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Meet The HR Professional

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Where did you grow up? Tell us about living there.

I started my life, along with two brothers and a sister, in a row house in Northeast Philadelphia. My parents are hardworking people, and very early on they instilled in me a strong work ethic, and stressed the importance of having strong convictions, being passionate about my wants and needs, and to not just talk about things, but to put a plan in place to make my dreams a reality. I try to do these things each and every day and to remember not only where I came from, but where I am headed as well.

Where do you live now? What do you enjoy most about living in your area?

The latest chapter in my life has led me to the suburbs of Philadelphia: Chalfont to be exact. I love being close enough to the city to enjoy the cultural and social attractions, yet far enough away to be able to give my children the gift of a yard and a neighborhood where they can ride bikes and run and play sports with friends. It is truly the best of both worlds. Bucks County is a wonderful place to watch my family grow, and a place where we can create roots for ourselves that will last a lifetime.

Why did you pursue a career in Human Resources?

Truthfully, human resources sort of found me. My earliest "position" in HR was at the age of fifteen. I helped students applying to medical school complete their applications. To get to this, I interviewed the students and then assisted them in writing their "story" to help them stand out from the crowd and get selected to join the medical school of their choice.

What solidified my passion for HR was my early experience with a difficult HR situation. I witnessed sexual harassment in the workplace and had to make the difficult decision to say nothing and preserve my job or speak the truth and risk losing it. I chose to follow my gut and subsequently played a major part in a huge harassment lawsuit. I felt that the HR department for this organization failed to help the victimized employee. This defining moment in my career prompted my commitment to work diligently as an HR professional and ombudsman to properly assist both employers and employees in a fair and respectful environment. This goal is something that I strive for each and every day — to be sure that the people I work with, and that I work for, are treated fairly and respectfully.



Heather McCloskey

What do you enjoy doing when you are not working?

At the end of the workday, on the weekends and just about any time I am not at the office I can be found with my children. The time I spend with them is the most joyful and satisfying in my life, and I welcome the opportunity to share all kinds of experiences with them. Whether we are together at a sporting event, sharing in an activity for school, or just spending time at home, I treasure the way we are able to enjoy each others' company and the family bond we are creating.

I have also dedicated a lot of my time to helping the members of my community, specifically helping people regain control of their personal and professional lives after suffering hardships or experiencing circumstances beyond their control. My goal is to provide them with the necessary tools as well as the self confidence to be able to reenter the workforce and reach their full potential. As a part of this goal, my company and I are recognized subject matter experts for Tracy Davidson's Survive & Thrive series on NBC10.

Recently, I also helped launch a wonderful women's networking group called Sisters U, as well as a corporate initiative called The Purple Cow, which helps people and corporations both big and small determine what makes them remarkable and stand out from the herd.

What is the most challenging or gratifying aspect of what you do?

I get to bring out the best in people. I get to listen to what someone is saying and turn it around and walk the person down a path that at the end allows them to fulfill a dream or start a business to do something they did not think they were capable of doing. If they are a business owner, I get to challenge them to step up and do something remarkable so they retain the right employees and manage their business in a manner that makes them proud.

Do you have any awards or certifications? How did it make you feel to get them?

"Philadelphia Top 100" Philadelphia Business Journal. Selected as one of the top 100 fastest growing, privately held entrepreneurial companies in the Greater Philadelphia Region, 2011

"Top Women Owned Businesses in Philadelphia Region" Philadelphia Business Journal, 2011

Recognized by Philadelphia Business Journal as "People on the Move" July 2011

Executive Spotlight Award Recipient, Eastern PA Business Journal, 2010

Certified Women Owned Business, PA Department of General Services, August 2010

Winning these awards and being recognized motivates me to work harder and try harder and aspire to be more than I am today. Honestly, I am not doing anything different than anyone else. I am just being a little brave and at times allow myself to jump

without a safety net.

I try to do something remarkable every day. I thank God everyday that I have great people in my life that bring out the best in me to make me dream big and take large chances.

What qualities do look for in a candidate?

I look to hire staff that has an internal drive to succeed, a strong work ethic and a commitment to excellence. (A sense of humor helps as well!) Our team is comprised of incredibly intelligent and gifted employees that share the same passion for helping our clients succeed as I do. They are the best of the best and the star performers in each of their disciplines. They are each subject matter experts — all I do is give them a chance to shine.

What advice do you have for someone looking to start a career in Human Resources?

As interns come through and interview with me I always ask them "why did you chose HR?" You need to know this. HR has one of the most important functions in an organization. In essence, we get to steer the ship and come up with how the culture of a company is developed and rolled out to the staff. HR professionals have an incredible opportunity to make their mark on every employee in an organization. I want people just starting out in HR to be able to recognize this fact and to always keep it in mind as they move forward in their careers.

What is the best tip you can give someone who is looking for a job right now?

The best tip that I can give a current job seeker is to commit to realizing that searching for a job is in itself a job. I would advise them not to take the easy way out and send every employer the same resume. Take the time to uncover who you are and what you want to do. Look inside yourself and discover what makes you truly remarkable and allows you to stand out from the crowd — and sell that person to your potential employers. Allow your resume to tell a story about you. Apply for the jobs that you are most passionate about so that the job you eventually find is one you truly enjoy doing.

What associations do you have with groups or clubs?

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

Temple University Mentoring Program

Sisters U (Cofounder)

Network Now

B2B Mastermind

Subject Matter Expert, NBC10 Survive & Thrive Series

Monthly guest on Chamber Chatter (Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce's radio show which is broadcast on BrandywineRadio.com)

Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce

Pennridge Chamber of Commerce
Penn Suburban Chamber of Commerce

Who was most influential in your choice of career?

For me, my father is the most influential person in my life. I grew up in an Irish, Union household. I saw how hard my father worked to make the transition from being a union laborer to a businessman. My father devoted his life to helping people get rehabilitated from drug and alcohol addiction. I got to witness his drive and passion and determination to not settle for average. He worked hard every day and become someone that people around him aspired to be then — and still aspire to be today. I knew from a young age that I was different and that I was special because I knew I had a spark like he had. I knew my role was to devote myself to my career and strive to make a difference in people's lives.

One of the most important things my father taught me was that success is a hard word to define and that we all define it differently. For him, it came down to the number of people's lives he touched.

On the day of his retirement party we tried to count how many people he had helped, or tally the number of families he had touched. What I realized then was that he could say for the first time in his life, "I am successful!" Why? Because although we tried, we could not count the number of lives he had made a difference in. This is the same goal I have set for myself. I want to walk in his footsteps and do for people what he has been so successful in doing for so many years.

If you were given a blank check, how much would you fill it out for and what would you do with the money?

If I were lucky enough to be given a blank check, I would not use it to leave my current job, but would continue doing exactly what I am doing today.

Additional money would, however, allow me to be able to incorporate my passion for helping people leave crisis situations into everything that I do. It would allow me to set up a "Home" and open it up to people that have fallen on hard times and truly want to make a difference in their lives and get back on track and discover their own road to happiness.

Being given a blank check would also allow me to create a grant program to provide training and resources to people in need or recovering from crisis. This would in turn put them in a better position to move forward in becoming the best that they can be.

It would also assist me in my goal to help people get themselves unstuck and to stop self sabotaging, and get back on track. Many of these people could very likely turn out to be owners and managers of Fortune 500 companies. They could then reinvest in the "Home" as well as in the community itself, and the wonderful cycle would continue.

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BUCKS COUNTY
Courier Times