

-- Speaker 0 00:04 Make it right. The manufacturing podcast

Speaker 1 00:10 19 makes it tour around the world. Some countries are slowly getting back to business. In February, China began ramping up its manufacturing, but in semi lockdown with focus on infection prevention because of the possibility of a second wave of coven 19 and the subsequent global recession. Those things are very real. Those are very real threats with the financial impact associated with the business shut down and now the heavy cost of preventing a relapse. The manufacturing industry has a lot to contend with. Welcome to the makeup right podcast. I'm Janet Eastman and believe it or not, this is show 100 and I'm marking this milestone with my colleague Kevin snuck, whose book make it right. Five steps to align your manufacturing business from the front line to the bottom line. Launch this podcast two years ago. Kevin, good to speak with you again.

Speaker 2 01:00 Lovely to talk with you, Janet.

Speaker 1 01:02 I can't believe that this is podcast 100 and this is actually been not happening for two years, but you know, congratulations to you.

Speaker 2 01:10 No, it's been a fantastic ride, hasn't it? And you're the one who's led <inaudible> Gaso, you know, all the congratulations, really go back to you. But, uh, this was something, you know, we both ramped up a couple of years ago and the idea was to get as much good information out to manufacturers as we possibly could. And, um, back in those, you know, back in two years ago, yeah, it was very few shows or very few education outlets that were really trying to help manufacturers learn from each other. And, uh, so that was really the goal when we set this up. And I think it's been fantastic. I've, no, uh, we started off with probably the first 12 or so of me talking. Um, and then, you know, a lot more since then have been a manufacturer's from outside. And, um, I've been learning all the way through here. If you think about back over those two years or we've been covering, we've, we've gotten frog safety, uh, the manufacturing floor. How did he tours on manufacturing? Um, all the way through to sort of sales at ma B2B for manufacturing. Mmm. Just wonderful content. And it's been a, it's been a really nice ride.

Speaker 1 02:19 Yeah. I've learned so much. It's, it's just astounding. So, um, yeah, I've enjoyed the process and I've met some really great people online and so, uh, let the party continue.

Speaker 2 02:31 Well, there's a lot of good people in manufacturing and I think sometimes manufacturers tend to focus internally a lot, you know, into their own business, into their own factories and uh, not always like graded promoting themselves or sharing information between different groups. But I've got to say the people we've reached out to, I know I've been kind enough to share information on the podcast. It's just been fantastic and some really, really good content.

Speaker 1 02:57 Yeah, they're really giving people, it's been, it's been really fun. Now, Kevin, you're a leadership advisor. You're a manufacturing consultant, you're based in Thailand. You do a lot of your work with manufacturers in China and in this time of coven 19, what is the situation like right now there?

Speaker 2 03:16 Yeah, well all over Asia, it's a, it's still a very fluid situation. Very difficult for a lot of people in China specifically. You know, obviously it hit first there and uh, and factories started closing down. Um, the first, the first step for them was just after the Chinese new year. Um, I was actually in China, I think last time I was there was towards the middle to end of January. And it was only just shortly after that the China's sort of closed its borders. Mmm. And, uh, and people are coming back from the Chinese new year where we're locking up shop for an extra couple of weeks to make sure that all the staff there could be quarantined before they were allowed back into the factories. And yeah, once they did get back in, which was one or two weeks after the end of the Chinese new year and things ramped up fairly quickly, but every, every company that I was working with there very stringent controls in place to make sure that people were being

Speaker 2 04:18 a quarantine and if they had been traveling up country, making sure that anybody going back into the factories was, you know, really safe and working closely with their coll --

-- eagles. One of the good things around a lot of manufacturing in China is they already have clean room facilities and stuff. Mmm. It's very well controlled. People going in and out of the production areas. People in many industries, you know, everything from electronics to cosmetics already were, um, four masks and outfits and things anyway, during their normal daily work. Um, so I think that's really helped them get, get over this, uh, initial stages of, uh, of the Corona virus and then move through into a normal operating procedures again.

Speaker 1 05:02 So at this point in time, a lot of them are ramping up again, but not back to full production, if that's correct in my understanding.

Speaker 2 05:11 Well, actually many are back to full production. Um, the issue is that the rest of the world is closing down. And so, Mmm. You know, even though a lot of the factories are already to be able to produce that as they were before, people around the world are concerned, you know, for their income. And so not buying as much as they were during, you know, before the <inaudible> the Cove in 19. And so, uh, although the factories, a lot of the factories are ready to go on full output, they just given the amount of orders.

Speaker 1 05:41 Ah, I see. Okay. So if we look at this whole situation, um, you dedicated your book to frontline workers around the world. <inaudible> when we look at this situation, what are the kind of difficulties those frontline workers are facing right now?

Speaker 2 05:57 Yeah, well, typically the frontline workers are the ones that have lower income. Um,

Speaker 2 06:01 and uh, and so it's hitting them harder than anybody else. You know, I think it's not only in the U S and the UK where a lot of people are, um, are living on very low levels of, uh, of credit or even in debit. Mmm. <inaudible> people just don't have that much disposable income. And, uh, and so they're the people that are really getting hit very hard as a, as factories. And this is not only the manufacturing sector course, it's in the service sectors and hotels, a hospitality industry, um, but frontline workers around the world I think are getting hit extremely hard. And places like Thailand where I'm living at the moment, the government is trying to, to help with handouts and um, and uh, protecting people, reducing the amount of tax they have to pay at the end of the tax year, et cetera. But, uh, you know, overall I've, I've been really pleased at the way people have risen to the challenge and have kind of understood that everybody is in the same boat.

Speaker 2 07:03 Um, I think there's, there's some sort of solidarity behind that. And this is not just one country or one particular industry, but it really is, is going across everybody. Mmm. But yeah, it's the frontline workers that I feel most for because they're there already at risk federal already in many cases, especially in Asia and living on the sort of, on the poverty line. Um, and so any, no disruption to their income is going to be a huge impact. So when you think about that, what are some of those key challenges that business owners are facing right now as they're trying to manage through this and bring people back to work? The stress must be amazing because they're trying to keep the company afloat trying to support all their workers. Maybe the business just isn't there yet. Yeah, well you and I are both business owners as well and you know, our own small businesses and as I go around the larger businesses, that level of stress just multiplies.

Speaker 2 07:56 You know, uh, I'm working with companies that have got thousands of employees and uh, and I know for a fact that the chairman or the CEO is going to bed every night worrying about how those thousands of employees are going to keep their job and keep that ring on and be able to pay their kid's school fees for the next year. So a lot of cases people see that business owners or the higher levels of management and they think you, you're okay, you've got an income coming in and you got some savings and you're going to be fairly well protected from a, from a financial point of view. In some cases that's true, but from an emotional point of view, when you are the one who is responsible for keeping the careers and keeping the income of thousands of people, that's a different type of stress. And, um, so what I'm seeing from a lot of business owners is it was a huge burden --

-- that they're carrying on their shoulders and, uh, Mmm, yes, it's different. I they can still eat and they still, you know, have, they pay the kids' school fees and things, but it's a different type of stress.

Speaker 1 09:01 So for those businesses that are getting back up and running, what do they need to be doing now to manage through the coming weeks and months?

Speaker 2 09:09 Well, I think we, for manufacturing <inaudible> specifically, um, they're going to be refilling the pipeline, the order line for their clients. The clients are gonna want to order from the people that have stayed in contact with them during this period and given them the confidence about what they're doing to be able to maintain a good reliable supply chain. And so one of the things that I would say during the crisis is that, um, as a manufacturer you need to be keeping very frequent, um, contact with your, with your clients. Um, now if your a a service to the manufacturing, like if you're a consultant to the manufacturers, what you want to be doing is looking at how can I, how can I change my model because I can't show up at the factory anymore and do my work? How can I change my model? So the more of my work is done online and that I can still do remote service in the way that I would have been doing know I had, I had it been work as usual.

Speaker 2 10:11 Um, so a lot more companies, uh, using zoom and Skype and other sort of, uh, media to be able to keep in regular contact. And during this sort of time, it really is that level of trust and competency you want to be building, you know, both ways. And so, you know, I've got clients in Korea and China, London, Malaysia, so you know, pretty much all, I am not allowed to travel out of Thailand to any of those at the moment. So what we've been doing is having zoom calls and having virtual meetings. I'm trying to keep as much of a regular contact point as we would have done during the normal times, but doing it by, uh, you know, via virtual needs

Speaker 1 10:51 <inaudible> so ultimately you're still continuing to deliver value to your clients. It's just that you're not face to face. And that's something I think that we can, we can learn from right now because I'm pretty sure, even though this is an unprecedented time, this is not going to be the first time and last time that this happens. Right?

Speaker 2 11:11 Yeah. I this, this is going to be good practice, uh, uh, things that, different types of interruptions for the supply chains in the future. Mmm. One of the things that I would say is as a service business like my business is to the manufacturers, you really need to change what you're talking about. Mmm. At the moment, people, uh, less likely to need training. Uh, they are need specific help on specific issues. Mmm. Know there was a, I was talking to another colleague of mine and he talked about this idea around, you know, when somebody is drowning they don't need swimming lessons. Mmm. And I think that's very true. What you need when you're drowning is you need a rope. Can you somewhat of throw you a rope, pull you out of the water and put a towel around you. You know, and that's very different then during the work as usual. And so I think you need to be very sensitive as a service business to say, as I'm working with my clients, what specifically do they need right now? What's going to be helpful? Them not over the next three years, but right now, what's going to get them back up and running and back onto a level playing field.

Speaker 1 12:24 Are you finding that your, your clients are reaching out to you with, um, with questions that they've never had before for you?

Speaker 2 12:32 Slightly. But what I would say is more is that the clients have kind of gone quiet and one of the reasons they've gone quiet is because they're so busy, they're so focused on just trying to figure this out. Mmm. And there's a risk to that as well from the client's point of view. Because if they, if they don't reach out for help, Ben, you try, you go back to old patterns of what works for you in the <inaudible>. Ah Mmm. What I'm doing is I'm doing the reaching out to them and saying, Hey, look, there's different things that we can be doing here. You know, we don't have to continue with the work that we were doing before COBIT hit. Let's put that part on hold for now. Let's look at it. How we can really guide you through this. Not, and not by slipping

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-- back to old patterns, but by using the best practices from around the world, which I'm sure <inaudible> able to keep in touch with and then next, learn from them as rapidly as possible to get you over this particular hub. So that's what I mean by being a different type of service. It really is like it is throwing that, um, I wrote to them and help him pull out. No, quite often a drowning person is not going to shout for a rope. Yeah. They're going to be flailing around in the water just trying to do the best they can and that's where we need to be on the bank. So we need to be looking for them. And then, you know, proactively throwing rocks.

Speaker 1 13:54 You mentioned in your, your book that leaders should be reaching out to their staff on a regular basis via video and whatnot to inform them about what's going on with the company, et cetera. Right now in this time of Cove at 19, are business owners reaching out to their staff with messaging via video saying, here's the situation. This is what's happening. This is where we're at. Are they doing that?

Speaker 2 14:22 Um, I'm seeing a little bit more of it. I think, uh, the situation is so dire that it's forcing, uh, CEOs and business owners to have that <inaudible> communication with the front line. Now, I don't think they're doing it necessarily as effectively as they could be doing. Um, you know, in the book. And, um, and with my clients I speak, I talk specifically about, it's so easy to record a video these days. You know, all you need to do is put your phone up in front of your face and do two minutes of, I just want to talk to line three. Mmm. You're, you, you guys, you came in, I saw you working 24 hours yesterday. Thank you for your support. You're doing a fantastic job and all stay safe and I wish the best for your families. You know, it takes 30 seconds to do that, but it means so much to the people that are doing it.

Speaker 2 15:12 You know, we saw her in the UK and is some of the other countries people standing on the streets uploading the healthcare workers now. Yeah, I I know from some people. Yeah. The skeptics were saying, you know, what good is that going to do, you know, this is um, you know, popping in the street is not actually going to help the situation. But my sister and my sister's husband work in the healthcare, a industry that both doctors and they really appreciate that kind of show of support. And so during this time over communicating, letting people know how much you value them, letting them know that you're aware of the stress that they are suffering and that you're there for them. I think that's incredibly important and it's always important during times of crisis to increase the amount of communication. So whatever I was saying during the normal times, I want CEOs and owners to be sharing more information, especially during crisis. I want them to be on right on top of their game.

Speaker 1 16:09 <inaudible> you develop the align process to improve manufacturing for the people in the industry. So where do you see the align process right now having the biggest impact?

Speaker 2 16:22 Well, this is it. It's all the way through it really, that idea of aiming from the heart, having a very clear direction for the business, uh, a in the align process is aim from the heart. And that means that the, the owners of the business need to have a super clear direction about where they're going and why they're going there. And I think that's a rallying cry for people at the moment because, um, you know, there's going to be, it's going to be some businesses that go under, it's going to be other businesses that are concerned about going under. If you can have a very clear vision and people in the company know why, where we're headed in that direction, then it's a good rallying cry and people can rally around that. Mmm. But this, that the L in the align processes lead with the frontline.

Speaker 2 17:09 You know, this is a lot of what we've been talking about. The frontline people are the ones who do the work every minute of the day. We need to ensure that we're there to help and support them over these types of obstacles. What's going to happen is that the companies that <inaudible>, uh, do extremely well standing by their front line employees are the ones who are going to get the loyalty ongoing. And that's, again, that's not only in manufacturing. I've seen in the hospitality industry, the, the ho --

-- tells finding ways to adapt. You know, we have one hotel in <inaudible> in Bangkok, Thailand that, uh, it is opened up their lobby and has done an open restaurant in the, or an open cafe in their lobby to do takeaway food for people and the staff being able to keep that job because there they managed to pivot and then now, you know, packing and preparing food for people who, uh, who don't have their own cooking facilities within their own houses. And so pivoting that way, allowing the staff to, to keep a sense of meaning and purpose. Mmm. Keeping them employed and keeping them paid loyalty is going to pay off over, you know, over many years. And so, and that the, the second body L lead with the front line I think is also very critical.

Speaker 1 18:28 So what are some key takeaways or thoughts on how people can manage through the next few months, Kevin, that you've seen? Like I know <inaudible> Mmm. You seem to think that your state is the way it's going to be until probably the end of June, early July. You're in Thailand, we're hearing the same sort of thing over here, maybe even farther into, into the year. So key takeaways or thoughts on how people can manage through these next few months?

Speaker 2 18:54 Yeah, well, a lot of people are talking about a new normal, and I never want anybody to feel normal anyway. I want to do something extraordinary. Um, so I don't want people to slip back into old practices. I don't want them to try to be normal again. I always think that in terms of crisis, rather than bouncing back, I want people to bounce forward. And so you use the momentum from the difficult times to be able to give you that step forward on the path. Um, so what I'm looking for for people is what, what can we really learn? What can we learn about the organization? What can we learn about the people? What can we learn about <inaudible> communication systems or support structures, et cetera. The give us, you know, a step up on the ladder when they're sold or sort of <inaudible> Mmm. We don't know whether it's going to be two months or six months or whatever.

Speaker 2 19:47 Mmm. But learning is critical. And, uh, there's, there's a lot of, uh, there's a lot of fear at the moment. There's a lot of negative media. Mmm. The more we can block that out from ourselves and look at, okay, the situation is as it is, this is a great place to start. What do we learn? How do we get the most from that? Who didn't you practice is not back to normal, but new practices that are really going to help elevate us. So, you know, over the next three to six months, that to me is the critical factor. And I know that it's, you know, this is not, uh, in any way demeaning that, that the challenge of this situation that we're in, but when you can pull people together and use those challenging times, really Mmm. To come up with creative solutions that take you forward, that's what entrepreneurial-ism is all about it.

Speaker 2 20:42 You know, I work with a lot of entrepreneurs, the smartest people on the planet, and they're only people that ever, I've taken really difficult situations and propelled them forward. Mmm. So I'm looking for the entrepreneurial creative spirit from, from our business leaders. Mmm. Just say, look, we're going to do things differently and this is how they're going to be best in the future. <inaudible> fear can really stagnate people and they can really turn. And the one thing that I've noticed about this time is when you can't be out and about doing all the things that okay in the past may have been distractions. We all have a lot of time ourselves right now where a lot of really good creative thinking could be happening and you can reimagine your life and your, your prospects. It's a very interesting time if you can block that fear <inaudible> and get to really thinking about else is a possibility.

Speaker 2 21:40 Right? Yeah, I think so. And for me it's been a, um, you know, an ongoing process of a <inaudible> many years now where I've spent a lot of time in meditation and time on my own. And that's what gives me creative thinking. I love that time. And so self isolation to me is not, it's not a huge issue. Um, now when, when people who have normally been very busy and very distracted and Ben suddenly you get thrown into self isolation, that thinking time can turn negative very quickly. There can be the doubts and fears come in. What I'd like to encourage people to do is jus --

-- t take a breath. Uh, in many, many cases, this is not as bad as you think it might be. And the media is creating a huge amount of fear. No good decisions are ever made out of a fear state.

Speaker 2 22:36 We have to be able to take a breath and look at some reality. You know, one of the things that I like to do is look at the trees outside. Yeah. Those trees, if you look at an old tree, it's been standing there for a hundred years. It's seeing everything come and go and it just continues to grow. It just lets it go by. It takes the wins, it takes the reigns, it takes the, the sunny seasons and the snow and it just continues to grow. And, um, if we can look at this current situation like that and say, yep, this is the situation right now, I understand it for the reality that it is and I also know that it will pass, then we can allow ourselves to calm down a little bit. You've seen that calm and more loving state. Did we actually make much better decisions? So I know that it can be a, it can be a challenge for people that have been very distracted and very busy. Mmm. But, uh, the, the way to do that is to kind of breathe into it and then allow yourself to, to really, yeah, really chill out a little bit and then see what comes up as a positive step forward. <inaudible> I love the tree image. That is a great way to end this conversation.

Kevin, thank you so much for taking the time to

Speaker 1 23:45 chat to me and uh, good luck over there in Thailand.

Speaker 2 23:49 Thank you John. And once again, I just want to say that I really appreciated your help and support over the last couple of years. These a hundred episodes that we've done have been fantastic and you know, long may I continue.

Speaker 1 24:02 I have thoroughly enjoyed it and thanks to you Kevin, it's here. So, um, enjoy your week and uh, thanks very much for being on the show again.

Speaker 2 24:11 Thank you.

Speaker 1 24:12 Kevin sneak is a leadership advisor and author of the bestselling book, make it right, five steps to online your bed and the factoring business from the front line to the bottom line. And it is thanks to Kevin that we're able to talk to manufacturing leaders in entrepreneur on make it right as he is ours boxer. That's our show this week. Please check out our Twitter and LinkedIn teams that are on our podcast page. Subscribe and share the podcast with your friends and colleagues to iTunes, Google play, Stitcher, Spotify, and YouTube. And remember in this time of troubles kind to each other. Until next time on Janet Cheesman. Thanks for listening. To make a right.

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