6 Key questions on scaling answered

Rhys Jones: The following podcast is taken from my video blog, which you can find under the same name and the Recruitment Podcast channel on YouTube.

James O'Brien: Hello and welcome to the Retained Recruiter Show. My name is James.

Jo Gregory: And my name is Jo. Welcome, everybody. Thanks for joining us again. We are not alone. Look at us. The rose between two thorns in the middle there.

Hello, Rhys. Nice to see you.

Rhys Jones: Nice to see you both.

Jo Gregory: James is going to introduce you in a way, better way than I did.

James O'Brien: Well, I'll try, but I'm not saying I'll necessarily succeed, but no, listen, we appreciate you all joining us today. And we are joined today by Rhys, who spent the last 24 years setting up and scaling recruiting businesses, which is why you're here today to listen to more about that.

Now, Rhys initially had two of his own businesses, which he scaled and exited through sale over the past 12 years you know, through his recruitment, startup and support business called Davidson Gray. So do please look them up. And now through Davidson Gray, he's helped scale numerous recruitment businesses, and that's why you're here from startup and exited four of those through sale taking one recruitment business to successful trade sale within 18 months, and you'll know how difficult that is if you've ever tried it.

Now, recently, Rhys has shown us his scaling skills through a non-recruitment business working in partnership, founding a tax rebate business called Gorilla Tax, which were rebates from startup to scaling over a million pounds of tax rebates every month - well, that sounds like a lot of money - within 12 months of its launch, and Rhys has also spent time at Cranfield Business School, and he's a student on their business growth, but he was so good, they invited him back to work alongside their tutors on future business growth and scaling programs. Well, Rhys, if that's not an introduction, I don't know what is.

Rhys Jones: Doesn't sound like me. It's not. Did I do all of that? It's little old me, isn't it?

James O'Brien: I know you're only 22. You've just had a tough paper round.

Rhys Jones: Well, yeah, yeah. This is all fake. I've dyed it. It's grey as a thing at the moment.

Jo Gregory: Just a filter. A beard filter.

James O'Brien: Indeed. So, Rhys, welcome.

Rhys Jones: Well, thank you for inviting me. Thank you, Jo. I think the last time we met was a long time ago, wasn't it? When we were doing the, what was it, the board now, the institution, the recruiting institution?

Jo Gregory: Yes, it was. Yeah. Yeah. Many, many years ago. But you know, good friendships remain, don't they?

And it's brilliant to have you on the show. We're going to pick your brains massively. I think we need to crack on. We've had a lot of questions that we want to talk to you about. There are three particular topics that we want to talk about today. So, the three steps to scaling your recruitment firm.

Like the alliteration and that's the first thing we want to talk about is succession planning. And I think firstly, I think, you know, I'd like you to just give us an idea of what we mean by scaling and why some businesses want to do it. Cause not all businesses want to scale to exit. Do they, you know, scaling can take many different shapes and forms, but then we want to talk about succession planning.

We want to talk about smart marketing, and then we want to talk about growing your leaders in your business. So, we've got, we've got a lot to get through and we're going to talk fast. Yes, absolutely. James, what we're going to kick off with?

James O'Brien: Well Rhys, let's kick off with you. Just give us an overview of where you see your skills and expertise lie, and then we'll go straight into the first one about the importance of succession planning.

So just fire away.

Rhys Jones: I think it's called I've been there, got the t-shirt, you know, I did it myself and built the two businesses. And that's why I do what I do now with Davidson Gray because of the amount of learning I've got hands-on. I wanted to cascade down to other people because I made a lot of mistakes, but pain is a better teacher than pleasure.

So, I learned a lot through getting it wrong. And then learned a lot through getting it right and seeing the results of getting it right. So, because I've scaled the business that I had, and then I've got the benefit of working now in Davidson Gray, where all I'm doing now is really the strategy of mentoring.

I've got a team that backs up and does the support for the accounts and the marketing, that kind of thing. But I'm working all the time on strategy. So, I'm getting better and better and better because I'm redoing it with different businesses. So rather than using the same blueprint of the businesses I had before, I'm working with different personalities, different cultures, and different markets.

And being successful at all of those, I'm becoming a more, more rounded business professional. You mentioned earlier on, I did some studies at Cranfield, which I thought was amazing. I thought you could self-teach being an entrepreneur, which you can do to a degree, but it is actually a skill. It's a brand-new job.

So that's part of the failing I think a lot of recruiters have is they wing it to a point, and they get caught out. And if you're scaling a business, it's difficult. You'll be going to a new job constantly all the time as the business grows. And how are you going to know how to do that new job if you've never done it before?

It's that sort of, that's where I bring my experiences. Scaling numerous businesses, in different ways, with different people, in different markets. And seeing how things work. So, I'm constantly trying to be the best I can be. That self-actualization, always be the best version of me. And become the perfect businessperson, which I'll never be because you can't be the perfect businessperson, but it's that I'm constantly working on growing and scaling and strategy all the time. That's what I do now.

James O'Brien: Rhys, I've got a question there that's just popped up in my mind. And I think it was a question for later if I could bring it up now. And that's because when you invested, because that's what you did in Cranfield Business School you then came on to, you know, saying, listen, there is no blueprint for this necessarily.

You can't just wing it, because wing it, you know, there might be people in here saying, well, I've done it, but winging it's not a good idea. So, I think it's the importance of coaching and mentoring, and so I'd just be interested in your views on that, or to maybe just express them. So that's the question that came to my mind.

Rhys Jones: Well, I did it myself. I winged it for five years. And then I went to Cranfield University, and I got the guy that was coach was there to be my non-exec. It just helped me understand that rather than trying to be the smart ass and do it all yourself, it's to go to somebody who's got more experience, who's been there before, so they can help prevent you from making mistakes before you make them.

But also, rather than make the mistake, you're getting it right, so the mistake doesn't happen. With a coach and a mentor, it's also about keeping you honest. You know, because you can get a bit carried away with your success and if you're carried away with success, I had what I call a fat and lazy stage where the business was shitting cash and doing great.

But underneath it, things were going wrong. You know, the people weren't hitting the numbers, the processes weren't being hit, but everything seemed to be going right. If you've got a mentor and a coach, they're keeping you honest on your numbers and they're stopping you from slipping into the stuff that you enjoy, which human nature does, but keeping you honest on that.

But it's more so it's, if you've never done the job before, how can you expect to be able to teach yourself to do it? You know, work with somebody who's done it before, or if they've not done it before, they've worked with businesses, they've got the intellect and they've got the experience in academia to be able to guide you in the right direction. So, what you're not doing is learning as I did the first five years by making mistakes because that's stupid. You know, my ego wanted me to do it myself. But, the smart thing is to hire somebody smarter than you. You know, hire somebody more experienced than you and learn from them.

That's the really clever thing. So, you know, mentoring coach is a big thing. I can get in a soapbox about it, but you want to grow a business. The value you get from coaching and mentoring just fast tracks the business, and it also removes the stress. Cause sometimes it's quite lonely running a business because who do you talk to?

You want to talk to somebody who understands who you can bounce something off and you respect their opinions So it helps that in your decision making, but also it can push you as well because you can get a little bit lazy in pushing, not just the growth of this, but the involvement to make it a better business, not necessarily bigger, but a better business.

And it keeps you also disciplined and working on the business rather than in it. Because you can be dragged into a business, but no standing back and working on the strategy and implementing the strategy and also having you accountable to actually following through on the strategy because you can have these great ideas, then don't do them.

But if you've got to meet on a regular basis with a mentor and a coach, how have you got on with that process you're doing or the marketing or whatever? So, it keeps you honest.

James O'Brien: It's that accountability, isn't it? Because of the objectivity of the independent third party, coach, mentor, non-exec, whichever route you take, I think it's that point of knowing, almost, and maybe this is wrong, but sometimes the analogy is, you know you're going to be speaking to them, so if you haven't done it, you're just got to look in the mirror and say, well, why did I commit to doing this with somebody because you sort of feel small if you don't actually start to follow through with, I suppose.

And maybe that's the accountability part. So, I think it's really important. But let's move on to talk about the importance of succession planning because I know that's one of the topics that and I may have veered us off there in terms of where we went but talk through the importance of succession planning.

Rhys Jones: I think that if you're not going to succession plan, then you can't expect to do everything yourself. You need to have people that could be – if you're going to grow the business, you can't continue to grow and do the same job. So, you need people to be able to do the parts of the job that you have been doing.

And that is looking at the succession of people taking on part of the tasks that you do now, which is easy to want to hold on to. But all you do is you're holding the business back. If you want to continue to have your fingers in all these pies, then you're going to slow the business back. So, you're with the blockage at the end of the day.

So, if you look at succession planning, it's coaching people, getting in a professional coach because a lot of leaders think they can coach themselves. But coaching is a skill. It's really difficult coaching. I mean, Jo, obviously you will know, but it's very difficult to get people to think for themselves.

And if you're going to succession plan, people have to be able to make decisions themselves without coming to you all the time. So, you've got to allow these people to have the empowerment to do the jobs and allow them occasionally to make mistakes, but also trust them to be able to do the specialist areas they're working on or trust their decision making because if they don't feel as though that confidence and the freedom to make the decisions, then they're not going to be able to grow into the position behind you.

Because if ultimately you do want to sell the business, the business has to work without you there. Nobody wants to buy a business if you're part of it, but also do you want to be there in five, 10 years' time, five days a week? If you don't succession plan, then you're tied in the business because the business revolves around you.

And if a business revolves around you, it's a weak business because what happens if you become ill or you lose motivation or whatever it might be, it can't be all about you. A successful business should be a business that works without you. You're there to add value, but it's got to work well without you there.

James O'Brien: Okay, Jo, do you have a question because I've got one if you haven't.

Jo Gregory: I have got a question. Yes

James O'Brien: In a holding pattern

Jo Gregory: This is like London Heathrow my first question is how important is it that you have the right people in your business because you can't just succession plan with anybody in your business and I think Michael in the comments has mentioned this point as well. Recruiters don't necessarily make good managers. Recruiters don't necessarily make good business owners.

So how important is it to make sure we've got the right people in the business?

Rhys Jones: It's essential because it's a people business isn't it? Is it having the right people in the right places then? Yes, recruiters don't necessarily make great managers but some of them do, and you shouldn't discount what they can be because if they're not doing their managerial work now, it's not because they can't do you know. If you want to promote somebody, they're not doing the job now, you're going to coach them. So, it comes back to the coaching again. So, it is far less risky to promote from within, but there may be times you do have to hire externally. Now certainly, if you're looking at say a finance position or marketing position, you will hire externally, but if you have a good leadership development program, you should really be able to grow your people, assessing the right people with the right skills and the right motivations, the people that've got the potential to do those jobs.

And that's when it comes back to basic things, like looking at what you actually want from that person. If you're looking at a job spec, what's the job spec of that person? Can we not write job specs? It's useless. If you're looking at the skills you want from that person, he's looking at the potential they've got, now they've got the desire to actually do it.

But again, it comes back to coaching. So, if you can promote from within, that's always the safest, rather than bringing somebody in because it's an unknown entity. But at times you will need to, and it's, it's understanding at which point you haven't got the right people in the business, and you can't do it.

And certainly, if it's specialist things, because as a business grows, you know, you don't need a finance manager initially, but anytime you will, anytime you'll need a finance director, you may well need to hire somebody in similarly with marketing or HR, you know, you're not going to get those from within, but it is critical to make sure you get the right people, but then.

Ensure they are performing and that's where a non-exec coming is to help you understand if they are performing rather than if you bring somebody in and they're not performing, you feel it's a failure on you and again, it's not about you. So, if the person is not performing, it's nice to have somebody there as a soundboard to say, okay, I've hired in this undergrad FD or this, you know, marketing director undergrad.

It's not an area I'm an expert in, but how do I make sure that they are working? So again, the non-exec comes into that. But no, it's. Having the right people in your business is essential because you're scaling and in effect, it's like a house of cards, isn't it? Or also you could say a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

So, if you've got somebody in the business that isn't performing and they're there because they've been there 10 years, but they're not doing the right job, then you've got to make sure that either they get the coaching or the skills or they move to a different position. Or if it's a change of attitude, whether they actually need to leave, because as a business grows, sometimes people have to leave.

You know, they're just, they're no longer right for the new business because as your business grows, it's constantly becoming a new business.

Jo Gregory: Yeah. But it's very difficult to know that if you don't have a plan, isn't it? You know, if you don't have a plan in place for your business, that's got that identifies these, these trigger points, you know, at various different stages cause it takes a long time to succession plan, you know, the clues in the title, it's not something that's going to happen overnight.

Right. So, if a business is looking to grow. What kind of plans should they be putting in place, just sort of top-level tips on what should they be considering?

James O'Brien: Jo, before we just go for that, one of the things I want to say about performance and coaching is, yeah, one of the things we do here at iIntro is we do help people with the performance and obviously we provide coaching and support to those people.

And if ever you need to get in touch with us or want to sort of download and have a look at what we do, there's a little thing above the screen saying, you know, www.retainedroadmap.com and later on, they'll be flashing a thing that says, hey, if you want to have a chat with us about how we can help you improve your performance improve your cash flow, all the important things to succession planning and leadership that we're going to be talking about.

And then please do get in touch with us. But Jo, back to you.

Jo Gregory: Yes, planning race. Give us some top tips. What should businesses be looking for when they're planning to grow?

Rhys Jones: It's looking at the strategy and looking at the business you want to be and how are you going to get there. And I find that if you have a regular meeting again, I keep using the term keeps you honest, but it's having somebody to ask you the questions to make you think. You know, where do you want the business to be in a year?

What does success look like? You know, what are your pain points? You know, what is your barrier to growth? What's the biggest challenge you've got right now? It's reviewing your business plan because your business plan, if you write it now, then in a year it's out of date because your business is constantly evolving.

You're reacting to opportunities. You're reacting to setbacks. So, it's regularly reviewing the plan, making sure you're on plan, but taking opportunities and making the most of them. So, it's reviewing that and having a group of people you can talk to review that and make sure it's on plan and setting tangible results that you hit in the plan.

So, it's not just numbers of people. Find the market leader. Is your marketing working? You know, okay, you might have 5, 000 visits to your website every month, but are you getting candidates? Are you getting clients from it? So, it's reassessing that plan on a regular basis, but it's actually having a plan.

It comes back to what I said earlier, it's, it's very easy to continue to work in the business rather than working on it. And as the business grows, you've got to start working more and more and more and more on the business. And it's, it's not really natural because as a recruiter, you tend to want to be in there with the thick of it and doing it.

Like, you know, I'm a leader, I'm there working with people. I have to learn that that rather than being, you know, the big personality in the room leading like that, it's you've got to step back, and you've got to look at the strategy. You've got to be strategic. And if you're not the person to do that, at some point, you've got to realize I'm not the best person to do this.

He's looking at other people that can do it because it's not all about you. It's about making smart decisions and having the right people who are good at things that you're not good at. And there may be a strategy because if you're, you're looking to grow a business that you've never been to before, which is generally what cases you're at five and you want to be 10 million, you've never run a 10-million-pound business.

How do you know how to run a 10-million-pound business? And that's when it can be, do you get somebody who's actually got more experience than you and you redefine your role? So the things that you go down and the things that you enjoy, you know, that, that's, again, we're having a day about coaching, mentoring, having somebody to keep you disciplined, to keep looking at the business plan, setting yourself tangible results, then staying honest to it.

And if it's not on plan, what do you do about it? It is that it's staying consistent and not each month you've got your meeting or whatever is calling off because you're too busy. Staying disciplined to keep into your strategy.

James O'Brien: Jo, Jo, I've got a question or a point that Michael's making in the comments Not about the commercial break, but you're right on that one Michael and also thank you Chris But Michael says, for Harish, this is for you He says doesn't a high volume of business help connect the dots to scale a business?

And obviously, we work in a roller coaster business sometimes. So, what are your thoughts on that? What was the question again? He's saying yeah If you've got a high volume of business doesn't that help you connect the dots to scaling a business? Is that the is that the thing that says to you?

Maybe I've got something that is scalable.

Rhys Jones: That's an interesting question. It's almost like a chicken and egg, isn't it? If you've got enough work, then you can need to scale it, but you've kind of got to scale it to get the work sometimes So if you have got a lot of demand that yes, that gives you an easier platform, maybe to scale it.

Yeah, you don't need the demand to scale it. You know, you can make the demand through your strategy. So, it's kind of a bit of a chicken and the egg,

James O'Brien: which leads you into smart marketing, really, doesn't it? So, obviously, that'll help you understand where you're scaling. So that was a nice little segue.

Thanks, Michael.

Rhys Jones: Yeah, well, I think his market is very misunderstood in recruitment because a lot of business owners think it's all about direct sales. And part of the reason is, is, is recruitment business owners are impatient and marketing takes time. But also, they think marketing is something they could do themselves, but again, it's a skill.

And it's understanding about how you can actually increase the brand awareness and the incoming inquiries to your business to make your environment an easier place to make money and actually smart marketing. And the reason why I used smart marketing is because anybody could spunk a load of money on marketing.

It's smart marketing. And how do you know the difference between spunking the money and actually having smart marketing? It's measured. You've got to measure the result of your marketing. And that's where people get lost in it. We're doing lots of adverts on LinkedIn over. We've got 5000 visits to the website.

Is it making you money? And what I would say, is if you are using an external marketing agency, ask them to give you the KPIs. Mm-Hmm. Say to them, how, how, how will I know if you are being successful? And that can quite often tell you if it's a good marketing company or not, because they should be tied to results, not to fluff.

So, you can have lots of podcasts and videos and that kind of thing, but does it actually make you money? It's tying it back to the KPIs. So, for example, if you've got a website, and I mentioned it earlier on, 5,000 visitors are great, but I can get you that tomorrow. But how many candidates are going to apply for jobs?

How many clients are going to ring you? Now, what's the user journey? Because you've got 5, 000 people on your website, but the bounce rate is really high. And a bounce rate, though, they don't know if somebody comes on your site, lasts a few seconds and then there's a problem with the homepage. But then if they're not bouncing off, what are the user journeys?

You can see where they're going on the website. Are they going to the job section? Are they going to the retained services section? Are they going to the contact page? And are people dropping off? So, it's making sure you understand the results. And if you get your marketing right, you make your environment so much easier to make money.

It also helps the retention of staff because people want to work so they've got good marketing. So, it's, it's a self-fulfilling prophecy to have good marketing in the business. But so, few businesses have it because they'll try and do it themselves. Won't quit results. Don't see it. So, they sack it off.

And this comes back to having a separate strategy and then going back to, okay, do you employ a marketing director? Do you have a part-time marketing director? It probably is better. So, you've got somebody who can help you with the strategy. And then you implement it now, not necessarily enhanced, but it can be enhanced, can be external.

It's having somebody who can help you again with the plan because some markets are quick that market is quick, but, for example, SEO, if you're looking to optimize your website, which doesn't happen overnight, that will take time. And that's where, you know, you put your website up, I'm going to get in the results and then you've got to climb the Google rankings.

And again, it's about being smart because we do a lot on that because if you want to rank for, let's say, for example, pharmaceutical jobs, well, you're pissing the wind. Because you're up against the job sites and the total jobs and that kind of thing. They've got massive budgets; you're never going to get it.

So, it's assessing where you can actually win. So, it's assessing what traffic you have for what terms. So, let's say it's pharmaceutical recruitment. So, is there, is there traffic? Because sometimes you don't get enough traffic. Say there's traffic, it's thousands of people a month looking at that. Is it actually attainable?

And if you use a software reader it gives you a difficulty score. Is that, is it attainable? Because you only go into a fight you think you can win. Otherwise, you're wasting your time. So, you can spend loads of money on SEO but if you're never going to be on page one, then it's useless because if you're not on page one you might as well page 101.

So, all of this ties into two. You want your business to be more of a machine if you possibly can. Yes, it's uber-reliant on people, but marketing can't walk out the door. So, if you get your marketing right, it's always going to be there, but it's going to complement the people in your business by making it an easy route to make money.

It's easy when they're speaking to people. It's, it's, I've got a thing about it, as you can tell, so I'm so enthusiastic about it because one of the businesses we built was built really around marketing. It was a marketing business. It was a headhunting business, and it was, it was built so well. We were getting 60 unsolicited inquiries from brand-new companies.

Every single month who decided they want to head on to so you can imagine the value of that So all we had is we had all these inquiries coming in and then BDMs that were going out and closing it. The vast majority of the business was just resources, just fulfilling these jobs. And that came from marketing.

And I've not, I've yet to see a business that's like that. Because I think within recruitment, as I've said to you, I'm repeating myself now, people don't understand marketing. It's all about direct sales. Now you'll never beat the phone. I'll say for one second, you'll never beat the phone. And you've always got to be the recruiter being direct.

But if you can get this marketing right, it makes scaling so much easier.

Jo Gregory: Yeah, absolutely.

James O'Brien: Well, I think that's a great a great view on smart marketing or, or marketing and how to, how to consider making it smart. So again, I think some good hints and tips there. Jo, what's the third and final topic that we're going to cover before we go to some little points?

Jo Gregory: So growing leaders and growing leaders in your business. And we've touched on that already. We've touched on recruitment. Obviously, I intro. We're very, we're very big on you know, making sure you get your recruitment right because retention starts with recruitment. And if you can't retain your staff and you can't recruit staff, you're probably not going to grow, grow your business.

So, talk, let's talk about the team a little bit more. The importance of having a balanced team. team, the importance of making sure you've got the right team, but then the importance of kind of having the processes in place to ensure that those teams can do what they're capable and motivated to do.

So, what are the top things that businesses need to have in place, Rhys, to ensure that they've, you know, that they've got a business, which is moving forward? From a team perspective, a staff perspective,

Rhys Jones: I think there are lots of processes, which you and I discussed before it's having a process and people don't like the idea of the process, but it's always a best working practice.

I have to do something, and people should thrive in your business because of the process, rather than trying to wing it, because if you've got five people doing something different ways in their own ways, none of them the best way. We've spoken before about hiring as recruiters. You need as many staff obviously in your business as you can.

People are applying. He's looking at the staff attraction policy. Is it a good process? You know, how do you look at attracting enough staff? What is the process for that? How would you look at actually assessing it? Cause we've spoken this before about retention being massive. He's hiring the right people.

You can have a lovely environment and all your free food if you want. And the coach and everything like that. But if the, if the, if the client you're starting with isn't right, they're not going to stay. So, you've got to look at, okay, what is the job description? What are we actually looking for from these people?

And how do we assess that? And then how do we assess the success of that? And that is a process. So rather than having management say, right, okay, you can hire another couple, off you pop, go and do it. How are they going to do it? Well, this is what we do. This is how we advertise the job; say we use this room to recruit a company.

It gets sufficient people that you can hire a standard that we want to do the job description. So, you know what you're looking for, but also, we're not going to accept second best. But if you're not going to accept second best again, it comes back to getting enough people in the pipeline. And how are you going to do the assessment?

So, it's that is all the process and once you set it all it's there But then you also need to reassess the success and finesse it if you can But with any scalable business you have to have processes throughout the business which Our best working practices. And that is, that is one of the biggest things about scaling a recruitment business.

James O'Brien: I think it's documented as well, isn't it? Because it's, it's sometimes you say, it's a process. I mean, I think I can scare people and say, well, what does that mean? But I think it's about documenting it so that. The scalability comes. And you, you mentioned earlier about the fact that you've got to be able, the business got to work without you.

And so, documentation, process is, is really there. And I know, I know Rishi, you site quite popular on talking about a topic where, you know, where sometimes you, you see the telltale signs when growth changes the culture of the business because you only start out, and it can be, you know, you and a few mates but then as you grow, it can sometimes grow beyond you.

So, what impact can that have on the business?

Rhys Jones: Well, the thing is your culture sometimes has to change because as you just said, you know, initially it's you and your mates and then it says, okay, we're going to get a bit more professional than that. So sometimes it has to change, but this comes back to what you mentioned earlier about leaders.

You know, people think of leaders in different ways, but the leaders you want in the business are the cultural leaders. You know, they're not just following the process of hiring the right stuff, but make sure the culture is there, you know, it's the leadership and development, you know, do people still want to learn, do they want to be the best?

And this is where going back to saying earlier on about the foundation of a business, it's actually what is your culture? Because how can you look after your culture if you don't know what it is? Yeah. So, what is in our culture? And people again think culture might be teamwork and getting on with people, no politics, but the culture can be using the database properly.

You know, everybody wants to use the database properly because they get value from it. It can be That desire to learn so you're having regular coaching regular development people want to learn people who the best they can be But you've got to assess what the culture is and make sure that you can stick with it through the leaders So what I recommend is maybe every three or six months you revisit the culture and say, okay Are we still the culture we want to be and does it need to change?

But also, what I found handy is if you pull in a few people off the coal face every now and again and talk to her about the culture and check whether they're feeling it. So what you haven't got is a load of yes men and women telling you the culture is great. You know at the cold face now, you don't necessarily need to do that yourself But it's hearing from the people within the business multi-levels that the culture is still the same But as I said, the key thing is understanding what your culture is and it's not just everybody gets on Well, they get on and you know, there's no backbiting and people share candidates that kind of thing It is actually looking at it in a more tangible strategic way Which comes back to me again, maybe having somebody with experience helping you to understand what the culture is, and at what stage does that culture need to change?

And once you've gone from, say, a few people, as you mentioned earlier on, and then you've got multi, multi-managers, and then you need multi-level management. And then before you know it's getting right; the culture can't be quite the same. We've got to make sure we have the correct processes for appraisals.

We have the processes to make sure that we're not falling foul of any, any policies and people coming back, you know. And also sometimes you find that the people that were part of the culture at the beginning might change and you can't ignore that because if, if, if you have somebody existing or more importantly, you bring, you have somebody in is a cultural assassin, you don't want to actually build the gun.

You know or fuck off. You have that conversation with it because. Exiting some of your businesses is a big deal, so you should give them the chance to be able to change or leave it to their own volition. If you've got somebody that's going to damage your culture, no matter what the bill or who they are, you've got to be ruthless because you're looking at the greater good for everybody, not just that one person.

Jo Gregory: Yeah.

James O'Brien: Jo, final question before we wrap up, I think it's going to relate to what perhaps research is talking about there in terms of being ruthless.

Jo Gregory: Yes, yes, it is. So, I suppose to boil it, boil down what you're saying there, people that are in your business tend to have two things, attitude and, and actions.

So, if you've got someone who's, who's a top biller, but has a bad attitude, then that needs looking at what about someone who's got a great attitude, but is underperforming?

Rhys Jones: That's a tough one sometimes. But I, I've certainly been there. But you've got somebody, and their attitude is spot on, and they seem to be doing everything right.

They just stopped making it funny. And, and it's, it's difficult because sometimes you can't produce it if it, if the attitude is spot on and they're just not performing, unfortunately, sometimes it doesn't work out. Clearly, you need to look at why they're not. You need to look at every single opportunity.

You know, you, you have to do what you can, coaching, training, troubleshooting, desk reviews, the whole thing, but if somebody's not performing, Again, I don't like to use the word ruthless. I don't count myself as a ruthless person, but you've got to be ruthless to protect the greater mass. And for example, you know, what I always advise that you do when you're growing a recruitment business, is have a minimal level of billings.

It might sound obvious, but if you've got somebody who's got the right attitude and everybody likes them and they're doing 80 grand, okay, well that's fine. But the problem is, is people tend to flit between top billers and the lowest billers. So, if your lowest bill is 80 grand, then you might get a load of 120 billers.

Your lowest biller is 140 grand. Then you get more 160 billers and what you've got, you've got to maintain those standards. So, no matter how nice the person is and the attitude, if they're not if they haven't got the right standard, you've got to keep those standards. And where I see a lot of businesses fall into is if the person isn't losing your money, you'll keep them.

So, let's say 80 Grand a year, you’re gonna lose money. Well, no, that's not good enough because what you're trying to do is create a winning environment where you've got top performers throughout the business. People, people want to stay there because look around all the senior winners, you know, people that I've known good billers.

I've left a business because they said the people weren't that good. I want to work with them. It's like joining a football team. You know, if you want to join a Man City or a Liverpool, you want to be in a team full of success. You don't want to be in a team that isn't winning. That's why you've got to be very protective, and I'll use the word, lucid, protective of the greater good.

And keep those minimum standards and make sure you've got some big billers because people want to see what they can achieve and what they can attain and what is possible while keeping that minimum level. So unfortunately, sometimes if people have got a great attitude, do everything you can so it's demonstrable you have.

If they're not good enough, they're not good enough.

James O'Brien: I think those are the challenges when you're trying to scale up a business. And Rhys, I'm sure we could talk for hours, but obviously people have come in on the, on that. It did. It did. Listen, we covered areas about succession planning, about growing leaders in your business, smart marketing, and lots of other things to talk about.

As you can see, you know, we'd love to talk to you as well, but I hope from your listening today, you've actually picked up a few hints and tips that are going to help you in scaling your business. And obviously, if Rhys or ourselves can help you in any way, then please do get in touch. So, I'd like to say thank you on behalf of us all here at the Retained Recruiter Show, Rhys, for your time and input today.

Jo?

Rhys Jones: Can I plug my own YouTube? You can come find me on YouTube. The Recruiting Podcast with Rhys Jones, and you can hear me talking similar crap on that as well.

Jo Gregory: Hours and hours of it, but it's not crap. It's excellent stuff. So yeah, Rhys has got his podcast. Obviously, Rhys is very prominent on LinkedIn as well. So, if you're listening or watching this, do come and find us on LinkedIn. Rhys, will you come back again? Will you do it again?

Rhys Jones: I'd love to. It's absolutely brilliant.

for you. You're quite right. I think we could have carried on for quite some time. Absolutely. So no, I'd be more than delighted to.

Jo Gregory: Brilliant. We would love to have you again. But no, it's been great. Hopefully, it's been useful and insightful for people who have watched as well.

James O'Brien: Indeed. So, listen, thanks very much everybody for listening in today. We look forward to seeing you again. Look out for our next communique about the next retained recruiter show, which will hopefully be at the end of this month. It may just be Jo and somebody else, but we'll, we'll see what happens there.

But in the meantime, thanks very much for watching. So, it's goodbye from me.

Jo Gregory: And it's goodbye from me.