

154 TruStage Terrance Williams

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By Terrance Williams

Lisa Hochgraf 00:03

You're listening to the CUES Podcast, episode 154.

Lisa Hochgraf 00:09

Welcome to the CUES Podcast where leaders and experts discuss the top topics in credit unions today. I'm Lisa Hochgraf, senior editor at CUES.

Lisa Hochgraf 00:19

Today's guest, Terrance Williams, talks about his path to being named CEO of TruStage, a CUESolutions provider, why he chose a career in insurance, and how and why he always aims to pay what he considers his good fortune forward.

Lisa Hochgraf 00:35

In this episode of the CUES Podcast, Terrance tells a great story about how his father helped shape him into the servant leader he is today. He tells about how he knows for sure that going into insurance was the right career choice for him. And he describes the job he had along the way that has been the most formative to him as a leader.

Lisa Hochgraf 00:56

In episode 148 of the show, Deedee Myers, CEO of CUESolutions provider DDJ Meyers, said the most important thing that CEOs need to do to design the organization of the future is go on a listening tour. And that's just what Williams is doing in his early days as the CEO of TruStage, traveling a lot between the TruStage headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin, and the offices of client credit unions and industry partners across the country.

Lisa Hochgraf 01:24

In the show, Terrance talks about the opportunities for credit unions he's hearing about while on the road, and also his vision for the TruStage of the future--both what will change and what will not change while he's at the helm.

Lisa Hochgraf 01:38

I think you're going to really enjoy getting to know Terrance.

Lisa Hochgraf 01:41

So let's get started.

Lisa Hochgraf 01:45

Welcome to the show. Terrence. It's wonderful to have you here today.

Terrance Williams 01:48

Thank you so much. I am really excited about being here and really looking forward to the conversation.

Lisa Hochgraf 01:53

Gonna be great to get to know you. Let's start with a really broad question. Would you tell us about your background? And what drives you as a leader?

Terrance Williams 02:02

Wow, that is a broad question and what sounds like a simple question, but to me, it's pretty complex. Because you know, I am a believer in the fact that we are products of our environment, we are products of our experiences, and we're products of the things, the journeys that we've had in life. And for me, much of what I just described has really shaped who I am as a leader. So let me give you some perspective on what that means.

Terrance Williams 02:28

So I am a Southerner by birth. I grew up in a small town outside of Charleston, South Carolina. And I grew up with a mom who was an educator and a dad who was a construction worker. And they instilled within me, this belief that I can accomplish and do anything with certain preparation, with certain education with a discipline with perseverance, all of these kinds of things.

Terrance Williams 02:53

So I grew up in this household where this is what was poured into me as a kid. And I really think that has shaped who I am now as a man and as a leader. So my background is one that is really centered around, I talk about servant leadership a lot and the importance of that, and I believe that I'm replicating behaviors that I saw from my mom and dad. And even you know, when you're a kid, you really don't realize that you're seeing this. But when you grow into an adult, you recognize that you're seeing things that happen along the way. And my goal now was to really replicate that and to really ensure that I'm doing my part, to make a difference, just as I saw them doing their entire lives.

Lisa Hochgraf 03:35

So can you tell us a story about your parents, something they did for you that maybe at the time, you didn't realize was modeling this, but now you're like, Oh, my goodness.

Terrance Williams 03:43

Absolutely. And I've shared this story inside the walls of TruStage. My dad was the elder in the church. And so I grew up going to church every Sunday from like 9 to 2 or 9 to 3. And because of his role in our church, he actually was the one of the individuals, at least, that went to visit someone who wasn't able to get to church because of an ailment or sickness or whatever. So I literally grew up and going to church and then going to visit whoever couldn't make it to church. And my dad was the person who

would go there and deliver the communion to them and to ensure that they were okay and to check in on them.

Terrance Williams 04:21

So, again, I saw that as a kid, and I hated it when I was seven. But I recognize that he was such a pillar in the community, even though I didn't know what a pillar in the community meant then, because he was the person that everyone came to, if they needed advice about a wayward child or if they needed help around a marriage or relationship that was struggling, everyone came to Elder Terry, to talk to him to get guidance etc. So, those are the types of stories that I remember that really played this huge role in who I am as a person now.

Lisa Hochgraf 04:56

So these examples that your father, Elder Terry, and your mom, whose name I don't know yet, but I'd love to learn.

Terrance Williams 05:03

V e r a.

Lisa Hochgraf 05:05

Vera. Oh, yes, and taught you. So they would you say that drives you as a servant leader now and what has that looked like during your career?

Terrance Williams 05:14

A few things. It's really led me down this path of understanding what leadership means. I think that too often, leaders make a few mistakes that I've always tried to avoid in my career. And No. 1, you know, my dad was this leader in the community, but he never took himself too seriously. So as a leader, I try not to take myself too seriously. Or I try not to put myself in a position where others are uncomfortable approaching me or coming to me with feedback or with a perspective or with dialogue. Because I want to make sure that everyone's comfortable engaging with me, when I go get lunch, I talk to everyone in the cafeteria, regardless of their role, and regardless of what they do, and I want them to view and see me as someone that's approachable, as someone that they can talk to and engage with. And give me feedback, give me a suggestion, give me a thought ... doesn't mean we're going to do everything that comes my way. But I always want to maintain that open forum, so that people are comfortable coming to me and approaching me. So those are things that I gained from kind of watching my dad over the years as a kid growing up that I take with me to this day.

Lisa Hochgraf 06:23

Those are great connections. Thank you so much. The next thing I would like to talk about is your decision to work in insurance. Now I'm going to show a personal bias here. When people tell me that their children are going to college to be actuaries, I'm like, "Oh, man, really?" That's a lot of math. I'm a word person, right! Tell us tell us about your journey into this profession. And maybe some of the leadership experiences along the way, it says here you are recognized by Forbes as one of the world's most influential CMOs, but you are not a marketer by trade.

Terrance Williams 06:55

Oh, there's so much in that question. So let me try to start with your initial question. And then we can definitely go deeper on some of the other components there. I'll share a short story on this one to really kind of bring it home and bring it to life. In the last couple of months, I've been out and about meeting tons of people, internally and externally. One of those meetings I had a month or so ago, I met with all of the college interns that are here at TruStage. And so I probably was in a room with about 30-plus people and had another 40 virtually on the line. And I did my introductory kind of remarks about who I am, where I'm from, etc. And then I opened it up to questions from them. And one of the first questions I actually got was, "Hey, it's really unique that you chose to pursue a career in the insurance industry. As you look back on your decision from when you were 17 or 18 years old, do you still feel comfortable that you made the right choice?" And I've never gotten that question, it's pretty unique question, did I make the right choice? And I laughed, and then really tried to explain to the group, the short answer is absolutely with an exclamation point, "I made the right choice!"

Terrance Williams 08:05

But I made the right choice not for what many would be led to believe many would think that I made the right choice because of my role, or because of what I do for a living, I actually made the right choice because I believe in our industry, I believe what we do genuinely matters. When you think about the ability to transfer risk, the ability for me to live my life without the worry of being able to take care of the unexpected, without having to worry about what might happen with the loss of a loved one from a financial standpoint.

Terrance Williams 08:41

And I often say that, you know, our role when you boil it all down, because we deal in a lot of contracts and languages and a lot of legalese, but when you boil it down, our role is really to ensure that we can help rebuild lives to the degree money and caring can. That's what we do. And I would like us to talk about that more as an industry.

Terrance Williams 09:03

And one of my goals actually is to use my platform to ensure that people understand our industry a bit more around what we do and how it matters. And I believe we make a societal difference the industry as a whole. So that's why I'm pretty comfortable. I made the right decision all those years ago about pursuing a career in the insurance industry.

Lisa Hochgraf 09:24

I liked that a lot, Terrance, and I think that credit unions and a lot of insurance companies, including TruStage come from mutual routes, right? The ownership of by many. So it's not only that you're pooling, have the insurance spread the risk, but you've also joined together to make the entity in the first place.

Terrance Williams 09:40

Well said, yes. In fact, I believe one of our strengths. One of our strengths as an organization is our mutual structure. And this belief in this notion of people helping people, the ability for us to make long-term decisions that really are centered around the member, the ability to ensure that we can invest

today with the recognition that we will benefit someone tomorrow. And we will see a return, you know, the next week. Now, obviously throwing up those numbers in those timelines are illustrative. But this whole theory of investing now for the long term, but adding value for the members, there's a huge advantage in my view that we have as a mutual organization with the ability to do that. So yes, completely agree with you.

Lisa Hochgraf 10:28

Yeah. We talked about your early interest. Do you want to talk a little bit about varied leadership experiences, and how you got the marketing award without really being a marketer?

Terrance Williams 10:39

So this is an interesting story. I grew up at Nationwide Insurance. I grew up corporately, at Nationwide. So I'd been there 20 years, 20-plus years. And in most of the roles I've operated in in that company, I was what some would call an operator. So I had P&L responsibilities for a geography or for a company, and was really centered almost all of my career around leading businesses. And I was called into my boss, the CEO's office one day, for a discussion. I didn't know what it was about. And he sat me down in his office and said, "Hey, we want you to come back to Columbus." I wasn't living there at the time. "We want you to come back to Columbus, Ohio. And I want you to become the CMO of the company." And you can see the surprised look on my face, which is not the norm for me. And he said, "A little surprised by that one, huh?" And I said, "Yes, I am."

Terrance Williams 11:37

And he wanted me to come back to lead the marketing organization because he wanted someone in that role who had practical operational business experience. He wanted someone who understood a P&L, he wanted someone who knew what it means to run a business and to make investments centered around profits and losses and member satisfaction. And I had done all those things my entire career, even though I was not a classically trained marketer. So yes, stepped into that role, and had an absolute blast, pushed out some campaigns that are still underway today. And within that organization, did a lot of work with with some of the spokespersons that were at Nationwide at the time, and really enjoyed that role immensely.

Lisa Hochgraf 12:21

That's really cool, sort of the skills transferability is something we talk a lot about at CUES because of our talent development focus. Sometimes we invite people into our team meetings that wouldn't necessarily be the first people you think of, but we know, for example, we need a process person in this group. Let's invite ... Susan. And then that adds, right. And so I think that sounds like nationwide did a nice job of saying, Terrence has the skills we can surprise him, but he's gonna be able to do this.

Terrance Williams 12:50

Right. It really does come down to what you just said about ensuring that you think about inclusiveness and backgrounds and perspectives and experiences. And all of those things play a role in success. I often make the comment that the people around the leadership table, the people that I have the privilege of leading, my direct reports, I want people who have different backgrounds and perspectives and experiences because I want to hear all of the various options as we're having a dialogue around a

plan or around something that we're contemplating. I want to hear from everyone around the table. And as I started this discussion with you, our backgrounds and our journeys, and our experiences often shaped who we are. And I want to hear all of that from the various people around the table because to me, that's how you get to the best solution, by hearing those varied perspectives, and weighing all of these options to ensure that you're really meeting the customer where they are.

Lisa Hochgraf 13:47

Now I'm starting to get a feel for what you stand for. But here's a question for you. What is your personal mantra, Terrance?

Terrance Williams 13:54

Oh, goodness, my personal mantra, there are a couple of things that I live by. One of them, I've already alluded to a little, but I'll go deeper on it. And it's watching my parents and them giving back and making a difference. And even when I was too young to realize the significance of what they were doing. And you know, as I grew into an adult to recognize and see that. So watching that, it was literally just instilled within me that one should always ensure that you're making a difference, that you're paying it forward. So that's something that is really important to me. So the short answer to your question of one of my beliefs is pay it forward.

Terrance Williams 14:35

And pay it forward for me means that I should always seek to ensure that I am doing everything I can to make a difference for those around me, those behind me and even those in front of me, that I'm having an impact on them in some form or fashion. And that impact should be about making them better, about giving them some counsel, advice or thoughts that perhaps they wouldn't have gained without.

Terrance Williams 14:58

And I've shared this in inside TruStage. During one, I think it was my first week or my second week that I was sitting on a stage with Bob Trunzo and we did kind of a fireside chat. And I talked about the importance of paying it forward. And why that's so relevant, so significant for me as a person and as a leader. And I shared with them this bracelet that I wear on my arm. And this bracelet literally says pay it forward. And the reason I couldn't even tell you what year I put this on my wrist, but it's been there for many, many, many years, never comes off. And it is my daily reminder to ensure that I'm not just thinking about me. I'm not just thinking about the business and not just thinking about the things that are right in front of me. But I'm thinking about how can I make a difference? How can I pay it forward, based on the platform that I have, based on the blessings that have been bestowed upon me as a person. So pay it forward is one of the things that I talk a lot about, and it's important for me.

15:59

Wow, that's really impressive. I like that. Maybe you can share a picture of the bracelet, and we can post it on the page.

Lisa Hochgraf 16:08

So you mentioned that you spent 20 years at Nationwide, you feel like you grew up there. How and why did you make the choice to join TruStage?

Terrance Williams 16:18

This is an interesting one, because when I started talking to TruStage, it was CUNA Mutual Group back then, I was quite content where I was. I was enjoying myself. I was in a role leading various businesses outside of the property casualty space with Allstate, so I was quite content enjoying myself.

Terrance Williams 16:38

But when I started talking to TruStage, as I started peeling back the onion and learning more about the organization, a few things began to surface for me that really were meaningful and made the difference for me. First, you've heard me reference the importance of communities and giving back and making a difference. And as I started understanding then-CUNA Mutual group, their commitment to the community, what they do not just by way of writing a check, because writing a check is important. But it's also important to ensure that you're supporting groups, with thought leadership, with strategic partnerships, with having boots on the ground of employees to help with nonprofit organizations. And I started learning and hearing all of these things that CUNA Mutual group was doing in the community. So that was a big important matter from a community involvement.

Terrance Williams 17:27

The second one was the commitment to DEI. You know, diversity, equity and inclusion matter to me. And I believe that companies, corporations have a duty or responsibility to ensure that they are living into the space with actions, with prudent actions that really demonstrate their commitment in this space. And I saw that at CUNA Mutual Group, I remember going through one of the first times I went to the CUNA Mutual website, I was amazed by some of the platform positions that were on the website, and about their positioning and beliefs as it relates to DEI. So that was one of the other quick big items for me.

Terrance Williams 18:02

And then the third item that was arguably one of the most important to me was the mission of the company. So I spent my entire career really talking about the importance of financial literacy, the importance of making sure that people are prepared for the unexpected, and they're prepared for the future. So I've spent my entire career talking about those things. And there was simply a level of alignment with CUNA Mutual Group. The beliefs that I had, around the importance of financial well-being and really ensuring that there's access to everyone's everyone has access, all of those things were really embodied in the mission of TruStage. So it literally felt like there was this massive level of alignment with the company and with me personally and professionally. So that really is why I'm here. It's what led me to take the conversation further after that initial phone call quite some time ago.

Lisa Hochgraf 19:04

That's really a fantastic foundation, a fantastic place to start from, an alignment of the company mission with who you are and where you want to go. That's a fantastic place to start. So let's talk a little bit about that. We've talked about where you worked before, and what experiences you've had in the past. Right now you're packing your suitcase a lot and going out on a listening tour talking to credit unions, talking to other people in the industry. What are you hearing? What are some big themes out there right now?

Terrance Williams 19:32

There are a number of things that I'm hearing and while someone told me this when I first started or maybe right before I started that, you know, every credit union is slightly different, slightly unique. Everyone has a an approach to their market that's distinct and difference in its focus and strategy that may be some level of uniqueness. But there's some clear common threads across all of the credit unions. So what I've been hearing as I've been out and about and engaging is one thing that rises to the surface that you don't see everywhere is how credit unions really live into this cooperative spirit. And let me explain what I mean there. I come from an industry where I didn't sit down with my competitors to talk about, here are the areas that I'm focused on. Here's how I'm tackling this problem. Here's what we're thinking about as it relates to problem XYZ. So I come from an industry where we didn't do that. But yet, I've gone to meetings now where credit union CEOs are sitting right beside each other in a room talking about common issues and how they're solving it. And someone is sharing what, here's what we're doing in this space. And here's what you may wish to consider or try. So this cooperative spirit is something that's unique.

Terrance Williams 20:49

I'm not sure if we recognize how big of a deal that is. Maybe we do. But it's a significant change from what exists in many, many industries, this alignment, this helping each other, people helping people and sitting beside each other, even someone who arguably could be considered a competitor, but sitting alongside someone and helping them to move the meter because you've been there, you've done that. That's a big deal. So that one I've been super impressed with. And I've seen a lot of that.

Terrance Williams 21:19

One of the other things that I've appreciated, and I was told this before I started, you know, sometimes it's always good to validate things that you heard that you think, going into a new role. And what I've really appreciate it in hearing from credit unions is just the what I'll call the credibility that exists within TruStage in the credit union movement. So we are a significant partner, we're a significant driver of really ensuring that we're supporting the credit union movement. And what I've heard from CEOs and others within the credit union space, is that what we do matters, and that we have this responsibility to ensure that we're continuing to support the system in every way that we can to ensure a long-term viable system that really is making a difference in the communities we live in work in.

Terrance Williams 22:10

So this credibility piece is something that has been significant that I've seen across the board. And I also have appreciated. The last piece I guess I would share is just the advocacy or the partnerships. I've appreciated hearing that up front and personal from leaders about how we align our resources, how we do things together. From an advocacy standpoint, whether it be something that's going on at the federal level, or something that's happening in an individual state, how we align our resources, and all advocate for the good of the system as a whole. So all of those have been just a handful of things that I've observed or seen or heard over the last several months, that really has been inspiring to me. And it really aligns with kind of what I what was shared with me before I started in my role.

Lisa Hochgraf 22:59

That's really nice when you use the old journalism adage of if your mother so she loves you check it out. So you heard all these things about credit unions, and then you went on your listening tour and you found them to be true. And that they align with you both.

Terrance Williams 23:13

Definitely so, definitely so.

Lisa Hochgraf 23:15

Very, very cool. So based on what you've been hearing and learning so far, what opportunities do you see for credit unions?

Terrance Williams 23:22

You know, there's like most things in life are always opportunities and things to zero in on. So I'll throw out just a handful of items that are in no particular order, but just random items that I believe are opportunities for the system and things that we can do to help.

Terrance Williams 23:37

The first one is really centered around technology. And the reason why I lean into the technology piece, my belief is that member expectations, how consumers want to engage is changing rapidly. The ability for someone to pick up their phone, which is in essence a computer, to pick up their phone, and to make transactions to move money around to shift things, to buy a CD, to do things that were unheard of 15 years ago but I can do all of these at my fingertips now. So I think an opportunity is for us to continue to lean into the digital journey and ensuring that we're creating an environment that allows the member to engage however they wish to. If they wish to walk into a branch, that ability is there, but if they wish to engage at 9:30 p.m. on their phone, and to handle transactions, that they can do that as well. So technology and digital is something that I think is we'll need to continue to lean into as a system. And I think we play a role there because, you know, I say regularly that you know, we're going to continue to leverage our balance sheet to invest in technology, to invest in digital with the cause, of the goal of benefiting credit unions, of ensuring that we're doing things that will help them from a member experience standpoint. So technology and digital is the first one.

Terrance Williams 24:59

The other one that I would mention that I think is an ongoing opportunity is related to DE and I. And I mentioned this earlier that I was so proud of what I've seen from TruStage in this space. But inclusion really, really matters. And inclusion matters on several fronts. It matters based on representation. It matters based on how we're designing solutions and products. It matters based on the specific expectations that a given community may have or how they think about a certain product or solution or interaction.

Terrance Williams 25:32

And you know, I often share this story about my grandmother. When I was a kid growing up in South Carolina, we lived right next door to my grandmother, and she was someone who always believed in preparing for the future. And maybe that's why I'm a planner. And I can remember this life insurance salesperson coming to her house, literally driving over to her house, which was right next door to us. So

it was every I don't know if it's every week or every other week, but he was there often, and he was coming in. And he would always collect this small amount of money. You know, I don't remember the amount of money but he would collect \$1. And she would sign this form about this life insurance policy that she had in place, and he would collect this money from her. And I share that story, because my grandmother probably paid significant amounts more for the base life policy that she had than what she was paying. So I believe that we have an opportunity as an industry to make sure that we are doing our part to avoid any of the missteps of the past, as it relates to how we think about communities, how we think about various ethnicities, and how we think about our role as an insurer overall.

Lisa Hochgraf 26:41

So more alignment.

Terrance Williams 26:42

More alignment, for sure, is important there. You know, the other part that I didn't say, when I was talking about the technology piece, is just the importance of collaboration and partnerships. So we believe that investing in technology from a fintech standpoint remains vital to our long-term aspirations as a company and to the importance of helping to bring along and move credit unions through this space. So I, when I talk about us investing in technology and digital or us investing from a fintech standpoint, or from a startup company standpoint, we have the ability at TruStage to really partner with and invest in sort of companies that can likely add value or leverage as a benefit or an asset to a credit union. And I think it's important that we continue to find ways to bring those types of opportunities to the table, allowing credit unions to partner with them. Startup companies can move a lot faster, can do things at a different scale, in a different way that we can or maybe even the way credit unions can. The finding ways to create these entry points from a partnership standpoint really matter. And those are the kinds of things that we're going to continue to lean into. And as I think I mentioned, as I was talking about some of my background, you know, I've had the privilege of leading venture groups at another company. And the venture landscape is super important because it allows you to tap into a group of entities or companies that you likely wouldn't be able to engage with otherwise. So that's a critical part of the partnership piece for us going forward and with credit unions.

Lisa Hochgraf 28:22

indeed. So as a longtime industry editor, I've been writing about credit unions for more than 20 years. Now suddenly, there's gray hair up here. I've observed that TruStage has been involved in technology and DEI and fintech. So that's on the radar. That's out there. So what's next? These are all great things. Now you get to build from here, what's TruStage look like in the future as you lead it?

Terrance Williams 28:47

Well, it's a good question. And one, as you might imagine, I've been asked once or twice over the past month or two.

Lisa Hochgraf 28:53

I can only imagine

Terrance Williams 28:56

The way I typically answer that question is I start out by talking about what's not changing. Because, you know, during any leadership transition, there's always a level of anxiety and people are under trying to understand what's going to happen next, etc. And my belief is that let's start with what's not changing. And I've already referenced a number of these throughout this conversation in our commitment to communities is not changing. Our commitment to ensure that we are investing in startups and really leveraging our balance sheet to invest in startups. That's not changing. Our commitment to really focusing in on the venture space and our fintech strategies around how we drive partnerships. None of that's changing.

Terrance Williams 29:36

But arguably, the most important area that's not changing is our commitment to credit unions. I believe strongly in heritage and the importance of it. You know, we were founded as an organization that was meant to cater to and serve credit union members. We will continue to view our credit union partners and customers as a huge, huge part of who we are what we do and we'll always be linked to that heritage. So none of those things are changing, the commitment that we have in those spaces I've referenced now.

Terrance Williams 30:07

But what may change? I am a firm believer in not driving change for change's sake. But change to ensure that we remain relevant, change to ensure that we continue to meet members where they are. I referenced digital earlier and my phone. We have to continue to evolve our market approach, our thinking from a solution standpoint because customer expectations are changing. So the evolution that you will likely see at TruStage in the years ahead will likely be centered around us evolving to continuously ensure that we're meeting the needs of future members and customers, doing things that are super critical to, as some would say, to go where the puck is going, as opposed to where it is. And I'm a huge believer in that from a strategic standpoint. So those are some of the things that you'll likely see and hear from us in the years ahead.

Lisa Hochgraf 31:06

Very good. Thank you so much, Terrance. You've been very generous with your time today. Before we close up the show, I'd like to give you an opportunity to tell me what question I should have asked. What is the question that I didn't ask you today that you would like to answer for the listeners?

Terrance Williams 31:20

That's a really good question. Um, well, you didn't ask me what role from my past that shaped who I am or influenced my style, you didn't ask that? Would you like to ask me that?

Lisa Hochgraf 31:31

What what role from your past most influenced your style? That's a great question. I'm interested in the answer to this.

Terrance Williams 31:41

I often share this example and this story about the importance of leadership. I'm a student of leadership, and I believe strongly in it. And I go back to one of my first roles as a general manager. So I

became had responsibility for profit and loss responsibility for a region, and it was actually the New England region with another company. And I had operated in all of these functional areas. I'd lead claims, underwriting, sales, etc. And now all of a sudden, I'm the person in charge. All those areas report to me.

Terrance Williams 32:11

So my first natural instinct was to go to these leaders who led claims, who led underwriting lead sales. And basically, while I didn't use these words, basically what I was saying was, "Just do what I did when I did your job." Even though I use different words, that's really what I was doing, saying. "Claims leader, if you do this, you'll be successful, because that's what I did. So that's what's necessary for you to be successful." And I stubbed my toe, I wasn't able to connect with these leaders the way I really should have in my first general management role.

Terrance Williams 32:43

The lesson that I learned was leadership is not about me telling you how to get from A to B. Leadership is about me crafting a vision that you can believe in, that you can buy into, that you understand your responsibility, and how we're gonna get to B, but I'm not painting the picture. I'm not declaring the pathway. But I'm setting the vision for the organization or for the group, you know.

Terrance Williams 33:10

So it was a rocky experience for me to learn that. But fortunately for me, in assignments, after that, I really learned that it's really about setting the vision. It's really about inspiring the masses and getting everyone to believe and align around what you're trying to accomplish. And creating that North Star, that North Star that allows everyone to see the future ahead. So I often talk about that role in that job as it was one of the experiences that really helped me to kind of see the importance of leadership as a whole

Lisa Hochgraf 33:40

Leadership as a vision-setting exercise so the masses get inspired to create their own pathways to get there and maybe even bring some newness and freshness to it as it goes.

Terrance Williams 33:50

Exactly, exactly. If I'm driving the the whole scene, then you know, that's not that doesn't work. That doesn't work for you and me to do that as a leader. Because to the point earlier, you want perspectives from around the table.

Lisa Hochgraf 34:02

Very inspiring, Terrance. Thank you again for being on the show today.

Terrance Williams 34:05

Thank you so much for the opportunity. I've really enjoyed the dialogue and the conversation, and you've made this completely painless, which I sincerely appreciate. So thank you.

Lisa Hochgraf 34:15

My pleasure.

Lisa Hochgraf 34:17

I would like to thank you, our listeners for taking time out of your busy schedules to listen to today's episode of the CUES Podcast, and many thanks to Terrance for sharing his perspectives on leadership.

Lisa Hochgraf 34:29

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Lisa Hochgraf 34:38

Find a transcript of this episode at [cumanagement.com/podcast 154](https://cumanagement.com/podcast/154). You can also find more great credit union-specific content at [CU management.com](https://CUmanagement.com).

Lisa Hochgraf 34:51

Thanks again for listening today.

Lisa Hochgraf 34:53

CUES is an international credit union association that champions and delivers effective talent development solutions for executives, staff and boards to drive organizational success.