- Hey, and welcome to PCTY Talks. I'm your host, Shari Simpson. During our time together, we'll stay close to the news and info you need to succeed as an HR pro. And together we'll explore topics around HR thought leadership, compliance, and real life HR situations we face every day. Joining me on the podcast today is Jim from SHRM. He is their Chief Human Resource Officer and so excited to sit down and spend a few minutes with you Jim.

- Thank you Shari. Hi, it's nice to be here.

- So I wanted to start with, you know you have a really unique perspective being CHRO in a HR organization, kind of like my role in an HCM organization. You know, we gotta get to be HR for HR. And so from your perspective, how has the role of the CHRO changed in the last couple years?

- Well, COVID changed so many things that were already starting to change prior to 2020. I really saw a lot of focus on flexibility and agility and individualization and personalization as it relates to the human resources space. It wasn't that long ago that we were all taught to believe that it was a one size fits all solution set, and boy those days are gone. So the idea of flexibility, agility certainly moved forward 15 to 20 years in the space of 24 months. And that will forever change the way human resources and human capital and even the labor force itself is viewed. And we'll change how that things get done in the way organizations respond to people who are out there looking for work and trying to make things happen. They just are not gonna do it in the way that they did prior.

- You know, I had Johnny C. Taylor on last year right when his book came out talking about reset. And it was such an exciting topic for me because I think, you know the sky's the limit when it comes to HR for so many years we talked about having a seat at the table, having a seat at the table, and now it's like we're at the table. Are we showing up? Are we coming to the table the same way our business counterparts are coming to the table? How have you seen CHROs change their focus and how they show up at that table now?

- Yeah, it's very much more driven from a business acumen and what I call numerical reasoning skillset than it ever has been in the past. So the types of people that I'm hiring now into the human resources space do not have the same skills that those did just 5, 6, 7 years ago. The folks I'm hiring now are much more focused on analytical reasoning skills, on critical thinking capability of being business people who happen to specialize in the art and science of human capital. And I like hiring those kinds of people because they can take all of the things that are associated with the business of human capital and put it into such a format in such a way that business leaders who are sitting at the table who speak in numerics can understand that language. And that's just a lot of fun to watch and to

witness and to experience. But it's also very, very important that if you are get that seat at the table that the way that you maintain that seat at the table is by clearly articulating the science and art of numbers just presented from a human capital lens.

— So what do you say to those HR people listening who are like, yeah I just got in HR cause I wanna work with people and I'm not good with numbers.

— I would encourage them to think about what that means for their career because there are plenty of people's science and people oriented professions out there and human resources is certainly one of them. But the way to stardom in the human resources space is by having a great understanding of business analytics, business intelligence, numbers, and other analytics. What you can do with that though is if you are a person who wants to be a recruiter then get very, very good at the business of human talent acquisition numbers, right? And think about the funnel and the way people come in and you can put that into a numerical context and a numerical way of thinking. It does mean you have to understand exactly how the business works. It doesn't mean you have to understand exactly how recruiting works in that particular space.

— So what advice do you give to those that are either newer in their career and wanting to kind of move up? I use ladder loosely 'cause I feel like, you know careers are lattices now, not necessarily ladders but you know, they want to be that to that CHR role. Sometime they want to be in that CHR role at some point in their career and maybe they don't have this current skillset. How do they start to flex that muscle and learn more about using data to accomplish things they wanna do with talent?

— The most introspective, fully capable people I'm bumping into this these days, are lifelong learners. And because they're lifelong learners, they are constantly innovating they're constantly looking for a different answer. And sometimes the best answer might be the one that's right in front of you, but if you don't go through that science of determining what the best outcome is then you might have missed something. So I like people who have that natural innate ability to learn and for whom that is part of their DNA and part of their culture. I also think there are three things that people in the future are gonna be focused on who are going to be effective human capital leaders be they see PO's or sees HRO's or whatever that title might be. The first one of those things, very, very obviously is the idea that you need to understand talent, tech and leadership. Those are the three things where I would be investing my money if I were a young human resources professional now who wanted to be a more senior HR professional in the future. Talent it's all about that, you mentioned it already the great reset, the great reshuffle. I actually think it's the great reconciliation because what people are trying to come to

terms with is are they willing to put in the time, energy and have the fortitude that they need in order to be successful? If not, and they don't feel like that they're getting that from their employer, then that balance is off. And so is that a reset, a reshuffle, reconciliation? I don't know what it is, it's some reword somewhere, right? But the idea is that there has to be a balance between what you're willing to put in and what you're willing to get back or what you do get back. So I'm very excited about that opportunity around talent and what talent means. Tech is just that if we in the human capital space don't understand the technology that's available to us particularly HCM type companies and organizations which you guys should know all about, then we're in trouble. So I am a big believer that you should be a as much of a tech expert as you can be, at least know what's out there and what's available and what's coming. And the third area clearly is leadership. The leadership that's required today to lead not just here in 2022, but also in 2025 and 2030 is very different than the leadership that was in place just two or three years ago prior to the pandemic. For example, now there's much more of a focus on empathetic listening skill and empathetic capability in general emotional intelligence. This idea that I have called decompression which is where we as leaders have to understand when people around us are burned, are burned out and they need those leaders need to be able to grab people by their shirt collar and pull them up out of their screens to refocus on what's important to the world around them. And I call that decompression. 'Cause to me it's like a diver coming up from the deep right? You come up and you get re align with the horizon. So leaders today aren't thinking that they need to even deploy that skill but it's gonna be required in the future. There's no doubt about it. This entire world of what a leader did yesterday versus what a leader will need to do tomorrow is radically different. And in the human resources thing, space I think is the thing that is actually changing the fastest because successful leaders of tomorrow don't look like the ones that are even sitting here today.

— I'm always amazed at the way Gen Z is starting to challenge how we work, especially in the HR space. You know, we joke about Gen Z coming in the door and in the first 90 days being like, "Okay, can I get promoted now?" But there's some truth to that. There's some truth to, I wanna know my career path and I wanna know exactly how I get there so I can work towards that. How have you seen that influence how CHROs are partnering with business leaders to say, we need to be more authentic we need to be more transparent we need to share more with our employees.

— Yeah, I absolutely love this generation of young folks who are coming in because they are in many ways representing what every generation prior to them wanted in the workplace. They're just brave enough to ask for it, right? So I absolutely love that. They're also incredibly informed, they're digital natives. They've had all the

knowledge and information available to them from a technological perspective as long as they had a wireless signal on a device for most of their lives. That also is unlike any generation prior to them. But you're right. And what your question suggests is that that will set new standards in the workplace that we are not yet prepared to deal with. That means immediacy, first of all immediacy in feedback, immediacy in response and immediacy in the way you communicate. We also know from this generation that the when it's important to them, they still prefer to communicate with us face-to-face but when it's routine or something that's that they consider just to be part of the norm then the best way for to communicate with those folks is digitally or through some other type of electronic means. So we as leaders probably aren't thinking like that yet. Yeah. In the workplace. And nor do we have the tooling and the capability to really help those individuals become successful because we're still thinking about career ladders and doing time before that. You get, you know, there's that there's something to do with tenure in your success trail. And these folks, younger folks don't think that way nor have they ever been required to think that way. Remember, this is a generation that responds to likes. They are validated by the fact that they post something they do something, they get an instantaneous feedback. I know in my own household I'm raising four of these Gen Z folks in my own household. I got into a conversation with one of my children about the likes and how fast people respond to that and I got X number of likes on something that was posted. I'm like, who cares? But it's important to them, right? Because that's how they're validated. And we in the working world haven't yet figured out that validation for the workplace.

– It's an exciting data point for HCM's to be paying attention to how you build that likes into, or your social pieces into your HCM and—

– Absolutely.

– And how you're leveraging technology. So that's really exciting. You know, as I wrap up my conversation, one question I have for you is what new roles do you think are gonna be showing up in HR that we haven't seen before?

– A lot of it's gonna be driven by the social scientist. You know, if I were starting all over my career right now I would probably go and study sociology or cultural anthropology or psychology because the impact of what we've all experienced in the last two to three years we don't yet know what that means in the workplace. We think we have some good ideas. We're seeing it show up in very sad ways right now in our society with the high rates of mental health or maybe I should say lack of mental wellness in the workplace. And those survey numbers whenever you talk about those types of things are actually getting worse, not better still. So it's time for us to readdress and rethink about how we build solution sets and build workplaces that are

inclusive and more that people have a sense of belonging where it's okay to bring your whole self to work and to to be who you are when you arrive there. That's a work in progress for most employers today. So we'll get there. I have absolute faith and knowledge and I want to focus very much on ensuring that Gen Z can contribute to the workforce of the future what they're capable of giving to us. Because they are shaping already the workplace not just in the United States, but around the world. And it's gonna be fun to watch this happen, right? As human capital leaders as CHRO. I can't wait to continue on this journey watching these young folks come in and just absolutely change the way the rest of us think about work.

— Yeah, I completely agree. I have kids who are in their teens now too so I'm excited to see what they're gonna do for the world around us. So thanks for taking a few minutes of your day, Jim.

— Thank you, Shari. Enjoy the rest of your day.

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