Argyle Conversations

by Argyle Executive Forum^{SM}

You've Expanded your Global
Footprint—Where to Now?

Danielle Korins, Group Vice President, Human Resources, at PVH, and Bertrand Dussert, Vice President, HCM Transformation and Thought Leadership, at Oracle discussed strategies for creating collaboration between brands and across markets and steps HR leaders can take to create value for their organizations.

Bertrand Dussert: Danielle, please tell us about your background.

Danielle Korins: I've worked in HR in a variety of industries. I started out in the hotel industry. I was a business major with a hotel concentration in college and participated in a management training program, where I worked in a different area of a hotel every week, including HR. I loved the work I did in HR and used my experience to work in different industries, such as medical devices, pharma, banking and financial media. These experiences included several systems overhauls, about five m&a transactions, and a lot of international work. I joined PVH for the opportunity to help progress its HR department forward and help to keep what we do well, and change everything else.

What is your role within HR at PVH?

We have three divisions in our company: Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, and Heritage Brands, which includes IZOD, Bass, Van Heusen, Arrow and our recent acquisitions, Speedo and Olga Warner.

I joined the company a year ago as head of HR for Heritage Brands and also lead HR for our Corporate Groups, including Global Supply Chain, CFO, Risk, Marketing, and Corporate Sustainability/Human Rights.

What are some of your big initiatives?

It's been an exciting, tumultuous, big year. We took on a large acquisition halfway through the year, which has absorbed a lot of my time. Our initiatives revolved around integrating the acquisition of Speedo and Olga Warner as well as bringing back Calvin Klein brands like jeans and underwear under what we call the 'House of Calvin Klein.' That has expanded our geographic footprint, and will enable a lot of synergies. In addition to aiming to do the right work in the right places with the right people, we want to make sure that we drive an excellent culture, whereby we do right by people and provide a positive environment.

How does HR determine the right mix of local talent and global mobility in the workforce, especially with an expanded global footprint?

We're pretty lucky in that we have a lot of people who have worked abroad, want to work abroad, or are currently working abroad. We have a fair mix and it's constantly evolving because the business has different needs. We've created success factors for the people we have on profile so that we can capture systematically what people want to do and where they might want to live, theoretically, and we encourage our managers to ask people about their future aspirations. It's important to have a lot of local people in the market who know what they're doing in that particular location; however, bringing somebody in from another country always offers a great perspective. We just have to make sure that we do it well.

> *"The need for collaboration is both within the brand and across brands and distribution channels, and as well as across continents. So whereas previously someone in a particular role might have handled two different brands, we're finding that a lot more people are aligned with a single brand and we're building collaboration from there."*

You said theoretically, which is interesting. Do you find that there is a gap between an employee who has declared a willingness to work abroad and then actually agreeing to make the move when an opportunity comes up?

Of course. Naturally, most people don't want to turn away a potential opportunity. So many people will say, 'Sure, I'll go anywhere for the right role.' But an actual move often comes down to timing for people, such as waiting for

their kids to graduate from high school, etc. It also has to be the right role. As a business, we have to enable international assignments and do them well because if employees see that one of their colleagues who went abroad and made sacrifices in their life didn't have the greatest experience or didn't have a great role to come back to, it will sour them from wanting to work overseas. If we don't pay properly, provide cultural training, or take care of our employees who work abroad in all the right ways, it can fall apart. Oh, and it's very important to have a great role for them to come back to so that we enable them to leverage all of these new skills and broad perspective!

What does PVH's global footprint look like today, especially with the new acquisitions?

We now have an expanded Asian reach. We were in Asia before but now we're more heavily invested in that area both from an employee perspective as well as from a revenue perspective. Latin America is a new area for us as well. We operated licensed businesses there before but now we have a direct business in that area. Our operations in Europe are also expanding.

With such a wide global footprint, how do you create collaboration across brands and markets?

It's a challenge right now. We acquired Tommy Hilfiger about four years ago and with our latest acquisition, we've gotten much bigger, with now over 30,000 associates. The need for collaboration is both within the brand and across brands and distribution channels, and as well as across continents. So whereas previously someone in a particular role might have handled two different brands, we're finding that a lot more people are aligned with a single brand and we're building collaboration from there. People in support functions, like global supply chain, finance, IT, and HR, are all aligned to different brands as well and we're building collaboration there. Across-group collaboration is also happening, especially at the executive level, where they have ownership across brands, but people who are moving around to different groups are discovering that they now have real career paths because they know more people.

In building collaboration, we also look at talent management. Do we do talent reviews across all the brands? Probably. Do we create common policies or websites that drive us together as a company across brands? I don't know. Even as a recruiter, do we market PVH as the employer or do we market the Calvin Klein brand? Most people are going to use Calvin Klein because it has better name recognition. As a corporate person, I was attracted to PVH because I wanted to be part of a big umbrella company where I can move into different places.

What we found in businesses is that if there's a go-to-market interaction such as recruiting or directly selling to people in the marketplace, they have to have policies, approaches, and mindsets that are very local. With more global functions, such as financial reporting and HR where you need scale and visibility, there is a tendency to lean toward a global standard.

We are doing due diligence around that right now because we will be changing our systems over the next couple of years. What has to be global and what has to be at the regional and local level? That's exactly what we're trying to figure out now.

How is your organization moving toward a more data-driven view of its workforce and workforce planning?

It's imperative that we have good metrics in place. We're trying to build systems that can provide us with good data that we can then analyze and report on, and that does not turn off the business but actually helps us collaborate with the business. I worked in a Six Sigma environment before where data was everything. It was extremely effective but in one experience it was also very sophisticated and advanced, had been used by the company for a long time, and had buy-in by the senior leadership. When I look at how we're going to apply data for our businesses, we need to be mindful and collaborative as to what each business needs to drive their strategy forward and what is just extra noise? From an HR perspective, I want to do better at looking at what we're doing and what is the return on investment. But as it applies to the business, we have some work to do to figure that out.

The best implementations of data-based decisions that I've seen all have one consistent thread: They focus on the questions. As you go down that journey, the quality of the questions drives the strategy around the data. What data do I need? What are the business questions that I need to

answer and, if I can answer them faster than my competitors, how will they help me outmaneuver those competitors? Those are the questions that can provide a real payback.

But few companies have done that upfront or they'll roll out a lot of infrastructure and won't have a data scientist who looks at the strategy to determine what insights can be gleaned from that data. True business insights are what will help companies run the shop. I'll give you an example on workforce planning. One of our customers had a distribution channel through a large retailer in Singapore. They decided to open up some proprietary stores because it was the right time in the marketplace. They got the land, the real estate, and had everything set up. Then they held a job fair and expected over 300 people to show up, but only 30 did all day. What they learned is that while they could make the business work because HR could support the strategy, the cost to do so didn't make sense. The additional risk of having their own real estate and proprietary stores didn't make sense and they decided to exit out. That is a prime example of how differently the business might have behaved if they had better data and had known upfront about the high cost of labor and engagement.

No one ever wants to admit that they're not really where they want to be on the metrics. I've found it difficult to hire HR people who want to work with metrics or who can do it well. I wonder if we should hire someone from finance or a really great analyst – as you said, a data scientist – to give us an unemotional view of what the data is telling us and then help us figure out what it means. By having HR teams try to do it, you're naturally going to want to protect the data somewhat. It really needs to be done in a silo by someone who's analyzing the data for us. And then we HR people need to be smart about using the data to tell a story, and act on it appropriately to drive success.

Large organizations should definitely have a data scientist. Small companies probably can't afford one. If you're somewhere in between, it's important to think about at what point do you bring someone in who can do data mining and help connect the dots, not just look at the total available data but at the speed at which it flows through the organization and creates insights. Oftentimes, HR leadership teams don't realize what they can ask or that it is even possible to get those answers.

I think a lot about the comment stated earlier about how an HR leader should be a business person rather than a business partner. The challenge, though, is that you can know how to read a balance sheet and be fantastic at business, but if you don't have the intuition and the relationship-building skills to figure out how that translates into how you can help the business, then it doesn't mean anything. Our CFO knows how to read a balance sheet and is not asking for my help to do that. What I try to do is focus on what is the end result. What are we trying to achieve collectively as a business? When we say that HR leaders have to be business people, we need to do a better job of helping younger staff understand what that means. Your role doesn't necessarily change unless you know how to apply the big things.

It goes back to knowing what our business outcomes are. What are the big bets that you're making at a business level and how does employing people in the right way at the right price and at the right time help achieve those outcomes? One of the epiphanies for me when I left Amex was just how much the HR role is not focused on the function. About 25 percent is focused on function. The rest is about helping to guide the business alongside the leadership team. It's more important as a senior HR leader to know your business, your industry, and what creates value in your organization. A lot of organizations don't do an explicit enough of a job of distinguishing between general business skills acumen and knowing how to create value.

I agree whole heartedly!

****

BIOS:

Danielle Korins
Danielle Korins is the head of HR for the Heritage Brands and Corporate team of PVH, a global leader of powerful brands including Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, Izod, Speedo, and others. Danielle joined PVH a year ago, having worked in HR roles at Dow Jones, Bank of America, and Smith & Nephew, which included a three- year stint in

London and a focus on Europe and Asia. Danielle is enjoying her role at PVH, where she is helping integrate the best of the vision and cultures of newly acquired businesses as well as those of the diverse groups of leaders in the legacy teams.

Danielle is a graduate of UMass Amherst and completed an Executive Business program at MIT.

Bertrand Dussert
Bertrand Dussert serves as a strategic HR transformation and technology advisor to Oracle's executive clients, and provides an additional feedback loop into product strategy on their behalf. His focus is on delivering insights and thought leadership directly to customers, and at targeted industry events as appropriate.

Prior to joining Oracle, Bertrand served as the global leader for both HR Shared Services and Recruitment Operations at American Express. Prior to American Express, Bertrand was Executive Director at UBS Investment Bank, where he served as HR Head of Vendor Management, Process Re-Engineering and Americas Head of Professional Recruitment. Before his time at UBS, Bertrand led a 125-person strong Global Field Operations team in the HR software vendor industry, and served as a partner in an HR consulting firm that was ultimately sold to Korn/Ferry International. Bertrand has also served as Director of Operations for Spherion/Randstad, worked in Paris for a French software firm, and holds an MA and BA from the University of Western Ontario in Canada.