

JANUARY 2026

EDITION #1

Forge

A LEADERSHIP THOUGHT
MAGAZINE

INAGURAL EDITION

"WHEN SMALL
BUSINESSES TEAM UP
,EVERYBODY WINS"!

SHAPING LEADERSHIP CRAFTING IMPACT

ARTICLES THAT SERVE AS A BLUEPRINT FOR BUSINESS LEADERS
SEEKING TO BUILD RESILIENT ORGANIZATIONS CAPABLE OF THRIVING IN
DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENTS.

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Michon, Lisa, and
Danielle
November 2025

Joy Thru Tears Gala

Editors Notes

WELCOME TO FORGE MAGAZINE

Shaping leadership.

Crafting impact.



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Leadership, Engagement, Learning,
Recovery.



Danielle Lord, PhD | Principal
Archetype Learning Solutions

"Forge," initially I was uncertain. Not believing that Forge could be a compelling name for a leadership magazine. But the longer I thought about it, the more I liked it. Consider what comes to mind when we think of forge:

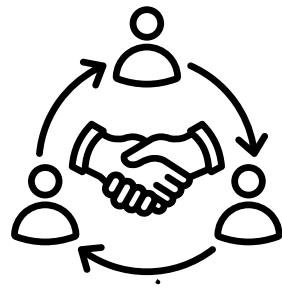
1. To move forward
2. To make or shape (a metal object) by heating it in a fire or furnace
3. To create something strong, enduring, or successful
4. produce an imitation of a document, signature, banknote, or work of art

When I think about the work of leadership, employee engagement, helping organizations learn, recovery all of these things resonate. We are often called upon to move forward, sometimes in the face of uncertainty, our greatest accomplishments are often done in the heat of the moment with lasting results, and even imitating the work of best practices can yield a great benefit.

Its a very active word: it's bold, energetic, and connects to the larger themes of shaping, building, and transforming organizations to do their best work through humans, our greatest assets. The word carries connotations of craftsmanship, innovation, and leadership.

"Forge" especially aligns with our industry focus and aspirational tone, making it an ideal anchor for which to begin.

Stop competing. Start collaborating!



The best part of being a business owner...

I love to collaborate with other small business. I find that through conversation, the creativity soars, its fun – making way for healthy, happy brain endorphins, and strengthens the small business community through relationships. Unfortunately, not everyone agrees.

When small businesses team up, everybody wins!

Business-to-business collaboration is one of the most reliable growth levers small companies overlook, and avoiding it quietly limits revenue, innovation, and resilience. When small businesses deliberately choose partnership over isolation, they gain capabilities that would be too slow or expensive to build alone.

Why collaboration beats competition

Many small businesses assume that collaboration means “losing” customers or control, when it actually expands what each firm can offer.

Partners combine complementary strengths, products, services, or expertise, to create solutions that none could deliver alone. In a crowded market, this kind of combined value is often what differentiates you from both larger competitors and solo players.

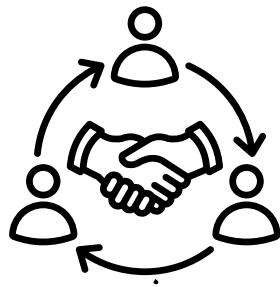
COLLABORATION:
ENTHUSIASTICALLY
PARTNERING TO
SUPPORT OTHERS!

Core benefits for small businesses

- Access to new customers and markets through each other’s networks, often faster and cheaper than traditional marketing.
- Shared costs and risks for things like marketing campaigns, events, product development, or technology investments.
- Stronger brand credibility from being seen alongside trusted partners, which builds confidence with hesitant buyers.

Stop competing. Start collaborating!

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Fuel for innovation and problem-solving

Collaboration brings diverse perspectives to the same business challenge, which consistently leads to more creative solutions. Small businesses that co-create offerings or share lessons learned avoid “reinventing the wheel” and shorten the path from idea to market. This cross-pollination also improves processes behind the scenes, how work gets done, not just what gets sold.

Resilience in a volatile economy

Partners can help each other weather downturns by referring work, bundling services, or bidding jointly on contracts that would be too large to tackle alone. Collaboration also spreads risk across multiple revenue streams and relationships, so one lost client or disrupted supply line is less likely to be catastrophic. In uncertain times, a trusted network of other business owners functions like an informal safety net and early-warning system.

A mindset shift for small business owners

For small businesses, the real shift is from scarcity thinking (“If you win, I lose”) to ecosystem thinking (“If we grow the pie, we all win”). The question moves from “How do I protect my slice?” to “Who could I partner with to create something better for our shared customers?”. In that ecosystem, collaboration stops being a nice-to-have and becomes a strategic, everyday way of doing business.

‘Ready for collaboration in 2026? Here are some fun ideas and we’d love to hear from you!

Choose one collaboration experiment to try in the next 30 days, then tell us what happened so we can feature your story in a future issue.

- Email us one local business you’d love to collaborate with and why, we could collaborate on how to make a great partnership.
- Host a 30-minute ‘coffee chat’ with another business owner this month and ask only one question: ‘How could we help each other grow?’
- Identify one part of your business that feels stuck and ask another business owner how they’ve solved something similar.
- Share your best (or worst) collaboration experience with us, your lessons learned could help another small business avoid a costly mistake.

Care for the caregivers: A collection to empower caregivers with support



Care
Partners
Project



Joy Thru Tears
Foundation



We call ourselves the *Care Crew*. Four women with businesses dedicated to helping, supporting, and caring for the caregiver.

- Lisa Schultz, creator of the Care Partners Project, a journal of support for caregivers
- Danielle Lord, PhD and Michon Garemani, co-founders of COMPASS
- Louise Braun Frank, Founder of Joy Thru Tears Foundation

We are happy to be collaborative partners and thrilled to have Joy Thru Tears and the Care Partners Project as COMPASS sponsors.



COMPASSION

*Caregivers are the quiet hero's
holding families and
communities together.*

What can Archetype Learning Solutions do for my business?

Its in our name!

Archetype: something unique, like your business,

Learning: adult learning theory and sound design,

Solutions: an offering as unique as your organization.

Archetype Learning Solutions is best described as a dynamic, multidisciplinary catalyst for organizational transformation, one that integrates advanced leadership development, organizational learning, and human-centered change across complex environments.

Holistic Organizational Learning & Development

ALS operates as more than a consulting firm; it serves as both the architect and facilitator of cultures where organizations themselves are viewed as living systems capable of continuous learning and adaptation. This approach blends the science of organizational development with the art of human connection, while advancing individual and collective potential.

Distinctive Attributes

Helping organizations improve collaboration through cultural enhancement, reduction in organizational silo's, and psychological safety to enhance innovation.

- Human dynamics focus: ALS recognizes that organizations don't just "do" work, they learn, evolve, and embody collective intelligence. Solutions are co-created, never one-size-fits-all, making ALS stand out in a crowded market of transactional consulting.
- Multi-sector thought leadership: By unifying employee engagement, first responder support, and leadership innovation, ALS is at the forefront of shaping healthier, high-performing workplace ecosystems in healthcare, industry, and beyond.
- Research-Rooted, Practitioner-Led: Every tool, curricula, and engagement is grounded in research and proven adult learning principles, ensuring interventions have depth, rigor, and real-world resonance.



Archetype Learning Solutions is a multi-division catalyst for organizational growth and resilience. By uniting research-based leadership development, tailored industry mentorship, and wellness-driven programs across dynamic sectors, we empower organizations to learn, adapt, and excel.

With specialized divisions like The Fog (industry mentoring), HelixMD (physician leadership and wellness), and COMPASS (caregiver and first responder support), combined with a great deal of collaboration, we redefine what's possible when organizations and their people evolve and work together.

What can Archetype Learning Solutions do for my business?



How does Organizational development differ from traditional HR?

Most businesses believe they need fractional HR support. What they really need is fractional OD support.

HR is a necessary business function, like accounting. These are the operational architects of your business. Both HR and accounting are essential for creating the systems and frameworks that keep an organization running smoothly. They focus on precision, compliance, and operational efficiency. HR -

- Develops policies for hiring, onboarding, performance management, and employee relations.
- Ensures compliance with labor laws and regulations.
- Manages employee benefits and payroll systems,
- Focuses on maintaining a stable workforce by establishing clear processes for managing people.

HR is the detail-oriented discipline focused on creating order, mitigating risk, and ensuring the organization operates within established guidelines.

Organizational Development (OD) is a bit more like finance. OD takes a broader perspective, focusing on long-term goals, strategy, and adaptability in a dynamic and complex environment:

- Analyzes organizational culture, structure, and processes to identify areas for improvement.
- Designs strategies for change management, leadership development, and team dynamics.
- Focuses on aligning people with business goals to foster innovation and adaptability.
- Guides organizations through transformational initiatives that improve resilience in a changing market.

OD operates at a strategic level. We focus on ensuring the organization is positioned for future success by anticipating challenges, seizing opportunities, and aligning resources.

An HR /OD Comparison

Comparison and contrast of Human Resources & Organizational Development structures using finance and accounting for evaluation				
Aspect	Human Resources (HR)	Accounting	Organizational Development (OD)	Finance
Focus	People policy	Financial policy	People-centered strategy	Financial strategy
Scope	Operational	Operational	Strategic	Strategic
Time frame	Short to mid-term	Short to mid-term	Long-term	Long-term
Primary goals	HR accuracy, compliance, and liability management	Financial accuracy and compliance	Organizational adaptability & innovation; Employee engagement & retention	Profitability and growth
Approach	Tactical	Tactical	Transformational	Transformational



ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

With employee engagement reaching the lowest levels since recording results, I took my years of experience with employee engagement to a new direction...

Engaging your Employees: 12 heart-centered strategies is my book that outlines 12 ways that employers, managers, leaders, and even employees can engage through easy to use strategies. Our strategy is simple: engage everyone, everyday through quality, daily interactions.

Each month we'll focus on one of the 12 strategies to help you recharge your employees through great engagement.

...best of all, its free!

Our January strategy (strategy #8) is Gratitude

How does gratitude support employee engagement?

1. Dramatically Increases Engagement and Motivation
Employees who receive regular recognition and appreciation are up to eight times more engaged than those who do not. When leaders express gratitude, 81% of employees say they are motivated to work harder, and 70% would feel better about themselves if their boss were more grateful.

2. Enhances Retention and Reduces Turnover

Employees who feel appreciated are significantly more likely to stay with their organization—53% say they'd stay longer if their boss showed more appreciation, while 66% would consider leaving if they felt unappreciated. Gratitude is a key driver of loyalty and reduces costly voluntary turnover.

And so much more! Gratitude not only benefits your employees, people who share gratitude benefit as well.

• In a randomized trial of a single gratitude letter writing exercise among health care workers, participants showed significant improvement at one week in emotional exhaustion (a core burnout domain), happiness, and work-life balance compared with baseline.

Never underestimate the creativity of a disengaged team member!

Announcing...HelixMD!

Leadership support for aspiring and recovering physician leaders

We have been sitting with something for a long time. With the stories physicians tell us after long days. With the silence that follows promotions that were meant to feel like progress. With the weight leaders carry when their clinical identity, values, and responsibilities begin to pull in different directions. And we want you to know, something is coming. Not a quick fix. Not another leadership model that ignores the emotional reality of medicine. Not a resilience message that asks you to endure what should be redesigned.

What's coming is rooted in years of research, reflection, and lived experience — and it starts with one truth: Physician leadership fatigue is not a personal weakness. It is a system signal. A signal that roles are unclear. That expectations are misaligned. Those values are under strain. That leaders are being asked to absorb pressure without the structures needed to sustain them.

HelixMD



Over the past several weeks, we've been quietly preparing something designed to meet physician leaders exactly where they are, not where they're expected to be.

It will help you:

- Make sense of the fatigue you may be feeling
- Understand how leadership stress is showing up for you
- Reconnect with the values and identity that brought you into medicine
- Begin a recovery process that doesn't ask you to step away from leadership but to lead differently

We're not ready to share everything just yet. But we wanted you to be the first to know: This work is for you. And it's coming soon. If leadership has felt heavier than it should... If you've been searching for language that finally fits your experience...

If you've been waiting for support that doesn't ask you to explain your world... Stay close. We're building this carefully and intentionally because physician leaders deserve nothing less.

Being a physician was a life long dream, you could say it's in your DNA. At the intersection of clinician and leader is HelixMD. Preparing future physicians for leadership roles, helping existing physician leaders navigate leadership fatigue. Get back to your roots with our strategies to help you transition from the clinic to the c-suite.

Physician is in your DNA: don't let leadership fatigue derail your career evolution



COMPASSION

'January often arrives with loud messages about resolutions and reinvention. But I believe new beginnings don't have to be rushed or rigid. They can be soft. Spacious. Intentional.

A new year is an open field of possibility, an invitation to begin again, not from obligation, but from awareness. This month, I invite you to move gently into 2026, listening for what feels true and nourishing for you.

Let this be a beginning guided by curiosity, compassion, and choice.

*Mindfully yours,
~Anika*



The best way to care for others is to care for yourself!



Our COMPASS Mindfulness coach: Anika Kilx

Anika's Monthly Mindful Practice Setting Intentions (Not Resolutions)

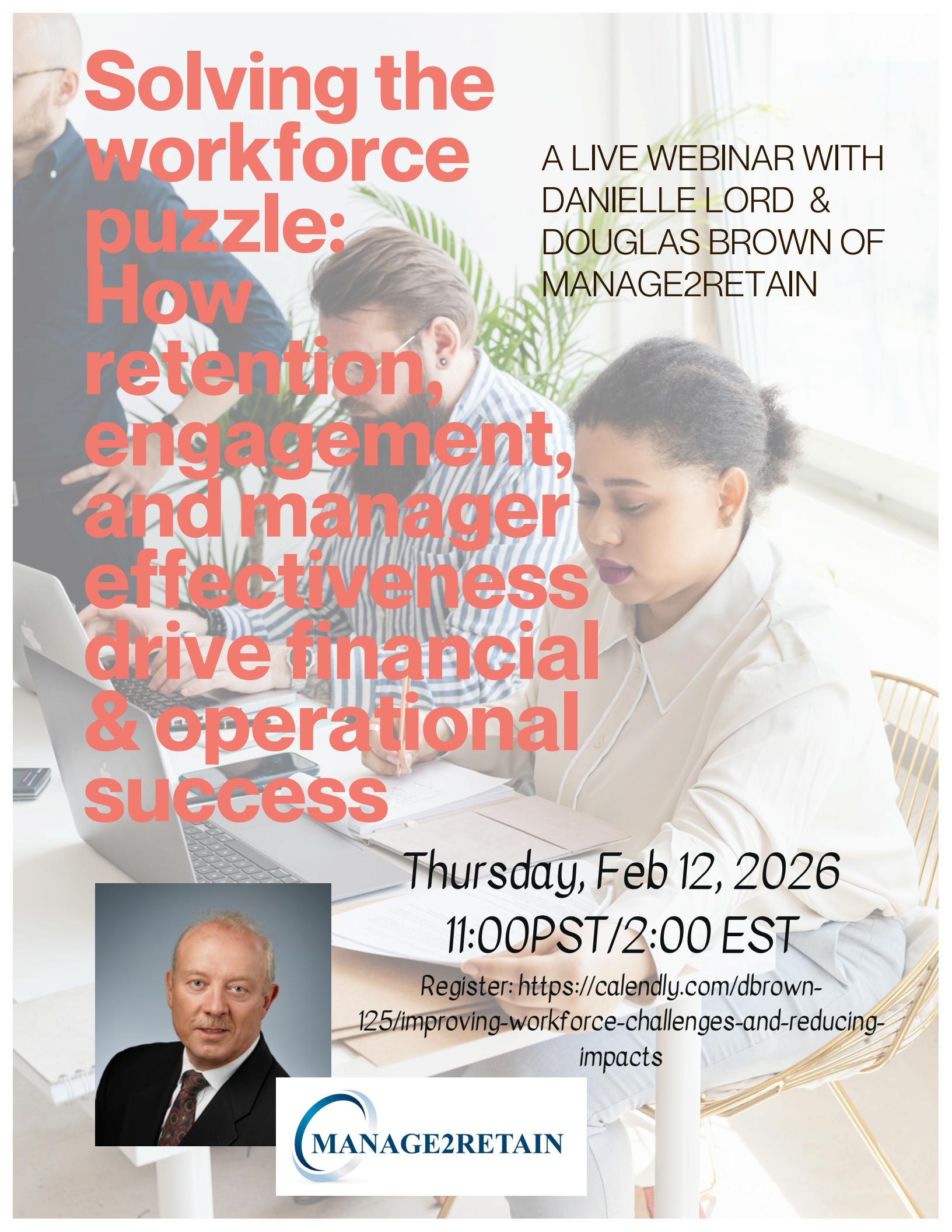
Tip: Write down your thoughts and keep it visible as a reminder.

Try This Practice:

- Find a quiet moment and take a few grounding breaths.
- Ask yourself:
 - How do I want to feel this year?
 - What quality do I want to bring into my life?
- Choose one word or phrase (peace, vitality, presence, courage).
- Place a hand on your heart and repeat it silently.
- Let this intention guide your choices—without judgment.

Connect with Anika:

<https://www.halsacoaching.com/book-online>



Solving the workforce puzzle: How retention, engagement, and manager effectiveness drive financial & operational success

A LIVE WEBINAR WITH
DANIELLE LORD &
DOUGLAS BROWN OF
MANAGE2RETAIN

Thursday, Feb 12, 2026
11:00PST/2:00 EST

Register: <https://calendly.com/dbrown-125/improving-workforce-challenges-and-reducing-impacts>



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We merge research and business blending
the art and science of leadership and
bringing your business cutting edge
solutions.