



NCHRS.D MEMBER Spotlight

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NCHR-SD would like to turn the spotlight on a member making an impact and exemplifying excellence in the field of Human Resources. Enjoy this month's featured interview with NCHR-SD member [Karen Smith](#)!

**KAREN SMITH**
[LinkedIn Profile](#)

What is your current role?

I am the VP, People & Culture at [Omniome](#), a late stage Biotech start up in the DNA Sequencing space.

What led you to HR as a profession?

I was going down the social work/counseling/psychology route early in my career (right out of college). I was hired on with the Child Protective Services after completing my practicum during my senior year at the University of Arizona. I had several cases of abused and neglected children who were in the "system". As rewarding as it was to make an impact in a distressed child's life, I found I could not separate from my work.

I went back to my career advisor at the university to explore how else I could put my learnings to use and seek something in corporate America. Human Resources aligned with my personal values in that I still wanted to make a meaningful impact to people's lives. The idea of nurturing someone's career development spoke to me. It did not take long for me to then land

my first HR role as HR representative for a global company.

I grew within that organization and landed an HR leadership role 7 years later. From there, I grew both in scope and in competencies. I had incredible global responsibilities that took me all over the world.... and then the rest is history!

In your opinion, what is the future of Human Resources?

I see the profession continuing to evolve as critical in the overall business strategy at the highest level. We are also becoming more data driven.

The necessary skills sets are also evolving, and we are seeing more talent in marketing, operations and financial disciplines being successful HR leadership positions.

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Leading more remote and agile workforces – especially considering current pandemic situation, plus the migration towards the expansion of the GIG economy/on-demand workforce – is going to be part of the future of HR.

Changes in technology certainly play a role in our future as well. AI is trending to have major impacts in many aspects of the HR body (engagement, talent management, performance analysis, etc.).

Has NCHR-SD helped your career?

Again, that personal value/purpose I have in making meaningful connections applies to everything in my life. Connecting with other HR professionals not only feeds my soul but has also helped me develop relationships that open those doors for opportunity! I found my current role through my NCHR-SD community!

I also learn from each connection I make and truly enjoy the thought partnership we all provide one another within the NCHR-SD community.

What is something people might not know about you?

I love exploring the world! Travel is my thing. Now, I also try to also incorporate my love of surfing (new skill I picked up since moving to San Diego) into my worldly journeys. I cannot say I am good, but I can say I love it

and am free while I am splashing around 😊.

Thank you, Karen, for spending time with us this month! Stay safe everyone.

