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LEADERSHIP & BUSINESS PODCAST

EPISODE 96: DIANNE GREENE – MILLENNIALS AT WORK

Ken White

From the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. This is Leadership & Business. The podcast that brings you the latest and best thinking from today's business leaders from across the world. We share the strategies, tactics, and information that can make you a more effective leader, communicator, and professional. I'm your host Ken White. Thanks for listening. Millennials, the generation whose members are between the ages of 16 and 38, make up the largest percentage of the population. By 2020 researchers say almost half of all U.S. workers will be millennials. And while there's no doubt millennials are here, and their impact continues to grow. Many organizations and companies struggle to attract and retain members of the generation. One organization that has it figured out is ADP. The Fortune 500 company that offers Human Capital Management Services, payroll services, HR software, and tax and compliance services for businesses around the world. Dianne Greene is Division Vice President and General Manager of ADP in Norfolk, Virginia. Seventy percent of her employees are millennials. Greene joins us on the podcast today to discuss the little things and the big things ADP does to attract and retain high-quality millennial talent. Here's our conversation with Dianne Greene of ADP.

Ken White

Dianne, thank you for taking the time to join us. First of all, welcome to William & Mary. Great to have you on campus.

Dianne Greene

Thank you. I'm so excited to be here. It's been a great day so far.

Ken White

And you had a nice lunch with some of our undergraduate students.

Dianne Greene

I sure did. They blew me away.

Ken White

Aren't they amazing?

Dianne Greene

They are amazing.

Ken White

I was nothing like that at that age. Not even close.

Dianne Greene

I don't think I was, either.

Ken White

Oh, I know I wasn't.

Dianne Greene

My brain just didn't work like that.

Ken White

It is. It's amazing, motivated, and smart.

Dianne Greene

That's right.

Ken White

And it's fun. That's great. Tell us about your role in the organization. What do you do? What's your organization do?

Dianne Greene

Yes. So I am the Division Vice President and General Manager of one ADP Norfolk. It is one of ADP newest facilities in the Norfolk area. We're right there in downtown Norfolk, and we're nestled amongst many other businesses in the Norfolk area. Norfolk's going through quite a revitalization right now. And so ADP has come in at just the right time, I think. I think being on the front end of all of that has really served us well, and our goal is to hire the best and the brightest in the area. Hampton Roads and beyond. We have when I say one ADP Norfolk, the one ADP methodology is part of our win as one strategy, and that is where ADP is really looking to break down silos. Really looking to collaborate and to get to market faster with solutions and services for our clients. And since we are the world's largest human capital management company serving over 650,000 clients worldwide in 110 countries, we have to do it right. We've got to manage our own human

capital resource the best way possible, and so we are leading the charge around that and really doing things differently in these one ADP locations. We have brought all business units, all functions, and disciplines under one roof where you have leaders side by side with associates, that leads into many opportunities whether we are looking at development opportunities. Whether we're looking at growth opportunities, innovation getting to market faster, all of that happens when you have all of the resources, all of the discipline, all of the mindshare in one place, and we're able to feed off of each other.

Ken White

One of the things it seems that you have really got right is hiring young new professionals or millennials, and it's an area that that many companies really struggle with. What do I do with these millennials, and they just really struggle? It has just been a grand slam for you. How did this happen? How did you approach it?

Dianne Greene

Yeah. So like I mentioned, you know, being the world's largest human capital management company, we've got to drink our own soup. We've got to get it right. And so, in one ADP Norfolk, we have 22 hundred seats at max capacity. We are just about midway through. So I'm at my halfway mark. Just about and 70 percent of them are millennials. 70 percent.

Ken White

Wow, 70 percent.

Dianne Greene

And I'll tell you. You know we've got everything there. Let's talk about the amenities because I think sometimes, when companies are hiring for a large millennial base that they think about the fun stuff and the fun stuff is good. I'm not discounting that at all, but that cannot be the end all be all of your recruiting formula. And so we have we've got the basketball hoops, we've got a, you know, the ping pong tables on every floor and corn hole and all sorts of table games and the video gaming room. I could go on and on. We've got you know 24 by seven gym and a doctor on site. It just, you know, amenities just abound in that particular facility, but that's not what keeps them or and that's not what will attract them. What attracts them is the ability to understand the role that they're coming into and how that applies to the bigger picture. Right. So to the business at large, how is everything that I'm doing on a daily basis adding value to your business? So they want to make sure millennials do. They want to make sure that there is a purpose and a value to the work that they're doing every day. They also want to make sure that they're getting the training and support. So we've changed our training and our support. When I talk, I'll talk a little bit about our leadership support and our management support completely different from what it used to be several years ago. The training is now quick.

There are new methods of training. Let's use video vignettes. Millennials want the information fast. Give it to them in small bites, give them a sandbox to play around in to make mistakes, to break things, to understand how the process works, and what what is the outcome of that. Give them a safe place to do that. The support it's, you know, looking at how leadership really develops your associate base. Our leaders know that you bring an associate on. You assimilate them to ADP culture overall. You train them on the tasks or the job that they were hired to do. But beyond that, you've got a mentor, monitor, and coach them. You know that you have to manage on a situational type basis, meaning it's not one size fits all. Leadership isn't one size fits all and what presses your button to get you engaged and to make you successful is different from the button that needs to be pressed for me. And we train our leaders to understand that. To understand how to look at the gaps on their team, how to identify fit, and then also how to know from a situational perspective which buttons to press to get everyone to be successful and to have the engine working as efficiently as possible. The other thing that we do is open two-way communication. So I remember my days on Wall Street it was very stiff. I was always afraid to talk to my leader's leader. In fact, I wouldn't even.

Ken White

Sure.

Dianne Greene

I would hide; I wouldn't want to have a conversation with that person. You know leadership is changing now. Millennials want to know that they can walk up to you and ask you a question. Ask you any question, and that you're not going to sit in judgment, and you're not going to think that because of your title that you can't answer. And so, you know, it's two-way communication and giving some level of transparency to the work that is being done and to the goals and the opportunities. We also really promote an environment where ideation and experimentation are welcome. Feel free to publish your ideas to share your ideas on collaboration sites in collaboration spaces. No idea is too big or too small. Let's fail fast, and let's move on to the next thing. That's big for Millennials because they want to test things out. I think there's this preconceived notion that they're the generation where everyone gets a trophy, but I don't know that they all expect a trophy. I think they all want to get their hands dirty and try to figure things out and fail at some things and get up and keep going. Try something else till you get the right formula. So that's been really, really helpful for us. Sharing across the employee community, opening up and being more transparent as leaders, and making sure that we are leading them in a way that isn't one size fits all and that we are listening. And then you layer on the basketball, and the Ping-Pong and everything else. All of that seems to work very well for us.

Ken White

It sounds great. It sounds like something I could read in an article and say yeah, sure. How do you implement this, but you're implementing it?

Dianne Greene

We are.

Ken White

How? I mean, that takes an incredible amount of effort and buy-in from everyone who's not in that 70 percent.

Dianne Greene

Absolutely. It starts with the leadership. It starts at the very top, and so you know our CEO is himself very approachable. He understands. He listens. And so that filters all the way down to all levels of leadership, and so as I lead that area or that particular facility, what I'm looking for as we bring new leaders on whether we're hiring them from the outside or whether we're relocating them from our other parts of ADP. I really look to test for an understanding of the new world order in terms of leadership that it is not stuffy. Stay in your office all day long. You must interact, and you must understand the people who are part of your organization. We know that we've got to start with. You know, we've got to make sure that we have diverse slates, and it's not ethnic diversity only. It's diversity of experiences, social, economic. It's, you know, diverse backgrounds and upbringing, all of that generates ideas and all of that helps us to be far more innovative than we've been in past years. And so we take that really seriously. We take it really seriously.

Ken White

We'll continue our conversation with Dianne Greene of ADP in just a minute. Leadership & Business is brought to you by the Center for Corporate Education at the College of William & Mary's Raymond A. Mason School of Business. The Center for Corporate Education helps companies and organizations from all over the world by creating and delivering customized business and leadership development programs. If your organization is looking to get to the next level, contact the Center for Corporate Education to discuss how we can create and deliver a program that specifically fits your needs and gets results. For more information, visit our website at wmleadership.com. Now back to our conversation with Dianne Greene of ADP.

Ken White

We see, and again I don't like to generalize. You use that title, millennials. But we see with younger workers younger professionals today after a few months. I want promoted. How do I move up? How do you tackle that?

Dianne Greene

So I will tell you that is that's always an issue in any organization where you have, you know, a broad base of millennials. They, you know they, expect things to come quickly. However, I'll tell you if you are appropriately setting expectations from the get-go. They come in understanding that it's not that you can't move up the ladder. It's not that you can't get up that learning curve faster than others. It's not that opportunities don't exist. However, we do need you to become proficient in your role. We do need you to understand the job that you have been hired for. We do need a return on the investment of investing in you and bringing you in. And I think when you are truly honest and transparent at that level, we found that they understand. So I'll share with you that before I got to Norfolk, we'd been operating since June, and I think there was that misconception that I'm gonna get this job and within three months, I'm going to be in the next role. And so when I got there, I really had to spend time resetting expectations to say, let's think about this a little bit. At the three-month mark, you're still in training. You still haven't learned the job that you were hired for. Let alone you know being proficient in the role. So let's just think this through a little bit and really talk about, you know, we know that you may want to do something else. What are those opportunities, and how do you get to that next thing as you ramp up the learning curve, and so then you start talking to them about career development and career discovery? Where they can explore other areas of the organization, and they can learn from others, and do some job shadowing. You make those available to them, and you make it available to them quickly. So you say three months, you're still kind of in training. How about you sit in your seat six months so you must be in your seat six months before you can start looking around and exploring wide possibilities within our organization? And that's gone really, really well.

Ken White

You've done so much. How long does that take? For an organization that's struggling with this that hasn't done it. That says, for crying out loud, 70 percent of my workforce, you know could be could have these desires and these expectations. How long does that take you to get the plan and to implement?

Dianne Greene

I think for us at ADP because we do this for ourselves, and this is part of what we offer as a service to our clients. We've been able to ramp it up pretty quickly. Leaders are held accountable. So my leaders in one ADP Norfolk know that beyond their day-to-day job. So let's take maybe VP of Finance beyond the VP of Finance role. There's a whole lot more to it. You are in a location where we are one ADP, so we are looking beyond finance. We're looking into service, and we're looking into implementation and sales and procurement. So you're getting outside of your core discipline, let's say, and everyone has skin in the game. We are all responsible for hiring the best talent. We're all responsible for leading our associates in a manner that provides them with opportunities to be successful. That we

are investing in their success, they, too, are investing in the success of the business. And so you make sure that at the very highest levels that that is part of the culture of the organization that is being infused that in and of itself, I think for our location because it's new. You get to pick who you want, and you get to pick who is on board with that methodology. In other places where let's say, more strategic locations that have been around a lot longer. It does take a little bit more time, but I would say the new one ADP locations it's faster because you are bringing that new talent or you are bringing talent that is hand-picked from other places within ADP into the location.

Ken White

So one ADP from a leadership standpoint, yep, we're on board. And what about toward the bottom of the org chart that that new employee? How do they feel about being a part of this huge organization and hearing about other functions that in the past may not have quote unquote affected them?

Dianne Greene

Mm-hmm. So I think you know, for our new associates, sometimes it can be a little overwhelming. We are a big organization, and as I said, we're going to be 22 hundred strong in another, you know year year year and a half or so. And so it can be daunting. You know you come into this organization, you know that you're hired for a particular role, but there's this sea of opportunity. We try to support them in many different ways. We give them the opportunity to join what we call business resource groups or a BRGs. BRGs are groups of people with like interests, so you we have a Cultivate for African-American. We have Adelante for our Latino. We have Asia for Asia Pan. Just coming together with like ideas like interests and you form, you join these groups, and it suddenly makes this big place feel smaller because you have a ready-made network of people that you can touch base with that you can bounce ideas off of. That you can do fun things with while still adding value to the business itself. And so we've got eight of those groups. There's one for generations that has all five generations coming together and sharing ideas. There's one for innovation. There's golly. There's one for women called I Win. And so you can join one, you can join all. I'm in all of them because there's nothing to be lost from being in all of them. But it's a ready-made network that makes the place seem smaller and a ready-made group of friends. When you first come on board that you can just bounce ideas off of, and you can learn about the businesses that they're in because everyone's in a different group or a different function.

Ken White

What a great idea you feel at home right off the bat.

Dianne Greene

You feel at home right off the bat.

Ken White

Interesting.

Dianne Greene

Right off the bat.

Ken White

We talked mostly about the organization for young professionals going out looking for that first job. Any kind of advice you have for them to get off on the right foot and get a good first job?

Dianne Greene

A good first job. I always say one of the mistakes I made when I was coming out of college is I think I tried to be someone that I wasn't because, in my head, I had this thought about what the professional looked like and how that professional should be. Whether it's in dress and the way that I spoke, and that was hard. It was hard coming out of college and trying to be someone that I was not trying to fit a template. I think our Millennials are coming out in an environment that is far more inclusive. It is an environment that values differences. And so the biggest piece of advice I could give to anyone graduating college and going into the workforce is be yourself. Know that your uniqueness and the differences that you have versus the next person that's your selling point that that's appreciated. That's your value. And so if you try to hide that to be something that you are not, you'll probably end up in a role that is the wrong fit for you and one that you won't be happy in. So I just say be your authentic self. It's so much better. It's so less stressful trying to, you know, be someone that you're not and to really know and understand that it is in our differences that there is the greatest value, and that's how we get ahead.

Ken White

And for the organization who needs to get moving on this path. What kind of advice do you have for them?

Dianne Greene

Yeah, I would say listen, break down the walls and break down the silos and really be open to communication. Two-way communication with millennials. Be open to their ideas. Engage with them. That's how you get them on board. Engage with them. The old ways of leading are disappearing. They really are. They're really disappearing, and you know, I'm of the opinion that they need to for us to be innovative. And for us to move ahead in this fast-paced world, they need to go away. They need to go away. So engage with them you'll learn a lot.

Ken White

That's our conversation with Dianne Greene of ADP, and that's our podcast for this week. Leadership & Business is brought to you by the Center for Corporate Education at the College of William & Mary's Raymond A. Mason School of Business. The Center for Corporate Education can help you, and your organization meet and exceed your goals. With business and leadership development programs that fit your needs and get results. If you're interested in learning more about the opportunities at the Center for Corporate Education for you or your organization, visit our website at wmleadership.com. Thanks to our guests this week, Dianne Greene, and thanks to you for joining us. I'm Ken White. Till next time have a safe, happy, and productive week.