

- 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. On today's episode, I have with me Katrina Collier, facilitator, mentor, author, speaker, podcast host, all around HR influencer. Katrina, thanks so much for jumping on with me today.

- Thank you so much for having me here, Shari.

- So you have this amazing background in the recruiting space, and I'd like to start with talking a little bit about what we're seeing right now in recruiting during this great resignation phase. And what do you think some of the biggest challenges are?

- Yeah, is it the great resignation? Is it great reassessment? I don't know, there are lots of greats before it, aren't there? I mean, certainly, we are definitely making up for the fact that we, too many people, whether you downsized over five, whatever you did as a company in 2020, we're now trying to make up for it in '21 into 2022. And it's like a catch up game. And then you've got the people that have reassessed. So, there's lots of people sitting there going, "Whoa! I've had a life reassessment." So it is really fascinating time. The biggest things that I'm seeing is companies still being unrealistic. Like, well, our staff have been working at home. They've been incredibly productive and we've done better as, the best results we've had for ages, but you know what? Everyone's coming back into the office. And people are like, "Yeah, no. No, I'm not coming back full time into the office." However people don't necessarily want full time remote either. Like, they just want something. They wanna work how they wanna work. And I think that's the biggest challenge I'm seeing, is these companies who are like in denial as to what's going on. So potentially, they've got recruiters, whether they're external or internal, who are advising them and saying, "This is what's going on." I had a friend telling me yesterday, just a regular marketer, she is getting approached three times a day. And she goes, "What is going on?" Like, what is going on? So it used to be, that was just in STEM, science, technology, engineering, maths, they were all being hit up constantly. No, now it's everybody, is being hit up all the time over jobs, so it's crazy out there. And if companies are slow, if they're stuck in their process, they are insisting on people coming back to work. They're just being inflexible, full stop. They're gonna really, really suffer.

- You hit the nail on the head with flexibility. People want flexibility in different ways than we've kind of experienced so far. Flexibility used to mean like, "Can I work remote one day a week?" That, not gonna cut it anymore.

- No, and now it's like, "Well, actually I wanna work from 6:00 AM to

whatever time, because I'm a carer or I've got kids," or whatever, "and I'll get my hours done when I wanna get my hours done." So it's more than even just, "I'll go into the office a couple of days a week, and the rest of the time I'm at home." It's really like, "I wanna work when it suits me." So I've been working that way for years 'cause I work for myself, and I work Sundays. I love working on Sundays, nobody's around, it's dead, quiet, I get so much work done. And then I kind of don't really work on a Friday. So, I sort of shuffled everything around because it suits me to do that, and I can. And this is what people have realized they can do. It is like, well, as long as the output is there, it doesn't, I don't need to be present. And this is just so hard for so many companies.

- I completely agree. I wanna switch topics a little bit. You wrote a book called "The Robot-Proof Recruiter" A Survival Guide for Recruiting and Sourcing Professionals", and it talks about how recruiters need to continue to learn to lean into the human side and not replace everything they do with AI data. So I'm curious, how do you see the future of AI supporting human interaction recruiters need to have with candidates?

- Yeah, so when I was asked to write that was 2018, Kogan Page actually came to me and asked me if I'd like to write a book which I still find mind blowing, 'cause that just doesn't happen very often. And it was right around the time that there were a lot of technology providers saying robots are gonna replace recruiters. So that's where it all came from. And a lot of people think I'm anti-tech. Now, I'm not anti-tech, I'm anti how recruiters use it. So, I see a lot of spam going into people's inboxes through automatic robots and things like that. And it's like, that's where I have a problem. But when the AI is really supporting the candidate experience and it's really helping the human to have clarity and certainty in the transparency of the recruitment process and really push them through the process, then I don't have such a problem. So I like seeing it used there. I don't like seeing it used in video interviews and stuff like that, cuz I still think that people created it with a bit of bias in it. So, we've heard the horror stories already. But I like seeing it when it's supporting, so it's creating more time. And I always say to anybody who's buying any form of HR recruitment technology, "Ask your peers what they use." Do not buy a technology that was made by a developer who was having a bad recruitment experience. So they thought, oh I'll create some tech and actually they've never recruited. So, you want people who've actually, either recruiters who've made it or certainly had recruitment input. And is it gonna save you time and money and hassle, and that's for everybody, the recruiter, the hiring manager, and of course the candidate. But I'm sure there'll be more of it in the future but as long as it makes the process better for the candidate, I don't really care.

- I'm sure there absolutely will be. It's interesting you mentioned

the spam thing. I can't tell you how many times, on LinkedIn, you get a new connection and you're like, "Oh, this person looks pretty interesting." And they're reaching out for something really specific. So you connect and then the very next moment, you get this very automated InMail. And you're just like, "Ugh, what a waste of time?" Like, I want a real connection, not a sales connection.

- I know, and sometimes you sort of look at it and go, that's really obvious to ignore. So I kind of get the, "Helping female entrepreneurs get so overwhelming." It like, I'm not overwhelmed, go away, like ignore. And other times you're like, oh, they look interesting. And you think, okay, and exactly what you say. But obviously a lot of sales people do that as well as just recruiters doing it. But it's the worst. And it is like the number one complaint, is receiving these messages or calls that are irrelevant to the skillset, 'cause someone hasn't taken the time to look at profiles. So I'd love to see less of that.

- Oh, that's so true. I get hit up for a lot of things that are not jobs I would even consider. I mean, I love my job so I'm not considering anything anyways, but it's funny the things that make it to you though, and you're absolutely right. Like you've missed the whole point in making the connection with the human being.

- Absolutely

- Speaking of profiles, we had a little bit of a chat about this offline, but let's talk about resumes. Do you think it's recruiters' responsibility to help candidates write better resumes or who should be teaching people now? I mean, it's not like you take a class in school, elementary school or high school, or you're not being taught this. How do we help people learn this skillset?

- It is ridiculous that it's not being taught at school. I think my parents taught me or I think I learned at school. However, it doesn't mean it was a great document. I then was taught by a recruiter and I'll give you the two words he taught me in a second. But if you have a look at most recruiters' profiles, they're dreadful. Like recruiters can't write their own resumes. And they look at them day in and day out. I feel sorry for people who don't recruit, who are trying to write this document, that's trying to sell themselves. And they dunno where to go. And then some of the advice is so bad that I have one tip for anyone, so what? So you read your bullet point, I came on a podcast with Shari, so what? Which meant that we had a fantastic conversation. We were able to help other people with their resumes or whatever. You get the benefit and the achievement. Everyone leaves that off. So number one thing, and if every recruiter hearing this then passes it on to every job seeker, that would really help. And I got that from Ray Murphy, I have to give him credit. He told me that about 17 years ago. It's, but whose responsibility? If I had a resume

in front of me and I gave someone the benefit of the doubt and called them and found out they were great for the role, I would be advising them to fix it before it got to the hiring manager or the hiring manager could dismiss it. If the recruiter and the hiring manager have a fantastic relationship and they trust each other, then you could go, "Just ignore the CV, it's bad, interview them." Sorry, resume, I know what country I'm talking to. I have these two different languages going on, CV one and the resume one. But that thing goes back to the trust between the two. Do you wanna rely on that or would you just rather get the resume fixed, which will only help the candidate down the line anyway, in other places? So I don't think a few tips hurt. But they're very hard documents to write for everybody. And we are still recruiting on that basis. And that's where AI is never gonna fix recruitment, because nobody can write their resume. Well, actually, sorry. Maybe a couple of people could write their resume. Most people can't.

- I think it's such a good point that, so what? If you can think about that and implementing that into what you're writing, I'm now in my head thinking about my own LinkedIn profile, and I'm like, do I have my so what?

- Should we open it? No.

- Let's not do that right now. Maybe before this episode goes live.

- But it is that thing, it's like, I helped Shari with her resume, so what? Which meant that she got an interview and now she's earning six figures like, whoa. If you just do help Shari with her resume, it's like, oh, so what? Like who cares? I don't care. And that's why those two words are so amazing.

- So you have to-

- But I have to give the credit to Ray Murphy. It is not my tip.

- Well, it was really good advice for him to pass along to you, for sure.

- Absolutely.

- You talked a little bit about having a good relationship with the hiring manager. And I think that I've seen in my career that there seems to be a difference between agency or staffing recruiters, external recruiters, and in-house recruiters, feeling like they have this competition and kind of gate keeping access to managers. Have you seen that as you worked with recruiters?

- Yeah, silly, isn't it? It depends which side I'm talking to as to what I say really, but if I'm talking to staffing right now, this is

the market for them to set the rules, 'cause as I mentioned, we, I'm not allowed to say over fired cuz apparently it sounds flippant, but we over fired in 2020. We're now trying to over-hire, right? So we've gone from one extreme to the other. So if there was ever a market for staffing to set the rules with their client, this is it. And I don't mean set like ridiculous fees. I mean, like we are gonna partner properly on this role. You're gonna give me access to the hiring manager or I'm not working on it, because I need to know what's under the skin of the job requirement, like all that's stuff they never say. And it's the same for talent acquisition or in-house recruitment. They should be having that same relationship. But when you start pushing people further and further and further away from the hiring manager, all you're gonna do is throw resumes at them and hope they stick, and have more interviews than you need to and more people's time is wasted. It's just, it's crazy. But it's interesting, I see less of the in-house recruitment staffing. So if in-house recruiters are dealing with staffing, they tend to treat them fairly well. I find it's HR that tends to be worse. They tend to be the ones really pushing them a long way away. And it's just like, that's just, it's not gonna help anybody. I personally think if you're gonna work with external agency, work with one or two and keep them really, really close, make them earn their money by letting them in. The greatest success I had when I was on that side was when I was walking the floors, sitting in on interviews, understanding the team dynamic. And then I knew whoever I sent over would match the team and would be a great fit. And I knew all the projects that were going on. I knew other stuff, not just the job description, which is usually pulled out of a draw from three years ago, and it needs to work. So that's my main problem. But in this market, either side, their biggest problem needs to be partnering with the hiring manager, having a proper intake strategy session and getting under the skin of the role. That's the most important thing in this market, wherever you sit.

- I think you're absolutely right because it goes back to what candidates are looking for right now in that flexibility. And if you don't really know the role or the culture or how that manager works, or like you said, the other projects going on, I think that was a really interesting nugget because I've been recruiting before and didn't have all that information. Then you bring somebody in the role and they're like, "Hey, you didn't tell me that this was happening. That might have been more interesting." Or, "You didn't tell me it was happening. And I definitely don't wanna be a part of that."

- Yeah, the opposite.

- Yeah, so I really like that point. As businesses think about structuring their internal recruiting departments, how can they minimize or eliminate this kind of competitive ideology that they have?

- Oh, education. It really depends because it depends where the company is in their stage of growth. A lot of companies now, so if they've got an internal talent, so I'm thinking of one, someone I've just quoted in the book actually, he says Sky Betting & Gaming, they're of a certain size company where they have enough people to work on the number of roles. It's not a ridiculous number. They can take time out. So they go incognito and have sourcing jams and go and find people where actually their agencies aren't supplying them. They're still partnering with some agencies but actually they're not able to supply the people, 'cause actually sometimes the internal recruiters are better sources than on their agency side. It's all quite fascinating. So, sometimes it just comes down to the size, the bigger the company. Then it comes back to, is the company gonna have faith in that team? So I'm doing a piece of work next week in Berlin. And it was so lovely talking to this director of TA, he's a client of old, so. And he said to me, "Oh, I get headhunted all the time. And it's always like, 'Oh yes, we're a venture capital backed company and we're going into hyper growth and ra-ra.'" And he rolls his eyes, which I'm doing, but the podcast isn't showing. But this company said two things to him that got his attention. One was, "We don't have values, we have behaviors," which is quite different and quite easy to implement when you think about it. Wouldn't you rather know I need to have this behavior than this value, how do I do that? So we love that. But the other thing was, the leader said, "How can we make TA the best function in the company?"

- How cool-

- in other words, they're gonna fund them, they're gonna train them. They're gonna give them the tech they need. They understand they're the people that bring in the people. Now, they may still have to partner with agencies on some roles, of course, because if it's a niche role, they still have to. But it's more really that side that needs to be in place. But it is strange that you do get that friction when a lot of the internal recruiters do come from outside, and maybe that's why it happens. They feel like payback or something, I don't know. But I just think in this market, I think everyone's gonna start sorting themselves out 'cause it's just so tough. I mean, I've not seen anything like it in 19 years.

- Yeah, it's definitely an uncharted territory. To wrap up our discussion, how do you see the role of the recruiter changing? I would say five years, but like nobody's planning five years from now. So like, the next 18 months, how do you see recruiting change in the next 18 months?

- Yeah, in March, 2015, in an interview, "Where do you see yourself in five years?" Well, I'm gonna be locked down in London. So well actually I'm just polishing off the second edition of the "Robot-Proof Recruiter", which will be out in August. And fundamentally recruitment

hasn't changed but what's happened with talent acquisitions or this internal function that's growing, one, it needs to get outta HR. So it needs to be its own function, I'm sorry, HR. But it does, because it plugs into HR, and marketing, and into sales, and into workforce planning. And then you get little bits that start getting created from talent acquisition, like talent intelligence, for example, which is a growing area. So Toby Culshaw, for example, has managed to save his company millions because of Talent Intelligence. And you go, wow, this is fascinating. So it's becoming bigger and more interesting function but it's still a new function. So it's still a bit confusing for companies. But I see coming into its own right. That definitely I see will change in the next five years, or I do hope so, because the companies that really understand, oh my gosh, we're made of people, and the people make us successful. Like, and start going, actually, you know what? We're gonna stop looking at recruitment and HR as cost centers, and we're gonna fund them properly and train them properly and build them up, they're gonna succeed, because the world's changing. We have gone from, "Be grateful you have a job," to, "Oh my goodness, thank goodness I've got employees." And that change has happened in 20 years. It definitely, yeah, it's not the 30 I've been working, it's definitely 20 years. When the internet started having deep impact was when the real shift started changing. And that's why I see just recruitment becoming this force if they start sitting up and partnering and just taking ownership, that's what I see happening in-house. I don't know what's gonna happen in staffing. They're always gonna be there. We're always gonna need staffing recruiters. And none of them are gonna disappear because the product is a human being, and they're just too complicated. And the other reason I say that actually, when I was working in the bank, they started getting rid of tellers and putting in the automatic teller machines, I'm going back for 30 years. And there are still tellers in the bank. There are some banks that have brought them back. I think you call 'em cashiers, right? The staff where you do your transaction with your money because people don't necessarily want to use a machine just for that mundane transaction. So they're never gonna wanna use a machine for their career. So I definitely don't see the robots taking over, but I see talent acquisition coming into its own. That was a very long-winded answer but I'm very good at those.

- I think it's really exciting. I think it's cool to hear your perspective on TA and how it's gonna evolve in organizations. And we're very fortunate in our organization, TA falls underneath HR, the umbrella, but it is its own separate function. We have TA, Learning and Development, and then HR, kind of are pillars underneath HR. And it has created the synergy you talked about because they have their own initiatives. They're bringing their own information. They're giving their own suggestions and it's just been really cool to work in an organization like that. So I'm excited to see-

- It doesn't happen everywhere. So I'm really glad to hear that

because I hear this, when you talk about the external agency to in-house. I hear it from HR to TA. And you're just going, "Oh my gosh." One lot bring them in and one lot look after them. Let's not over-complicate it here. So yeah, it's so lovely to hear that about your own company.

- That's wonderful. Well, Katrina, thank you so much for spending a few minutes with me.

- Thank you.

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