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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 Alyssa Lahar, the Chief Human Resources Officer at ZoomInfo, a business marketing and information company, not a video conference company, which we discuss on the podcast. Alyssa really has incredible energy, and I think she really matches the culture she describes at ZoomInfo. It's a very fast-paced, agile culture, flat org structure, no hierarchy, and a really friendly organization. She describes how they really encourage people to change functions and change departments to really find their passions inside the organization. Alyssa also shares a funny story about how she overcame her fear of flying several years ago. So it's a great coincidence that our very next guest on the podcast is the Chief People Officer at Southwest Airlines, Julie Weber. And now our conversation with Alyssa Lahar.

Alyssa, welcome to the podcast.

Alyssa Lahar: Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Dave: It's good having you. And we always start The Hennessy Report by Keystone with learning a little bit about our guests before we talk about your company and HR. Share a moment from earlier in your life that you see as an inflection point or informs who you are as a person or as a professional.

Alyssa: I'm envious of all the interesting stories that your guests have shared. I took the more traditional route getting into HR. I worked as a recruiter at a recruiting agency the summer before my senior year in college. And then from there progressed into compensation and ultimately went to work for EMC for 19 years, which was acquired by Dell. My inflection point, I think, came a little bit later in my career. I was probably in my early thirties and I had just taken on a new role. And I am, and was, petrified of flying. I remember being at Logan Airport, taking a flight to Denver, and I remember calling my husband saying, "I'm not getting on this plane." He told me, "You have to, they're expecting you." I worked for a global company, future opportunities and growth within the HR organization would require me to fly to different locations, but my inability to get on that plane directly conflicted with my aspirations.

So, I ended up getting on the plane. Those five hours were filled with fear and tears and a lot of turbulence, but I did do it. And I think for me at that point, I realized that my entire career would be filled with challenges and roadblocks, but if I wanted to continue to grow and to learn, I would not be able to let my fears dictate my decisions.

Dave: Yeah. That's a good story. And figures, the first flight has a lot of turbulence too, right?

Alyssa: Denver, always Denver.

Dave: Yeah. Well, let's talk about ZoomInfo. Why are so many companies have the name "Zoom" in it? We got the Zoom video conference, we get Zoom Tech [Technical Services], Zoom Education and ZoomInfo.



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Alyssa: I know. It seems to be a popular name and I think due to COVID and the pandemic this year, Zoom video was obviously brought to the forefront and then with our IPO this year that put us in the spotlight. So yeah, definitely a lot of companies, maybe it's a good sign.

Dave: You got to look at it that way. I'm sure you have to answer questions when you're interviewing new candidates, they get confused about which Zoom they're interviewing at, right?

Alyssa: Yes. Yes we do. I'm hoping that works to our advantage though.

Dave: Well, on this note, tell us about your business. Tell us about ZoomInfo, what the business model is, how it's evolved, just so people get a sense of what you do there.

Alyssa: We are a fast-paced go-to-market intelligence platform. We help companies sell and market their products and services to other companies. So essentially we're helping companies send the right message to the right customer at the right time.

Dave: Can you give us an example of a typical client engagement? What do they come requesting? What does Zoom provide?

Alyssa: I'll actually give you one of my favorite examples, because I think it also highlights the opportunity within COVID. There's a company called TentCraft and they manufacture tents for concerts and things like that. So as you can imagine with COVID, they have been deeply impacted. We've helped them pivot their business. So they came to us and said, "We think there's a real opportunity to turn our tents into testing tents." They had never sold to healthcare or to hospitals. So we worked with them to get the data they needed to target the right customers. And this was last year, and April was actually their highest revenue month of all times because they were able to pivot with their product and using our tool and what the industry needed at that time.

Dave: To help make connections and build relationships with their new customer base that they had to target, right?

Alyssa: Exactly.

Dave: That's really cool. You don't think about all these other businesses that are impacted by the pandemic, but I wonder where all the tents have shown up outside of restaurants that have expanded so you can eat outside, and it's companies like this, right?

Alyssa: Exactly. And we have so many great examples of retailers that have done similar things. We have a company named Arnold's Office Furniture who create office furniture, and then Silk Home, which makes fabrics, and both of them pivoted their businesses to create personal protection, and were able to keep people employed at their companies and keep generating revenue just by using our tool and being able to target the right customers.



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Dave: Wow, that's interesting. It almost reminds me of when we had Annie Drapeau from Toast and she talked about how they had to pivot their business for all the remote ordering of food and takeout. So, that's cool. Alyssa, can you tell us a little bit about how ZoomInfo began? How it's evolved?

Alyssa: Our founder and CEO, Henry Schuck, started this company in 2007 in his law school apartment. He and his partner at the time put \$25,000 on credit cards and DiscoverOrg was born. So DiscoverOrg was the company that he started and then acquired ZoomInfo and then we rebranded as ZoomInfo.

Dave: Ah, I didn't realize that. And what was DiscoverOrg? What was their business model at the time? Was it similar to what you do now?

Alyssa: Yes. ZoomInfo and DiscoverOrg complemented each other. So when we brought the platforms together, we created a shared new platform that took the best of both legacy platforms.

Dave: Can you give us the sense of the scale now? Employees? How big you are from a business standpoint and how fast it's growing?

Alyssa: So I started about 16, 17 months ago and we were just under a thousand employees and today we just hit over 1800. So in a very short period of time, we have hired a lot of people.

Dave: Yeah, almost doubled. Wow.

Alyssa: Yeah, and the expectation is that we'll continue to grow at a very similar pace this year.

Dave: I wonder if the remote way we work, the business community need your services even more, your marketing services or your information services?

Alyssa: Right, and I think a lot of in-person events have been canceled and rescheduled. And so our pools give them an opportunity to still go after those people that they would have been able to come into contact with in those types of events, but to do it virtually.

Dave: Right. So it really ties in with this crazy economy we're in. Let's talk about HR stuff. Maybe you could share ZoomInfo's core values and how they're manifested throughout the organization.

Alyssa: We are a group of people with a passion to win together. We have and live by five main core values that we have embedded into every piece of the employee life cycle. Our values around defining new possibilities, so being creative, being innovative, no matter what part of the organization you're in, you don't need to be in engineering to create. Being difference makers, so Henry talks a lot about getting 1% better and that's our goal and whatever we're doing, whether it be process or our products or our data, always just getting 1% better. One team, one dream. We work very well together. It's an extremely collaborative environment. There's not a lot of hierarchy. It's run like a very flat organization and people are encouraged to really reach out to whomever they need to across the organization, regardless of function or level or anything like that. Our fourth value is really around getting stuff done. We definitely have a bias towards action and then our bar is high, and that's for our candidate



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experience our employee experience and certainly our customer experience. We're always trying to create the best experience that we can for people.

Dave: Excellent. How do you make sure that the new people to the organization know it's okay and are encouraged and maybe break some of those old habits of being very hierarchical?

Alyssa: When we're interviewing candidates, we very much also look for how they're going to fit into our culture. We have a fast paced culture and it can be chaotic at times. But what I love about that chaos is from that you have the opportunity to be very agile and to move very quickly and to course correct when necessary. As we go through the three hour onboarding on their first day, we have different people come in and talk to pieces of the culture and give examples of the values.

On "One Team, One Dream," for instance, this year with racial injustice and so forth, that was something that was very important to us. And we wanted to show not just our employees, but the whole world that we were very supportive of our Black employees and the Black community. And we used our platform on IPO day in New York on the NASDAQ tower to send a message. But we also did a lot of work internally. We worked with our Zoom in Color, which is our Black employee resource group, and we partnered with them and our marketing team to design shirts. We ended up selling these really cool shirts. All of the money went to various charities that Zoom in Color recommended. We had a Black manufacturer in Minnesota manufacture the shirts, and it was the entire company moving in one direction, supporting one another. And through various efforts, we raised over a \$100,000 for these charities. And I think what was so amazing and how this ties to the "One Team, One Dream" is, yes, Henry and others did give money, but that was independent. This was truly a grassroots effort of every employee giving \$5 or buying a shirt or whatever they felt that they were comfortable doing to raise this money.

Dave: I know it's difficult oftentimes for white people to talk about race. I was wondering what kinds of things you do to make it okay.

Alyssa: I'm just really proud of all the work that we've done, and we is not HR. It's not even the employee resource groups. It's every employee. I think if you didn't have the support and adoption by every employee, then HR putting out a strategy around diversity and inclusion and equality isn't going to mean much. We spend a lot of time partnering with the employee resource groups, ensuring that we're doing the right training...we're providing the right education. We host lots of fun events to get people excited about it. For Martin Luther King Day, we just hosted an open mic night where people could come and perform. They read poetry that they wrote. It was just an incredible night and that raised money for Black Resilience. A couple of weeks prior to that, our LGBTQ community had a drag show, which was amazingly fun.

Dave: You told me about that when we first met.

Alyssa: And it was great because the first portion of it was really about education, and I learned a lot about how drag was founded. And then of course, we got a performance, which was very cool.



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Dave: And did you find that employees embrace that?

Alyssa: So much so. And, we try to create an environment where people can ask questions. We tell them that all the time. It's a safe zone. And people ask questions all the time, and people are very respectful, but they're seeking to understand. And it's pretty amazing, the patience that the different communities have shown our employee base in terms of responding to these questions and really helping us be educated because it's certainly not their job to educate us. For Juneteenth, we had an event and they talked about how slavery started. And after it, I went upstairs and I was talking to my husband about it because again, I learned a lot during that session. And I think we're always learning and we always have the opportunity to learn from others. So these events have just been really great. We try to celebrate people's differences and make people feel comfortable asking anything. With that said, we also have a zero tolerance policy. So we expect people to be respectful and we absolutely hold people to that.

Dave: Something you just said reminded me. We just interviewed for the podcast, Robin DiAngelo, who wrote *White Fragility*, and one of the things she said is, "When you're doing this well, you might sometimes find that you're hearing more things from more different types of people in your organization that have concerns." But she says, "That's a good thing because you want people to feel like they can come forward."

Alyssa: I a hundred percent agree. In the beginning, we sort of monitored the questions. We had people writing questions ahead of time. So we could ensure that they were appropriate. And now we've gotten comfortable with letting people ask questions as they come to them. And we've seen an increase in questions for sure. But it's driven better conversation amongst employees. So yeah, I totally get it.

Dave: Yeah. I think it shows that there's more trust in the organization that people can voice concerns, right? It's worse if you don't hear anything.

Alyssa: Right.

Dave: And that's what her point was.

Alyssa: And people are showing up at these events, they're supporting people. It's... They're very well attended globally. We have about 250 people in Israel, and we try to do events at times where everyone can attend. That's not always the case. It's fantastic to have everyone there.

Dave: What's important to you about the way people work together at ZoomInfo?

Alyssa: I think ZoomInfo's culture is incredible. I think when you walk the halls – pre-COVID – there was this energy around people. I think we have this great habit of hiring really smart people. And so, you'll find that if you want to learn more about something, you can reach out to somebody, who's a subject matter expert, and they will absolutely spend the time to make you knowledgeable in whatever topic you're interested in learning more about. And I think more than anything, we want our employees to feel that they can be themselves. And we do believe that diversity is something to be celebrated. And so



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when we transitioned last March to virtual, which was new for us, we have tried and we'll continue to try really hard on preserving that culture and the way people work together.

Dave: You've given a couple of good examples of the way you're doing lots of things to keep that community, even though you're not in the same space. I was wondering what else you've been able to do during this pandemic to try to keep people together?

Alyssa: The most important thing we're doing is recognizing it's a really difficult time for people. Everybody's different, everybody has different needs. So treating people as individuals and encouraging them to come forward with any of the needs they may have is really important. From a company-wide perspective, we launched a wellness platform and that is helping people get active. It reminds you to get up and do some activity during the day, which I know we all sometimes forget. It's for the competitive people out there. You can have challenges, to number of steps and things like that. I think it also sends a message to our employees reminding them that they have the freedom and flexibility to spend part of their workday exercising. We move, or in 2020, to a flex time off schedule. So encouraging people to take the time they need, even if they're not vacationing right now, but if they just need a day to decompress, they should feel free to do that. We've also had a lot of micro training sessions presented to management around how they can support their employees.

Dave: So it sounds like it's really small bites, small videos. You're trying not to do those long sessions on video and...

Alyssa: We have a slack channel that we use for recommendation or suggestion of the week where we'll just give them a one or two liner about how they can work more effectively with their teams and so forth. And, for an example there, meeting fatigue seems to be something that's been on everyone's mind. And so we're constantly evaluating opportunities to improve our employee experience. So we're running round tables with new hires, with tenured employees and everybody in between. And we learned through that, that meeting fatigue was something that people felt could use some support. So we built out a training where employees can learn how to run an efficient meeting, when to even have a meeting, and also really to understand what the implications are of a bad meeting. I think we all just sort of expect that it's a waste of time, but it's also lost revenue. It's poor morale. And so there are so many pieces and repercussions around attending or hosting.

Dave: That's really good. There's a ripple effect to a bad meeting, right?

Alyssa: There is, very much so.

Dave: Yeah,

Alyssa: You know agenda doesn't have to be complicated. It can just be four bullets and that's it. At least it sets the tone for what you want to accomplish in a meeting.



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Dave: I like that concept because I think a lot of people say, "Well, we didn't accomplish what we wanted to in that meeting." You don't get a positive, but I think your view is there's also a negative. You can also lose something from a bad meeting.

Alyssa: We have a gentlemen who started with us last quarter. He runs DevOps. And he was saying at his last company, he built Google plugin and it calculated every meeting they had, how much that meeting was costing. And so when you had all these executives or you had just a lot of people at this meeting and you said... I would start the meeting with, "Alright, this is a \$50,000 meeting. We better accomplish something out of it."

Dave: Oh my God, you got to send us that.

When you're hiring HR people, what's important to you about them?

Alyssa: It's important that they can partner well, both internal to HR and externally with the other organizations. HR plays a pivotal role. We work very closely with finance and legal, and then in terms of supporting the business, every function within the organization. So somebody who can communicate well and really build trusting relationships with other parts of the business is really important. Often HR has silos within HR. You have talent acquisition, you have employee experience, you have HR VPs. While everyone's not going to be able to sort of cross train in every function, I do like when we work collaboratively to solution any problem that we're working on. So for me, even during the interview process, as we're bringing people in for HR, we'll have different people across different functions be part of that interview process because I think you can teach skill set, but that type of drive and partnership is something that we want to see has been demonstrated.

Dave: I was wondering what you think about the limitations of the interview process. Sometimes somebody might interview very well, but not be a good fit.

Alyssa: I agree. I try very hard to make the interviews be very casual, to try to make people feel at ease, not be nervous and whatnot. And I will typically talk to candidates several times in the process so that if they had an off day or if they were nervous, that's okay. And again, we have many people in the process. So if I'm hiring, for instance, right now, I'm hiring an HR business partner. And so that person will meet with someone from the business that they'll be supporting. I will meet with them. Our head of talent management will meet with them. Our head of benefits will meet with them. And I feel like collectively, we get a good sense of what they've done. As I think all people have moved towards, it's much more behavioral based. So I'm more interested in how they have solved problems and what types of challenges they've been faced with more so, I am. than on how they necessarily respond to a specific question.

Dave: Right. That's a good point. If you make somebody feel relaxed, you're going to get more of who they authentically are, right? You're really trying to get to that, instead of people being rigid in the interview process. What are you proudest of with your HR team that you have built at ZoomInfo? Inherited as well?



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Alyssa: We have a fantastic HR team. It was a very challenging year for HR. We had natural disasters. We had racial injustice. We had COVID. I mean, there were so many challenges that our employees faced and the team has supported employees in such a genuine and respectful way. And on top of that, we've really made so much progress in performance management, and training and enablement for our leaders, and succession planning, and all the HR non-negotiables that could have been easy to put in the back burner while we kind of tended to the priority. If we were able to accomplish all of that, we implemented new systems to support our employees. So the HR team that we have today is amazing.

Dave: You mentioned one of my hot button issues. I always love to hear what organizations are doing with performance management. What's your performance management philosophy? How is performance management impacted here in 2020, 2021?

Alyssa: We want to provide every employee with the opportunity to be successful, so giving them the tools and resources that they need. Over the year, we've really made continuous learning a priority. So we onboarded a new LMS. We have a lot of new content because we don't want people to take training for the sake of taking training. We're really trying to create thoughtful learning paths for employees, and for managers, we just rolled out a pilot around management training. So those that are newer to management, helping them with having difficult conversations and how they performance manage within their teams and how they manage living our culture. These training sessions have really been helpful. We keep them very small. There's about 10 people and they can share stories and they can feed off and learn from each other. I think ultimately we just want our employees to feel valued and engaged. Retention is very important to us. We have very low attrition numbers, I think, because we've created this opportunity. I've never seen an organization where career mobility is so blatant. There's so much opportunity for people to move within departments, but cross-functionally and...

Dave: Oh, it's really encouraged to move cross-functionally within the organization?

Alyssa: Very much so.

Dave: I've seen organizations go, "Don't take that person from me." How do you quell that from managers?

Alyssa: It's funny because when I explain the culture here of just being a very kind culture, I truly mean that. There's no ego or politics here, which is amazing. And we really work hard...

Dave: And rare.

Alyssa: Yeah. And people, I hire months later will say, "You weren't kidding." And I think it's because of that, it allows managers to say, "Well, what's best for the employee?" And I'll give you an example. I have someone on my team, who's an HR business partner for the sales organization, specifically for our Chief Revenue Officer, obviously a very important job. And they have a great relationship and great trust, which is important in that role. And the HR business partner recently said, "Hey, I would love to try this and wants to go do something in talent acquisition." And when we shared it with the Chief Revenue



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Officer, he's like, "Fantastic. I'm going to miss him and he's going to be hard to replace, but I love that he's getting this opportunity."

Dave: That's awesome!

Alyssa: When it starts at the top and you have the CRO saying, "Hey, I'm supportive of this move." Then it trickles down and people just work it out and there are transition times and knowledge transfer and all that. But people are genuinely supportive of employees moving throughout the organization. My VP of Benefits, she's worked in IT, she's owned facilities, so people truly move around and it creates great opportunity and great well-rounded employees.

Dave: And people can find out about a skill or a talent they didn't know they had, right? By trying new things. That's great. What's something you've changed your mind about? Something important about HR or a business or talent that over the years you have a new view on it?

Alyssa: Probably leading people. So I'm a high D in terms of DiSC assessment, which basically means I am direct. I am decisive. I am driven. I am demanding, which is not the easiest to work for.

Dave: You read the detail on those. They describe each of them, right?

Alyssa: I'm also self-aware. But I drive results and that's one of my strengths. And so what I've learned over the years is to really bring people with you. And oftentimes you'll come up with a better solution just by having diversity of thought. I not only do that myself now, but also ensure that as I'm working with leaders in the organization, they're also doing that because I think if you looked at our culture, we probably have a lot of high Ds, which is amazing in getting things done and driving results.

Dave: It's one of your core values, right?

Alyssa: Exactly, so it's a great problem to have, but just ensuring that as leaders, we're all taking the time to explain the vision and how everyone ties to that vision and providing context, so that way all employees feel like they're part of the decision.

Dave: And overused talent becomes a weakness, right? And that's what you're saying. You want to make sure you're building a great team along the way. Well, now it's time for our NEHRA question of the podcast we bring in Meghan Mandino, the producer of The Hennessy Report, and also, she's part of NEHRA's emerging HR professionals. She has a question for you as well.

Meghan Mandino: So we were wondering, "What advice you would give to those, looking to emerge in the HR field?"

Alyssa: I would give two pieces of advice. It's a benefit for anyone in HR to have done a stint in recruiting, at some point. I think it provides them the opportunity to learn how to sell a company, to learn the industry, to work with individuals at all levels of the organization, and most importantly,



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customer service because of their interaction with the candidates and how they're representing the company.

The other thing I would say, and I had a mentor early on in my career, share this with me, and I'm a firm believer that sometimes people tend to look at, "What's next? What's the next title? What's the next layer of the organization." And it's really okay to move horizontally, whether they move from compensation to recruiting, to talent management, whether they move to supporting Israel instead of the United States, so they pick up a new geography or they go from supporting engineering to sales and it's just visibility to new leaders. You end up much more well-rounded, and you end up in a better position to take those leadership roles because you have a wealth of knowledge to draw from. So I would say those would be my two pieces of advice.

Meghan: That's really helpful, and I know a lot of the people that are involved in NEHRA and especially the Emerging Leaders Program are in different points in their careers. Some are entering HR right out of college, some are entering later in their career, and I actually have met a few in previous functions. And I remember one woman who was in a totally different career path and in banking, and she just had this passion for HR that she wanted to enter, but didn't know how. And I was wondering how you would tell someone to get kind of the courage to make that decision.

Alyssa: I think a lot of HR is built on relationships, being able to earn someone's trust, providing value and demonstrating that value. I think you can learn the skills along the way, as long as you're eager to learn and willing to learn from others and ask questions and so forth. We recently hired somebody with a finance background into HR. They didn't have any prior HR experience, but they had a passion for HR and a willingness to learn. And so we're excited to teach them. There are a lot of places within HR that you can start your career: compensation, if you enjoy analytics, I spent about a year and a half in compensation. We have someone who came from the sales organization, who is now working and being very successful in recruiting and was just moved into a leadership role there. So I think find what you're passionate about and then look how those skills transfer into the different HR functions.

Dave: Yeah. Sometimes I hear marketing and HR because sometimes internal communications can be a bridge to HR, right?

Alyssa: For employee experience as well. When we were looking to hire someone in 2020, we looked at PR, we looked at corporate comms, we looked at marketing, we looked at a whole bunch of different areas outside of the traditional HR employee experience.

Dave: Alyssa, you mentioned you had good mentors. When you look outside to the thought leaders or other HR pros, who do you look to to get ideas and advice when you go and you want to sharpen your skills? Where do you look?

Alyssa: This is going to sound a bit of a suck up, but I go to my boss a lot. Henry is a wealth of knowledge. He is so passionate about the company and the industry. And so oftentimes I ask him his opinion, and we don't always agree and that's fine, but it's always an interesting perspective. I certainly...



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Dave: He has a really good people barometer it sounds like. People strategy monitor.

Alyssa: Very much so.

Dave: Yeah.

Alyssa: Very much so, and sometimes he'll just point me to something he read recently. I do have HR people in my network, various CHROs that I'll reach out to if I have to then I can. Yeah. I'm very fortunate there where I've built some really great relationships. I do a lot of Google searches and read a number of different blogs and try to stay connected on the different metrics and understanding best practices in the industry and things like that.

Dave: If you could write a letter of advice to your 25 year old self, what would you write? Dear Alyssa...

Alyssa: Not to get worked up or emotional about things until there's a reason to. Growing up, my mother used to always tell me there are multiple measurements of intelligence. I think it was her way of saying, "It's okay that your brother's smarter than you." But she used to always say that emotional intelligence was what I was blessed with and common sense. And so I try very hard to use common sense and emotional intelligence with any problem I have professionally or personally.

Dave: That's good. What's something 10 years from now you fear you're going to regret? What's something you're like, "Oh, I want to make sure I don't fall into that or don't forget to do that?"

Alyssa: Certainly the time I spend with my children and my family. I am very fortunate where my husband is extremely supportive of my career. He's in education which does allow some flexibility in the evening, so sports and things like that, he's able to handle, which allows me to do what I need to do to grow my career. And I make sure that the time I spend with my children are quality versus quantity. I definitely work very hard at prioritizing both work and my family, but I hope that is something that I do not look back ten years and regret.

Dave: Yep, that's a good one. What's the kindest thing anyone's ever done for you?

Alyssa: When I interviewed with this company, one of the interviews I had was with a woman named Michelle Brewer. She was running HR for ZoomInfo and she was an incredible HR practitioner. She grew up with the company since the very beginning and she had this undeniable passion for the people and for the company. Henry and the leadership team had determined that it was a good time to bring somebody in, who had done HR at scale, and somebody who could continue to grow what Michelle had already put in place. When I onboarded, I thought, "You know, this could go in one of two directions," and I have to say Michelle was a rockstar in terms of my onboarding. She went out of her way to make sure I met with the right people to make sure that all of this trust that she had established over a decade was transferable.

And she still is educating me on the history on everything and anything I would need to know. I have about an hour and a half commute. And so I used to talk to her for an hour and a half every night on my



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way home from work. And we would just chat about the day. She would share things with me and I will never be able to thank her because I have been able to be successful in this role, truly because of her and how she set me up for success. Not to mention, I spent the first four out of five weeks in Vancouver. She's out in Vancouver, and every time I was there, she made sure I had a cheese quesadilla, and so I appreciated that as well.

Dave: Well, that's... Everybody knows that's typical Vancouver food. Everybody knows that. That's where they invented that I think.

Alyssa: But she has just been remarkable in how she has extended herself.

Dave: Yeah. She sounds like an awesome person and it really set you up for success and for the organization that you're successful. That's great. And last question, you could go to dinner with anyone who you don't know, who would it be?

Alyssa: So there are a lot of people that I would go to dinner with.

Dave: You want a big dinner party, not just a little one-off?

Alyssa: I think for the sake of this discussion, I think I would pick Michael J. Fox. I grew up watching him every Thursday night on *Family Ties*... Alex Keaton...

Dave: Oh, me too.

Alyssa: ...with my parents, with my brother. And he was determined, he was smart, but he was also very compassionate or his character was all of these things. And from what I read, I think Michael J. Fox is as well. And later in his career, after he was diagnosed with Parkinson's, he took a brief break, but he did go back. He went back to acting, he went back to directing. He went on shows with his tremors and with his shakes. And to me, what that showed is that disability does not have to slow you down or take you away from your passions and what you love to do. And I just think he is such a remarkable role model. He is a self-proclaimed optimist, which I also admire. And I just think despite all of his challenges he has persevered.

Dave: That's great. Alyssa, it's been so great having you on The Hennessy Report by Keystone.

Alyssa: Thank you. Thank you very much for having me.



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