if you think about it, that candidate becomes the employee.

Kristin Noack | 00:03:05;25 - 00:03:34;05

So as in yourself, you became an employee thinking about those same things as well. But what happens next? Because that employee becomes part of the fabric of your organization. So you have to think of the other things. And that includes engaging in an employee, investing in an employee and communicating with an employee. If you think about the simple things you originally thought about when you did your candidate experience as part of the culture, what is the leadership saying?

Kristin Noack | 00:03:34:10 - 00:03:52:13

What about technologies in your workspace? It's the same thing you're thinking about as you become the employee. And I think that's important to understand. These are our next steps. Those don't change. You didn't walk into your job and say, Well, that's what I want yesterday. Today I want something else. So that part of you and that's part of an employee experience.

Sophie Boler | 00:03:53:00 - 00:04:09:09

Absolutely. And as you know, it's essential to keep staying up to date on these trends and changes like Jim discussed. So that being said, what are some of the new tools that you've seen to improve the employee experience these days?

Kristin Noack | 00:04:09:09 - 00:04:29:08

Glad you asked, because there's a couple of different ways you can look at tools that everybody thinks about making tools tangible is there technology? Is there something in that capacity? Sure, there are human resource technologies, the candidate size, those are the applicant tracking systems. It's the HRIS systems that become part of the organization once you're hired. And those are really important.

Kristin Noack | 00:04:29:08 - 00:04:55:08

And I think it's been mentioned in past podcasts about these up to date as possible. And those tools, an HRIS system can give employees a very great experience from being more adept at getting information, policy updates, communication. Let's face it, most of our employees in some cases now are not back in the workforce as they were before. We need to reach them from afar and as quickly as possible.

Kristin Noack | 00:04:55:08 - 00:05:18:11

But that's not the only way to communicate. Those are the only current tools that I think are really important for the employee experience. I think the tools that you've created now having to be forced into technology in Zoom meetings or team meetings are really important to communicate. Water Cooler discussions, just having a general discussion at a level between supervisors and employees is wonderful.

Kristin Noack | 00:05:18:21 - 00:05:29:01

What about town halls? I think those are really important too. We might have done them to some capacity before, but they've really risen to the challenge of what we do each day for employee experience.

Sophie Boler | 00:05:29:15 - 00:05:42:10

Right. And we know it's important to pay attention to what matters to every single employee at work. And this might be challenging. But how do you listen to each individual employee and their wants and needs?

Kristin Noack | 00:05:43:03 - 00:06:05:15

Very good question. Because, again, let's think back to that. You're a candidate. You've become an employee with your organization. Those wants and needs you just talked about, they're still part of you, whether you're sitting in the outside meetings and that you're internally as an employee. What can you do? So I think it's important to look at it in a capacity of surveys in this state.

Kristin Noack | 00:06:05:28 - 00:06:40:09

I think it's important to understand, both at a macro level and micro level, what your employees are saying. So how can you do that? One of the ways is, for instance, MRA does an engagement survey in a great department that works quite extensively on all this information that an organization is looking at about their entire employee base. And those engagement surveys are wonderful to help us look within those quantitative and qualitative factors, what the trends are, what are the satisfaction points for your employees?

Kristin Noack | 00:06:40:20 - 00:06:59:10

And I think if you're looking for a way really to listen to listen on a big scope with those engagement surveys is important. After that, sometimes we need something different than that. Oh, my gosh. Sometimes we need to look at a smaller group. We need to maybe focus on our sales team or something of that nature and how can we do it on a smaller scope?

Kristin Noack | 00:06:59:21 - 00:07:27:24

Those one-on-one discussions, those stay interviews are incredibly important and those should be at a frequency that gives you good information without waiting too long, which happens often. So you can get that information to your leadership, to your organization, and that communication to the employees. Stay interviews is another thing MRA does with intention. They're able to help organizations in numbers to focus on those smaller scope areas that they want to look at.

Kristin Noack | 00:07:27:28 - 00:07:32:18

That satisfaction, that quantitative and qualitative aspect, right?

Sophie Boler | 00:07:32:19 - 00:08:00:21

I think gathering all that feedback from employees is super important, whether that's in the conversation or, like you said, engagement survey, I mean, anything really helps, but the employee experience really helps to also improve employee retention. So what are your top three must-have strategies that an employee should really have to create a good employee experience that will lead to employee retention?

Kristin Noack | 00:08:00;26 - 00:08:28;18

Well, I think it's a great question. I think there's probably more than three strategies for that. So let's talk about some that we could focus in on. One thing that is really important to understand for an employee is how are they received their messages and how are things perceived? Take a step back on that. The candidate experience, when you were looking at the organizations you were actually looking at online, right now you are focusing on what is the organization looks like.

Kristin Noack | 00:08:28;26 - 00:08:49;14

That's the branding. And I think sometimes leaders don't know what their brand is. And I think if we can understand how an employee gets engaged, you need to understand how you can communicate with your employees, whether they be that candidate, that employee now or that exiting employee. What did you? What is your brand? How are you communicating? What messages are you sending?

Kristin Noack | 00:08:49;19 - 00:09:08;25

So I think my strategy one is to know who you are. You go back out and try and become that candidate again and see what your organization is like going through the process or potentially just talking to your leaders and talking to your employees. Again, those town halls, things of that nature, how are they understanding your organization? Is it as you expect it?

Kristin Noack | 00:09:09;03 - 00:09:33;02

Do you need to make adjustments? Another strategy is really to consider the experience. There are those four key areas we talk about the lifestyles and those are the employee journey, which is that culture. Are you staying true to your culture strategy? Look at what your culture is. Identify your culture. Ask questions about your culture. Is it matching what you think it is leadership?

Kristin Noack | 00:09:33;02 - 00:09:58;19

Is leadership being communicated? Are they being supportive? Is a collaborative focusing on that technology? Do you have up to date technology as you can have for your employees, or is there something more you could do? Many organizations will do surveys or other types of conversations and come up with a list of points of things that are really important in technology rises to the top.

Kristin Noack | 00:09:58;19 - 00:10:20;11

Maybe that's something that is a strategy that can work with moving forward and present to their play base. And then there's the workspace, the workplace. Work life balance. You said it yourself in conversations previously and you probably agreed today. What is there for flexibility or benefits? Again, these things are not just for a candidate. They're for an employee.

Kristin Noack | 00;10;20;18 - 00;10;22;09

They're throughout the whole lifecycle.

Sophie Boler | 00;10;22;15 - 00;10;39;24

Right. And we have to bring a budget at some point. Right. So what happens if an employer doesn't feel like they have a big enough budget to really support a good employee experience? What are some practical but inexpensive, inexpensive options for them?

Kristin Noack | 00;10;40;02 - 00;11;13;11

Good question. Making things happen doesn't have to be expensive. That's the really good news. So one of the tools I often refer to as something that MRA has in our toolkit, if you're a member and the website, it's called the Employee Experience Assessment Tool. It is a fantastic way to take a quick look at the comprehensive checklist in the state of your organization and talk about that journey that's a candidate to be engaging with the employee, the best in the employee, growing even to the exit.

Kristin Noack | 00;11;13;17 - 00;11;29;05

It actually touches on this tool kind upon all those areas. Yes. No capacity to saying, how are we doing? It's a quick meter. It's a thought process and the journey, are we missing any meeting points that are really important to our organization and there's no cost.

Sophie Boler | 00;11;30;20 - 00;11;45;12

So, well, you just touched on the exiting of an employee and unfortunately this does come with the employee experience as well in an employee leaves the company. And so this should also be a positive experience right?

Kristin Noack | 00;11;46;10 - 00;12;09;07

It should be a positive experience. But let's be honest, it tends to be emotional right out of the gate whether or not it's your top performer or someone you might have been expecting could potentially be exiting the organization. It's emotional but that isn't the time to get emotional. Now is the time to investigate and that's something I'm really passionate about with organizations, especially in this market.

Kristin Noack | 00;12;09;21 - 00;12;34;20

And that recruiting side is the other half of my career in recruiting and retention. We get calls all the time. I need to find people. So why are you losing people? Have you investigated? Have you done discussions? If there's an organization out there that hasn't done it yet, have those conversations and you've had the time when someone leaves we want to catch them before they leave with good, deep conversations as best as you can.

Kristin Noack | 00;12;34;28 - 00;12;58;13

That's the exit interview situation. Sometimes I'm hearing it's really hard for organization to do that on their own. They feel that it's either not the right time you place or are engaging as much, and sometimes it just as training for leadership in how to conduct an exit discussion. That's where MRA can come in. Our exit interview team is great at doing that.

Kristin Noack | 00;12;58;13 - 00;13;30;17

We hear those discussions, we're considered a neutral third party, so that works out fantastic. But it's important to figure out what happened in that employee journey by going through and investigating at this exit stage. And then what you do with that, I think is very important. This is what I feel is that positive Sophie I think what you need to do at that point is understand can we make adjustments within your organization, are you finding with someone that it is an onboarding situation, is it something we could have done more from the frontend--just simple better messaging.

Kristin Noack | 00;13;30;27 - 00;13;52;05

Is it a leadership or supervisory situation? DO you need more supervisory training or is it a circumstance that you really can't manage at this time? Because maybe it's not a possibility of the individual being able to experience what they're looking for, your organization, and then you have to take them forward from there. But positively, you should get some good results from discussion.

Sophie Boler | 0;13;52;12 - 00;14;04;12

Absolutely. And just talking about this whole process, this smooth and rewarding employee experience process really gives back time to managers. So how is that true?

Kristin Noack | 00;14;05;16 - 00;14;25;19

Well, it's true because if you can do this journey well, you can manage to touch all those points in employee's engagement with you and your culture and your communication, your technology and the work life balance. You're going to be in position actively to recruit less and retain more.

Sophie Boler | 00;14;27;03 - 00;14;36;17

Good answer. But because a good employee experience can really differ for each employee, how do you address all the other needs?

Kristin Noack | 00;14;37;07 - 00;15;05;04

You have to do it in pieces. You have to look at where the important things are and really understand what to start with. And maybe that requires the chat with MRA to see where you're at and what to focus in on. But at least start with communication. You don't know if you don't ask. And having those potential one on ones with your employees at your supervisory level and lower level and then communicating that up and broadcasting and out to your town halls.

Kristin Noack | 00;15;05;26 - 00;15;25;19

See, that's really crux of moving forward and doing that and has to reach your employee base right now and probably could be Zoom meetings. It could be regular email communications. But just because there's a difference in where your employees are, don't shy away from communicating with them.

Sophie Boler | 00;15;25;26 - 00;15;32;20

Right. Exactly. And how does senior leadership play a role in the whole employee experience process?

Kristin Noack | 00;15;33;07 - 00;16;03;03

I think senior leadership needs to be the one in the forefront of that brand and need to be the one in the forefront of the communication of the organizations through certain type of things we've done here that have shown that individuals will move an organization because of it's leadership. So is your senior leadership with you? Are they understanding what the voices are of the employee and do they understanding the employee experience, having them do a little bit of that work to their viewpoint?

Sophie Boler | 00;16;03;29 - 00;16;11;14

Absolutely. Well, we're running out of time, but do you have any last thoughts that you can give our followers today?

Kristin Noack | 00;16;12;23 - 00;16;28;11

I think the biggest that I would leave you with is the journey. It's truly about the employee's journey, whether it be the candidate, the employee, the access. You need to know what your journey is providing and it just in order to retain.

Sophie Boler | 00;16;29;21 - 00;16;58;02

Absolutely. And like Jim mentioned, the employee experience never ends. It's an ongoing thing. And it will never end. But like I said, that takes up all of our time for the day, unfortunately. But Kristen, thank you so much for joining us today. And listeners, I hope you enjoyed talking to Kristen, too, but we have added Kristen's LinkedIn profile to the show notes as well as a couple great resources that she's given us.

Sophie Boler | 00;16;58;11 - 00;17;16;27

So make sure to check those out and make sure to connect with her, too. Shoot her a message. She'd love to chat, I'm sure. Absolutely. All right. We will be continuing the conversation next week. But thank you again, Kristen. I had fun talking to you and we will see you again soon.

Kristin Noack | 00;17;17;03 - 00;17;17;17

Thank you.



EPISODE 8

Getting the Most Out of Your Employee Experience

Sophie Boler | 00;17;18;06 - 00;17;40;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 MRA 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.