



Pamela Lipp, Head of Executive Talent Management at JPMorgan Chase



X-Factor Leadership

Powerful conversations with heads of talent and learning at leading corporations

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Standout Leaders Create And Demand Inclusion And Get The Best From Teams

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For the next installment of our interview series with top leaders

*in the talent and learning field, we spoke with **Pamela Lipp**, head of executive talent management at JPMorgan Chase, who shared smart insights and key lessons with me and my colleague **Adam Bryant**, managing director at **The ExCo Group**.*

Reimer: How did you end up in the field of talent management? Did you know what you wanted to do when you were a kid?

Lipp: I always thought I would be a sports psychologist. I was not a good athlete, but I loved being around sports and I was very knowledgeable about it. Then I went abroad my junior year to Australia, and took a sports psychology class, and it may have been the worst class I've ever taken, and not because of the teacher. I was bored.

I was in an existential crisis because I was going to be 21 and I had no clue what I was going to do. Then I took a social psychology class and I loved it. I said to the professor, "I have to do this for my whole life." So I went to grad school, got a degree in industrial organization and have been in development roles my whole career.

Bryant: Let's shift to this year. Are you looking for different qualities today in the next generation of leaders than you have in the past?

Lipp: Nobody was really prepared for a global pandemic before March, but there were a lot of people who stepped up this year to figure out a

lot of complex things and were still able to innovate. Being able to think ahead and see around corners is more important today than it ever was.

We're also talking about diversity and inclusion in a different way. It's bigger than making sure you have leaders who are demographically diverse. We are looking at the leaders who are developers of talent and who give people on their teams the exposure and the opportunity to stretch. The leaders who get this right — who create and demand inclusion and get the best out of people — will separate themselves very easily.

Reimer: How do you know who's going to step up in a crisis?

Lipp: That's the \$64 million question. This is non-scientific, but one of the things that you can observe about people in a crisis, and the thing that their team members and peers say about them, is that they remain calm, they're able to still process information, and they can distill the challenge and the plan down to simple terms.

But that ability is difficult to test ahead of an actual crisis. Maybe you can approximate some of those conditions in a simulation. Maybe you can assess that quality and tease it out from interviews and 360s about how people show up. But it's not perfectly correlated.

Bryant: The quality of empathy also has come up a lot this year as a crucial skill for leaders. How do you frame that for people who are more focused on hard results?

Lipp: In the old investment banking days on the trading floor, if you hit a goal, you'd ring the bell. But we can't think about, say, diversity goals in the same way that we think about hitting business goals, where you ring a bell and celebrate. We can't say, "I hired someone because they're a woman and we've hit our goal."

Instead, the conversation has to be, "I had an open slot, we had a diverse slate of candidates, I hired this woman, and she is going to help us hit our goals because of all of the skills she brings to the table." We're focusing more on humanizing the talent process. We've got to remember that there are people behind these numbers who are coming to us because they want to contribute, learn and grow.

*It's not just the results, it's how
you get there.*

The point is that it's not just the results, it's how you get there. It used to be about whether people were following you. Now there are additional questions. How are those people feeling? What impact do you have on them? Do you have a sense of urgency that you need to drive a vision? Are you adapting your style to your team? Do you as a leader understand the impact you have?

Reimer: You also held the role of chief diversity officer for a few years. What has been your reaction to all the conversations about social justice this year?

Lipp: People are still experiencing deep feelings about it — either guilt, or resistance that this is really an issue, or they're still in their awakening phase. You have to allow people to go through those phases. We need people to get past listening and sharing to active ownership of accepting that these systems are in place and accept how they may have benefitted from or contributed to those systems.

I've had interesting conversations with senior white men who say that they now realize that some of the things they took for granted were just part of how the world operates and helped them get ahead. They may have made some effort to promote diversity when they were in senior positions, but now they're really understanding that it wasn't enough.

They're really getting it and owning the idea that they have benefitted and contributed to those systems. It's ingrained in how we deal and work with people every day, personally and professionally. Leaders have to be constantly aware and on the lookout for those dynamics, and then think about how we make real changes in our leadership pipelines and cultures.

Bryant: What were important early influences for you that shaped who you are today?

Lipp: My history is that my dad is white and my mother is Black, and both sides of the family were not overly supportive of their union. They got married in September 1967, just three months after the Supreme Court made interracial marriage legal in all 50 states.

I didn't meet my grandmother on my dad's side until the day before my 21st birthday. I was really angry. When I had to meet my grandmother, aunts and cousins, I said to my mom, "I don't understand. I don't know them and they're strangers, but we're related. How could you welcome them into our home?"

*You have to meet people where
they are.*

And she said, "You have to meet people where they are. If they're ready now to try a relationship, you have to step partially in." That has always guided me in terms of how I think about the leaders we are developing — what they are ready to do, and what they can handle as we're working through coaching.

What are they personally ready to commit to in terms of changing and moving forward? They can't do it all at once, so how do we get them to focus on developing one or two aspects of their leadership? That always guides me when I meet them and listen to their story to understand what's doable for them.

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This is great stuff! I love how panels calls out the silver lining of 2020 in highlighting the need to measure EIQ and emotional integration skills before a crisis hits. It seems to be that assessments like MBTI and the psychtest emotional intelligence test can do exactly that, but organizations have relegated those to isolated off-site events which are not integrated in ...see more

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[Pamela Lipp-Hendricks \(she/hers/her\)](#) is love to tell you more about the tool. Do you have time to zoom?

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Winston Folmar • 3rd+

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Interlocutory Attorney at Trademark Trial & Appeal Board

Nice Glamor Shot!!! And I didn't know you studied abroad??? Cool to still be learning new things. Nice article/interview.

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Pamela Lipp-Hendricks (she/hers/her) • 2nd

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Head of Executive Talent Management at JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Why thank you! Yes - a whole year actually. It was so much fun.

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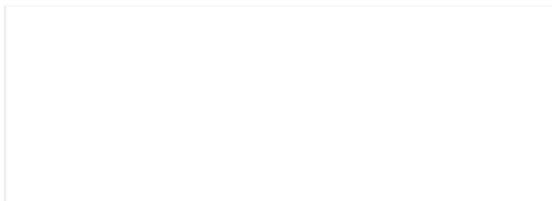
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