

Welcome to the Ready Set Transform podcast where you have a seat at the table with CEOs, industry leaders and tech experts. The topic business transformation. No sales pitches or marketing talk. Just real stories from companies of all sizes and industries. You'll hear business executives inside view of their company's transformation journey. They'll share examples and concepts that can help you and your business thrive. Get unique perspectives on how leading companies tackle the biggest challenges facing businesses today. Ready Set Transform is brought to you by RISE with SAP.

Bonnie: Welcome to Ready Set Transform presented by RISE with SAP. If you're curious RISE is spelled with all capital letters because it's that important. I'm Bonnie D. Graham, very excited and very honored to be here as producer and host of this brand new series presented by SAP. We have an exciting topic today all of you around the world who are going to become our loyal fans, our global listeners will find this of interest and it will apply to you. It's a reality check topic. We're talking about are all companies becoming technology companies. You can sit there and think about it a-ha what does this mean.

Before I introduce my two special guests if you get to see the video you'll see them in a minute. Let me give you two buzz quotes which is how I love to introduce these shows. I have a quote from Alan Curtis Kay, born in 1940. I call him a young man. American computer scientist, very interesting guy. Here is the quote. Technology is anything that wasn't around when you were born. Just let that sink in. everybody should be smiling about that one. Yes, probably true.

Here's another quote. Buzz number two from Arthur C. Clarke, author who co-wrote the screenplay for the 1968 film 2001 A Space Odyssey which is considered one of the most influential films of all time. Here's the quote. Any sufficiently advanced technology is equivalent to magic. I think in our lifetimes, I don't know how old our listeners are or my special guest today but in our lifetimes we've certainly seen a lot of magic.

One more quote they told me I could use. This is from Douglas Adams, author of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy which started as a BBC radio comedy show before developing into a trilogy of five books that sold more than 15 million copies. Technology is a word that describes something that doesn't work yet. Oh my. Okay so let's talk about what we're going to be discussing today. We live in a world dominated by technology companies. We see new IPOs every month. You may be investing in some of them. Stocks are constantly reaching all-time highs which keep getting higher and the number of apps in our pockets continues to grow by the hundreds every year. Count the apps. They are getting more and more.

All businesses today rely on technology to deliver their services and products to customers, that's you and me. Tech has become the standard. Small enterprises run their entire business on pay-as-you-go ERP software, one

example. Your favorite restaurant probably uses an app to deliver food to you if you're doing takeout or door-to-door delivery. Real estate agents can get you an apartment just like that directly on their website. You don't even have to show up. There's everything you need. There's no way back and we all know that however does this mean all companies are really technology companies. Is tech truly changing existing business models or is it simply adding what we'll call a digital layer? How can traditional companies and yours may be one of them take advantage of technology to transform your business? What is business transformation from a technology perspective?

Big questions, important questions, timely questions, relevant questions and I have two people with me today who are going to help us answer these. I want you to wave for the camera. We have Teri Hamann at SAP. Teri, thank you so much for joining us on this debut of an exciting new series and we have Mike Maiolo at Rising. I'm going to ask them for their thoughts on business transformation and how it creates competitive advantage when technology is infused into all areas of a business today. Our topic as I said at the opening is are all companies becoming technology companies Bonnie D. In the house. Happy to be here.

Teri Hamann, so grateful for you taking the time today. Teri, I'm going to put you on full speaker view here on our video. Will you please introduce yourself to our listeners? Tell them a little bit about what you do, what is your role at SAP, at RISE with SAP and what's your passion for our topic today. Teri, welcome.

Teri: Thank you so much Bonnie. It's such a pleasure to be back here with you again and with Mike again. It's our repeat performance. I'm senior vice president and global head of cloud strategy and go to market at SAP for RISE with SAP. I've been in technology for over 20 years. I worked for companies such as JD Edwards, PeopleSoft, Oracle, worked for startups and then ultimately came to work for SAP. I think we're about 16 years ago. I've had a variety of roles. I've worn many hats across those different organizations.

I've been able to see number one a multitude of different companies I've had the honor to work with across different industries. I've done sales, pre-sales, value engineering, strategy, go to market. What I'm responsible for today with RISE is really leading a global team focused on harmonizing and unifying the RISE operating model across our field as well as our global organizations responsible for strategic planning as well as our overall go to market motions. It is a pleasure and an honor to be here with you again.

Bonnie: Thank you so much and Teri was referring to a previous show in another series where she and Mike were my guests. I think it was in 2020 and I am very glad to see both of you back together to share your wisdom so I appreciate that. Thank you Teri. Mike, you're up. Please introduce yourself to our audience. Go ahead.

Mike: Bonnie, thank you so much and Teri, thanks for having me here to join you. My name is Mike Maiolo and the chief executive officer of Rising. We are headquartered in North America, here in Connecticut but operate globally in the technology space. We implement SAP's technology solutions to help our customers gain value through that transformation journey that they're on and Rising is a big part of that.

My background, I worked in manufacturing in my first career and then been in technology for the last 20 or so years. My responsibility at Rising is lead a growth company into the future, focusing on our strategic direction, bringing value to our customers and engaging with our very important partner SAP.

Bonnie: Thank you very much. Teri, what's your passion. I don't want you to give away what we're going to be talking about but what's your passion for the idea of companies. Am I a tech company? Am I not a tech company? Is it in all my layers of operation? Is it in my business models? Am I or am I? No, I'm a dairy company. No, I'm a shoe company. Am I a technology company? Teri, should everybody be saying yes, I am. Just a quick insight for everybody listening.

Teri: I think it's an interesting question that we pose because I think companies from 20 years ago were really evaluated on. They were categorized by what they sold. I think we're moving more into an environment where we're being categorized more by what we do than what we sell. I think it's and for me the passion is having worked for technology companies for over 20 years I don't necessarily feel a company needed to have started as a tech company to now be considered a technology company. It so interacts with every aspect of our lives, our children's lives. I just think it's a really interesting question that we should pose and how do we manage through that.

Bonnie: Thank you. Very, very interesting. They didn't have to start as a technology company. Something else and look where we are today. Mike, your thoughts on that. Is every company already a tech company? Do they have to say it?

Mike: I think it's a great question and to me I don't think you have to say you're a company but you certainly have to figure out how to use tech to be the best company you can be. I still think that you have to look at what is it you're in business to do and that doesn't mean what you sell necessarily. It can be what experience are you trying to address but to me you have to in this day and age embrace the use of technology for innovation, for being as efficient as you can be at whatever it is you're choosing to be.

Bonnie: Thank you very much. Thanks both. We weren't planning on that question but I really wanted to ask it because I think our listeners are going to say what? Are they really talking to me? I'm not. Well maybe you really, really

are. This could be a hold up the mirror reality check type of a conversation. Teri, we're going to move into the quotes for those of you well new to this new series but new not new or new to my series, my miniseries I do for SAP. I always ask my guest to send me a quote from a fictional character from a movie or TV show or a line from a song lyric that has absolutely nothing to do with the topic.

Then I ask them to please explain in their own words how they think it relates to the topic and this is another way of our seeing how they think and how they articulate what we're talking about. Teri Hamann has sent a quote from an iconic movie Ferris Bueller's Day Off, all the way back in 1986. It's considered an American teen comedy film. I think it's a lot bigger in importance than that. Ferris Bueller played by the one and only Matthew Broderick is responding to a question from Sloan Peterson played by Mia Sara. Here's the quote. Mia Sara says what are we going to do. The answer from Ferris Bueller and this is the quote Teri picked is the question isn't what are we going to do. The question is what aren't we going to do. Teri, this is a great quote. I can't wait to hear what you have to say about how does it relate to our topic.

Teri: First of all I never thought I'd be quoting Ferris Bueller but I found it to be so relevant to the topic we're talking about is I think that is the question that is posed now to companies with the introduction of technology and the doors that that has opened for a company is it's limitless. It's boundaryless in terms of what we're going to do. I think that's a question that many of the companies that I interact with. It's something that SAP asks itself is with the capabilities that we have now today do we do we have the traditional boundaries that we did in the past. If we don't then sky's the limit on where we can go. That's why that quote really resonated with me especially talking about RISE with SAP as well as are all companies becoming technology companies.

Bonnie: Thank you. We get on many of my shows people quoting Ferris Bueller's Day Off and that's not the quote. Something about you're going to miss it if life goes by so fast. I was very intrigued by the one you picked. Thank you very much Teri. Mike Maiolo has sent us a quote from Rocky Balboa, the 2006 film. Everybody knows Sylvester Stallone played Robert Rocky Balboa, the Italian Stallion in various iterations over his lifetime of the fictional character. In this particular scene Rocky is speaking to his son Robert Balboa Jr. played in this movie by Milo Ventimiglia and here's the quote. Should I try to do it in my best Stallone voice Mike? Is that okay?

Mike: Absolutely.

Bonnie: You, me or nobody is going to hit as hard as life but it ain't how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get it and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done. Mike, rescue me please.

Mike: Bravo.

Bonnie: Talk to me.

Mike: To me first of all I absolutely love the Rocky series and I love the quote. Part of what made it relevant it's not directly about technology but think about the journey we're all going through pushing forward post pandemic or back end of pandemic if you want to look at it that way. The analogy could be those punches we all took personally and in business related to the pandemic, a real test to see what our character was all about, how we would keep pushing forward, how we'd take those punches and how we would find our way into the future. It's been a struggle in many ways but I think we've all learned a lot about ourselves as companies. We've figured out that winning is about being able to take the punch and move forward. It's not about avoiding the punch.

Bonnie: Very interesting and yes we are how many months into the pandemic, into Covid 19 and the second wave if you will. Here we are recording the show in late September 2021. Companies that got back up or refused to sit down and count themselves out are still in the game. Thank you both for the very interesting quotes. I appreciate the work you did. That leads me to the part of the show we're going to get into our formal round table discussion here. I'm going to pick a statement from each of you. They graciously sent me, Teri sent me statements and Mike sent me statements.

I'm going to pick one from each of you. We'll go back and forth. Teri, I've got one teed up here, statement number one. I'll read a little bit in a minute but just so the listeners know Teri will unpack the statement for about three to four minutes and then I'm going to ask Mike to agree or if he dares to disagree with what Teri said but Mike this is about your thought leadership so whatever you say just join in, just say something and then I'll go back to Teri for a response to Mike. At that point I'll have picked a statement from Mike and you will unpack it. We'll go back with Teri and let's see how much ground we can cover.

Statement number one from Teri, a little bit at the top I will start with. Robust technology, regardless of what your business does is essential to remain competitive. All companies today regardless of industry or geography and this is especially important Teri because our audience is going to be global, around the world, are faced with similar dependency on technology. Teri, unpack this for us please.

Teri: Absolutely and I think it's the crux of the question of are all companies considered technology companies. From my perspective we're playing a different game than we were 10, 20 or 30 years ago Bonnie. We can look at companies in any industry, any geography or a customer segment and all of them are relying more and more on technology to be successful. It could be an ERP that they're using to run their financial processes. It can be the apps

where consumers can buy their products or it could be their overall presence on social media channels. All modern companies leverage technology to remain competitive. That's the norm and it's no longer the exception.

In preparing for this podcast I read an article on Harvard Business Review and it discussed how different companies like even a pizza restaurant and a bank they chart their path to success by investing heavily in technology in early 2010. They understood that offering a great product or a service was no longer enough to ensure success. If they really wanted to win they needed to look at other business areas such as customer experience, product distribution, employee engagement and technology is the answer to face those challenges. They invested very heavily and became leaders in their industry. By the way that pizza company's stock wound up outperforming Apple and Facebook for many years. It shows that the net impact of embedding this into the overall strategy for any company.

I think one of the biggest drivers pushing companies to invest more in technology is their own society especially younger generations. They were born in front of a computer for lack of a better analogy or a mobile phone and in many cases it changes the game for companies when they can engage and draw those individuals in in the manner that they want to experience that company and in terms of the overall digital experience that a company can deliver. Anyone born in the 2000s, they're now entering the workforce. Their expectation is to have the apps and the systems, allow them to get as much work done as possible higher than any previous generation.

For example when I started working way back when we had to learn whatever software was available. We had to adapt to the systems that our companies were providing us. This digital transformation is really changing the game in that respect. For me it's all culminating to this point of companies are faced with more and more. They are what they do not what they sell. That was my perspective.

Bonnie: Thank you very much. Very interesting. A lot of unpacking there. Mike Maiolo, join us. Agree or disagree and Teri told me it's okay if you disagree with her. She'll still like you.

Mike: Well that's good to know however this time I will agree with a slightly different view. I think Teri's points were spot on. I'll use the pizza company analogy to kind of go a little bit further with my response. Think about it pizza is not that complicated. You've got a handful of ingredients. It's about buying those ingredients well. Combining them in the right way to make a great pizza and then getting it to your customer wherever they may be but the part that's really complicated has to do with the two things that Teri hit the employee experience, their expectations. The way people consume data as employees now has changed what a company must serve up in terms of technology to deliver

that data and to train people and provide the apps that they're so used to using to affect their everyday life.

Then the same with the customer experience. It's just not about receiving the pizza on time, hot and tasting good. It's about is there a survey that asked me what I wanted to see different or what did I like or what did I not like. It's on an app. the point is even the simplest business requires a ton of technology to be the best of what you do.

Bonnie: Thank you very much. I love the examples. People say yes, pizza. I could relate to that somewhere at some point. Teri, anything you want to say back to Mike and Mike I'm putting your discussion statements in the chat for you. Teri, anything back?

Teri: No, spot on. At least on this point I think Mike and I agree.

Bonnie: We heard that.

Teri: I can't guarantee later on.

Bonnie: Fair enough. Thank you very much. Mike, I'm going to your statement number one. This is interesting and this is maybe very telling for some of the people listening in the audience. Mike says no one is saying let me buy more technology rather what they want is to be a best run business. There was a point in time when businesses were each developing their own customized solutions. That time is passed or Mike counsels it should be passed. A business should be able to focus on what brings profitability. A lot to talk about. Mike, I'm putting you on speaker view. Talk to us please.

Mike: Thank you Bonnie. Listen, I'm being somewhat tongue-in-cheek about the comment that no one's saying hey, let's go buy more technology. The fact is they need to go get technology to innovate but it's not simply about buying technology because it's available or because we haven't bought technology in X number of years. It's about having to fulfill a journey that you're on.

There's a lot of books on American capitalism to talk about. Are you as a publicly traded company in business to provide value to your shareholders, an opportunity for your employees or value to your customers? My answer is all of the above because you are measured on your ability to drive shareholder value but you can't do so unless you're taking care of your customers and understanding how to bring value to your customers. The technology role in all of that isn't like I said just because it's time. It's because if you want to be the best chicken manufacturer or whatever business you're in you have to keep up with the pace of technology and use it to innovate and to provide an opportunity for these hungry employees who are seeking a different experience than they were when Teri and I started in business.

Bonnie: Thank you very much. Teri, thoughts? Join us.

Teri: Well from my perspective I have to agree and disagree a little bit. As a technology company I would hope companies would continue to buy technology and buy software but I do agree wholeheartedly with Mike's position in that I don't think companies are seeking to invest in technology just to say they did it. My perspective is they want outcomes. Using technology to solve business challenges will help companies become more profitable, more efficient, help them drive better product and services. Each time a company is implementing a new technology to support there should be a business objective behind that decision. Agree and disagree at the same time. I would love them to keep buying software and technology but also agree that it should be outcome focused to drive real business results.

Bonnie: Thank you. Mike, anything back to Teri you want to say.

Mike: I'll just state the obvious. We need them to buy technology so that we have a business to take care of but as long as they're buying it for the right reason.

Bonnie: For the right reasons. Thank you both. Teri, let's go to statement number two from you this is interesting you've got a great example. You say companies that have a business model oriented around technology should consider themselves to be a technology company. A common comparison is made of Tesla and traditional automotive manufacturers. I'm going to stop there and let you finish this sentence, this thought. Teri, go ahead.

Teri: Absolutely. The way I see it what a company does really defines what it is. Suppose your business model is built around technology meaning that it will be through technology that you'll enhance your customers' lives, ensure success of your business. In that case you can call yourself a technology company. It doesn't matter if you are building cars or selling actual software as we do at SAP. If technology touches every area of your business. In my opinion you are a tech company.

I'll use the example of Tesla versus the traditional automotive companies. While Tesla was born as a tech company and offered cars heavily dependent on technology. The same was not true for Ford and GM. There was of course a lot of technology involved in the development of those first cars. Still car companies didn't have a business model that was oriented around technology. Their technology was packed into the vehicles as everything else was. Why would we want to buy a car? Why would we want to go visit a shop when we need repair?

I think it has brought to the forefront that change in perception with regards to as we stated before traditionally companies were evaluated on what they sold. Now it's moving more to a model of they are what they do and we also don't

continue to evaluate companies based upon where they started. I think that another example of this is Amazon. Years ago they stopped saying they were a retailer and began to define themselves as a software company. For them it was about what they were doing as a company instead of what was in the box that they were shipping every day. I definitely see Amazon as a tech company.

Maybe talking about ourselves at SAP we were founded almost 50 years ago by leaders who had a vision for the business and potential technology. It's cool and exciting that we call ourselves a tech company since day one but in our half century journey we've also helped thousands of companies improve their technology capabilities and to evolve their business. I really like posing that question to say are all tech all companies becoming tech companies. To Mike's earlier point I don't think they need to actually call themselves a tech company but I do believe we have to recognize that the introduction of technology has caused every company no matter what they do, no matter what they sell, no matter where they started to recognize and realize how much technology has brought a huge competitive advantage to their business model.

That was the impetus of that statement is I think as we look at these different companies and how they have really pivoted their operating model around the doors that technology opened for them. It really allowed business model innovation for them to introduce to drive their growth agenda and their growth strategy because it makes you think had Amazon not really pivoted away from being just a retailer would they have achieved the success that they have today without really embedding technological advantage into their operating model.

Bonnie: Books, books, books. That's what we were doing with them back in the day and now it's everything. Mike, chime in please. Agree or if you dare to disagree. Go ahead Mike.

Mike: I'm going to dare to slightly disagree and it's going to look like I'm splitting hairs but hear me out on this guys. To me I don't think a company needs to call themselves a tech company. I'll give you a couple examples and I'm going to start with rising. We are a services company and I want to define who we are based on the experience that we deliver to our customers but we can't do any of that without technology. We're heavily reliant upon technology to run our business.

In fact we're in the process of investing heavily in technology to become a better Rising or RISE with SAP because we happen to be using SAP to go down our technology journey but we're using that technology to get the experience we want. Let me explain. Our entire goal was to run our company more efficiently so that our employees could spend more of their waking time with customers delivering value. Are we a tech company or are we a tech enabled company? I would argue its tech enabled.

Bonnie: Interesting. Teri, what do you think? Back from you, back to you from you to Mike. What do you think?

Teri: It's like ping pong. I appreciate the differentiation there and I don't think by posing the question are all companies becoming tech companies that we're really saying every company now has to call themselves a tech company. I don't believe that they need to but I think part of this discussion is to recognize what technology brings and the evolution that is possible of their business model to not be constrained like they were in the past. Like all of this is even challenging how we do industry classifications of companies now in terms of like where do they fit.

It's blurring the lines between historical classifications for companies. I think that that is a very powerful change that has been introduced that has allowed companies to really pivot. Don't completely disagree with Mike but I don't think by recognizing the technological impact that they necessarily have to say they're a tech company now.

Bonnie: Interesting. I have the sense from listening to both of you that the so-called splitting hairs as you prefaced your remark Mike I think this will be valuable to the companies who hear and view this episode because they might be grappling with this. If they sit down at the C-suite, at the table and they say who are we really. Are we supposed to call ourselves a tech company? I'm thinking of a company that serves pizza going back to pizza too. Let's say they bring in the best pizza in Brooklyn. Serve it to their employees as a company paid for lunch once a week. Are they a food services company then? Are they a pizza company then? Are they a dining room company then? No, they brought in the pizza but that's part of what they do. I'm splitting the hairs even further but the point is yes the tech enabled sounds to be about right but we're going to continue our conversation.

Mike Maiolo, I'm looking at your statement number four. This is interesting. Take us in a slightly different direction which is very important for our listeners. You say businesses need a partner to help unravel the very complex decisions involved in moving to the next generation tech platform on the cloud with real-time analytics and predictive capabilities. It has to be able to meet unique business needs. Partners are forming the bridge between technology expertise and the industry. Mike, unpack please. Very interesting.

Mike: First let me define how I'm using the word partner because companies that are innovating and moving across the technology platform to drive value to their end consumers they need partners in many different ways. I don't mean the traditional partner like you have a software company that has a partner. Rising as a partner of SAP but I mean there's a whole group of people and companies and SAP is an example.

SAP can't just sell technology. They have to partner with the company that is consuming their technology to say what are you trying to do and how do we help you shape the vision for what the future is going to hold for you as a company based on the technology we have and the processes that go with it. That's where this sort of group of partners becomes really valuable to the end consumer which is one, you have to pick the right technology. Two, you have to think about what's the best way to use that technology to become a best run business whatever business you're in. Part of that is calling upon years of experience, seeing other companies innovate and come up with best practices around how that technology works.

The other part of it is technology's transforming so quickly that you almost need a partner to translate where are we now and where are we about to go so that I can make real-time decisions about what the future holds for me. How do I invest in the technology? How do I use it the right way to get where I'm trying to go? For us SAP happens to be that partner because they're helping us use their technology to make Rising the best Rising we can be.

Bonnie: Thank you very much. Teri, join us. Thoughts?

Teri: I agree with most of what Mike has said. I also want to reinforce that while I think companies can be defined by what they do or what they work with. I don't necessarily think that they have to develop all the software that they use. Companies will need technology to run their finances, recruiting, distribution and other critical activities. I would also agree that we need the perfect blend of combining technology and business expertise. RISE with SAP for example was borne out based on those two pillars bringing together technology and business process expertise. I agree on this point.

Bonnie: Thank you. Mike, anything you want to say back to Teri.

Mike: No, I just agree and I just would add that it's the confluence of technology and process that really is where the difference is made. That's why I like the concept of RISE with SAP because it's not a technology pure play but it sure is based on great technology.

Bonnie: There you go. Talking about tech. Let's continue. By the way if you're just listening, if you're just tuning in this is a brand new series I'm very, very proud to produce and host. We are calling this one Ready Set Transform presented by RISE with SAP. My very special guest on this debut episode, if you're just tuning in you missed a lot of good content. Go back to the beginning. We have Teri Hamann at SAP and we have Mike Maiolo at Rising.

Let's continue the conversation. Teri, we're going to look at your statement number four now. This is interesting. You say the future of work is heavily impacted by the blurring of the lines of every company becoming a technology

company. I'm going to stop there and let you tell us the rest of the story. Go ahead Teri.

Teri: It's an interesting perspective that I think has actually been amplified uh by the recent struggle that everyone faced with Covid both companies and individuals. With more companies becoming and recognizing the impact of technology on their operating model one of the uh biggest challenges is actually finding the right people to build your team and also to ensure that they are equipped with the technology to drive the outcomes you expect.

Let me give an example of what I mean by finding the right people. It's not news that software developers are high in demand. Certainly it's something to do with that it's one of the reasons we're having the discussion we are today as more and more technology permeates every aspect of our life and our businesses. As we see today more companies evolving and transforming. You see fashion companies are hiring software developers. Food chains are hiring developers. Media companies are hiring developers.

These companies are trying to prepare for the future and ensure that their teams have the digital mindset to really help them thrive going forward. They want to find the right people to support their vision of the business in years ahead. Having the right team is really fundamental for companies that are transforming into tech companies but another vital piece is ensuring your company is equipped with the right technology. The right technology to grow your business, to innovate, to achieve excellence, to bring your team together no matter what the situation is. I'm talking about things such as implementing a modern cloud ERP to support your most critical business processes, introducing robust technology and apps to better serve. Monitoring the feelings of your customers, your employees, your vendors.

Many business challenges if not all can be tackled with the use of technology and companies have to invest in that technology when they want to be considered tech companies or not. For anyone who's listening to us if business transformation or digital transformation is not a hot topic in your company I strongly recommend that you Google the name of the show RISE with SAP. It offers a clear path to help your company achieve digital transformation but it also helps you begin to tackle some of those leading indicating questions you should be asking yourself as a company. How do we get time to value, flexibility? It presents a real opportunity and something that we have noticed for many companies is the whole word or concept of transformation sometimes is a scary, it's a scary word for a lot of companies.

We have to remember as we look at the evolution of our business models transformation doesn't have to be some huge effort that takes 10 years and hundreds of millions you can start small. It's about the journey. I think for me with this talking point the journey that we're all on is hugely important. What we have to make sure is at the pace of technology continues to accelerate we

have an obligation to bring our people along with us. We have an obligation to make sure that our future workforce is ready to step into the demands of the high-tech requirements that we all will have going forward.

For me it's really the merging of technology in the workforce and the fact that it requires thought investment and we all have to get out in front of it because as I said there's extremely high demand for a finite set of resources. This again goes back to the question of is every company a tech company because as retailers hire developers, food companies hire developers. That's why I was saying that line is blurred and we're all in competition for that same set of resources.

Bonnie: Very, very interesting. Mike Maiolo, join us. Thoughts? A lot to talk about.

Mike: I have to agree on this one and part of, there were several themes and what Teri was sharing with us but the one I want to focus on is people. The experience that our employees require is changing rapidly. It began to change with the digital world that our younger people were coming into the workforce with expectations on apps and technology being routine in their lives. People like me needed lots of training to use any technology. Now my kids are born using technology and can understand how to use an iPhone probably at age three if they're slow to get there. We have to use technology so that we can make the experience of our employees as good as it can be. To take some of the mundane tasks that they're used to doing away from them so they're challenged more. It's an expectation they have. For us to get them in customer facing activities more and more.

An example is it's not just about having a technology that creates an invoice efficiently and effectively. It's about taking tasks that are repeatable tasks. We're using robotic process automation to take those repeatable tasks, take them away from an employee and have it done using technology so that people can focus on doing things that are more fun, more challenging and more to their liking because we're all facing a talent shortage for lots of reasons. Teri commented on a couple of them but for us we've got a really be different and offer an experience that's different or it's tough to recruit for sure.

Bonnie: Thank you very much. Teri, anything you want to say back.

Teri: I think it presents an interesting challenge for everyone and especially the fact that technology is so native to these younger generations and they want us to engage them in the manner that they want to be engaged that's familiar with them. I think it presents a real opportunity going of just the limitlessness of technology in the future. I think in their hands things are really going to, really going to take off.

Bonnie: I remember not too many years ago when there was an automotive company. I don't remember whether it was, maybe GM, maybe it was Ford Motor specifically started allowing employees to bring their own devices to work B-Y-O-D. The question was if you let the employees bring their phone, their smartphone, whatever that smartphone was, it was years ago. Would they be putting any proprietary apps on that phone but also would they be happier operating at the level they were already accustomed to in their own life as a private person, as a consumer, as an everyday person in a culture that accepts technology in your hand.

There was a barrier. The question was would other companies follow suit and say sure, bring your phone. Sure, you could work from that phone. I think that line has been blurred so many times that I don't know. Teri, anything you want to it's just a sidebar but I'm curious Teri and then Mike. Anything you want to say about that?

Teri: I mean who would have imagined even two years ago that almost 80 to 90 percent of the world's workforce would be working from home. I mean who would have thought. I mean before everybody was like oh my goodness. You can't do that. They have to be in an office. You have to be watching them. Just the sheer ability of how much technology had already been in place that enabled so many companies to still run with their workforce sitting at home. I think it was an absolute eye opener on what the possibilities are going forward and who would have thought it. I mean just a few years ago that would be whether you're using a whatever digital platform or Zoom or just the fact that that kept teams working, teams collaborating and what we would have done had that technology not existed. I think the world economy would be in a far different situation than it is today. I completely agree with you on how it's really impacting.

Bonnie: You're right. That was the next frontier. It was don't just bring your device to work. Stay home. Use all the devices. Use the technology and work. That was the frontier. Mike, thoughts on that one.

Mike: I'll just add that if we hadn't begun that journey already Teri's right. Companies like ours who are delivering global technology transformational implementations used to do most of that work in person. We had started using technology to figure out ways to do it more efficiently, more timely and globally without having to travel globally but I think that what we're headed towards is a bit of a hybrid because I think the complete remote is a challenge in many ways.

Part of what's missing is the experiential bit and the relationship piece where you get to know someone over time and not only can address the problems they tell you about but can anticipate what the ones might be in the future. I think we'll capitalize on this change and we'll figure out how to stay remote and do a

lot of the things that we can do very efficiently remotely but then we'll have a percentage of our time back traveling because I think some of its needed.

Bonnie: Thank you very much. We're just about ready to close. We have a few minutes left. I was going to read your statement number six Mike. Let me just introduce this briefly. This on the theme of future work. We're all challenged by the great resignation and recruiting talent, the challenge now. People are no longer interested in just working for a good company. They want to work for a company that will solve problems efficiently, effectively and do things with the same mindset and values as them. Any quick comments on that. Where are we heading with this Mike and then Teri? Then we will do our, we'll do some predictions. Go ahead Mike.

Mike: The great resignation is a terrible phrase but sadly true and happening globally where people are changing their goals of what they want for their career. I think the pandemic accelerated that. I think the digital age accelerated that but here's my takeaway. My biggest challenge as a CEO is to make sure we're clear on what problem are we trying to solve and are we putting our best people in a position to solve that problem efficiently and effectively. Are we using technology in the right way to give our employees a great experience, to give our customers a valued and great experience and to make sure that we're evolving so that we can train people and continue moving down the path of the journey that we're on which is again based on technology but is really primarily focused on being the best company we can be by making sure our end customer is happy with what we're doing and our employees find it a good and challenging place to be.

Bonnie: Thank you. Amen to that. Teri, anything you want to say before we wrap up.

Teri: I think it's an interesting view. I agree. It is probably the most significant driver helping us to overall reframe the fundamental question of what can and can't we do. It goes back to my Ferris Bueller quote like it isn't what we're going to do. It's what we're not going to do. We're in a world where we can approach the same challenge from so many different angles. while a company can be trying to figure out the best way to change car oil after 3000 miles another company might be working on the future of transportation and whether that involves a car or not. I mean think about that. Bonnie to go back to your point about the bring your own device. We can be talking about does our future transportation even involve cars. I think that's an incredibly exciting time to be in.

Bonnie: We are indeed an exciting time. I'm going to ask you each a crystal ball predictions question very briefly. Our topic today is are all companies becoming technology companies. If we met again one year from today, it's just about the end of September 2021. Let's say heading into Q4 of 2022, Teri Hamann, would

we still be asking that question? Would anybody want to hear the answer anymore or will we know a solid answer? What do you think Teri?

Teri: I think it will continue to be a question that we try to address over the next several years. I think it has been an interesting paradigm shift. I think we will continue to evolve and struggle with it going forward. I don't think we'll have it solved in a year but I look forward to the debate.

Bonnie: Thank you. I like that. Fighting words. That's provocative. We like that. Mike Maiolo, what do you think?

Mike: I agree and I think that we're going to continue to ask the same question maybe a little differently because I think you could substitute the word innovation for technology. Are you an innovation company? I think that kind of bringing together the two quotes that we brought out there. What we're not going to do is stand still and take those punches in the face. What we're going to do is innovate and change the way we do things so that we can be more efficient, more effective, attract the best talent and grow companies because that's where people want to be. Both customers and employees.

Bonnie: Thank you and I'm going to add back the quote I opened with. One of my buzz quotes from Arthur C. Clarke, who co-wrote the screenplay for 2001 A Space Odyssey. I always lowered my voice when I say the name of that movie. The quote was any sufficiently advanced technology is equivalent to magic. I would say let's keep being fascinated with what technology can do for us. Let's keep thinking of innovative, that's your word Mike, creative ways to use it to better our companies, our businesses, our goals, our outcomes, our employee experiences, our customer experiences and the world. How about that.

Teri Hamann, it's been such a delight and I've learned so much from you. You speak I listen. People listen. You have so much to say. Thank you for sharing your insights, your wisdom, your knowledge. Mike Maiolo, the same exact thing. Really appreciate your taking time. I want you to both put your hands together and let's applaud the gentleman who came to me and said let's do this series Ready Set Transform. It's Lucas Escudo at SAP. He has worked tirelessly along with me to get this launched. Lucas, I'm very proud to be the producer and host. Very honored that Teri and Mike have taken time to be with us today. Shout out also to Sheri Anne Meyer at Rising for supporting Mike's appearance.

Let's say goodbye. This is the first episode of many to come. Find us on Voice America the Business Channel. Bonnie D. Graham, signing off. Everybody wave bye. Bye bye.

Thanks again for tuning in to Ready Set Transform presented by RISE with SAP. To keep the conversation going tweet your questions and comments using the hashtag #RISEwithSAP or email bonnie.d.graham@voiceamerica.com. Please join

host Bonnie D. Graham again on the business channel. We wish you a great week.