

Hello and welcome to the Valley today. I am your host, Shannon Michael. It is Laurel Ridge Community College Day. That is where every month we jump on a zoom with Guy Curtis or Brandi Boyce. This month we have the privilege of staring at Guy Curtis. He is there. Director of marketing Guy Curtis. It is always nice to see you on the zoom, though. Andy Grierson pointed out something very valuable when he did the show with us a couple of months ago, which is we are way too close to each other to not be doing these in person. You know, you're right. We really should be doing it in person. But zoom is so convenient. Glad to be back on the show. Thank you for having us. Yes, I am having the privilege again to be with you. Thank you for the time and opportunity and so we're excited to be back. We are bringing Jay Foreman into our conversation today. So those of you who have been following along with The Valley today since its inception may remember him in 2017 when we were still live more recently, even though that's not the right word to use. In August of 2020, Jay joined us. Jay is the corporate training

sales manager for Laurel Ridge Workforce. We're going to be talking about some corporate training today, leadership Base Camp. But Jay, I was so excited to see that you would join the team at Laurel Ridge. This feels like it is right in your lane. It is. I've been working as an adjunct instructor for about the past ten plus years, so I really had a peek behind the curtain. Got to come on board and join the family. Now I use the term instructor because I got my hands slapped when I first started with them. I started calling myself an adjunct professor and then I pretty quickly they let me know that you have to have a doctorate before you can call yourself a professor. So I learned that the hard way. I'm glad you don't mean that, because I might have found myself making that same mistake. Yeah, professor, this has a nice a ring to it, I thought, but I was corrected. So if someone is listening today and they're like Jay Foreman, that name sounds familiar, but I can't quite place it. Give a little history, have they? Maybe they've read your books. Maybe they've been in an event that you've MC. Tell us a little

bit about Jay Foreman. Yes. Been doing the MC circuit here for about ten years here in the stage sometimes I know Umkc once in a while too, so I'm in good company there. I've written and had published 18 books now to date, started about 15 years ago. Doing that started with children's books and then morphed into doing different type books. I did the exact opposite of what they say to do. They say pick a lane, pick a genre and stick with it. I've written everything from leadership books to biographies to young adult sci fi, so I wherever the muse takes me. But I've enjoyed it. And again, I've had 18 books out there to date. So how did you find yourself in a position to be doing corporate training and be affiliated with leadership? When I started getting into writing books all those years ago, I found that people started inviting you to come speak different places. It didn't matter if they've ever heard you speak before. Obviously they think you have a book, you have something to talk about. So I started being asked to speak at a lot of different places, and I found out that I enjoyed

it. Never thought I would. I actually failed public speaking in college, not once, but twice. I switched major, so I never had to take it again. That here I find myself speaking for a living. So books kind of got me into speaking, and I started talking a lot, and I realized that I love speaking. I had stories for days, but not a lot of substance. So I decided I wanted to get something behind that, to give people a reason to invite me in to speak. And I've always loved leadership. I went down to Florida, got certified in John Maxwell leadership, went and got my master's degree in executive leadership, and continued to get different qualifications, different certifications to to pad my resume, if you will, from there. And really just found a love for it and started teaching leadership. I started I went into business for myself and started teaching leadership classes all the time. Would come in here at Laurel Ridge Workforce when they would have me in and teach with them, and that's how that partnership was formed. But I have a passion for leadership, so I just love to be able to now be in a situation

where I can, I call influence. The influencers work with larger corporations and businesses and associations and listen to them, see what their needs are, and then bring them leadership, among other things as well. Leadership tends to be one of those conundrums, I think, amongst the general public at large, because so many people have this idea that leadership means you need to be a boss or you need to be a manager, but leadership qualities could be found in anyone, no matter what their job is. So it's probably different every day depending on who you're talking to and what their goals are. It is situational leadership. I say every single person is a leader every day of our lives. But it's funny. It's almost like you have to pull it out of a lot of people, let them know that they are a leader. If you start a class to say who here considers themselves a leader, only a few hands go up, typically because people I don't know if it's a vanity thing or a humility thing, but they just don't consider themselves leaders when we all truly, really are. You are taking over for Larry Baker, who recently retired from Laurel

Ridge workforce. Those are some pretty big. Excuse.

Deville. Are you nervous? Yes, I absolutely. Larry is a legend called Larry Legend. The guy has done it all. I said, who had this role before? You? And he's like, it's always been me. I'm like, oh my gosh. So he's set the standard. But it's funny.

I've been in this role maybe about six weeks now, and I have yet when people find out what I'm doing, they find out that I am this role. Now, not one person has said congratulations. The overwhelming response is, how are you going to follow Larry Baker? So I have to answer that. So I know there are big shoes to fill. And I had the privilege of shadowing him for about six weeks and trying to glean every bit of information and knowledge from him that I can. And today is the first day in the office without Larry. Now it's time for the rubber to meet the road. And when we talk about corporate training, what does that look like from Laurel Ridge perspective? First and foremost, meeting with the folks in the organization, talking to them. And actually not so much talking, but listening in what they say. Where are the needs?

What are they looking for, having those discussions and then see what we can do to meet those needs with them, whether that's their soft skills and leadership skills, which is my sweet spot, which I love. We offer so many different things, from skilled trades to working with it, share points, really important or really popular these days. Health care. We have a whole myriad of services that we have to offer here. I think sometimes employers get themselves stuck inside that box, and so when they need help with something, they're looking for a traditional way and don't know that they can call you and say, look, here's my problem, and there might be a new way to approach it. There might be a tweak that simply needs to happen to their current systems. Sometimes it's hard to even know you have a problem really, until you have that conversation. Yeah. Here at workforce, we pride ourselves on staying ahead of the curve. That's what we need. We need to know what's out there, what's coming next, what to look for, what are some pain points or pressure points that we can help you out with

that I'll never forget. I went to a leadership conference years ago and one of the first speakers came out and he made the comment, hey, you're going to learn a lot of great stuff here today. And we stand by 100% of what we're going to teach you. For six months. I was like, what, six months? That after that would be something else. Come back again. And I'm like, okay, this guy's pretty reputable. This sounds like a little bit of a bait and switch, right? Or a pyramid scheme. So I one of the first breaks I went and got to go talk to this gentleman. I said, hey, can you elaborate a little bit when you said you stand behind everything for six months and then anything goes? He said, sure he goes. It will be as transparent as possible with you. But things change so much in the world today. Not just technology, but leadership skills, soft skills, communication skills. Things change so drastically and so quickly and things compound so much these days. Shame on us if in six months we haven't found a better way to do what we're doing right now. And that always resonated with me. And I think that's

one of the things that separates workforce from other entities out there. We do our homework, we do our due diligence and try to stay ahead of the curve to be able to pass this information and this knowledge and this help on to the different businesses that we work with and soft skills in particular. I know what they were when I was entering the workforce, I'll say 100 and a half years ago, but they are dramatically different even now because there were no cellphones when I was entering the workforce. There are a lot of things that have changed that make those skillsets different now. The landscape has completely changed now, and the ones that are the most effective and the most efficient in doing business these days are the ones that are acknowledging that and recognizing that and keeping up with that. You mentioned how much phones have just changed everything, and I'm not knocking a cell phone. I couldn't get by without mine. I couldn't survive without it. I love it, but it's also the younger generation is they rely more on texting. I'll say older generations like me still like the person to

person interaction. So much to the point where we teach a great course here called Crucial Conversations. How to have those hard conversations before I came on. Here is something I want to bring to the table. Here we were. I was actually going in to different schools, high schools and teaching, not just crucial conversations. The class was just called conversations because people have gotten away from having any kind of conversations with people. So it's only skill sets are needed. Some of the basics are still needed, and it's very difficult because we have such a multigenerational workforce these days that you have the Gen Z that are in an office setting, for example, and they're working with someone who's been there 30 or 40 years. They do not speak the same language a lot of time. No, no. And that's actually one of our most popular courses that we offer these days, is bridging that generational gap, helping all the different generations within one workplace to appreciate and see the value that each one brings to the table. We're not butting heads. We can all learn from

each other, and it doesn't even necessarily matter how large or small that staff is. I know Andrew, the owner at the River 95 three. He and I've had many conversations. It's a small staff. There are like 7 or 8 people, but we have a lot of 20 something 30 somethings, and then even more of the 60s and 70 somethings, and Andrew is in that age range. And so when he would give somebody a task, he gave it to them like he would tell it to a boomer or a Gen Xer and then didn't understand why it wasn't done the way that he wanted. And I would have to come in kind of as the Gen Z Whisperer, the millennial whisperer, and say, Andrew, you should have explained it to him this way and told him what the outcome was that you wanted, and it's just different. And he's looking at me like, how do you know that? And I'm like, I don't know, maybe it's because I raised a millennial. I don't know how I have this ability, but it is very, very different. It is. And you hit the nail on the head when you said, explain. Know what the outcome, what you want it to be. Because what we're finding out is instead of saying, okay, like somebody like

me, a Gen X was saying, here's steps one, two, three, four and five. Follow that order and get it done. Instead, they're saying, here's the outcome we're looking for, and giving them the autonomy and the freedom to go do it themselves. And what they're finding is you give them that freedom. They're enjoying the task more and more often than not, they're coming back and saying, we found a more efficient way of doing things for us. So it's a win win, really. Let's take a break. When we come back, can we talk a little bit about leadership base camp? I know it starts in September, and it spans a lot of the topics that we've been discussing as well. Can we get in the weeds on that in the next segment? I would love to. We are on the zooms today with Guy Curtis. He is director of marketing for Laurel Ridge Community College. Joining us is Jay Foreman. Jay is corporate training sales manager for Laurel Ridge Workforce. We're going to talk about Leadership Base Camp when we come back in just a couple of minutes. Got a few hours to give. You could make a local nonprofits day. On September 19th, United

Way NSV invites you to join over 900 volunteers for A Day of Caring, the region's biggest single day volunteer event. You'll help nonprofits across the valley by painting, landscaping, organizing donations or doing light repairs. Whatever's needed. No special skills, just a willingness to help. Whether you're solo or part of a team, your time will make a real difference. Sign up today at [United Way nsv.org/day of caring](https://UnitedWaynsv.org/dayofcaring). Be part of something bigger. Help us care for the valley together.

Welcome back to the Valley today. I am your host, Janet Michael. We are on the zoom today with Guy Curtis. He is director of marketing for Laurel Ridge Community College. Joining him is Jay Foreman. Jay is the sales manager for corporate training of Laurel Ridge Workforce Solutions, J. Guy Curtis and I spend a fair amount of time talking about professional development. It's one of the things that he and I both love. You offer me a class or to be able to go to a conference. He and I are there all in ready to go. So we are all in on professional development. You have a slew of

programs through Laurel Ridge Workforce that offer leadership classes. We talked a little bit about some of them in the first segment, but base camp is kind of like leadership for beginners. Yeah, for emerging leaders, kind of like the 101 type class. It is fantastic. And it's so much needed these days, because what we found is that a lot of employers say, hey, we want to promote from within, which is a great thing. Then they found that people get to the next level and they don't have the support to lead like they should be leading. So then we have leadership base camp coming up. It starts on September 11th and it will run five different sessions every other week. It's every other Thursday starting on September 11th. We have some great classes in these. They include different sessions such as Buddy to Boss. They get their disc profile, assessment, time management, supervisor, communication skills, creative problem solving, toughest supervisor challenge. We run the gamut and we have a brand new class we're adding. This is the first time I want to throw it over to Guy in a second. We are actually introducing an AI

class in our leadership base camp this time around.

Yeah, it's great that this is baked into the program so that as ChatGPT and other AI sources are so heavily used, how a leader can run with that sewer. So like, I love chat and other sources because I use it as like a second voice, but it's obviously the intern in terms of guidance. And so you still need some leadership experiences and having that classroom discussion and others leader to lean on to, to help coach you. But using AI with no background experience at all, you can just prompt it with questions around how do I coach somebody? How do I manage a certain leadership style versus my style? So leadership base camp is going to incorporate AI into everyday leadership strategies. And so whether you're trying to have a difficult conversation and just ask the question, how should I approach this person about it? And potential prompts that you can give back that person would be a better leader. So how can you use that chat, GPT or other source to help you? So it's a great way that Jay mentioned before how they're incorporating today's technologies to like

best practices of leadership, which is always evolving. And so this course today may be changing in six months, like Jay said. So you never know. So it's a great addition to base camp. Obviously those who should attend run the gamut. But as Jay mentioned, first time leaders, frontline supervisors, coaches, trainers, anybody who's involved in supporting anyone in a leadership capacity, whether you're new up and coming, a body to boss situation or maybe even your experienced leader, you've worked with others for many years, but you haven't had formal training. This is a great base camp to start. Jay, you said something earlier too, that I thought was interesting in that if you were in a room and asked people to raise their hand if they thought they were a leader, very few people would. I would imagine that becomes a barrier for people signing up for this, because they don't think this is a class for them, but this is absolutely the class for them. Yes, it is. And it's funny because I've taught this class in the past in my old role with with workforce, and I've seen folks come in and

sometimes their employer sent them there and they're coming in begrudgingly. I really don't want to be here. I don't believe I'm a leader.

There's nothing better than watching these folks come into their own skin, feel comfortable in their own skin, and really start to become a true leader as time goes on. And the best thing about this is not only did they become comfortable with themselves and in leading, but they also make these great connections with other people. Because these are cohorts, these are people from different industries, different businesses, different organizations. And to see them come together in a stark problem solving together. And typically when they leave here, they have a brand new network that they exchange information and they can stay in touch afterwards as well and continue to help each other along the way. That's one of the things I love the most about this is the networking and the camaraderie people get out of this besides learning the leadership skills, and you purposefully keep those classes somewhat small so that it's not a group of 50 or 60 people in this

class, because that makes it more complicated to have those relationships and create that cohort. It is a very personal, one on one experience that they're going to have as they go through these five different sessions. Yes, it becomes very intimate and we actually make sure to wear tension, all that, no more than maybe 2 or 3 from one specific organization can join that because we don't need to become everybody's here from the river. And then it becomes all about your call. Instead of someone else, instead of a the bank or over here, or the insurance salesman over here, the plant manager over here, whatever it may be. So we make sure that it's a pretty eclectic group as well coming together for these. And when I talked earlier about the multi-generational workforce, I'm guessing that there's probably a pretty diverse group of people and age ranges that are participating in this. It typically is. That's the beauty of it, though. Spending that much time together, they learn to start working with one another. The first class was typically little standoffish people feeling each other out by the

second or third class, you'd think they were old.

Last high school buddies showing back up for the class again together. When you brought up Janet, some people, they don't think they're a leader.

They don't know if they should be here or not. I wanted to throw out here to another service that worked for solutions offers our free needs assessments, not only for this week. If you want to reach out and say, hey, can you come talk to us about who should be here? Here's who we have. Do they fit into this course more than welcome to do?

That's a free service and anything at all. If we're having trouble with retention here, we're having trouble with a succession plan. Anything at all, they can reach out to us. So we have free needs assessments for anybody that would like. And those are great. Even if you don't think you have a problem to set up that call and say, hey, come and let me just tell you a little bit about what we got going on here, because sometimes when you're in your box, you can't see the problems that are floating around in front of you. Exactly.

I always used to say when I was an author, you can

never edit your own stuff because you really, deep down don't want to see your own mistakes or what you could be doing better, but they're there. And typically too. I found that when we go in and talk to folks, a lot of times what they think the problem may be. After some more conversation and some more questions of peeling back the different layers of the onion, you find out it's maybe something completely different to what they thought the problem may have been. I liken it to sometimes when I talk to my doctor and I'll go in and say, well, I've been on WebMD, I can tell what's wrong with me right now. And they'll be like, no, not at all. You're so far off the market. Let us tell you what's wrong with you. You don't ever go to Doctor Google when you have a problem, a medical problem. Go on. When I should have been dead two weeks ago, according to this. And when you talk about these five different sessions starting on Thursday, September 11th, are they all day or are they half day? How are they structured? Did their all day start at 830 in the morning, ends about 430 in the afternoon and there'll be a

lunch served in between. And each day is broken up into two different classes. So it's not the same topic all day long. So all in all, there's five different sessions times you'd be on campus, but two different classes each in each session. And then of course, the all important question is there homework in the off week weeks? Larry and predecessor used to always like giving homework. I don't know if I'm going to continue that or not because I used to get the brunt of it. Larry, you got to sit back and say, okay, make sure they have homework. But being the guy that actually had to assign it and take it back from him, that's a whole different ballgame. So we're rethinking that. The important thing is they come and they enjoy themselves here and they take something away from it. I am all in for a guy who doesn't want to assign homework. Yeah. Thank you. I'm trying to take the popular route here, right. Yeah. Homework can come in 5 or 10 years when you're really comfortable in your chair. Yeah, exactly. You know, I'll be more comfortable working with that sometimes for classes like this, you have to have

a recommendation from your employer or other people in your community that are leaders. What's required for someone to register for leadership base camp? Actually that much of a requirement? Typically it's the supervisor or someone who's sending that person forward or some type of decision maker. But most cases, it's a simple authorization, a bill form your company can be billed for bringing in an employee or to the corporate training team is a great first step and kind of figure out how that process will take. Certainly Jake and up along with the process as well too. But Jay mentioned before, they're trying to diversify the audience, so they'll limit as far as how many folks per company or business. But it is a great opportunity to come in and be engaged for those five weeks. And it looks like they finish up around January 18th. They're starting in September the 11th. So it's a great chance to reconnect. And I love the idea of different topics in one day, but having a new focus and hey, not having homework today, that's even better. All right. You heard guy sign off on it's a done deal

now. And Jay, for someone who's listening today and they're like, yeah, that sounds really great. But I've already been there, done that. There are other options. From a leadership training perspective. You have Leadership Institute. There are a lot of other things that they can reach out to you and say, hey, I think I'm a little bit above a base camp. What do you got? Like you said, Leadership Institute. That's kind of the next level. We like to see folks graduate from base camp and go take Leadership Institute there. They get servant leadership coaching people, resolving workplace conflict, different classes. We call this the one on one. This is almost the 201 type leadership. Then in addition to that, we offer customized training that's very popular too. We can come in again the free needs assessment, talk to you, see what you're looking for. A lot of people I found kind of like the ala carte approach where we want a little bit of communication over here. We want dealing with difficult people over here. We want to understand servant leadership. Can you put all that together and a tie ribbon

around it and we can. A lot of people say we want something, but we want it to be specific to our culture here or specific to our industry. We can help with that as well. So it's just a matter of talking to us again, the free needs assessment. We'll listen to you, hear what your needs are and do our best to deliver for you. If Andrew ever calls you and wants you to come and do something about working with difficult people, you better give me a heads up. I wonder who he's talking about because it's likely me.

Nonsense. No, I don't believe that. So where will people go? Guy Curtis, where is the best first place for them to start doing a little more investigating and looking into Leadership Base Camp some more, please visit our website. Lower Ridge workforce.com/l b for Leadership base camp.

There you'll find the latest brochure that highlights all the courses that Jay mentioned that are part of the program delivery. You get to learn a little more about each of those courses, what they entail. But the thing is, like you said, it's limited. So there are a limited number of seats.

So the best thing to do is to go ahead and get hold of Jay or reach out to the corporate training team. You can call the office at (540) 868-7021 or reach out to their corporate training email, which is corporate training at Law Ridge Edu and shoot them. A quick note let them know you're interested, but we are limited in seats and so the time is now to get your first time leader enroll to one. So thank you Jay. I am looking forward to hearing all of the people talk about how much they have gotten from this particular base camp this year, because it's got you at the head of it. So I think you're going to do a fantastic job. Maybe I'll get invited back instead of just once every five years down. Right. It seems to be the trend, I know. Yeah. I'll see you again in 2030 after this. I appreciate you taking the time today, even though it's been five years. I know it's been my pleasure. Thank you. Thank you for all you do for the community as well. You're always a smiley face and a friendly face, and I know everyone loves tuning in and listening to you, so thanks for spending some time with us today, Guy. Curtis, I can't let

you go without asking you about fall registration or is it spring registration? I always get confused on what's what for the time this weather, it's hard to tell, right? Spring fall. Now we have classes at the college starting as early as August 25th, and they're going to be rolling through September for many of our traditional degree and certificate programs. If you're looking for a fast track training program, the Workforce Solutions office, as well as other programs at the college are always enrolling their continuous enrollment. So depending on the program. But yeah, it's never too late. So if you're really considering a new skill, a new career, or if you're fresh out of high school looking to get started, we welcome to have you on board here at the College Show again, classes starting as early as August 25th. Others are enrolling after Labor Day. Thank you for taking the time today. I always appreciate you finding me a great guest and today was no exception. It's so much easier if we had folks like Jay coming forward to speak more about the colleges and programs you offer. And so thank you

for having us today and glad to be back on. I think brand is next month, but I'm not quite sure. I think right now you haven't had the arm wrestling tournament yet to see who wins the prize. It's it's right. Exactly. So we'll see. Maybe coin flip next time just to be safe. We don't get hurt on the job. I will be back tomorrow with a brand new episode of The Valley. Today we're talking to the Shenandoah County for eight years. We talk to them every year about what goes into raising those animals. So meet me back here for that conversation tomorrow, just a few minutes after noon.