



Keystone Partners

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 by Keystone Partners. I'm Dave Hennessy and today's guest is Jennifer Kartono, the Senior Vice President of Global Human Resources for Iron Mountain. They have 230,000 customers. And a lot of us think about those trucks we've seen on the road. Jennifer shares how they have transformed to a much more digital organization with still their core value being safety and security. And in fact, they have morning briefings with employees on security, but that hasn't stopped them from becoming a creative organization. In fact, their DEI strategy with their 20,000 employees, called Mountaineers, know that the success is driven by a collective effort and they get more creativity and more effectiveness through their diversity. She also talks about how they are inspiring their managers to take a more active role and really checking in and sharing resources with their employees during this pandemic. You'll enjoy this episode. Next up on the podcast, is the CHRO of ZoomInfo, Alyssa Lahar. And now, our conversation with Jennifer Kartono.

Jen, welcome to the podcast.

Jennifer Kartono: Thank you so much for having me. I'm really glad to be here.

Dave: Let's get started by finding out about you, maybe an early life moment that informs your work today.

Jennifer: When I was in high school and into college, I worked part-time at a grocery store and I started as a cashier and quickly was asked to take on the role of customer service manager, which really meant that I was responsible for delivering a positive customer experience through a team of cashiers, baggers, and service desk staff. And that really helped me learn and understand how to support a highly diverse team to deliver on the goal of meeting the customer need.

I was in my teens and I had team members that were my peers and for them it was an after-school job. I had team members for whom this was their career and they worked there 40, 50 hours a week, and I had team members with disabilities. And this really required me to spend time listening to each of them, to understand their perspective and identify each person's strengths and motivate each of them and ultimately get the best out of them to work as a high performing team. This experience really informed my employee and customer centric approach, and it helped me truly value the power of diverse teams and their ability to deliver the best outcome.

Dave: That's awesome. I interviewed one of your former colleagues, Annie Drapeau, for a previous episode. And you said that something that she said reminded you of another moment early in your life with your father. You're willing to share that story as well?

Jennifer: Yes. I was fortunate to be able to work with my father off and on through his career. And I was able to see how he worked with the employees that worked with him and his customers, and really treating them with respect and listening and understanding, where they came from and their



Keystone Partners

perspective, and then being able to motivate everybody to deliver on a common goal. And I take that with me today.

Dave: What kind of business did he have? Just curious.

Jennifer: He had a law firm and then he also owned daycare centers.

Dave: Cool.

Jennifer: Really different types of people that you're motivating, coming from different places, diverse teams, different perspectives.

Dave: That is some diverse background, law firms and daycare.

Jennifer: Yeah.

Dave: So Iron Mountain, what a fascinating organization. I think some people know about what Iron Mountain is just from the trucks, right? Delivering documents and storing documents. But you really bring the physical and the digital world together at Iron Mountain. Maybe you could describe the business model, the evolution of the business before we talk about culture and HR, because I think people might be surprised about the different things that you're doing, both digitally and in the physical world.

Jennifer: Sure, you're right. Most people do recognize us for our trucks that they see. But Iron Mountain is the global leader in storage and information management. We have about 230,000 customers.

Dave: That's all? Just 230,000 customers, that's it?

Jennifer: That's all. They're in most major industries and most of the Fortune 1000 rely on us to be their information management partner. We have been digitally transforming from our foundation as a physical storage provider, which was more records, objects, such as art, movies, consumer things.

Dave: Art? You store art?

Jennifer: Art. We have an art storage business and we also have an entertainment business. So yes, we store all different types of art, work with museums and galleries and private collectors. And we work with movie studios, different TV companies.

Dave: Is it actual film or was it the digital storage of movies and content? Is it both?

Jennifer: It's both.

Dave: Okay.



Keystone Partners

Jennifer: It's both. And what you're seeing more of is that organizations want to take those assets and extract value from them. So digitize them, extract value from them or bring them together and extract value from them.

Dave: Jen, do you do the conversion? So like say content like that might be old movies or content that is in document form, do you do the converting to the digital world and then store both for your clients?

Jennifer: So you're touching on a key differentiator for us. So most of our customers are going through their own digital transformation and that's key to enabling them to stay ahead of their competition. And we do enable that vision for our clients by bringing our digital solutions where we can replace non-digital manual processes and automation. We can digitize all our clients, say physical content, and provide tools to search unstructured data, classify, apply governance and do things like that for our customers. That is a differentiator for us.

Dave: That's cool. And will documents eventually go away for some? Do you have customers that say, "No, we don't do any physical documents anymore. We want Iron Mountain just to store it all digitally"?

Jennifer: I would say you have companies that were more born digital. So if you think about newer companies that are starting today, many of them are born much more digitally. So they have many or most of their records in a digital nature.

Dave: I see.

Jennifer: And then your larger older companies tend to have more of a hybrid of records, both physical and digital. They might also tend to make a decision on a go-forward basis that for certain types of documents or for processes, that they're going to use a digital approach.

Dave: Has COVID accelerated some of this conversion to digital?

Jennifer: COVID has absolutely accelerated digital transformation in the marketplace and Iron Mountain, like many of our customers, has had to quickly pivot to new ways of working as a team across geographies and with our clients. You think about everyone going home and then needing to provide secure access to information where potentially, in the past, you've been at the office or getting access to documents in a different way. So that document storage we talked about, some of them may be in a physical state. How are we able to get those into a digital state and allow our customers access? COVID had an impact on driving the overall market around digital transformation, but certainly for us, it also allowed us to partner with our customers and provide some innovative solutions based on their needs.

Dave: That's cool. So I imagine, as you're shifting to this digital world, Jen, that this really impacts your talent strategy and you're probably adapting your culture to meet this evolved digital business demand.

Jennifer: We focused on transforming to more of a solution and value creation orientation for our customers where previously, we were more transactional. We're now solving more complex problems. So in the past, we may have been helping customers understand how to free up real estate and things of



Keystone Partners

that nature by taking records off site. But now we're really focused on helping customers solve more complex solutions, more end-to-end processes. So we really need to listen deeply and understand our customer needs and focus on the customer experience. We've really been focused on evolving our commercial organization to support complex solution sales, so training and hiring the right talent. We've been focused on continuing to evolve our customer experience organization and our approach there. They've been doing a great job, but that's something that you continue to evolve and add to. We also have been focused on building that muscle around true customer led innovation and solution development, and ensuring strong service delivery for our customers. So really putting the customer at the center.

Dave: And how's that impacting what your HR team's doing? So how has your HR team evolved to meet these customer centric demands?

Jennifer: Really, it is partnering with, understanding the customer perspective, both outside and inside and bringing that to the table for our planning and understanding of our talent, our capabilities, the types of programs we need to enable the talent and the organization that we need in the future. So the HR team has been partnering with the business and collaborating with them to focus on that. The other big thing that we've done is focused on transforming and evolving our internal processes and technology to enable us to work differently. And HR has partnered with our technology team on that. For example, we rolled out agile training, we did design thinking. So that is starting to really move into a different way of working and different capabilities. And I think the last and big piece that HR has been focused on is around the culture. So really facilitating a culture where the customer's at the center, where we focus on the employee and an agile, creative environment where we collaborate and are inclusive, and bringing that even to our leadership capabilities in how we think about what's needed there.

Dave: I think you're starting to talk about what some of the core values are. Are there any other key parts of the core values at Iron Mountain that you'd like to share and how they manifest in the culture?

Jennifer: Our core values are foundational to who we are, and it is really what's most important, and they guide our decision-making and our culture. We have a number of them, but one that I might highlight is that we own safety and security. We really focus on protecting ourselves and each other from harm and secure our customer's assets as if they're our own. We do a lot of safety briefings with our employees in the morning. We have a very large frontline who is out in front of our customers, driving trucks, and warehouses, and what have you. And we do regular safety briefings with them and training to ensure that they're safe.

Dave: That is not something that you'd see. I think they say you shouldn't read somebody's core value statements and say "That could be any company." And that's certainly something that you don't see in a lot of core value statements, that the safety and security is such an important part of what you do. It's kind of like you're the Fort Knox of the business world in a way, right? And I imagine you have to hire people that really embrace safety and security in many different parts of your business.

Jennifer: That's right. Safety and security is important across all of Iron Mountain, but it looks a little bit different in the different pieces of the business. So clearly, we have our frontline workers that I



Keystone Partners

mentioned, but we also have our data center business where safety and security is paramount. It really is a part of our brand.

Dave: Right. I was wondering, a talent that you brought into Iron Mountain, does it come from places of highly secure type thing? Like I mentioned, Fort Knox kind of jokingly, or the Federal Reserve Bank or other places that we would think of really highly secure, maybe defense. Do you draw talent from those types of industries, maybe IT security firms and things like that? I'm just curious if that's the kind of person that you attract and recruit.

Jennifer: We recruit people from those types of organizations. We have a lot of assets, so we have a fairly large physical security. And to your point, that's where we hire people, from different agencies and organizations where that is critical.

Dave: Yeah. I was curious too, you think about innovation and creativity and speed of decision-making. Those kinds of things seem to be, maybe I'm just being stereotypical, that would be in conflict with security and safety. I'm wondering, how do you make sure, in your culture, that we can be creative and innovative and make decisions quickly at the same time that core value of being so safe and secure? Is it in conflict or is it not?

Jennifer: It is a balance. Certainly to be innovative and move with pace, we need to think forward leaning. But certainly, as a part of that, we're thinking about managing either our data and information or our customer's data and information, in a secure way, and keeping the safety of our people. It's been kind of a healthy tension for us, I would say, certainly leaning forward, driving customer led innovation. For most of our customers, security is important to them. So it becomes part of that innovation thought process.

Dave: I see. Please tell us about Iron's DEI strategy and your approach, and maybe how it's evolved in 2020. I know a lot of companies have added more focus to their DEI strategy.

Jennifer: At Iron Mountain, our commitment to inclusion and diversity really starts with our core values and our culture. We have inclusion and teamwork, diversity foundational in both of those. With 20,000 plus employees, we represent many different races, religions, ethnicities. And we know that our shared success is really driven by our collective efforts and our diverse backgrounds and experience and ideas. That really makes us stronger and enables us to be more creative, innovative, and effective. We have been really focused on building an inclusive workplace that encourages employees to be their most authentic selves. It is foundational in our core values and our culture. We want people to feel welcomed, we want people to feel a sense of belonging, and connected and valued at work. And really, without inclusion, diversity and equity efforts don't have the full success that they could.

Dave: That's correct.

Jennifer: In 2020, we've had great engagement and involvement within the company taking DEI to the next level. It's been an important part of who we are and it will continue to be. But we have highly engaged ERGs. We set up cross functional teams that are running point on various initiatives that we



Keystone Partners

kind of structured under some key pillars. So we're focused on bringing new initiatives on our talent and bench strength, leadership, and organization, and corporate responsibility, to name a few. And so we have different teams that are running point on that, connected with HR and our diversity team. It's really nice to have the broad engagement of the organization because you're able to deliver so much more and you're also able to have the different perspectives at the table.

Dave: Jen, here we are, early in 2021 and I was wondering if you could just share how you've been helping your employees over the last year, navigate the life work balance having to work remotely in some cases. I know you have a lot of people that work in the physical world that can't work remotely. I'm just wondering what you and the HR team are doing to help your employees during this pandemic?

Jennifer: Our HR team has been amazing, collaborating and partnering across the company and outside the company. We quickly came together as leaders to support our Mountaineers and ensure they were safe and able to find...

Dave: Mountaineers! I love it!

Jennifer: Mountaineers. We did poll surveys to understand how people were feeling, what type of support they may need so that we could stay on top of that. From a wellbeing and work life, we really focused on delivering PPE for frontline and families and access to testing very early on because we have a large number of people who are out there on the front line of our customers every day. But we also had a significant number of people who moved to work from home in roles that could work from home and providing flexibility of hours where possible, doing some job sharing where possible and where people were looking for that. We updated our EAP and mental health offerings to support our employees and families. And we really provided some training around resilience for both employees and leaders. Financial health was some training we provided that actually was requested by our employee base, and really working with leaders to have them play an increased role in wellbeing, checking on employees.

Dave: I'm curious, what's that look like? What does it look like for a manager taking a more active role with their employees at Iron Mountain?

Jennifer: We worked with our employees and our leaders to have them understand what was available to their employees and to understand the importance of that connection. And that really now more than ever with many people at home and many people struggling, to balance everything, that they probably are the person with the best perspective as to how somebody is doing and how they can help them move forward. So really making sure they understand what we're providing, what's available, from the perspective that they can bring those offerings to the person.

Dave: Another touch point. I'm sure from an HR standpoint, you're sending those to employees. But sometimes people don't get that information or see it when they need to see it. So it sounds like the managers are reinforcing...



Keystone Partners

Jennifer: That's exactly right. And I think the other thing is sometimes employees are reticent to reach out, to say an EAP or to different types of help you may provide, something on mental health, and helping them understand what that process is and making it feel easier for them to access. And lots of times, that's through their direct leader.

Dave: That's great.

Jennifer: And then I think the last piece is really focusing on communications. I know many companies have been doing that, but regular communication from the CEO, leaders, HR.

Dave: Jen, how do you and the people that work for you communicate? Do you do Zoom meetings? Is it emails? Is it podcasts? How do you keep the regular communications from the HR group?

Jennifer: We have regular Zoom meetings. Lots of times we'll work with a leader to be part of their meeting and help deliver a piece of it. Certainly, emails we've put out. And I think the other thing we've used is we've created some communities through Currents or some areas like G Suite Google sites, where we've been able to create a place for say, working parents, helping to facilitate and collaborate on that site or tips for working virtually and managing virtual teams. So the HR team was really leaning in to help put those tools and build those communities and connect with the organization as well. Yeah.

Dave: Now, Bill Gates recently predicted that business travel, I was surprised, I saw this article a month or so ago and he predicted the pandemic so he has some credibility here. Five years ago, he did a big TED Talk on a pandemic like this coming. But he predicted that business travel compared to pre-pandemic, he thinks it will be reduced by more 50%. And that in-office work will be long-term reduction 30%, from pre-pandemic to when the pandemic is over. Do you think he's right, I guess, about those two things? And as you think about, if you think he's somewhat right, what does that mean for work at Iron Mountain?

Jennifer: I do believe the pandemic has pushed the envelope on what types of meetings and activities can be done virtually or differently than we've done them in the past, which might've been more in-person or face-to-face. And I think as we go forward, I would see travel, in general, reduce. I think we'll have more, say regional engagements. I think we will really be thinking about travel relative to am I traveling 24 hours, one way to attend a two day meeting and 24 hours back, and is there a different way for me to have that type of meeting?

Dave: Right. So really looking at the trade-off. If it's like a week of travel, say, "Oh, that might be worth it." If somebody is going for one meeting, then it's going to be two days of travel for one meeting, you're like, "Well, maybe that doesn't make sense." Right?

Jennifer: Yeah. So I think a lot of those types of meetings will be looked at more closely. I certainly think a certain amount of travel will continue. You'll want to connect with your customers and with employees broadly, but I do think travel will change. And I think it really is about looking at what is the work you're doing when you're traveling, what are you trying to achieve in the travel and looking at those trade-offs. Similarly, as I look at the office, I think the job, I'll put that in air quotes, of the office



Keystone Partners

will fundamentally change. I do think there will be offices, I don't think that's going away. But I think how we use the office and then the spaces that will be required to support that type of work will likely be different. I think we'll be using the office more as a collaborative space where people are coming together, either to do training or to innovate or to connect. And so I think it'll be different type of spaces and a different type of need potentially in the office than we had in the past.

Dave: Yeah. I think you're right about that. You said it differently than I've heard people talk about it. I've heard people talk about it, like we won't spend as many times in the office. But I think what you're saying is really right. It's like the why in the office. And the why is when are we collaborating and that's going to be the big driver. When do we need to be together to do things more effectively? Not where do I say I sat in my desk at the office so many hours a week. That's less important. I liked the way you said that.

Jennifer: That's exactly right.

Dave: What is something of importance with regard to HR, business, that you've had a strong opinion about, but you've started to change your mind about, or have you changed your mind about, over the years with your experience?

Jennifer: Earlier on in my career, I'm not sure I appreciated the goodness that conflict could facilitate. I think I saw conflict early on as something that perhaps was best avoided, and I've changed my position over the years and through experience. What I've learned is that oftentimes the best outcomes come out of conflict. It really encourages open-mindedness, it brings new perspectives to the table. It really helps avoid group think. And when it's done well, it is respectful.

Dave: I agree so much in that same camp with you on this one. I'm still a little bit conflict avoidant, but I'm understanding, right? They always say, if two people always agree, one of them isn't necessary. We have to have some healthy conflict to get better decisions and better outcomes.

Jennifer: Yeah.

Dave: I like that. We produce this podcast in cooperation with NEHRA, and we have the NEHRA emerging HR professionals' question of the podcast. "What's something, a quality or a couple of qualities, that you see in HR people that are really effective? Ones that are emerging. People maybe that you look to hire or people on your team. What are some of the things that they're demonstrating that you're like 'That's the kind of thing I want to see in people that work for me'?"

Jennifer: I think one are people who bring the outside in. So people who themselves put an emphasis on learning and bring new perspectives to the table or new approaches to the table that can help support the business and that can help our team learn collectively.

Dave: Jen, if I could, I like that a lot. You don't have to name any names, you could of course if you wanted to. Is there an idea that came out from the outside in that you're like, "This is a good example of it."?



Keystone Partners

Jennifer: We have evolved our approaches relative to say some talent frameworks or approaches on how we think about the value creation roles in the organization. And it was really from bringing another person's perspective in something they've done somewhere else or that they've seen elsewhere and bringing that inside.

Dave: That's cool, value creation roles.

Jennifer: The other thing I was going to say is just strong business acumen. So somebody that can really appreciate the business, the business drivers, they're able to say, translate how the HR strategy and the HR approaches from talent, culture, organizational development, and those types of things can enable the business or the enterprise to achieve their goals.

Dave: Excellent. If you could write a letter of advice, business, career advice, to your 25 or 30 year old self, what would you write? Dear Jen.

Jennifer: I would probably say to focus on productivity and not effort. I've always had a very high capacity for work, but I find, early in my career, I would sometimes put in more hours than needed. And I probably also did too much soloing early on and not employing enough of a team. Often, my methods weren't potentially as productive as they could have been. You don't get points for working 60 or 70 hours a week. You actually get points for producing results and delivering. And I probably could have shaved hours off of my work week earlier or produce much more in the time I spent working by engaging a team and thinking about things differently.

Dave: That's really good. That's good advice to all of us. So that's great.

Jennifer: Too bad it took me this long.

Dave: All right, Jen, all of a sudden, something gets canceled and you ended up with a bucket of hours that are totally unscheduled, and you're somebody that savors time. So what do you do with this gift of time that just falls in your lap?

Jennifer: Certainly some unscheduled hours would be decadent. I would go for a run, take the dog for a walk and really just spend time with my family and friends, either on the beach or a ski slope and probably have a good book nearby. Simple things.

Dave: That's good. What's a book that you love?

Jennifer: I just read *Good Company* by Arthur Blank. That's a good book. But I actually go between, say business books or non-fiction books and also complete beach reads, to be honest, because I find I just sometimes need to check out.

Dave: Yes. If you could go to dinner with anyone, who you don't know already, who would it be and why?



Keystone Partners

Jennifer: I think Sheryl Sandberg. She's so intelligent and inspirational. I am amazed by how she balances her personal life, her professional Facebook life, and her contribution to activism for females. It really is amazing to me. So I would love to have some time with her.

Dave: I agree. And we've had a couple people on the podcast talk about her. And one person who was one of her direct reports, it was Kim Scott who wrote *Radical Candor*. And when they were at Google, she talked a lot about how Sheryl was an incredible mentor and actually, her interactions with Sheryl were really the start of her writing the book, *Radical Candor*.

Jennifer: Oh, that's fantastic. I didn't realize that.

Dave: And it's been so great, Jen, having you on the podcast. Really enjoyed the discussion. Thank you.

Jennifer: Thank you so much for having me. I appreciate it. It's been fun.

Recorded Message: Thank you for listening to The Hennessy Report from Keystone Partners. Be sure to subscribe to listen to all of our conversations with leaders in HR. Go to keystonepartners.com and click on the podcast button.

The information, opinions, and content presented in this podcast are for general information only. Views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in the podcast belong solely to the speaker, and not necessarily to the speaker's employer, organization, committee, or other group or individual.

Keystone Partners assumes no responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions in the content of this transcription. The information contained herein is provided on an "asis" basis with no guarantees of completeness, accuracy, usefulness, or timeliness.

© Keystone Partners and The Hennessy Report. 2021. All Rights Reserved.

All other trade names or company names referenced herein are used for identification purposes only and are the property of their respective owners.