

## Aligning People Strategy With Business Strategy

An Interview with Jacqui Canney, Chief People Officer, ServiceNow

**EDITORS' NOTE** *Jacqui Canney is the Chief People Officer at ServiceNow, leading all talent strategies for the company's rapidly growing global workforce. She is focused on constantly improving employee experiences by putting people at the center and enabling them through technology. Prior to joining ServiceNow in September 2021, she served as Chief People Officer at WPP and Walmart, driving complex transformations. Canney worked at Accenture for 25 years, where she played a pivotal role in supporting the rapid growth of the business. Canney serves on the Board of Directors for Project Healthy Minds, the Chief HR Officer Board for the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp), and the Board of Trustees at Boston College.*



Jacqui Canney

do their best work, live their best life, and fulfill our purpose together. We are creating a culture that people want to be part of and it's why we saw one million people apply to work at ServiceNow last year.

Our values keep our culture healthy and thriving. If you're part of the ServiceNow team, you add something unique and different that makes us stronger. You share our sense of purpose in our communities. You create belonging. You dream big, wow the customer, and believe in winning as a team. Throughout it all, you stay hungry and humble. Our company is growing so fast, but we always have something to learn. And our best work will always be what we do next.

**What have been the keys to ServiceNow's industry leadership and how do you define the ServiceNow difference?**

It's a simple principle: our people strategy is our business strategy. We're building a talent system at scale and using our own platform, which gives our people what they need while also benefiting our customers.

Our culture is our biggest competitive advantage. We put our people at the heart of everything we do, and we empower them to grow themselves, their teams, and the business. We know that diversity, equity, and inclusion drive innovation. We're constantly improving the employee experience. We're providing every employee with opportunities for career advancement, mobility, and upskilling. And all of this helps us build the best teams and fuel our growth as a company.

We're an AI-first company because we know AI is reshaping business, work, and life as we know it and we want to make AI work for

people. That's why, at ServiceNow, HR plays a critical role in responsible AI implementation, because AI is a human challenge as much as it is a technology challenge. We believe AI should set people up for success, make their jobs easier, and enable learning and growth.

We have a clear purpose and vision for everyone to stand behind; a CEO who inspires us; a supportive board of directors; a winning talent strategy; a great management team; and exceptional, differentiated products. We stay ahead because our employees are comfortable taking risks to propel transformation. They test our solutions before our customers try them. By bringing our talent strategy together with our technology, we can see around the corners and prioritize the right things. This is why ServiceNow is becoming the defining enterprise software company of the 21st century.

**What excited you about the opportunity to join ServiceNow and made you feel it was the right fit?**

It all started with this question from Bill McDermott: "Do you want to make the world work better?" When your company's purpose instantly becomes your personal mantra, that's when you know it's the right fit.

Making the world work better is a powerful proposition. You can only imagine the innovation and culture that enables you to deliver on that promise. It was clear to me that this was a once-in-a-generation opportunity. No other company is better positioned to shape the way we work for years to come, and I say this as someone who was a ServiceNow customer before I joined. I saw firsthand how our technology simplifies work, drives business transformation, and creates better experiences throughout an organization, from the C-suite to frontline workers.

**COMPANY BRIEF** *ServiceNow (servicenow.com) makes the world of work, work better for people. The company's cloud-based platform and solutions help digitize and unify organizations so that they can find smarter, faster, better ways to make work flow so employees and customers can be more connected, more innovative, and more agile, and we can all create the future we imagine.*

**How do you describe ServiceNow's culture?**

At ServiceNow, we love to solve the toughest problems for our customers. We share a relentless curiosity and desire to make the world work better for everyone. It's a culture of continuous learning. It's a culture that thrives on diverse perspectives and it's why ServiceNow continues to innovate at the highest levels.

At our core is our People Pact: our commitment to every employee that we'll help them

**“At our core is our People Pact: our commitment to every employee that we'll help them do their best work, live their best life, and fulfill our purpose together.”**

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Here is what I found most exciting: ServiceNow is growing like a fast-moving startup with the profitability of a global market leader. That’s a remarkable strength. It also makes the role of a chief people officer incredibly fascinating.

I have never had a role quite like this because there is no company quite like ServiceNow. Fast forward, we’ve added 13,000 new employees, more than doubling our workforce, since 2019. I feel so fortunate to be part of this evolution. We keep growing and building – and I’m learning and having a lot of fun along the way.

**Will you provide an overview of your role and areas of focus?**

As Chief People Officer, my role is to scale and grow our global workforce of over 23,000 employees so we can make work better for our people, our customers and their teams. And our team is empowered by the same platform, tech, and solutions we offer our customers.

The role of the CPO and HR leadership is more important than ever and has changed radically in recent years, especially with AI/GenAI. CEOs are expecting more of us as we align our people strategy to our business strategy to drive long-term profitable growth. My team is focused on constantly improving employee experiences by putting people at the center and enabling them through technology.

For ServiceNow, we are driving our people strategy based on three pillars: people-led, data-driven, and AI-powered. With this foundation in place, we can scale and innovate, create an inclusive employee experience, build leaders for the future, and prepare our teams, partners, customers, and communities with the skills they need to thrive in this ever-changing digital workplace.

Working alongside a remarkable group of leaders and business partners, I strive to create

a people-centric agenda that is as unique as the people we serve and as ambitious as our company’s vision.

**How critical is it for the Chief People Officer role to be engaged in business strategy?**

It’s paramount to the success of any business. To win as a business, leaders know they must commit to the development, growth, and well-being of their people.

There are three things that all of the world’s most successful companies do. They embrace human ingenuity and digital transformation. They create remarkable experiences for their people and customers. And they help their teams grow to their fullest potential. None of these things would be possible without a CPO at the table, actively driving business strategy. I’ve seen it time and time again throughout my career.

Employee satisfaction directly drives customer satisfaction and business performance. You might have great products, but without putting your people at the center, you will not be successful. A CPO is critical when it comes to setting the strategic compass and ensuring you have the right foundation in place for your business to thrive.

**Will you discuss ServiceNow’s commitment to building a diverse and inclusive workforce?**

DEI is a moral imperative and it’s embedded in everything we do at ServiceNow. We are doubling down. Nearly 50 percent of our new hires for leadership roles in the U.S. were women in 2023. We launched a leadership development program for early-in-career and mid-level employees of underrepresented groups, resulting in lower attrition and higher promotion rates compared to the broader employee base. These are just two of many examples.

We need a diverse workforce because we firmly believe that’s how innovation thrives. That means fostering a sense of belonging and creating a space for dialogue through our values, behaviors, and ongoing programs. We’re making it our business to create a better, more inclusive experience for everyone and to contribute to a world that is more caring, fair, and just.

**Do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women to grow and lead in the industry?**

There is certainly more work to do, but I’m also encouraged to see how far the tech industry has come. At ServiceNow, we are proud to be at the forefront, setting new benchmarks not just in tech, but for businesses across industries, across the globe.

We are the only company to be recognized in the latest American Opportunity Index with top scores across four crucial categories: parity, pay, promotion, and culture. The Index assesses how the largest companies in America are developing their people to foster career growth and drive business performance. We’re also honored to be recognized consistently among *Fortune’s* Best Workplaces for Women. That matters because enterprise and culture change always start at the top. It is inspiring to be surrounded by incredible women and to be part of a culture that values and celebrates everyone.

**What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers?**

Be authentic to yourself – always. The courage to challenge assumptions is the key that will unlock your greatest potential. When you’re curious and willing to learn, the future is limitless. But remember that you don’t get anything you don’t ask for. So, raise your hand, speak up, and make yourself seen and heard. ●

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