

- [Shari] 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 Jeanne Meister. She is the executive Vice President at Executive Networks. And she's actually hosting a panel tomorrow with a bunch of really amazing CHROs. We're here at HR Tech. And Jeanne, I'm so excited to have you on the podcast today.

- [Jeanne] Thank you so much for inviting me.

- [Shari] So let's get right into it. You are hosting this panel and it's all about the future of work. And I'm curious, what is one thing that you're most excited to talk to them about?

- [Jeanne] I'm most excited about sharing the results of our global CHRO of the Future survey which we just completed with 112 CHROs that work for Global 1,000 companies, so the largest most global companies in the world. The top line of that survey was, while so many companies are talking about the great resignation we're talking about the great reevaluation, as employees reevaluate where they work, why they work, when they work, and if this is the employer they wanna continue with. So, we think that this is really an inflection point for a lot of companies to dive deeper. Yes, lots of people have left About 4 million workers have left in the last 15 of 17 quarters. But I don't think companies are doing enough to understand the reasons behind the Quit Rate, it's called. And the single biggest reason when we polled these 112 CHROs was burnout and stress, right. And interestingly, wanting more compensation came in fourth. The second most important reason was lack of visibility into their career advancement opportunities. So, big opportunity for CHROs. We have three of them from diverse industries, from Tyson Foods, Unify Services and VTT Research from Finland.

- [Shari] Wow. What an exciting panel to be able to ask some of these really important questions to. Is there one thing you've gone through that survey data that really surprised you or anything that came out of that survey that you were like, hey, I didn't think that would be one of the top priorities for CHROs or one of the things that they were struggling with?

- [Jeanne] Yeah, a couple things. The first one is definitely future of work, right. You know, it's in the media constantly. What is surprising is, a growing number of companies have created this as a pillar in the HR operating model. So, it's now talent acquisition, learning and development total rewards, future of work. Why? Because of the massive changes, right. It turns out that for knowledge workers, the vast majority actually McKinsey says, nine out of 10 companies will be hybrid. And it turns out that hybrid working, that

model, is really one of the most difficult to do right. We did some other research and we found out that this notion of proximity bias was real, right. So, if I'm working in a hybrid way where only go in a couple times a week and you are working mostly in person, there is, you know a bias toward the person that's in the office more, having more opportunities for mentoring, for stretch assignments, for promotions. And this is a big fear among hybrid workers. How is this new model gonna impact their career long term?

- [Shari] You know, originally I wanted to ask you, do you think it's the responsibility of HR to think about holistic wellbeing for employees? I think the answer's already yes to that, as you talked a little bit about the survey. So, I guess I'll rephrase my question ask you, you know, things like proximity bias, things like holistic wellbeing. I don't know that HR is fully equipped to address all those things right now. You know, what ways, as you've talked to CHROs, have you seen them tackling those issues in innovative ways?

- [Jeanne] One really interesting one is, when we talk about the future of work, most of the emphasis has still been on knowledge workers, right. I mean, people like you and I that have the luxury of working where we want to work. Not enough attention has been paid to hourly workers and frontline workers. And I think we've realized just how essential these essential workers are. So, a growing number of companies, actually starting with Walmart in 2018, have created something called Pay on Demand, which is essentially flexible payroll. Most companies pay their workers every two weeks. That's sort of standard, right. So, I guess we all have to ask ourselves if we can shop on demand and listen to movies and music on demand and bank on demand, why do we still get paid every two weeks? And it turns out that a growing number of companies have created a an option so you can get pay on demand. And it's being touted as a new flexible option for frontline workers.

- [Shari] Do you think that there were data points that HR used to get to that point to think about pay on demand? And the reason I ask that is I think we collect so much data and it's coming in and as we change our mindset and we think about our employees as talent, as consumers, there's so much for us to look at and decide what to do as HR practitioners. How do we look at all those data points and come up with great ideas like, hey, I wanna work with an HCM that has a pan demand module. Or hey, you know I wanna work with a mental health organization or an EAP that has telehealth built in or has, you know X number of, whatever the thing is, you know. How are they using data to get to those decisions?

- [Jeanne] Well first, it's how they're organizing the data. So, you know, now many companies are doing pulse if not monthly, you know, sometimes even weekly employee sentiment surveys. And one of the things that I hear more and more is, they're segmenting their pulse

surveys by your work environment. So are you remote, hybrid, fully in person? And they're segmenting it by your generation, right. And they're, they're even segmenting it by full-time and part-time. So they're able to dice and look at all this data, and I think in a much more meaningful way, and really uncover actually, you know, the personalization of some of these total rewards vary quite a bit by your work model and your generation, right. And so, what what we found in other research was that younger workers are really very interested in financial wellbeing benefits, you know. They're sort of struggling to, you know, pay student loans and managing high rents if they live in urban environments. Whereas older workers or boomers if they're still working, are really very interested in more flexible hours of when they work. So I think, you know, the advice to HR leaders is, when you do a, and a lot of people are raising their hand saying, yes, I'm regularly doing employee sentiment surveys. But the follow up question is, are you segmenting those surveys so that you're really understanding the personalized needs of different segments of your workers?

- [Shari] How have you seen CHROs, and maybe this is a question you'll ask the panel, address those segmentations. And what I mean by that is, you know you could have an organization that has a knowledge worker contingent that you're like, yes you can be fully remote. And then, you have an hourly worker contingent that says, no, you have to be on site. But we wanna try to create the same experience for both of you. How's that being addressed?

- [Jeanne] Well, I think they're starting to get some pushback, right. I think, you know, the people that have been there the whole time, the hourly essential workers, are kind of feeling, Wait a minute. You're doing all this special, personalized benefits for people that come in a couple times a week. What about me, right? So, I think the conversation about employee experience has moved honestly from creating compelling experiences, which we're still interested in doing, to how do we create more fair and equitable experiences? Because we really need to do a better job to appreciate all segments of our workers, right. And, you know, these are humans that are in some cases, you know, giving their lives, right, especially in the medical profession during the last couple of years. So, I do think that this issue of fair and equitable experiences is really rising to the top of, this is how we're really trying to differentiate our employee experience for all segments of workers.

- [Shari] And that plays into, how you think about DEI, you know. It is a mindset to think about DEI in everything you do. You know, we have recently started talking about DEIA, accessibility being our A, some companies have added a B or beyond or belonging. And I think it has really shifted how HR thinks about inclusivity and equity just differently. It's not a program necessarily. It's the foundation of how we think about the work that we do. I'm curious for that survey,

how did DEIA topics come up, you know, on the list?

- [Jeanne] It came up as actually, the second most important, right, after when we asked, What are the major challenges you're facing? Talent, attraction and retention.

- [Shari] Yeah.

- [Jeanne] You know, we see it all the time. But D, E and I, you know, really came in the top three. And I, I think the whole mindset has now become, how do we really publicly state some of our goals and build our commitment to D, E and I, and I like your notion of accessibility, into the very fabric of the organization? Because that's what we have to do. And really, have a mindset of, you know the future of work is for all workers. And so often, we just focus on professional workers 'cause they have the luxury of working when and where they want to.

- [Shari] When I think about the future of work, one of the things that keeps coming up for me is this idea of, I'm gonna call it radical transparency, 'cause I feel like that's where it's at and where it's heading especially with the expectations of Gen Z. We can no longer as companies say, A, without also saying why we are doing A. As you think about your role and having conversations with CHROs, I feel like HR is on display a little bit on how we're gonna handle things. Have you seen that same change and what do you see our roles in that transparency evolving to?

- [Jeanne] Well, I think first of all, HR has, you know, taken on during the pandemic a much more important role. It's elevated the stature of the entire profession. I like to say that HR has become essential workers for the organization, right, dealing with, you know, a whole host of getting back to the office, safety issues, employee wellbeing, mental health, burnout. So, I think for HR professionals, we really have to, you know, step back and consider, you know, how do we build our commitments to accessibility and employee wellbeing so that it's a commitment to the organization? And many companies are making it a public and accountable commitment by creating ESG annual reports. And one of the interesting findings in the report, which I'm happy to share with you and it's now public, is that over 50% of the companies we surveyed have said that they're making their company's commitment to ESG accountable to executives, variable compensation levels. So I mean, that's, really, I mean that's the ultimate commitment, right. You know, we are going to make leaders accountable. We're not just talking about it. We're not creating another training program for it. We're not creating another vision statement for it. We're making it truly accountable to live up to this in terms of hiring, developing and promoting a more diverse workforce.

- [Shari] It's exciting to see everything that's happening in the HR space. I don't know if you've had a chance to read Johnny C Taylor's

recent book about HR. It's called "Reset". And I love what he talks about as he thinks about HR having to reset and think differently. And, you know Adam Grad's written some books about that, more than one. And I'm at a place in my HR career, where I feel like the sky is the limit for us. So. as you read through those survey results and as you go into this panel, what are you most excited about for the future of HR when it comes to the future of work?

- [Jeanne] I think HR now feels they really do have the old seat at the table. We asked I thought a really insightful question. We said, do you agree with this statement that HR is as important to the organization as the finance function? Is the HR team as important as the finance team to the workings and to the success and the performance of the organization? Nine out of 10 HR leaders said, yes. And these are HR leaders of the Global 1,000. So I think finally, you know, we are all seeing the importance of our contribution to the organization and its bottom line.

- [Shari] I mean, at the end of the day that's what we want, right. We want to do a good job in cultivating and encouraging talent that's gonna affect the bottom line, right?

- [Jeanne] Absolutely.

- [Shari] Well Dean, thanks for taking a few minutes of your day to chat with me. This is really interesting. And we'll put some links in the show notes to all the amazing data that you've talked about.

- [Jeanne] Thank you so much for having me. Really enjoyed it.

- [Shari] This podcast is brought to you by Paylocity a leading HCM provider that frees you from the task of today, so you can focus more on the promise of tomorrow. If you'd like to submit a topic or appear as a guest on a future episode, email us at [pctytalks@paylocity.com](mailto:pctytalks@paylocity.com).