

CHRO Conversation
Milliken - Melanie Steinbach, CHRO
Video Length 15:32

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hq1myuU5VMc&index=2&list=PLUEIH5PMd16kn9p29AbXCJLvTiVUJRjLu>

Topic	Time
<p>What does strategic HR mean and what does it look like at Milliken?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One half of HR - “HR Operations” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Critical, metrics-based function ○ In the past, this was all Milliken was known for ● (New) second half of HR - “Strategic HR” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategy development skills ○ Organizational capability assessments ● HR takes on a business consulting role ● Having conversations with senior leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build credibility ○ Business acumen 	0:17
<p>What new challenges does the shifting to strategic HR create?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Change the perception of HR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be the new voice of talent in the creation of strategy ● HR VPs learn how to have conversations ● Business leaders learn how to listen to those voices 	3:25
<p>What are the benefits of HR having a voice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategies gain traction faster ● Strategy decisions based on more than macroeconomic data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Now we ask: What about the market’s talent pool? ● HR will drive business in the future 	4:31
<p>Are there different competencies now that HR professionals need?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No longer just operationally excellent, subject-matter experts in HR disciplines/labor laws/policies ● Now: HR must understand how we make money and why we win ● Now: Business presidents must trust judgement of HRBPs 	6:07
<p>How have you transformed the HR function at Milliken?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gained CEO support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transform performance from bottom- to top-line focus ● Gain credibility as an HR Leader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Earn the seat, contribute ○ Ask questions, be curious about the business ○ “This is what I’m hearing, is this what you’re saying” ○ Ask about talent! 	7:52
<p>How critical is communication as an HR competency?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clarity of thought 	12:14

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distill what you hear into a few succinct points ● Clearly communicate at multiple levels ● Communication is important in every function, especially HR 	
<p>What is HR's role in Executive Succession?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Succession is the process that HR can use to ensure business continuity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It's a tool that allows us to look ahead ● Increase leaders' accountability to develop successors ● Make sure successors are better than current leaders 	13:32

Helpful Questions:

1. "This is business consulting; this is what the best HR people should be doing." [\(2:34\)](#)
2. "We've had to kind of elbow our way in with our business partners to make sure they understood that if HR were in the room it didn't mean that we were about to fire somebody, it meant that we were really trying to be the voice of talent in the creation or the execution of the strategy." [\(3:50\)](#)
3. "I think in terms of finding your space...the CEO support only gets you so far and then you have to start actually earning the seat right. He can pull up the chair, but unless you're going to contribute when you're sitting at the table you're going to get pushed to the back." [\(9:23\)](#)

Discussion Questions:

1. What did Melanie say was a big challenge when it comes to implementing strategic HR? What did Milliken do to overcome this?
2. What critical competencies are needed by HR professionals today? How has that changed?