2ND ANNUAL PEOPLE PIONEERS

Honoring the Leaders of the *People-First Revolution*

ChartHop

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Why We're Here:
What it Means to be a People Pioneer

HR as we once knew it is disappearing. Just a few years ago, a statement like this might have conjured images of corporate chaos (anyone else imagine a flurry of papers and trash can on fire?), but it turns out the disappearance of traditional HR is a good thing.

> What we're seeing instead is a people-first revolution. And the changes extend well beyond a surface-level rebrand from "HR" to "People Operations."

Exactly as it sounds, the people-first revolution puts the people who power a company front and center. It shifts the focus away from policies and compliance (both of which still remain important!) toward initiatives like employee engagement and development. It's about launching programs for the whole employee lifecycle — from recruitment to retirement.

The people-first revolution is based on the idea that we bring our whole selves to work. Truly supporting people, whether that's creating inclusive environments where everyone feels a sense of belonging, introducing new benefits, or creating a culture based on transparency and growth, pays dividends. It means that people feel seen, heard, and valued and that they're excited to come to work each day and deliver results, rather than just punching in hours to get paid. And that shift can make all the difference in terms of company performance in so many ways — greater retention, more innovation, higher profits, and the list goes on.

Critically, all of these changes stem from the People team embracing a true people-first mindset.

The second annual People Pioneers Award is designed to honor the leaders who have driven this impact by redefining the HR discipline with people-first strategies to unlock business resilience and build a future-ready workforce in the lean times and green times.

Meet the 2nd Annual

People Pioneers

The second annual People Pioneers are a group of 10 senior People leaders nominated by their peers and selected by a committee from ChartHop for their distinguished work around:

- Strengthening company culture
- Building sustainable growth plans
- Implementing new wellness initiatives
- Embedding DEIB across the entire organization
- Supporting employee growth and development

Read on to meet each of the winners and learn about their efforts to drive change.

Adrianne Court
CHRO AT TEALIUM

Adrianne Court is the CHRO at Tealium, a customer data platform. She has led Tealium through a transformative year that included scaling the company and building culture through efforts like establishing new ways of working, introducing DEI initiatives both internally and in the communities where Tealium operates, and updating paid time off and leave programs to support employees outside of work. The results of these initiatives are reflected in Tealium's eNPS survey results, which grew from 26 to 37 between 2021 and 2022, and Glassdoor ratings, which increased from 3.7 to 4.1 in six months.

Aleksandra Paszkiewicz
HEAD OF PEOPLE AT NETGURU

Aleksandra Paszkiewicz joined digital acceleration company Netguru as Head of People in 2021. Since then, she has created an unforgettable employee experience by introducing clear salary bands to give employees clarity into opportunities for raises, implementing hubs and events for people to come together in person, and establishing new learning and development opportunities. Her teammates describe her as open to feedback like no other leader and always willing to put people's needs first.

Chad MacRae
VP, TALENT AT TINDER

Chad MacRae is the VP, Talent at Tinder, the world's most popular app for meeting new people. In this role, Chad has brought strategic foresight to the talent team by introducing design thinking for more creative problem–solving, modeling growth through detailed scenario planning, and helping new teammates succeed through OKR development. Where most leaders focus on hires and delivery, Chad allows his team to have a safe space to try new things and to innovate in Talent Acquisition — leading Tinder to triple headcount growth over the last three years.

JaNaye Norman
VP OF PEOPLE AT MODO LABS

JaNaye Norman is the VP of People for mobile engagement and communication platform Modo Labs, where she has helped build an engaging, inclusive, and empowering workplace for all employees. JaNaye has over 10 years of experience scaling global organizations with authentic employee experiences by taking a people–first approach. At Modo Labs, this has translated to a focus on DEI, including creating a DEI statement, establishing metrics for accountability, and leading an external diversity recruitment campaign to decrease attrition among key groups of employees.

Jen Paxton
VP, PEOPLE AT SMILE.IO

Jen Paxton is the VP, People at Smile. io, the world's largest reward program provider. During her time at Smile, she has overhauled the company's total rewards program to establish a fair compensation policy for the global workforce based on market data and invested in manager training to build skills in first-time people leaders. Beyond her work at Smile, Jen also serves as a leader and mentor in the Boston Startup People community.

Joanna Wise
SVP PEOPLE AT WHIP MEDIA

Joanna Wise joined Whip Media, an enterprise software platform and data provider to more than 50 of the world's largest entertainment organizations, as Senior Vice President of People in 2021. Joanna was the company's first executive hire in an HR role and brought her vast experience working with global entertainment companies like EPIX, MLB, and Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia to build a world-class People program at Whip Media. Her unique background in both HR and entertainment enabled Whip Media to not only recruit and scale its team but to implement innovative employee programs around mentorship, employee wellness, and performance management — all while the company's global workforce remained remote.

Larry Indovina
CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER AT TOP HAT

Larry Indovina is the Chief People Officer at higher education app Top Hat, where he is responsible for designing, developing, and executing strategic human resources initiatives, with a keen focus on growth and expansion. Larry has more than 20 years of experience pioneering people strategies at high-growth companies while maintaining a relentless focus on world-class employee experiences and workplace culture. His most recent contributions to Top Hat include rebuilding the executive team and leading a CEO transition, increasing eNPS scores by 41% year-over-year, investing in a learning and development program, and introducing new benefits, including an employee stock option plan.

My Doan Cong
HEAD OF PEOPLE AT ALT

My Doan Cong is the Head of People at ALT, a fintech platform that's transforming how the world invests. Since joining ALT in early 2022, My has prioritized HR within the company by building a best-in-class People function that fosters an empathetic environment for all employees. My's leadership around people-first initiatives includes introducing employee leveling and raise structures so everyone has a clear path to growth, developing a wellness program to address physical, mental, and financial well-being, and establishing new ways to collect feedback and measure employee engagement to fuel future improvements.

Natalie Rast
DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE OPERATIONS, US AT STENSUL

Natalie Rast is the Director of People Operations at email creation platform Stensul, where she has proven herself as a courageous leader who holds herself accountable, conducts her days with a people-first attitude, and acts as a voice for the more introverted. One of the biggest impacts Natalie has made on the organization was her work to redefine Stensul's company values to guide hiring decisions and day-to-day work for employees. She also led the transition from a solely remote environment to a hybrid work environment, using conversations with company leaders, teammates, and her peers outside the company to create a flexible work environment that satisfies the work-life balance needs of the entire team.

Noah Warder
HEAD OF PEOPLE AT GUUSTO

Noah Warder is the Head of People at Guusto, an employee recognition software and rewards platform. Since joining Guusto in 2020, Noah has built out a people function that did not exist. He has introduced everything from base policies like PTO and sick leave, to structured competency and compensation frameworks, to a DEI roadmap with metrics for success. In doing so, Noah has helped shape a culture that is people-first, focuses on flexibility, and allows Guustonians to be their whole authentic selves.

How to Build an Award–Winning People Program

The winners of the second annual People Pioneers Award introduced a variety of people–first initiatives to positively impact their companies in countless ways. Across the board, five areas in particular stand out as common themes that tie these People Pioneers together:

- Creating a connected team with a strong culture

- Fostering an inclusive environment where everyone can belong

- Growing intentionally and scaling sustainably

- Driving continued learning and development for employees

- Implementing benefits that allow employees to be their best selves

Here's a look at why these areas are so important to building a people–first culture and top lessons from the second annual People Pioneers Award winners.

Creating a Connected Team with a Strong Culture
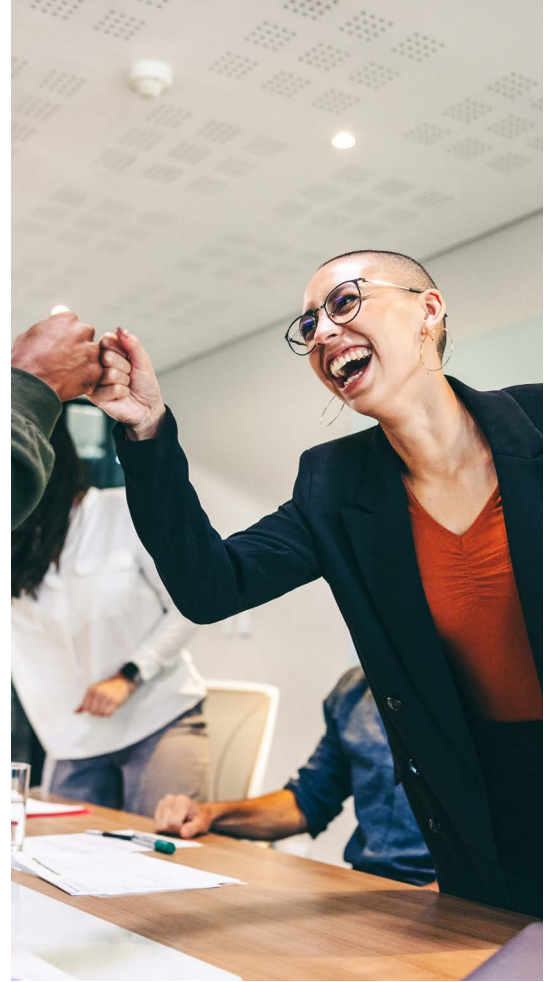
WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Culture has always been the backbone of a company. But in an increasingly dispersed workplace — one where more teams are hybrid or remote — culture matters more than ever before. It's what creates the norms that keep teams aligned on working styles and help foster social bonds, even when everyone isn't sitting next to each other for several hours a day.

In short, a strong culture sets the pace of work.

Culture is an organization's DNA. It is the shared values, goals, attitudes, and practices that characterize a workplace. It is reflected in how people behave, interact with each other, make decisions, and do their work. It impacts everything.

— Harvard Business Review →

LESSONS FROM THE PEOPLE PIONEERS

Create meaningful opportunities for IRL connection

For Aleksandra Paszkiewicz and the Netguru team, in-person connection helps complement remote work. Recognizing the importance of these face-to-face opportunities, Aleksandra organized a new company event, dubbed "Burning Minds," for all 900 Netguru employees to come together for two days. The event included multiple panels and workshops around Engineering Culture.

Building on that success, Aleksandra also implemented the "Workation Hub:" two dedicated spots where Nutguru employees can work and socialize together surrounded by nature. These hubs give teammates ongoing opportunities to meet in person for both formal and informal meetups.

Get creative with fully remote teams

While some remote and hybrid teams will be able to create those points of IRL connection, face-to-face meetups aren't always in the cards. In those cases — or even in between in-person events — it's essential for leaders of remote teams to get creative. Just ask Jen Paxton.

Jen knew remote bonding would be essential for Smile's all-remote, globally-dispersed team and made it her mission to get creative so that bonding opportunities would feel genuine and not like another Zoom meeting. To start, this included setting clear expectations around remote working practices by focusing on communication styles, working styles, decision making, and meeting structure. From there, Jen turned to the social side, bringing on an events provider for remote team building and creating a virtual store that allowed employees to choose their own holiday gifts.

> " ... this included setting clear expectations around remote working practices by focusing on communication styles, working styles, decision making, and meeting structure.

LESSONS FROM THE PEOPLE PIONEERS

Define clear company values

When done correctly, company values can create a framework to guide everything from employment and performance decisions to day-to-day interactions and workload prioritization among employees. That's why Natalie Rast devoted so much effort into redefining the company values at Stensul.

Natalie worked closely with Stensul's founder to understand his vision for the company values and consolidate a lengthy list of ideas into four very concrete themes. Since establishing the values, Natalie and the Stensul team have not only used them to guide hiring decisions, but they've also embedded them into everyday life at Stensul. For example, each quarter Stensul chooses one of the four values to focus on living to its fullest potential and then rewards the team members who show the most dedication to that value.

Growing Intentionally and Scaling Sustainably

"Driving sustainable growth is about more than just loading up your product development and engineering teams with endless feature releases and product improvements. You'll get better results when you take the time to understand your best–fit customers, have the right people in the right seats, and establish clear goals."

— Entrepreneur →

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Intentional, sustainable growth is a must–have for long–term success. And while there are numerous aspects of the business that play into this intentionality, hiring and retaining the right people sits at the heart of it all.

This intentional growth is all about having a clear vision for headcount plans — how many people you need, in what roles, and when you need them — as well as the agility to adjust those plans as both internal and external circumstances change. Paying attention to the diversity of that workforce is equally important, as that's what will help drive inclusivity and innovation.

And the work doesn't end once those people are hired. Scaling sustainably also comes down to keeping those people engaged and aligned on a clear set of growth goals once they join, that way everyone is working toward the same outcomes and has a deep understanding of their role in achieving those goals.

LESSONS FROM THE PEOPLE PIONEERS

Headcount plan for any scenario

As Tinder set its eyes on big growth goals in 2019, Chad MacRae led the effort to plan for multiple potential scenarios. And when the world turned on its head in 2020, that plan for any scenario mentality proved critical to success. While this was certainly an extreme example of what can happen, it underscores the importance of factoring internal and external needs into headcount plans.

For Chad, planning for any scenario means considering both the current state of the business as well as key external drivers that affect the business and potential headcount growth. This approach enabled Tinder's talent team to consider multiple scenarios to scale throughout the pandemic, including opening up hybrid and remote work opportunities across the US, Canada, and Mexico. And thanks to that flexibility, Tinder successfully tripled its headcount growth in three years, with 70% of current Tinder employees hired during that time frame.

> " **And thanks to that flexibility, Tinder successfully tripled its headcount growth in three years, with 70% of current Tinder employees hired during that time frame.**

Focus on diverse backgrounds and experiences

Intentional, sustainable growth is not just about opening up the right roles, it's also about having the right mix of people in those roles. That's why JaNaye Norman made hiring for people with diverse backgrounds and experiences a top priority for the team at Modo Labs.

To accomplish this goal, JaNaye created recruitment marketing content and placed advertisements in national diversity magazines to attract new candidates. She was also intentional about sending mid-level managers to national and regional diversity job fairs to meet qualified candidates in person. Critically, as the Modo Labs team grew, JaNaye made sure that all employees had a way to share their experiences, as doing so would help bring everyone together rather than reinforcing their differences. These efforts helped Modo Labs work toward their goal of decreasing attrition rate for product and engineering positions.

LESSONS FROM THE PEOPLE PIONEERS

Build the right foundation for growth

Being intentional about growth all starts with a strong foundation — one that stems from clear leadership, a strong vision, and a documented strategy. For Larry Indovina, that meant helping strengthen Top Hat's executive and talent acquisition teams.

First, Larry led Top Hat through a CEO transition, which ultimately led to hiring six new members for the 11-person executive team. His goal throughout this work was to bring on exceptional and seasoned leadership who could align deeply to drive the next phase of growth for Top Hat. From there, Larry also built out a world-class talent acquisition program, starting with a recruiting team. These efforts paid off, as 92% of new hires were successful in their roles and happy with their decision to join Top Hat.

"

Being intentional about growth all starts with a strong foundation — one that stems from clear leadership, a strong vision, and a documented strategy.

Implementing Benefits that Allow Employees to be their Best Selves

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

A key part of total compensation is the benefits and perks being offered. And no, we're not talking about perks like all the coffee you can drink. We're talking about initiatives that have a tangible impact on employee health and wellness, allowing them to show up as their best selves and do their best work. These types of benefits should support people both inside and outside of work, for example by allowing them to recharge and focus effectively and by providing education and support around important life events.

Because let's face it. A burnt out employee is not a productive employee.

"Wellness may seem like an individual concern at first glance; however, researchers argue for the connection between well-being and work outcomes. Poor well-being affects individuals at work, resulting in lower productivity, more time off from work, and making more errors than normal in the workplace."

— **Psychology Today** →

LESSONS FROM THE PEOPLE PIONEERS

Drive efficiency through a people–first lens

There's been a lot of talk about "driving efficiency" across companies, largely due to recent market downturns that have tightened the purse strings on operating budgets. My Doan Cong and the team at ALT approach efficiency through a people–first lens and ask themselves, "How can we get folks to do their best work?" which is the other side of the efficiency coin that's often overlooked.

Since joining ALT, My realized that while they did a good job of growing intentionally and not overhiring, that sometimes could lead to people wearing multiple hats. This was especially clear on an engagement and wellness survey where employees expressed hitting a burnout curve. In response, My led the ALT People team in rolling out a comprehensive Wellness Program, which includes wellness days, expanded leave policies for parents to bond with their children, coverage plans for each employee to feel good about taking time off, and much more. Ultimately, these initiatives have helped increase efficiency by reducing costly turnover due to burnout and creating an environment where employees show up energized to do their best work.

> " ... helped increase efficiency by reducing costly turnover due to burnout and creating an environment where employees show up energized to do their best work.

Center employee wellness around work–life balance

Recognizing that a strong work–life balance is at the forefront of a highly productive workforce, Joanna Wise implemented a comprehensive wellness program to mitigate burnout and reduce stress for all Whip Media employees.

For example, Joanna introduced "Focus Fridays," which limits recurring or non–critical meetings on Friday afternoons to give employees dedicated time to get work done, make headway on never–ending to–do lists, and/or plan for the week ahead to prevent weekend work and head into the following week with a clean slate. Employees may also carve out time for professional development on Friday afternoons.

LESSONS FROM THE PEOPLE PIONEERS

Adapt programs for a global team

For a wellness program to be the most effective for a globally distributed team, employees need resources that are tailored to their geographic region. So when it became clear that the Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) available to Tealium employees varied by country, Adrianne Court sought a new offering that would level the playing field.

Specifically, Adrianne aimed to address the themes of isolation, stress, and mental well–being that emerged from a recent engagement survey, while meeting the language needs of all employees. This work led to the development of an entirely new EAP that will be rolled out to employees globally in January 2023. The new initiative goes beyond just a mental health counselor referral program to also include support seminars and additional learning programs that provide native resources for the Tealium team in all the countries where they work and live.

Fostering an Inclusive Environment Where Everyone can Belong

"D&I is far more than an 'HR issue.' It should be a core ingredient in the design and execution of business strategy and embedded in the activities of the organization day in, day out. Increasing the number of non-white individuals involved in the strategy process will help develop a core purpose that better reflects a broader group of customers and employees."

— **Harvard Business Review** →

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Without representation at the leadership table from traditionally underrepresented communities, DEI initiatives will continue to fall short of systematic impact. And doing so is not just for the benefit of creating an equitable environment internally: having leadership in place that reflects a range of background and perspectives is how organizations can build trust with external audiences and be better equipped to navigate unexpected challenges.

Critically, this representation will also trickle down throughout the organization, leading to additional benefits, like greater innovation, that come from having people from a mix of backgrounds and experiences bringing ideas to the table. No downsides detected.

LESSONS FROM THE PEOPLE PIONEERS

Guide efforts with a DEI statement

JaNaye Norman is guiding Modo Labs' culture to be inclusive and empower all employees. Serving as a key sponsor for the DEI vision and strategy, JaNaye's work at Modo Labs began with curating the company's DEI statement. This proclamation signals their leadership's commitment to furthering equity and inclusion, outlines what DEI looks like at Modo Labs, and introduces metrics to hold the team accountable to those goals.

This DEI statement is one piece of the overall strategy, with the ultimate goal of increasing representation both within senior leadership and across the entire workforce. And luckily for the Modo Labs team, JaNaye has a wealth of experience in past roles doing just that.

Take a two-pronged approach to a diverse workforce

In seeking to embed DEI across the entire organization, it's important not to focus solely on filling seats at the leadership level. In many cases, there are employees already in your company with the potential to rise through the ranks.

Seeing this opportunity at Guusto, Noah Warder developed a structured mentorship and leadership program for all Guustonians to boost leadership among underrepresented employee groups. Critically, Noah recognized the importance of additional training for these new leaders to set them up for maximum success in more senior roles. Paired with a program to prioritize a representative candidate pipeline for all open roles, these initiatives ensure Guusto's workforce is a reflection of its wider community at all levels.

Driving Continued Learning and Development for Employees

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Organizations can't afford not to continually invest in their employees. As the "War for Talent" rages on and we enter increasing uncertainty in the economic climate, retaining and developing talent is critical to business success. A workforce with ever-expanding skill sets and that stays up-to-date on developments in their field is one that can quickly respond to external changes.

Supporting employee growth can take on many forms and names: upskilling, professional development, coaching. But when determining what will have the greatest impact on a particular workforce, what you call it isn't nearly as important as how you position the opportunity to grow and create easy access to resources.

"The quickly changing environment places a greater emphasis on the need for the workforce to continue to acquire new skills. Businesses that invest in learning and development opportunities better prepare their employees to adapt and innovate, which will create a competitive advantage."

— **Forbes** →

© 2022 ChartHop

LESSONS FROM THE PEOPLE PIONEERS

Offer something for everyone, everywhere

Growth and development programs are only as good as they are accessible. For example, arranging for external speakers outside of working hours for some employees won't have the intended effect of supporting learning for all. That's why Adrianne Court knew she would have to get creative in offering programs for Tealium's global workforce.

Tealium LIFT (Learning is Facilitated at Tealium) offers a myriad of professional development opportunities through a third-party vendor with over 6,000 courses available on-demand as well as best-in-class manager and leadership development programs. Under this initiative, no matter where an employee resides or how they're trying to grow professionally, they can tap into learning that will support their career growth.

Invest time to invest in employees

A budget the size of a small country's GDP isn't necessary to effectively support employee growth. In many cases, making time for knowledge sharing is just as valuable as formal training programs. This is the crux of how Chad MacRae approaches learning and growing for the team at Tinder.

Chad invests time in helping all members on the Talent team grow by setting up thoughtful OKRs where they can work in cross-functional teams outside of their normal scope. This exposure to new departments and projects allows employees to deepen their knowledge of other areas of the business and develop skills in new areas.

> " ... making time for knowledge sharing is just as valuable as formal training programs.

LESSONS FROM THE PEOPLE PIONEERS

Manage growth for managers

We've all heard the phrase "employees don't quit bad jobs, they quit bad bosses." While that may not be the case for 100% of voluntary departures, the employee–manager relationship significantly impacts employee satisfaction and, therefore, retention.

To tackle this all–important relationship head–on, Joanna Wise implemented a Manager Development Program to improve self–awareness and competency in key areas of management for Whip Media's people managers. Specifically, she sought out courses to address topics such as delegating, coaching, navigating difficult conversations, and giving and receiving feedback — all of which are designed to support Whip Media's managers in creating a better employee experience.

Gearing Up for the People-First Revolution

There's no turning back from the people-first revolution. The days of HR as a compliance-driven function are long behind us, and that's something for which we should all be grateful.

What we have in front of us represents a significant change, and a change for the better. A future of work that prioritizes people — how they work, live, and come together to produce incredible results — above all else is a world in which everyone wins. The people-first revolution is a boon for employees and employers alike.

But it does represent a significant change in how People teams operate. Fortunately, we have a strong blueprint for what

success looks like thanks to the work of innovative leaders, including those who comprise the second annual People Pioneers.

These People Pioneers have found new ways to push the boundaries of traditional HR by better engaging and supporting their workforce through initiatives that span culture, DEI, well-being, development and more.

And best of all, they're only just getting started.

ChartHop