Addressing Recruitment and Retention in VR

Context

John Walsh (JW): So let's get the presentation started by taking a look first at some learning objectives. So what we're going to do, Ron and I are going to spend a little time talking about some of the things we found that are promising practices around recruitment and retention. So we're going to specifically look at some of the key takeaways from a pilot project that we conducted through the VR Technical Assistance Center for Quality Management in collaboration with the Operations and Personnel Committee of CSAVR. So we'll be looking at some of the findings from that. We'll also be looking at some of the promising practices about retaining your current staff that oftentimes link to improving your recruitment strategies to attract those new candidates. We're also going to share resources that you can access to assist you in implementing practices around retaining valued staff and attracting those candidates to fill vacancies when they occur. Last but not least, as I said, we're fortunate to have three directors join us, and they're going to talk about their journey to improve recruitment and retention in their organizations. Now, you're going to see that the directors are kind of at different phases of their journey, and each journey is slightly different. So keep that in mind when you listen on some of the practices that they've implemented. The other piece of this is we like to keep this session interactive. So I already noticed there is a pretty active chat going on. So if you have questions as we go through the presentation, please feel free to put it in chat. We'll be monitoring it, and we're going to actually take little kind of pauses in the presentation after each of the sections to actually answer some of those questions. And then at the very end, we're also going to leave a little space to answer those questions we couldn't get to. If you don't feel comfortable asking a question in general chat, send me a direct message, and I'd be happy to ask on behalf of a friend.

JW: So in this first section, Ron and I are going to do a bit of presentation that's going to give you kind of some of the groundwork for what we're going to talk later with the directors. So let's start really globally. And when I mean that, I mean let's look at some of the results from what the Gallup organization have found. Many folks are familiar that the Gallup organization conducts an annual employee engagement survey. And they issue a report called The State of the Global Workplace. And what that really looks at is a measure of employee engagement. And I'm going to talk a little bit more about what that means, what employee engagement means. But in a time where many organizations are finding it difficult to retain staff or recruit new staff, it's really critical to understand this concept of employee engagement. So part of the Gallup survey that they do globally, they ask the question, to what extent are you currently looking for a different job than the one you have now? So 48% of the respondents to that question stated they're watching or actively seeking a new job. One of two employees are open to leaving their organization. So you could see this is not an issue that is only unique to the public VR system.

JW: So a key takeaway that has consistently emerged from the Gallup survey, and again, they do this on an annual basis. A key takeaway is, if you want to improve your organizational

performance, change the way your people are managed. Now, you probably heard the old adage, employees don't quit jobs, they quit their managers. And I think there's some truth to that. And I think the survey backs it up. When you look at recruiters, they often hear from the recruits, the reason they're seeking a new job is often linked to their direct supervisor. And some of the issues that can emerge are managers struggle to, fail to kind of foster, teamwork, to keep staff members engaged, to provide that needed feedback and coaching that contribute to the employee's growth. Throughout this kind of, throughout this presentation, you're going to hear employee engagement arise again and again as a central theme.

JW: So let's take a closer look at some of the results of the most recent 2023 Gallup state of the global workplace. So when you look globally, 23% of the respondents to the survey report that they're thriving at work, they're engaged. Now, when we look at the statistics in the United States, that's a little better, it's 31%. So these employees find their work meaningful, they feel connected to the team and their organization, they feel a sense of pride of the work they do, and they take ownership on their performance. They go the extra mile for the teammates and the customers. So let's look at the other end of the spectrum. For those that are actively engaged, or if you will, loud quitting, 18% of respondents globally and 17% in the United States, these are folks that may take active actions that directly harm the organization. They could undercut its goals, they can oppose its leadership. At some point along the way, the trust between the employee and the employer was severely broken. Or perhaps the employee has been woefully mismatched to a role, causing a constant crisis. But oftentimes, when folks are actively disengaged, those are the folks that could be real morale killers in an organization. And that could be very detrimental to your corporate culture, organizational culture. Now, if we look at the middle group, about 59% globally, 52% in the United States, are respondents that are not engaged. They're not actively out of the game, but they're not in the game either. Sometimes we hear the term quiet quitting being used. These are employees, they fill a seat, but they're watching the clock. They'll put effort in, but they're really not psychologically connected to the work they're doing. They oftentimes can feel minimally productive. And honestly, more likely, they have feelings of being stressed or burned out than those that are actively engaged in the workplace. They often feel disconnected and just kind of divorced from the main purpose of the organization. So here's an interesting statistic. So we talked about that middle group, right? So the quiet quitters, if you will, that's 59% of the respondents. When Gallup asked additional questions about what would you change about your workplace to make it better, 85% of that group, which comprises the majority of employees that responded to the survey, their responses were related to engagement or culture, pay and benefits, and wellbeing or work-life balance issues. So I want you to notice that the top response, 41% is related to engagement, feeling connected to the organization or the sense of organizational culture. Pay and benefits comes in second at 28%. And then lastly, at 16% is the issue of wellbeing or work-life balance. So although pay is listed as an important factor, and it is, I mean, we want to have livable compensation for folks that they could support their family, they can support themselves.

JW: But I want you to notice how much organizational culture, feeling engaged, and having a sense of wellbeing are such critical factors that emerge from these surveys. And it's consistent throughout the years. There hasn't been much change in that factor for a number of time.

JW: So what are some of the themes that emerge from some of the open-ended questions from this survey? Folks want to get recognized for their contributions. They want managers

that are approachable and are open to discussion. Folks want to feel a greater sense of autonomy to stimulate everyone's creativity. Folks want to learn more things. They want to have a chance to grow professionally. Folks want to be respected. They want to also be given a fair chance for promotions, those kinds of opportunities for advancements. They want clear goals. And they want stronger guidance from their management team.

JW: Now, we're going to link this directly to the public VR system, because Dr. Jim Herbert from Penn State University also did some work, some survey work directly with state VR agencies and kind of look for those congruencies when we go through that data.