



Transcript for the WLEI Podcast:

Lean's Role in Labor Shortages and the Supply Chain

November 30, 2021

Featuring: Matt Savas, Josh Howell and Richard Vellante of LEI

Narrator:

From the Lean Enterprise Institute in Boston, this is the WLEI podcast, where we share stories of people making the world better through lean thinking and practice. For more information about LEI, including how we can help you apply lean thinking, please visit lean.org.

Matt Savas:

Welcome to the WLEI Podcast with the Lean Enterprise Institute. In today's episode, we discuss the labor shortage problem in the hospitality industry and what lean thinking can do to address it. We challenge recent takes on assigning blame to lean for supply chain problems. And we discuss the emergence of a new sort of customer value with NFTs in an innovative application in the restaurant industry. Let's jump in.

Matt Savas:

Welcome to the WLEI podcast. I'm Matt Savas, executive director of content and marketing for the Lean Enterprise Institute. I'm joined today by president Josh Howell and Rich Vellante, executive director of events and administration. How are you guys doing this morning?

Richard Vellante:

Very well, thank you. Thanks for having me.

Josh Howell:

Yeah, doing good. Happy to be with you guys.

Matt Savas:

Awesome. All right. Well, we got a few topics that we want to tee up for discussion this morning. The one that we're going to dig into first is all about the labor shortage. It's all you read about in the news today. All right, I'm going to start with a quote here from the Wall Street Journal talking about the state of the job markets in the industry. "Employment remains down by 1.3 million jobs since the pandemic began. By contrast employment has bounced back beyond pre-pandemic levels in many other sectors."

This comes from June, so back this summer, but really hasn't been much change in the industry since then. And they quote a bunch of people who have left the industry and picked up new jobs.

Matt Savas:

This is a quote from a gentleman named Zach Liberik. He's a former line cook at a Denver food hall, he has since transitioned to the cannabis industry where he trims pot plants. He works 7:00 to 3:00 PM. He's quoted as saying the new job offers similar pay, but extra benefits such as paid time off, and he hopes to make a career in the new field. He says, "it brought a needed zen into my life. The kitchen can be very frantic and very taxing. It was a good change of pace." Rich, you worked in the restaurant industry for what, 40 years? I mean, you've experienced...

Richard Vellante:

You're dating me.

Josh Howell:

40 years. Good Lord.

Richard Vellante:

Not that much, 35 years.

Josh Howell:

40 years, my God. I was just popping out of the womb.

Richard Vellante:

I was with Legal Sea Foods for 25 of those 35 years.

Matt Savas:

So what's your take on what's happening in this industry? What did the pandemic wake people up to and why aren't people going back to these jobs?

Richard Vellante:

Yeah, I'm a bit of a product of that myself.

Matt Savas:

That's right, you work for us now.

Richard Vellante:

You know, I work at LEI. For me, I think the pandemic really exposed some of the things that have been going on in certain industries and the restaurant being one of those industries, the restaurant industry. It's hard work, and what does that mean? Hard work? It's, I think you mentioned it in that quote, is "frantic" was one of the words that was used. It's high-stress. It's hot. It's a challenging position, but not just from the kitchen side, but also from the wait staff side.

Richard Vellante:

There are very low margins. Everyone wants to come in at one specific time and be treated a certain way, and there's the customer expectation. And I think the challenge too, of the restaurant business, is that the pay scale is so different from wait staff to the kitchen. It's dispersed differently.

Matt Savas:

Because of tipping.

Richard Vellante:

Because of tipping. And it is our culture, the tipping culture here in the US that you mix that in with a gig-type of work environment, where it's not anyone's career, except for usually someone in the kitchen, yet they're being paid the least amount in the restaurant crew.

Matt Savas:

It's interesting that you say that because the Wall Street Journal also did an interview with a woman named Amanda Cohen. She owns a restaurant in New York City called Dirt Candy, and she's quoted as saying that she wanted to make working at Dirt Candy feel less like a gig and more like a career. And she attributes recent success in her restaurant to things like raising wages to \$25 an hour, offering people health insurance, paid leave, she eliminated tipping for the exact region that you mentioned. So it's certainly not a panacea solution to every restaurant's issues, but it certainly, she would seem to agree with you that...

Richard Vellante:

I can appreciate her efforts there. And I think she's addressing some of the issues. And when you look at the European model, I had the opportunity to work in Europe and it's a career.

Matt Savas:

Yeah.

Richard Vellante:

So it's approached differently. So she's touching on some of the things that, that from the surface makes sense. I think one of the other things that the restaurant industry needs to really think about is the model itself. And okay, wages are really important, creating an environment, that is much more important, but if you do all of those things and still introduce an individual that is being paid a little bit more, perhaps has a few more benefits, but yet works seven days a week, is in a frantic environment, because no real durable stability in the processes in what's happening in everyday life, in the restaurant world. You can pay as much as you like, but it's more of, can you endure this difficult environment and how long can you do that for, as you begin to become more mature and realize that there are other opportunities out there. I think the restaurant world has to rethink beyond just an increased pay wage.

Josh Howell:

I couldn't agree more, Rich. I couldn't agree more. I mean, since we've known each other, you've talked a lot about, or I hear a lot from guys like you and others in the industry, about the physical nature of the work. You happen to be a former linebacker, you're a physical, fit, strong guy, and yet it still comes to mind for you how physically challenging the work in this environment is.

Josh Howell:

I often thought, back when I was working at Starbucks, that in fact, the way that the work was designed was discriminatory. There were people who simply could not work in a coffee shop. There are people who could work in a kitchen. Because the work is just so physically demanding. In fact, I had a barista, in one of the stores that I managed, that literally had a panic attack in the middle of a morning rush because of the demands, the intensity, of that work environment.

Josh Howell:

And we've learned enough to know that it just doesn't have to be that way, that there are ways to, as you put it, bring durable stability, make the work safer, make the work less physically demanding, make it less intense, less stressful. It is possible. But if those things aren't addressed, I agree with you. I don't think it's just, just a matter of pay, or benefits.

Matt Savas:

Well, let's talk about that a little bit more because businesses are dealing with these problems now, and I would, I'd say, from the Lean Enterprise Institute's perspective, we have some thoughts about what businesses can do now to solve some of these issues. Josh, you recently wrote about an experience with a local organization that's struggling with hiring enough people to support Fall rush. Your own experience at Starbucks and transforming that organization, how stores operate. What would you say lean thinking has to say about how to support these businesses by making jobs better?

Josh Howell:

There's a few things, I think, that we'd like to focus on. It was definitely a part of the work that, Rich, you and I did together. Matt, you were a part of some of that too, with Legal Sea Foods. There's, on sort of the input side, coming into the operation, I think there are ways to kind of levelize what happens within the operation, the work itself. It tends to be an industry that's characterized by these intense peaks and often these long valleys. But that kind of volatility that instability brings with it tremendous stress, especially in those peak periods. So, there's things, there's tactics, that we can deploy to kind of levelize things out.

Josh Howell:

Once that condition is established, then there are ways to sort of design more routine, kind of easier-to-execute work with less bending, less reaching, less running around, less banging into one another, that again can bring some relief to what has traditionally been a very physically demanding, stressful, physical environment. Those would be a couple of the things that I think are key to improving the working conditions that exist in hospitality.

Matt Savas:

What about your experience at Legal Sea Foods, Rich? I mean, was there a point where you saw a change in how work was done, where you felt like: this is not as taxing, this is not as demanding. Workers are feeling better when they finish a day on the line.

Richard Vellante:

Yeah, it's interesting that you bring that up because Josh alluded to, some of it, is beginning to really understand your operating process. Why do we do things? How do we do things and how do we support

each position? So what I mean by that is, we talked about a little bit earlier, what attracted me to this business was that physicality, who could survive the difficult situation, to live the next day. And you hear a lot of famous chefs talking about this, is that when the time that I got into the restaurant world, it was that attracted me. I'm tougher than everyone else. I can live through this. And so it was about the individual. But when you really think about it, there was so many times at Legal Sea Foods where we would say, you would allow a cook to go down, we'd say going down like power windows. Like, oh, they're going to have to survive through themselves, right?

Richard Vellante:

"They're in the weeds." You hear that a lot.

Matt Savas:

Yeah.

Richard Vellante:

And it was like, well, they're going to have to figure it out and survive. And we would say, if this person couldn't handle it, then they're no good, let's find another one that can handle it, instead of really focusing on the process. When we slowed down a little bit and started to do the work that Josh was just mentioning is like, how do we really start to look at what they have to prepare, how long they have to prepare it, how long it takes to prepare it. And when you start looking at the pressure of the demand, and you look at the two, you say, not very few humans can actually do this unless they are superhuman.

Josh Howell:

Exactly.

Richard Vellante:

So we're like, we learn to say, let's be hard on the process, not on the person.

Josh Howell:

I think you're putting your finger on it, Rich. At LEI, over the last handful of years, we've really been promoting this methodology, we refer to it as "Lean Product and Process Development." In the experience that I've had in this industry, there is intense focus, rightly so, on the product, right? The entree that you're going to put a recipe together for, the espresso drink that Starbucks is going to introduce, or whatnot. But almost virtually no effort and intention put into the process side of that. The work required to prepare that entree, the work required to prepare that beverage.

Josh Howell:

And until that changes, until it's product and process development that's running through R&D departments, or running through, you had a test kitchen at Legal Sea Foods where you were developing menu items. Until that process dimension is attached to the product development dimension, the stuff isn't going to change, but it's utterly missing from any of the work that happens in this industry. I think paying better attention to that and giving folks the know-how, the tools required to do good process development is an area with tremendous potential. And needed, that's really needed.

Richard Vellante:

And that's the key point. I mean, you can pay anyone what you want and it's admirable, but if there's a gap between that leadership that Josh is just talking about and the actual work being done, you're still getting frantic environments and chaotic environments. And it's true, the restaurant world and anything in this section, this space, you have a lot of passionate people that love to focus on the recipes and have passion for those recipes. But they forget that there are processes around that recipe and how it's done and how it should be done, and what's the most effective way to have it be done.

Richard Vellante:

And what you find in restaurants, in many places, is this mentality of making it in a big batch. I need to make sure that I am going to survive this shift, so I will make as much as I can to survive and live through this night so that I can show up again tomorrow. So it's this kind of hoarding mentality in the kitchens, in any kitchen that you work in, people hide the towels, people hide their knives, people hide their ingredients. There's this reality of, where is this all being hidden? We know that any kitchen you go into, which cook is hiding it and where?

Matt Savas:

Well, I remember when I first showed up to one of the Legal Sea Foods restaurants, a very busy one, Pecorino cheese was, I remember the saute cook was holding God knows how many pans of Pecorino cheese, because it's a pain to shred Pecorino cheese. You got to get out the Robo-Coupe, you got to cut up the block of cheese, you got to shred it, that's kind of a mess, you got to pour the cheese into a pan. And so you have to do that during service, you're done. You're going down like power windows.

Josh Howell:

Yeah. I mean, that hoarding, that batching, is totally understandable. I mean, these are workers, these are cooks that have been crushed in the past by not having hidden that preferred tool or not having prepped a big batch of ingredients, and they suffered as a consequence. And to that individual, the available countermeasure, the idea that they have to prevent that from happening again in the future, is to hoard, is to batch. But again, what we've, I think shown with multiple organizations is there is another way to approach that. There is a way to get away from batching, to get away from hoarding. To get closer to one by one, to get closer to routine work. But that's an operating system challenge, it's not something that an individual cook or an individual worker or barista, let's say, can handle on their own. It's an operating system thing, which again, Rich, you can talk about your culinary education, operating system was not a topic that gets covered in culinary education. It's all about the product, but the process, the operating system, that's just something that you're left on your own to kind of figure out.

Richard Vellante:

So that one example of what Matt was talking about, the difficulty of making that cheese, we learn to offline certain items. So, in a lot of restaurants, what you do is, you are in charge of your section, and your saute person is in charge of all of the mise-en-place. The mise-en-place is what they prepare before the service. We learn to offline that, and what, essentially, it does is that the individual that is afraid to have to make this Pecorino or Romano cheese during the night, they're going to make a lot of it to survive. Well, what we've done is we've offlined that to someone that we called at Legal Sea Foods a line back. So they would have this ability to know how much was left in the pan. If, let's say, there's a small amount left, they would make more and deliver it to the saute person.

Richard Vellante:

The saute person can focus on what they're doing, what they're cooking, and not worry about getting into the weeds, having to cook, having to make this Pecorino or Romano so that they can survive through the night. There's someone behind them that is prepping this and delivering it just in time for them to use it in their other dishes, which evens things out, which calms things down.

Josh Howell:

Exactly.

Richard Vellante:

Which really helps the cook focus on cooking and not worried about, "Oh my God, I'm running out of this. I'm going to have to run to the walkin. I'm going to have to go find it." That just takes you off of your real work. And so you're not creating value, you're running around like crazy and then you frantic.

Richard Vellante:

And then you turn into that individual that Matt read about. "I just don't want to be in the situation anymore." "I'd rather cut marijuana and be calm."

Matt Savas:

Yeah, for sure. Having that support system in place where you have a working product, backup product, when the working pan empties, somebody's there to replenish it. Also, it has repercussions the following morning, because prep is happening continuously. You don't need 15 cooks to show up at seven or eight o'clock in the morning to restock their stations. And I mean that frantic exercise begins when that door opens at eight, you have people rushing to get product, to get tools, to get equipment, so they can get ready, like you said, to survive.

Josh Howell:

Guys, these are production system, operating system fundamentals in other industries such as manufacturing. They go back decades. The separation of the work of assembling things, transforming objects, separate from the work of bringing those parts, that conveyance work to the person who's there assembling and transforming those objects. I mean, that's been standard in industries like manufacturing forever. But in this case, in hospitality, in restaurants, it's just not. And that's the specific kind of characteristic of the more effective operating system, production system that this industry could really benefit from. And that would bring calm, I don't know about zen necessarily, but would bring more calm, more stability to the work and, and to the employment experience.

Matt Savas:

We'll say to every restaurant owner, you can learn all of those concepts with LEI's workbooks, Learning to See, Creating Continuous Flow, Making Materials Flow, all spelled out there. All the answers that you need are in those books.

Matt Savas:

All right. So from one crisis to another and, in this case, we're saying that lean thinking can help an industry. In another case, we have the New York Times saying that lean thinking is destroying our supply chain. A few weeks ago on the Daily Podcast, a podcast that I listen to regularly, we had a reporter,

Peter Goodman and Sabrina Tavernise talking about the state of the supply chain. And really Peter Goodman goes on to assign blame to a lot of the issues we're facing to lean thinking.

Matt Savas:

I'll just read a quote here, "There's a big picture element that we need to reckon with. And that's that for really four decades publicly traded companies have been under tremendous pressure to go as lean as possible. We've been living through a time when so-called just-in-time manufacturing has been the mantra. Publicly traded companies are answerable to shareholders. In \$1 that they spend warehousing a part as a hedge against some problem in the global supply chain. Well, that's a dollar they can't use to pay a bonus to the executives who run that company. That's a dollar they can't use to pay out in dividends to shareholders."

Matt Savas:

I think that's a pretty crude take on lean thinking, Josh, but I don't know. What's your reaction to that quote, the podcast in general there?

Josh Howell:

It's a totally crude take, but one that we have seen taken repeatedly in the press for years. I mean, this isn't a new thing. It's certainly been highlighted because of the massive supply chain disruption that we're all experiencing, the risks of inflation that are increasing by the day by the hour. But in that quote, I mean, he's conflating two things: to make inventory levels as, quote unquote, "lean as possible." I mean, if you're using just the literal definition of that term "lean," perhaps that's an appropriate phrase to use. But then he brings in just-in-time, which, in this case, he is, in fact, defining just-in-time as just the least amount of inventory possible which, of course, is not representative of what just in time is all about. Just-in-time is to put all inventory in time so that it's always available in virtually any situation.

Josh Howell:

I am perceiving, from subsequent reporting, including by Peter Goodman himself and others, I just watched a report in PBS's news hour the other day, there does seem to be perhaps blame being placed in other areas through ongoing reporting of the supply chain issue. So I'm hopeful that, because lean, just-in-time, have been kind of unfairly criticized, blamed after what's happening in the supply chain, the issue's so massive, there's so much reporting happening on it that people do seem to be looking at other causes of what's going on and not just going to this lazy analysis that you quoted in that article that puts blame on lean, in fact, without an accurate understanding of what lean and just-in-time is, in fact, all about and trying to achieve. It's not just to reduce inventory and put yourself at risk of disruption and stockouts, that is exactly what lean is not.

Richard Vellante:

Is there an element of this, I'd love to hear you thinking of this, of using the tool incorrectly or misunderstanding the tool itself, meaning what some people think lean is all about versus what lean thinks lean should be about, or what you think it is.

Matt Savas:

Well I think there can be different layers of misunderstanding. In this case with this reporting here, I think it's just a total misunderstanding of just even basic business practice. I mean, you can't expect a

business to warehouse every part for every product they produce to prepare for a once in a generation event. That just doesn't make any sense.

Josh Howell:

Exactly, once in a century.

Matt Savas:

And when it comes to things like PPE, that yes, we need to have that available for a crisis like this. Well, you can't rely necessarily on, I would say, the private sector to do that. I would say that's something the federal government needs to decide, okay, are we going to ensure against this possibility or not? And if so, how much are we going to do that? Also, they say sort of strange things as if shipping from Asia is a handy way to keep lead times low with just-in-time shipping, that doesn't make any sense. It's weeks of lead time and companies, in fact, keep warehouses, many warehouses, so they can store the inventory they need to hold from Asia so that they can ship to their factories wherever they're producing.

Matt Savas:

And so I think it's, I don't know, like Josh said, I think it's a pretty lazy analysis of the issue. I also think this misperception, that lean is all about making more money. In this case, they say it's making more money for executives and shareholders. Yes, the outcome of lean enterprise should be a more profitable enterprise, but the means by which you get there should also lead to many more positive things. It's driven by improvement, something that we call Kaizen, and Kaizen is only possible through developing the problem solving capability of the people inside of an organization. And real capability development relies on things like job security. You're going to invest in people, they need to be around for a long time. And so companies that do this well, invest a lot and their people, and they create what we would say are better jobs than companies who aren't doing this.

Matt Savas:

I just think there are different layers of how you can, as you asked, Rich, misunderstand the tool. I think the New York Times just totally missed the mark, but beyond that there're many other layers that I think that they just totally whiff on here.

Josh Howell:

Yeah. I mean the purpose to value and increasing profitability can certainly be to the exclusive benefit of executives, that happens. No question. But it's also necessary for the topic that we were talking about earlier. I mean, for that restaurant owner that you quoted earlier, Matt, who's committed to paying higher wages, well that's, that's going to be straining to the business model, unless she's able to find ways to increase productivity and subsequently increase profitability.

Josh Howell:

So, we want that profitability, we want that capacity to be generated. The question becomes how's that going to be applied and with lean thinking and it's deep philosophy around respect for people and the necessity, as you put it, Matt, to engage those folks, support those folks, unleash them and equip them to be effective problem solvers. All that requires us to, to be as mindful of how these gains, these profitability gains, capacity gains, can benefit team members, frontline team members, as much as it is executives. But certainly that is not the only goal and desirable outcome from applying lean to any operation or supply chain.

Matt Savas:

Well, we got to end on a more fun topic rather than two crises here. So I want to transition into something that I find deeply exciting. This is NFTs, specifically your restaurant NFT concept. For those of you who don't know what an NFT is, don't worry, I don't know either. Pretty sure people who invented this stuff don't know what they are. No Non Fungible Tokens. I am going to read directly from Ethereum's website, the crypto that underlies non fungible tokens. These things are used to represent ownership of unique items. They let us tokenize things like art collectibles, even real estate. They can only have one official owner at a time and is secured by the Ethereum blockchain. No one can modify the record of ownership or copy paste a new NFT into existence. So these things are blowing up. Artist named Beeple sold an NFT for what, 60 million dollars at an auction back in February or March this year.

Matt Savas:

Again, what are you buying? You're buying proof of ownership to a digital asset. Digital assets are infinitely replicable. And so how do you assign ownership to anybody? Well, an NFT is able to do that through the blockchain. Yet, I'm not going to pretend to know how this actually works, but the other interesting thing here is it allows the creator to stay financially invested in their original asset. And so if that NFT is subsequently sold to the one by Beeple, well, Beeple is going to get a cut of the action. And that's insured because of how all of this stuff is connected again on the blockchain.

Matt Savas:

That's a pretty less than 101 level explanation of this stuff. But I bring this up because I think, what does this have to do with lean thinking? Lean begins with customer value. And we are beginning to see new types of value emerge very rapidly. And these things are moving already out of the digital realm, into the physical realm. And here we have one with a restaurant concept. This is being backed by a group called VCR. You can check out the explanation. They did an interview with CNBC. I encourage everybody to check it out. But, Rich, you brought this to my attention. Can you just briefly explain what, what a restaurant NFT concept is?

Richard Vellante:

So, I think this is brilliant. And this is a way of when you're in the restaurant business, you're always saying, how do you leverage your assets? And what are those assets? Well, in this restaurant group, they realized the asset is the table. Like, what's the one thing that when you think about going to a restaurant that's valuable and on a Saturday night or a certain night, or if it's a restaurant that's a hot restaurant, tough to get in, it's getting a table.

Richard Vellante:

So you think of that, that restaurant Arroyos, and you'd have people would buy their tables and have their set times to go into the table. Well, you had discussed about how NFTs work. So this group is thinking about, okay, they were going to have a club membership and they're banking on, it's going to be hot and really exciting to get into and hard to get into. So you can buy your time slot, which is awesome, right? Your NFT time slot. So here, I'm a person that says, I want to pay X amount of dollars for Saturday night, at seven o'clock for six people. And I will pay whatever that's worth, whatever that value is to me, I'm going to buy it. I can use it at any time. That's my table. Now...

Matt Savas:

You can just walk in. So that time, that day you just walk in, no questions asked, right?

Richard Vellante:

But the beauty of it is that the restaurant gets this prepaid money that they're selling the value of the table.

Matt Savas:

Before they serve a dish. Before the kitchen may even be built.

Richard Vellante:

Right? So, that's changing the model. One of the problems with the restaurant model is its tight margins. It's just super slim. Well, this changes the game, right? You're getting paid for one of your assets that you weren't able to pay before. And so you're still, once they come in, they have to pay for the food, they have to pay for the drink and all that. Now the beauty of this is let's just say, I own this slot and I'm going to be out of town.

Matt Savas:

Yep.

Richard Vellante:

I can put this up bid. What's it worth to somebody? And once that gets traded, this is where that NFT is interesting. Once it gets traded to someone, someone pays for that, the restaurant gets a cut of that, whatever percentage that is. This is brilliant.

Matt Savas:

So you can make your reservation on AirBnb. What's also interesting about this is that you could imagine that people have no intention of ever going to the restaurant, they just see it as an investment opportunity. Say Thomas Keller is opening up a new place in New York City, and everybody knows everybody's going to want to get a seat at that table. I'm sitting here in Boston. I'm probably never going to go to that restaurant. I probably couldn't afford to go to that restaurant, but hey, I think this could be a regular source of cash. I can just regularly sell a 7:00 PM Saturday night reservation to punters who undoubtedly are going to be queuing up for this thing.

Richard Vellante:

It's like Geek Seats.

Matt Savas:

Geek seats.

Richard Vellante:

You can go on, right? Say, oh I'm going to be in New York.

Josh Howell:

SeatGeek? Yeah.

Richard Vellante:

I'm going to be in New York, and I want to buy a table here, who knows, for a certain time.

Matt Savas:

And then when you think about that, you realize the concept can be applied so many places. I mean, the one that immediately came to mind was tee times, golf tee times. Pebble Beach at eight o'clock on Saturday morning. I mean, what is that worth? Is that worth a million dollars? Is that worth \$5 million? I bet it's worth at least a million dollars. And I think we're going to find out pretty soon because people are realizing, like you're saying, Rich, there's a new form of value that is being created every single day with the discovery of these digital tools. And it's not going away anytime soon because one, there's a market, well, there's a market for both buyers and sellers are beginning to realize there's so much opportunity here to create assets where assets previously didn't exist.

Matt Savas:

It's pretty amazing. I'm looking forward to dining in the Metaverse, personally, where all food is digital and somehow Mark Zuckerberg is just pumping my stomach with digital calories.

Richard Vellante:

Sounds horrible.

Matt Savas:

Yeah. Well, we'll get there soon. He's about to invest, he says, 10 billion dollars, really just to make the Wall Street Journal story go away about how Facebook is hurting everybody, and Instagram. But I don't know. That's what I'm hoping. I can't wait to, to be lounging in a prone position, headset on eating a digital burrito while, I don't know, a mob is just, oh God... Anyway, it'll happen one day.

Josh Howell:

Yeah, you're reminding me that it's been a little while since I've watched the movie Wall-E with my kids, which essentially predicted this future however many years ago. Steve Jobs and the Pixar Studios showed us the conclusion here.

Matt Savas:

What happened at the end? The apocalypse?

Josh Howell:

Something look forward to here. Essentially, we lost all bone structure just turned into blobs of fat because we were sitting around, plugged into our screens all day.

Matt Savas:

Yeah, that's the target condition, I think, for humanity. Yeah. Current condition: bones, heart beat. Target condition: soft blob living in your headset.

Josh Howell:

Yeah. Well, as that happens, the physically demanding work in restaurants is going to have to change.

Richard Vellante:

It will.

Matt Savas:

Well, this NFT stuff, just to back to the subject, this is something that I think will be tremendously interesting to see how this unfolds outside the digital realm and begins to impact the physical world, like these restaurants. And if this succeeds the applications of this, who knows where this could go. All right, that wraps up today's discussion. Josh, Rich, thanks for joining me here on the podcast. And, let's see, I guess I'll see you guys in a couple of weeks for another go.

Richard Vellante:

Awesome. Thank you.

Josh Howell:

That was great. Yeah. Thanks for organizing. It's great. It was fun.