



## Regions Next Step Podcast

### Young Professionals Series: Networking Your Way Up the Leadership Ladder

In this podcast, you'll hear from some of today's brightest business leaders about the importance of networking.

Tune in to hear how they are making time for networking, paving the way for their own career growth in a busy world and the qualities they look for in a great leader, as told by:

- Shannon Beube, Commercial Banking Solutions Relationship Manager for Regions Bank
- Chyna Bowen, Regional Director of Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship
- Kendra Elaine, Millennial Leadership Expert and Certified Corporate Trainer
- Jason R. Hall, Co-Founder and CEO of Arch to Park, LLC

### ***Episode Transcript***

Narrator:

You're listening to Real Talk with Regions Bank. In this special podcast recorded in St. Louis before a live audience, Laura Hettiger of KMOV News 4 continues her panel discussion with four young business leaders.

In part three, we'll hear about how they make time for networking and career growth in the busy world and what they look for in a leader. Chyna Bowen is the Regional Director of Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship. Kendra Elaine is a millennial leadership expert and certified corporate trainer. Jason R. Hall is the co-founder and CEO of Arch to Park LLC and Shannon Beube is a commercial banking solutions relationship manager for Regions Bank. Now, let's hear from St. Louis' young leaders at this Real Talk with Regions live event.

Laura Hettiger:

We all have very limited time. Yes, there are 24 hours in a day but somehow we have 48 hours' worth of things to do each day. We have limited time and we all have priorities. How do you make time for networking and career growth and what are some tips that you stand by?



Jason Hall:

So, we're getting more specialized, more specialized, more specialized, and we're almost compartmentalizing our humanity through that. So, and that happens in law firms. Like you get in a group and you work on this. So, one of the things and this was just sort of naturally who I was was curious of people. So, I can't emphasize enough when you're young like do what you got to do for your job, but the businesses and the community you're a part of are much bigger. And get out there particularly when you're young and build that network, find out what people -- other people are interested in because you will find the later you get in life it is a very small world. And the people that I interact with today that I met in my 20's that I never thought they would go on to do X or Y in different career paths it's like life is just more interesting to see your friend succeed, see them hitting their passions and it's good to be able to pick up the phone and have that authentic relationship. The earlier you build it, the longer it's going to be. Therefore, if you nurture it, the richer it's going to be and feel a lot less sort of fake and transactional. Because when you're successful, you're going to have all kinds of people calling you. You'll have best friends you never knew you had because they want something from you because you're in a position of influence. But you're able to sift through that a lot differently I think when you've had that long tail of a relationship early on.

So, build, get to know people in your organization outside of maybe even the little silo you work in. Don't call a CEO or a business because they want access and they're like actually return calls. And so, I think we are and I do the same thing. I've had like the craziest things like on LinkedIn I had this a couple of years ago this -- she was a mom working in the laundromat at the Four Seasons Hotel and she's like I am trying to find opportunities for my daughter. And I felt like she was a lot like me. One of the first in her family that was going to be going on in her education and she's like can she shadow you. And I was like absolutely, and we sort of built that relationship and connection. So, again you got to return that favor. You can't just -- it can't be give or just take. You need to give. And I'm a firm believer whatever you give will come back and don't try to predict where it's going to come from but that will help you build some really interesting relationships.

Chyna Bowen:

I don't know if you make time for it. you just live it. So, when it comes to networking I never approach even in this situation. This isn't an networking opportunity. This is just a great opportunity that I was offered due to meeting someone in a prior setting, and they said, hey, I think you would serve well on this panel. That's great. That's just another opportunity to talk to people, to meet new people. So, don't go into it as another job. We have enough tasks that continue to grow at the end of the day. Why don't you check one off then the next one pops up.

But one golden rule that I live by that most people probably wouldn't think is reflection. I don't think that we create enough time to do that. You have to level set and check in with yourself. What are you doing. Why are you doing it and how are you doing at it. So, just check in with yourself.



Journaling I think is so powerful. I encourage my students to always do that. It's not a dear diary. It's just here's where I am and to be able to reflect back on that and to see your own personal growth I think is so invaluable to have that quiet time for yourself and to also to be able to manifest what it is that you see and what it is that you want. I don't think that we spend enough time doing that.

Kendra Elaine:

Everything is a networking opportunity. You never know who you're going to meet at the grocery store. You never know who you're going to meet in the office. You never know who you're going to meet anywhere. So kind of – and I think sometimes we put a lot of pressure on ourselves when we say I'm going to this networking event and like we just put all those pressure on ourselves and if you look at it like you know it's another -- it's a great evening out to mingle with other professionals and look at every opportunity. There's always a chance for you to meet somebody. There's always a chance for you to get to know somebody and focus on relationship building. You find time to make it to the things you can and like she said journaling and knowing what you want to do and where you want to go you would say I think this might be a better opportunity for me to attend or I think I could build some relationships here and prioritize accordingly.

Jason:

I think I'm a big fan of build your network. I don't like the word networking because it sounds very transactional. Now the reality is not everybody is going to be your best friend that you're hanging out with on the weekend. The mastery that you need to have are those soft relationships. And that is where you figure out what your connection is with people. You do have to -- your soft relationships you have to invest in. You spend time. It's like growing a plant. You got to water the plant and share that, and I think like this panel that I'm on my relationship with Regions Bank. My heart and Nancy and I met we had a passion for bringing financial tools of the inner city and underserved entrepreneurs. It found out that was an overlapping area. We worked very hard on this inner-city capital connections program to bring that to St. Louis and kind of. We worked together on something we both cared about and through that you strengthen the relationship because you've had a shared experience and that is fundamentally shared experience is where that relationship deepens at a whole different level.

And so it's a little bit of that follow your passion, finding what -- there's just going to be some people you don't have a relationship with and that's okay. We've got a big planet. There's lots of people. You can't know them all. But finding those where you do have shared interest and mastering those soft connections will be critical and you will see those that I think, there's been a lot of science that's gone into this, that master that and have the capability of handling more of those than most end up becoming some of the most successful business leaders and social influencers.



Shannon Beube:

I'm very involved with Friends of Kids with Cancer which has turned into a great networking ability, but it's just something that I'm passionate about. And I can expand that by bringing other people into my passion. The same fold when you meet somebody and you enjoy what they do, with the financial education or anything like that, if you have an interest in that, use that. So, don't think of it as a task or job that you have to do. It should be something fun, something exciting something that you can learn about so you don't feel like it's a task or job that you have to do that you're really just expanding who you are.

Jason:

I want to add one other thing to do that. This is sort of the digital dimension because this is something I did not have early in my career that now is a much bigger part of it is social media. And think of that as a place where you are developing your personal brand. And how you choose to express yourself, what you highlight. I'm like the hey I love St. Louis. I'm going to tweet out all kinds of St. Louis stuff because that's who I am. And it's amazing to me. I will meet people like at different events and stuff and they're like I know you. Well, actually I only know you from Twitter but like I feel like I know you. And so, that is an interesting tool that does develop -- it impacts your reputation quite frankly. And is a form of developing a bond with people. They will find you based on what you're sharing. And that sort of fascinating to me because I didn't have anything like that when I started. I mean that stuff was still in its infancy and not nearly at the level it is. But today much bigger deal.

Chyna:

When Jason and I were talking before, he mentions someone that I might know and my first response was well I don't know him, but I follow him on Instagram, so I feel like I know him. It's totally true.

Narrator:

Certainly. Management poses plenty of challenges. And to become an outstanding leader you need to be ready to conquer any challenge that comes your way. Leveraging smart advice, tools and resources. Like those we learned about in today's discussion are great ways to set yourself up for success. Helping you achieve your goals is something Regions Bank understands.

Regions Next Step is a financial education program offering advice, tools and guidance to help you accomplish your goals at every stage of your life. No matter your goals Regions will help you with each step you want to take.



Laura:

What is one characteristic and please think back on some of your bosses, what is one characteristic that you believe every leader should possess, and what is the biggest challenge facing leaders today?

Jason:

It's interesting. When I got my first real break with a really important mentor at Bryan Cave, so very early in my career, first year, it was like totally none of this. So and I agree with all of it because you got to ask, people have to know what your passions are. Mine was sort of interesting. It was on Christmas Eve which nobody is in a law firm on Christmas Eve. I'd come in for what was supposed to be a one hour conference call on a deal and there was this partner within the law firm with whom I had no personal relationship, no working relationship and he had like massive crisis happened with one of his clients. And so, I just happened to be at the one person that was in the ghost town of Christmas Eve at the law firm and he really needed help so I stayed and we ended up working until like 6:00 that evening on Christmas Eve and he responded like wow that's someone who's willing to work hard. Work ethic speaks to people, and he came up and was sort of after that event. So we got into the new year, and he was like I really respected what you did and how you did it and how hard you worked and I would like to be your mentor. So and he came to me and he was like one of the most influential partners like on the senior management team, which sort of helped cut through a lot of red tape as a young associate.

Total lucky break but I do think it is another lesson early on which is not just build the network like really work hard. And show that work ethic. It doesn't cost anything. I may not be the smartest person in the room, but I'll work twice as hard as anyone and that will speak to people and people will pick up on that that are a little further along. And I think it is the view that -- and I sort of look at this today with 20-year-olds that I mentor now. They must care about themselves. They're willing to invest in themselves. So, I should be investing in them too. And I think it sends a signal of seriousness and commitment. And if you're not committed to yourself, it's harder to attract others to commit to you as well.

Kendra:

I really look for transparency and trustworthiness. So, when I am applying for job or anything, leadership is huge for me. So, I want to know are you a boss that I can trust? Are you a boss that's going to have my back? And are you going to be transparent? Are you going to tell me what's going on within our company? Are you going to reveal what that is? Are you going to be transparent with me and say hey you're doing these things wonderfully but you need to work on these other things so that I'm not surprised. So, I really want a boss that can be truthful, can give me feedback, positive and negatively, and somebody that can be transparent and tell me what's going on. I want to know the why behind everything. So, the more information you can give me about why we're doing things within the company, the more backing that you're going to get.



Jason:

One thing that's been I think an evolution for me in my thinking -- when I was really, really young in my career, you sort of think the leaders must be -- that's the smartest person that becomes the CEO or the hardest working person or whatever. But I think in today's environment and one of the lessons I've learned that being a leader it really isn't the title. You sort of get the title because you're already a leader and that comes from a level of personal influence and meeting the needs of other people around you. And in doing so, you actually gain influence. I mean it's a little bit counterintuitive but and I think that's the greatest demand on leaders today. It's not to be the best self-performer. It's actually to be the best at understanding what motivates other people, what meets their needs and that ultimately is what creates this aura of influence that allows you to become a leader.

And since I view it as people almost give you permission to be a leader and that's because they feel they trust you or you have met their needs and that you're put in that position of influence as a result of that. And that's very different than -- it's not all is kind of cutthroat climb the corporate ladder as you might think. It really is other people fighting for you and that is only gained through influence and that's only gained through trust which is a proven track record of meeting their needs. What do they need to be successful and it's an unselfish form, and I think that's hard because early in your career I think it's very natural to be selfish because you're scared. There's a lot of pressure and so you become me, me, me, me focused and you think doing all those me, me things will get you to the top if that's what you choose to do. But actually that is not the way you become a leader I've learned, and I've experienced that in my own life.

Chyna:

That's so true. I think today that we confuse being a boss with being a leader. And to be a boss that means you're the most important person in the room. You probably make the most money. You're over people but to be a leader, people have to follow you. And people don't want to follow inauthentic people. They want to follow someone who is humble enough to recognize and to grow and to help develop other people's talents. Because if you just wanted to be the best person in the room then you be the best salesman. You don't need to have people following you. So, to be a leader I think it requires humility and authenticity.

Kendra:

I totally agree with that. Being authentic is important and something that you said I think being adept in knowing what motivates people and having that ability to get to know your team and who you're dealing with because everybody is motivated by different things.



We all have different personalities. I might have to engage with this person a little bit differently than how I engage with this person. It might be the same exact message. I might need them to do the same exact thing but I might have to approach this person differently than how I approach this person. Taking that time to know each other's values and realizing how we all communicate differently that will help you build influence with people when you're speaking their language.

I would have bosses approach me sometimes, and it's like I'm not necessarily motivated by money. So, if they approached me and say you know you want to make some extra money tonight? That's not how you would get the best work out of me. For me personally you would need to approach me differently. And I respect leaders who had that wherewithal to say, okay, I need to approach Kendra differently with this. And if you want to distinguish yourself as a leader, as you're coming up, you know, in your positions that you are now, taking that time and acknowledging like looking at how your different managers, how do they communicate because you can be a leader in the position that you're in now navigating your leaders and navigating with you managers, taking the time to say how -- am I communicating with them the right way to build that influence even in an upward fashion?

Laura:

Something that I love that you guys all hit on these are all skills we figure out when we're in kindergarten and first grade. You want to be friends with the people who are transparent. And tell you the truth. You want to be friends with the people that understand you or at least try to understand you. The people who are real, who are authentic and the ones who know how to communicate with you. We all have these skills. We learn them at an early age and leaders I found usually keep working on those skills. And would you say this is something I have personally noticed throughout my career that younger workers are having a harder time admitting or coming to the realization that they don't know everything and then they take it incredibly personally sometimes when you make a suggestion that maybe it can happen this way. What would you suggest for maybe younger workers on finding that humility that you mentioned?

Jason:

I deal with this with my youngest employees and it's like because I tend to also be very direct and very kind of abrupt. That's just my style and I'm just like here's who I am. And I feel like that's me being authentic but one of the best pieces of advice that I got which was from the former chairman of my law firm whom I'm still friends with today he said just remember when you are above somebody in an organizational chart or perceived as being a leader, everything you say is like sending an email in all capital letters because that's how they hear it.



So, I think you have to be really careful when providing that feedback to younger workers because it's going to like -- think about it. Maybe low self-esteem or whatever we're going to feel attacked, and I felt that way. And you had this rush to like say no but so just I'd say take it, listen to it, but when you're giving the advice, lead with something positive. Like this was really good. And instead of saying you were horrible here, or it's this could have been better if. Like it could have been -- like kind of cast it in a positive term. People will pick up on that but it feels a lot better I think providing it that way. But being cognizant when you give advice make, sure you're calm, make sure you're not coming across angry because they're not going to hear you if you do and being sensitive to that.

Narrator:

And that concludes part three of a special three-part podcast recorded live in St. Louis and presented by Real Talk with Regions Bank. If you missed part one, check it out to find out how our panelists learned how to use passion to work in today's business environment, what finding empowerment means to them and the importance of mentorship. Check out part two to hear more about the challenges that young professionals face today and how our panelists innovate and overcome their own challenges in the workplace.

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