



ConvergenceCoaching, LLC

Inspired Ideas Podcast

Episode 7: Evolving to An Advisory, Difference Making Culture

Welcome to the ConvergenceCoaching Inspired Ideas podcast. Join us as we explore great leadership and management ideas that apply within the accounting profession and in other aspects of life and business too.

Brianna Johnson ([00:24](#)):

Hello everyone. Welcome to our Inspired Ideas Podcast. This is Brianna Johnson. I'm a consultant with ConvergenceCoaching. And today I have with me, Aaron Ackerman, a partner with HoganTaylor, an IPA top 100 firm. Aaron is passionate about helping clients solve their hardest problems. He leads the advisory practice and the Oklahoma city market, and he launched that practice in 2014. Prior to joining HoganTaylor, Aaron spent 10 years serving as a controller or CFO for several different Oklahoma city companies, including one of the largest private companies in the U S and a private equity backed startup. So we're excited to have Aaron here. Aaron. Welcome. Thank you for joining us today.

Aaron Ackerman ([01:08](#)):

Thank you. Excited to be on the show.

Brianna Johnson ([01:10](#)):

Great. Yeah. So we always like to start off our podcasts with the same question; What inspires you most in your life or work?

Aaron Ackerman ([01:21](#)):

That is interesting; and a good question. So I think as I've gotten a little older and moved in my career perspectives and priorities have shifted for the last several years, I've just really felt like whether it's work or life or the other things we just do outside, it's all about relationships. And so really building meaningful relationships with my clients, with my coworkers with my family and friends; that just keeps rising higher and higher on the list of things that matter to me as I get older. And so I would say just great relationships. That's what inspires me.

Brianna Johnson ([02:00](#)):

I love that. Especially in the workplace; when you build great relationships in the workplace, I think that's when it stops feeling like work.

Aaron Ackerman ([02:08](#)):

Absolutely. Yep.

Brianna Johnson ([02:09](#)):

So I am really excited to talk with you today and for our listeners to hear this conversation, we are going to talk about some things that you've been doing at your firm in terms of consulting and and also creating this advisory mindset, this entrepreneurial mindset. At ConvergenceCoaching, I am involved with the Rainmaker Development Program® (RDP). And so I have a personal interest in some of the work that you were doing in terms of building a rainmaking culture at HoganTaylor. I'd love for you to share with our listeners what your



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project entailed, focusing on rainmaking in your firm and how you were making that part of the culture at HoganTaylor; Can you tell us about that?

Aaron Ackerman (02:51):

Yeah, you bet. So really it kind of started before I joined into the TLP program, but our CEO, Randy Nail, who would be a great guest for your podcast; He is just an awesome leader, a really big-vision kind of guy. They had come to me and, and said you know, we want to... and I hesitate to use the words "change our culture" because HoganTaylor has a phenomenal culture; but he said, "We need to enhance our culture around business development." And like a lot of firms, you kind of end up with a handful of partners that are the rainmakers; they're like cowboys; They go out and do it on their own, and they're bringing in a lot of work, but we didn't really have a pervasive culture of real collaborative business development at all levels.

And so that's one thing that we're really interested in; Really enhancing and building out this culture of business development is something that everybody, from staff to partners, participate in in different ways. And so that's kind of what we set out to do, and it folded in perfectly as a TLP (Transformational Leadership Program™) project. And so you know, tweaking or enhancing a culture is really hard. And so I spent a lot of time just studyin,g reading books about culture, trying to figure out, like, how do you do this? Because we didn't want it to be something that we talked about. We created a logo or a, you know, a list of bullet points. And then it just got put in the drawer and never really acted on and became just another thing that we talked about for a minute, it needed to be really impactful.

And so we wanted to do it right. love to read, and I came across a couple of books that I think are kind of the gold standard for anybody who's involved in shaping and enhancing culture. And I'll just mention those real quick. One is *Culture Code* by Dan Coyle, a really cool book. The other one that's kind of just become my Bible as far as culture goes; It's called *Switch*, by Chip and Dan Heath. It's almost more like a field manual. The advice it gives is very practical. It gives a lot of strategies about how to do culture right. And so I leaned heavily on concepts from that book, but we really see this as kind of a multi-year effort. And so it's been challenging to distill that into actionable steps that need to happen in milestones that need to happen in year one and things like that.

So when, when Randy first came to me and said, "We need to enhance our culture, like go do it." I'm like, okay, I don't even know where to start like that. That's a big, audacious goal. So how do you start? So we, we broke it down into things we could do first, second, third, et cetera. And really during TLP and even still now we've kind of focused on what I call phase one. And I'll tell you what phase one entails; It's sort of three prongs of things that we can take action on and measure and really monitor. Stepping back a little bit; At a lot of accounting firms and professional service firms, business development is not really something expected of people early in their career. You get all of your accolades and your raises and bonuses based on advancing your technical skills.



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And then you get to a point in your career where all of a sudden it's like, Oh, hey, you want to become a partner, a senior manager. You need to go develop business, but we've never really invested in that part of your development. So one of the things we want to do is roll that down, all the way to new staff. One of the ways we're going to do that is aligning goals with the message of "We are a firm that has a really strong business development culture that everybody participates in." And so probably in year two, every single client-facing person at HoganTaylor is going to have a formal business development goal that will get measured. It will be part of their review. It will impact their compensation. And so one thing we want to do is just make that accountability really aligned with our goals.

It could also be for a new staff. It might be their goal might be to go with a partner to a meeting and take notes four times this year. It could be as simple as that for, for a partner that's been developing business for a long time and has a huge network. It could be bringing in \$2,000 or \$300,000 of new work, you know, and anything in between. So it's not necessarily that everyone has got to go cold call meet with prospects, or, you know, network like a champ. It could be very simple. One of the things that inspired me in that area was really the gradual release of responsibility model that I learned from Jen and Tamera. They put a vocabulary to the approach in a model; it made sense to me. I act as the teacher, the experienced person. I bring a new person in, I'm going to do the work and they're going to watch me. They're going to help me, and then they're going to do it. I'm going to help them. And then they're going to do it. I'm going to watch them. And then you've kind of completed that cycle. So that's really the goal is that we want people to just become part of business development and some way small or big. The other thing that we did just from sort of having the right tools is we've never had at HoganTaylor, a true CRM tool or platform. And so we have implemented HubSpot, which helps us really manage contacts and deals, PR proposals; The whole pipeline is now digitized and tracked. And so that's a big piece of it. And so we're trying to make it a habit of our every-day life at HoganTaylor, just like entering time into a time system.

So it's kind of just phasing in. And really what we want to do early on is reward and celebrate effort, not so much results. So if somebody's goal is to go on for networking events this year; We're going to celebrate that they went to the Ford networking events, they met that goal. The goal wasn't that anything happened or came out of it; That would be the next step. I think one of the most important things is taking business development out of the black box for people and demystifying it. So a lot of people are just scared by that. I'm not a natural extrovert. So I think I can't be good at that, or I say I've never learned, or I'm very nervous about going and trying to introduce myself in a crowd; whatever it is.

So, again, we want to demystify business development because there's a lot of ways to participate in it. One way is just delivering great service, asking really good questions of your clients. And then listening that turns into more work' that's also business development. In fact, I had an instance where I had a manager whose goal was to bring in new revenue. We got to his performance review and he reported having failed at that goal. I said, "Why did you say you felt that you failed? He said, "Well I didn't bring in any new clients." I said, "But you worked on this client every month. That was a \$4,000 a month client. It's pretty quiet, but you delivered great service. You asked great questions and we solved problems. And now there are \$7,500 a month client." I said, "That's, that's a huge win; a great business development win." And so what we want to do is tell stories like



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that within the firm, to show people they are already doing this. We want to show you how that's a big business development win, and just take some of the fear out of it for people that see it as something intimidating.

Brianna Johnson ([11:10](#)):

Yeah, that's exactly right. That's the most common thing I think we hear from people when it comes to business development. It's this response of, "I went into public accounting thinking I wouldn't have to do sales." To your point, there are many ways to contribute to the firms, revenue. You mentioned the example of not placing the same emphasis on existing client revenue. I think sometimes firms do place a lot of the glory around bringing in or sourcing new clients. Of course that's important. We need that type of growth, but the existing client retention is also key. A lot of times our servers don't realize the role that they're playing in business development, just by being great client servers and forget too, that it's easier and takes less time to retain an existing client than it does to go out and get a new client.

So the fact that we can provide really great service for these clients and we can make them longterm clients; that says a lot about who we are as a firm and the level of quality we provide. And also that leads to additional business development opportunities from referrals, from happy clients. There's so much benefit that comes out of really focusing on existing client service and making sure that we're winning in that area. I think it's easy to forget that; Especially for people who are getting newly involved in business development and feel the success is only in bringing in new clients. I think that's a good point you raise.

Aaron Ackerman ([12:47](#)):

Yeah, a hundred percent. I mean, I love new clients, but I love new revenue from existing clients even more. And so, you know, and that doesn't always get celebrated. I've been working with marketing, we've got a really cool way to communicate to the firm each month and who knows how long it will go; perhaps indefinitely, but we're just going to tell these success stories. They're not all going to be, somebody went out and brought in this giant new client. They're going to be all kinds of wins that pull back the shroud and make people think, "Oh yeah, I can do that. I may not be able to bring in a million-dollar client, but I can serve well and ask insightful questions and listen to the answers."

Brianna Johnson ([13:39](#)):

Yeah, that's great. I want to underline two points that you mentioned; The role of having the one-size-fits-one goals related to business development. We can't give everybody the same goal. Like you said, we have to base it on their level of experience with business development in their career and also their level of comfort with what they're doing. We don't want to force somebody into a networking goal that they feel totally unprepared for. I think that's one key thing for our listeners to pay attention to, is this idea of the one-size-fits-one goals. If this is something you're working on as a firm; building a rainmaking culture. The other key piece is what you said about the support.

You're using the gradual release of responsibility model which is a great experiential learning mode for teaching these skills. So we can set goals with people; but unless we provide our people with the support they



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need, it's going to be hard for them to achieve those goals. We're not going to see a lot of results from them. As a firm, that has to be part of our strategy is; making sure we provide support for these people and help them learn these things they are trying to do. So now tell me, I believe HoganTaylor has four locations, is that right?

Aaron Ackerman (15:00):

Yep. That's correct. Two in Oklahoma and two in Arkansas.

Brianna Johnson (15:03):

How do you manage this aspect of affecting the culture as a firm with multiple locations? Because I know that's a common challenge we hear from other firms is, having it feel like one firm across multiple locations. And then also, these different things we're trying to implement as a firm, making sure that it happens consistently across offices. What are some things you're doing to help with that?

Aaron Ackerman (15:25):

Yeah, that's a great question. One thing I would say is, we just have an exceptional CEO. He's really the culture champion of the firm. He just does a phenomenal job. Like our culture is, is real and it's consistent across locations, even though we've had acquisitions and things where we brought in other firms; That's just one of his like superhuman skills as a, as a leader. There's a couple of things that we do. So one I mentioned is the communication. We are using an interesting video platform to do these regular communications, so it's not just another email that doesn't get read. It's something that grabs attention. We want to make sure that we're getting seen and that's becoming part of the culture as we roll out these communication pieces.

Also, there are a couple of times a year where all of our partners get together for a day or two at a time. That's always really special. We have around 45 partner or so. These events put us all on the same page. It's not that we always all agree about everything, but really as far as what direction this firm is going, everybody is on the same page, they're pushing in the same direction. It helps that we don't really have siloed partners that have completely different ideas about what HoganTaylor should look like in five or 10 or 50 years.

We did another really cool thing at the end of 2019. Our CEO, myself and two other partners basically did a Road Show to talk about business development and business advisory. We went to each office; two offices twice just because of their size, and two offices once. So we did six presentations and we talked to literally every person in the firm; Client facing, administrative, back office...everybody. That's a big investment when you talk about taking every partner, every manager, every employee out of the firm for four hours to talk about cultural stuff. It was a big deal. It impacted everyone profoundly. Nobody saw this as like, "Oh, I've got to go to this thing." It was really an inspiring deal. We won't do that every year because logistically it's hard to pull off, but we did it. I think it was a great decision on Randy's part worked out phenomenally well and made a big impact across the whole firm. So those are some things we've done here recently that I think lend themselves to keeping our culture cohesive.



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Brianna Johnson ([18:18](#)):

That's great. One of the differences I see is intention around culture. If we don't place intention around defining what we want our culture to be, and assessing it right now, and getting the temperature of our people and what they think; Then really nobody's paying attention to culture and this culture just sort of develops on its own and it may or may not be the kind of culture we want to be working in. You are placing that intention around having a really great place to work and regardless of location, you know, or where you're working, that everybody feels involved and engaged in the firm. And it sounds like you guys are doing a really great job with that. So that's awesome.

Aaron Ackerman ([19:01](#)):

Yeah, that's right. And the other thing is, I think just sort of time and place. We're a good size. I started my career at a big four firm. So that was different animal, when you're talking about messaging across your whole firm and culture. We've got four offices, I think we're somewhere around 350 employees. So we're big enough that we can really make an impact in our markets, but we're small enough that we're nimble. We can talk to everybody in the firm pretty easily and, and somebody like Randy and our other partners; they can have a real impact on culture. Maybe we're just lucky; it's kind of the best of both worlds.

Brianna Johnson ([19:44](#)):

Yeah. But you've also learned how to grow with that, you know, because obviously you were smaller at one point and as you've continued to grow, you found ways to maintain that communication, to continue these efforts around your culture. I think that's also important.

Aaron Ackerman ([19:59](#)):

Yeah, absolutely.

Brianna Johnson ([20:00](#)):

I want to shift our conversation a little bit toward what your firm is doing on the advisory side. This is a conversation that's happening across our profession; is the importance of focusing on consulting services, focusing on advisory and placing less of an emphasis on compliance services that may have made up the majority of our revenue at one time. So tell us a little bit about your background in terms of the consulting practice and how you joined the firm and what you're doing today with that.

Aaron Ackerman ([20:32](#)):

Yeah. So it's it's kind of an interesting story. In our firm, I'm unique in that there's nobody else that came in to the, from the way I did. So before joining HoganTaylor, I was a CFO for a startup energy services company. We had a private equity sponsor and we had a plan when they hired me to be the CFO. We, we had a plan to build and grow that company and then exit either through acquisition or IPO. Our target was like five years. And so I knew going in; I said, look, if we go public, I'm not a public company, CFO. So I'll help us get from here to there, you know, then that all exit at some point, whenever that it makes sense. Well it went very fast and we were IPO ready, had gone through SEC road show and everything in like 30 months. That exit came much quicker than I was expecting.



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So I'm like, okay, I need to go find something else to do now. Well, I'd had a relationship with HoganTaylor. I'd been their client in a previous stop in my career and had a really great experience with them. So I called HoganTaylor and said, "Hey, do you have any clients that might need a, a CFO or that you could help introduce me to?" The perso I called was Randy, our CEO. He used to be an audit partner in Oklahoma City. That's how he and I had a relationship. He said, "Yeah, we've always got clients looking for good people, but I have another idea. Let me make a couple calls and I'll get back to you." So he and another partner called me back and say, "Look, we've launched this advisory practice in Tulsa. And we think Oklahoma City is a perfect market for it. We just don't have anybody to do it. Do you want to come do it?"

Eventually I agreed. It sounded great, but the role didn't exist yet. So I was going to get to kind of feel like an entrepreneur without, really having too much at risk. It was sort of the best of both worlds. So I show up in November of 2014 and they gave me an office and say, "You have no clients, no staff, good luck." And that is, that is almost literally how it got started, how I came into the firm. So I'm one-hundred percent focused on advisory and consulting. I have been since day one, we've got something like 50 or 60 people, 100% dedicated to this practice. So, nobody in our group touches a tax return. We're not working on audits. We're not doing anything but serving clients in that advisory capacity. And so the firm has put a lot of resources behind really building that third major service prong to go along with the audit assurance and tax side. So that's been five years ago, they had Tulsa started and going really well, you know, a year or two before that. So that's kind of the history and the genesis of what's now a pretty good sized Advisory practice at HoganTaylor.

Brianna Johnson (23:29):

Yeah, that's great. I think one piece of the puzzle that some firms have trouble figuring out is how to even get started with the consulting practice. There's a whole list of consulting services that our firm could provide. How has HoganTaylor decided which services to start with and how have you expanded and added new services?

Aaron Ackerman (23:52):

The way we started and is, and it's still, you know, kind of our bread and butter; is around fractional CFO and controller engagements. The reason that's where we started is because that's what I'd spent the last decade doing. My partner in Tulsa that proceeded me and who launched the practice for the firm; de'd been a CFO. He had also started as an auditor early in his career at a big four firm, but he'd been a CFO for 20-something years. And so that's, that's like what we did. In fact, Robert Wagner, who leads this practice for the whole firm, he was the CFO of a company for over two decades. They went through all these acquisitions where they were buying companies, smaller versions of themselves. And every time they went through one of these Robert realized the company they purchased didn't have everything they thought they had. They thought they had a CFO and they don't really have a real CFO. Their books are a mess and it ends up partying their valuation. So after going through several of these, he'd kind of formed this thesis in the back of his mind, like there's a real market here for somebody to go and be a fractional CFO to be an advisor; kind of a strategic-level person for these companies that think they've got everything covered, but they don't. When that becomes really clear is when you're going through a transaction, through due diligence and your evaluation gets depressed. So when his company sold and kind of like the situation I was in, he's like, "Okay, I've got to go do something else." He and his corporate controller started a firm just with the two of them providing fractional CFO services.



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They did really well. HoganTaylor saw them and said, Hey, why don't you just merge with us? And so that's how it got started. So that's really sort of our legacy is that CFO controller level service to clients. We still do a lot of that; it's half or more of our advisory revenues, that kind of annuity, like a monthly type of engagement. So that's how we got started, just because that was our background. It was sort of an easy place to start. Since then, we've been really strategic about adding other skillsets to our teams and going strategically after services that we know our clients need, that want to be able to provide. So that's things like IT consulting around cybersecurity, or desktop support managed services. We have human resources and human capital consulting and we're looking to add other things as well. Transaction advisory services is also huge. So we've all been through a lot of deals. We've hired other people that have real expertise around M&A consulting. So that's how we got started was the CFO side. We've just kind of grown it from there by being strategic and really just listening and perceiving what their biggest needs are.

Brianna Johnson (26:46):

Yeah. Well, and I think that's exactly what needs to happen is, we have to look at our people and what skills they already have and what types of conversations we're having with clients. That's the thing. A lot of firms are already doing consulting for clients. They just haven't packaged it as a formal consulting service, you know? So it's part of it is taking that skills inventory of our people. Another part of it is looking at what we're doing with clients currently. Then what you said, as far as what do our clients need, what's missing for them. Then how do we decide who in our firm is going to take on those services and be able to become an expert in those things? And so I think, you know, I think that those are some places for firms to start that are trying to figure out where to go with consulting. Tell me a little about development and growth talent-wise in a consulting practice. How are you all focusing on developing up-and-coming talent in these consulting practices? Obviously, you know, some of these services take a lot of time and experience to develop and to be able to work with clients. What are you doing to bring people into these practices and into your firm, and then to help them progress in their career?

Aaron Ackerman (28:02):

So right now I'd say we're pretty focused on acquiring firms that are already doing what we want to do, which is kind of an easier way to really get into the market than hiring one person, like they did with me, and saying, "Okay, go build this, one client at a time." We recently completed an acquisition of an IT consulting firm in Oklahoma City. We're also looking at other things now around marketing services; We're looking at really everything that's kind of non-compliance. So that's one of the issues is; a lot of the advisory services that our clients need are not necessarily traditional CPA types of things. You know, obviously the transaction advisory and fractional CFO, that that was right in our wheelhouse and we've even transitioned people from other parts of the firm from audit and tax into advisory in a fulltime way.

They are able to just make that transition really well because it's really sort of all in that CPA world, but we're, we're focused right now on expanding into non-traditional services. In fact our board says we will probably not buy any more CPA firms. LWe're very much in the acquisition mode right now, but we're looking at other service providers that we can bring in to our culture, into our brand and introduce them to our existing clients, let them keep serving those clients, the clients that they already have. That's been a successful model, even going back to when they brought in Robert Wagner in on the advisory side. So that's one thing we're doing.



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Another thing though that's been really cool is we have had some great success in transitioning people that maybe want to shift in their career or whatever, rather than losing somebody from the firm.

We've had a great opportunity to bring people into advisory, to keep some great talent in the firm, but give them a different kind of challenge. And, you know it's just a very different rhythm. We work a lot of hours, probably similar hours to the other practice groups, but we don't have that compressed timeframe like a traditional busy season. So that's been really fun to be able to retain talent that, in a different situation, we might've just lost to industry or whatever. So as far as developing skills, one thing we've done, right is we just haven't really shyed away from opportunities that our clients throw at us; even if it's new. We've got enough bench strength across the firm. I'm not really afraid of an industry that maybe I don't know a lot about because we've got some people that know a lot about it. I'm not afraid of a particular kind of engagement because somebody's going to know about it. So we've leaned pretty heavily on just hanging our hat on the fact that we've got enough people, whether they're in Little Rock or Tulsa or Oklahoma City or Fayetteville; We can find the right resources and get them plugged in.

Brianna Johnson ([31:01](#)):

Right. One of the things that we have to understand is some of the differences in the way that we manage our consulting practices. A lot of times it's going to be project-based work and not necessarily the repeated work that we would do in other practice areas of our firm. So we have that piece of it that's different than a traditional practice area per se, but then also the way that we measure people is going to be different too. So how are you managing performance of your different consulting practice areas in terms of the people?

Aaron Ackerman ([31:35](#)):

Yeah, this is a really interesting question. I mean, it really goes back even to a bigger question that's been a trending topic for years now; getting rid of the billable hours. As a profession, there's not very many people on the bleeding edge of that. We're probably further ahead than attorneys, but we're not there. So in advisory it's been sort of cool because we can really test some of that, almost in like an incubator, where it'd be a little more difficult with audit and tax. So for me in my practice, I don't have one single client that I bill per hour. I really don't look at hours that often we still track it. It's not important to me as far as how we bill and how we manage our clients and ourselves.

It's been kind of a learning curve, but every single one of my clients is either a fixed-fee or monthly arrangement or a project fee. When clients say, "How much do you charge per hour?" I say, "I don't charge per hour. Let's talk about outcomes and deliverables and objectives and figure out what that's worth at the end of the day." Does the client really care? If they need a, B and C done, do they care that it takes one hour or a hundred? Not really. They're really not that interested in the input. They're interested in the output. So we've spent the last five years really just getting better at that through practice.

As far as managing people. This is something I think about a lot and talk to my other partners about a lot. So let's say in two years, I'm just making this up, but let's say HoganTaylor says "We're not going to have time sheets and we're just going to figure it out." Well, my partners will say, "How do we manage poor



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performers?" Or, "How do we manage excellent performers if we don't have that data point?" That is a challenge. But one of my responses to that is, "Would you know who your poor performers and your star performers are without looking at their time sheets?" The answer is yes, of course we would. You just know, because you're working with these people, you're observing. If you're a good manager, you are, it's kind of back to the relationship thing. You know who your good performers are. You don't need to see their time sheets to confirm that for you.

So it's going to definitely be an evolution, but that's how we've been managing performance. There's other metrics like revenue per client-facing professional and things like that that we manage; but to drill down to "Why are we not more profitable on this client?" I manage that by just being present and attentive, by being a good manager on that engagement. That's probably not a full answer. It's sort of where I am in a longer progression. So, you know, I think two years from now, maybe I'll have more to say on that, but I think that's where I am right now is just being aware of who's working too slow or why jobs aren't getting turned around.

Brianna Johnson (34:29):

Well, and client satisfaction and results. That's what it comes down to, is measuring results and production outcomes against what we're expecting. Another part of it is having clarity on what those expectations are at the forefront. Then having follow up conversations about how those expectations were met, right? Also, providing feedback and helping people grow and progress. I think the more we start to focus on those types of measures and, and that type of performance; it places more trust in our people. And honestly, I think we get more out of our people that way.

I'm glad the shift is happening. I think that your practice is a perfect place to be testing it out, like you said, and seeing how it goes. It's one of those things that you learn as you go, and you have to keep having conversations about what's working and what's not working and figure out what small changes you can make over time. We're not going to just change the entire firm's performance structure and how we're managing things. But you can use this as a little pilot area for what you're trying to work on.

Aaron Ackerman (35:57):

Yeah, absolutely. In fact, I've already raised my hand and said, we will be the beta in the firm for no time sheets. So I'm just waiting for somebody to say, that's okay.

Brianna Johnson (36:05):

I love it. This conversation has been really great. I appreciate your time here today, and you talking about these different things that you're doing as a firm and sharing with our listeners, some of these best practices that you've learned along the way. I have a couple questions for you, a couple of rapid-fire questions, if that's okay.

Aaron Ackerman (36:29):

Yep. You bet.



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Brianna Johnson ([36:30](#)):

Okay. So these are just fun questions for us to learn a little bit more about Aaron. So if you could not work for one year, what would you be doing with your time?

Aaron Ackerman ([36:40](#)):

Well our family loves to travel and I love to read, My wife loves the beach. We'd probably like do some traveling, go to the beach and for a year, I would probably try to read 50 books, if I didn't have to work.

Brianna Johnson ([36:58](#)):

Nice. Yeah. In beautiful locations. That sounds great. Okay. So if you knew you could not fail, what would you do?

Aaron Ackerman ([37:07](#)):

That's a good one. I don't really want to be the president, but if I couldn't fail, maybe I would run for president. I've got all these ideas I think are really good. It'd be fun to go figure out if they are or not.

Brianna Johnson ([37:20](#)):

Yeah, definitely. Well, anything else that you want to share with our listeners today?

Aaron Ackerman ([37:32](#)):

No. I mean, know there's a lot of firms out there like us that are really looking at the future and trying to make sure that we're positioned to be not just relevant, but really valuable to our clients. And things are going to be disrupted with automation. I'm excited. I think that these kinds of conversations are great. I know they're probably happening all over the place. So I appreciate you asking me to be on the podcast to share our experience. We certainly don't have it all figured out, but I think we've got our eyes wide open, so we're trying to go boldly into the future.

Brianna Johnson ([38:13](#)):

Yes. Well, you've come a long way in a short amount of time, too. It sounds like with what you guys are doing there; it's a differentiator for your firm and and just your mindset on where you're going with these practice areas. What you're wanting to help clients with I think is really great. I'm excited for our listeners to hear these different things that we've discussed. And and I just want to thank you for your time, so we really appreciate it,

Aaron Ackerman ([38:45](#) **Aaron Ackerman** ([37:32](#)):

Yeah. You're welcome. Thank you so much for having me on.

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