



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 your host Dave Hennessy. Many of you know, HubSpot is one of the hottest and most fascinating technology companies in the market. Recently had a chance to sit down with their Chief People Officer, Katie Burke. Katie's career and influence in the HR space is growing as fast as HubSpot. Katie and I talk about HubSpot's very unique culture, of which transparency is a key tenet. Later she talks about her passion for developing women leaders, and how she enables that inside HubSpot. Also, Katie shares her unique path to the human resources and people strategy function. Our conversation brought us to talking a little bit about what GE is doing with regards to performance management. And in fact, next up on the podcast, is someone who Katie knows from GE, and that's Paul Davies. He's the leader of employee experience at General Electric. And now, I bring you my discussion with Katie Burke.

Well here we are at HubSpot with Chief People Officer, Katie Burke. Welcome to The Hennessy Report.

Katie Burke: Thank you so much, glad to have you here at HubSpot, and excited to talk all things HR and culture.

Dave: That's great. Well I'm really excited to interview you, because one of our former guests, Russ Campanello said that you are the most exciting HR professional in the market these days.

Katie: Oh, that is such a nice compliment from someone that I really deeply admire. I think Russ is one of the smartest and kindest people working in the industry, and so I'm delighted to learn from him. And frankly, super honored and flattered that he said that about me.

Dave: Well, maybe we could start a little bit before we get into HubSpot, and to HR, and your practices here. But, a little bit about your background, and maybe focusing in on some of the things that really influenced who you are as a leader, as a business person today. Some early experiences, or people.

Katie: Yeah, so I'm an unconventional HR leader that's for sure. A few things that have influenced kind of my career trajectory. One, I thought I was going to go into education policy, so I'm a certified middle school and high school teacher. Which, most people think is totally irrelevant, but I actually find is super relevant. I think if you have learned to teach, educate, inspire, and work through the education system, you can pretty much think through anything. I have a great deal of respect for educators.

I also am a former communications professional. I worked for years for an agency in DC and New York doing a lot of crisis communications work, advertising, comms, and then did that work here at HubSpot. So I'm a former marketer by trade as well. And so, the way I like to think about it is, I've always been really passionate about culture and performance, and I personally think that HR is going to move more toward the direction of marketing and IT, so I think you'll see more IT and marketing professionals taking roles in HR.



So, I'm lucky that HubSpot has allowed me to make that transition while I've been here. And then the third kind of ingredient that's a little unconventional is, prior to HubSpot I worked at Athletes' Performance, which is now called EXOS, and we trained all of the Red Sox, we trained NFL combine athletes, and so we were really focused on human performance as a dimension. So, I think the third dimension is, I think about performance as a growth catalyst, not just for individual people, but for companies, organizations, and teams. And so, I'd like to think that, that influences how I think about HR here at HubSpot and beyond as well.

Dave: Yeah, interesting. You mentioned you think that HR might migrate more towards tapping into our marketing and IT professionals. Can you talk a little bit about that, and why, and what you think is driving it?

Katie: Absolutely. I think traditionally and historically at a lot of companies, HR has been a compliance engine. So really, you're defensive, you're solving problems as they come up, that sort of thing. But you're not proactive at thinking about the growth of the company, the talent pipeline, strategic challenges. And by the way, that's something I blame on companies, not on HR. I don't think HR has had the seat at the table that it deserves. And so, I think now we're seeing more forward-looking companies think through HR as a growth function, not just a compliance function. And, a necessary ingredient to help them compete at scale.

With that, it's not just companies that need to change how they interact with HR, it's also HR as a profession that needs to change a little bit. So, a big part of our arsenal as HR professionals is going to be the tools and technology that we select. So, automating things that don't matter so that we can focus on bringing a human touch to things that do. And so for example, onboarding experiences, things like capturing your information, sending back your offer letter. All of that stuff should be easy and should be done through some sort of process and technology. And same thing, measuring how happy employees are, measuring what needs to change, getting manager feedback. All of those things are elements of your business that will require great technology, and so I think you'll see a CIO influence in how HR professionals think.

And then ultimately, I personally believe that your employees are your customers. And so, when you think about that, it leaves room to think through having great marketing folks who have thought through bringing a great product to market, and what that looks like, and the responsiveness, and excitement, and enthusiasm it takes to get a customer base excited about a product. The same is true for really busy employees. So, the way that I think about it is, our employees at HubSpot are incredibly busy. They don't have a ton of time to process information, so part of our job is to make sure the information is relevant, exciting, available to them when they need it, that sort of thing. That's fundamentally a marketing challenge, so I think you'll see more folks from both IT and marketing seeping into the world of HR, and I think that's a good thing.

Dave: Can you talk a little bit about the business of HubSpot? I think some people know a little bit about it, about search engine optimization, and just a little bit about what you do here.



Katie: Absolutely. So, HubSpot as a business started to disrupt traditional marketing. Not sure about you, but I ignore most of the direct mail that's sent to my house. I fast forward through most of the ads that are on television programming that I love. And, I certainly ignore any phone calls that aren't from people I know on my phone on a regular basis.

So, the idea that Brian and Dharmesh had was, to really create marketing that's focused on pulling people in, versus pushing irrelevant messaging. And, helping businesses globally create relevant content for their users. So, inbound marketing is all about taking a more human centric approach to marketing. Since HubSpot's inception, we're now on year 11 as a business. We've also applied our product strategy to the world of sales as well. So, every single business wants to grow. We're trying to help companies grow through an integrated approach to marketing and sales that's more human.

And so, our products actually help people do things like, as you mentioned, great SEO. But also, blogging, email nurturing campaigns, great analytics, building out a robust website. But, now our sales products also allow people to set up meetings with prospects, to get relevant information on how their contacts have interacted with content on your website, that sort of thing. And so, we think about our mission as helping millions of organizations grow better, and our products are really a reflection of that.

Since I joined HubSpot we've gone from having roughly 350 employees, to now we have over 2,000 employees. And global growth is a big part of our strategy, so we now have seven office locations globally. And so, when I think about what's possible for our product, I think about the corners of the world that aren't yet doing some of that great work, and the consumers that are ready for that relevant marketing. So, I still think our opportunity to grow is tremendous, and I still think... I'm always amazed by how fast our product team is iterating on our product to make sure it's meeting the needs of our customers.

Dave: Great. How would you describe the culture at HubSpot? I think you touched on it a little bit, by the way you talked about marketing inside and outside. But, maybe more fully talk about that.

Katie: Yes, the culture at HubSpot I think is predicated on a fast pace. One of our core values here is adaptability. There's a reason for that. It is a rapid pace around here. Sometimes when people hear that they think hours, and it's not just busyness for the sake of busyness. It's a rapid pace of change around here. And so, as a result you need to be someone who enjoys a fast ride, and rapidly changing dynamics within the business. I personally find it exciting and energizing, but it's not for everyone. The fast pace is definitely a defining part of our culture.

The second thing that defines our culture is transparency. If you were to walk around HubSpot today and ask, "Could you access our Board deck? Do you know what is on Brian Halligan's priority list for this month?" They can all access it on our company wiki. Regardless of their level, regardless of how long they've been here. That's pretty unique at our scale...

Dave: Mm-hmm it is.



Katie: ...and as a public company, so transparency is something that's a really core tenet of what we do here. And then, the third thing that I think defines our culture is a spirit of autonomy. There is very little decision making here through power or title, it's very much through influence. And so, one of the things you'll see here, our employees talk about is, the degree to which they're given freedom to innovate, to find new solutions to existing problems. And frankly, to speak up and provide feedback to anyone in the business. That's one of my favorite things here. I am not short on feedback from people of every level, every location, and every position we have in HubSpot on telling us what works and what doesn't. And, the best leaders at HubSpot are energized by that.

Dave: Ah, great. I mean, it must be interesting to have so many people so aware of what's going on at the highest levels of the organization and knowing information that doesn't typically shared. What are some of the benefits of people knowing so much?

Katie: So, one of...

Dave: And challenges, maybe both.

Katie: ...Yeah.

Dave: 'Cause I'm sure there's some challenges to that as well.

Katie: So, one of the benefits to me is, as you scale and grow, one of the things that tends to seep in is people solving for their teams over the company. You can imagine all of a sudden if you're running the sales team, and I'm running the marketing team, all of a sudden it's like, "Oh, let's just not share a little bit of context here. Let's keep it to ourselves." Having a core value of transparency removes people's ability to solve for themselves or their team, because the default setting for everything is openness, which is a good thing.

The second thing is, one of our value propositions for employees is, that when you come here, you will become a better entrepreneur. And so, we have a lot of alumni who have started their own companies and organizations, and that's a point of pride for us. As a result, we need you to not just become a better sales professional, marketing professional or engineer while you're here. We need you to learn things outside your function. And so, we believe we provide a better employee experience because even if you're on, for example our finance team. You're learning about how we ship products, you're learning about how we go to market. And so, if you go to your next job, or next role, or start a company, you now have more context than ever on how to do that.

So, I think of it as growth through osmosis. So, every seat I've had at HubSpot I've learned something just from the open office plan, from listening to someone sell or market HubSpot in a different way. From hearing about people's experience, or hearing feedback from a global customer. That's really critical to how we think about growth for our employees.

The challenges, as you might imagine are, it's a little scary for new leaders coming on. Training new senior leaders to get comfortable with the notion of sharing what's on their priority list...



Dave: Right.

Katie: ...Is an interesting challenge that we have to think about for onboarding leaders. And then, the other thing is just scaling, really truly thinking through scale. One of the early temptations is, anytime someone breaks a rule is to go, "Ugh, transparency's broken, it doesn't work." One of my kind of really important roles here is, to push back on people and say, "If we have a need for a policy change, let's do it, and let's make it happen. If we just have an error, a mistake in judgment, let's not change what we've worked so hard to build and scale with a culture of autonomy just because of one person's mistake."

Dave: Right, one anecdote doesn't change our philosophy, right?

Katie: That's exactly right.

Dave: Right. How do you link your culture, which sounds really incredible, to what you're doing with employment branding?

Katie: Absolutely. So, when people invest in HubSpot as a product, they're investing in our people too. One of the coolest parts about HubSpot is our support line, our customer support employees, are the folks troubleshooting when you need it most. When you're trying to get out a really important email, when you're at a critical juncture in your businesses growth. And so, I review our employment brand as very much part of our broader brand commitment to our customers, which is our people are going to be great, exceptional, and have a lot of autonomy to solve for your needs.

So, when you start with that as a brand promise, it gets easier to prioritize your employment brand. I think the thing that most people are most familiar with HubSpot for, is our culture code. What most people don't know is when Dharmesh wanted to send that out into the world, there was a lot of internal discussion and disagreement about whether or not that was a good thing for HubSpot. People felt as though, you might imagine, it was like sharing their mother's recipe with the world, or their grandmother's recipe with the world. What if people mess up? What if people steal it? What if people try and take credit for it? There were all these sort of conspiracy theories of what might happen.

One of the big bets we made early on in our employment brand was, (a) that our execution would outpace other people. It wasn't just the recipe we were sharing with the world, it was our ability to execute on it. And then two, that sharing our culture code with the world, even when it was aspirational, would make us strive harder to close the gap between our rhetoric and our reality. That's turned out to be true as well. So, in the same way that when you launch a great product, you're marketing it, and then you have a responsibility to close the gap between its brand promise, and what you deliver. We feel the same way about our culture. We put out a really amazing document that we're really proud of. Now, it's my job, and my team's job every single day to make sure we're closing the gap between who we want to be, and who we currently are.

Dave: Any interesting stories that have come out of that, with either clients, or inside the organization with employees? Anything that comes to mind? That was just like, one of those inflection points where you say, "Oh, this is working so well."



Katie: So, I think Glassdoor is one of the most common topics or areas that I get asked by other HR leaders about. Often times most CEOs want to know how you can hide from Glassdoor, how you can make it go away. And, the way that I think about it is, Glassdoor is essentially disrupting the job search process. And so, rather than thinking about it as enemy number one, think of it as a water cooler that you're invited to. Where your candidates, and your employees are having conversations about your business, and what's working, and what isn't.

I actually think one of our biggest inflection points in our employment brand was making the decision to double down on Glassdoor, and to really respond to reviews, to engage. I think we hear from our candidates... You asked for an interesting anecdote. We heard feedback very early on, that candidates outside the US would not look at Glassdoor, so it was really going to be an American employment brand play. We found exactly the opposite.

Dave: Really?

Katie: So, our American candidates look at it, but we also have not... To my knowledge, we have not yet hired someone who works in Singapore, or Australia who hasn't looked at our Glassdoor reviews. And frankly, shared a specific story about something that they saw that they were looking for as they made their decision. So, I would say that's one. The second thing I would say is, we have an Instagram handle called, "HubSpot Life." And, the reason we do that is literally to add color to what goes on here. We give our employees a lot of autonomy over what they share, when they do things like employee takeovers there. And, I'm shocked at the number of candidates every time who come in and say, "That was part of my decision. I wanted to find a company where I felt like I could belong. And, seeing and hearing that you did this event, or did this experience is really, really helpful."

The third thing I would say is, it's really cool for me to see people, that when they come in they're like, "Oh my gosh, I can't believe I got to meet you. I read your blog post about X, Y, and Z, and it's a topic I really care about." And so for me, those stories never get old, and I think one of the keys in employment branding is really adding a human and personal touch to it. I think historically, employment brand stories are people with a thumbs up sign and they say, "I love it here, and it's all perfect, and it's amazing. There's nothing wrong." And what we try and do is have people share authentic stories. So, things they were worried about when they got here. Things that they failed at.

We have something called a "failure forum" here. Where, people stand up and share something they tried that didn't work.

Dave: Where, in small groups, or a large?

Katie: In a large group.

Dave: Oh really?



Katie: We hold it in a big conference room, and basically people get up and share products that were a miss, strategies that they tried that didn't work out. And, the goal is inherently to build empathy and comradery around the fact that it's not just always a fairytale here.

Our goal is not to be perfect, our goal is always to be growing and progressing. And so, I think the more your employment brand can reflect that humanness, the better.

Dave: That probably enhances that entrepreneurial risk taking culture that you want here as well, right?

Katie: Absolutely.

Dave: 'Cause it's okay to fail.

Katie: That's exactly right.

Dave: We all tell those stories.

Katie: I completely agree. You know, one of the things I always say to people is, "Everyone, when they're asked what's your biggest weakness everyone says that, 'I work too hard.' I want people to actually say, 'No, I tried something and it didn't work out, and here's something I need to work on.'"

Dave: Yeah, how do you hire for leadership here? I imagine it's a very unique culture when you bring people... And you touched on a little bit. When you bring in, and look to bring in executives, I imagine you promote from within whenever you can. But, sometimes you have to go outside to find that with all this growth. How do you find that right leader?

Katie: It's incredibly hard. So, executing recruiting is one of the hardest things that we do here, and one of our challenges is, we're at scale, right? We're trying to hire people who have seen the movie before. And so, we want people who have scaled global businesses, and have global experience, and have built teams of 1,000 people. The reality is though, our culture at HubSpot, given its culture of autonomy means that you have to be able to provide high level vision, but also operate in the weeds. It's really hard to find people who really enjoy doing both.

And so, what we try and do for any senior level hiring, is mimic the job itself. For example, if you're joining the culture team, or you're joining the finance team, you're going to do a presentation that actually mirrors something you might present to either our employees, or our investors. I personally think human beings all think that we're better at interviewing than we are. And so, the more that you can ground things in an experience or exercise that mirrors what the person would actually be doing, the better.

Dave: Excellent. I have an interview coming up with a very senior HR leader from General Electric on the podcast. One of the things he agreed to talk about is what they've done with regard to performance development, and performance appraisals, and performance management. They're really been moving



away from annual performances, and ratings. And, I'd like to know what you do here at HubSpot with regards to this.

Katie: Our long-term goal for performance reviews is to eliminate the notion that it's something that you do on any sort of annual, biannual cadence, and to make it a regular part of our operating system for how our managers, and our employees communicate on a regular basis. Ideally, if I work for you I'm not waiting for feedback for six months, 12 months, depending on how you do it. I'm giving you... We're having that conversation on a weekly basis. Right now, we actually do reviews three times a year. We're on a trimester system, very similar to Dartmouth. Which, is a little unique. We may change that, but the ideal recipe at HubSpot is that you're having feedback conversations on a regular, ideally roughly weekly basis. That, you're having growth conversations to talk to people about their long-term career goals, and even just personal and professional things that they want to accomplish. And then, that you're doing a little bit more formal check ins around feedback at least twice a year. Those are kind of the principles that we think about.

Ideally, we're pushing people to think beyond their task at hand. One of the things we're really trying to do is say, "Okay, great that you've mastered that skill. Have you taught someone else to do it? Have you created content externally to teach the industry how we can do better? Have you learned from professionals in your field?" We really want to push the envelope on what it means to have mastered a skill. And, part of that is up leveling our managers to make sure our managers are equipped to have those conversations, and really help our employees grow.

Dave: Hmm, how do you develop, you talk about up level management. How do you develop management and leadership here at HubSpot?

Katie: We have a great team focused on management leadership here, and one of their core principles is getting managers to learn from each other. The traditional model of management training is one person standing up in front of a room, and teaching everyone else how to manage. One of Laura's core beliefs, and I happen to agree with her is that, that's not the way that people actually learn to be great managers. And so, we're actually spending a lot of time getting our managers to learn from each other, by a concept called, "Think spaces." Where, there's a core topic, and you sit in a room, you do role plays, you do discussions, you share experiences, that sort of thing. And so, one of our goals long term is to create a great manager community, so there isn't just one single source of truth. We're developing great leaders, and then letting them learn from each other.

Dave: Is there a facilitator, one of the managers is a facilitator like that?

Katie: That's exactly right.

Dave: Okay, yep.

Katie: There's a peer facilitator.

Dave: A peer facilitator, yeah.



Katie: So, we actually encourage someone to volunteer to that take on, and that's a great leadership opportunity unto itself.

Dave: Right.

Katie: We've seen great traction there. And then, the other thing we try and do is then build in some experimental programming on top of that. For example, we've done some programming with the energy project around long-term performance. We are bringing in someone that I won't say, but we're bringing in a military leader to talk through military leadership, and how that can apply to great decision making here. And so, we're also trying to mix some community related paths that are normal programming, with experimental content that keeps things interesting.

Dave: That sounds like it is very interesting. Well, now we'll come to the NEHRA question of the podcast, we promote this Hennessy Report in cooperation with NEHRA. And the question is, what advice would you give to people that are up and coming in the culture, or people strategy function, HR function, if they want to rise to a level that you have in the HR world. What advice would you give to up and coming HR people?

Katie: I think for up and coming HR folks the first thing to do is know the business, and really know it cold. I think most HR folks sit with core HR folks, or sit with finance people. The best thing to do is actually spend more time than you think you need to with the business. Whether that's shadowing sales folks, engineers, spending a day with them to really understand what their day to day looks like, it makes a huge difference.

The second is to get really comfortable with setting a vision for your team that isn't just transactional. So, the way that I think about it is, our team... We build our people operations team around the goal that we want to be the best people operations team in the world. Are we there yet? No, but we're really aspirational around how we think about it, and we actually have a university called People Ops University that helps people train and grow, and work on their skills here.

The third thing I would say is, don't just evolve your HR skills. Don't just evolve your facilitation skills or getting your PHR or whatever it is. Make sure that you're also working on things that are typically valued as leadership skills, so that could be communication, that could be writing, that could be your financial knowledge, your modeling knowledge. Most HR professionals I know are focused on progressing specifically within HR, and if you're going to reach the executive level in the HR function, you need to work on a few other things too.

Dave: How did you make that shift to HR? You touched on it before that you had moved around. But, how did it actually happen? How did you go from marketing to people strategy in HR?

Katie: Great question. It seems probably very unconventional from the outside. During the IPO process at HubSpot, I was doing a lot of the work communicating with our employees, and our outside stakeholders, and our management team around the IPO process itself. So, employees got used to, very early on, hearing from me around, "Here's what to expect. Here's what we're thinking about. Here's



what this day is going to mean for the company," and that sort of thing. And even very early on when I worked on the marketing team, I was involved in the launch of the culture code. So, Dharmesh and I spent a lot of late nights going back and forth around, what does autonomy actually mean? As we're articulating this, what do we actually hope to inspire in employees?

I would say the jump seems like a big jump from the outside, but I was involved in culture from my first day at HubSpot. So, the first thing I would say is, if you're interested in making a career switch, don't just talk about doing it. Actually do the work. So, I spent a lot of time working on culture long before it was my full-time job.

But, the actual transition, Brian and Dharmesh actually were the people that helped drive the transition. They came to me after the IPO and asked if I wanted to do culture full time. And at the time, that was pretty early on in the evolution of the buzzword, "culture." And that just sounded like a really good way to be unemployed in a few months. And so, I originally said no, which goes to show you just how smart I am. They convinced me to take it on, at the very least as an experiment. So I started with taking over our culture team, started then taking over employment brands, started then taking over L and D team. And then with the departure last year of Jim O'Neill, I took over the entire team and haven't looked back since. So the answer to your question of how I made the transition was...

Dave: You were forced into it.

Katie: ...Yeah, exactly. My arm was twisted. No, but I think I was lucky enough to... I don't think one of the questions that comes up for me often is, "Should people pull someone who has no HR experience whatsoever, into a leadership role?" And, I've been fortunate that I had a great hybrid. I got to spend some time with core HR, and develop a great rapport, and great respect for the core HR function, and some of the amazing work that they do. And so, as a result coming into the role, I had the upmost respect for my colleagues who grew up in recruiting, and HR, and L and D. And was able to then push on some of the innovation side of things, kind of the surround sound, if you will.

And so, I think it's really important if you're someone coming in as a bit of a disruptor in the HR world, to have the appropriate level of respect for folks who grew up in HR and recruitment. But also, to be able to push the dial a little bit, and to make sure that you're innovating. That balance and dance is really hard, but I feel lucky that HubSpot has taken the risk on me, and that I'm surrounded by great people who do great work.

Dave: Yeah, and it sounded like as you described it, you were already kind of focused on HR issues 'cause you were really driving the outward communication measures inside the organization.

Katie: That's exactly right.

Dave: So you kind of saw the need.

Katie: That's exactly right.



Dave: Do you still, you must have a peer in marketing here now?

Katie: I do!

Dave: Now, do you still play a role?

Katie: ...I don't.

Dave: No.

Katie: So it's nice. I think one of the great parts is we have a great partnership with the marketing team, and so I'm lucky enough that we work with them very often on things like our employment brand. You can imagine, even on recruiting you can imagine there's a strong marketing tie in. But, I think one of the keys to growing in a company is you have to leave your previous roles behind. And so, certainly for messaging to employees, I'm still very involved in that collaboration. But I defer to the experts now on the marketing team, on some of the great work they're doing, and luckily, they are best in class.

Dave: Ah, great. Another question, if you could give career advice to yourself, write a letter to your 25- or 30-year-old self, what advice would you write?

Katie: Yes. So, I think one is to take big risks, so to swing for the fences. I think honestly a lot of people want to make incremental bets, and hope that they pay off. One of the things I always say to people around here is, "If there is a big high profile project, chances are everyone wants it. So, you're competing with everyone for that work. Find the thing that no one else wants to do, and it's going to be tremendously hard, and tackle that really hard thing first." Because, I think you build your reputation by how much hard work you're willing to take on when no one's looking. And frankly, how kind you are to people, and how collaborative you are when the stakes are the highest. That would be my first one, is to take big risks.

The second thing I would say is that, confidence is a muscle that you need to sort of develop and work over time. I think in particular, one of my core passion areas is women's leadership. I want more women in executive positions, I want more women on boards. I think very early on you see confidence start to diminish in young women. The data shows coming in, if you and I are entering the same company and the same role, our aspirations are roughly the same. And, one year into the work force women's aspirations drop precipitously. I think that's unacceptable.

So, one of the things I'm trying to make a personal commitment around is really inspiring young women to develop confidence, to push the boundaries beyond what they think is maybe comfortable, and to have confidence and believe in themselves and each other, and so that would be my second piece of advice.

Dave: That's great.



Katie: The third is, don't take yourself too seriously. I think taking work seriously is a wonderful thing, not taking yourself too seriously and having a degree of humor I think is imperative.

Dave: What do you do here, you mentioned developing women? Are there things that you do at HubSpot to help women develop in their careers and their leadership?

Katie: We have an award-winning Women at HubSpot program that includes everything from ongoing events, to salary negotiation workshops, to a women onboard resource that we released accidentally.

Dave: So, you're teaching them how to negotiate with you? Is that so?

Katie: That's exactly right. Honestly that's part of our culture of transparency...

Dave: That's true.

Katie: ...is being clear.

Dave: It's consistent.

Katie: Exactly, it's remarkably consistent.

Dave: Yep.

Katie: And so, for International Women's Day for example, we have an evening event that's open to the public. We have a full day slated of experiences for our employees, including external panelists. We regularly bring in authors to do talks, we have regular employee resource groups meet at group meetings.

Dave: Mm-hmm

Katie: We support our male managers and being advocates and allies as part of our women's program, so it's open to all genders, and that's really important to our success. And so, I think if you asked most women at HubSpot, they would feel incredibly supported, and incredibly inspired as part of their employee experience. That is no accident. We put a tremendous amount of time, energy, effort, and budget into making sure that, that happens. And so, I think that's been absolutely critical as we've grown.

And then, in addition to that, we've also formalized some of our benefit strategy to support attracting great working parents, including great women. For example, we now cover fertility benefits, we cover egg freezing for women in certain demographics. And, then we also have extended our primary care giver leave, to now be four months, which is really exciting for us. And so, we've not only signaled our support for women with great programming, we've also signaled our support with great benefits as well.



Dave: Along that same lines with regards to diversity inclusion, you mentioned what you're doing with business resource groups, or employee resource groups.

Katie: Mm-hmm

Dave: Is there anything else you want to say about that?

Katie: Yeah, so we're fortunate enough to have several employee resource groups here. I already mentioned Women at HubSpot. POCAH, People of Color at HubSpot is one of the others. We also have a ParentSpot Group, which is devoted to support working parents. And, we also have an LGBTQ alliance. One of the things I'm most proud of is those employee resource groups are really driven by our employees. The best ideas from those groups come from our front-line employees. And, our executives support those resource groups with our presence, with our budget, with our energy effort amplification. But really, we believe that the best ideas for the success of ERG's comes from our employees. So, by way of the example, our People of Color at HubSpot group hosted a screening of *Black Panther* the other day. For Black History Month, we did a great book club focused on *The Hate U Give*, so talking about Black Lives Matter. Those are all ideas that came from our employees, and I'm just proud to support them, and participate in them.

And so, I'm really proud of the great work they're doing. I think diversity gets a lot of attention, but I actually think the inclusion part of it is equally as important.

And, those groups really, really help us move the needle on how included people feel at HubSpot, and that's incredibly important to me.

Dave: Would you mind touching on your relationship, and how you work closely with Dharmesh? You mentioned it before, and how the two of you collaborate on culture, on other HR, and HR issues?

Katie: So, Dharmesh is unbeknownst to most of the world, the moral compass of HubSpot, above and beyond just culture. He's often advocating for our employees, for our customers, for just doing the right thing. And so, I often go to Dharmesh when I'm wrestling with a question and just ask for his input, because I know he's going to have great insight on the long-term implications, and the right thing to do. But secondarily, I also find him to be a genuine and wonderful collaborator as it relates to decisions we make around our culture.

For example, before we're releasing something new, before we're thinking about doing something different, I often ask for his help and advice. Dharmesh is also incredibly involved in our recruiting efforts, so he views ... He's our CTO, but he jokes the T is both for Technology, but also for Talent. And so, he's incredibly involved in helping recruit some of our top senior candidates as well. The answer to how I collaborate with Dharmesh is, often, early, and usually extremely late at night and over emails. So, the only thing you can't do with Dharmesh is phone calls. He hates them. And then the second thing is, you have to know that he's an introvert at heart, so you need to leverage his talents where they're best used. He is not...



Dave: So texting is great?

Katie: ...that's exactly right.

Dave: Calls, not so much.

Katie: Texting, Slacking, emails, he's great.

Dave: Yeah.

Katie: Calls, not so much.

Dave: Yep.

Katie: But I feel incredibly spoiled to have a founder who, one of the questions I get often from HR leaders is, "How do you drag Brian, Dharmesh along on some of the stuff that you're doing, and how do you convince them?" And the answer is just the opposite. They're pushing us to do better things, and they're incredibly supportive. And so, I'm lucky to work for two co-founders who believe in this stuff so heavily.

Dave: Yeah, that's great. What gives you energy?

Katie: Our employees give me energy. We talked earlier about our Women's Program. The Women's Program is really a function of some of our female candidates saying, "I want this. I want this programming," that sort of thing. For me, the expectation from them that we need to always be raising the bar really energizes me. And then, the success of our employees. So just hearing and seeing, when I see a recruiter say, "Oh, we got that candidate, and I can't believe it. It was so hard to close, and I know they're going to make a big difference here." That's what really gives me energy on a day to day basis.

Dave: Do you have a secret life hack that you'd like to share?

Katie: My secret life hack is that I work out six days a week, no matter what is going on here. Unequivocally, it is my secret to sanity as it were, or whatever I have left of it. And so for me, that time to myself is sanity saving, but it's also time to think, write, vision...

Dave: Before work, is it before or after?

Katie: ...all of that kind of good stuff. I'm a morning workout person.

Dave: Okay, yeah.

Katie: So yes, I get up and go.

Dave: Can you give us what's the activity?



Katie: Oh, absolutely. It varies. Sometimes it's a run outside. I am a regular participant at SoulCycle. I go to Exhale for barre classes on a regular basis, so I mix it up. But, whatever it is, that's my time, and I find that when I don't have it my work suffers, my mood suffers, that sort of thing. And so, I think working out first thing in the morning is the best investment you can possibly make in yourself.

Dave: Yeah, I've heard that a lot from podcast guests.

Katie: Absolutely.

Dave: Including Russ, who we talked about before.

Katie: Yes.

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

Katie: Beyoncé.

Dave: Right off the, that was not even a...

Katie: Not even a question. Yeah, that was not even a question. Yeah, she's my person. Honestly, I just love her. I use her as an example of confidence for our young women who work here. So, Beyoncé. But, if I were... If entertainers were off the options list, Marian Wright Edelman is my personal hero. She is the founder of the national Children's Defense Fund. Incredible African American female leader that's really pushed the boundaries on what's possible and fought for people who were under represented. And so, she would be my person if Beyoncé were unavailable, which would be awful...

Dave: She's your backup. She's... Right.

Katie: ...but I could understand. Yes, she's my...

Dave: Well I qualified it with the living part, right?

Katie: Absolutely.

Dave: This was awesome!

Katie: Great, thank you so much for having me. And, thanks for coming to visit us at HubSpot.

Dave: Thank you.

Katie: It's great to have you here.

Dave: Thank you. Thank you for having us, this is great.



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Katie: Of course.

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