



The Porch Podcast: Culture Change Catalyst - Transcript (Katie's Side)

Katie McLaughlin 18:39

The old workplace was that punch card, come and go, just work and then leave. We're all experiencing that. We're taking work home with us. Whether that's actually taking work home with us, or whether we're all living and working in our homes. But ultimately, we are whole people when we come into the workplace. So our joys, our interests, our hopes, our fears— all of that comes into play. If we're leaving work, and we've had a devastating day, it's , we feel we're being beat down every day, by toxic circumstances, constant deadlines. We're gonna bring that out into our communities and into our families. That continues to breed troublesome relationships even outside of work. I also think that your people are your biggest asset. They're the ones who talk to your customers. They're the ones who try to sell your product. They're the ones who build your product. All of that influences the way that they show up at work and do their work for your company.

Katie McLaughlin 19:50

When we're happy, when we're engaged, our defenses are down, but in a good way. We feel centered and grounded. We're not going to take criticism or change as intensely or as negatively potentially, because we're already at that level of feeling happy and feeling engaged. But as that starts to wane, so does our "give a shit meter". The amount of chips we want to give at work really starts to decrease. That's where we become resistant to the things that are going on. We don't want to accept change. And we think, "Why should I give my ideas to this company when they don't actually value me?"

Katie McLaughlin 21:19

Ultimately, people leave. So companies and business owners and senior C-suite leaders often think that people are replaceable. They are, but it costs at least 30% of someone's annual salary to replace them. Sometimes it's almost as much as 100% to replace that employee. And those stats are all about the amount of work that goes into recruiting new people. Personally, I've looked at a lot of other folks who do this research. Gartner, SHRM and ATD have done



research on this. But I believe that what's missing from that research is the cost associated with if you have to terminate an employee or an employee leaves voluntarily, and yet they only have two weeks notice. You don't have a hire, ready to join and ready to be productive as soon as that person leaves. So then the burden of their work goes on to other people. Those people are more stressed and distressed, they don't feel as engaged and are taking more work home. There's all this ripple effect that happens from every single person that leaves. There's two big data points that most companies already have access to, that I encourage people to take a look at. The first one is one of the most underrated pieces of data that nearly every company gathers every single year—the engagement or culture survey. Granted, anytime you do a survey of your employees that's led by someone in your company, it can feel like, can I trust this data? Is it anonymous? You may get a slight twinge of inflation essentially towards the happier side of those survey questions. But the better you do at conveying that nobody could actually track down who gave what responses, the better data you're going to get. And that data covers everything from how engaged they feel that their leader is in their work, whether or not people feel they had the opportunity to share ideas. How inclusive or accepting of diverse ideas, perspectives, and identities in this company? How well does my C-suite communicate ideas? All of those types of questions are included in these surveys. They become this amazing roadmap towards making some improvements within the organization. I saw somebody just put in the chat about 15, five and amplify work on engagement surveys. I'm a partner of theirs, I love the work that they're doing. So definitely plus one to that. The other data point I'll call out are Glassdoor reviews. We're always looking at every data point with some caveats with Glassdoor reviews, you're gonna get more negative, then you are going to get positive. Because when we have a terrible experience, we're more likely to put in a nasty review. Especially if you start to look at those trends at the start of the pandemic, people's survey scores tanked, especially in the realms of culture and diversity. So we have to keep in mind that our people are telling us whether or not they're happy. We need to go look at that data and use it.

Katie McLaughlin 26:03

Customer data is also really helpful when companies leave. When customers leave a review on your company and not just on your product, they are typically going to share what their experience was. Did I have a long wait time to get a hold of somebody? Could I talk to anybody? They also might say, expressions of feeling they got swindled. And that may go back to an experience of working with a salesperson who was just trying to meet their metrics and didn't care as much about whether or not they were being accurate, or wholly representative of the product. That said, you can also look at your customer churn rates. Most companies who are doing any of this kind of measurement are also measuring how quickly customers are churning. And if you have a physical product, you might be looking at return rates. And so any of those data points can be indicators. There's no one-to-one exact correlation per se, because as



humans, we are not binary beings that can just be measured from a yes or no question. We have to look at the whole picture in order to know Is there work we have to do and I believe every company has work they have to do

Katie McLaughlin 28:03

I completely agree about the personality testing to know measurement or data point is perfect. In business and in life, our brains are literally wired to want to have the easiest, fastest solution to something. One of the ways in business that we get tunnel vision is thinking that data is what it's all about. And that our data tells us everything we need. It can tell us a lot, but it still has our own assumptions that we put on it our own biases. There's also all these other cultural systemic challenges that influence a lot of that data, especially when we think about employee performance.

Katie McLaughlin 29:54

The first thing is that they have to acknowledge that difference that you're describing. You can't just rely on all these old descriptions. I think a lot of people are realizing that, but change is hard. It can feel like, "oh, well, we've always done it this way". So when we go back to the office, you'll have XYZ things.

Katie McLaughlin 30:21

Totally. My partner got hired at a company where it's based. I live in Seattle, and it's based here, but they only have a workspace and then not everybody comes to it. Nobody on his team actually goes when he does go into the office. So it's just a whole other experience. But one of the big things throughout the whole experience of hiring somebody publicizing your company, every single tiny thing matters even If you don't communicate with them in a clear, concise, open, excited way throughout that whole process. If the people who are doing the interviewing and reaching out to your new team members aren't committed and engaged, that's going to tarnish the experience. Interviewing is a skill. And we think that just that anybody can interview. I'm sure that you have probably noticed that throughout your time of even just doing this show that you've noticed your own improvement, as an interviewer and asking questions. It's a skill to ask questions that actually give you information. It's often a leader who's making the decision about who they're hiring. The tools that leaders have to describe how they lead, how they engage their team, how they assigned work, all of those things are going to be the actual lived



experience of culture. How does your team communicate? Are you regularly online at the same time? Are you regularly meeting with folks? Then I guess the last note I'll say on this is that we can't discount the importance of showing up on time and being ready to have the conversations with a new hire or potential hire, because when you're late, it doesn't seem like you're a priority. So that already sends a message to your potential hire that they don't seem committed to this, or they don't seem important to them.

Katie McLaughlin 33:29

That's not the kind of conversation that you really want to have one-on-one with a leader. I believe that it takes self work to get comfortable and to show up authentically, on conversations on Zoom, or your video platform of choice.

Katie McLaughlin 34:42

It's also so interesting to see and it's much harder to focus also, because you have all these notifications that come up. I'm definitely an Apple devotee. So I have the whole system that all connects to itself and I can get notifications everywhere. What I've realized is that I need to protect myself and all of that if I want to be authentic in the conversations I'm having, I have to turn all of that stuff off. Almost always my computer is on "Do Not Disturb" mode, so I'm not getting those desktop notifications.

Katie McLaughlin 36:54

I mean, it definitely does feel a bit like that. I have to catch myself saying, "Well, are we in the post-pandemic world?". Have we moved on, are things back to normal? I think normal is pretty boring anyways, but I was a remote employee before the pandemic, I think 2014-2015 is when I got my first remote job. Nobody else was a leader who was also remote in my company. And it was so much work to get engaged, it was so much work for people to understand, , how stressful back to back meetings were for me, because I didn't feel I could be late to meetings, because I didn't have to go anywhere. Whereas now, we have developed more of a culture of ease around, okay, you probably have been in back to back, maybe you needed a bio break. And that's okay to be a few minutes late. For people who are used to the culture and know that



you're going to be missing stuff. However, don't let that be an excuse. Oh, I had a leader while I was working remote before the pandemic, who was chronically late to all of my one on ones and, and canceled them a lot. And, at that time, we had a tenuous relationship besides that, and that just felt one more thing, another notch in the I don't think this person actually values me, they don't get that I actually need this time with them. And, and so that thing that may not have appeared as a thing as a problem was just one more notch in the belt of I don't know if I can stay here huh?

Katie McLaughlin 39:33

A few things that come to mind. We now essentially have all these little satellite people. Think about when you had satellite offices, there was still that same challenge of how do we develop this culture? How do we create bonds between people that are from different places, maybe have different educational backgrounds, one of my first experiences working in a satellite office, I actually went from our home office to help build out a satellite location and help to try to instill the culture. But one of the things we really had to learn was that people were coming from a different educational background, a different perspective on work life balance, and the role of family in the workplace. We really had to learn their culture and things. This wasn't us, this was not a global thing. But we still had to learn, okay, here's this disconnect. It doesn't make those people less than, but it means that if we want them if we want this synonymous experience, , where we've got people over here, and people over here who are doing similar stuff, then we maybe need to give people who have a different identity, a different background, different treatment, maybe they need different coaching, maybe they need a different manager to employee ratio, maybe they need different training, it's so important that we can start to consider that as you put people in other parts of the country or other parts of the world.

Katie McLaughlin 41:51

I absolutely think that's what companies should do. The more that we really kind of cement our work lives in this fragmented location, the more we need to invest in our people. And the more we need to take time out of our workday out of productive time to connect with each other. It's part of why one of the big things that I do in my work is our team centered workshops. Because there's a whole lot of stuff that happens behind the scenes that we just all get super disconnected. When you're working remotely, little things I was describing before about my manager, being late to a meeting all the time, those little things grate on you. You don't have as much context when people are just messaging via instant messenger. There's just so many things and so we have to start fresh, wipe the slate clean, reconnect, laugh together, and get



real talk together. Those are the stuff you need to be investing in as well. It's not just in gift cards or swag that you send to people through mail.

Katie McLaughlin 43:34

One of the things that I implemented with my last team and recommend to every leader is to celebrate wins. It's so common for us to think a win is oh, man, I made this great sale, or, Oh, I talk this customer off the ledge, whereas there are tiny wins that happen every day. One of my wins today might be that I showed up early to this conversation with a prepared agenda. That's the one I want to call out, ? Or , maybe you can also trade off on different wins. I want to call out a win for both me learning this thing and a win for Lindsay and how she helped me understand it. . That's something you can do asynchronously. You can do that on your instant message channels and things like that. Either make a channel specifically for wins or in your team channel. Have there be a recurring post where you ask people what your wins today or what are your wins this week

Katie McLaughlin 46:11

I think culture has actually never had anything to do with the physical office. We've always thought that culture is this big checklist of these events and these things, and we give out these gift cards and these awards and yada yada, yada. But those are the frostings on a cupcake. You have to actually have a cupcake to put some of that frosting on top of. And that cupcake is all those ingredients that are the every day in-between moments: when we get off the cuff feedback, when we get asked where is that thing that I asked for when we interact with a co-worker or a cross functional person in a different department and they blow us off or they put up a wall or get defensive. All of those tiny little moments are what add up to that experience of culture. And so the biggest thing I think you as a leader can start to focus on is where our ideas come from in our team. Are they coming from a broad swath of our team? Or are there fragments of a team that feel they can give ideas? Who is participating in team meetings, team conversations? If you do this when saying, who's participating? I could probably go on and on with a laundry list of things I think leaders could do. But the last thing I will say is that it's, I believe that a lot of ways these remote world's skew towards the extroverts, especially if we're in groups, extroverts or more outgoing, outspoken, you can be an introvert and be outgoing. When we skew towards that, it's a lot harder for those other folks who are maybe a little more



reserved, a little more shy, introverted, quiet, and need time to process. We need to build that into the ways that we asked for ideas. A really great thing, if you're coming into a brainstorm with your team, put out a shared document, and ask them to plop their ideas in before the meeting. Then we can go through those different ideas, and people then have the chance to be recognized and be heard.

Katie McLaughlin 49:33

I guess my first question would be, obviously, you're not going to have them parade around the office, which sounds amazing. By the way, I want a parade in my honor. ? Yes.

Katie McLaughlin 50:02

I'm an Ideator. I actually think that your example totally just reminded me of another idea, , why are there not Lunch and Learn kind of things, and they could be 30 minutes , 20 minutes an hour, where you kind of showcase that work of that other person. And we all know that not everybody shows up to a meeting. So don't just let the meeting be the one place where you give out that recognition. Also send an email, put it on your social media that you notify that you recognize employees, that is to accompany the employer branding thing. So put that out there on your social call out and our month of awesomeness award winner this month is blah, blah, blah, and here's two or three bullet points about why they're awesome, ? All of those things will make sure that you target and you get first of all, get the person who needs to be recognized and they're going to see how public you are recognizing them both within the company and out in the broader public and that's going to continue to boast that boost that feeling of awesomeness.

51:50

Yeah totally

Katie McLaughlin 52:10



Not to be outdone, is the actual showcasing of the work now because we don't get to see or hear around the watercooler. We don't get to hear about that if we're not the ones doing it. So have those teams do a 15 minute little promo or a five minute little quick video that you put out on your internal socials. If it's confidential, then put it out on your internal socials and get people excited about the work that they are engaging in.

Katie McLaughlin 53:22

I think I made a face with that question. Because honestly, I'm not surprised that the level of orientation is different. There's a lot of ways in which we can make assumptions that orientation is not my job. I know, there's a lot of HR and talent folks that come to this or might be here today, or listen to the recording. We know that it's so important that a certain amount of that orientation and onboarding comes from people's leaders and from their teams come from cross functional leaders. Now more than ever, it is our job to architect that experience for leaders, we can't assume that that is what they know what to do. We can't assume that they're going to do it on the cadence that we want them to, or on the cadence that their new hire needs. They're doing their thing, we're working on our stuff, and, and then all of a sudden, we have a new hire. So I have to be intentional about this thing. And I have to really be thinking about their experience. I really think that's a place where, let's create, let's create a schedule, let's create a plan, and don't just have it be for their first week. Think about their weeks leading up. There have been so many times when I have heard stories about remote employees being, "I don't know what's going to happen on Monday. And I am getting a computer, do I just get an email to my personal email? How is this gonna happen?" None of those questions should be out there. Because it just makes you and your company look unprofessional and unprepared. It already starts things off on a negative forefront.

Katie McLaughlin 55:28

I think most times people are giving notice to their previous employer. Or if they are in between jobs, they might want to take a sec before launching into something new. So give them as much notice as you can about those basic things. They don't have to know their whole schedule, they can just say, "Hey, we're gonna plan to meet up at 9:30 your local time. Here's the Zoom link. And we'll talk through the whole rest of your orientation at that point. We're so excited to have you here." That's all it has to take to calm any initial fears or anxieties that this person has because they don't really know you. They haven't gotten to be wined and dined and experienced who you are and all of that.



Katie McLaughlin 56:43

Best way is signing up for my newsletter. I don't send a ton of emails, but I do always send out a monthly message about any new content and new blogs. I'm a guest on a lot of things. I'm putting out all of those recordings so that you can learn from them too. Connect with me on LinkedIn and follow me. I'd love to have conversations with any of the folks that are in the chat today. There's been some really great engagement and I just want to say thanks to everybody who has been here. You being here shows that you care and it shows that you're trying to take intentional steps to be a better leader. I talk about leading deliberately and that's what we need in our worlds in our workplaces is conscious intentional, deliberate leaders who are choosing how to engage their teams rather than just going off of gut reactions or habits that may not be our best foot forward.

Katie McLaughlin 58:23

No, thank you this has been great and again thanks everybody for your great questions. I always love the challenge and I love to brainstorm these different things so there's always some cool stuff we can all learn through through experiences this

Katie McLaughlin 58:56

I just figured, I know you have to end the meeting for everybody. We ended a little earlier than I expected so I thought I'd just hop on and have a little debrief.

Katie McLaughlin 1:01:34

Cool. Awesome. Thanks! That question about compliance. What are they? What's their story? What do you mean by compliance? It's usually when anybody asks me a question, I often turn it back around and try to get more detail out of them. But it's so much harder on a non live non live video conversation with the folks. Yeah cool

Katie McLaughlin 1:03:14

I think that the compliance thing can sometimes also come out of a heavy HR or finance role where they're like, are they using their computer for non-work things? Are they leaving the



country? I know that at one company, they had employees who were just gonna go to Russia and work from Russia. And it was a huge cybersecurity nightmare.

Katie McLaughlin 1:04:20

I realized that I forgot to download the chat. So I know if you could have somebody from your team send that along. I'd love to because I didn't. I was not really following it. I'd love to see what other questions were coming up okay,

Katie McLaughlin 1:06:01

I've definitely heard about a lot of layoffs. I also know there's tons of companies that are hiring. And so it's this weird scenario. I'm not really sure kind of where things are going. I've kind of taken a little step back from my business for a little bit this summer because I've had a smorgasbord of nonsense happening in my personal life. And so I've had a few weeks where I kind of get why some people just don't want to work now. Things are still really hard.

Katie McLaughlin 1:07:07

Totally, I'm down. Yes!

Katie McLaughlin 1:07:51

The mental health component of all of this, we're really not talking enough about. I try to get at it with my work. Because at the end of the day, we're humans and all of our shit comes to work, our baggage, our triggers, our past history and expectations. We could have a whole conversation about that because that is where all of our sharp reactions come from in the workplace. It's part of what fuels, "Oh, I'm just going to leave, clearly this company is doing nothing about this problem. So I'm going to reevaluate what matters to me and what matters to me is not being treated like this."

Katie McLaughlin 1:08:51



I do talk about healing a certain amount. I'm relatively new in business. I'm still trying to figure out what words and themes are really resonating with me and my customers. I do talk a decent amount about healing. I feel that some of the pieces we didn't really get to today were some of my theater-based exercises and why we need to use different interventions, especially now because this gets really hard to talk about. I remember I was talking about the cupcake, which is a metaphor I've never used before. There's also this layer of gunk and sludge that is down there when you move a kitchen gadget and now you realize there's this disgusting stuff onto the coffee pot that I never expected would be there. I can't unsee it, but now I have to do something about it, or it's just gonna keep nagging at me. That's some of the healing I'm trying to help companies and leaders to have as well that you gotta process this shit.

Katie McLaughlin 1:10:37

I'm fine, everything's fine. Everything's fine.

Katie McLaughlin 1:10:46

You got to lower the stakes too. A lot of what I talked about is also because we're taking this out of the very specific scenario, we're making this more objective. Now that makes the stakes a little bit lower. We're troubleshooting all of the relationships that we have within our team.

Katie McLaughlin 1:11:45

I would love to stay in touch with you and keep jamming on this stuff. This has been great. Thank you so much for inviting me on. I think you just randomly messaged me on LinkedIn back in the day.

Katie McLaughlin 1:12:04

I appreciate the nod in my direction. It makes a difference. So thank you for that.

Katie McLaughlin 1:12:48



Yeah, for sure. Totally. Yeah, I would happily happily connect on any of that. I'm looking forward to staying in touch. Cool. Thanks, Lindsay. Yeah, bye.