

Transcription details:

Guest: Bill Coppel, First Clearing Chief Client Growth Officer

Host: Susan Quinn, President & CEO of circle S studio

Transcription results:

Intro Welcome to The Next Frontier. Where we examine what the role of the financial advisor will be in a world that's being disrupted by artificial intelligence and algorithms. Our mission is to spark new conversations that create stronger connections and build greater client confidence. Join us as we look at our industry and others through a new lens and explore the opportunities emerging at the intersection of high-tech and high-touch. It's time for a new conversation. Are you ready?

BILL COPPEL Hi. This is Bill Coppel and welcome to The Next Frontier. Having spoken to hundreds of business owners over the years, I keep hearing one common theme expressed over and over again, "How do I continue to grow my business in the face of mounting regulatory complexity and competition?" Exacerbating matters more, so many professional services are now offering a compelling digital alternative, often at favorable prices and accompanied by even more flexibility and convenience. Welcome to the 21st century. And our steadfast growth strategy of relying on referrals has taken on a new look, as the way we interact today is tilting more to a reliance on social media platform validation, rendering face-to-face contact a distant secondary option, and for many prospects, an unnecessary time-consuming endeavor. The fact is the world has changed and continues to change, yet we find ourselves reverting to the use of bankrupt language and trapped by past practices that no longer yield the once anticipated benefits and we wonder why. It all comes down to this. In a sea of sameness, how do you stand out and not fall into the trap of competing on price alone. That's what our guest, Susan Quinn, is here to help answer today. Susan is the founder, president, and CEO of circle S studio, a consulting, branding, and digital agency that serves growth-minded companies across the U.S., helping them cut through the clutter in today's challenging business landscape. With a 30-year track record that includes running a successful agency and numerous board memberships, Susan has become a trusted ally to C-level executives from firms of all sizes by guiding them through a process that results in a powerful brand that distinguishes them in the marketplace. She holds a bachelor's in political science from Randolph-Macon College and is certified as a life coach by the Human Potential Institute. In addition, circle S studio and First Clearing have enjoyed a long, 15-year relationship. Susan has become instrumental in helping guide our thinking when it comes to brand and thought leadership. So with that, Susan, welcome to The Next Frontier.

SUSAN QUINN Good morning, Bill.

BILL COPPEL So let's get into our conversation today and one I'm very excited about having. Susan, let me start here. As a branding professional, how have you seen the path to establishing a powerful brand change with the emergence of e-commerce? Or, " has it changed at all?

SUSAN QUINN That's a great question. We spend a lot of time at circle S getting brands to what we would say a premier-level, something that stands out. But to your first question, has it changed? I can tell you what hasn't changed and I honestly want to start with the word "branding." I mean, it literally comes from a word "to burn" and this is where cattle ranchers back in the day would burn their livestock to signify the ownership, I mean, right? That's where a brand came from and so what hasn't changed is, today we still want to create unique brands that would identify your company that is different from the next company. Particularly, if you think of the financial industry, everyone is seemingly doing the same thing, so how do you make your firm stand out? So the brand is still very important. In terms of what has changed, for me, I think it is around this notion that the consumer, the customer is now a part of your brand. So that's very, very different in today's e-commerce and particularly for a younger generation, and there are a lot of surveys that will support this, that about 72% of the millennials actually prefer a brand that will deliver on an experience. So this new word "experience" is a big part of what branding is today and in fact, the experience overtakes price in all instances and for all of the clients that we serve. So that's where our brand is focused, on certainly the elements that create a brand, but around the experiences that support your brand and your business.

- BILL COPPEL So do you think that consumers and businesses still view brands as valuable compared to the way they did perhaps 10 or even 20 years ago? How do consumers make buying decisions today, relative to what you just said? And how does that translate to business owners and how they make buying decisions as well, relative to brand?
- SUSAN QUINN Well, to answer the first question, do businesses, consumers still view brands as important. As a branding firm, I would like to tell you that the brand is the most important thing. That if you don't get every aspect of it perfectly, you will never attract anyone. And the reality of it is, it's way more than that. But a brand still has a place and I would venture to say that it has even a greater value because we now can sort through hundreds and thousands of options at our fingertips. And that isn't what we had 20 years ago, so the competition, in a way, is greater and therefore, to have a voice, to be something that people would want to even consume, it does begin with your brand. And by the brand it is-- what is the foundation that you stand on? Who are you serving? What is your unique point of view? And we helped crack those unique brand experiences for clients all the time. In terms of how consumers, customers, clients make buying decisions today, the research that we show says that they all-- it's like 96%-- I don't know what the 4% are doing, but 96% begin the process, whether they're buying a product, whether they want the service of a firm, they start on the website. And in a nanosecond, literally the snap of your finger, they're going to determine if they like your brand, if they like who's on the other side of the virtual home and they will either go in or they will leave. So the buying decision happens way before you have a chance to tell your story because consumers can educate themselves. We don't need the gatekeepers anymore. So in that instance, it has changed but the brand is still relevant and I think even more relevant today.
- BILL COPPEL And that really underscores what you said around this notion of drawing the client into the brand and that experience that occurs and that interaction between the client and the brand is really, really powerful. So just to recap, brands still matter, right, and what's different is this notion of drawing that client in. In the example you just gave about, say, someone going to your firm's website to begin that process of decisioning, that's the engaging piece that begins that client experience, if you will. So that still matters and maybe what's a little different is, sort of, we've replaced the soap opera commercials for Tide or the billboards on the highway with these more interactive digital experiences. So let me go here with you. Your firm, circle S, you've developed a particular expertise in branding for what we call professional services. Share with our listeners the kinds of firms and businesses you tend to support.
- SUSAN QUINN Yeah, just a little bit of story on that because I think it will be relevant to the listeners of your podcast. We, and this has been probably-- I've had my own company for 35 years, and 10 years ago, we made a huge shift and we narrowed our focus and it sounds counter-intuitive. I have always heard "there are riches in niches" but it's like, "Oh, well, who am I going to leave out? And I want to be everything to everyone," but--
- BILL COPPEL And whoever wants to turn down an opportunity, right?
- SUSAN QUINN That's right. So let's just make sure that we're covering A to Z. But we did a deep, deep dive around who we were serving, who were our best clients, where were we being welcomed-in, if you will. And what we found is our best work, our most profitable work, and what we love to do was in this area of professional services. And within that, we do a lot in the financial industry. We love it. That's where I began my career. I started in banking so we do work more on the community bank side. We do work with financial services. We do work with broker-dealer firms. We do work with asset management firms. We also, on the professional side, work with what is called the AEC industry, architects, engineers, and construction. The legal, CPAs. Anyone, basically, where the profession is the same, what you provide generally is the same and we love being at the table with these very smart, credentialed-- they have many degrees and they're really good at their craft but what they're maybe not as adept at is telling their story and telling it in a compelling way...and really connecting on this emotional level. The IQ is there but maybe not the EQ. So this was an area where we felt we could stand out and we literally put a stake in the ground and we said we were a B2B firm, working business-to-business. We moved away from anything on the consumer side. We stopped doing work, honestly, with non-profits. They were a percentage of our work, they were not profitable work. We have never done or responded to an RFP, RFQ that arrived at our desk because in the research, we never got a single one. So basically we narrowed our focus and this is something that we also help our clients do

because I think everybody wants to be everything to everyone. And this is one of the practices that I see is a growth opportunity for firms that are willing to do that.

BILL COPPEL So I also understand that you have built into your services a strategic consultancy that helps clients navigate through change and disruption or other challenges that are, say, causing their traditional approach to no longer be effective. And it seems to me that what you just described is the beginning of a great example of that consultancy which is-- so many of us claim we're focused but you just can't turn down that business opportunity. Talk to us about how you built this consultancy into your practice.

SUSAN QUINN Bill, I love to connect the dots. I love to follow trends. I love to see who is the best-in-class and why. And as my career has evolved, and we learn a few things along the way, and I started to see these huge patterns that top brands, wherever they are, B2C, B2B, what they have in common. And I actually have seen that we learn primarily in the B2B world from the B2C world because you go online, you go to Amazon, you're going to purchase your groceries, you're going to do whatever and they intuitively can tell you, "Oh, if you like this then you should do this." They spend millions and millions of dollars to create this incredible user experience and what happens in the B2C world, we come to expect in all aspects of our life. So what we decided to do is create the main experiences that we saw as the transformational component to growth because that's what the best brands were doing and that's what we help our clients do. So we spend a lot of time consulting on that. I mean, if you want to navigate change for an industry that is being totally disrupted, then we go in, we consult and we look at, "All right, here's where you are. Here's where the industry is going. What's the delta between the two?" And then strategically positioning them for the growth of that disruption. That would be an example. Everyone can pick the everyday and ordinary. We are intrigued by those that dare to do it differently. That really want to engage with all of the generations and understand them and so we spend most of our time around three experiences and the first being the brand, the second being an employee experience, and then how that would transition to the client experience. And we help our firms navigate all three of those in a seamless way.

BILL COPPEL And I want to come back to those in a minute because I think that's very important, those three steps. And what you've said here is that oftentimes, branding is confused with a logo or some other artistic or creative expression and with the consultancy that you've built, this is really about thinking through what it is we do well and how we can articulate in a way that is going to connect with our target audience. And with that, I want to take a little deeper dive into this notion of branding in professional services. Clearly, as you've mentioned earlier, they tend to be highly regulated. You end up having to do things pretty much the same way whether you're in financial services, or a part of AEC, or an attorney, or an accounting firm. There's not a lot of ways to differentiate yourself, based on the way the regulations have been written and so forth. Talk to us a little bit about how you start thinking about this. What's that first question that you're going to throw out, for example, that you may ask yourself, as you approach a new client, in terms of, "Where do I begin this journey with them to help illuminate the things that are important for them to think about," versus, "Do I want this color or that color or this look or that look?"

SUSAN QUINN Well, Bill, I remember like five years ago, when we would be out speaking, we had a slide that would say, "By 2020, the CX -- which is the client experience, the customer experience -- is going to overtake price and everything else. And the main thing is going to be the client experience and so that was a prediction we made five years ago and that's where we are today. So when we first come to work with a client that wants to propel growth, first of all, we want to understand, where are you and where do you want to go. And then the next thing is really looking at the clients that they serve, understanding generationally where they fit into those categories and then we basically do the buyer's journey with them, from a prospect to a raving fan. And what are the touch-points that would happen to attract and then retain the client that you are seeking. And so that is kind of phase one of that. The journey, too, is where you have a unique point of view and this is where we see some of the greatest opportunities for companies. I think it's something like 67% more leads come from companies that have thought leadership. I mean, think about that. 67% more. That's not a number that you just say, "Well, I don't have time to blog. I don't have time to do a webinar. I don't have time to engage in my unique point of view." And what I would say back to my client is, "Why wouldn't you?" If you think that just the email and bringing people in or entertaining them at the latest sports event is going to get you where you need to be, then you need to follow the statistics that we are looking at.

Because it is a key part of growth for companies today and it's also what the generations, Gen X, Gen Y, Gen Z, for sure care about that probably more than anything else. So we spend a lot of time around how you would authentically create your unique point of view, from a content perspective. And then we call it cornerstone content and then how you would slice and dice that and disseminate it in an appropriate way to each of the clients or the targets that you're trying to attract.

BILL COPPEL So thought leadership really becomes a very important strategic approach that you're recommending, regardless of the profession. To have a point of view and to be out there sharing that point of view which, I guess, would signal to your potential buyer that you're in the game and you're thinking about shaping, changing, navigating through the industry that they're in. And I want to go back to the client experience for a moment. What dawned on me when you were explaining that, which I thought was very insightful ... what jumped to mind was this idea of, why in the world would Amazon buy Whole Foods? And when you step away from that and you recognize that their particular approach there was, they're going to transform that experience for a consumer. So that when you step into a Whole Foods, you'll have an Amazon-like experience where it becomes almost on the borderline of entertainment to go shopping. So I take that to heart with the illustration that you shared here. What I'd love to do now Susan is kind of go back to those three components of the approach that you've mentioned earlier which is around this powerful brand experience, this notion of how that ties into a very important and deep employee experience. And how that really drives this into what the consumer-- or the target audience, I should say, the business that you're trying to win, how that transforms their decisioning away from price. And what I'd love for you to do since our audience here is primarily financial service professionals, I want to deviate from that for a moment and maybe you can share some examples of this based on your work with the AEC community, architects, engineers, and construction community. Because when I think about them, they're as highly regulated as we are, if not more, and they really have to figure out ways to compete and win business. And they can't always rely on price being that one determining factor.

SUSAN QUINN And it really is, Bill, the-- I can't overstate the experience. Here's what I often see as a mistake. I think people like to check the boxes, "Okay, I've got my company. Maybe I started it a million years ago and I need to do a brand refresh. Hm, check the box." Well, why are you even going to invest in that if you don't immerse yourself into what that brand experience is going to be. So think about it two ways, if you want to attract or retain your staff and if you want to attract or retain a client, you need to be intentional about what the words of your brand actually mean. The best companies have a strong foundation. They have core values. They have words that actually have meaning. They don't just fill in the blank, "Our mission is blah, blah, blah." Most of them are blahs. What we do is we go in and from the employee experience, how do you translate that into the workday? How does it live in that environment? So you asked for an example. One of our clients, this is a national firm, they have a really strong mission and in the research that we've done, literally to a person, they can recite the mission. And there are three words and I can recite it. It's, "Respect, service, and excellence in everything we do." And that mission lives in everything. It drives how they communicate with their employees and ultimately, how they serve their clients. So how does that live? We have created, within their own workspace, really, those words personified. In terms of training, it lives in the university of their national firm. In terms of-- I'm thinking of one-- this is an engineering firm, they are conducting town hall meetings to find out how they can be a best-in-class for their employees. And they've identified five things. What is the training that you need to conduct your job well? If work-life balance is important, what does that look like for you? Are the core values important? Anyway, they've identified the top things. We go out and we research them and then we bring back to this company so that the employee experience gets a very high mark and a lot of companies like to be the best place to work and everyone seeks those. Well, there's a reason why. Because people like to work for a company where their people matter and you can find out like in a nanosecond if it's real or not. I think they say that with two kind of flubs, if you're not really serving your team well or your clients they're going to leave in a nanosecond. And so the same thing is for your employees. You have to treat them like they're your customer. It begins at home. And so we spend a lot of time zeroing in on that. And they're like five generations in the workplace today so you can't assume that it's all the same, particularly if you've got some diversity amongst your team.

- BILL COPPEL That makes complete sense. And oftentimes you find a lot of companies know exactly what they do and they know how to do it and they struggle with translating that into the why. Can you talk a little bit about your experience in helping them bring to life this experience you're talking about related to the why?
- SUSAN QUINN Particularly in engineering and construction, and I would say the same thing in the financial industry, everyone is really good at, "This is what we do and this is how we do it." And we have this unique process, we bring you in, we understand what your financial goals are. We'll meet with you quarterly. We'll make sure your portfolio is in alignment and that you can live the life that you want but I don't think they really get into the why. The why gets flipped of the unique point of view from who is literally, not across the table, we like to say at the table with you and so you are literally peeling back the onion. So a lot of the why is thinking through who's at the table with you and that gets into relationship building. And we spend a lot of time, how you can really understand. You do look at these generational differences. I mean, Gen Z, they're now, I think, 20% of the workforce. They're very pragmatic and very realistic. You've got your millennials that we all like to bash. Guess what, I think they're an amazing generation. I think we've learned so much from them but they've got their own unique-- every generation is different. They crave input. They like to tell you that, "If you can't give me a raise soon then I'm going to be out of here." So we just have to understand the why of each person that's there and we can go on and on about the generations. I'm not a generational expert but I do zero-in and follow them because it's key to understanding who I surround myself with. And I would say, continuing the experience of each part of the journey are you answering the why, based on who's at the table.
- BILL COPPEL And that's the authentic piece that you're talking about, is that the "who's at the table" and the "why they're at the table" has to build back into what you spoke about a few moments ago, around the notion of our mission and truly believing in that. And that's where the authentic piece comes in. How hard is that? It seems that people use a lot of bankrupt language today and as you pointed out, in building out what are those core values and what are the words you choose to define them, what are you finding that is the big stumbling block here? It seems to me that it seems rather straight forward on the surface, yet so many firms struggle to find it.
- SUSAN QUINN Well, I think we stop at the surface. I love that you say that. I always think about the duck and you kind of see them swimming so calmly on top but if you go beneath that, they're paddling like heck. And there's a lot beneath the surface and I don't know that a lot of firms or a lot of people, honestly, take the time to dig deeper. And that's where the relationships-- honestly, Bill, it's what you're doing on The Next Frontier. You are asking financial advisors and your industry to go beyond the numbers, to find ways to build relationships and the work that we're doing and saying that if you can make me feel valued, that's where you build trust. And if you have trust, that's where you can begin to having a raving fan. But you don't just do it a couple of times a year. It's your focus literally every day and that's where we see the greatest opportunities. I'll give you an example, Southwest Airlines. If you look at them, they are a no-frills airline. There's no first-class, there are no meals, you can't get assigned seats. It's a pretty basic airline but if you look at the top brands, those delivering unbelievable experiences for both their employees and their customers, Southwest is one of the top brands. And I'll tell you what they do, they think about how they can delight you on the experience. And one of the examples that we'll give when we're out speaking is, "How many times have you traveled and you go to get your luggage and a wheel has fallen off or something. Your luggage has gotten ripped." So if you are a Southwest customer, you've just picked up your luggage, they ripped the heck out of it. If you go to their office, most people would think, "Okay, well, give me your phone number, we'll get back to you." No. They open a door and there are hundreds of pieces of luggage and you can walk in and you can pick one or if you want to fill out and get the exact thing that you had before, then there's a process for that. If you look at the results of that, people are like, "Oh my gosh, it was the easy button. They anticipated my needs. They thought about how they can be of service and delight me." Those are the ways that the companies, that spend time to think about who is at the table with them, are winning at this differentiating race, if you will.
- BILL COPPEL That's a real cultural thing where they have exactly taken that internal experience that you're talking about, that employee experience and that has become their brand. So great example.

- SUSAN QUINN Well, and Bill, make no mistake that those cultures do not come because someone wrote it down on a piece of paper or they put, "Service" "Respect," up on the wall. Training is a big, big part of these top companies, even the smaller ones. The founders, you may have started with one thing, but how does everyone know it until you can really infuse it and what that means in the day-to-day. And I'm kind of stunned by what they say the number of people that will abandon you and I mentioned this before, two or three negative experiences, I mean, it's like over 90% of people are just going to-- and in some instances, just ghost you. They're no longer your customer. They're no longer your client. They're gone. They're done. They're going to go on to the next thing. So this experience that you are creating is so vital to building loyalty amongst your customer base.
- BILL COPPEL And expressing that is important and never forgetting that is important. I think we tend to, particularly in highly regulated businesses, we easily get hung up on the regulatory aspect of it, rather than push back and say, "Hey, how do we change this in a way that continues to maintain an outstanding experience for my client." Because at the end of the day, that's what they're going to remember. You've heard the expression Susan, right, where in the event that you do have a mistake, and we all have mistakes, yet it's your speed recovery and the authentic approach you take to make it right and I think your example of replacing someone's luggage is a great way to illustrate that. So we've got the notion of the brand experience and how that ties into the client experience and how those two work together to really articulate the why, okay, beyond the, "I know what and the how," but really why we're in this business. When those two things are working right, what kind of impact can that have?
- SUSAN QUINN Well, there's a huge component. We call it the flywheel. When you have precision of the brand, the employee, and the client experience, it can increase the growth of your company by three times within a three-year period. I mean, it's really phenomenal and it is precision-focused and honestly narrowing what you are going to be focused on. And I do this all the time in the consulting. Give me your top three things of how you are going to be driving growth and who is owning that and what are they doing specifically. And when people start to narrow that, that I want to be a thought leader in small business, 401(k) retirement plans. Pick whatever area you want to have a point of view and then live it and be there and be of service so that people know that you are an expert in that. We see growth and the company that I've mentioned, they have doubled and now doubled again, now some of it has been through an acquisition, but the organic growth happened within four years from them having precision in each of the experiences that we talked about. And I could give you many examples of other great firms, where they are, once again, just almost obsessed, like a Southwest, of delighting and giving a really amazing experience. And I'm going to add one more thing that often goes unnoticed. But how do you know if you've got a raving fan or how do you know if someone is just kind of, "Hmm, I'm not really-- I'm here but I could leave in a minute." And we believe that you need to keep a pulse. So somewhere you have to infuse, within your brand, within your company, a way to understand, "Are they happy or are they not?" And so sometimes, it's someone else calling on your behalf. I think we're surveyed to death. I know I am but you have to keep a pulse and you have to know in real-time because otherwise, you're going to live in your jar, in your own little world, you're going to decide for everyone else and it's hard to read the label of that jar when you're on the inside. You've got to get the perspective from the outside from others of how they feel and what they think.
- BILL COPPEL And I'll bet that can be woven into the challenge of a team member who-- to your point about surveying, I think is spot-on. It goes on a lot today, more than I can remember ever taking place and there's a reason for that, as you point out. That this is where firms are trying to ensure that they're on the right track. I bet you can weave that into the culture of your team members where they're listening and listening for feedback that either validates the effectiveness of what they're doing and they are living up to their brand or it's sharing with them insight that perhaps they've lost their path in a particular incident and where they have an opportunity to re-balance. And I'll add to that comment this question. It would seem to me that a successful firm has taken this approach that you've described here and woven it into their recruiting process because they like to say at Southwest, hire for attitude and train for skill. Have you seen that or do you participate in the hiring process when you're working with a firm?
- SUSAN QUINN I've never thought we would but yes, we will, particularly-- well, let's say, before coronavirus, it could all be very, very different. But over the last five years in particular, when the economy has been robust, it's hard

to, honestly, retain top talent because some of the loyalty is not there and that's where having a really solid culture that stands for something, that people know it. So what we help do, like for some companies, they want to attract-- who doesn't want the top talent? I mean, maybe you can't afford to pay them but let's face it, top people are going to propel growth for your company and so we will help them with, "What is it? Why did these people go to another firm?" And we will help them with, as you are bringing them, it's just like a version of your client. This is how you can promote your culture and these are the ways that you can do it. It lives on your website. It lives in social media. It lives the minute you walk into the company. It lives the way your team speaks to them. And so we will consult with them on each part of that journey. It lives with the on-boarding, once they're on day one. It lives in month three, six, nine. If they've been there four years, how do you keep them engaged? How are you managing them? And that's kind of a fun thing to do. I never thought that would be part of branding, but it's part of keeping talent and we like spending time there.

BILL COPPEL That makes a lot of sense to me. And I want to stay focused for a moment on the individual and go in this direction with you. Often, in professional services, there's an individual, in financial services it might be an advisor, or in a law firm it could be a particular attorney or accountant or engineer at a construction or engineering firm, and so much of that firm's relationship with a client maybe through that individual. And it's kind of a brand within the bigger brand, if you will. In case of financial services, as an example, let's talk a moment about how do you navigate the brand within a bigger brand? What's important for people to be thinking about so that they can perhaps co-exist in a symbiotic relationship as opposed to a contentious relationship where you actually end up competing with the brand that you're a part of?

SUSAN QUINN Well, I mean, it's pretty much what I was just saying. The two need to be aligned. If your core values as an individual do not align with the bigger brand, the bigger company than you're with, then it's not a good match for either one of you. So you need to be able to connect the dots there and, let's face it, people don't join the brand of the company. They connect with the people of the company and you are going to have a brand as an individual and you want them to be somewhat aligned in terms of the core components of it. But then I believe, as an advisor, you need to say how you are different and so it's kind of yes and. There's the brand of the company and it's your brand as an advisor that is important. And you would do that through how you show up, the thought leadership. But you need to think about every aspect that you're doing because it does create who you are within that larger company and like a company, you need to determine how you want to show up. What are the important components-- and sometimes people may get bigger than the brand and I've seen that too. We're consulting with one big engineering firm that at the end of this, they say, "You know what, I don't know that we have a company brand anymore. It's about these 25 people who individually have a brand. We're now trying to cobble those two together so that they both exist."

BILL COPPEL It's not easy and it's not an easy decision. You're absolutely right. I've witnessed what you're saying. I've witnessed this in action and it's a hard thing for someone to really face the fact that if your values and those things that are important to you as a team member don't align with the organization, that can be harmful for both. But making that decision and having the courage to recognize that and moving to align what's important to you with an organization that appreciates that is really, really challenging. But I think that perhaps this is the environment that we're going through right now, the COVID-19 environment in which we're having this conversation, Susan. It would not surprise me that people are doing some reflection right now and some soul-searching. And as we emerge out of this tunnel at some point, it'll be interesting to see how folks begin to realign what their values are with the organizations they want to align themselves with.

SUSAN QUINN Yeah Bill, I was listening to Simon Sinek, someone that I certainly respect. He's the famous guy, "People don't buy what you do or how you do it. They buy the why." It's the power of the emotion. And what was being shared in social media was, we all know the grid that we see our teams appearing on now, conducting our morning meetings. And we saw four minutes of his company and he's very passionate about saying, "If you look at all the disruptions that have happened since the beginning of time," and he goes on with this, saying, "When the internet came, we thought everything was over. When Starbucks came to the corners, the local coffee shops went out of business." And he said, "They weren't the disruptors, what was happening is that people weren't remaining relevant. They weren't innovating. They were getting stuck in

the day-to-day." And I think the greatest opportunity and what he says is, "Look at this as a chance to tap the brakes, to look at where you are, to see how you can invent the future maybe in a different way that may be more relevant." Because I can promise you, post-coronavirus is going to be different in every way. Normal is not going to return. We are going to find new and different ways and I would say to everyone who is running a company or who is looking to bring in clients, if you're a financial advisor, use this time to think about how you are going to do it differently or in a more innovative way. In a way that is connecting, in a relationship that maybe doesn't exist and I think those are going to be the ones that will shine. But I think there's a silver lining for those that are taking the time to be thoughtful and look in a very strategic way about their business and how they can do it. And honestly--

BILL COPPEL And well beyond the scope of what used to be normal, engaging in areas that clearly would seem unrelated to their specific discipline, if you will, but are very relevant to the companies and clients that they serve.

SUSAN QUINN Yeah, I love the quote from-- I don't know who it's from, but some of the thought leaders that I follow, it's kind of like, "In the rush to return to normal, use this time to consider what parts of normal are even worth rushing back to." I've got it pinned at my desk as a reminder. I don't know that I want to rush back to a lot. I want to think about what is the right next thing.

BILL COPPEL Susan, that's a very, very powerful thought to conclude our conversation today and as I said, when I introduced you at the top of this conversation, you and I have worked together now for a number of years and you have been instrumental in helping, certainly First Clearing find its path and help it continue to articulate its value through thought leadership. And certainly, you've been a huge supporter and in many ways, helped stand The Next Frontier podcast up and get it going to where it is. So I want to take a moment to acknowledge that and thank you for all the help you've provided us. It's a real treat to have you join us and share your experience and thinking around what it really is to build a powerful brand. So thank you for being with us today.

SUSAN QUINN Bill, it is a pleasure and an honor for sure. I enjoy working with people who spend time and want to do the things that matter and certainly put you in that category. That always seeking new and better ways and continuing to grow. I've witnessed that throughout our time with First Clearing and that's the fun part. Never get stale, continue to grow, and as I say to my team, let's do what matters.

BILL COPPEL Terrific. For our listeners interested in learning more about Susan and her work, you can find links to her information in this episode's show description. We hope you enjoyed our conversation today. Please take a moment to subscribe to our podcast. And if you like what you've heard, please tell others about it. It helps people find us and ensures you never miss an episode. It's also a way to challenge you to think differently about your business and the role you play. And together, we can change the conversation. Thanks for listening. And until next time, be well.

Outro If you want to join the conversation or connect with us, please visit us at www.firstclearing.com. This content is provided for general informational purposes only. The views expressed by non-affiliated guest speakers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of First Clearing or its affiliates. First Clearing and its affiliates do not endorse any guest speakers or their companies and therefore give no assurances as to the quality of their products and services. This channel is not monitored by First Clearing. First Clearing is a trade name used by Wells Fargo Clearing Services, LLC, Member SIPC, a registered broker-dealer and non-bank affiliate of Wells Fargo & Company. Copyright 2020 Wells Fargo Clearing Services, LLC. All rights reserved. First Clearing provides correspondent services to broker-dealers and does not provide services to the general public. CAR-1121-00346