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SPEAKERS

Suzanne Murdock, William Redpath

Suzanne Murdock 00:00

Hi. I'm Suzanne Murdock, and welcome to series three of Powering Productivity. Each episode, I explore the energy, that really genuine connections, expertise, and being in your best flexible working environment can bring to you, your business and your whole life. So let's get started.

Suzanne Murdock 00:24

Hello, and welcome to on this Powering Productivity podcast. Great to be here as ever. And welcome back again to William Redpath and director, founder of Manabu Learning, advocate of remote working and chapter lead of Grow Remote County Down. Did I get that right?

William Redpath 00:43

You did indeed. Good job!

Suzanne Murdock 00:45

William, we're making a bit of a series of series it seems this episode after episode around remote working at the moment. And last time, we spoke around the demand for going back to the office, which was quite an interesting conversation. And on the back of that I am super interested to explore your thoughts around I guess the possibilities and perspectives of more regional office working as opposed to the city centric work? And do we need more access more awareness of the options out there? So looking forward to discussing that with you in a bit. But for those of you who maybe haven't seen or heard from William previously, give us a bit of a synopsis of your story to date, William?

William Redpath 01:30

Yeah, sure. So like you said, and well done, and you got it, you got a really good synopsis. Suzanne, thank you so much. Well, so yeah, I'm the director of, I'm founder of Manabu Learning. And one of the main outputs of of the work we do is, is around people development is round training, working with teams. And we try to do that in innovative ways. And one of the things that we've been most successful with, I think, for the past few years using digital games for that. So we were quite successful, I think, I want to say I want to say because of COVID. But let's just say in COVID, you know, there were a lot of

companies there that were forced to work remotely, and were struggling to run interventions with their people and were worried actually about their people as well and wanted to bring them together in a meaningful way. And, you know, our games and platforms were a great way for companies to do that. So it's kind of like, launched me in of last few years into the world of remote working as well and being close to organisations, and people in organisations that are making decisions around remote working, I would say also, my own story, or I'm working on my personal story. I'm speaking to you today from my office, which full disclosure is in an urban centre that's in Belfast, just in East Belfast along, we're just across the bridge from the city centre, and I'm here but I am from Saintfield, which as most people probably know, is a village in County Down, small village. And I worked from home there for two years before moving to this office. And one of the challenging parts of that or one of the things that reasons why I moved to Belfast was because there was no access to a local hub in the village or even outside of the village, which supported remote working, I was somebody that wanted to try and get out of my spare bedroom and work with other people. And I find I thrive in those types of situations. But unfortunately, there wasn't there wasn't any available and I often often tell the story. I'm not finished with this in my intro, but I often tell the story of I did call the community centre in Saintfield and ask them like, Do you have any co working space and the lady on the phone told me that not only did they not have any co working space, but they didn't even have any WiFi, Suzanne so they were a long way away it would seem from from being able to offer hot desking and that type of thing. So that's why I'm up here. So you know, on an ongoing basis, as you say I am Chapter Lead of Go Remote County Down. Kind of got involved with those guys off the back of those conversations. And you know really, really proud to be able to kind of fly the flag a little locally and play my part to try to advocate for remote workers and make more services available to them. And opportunities as well, of course, to remote workers around County Down?

Suzanne Murdock 04:24

Yeah, I guess for the backer it's very much twofold from your perspective is the community aspect for remote workers, as well as the opportunities and the workspace elements are different working environments.

William Redpath 04:38

Yeah. I think so. And like, this is this is like a huge thing. And I think when you're talking about remote working, sometimes we can fall very quickly into like two two realities or definitions. I don't know. So it's like on the one hand, you know, you think that remote working or if you're self employed and you're and you're working remotely, it's about more opportunities, more responsibilities, career development, that sort of stuff. But that is just one small part of the advantage of working remotely. And then the second part of it is that I want I always try to make this clear when I'm speaking about remote working, it's not about necessarily working from home. And sometimes people conflate the two, they assume that just because you're working remotely, that means you're working from your kitchen table, or you're working from your spare bedroom. That's that's not the case. And in fact, I would, I would certainly leaned towards, I think that where I'm best is working with other people, it just doesn't need to be in an urban centre. And I think that's been the traditional way of working, we all drive to work for 9am and sit in traffic. And then when when we all leave work, we sit in traffic and go home. And there's there's another way of doing that. So I just wanted to make those two points that it isn't all about career development or business development, there are other community benefits that can be experienced from remote work.

And I know Suzanne, you're based in Newry. And there's a lot of cafes and other places and spaces around Newry that will have benefited from from as an indirect result of you being there. And then the second part of it as well. People will use your go to the hub in Newry, because they are remote workers, but they just work at home. And I think it's important to mention that as well, and like it doesn't mean working from home, it can mean working from anywhere.

Suzanne Murdock 06:33

Absolutely. I think there's a big piece there. That to date, a lot of the research stats, the reports and the conversations, when you think of remote working, you're right is around remote working from from home. But like you said, that isn't the case, there's more and more people I know that are using co working spaces, flex spaces, not necessarily all of the time, but certainly a couple of days a week, even if they are spending the rest of the day at home. So the stats aren't always 100%. There, they both think there's a lot there's a lot changing, and it's obviously constantly evolving. But the focus for today, we've touched on this already is very much around flexible office working but from regional locations, as opposed to city centric. I mean, what are you seeing at the moment, William? Have you seen many of your clients working from flex office spaces in smaller, smaller cities town areas?

William Redpath 07:30

I would love to say yes. No, is the answer. No is the answer I'm afraid to say. To like just to give people a bit of a bit of a sense of like, who what's the profile, what's the population look like demographically of, of companies that I might be working with, you know, let's, let's say a typical company might have 400 staff. But usually a lot of those staff are like geographically dispersed, so they're not even, you know, in the temptation sometimes in these conversations is that we assume that everybody has the possibility logistically to come into the office at a moment's notice, when for a lot of people that isn't the case, you know, remote working, is is something that a company has adopted, because they need to do it that way. Because many of their employees, even if you take the island of Ireland as an example, live across all across the island of Ireland, you know, from, from Cork from from well, from Malin to Mizenhead, you know, that's kind of what we're talking about here. And therefore, it's, that's where they are and with reality with remote working, but if I'm on a piece of work with them, and you're on a zoom call, and you're trying to bring people together remotely, it's clear that 90% of the people are at home, you know, they're in a bedroom. And which is really interesting, Suzanne, because you and I have also spoken previously about connected hubs, which we should maybe mention today. And the they're the growth of the growth of work, workspace, flexible workspace around the island of Ireland, as well. So I think our challenge is today is to try and work out, is this an awareness issue? Is this a marketing issue? Or even, is it like a demand issue, you know, are people looking for these types of, these types of things? So I think that's kind of where we are. But in answer your your question simply, I'm not seeing that at the moment with a lot of my clients. I think a lot of people are still working from home if they're working remotely.

Suzanne Murdock 09:37

Is it, a question, flip the question back to you. Is it an awareness thing? Or is it an acceptance then from employers? We spoke on the previous episode there about, say the corporate employers sometimes are quite often embracing flexible office spaces in the regions but putting the onus on the employees to go out there and find them, often pay for it themselves, as opposed to them trying to get one workspace

provider or brand, with different spaces in different regions. So they've essentially just got that one contract, you know. Is it a, is it a continuity, a simplicity acceptance issue? Or is it the awareness from, from what I'm seeing at the moment, there's a lot of work going into the whole education awareness of these regional spaces. And you've got the likes of connected hubs, which, for those of you who haven't heard of that is an organisation essentially, alongside Grow Remote that do a lot for advocating and linking up different flexible office workspaces across the island of Ireland. And they work from the perspective of the of the employer and the employee sharing options, locations, awareness, etc. Forgotten I, I've even forgot what the question was now. Yes. Is it awareness or acceptance?

William Redpath 11:04

Like, I don't want it to seem like it's a there's like a blanket dismissal from organisations about using a version of remote work, because the lazy thing would be to suggest that companies would say to say it was likes you and me and we are we're working remote like, it's like, well, Suzanne and William are productive enough working from home. So why are we going to all of a sudden my pay so much, 100 pounds plus per month for them to go and work somewhere else when they're when they do that from home? And I because Suzanne and William have asked for it, everybody else is going to want to do it this way, I think it's probably too lazy to suggest that. So I'm not going to. I think we're, I've seen in companies taken advantage of, of flexible working space has been when there is a real benefit for them to do that. So we'll try and give you an example. There is a place in Kilkeel, I think you and I have actually both been to Suzanne, Made in Mourne, and it's on, just off Knockchree Avenue, which is sort of getting into my Kilkeel geography here, blame my family history, but it just in the centre of Kilkeel, right in the middle of the town. And the the interesting thing about that is that there's several organisations there, who are headquartered in Belfast, but have like a regional office there. And because some of the work that they do is around Kilkeel, and that therefore it makes sense for them to do that. They're also organisations that want to be seen to have a physical and visible footprint in the community as well. And it's useful for them to have that where and similarly, whenever organisation is still not done that, well, they have decided maybe been intentional around, we're going to have a remote office, we want to have somewhere that people can come on work from. So when there's been a need there, because they've maybe got field based staff, and they need to have somewhere they can work from, or indeed, they wanted to have that visibility locally. So I guess that's the problem, it depends. And organisations are going to evaluate the proposition on that basis. On the other side of that, if it's a case of like, they don't necessarily need that visibility, or there maybe isn't, if there isn't the same, the same benefit, perhaps then they're less reluctant, although, and then it's then put on to the employee themselves to come to their line manager and say, this would really benefit me, and here's the reasons why. But I still think we're in that place of like, the onus is gonna be on their outwith, unless there's a strategic decision, as described by the company, that onus is very much going to be on the employee themselves as an individual to make the case for this is where I work best and how I work best.

Suzanne Murdock 13:58

I'm completely with you on that. And I think a ping thing that certainly got off for me in the last few weeks is because of where we're geographically based here in Newry a lot of corporate remote workers, we have are employed over in mainland in England. So naturally, a lot of those employers may have regional co working spaces across England because they've got a heavier basis of

employees in certain towns and cities. So it's like a team base. Whereas those who are over here, it's the onus is yes, maybe more on on them because they're an individual, as opposed to a team. So there may be that slight difference in regions across between England and Ireland at the moment.

William Redpath 14:44

Yeah, and and look, the the idea of people having satellite offices and remote offices is nothing new. That's been something that's been around for a long time. And I've worked in companies that have done that before. So that's that's not new, but that's also not necessarily what I see in my mind's eye when I'm talking about the real advantages and benefits of remote working, so you take, for example, the place, the place that I'm standing in today, which is a serviced office building, within which I'm sure, conservatively, there's 40 small businesses in here and some are actually well known brands as well, they just have quite a small headcount. But like our therapists here, if I was to pick this office building up and put it in Saintfield, or put it in Kilkeel, or something like this, or Ards Peninsula, then I that's a slightly different proposition, I think, to the people, the tenants, and the people that would potentially take up office space here than a office, and like, on its own, in maybe an industrial park or something like that, which, which would have been maybe more the traditional remote offices that a company might, might have. So whenever I'm talking about this, I guess what I'm thinking about, and what I'm trying to describe is almost like the situation I have at the moment where I can interact with lots of different businesses, benefit from the networking opportunities that are there, but also, from speaking to other people about, you know, I've got this problem in my business, like, you know, have you ever experienced this? Or like, is this something you guys have ever come across, or even just meeting other people who are working for a different employer, and building relationships with these people, I think is really, really beneficial. So I'm trying to describe almost like, probably the type of thing that you are running, Suzanne, in Newry, or indeed, the situation here, and East Belfast, but it's like, been lifted up and transported somewhere else, rather than just a remote office on its own where people meet, you know,

Suzanne Murdock 16:46

yeah, that's what I'm thinking. And then the other element, the benefits of these spaces, is the infrastructure in that facilities. I think a lot of the certainly the corporate workers who are working more remotely now have all been in those cities centric, maybe big branded, workspace hubs with great infrastructure. And now it's almost expected, I've been immersed in that for so long, it's expected it's a given that these regional spaces are going to have that too. And we're actually finding that more and more often do. Now, there's that always that balancing act between the different member makeup needs requirements, the budgets and the investment, you know, how deeper the pot, the pockets of the workspace operators compared to those of the city centric spaces, so there's always going to be bit of a balance. But on a whole those those infrastructures and facilities are being replicated across now from city centric to more regional spaces. So so they're definitely offering very similar sorts of things.

William Redpath 17:47

Yeah, and like, it, it's interesting for me, because, in a sense, like, I would say, in here, and I'd imagine similar across the board, and maybe even where you are, but there's different types of tenants that will use these these spaces, there's people that will require an office space, maybe they need somewhere to meet clients regularly. You know, for example, there's a counselling service in here, so they need to

meet people in person, and people will come in and, and use that service. There's other people maybe like myself, who maybe aren't meeting client as clients on as much of a regular basis, but nevertheless, like have more or less a fixed office space that they're in every single day. So these are like your anchor tenants really. And then there's people which will benefit from the flexible working where there may be coming in a couple of days a week. What I'm seeing, though, right, is that somewhere like this, right, which has excellent infrastructure, it's good good transport links, as well. And it's actually you know, as I say, not too far from the centre of Belfast, they struggle to fill the hot desking space and the flexible working space. They have got this kind of transient population anyway, I think that'll always be the case. But even getting people in to see it, I think is difficult, too, I think for for places like this, it's how do you make that easier for people to come and try out? How do you kind of get people in because I do think that when people have experienced it, that it's the penny drops a little bit with that, and they go, I really see the benefit of this and the way more productive you know, we're talking about activity in this podcast, but I'm more productive. I'm doing better work. I feel better about myself, all these types of benefits, but it's like, it's the initial step. Sometimes to how do you get people to actually try it.? Because maybe they're sitting at home thinking, well, this is the only solution or this is this is where I'm going to work. This is as good as it's gonna get. When actually there's there's maybe other options there.

Suzanne Murdock 19:52

And for us, it's always been word of mouth and getting out there and talking about it using case studies. Get reviews from our members. There's there's a few of our members who called they've been with us nearly 10 years now. And they started, they started off picking up the phone. Right I need I need an office. Now this was back 10 years ago, where we didn't really do offices, it was all open plan. Yeah. And it was almost a case of not arguing down the phone, but really making my case for the hot desking. The open plan working the benefits it brings. And couple of these guys tried it out and came to came back to me about a month later and said, You know what, you're right. Love it. Now, I can't imagine going back to the same four walls are not speaking to anyone for days on end, because that's how that's how it was. And I think if you're immersed in that for so long, you're completely unaware, you're unconscious to the creativity that these places can bring you open mindedness.

William Redpath 20:53

Yeah, like? And and this is the maybe the pertinent question, but you know, is that always only going to appeal this certain percentage of, I'm going to say a certain percentage, I mean, like a small percentage of people who are really trying to change their working conditions and are on are quite active in that. And I guess there's always going to be a population of people there that perhaps see that as the responsibility of their employer to source alternative working arrangements for them. I just think that all I can say is that the benefits that I've had from coming to a flexible working space have been enormous. And you're we're recording this podcast today, Suzanne, on World Mental Health Day. But like, I think about that, as much as I don't think about it very often, I'm sure that has been one of the biggest benefits to me, and you know, leaving a day's work, feeling like, you know, I've made progress, whatever I've interacted with other people, these are all very healthy things to be doing. And, again, I think that it's about giving people can we give people a taste of that. And to then hopefully, they become converts to this, this, this kind of way of working. The other thing that I wanted to mention as well is that, you know, we're assuming, in this conversation that there are these vast caverns of unfilled of their skin space around around Northern Ireland and all over the province. I'm not sure how much

that is the reality either. I think there's still a little bit of supply issue. And you know, I open this conversation today by bass speaking about my own experience of trying to find somewhere local to me, that was 5/10 minutes straight away. And it wasn't in an urban centre. And I think that's still is a problem here, it still is a challenge. And you know, there was that great article that was always maybe we can we can share that with people. But that great article that was out about Northern Ireland is lagging behind, and the remote working a little bit compared to the Republic of Ireland. So we think we need to have a conversation about that as well. So that's the other thing it's I don't know if it's necessarily just a marketing question. I think there is also a supply question there for people because I, you know, I could see in somewhere like Saintfield, which is a is a commuter village in many respects and you can be outside of like outside of rush hour, you can be in the centre of Belfast within like 25 minutes and leave my work at home and you're walking to the shop at lunchtime you'll see that people are sure people resonates with us but you see people of a similar age and they're definitely working from home. So I'm sure it would succeed in somewhere like that, where you've got a lot of people of working age, but it's just again about supply and like how do we how do we advocate for that and then kind of keep turning the dial on that conversation.

Suzanne Murdock 24:06

I think it's almost come full circle William. As I said when we started out we were very much hot desking plan with but with the onset of the pandemic etc. You know, essentially poor working operators had to make the model work it had to stack up and so a lot of a lot of them turned more to off flex essentially what it's called is flexible office spaces. So they had say two three person offices which could be used as desk chair could be used as meeting room so keeping it flex but less of that whole open plan. And as a result to date, the demand has been more office and shared office. And I think it's the more city centric so for example clockwise in Belfast, you've got the likes of Glandore, the bigger the biggest space is the bigger capacity have have an element of the hot desking they've got their their lounge access as well. But yeah, in the regions right now, not so much more. So across the Republic of Ireland, again, there's quite a few bigger spaces there. And in the regions, I think there's been quite a lot of investment there. So yeah, there's still there's still definitely a lot of work to do in Northern Ireland from that.

William Redpath 25:18

It feels like, yeah, but it feels like and I don't know, you ever, you're maybe a little bit closer to this because you run somewhere, but it feels like the jump as well is quite big for people like the there's so someone here, right, so I'm in like, a location, which is, it's part of Enterprise Northern Ireland, you know, this is a subsidised like, space. It's the public interest, it's partly publicly funded, largely publicly funded. So you know, our utilities are lower, and all the rest of it, right. So it's affordable. But the key thing about it is that, like, there's a lot of like one or two person offices, you can get in here. And whenever I went to private, private spaces, my experience of asking them was not only was it more expensive, but maybe that's you maybe get a bit more for your money as well, which is fine. But the minimum space they had was like for personnel first, you know, when you paid per desk, so for a lot of businesses that are trying to get started that are trying to get out into the community, it feels like the jump is quite high. It's like you either hot desk or work from home. Or you have a team of people, but clearly there's somewhere in the middle there. Yeah. Yeah, it's like who's who's servicing that.

Suzanne Murdock 26:36

And I think another element of it is, if so you're working from home, most of the time, you're doing a bit of hybrid. There's a bit of a stigma out there that if you if you want to go and do co working hot desking you want that vibe, you want that bus, you want that wow factor, which is still very city centre based a lot of the time. Yeah, like whole lifestyle thing.

William Redpath 26:59

Maybe maybe like, but it's like a lot. It's like a lot of things, I think the idea of that is different to the reality, like albeit today I'm actually meeting up with one of my friends by which something else later on and I'm going for a drink with them. And remember, whenever I was moving up here, right, he works in, I'll not tell you exactly where he works, but he works in Belfast City Centre. Whenever I was moving up to Belfast, you know, the chat was, oh will be like going out for drinks, like every week, and we'll be like doing this and catching up all the time. I think we've been out for drinks like twice or three times in like a year. You know, the reality is that like, you, you don't do that as much as you think you're going to

Suzanne Murdock 27:42

I hear that so often.

William Redpath 27:44

And and whenever, you know, at the moment, I'm looking at getting a getting a house. And we're looking at a couple of different places. I've mentioned that I live in Saintfield. But we're also looking at somewhere maybe in Hillsborough as well. And like the thing that puts me off Hillsborough is like coming down the M1, you know, so So you're you're not, you're not adding in, like, if you're going to get a space in the city centre and because we're I think we're talking about the attraction of coming to a city centre, whether it's Dublin, Galway, Belfast Cork, whatever. And you're attracted to that, because of the lifestyle benefits you're gonna get. I think what you're actually adding, then in reality, most of the time is a commute and traffic, the hassle of working with the city centre. That's going to affect your life much more than the old time you get to meet up with friends for drinks, really, and I don't know, maybe maybe when I was 10 years younger Suzanne, maybe I would be doing that?

Suzanne Murdock 28:41

It's a balancing act, isn't it? And you really do. Yeah, pros and cons list. Again, like everything else, it's constantly evolving, as we're evolving as people, your priorities change, your likes, your dislikes change,

William Redpath 28:54

I wonder as well, like, Is there is there an attraction to places just just take the co working spaces and of themselves for a moment rather than the other things that maybe indirectly impacted on that such as lifestyle, or, you know, whatever. I wonder, a lot of the enjoyment even again, you were talking about interacting with people, but you need to enjoy interacting with these people like that needs to be part of it as well. And you need to like, make friends, you don't want to go somewhere with people that you don't like, or if you were a sociable person, and you wanted to socialise. If that wasn't the case, when you got there, then maybe it's it's not meeting your expectations. So what I'm wondering from a practical point of view, is that, is there a job or work to be done around, you know, getting like a bit of a

critical mass of people there to gather, like almost if there's, say, for example, somewhere, if I was if I was open in somewhere like the hub, right? And then you're doing in Newry and I was doing something like that in Saintfield. You know, I think I'd be interested in getting like almost a group of 10 people that kind of all almost knew each other, and like getting their work up at the same time. I know there's that's a nice idea, but it feels like that's gonna be part of it as well, there needs to be a core a core group of people out there that are going to hold the thing together and get on.

Suzanne Murdock 30:09

Yeah, what they say is now if you're starting a co working a traditional co working space, which is more about the community, the people side of things, yes, you have to have that client in mind is that one person that you'd love to work with, you know, what are their values? Are they aligned with your values, and start from that point, then just take the first person that comes along? Because if you're not careful, you're going to form those 10 people that you just cannot work with and do not gel. Because there's, there's no purpose or balance of values there?

William Redpath 30:45

No, no, I think I think and this is, this is part of it as well. It's like, whenever I'm, we're all human beings at the end of the day, and we like our groups and tribes and all that stuff. And it's, it's probably the same reason why, you know, if you're going to the pub, or you're going to join a sports team, or whatever you want your friend to come with you come with me.

Suzanne Murdock 31:07

But there's a whole other cohort of people who are working from home, and they might be introverts. And they just want to come along to an office space, and maybe completely focus on their job. But they've got that infrastructure, they've got that consistent Wi Fi, they've got the piece that they're not getting at home. And they're just looking at it from that stance. They're not really interested in the community and the people side in the networking, because they might already have that within their their employers network, for example, or they're running a business and that they're just not interested in the networking side. They just want to get that job done. Yeah. And and get out again,

William Redpath 31:43

yeah. And like, how do you? How do you speak to those? Like, how do you speak to those different populations? I think that what what started me off not I guess it was this idea of like, the idea, the idea, actually, of working in a co working space is different to what the reality of that is, and what are the things that really matter to people? Well, they might differ from person to person. But I guess for most people, if they were sourcing somewhere to work, they, first of all, would want it to be convenient, I would imagine for them to get to, you know, within this is this has to do them with availability and supply, you know, how do we make sure that there is more places, there are more places that the people can get to get along to? And then can we can start to think about? Well, you know, what is the makeup of that, in terms of the people that are there? And I actually did those? How do we meet those needs? You know, how do we meet the needs of people that are introverts and actually just need a peaceful place where they can go and work where there isn't dogs and kids in messy house and all sorts of stuff going on, that are distracting them from getting on actually with their work? And so how do we meet the needs of those people, but then also meet the needs of people that are seeking to grow

their connections network, and you know, get all the benefits from it. And like you say, she's, it's probably the scale in that is, is probably comes from the people like yourself, when you're evaluating applications, and making sure like any sales process, that you're managing the expectations of the person who's applying and saying, Look, based on what you've told me, I think that this could be a good place for you. Or actually, based on what you told me, it's maybe not, because I think that really this is the in somewhere like this, this this imaginary place that we're talking about. You'll need those anchor tenants, you know, these people that will stay with you for a long time. And they will do that if their needs are met. So it's maybe just about making sure that you're, you're doing that hard work at the beginning, isn't it?

Suzanne Murdock 33:48

Yeah, I think it's about that whole onboarding process and understanding the member requirements from from the outset, from both from both perspectives. And then that yeah, that whole onboarding process, yes, you introduce them to to the community that that that's there, but you make you allow them to understand that it's might not be something for them, we have other spaces, there's different environments, you know it for us this there's a different environment for everyone. In other spaces, it's very much a co working that open plan concept. In other spaces. Again, it is a flexible office, so often quite siloed, that there can be very different types of spaces. And maybe to some extent, it's about almost labelling them. So you've got your co working spaces, you have your flexible offices and getting people to understand what the differences might be, and that sometimes they overlap each other. There's two spaces in one other times there isn't so yeah, for me, it always comes back to understanding the member requirements signed by posting.

William Redpath 34:51

Yeah, and I guess the nature of most places, you know, most places are going to be like 15/20 desks or less. As you know, they're not they're not going to be like 3000 desks. So you probably can do that work of getting to know people individually, and doing a bit of getting a bit of a deeper understanding of why they're actually there. And how can we make sure that, that we continue to give you those benefits? Because, like, yeah, at the end of the day, it's like somewhere that people are going to work. Usually, they're motivated by, I guess, and it comes back to the theme of these, this, these podcasts. And it's like, it's about productivity, usually, like, it's your yes, you hope that like any job, you're going to make friends. And like any job, you know, it's going to help you develop your career or business or whatever. But most, most importantly, it's, you know, it's a place of work. At the end of the day, you know, people are going to be there and choose to spend the money and invest that money because they think that it's going to return more productivity or better results or make them more effective at their job or whatever. So think if you can kind of get that bit right first, ie because you've got good infrastructure, you've got good Wi Fi, you've got a clean space, a peaceful space that people need to get on with work they can do that. Maybe dare I say it, have got a good coffee machine, as well, like, these are all the kinds of fundamentals really. And once you have that in place, then you could start to go right, what's the profile of the members we're looking to get in? And how can we like, go in develop that and make sure we're attractive to different sets of people as well?

Suzanne Murdock 36:26

And I think just wrapping up, I'm just conscious of time. I think the other aspect is knowing the other co working flex office spaces around you in the different regions for signposting understand what they're doing what we're trying to work as closely as possible together. Because it's all it always overlaps strengths. You help each other out.

William Redpath 36:48

Yeah, and and I know you do that, as well, Suzanne, you have been talking about placing giving a shout out to Made in Mourne in Kilkeel, and they do some, I think they're trying to do something similar to what you're doing. You're obviously not a million miles away. But I think we have to try and see, try and see the market for this is quite abundant, actually, in theory, the potential of it is very high. And really, it's more a question of also looking at that opportunity and say, how do we unlock that? You know, what are we missing? What are the steps we need to take to put this in front of more people, rather than we're all fighting or fighting over that one person in a 20 mile radius that's looking for hot desking space

Suzanne Murdock 37:25

Which is completely against our whole ethos, coworkers work together, collaborate. So yeah, and I think look, look at look at what the markets telling you look at what the operators are doing across the globe, and work together collaborate, look at lead yet leading edge practices. So I mean, I think the future is bright for for flex, whichever way you wrap it up. It's only gonna grow.

William Redpath 37:47

I think so. I think so keep doing that great work that you're doing at The Hub in Newry as well.

Suzanne Murdock 37:51

Thank you. Well, thanks for your time, William. Well, we'll have to decide what our what our next episodes is going to be honest as fast turning into a series.

William Redpath 37:58

Yeah, great, loving it. Really enjoyed it.

Suzanne Murdock 38:01

Okay, well, thanks for your time. We'll speak to you soon.

William Redpath 38:04

Thanks, Suzanne.

Suzanne Murdock 38:07

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