



Recorded Message: The Hennessy Report from Keystone Partners. A free flowing conversation with leaders in the HR community talking about themselves, the industry and their work. Brought to you in cooperation with NEHRA, the Northeast Human Resources Association.

Dave Hennessy: Welcome to The Hennessy Report, I'm Dave Hennessy. Today's guest is Beth Carlson at Raytheon. She heads up global talent development and learning. In between when we recorded our episode with Beth and now, it was announced that there's a mega merger of Raytheon and United Technologies. Very exciting news. We'll look forward to hearing more about that in the coming months.

In this episode, Beth talks in detail about the over 11,000 veterans who work at Raytheon and make a significant impact on their mission. Beth goes on to discuss the weight of their mission and values and how that drives talent strategy throughout their whole organization. Next up on the podcast is our second Raleigh, North Carolina-based guest and that's Michelle Strader, the Chief People Officer at Zaloni. Now, we bring you our conversation with Beth Carlson.

Beth, it's good to have you.

Beth Carlson: Great to be with you, Dave.

Dave: Beth, was there an early point in your life, that you'd be willing to share, a moment or a person that kind of got you focused on the area that you ended up being so passionate about?

Beth: Yeah, I spent a lot of time when I was young, playing a lot of sports and being really involved on teams. I think that was my earliest moment of really recognizing the leadership side of things that I so enjoyed because my involvement, it was all about the team. So, the way that I always focused on the teams that I was a part of was, at home and in the backyard and with my siblings, really perfecting my own skills. That was really about being able to bring the best I had to the court and to the team. I was put in leadership roles, captains of teams, and it allowed me to be there for my teammates, as well. Sort of perfecting my own skills on the back end, on that path of excellence and performance and then really being about something much bigger than myself. Really, the team of people that I was part of.

Dave: Right. Then, you went on to a study psychology, so you...

Beth: I did, I was a big ear. I've forever been the great listener. I use that with a capital G, because I'm a more natural listener. That's something that, over time, has accumulated as well. I think the, the field of psychology became kind of a natural draw, in terms of the combination of focusing on individual differences and managing individual differences, at an individual level, but also collectively. In terms of leading teams of people.

Dave: Well, let's talk about Raytheon. Raytheon has a long history, almost a hundred year old history, founded by three people from MIT and has really always been a technology innovator. Can you talk a little bit about Raytheon today? Its culture, its values?



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Beth: Yes. Technology innovation continues to be the main artery of Raytheon. We're a company of 67,000 employees, tens of thousands of engineers. We continue to be rooted in technology and innovation and that continues to be our path forward today. Our focus is squarely on our ultimate customers, our war fighters and ensuring that they have an unfair competitive advantage on the battlefield, or in whatever sphere of battle is occurring. Our focus on ensuring that they come home to their families and their loved ones.

So, our mission is: we create trusted, innovated solutions to make the world a safer place. Yes, a long history, a consistent history and that, I think, feeds into the culture that we have today. It's central to our culture, or the company values and we wear those values on the back of our badge. We have five of them: trust, respect, collaboration, innovation, and accountability. Those values are central to the way that we do our work, to the way that we engage with one another and ultimately, to the way in which we deliver on our commitments to our customers.

Dave: It might be a good jumping off point, to talk a little bit about your role, Beth. How you incorporate those values into the work you do here. Talk a little bit about what your scope of responsibility is here.

Beth: I lead the Global Talent Development and Organizational Effectiveness organization. It's part of the Human Resources organization here at Raytheon. I have a terrific team of people within the organization and our entire focus is really on risk mitigation. Whether it's risk mitigation from a talent perspective and ensuring that we have the talent that we need to achieve our objectives and risk mitigation from an organizational effectiveness perspective. In terms of ensuring that the way in which we're organized and aligned actually also is right and aligned with our business strategy and are achieving our objectives. Really, everything that we do is focused on accelerating performance. Strengthening performance, accelerating the readiness of talent, and strengthening performance and accelerating the readiness of organizations for the future.

Dave: Can you talk a little bit about how your values and what you're doing in your role contribute to help all people can be leaders inside this organization?

Beth: I think, from a values perspective, they are embedded in the way that the company works. The way that decisions are made, the way that policies and programs are established. It's all interwoven, so they're not sort of separate and distinct. We do weave them into the different career development programs, resources that we have. We weave them into our leadership development programs as well, but it's more up to 67,000 individuals, holding on to those values and ensuring that every day they come into work, that they are doing their part to uphold the values that this company runs on.

When I think about culture, I think about multiple dimensions. I think about the culture that all leaders are accountable for creating, for the organizations that they lead, the environments that they create, where employees have the opportunity to come to work. To show up, fully, who they are, and to be able to contribute everything they've got to contribute, in an environment where they can find purpose and have opportunities to grow and develop.



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Dave: I think this is true – I think I've heard this in the past – that there's a lot of people that work at Raytheon that may have worked in the Department of Defense or worked in the military in some capacity in the past. Is that true? Is there a high percentage or a significant...

Beth: It is true. Yes. A significant number of veterans at Raytheon. We have over 11,000. We're proud to be able to employ veterans and certainly the skills and capabilities that our veterans have are so relevant to the work that we do. In many instances, we have people who served in the military who actually used the products and technologies that we created and so, we have that firsthand feedback, but also perspective of what really is needed and necessary.

Dave: Just like what you said at the very beginning, what your mission, what's your job, is to help people in the battlefield get the unfair advantage. What feedback do you hear from people that worked in the military, when they join Raytheon? Because it's not exactly the same...

Beth: It's not exactly the same.

Dave: ...I mean, you're a technology firm and that's...

Beth: Yes, it's not exactly the same. I think where the similarities lie are, certainly, first and foremost, in terms of the sense of purpose. Who we are and why we exist. That's absolutely shared. I think another similarity is, in the military, rules and regulations are a given. At Raytheon, we have many policies and processes and procedures that also inform the way that we work. That too, is similar.

I think where there can be some adjustment and it comes in different forms, in one instance, it could very well be being in such a structured environment in the military. Then, being in a company with plenty of scaffolding around, "Here's how we do things and these are the processes every step of the way." There is an element that we're really focused on right now in terms of really empowering our employees. That whole notion of empowerment is something that can be differently exercised in the military that is...

Dave: The command and control, versus empowerment.

Beth: Yes, yes.

Dave: Because you're trying to create an innovative culture, right?

Beth: That's right.

Dave: You're always trying to be productive.

Beth: Innovative. Right now, we're, we're very focused on, "How do we continue to leap ahead?" It's not so much the slow move, slow steps, but from an innovation perspective, it's really, "What are the game changers?"



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Dave: That's interesting.

Beth: So that could be a difference.

Dave: What do people that are veterans or former military bring to your culture that elevate it even more?

Beth: Yes. So many things, but the, the first couple of things that come to mind are, again, that up front close personal experience. The experience of being on the line. For civilians like myself, that's something that I can do my best to understand. Yet, there's nothing that replaces that actual experience.

Dave: How do you specifically see those experiences benefit this organization?

Beth: I think just a very strong undercurrent, again, fueling the ongoing focus of why we exist. To protect our nation and our allies and to bring those who are actually on the line protecting our freedom and our sovereignty, home.

Dave: Right. Those people that have done it themselves can be the best ambassadors inside the organization.

Beth: Absolutely.

Dave: That's great. In our prior meeting you and I had, we talked about how the role of leading and managing, years ago, used to be somebody's whole job.

Beth: Yes.

Dave: And, how now, people have their own individual contributor roles, as well as managing leading people. Can you talk a little bit about that? Because I remember we had a discussion about that.

Beth: Yes. I think what you've said is spot on. In an era where the luxury, so to speak, of being a leader or a manager and that really being the majority of your job. Very different way to grow, develop and practice leadership skills, compared to literally leading, in some instances, we have leaders who are leading a number of employees and have a full workload themselves in a technical role.

Dave: A technical role. Yeah.

Beth: So, to carve out that time. Our focus now is, "Are there different ways that we can deliver on that commitment?" And, it is a commitment that we have for all of our employees, to be able to, again, bring their authentic selves to work every day. To have the opportunity to grow and develop here. We have fabulous jobs here. We have an undeniable great purpose and with the combination of those two things, anyone joining Raytheon should be able to, if they so choose and if they perform, should be able to have a full career here.



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When we focus on the change in demographics and the millennials coming into the workplace and what we have experienced and understand, a real interest and desire is on ongoing growth and development. Sort of building tools and skills that either they can leverage here or pack up and bring somewhere else. Our view is, "Use them here." We have so many different opportunities and we need to ensure that our employees are aware of those opportunities and how, in an ongoing way, focusing on the experiences that they're having and what they are building, and the skills they are developing through those experiences, and work can be a series of experiences versus, how I may have reflected on my career – this many jobs, this many titles and roles.

Dave: Titles and stuff, right.

Beth: Yes. Really, I could repackage that and say, "I had a tremendous variety of experiences and that has served me well."

Dave: You have so many engineers here. I'm sure there are many that you want to find a way to keep and develop and grow, like you're talking about, but they don't necessarily want to be in the management track.

Beth: That's right.

Dave: What do you do to help those people find, because I think we all have this thing, as we grew up, the way you advance, is you become the boss of the function. That that's the goal, right?

Beth: Yes, yes.

Dave: So, how do you change that mindset? How do you create opportunities for people that don't want to manage other people? They want to just do that technical work so well, that scientific engineering work that you need?

Beth: We rely on that. We rely on having employees who want to be the best engineers and follow that engineering technical path. That is a critical backbone for us. It goes back to what we were talking about earlier, where it boils down to every person, in terms of their interests, their passions, their desires for themselves. One of the things that I have focused on, more recently, is the criticality of really honoring our talent where they are. There are times when leaders see the potential in their talent and want for their talent, something that their talent is not looking for themselves.

And so, how do you balance that sort of stoking something that maybe an employee doesn't recognize in themselves, that once noted, they can follow a different path?

Dave: Sure.

Beth: And/or honoring someone who just wants to come in and do what they're doing. They love what they're doing...



Dave: They love that work, yeah.

Beth: ...and home they go, and that's their career, that's what they want. It's both. To me, it really does get back to the beginning of our discussion. We talked about psychology and the whole idea of managing individual differences. I think that's what leadership is really all about.

Dave: That's great.

What's something that people would be surprised to learn, about what it's like to work at Raytheon? Somebody from the outside? I think everybody has their image of what happens at a defense tech contractor. I know a technology-innovating defense contractor.

Beth: Well, and maybe the best way for me to respond to that, is what was so surprising for me.

Dave: Oh, yes, that's a great idea, right.

Beth: What was surprising to me, was being surrounded by these unbelievably smart, brilliant people at every turn.

Dave: It's the genius factor.

Beth: It's the genius factor, but here's the thing about the genius factor; everybody's got an ego. Egos show up in a variety of different ways, but when there's a problem to be solved, there is no ego. These great brains get together and solve really hard problems day-in and day-out. Tom Kennedy, our CEO, likes to talk about making the impossible possible and that is what occurs with seemingly, regularity. That, to me, it just sounds like a bunch of words that string together into a tidy sentence, but it is very real. I've had plenty of experiences, as we all have, where egos somehow create, and are prevalent in a system. In an environment where egos could reign supreme, based on capabilities, it just seems near absent.

Dave: Oh, that's fantastic. Can you talk a little about Tom's leadership style? Tom Kennedy's?

Beth: Tom is an amazing leader. He has amazing energy and amazing passion and focus. He operates from, as he would refer to it, the very core. When there are issues that need to be solved and from a strategic plane of course, as well. He can toggle back and forth in any given conversation. He is remarkable. He is passionate about innovation. He is passionate about talent and organizational effectiveness, which makes the work that my organization is responsible for even better still. He is all about our mission and flawless execution. I mean, that's how he's wrapped.

Dave: I think, Beth, you know, that we produce this podcast in cooperation with NEHRA, the Northeast Human Resources Association and we have Sarah Dumont, the podcast producer who's on the NEHRA YP, young professionals committee, here to ask you a question.



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Sarah Dumont: The NEHRA YP question today is; when developing talent all over the world, do you use different strategies to get employees to achieve a goal in the United States versus a different country?

Beth: That's a great question, Sarah. Thank you. The tools and resources that we use in the United States are similarly used by our employees in a variety of different countries. Those things are the same. The way in which employees are coached and developed and our philosophy around development, that's similar too. I think, at the end of the day, as people, we have different wants and expectations and aspirations for ourselves.

That's so whether you're in the United States or you're in Saudi Arabia or you're in Poland or you're in Australia or you're in the U.K. and so on. It really goes back to whatever those cultural norms are that need to be managed through, is the way that the development, so to speak, would occur. But, in terms of meeting the needs of individual employees, I think that's universal.

Dave: If you could write a letter of career advice to yourself, to Beth Carlson of 30-years-old, what would you write?

Beth: I think it would be a tome, but I think one of the things that I would highlight, and this falls under the just, I think a, critical learning, would be, "Trust your gut. Trust your instincts, build your skills, build your capabilities, continue to be risk-averse, in terms of your pursuit. When you see and feel a red flag, honor it. Honor it."

Dave: Trust your intuition.

Beth: Absolutely.

Dave: Impressive. What's something interesting about you that we wouldn't find on LinkedIn?

Beth: I completed an Ironman.

Dave: Oh, really?

Beth: Yes. That was close to a decade ago.

Dave: Where was it?

Beth: In Louisville, Kentucky. My goal was to be able to finish, so it was actually a very simple goal. Which meant, in each leg...

Dave: I don't think it's a simple goal.

Beth: Well, there was a lot to learn, because at each leg, if you don't complete it within a predetermined timeframe, then you're done.



Dave: Oh, okay, yeah.

Beth: Thus, my goal to be able to finish the swim, finish the... Yes.

Dave: That's great.

Beth: That was an amazing experience.

Dave: Congratulations on that's awesome.

Beth: Thank you.

Dave: If you could go to dinner with any living person, who would it be and why?

Beth: My husband.

Dave: Your husband?

Beth: Yes. My husband, Peter. He is my favorite person. And, we have five children; one of our children has special needs and so, the amount of time that he and I actually have to spend together, let alone go out to dinner together is quite limited.

Dave: That's great. Well, it's been so great having you on the podcast, Beth. Thanks for doing it.

Beth: You're welcome. My pleasure.

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