

Podcast Name: *HR Bartender*

Episode: Mark Wales

Welcome to the *HR Bartender* show - a casual place to talk about all things work and get practical advice to work responsibly. The podcast is hosted by Sharlyn Lauby, author of the *HR Bartender* [blog](#), and this episode is the latest installment of a mini season on talent and technology. The episode features guest Mark Wales, who has over 30 years of retail experience in the US, Europe, and Asia with various leading retailers. Mark is an expert on how to implement and drive benefit from Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), ecommerce, and workforce management. His recent project has been a next generation model for workforce management, which focuses on employee experience as a way to drive customer experience and ultimately improve company performance. Mark champions a holistic approach to business, and he joins Sharlyn today to share his thoughts on workforce management.

After talking with Mark about how the COVID-19 crisis has shaped him, Sharlyn moves directly into the topic of scheduling. Workforce management is a science, and Mark explains that it involves not only getting the right people to the right place at the right time, but also making sure that each person is doing the right thing. An employee is not just a body, but must be a person who believes in the values of the company and works well within the larger unit of the team. Scheduling also cannot stand as its own thing separate from other aspects of workforce management. In managing a workforce, business leaders cannot simply run by numbers; rather, they must look holistically at the whole process - from hiring, to scheduling, to compliance - and then examine results before cycling attention back to the process.

Shifting the conversation to current workforce shortages, Sharlyn asks about determining whether one has a staffing issue or a scheduling issue. The first step, Mark says, is to see whether the corporate level of the company is organized into a healthy, holistic team. While there should be some room for local teams to adapt to their own contexts, the broader company also needs consistent expectations in order to retain employees and avoid team disruption, and this necessitates a strong operational side. Workforce management can be owned by different business divisions in different companies, but Mark's recommendation is that it be considered a management discipline. Finally, Mark offers final advice on connecting workforce management with risk management, and Sharlyn leaves listeners with her takeaways from the conversation.

Links:

Learn more about [Sharlyn Lauby](#) and [HR Bartender](#).

Learn more about [Mark Wales](#) and follow him on [Twitter](#).

Learn more about the [Workforce Institute](#) and the institute's new [book](#).

Learn more about the founding sponsor of the show, Ultimate Kronos Group ([UKG](#)).

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