

KRISTEN SUESS, CEC, CPHR

STARTUP PEOPLE PARTNER

Kristen is a skilled people strategist and executive coach with more than 15 years of experience, primarily in human resources business partner roles. She thrives in values-based, innovative environments where she can be a part of a high-performing team. She is motivated by enabling and empowering others and is sought out for her coaching and guidance by senior leaders and ICs alike. She brings her breadth of global HR expertise and hands-on approach to tech companies – building, scaling, and adapting to the ever-changing needs of high growth startups.

KEY SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Coaching
- Facilitation
- Project management
- Employment law
- Change management
- Internal transfers
- Compensation and benefits
- Performance management
- Talent strategy
- Retention and engagement
- Career path development
- Customer facing teams
- Communication strategy
- Leadership development
- Feedback
- People programs
- People analytics
- Talent calibration

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Slack Technologies, Vancouver, BC

2016-2022

Director, People Partner

Joined Slack as the first People Partner at the beginning of a fast and steep growth trajectory. Supported the Canadian region as they expanded from Vancouver into Toronto, as well as the global Customer Experience (CE) team of 300 as their dedicated business partner. Designed and built Slack's leadership development program – Basecamp. Had the opportunity to envision, build and navigate incredible challenges that came with growing Slack from 300 to 3000, going public in 2019, and being acquired in 2020-2021. Promoted to Director in August 2019.

Select Highlights

- Identified a need for a new role to improve our pipeline between IC and management roles and crafted a bespoke Associate Manager Program and role, which resulted in 80% of candidates moving into full management roles within a year and addressed longstanding engagement survey asks for more career pathing options
- Developed and launched an internal transfer process that optimized for consistency, fairness and excellent internal candidate experience
- Wrote a manager playbook to support execution of calibration, feedback and compensation year after year
- Led the integration effort for the 300 person CE team as part of the Salesforce acquisition to ensure all roles were mapped and leveled correctly – advocated for and influenced outcomes related to compensation and policies to minimize disruption and disengagement
- Built a project plan and executed a complex international role redundancy exercise in a manner that aligned with our values and resulted in the retention of the majority of impacted individuals
- Overhauled the Customer Experience team's career pathing documents, competencies and career development guides
- Built Slack's first (and current) leadership framework and leadership development program: Base Camp – attended by every manager at Slack, and included in the Leadership book "How the Future Works"

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- Adeptly navigated many complex and challenging employee relations, and performance issues across 5 countries
- Wrote Slack's international performance management process and developed global training for managers, in collaboration with a peer in Dublin
- Drafted and rolled out the first Canadian Employment Policy Manual to address compliance issues
- Facilitated workshops including: Interviewing, Giving Feedback, Respectful Workplace Training
- Developed & conducted the first talent calibration exercises at Slack, and collaborated with peers to evolve our approach to calibrating talent over time
- Led the cross-functional effort to evaluate performance feedback platform options and select a new vendor
- Revamped the entire interviewing process & rubric to improve the quality of manager hire on the CE team

Starbucks Coffee Company, Vancouver, BC **2011-2015**

Human Resources Manager, Western Canada **2013-2015**

Promoted to role as a strategic business partner, supporting the RVP, 4 Regional Directors, along with their teams, across BC & Yukon. Developed strategic people plans to align with and drive operations objectives. Focused on talent development and succession planning.

Learning Business Partner **Feb 2013-Aug 2013**

Acted as a business partner and consultant to RVP to identify & deliver learning and development solutions with the goal of enhancing employee capability and business performance for over 6000 retail employees. In partnership with key stakeholders, developed annual strategic learning plan to align with and support the operating plan.

Senior Human Resources Associate **2011-2013**

Provided HR support to a Regional Director and 11 District Managers in an area comprised of 100 stores. Provided coaching & consultation on employee relations and performance management. Responded to critical people issues with sound judgment and tact. Conducted investigations into employment-related claims on an individual basis, and in partnership with legal team and management.

Cannon Design Architecture Inc., Vancouver, BC **2008-2011**

HR Representative, Associate

Acted as the sole HR Generalist overseeing the Victoria, Vancouver & Calgary offices.

EDUCATION, PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATIONS

Bachelor of Commerce Degree (B. Com), Distinction | University of Victoria 2000-2004

Certificate in Executive Coaching (CEC) | Royal Roads University 2018

Chartered Professional in Human Resources (CPHR) Designation | CPHRBC 2009-2022

COMMUNITY

Founder | Vancouver HR Hub (professional network) 2016-present

Advisory Council Member & Co-Chair of the Mentoring Committee | CPHRBC 2007-2014

Mentor | UBC Human Resources Management Club 2015

Big Sister | Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland 2015

Speaker & Panelist | UBC Imprint Conference, SFU HRSA, Capilano University 2013-2015