

EPISODE: #11 Hosting Gary Davis, SmartAction

Shannon Bryant(host):

Greetings and welcome to the eleventh installment of our podcast series the work force lands brought to you by Terry Kelly college in North Texas I am Shannon Bryant executive vice president for corporate solutions and economic development and I will be your host moderating strategic conversations with employers and economic developers on all things related to preparing and growing the work force today in the future for this episode of the work force limbs podcast we enter the world of artificial intelligence today my guest is Gary Davis CEO of smart action the tech company that designs and installs automated call answering systems welcome Gary happy to have you here today.so let's start out I want to know all about smart action in the company the mission tell us about the organization if you will .

Gary Davis:

Sure we as a company we started out as a way for think tank if you will people getting together try to figure out how to make a computer think like a person somewhere along the way they had the reservation had the nascent versions of what maybe you would experience a with Syria but at the time weren't sure how to monetize what to do with it the founder had you know friend that worked in a call center to you know be great if you could make that work for customer service instead of push one for press two for the company was born.

So over the years we've leveraged our in house our own technology you know the whole our early stage ideas were if this isn't easy customer service is an easy automation isn't easy the allies not easy so how do we make it less hard how do we provide frictionless interactions for our customers customers.

Shannon Bryant(host):

I like that frictionless yes so.

Gary Davis:

And then over time we've continued as the market is shifted in certain aspects of for example speech recognition or text to speech I've become more commoditized we've narrowed our focus on what happens in between those things and that's where that artificial intelligence comes into play and you know our goal is to ensure that you are again our customers customers are getting the help they need you know the idea behind using a machine to deal with a human interaction and making it as human as possible were knocked out nobody's getting full there were not some fake human in place but we certainly can provide you know level of service and really save the call center the human to human interaction for the more complex things that aren't repeatable or scriptable are quick and you know how do we relieve that pressure so you know we are our goal has been and continues to be eight to you know provide the best experience and you know help our customers maintain their brand awareness and their customer relationships while giving the customers the help they need and giving the call centers the relief they're looking for.

Shannon Bryant(host):

Okay how large is the company Kerry how many employees do you have.

Gary Davis:

We're right around seventy employees we cannot it fluctuates here and there depending on you know needs and career paths but so we're seven employees we have been around about twelve thirteen years now as an organization.

Shannon Bryant(host):

And you've been with us even the CEO hello.

Gary Davis:

I've been the CEO for a little over two years ago the company just about three and spent three years.

Shannon Bryant(host):

Okay, Great and tells a little bit about this you're talking about serving the customers of the customers what kind of industries do you serve.

Gary Davis:

So, it's another cop out to say were industry agnostic but yeah we work in certain verticals we work in the hospitality, medical, retail, service if you will so you know we do roadside assistance we do where's my order we do I need to schedule doctor appointments, I need to change my hotel reservation, I wanna upgrade my room like so you know we were taking a foundational thing like let's say scheduling and but then we are able to then configure that scheduling piece based on the vertical a customer would begin to the end of the day whether you're making an appointment for you make it a point man our reservation for a room to see a doctor. For a tea time whatever maybe it's all still what day what time and what's available and who do you want to see what course you want to play or what hotel you wanna stay at so it's just a set of variables but that that foundational element is similar for all we do the configuration so we then take college you know fifteen twenty of those. About models and based on a vertical assemble them into okay so for insurance you want things like that you know claims management first also lost button your medical I want to know where my reference my referral. The similar concepts but they are they each feel different depending on the vertical your hand.

Shannon Bryant(host):

So, you're able to establish Kendra foundation each of the industries and then customize it according to the client very similar to what kind of the corporate solutions department does here at TCC.

Gary Davis:

Fair enough.

Shannon Bryant(host):

So okay great so can you give us an example of just so the audience can understand perhaps a message how do you humanize a message if you will for a call center client.

Gary Davis:

Okay, Part of it is there's a. use a lot of human adjectives as well things like empathy care under you know you come across understanding or the idea is to create an

environment that when the phone is picked up in the machine says how can I help you today and you say look I can't fault you know where's my order I'm looking for my order or I want to pay my bill I need a doctor's appointment and then the next thing it does is it understands what you said and starts to help you do that establishing that almost trusted me is probably the right word but that trust with the caller that he okay this thing's gonna help me I'm gonna give it a chance right thank you for calling someone so push one for immediately everyone's just like operator you know very quickly people on a bail out of that because until I it's so it's all on me to figure out which buttons I have to push to get to where I want to go where is when we take the natural language approach leveraging our you know the artificial intelligence site and be able to grab capture intent and an open ended questions and understand and very quickly the caller realizes of this thing understands B. this thing's gonna help me it gives it a chance and you know that's a big piece of the puzzle is it's not we're not trying to make it. It's human like it's a human like interaction because re using natural language because you can speak naturally as opposed after articulate differently because it's a bot but the idea is that if you build that trust and that's the human aspect is to create a connection with the caller that says. I'm gonna help

Shannon Bryant(host):

you make me not only hit zero well.

Gary Davis:

It's funny because you know we have a two pet peeves ever since I joined the company and they were I have them before joining the company but I don't like calling someplace getting a machine going through information like who I am and my account number and authenticating and then then they have to send me to a person in that person all the same question right.

Shannon Bryant(host):

Exactly and so on.

Gary Davis:

Yeah, I try to be saints that's part of how we approach it with our customers as a we need to be able to pass you what we've already done so you're when you're call center picks up all that works already done enough to redo that work and your caller has better experience.

Gary Davis:

All about that caller experience and my other pet peeve is when someone says operator or representative how many times you know out there out there listening how many times have you called in and you said that. The next question is well what is it you want the I want to talk to somebody about I can still might be able to help you.

Shannon Bryant(host):

Right.

Gary Davis:

I have a question about my bill well you want to pay your bill no question about my bill well you have a question about billing yes okay well which believed because the vote the bots trying to trap you wants to keep you in that machine you get stuck in a cycle right and it's frustrating right and that's that that's counterintuitive to customer service you want to create custom frustration when trying to quit because for service so we take the approach someone wants out there out sending over now there's on occasion always say there are longer wait times you want to call back or do you want to wait. We don't try and trap them in the box again we're the best customer service for someone who doesn't want to talk to a machine is to get them out of machine.

Shannon Bryant(host):

So, in working and I guess in the sales process how do you overcome the obstacle of customers wanting human interaction in the business I what what's the conversation like and how does that relate to your product.

Gary Davis:

So we come across that quite a bit of course you know everybody wants to have people talk to people right and that's you know the end of the day your hope and expectation is that's the best customer service the probably run into as you don't always have the availability or the budget or whatever it may be to have all the people you need and you start to run into challenges where you have long hold times a long wait times and though eventually talking to a person is what someone wants the longer it takes them to get to a person or the harder it is for them to get a hold of somebody the more frustrated they get and you actually deteriorate that customer experience while actually trying to hold to we always let somebody talk to a person in today's environment which was happening before pre pandemic we are disturbed to see workforce challenges but it's so much exacerbated now with your pull whatever phrase you want the great resignation the great departure that what it was you know the incredible shrinking work force everyone to call the service industries decimated by that and those call centers are service jobs and to keep people you're having to pay a lot more tough and you find people you savings all will pay more will find people you still can't find people even though you're offering more.

Shannon Bryant(host):

That's not quite how it works right.

Gary Davis:

So your capacity is nowhere near what used to be but your demand is probably a hundred ten or twenty percent of what it was so you what that does is it creates a whole time you want to maintain that human interaction yeah we've got you know we have people we talked to have three hour hold times and how many of those calls are on hold could be handled because they're a simple question or I want to change an appointment or are they you know they want to they want they got a bill they want to pay their bill like these are things that can be automated and what happens is if you start to automate these calls you actually we've found with a customer's when we've done the analysis within their C. step C. sat scores go up their customer their net promoter scores go up because our customers get the help they need without having to wait and one something's more complex because you've offloaded so many of these repeatable calls to the bot you actually have been within that call

center now you actually have people the wait time might only be fifteen, - twenty minutes, five minutes or the answer right away but now the people who are really having an issue that the machine can't solve because there are those exist they actually get somebody and get somebody in a timely fashion get the help they need so the reality is that the in today's world I want to maintain a human touch with my customers you're actually deteriorating that human experience without having automation in place.

Shannon Bryant(host):

True do you have a way how do you go about measuring success for clients to buy your product like an R. L. why are you able to establish that for a client certainly so that.

Gary Davis:

Our allies the big pieces the biggest piece of it you know we. The obviously we deliver the machine cost less than dealing with a person there's calculations we can do how many calls do we expect we'll call we what we do run through a whole process you'll call study and understand the volume in the call types and things like that and then we'll put an ROI together we're usually very conservative about that R. O. Y. and but we find that in almost all of our clients and our allies it is impressive or it is compelling. The R. O. Y and you know there are some customers where that are a why isn't maybe as incredible but for the intangible cost that's happening to them become comes into play so you know it yeah there's an RO higher the machine pays for itself but savings wise you know you're not gonna lose you're not losing customers you're not turning people away or you're not having these other frustrations and there's a huge value to that as well customer retentions got yet so the customer retention you know some of our customers like I said they do Pauline and they get their customer satisfaction or net promoter scores and we participate in that with them are you look for those numbers from them but predominantly it's an R. O. I. based equation you know it pays for itself it puts money in the bottom line that that money can go to retaining your positive staff other marketing yeah we've given you know some of the people we talked to recently who actually running B. PO's with you know these large call centers for multiple customers we usually work with that.

Shannon Bryant(host):

The customer explains PPR just for our business process outsourcing so.

Gary Davis:

It's a call center that handles let's say you know multiple customers so where as we sit in front of that on the customer basis so you know we would set up a bot for one of our customers the calls will come to us first we can't help them we would then send it to that call center the third party call centre well there's a conversations with those third party call centers that say Hey you know you have the same capacity problems how are you going to have growth this year next year and the year after the only gonna get growth is to create capacity how do you create capacity let us start putting digital I we come IVR intelligent personal agents or not operators they're not receptionist actually agents they can actually complete tasks and do things you know how do we put them in front of the BPO.

Take those minutes away from the call center that man makes more minutes you can go sell somebody else and I so basically every minute you defer to the pot is a minute of potential growth you could have by selling to another customer when you say what's the evidence what's the measure success it measures success is happy customers and happy customers for us happy customers for our customers and you know a financial impact we don't take the R. R. I. and say okay we can lay off thirty five people from your yeah that's really you know not the approach we try take it's more along the lines of you won't have to add more people and you're going to solve these problems you're having because at the end of the day I can sit down in front of a customer and say Hey we can we can in your industry we do these fifteen things most often three to five of them are pain points across every everybody in that particular industry so the right away said well that's a problem that's a problem that's from okay great I guess all those problems then as we solve those problems and have success all right let's add some else listed somewhere else and start and expand those pieces specially backed your human like conversation their customers who are concerned about having a potter machine in play.

So, you start small rightly get your customers you should see that work see that your customers aren't rejecting the notion of having a machine help them and then you can start to expand that footprint and a strategic way to continue to grow that our ally.

Shannon Bryant(host):

Right do you do multiple languages?

Gary Davis:

For organ donation we do we've done predominantly English and Spanish but we have the capability of doing most any.

Shannon Bryant(host):

Any language being a company that really works in the AI space tell us about smart action and how do you adopt the concept of innovation so you're obviously a high-tech company doing really challenging things every single day trying to improve but what is what is innovation look like for you.

Gary Davis:

Innovation for us is committed to a couple times recent past there's a time where we everything was our own tax so we're having to you know expand our own speech track expander into TS expand our own the. A. I. capabilities within certain functions and parts of the system and then as you know other companies out there that have all the money and all the resources like Google Microsoft Amazon.

Commoditized certain pieces equation like speech recognition right it's you know you call an API you send it or you know you scented audio you get back taxed as I start to look at what we were doing you have to continue to try and compete with that we would out do them says B. truck wise for long period of time until suddenly we weren't right we were now there's good as us okay now the better whatever so we made the pivot the second will start using some of these third party tools the benefit there is I can then focus more innovation into what happens between the speech recognition text to speech algorithmic artificial intelligence how we make those

decisions building out better components that use better natural language models that understand things better than the competitors can provide and really focusing on that piece of the puzzle of the understanding and the variations and the functions that we can provide to our customers and let the commodities on the book ends be the Prodi's and what that does is it provides not only a better experience for our customers and their customers also enables them my clients to have sort of kind of front edge of some of these technology pieces that don't require me to make massive investments because I'm investing in the way the way better sweet spot in the middle making that so awesome as speech recommend her as the text to speech engine sound more human like they'll get those advances because we're just plugged into that now as opposed to having have me continue to invest our version of those stay competitive I can now focus on the in between and get better intelligence better customer understanding will you continue to refine the back and forth to get that more empathetic or among the sales side that more push if you will to really achieve the customers business goals and customer service goals and not have to invest in you know commoditized and points.

Shannon Bryant(host):

So, with all this innovation and technology show what kind of staff do you hire who who's helping with this to move the kind of the needle forward if you know your strategic direction.

Gary Davis:

You can both sides because not only are we you're building the box we also then manage them as a service I've got the engineers we're usually looking for early stage career kind of hungry learn a lot they're helping you know innovate build those things I have a couple of a product managers in the in a manager with you know a lot in the in that role to help provide here's what do next the roadmap and so forth but you get those kind of young up and coming hungry engineers who want to go do something cool and then want to leverage that to whatever the next thing is that's a sweet spot there and then on the other side you know we looking like technical account managers support things of that nature where you know they're really the eyes and ears for the business you know they're providing yeah we have a customer portal to provide certain data points and things like that but they're going next level Hey I dug into this this or this and we think we can make this change here I made I made this change and we're and we've seen a three five ten twenty percent pick up in completion our understanding whatever may be you know we're managing that downstream so I've got to come a functional group of post-delivery managing the natural language processing and the different pieces of the equation the deficit means yeah it needs to be pet care and feeding and this is a big piece of the puzzle that a lot of customers and a lot of people the market because voice recognition and so forth so ubiquitous everybody talks to Syria they've got Google's or Alexis in their house they think it's easy what happens next when that text comes back that's hard that's not easy and it takes a lot of work and if you're gonna work in an island just unto yourself it's very difficult and I have people who understand the N. L. you and understand what the algorithms and manage intense and all the different pieces that happened between the bookends is complex and the way we work is you know you go higher up person you find a unicorn that can do all that for you you've already spent more money than my solution is going to cost you so we're really at that point where it's the idea is that we're providing not only the technology but then we're continuing to manage it for you and because of the scale and us working across multiple verticals.

As we find our fix challenges for one customer approve something over here and a piece of the puzzle for this customer actually benefit you over here and if you're working just with

your own data sets in your own calls as opposed to the millions and millions and millions of calls that I'm dealing with you're only gonna catch certain pieces you know gonna fix certain pieces so what happens is you deploy and you've got a scale of diminishing returns whereas with us you deploy the ideas you actually should continue to grow and increase because we're constantly tuning and adjusting and applying expertise against what's happening not only to your individual bot but also the components within and across industries to have a better understanding.

Shannon Bryant(host):

Okay fascinating, So I know you move the company to four or ten twenty twenty-one so I crack that's correct from Los Angeles yes why Fort Worth weiren county.

Gary Davis:

March fifteenth LA shut down or send everybody home. Two weeks four weeks to months and we had a point where we were doing polling of our employees through surveys and really turn to hate you know a lot of plays like I'm never going back to the office we're a tech company we made the transition to virtual very quickly yeah I started looking in terms of the challenges around LA the challenges around hiring people in LA and once we made that Hey we're going to be virtual decision we opened up hiring to anywhere in the United States and we really started to find that for you know our pay scale we could get actually hi gale high quality people in through the through certain areas of the country that we certainly can't compete in LA so looking at that as well.

In addition, we probably let's move headquarters were virtually can be anywhere let's get out of California because it's challenging to do business in California probably read that a million times but yeah so.

Shannon Bryant(host):

Few times.

Gary Davis:

So, I started looking at other places though I've always had a personal affinity for Texas and DFW articular and so I just I did kind of blind outreach to a handful of places so I you know I did Dallas to Fort Worth Nashville, Vegas two cities in Florida and Atlanta and you know had a Hey this is who I am this is Iraq have this tech company we've gone virtual and looking for you know to relocate to headquarters to have certain incentives as you know just kind of a an opportunity to creatively fundraiser if you will as well as your change the paradigm of who we are as an organization. Frankly for worst was like Johnny on the spot, they came back immediately they engage right away one or two the other cities. Kinda had feedback it just wasn't as energetic wasn't as committed if you will as a Fort Worth was. So you know start looking for worth made a few trips out here. One employee was already out in the area had been here in the past for other things so. It really started to ring true as I worked with the city you know it was really interesting to see where they started with the incentive program and then working with them as a tech company like when a we're not building a building this doesn't look what you're sending me as if I'm doing construction but I'm tack so we got a three you got to rethink how these how you gonna measure these things are what these commitments look like or how this works. They work wonderfully collaborative on that and had some really great ideas on how to do that so it worked out really well it just

sort of landed on this was what makes sense it makes sense for the organization it makes sense for you know me as the CEO pulled the trigger made the move and we've not been happier couldn't be happier it's interesting the opportunities that have come to us because of the move to Texas that right there for us when we were in California.

Shannon Bryant(host):

Find more listeners here.

Gary Davis:

Finance certainly more business here we're finding that even partners that were here that we were connected with while in LA it's a completely different tenor and tone in collaboration now that we're here versus being from LA regionally the it's a big pick up for us are a bit of a big motivation for us but also as we go talk to other people in the country it's you know there's like there's a piece there was like all you got all you left California and there's just this sort of plight understanding that US organization are making the moves to make sure you you're the best you can be for us and moving from California to Texas for the particular.

You know making that move it shows that you're looking to continue to be on the front end of things you're looking at eight so many tech companies are moving you know to the Lone Star state that and I like I looked at Austin my problem loss was very impacted right so if you have the stiffest challenges were resources every eighteen months they go find new jobs and the cost of everything goes up in fort worth was Hey we want to be the next check-up we want to bring you and then we want to bring others now we wanna keep bringing others and you know there's challenges with all of that night you know I mean I talked to the city I talked to the chamber like kind of a wide perspective but that's the goal that's what they're after is you know they were you know ten years fifteen years now they want to be were national was you know five years ago if you will certainly want to be part of that no I'm a small company but you know what you just read somewhere right in the first drop in the bucket right.

Shannon Bryant(host):

That's right exactly that's what I always tell people you don't got a start somewhere right.

Gary Davis:

So it's you know it's just was your RST of Kismet maybe but it just worked out really well and again it's it was very easy to land on that decision based on the interaction I was having with people to city and the people to chamber and then people such as yourself and you know just kind of it once I got here just I've never run into a standoffish anything everybody's been very welcoming organizations are eager to help everybody's up for conversation so it's just it's been it's been a really great opportunity and everyone introduces you to others like that the networking aspect of making this move again nothing like we were we were able to get Los Angeles so it's been it's you know it's beta it's made a big impact for us and out I didn't make anyone fact pick up and move offered an incentive for them to do so some dead and then as we've had turnover we've just been re hiring you're focusing a retiring on the DFW area and have had good success with that.

Shannon Bryant(host):

I'm curious to know what the hiring most of your employees are virtual.

Gary Davis:

Right.

Shannon Bryant(host):

It opening up kind of the hiring process if you will if that is a virtual position have you found better options and finding talent because one of the things that you hear obviously. In the tech industry is you know trying to find people to write skill sets and I just curious did that help opening up that world of virtual work from home.

Gary Davis:

the work from home also challenges. You're not to get to you know to pandemic Lee lost in in in the politics of things but one of forty first virtual we had a huge uptick in productivity and just because there's nothing else to do. I mean even myself I'd like I'd get up at you know 10 o'clock and I had to go grab a couple water and at 2:00 AM I realize I'm still sit at my computer working right just because it was right there.

Shannon Bryant(host):

Right and so you can't leave the living room right.

Gary Davis:

Read the office and home there you know you talk about having a balance was the balance it's the same thing all the time. Well at some point that starts to wear on people. So, we've done a lot of work around the corporate culture and things to deal with you know trying to you know provide we do virtual happy hours we try and take go meet with other co-workers are we set up a Regis go have a team meeting like trying to get people to collaborate or get together but the virtual side. There is still a desire clearly with employees that.

Yeah, I can work from home but December lives near me. True warehouses everywhere somebody else where's the office like they still want. On occasion the availability to go and collaborate and have community.

Shannon Bryant(host):

Kind of social connect?

Gary Davis:

We recently actually the meeting tomorrow construction meeting tomorrow morning we're taking a space downtown at the Fort Worth of building so our office will be downtown Fort Worth which I think is important given the move to Fort Worth but it's also central and as we look for the early-stage career folks do you've got things like public transport in the different pieces of the puzzle that makes sense by being downtown. It's not the huge space for the entire company comes to work every day it's a smaller so. It's not small but it's a smaller space that. You know we may have a handful of people in and out each day or you know it's pretty people once or twice a week who knows I probably I'll go in a couple times a week to have that office environment or quiet space whatever maybe but. It's changed it still has that draw to

it if you will right I you know I've got it yeah you know I don't play in Colorado I got one of Pennsylvania like we've got people elsewhere. But I'm trying to make sure that there's still a sense of community and we have the ability to gather at times if we can't support into the culture it is a important of the mental well-being of your employees myself included consignment times, I've been on assuming my dog start barking it's like at some point okay.

Shannon Bryant(host):

We've all had those heavily over the past couple of years for sure thrust so Gary with being such the tech related company everything obviously my expertise is the learning and development space one is learning and development look like for the employees a smart action?

Gary Davis:

we have a lot to do we're busy and it's hard to balance let's we let's get stuff done and go let's deliver for clients and let's you know let's innovate let's change the change the way we do things which is what we've been doing and. also along the way let's set time aside for your personal growth education and it's hard we provide certain tool sets to our employees to do those sorts of things we try to make time available for them we have an education stipend or someone wants the PM wants to go get certified we help offset that cost of you know engineer wants to take a certain course we cannot help offset that cost but you know a lot of that is more monetary and Hey on your own time type stuff which is again what is your go back to the conversation someone's own time is a lot greater than it used to be. In and we try we did we had a hackathon last year and we had our first hackathon we have four different problems are trying to solve it through into four different engineering teams and Yeah, they had to go. Research and learn and figure out how okay what tools can I bring to solve this beyond the ones I currently have because obviously if our current tools with solid we'd already have solved these problems right exact so inspired vacation right had to require any bit of a choir than to learn and you know it's a lot of education and thought man. You know and then you start to push the envelope. You know I'm gonna hate all right engineering group. You're gonna present your hack. To the whole company an all hands meeting right so it's also you know kinda it's the other side of the equation there's the hate going you know going to cave and solve a problem but then there's the other side of come out in the light and share it with everybody professional developments you know soft skills management but then there's also that you're kind of a hard and fast for a long time as an organization the way we did things in the foundational tech we were using didn't lend itself for that kinda.

Goldfield loop new tools and what what's on the market place and how do you bring X. Y. NZ to bear or cat you know can you get you know can you get a piece of software that then you do X. Y. and Z. two and now ex you know explodes for us in terms of some far better way of doing it we really weren't able to do that now in the last year and a half as we've pivoted away from some of that legacy locked in tack and started to use certain third party pieces. With so much more capable for our team to learn new things go do new things and frankly things that they can then carry with them and I think it's a big piece of what your target audience you're targeting police are early-stage early career people you have to have part of your element B.

when their time with us is ended they have a quantifiable lifted their skills to take elsewhere.

Shannon Bryant(host):

The trajectory forward right?

Speaker 1:

It's been it's been a very challenging big challenge for us because really there wasn't. Just right there was a very consulting aspect where you know engineers in PM's just crying and then their commodities just grind and we've worked very hard to transition away from that and get to another road trip the project managers and engineers are there delivering right there their delivery there everything we talk about everything we're doing doesn't work if. They're not making those changes and pushing the envelope and moving this forward right so they're not commodities they're valuable and they and the absolutely right and the value that I didn't you know the value they should get from us is that. That level of growth. The value we get from them is though the work product they provide. It's been a you know we still struggle with it sometimes there are times when it's like just I don't care just get stuff done but. You know it's definitely far better than it used to be.

Shannon Bryant(host):

Okay Gary as a CEO what challenges are you finding as a leader of a high-tech company and what are you doing for your own professional development?

Gary Davis:

They say things like it's you know being a CEO the loneliest job type thing so it is tough to kind of sit with hair the decisions lie with me if we give it doesn't get figured out before it gets to me I own those decisions.

Really keeping the organization focused keeping us moving in the right direction and making sure that you know we've got other leaders in the organization that are going to drive our continued success and change and work to you want to talk about the growth well there's growth within that leadership team. My job is to provide value for my shareholders. Okay, hello I am of our value for my shareholders is I'm going to I'm going to have to have dynamic leaders that grow under my stewardship and drives very organised they're part of the organization to grow under their stewardship and has and we're all going to do cool things and deliver for customers and grow the business to our minds I provide value for money my investors right for shareholders how I do is I'm you know I'm a look at I think of myself as a lifetime learner now my mom will tell you my teenagers that wasn't true.

Shannon Bryant(host):

Should we have mom on the.

Gary Davis:

Right exactly. You know I try to read a lot you know I don't have the time I used to sit and read books. I'll do a lot of articles I will read the you know think it a lot of non-fiction so when I read it's nonfiction stuff I try and balance a couple of more heavy things with like you know a pop band story or something but you know just to just to cleanse the palate I've got a couple of friends at this point but I brought in an

executive coach for my entire team so not just a CEO coach but as a team one coach if you will so we've had that coaching place about a year which has had a really good impact on us I have someone who we used to be CEO who's ever trusted confidante so you know him and I'll talk certain things and how can I help he doesn't tell me he never told me what to do but he helps me find my way to answer those questions myself but you never get the honors acquiesced might meet with a couple more members on a periodic basis yeah there's the Hey here's a board meeting where board members and then there's Hey here's this meeting we're here to help you continue to find success so that works really well too so that you know it's. You know a pretty decent net of support for myself and then the things that I learned in the process I go through or when I pick up a well that's a really good way of doing that, I'm bringing that back to my team to help them grow and help them improve what they're doing you know at some point no I there's one of two people my team they're gonna be CEO someday.

Shannon Bryant(host):

So, hope to grow them.

Gary Davis:

That's right.

Shannon Bryant(host):

So there any CEOs out there obviously as you mention one in particular in the CEOs that you look up to?

Gary Davis:

Bob, I agree Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos's all those guys out there that are just. You know but everyone's looking they're celebrities at this point but at the end of the day they've done incredible things and they've let these massive organizations and you know in some cases like Basil city and must create organizations out of nothing into these huge companies but at the end of the day you listen to their stories are like well my little company in the things I'm doing actually can relate to that I can relate to that I had a really good research group in LA some really good see you know in that group there a collaborative I'm trying a new group here of fat you know I'm my first of my first meeting will be the simple next month with them.

Shannon Bryant(host):

So, for those that don't know that are returning to vestige international is a the C. L. executive leadership.

Gary Davis:

Right.

Shannon Bryant(host):

Organization I was a member many years ago when I was in corporate America it's a great organization just so for clarity for our audience?

Gary Davis:

right so it would get it's the idea is I have so. I have some place to go that I have peers who aren't competitors aren't my border gardens lately they basically they're

they're judgment free and we're there to help each other collaborate in a great while we're all in different industries. They've seen things. I've seen things and sometimes. Hey wait. I saw that wait I saw that wait. What we should do that right and that advice and that that insight in the Val Walker you know process an issue in the walk you through and everyone has input NASA bunch of questions really makes you navigate through those waters and thick it differently so I've had some really good interactions with some folks there and you know and then I you know again like I've got a personal friend who was a CEO for a period and it's he's been very helpful as well and my coaches and helpful but I you know I'm and I've got you know a couple folks on the board have been CEOs so one of my independent board members was you know in our space so he's got a he's got a different outlook and you know I come from a attack in operations background and this board member comes from a sales enablement background so it's great to have someone who hated that expertise is not in on the side of the fence that I'm not as strong on now you know I've had to. Learn quick.

But you know my history is my background is around the supply chain or the you know the digital live free and that you know the SPLC has suffered a life cycle all those pieces of that puzzle his is Hey we're out front we're closing deals it's been a big help in that aspect to have you know have that independent board member whose have that experience to you on that okay doesn't really doesn't matter what I want to talk about it eventually comes back to what's going on with this this and this and the sales side.

Shannon Bryant(host):

So really keeps me honest going to have those kind of those kind of people running kind of makes the puzzle complete it yeah well we'll get we'll really appreciate having you on today so I'm going to ask just one last question so obviously TCC a community college we have a lot of folks from community colleges list in the listening audience what advice would you have for any young student person coming out of a tech program at the college pertaining to you know now the now the future of the work force if you will well.

Gary Davis:

First of all I think it's you come out of a program from for example TCC in a particular discipline. Leverage that. Don't discount what you've accomplished I went to community college. Go yes I started a community college and then you know what they're pro. Graham transfer to the UC I wanted to go to you but you're learning the when you when you open to paged whatever in a book or you do whatever and engineering exercise you yeah right some piece of your python script or some piece of C# code and you compile it and it works well that same code works the same way as Harvard as it does a TCC.

Shannon Bryant(host):

True star

Gary Davis:

Right so you've learned it. You know how to do it and. Don't diminish that in any way shape or form so you know K. carry that with you and go into the market or you interview with people. Have that confidence of no yeah. I know what I'm doing. I've

done this relates to the you're right now. You're taking a class you know certain set of classes at TCC for example of two in a certain discipline. You're probably at the cutting edge of where education's going.

Shannon Bryant(host):

Absolutely.

Gary Davis:

Spending four hundred fifty thousand dollars on a four-year education is becoming not necessarily the way the world's going to work anymore and being having particular expertise in a particular discipline that will help you get a job expand and then that trouble expand that knowledge and working that job and compete against others. That's where that's headed. And the you know the ability to make those shifts quickly you look at 80% of the jobs twenty years from now don't even exist yet.

Shannon Bryant(host):

That's true.

Gary Davis:

Right, The twenty years from now if your. If your twenty years old. You're in college to get a degree to do whatever. 80% of the jobs when you're forty. You're not prepared for from college. Because?

Shannon Bryant(host):

It's changed.

Gary Davis:

Right exactly so. You know the ability to say well okay I'm gonna go take a set of courses it's going to teach me a discernible skill. And I'm gonna go work that skill to make a living to make my way and improve my situation whatever it is yes go do that and I think that's a huge benefit especially the community college network and then what you're what you're on the team to hear TCC.

Is rapidly adjusting to that reality in my opinion and it's a big deal it's a big piece of that puzzle and I think that you're out there listening and you're in a program TCC. and you've got a I complete this program I have the skill yeah you're actually making the right decision and doing the right thing and go do it and don't for a minute thank well to community college so what like I said the books of the same the codes the same at all works the same some very smart people I know didn't necessarily have it's not like they had some crazy they're not smart because of some diploma that hangs on the wall. They're smart because they're smart so go do it Qatar had I wear the badge into something else.

Shannon Bryant(host):

I could not think of a better way to end this episode so Gary thank you so much for being here today. Shade it we look forward to having you on perhaps a future episode and see where you are I am sure now that would be wonderful well thank you all to the listening audience and we look forward to seeing you on the next edition of the work force lands.