

Speaker 1: This call is being recorded.

Rick: Hello?

Jason Ferrara: Hello, Rick. It's Jason Ferrara.

Rick: Hey, Jason. How are you?

Jason Ferrara: Pretty good. Can you hear me all right?

Rick: Yeah, can you hear me?

Jason Ferrara: I can. I was trying to plug into a conference room where we have a bigger speaker but apparently it doesn't care, so it's just running right through my computer.

Rick: Oh, no worries. I know that's-

Jason Ferrara: I have sitting with me right now, I've got Robin Stenzel, who is our Chief Solutions Officer.

Rick: Great. Hi, Robin. Nice to meet you.

Robin Stenzel: Hi, nice to meet you as well.

Jason Ferrara: So, I talked a little bit with her about our conversation and I'll let her introduce herself and her role and that sort of thing, but I thought she'd be the best person to talk to you about your questions and your thoughts and your focus in the article. So I'll be sitting here quietly clipping my fingernails while you and Robin have a conversation.

Rick: Oh, well there's no need to do it quietly.

Robin Stenzel: Oh, but there is.

Jason Ferrara: If there is one thing Robin loves, it's when I clip my fingernails

Jason Ferrara: Great, Robin why don't you introduce yourself [inaudible 00:01:43]?

Robin Stenzel: So Robin Stenzel, I've been with [inaudible 00:01:34] about 3 months now and I've got my background is really as an HR practitioner, both in a generalist role and in talent. My last role was leading talent for a large level manufacturer that had grown significantly through acquisition, so I've been with the company nine years, but I started small, I'll use that relatively kind of depending on where you sit, but we were 3 billion in revenue, 10 thousand employees and in North

America mainly. When I left, we were 20 billion in revenue, 55 thousand employees globally, and we had split that up to several businesses and Merrill was the talent which included selection, development, learning and kind of all the proponents management processes before. And so now at outreach as chief solutions officer and working with our go to market teams, working with our product team and really thinking about how do our solutions apply, fit in, how are they practical for HR, how do they really help you make your job easier, how they make employees lives better, and how did they provide you the right data and insight to better utilize the talent?

Rick: Great. Yeah. You know, we should get you at our companies so we can have that same kind of growth too. I'm, you were the reason for it.

Rick: So you know, let's start in broadly and then we'll kind of narrow in as we go, if you don't mind. Let's start broadly, you know, HR tech, you know, I don't know if you can quite say, it's certainly an emerging sector in HR. I don't know if you can quite say that it's new, but it's certainly changing thing. Changing the game a lot, let's put it that way. So just kind of broadly, philosophically what role, and you can speak about [inaudible 00:03:32] as well, what role do you think HR tech can play in improving the employee experience?

Robin Stenzel: I think that really starts at the beginning. So even before you're an employee, so if you think about it, we're really sort of setting the tone for your employment. And so if you can imagine as an employee what tech can do, it can help you. How easy is it for me to apply for a job? What is the experience I had going through the hiring process. What is the data and information that you're gathering about me? And then when you hire me, tech can help us take that data and apply it to my onboarding experiences. So from whatever, whether it was interviewing process or as an assessment tool, how did I gather data about you to then apply it to that experience as you come onboard?

Robin Stenzel: So now, let's use an assessment as an example. If I use an assessment through my hiring process and it's tech enabled, that information can go to my manager and when I sit down and say, "hey, I'm super excited to be here, there's the job that I have, I'm going to go do, what do you expect from me?" We have [inaudible 00:04:39] in information that can say, you know what, you're doing great here because these strengths you have, you really helped me be successful in this job and really think that you should pull [inaudible 00:00:04:49].

Robin Stenzel: You've got a couple of gaps and here's where they are, with your time I'm going to help you get up to speed. Now imagine my experience just got a little bit better cause I've gotten feedback. I know where I stand and I know where I'm headed and I can continue on and that can help me continue to tie that into learning that maybe I'm going to have to go do that formal or informal and

setting things up and then it really starts to show me where I have to tie back into actual performance and I get measured against these things.

Robin Stenzel: How have I done? How successful have I been? But I like it a little bit too. I think a couple of things we used to talk about at my old organization, where does it feel like an Amazon [inaudible 00:05:25] experience? Was it easy enough, just like it's easy enough, you know I use my mom's [inaudible] she can put an app on her phone and actually go do something and it's easy to use. Are we creating that same employee experience?

Robin Stenzel: The other thing is from a data gathering experience, if you use it like a dating app, you go in and imagine if you fill out something, a dating profile and you go, who would say that you really [inaudible 00:05:47] that you get connected with somebody who says, "hey, how would you like to go have Mexican food?" You haven't used the data that you provided [inaudible 00:05:53] feel the same way. I give you information about me. And so how are you using that to improve my experience?

Rick: Right. Well, it sounds one thing that I think is so interesting, you talked about UX, you talked about getting this data so that you kind of know where you're at skill wise. All those things I think also tie in culturally helping employees, especially newer employees fit, feel, I'm getting a little tongue twisted, but helping them feel like they're part of the organization quicker on. I've talked to so many people who talk about how training and learning if you're at an organization, you know what organizations offer you in that sense. You know the back can help you feel a part of things. And my second question, you know, if we're talking dating profiles, if you could help me with mine.

Rick: I haven't had any trouble lately. Okay. So, you know, what are some other ways, you know, let's think, thinking about, you know, I really liked your onboarding example, you know, you're sitting across the desk from your manager talking about your role. Let's talk about things from the manager or the leader's point of view. What can products like outmatch or you know, other HR tech, maybe you have some other examples. How can that help inform leadership on what they need to do to improve the employee experience? Because sometimes that can be a bit of femoral from a leader's point of view.

Robin Stenzel: I mean, so you know, in general I think tech can help us provide some feedback. But imagine, and I'll use the assessment and example as well. So then you go in and you've taken an assessment from a leadership standpoint, we can now look and say, who are the people that we're hiring? What are the skills that they have and where do we have gaps? And so again, how do we then create the right learning for them? Because back to your point I think for wanting is so important. How do we create that stickiness? The other thing that it does and kind of a little bit of a gamble before, but now engages I as a leader, as a manager have information. And so when I sit down with you, I can personalize

that and I can start to talk about, the stated information to enough public  
[inaudible 00:08:22] look at where might you go next.

Robin Stenzel: So if I'm not a new employee and I've been there for awhile cause you have information and we've talked about it and we're looking at it, we can start to plan. So from a leadership perspective, we're starting to look at how we plan for succession? How do I look to see that as some of these higher level roles [inaudible 00:08:41] ? How ready are they? How quickly can I get them ready and what are the things that I need to do and can help them gather that data, look at it, understand where that is and where do we need to ship? The other thing that can help us do, and I think this is probably what organizations you know [inaudible 00:08:58] one of those things that can seem like a longer, slower process, but because so much is happening to us, we have projects all the time that pop up.

Robin Stenzel: Well if I can go into business [inaudible 00:09:08] , whether that be through my assessment data, whether that be through a talent management system, whatever I'm using I can kind of go in and I can query it. I can look to see how do I use that information [inaudible 00:09:22] as development opportunity, but we're learning through a project that will help them accelerate their career or even broaden their skills.

Robin Stenzel: And now I'm using another example from my past life. We had our CEO [inaudible 00:09:35] and had a meeting and he said, "I need to know who do we have that speaks Mandarin? Cause I would be great to have someone to go on the call with me and be super helpful if we had that". So we were able to use the data we gather about our employees, query that we're able to see, filter by where he was going to be that day. What was the location and provide somebody who actually had that experience to go in help with that meeting.

Robin Stenzel: So now he's looking at the [inaudible 00:10:02], okay, data is given me what I need to help kind of do that. The data also, just like it's giving employees insights about how they're doing, it's giving leaders insights about where we're headed as an organization. So if an organization has an example is looking to be innovative I want to look to see we're filled with attributes that will change to kind of lead into innovation and I can use that data [inaudible 00:10:24] but can understand.

Robin Stenzel: I might also want to get that data for looking to understand because I know diversity helps me be more innovative. What is meant diversity look like, and I can take that back through that employee life cycle who I have today, but what does the hiring process look like? Am I bringing in that innovation, is that a place that I'm headed? Or whatever that skillset is that you're looking to grow as a company, I think it helped inform and helps me shift what I need to do based on who I want to hire, who I want to develop, when I want to develop them, what I

want to develop with that to get the business outcomes that I need to be successful.

Rick: Right. Yeah, that's, that's a great answer. And you answered one or two of the followup questions I had too, so thank you. So, okay, so let's think about purchasing, you know, a platform, piece of software. What questions, what things should companies be considering when they're making these purchasing decision?

Robin Stenzel: What should companies consider when they're making purchasing decisions?

Rick: For HR and software.

Robin Stenzel: I think you need to understand what is your HR strategy or what is your talent strategy, right? You need to understand the business strategy from the business strategy and help what you created into a people strategy that's tied to that. And when I start to look at tech, how tech [inaudible 00:11:50] in and help my HR strategy.

Robin Stenzel: I think the other thing I've got to look at is, what are all the pieces of tech I might need and how do they work together? Because it's really easy to go out and start to look at different things and say, wow, that's super cool, I'd like to buy that and I want this, kind of like in the grocery store, you know you come with your list or these I do and then all these other interesting things start grabbing my attention and I get to them and I make anything with them cause I haven't bought anything that's where the cohesive meal planning.

Robin Stenzel: Tech is the same way. I've got to think about what is that cohesive strategy. I think you know for some, for so long and this kind of wasn't, and I'm going to buy one piece of tech that's going to do everything for me and then I'm going to be done. And what we realize is, it doesn't really work very well that way because not everything, I've thought tech is great at these things. I've got some gaps and some holes. So how do I start to fill in the gaps and holes that I have from maybe [inaudible 00:12:45] , which could be an HRIF system, it could be an account management system, but how do I look at where I've got gaps, how I start to fill in those gaps, and then how do I create that?

Robin Stenzel: I think as you look to add on then, you have to think about what is the employee experience look like across that life cycle, because if people feel like they're going in and out of school, what you'll find from a tech perspective is, I'm not going to use everything but that to many things that I have to go in and out of. So then someone's going to be able to stitch all of that together to create this holistic experience.

Rick: [inaudible]. And what about once you actually deployed attack and you're using it, what do you see, maybe it's some clients of yours, maybe things that you've

seen in your previous position, what you see people getting it wrong about actually putting these tools into practice?

Robin Stenzel: I think one of the things that becomes a challenge is as we look at something and we say, well this is a really full product, I'm going to put it in and they will come. So I think as you put technology in, it's understanding, not just the communication plan, how do I communicate this to employees and help them understand, not only do I, how do I communicate this to managers and understand, and so I think you've got to think about it. I'm going to implement something. Why is this important to my employees? What are the benefits for them and how am I going to communicate that? Same thing for my managers. Same thing for my leaders. All those things become important and then are going to have to do some connections and some change management. I'm probably going to ask you to do something different. A lot of times I think what we think of, let's offer a super easy to use.

Robin Stenzel: I don't really need a change management plan. I'm going to communicate it to you. I'm going to turn it on and then you're going to go use it. And even if I go back to my Amazon example, while my Amazon app is super easy to use, if I haven't built that as a habit in a way to shop, I'm not going to go back and use it. No, once I start using it and I start to have more experiences with it and I see that as easy and it's helpful, I'm going to continue to come back to it. So often we forget that change components and we in HR, I've been sitting and talking about it, we've seen the demo, we play with it, it's super easy and then all of a sudden it gets to our employees or our frontline leaders and their, what is this?

Robin Stenzel: And then even more importantly, the challenges to our seniors leaders as you've spent this money, what's the connection [inaudible 00:15:10] insights, what am I getting from the piece of tech that really kind of makes a difference to the business? How have I connected that back, not just to the employee experience and how do I also connect that back to what are the outcomes with getting [inaudible 00:15:23] improvement business. And so we sometimes stop our business case a little bit short. I'm really don't kind of go through or we've created a great business case, but then we don't start to share the outcomes and the insights when we've implemented.

Rick: Yeah. Great. That's a phenomenal answer. One last question for you Robin. It wasn't one of the lists, but I'm just curious, you know, you've worked in HR for awhile. How would you say that your job as a practitioner has changed with the emergence of all this new technology in data?

Robin Stenzel: Great question. I think what practitioners, you know and in particularly in HR, we've had, I think historically been a little bit more a reactive versus proactive. Technology's helped us to start to see things before they start to happen, but what was also causes as we go on and hire practitioners, you have to really understand, do people have a good data mindset? You know, in the past I think,

you know, I think about forgiving people for HR and they would say to me and they were, why did you like to be an HR? Cause I like people, which is great to be a human that you like people. A little hard sometimes like it's kind of jokingly, but I think [inaudible 00:16:45] worst that people that maybe may not like them as much, but it's really less about do I like people. But in HR I know not to be a great influencer because now my [inaudible 00:16:56] influence employees that managers, I know have to influence procurements.

Robin Stenzel: I have to influence IT and I have to influence legal to help me be able to buy and implement these tools. So I feel like influencing have to get much better and then I've got to be able to influence [inaudible 00:17:13] . I've got to have good data and analytics so I've got to have curiosity to understand if I'm going to implement tec along the way, what is the outcomes that I should best push to ask the question, what should I expect from this? And then when I answered that question, how am I following through? And then a lot of times [inaudible 00:17:31] use data instead give you insights. So I've got to be able to look at the data I'm getting, help be able to create the story from that to then go back and tell whether that's my leadership team, my frontline managers, or my employees, here's what we're learning and here's what we're doing and here's what we're changing. And so that storytelling also become very different.

Robin Stenzel: So again, I think in the past we would have worked for HR people who liked people who could understand the compliance and modality and who could follow a process that maybe tap them, maybe project management. I think [inaudible 00:18:05] really started to kind of come to surface and really I think that you have to do differently today to be successful in HR.

Rick: Yeah. Great. Great answer. You know, that's, that's all the questions I have for you, Robin. I don't know if there's anything else that you wanted to add on the subject or anything that we've been talking about that you like to speak on.

Robin Stenzel: Yeah, I mean, [inaudible 00:18:30] I'd love to get other things.

Rick: Nope, I'm all good. So thank you for your time [crosstalk 00:18:37] . Nice to meet you as well. Appreciate it guys. And we'll let you know when the post is up.

Jason Ferrara: [inaudible 00:18:43] Thanks Roger. Really appreciate it. Let me know if you have any follow ups or know any other, any other opportunities. I mean, I, you know, I sit very close to Robin and know her schedule and we have a bunch of other folks around here who have unique perspectives too, you know, like our CTO or Director of Profits or anything like that might want to talk to you. So let me know if there's anything in the future and lets talk again.

Rick: Well, of course. Great. Thanks. Appreciate it.

This transcript was exported on Sep 20, 2019 - view latest version [here](#).

Jason Ferrara:           Okay. Bye.