

Winning Strategies from Talent Acquisition Leaders

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Katy Theroux of NCI Building Systems on HR's Role in Productivity and Branding



HR's Role in Productivity and Branding

An Exploration of the Many Sides of HR with Katy Theroux

Katy Theroux is Chief Human Resources Officer and Executive Vice President of Corporate Marketing for NCI Building Systems. An expert at aligning workforce and business strategies to drive powerful business results, Katy has led organizations from various vantage points (talent acquisition, operations, marketing and customer service) and combines all that experience, as well as her MBA from Saint Peter's University, to lead NCI's HR function.

[Talent Strategy →](#)

How does your unique expertise and range of responsibilities shape how you approach building an effective talent acquisition strategy for NCI Building Systems?

I think my personal approach to managing talent acquisition and HR started for me back in college where my career first began. I was at Syracuse managing the university's concessions, novelties and catering department at the Carrier Dome. From popcorn, beer and hot dogs to t-shirts and pompoms, our organization managed and staffed all the retail and food service outlets, which were staffed by about 400 students. It was an operationally-oriented environment in which we were engaging with customers and managing student employees at all times. Seeing the business from the perspective of both the customers and the employees gave me a foundation that has stuck with me throughout my career. I think that experience taught me the stark difference between having great people on the job versus having okay people on the job. From a customer's vantage point, it's a totally different experience and their experience, good or bad, is what fuels or drains revenues.

Bringing the Voice of the Customer to HR

A decade later, I also had the chance to expand my range of experience when I was running HR for a mid-market company in the midst of a big transformation. We were struggling to get the voice of the customer

heard throughout the organization. The voice of the customer was a key area of focus for our changing culture. As a leader in this change, I asked to take on the function to help accelerate the transformation. Over time my role grew as the voice of the customer influenced the products we sold. Eventually, I took over the product portfolio and marketing function. Gaining experience running a P&L is incredibly valuable for any leader, and I quickly discovered there was a lot of overlap between marketing and HR. Both the marketing and talent functions can have a powerful influence on the company brand. The brand is shaped wherever employees and customers meet. Whether a company produces products or services, wherever customers and employees are interacting is where the brand really comes alive.

Today I put all of that experience into a talent acquisition strategy that is focused on building teams that can 1) get the job done 2) support the customer to the best of their ability and 3) live out the company's brand commitments and values in the communities where they live and work.

Engagement →

What are the most important ways that HR can better engage quality candidates and become more productive in generating strong hires?

In HR, we are expected to have the same focus on driving results as our colleagues in other departments. In the last 10-15 years, we have seen both productivity measurement and consideration of the customer mindset become a part of how HR plans and works. Aside from enabling technology, I think this mindset has been the largest change for us as an HR community. Because of my work experience in college and my first job at a company where people truly came first, it has always been that way for me. But having experienced HR in seven companies, I can tell you that this is still a unique mindset.

To increase productivity while maintaining a positive impact on talent quality, HR teams need to leverage the kind of metrics and data analytics that the rest of the business uses to measure progress and benchmark success. That means using dashboards and data to line up HR objectives with business goals. As a company that has grown rapidly primarily through acquisition, we are very excited to be on the path to having just one system for talent data. We are implementing enterprise-wide HCM

software. It will allow us to see and measure the talent life cycle from start to finish, which will result in process improvements and insights that generate stronger decisions. This is where I see technology and analytics helping HR rapidly become an even more strategic, productive business and talent partner.

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[Employer Branding →](#)

Do you think it's important to have an established employer value proposition (EVP)? If so, why?

I always feel mixed on this question. For our organization, we have one message to the marketplace about who we are and what value we bring. Those values get translated into a set of behaviors and how we work with each other. Right now, we don't have a unique EVP, but we leverage the overall company messaging and purpose in order to speak to our employees and candidates about how we want and expect people to work, succeed and grow. As a company that has grown through many acquisitions, and one that generally goes to market as one of more than 15 brands, we are working hard right now to define the voice of the company. That voice is what ties us all together, defines who we are together and what that means to our customers, our employees and our NCI brand. Perhaps it is the path toward an EVP, but I think, especially for us right now, the journey is as important as the destination. The work we are doing to get to one voice and one message is bringing us closer together, and, as we grow, that is critical to our people and their success.

Has the rising focus on employer branding changed how your company recruits?

From a competitive perspective, yes. Employer branding has the potential to differentiate us at a time when it is still so hard to find talent. What I do know and see is that job seekers are smarter than ever. In fact, they are seeking jobs in the same way they are buying things on Amazon. They research, they compare, and they look at the data. With online tools and increased connectivity among people, they can easily see what other people are making in terms of salary and benefits. They can gather insight on a workplace without ever having been there by reaching out to employees or former employees and visiting sites like Glassdoor and LinkedIn. For us, in terms of employer branding and recruiting, this means we must consider how many places job seekers can gather insights on our organization and brands. We need to think about and address the many digital places where they are going to access our brand and present a clear picture of who we are as an employer and a place to develop one's career. We are in the early days of this at NCI – we have a plan and are beginning to execute on this.

[Key Points →](#)

Key Points:

The Candidate-Brand Connection

An expert at balancing leadership roles that straddle HR and marketing, Katy Theroux is a CHRO and EVP of Corporate Marketing whose thoughtful responses to our questions yielded numerous insights, including these three essential reminders on how to cultivate a stronger employment brand.

Brand Is In Every Connection

Your brand is shaped wherever customers and employees connect. Pay close and thoughtful attention to how your teams engage candidates and employees because those interactions are the heart and soul of your employment brand.

The Journey to EVP Matters

Developing an employer value proposition (EVP) is as much about the journey as it is about the destination. To get it right, it takes time, research and interaction with the employees who can confirm its authenticity. Don't skip steps. Do the work it takes to create a genuine EVP.

Show Hyper-Informed Job Seekers Your Good Side

Information access has made job seekers smarter and more resourceful than ever. Employers: Take into account the many digital places where job seekers are researching your business and ensure your employment brand story is strong.





About Orion Talent

Orion Talent provides a total talent solution for businesses nationwide, including skilled talent acquisition, recruitment optimization and military hiring solutions. As a military recruiting leader for 25+ years, Orion Talent has a long history of supporting Veterans in their search for meaningful careers and has found employment for more than 40,000 Veterans. Orion Novotus, an Orion Talent company, provides a full range of recruitment optimization and consulting solutions. Orion Talent has offices nationwide, a dedicated team of 200-plus recruiting experts, and holds more than 400 hiring events each year.

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