Jillian Flodstrom (00:03):

Welcome to the Scale your Small Business podcast. This is the place where we help entrepreneurs and small business owners put systems in place to see exponential growth. I'm your host, Jillian Flodstrom, a serial entrepreneur, a compulsive organizer, and your business cheerleader. I'm gonna help you calm the chaos, increase productivity, and grow your revenue. Let's get started. So let's jump right into it. So first of all, I think one of the biggest questions that a lot of people have is how do you identify the right talent to hire for your business?

Jeremy Gotwals (00:40):

You know, I'm so glad you asked. It's funny that you mentioned it because we recently released a book with one of our authors called Hire Who You Want On exactly this, and it's the approach that Hester takes. And we, you know, we helped him write this book. It, it's a little different than he might think. And it's the very similar to the approach we take. We focus on vision and we focus on character, and we focus on culture, and we focus on personality. I would rather hire a c player that has the potential to become an A player, but who has incredible spirit and passion and moxie I would ra and who loves what they do and who loves people. I would rather hire that person than an a player who's just like, you know, doesn't like people <laugh>.

Jillian Flodstrom (01:33):

Yeah. You gotta have love for people. For sure. Is there any specific skills that you're looking for in your business when you're like, Hey, we need to hire someone new?

Jeremy Gotwals (01:42):

Yeah, so when it comes to, you know, when it, when it comes to skill sets, you know, we always look for people who we know are going to be able to, to work fast and work in a changing environment. Cause as a small company, you know, things are constantly moving. So, so when we look for talent, we look for people who are comfortable with improvisation, you know so our business understanding, having, having emotional intelligence is a big differentiating factor behind creating a piece of work that is going to make a return on investment for our clients. So these are, these are just a few of the things that we look for when we are looking for, for talent.

Jillian Flodstrom (02:34):

Now, on the flip side of that, when you're looking to retain your employees and keep the best people working with you, what are some strategies that you use?

Jeremy Gotwals (02:44):

You know, when it comes to retaining talent something we've received a piece of feedback that we've received in the past is that the independence and sort of the freedom, the autonomy that our company provides is, is of high value here. We're not helicopter managers. We allow our team to have a great deal of autonomy. In fact, I think we could micromanage a bit more <laugh>. So we, you know, we're very much like, here's the mission, here's the goal, here's the objectives, here's the SOPs, and go do it. And, but I think one of the things that we've learned is that, that in our, one of the mistakes we've made in the past that maybe we weren't involved enough in making sure that all of the steps of the formula lined up. So, but one, but certainly one thing that's really great for us, you know, in, in the talent that we work with is, is really keeping that spirit of cooperation, that spirit of collaboration.

Jeremy Gotwals (03:58):

And our longest standing, our longest standing people, you know, who have worked, who have edited books for us for years, for instance they they, they have a lot of autonomy. I mean, Rebecca Spivey, for instance, one of our editors who's been editing books for us for something like five years, you know, she, she's someone who I'm, I'm just like, Hey, I put her on with an author and I don't, I don't have to think about it. She'll tell me when she thinks she's gonna be done with a project, and I trust that she's just gonna know exactly what to do in her role. I don't have to worry about it. But with some of our more junior talent, you know, that that can change and differ. So I, I think that that spirit of cooperation, that spirit of cooperation and giving our team a lot of autonomy and a lot of freedom and a lot of space to really be CEOs of their own department, I think that that's crucial when it comes to making sh pe Sure. People are set up. Right.

Jillian Flodstrom (04:57):

Well, and when you have so many folks that are all over the world, how do you approach training and development for all those employees?

Jeremy Gotwals (05:06):

Yeah, I'm so glad you asked. Training and development is honestly one area of our company that we could really improve upon. In the past, you know, when we were first scaling our company it, it, there was a lot of haphazard and a lot of, there was a lot of chaos, you know, when it came to, you know, onboarding and training. And really what we've learned is that your, it's your processes. It's your written repeatable processes, it's your SOPs your standard operating procedures. It's documenting your approach. And as our author John, he Easter says, knowing what great looks like, you know, knowing what, what is, what is, what does great look like? You know, standing some of these fundamental things are a few things that have helped us improve training. So, just like last week, I was improve, I was training a couple of writing apprentices on hook creation, and I've got them wax on, wax off, practicing writing hooks.

Jeremy Gotwals (06:13):

And one of the things that we found to do was, hey, we asked them, cuz they're both writers, I said, write me five books for your books for the books you are working on. You know, and so I contextualize a, a a piece of training to something that would be important in their lives, something that would be important to them specifically. And they both had really great feedback to share. And actually tomorrow I'm gonna review these new hooks. But you know, knowing what exercises are gonna have the most net beneficial impact for your end product or your end service. But also knowing what things are going to engage and really encourage your team to, everyone loves to say think outside the box, but you know, to really think beyond the limitations of, you know, their given formula and really to, to innovate. That's where you really see innovation.

Jillian Flodstrom (07:14):

I think there's so many small business owners that are listening right now that can completely understand where, when you said that, like in the beginning, it's haphazard and you're kind of trying to work it out and figure it out. There's so many people that you're right, are just trying to work it out. What are some things, and maybe even some tools or software that you use to manage your team, but also manage those processes so everybody's on the same page.

Jeremy Gotwals ([07:38](#)):

Yeah. So, you know, one tool we were using for a while was monday.com, and we switched to a sauna. The jury still out on whether we prefer one or the other. Like, I don't, we don't have enough data yet to say, yes, Asana is better, or, wow, we should have stayed with Monday. We don't have enough data on that. But you know, what I also learned is that you'd be surprised what you could do project management wise with, with G-Suite, with some of the free tools that are Trello. You know, we, our authors, for instance, our clients have given us a lot of feedback that they really love Trello for planning their projects. And so a combination of these tools it it's really about what tool works right for you. I, I asked the team to choose the tools that they felt the most comfortable with because they're the ones living in the tools and executing every day.

Jeremy Gotwals ([08:36](#)):

The larger your company get gets, the larger your company gets, the more that becomes true. So, you know, one area that is really, that we're really buckling down right now in, in our companies improving these things, because what we found before was that, yeah, your revenue can scale, but holy, if you don't have the right infrastructure or if you, if there's holes in your infrastructure, you can leak money and your team can get burned out. So right now we're using Asana. We're using Slack for team communications. Slack has been a glorious time saver. You know, we, we ch for at our most optimal times and productivity very few emails were exchanged back and forth between members of our team. Most of the day-to-day correspondence lives in Slack. And a simple, depending on the size of your team and what you've got going on, simple Zoom standup meetings a few times a week or a couple times a week to cover project status is sometimes, depending on what kind of company you are, all you need to just keep that engine moving.

Jeremy Gotwals ([09:44](#)):

Of course, for some teams, you know, it makes the most sense to have that day standup. So you know that that really depends on you and your company and what you're doing. And I don't claim to be a process expert. I don't claim to be a systems and process expert. So that's one area where we are kind of like, okay, we've learned from our mistakes and now we know that we have these things to improve on. So that's a very long answer to your question, but yeah, but th that's, that's a kinda a, an overview of what we're looking at.

Jillian Flodstrom ([10:17](#)):

Well, I can definitely attest to Asana because it's something that my team uses and we are all over the world and it is a game changer. It's amazing what that system can do. And I think it's, there's very similar, just like you mentioned like monday.com, Trello, there's all sorts of different options, but choosing one that works for your team, I think is so important. And to stick with it even when it gets difficult, because it can be very easy to be like, eh, this isn't working word out. But I think that there are things that your teams can do with that software. It's incredible. And I encourage people to check out that free version of whichever product that they're looking at, because it might be what meets your needs currently, no matter what size you are. And I know that you're in the same boat with remote employees and teams of folks. How do you manage those folks? Do you lean on the software or is it more those in-person meetings over Zoom?

Jeremy Gotwals ([11:10](#)):

When our team was the most at the, and when our team at time, our team has been the most effective when there is regular communication and, and regular Zoom correspondence at the same time, you can overdo it. You can, like, we at the reverse of that, there have been periods where even this year where we've just burnt time in Zoom, like where, just like, like I can look at, I can track a lot of hours this year that have just been wasted on Zoom. That is just like, we did not this a meeting didn't need to happen about this. Like this didn't need to be a, a meeting. And I am not a fan of wasted meetings. I, there's a healthy balance though, because your team needs to know that there's someone cares about them. Your team needs to know that someone is listened to them, that someone is concerned with their problems.

Jeremy Gotwals ([12:09](#)):

And I think at, at our worst, I think at our worst I was so in the focus of my own specific responsibilities, which, you know, at times is very scattered. And too, even when, even in like, even when we're, even with the largest, our staff has been, like, I've had too many things on my plate. And I think that there have been time. I think at our worst, I've been isolated from my team at times, and that happens, that happens to founders and it happens to leaders of companies where we get isolated from our team and we're not giving them enough love, we're not giving them enough, enough attention to their problems. And it's because we're so in our heads with our, with the problems that we're trying to solve. And that can be really difficult. That can be a really, it can be a, a setup for a toxic and stressful environment if you don't solve for that. So, so making sure that you're taking time away to shut everything else off and really, you know, pay attention to your team is super important.

Jillian Flodstrom ([13:14](#)):

And I know that you recently scaled your business, so talk to me a little bit about how you handled the onboarding process for all those new employees that you hired.

Jeremy Gotwals ([13:24](#)):

Yeah, so I mean, as we were scale, we were building a lot of our onboarding processes as we were scaling. So it wasn't like, yay, we've got this great process, now we're gonna go scale. It was like, no, we, we were, hi. We were hiring and onboarding and kind of figuring it out as we went, as we were scaling. And so the, the process, you know, became one that certainly improved over time, but that was certainly a trial by fire and there were a lot of mistakes we made along the way with that. You know, they, we hired some great people and made some great decisions and we also made some costly decisions. And so after, and then the aftermath of that, now our practices today are much more thorough, are much our prac, our hiring practices today are much more involved, you know, have more details than they did in the past.

Jillian Flodstrom ([14:31](#)):

And if you could look back on that scenario, because I think this is really good for people to hear people that are super successful, talk about those mistakes that they made. Looking back on when you were scaling your business, is there anything that you would go back and change or you're like, Hey, this is something that I always mention to people, don't fall into this pitfall.

Jeremy Gotwals ([14:50](#)):

There's so much I could say and so much that I would love to tell my former empath self. You know, one of those things is don't scale too fast. I was ver we were very attracted to that growth. And the thing is, sometimes it just happens. It's like one day you are hunting for leads and the next day you can't, you,

you have too many leads. And that's what happened with us. It's like, it was the end of 2020. We were just fi figuring out some of the pieces to great lead flow and then into 2021 it was like, holy crap, we had more appointments than we could even handle. And there was this, there was this instinct to be like more mourn. There was this instinct that revenue solved all problems, which there's truth in, but the, the problem was that we, we knew how to operate, we knew how to operate a, a a company of this size, but we weren't set up to operate a company of this size.

Jeremy Gotwals (16:00):

And so what happened was, well, yeah, we just kept closing new business, but as a result of that, there were a lot of things that we didn't see a lot of unforeseen things. Our infrastructure, our foundation was not as strong as it should have been. And when it comes to hiring you know, there's this mantra of higher slow fire, fast. I believe there's a lot of truth in that, but I also think that it's not just about hiring slow and firing fast. It's, and it's not just about hiring smarter, it's also about really investing the time to really understand what does great look like with your employees. As our author John Hester says, what, what does really identify, really documenting, really understanding what makes an employee a great fit. And what we found is that sometimes even top performers are not a fit, because a top performer may not be a culture fit or a top performer might just be there to collect a paycheck, you know, so really I'd rather take a b performer who is really loving the energy and loving what they do and loving the people than an a performer who is salty and bitter and, and doesn't have that love.

Jillian Flodstrom (17:25):

Absolutely. I think that's good for all of us small business owners to keep in mind is that personality oftentimes is so much better. Because if you have a personality, we can teach those skills and not necessarily looking for someone with those skills at the beginning is the best way to go about it. But I appreciate you sharing everything with us today because your knowledge about scaling your business is so vast, and we could chat for hours about this, but I just wanna thank you for spending time with us today to chat about all these different things. Now if people wanna get in touch, where's the best way to connect with you?

Jeremy Gotwals (18:01):

You know, if people wanna get in touch with me a really great secret is to just go onto my Instagram and follow me and send me a dm. Just, Jeremy got Walz. It's like, the question got Walz, but there's one L. I typically also hand, you know, my, my number texting me is also a much faster way than than email. But if for those who want to get in touch with me, follow me on ig, send me a DM and then I'll send you my cell if, if it makes sense for us to have a conversation.

Jillian Flodstrom (18:35):

Awesome. Thank you so much again for being with us today.

Jeremy Gotwals (18:39):

Hey, yeah, thank you so much Jillian. You rock.

Speaker 3 (18:43):

That's

Jillian Flodstrom (18:43):

All we've got for this episode of the scale of your Small business podcast. One thing that would really help me and other new potential listeners is for you to rate this show and leave a comment in iTunes, Stitcher, or wherever you tune in to listen. Also, make sure to link up with us@highgillian.com or on social media. And don't forget to please just share, share, share this podcast with anyone who you think might enjoy it. Until next time, remember, it's never too late to get clear.