

Episode 295: Second Chance Hiring and DEI with Cheri Garcia



Intro: [00:00:00.96] Welcome to the Workology Podcast, a podcast for the disruptive workplace leader, join host Jessica Miller-Merrell, founder of Workology.com, as she sits down and gets to the bottom of trends, tools and case studies for the business leader, H.R. and recruiting professional who is tired of the status quo. Now, here's Jessica with this episode of Workology.

Jessica Miller-Merrell: [00:00:26.40] Welcome to the Workology Podcast sponsored by Upskill HR and ACE The HR Exam. According to SentencingProject.org, nearly one in three adults in the US, that's 70 million Americans, have a criminal record., including those who were arrested but not convicted. For many, a criminal record creates a significant barrier to employment, even when the record includes only a misdemeanor arrest or conviction. Regardless of their qualifications, people with criminal records struggle to participate in the American workforce and contribute to their families and society. There's a cost for employers as well who are unable to benefit from the talents of tens of millions of qualified candidates. With me today is Cheri Garcia. She's the founder and recruiter at Cornbread Hustle, a staffing agency for second chances. Cheri is passionate about helping people with criminal backgrounds and individuals in recovery find transformation through employment or entrepreneurship. Cheri was named to the 2021 Dallas Business Journal 40 Under 40, a list of emerging entrepreneurs, and she has won five of six awards in The Pitch by United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, including Social Innovator of the Year. Cheri, welcome to the Workology Podcast.

Cheri Garcia: [00:01:44.91] I'm excited to be here. Thank you for that awesome introduction.

Jessica Miller-Merrell: [00:01:48.81] Well, I, I'm not the one who was on the 40 Under 40 or won the five of six awards in The Pitch by United Way. So you did the work. I just read the words.

Cheri Garcia: [00:02:00.69] Thank you so much.

[00:02:02.43] Let's start with some background. Can you tell us a little bit about what led you to the idea of Cornbread Hustle?

Cheri Garcia: [00:02:09.39] Yes. So I am an addict and alcoholic in recovery. In high school, I decided to try methamphetamines to lose weight and have an energy. And methamphetamines is also known as meth. And that very quickly made my life decline. I was addicted for two years, ended up getting clean from that drug

and diving straight into entrepreneurship and I mean head on into entrepreneurship. It filled the void of the highs and lows that the drugs provided for me. Now, the problem with diving straight into entrepreneurship and not addressing whatever traumas or other mental health reasons that caused me to become an addict in the first place, I later discovered that I was an alcoholic as well. So as I'm diving into entrepreneurship, doing a whole bunch of cool things, I invented a product, I went and worked for the new station, I got a patent, I developed alcoholism. But despite the alcoholism, I wanted to put my entrepreneurial skills to test with going into prison and teaching others in prison how to make a business plan. Because I knew in my heart, deep down, even if it was an unhealthy reason, I knew that people who have faced adversities would be able to make great entrepreneurs. So that led into me creating this second chance staffing agency. I started it five years ago. Two and a half years ago, I came to the realization that I was indeed an alcoholic. I had got a DWI and here I am as the CEO of Cornbread Hustle, arrested in the back of a cop car. And I'm like, I might have a problem here. The interesting thing about that, when that happened, that's when the business actually begun to take off. Reason for that being is as a CEO, I became vulnerable. I was walking in the shoes of the people I was serving because at that point I was now on probation and I now had a criminal charge and I was able to get sober and turn this company around.

Jessica Miller-Merrell: [00:04:26.37] What a story. And I think that we first met when you were you were six months sober, so. Yeah. Which you told me when we had the prep call that it was like a blur.

Cheri Garcia: [00:04:38.94] Yes. It's, your first six months, oh my gosh, like, you're just lucky you made it. But for the whole one year for me was a blur. And just you're doing a lot of just facing your problems and trying to fix your life because, look, my bank account was negative. I own this company. The bank account was negative. I was trying to hold on to every thread that I had and going through. Like for me, I'm like a two and a half year old right now. I started using drugs and alcohol as early as middle school. So I'm going through all these successes and wins and highs and lows as a new person like who am I? So it's it's definitely been the journey. But I would say a year two was when things got more clear and I'm like, holy cow, alcohol really interfered with my success.

Jessica Miller-Merrell: [00:05:30.12] I appreciate your candor and willingness to share. I wanted to ask you about this past year because I feel like this past year different industries have been impacted with covid in different ways. And as a staffing leader and owner of your own staffing business, what changes have you seen in your staffing agency in the last year?

Cheri Garcia: [00:05:53.85] So that's a very interesting question, especially for me, because just one year ago we were struggling. I was so I'm two and a half years sober. I was just, right before covid hit, I had just hit about one year sober and I had just started to break even on the business. And then covid came and I was like, OK, that's great. I already struggle with the disease of alcoholism and I'm trying to conquer that. Now we have a virus trying to take us out and I just wasn't having it. I was like so resilient back against the wall because I had already been through so much. I felt like I didn't get this far just to get this far. So when covid hit, I thought for sure because I was seeing all the industry news that staffing agencies were freaking out. Shutting their doors, everyone's losing jobs, and I was like, oh, man, we're, we're barely breaking even, so we're really going to take. So I went ahead and sent out a message to all of our employees and I was like, hey, listen up. I got hazmat suits, OK? And I got disinfectant and I learned how to kill this virus. I learned

everything I need to know about bacteria. So we are now going to be virus busters. We are going to disinfect for a while until things get back to normal because none of us want to lose our jobs, OK? And everyone is like, OK, whatever.

Cheri Garcia: [00:07:20.32] So as we're gearing up for that and as we are switching into disinfecting, we did make six figures in one month, which was incredible because there was such a high demand for it and I was quick enough to get the right products that we needed, but nothing happened in terms of losing business for us. In fact, we got so much business because people got unemployment because and you know, that entry level jobs, a lot of people were making more money on unemployment through the covid pandemic. And so who is not eligible for unemployment? People who just got out of prison with no work history. So we had essential businesses reaching out to us. We were up to our eyeballs in business because they're like, hey, we're feeling friendly now. Send whoever you got, we trust you. Like, here's the charges we'll take. Here's the ones we won't take. And so then we became ultra busy because now we're in high demand for disinfecting and then staffing as well. And for me, you know, I just really thank God every day that I even had the wisdom and the knowledge to start that disinfecting company and to pivot like that. I definitely know that I am a strategic person and I do believe that I'm very smart, but I definitely know my higher power had played a big part in that to keep us going.

Jessica Miller-Merrell: [00:08:50.11] What an interesting pivot. And I think that as an entrepreneur like mad respect for that, because so many people did not pivot and so many businesses have been negatively impacted. And then, of course, you're mentioning the challenges with hiring because of the unemployment extension and the kind of the stimulus and all those factors. So I'm not surprised that and it's about time, frankly, that employers look at second chance hires as a way to to fill their talent pipelines. I wanted to talk a little bit more about second chance hiring as it relates to diversity, equity and inclusion. I don't think that this is in the conversation enough, which is why I was so excited to have you on the podcast. So I wanted to ask you, what should HR leaders understand about the benefits of hiring employees with criminal records?

Cheri Garcia: [00:09:44.05] So, first of all, one in three people have a criminal record and all people who are incarcerated right now, 95 percent of people sitting in prison as of right now will one day be released. So it's a giant talent pool of people who are willing and capable of working. So by ignoring that talent pool, you are putting yourself through unnecessary stress. And I know what the market looks like right now. Nobody can find workers. Even our current clients have been emailing us like crazy the last couple of months with all types of new incentives, just incentivizing people to show up to work and do their job. So I can't imagine how hard it is and how much people who are not background friendly are suffering right now because even our clients who are background friendly are struggling to find workers. So in in terms of DEI, you know, that's a huge number, one in three people. And addiction doesn't discriminate. I mean, you're looking at me, a meth addict and an alcoholic. And I have been arrested 14 times and I'm a white female. Then you also have a high number of people who are black and Mexican and Asian and all types of different race races who are sitting in prison today. So if you have certain goals as it relates to your diversity being background friendly, checks that box all around.

Jessica Miller-Merrell: [00:11:17.98] Again, thank you for sharing. I, I do think that the conversation I'm so glad that we're having more of them. But again, I feel like the second chance hiring is not in that

conversation, so I want to bring it back into the spotlight where we can we can think about this. And you're such a great example because you are someone who has faced adversity, does have a criminal record, and you don't look like what I think many people consider like the typical felon. I mean, I don't see like what I see on the news, like face tattoos or, or different things that is kind of sensationalized by the media.

Cheri Garcia: [00:11:52.34] Absolutely. It's such a stigma. And that's what I that's why I believe my LinkedIn has done so well. So now I have about maybe one hundred and ten followers or so, and they're following only because the stories are so insightful. They, the stories are basically, hey, check out this woman who was in prison for meth and we just hired her for a six figure salary for one of our clients because while she was in prison, she learned a lot about software sales, you know, when people were like, whoa, that's crazy. Or check out my employee sitting next to me right now who cannot get a good place to live. She lives in a motel. We pay her very well. She looks like this sweet, sweet, sweet grandma that wanted her to fly and check out her record. She has, like assault with a deadly weapon and it's hard to even, like, imagine. So I put the human to this story into the script. Like, I show people like, hey, check out this person. Like, I just hired a guy that was making ten dollars an hour in a furniture store because he has a felony from too many DWIs. And now his, his background is a six figure earner, top performer recruiter. So I hired him and snatched him right up. And he's producing like nobody I've ever seen. And our clients are like, give us more of this. And I'm like, did you know he's a felon? And they're like, what? You know, so I just love those stories. It's so awesome.

Jessica Miller-Merrell: [00:13:28.19] A hundred and ten thousand LinkedIn followers, I checked, you are really resonating on the social media platforms. One of my friends sent me your info after a clubhouse and she's like, oh, you need to get this lady on your podcast. I'm like, oh, I know Cheri. Like, I am so excited that, that you're out there talking about stories, success stories, your own story. And hopefully, like this podcast and the other things that you're doing are helping to change the narrative for those H.R. leaders who, who do want to change the narrative in their organizations and they're thinking about bringing second chance hires to the table, what should they be talking about or saying to their company leadership?

Cheri Garcia: [00:14:11.78] Oh, I love that question. So to give an example of a big account that we got recently, and actually I'm totally happy to name who they are because they've allowed me to go in the media at their work site explaining our new partnerships. So it's Linux, and Linux is a very large organization that most people have heard of or seen their logo. And they asked us to come out to Stuttgart, Arkansas, which is in the middle of nowhere, and they said, hey, we're happy to hire up to two hundred and fifty people with criminal records. But we only want to go through you because you guys are experts in doing the vetting and understanding when somebody needs help or you're, you understand if somebody is relapsing or, you know, they wanted that. I guess you can call it like the bridge or the safety net between then just going all in on second chance hiring. So what they had to do was bring us in and put us in front of their leadership. Now, warehouse environments typically aren't already like a great culture in rainbows and butterflies. So this is an environment where supervisors were like, this is not a good idea. You're going to bring in Cornbread Hustle so we can manage people who need a babysitter. And that's really what a lot of people had the mindset of. So I had to do presentations for a full day in front of different groups of supervisors to not only explain our process and how we work to help give them a sense of peace, but also I was able to share my story with them and give them examples of success stories and why our turnover rate is 50 percent less.

Cheri Garcia: [00:16:07.28] And just I shared a lot on empathy and how these supervisors come to work every single day and that their job can be so much more than a supervisor that's managing people. Now, you are a light to somebody who's looking to you at the beginning of a new life for them. And so it really did resonate with a lot of people. Now, you know, we've been there for a couple of months. We've already been able to hire. I think we have almost 80 people now. I'm not sure it's somewhere in between 60 and 80. And we have got nothing but great reviews. And it's opened up a lot of conversations with their internal employees who came into our office to talk about different struggles that they were dealing with. And they felt vulnerable enough to come into our office and bring up conversations that we were able to go and talk to leadership. So it's been great all around. And, you know, it's interesting. People believe, like they're going to bring a bunch of felons, but it's done the complete opposite. We brought a bunch of empathy.

Jessica Miller-Merrell: [00:17:13.11] I want to back up. You said 50 percent reduction in turnover, and that is huge. That is huge, and I want listeners to think about their own costs, like if you know what your cost per employee is for turnover, and then think about how you can reduce that by 50 percent and then think about that number. That's the conversation to get it started with your executive team, because that is now H.R. being a revenue center, not a cost center, but a revenue center, because they're impacting the bottom line and they're doing it in a very dramatic way.

Cheri Garcia: [00:17:53.06] And, you know, it's, every place is different. So, you know, we have a couple of warehouse environments that they're just hard jobs and they don't pay a lot, lots of heat hostility, not because of the leadership or anything like that. It's just a hard job and there's lots of jobs available. So those jobs, you know, sometimes we have higher turnover. But I can promise, like all jobs that we've ever been at, our turnover is less than our competitors or other staffing agencies or the industry average. Now, we do have a couple of warehouse environments that have they're doing it right, man. Like those HR leaders are keeping the culture great. We have one one client that doesn't call our employees temps at all. They call them EOTs, which is employee owners in training. So they go ahead and tell our employees the second they start their first day, you're going to own part of this company, because that's how much we want you to become part of this family. And they have like a chaplain on site that gives I don't know if it's advice or mentorship or whatever, and they're just very invested in their employees. And we have a couple of places like that. And that those places we have like, oh my gosh, it's like two percent turnover rate. Like everybody that comes out of prison stays there because they're like, oh my gosh, I just got adopted by a family that accepts me for who I am. I'm never leaving this place. They gave me my second chance. And I've had employees turn down huge job offers just to stay with the employer that gave them their first chance, because even though this isn't healthy, and they do deserve more, they feel indebted. They feel like, no, I'm going to stay here and they're afraid to go somewhere else and not be treated as well. So the loyalty is real whenever you treat somebody well, who needs that second chance.

Break: [00:19:56.20] Let's take a reset. This is Jessica Miller-Merrell, and you were listening to the Workology Podcast sponsored by Upskill HR and ACE The HR Exam. Today, I'm talking about second chance hiring with Cheri Garcia.

Break: [00:20:10.81] Personal and professional development is essential for successful H.R. leaders. Join Upskill HR to access life training, community, and over one hundred On-Demand courses for that dynamic leader. HR recert credits available. Visit UpskillHR.com for more.

Jessica Miller-Merrell: [00:20:27.39] How do you work with employers, your clients, to make sure they are making and you are making with them safe hiring decisions and hiring decisions that help avoid liability and risk to their existing workforce? Because I, thinking that some of our listeners might say, oh, my gosh, we're hiring a bunch of felons, does that mean that there's going to be increased break ins in the parking lot? Or what if somebody comes in and beat somebody up? What does how do we keep that from happening?

Cheri Garcia: [00:20:56.28] I would say, number one, that is something that everybody thinks that just like we think felons have neck tattoos and look a certain way. But I will say that in the five years that I've been doing this, there's never been violence at the workplace or drugs brought on site. Anything that happens or the same things that happen with entry level employees who are no call, no shows. So let's put that fear to the side. I would say the biggest fear that any organization should have and I feel like it's always the last thing that they look at or they underestimate how it can impact their workplace. The biggest thing I would say that you need to work through is not just your leadership, that you're going second chance hiring. The employees. Because there are a lot of environments, especially if it's a you know, again, a lot of warehouse environments can be toxic environments because of personalities. So when you have unhappy or disgruntled employees that they may not even care if they're working with felons or not, but because it's something they can complain about and make a fuss about, they will. So it's getting everyone on board and bringing somebody in, even if that person is someone like me or if it's another speaker bringing somebody in to teach empathy and how to make a difference in the workplace because your leadership all day long can be excited about second chances and feel like they're making a difference. But if the people they're working with don't accept them, then it's going to be a toxic environment. So that's number one.

Cheri Garcia: [00:22:41.05] Number two, everybody does have all of our clients have their own custom second chance plan. I talk to them about the workplace environment and I ask them, if I learned not to ask any more or what charges won't you accept. Because they'll always give the same answer. And that's well, we don't want sex offenders or murderers or, or, you know what no violence either. And yeah, if it can be just nonviolent and then it goes all the way down to how about misdemeanors, and maybe if it's seven years old. So I've learned like don't ask the question. Instead I drive the conversation to help them understand instead of leading in fear because we're all human beings that project our own fears. Let's lead with logic. OK, logically, what kind of job is this and what are they doing? So, for instance, we have a a metal recycling plant that's a client of ours. They will accept because of our direction and helping them get through like, what is their plan, because most people deciding to hire second chance individuals haven't even thought about this until now. So these are total new policies that they're creating in their company. So we have decided that they don't take people with theft pattern of theft because of all the copper. Now they'll take somebody with the convicted, a convicted murderer or somebody that has a sex charge because they're out there just doing manual labor. And the risk of them doing something crazy at the workplace is not really high. But the risk of them stealing if they have a pattern of theft is pretty high.

Cheri Garcia: [00:24:19.52] Another example, if it's a job at a bar where there's a lot of socializing at the end of the work shift and a lot of young people who like to drink, I'm not going to send somebody who just got a felony for their fourth DWI to go work in that environment. And I'm going to suggest to them that they just stay away from that just to minimize risk. Not saying that all of us, including myself, can't work at a bar in recovery. But I'm here to be responsible not only for my client, but for the people that we're trying to help thrive and grow. And just to give another example on how I customize, I'm the one that knows that I'm responsible to customize a plan as I see things happen. So in one of our plants, we had realized that in that certain area there is a lot of gun violence. Like people in this area, they shoot first, ask questions later. And I was like, man, what is going on out here? And so I realized since in that area, that's what it seemed to be like it was just that's just how it was, I decided for the sake of the workplace safety and so I sleep at night that we weren't going to accept people with gun charges in the last two years because of the mindset of that environment. Right?. So it's just basically using logic and making sure you're setting the employee up for success and not putting them in a destructive environment that will hurt them, as well as helping the client feel comfortable.

Jessica Miller-Merrell: [00:26:00.08] I love the approach that you're taking and sharing that it's a customized approach that really is unique to each employer and whatever their tolerance level is, or the right fit to ensure that you're not putting your hires into situations where they might be tempted to make a bad decision. The other question I wanted to ask you is, how do you ensure the employees that you have that are going into these organizations? How do you make sure that they're ready for workforce, for the workforce following their release from prison?

Cheri Garcia: [00:26:39.17] So we start off with a phone interview and we ask a series of questions. And if on the phone interview we can tell that they're just not being transparent or, and generally we can tell because our entire staff is made up of people only who have at least five years experience being incarcerated or addicted to drugs and/or alcohol. So none of us are. You're just a HR person that's like, oh, really? They said it. So I'm going to believe it. Like, we used to say all those lies, too, so we can kind of see the red flags, you know, because we've all done the manipulation game. And if anybody listening to this knows a lot about the prison scene, prisoners can be very, very manipulative. That's why if they change it for good, they make great salespeople. But the manipulation isn't because they're bad people. It's because it's a survival technique and they had to manipulate to get what they needed to survive. So we have all walked the walk. And so we're pretty good at screening on the phone interviews. Once we know that they may be a fit, we always do an in-person interview. Even though that takes so much more time and money and slows us down, we have to do it because even if it's on a video or on a call, you're not able to really tell if somebody is using drugs, if you're talking to them like there's been many times that I've been on meth and I sounded like a very, very intelligent person that's just very eager to work.

Cheri Garcia: [00:28:23.00] And so when they come in for the in-person interview, we were really looking more for character and asking questions around what prison taught them. Our interviews are different than any interview you'd ever imagine in your life. Like if somebody comes into my office, I'm like, hey, so I was on meth. I did this. I did that. What's the craziest drug you've ever tried? Like, we're just talking about our experiences. So we don't have a dog and pony show here where somebody is being somebody they're not. In fact, sometimes they get so comfortable that it helps us recognize some red flags. So we do a mouth swab drug test. And the reason why we do a mouth swab is because, again, we've all been there, done that. It's very easy to come in with somebody else's urine, go in the bathroom because we can't legally watch them

use the restroom. We're not probation officers. So we do a mouth swab on the spot to make sure that they're drug and alcohol free.

Cheri Garcia: [00:29:21.14] We do test for alcohol, but we can't discriminate against somebody drinking alcohol because it's legal. But if somebody did just get like their fourth DWI and they came into an interview and they fell for alcohol, then we're going to use our best discernment and know that they're probably not ready for, to represent us or go to the workplace. After we do that, then we send them to the client site and our recruiters are all incentivized financially, like we give bonuses to our recruiters when they walk somebody all the way through their ninety days and make sure that they're doing well and on the right path. So now our recruiters who all spent time in prison, get to make a difference in somebody's life. And when that person gets excited and gets the job and gets converted, our recruiters here get a bonus, which is totally cool. So the sky's the limit for the people who work here. And they're all they all have a vested interest making sure that they're putting people that they believe in to work. And, you know, everybody wants to make money. So the better they do and the more that they give back and help people change their lives, the more money they make.

Jessica Miller-Merrell: [00:30:30.65] We talk you've talked a lot about hiring the steps that you take, the work that you do to ensure that it's the right person for your client. You talked a little bit about a second chance policy. What recommendations do you have for an employer who's thinking about creating a second chance policy for their workforce?

Cheri Garcia: [00:30:49.99] So my recommendation would be, first of all, I don't I wouldn't gather your leaders together at a round table and say, what should we do everyone? Because everyone's going to bring their bias, and their, the stigma and project their fears. And it's just going to be like the biggest waste of like a two hour meeting that you could ever have, because usually you'll walk away with no results or any answer. I would say that if somebody is considering a second chance policy, the person who is approving it and has the final say definitely needs to be the one that is making a decision, then communicating it to the rest of the team with education and awareness and empathy training. Because if you come together with your team and discuss it, then it's a lot of opinions and fears. Also, yeah, I would just say the main thing is making a decision, sticking with it and then not forgetting to move forward with education and awareness and providing a safe workplace environment. If you know in your heart that your environment is a hostile work environment and that you're doing the second chance hiring for all the wrong, like, I have had clients, well, they're not clients anymore because it doesn't work, but I've had, I have had people want to, this sounds really, really sad, but it's true and it happens want to hire because they feel like they can treat somebody coming out of prison because we do have inmates. Literally leave prison every day and go back to prison. They go to work and go back to prison. And so I have had people think that this means they can have cheap labor, that they can treat really badly. And that doesn't work either. And that's not good for anybody. So I would just say, like, of course, a lot of our clients come to us and they don't really have a heart for second chance hiring. They have, they're in desperate need, which is OK. We love those people because it's so cool to see the twinkle in their eye or the light bulb go off whenever they see the change and how amazing second chances really are and they become believers. But I definitely would say that if you're if you're a workplace environment that's not interested in empowering anyone then it's just not going to work. Because then you're going to make people feel like they're still in prison and they may be triggered to behave like they're still in prison, if that makes sense.

Jessica Miller-Merrell: [00:33:24.47] Yes, absolutely. And I appreciate you sharing because I think there's a lot of employers don't know where to get started. The last question I wanted to ask you was about criminal charges. What criminal charges can put an employer at risk for negligent hiring?

Cheri Garcia: [00:33:41.75] A good example could be, so the other day, we had a guy that he told us his background and we did our initial background check, speak with probation officers, all that great stuff and, we placed him in the job. What we do after we place someone in the job, after we do all over initial, we also run an official background check, which is a, it costs actual money and it takes time because somebody is literally going to all the courts and gathering like what the official employment background check looks like, just like any employer would run. When that comes back to us, we look at what the employee told us versus what comes back. Usually it's an automatic like we let you go if you weren't honest about everything, because we will place just about anybody with any charge. So if you're not being honest with us, that's a major problem. But we did, we did have one where technically the guy didn't need to be honest because it was a pending charge and he hasn't even gone to court for it yet. But because I knew about it and because we're a second chance staffing agency, I reached out to the client and told him, hey, FYI, this is on his record, do you want me to let him go or do you want me to find out more? Since he's such a great worker and producing the client was like, just find out more. Let's figure out what's going on and if we can help him.

Cheri Garcia: [00:35:16.50] That's even how nice they are. Maybe we can help them. I would say negligent hiring, like I feel like if I would have known about that charge, it is a sex charge, if I would have known about that charge and not said anything or the employer, and something happens to another person at the workplace, I believe that could be risk for negligent hiring. At the end of the day, anybody can sue anyone for anything. So it's just your risk tolerance, what type of insurance you have, what type of comfort level that you have. At the end of the day, bad things can happen, rather somebody, I mean, look at Jared with Subway. He had no criminal record and that was like some really bad PR and that was really shocking. So I'm sure some employees tried to sue for negligent hiring. Maybe, maybe not. But it can happen to anybody without a criminal record. So I think negligence is just if you know about something and you don't address it or scout out what they're doing and like document, like, OK, so we found out about the sex charge. We had a conversation with him about it and we analyzed the workplace and where he's working and what he's doing. Does this affect his ability to do the job and what are the risks? Right? And so I think that's how you would go about it. But again, at the end of the day, there is no fail proof anybody can sue and anything can happen.

Jessica Miller-Merrell: [00:36:52.95] Cheri, thank you so much for sharing your story, talking about second chance hiring and I think giving employers so many great things to think about for their second chance hiring policies, where can people go to learn more about you and the work you do?

Cheri Garcia: [00:37:08.49] CornbreadHustle.com, so, that, I'm still a little bit of a control freak, so any message that comes through to Cornbread Hustle, I see it. So if you go to CornbreadHustle.com, you can reach out to us and we'll get back to you. But if you want to continue to keep up with stories and examples,

successes and failures, because I do share the failures as well, because I think that's important, then just follow me on LinkedIn and keep up with the videos that I post.

Jessica Miller-Merrell: [00:37:40.86] Thank you, Cheri. And we will make sure in the transcript of this podcast, the show notes to include Cheri's LinkedIn so you can be, you know, one hundred and ten thousand and one followers and counting to, to keep up with the changes, wWhat's new, and then as you are looking for maybe just support information or resources on second chance hiring, Cheri is the go to for that. So thank you, Cheri, for joining us.

Cheri Garcia: [00:38:07.98] Thank you so much.

Closing: [00:38:09.66] Are you loving the Workology Podcast? Our Workology community reaches over 600,000 H.R. leaders every single month. Want to be a sponsor? Reach out to us at [Workology.com/advertising](https://workology.com/advertising).

Closing: [00:38:23.28] From an employer perspective, this is an opportunity to grow your workforce and expand access to job training and education to a broader pool of individuals who have previously not been considered for employment due to having a criminal record. However, the value for employers isn't just a broader pool of talent from which to select candidates. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, 82 percent of managers report that second chance employees brought to their organization as high or higher performance than those workers without a criminal record. And 66 percent of managers at companies that have hired people with criminal backgrounds rated these employees quality of work as comparable to those without criminal records. I'm so glad to have the opportunity to talk with Cheri on the podcast today. I want to thank you for joining and taking part in the Workology Podcast, which is sponsored by Upskill H.R. and ACE the HR Exam. Now, this podcast is for the disruptive workplace leader who's tired of the status quo. This is Jessica Mille-Merrell, and until next time you can listen to [Workology.com](https://workology.com) and check out all our previous podcast episodes.