



Season 4, Episode 9, “Nothing but Volatility,” April 9, 2024

Lauren Kriegler: I understood that this was going to be a really important moment for me in my career, especially as a new operational leader. I took a lot of time to think about “What are we doing?”—not just to look forward, but to look around the corner. So one of the things I often say to my team is: We don’t need to just be looking at the car right in front of us and slamming on the brakes. Pretty much anybody can do that. What we really need to be doing is looking two lanes over and the car, two cars ahead. And what are they up to?

Kurt Greenbaum: From Olin Business School at Washington University in St. Louis, I’m Kurt Greenbaum, and this is On Principle. Everyone’s experienced those moments when the steady drumbeat of work is disrupted by a seemingly unending series of mishaps, crises or unexpected challenges. That’s what today’s episode of On Principle is about. But the twist? Our guest today was faced with such a moment just months after taking on her first operational role for a major airline. She took on that role after absolutely crushing a massive project for the company. In today’s episode, we’ll look at the differences between project-oriented leadership and operational leadership, and what today’s guest needed to do to make that transition—and confront the summer from hell.

Lauren Kriegler: My name is Lauren Krieger. I am the director of fuel for Alaska Airlines.

Kurt Greenbaum: And what does that mean? Tell us a little bit about that role.

Lauren Kriegler: So I’m responsible for the end-to-end fuel program for Alaska Airlines. And so that really means ... my team oversees the supply, the sourcing, the inventory and the forecasting and the overall financial performance of fuel. We also support and oversee the operational performance of fuel. So when you look out the window of your aircraft and you see a fueller out there hooked up to the wing, my team also supports all of our business partners who fuel across the airline.

Kurt Greenbaum: Right off the bat, I came to understand that in most cases, airlines don’t maintain their own cache of fuel at the airport. At most airports, or as Lauren put it, stations, the airlines commingle their fuel supplies, and a consortium operates the fueling infrastructure. To use the terms Lauren used, the airlines will “nominate” their own inventory and supply. In other words, negotiate cost and volume based on their anticipated need. But the consortium oversees the actual receipt and distribution of the fuel. But before Lauren ever got involved with managing fuel, she led a yearslong project to overhaul the uniforms for every Alaska Airlines employee. And what does that mean? The uniform program?

Lauren Kriegler: Yes. Very fair question. So we supply uniforms to our 20,000-plus frontline employees. So that's everyone from maintenance technicians to in-flight crews. So flight attendants and pilots. And we also support our customer service agents. Essentially, whether you're working ... in the belly of an aircraft or on the flight deck, we provide uniforms. And we support folks who might be very new in their career, early stage in life, maybe in their 20s, all the way to a later stage in their life. We do uniforms from a 00 to a 26. So it's a really diverse program. Also supporting someone who might be in Anchorage or Nome, Alaska, or working down on the ramp in Costa Rica. So the program really needs to support a very diverse population and a very diverse group of needs. I think of them as being performance pieces. But back to your actual question. So as part of leading a uniform program, you have to really make sure that you have—it's really inventory. It's forecasting, it's distribution. We partner very, very closely with our labor groups. We are a union shop at Alaska Airlines and Horizon Air. And we actually have different labor groups across both those divisions who work really closely with your labor groups to make sure that you're hearing the perspective, the needs and the voice of the folks who you're really meant to be supporting.

Kurt Greenbaum: So now it's time to set the stage for a transition in Lauren's career. It's springtime in 2020. The uniform program rolled out to great success. Yes, even during the early stages of the pandemic. The program was in a good spot with strong leadership, solid teams supporting the program. And at that point, Lauren was starting to think about what was next.

Lauren Kriegler: So was having a tie-in with my boss, and we just kind of got through some of the regular stuff. It seemed like a pretty normal tie-in, like we had done every week for multiple years. And all of a sudden, she raises the idea that she'd like me to consider moving to the director of fuel position.

Kurt Greenbaum: And by the way, you're ... we're in the pandemic. You're in your home office at this point, right?

Lauren Kriegler: We're in the thick of the pandemic. And while I'd say airlines certainly continue to go in, I did have two young kids at the time. And so while I was working from home that day and I ... so I [was] always sort of on the verge of being interrupted by something, some sort of event. And they were younger at the time. And so I quickly said, "Oh, can you hold on one quick moment?" And I scribble on a Post-It note: "I'm on an important call. Do not come in." And I stuck it on the door. So yes, that was the Post-It note that sort of changed the trajectory of my next career move.

Kurt Greenbaum: Yeah. So tell me about that. Where did that conversation go?

Lauren Kriegler: She shared with me that this role was open, that she'd really like for me to consider it. We talked through some of the details, and another piece of it

was the recommendation that someone else who had been on my team for several years—a really strong leader on my team, actually, we work very well together—would also be moving over onto that team. And she had two roles envisioned where ... we would both be moving in, if you will.

Kurt Greenbaum: One of the things that's interesting about our conversation earlier about this transition, that you were talking about, was you've consistently talked about the uniform project as kind of a supply chain job, a lot of tentacles reaching across different departments and divisions and stakeholders and whatnot. But this is a very different type of job. Can you talk about why? I think you said this would be your first operational position.

Lauren Kriegler: Yeah. So when we had that conversation, I was really honest about the fact that—and which she, of course, knew; she knows my history—and I have no experience in this area. And I did want to make sure that I had the support to do it, and that there was going to be an understanding that there was going to be a lot that I didn't know, and that there was going to be a very steep learning curve. I do have very strong supply chain experience, and as you noted, it includes, you know, visiting factories and getting down to the true supply chain and distribution inventory forecasting. I did not have an operational background. I had not spent a ton of time out there on the ramp, so to speak. I had never fueled an aircraft and this was going to be new. And so one of the things that we talked about was, Is there support for me to really move into this role and for the steep learning curve that's going to come alongside with it? I would be honest with you and say I'm still learning, which I think in any role and especially in the aviation industry, it is so complex that I am learning something new every single day, which I personally love.

But I did move into that role—I think it was right around July—and I, you know, I did get sort of a Fuel 101, if you will, in advance of moving into that role. And I also spoke to leaders who maybe didn't touch fuel, but who had shifted from a more, I'll call it, true back-office or financial role and moved into a more operational role. And I really wanted their perspective on how do they navigate that transition, how do they navigate moving into a leadership role where they didn't have a lot of background? And just look for some really honest feedback. And then with the folks that I was looking to build relationships with, I was honest about what was going to be a learning curve for me, and I shared a little bit more about my background, because not everybody would have known that. We are a larger organization. And so I wanted to be honest, but—These are the skills I believe I'm bringing to the table, but these are the things where I'm going to need some support. And I really worked hard to open the door to say I don't know everything. And in fact, in many cases, I don't know what I don't know. So I do want you to feel completely comfortable coming to me and sharing concerns, feedback or issues, because that's the only way our team will get better.

Kurt Greenbaum: Lauren makes the shift to director of fuel during those early months of the pandemic in June of 2020. And as she mentioned, she's working

double time to climb that learning curve. Skip ahead about 11 months. It's May of 2021. Americans have been getting the COVID-19 vaccine for a few months now. Pent-up demand among travelers is bringing back air travel in a big way. Then, a cryptic text message began what Lauren referred to as the summer from hell.

Lauren Kriegler: It was Saturday morning of Mother's Day weekend. I had gone out for what I thought would be a very quick walk, and I quickly looked at my email, and I have a calendar invite to attend a meeting within 30 minutes. So I zoomed back to my house. I had understood what was happening in the industry, and what was happening was that the Colonial Pipeline had been shut down due to a cyberattack. And I quickly ... I understood that this was going to have a meaningful impact on our operations. So we had already, behind the scenes, started to do some work operationally and from a supply perspective to prepare, but it very quickly became clear how significant the scale and scope of this was going to be. Summer of 2021 ended up being one challenge after the next. Demand increased very rapidly. We ended up heading into a summer—I don't know if everyone recalls—of extreme weather. We also had a pretty significant fire season.

And all of those stressors, if you will, increase the stress on the supply system. And fuel is ultimately supply and inventory. And functionally, we ended up having supply shortages in many different locations that we were quickly having to navigate and manage on what felt like an almost weekly basis. When we have wildfires, often the resources are diverted to support the wildfires, which is, of course, the right thing to do, and we support that. That does still constrain our resources. I understood that this was going to be a really important moment for me in my career, especially as a new operational leader. And I took a lot of time to think about "What are we doing?"—not just to look forward, but to look around the corner. So one of the things I often say to my team is we don't need to just be looking at the car right in front of us and slamming on the brakes. Pretty much anybody can do that. What we really need to be doing is looking two lanes over and the car, two cars ahead, and what are they up to?

It was a really tough summer, and I'll take a really quick step back to cover a piece that I think is important leading into the summer was ... so we start working on this plan and on that Saturday evening. And late that night, we determined a time to bring in our operational leadership, and I had this "a-ha!" moment that how I led this meeting, how I delivered upon this plan, was really going to shape my operational future at Alaska and sort of really change the trajectory of my career—in that if I was able to do this well, I would be seen more as an operational leader. Each week, it felt as though we were putting in multiple different contingency plans to make sure that we were ready for the unplanned and unanticipated. And ultimately what we were borrowing from and iterating and improving on each week, to be quite honest, was the playbook we set in place from that initial Colonial Pipeline event.

Kurt Greenbaum: Can you elaborate on that a little bit? I mean, did you really feel like you actually walked out of the Colonial Pipeline disaster with a playbook?

Lauren Kriegler: We absolutely walked out with how we handled it, what we would have done differently. So one of things that we do quite a bit on my team is lessons learned. And I'm a huge fan of that. And it also ... what I also do is I invite other leaders in to come in and help us. Because if we're doing it just amongst ourselves, you might risk a little bit of tunnel vision. And also it is our decision, so it's hard for us maybe to say why we didn't like it or why it didn't go well. I would say we've gotten better at it, but we invite other leaders in. So we look to what we did; we reexamine it. We did actually do some documentation of it, and then we asked for feedback. And then it's never going to be the same exact issue week after week. But there are always some tenets that you can rely on, and sort of fundamental issues like, well, we did this, so let's kind of ... how did we do this well and what can we do better, and how can we support this issue with that?

Kurt Greenbaum: When we talked, Lauren spoke about how important it had been to her for her entire career to build relationships with colleagues across different departments and roles. That was critical during the uniform project, for example, when she was working across multiple divisions, partnering with different groups. And she also learned that in these roles, working in these partnerships means you're never really going to be able to make everybody happy. She called that a hard lesson, a lesson that thickened up her skin, but it never deterred her from prioritizing those strong relationships in her fuel role and previously on the uniform project.

Lauren Kriegler: And so what that means is, when you're making difficult decisions, I had a level of trust that I was ... it was coming from a good place and working to do the best for our teams and for our program. So that was one. Those are two things, I would say, is a fresh perspective, really strong relationship building. And then some of the tactical skills really related to inventory retail forecasting. And I understood the garment supply chain. One of the big takeaways for me, in addition to what I brought, was leading is just as much about learning and listening as it is about establishing and setting the tone and direction.

And that program, when we launched it, absolutely, I can say with clear confidence, would not have been as successful as it was if we didn't have really diverse perspectives informing our direction at multiple points. So I had a counterpart in marketing, and there is this healthy tension that exists between those two departments. And that was fundamentally a great thing, because when I might pull a little bit on the inventory and finance side, they might push a little bit on the design side and ultimately reach a much better place. And the same goes for getting feedback from the operational groups. The design that we envisioned in some cases wasn't always going to be feasible for our frontline staff, given the needs that they have in the different climates they operate in. It might be down to the storage on the aircraft. The coat that we envision just might not fit in the cabinet. So capturing diverse perspectives and being willing to say I don't always know everything was one of the most important takeaways in sort of saying, "This is where I think we should go. Thoughts? Feedback?"

Sergio Chayet: Every day we are surrounded by processes, and we may not even know it. Right? So, our daily lives. And whether you're in a business or you're, you know, in your job or in your daily lives, everything is either a process or a project. The difference is that a project has a beginning and an end, right? So we all do projects in our lives. You plan a wedding. So from beginning to end until you're married, that's the end of that project. But everyday—so, something as mundane as, you know, getting groceries, there's a long supply chain behind that. And there's a lot of people making, trying to make very difficult decisions to make sure that your groceries arrive in a timely manner, they're fresh and that everybody along the supply chain is going to be profitable because otherwise they wouldn't be in business.

Kurt Greenbaum: That's my colleague at WashU Olin, Sergio Chayet. He's a professor of supply chain, operations and technology for the school whose teaching on these topics, as well as his understanding and his lectures on project management, are well known around the school. In fact, since he started at WashU in 2005, students have recognized him at least 11 times with Olin's highest teaching honor. Help me out. Supply chain management, I think I understand what that means. Is that distinct from operations or are they related?

Sergio Chayet: So that's a good question. So the terminology has evolved. So when I started in this field it was operations management, which is basically taking care of processes. And then supply chain became popular. So the difference, I would say, is supply chain looks ... how does your organization link, or interact with the links that they have with partners, right? So upstream you have suppliers; downstream you have customers. And that is very important. So supply chain is more looking outward. How do you interact with your partners? And operations is typically looking, more and more, looking inward. How do you manage your internal processes? So you can view it both ways. You can say supply chain is part of operations. We're just looking at a macro level. Or you can say, well, supply chain is more general, and operations, you're just looking at, you know, something more particular to what you're doing internally. But they're both, you know, very interlinked.

Kurt Greenbaum: Let's turn our attention to Lauren's story. And I know you had a chance to hear some of that. What were some of the, kind of, biggest takeaways for you as you saw her story?

Sergio Chayet: So there's several. So one is that she spoke about transitioning from a project-oriented to a process-oriented job. And it's interesting. So both are things that we do as part of a job, whether in business or anywhere else. So project is something that you begin and end, and it has a clear end. The challenges to manage a project are usually more because there's a lot of visibility, there's a lot of uncertainty. So projects usually last a long time. So during your career you don't get to do as many projects, if you do projects that last several years. And usually

projects are used to innovate, to create something new. Radical change. So many times parts of the project are kind of uncharted waters and, you know, there's a lot of uncertainty. But on the other hand, processes are highly important because processes are what makes systems run right.

So when we go back and think about an airline—so Lauren is in charge of fuel, and she's been in charge of several things. Right? And we'll talk about those as well. But fuel is essential—right? of course—for any plane, to fly in addition to all of the other, kind of things, that any plane ... that a plane needs to fly, like oil and maintenance, et cetera. Fuel. Highly expensive, so they need to forecast how much fuel they're going to need. And you might say, "Well, it's easy. They already know the routes." Well, no, there's other factors such as wind and weather. And they may have to take an alternative route. And there's also weight. So sometimes you may be bumped from a flight because they say it's weight restricted. So the captain may decide that, you know, ... he doesn't want to fly with such a heavy plane. There's also cargo, depending on the wind conditions and weather conditions. Fuel also is massive in terms of weight. So some cargo airlines, for instance, they make a stop to refuel because it's cheaper to make the stop and carry less fuel than to make the long-haul flight and pay for carrying the fuel. Right? Another interesting part she talked about is, you know, how fuel is kept at the airports, right? So she talked about this consortium in which, they keep fuel in a single—in a reservoir or some kind of shared reservoirs at the airport. And every airline is responsible for buying and supplying the fuel.

Kurt Greenbaum: Sergio talked about the various benefits airlines get from the consortium arrangement. Safety, for one thing: every airline isn't managing its own separate cache of fuel. But this idea of inventory pooling can also help the airlines account for fluctuations in uncertain demand. If flights arrive sooner or later than expected, thanks to weather or mechanical problems, for example, some of those fluctuations may cancel each other out. The responsibility for that kind of operational challenge is much different from Lauren's role in the uniform redesign project. Well, let's talk about that. ... is there anything in that particular story that sort of stood out for you?

Sergio Chayet: Yeah. So. Well, number one is like, people don't think about those things, right? So when you take a flight, you just, you know, you look at the crew, you're, whatever, you're worried about your time of departure, time of arrival and didn't get an OK seat. So think about it. An airline has tens of thousands of employees, right? I think she mentioned Alaska has 20,000. All the bigger airlines like United and American probably are in the 50 ... 50 to 60,000. And everybody needs a uniform. They're different. Right? So the agents at the gate, the flight attendants, the pilots, the people at the ramp. So you might say, OK, so what is more difficult, to forecast demand? Let's say if I'm a retail store, I'm, whatever, Abercrombie and Fitch or whatever retail store. So how do I forecast demand for my customers? I don't know. I don't know when customers are going to buy. And you might say, Well, it's easier to forecast demand for uniforms because I know how

many employees I have. I know how many uniforms they may go through a career or how frequently they need to change their uniforms, and so on. However, [the] problem is that there's many sizes. There's many styles. And employees may gain weight, may lose weight, may be fired, may be hired. So it's not that simple, right? So I've heard stories from people who work in the airlines where there's shortages of uniforms. So they encourage them to actually swap uniforms that they no longer fit to see if other people can use, you know, kind of like a used uniform. Right? So the big joke is that whenever they run out of small-size uniforms, they do a staff appreciation day and they serve doughnuts.

Kurt Greenbaum: So Lauren also spoke about the transition that she made when she finished with that project. She was almost immediately given the opportunity to move into her first operational role at the airline. And I wonder if you can talk about that. What did you hear in her story about making that transition? And the other part of my question is, are those different muscles? Are they different muscles running a project versus an operation?

Sergio Chayet: Yeah, for the most part, I would say they are. Of course, there's things that are common. Right? So in both you're going to deal with risk management, for instance. Or that is common. But the big difference of a project is, as I've said before, it has a beginning and an end. It's usually highly visible. So think about her job with the uniforms. They basically went from off-the-shelf uniforms that they just kind of customized to actually designing a whole supply chain to actually supply their uniforms, which were now going to be, you know, uniquely designed for the airline and distinctive and so on. So it has a beginning and an end. So her job was to, basically, how do we create the supply chain, how will we design the uniforms?

And then once that's set up, of course, it turns into a process in which you need to keep it going right to, you know, manufacture new uniforms for new employees. And as new employees kind of switch and get new uniforms, you know, what they need when they no longer fit or when they're too old, et cetera. The skills you need for project management are a little different. So as I said before, there's usually more risk because it went from one step to the next. You sometimes don't know how long it's going to take, how much it's going to cost, how difficult it's going to be. Again, there's always unforeseen, right? So what risk am I going to run into?

And the other thing that is risky about projects is that, let's say that you are very sophisticated and you can do a probabilistic schedule, right? So you say, OK, so my deadline to finish this project is so many months. And if I do this and that, according to my models, I have a 95% probability of finishing on or before that deadline. That seems pretty good. But there's still that 5% chance you're going to miss the deadline. And if you missed the deadline, nobody's going to give you credit because you had a 95% chance of achieving it. Now, if we turn into processes, let's say you're manufacturing vehicles, you're Toyota, and let's say 98% of your vehicles are defect free. OK. You still have to deal with the 2% that are defective. There's maybe

a lot of waste and you may want to reduce those defects and so on. However, you get credit and you can profit from the 98% of the vehicles that are defect free. Right? So those are the two big differences.

So in general, I would say projects are a little bit more risky and more visible for good and for bad. Right? Because at the end of the project there's a big outcome. And if you worked on the project, you will always be associated with that outcome. Now the positive part is once the project is done, that's it. No one can mess it up. If you're in a process and you depart from that position, someone may come and mess it up and then it's not clear. You have to always explain: No, no, no. But when I was there, it was running perfectly, right? And people kind of tend to forget.

Kurt Greenbaum: Yeah. Is there anything that you saw in the ... her telling of her story that kind of stood out for you about how she managed that transition?

Sergio Chayet: So for me, it was interesting. So I usually talk to people who do the opposite, so who start in the process side and then turn to projects. So for me, it was interesting that she actually turned, as she went, the other way. And running processes is not easy either, right? Because basically they're the backbone of the organization. So if anything she's doing actually doesn't work, the airline will be crippled and there will be a crisis. Right? Again, it's highly visible. You have a high degree of responsibility, and it's one of those, what they call, like, thankless jobs, right? When everything is running well, nobody is going to come and kind of, commend you for doing it. But whenever something goes wrong, all the fingers are pointing at you.

Lauren Kriegler: The best thing we could do was engage our operational counterparts early. And therefore capture their feedback and input. They have a very different view of how the operation is running. We are not an operational team, and so we do really rely on that collaboration. And so we ultimately would always bring them in early, even if it was just the anticipation. It was often before an event, I would say 99% of the time we don't have events. Ninety-eight percent of our work is anticipating the events. And that's really what that summer of 2021 was. We actually didn't have our own specific secondary challenges at Alaska. It was the anticipation of them that kept us on our toes, so to speak. And so that early engagement, that communication and being really thoughtful about—what decision you make in one location is not in a vacuum. And it will very, very much impact other stations. And so making sure that we are always doing a good job of thinking about the inventory and the operational impact of any decision that was happening in one station, how that would cascade.

Kurt Greenbaum: Are there things that you can think of that you had done prior to the Colonial Pipeline to prepare your team to be able to address something like that when it came up?

Lauren Kriegler: I think being new in the role allowed them to feel much more comfortable participating and adding to the plan, because it wasn't as though I came at this with 10 years of experience. This is how I've always done it, and this is how I want to do it. So I think the team felt much more comfortable brainstorming, if you will, sometimes throwing ideas out there that weren't great, but that's OK. You have to throw a few bad ideas out there to get to the really good ones. And I do think that me being new in my role, being really clear that I wanted a team who was willing to disagree—we don't always have to agree on everything. That's OK and I'm actually very comfortable. But once we choose a path, my ask is that we've heard all the different perspectives. We've had an opportunity to disagree, and then we choose a path forward. And we move forward as a team. And so I do think that being new allowed them to be more open to contribute to the plan and flag issues and risks.

Kurt Greenbaum: So as you're going through sort of each wave of crisis that you had to deal with, were there things that you can think of that you said, Well, we could have done that better than we did. Are there examples of that?

Lauren Kriegler: I think in the very beginning, as we came upon some of these potential shortages, which some did or did not come to impact us, we weren't as good at communicating out. We wanted to solve them a little bit as a team. And then we realized the issues were going to go, how they were going to go. But the sooner we could engage our team, our counterparts, we made it much easier on them. And they often gave us really good ideas for how we could solve things.

Kurt Greenbaum: Got it. So ... so that's an example of something where you realized maybe during the Colonial Pipeline crisis, Oh, this is something we could have done better. And then you iterated on it as the weather events were happening, as the wildfires were affecting supply chain, as continued demand rose for—all this pent-up demand for travel that you talked about, I see.

Lauren Kriegler: And I would say one of the things is we also worked really hard with our operational teams to make sure that they understood they could give us feedback, and there are one or two things that they shared which were making their lives quite difficult, to be honest. It was just the way we communicated. So they were really happy that we were communicating. They really appreciated that. But the way we are doing it was making it challenging to track some of the issues that were happening, and they gave us just a few good ideas. And they were very rudimentary, to be quite honest, very basic—almost one of these moments for, like, Why have we not done this for so long? But we opened the door for them to say, "We appreciate what you're doing. This is becoming a little hard for us. Can you look at a few different ways?" And ultimately we became far more efficient. And that is one of the things I push my team on, is to really take a step back and say, Why do we do it this way? And if the answer is "Because we've always done it that way," that is an immediate "Well, let's go back and relook at how can we do it better." It's OK to do things one way for a very long time—and I think it's actually critical to respect sort of the program that's been before you and to make sure that you're really learning from

it—but it's also OK to say every couple of years, "We need to do a bit of a gut check, and are we evolving?" And I've now been in this role long enough that I have to actually do that to myself and say, "This plan worked in 2021. Does it hold true today?" And the answer is probably a little, but not entirely.

Kurt Greenbaum: Yeah. That's interesting. As you said, you've been in the role now since 2020, and some of the methods, practices, processes that you implemented may need another look...

Lauren Kriegler: Yes.

Kurt Greenbaum: ... in the last, even in the ... three years. Yeah. So what, going through that summer on the other side of it, what were your takeaways? What did you learn from that?

Lauren Kriegler: I learned that one of the decisions from a supply chain perspective that we had made, to be honest, in advance of me joining, was probably one of the best decisions that we made on behalf of fuel, which was we brought the operational team and the supply, sourcing and finance team together. So what that allowed us was an end-to-end look at the supply chain. And what we were really able to do there was, say—a supply issue ultimately will likely become an operational issue if you're not smart about it. And if you don't see it coming early. And an operational issue, if you're not thoughtful about it and managing it well, could ultimately become a supply issue. And so what became very clear to me was that this collaboration and bringing these two teams back together was creating a lot of efficiency, a high-performing team, if you will. And so even within that, I then made some changes within our organization to bring those two groups even closer. Because again, what I really, really wanted was for everyone to have ownership of the whole fuel program, versus "I only work in one area, and I focus on this area, and I work on this one segment and I focus on this segment." To me, collaboration is really important so that we capture all perspectives but then can efficiently move forward.

Kurt Greenbaum: Got it. All right. So I've really enjoyed this conversation. I really have, and I hope you have as well. My typical last question is: What did I not give you the chance to talk about that I should have?

Lauren Kriegler: Recently, I was sitting on a panel with other members of my of our leadership team, and we were asked a question about how do we navigate operational challenges, the inconsistency, the unpredictability of it, and do we like them? And there was a very diverse group of answers. But one of the things I would share, and one thing that I did not have going into this role that I very much have today, is clarity on why I've enjoyed this role so much. And the thing about an operational event or challenge: they can't happen every day. That's going to be exhausting and that's quite a bit of fatigue, if you will. But there is a real clarity of purpose. You push out the noise, and it is very clear what you're focusing on and what you're working toward. And I really enjoy that about being in an operational

role. Operations is a team sport, and when you're navigating a difficult situation, it is really great to know that you can call another operational leader, share what you're working on, ask for some honest input because you have a very shared goal and purpose, and I've always really appreciated that about the operational side of the house.

Kurt Greenbaum: And that's it for today's episode of On Principle. Thank you to Lauren Krieger and Sergio Chayet for their storytelling in this episode. Please be sure to visit our website for more information about Lauren and Sergio, along with a little more about the Alaska Airlines uniform project and some additional material. Our website also has an archive of all the past On Principle episodes, so please visit onprinciplepodcast.com. If you're a fan of On Principle, email your comments to Olin podcast at W-U-S-T-L dot E-D-U. That's olinpodcast@wustl.edu. And one more thing. Today's episode wraps up our fourth and final season of On Principle. It has been my great privilege to host 42 episodes of On Principle, to spend quality time with so many smart and generous people, and to collaborate with the many colleagues who have contributed to making this podcast happen.

On Principle is a production of Olin Business School at Washington University in St. Louis and comes to you with creative assistance by Katie Wools, Cathy Myrick, Judy Milanovits and Lesley Liesman. Special thanks to Olin's Center for Digital Education and our audio engineer, Austin Alfred. Jill Young Miller is our fact checker. Sophia Passantino manages our social media. Mike Martin Media edits our episodes with original music and sound design by Hayden Molinarolo. We have website support from Lexie O'Brien and Erik Buschardt. On Principle is the brainchild of our former leader in WashU Olin's marketing and communications team, Paula Crews, who's moved to a new chapter at WashU. Once again, I'm Kurt Greenbaum, your host for On Principle. Thanks for listening.