

-- Speaker 0 00:04 Make it right. Manufacturing podcast on the mega right podcast. We often talk with business leaders and entrepreneurs about the challenges and solutions they've encountered as they work to manage this. It's beast. We call manufacturing the people, the processes and the machinery. There's a lot going on at a very fast pace and it can be overwhelming <inaudible> particularly when we're living in what's being called as the age of distraction. So how does a leader keep it all together and get the best results? How do any of us this week on the maker right podcast, I'm pleased to have Kevin. Snoop joined me as he recently addressed this question at a conference. Kevin is a manufacturing consultant and the author of make it right, five steps to align your manufacturing business from the front line to the bottom line and he is a veteran of the show. Welcome back. Kevin, good to speak with you.

Speaker 1 00:56 Thank you very much, Janet.

Speaker 0 00:58 So tell me a little bit about what prompted you to actually do this presentation at a conference about leading highly effective teams in the age of distraction?

Speaker 1 01:08 Sure.

Speaker 0 01:09 I'm curious about this. Like, what was it that prompted that topic? Was there a particular incident?

Speaker 1 01:14 Uh, no particular incident. I think, um, this whole idea around people being consistently and continuously distracted, uh, has been with me for the last few years. Um, I've been walking around manufacturing facilities around the world and she and everything from security guards who haven't seen me enter the building because they'd been busy on their mobile phones to, um, you know, front line manufacturing operators who, uh, uh, rarely at the production line because they're busy, you know, on their laptop computers or on their phones in the, in the, uh, in the canteen. Um, and I think people are just generally very distracted by the technology, especially the technology that we have around us at the moment.

Speaker 0 01:59 So do you think <inaudible> it says, um, I guess it's all technology. It's, it's the fact that we have a cell phone in our, in our pocket that can connect us with our homes and our families. 24, seven, that wasn't always the case. Right. But then there's all the, the other distractions of the electronic devices that you have in your, your place of business. So it's, it's everything isn't it?

Speaker 1 02:21 It is. And, uh, and that's what I was explaining at the conference we were at. This is, it's a chemical addiction. And, uh, these, um, devices are designed to give us that chemical addiction. So every time that we get a beat, uh, it sends us into a, into a stress mode and the cortisol in our body starts to rise. And then when we address that, the, um, we get a shot of dope, mean a serotonin, which makes us feel good about having addressed the, uh, the cause of the issue. And so it really is a chemical, uh, addiction. And, uh, that's why it's not easy people to tell people, just to tell them, you know, to turn their phones off and to do better. Uh, we have to find a way to understand what's the root cause of what's driving us through this distraction that we've continually got and then how we get that fixed.

Speaker 0 03:13 So what's the impact of this bombardment on business right now? Do you think?

Speaker 1 03:18 I think it's huge. Um, you know, people talk about productivity as being low because, um, you know, for various different reasons. But I think one of the biggest ones is that people are just not focused and we can't do our best work. We can't get into a state of what we call flow unless we are focused on the task for, for a specific period of time. Um, with the distraction, uh, each time our mind is taking away from the job, um, it takes us time to get back into the flow of doing their job again and uh, with, you know, it used to be just a, you know, you'd be working in an office and somebody would come over and sit at your desk and have a conversation with you. And that was kind of like the distraction. Um, now it seems so much more because it's, it's honest all the time.

Speaker 1 04:06 You know, people are keeping the mobile phones in their pockets or on their desk. Every time the light comes on or the other phone buzzes in the pocket and they're distracted. One of the things that it showed up to me was, uh, around meetings when yo --

-- u walk into a meeting. It used to be that time before the meeting started that everybody would be engaged with each other. You know, you'd be finding out about what happened at the weekend, you know, how's your daughter doing? Oh, it's your birthday today. You know, congratulations. And you know, it would be small talk around the meeting table. What I noticed now when I'm walking to meetings is that everybody's got their head down on their devices, either the phone or a laptop and they're almost trying to avoid the gaze of everybody else because they want to get their bit done before the meeting starts. And a, and then the first sort of five minutes of the meeting is getting people to put their devices away and pay attention. And uh, you know, so I'm, I'm seeing it at every level of the organization from the production floor all the way through to the boardroom. And, uh, and I think it, it's really affecting relationships, which is what business is based on.

Speaker 0 05:18 Yeah. And I think when people are looking at their electronic device, like he said, people are trying to finish up their last little thing before the meeting starts. But is it also Oh, way to avoid engaging. I'm busy with this. I'm busy with this so I don't have to talk to you.

Speaker 1 05:34 Yeah. There's this epidemic of busy-ness and people are wearing it as a badge of honor. Um, this whole idea around being busy all the time, it is almost like, that's a good thing. Um, I, I did, uh, uh, client visit about three weeks ago and I wrote on the whiteboard, a busy boss is a bad boss and reason that you're bad if you're busy is that you, you, you don't have time for those engagements where people need help and support. Uh, there's two roles of a boss. One of it is to set very clear direction. The other one is to help and support people along that journey as they're, you know, as they're making progress. And, uh, if you're too busy to have a conversation, uh, if you're too busy to listen to their issues, then you're a, you're a terrible boss. And, uh, and so busy-ness I think is a, is an epidemic that needs to be, needs to be seriously looked at and people, it's all about self-awareness. People need to be aware when they're saying, Oh look, I'm too busy. Um, and, uh, rather than that we need to be engaged. I'm not saying that people shouldn't be, uh, active. Um, you know, work is about making progress and it's about being active, but there's a difference between being engaged and focused on a task list is going to take the business forward and being busy with stuff. <inaudible>

Speaker 0 07:02 I'm wondering what role industry 4.0 and all of the rapidly changing technologies are playing on this age of distraction. Can you share some incidences where you've seen the impact of this absolute distraction in the manufacturing setting where their people are so busy looking at their <inaudible> green about what's happening? They're not actually seeing what's going on on the line.

Speaker 1 07:26 Yeah, sure. Um, now I'm, I'm a big fan of technology, right? Uh, one of our companies is that is a technology business Lucy died for. And so we're, we're pulling data from production lines and then presenting it to people so that they can make better decisions. Um, so I'm, I'm not in any way anti technology. Uh, I think what we need to do is make sure that the technology is being used as a tool to help us be more productive, not, um, as a distraction that stops us being productive. And that means that, uh, certainly from, uh, an industry 4.0 perspective, I think the key is in doing really good analytic, uh, analytics of the data and then providing it in a format that allows rapid decision making to be made. No, for me, that's the critical part. So you're, you're helping people with the technology.

Speaker 1 08:24 Uh, you can have alerts and alarms only when they're required to take some action. You don't want a continual beeps and blurbs going off quite often in an industry is that people are spending a huge amount of time, uh, getting data ready for meetings, getting data ready for presentations. Now in, in this day and age, they shouldn't be any need to be spending time, um, manually manipulating data. People should be having automatically provided to them. And there's plenty of technology to help with that. Um, the times that I see people most distracted is when there's too much data. You know, when data is just coming at th --

-- em. For example, on a production line, you know, there's millions of bits of data coming every second. Um, and if you don't know you which bits of that to look at, uh, and you're overwhelmed, you're doing, let's say you're doing a focused improvement project on one piece of the equipment and there's just so much data coming at you that you, you can't think clearly it, that that actually confuses people. But we need to do is help them to, to simplify that data, analyze it for them, and then provide it in a way that only the most important data for them to make a great decision is being cause then <inaudible> <inaudible>

Speaker 0 09:45 you travel all over the world, you're meeting people from different countries, different cultures, different economic backgrounds. In this age of distraction, you must get us into that vibe of society. Is it negative? Is it positive? And what do you see the causes of that?

Speaker 1 10:02 The overall vibe in society? Yeah, yeah, that's a great question. Um, I think you could see this in terms of, uh, what's happening to people generally. I feel like as the human race develops, everybody ought to be getting more happy. Um, well actually the quality of life, if you think about physical things, the quality of life that people around the world has never been better. Um, the health care systems and never been better. There's so much good that is going on. Um, but unfortunately people seem to be getting sadder and sadder and that's happening around the world. I don't see, I don't see more laughter. I don't see more smiles, I don't see more relaxation. Um, I see people as gradually being pulled into this do loop of getting stuff done, um, and just trying to get through the day, eh, rather than looking forward to living for another day.

Speaker 1 11:02 And so I would say that's a consistent theme around the world. Uh, people are, you mentioned it before, busy people are very busy, people are under, um, under stress to, to achieve something. Um, and I, I think generally people are missing the moment in a lot of cases now in companies. Uh, all these productivity tools that we've brought in was supposed to make things easier for people. They're supposed to make things, um, you know, more productive. But actually in many companies, although the output is higher and you could say the productivity per person is higher, I think the quality of life per person is a, is very challenging. And, um, you know, what am I goals has always been, you know, for the last 15 years has been, uh, to have people have a really good day at work, you know, feel fulfilled and joyful at the end of the day, and then you'd be looking forward to coming to work the next day. Um, and unfortunately, actually very few people that are in that category.

Speaker 0 12:03 <inaudible> well, your, your book make it right. It's all about helping the leader figure out the path forward and getting everybody on board so that everybody can be as success. And it's <inaudible> probably a huge challenge for even that leader to get that personal alignment, isn't it?

Speaker 1 12:24 Yeah, it is. And, um, one of the challenges is, you know, where do I find the time to be able to invest in myself? The, the issue is if you don't invest in yourself, you don't have that spark of inspiration that's going to inspire your workforce. So, uh, it's, it's absolutely critical that the leaders take time for themselves to do the things that they love, to find that spark. You know, I, I work with a lot of entrepreneurs as well and, um, entre entrepreneurs generally went into entrepreneurship to find some level of freedom. You know, they didn't want to be working for somebody else where they were running the, you know, the cloud of somebody else's management. And so they set up their own company with the goal of being free from something. Um, and uh, and then gradually over a period of time, they've got so busy with the company that they've lost that sense of freedom.

Speaker 1 13:22 And so the, the reason that we're doing our work is all ought to be to help us to live a more fulfilling life. No rappers. Um, there was a a saying that I love, which is, um, yeah, we were all like spiders. We're all building this framework around us in order to achieve something. And you know, the spider builds a web in order to catch a fly. But if despite it gets caught in his own web and he's a stupid spider, Fred, often what we're d --

-- oing is we're building this web, um, and then we get stuck in our own web and it's creating that sense of tension. What we need to do is look at, okay, well why did I get caught up? You know, my business was designed to give me freedom. Why did I get caught up in this business and, uh, and get stuck? Um, now what am I going to do about it and, and what make it right. Those as they look to simplify things for people, give a a very clear five step path on how to find freedom within the business. Um, and within your own life as well.

Speaker 0 14:37 <inaudible> and you've, you've personally been very very focused on personal alignment throughout your career. What's been the impact on your life?

Speaker 1 14:47 Well, I absolutely love my life. Um, and you know, when people ask me how are things going, the answer is always, it's, it's fantastic. Um, so I, it's hard to explain this because it's an inner feeling and, uh, and, and it's been a journey. You know, it's not that I woke up one day and had been bumped on the head and all of a sudden everything looks rosy. You know, it's, and it's not that you don't have dips and curves along the way. Um, but what I can say or said, I feel joyful every day. Um, I feel fulfilled, uh, most of the time. Uh, there's things that I am still, uh, looking to achieve, but I am not looking to achieve them from a sense of lack. I'm looking to achieve them from a sense of usually helping more people and uh, so that it's, that's the right way to it too, to describe it. There's a sense there's, there's an underlying sense of calm and a contentment with, you know, we've some great peaks along the way, uh, rather than an underlying sense of stress or, uh, or or lack.

Speaker 0 16:04 Hmm. I was reading about, you know, this, this age of distraction and I just found this one article and it said that what history shows is that perceptions of distraction are heightened by the difficulties that society has in giving meaning to the experience of everyday life. And that <inaudible> there's a real challenge to find a meaning in our own accomplishments. And it sounds like you figured out how to do that.

Speaker 1 16:34 Oh, okay. Because

Speaker 0 16:35 yeah, like you figure it every day, you feel like you're accomplishing things in your, you're getting that sense of accomplishment out of your day. And that's what I think so many people are lacking because they come home from work, they sit down, they've got more work in front of them, and they're like, Oh, I haven't got anything done today. What have I accomplished?

Speaker 1 16:55 Yeah, that's very true. And um, I think a key part of that is scheduling your priorities. So I have very clear priorities in life. I have five, five priorities and I call them my five apps. And the first one is fitness, which is mental and physical fitness. Second one is family. And so fitness comes before family because I can't take care of the family unless I'm fit and healthy. And then the third one is finances, which includes work. So once I've got my fitness, my ha, my mental and physical fitness, right, I've got my family in great shape. Then I move on to finances, which is I work stuff. Um, and then the third one is friends and fourth one is friends and fun. And the fifth one is foundation, which is kind of giving back. Now what I've found as I've gone through, um, through my life is that you, your schedule tells you what your real priorities are.

Speaker 1 17:52 So if you look at your schedule and you're saying, look, my family is really important to me, but I'm at the office until 10 o'clock every night, then your real priority is your work, not your family. And this is not any moral judgment. I have no issue with people working, you know, 20 hours a day. I think if that's what they're clear is their priority, then that's what they should be doing. That's perfectly okay. Um, but what you shouldn't be doing is fooling yourself, saying, my family is my number one priority and then spending all my time at work. So once you get clear on your priorities, um, then you can schedule that into your year and, and build it that way. So, you know, I've said my health and fitness, my mental and physical fitness is my number one priority. That means at the beginning of the year, you know, we're looking forward to 20, 20, um, that, that needs to be scheduled in throughout the year.

Speaker 1 18:44 And so I know exactly what I' --

-- m going to be doing every morning over the next, you know, the, the 365 days of 20, 20, and uh, that's already scheduled in. So if you are a client of mine and you asked me to, you know, be in the office or be at a meeting at eight o'clock in the morning, the answer is going to be no, because that's the time when I work on my physical and mental fitness. No. So after the fitness being scheduled in, and that includes a couple of conferences, I think as a coach, you always always need to be learning. I think if you, if you're not learning as a coach, then you're a fraud. So I have coaches in, in many different areas of my life and um, and I, I use them to help me continually progress. And so I schedule in time for those conferences and those learning events that I need to be going to as well.

Speaker 1 19:36 So that's my number one priority that gets scheduled in first. Um, family is my second priority. And then I schedule eight weeks with my family per year and people say, what, eight weeks holiday? That's crazy. I say, well, it may sound crazy, but that's the way I've chosen to set up my life. I don't want to be trapped in the a, in the entrepreneurial, um, the entrepreneurial trap. Um, so if I'm going to be free and I'm going to set my life up for freedom as an entrepreneur, then a, then I need to set that up myself. Nobody's going to do it for me. So those eight weeks of holiday split into a four week block in the summer, and then for other weeks throughout the year, we've got one coming up at Christmas. Um, is a, is that, that's the way I schedule my family. And then I get onto, um, finances, which includes work after that.

Speaker 1 20:29 And that's when I start booking in my client's appointments for the year. Um, so I, I think if you, if you're very clear on what your priorities are, then you can set up a life that you love, which is, you know, that's what I think we're here for. I think what I want to be, I want to be surrounded by people that are living lives that they love, that are alive every day and they're feeling joyful and they're feeling fulfilled and they had the sort of people that give me energy and other people I want to be having conversations with that the people I want to be, you know, living with and I want to be spending my time with. Um, so that's been a huge drive for me. Uh, and what I can say is that the journey is, it's an exciting journey to be on.

Speaker 1 21:13 Um, but it helps to have somebody guide you through that falling off the journey, falling off the plan. Oh yeah, of course. Um, you know, many times, and I always say it doesn't matter how many times you fall off the horse, the question is whether you're going to get back on again. And when you realize you've fallen off and sometimes you don't realize it, right? Things gradually slide a little bit and when you realize you've fallen off, then just get back on the spaghetti. She can and, and I don't beat myself up for that, you know, I'm not trying to be a perfect human being. I think perfection is, um, is another type of disease. Uh, what I do is I look at it with a sense of clarity and then say, okay, what's the right next step? Um, and usually, you know, the process I've put in place works very well.

Speaker 1 21:59 So you just jumped back into the process. Right. You talked about planning your year. Do you actually sit down with a calendar and plan your year? Yeah, I've got it in front of me at the moment. Um, so, uh, we're, we're wrapping up 20, 19. I've got 20, 20. I've got a, a calendar with 365. It's actually an Excel spreadsheet for me with 365 days on there. Uh, I've got my 5s down the left hand side. Um, and I plan in day by day, uh, over the year what I'm going to be doing. That's awesome. I don't know. I don't have clarity for the whole year at the beginning of the year, you know, different things come up as you actually go through the year. Um, and I don't try to pack everything in because, uh, you know, I want to leave some room for flexibility. I think, and I say this in the naked right book, the structure brings freedom.

Speaker 1 22:50 Um, a lot of people try to avoid structure because they think it's going to be restrictive. But actually if the structure is designed to give you the life that you love, then it's always going to be good structure. And, uh, and you know that, you know, I'll give you an example. So if I wake up at five 15 in the morning and I, and I go into --

-- do yoga, then I know that I love doing yoga. I know that after that hour of yoga and meditation that I'm just feeling like, you know, bright and alive and, and, and it just gives me a fantastic start to the day. Uh, no, the, the chemicals that I build up in my, in my brain and my body during those, you know, during that hour last with me for 16 hours. So if I love doing that, why wouldn't I start every day that way?

Speaker 1 23:39 And why wouldn't I structure that in so that I get that boost at the beginning of every day and, and I, and it's stuff I love to do. And then after a period of time, you know, if you get bored with something, then reassess it, but make sure that you're, you're putting the things into your structure, into your schedule that you absolutely love doing. You know, I'm, I made it a priority to have four weeks in the summer with my children because as the children were growing, I wanted to make sure that I had, you know, really good family time with them. And, uh, and so you, you put that in. If something I look forward to every year and uh, it, it's a sense of, it's a sense of joy. Mmm. So yeah, when you structure your day and against things that you love to do, then it can't be a bad structure.

Speaker 0 24:28 <inaudible> and I guess if you have that visual that's available to you all the time, you can see that you do have those opportunities to do something that may come up rather than thinking, Oh man, I'm just too busy. I can't even think about that right now. Right. Like, you know, yes, there's this, this space of opportunity where I could actually do that thing. That might be really interesting.

Speaker 1 24:50 Yeah. And there's, we need that and we need that in every day. So none of my days are packed sort of morning to evening. I always leave spare time in my day. Uh, there are, there are weeks like that during my year that I leave free, um, in case something fun comes up. And, um, I always say that if you have a list of priorities and then something comes up, it really helps you decide whether you want to do that thing or not. You don't have to spend a lot of time trying to figure out, is this something I want to do? Um, you just decide where it fits on, on that list and, and if it's higher priority than something you've got on there, and by higher priority, I don't mean that it's gonna make you more money or that it's another, you know, business engagement because it's a higher priority in terms of something that you want to do is, is giving you a sense of peaceful power and joy.

Speaker 1 25:47 Um, then it's probably something you want to slot into your schedule. And if that means something else drops off down the bottom, then that's fine with you with your to do list. And you know, people write to do list during, in the day. I always recommend prioritizing that. And if you end up spending the whole day on your number one priority and don't even do your number two thing on the list, that's a good use of your time because you've spent your whole day on your number one priority. Now at certain times, usually what happens is you start your day on the humble one priority. You reach a point where you can take what you've written, you, you've reached a natural kind of break point in the number one priority and you're having to wait for something else to happen. That's when you move on to your number two priority. But you know, why do we feel like we have to tick off seven things on our list when we haven't even got the top one or two priorities?

Speaker 0 26:44 And a lot of times you end up trying to tackle all the small things to get them out of the way before you sit down to tackle the big thing. And by then you've lost all your energy.

Speaker 1 26:53 Yeah. Because, uh, you know, decision making is a muscle as well. Our brain is a muscle and as you continue to make decisions, um, your muscle is getting tired. That's why we make terrible choices at the end of the day, you know, that's why people go out for beers at the end of the day or you know, eat that, you know, piece of cake before they go to bed is because the decision making muscle is worn out. And so towards the end of the day is the time that you need to really need to be watching out for your energy levels and don't put into many important decisions. Towards the end of the day.

Speaker 0 27:27 That's Kevin Snoop, he's a leadership advisor and author of the bestselling book, --

-- make it right, five steps to align your manufacturing business from the front line to the bottom line. Next week on the show, we'll continue our conversation to look at how inner flow works with the align process. Kevin has developed and proven working with manufacturing companies around the world. I hope you'll join us then for some more positive discussion on how not to be overwhelmed in this age of distraction. And it's thanks to Kevin that we're able to talk to manufacturing leaders and entrepreneurs and share their conversations on the makeup ride podcast as he's our sponsor. And I have a copy of Kevin's book for the first listener who gets in touch at make a bread podcast at <inaudible> dot com that's our show this week. Please check out our Twitter and LinkedIn feeds that are on our podcast page and subscribe and share the podcast with your friends and colleagues through iTunes, Google play, Stitcher, Spotify, and YouTube. Until next time on Kennedy's, thanks for listening to the McBride. Comcast.

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