

S4E21-David Veech

SPEAKERS

David Veech, Peter Margaritis

Peter Margaritis

Hey, welcome back everybody. I have a repeat guest, and my guest today is Mr. David Veech. What do you go by my friend?

David Veech

Mr. Actually I just go by David. So.

Peter Margaritis

David. Okay, we'll just call you, David. You are a doctor, correct?

David Veech

I am not. No, no, I've worked on PhD for a little while, and I had some advice from one very successful consultant who was not a PhD and one very successful consultant who was. And they both said, 'Well, it's about 50/50.' And I was like well I'm working awfully hard for this for 50/50, so I think I'll just suspend that for now.

Peter Margaritis

I guess I was going down the Doctor path because I know that you are on faculty at my alma mater, University of Kentucky. And I know that you're doing work at The Ohio State University. You've got to say it properly when you're in Columbus or you'll get shot. So, I just made that assumption, but it's been a lot of time around universities then.

David Veech

I do. I love to teach. That's kind of the main thing. I spent 20 years in the Army trying to figure out what I want to do when I grew up. And what I found was that I'm pretty good at teaching, and I really enjoyed teaching. And so when I retired, the university hired me. And I was a lecturer there, and taught there for about five years. Then the academic environment was about all I could take. We went out, we started a consulting firm and did that for about seven years. And then we were going this way, and I wanted to go this way. And I found a reason to go someplace else, and I got this wonderful offer from The Ohio State University after I'd had a relationship with them for a long time. So, they brought me on as a senior lecturer in the College of Business, and that was pretty cool. And now I'm a lecturer in the College of Engineering, so.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah, that tells you something, you are with the engineering department which fascinates me. So, I noticed a little bit off track, I wasn't really planning on going there but come to what you're doing with the Engineering Department at Ohio State.

David Veech

Well, a couple of years ago, the College of Engineering, contacted the Director of the MBOE program. The MBOE is the Master of Business Operational Excellence program. And they were putting together a new master's program that they were calling a Master's in Engineering Management. An MEM program, and they needed some operational excellence content. They wanted a class on operational excellence. And so they asked Peter Ward, who was the director at the time, if somebody could do that. And he asked me if I wanted to do that, and it sounds like a lot of fun, like right up my alley. And so, I agreed to do it. And then we have all these delays, like COVID. But even before COVID, there were several delays that kept pushing this back further and further and further until finally I'm finished with my time in the business school and I'm like, I don't have any employee status at the University for almost a year. And then all of a sudden I get the College of Engineering comes back to life and says hey we want this program to run in the spring, or in the fall. So, can you get it designed, and I was like, 'Yeah.' And then the executive, Ed, calls and says, you know, we changed all the rules and the faculty can't spend as much time doing Executive Ed anymore, so we need somebody to run this program for minority business enterprises. Can you, can you do that? So, I've got some Executive Ed work going on. I'm designing the course with the instructional designers now that's going to go live in the fall. It's a great experience I'm learning a ton with that. So yeah, I'm trying to keep things, I like having the association with the University, but I'm glad I'm not full time. When I was full time, there it was okay, but then I can take that for only so long, like I said about five years. My limit.

Peter Margaritis

About five years, yeah. I was on faculty at the Ohio Dominican University, some years ago. And my uncle at the time, he'd been president of Iowa State, Murray State, Clemson, and he was president of the Association for President of University. And I asked him, 'What do I need to know?' He goes, 'Pete, this is it. There's a different business in academia. In business, you see the guy or gal with the knife coming at you. In academia, you don't see them. You just feel the knife going in, twisting around, and when you turn around everyone is sitting there smiling, innocently. Yeah, yeah, that's so, I, I did contact them a few years after them I said thank you for that advice. You were dead on. That's probably not the right word to use, but he was on point. So, I had you on before, talked a lot about leadership, a lot about team building and those attributes and the pillars and talking about your book, Leadersights, and we finished and you said, 'You know what, and I come back again and talk about building satisfaction at work?' And I went, 'Well, that's not going to sell.'

David Veech

Sarcastically, of course.

Peter Margaritis

I mean, you know, we were talking beforehand, you know, whether you're making 20 bucks an hour or \$250,000 a year. Money doesn't satisfy. How do you get, how do you build satisfaction at work, and especially how does the leader help build satisfaction with their team at work?

David Veech

Yes.

Peter Margaritis

So, help me with the concept, my friend.

David Veech

Well, this is really an integral part of tying your organizational philosophy together, right? So, we talked about that foundation piece of dynamic stability last time. How we're trying to build an organization that is stable enough to learn, and develop and produce good quality thing, and develop their people properl, and get a great reputation, while at the same time being dynamic enough and flexible enough to change as customer needs change. Those were the foundation pieces. The next part really focuses internally on getting the most out of the employee. So, we've had these discussions about why do you want to satisfy the employee on the job, and most people will say oh well because they work harder or they're more productive or they get more out, and of course none of that is true. So, then the question is, if none of that is true, why does it matter? And for a long time, it hasn't mattered. Okay, it hasn't mattered to businesses, because if it doesn't matter, I'm not going to worry about satisfaction. I'm going to worry about productivity and what's going to work, right? And it started with Henry Ford. So, Henry Ford in 1908, he made 10,806 Model-Ts in workshops with a bunch of guys who built the entire car together as a team. They finished it. They'd roll it out of the workshop. They'd start building the next one., They got to see every bit of that car built from the ground up. High skill. High satisfaction. And these guys were pretty quick. But to get the volume Ford needed, he had to reconfigure everything into the assembly line. And when you put the assembly line together. Now instead of building the whole car, you get to build one piece, right? You hang wheels all day or you put window cranks on or headlights, and that's all you do all day long as the work comes in. And he ran into problems because he used his existing workforce to man the line. And you got people going from the satisfaction and skill and value of being able to create the whole car to the guy who stands there all day and hangs one part. And so they started leaving in droves. And there are 253 automakers around at the time so there were other places to go to work. So, Ford decided that the way to stem the exodus was to offer more money to people. And he was very innovative and he offered a \$5 a day wage, when the going rate was 11 bucks a week. With those 253 automakers he puts a full page ad in the Detroit Free Press and says hey I'm hiring. Naturally, he's going to get a mountain of applications. And when you get a mountain of applications for a few jobs, what do you get to do, Peter?

Peter Margaritis

Go through all that fun paperwork?

David Veech

And you get to pick the very best, right? So, you pick the very best, the most talented, the most highly skilled guys. The guys who can all build the whole daggone car by themselves, and what do you do with them. You hire them to do this job. Just one thing. The next thing I do yeah I'm paying all these guys but now they're making mistakes and everything because they're daydreaming and off wandering. So, he invents this management system that starts with the foreman and he gives the foreman, a

valuable leadership tool that looks like a leather strap that's about 18 inches long. And the job of the foreman is to go up and down the line behind everybody working and making sure that they're paying attention. If they're not, whap across the back of their head or across the back. Get your attention. Get your books back on work again, and off you go. So, you can imagine how long that lasted.

Peter Margaritis

Right.

David Veech

Right. Fortunately, we're still not doing that, but we're still creating these mind numbing jobs. And it doesn't matter, I mean Amazon is the perfect example. Thank God, Jeff Bezos raised the rate for everybody at Amazon to 15 bucks an hour as the minimum, right, and that's great. So, what's going on in Alabama. I mean, those guys are getting \$15 an hour, which is a great wage for Alabama. They're getting full benefits. They're getting lots of hours to work. They're doing great. What the heck is going on? Why do they need to organize into the Union? That's the big question. And so, we got to look at the work, and we got to look at the leadership. And I do not have first hand experience working for Amazon. My son did get one of those Christmas jobs a few years back, and he kind of validated some of the things that I'd read and about learn about. And of course, in Amazon fulfillment center the whole, the whole job is, you get truckloads of stuff in from all the manufacturers and you got to pull it off the truck, you got to put it on the shelves. And you got to be able to scan the product, and scan the location where you're putting it on the shelf so the computer knows exactly where everything is. Then we get orders from consumers, and you got a team of people who has to pick those orders and stuff those boxes and take the box out put a label on it and off you go. And they have very high standards for speed. You have to be able to pick, I don't know 120 items, an hour or something like that. And it's very demanding. And the leadership has learned that they've just got to hound the hell out of people to keep them on that pace because their livelihood and their peace of mind will be affected if your rates are low, they get chewed out by their bosses and they've got this kind of carrot and stick culture that they have created in all these fulfillment centers. And so, it doesn't matter that you're paying them well. It doesn't matter that you've got good benefits. If you're treating them like crap because you don't think they're moving fast enough, and they feel like they're moving as fast as physically possible. You're going to have some problems. So, how do we balance that out, how do we balance the need for speed because, let's face it, we consumers have created a need for speed. I want my six bottles of champagne in two hours, not two days, right?

Peter Margaritis

Right.

David Veech

So, we've kinda got a built this expectation that we get it now and Amazon has darted off. Been very successful in delivering that and satisfying that need, but it's it's almost like they're totally disregarding any need for meaningful satisfying work on the job.

Peter Margaritis

Sounds like, it sounds like Ford all over again, but nowadays world.

David Veech

It is. And we all know Amazon's not the only one that operates at that level. But there are others, there, there are others who create these fantastic work environments. And one of them was Zappos, and Zappos shoes now, Amazon has swallowed them up. But before Amazon swallowed them up, I visited one of their fulfillment centers. And let's face it, the work is the same.

Peter Margaritis

Right. Right.

David Veech

Getting the shoes off a truck, putting them on a rack, pulling them off the rack, put them in a box. It's the same kind of work, but the atmosphere that they created was just completely different. I mean they called their employees superheroes. They gave them time to take breaks. They offered free snacks and things at break time. They offer free lunch. They have a great benefits package including Childcare and Education. All of that stuff, Tony Shea was paying for, and they were loving it. I mean, well visited the facility that had a facility in Shepherdsville Kentucky we went on tour there. And, I mean the energy in the place was just vibrant. You could feel it. It was tactile, right? And the last visit I made there was right after they had announced that Amazon was going to take over the fulfillment center. And everybody was just dreading that because they knew that the snacks were going to go away. The free lunches were going to go away. The education piece, maybe not so much but they were going to be much stricter about the time it takes to fill that job. But Peter, you've been to lots and lots of places too, you know, that we have crappy jobs everywhere. I mean just all over the place.

Peter Margaritis

They're jobs, and they help, but there's this like you said, mind numbing.

David Veech

Yeah, and some jobs are more mind numbing than others, but leaders just kind of go into these places and they, well you know, the job is the job. It's the work that you got to do and that's what you got to do. And that's just a cop out. I mean leaders need to understand that they can actually redesign the work. So, if you're going to redesign the work and if they do take that responsibility, which I hope do, then you kind of got to know how to change the job to make it satisfying. So, what does in fact satisfy, employees? And in all the studies on job satisfaction, they kind of roll down to three big things. One is meaningfulness. So, people want to do meaningful work, Two is awareness. The more aware they are of what's going on in the organization, the more satisfied people are. Even if it's bad news, if they know what's going on, they report higher levels of satisfaction. And then the third is a feeling of responsibility. So, we've taken those and we've known these for almost 80 years. So, we and we've taught this stuff, but it's in the interpretation that really gets it. So, I like to focus on meaningfulness first because that's pretty key and there are three key elements to meaningful work. One is the work has to feel like it's significant to the people doing the work. So, how do we design work, so that people know that what they're doing is important. Okay, and the answer is you tie them directly to the customer. So, even if I'm working on a small piece, I make sure they know exactly where that small piece fits into the overall

product that we're delivering to the customer, and I share that feedback from the customer so there's a direct connection. I bring customers in for tours the facility. I bring customers in to meet with the people in the call center. I bring customers in to have focus groups with my employees. I connect them to the customer so they can really feel like I'm not just doing this mind numbing work to line the pockets of some invisible owner. I'm actually impacted someone's life. And that's the way we want to feel. So, significance is a big deal. I also talk about the need for being an expert in your job. If we convey to people that this is not the kind of job that I can just pull anybody off the street, give you five minutes of orientation and turn you loose. This is a job that requires some knowledge and skill, and I'm willing to invest the time in you to build that skill, and build that knowledge so you will be a more vital team player for us. And what that ends up with is experts find better ways to do things much more so than somebody who's they're making minimum wage just to get the nickel. And so, if we can build that piece into the design of the work, that's that's pretty important.

Peter Margaritis

I have a question. As soon as it pops into my head this expert idea making someone feel like an expert, is that the foundation, or I've seen a lot instead of, you will get a badge, you get the badges, is that that aspect of having someone feel like that expert getting these badges in certain things as it relates to the job or some type of performance?

David Veech

It is related. The badges and everything and the certificates and the letters behind your name and all that stuff. Those are all extrinsic kind of motivators that some people hold great value with. And others, meh, not so much. So, if you're the type of person that gets motivated to achieve that next level, it's great to have that series of steps, and a reward that goes along with each one of those steps. That's a great way to train and develop people. A lot of people don't give two hoots about the badge, but they want to really understand what's going on. And so, you teach them how to do that and in my operational excellence world we've got a great tool that helps people become experts in the shortest possible time. And it comes from World War II, and World War II when all the boys were going off to fight the war, and all the women were going into the factories to make all the stuff that the guys overseas needed. There were people who've never worked in a plant before needed to get up to speed to do perfect quality work very quickly. And so, the Defense Production Board, the Department of War and the Defense Production Board created this training within industry program. That is the most practical manifestation of educational psychology that I've ever seen in my life. Because it's watch me do it, and I'm gonna walk you through it. I'm going to step by step show you how I do it, and then I'm going to do it again. And then I'm gonna let you do it at full speed, then you're going to walk me through it, and then you're going to do it again, and then we're going to bring somebody else in that you can teach. And you teach them how to do it you. They watch you and so this, there's like 12 repetitions of work that has to be done in this, this repeating cycle. And when you're done people like. 'Hey, I got this. I can figure this out.' But they're also tuned into finding ways to make it better. Now this is the way we want to do it, and I don't want everybody just to do it anyway old way they want to, but if you've got an idea about how to make it better. You've got to share that with us so we've got to test it, and if it is in fact a better idea then we'll teach everybody how to do it the new way.

Peter Margaritis

Okay.

David Veech

Those ideas only come from satisfied workers.

Peter Margaritis

Right.

David Veech

If somebody is dissatisfied, pissed off at your work, they're not going to tell you how to make it better, they're just gonna find ways to screw it up.

Peter Margaritis

Right.

David Veech

So, that's the real importance of focusing on satisfaction at work. So, meaningfulness starts with significance that comes with expertise and a connection to the customer. There's also variety. Peter, you don't get to do the same thing two days in a row? Do you?

Peter Margaritis

Oh, I would explode.

David Veech

Exactly. So, everybody is kind of like that. We need a little variety at work. So, instead of having to go in and just stuff boxes for eight hours a day, there's why don't you stuff boxes for a couple hours, and then put boxes away for a couple hours, and then go work on a problem someplace for a couple of hours, and then maybe come back and stuff some more boxes for an hour, a couple of hours. If we can get into this rotating scheme where people get to use different parts of their brain and different parts of their body to do different types of work, that has led to great... a much higher reports of satisfaction. So, meaningfulness comes from significance, variety, and then the third piece for meaningfulness is a strong sense of identity. And we get identity from a lot of places. Individually, it's our name and who we decide we are. You know, am I just a box packer at Amazon, or am I a vital superhero contributing to this success of the company. I'm doing the same work, but just, it just sound so different, so much better. So, we get identity from the brand, and a good strong brand leads to some levels of satisfaction, like if you're, if you work at Harley Davidson. You got this. There's this cool factor to who you are, and Rolls Royce those kinds of things. So, the company name is a good strong brand, but it's the environment that we create in teams, and making people feel like they belong to something that's really pretty critical to the success of the company. That's bigger than themselves. That is a huge factor and contributing to meaningfulness as well.

Peter Margaritis

When you say, you know, identity to a brand, my mind just went immediately to one of my favorite companies here in Columbus Ohio, who I've gotten to know very well over 15 years. Donuts? No, White

Castle. It's amazing to me the culture of what they have created within that organization, and the ability to be open to Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle. Yeah, I mean, that is, no one of my favorite companies out there that that meet this criteria that you're laying out. But I had to share that so.

David Veech

Excellent, thank you. Thank you. Let's see, where was I? It was meaningfulness, and then, so I said the three big pieces again meaningfulness, awareness and responsibility. To get meaningfulness, we get to design work for significance, variety and identity. The next piece is awareness. People need to be aware of two key things. That's it. Just two key things. They need to know what you expect of them, and they need to know whether they're meeting your expectations. So, it's... what's the standard, and then what's the status? So, what are the expectations, and give me some feedback. So, people thrive on that. So, one of the solutions I've found is very effective is, is you put information boards all over the place. And a lot of people like to run these electronic information boards to just have kind of scores of productivity, and how many boxes we stuff. How many cars we've made. How many insurance policies we've issued. Whatever it is. And so, they've got these kind of scoreboards but I'm more of a, an old school kind of guy I want to see a physical board in the workplace that people can huddle around in the morning. So, at the beginning of the day, you get in there and you huddle around this team information board. And one of the team members is responsible for being the team leader for that week, right? And they take everybody through this standard agenda on covering people, quality, service, safety, delivery, productivity, cost, whatever metrics you have on the board. You kind of do a quick review of what you did yesterday, and what's the goal for the day. What's our target for today. What kind of expected problems are today, and then it's ready break and go to work.

Peter Margaritis

Okay.

David Veech

Now, what you do with that is, not only you, making them more aware of what's going on, but you're really strengthening that team structure and the relationships in that team, and you're really working on the identity piece that goes in the meaningfulness bucket.

Peter Margaritis

Okay.

David Veech

So, critical thing, make you put a board up. Have teams huddle every morning. What are the goals? What are the problems? Let's get going. And don't forget to celebrate.

Peter Margaritis

So, you see this as a daily thing, not a Monday morning thing. Okay, it's Monday morning. We're gonna have our huddle. We'll talk about doing week. Break. I'll see you next Monday.

David Veech

Yeah, yeah, too many leaders are like, 'Oh well, I don't really have anything to cover.' Like what, do you work every day? If you work every day, you got something to cover. You just got to figure out what's going to be meaningful to the people doing the work. And so many of our corporate KPIs or corporate metrics.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah.

David Veech

Are all like pie in the sky stuff. If I'm down in the trenches, I don't care what the EBITDA is. I don't need to see that.

Peter Margaritis

Right, right.

David Veech

I'm supposed to make 14 new policies today. And it's noon, have been here half a day. I got six done already, so maybe I can help somebody out this afternoon. And we want them to know it's got to be really meaningful to them, and the only way to really figure out what's meaningful to them is to ask them. It doesn't matter what you want to measure, leader. What matters, I mean, you're trying to drive behavior so you got to have them come up with what you're measuring, and then it's your job to kind of tie it back through to get to those corporate measures. And if you've done a good job with your strategic planning and your, your cascading of your goals that, and if you're not very good at this then give me a call. That's what I had to do. I'll be happy to help, and we'll build this right in your work structure.

Peter Margaritis

Isn't there another word for that, servant leadership? That it's not about me as a leader is about me as the leader helping you.

David Veech

Exactly, yeah. Servant leadership is like the core of my, my Leadersights integral leadership model. And that's where we get this whole decision, the key decision you have to make if you're going to be a servant leader is, is you got to decide to love the people you're working with.

Peter Margaritis

Right.

David Veech

And that just means I'm going to make a deliberate decision to put your needs above mine.

Peter Margaritis

Isn't that what a leader supposed to do?

David Veech

It is. It is.

Peter Margaritis

Why is it so important to them?

David Veech

But we don't teach them that very consistently, especially when the only leadership development they get in the workplace is watching the way their boss behaves.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah, right.

David Veech

This is particularly bad in the government, because I would say that easily 90% of the leaders in government agencies across the board, have never had any formal leadership training. They've gotten the job because they needed to get a pay raise. They needed to get promoted, and the only way they could do that is to put them in a supervisor role, and they somehow survived by watching the way that their managers lead, and they did the same things. And so, they repeated those bad behaviors that they get results, and results are the only things that seem to matter if you get promoted or not. And even though we've been talking about this, and I mean there are literally 1000s of leadership development programs available within the government, but they don't make them available. I mean not everybody gets a chance to go. And so, we got some opportunities.

Peter Margaritis

You just described the part of the accounting profession by the way. It's almost like we're going to promote you to your level of incompetence. That you're technically sound, but you're not in the role of being technically sound. You're in the role of managing people. And there's no skill sets that have been taught to them to do that. So yeah. Well, we see, we see it in a lot of places, and I try very hard to rectify that. I've built leadership learning programs that are very people friendly that have had entire organizations go through to get everybody on the same sheet of music, and they come out, then it changes the culture change the culture when everybody gets the same stuff. It's incredible. So, the potential is endless. But that brings us to the last point. And that is responsibility. Peter, in accounting. How do we typically give somebody more responsibility? Promote them. Give them more work. Take on new clients.

David Veech

Yeah, and it usually means I'm gonna have to do more work. And so, the response is typically, I don't really want that.

Peter Margaritis

Right.

David Veech

It's I don't want more responsibility if it's going to mean just more work, or if I get to deal with all those crazy people. Right. I don't want to deal with people I just want to do my thing. But focused studies have found that if we increase the feeling of responsibility, without increasing the burden disproportionately, people report higher levels of satisfaction. And it's all back to the design of the work. If you are responsible for doing quality work, and you're held accountable to that, people respond positively to being held accountable to something that they know is going to be important. If you hold them accountable and stuff that's not important, maybe that's not doing the trick. But what we've got to be able to do as leaders and to increase these feelings of responsibility is one tie it to the customer again. Just like we did with significant piece. But let's bring them in when there's a problem. Let's bring them in to help solve it. Now, another problem that I see is leaders are expected by someone to be the problem solvers. And so, if you have a problem of work, you tell your boss, and your boss says, 'Okay, Peter. Do this.' Problem solved, right? Even though you know, you know, I tried that and it didn't work. That's not gonna work this time around. Am I gonna tell that to my boss? Am I gonna say you're wrong, boss? Not typically because, you know, he's got the leather strap or so we're afraid to tell our leaders that that solution is not going to work. And the leaders are afraid to pull people in to help them solve the problem because they don't want to look like they don't have the answer. So, these are not real simple little black and white issues, but they're all kind of interrelated pieces in this complex system that an organization is. But if we start teaching all of our leaders that this is the expectation, and the only way to develop people is really to bring them in solving problems and if people know that they're going to be brought in to help solve problems and people are listened to and they feel like you're listening to them, then they're going to give you more ideas. And they're going to report more problems and they're gonna report more ideas. But the idea of reporting problems terrifies a lot of people. But I want to be able to see every problem that people are having at work so we can find the resource and solve it. I might not be able to solve it like that, but I need people to tell me what it is because I just can't see it. I'm not out there enough, I don't know what they're going through. I have to have a channel for them to tell me where the problems are. And so if I'm the kind of leader that says they don't bring me problems, bring me solutions, then you're the problem. So, we got to encourage people to bring the problems, and then we got to create time to allow people to solve those problems.

Peter Margaritis

You said something there that got me, yes, bring me. Bring me your problems, and a solution. Don't, don't think just because I'm the leader. Don't tell me the problem and have me solve it. I got my butt chewed out big time once by doing that by my boss of Victoria's Secret. I had a huge error. I had a huge problem. I came in. I told her about it. I was expecting her to go all Tasmanian devil on me. She didn't. Which freaked me out and then she said, 'What's your solution?' And man, she went a Tasmanian devil on me. But she said the one thing to me that has stuck to me for years. Pete, I expect that you're going to make mistakes because you're a human being. I'm a human being. Someone called me a human being, not a robot. However, I expect you to come in here with a solution to that problem. That one screw up of mine, and that conversation I had with Roxanne A. that day changed my mindset. And now when I work with leaders I tell them, have them bring your problems, but come in with the solution. It's not gonna be right, but it starts to conversation.

David Veech

Well, I want you to I want to take it to another level, Peter. I want to hear the problem before you've had a chance to figure out what to do about. Now, in a lot of cases you make a mistake, there's going to be an immediate action that you can take that I expect you to take. So, when you tell me about the problem, I want to hear, well what do you do about it right away. Okay, so I did this. That's your short term counter measure. Then I want to have a discussion with you like what do you think caused this problem. Oh well, I just made a mistake. Well no, maybe not. But what caused you to make that mistake? Is there some procedural step that isn't clear or that we've skipped over? Or is there some physical barrier to the continuing success of this? So, if we're going to develop the brain capacity of our people, we've got to cultivate this ability to critically think through what happened, when it happened, where it happened, who it happened to, and how bad it was, and then why it happened. And then when we get to the solution part, I want to hear what you did about the short term but then I want you to come up with five different ways to solve the problem. And if you can come up with five different ways, sometimes that's going to make you think a little bit differently, maybe a little bit sideways. And you might come up with something that none of us have ever thought about before. But we've got to be able to ask the questions. If I don't have a relationship that allows you to come to me with a problem that you haven't figured out yet, then we'll never, we'll start just hiding those problems like we've done very well for years. You remember the Lucy video with the chocolate?

Peter Margaritis

Oh yeah, the chocolate. Love that one.

David Veech

She put chocolates down her blouse, in her hat, everywhere else, except, showing the boss what was going on.

Peter Margaritis

Right.

David Veech

And then of course the boss has bad information, and then makes a bad decision. Speed it up a little! That's the last thing they needed.

Peter Margaritis

Right, right. What ultimately Roxanne did is have me go and think about what happened. Gave me like an hour. She goes I want you to come back with, figure out what happened, and come back with a potential solution, and then we'll have a discussion from it.

David Veech

She sounds like an excellent boss.

Peter Margaritis

By far. I think she's way before her time in that concept because I've never had anybody else tell me that I'm human. Y

David Veech

Yeah.

Peter Margaritis

It's just, it's it's bizarre, because we all are, but we forget that.

David Veech

The one thing that we can consistently do is make mistakes.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah.

David Veech

So, one of the things we've got to focus on in the design of work is, is there a way to design the work to minimize the possibility of a mistake without having to turn somebody into a robot? If you can design work that doesn't require any thinking at all, then I don't want people doing it, I want a robot to do it. I want to put a piece of equipment in there to do it and they can... I can abuse the hell out of a robot, and I can call them names. I can talk about their families. I can really dog them out. It doesn't matter to the robot. I can't do that to people. I got to get people involved in this discussion.

Peter Margaritis

Absolutely. I mean this this has been, this has been a great conversation. You know, everything always sounds so easy, but this is very hard to do.

David Veech

It is.

Peter Margaritis

Consistently. And I guess the tone always starts at the top.

David Veech

It does.

Peter Margaritis

It does. And to get that buy in from this is the way that I've learned it because I've witnessed it. This is how I got to...to a completely different thought process and how leadership should be done.

David Veech

Yeah.

Peter Margaritis

And then you've got the...you might agree with me in this, might not, but there's a lot of ego up in that office.

David Veech

Huge.

Peter Margaritis

And are they willing to take that ego and go okay, well actually, what are the sides and actually listen to what you're trying to do?

David Veech

And you're back to the servant leader mentality there.

Peter Margaritis

Bingo.

David Veech

Even if I do have the answer, I still am obligated to help you find the answer for yourself. Because my answer, my answer could be wrong. Just because it worked for me 14 years ago, doesn't mean it's going to work today.

Peter Margaritis

Right. Yeah, because this, this landscape, this business and leadership has transformed itself dramatically from the 80s, 90s, 2000s into what it is today. And, but there's still pockets of that old leadership style. Those millennials, they don't like to work. They come and they leave. Well, they come and they leave because you're running an organization that looks like 1980. And that's not the way they work, and by the way, I say, how many of you have millennial children? Then you're the problem because that's how we raised them, and I'm guilty as anybody with it.

David Veech

They want to know why they're doing something. right?

Peter Margaritis

Right, right.

David Veech

And they are not afraid to point out when you're having to do something stupid. And we need to listen. Okay, maybe that is stupid. Why are we doing it that way?

Peter Margaritis

Right.

David Veech

Let's find a better way to do it.

Peter Margaritis

One last story, I thought of. There's a, it's in Minnesota, up there was one group of CPAs. At the break, this manager, this guy came up. He said, I'm a manager in an accounting firm. And I'm going to share this story with you. One of the partners came to my office and dropped something on my desk and said, 'This is how I want you to do it.' As a partner returned, the manager said, you know, I think I got a better way of doing this. And the partner stopped, looked and said, 'Okay. Humor me.' He was right. He didn't have a better way. But then he took it in as the partner was walking this is by the way, I would run this from completely different to the way you guys are running it. The partner stopped and thought about it for a moment, said, 'Tell me how you would run it.' When I said you get 10 partners killing themselves. I'd find five more partners. Spread the work out. You always talk about work life balance and you're killing yourself. Yes, you're gonna take a little bit less home, but you could have more free time and then on a few other things. He took the partner took that back to the partnership, and ultimately over a year later they began to redesign that firm, from what does this guy would describe it. And I said, 'Oh my god, that is, that is amazing, that that listened and applied.'

David Veech

It's amazing that he had the courage to pull it out.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah,

David Veech

What gives somebody that courage and confidence? We can talk about that next time.

Peter Margaritis

Okay, courage and confidence in the next episode of Leadersights by David Veech.

David Veech

I can tell you, these guys. You said it was difficult, and it really is difficult, and leaders are under a lot of pressure to perform and things like that. So, you really gotta find a coach, you got to find somebody you can trust that you can bounce these ideas off of. Somebody who can come in and who can watch you do your thing and then sit down with you and say well, I saw you do this, I saw you this, can you explain those things. And why are you doing it, what do you expect to get out of that? So, get a coach, get a coach.

Peter Margaritis

Absolutely. We all we all have coaches, and a lot of people don't. They should hire a coach because another set of eyes, outside the organization can do a lot of good in developing one's career.

David Veech

I'll leave my number my email address.

Peter Margaritis

David, I can't thank you enough. It's a pleasure to have this conversation with you. Very interesting. And it was a blast. I love what I do with this stuff because I get to talk to people like you, and you get to

stretch, you know, like a couch. You get to stretch different directions, make me think differently, then me just sit in my basement working until I get to go out and interact with everybody. So, thank you so very much and I hope to see you soon in person.

David Veech

Oh yes. Oh yes. In person, and we can sip some of that Kentucky brown water that we both so much enjoy. I'm in my friend. Thanks for having me on.

Peter Margaritis

I want to thank David for his time and his stories about how organizations can help employees find satisfaction in their work. When we find satisfaction in our work, the organization grows to newer heights. And I will conclude with an improv quote that's fitting for this interview and I've used this one before. "No one will ever follow you down the street, if you're carrying a banner that says onward towards mediocrity." Stay positive, test negative. Be safe.