

How LinkedIn's Chief People Officer Uses the Popular Professional Social Network

HR Brew | Mikaela Cohen | March 6, 2024

HR BREW Chief Chat

Teuila Hanson

Chief people officer, LinkedIn



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LinkedIn can finally put away the fake ID. The professional social network turns 21 on May 5.

"I use it every day, and I probably feel a little bit of FOMO if I'm not using it every day," Teuila Hanson, LinkedIn's chief people officer, tells HR Brew.

Since its co-founders Reid Hoffman and Eric Ly ushered it into the world more than two decades ago, the platform has garnered one million users, according to its site, and billions in revenue: In its latest quarterly earnings, the company reported \$15 billion in revenue in Q4 FY23. And while LinkedIn has long been a popular tool for job-seekers and recruiters alike, it's morphed into a professional (and, occasionally, personal) virtual hangout spot, along the lines of what Twitter once offered, Slate suggested in November.

Teuila Hanson, LinkedIn's chief people officer, is a daily visitor. She talked with HR Brew about how she uses the platform, and her experience leading its people function.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

How often do you use LinkedIn?

I use it every day, and I probably feel a little bit of FOMO if I'm not using it every day, because I want to know what's going on...I think it's particularly important for me to stay on top of trends and conversations around what's happening at work, and there are a lot of great news outlets out there, but in order to get to, like, really what's going on, what conferences are people going to, what are they learning, what are they reading, that's where I feel like I'm able to sort of satisfy that need and that curiosity for me to stay up on trends.

Tell me about your experience overseeing LinkedIn's people function.

Doing HR at LinkedIn has been a dream job of mine. Before joining LinkedIn, I've always admired LinkedIn's culture, the ethos of LinkedIn, and thinking about what it would mean to do talent work in a talent organization...So, I've always admired LinkedIn programs, how it thought about talent that it was attracting [and] that it was retaining as a business, and then also just how LinkedIn was leading the way in and helping other companies think differently about how to engage with talent.

You joined LinkedIn in June 2020. What was your experience leading it through the pandemic?

Fortunately, when I joined LinkedIn [that] June...corporations across the world had already figured out what it meant for people to work at home, make sure that employees were safe, [and] that they were provided with the equipment that they needed. So, I came into LinkedIn after all of those major decisions were made, and so, when I joined, there was already a sense of: Okay, this is the way that we're currently working, where we were working in a remote environment, and then figuring [out] ways to make sure that we were connecting with our employees...So, I think that really forced us to be in this place of like productivity and innovation, and let's think about new ways of doing things or different ways of doing things. How do we get the best ideas on the table to make sure that we were providing our employees with what they needed?

Is LinkedIn still operating remotely?

We're operating in a hybrid model, so we don't have a LinkedIn-wide return-to-the-office mandate or expectation. It really is dependent on different business units within LinkedIn. So, we've taken a very local-to-the-business approach here at LinkedIn...For example, for myself and the talent organization, every Wednesday is a connection day for us, and so that's an opportunity for the leaders within the talent organization to organize some sort of event. It could be just, "Hey, we're going to get together and have a lunch"...There isn't a one-size-fits-all approach that we've taken at LinkedIn.

From AI advancements to mass layoffs, the workforce has faced numerous disruptions in recent years. Has it, if at all, affected your strategy?

So, right now, I've been really focused on skills...that are required for us to continue to provide value to the organization during a time of change...The other way that I think about it [is] more from, like, a philosophical perspective...I am very excited about what AI can bring to the world of work, and I think about this from the lens of: There are several things about work today that don't work, and probably worked, [but] haven't worked for a period of time...What are those moments at work, if it's starting a new job and not knowing if you're meeting right members of your team?...How can AI, from a coaching perspective, step in and take some of that angst and toil out of work? So, I'm really bullish in saying: Wow, the future of work could be much more joyful and much more delightful, if we're introducing AI to help us identify those areas of work that we still haven't quite figured out.