

Peter Grist Sky News Interview 26.02.23

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00:00

Simon Love (Sky News): Welcome back to Weekend Live. Well, COVID has accelerated the rate of change in our economy. Business leaders say that training and coaching needs to be improved to keep up. Online training has been in focus recently as the COVID-era measure. But it's increasingly being found not to train staff adequately. Well, joining me live here in the Melbourne studio is Peter Grist, who's launched a national coaching program aiming to get businesses back to effective coaching and get businesses up to speed. Peter, really, really appreciate your time. Thanks for coming in today.

00:34

Peter Grist (GRIST): Thank you very much.

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Simon: So COVID really threw everything online in the corporate and business world. How much is it coming back to in person now, in the training space?

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Peter: Well, we're certainly seeing people have a desire to come back into workshops and face to face training. But what we're finding is, of course, that's not that easy, because it's not necessarily that easy to get everyone back in the office. And we're seeing that most organisations are taking very much a hybrid approach where they'll have their people come into the office only certain days of the week.

01:07

Simon: So are you finding that companies are keen to switch the dial back to a bit more in person training, get into a lecture theater or into a board room and actually talk to people rather than sending them, you know, a 40 minute thing to complete online, which effectively, I could imagine, and maybe from personal experience, it's very prone to just click and keep going isn't it?

01:30

Peter: Yes. Well, the obvious response, and it was understandable with everyone working from home was that all of your learning was transferred to digital. But what we're finding is the outputs of that are really not as good as if we combine that digital with a lot of other elements of a good learning program. So many organisations are very keen to still do some digital learning, but they want to do digital

learning that's engaging and fun and exciting for people. But it needs to be backed up by really good programs that help people apply the new learning on the job.

02:00

Simon: The Federal Skills Minister, Brendan O'Connor has been concerned about the nation's skills and I guess the shortfalls, the gaps. What would you say to government right now could be a couple of things that they could do to address some of these issues out there?

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Peter: I think the government could play a role in raising awareness of how quickly the skills gap could start to really cause problems for organisations and the economy. The OECD is suggesting that 50% of all workforces need to be retrained in the next three to five years. And we've had an unproductive three years through COVID with training and development. So, it's pretty easy to see how that gap's widening very quickly.

02:41

Simon: What's the reasoning for the retraining and the need for that?

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Peter: Well, if you think of AI and Chat GPT, anyone that has been playing with that can see that that's going to take over many roles inside organisations almost immediately. So therefore, we need new roles. And if we don't train for the skills of the future, we'll have workforce that set up for the past.

03:02

Simon: And Chat GPT, there's been a lot of emphasis on this this week. It even came up in Federal Parliament, I think Federal MP Aaron Violi. He had Chat GPT create a speech for him to deliver.

Peter: Yes, yes.

Simon: In the Federal Parliament, which I found fascinating.

Peter: Yeah.

Simon: So if you could do that; and that is taking over a function of say, a member of parliament that's supposed to be paid \$200,000 to represent their community and deliver speeches from their brain, it probably shows that AI is really going to take over this world, isn't it – particularly in the corporate world?

03:34

Peter: Yeah, we've got a really small example in our company where we had a lady doing copywriting for us; we now get Chat GPT to do that for us. We're now retraining her in data analytics, so she can look after our social media and website. So that's the sort of change that all organisations are going to have to go through. And we need the government to be out there really creating awareness inside organisations that this gap's an issue.

03:58

Simon: And it's not necessarily an issue, is that where you're essentially having to redeploy staff rather than get rid of them or make them redundant?

Peter: Yes.

Simon: Do you think this is something that businesses need to keep in mind that it's a positive opportunity here, rather than a bad one?

Peter: Absolutely, yeah.

04:17

Peter: You know, these skills aren't just sitting around on the shelf waiting to be employed. What we need to be doing is looking at what we've got – the skillsets with our people currently – and then help them make the transition in our own organisation to have those new skills.

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Simon: Just quickly, tell us about this program you've got going called The GIST. You've got well, you got Kenny on board!

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Peter: Yes! Well, you know, our job is to help organisations transform the way they do learning and development and one of the things we're doing is working really hard to try and make digital learning way more engaging and fun. And Shane Jacobson and his crew have been amazing at helping us understand how to use humour to make learning fun.

Simon: Toilet humour even?!

Peter: Well, we're trying to stay away from the toilet humour. It's got to be appropriate in a corporate setting. We've got to also create cultures in organisations where learning is valued, and not just about the day job all the time.

05:12

Simon: That's very good to hear. Well, really appreciate you coming in, Peter. No doubt stay in touch – with skills is definitely in the spotlight. Peter Grist there. Thanks very much for your time.

05:21

Peter: No worries. Thank you very much, Simon, for having me.

05:24

Simon: Good on you. Peter Grist, there, joining us here in our Melbourne Studio.