

[00:02:08] **Chulick:** Hey, just traditional kid in the Midwest. I grew up in University City. You know, like a lot of kids, you had to be home by time the streetlights went on. Yeah. My dad, like many dads in the neighborhood, had a distinctive whistle. Then when you heard that whistle, you had less than five minutes to get home for dinner, love. So, in a lot of ways it was you know, it was a very traditional kind of thing. And, you know, we played sports and hung around. And, you know, it was kind of funny. I was just telling the story the other day. I grew up University City, a lot of big trees. But when we were probably eight, nine, ten years old, we used to have those little bow and arrows and we would go squirrel hunting with bow and arrows in University City. You know, squatting in somebody's backyard, shooting squirrels. Could you even think of doing that today? But I mean, that's just kind of what we did.

[00:02:58] **Nichols:** It was a good childhood. It was a fun childhood. Did you have siblings?

[00:03:03] **Chulick:** There are five of us. So I've got three sisters and a brother. And so I'm the oldest male, got an older sister. And then they trail off from there. So.

[00:03:11] **Nichols:** So, you did you had some playmates.

[00:03:15] **Chulick:** It was a time when the birth rate was high. And there's a lot of kids in the neighborhood. And we had a lot of fun. And you we were close enough in age where you got to be friends with your siblings, friends. So, as you got older and particularly with five of us overall, it wasn't hard to run into somebody that knew your family. You always had to be careful about what you were doing because that little bird would always make it back to your parents.

[00:03:41] **Nichols:** I think that's a good thing.

[00:03:44] **Chulick:** And no social media. The social media was where the moms talking over coffee. That was social media.

[00:03:51] **Nichols:** Exactly. Now I tell people that all the time. I'm like, you know, I really didn't get a lot of trouble because my mom, I'm telling you, she didn't own anything because she knew all my friends, parents and, you know, is a good thing. So, I think you went to De Smet, right? So where do you go to university?

[00:04:09] **Chulick:** So, I went to Rockhurst University up in Kansas City. So I had eight years of Jesuit education. I don't know if that's good or bad. Time will only tell for that. But De Smet was

a great experience. I was there in the early years as was just coming together. And by the time I graduated, we were in the second graduating class. So it was really a unique time where you kind of picked out the class rings and you picked out the colors and you started some of the traditions. Some of them still exist today, but a lot of them have evolved over time. And then I had the opportunity to go to Rockhurst University in Kansas City. And that, too, was a great experience. Met a lot of friends, have kept a lot of friends from there. And, you know, my career took me, you know, job opportunities, what they were. I found opportunities here in St. Louis. Not too distinctive or different from what you can find today. There's a lot of opportunity. And I had some opportunities early on at a company people might remember called McDonnell Douglas, which is now Boeing.

[00:05:06] **Nichols:** Well, you know, that is, we didn't talk about that. That's where I got my start. And Greg did too.

[00:05:12] **Chulick:** And so what was your employee number?

[00:05:13] **Nichols:** Oh, gosh. Now that I don't remember.

[00:05:14] **Chulick:** 181637. Yeah. Because you had to put it on every form.

[00:05:19] **Nichols:** Oh, that is so funny.

[00:05:21] **Chulick:** But there was news there. And then I got into the investment banking business after that. And that's pretty much where I've kept my career over the last 25-30 years.

[00:05:33] **Nichols:** Amazing career in banking.

[00:05:35] **Chulick:** Yeah. We had a good ride. We had a good write. Half of my career was managing wealth management and then the other half was managing a commercial bank. So, it was an interesting balance. Usually you come up and stay on one side or the other. So, I'm a bit of an anomaly. Where I've had a balance of my experiences is in both. But it served me well and it served our clients well. And it served the team well in that when you're trying to be collaborative and you're trying to make referrals from one line of business to the other, one side of the house to the other side of the house. There's a mutual understanding and respect for what the other teams did. And, you know, from a leadership standpoint, it's a good thing to learn

early the importance of that kind of collaboration and the trust you have to put in somebody else. So, having that balance, I think I've served my career fairly well throughout the years and.

[00:06:29] **Nichols:** But you did retire from UMB.

[00:06:32] **Chulick:** I retired from UMB Bank. I was chairman and CEO of St. Louis and then I was president of the Midwest region, which encompassed not only St. Louis, but all of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma. And then I was also in charge of three verticals, which was health care, aviation and agriculture. We had a good run. Our results were outstanding. We grew assets in St. Louis from about 230 million to 1.6 billion. But what I'm more proud of are associate engagement scores were at 88, which is world class, and our CSAT scores are customer satisfaction scores were at 92. That's if you get those two pieces right or get them in that kind of category, a lot of good things can happen. So, I was really proud of the team. They are extraordinarily professional. They executed well. They worked well together. And you get those kinds of results because you have that kind of teamwork. I couldn't be more proud of that group of professionals that I was fortunate enough to be a part of.

[00:07:27] **Nichols:** Right. Well, we've always said if we do right by our employees, our employees will do right by our clients. And we have measured our net promoter score probably for eight years now. And it really does work if you're; you've got to take care of your employees and then they'll take care of your clients. And so those scores are amazing. Did you have an outside firm do that?

[00:07:50] **Chulick:** We did. Yeah, we had alternating years for customer satisfaction score and then associate engagements every year you do one or the other. St. Louis was the first to get to 88. So, we're pretty proud of that. When the industry was probably upper 70s, maybe in some of our larger national peers or maybe low 80s at best in high 70s. And so, there is a distinct margin of separation between what we were doing and others. But, you know, put it in the right context of what was going on at that time. Now, the recession was coming on and, you know, people were losing their jobs and they were losing their mortgages. And big banks took a lot of hits and a lot of grief. But just keep it in perspective.

[00:08:34] **Nichols:** Absolutely. So let's talk about flunking retirement. So, you retired and I want to know what did you do during that time? Were you just, I mean, you kind of sat back for awhile? Didn't you, Tom? And just said, what am I supposed to do next? And what's my next assignment?

[00:08:50] **Chulick:** Well, I had some ideas about what I wanted to do with my future, with my body of work. I'd been approached by a number of large private companies as well as some smaller public companies about being an independent director. And, you know, that's a whole another long process to be involved with. And I'd been asked a number of times, would you consider doing something like that? And the conversation would end with what conflict would there be with the bank? And so, I felt that there were some things that I thought my body of work and my experience could bring to the benefit of some companies. So, I was involved with a number of companies. I'd been part of a French hedge fund out of New York shortly after I had retired and was on their board for a while. And then there's a senior living development company that I was asked to be part of and still involved with that. And there were a couple of other groups that I was having conversations with when I got a text from the chairman of the St. Louis Chamber and said, do you have time to talk? And that was about a year later. And I had really good counsel from people have retired before me and people that I really have a lot of respect for in the community and other CEOs. CEO to CEO is kind of a unique conversation sometimes because there's not a lot of people you can talk to.

[00:10:06] **Nichols:** That's right. It's kind of lonely sometimes isn't it?

[00:10:09] **Chulick:** It gets lonely very often. And, you know, because I don't know that you could have friends because at some point in time, you have to separate being a friend from making business decisions. But I'm very fortunate that I have a very good network. And the advice was be careful that you don't grab the bright, shiny object. Give yourself time. So, I was in no hurry to do some things. My wife and I wanted to travel a little bit and we did. Our son was, I don't know, junior or so in college and he was playing soccer in college so it was nice to go to the games. So we have other things to do. And then about a year later, got a phone call and said, would you come in and help run the Chamber? And having been on the board for 10 years and on the executive committee and being on many other boards in the community, I thought that I might have a unique opportunity here to have a positive impact. And I said yes. And at the end of February or early March, it will be two years. And it doesn't seem like it's been two years. But yeah, time's flown, but it's been a great ride. We've accomplished a lot in a very short period of time. Sometimes I have to take a step back and realize that it has been a short period of time. But again, the chamber team is an awesome team. They're very professional, very purposeful. They're passionate about what they do. And, you know, we really set out to put together, a strategic plan, and it was a grassroots thing that bottom up when you put something together like that, people are part of the process and we are executing and that's what our investors are

looking for. They want to see what is the value of their engagement. We want to provide. I was on their side of the desk for decades. With people coming in and asking for what? Money. As a CEO, I'm saying what's my ROI? So, the conversation with our investors to me was pretty simple because I get it. And when we approach it of what's the ROI and not how much can you invest? It's a value.

[00:12:06] **Nichols:** It's becomes a much more educated decision at that point.

[00:12:10] **Chulick:** Well, we're strategically aligned and we're aligning under some purposeful measure so that if they're corporate pillars aligned with the strategy of the region, then how can we help them execute that for the benefit of their brand, their organization and their people? Because it's not all about a brand and it's not about organization. At the end of the day, it's all about people. And I'm one person, the Chamber is one organization. And I say this all the time. The successful regions are where the business community is absolutely and unequivocally engaged. And that's the messaging. And I'm very grateful for the business community to provide that support while I've been involved. And it's growing. And that business engagement. It's not just the support from a financial standpoint. Obviously, that's important to execute programs and create the value, but it's really important to be able to know that they are engaged. Because when businesses look to say, why should I come into your community? The governor can give them a story. They expect that from the governor and the chamber kid can give them a chamber story. They kind of expect that. But really, what they want. They want to know. They want a CEO, and again, I would sit in on some of these meetings for the chamber when CEOs would come in and say, why should I be here? Particularly in the financial services space. I could tell them why. So, getting that level of engagement is absolutely critical for the success of our region. And we're picking up more and more of that. I'm very grateful to the business community for what they've done. But we are a thimbleful of what we need to get done and we need a significantly more engagement of the business community.

[00:13:50] **Nichols:** Well, there is so much there to talk about, but we're going to take a quick break and we'll be back with Tom Chulick.

[00:13:59] **Ad:** Let's face it, the future is mobile. There's a good chance that you are listening to this show right now on your phone. Have you explored how you can move your business? Mobile to our mobile apps team at Technology Partners makes it their mission to move our clients into the hands of their employees and customers and change their business processes to meet the demands of their users. Let's work together and build a dynamic mobile app for your

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[00:14:33] **Nichols:** Tom, I know that our listeners, they hear our RCGA, RBC, the Regional Business Council. They hear civic progress. What is the mission of each of these organizations? And then how are you guys working together? How does it all fit together?

[00:14:47] **Chulick:** So civic progress has been around for decades and decades. And, you know, over the years typically look at, you know, how do they involve themselves to execute on big projects and big things for the city and create some vision. And they continue to do that. It's largely made up of some of the largest businesses in our community. Regional Business Council was spun out 20 plus years ago out of St. Louis Regional Chamber to kind of fit that next level of not just the Fortune 200, 300, 100 companies. How do you get to that kind of next level? But in the RBC has 100 hundred members and by design, it's capped at 100 members. I was on the RBC for 10 years and Kathy Osborn does a terrific job in leading that. And you know, they're trying to deal with putting together things around workforce and mentoring and connecting businesses to the workforce and working in other initiatives that may come up from time to time. And then you have the St. Louis Regional Chamber. So when you look at the St. Louis Regional Chamber, it represents the entirety of 2.8 million people in our at St. Louis MSA. It's 15 counties, eight in Illinois and seven in Missouri. So that's unique to the other two organizations that they have members from, not just the city of St. Louis and St. Louis County and maybe St. Charles County, but we are intentional about where that geography and what geography we cover. We have somewhere around a thousand members. And so we were the largest business led organization in the community. We probably represent about 60 percent of the workforce. When you add all that together, yes. When you look at the three organizations, they do slightly different things. And over the years, they've worked on some things together, other things they've kind of done autonomously. But there has been a call to action by the leadership of the three organizations over the last couple of years. That said, when you look at where St. Louis is and we look at it in comparison to our competitor cities, we're growing but the other markets are growing faster. So how do we bend the trend and continue to grow? And so there was a study done, McKinsey study done a couple of years ago that identified four areas I think most people would agree on. Crime and public safety, economic development, workforce and a narrative. And when you look at the three organizations, not everyone has to deal with all of them, but all three of us should be involved and support it. So, we have a unified voice on many fronts. Crime and public safety, something probably civic progress and RBC are better suited to work with. Economic development is a chamber infrastructure kind of thing and support

by the business community of civic progress. Workforce is chamber and supported by the RBC. And then there's this narrative. What is the story? What is the narrative of St. Louis? That's civic progress and the chamber. And last spring on PI Day, March 14th, Arch to Park launched St. Louis Made (STL Made). Which is the beginning of a new narrative. I catch myself saying that a new narrative suggests there was an old one.

[00:17:50] **Nichols:** There was no old one, right?

[00:17:52] **Chulick:** Well, there were different campaigns promoting the city, but it might be for specific purposes. Maybe it's conventions, maybe it's tourism, maybe it's whatever it might be. But this was intentional. Really begin telling the narrative of what St. Louis is and what they have to offer. But it starts internally so we can learn how to brag about ourselves, which I think growing up in this community, we have a hard time bragging about ourselves.

[00:18:17] **Nichols:** I could not agree more.

[00:18:18] **Chulick:** If anybody comes from out of town, they come here. They love being here, but they're like, how come you guys don't brag more? So it's learning how to brag about ourselves and then using a lot of data and a lot of research to start pushing this out through multimedia, through social media and other means to be able to communicate the story of STL Made throughout the region. So, what you see now is a significant collaboration among the three groups Civic Progress, RBC and the Chamber. They work on the four basic categories that I've talked about. And if there's two leading them, the third group, the third entity is supporting it. But you know, when we look at public policy, we work together to define what should be the regional agenda, public policy agenda that will help our community grow. How is it going to be business friendly for economic development? How does it help our workforce? How does it help our infrastructure? And if the three groups come together and we have some common things, each one may have some separate thing that might be important to their membership. But collectively, we come with a common agenda. Then when we go to Jefferson City or we go to Springfield, Missouri, or we go to Washington, D.C., and the chamber leads that process because we have a terrific public policy department. We're able to go in front of our elected officials and say this is the short list. This is what we want to focus on. And frankly, the legislators want that. Give us the short list, stay organized. So, that's a little longer answer to how are the three distinct, but how are they working together, I think, is the rather the message there and the collaboration that's going on is profound right now. We have regular phone calls were together very frequently. We go to each other's meetings and it's an environment now that

frankly hasn't been like that in quite some time. And so, I'm very fortunate and proud to be part of a group that is so willing and ably working together for the benefit of our community. And I think your listeners and the community at large needs to realize that the focus is how do we get this community growing at a faster rate? When people look at St. Louis, they love coming here. Got to get through the headlines. But everybody has headlines. But you get through the headlines, people want to be here for a reason. And so out of that populated our strategic plan. And in our 2020 strategic plan, there's three basic elements in there. And that's regional economic development, workforce development in innovation and entrepreneurship. So, our focus has to be within those guardrails so that we are careful not to chase any bright, shiny objects and social issues because our business leaders want us to go out and market nationally and globally the St. Louis region in its entirety, irrespective of it's Illinois or if it's Missouri or it's the city is St. Louis or St. Charles County or Madison County, Illinois or Washington County, Missouri. That's going to come down to the C-suite person that's interested. They're going to give us the criteria. So out of this strategic plan, out of the planning process of the three groups getting together last year, we designed and launched Alliance STL, which is specifically designed to recruit new business and jobs into the St. Louis region.

[00:21:23] **Nichols:** And retain them, right?.

[00:21:24] **Chulick:** When I say St. Louis. I mean, the region, not the city or the county, St. Louis region. And their focus is to market that nationally and globally. And their team has done a terrific job. Their pipeline is bigger now than it's been in years. The interest in St. Louis is at its highest level than it's been in years. They may be a little difficult for people in St. Louis to understand because the first thing you'll see as I go. Well, why? There's a terrific quality of life here. First and foremost. But one of the criteria is it's easy to around. We're a 30-minute city.

[00:21:55] **Nichols:** Absolutely, we hear that all the time.

[00:21:57] **Chulick:** A 30-minutes city. And when you talk to people from San Antonio, Nashville, East Coast, West Coast, they love it. When you think about the Federal Reserve stats and they talk about the low cost of living in St. Louis, where the seventh lowest cost of living in the country, that means we're better than 93 percent of the rest of the country when it comes to cost of living. You can afford to have a house here. You can afford to start your career here, because if you're on either the coasts or down in San Antonio or Nashville, you may have to get an apartment with three other people, may only be, two bedrooms, one bath. And you're going to be eating in and ramen noodles. And, you know, here you've got a great food scene and you

could start a career, get an apartment, get a condo, buy a house, because the cost of living is seventh best in the country. And the cost of housing is in that number. And so, when you look at quality of life, many generations like the food scene here, they like the attractions here. You know, a lot of people drive up and down Interstate 40 and they pass the Zoo every day. We're like, oh, yeah, the Zoo, I've been there a dozen times. Or you drive downtown and there's the Arch.

[00:23:03] **Nichols:** People from other cities thought, they cannot believe the Zoo.

[00:23:09] **Chulick:** This is the stuff they are looking for. And, you know, let's not kid ourselves, having the Cardinals be an iconic brand and it doesn't hurt that the Blues won. And now you bring in an MLS team, there's a lot to say for our quality of life. So we look at our strategic plan is focusing on how do we find opportunities to bring and let data take us to bringing the workforce to specific companies that have specific job openings to fill those today so we can begin to bend that trend line? And there's 20,000 open positions at any one time in this market, 75 percent of which needs something less than a four year degree. So, college is important for some, but there's alternative paths that really help you. And so, part of our workforce strategic plan is to help businesses as well as those people that are providing workforce services and training and in the Universities is coordinating that effort.

[00:24:01] **Nichols:** You know what? That's so important. Figure out what the business needs, right? And you've got to have somebody kind of quarterbacking that. So that's great. If our listeners are saying I'm curious, I want to see what that looks like, I'm assuming that they would just go to the website?

[00:24:16] **Chulick:** Yeah, go to stlregionalchamber.com. You'll be able to find the strategic plan in there. You'll find all of our events. You'll find ways to be engaged. You'll get a lot of information. There is research data on there as well. So if you're recruiting somebody and you want to get some stats and some basic figures about St. Louis, you can find all that on there. Or if you need to contact somebody. All the contact information for any of our team is on there as well.

[00:24:43] **Nichols:** Ok, so this is something extra. Can you talk about maybe something extra that you have seen in one of your team members? And this can be current or past, Tom, whichever you would prefer.

[00:24:55] **Chulick:** I've been very fortunate to work with some very talented people over the years. And well, my father used to say he's got two ears and one mouth, use them proportionately. So, you want to listen and you want to be sure that you're asking good questions and hopefully you're asking the right kind of questions. One of the things that I've tried to focus on and I've seen this be successful and there's some people who grab it. Some people that don't want to grab it tend to have a long, successful career. And it's really trying to understand attributes, skills and experience. And I tell them, I say, go to Google, look up what attributes mean, look up what skills mean, and let's sit down to have a conversation about your attributes and your skills. Experience is gonna come with time. And I think when people get to that point, then you can take them, to how do you get that experience? And it's being a student of the business. So, you know, the unfortunate death of Kobe Bryant, one of the things that you continue to hear so much is his work ethic. And it's how he put time in before practice and how he put time in after practice more than anyone else. And he had a tremendous amount of talent and skill beyond even his teammates that are all elite as well. What was the edge? His willing to put more work in and put the work ethic and so be a student of the game. And I think with one of the things that Kobe should teach us if you're paying attention, is that work ethic is important and being a student of the game is really important. I think when that happens, you begin to see the purpose and the purposeful movement in your life begin to happen and you work so much more efficiently and you work so much more effectively, not only for yourself and your family, but for all those around you.

[00:26:35] **Nichols:** Oh, I cannot agree with you more. So, there's something extra that every leader needs. I mean, would you say that it's that? We're always a learner. Hey Tom, are you finished with your learning?

[00:26:47] **Chulick:** I just mentioned about being a student the game. And I don't think you ever finish. I spent a lot of time reading books about leaders and leadership. It's not the leadership books. I just finished a book on Lincoln. I finished a book on Roosevelt. Finished a book on Winston Churchill. You know, those are all different leadership styles and things. Why were these individuals successful? Because everyone comes to it with different experiences and life experience and different points in history. Be a student of the game. But you have to realize as a leader that I say this to my team all the time. My responsibility is to put you in the best position to be successful. And it's having conversations both hard and maybe not so hard about where is it that you want to go in your career? And you have to get people to articulate that. But I also think that as a leader, you have to understand that you don't have to have all the answers. What people talk about humility. And if you're an up and comer leader or a manager, you think you

have to have all the answers, you think you have to control the meeting and you're not sure if you want to take the risk. But you have to realize that you have to take risk. You have to be willing to embrace failure. But you have to be humble. And that humility along the way in that I don't have all the answers. Let's work together and let's find the answer, gives you more strength as a leader than it would be if you had all the answers. And that's what would get you into having performance conversations and really talk to people about what their interest is. And we'll work together to do that. I've been so many, I've seen so many performance reviews where, did you do this? Did you do that? You know, the goal is 100. You got 92. You know, your goal was 100. You got 103. Is 103 good? Is 92 bad? I don't know. But the important thing, if you're going to retain talent and you're going to grow talent is you want to be sure that they know where they're going in their career. In the absence of a specific role or a title or position with the organization, they need to know that they're on a path. The four reasons employees leave is, knucklehead boss. Hopefully we can deal with that. That's the things I can control. Hopefully. Right. Knucklehead coworkers, you hope you're in a good environment. You've got good culture. Where am I going in my career? And the fourth one's money. So, if you get the first three and a pretty good spot, you can manage the other part. We all want more money. We're all underpaid. Sure. But it puts us in a better position to have that trust and purpose between the manager and the associate. And then what's the long term game plan that sets up for long term success in that quarterly or annual success based on a strategic plan or any other financial measure somebody wants to come up with?

[00:29:31] **Nichols:** Great advice. So, is there something that is coming up that you're excited about that you want to tell our listeners about? And if so, how can they get involved?

[00:29:42] **Chulick:** Our annual Arcus Awards are coming up on February 27th at the Hyatt at the Arch it is the region's recognition of great businesses in and throughout the St. Louis region. It goes from technology to the environment to growth to inclusiveness. It's a great fun night. There's 650-700 people there. A lot of energy, a lot of fun. If you have any interest at all in networking and being in the room, it's one heck of a great room to be in? You can find information on that again on our website stlregionalchamber.com. You can register on there. You can get more information, you can get a table, you can find ways to be engaged. That's really exciting. I tell you, one of the things that really excites me, and I ask people this question all the time, I say, do you feel it? And they look at me like do I feel what? I say, Do you feel the momentum? And there's very few people that answered no. And if they say no, I ask them why. Most of the people I talked to, they're not saying it because I'm Tom the chamber kid. It's they feel it. And I'm really excited about that. When you look at MLS, you look at NGA, you look at

what Bobby O’Laughlin and Steve have done with the Aquarium and Union Station. And you look what the Blues Enterprise Center's done with the remodel of the Enterprise Center and just had the NHL. That doesn't happen unless the State help, the City help, the County help be able to do that. Now, we got the Convention Center and the Convention Center is going to get more than just a facelift. We've got to compete against other regions. It's our front door when conventioners come to St. Louis and they want to come. St. Louisans maybe scratch their head and say why do people want to come here? There's a lot of people that want to come here. And the stats support that. So, I'm really excited about where we are. We've got something. You know, we got the stuff happening in Cortex. We've got an innovation district that many regions across the country envy and are trying to model. We're recognized as a foodie city. You know, we've got a lot of game and it's about lifestyle and why people want to come here. I'm most excited about all of that.

[00:31:45] **Nichols:** I am, too. I am too, Tom. So, you know, our listeners get involved, learn, be educated on what is going on and start telling the narrative. We are coveted. We're a coveted place to be. A coveted place to grow a business to move a business.

[00:32:02] **Chulick:** Our assets and our unique assets here. I mean, Governor, Parson will tell you this. He goes, we've got one of the best assets that anybody has that nobody else can replicate. And that's location. We've got river, rail, airports; we're good. And so, we can compete on all that. We just have to tell our story more.

[00:32:19] **Nichols:** Well, Tom, this has been so much fun. Thank you so much for making the time. And I'm so excited for our listeners to hear. This episode,

[00:32:26] **Chulick:** Happy to be here and thanks for giving me the time.

[00:32:28] **Announcer:** Thank you for listening to today's show. Something Extra with Lisa Nichols is a Technology Partners Production, copyright Technology Partners Inc., 2019. For show notes or to reach Lisa visit tpi.co/podcast. Don't forget to leave a review on Apple podcasts, Google Play or wherever you listen.