

SPEAKER_02: You're listening to the HR Mixtape. Your podcast with the perfect mix of practical advice, thought-provoking interviews, and stories that just hit different so that work doesn't have to feel, well, like work. Now, your host, Shari Simpson.

SPEAKER_01: Joining me today is Roy Abdo, CEO at Digital Revamp. Roy advises C-level executives on digital storytelling, online strategy integration, executive personal brand, and paid media. Roy advised the military health system for the Department of Defense on communication strategies, and is also a speaker for the US State Department. Roy also serves as a certified CliftonStrengths and high performing team coach. Roy, it is so exciting to have you back on the podcast. I've so enjoyed our previous conversations. So thanks for jumping on with me.

SPEAKER_00: Thank you so much for having me, Shari. It was a great conversation and I look forward to another one with you. I had so many comments on the podcast, on the impact that it made on those who listened to it. And I mean, a lot of people became subscribers too. They loved your content. So a shout out for the first time listeners, go back to the old content. Shari always brings the best content with the best people, with the great questions.

SPEAKER_01: Yeah, of course. And what a better way to segue into you being one of my best guests. Oh, thank you. We want to talk today a little bit about organizations and how they approach LinkedIn, not from a personal perspective, but from an organizational perspective. So let me start with this. Maybe you can share your approach on how you showcase an organization, an organization's culture on LinkedIn. I mean, how do you ensure that it really resonates with both potential employees and your current employees?

SPEAKER_00: That's a great question, Shari. Culture is what differentiates people from joining a company because you can, that's the only thing you can compete on and the high need for talent. And the first step I work when I work with organizations to help them showcase their culture on LinkedIn, let's look on their website if it's actually articulated. Did they take time to write there about us? Who are we? Our values? I mean, I call them the, you know, how things are getting done. What are the key principles we work on? You'll be surprised a lot of organizations and even legacy organizations, they just have, when you go join the team page, bunch of openings. So, and they're trying to attract those top talent, those millennials, those Gen Z. And the mindset of those individual is not only a job, they want fulfillment, they want a cause, they want a bigger purpose than when you're joining the organization. So it starts first with identifying the actual company culture, documenting it. And a simple exercise to do this is you pretty much go on and ask a couple of questions. What do you think our values are? How things are getting done here? What is it important for us? What is a non-negotiable? What is something we'd like to aim for, like the Northern Startup Organization? Once those kind of content is documented, our first step is translating them on the About Us page on the website. And then we move what to start broadcasting it. The common mistake people might make is they start talking about their culture directly on social

media. And I get attracted to that culture. I go on the website and I just see a whole different conversation or not even a conversation that exists from what I saw on social media. So the best step for any organization to showcase their culture is first articulate it. Second, documented on your own media. And then when I say documentation, like we discussed the values, the principles, and then even some, you know, the award that you people have, the benefits it has, a quote from a manager, a quote from an employee, what was it like working there, all of it on the website. Then I take that content and start translating it to social snippets, with teasers, with content that could be posted on LinkedIn. So when I'm posting it on LinkedIn, That becomes a good employee journey from unaware to becoming aware, to go on the website, to build more relationship. That's going to not only help attract talent, but also the current staff, they'll start getting reminders of what is the culture looking like. Because the whole thing is your first buyers are your employees before even getting a customer. If they're not buying into company's mission, into company's vision, into the purpose we're going for, all of us collectively as an organized workforce, there's a big disconnect outside of everything.

SPEAKER_01: I appreciate that you brought up the difference between what you're posting on social media and what is on your corporate website. I have always been fascinated when I've joined organizations that maybe have a really robust company website and it gives you the impression that culture is like A, and then you join the organization and the employee experience is so wildly different than the customer experience. So that's such a great point that those things should match. Your culture that you look at your clients should also be the culture that you want to engage your employees with. And what a great story if your employees become your, you know, your brand ambassadors.

SPEAKER_00: Yeah. I mean, we've seen it in organizations, Cisco, Cisco invested into, I think about 5,000 people to train them on content creation, to start talking about the company culture, the organization values. What is it like working for Cisco? Because people work with people. And remembering that idea is, in today's world, people are the new media channel. And if you're not a media channel that is posting content that is attractive, for that potential employee, potential prospect who might be joining your company, if there's nothing about what's behind the wall, there's a lot of anxiety in today's world. I'm like, oh, what if it's just online with my culture? I don't know where they stand on this. So thinking from a perspective as a relationship, It's much easier when, you know, if you're going on a first date with someone, if you've seen some of their photos, some of their Instagram, you had a quick conversation on a call with them, that there's less awkwardness, there's more trust building. And I think about it is, the way I think about it is, if you're posting jobs opening, and you'd expect people just to commit directly to something that they haven't seen, that's not today's media landscape, that's not the expectation anymore.

SPEAKER_01: You also brought up that Gen Z and millennials are asking different cultures, excuse me, different questions in relation to how

they, like their intrinsic values. And we've seen this where we've started to see questions around like sustainability and carbon footprint. I mean, things that I never even would have considered employees or candidates would be interested in in the past. So with that being said, if you're doing something really unique in your culture, what is the best way to really enhance that message on LinkedIn?

SPEAKER_00: See, I think when you say you're doing something really good in your culture, good is relevant to the receiver. So it might be good for you, but you have to understand, is it good for that receiver? So you might be thinking, oh, we're doing this company exercise or outing, but you have to understand, is that something of interest of your target customer? you know, of your target employee. So when I think about the question you're asking is the rule number one, I always say, know your ideal prospect, know your ideal, you know, the person you want to attract. And then let's look at what's interesting for them. What do they value? What kind of principles they're looking for? And then from there, we start looking of, okay, what kind of medium we should be talking about? Are they more on the video side? Are they more on the visual identity, like infographic? Are they more on the written? Should we have something along the lines of a downloadable, you know, something that we worked on, here's an exercise you did internally, here's what you could benefit from it. And here's how to find if you're a fit in our culture, answer those five questions. The display of the information is gonna depend on my target audience, location, preferences, and the interest that they have. For example, if you're trying to attract certain type of workers, they might not be even be on LinkedIn, they might be on different blogs or on YouTube. And you might be, you know, so it's not the recipe, the recipe doesn't work for everyone. The recipe works for those who take some time to understand, I'm trying to hire those talent, where those talents are spending their time. Is it Instagram, Facebook, is it TikTok? Is it blog? Is it Reddit? What kind of medium they're on? And what kind of conversation they're in? And what is it something that I'm doing that could be interesting to be part of the conversation or some trend happening that I could create an activity to be part of?

SPEAKER_01: Do you think, or I guess I'm curious your perspective and what you've coached organizations on if their LinkedIn presence should be more focused to their clients or if their LinkedIn message branding should be more focused to attracting talent?

SPEAKER_00: The way I look at it is what's the difference? You know, so we all as human would like to be part of something bigger than us. It's just human nature. We want to be part of a collection of a group of a community. We, we, we, we, we look for belonging. We look for people who accept us and value our contribution and become something. So the way I explain it is any company in today's world has to be a media company than a product or a service company. And then from that perspective, that just kind of sets the mindset. If you're focused only on your product and not posting content around how you're

building the product, the story, the innovation of the product, you're just not going to be winning compared to other people just showing you more behind the scene, what's happening, the build out, the trust, increasing the trust factor. So I would say step number one is, um, you start posting about the company, and then step number two, integrate the culture of the company within those posts. But if you're just only treating it as only posting to attract talent, that talent's gonna look at it, okay, I look on their Facebook or Instagram or LinkedIn, I don't even know what they do. And we've had it multiple times or like, what is it like working there? I don't even know what I'm going to be working on or the kind of deliveries that they do, right? Specifically when we work with some different associations or manufacturers or different clients from different aspects where, you know, they might do multiple things and they're not talking about the innovation in one sector or the new product launch in one sector. or even the build out of something or how they do team formations, the values of the organization. So we've seen it multiple times where organizations want to focus only on attracting talent, but their visual identity is distorted. An example we had with a healthcare provider, it's one of the largest healthcare provider in Oregon. And then what happens is we work, they literally wanted just to only work on their employment brand. We worked on their employment brand and it actually did some, it did the impact because when you go on their culture page, they have their values now, when they're putting an open position, they're actually attracting talent to the values. But then the first question they told us when people come in, they're like, we didn't, we liked the culture, but we didn't know what you guys fully do or the position, what it entails. So then we end up working with them on their whole website. to make it clear for that customer, here's what is it like to be working there? Because you have to be as clear as possible. And the common mistake company do in this kind of instant is what I describe as a curse of knowledge. Are you familiar with that term?

SPEAKER_01: I'm not.

SPEAKER_00: So the curse of knowledge is, let's say right now I'm talking to you, I'm gonna say something along those lines. The CTR of the IMP is depending on the CPC of the campaign. Any idea what I just said?

SPEAKER_01: Well, it's definitely marketing related. I got that much out of it.

SPEAKER_00: You see what I mean? So we as companies get so in love with their product and so in love with their service and so in love with the name of the product, name of the service, they forget that the world doesn't care. The world care what's the interest or the impact or the value. So instead of saying that sentence, I could have said to get more views on your podcast, you have to understand if you want to advertise how much it's going to cost you in terms of dollars to get something out of those customers. The idea behind it that I always explain is great communicators understand that the customer doesn't know as much about their product or their company as much as

the actual owner of the company or the organization. So your communication has to be so clear. And I always bring it down to like, think about a five-year-old. If you say what you do to a five-year-old and he's able to understand it, you won. And you can go viral if you take that five-year-old and he's able to explain it to another five-year-old. Then you know your message resonated with those individuals and they understood who you are, what you stand for, who you're serving. And that's a common mistake we see in communication when companies are trying to build their employment brand, their actual brand, they're not taking into account what does that person know about them. And they're assuming everybody knows all the lingo that they're using in their industry. In reality, people just, if you think about it from a scale of one to 10, when companies are putting marketing content, they're putting it on a scale of seven. when people actually really buy on a scale of three.

SPEAKER_01: What other mistakes are people making in this area?

SPEAKER_00: The mistake of thinking of content creation versus documentation. So a lot of organizations, they don't, might not have the resources or the bandwidth to create content. So they just think of it as this whole task they need to do. And it has to be super polished, super, uh, you know, uh, branded and all this kind of details, but just be where you are and embrace where you are and embrace the growth you're heading there. So if you look at some organization we've been working with for four years, five years, when we started, they had like a smaller budget. We literally just kept the ball rolling in terms of content. So this way there's a story. And then once you start seeing the traction, we build up a higher budget, more branding, more polished, more content. That's the kind of mindset. So I make a distinction between content creation and documentation. Content creation, you're thinking about as a separate task that needs its own set of principles and time and dedication versus documentation is like today, what kind of conversation I had? What kind of a meeting we had? Is there a takeaway from that meeting? Is there a system that we described or a process that we implemented? We just write it down and it's like, here's our teamwork today on X, Y, and Z. Because think of it from a perspective, when you're posting a job opening, that person has interest in the job title and the job description and the position they have. So you're unaware, you're moving from unaware to aware because of that interest that you have in that position. So I click on it, I go on the organization. At that point, I'm trying to figure out, is this a good cultural fit for me? So even that piece of content talking about how you're using agile methodology to build teams, or one of our favorite tools these days has been Slack or Asana, that's gonna build a relationship with that person. Like, oh, I'm familiar with Asana. I love this kind of, that's gonna get them to be thinking, oh, I might be fit there. Let me try to actually put my mind into this application and finish it and get that kind of job. So the common mistake is not knowing where that potential applicant came from and not having in mind that they are looking for things to build a relationship with you.

SPEAKER_01: I want to switch gears for a little bit and talk about metrics. You know, when you are deploying this content on LinkedIn, what are the, the kind of the metrics we should be looking at? I mean, I know that LinkedIn services up like impressions and engagement, but if you're brand new to this, what should we care about?

SPEAKER_00: I think the easiest way to explain this, I break it down into three things, what people see, what people say, what people do. So. Let's not complicate things. The more content you post, the more people can see it, and the more impression you're gonna receive of people seeing that organization, and you're gonna build the brand. And what is a brand? Let's break it down. A brand is a trust. And if you put in content, you're building more trust, you're building more brand. So there's more people seeing you. And then when people say what people say about something, are they commenting? Are they sharing it? Are they engaging? Are they going on? Do you have traffic coming from LinkedIn to your website? Are you getting more people filling out those open positions that you have just because of those content? That's the metric that I'm always thinking that I'm helping organizations get on with not only thinking about the growth of the number of followers, because let's face it, if you solely focus on employment brand, you might not get the growth of the followers. But once you have those open positions, you're going to have engaged followers. So engaged people engagement, which means they've done something, they click on the website, they follow the link, You use the right hashtags for that position. You reposted that post into open job forms. You reposted that post into a newsletter that is going out for those target customers. So you're building an employee experience or a potential employee experience from an unaware potential employee to become aware of your organization, to build the trust and to go to a place where it can apply.

SPEAKER_01: How do you handle negative reviews? I ask that because we see them all over social media, right? And we know just human nature, people typically aren't motivated to leave positive reviews. You know, you had bad experience, you leave a bad review. And with things like Glassdoor and LinkedIn and Indeed where you can leave reviews, you know, what advice do you give to organizations on how to handle those in a very transparent, authentic way?

SPEAKER_00: I mean, I get this question a lot. How do you deal with negative reviews? You know, the best way to deal with negative reviews is let's start first with having positive reviews. Most organizations, a common mistake that they have, they are not taking time to document the positive experience people are having. You just onboarded someone, you have a great onboarding. Simple ask, Hey, how was your onboarding? It was great. Okay. Do you mind leaving us a review on your, on our glass door, or you've been working here for four years. We have a program, you know, if you write, if you're happy, you write a review, you'll get the Starbucks gift card or, We'll do a company outing or you'll get recognition or employee of the month, get that kind of thinking. So the best way to deal with negative reviews is start dealing with positive reviews. Because this way you start to build a

whole image of your organization. The common mistake people are making, they just wait for a negative review and they go start putting positive ones. And for that potential applicant, it literally shows it's not an authentic process. So, but now let's say right now you're dealing with the crisis. We have a negative review and we don't have positive reviews. My best advice is to acknowledge it, and then realize what's going on and then tell them, Oh, we're happy to get in touch. You know, we, you know, it's, I'm sorry about this experience you've had. Let us look into it. Happy to get in touch with us and the reported and that kind of messaging. The fact that organizations are responding is a big win because it shows that they actually care. Uh, and then the fact that organizations take time to write positive reviews so that, you know, think about it from a, from a restaurant, you know, if you you, let's think about it from a different perspective. If you go to restaurants and have a negative experience, take a guess, how many people are you going to talk, how many people are you going to tell about it?

SPEAKER_01: A lot, probably a lot, at least 10.

SPEAKER_00: Right? At least 10. If you have a positive experience, maybe two or three. Do you get the idea? And it's natural because a negative experience give us social currency. We can, oh my God, we went to this restaurant, they had this, they had that. They didn't get me water, you know, versus everything went right. Like, oh yeah, it was good experience. We had the lamb champ, you know, lamb chunks, whatever that thing is. And the same goes to by human nature. If it's not dramatic, it's not gonna get to social. So a lot of, A lot of companies, they don't understand that they have to create positive experiences and be intentional about documenting it. So in case a negative experience comes in, it's not hitting you the rock bottom. You're just landing on the positivity because in someone's mind, they're looking for something to exit. So your job is to build up enough momentum. So this way, whenever you get that negative, there's already a lot of positivity and positive reinforcement happening or positive content that's pushing them not to go on that negative direction.

SPEAKER_01: Yeah. All right. As we wrap up our conversation, I'm curious what you see the future of LinkedIn, of brand building on social media, you know, a little bit of sprinkle, a little bit of AI in there. What are you most excited about?

SPEAKER_00: I'm most excited about the storytelling aspect of in today's world, because there was no better time in the history of humankind where organizations who really want to grow they should be able to grow because everything exists in the ethos of content. From having an AI tool that could help you generate content and even using that content generator to repersonalize it to your own messaging and then even the tools that help you post on social media and even the listening to have on social media and even from advertising. A lot of those tools, when I started with the advertising world, it wasn't as can I call it, you know, democratic process, you know, we, you didn't have that capability. If you want to advertise on TV, good luck, you

know, spending that kind of budget to have a job opening on television. I mean the process, you might put it in a newspaper and then a newspaper, they just lose the paper and then, The traceability is phenomenal. It's just gonna depend, I'm excited about organizations who are able to see that opportunity and build a strategy to leverage that kind of opportunity to grow exponentially. And we've seen it with organizations where they have referral programs publicly, they have their culture documented, they're talking about their outing, they're talking about their content, they're talking about the product they're excited about. And even now, you'll see big time the CHROs are another media and public speakers in the world. That's a trend for me that just, I literally saw it on the rise and COVID accelerated it big time. And now the new C around the corner, which is a chief AI officer. So I'm excited for technology that's gonna enable us to tell better stories. I'm excited for integrating AI with our work and everybody goes, oh, you know, AI is gonna take over the job. Yeah, AI is gonna take over the jobs of those who are not learning AI.

SPEAKER_01: Yep, absolutely.

SPEAKER_00: And it's similar to thinking like, you know, like a typewriter, those who, you know, those who learn computers, they kept using the keyboard on the computer instead of the typewriter. It just, and one of my favorite movies is the story of a three black women who were— Hidden figures. Hidden, oh my God.

SPEAKER_01: It's such a great example.

SPEAKER_00: That to me is the example of AI adoption. Back then AI is a computer, today is AI and it's much smarter than that computer. But those women took a decision upon themselves, we're gonna learn this because we don't wanna go obsolete. So I get excited about testing those new products, learning those products, we're experimenting with them. Obviously there's security places, we have to be careful about it. And obviously there's like places you have to be cautious on what you're putting in it. But the way I explain it is, We're lucky and we're blessed to be in today's world where we have that kind of capability and the kind of opportunity to do those kinds of things. And we're taking advantage of more than 2000 years of documentation that existed. And with the tip of your fingers, you're able to just learn something so quickly. You can get all the sermons of all the preachers of something. You can learn all the tactics of that company to use in within a split of a second. So it's a matter of time, dedication to build something. And from a marketing perspective, I'm always excited about how can we use that to create a brand, to create content, to, and you're going to see a lot of more brand emerging in today's media world than we've had five, 10, 15, 20 years ago, because it used to be a monopoly. There's a couple of brands, you know, if you think 15 years ago, there was a career, like three main, you know, sports shoes players like, you know, sports shoes, Nike, Adidas and maybe Reebok. Now there's a lot of more brands. And so the democratization of products, the democratization of service, it's a great opportunity for increasing our economy. And I think the future is bright.

SPEAKER_01: I love it. Roy, this has been a great conversation.

SPEAKER_00: Thank you so much, Shari. And thank you for having me.

SPEAKER_02: I hope you enjoyed today's episode. You can find show notes and links at TheHRMixtape.com Come back often and please subscribe, rate, and review.