

Insights *Elevated*

A SKLD perspective on the people, work and forces shaping industry.

People as the Competitive Advantage

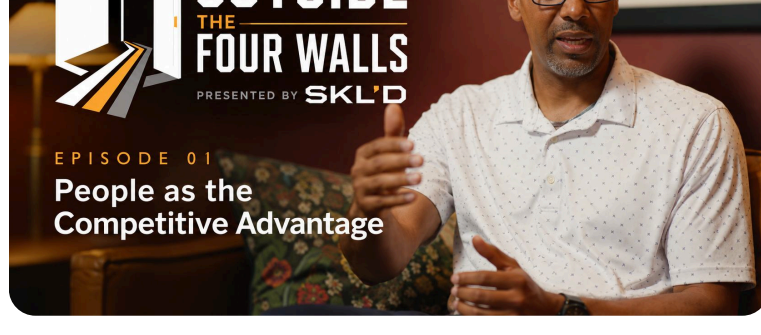
The work is changing. The people doing it will determine what comes next.

Technology, automation and shifting customer expectations are changing how businesses operate. In our first **Outside the Four Walls** episode, industry leaders explore what it takes to find, develop and retain people who can grow as the work changes.

EPISODE 01

People as the Competitive Advantage

A focused, 90-second conversation about the workforce behind business performance, the value of coachability and why developing people deserves a place in every growth plan.



A Note from Jon Neff, CEO

At SKLD, our mission is **to elevate every life touched by work**. That starts with seeing the person behind the position and helping employers build teams that can move their businesses forward.

When leaders talk about the future of their businesses, the conversation often begins with technology, automation or the next opportunity for growth. Making those investments work depends on people.

That was a recurring theme in our recent **Outside the Four Walls** discussion. Finding talent matters. So does recognizing potential, developing skills and creating an environment where people want to stay.

For employers, that raises a practical question: Are we preparing our people for the business we are trying to build? A new system can change a process. A supervisor who coaches well can help a whole team learn to use it.

This issue of Insights Elevated looks at people as a competitive advantage. The research points to a growing need for training and stronger engagement. Our first episode brings that conversation closer to the everyday decisions leaders make.

I invite you to watch the episode and consider where your organization could do more to develop the people who will carry it forward. And if you're an executive or industry leader with a perspective to share, reach out to me directly. We'd love to have you join an upcoming Outside the Four Walls conversation. Your experience could help another leader see a challenge or opportunity in a new light.

Jon Neff

Chief Executive Officer, SKLD

The Workforce in Numbers

SKILLS GAPS LIMIT CHANGE

63%

of employers surveyed identify skills gaps as a major barrier to business transformation over 2025-2030.

World Economic Forum | Future of Jobs Report 2025

TRAINING WILL BE ESSENTIAL

59 in 100

workers worldwide are projected to need upskilling or reskilling by 2030.

World Economic Forum | Future of Jobs Report 2025

ENGAGEMENT NEEDS ATTENTION

31%

of U.S. employees were engaged at work in 2025.

Gallup | Employee Engagement Indicator

Continue the Conversation

HR Roundtable

Bring your workforce challenges to the table.

SKLD's HR Roundtable brings together HR and business leaders for candid, peer-to-peer conversation about the workforce issues affecting their organizations right now.

From attracting and retaining great people to developing talent, navigating changing employee expectations and preparing teams for what's next, the discussion is designed to exchange ideas, ask better questions and learn from leaders facing many of the same challenges.

No presentation. No sales pitch. Just a worthwhile conversation among peers.

November 11 | 9am - 10am

Discussing burning topics on the hearts and minds of HR and Operations Leaders. If you would like to join us, please email

amclendon@skldjobs.com

NEXT GENERATION MANUFACTURING

Real People Drive What's Next.

SKLD is proud to sponsor the 15th Annual Next Generation Manufacturing Signature Event, bringing together manufacturing leaders to explore the trends, challenges and opportunities shaping the industry.

As manufacturers navigate new technology, changing skill requirements and an increasingly competitive talent market, one thing remains constant: people drive performance. SKLD helps manufacturers identify proven talent through skills-based assessment, targeted matching and workforce solutions built around what people can do.

October 22, 2026 | Zoo Atlanta

Going to the event? Let's connect.

Meet members of the SKLD team and continue the conversation about building a stronger workforce:

- **Stacey Elrod** | Market Manager
- **Kim Wallace** | Head, Client & Community Partnerships
- **Kai Shepherd** | President, Supply Chain

Stronger people.

Stronger companies.

A stronger manufacturing industry.

[Learn More](#)