

- [Shari] Welcome to our special edition of PCTY talks at SHRM '22 in New Orleans. So Tim, thanks for jumping back on the podcast with me. We are both kind of in this mindset, we're preparing for SHRM. It starts tomorrow. So I wanted to have you on, because you are part of this super elite influencer group at SHRM. So I'd love to hear little bit more about what the influencers are gonna do this year.

- [Tim] You can just call me Maverick from "Top Gun". Did you see the new "Maverick"? It's amazing.

- [Shari] I did.

- [Tim] It's awesome, the new "Top Gun" is amazing.

- [Shari] Really, really good.

- [Tim] So yeah, like it, so SHRM has evolved. The influencer team started as a blog squad, was fun. A lot of people got involved. It got really big. I think it got a little unwieldy for them. And so like a lot of things, COVID allowed them to kinda reset and come in and add in some, some new voices, some new faces, some ones that I've been around. And so I'm thankful to be a part of that. And really the entire intent is like, how do we work with, and really be a bridge between all of the HR tech companies and vendors and all the people that are out there in the audience. Because I think they think that they can trust us more because we're like practitioners like they are. I mean, I think that's their intent. I mean, SHRM wouldn't come out and just say that. I think it's like, oh, like we just want these people that are influencers and bloggers and all of these great things to go out there and share everything that's happening, which is, I think you know, that's what I've always done anyway. So like it works well for me.

- [Shari] If you are listening and you're like, hey, I wanna make sure that I'm gonna engage with these influencers, what's the best way to do that?

- [Tim] Well, they keep us locked behind doors, you can't. No, they actually do have like, one of the cool things about being an influencer, is they give you like a really cool space, like in the main like general session area. If you've been to SHRM annual, I mean it's thousands and thousands of people jammed in there. People get there an hour early, get in line to see the keynotes, 'cause they get really good keynotes. And we can just like saunter in, like two minutes before and sit in the front row. That's the only cool thing we get to do, but no I think we will be around for sure. So if people want to connect with us, you know, on social media, like LinkedIn and stuff like that, and like, say, hey, we'd love to meet you, whatever. I spend a lot of time on expo floor. So one of the things that I love about SHRM annual is really going out there, and once a year, just

spending quality time, seeing what's new, what people have done. We don't do enough of that in HR and talent acquisition. We don't spend enough time to know the landscape of the technology that's impacting our jobs on a daily basis . And so for me, I love, you know, going on the expo floor and really digging in on that side.

- [Shari] I love that you mentioned the expo floor. It's always one of my...

- [Tim] overwhelming?

- [Shari] Overwhelming is probably an underwhelming word for it, really.

- [Tim] It is.

- [Shari] You know, I always tell people if they're first-time attendees, I'm like you have to build it into your schedule 'cause that first night, the opening, it's not enough time. It's just,

- [Tim] No.

- [Shari] and it's three or four hours still and it's just, you gotta build it in. So if you're a first timer, how do you navigate it? Like, what's your advice?

- [Tim] Well, I mean, depends on what your, like what your specialty is, right? So if you're employee engagement or wellness or recruiting or whatever, really digging in to find out what are those companies? And SHRM makes it easy on their site, you can kind of like you know, pick like, oh, here's my specialty area. Here's what I'm like interested in. Like, let's just say you're CHRO and you're like, we just have to get better at wellness. Like you could easily go in there and like, oh my gosh, there's 50 wellness companies that I probably need to go and just see, you know? You're not gonna be able to demo every one of 'em. The one thing I like about the expo is most of the vendors have figured out like how to do a quick, like five-minute ven demo. Let me, just show you exactly what we do really quickly, and then you can say, oh, you know what, I need to learn more. Let's let's spend longer time. And so for me, it's kind of, that's how I kind of figure out. Also, SHRM has, they've started, you know, like a startup kind of pavilion or technology, like new startup stuff. I love to go over there and check that out as well just to see, you know, what new stuff is out there. Even though, again, almost everybody has new stuff, they kind of wait for SHRM to launch it, so.

- [Shari] Exactly. What other advice do you have for first time attendees in general? So not just the expo floor, but like, hey, it's your first time ever coming to this conference. And, you know, I just looked at the numbers, I think they're sitting around 13 thousand, is

that?

- [Tim] Yeah. Which is actually smaller than... In 2019, I think it was like over 20 thousand. And like, I remember going to that one and going, okay, this is too big now. This is a lot of people. But no, I think as first timers, don't get caught up into saying like, oh, I went into the session and it kind of sucks. Just leave and go find another one. I mean, there's so many sessions and great speakers and sometimes you stumble into somebody that you're just like, oh my gosh, this is amazing. And it's not always the fullest room, but sometimes it is. Like, sometimes you follow the crowd a little bit and someone will go, oh my gosh, I've seen this person speak three or four times. And usually that means there's something pretty good about 'em, from that standpoint. But don't, I think sometimes we get caught into like going into a session and then like, oh I don't want to embarrass a person by leaving. There's no speaker there that gets embarrassed by that. There's no one at SHRM talking, is gonna be like oh my gosh, I can't believe you're leaving. If you try to leave my session, I will call you out. Like, I will like, hey Shari, do not leave. No I won't.

- [Shari] No, I totally agree. I have been in sessions where I'm like, Oh this was not what I thought it was gonna be. Or like, it's not the right vibe, or not the right thing for me to be focusing on right now. So I totally agree. I would also add from a logistics perspective, wear gym shoes. So I didn't realize this, the convention center is a mile long.

- [Tim] Yeah.

- [Shari] Oh my goodness. Wear gym shoes. Don't worry about like...

- [Tim] And there is not enough seats for people. Be comfortable. Like when you see, you know, men are usually more comfortable than the ladies that come, but when you, like what was it Vegas last year? And I would see women like with, like the the four, five-inch heels coming in and I'm like, that's a long day for you.

- [Shari] Yeah, for sure. Okay. So what are you most excited about for SHRM as we look ahead for this week?

- [Tim] So this was a session they started in Vegas last year, and so this is the second time they're gonna do it. And it's the startup competition, you know? And so they actually had the "Shark Tank" judges. They have one of those "Shark Tank" judges. So they had Damon last year. And I think this year they have, I can't one remember, one of the other guys, but they actually have a real shark there as one of the judges. I was actually supposed to be a judge this year, and my session got scheduled the exact same time.

- [Shari] Oh no.

- [Tim] Those two groups don't work together, so they're like, hey, you have to decide. And so I'm doing the session and not being a judge, I'll be a judge next year. But I love it because the, the people that come, the startup people that come, they're so well prepared. Like the first year they did this, I was like just so impressed by the people that come in and talk. And then the dynamic of seeing the judges actually, so I will tell you, get there way early. Last year, there was people lined up an hour before that session, and probably 30 minutes before the session, they had to like turn people away. It was already full. So they're having it in a much bigger room this year, but still they plan on having that thing just be jam packed, and it's really fun.

- [Shari] Well, that's awesome. And I'm sure since you won't be in that session, somebody else on the influencer team will be allowed to be.

- [Tim] I know, for all the overflow, like I'll be actually be speaking right then and like just come see me.

- [Shari] I love it. Well, I will put in the show notes, if you're listening and you wanna get connected with these influencers, I'll put all their socials in the show notes so that you have them. And Tim, I can't wait to spend some more time with you on the show floor when we get there

- [Tim] Right, yeah? Get ready to eat some beignets.

- [Shari] I love it, thanks Tim. Thanks for listening. And don't forget to join the conversation using #PCTYSHRM.