

KATHY KLINKER (Pykkonen)

Enterprise Talent & Culture Strategist

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EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Enterprise talent strategist and change architect with 25+ years designing and scaling leadership, succession, and culture systems across corporate, aviation, higher education, and military environments. Builds enterprise-wide talent infrastructure — succession coverage, capability visibility, leadership readiness, and workforce analytics — that tie directly to retention, promotability, and EBITDA outcomes. Trusted advisor to CEOs, CPOs, and business-unit presidents on translating ambiguous enterprise mandates into measurable talent strategy across multi-brand, high-growth organizations. Delivered measurable impact by identifying 126 flight-risk leaders, achieving 100% development-plan completion, reaching approximately 800 leaders through leadership programs, increasing LMS adoption from 10% to 40%, and advancing from Senior Director to Vice President within seven months.

CORE STRENGTHS

Enterprise Talent Strategy | Succession Planning & Governance | Leadership Development | Organizational Development | Workforce & Learning Analytics | Workforce Planning & Capability Mapping | Change Management & Executive Advising | Culture Enablement | Career Pathways | LMS & Learning Ecosystem Strategy | Stakeholder Management | Data-Driven Decision Making

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Great Day Improvements | Hybrid / Remote

Vice President, Talent Growth, Learning & Culture

April 2026 – Present

- Direct enterprise talent strategy, leadership development, organizational culture, and capability initiatives across a six-brand, 4,200-employee organization, partnering with the CEO, CPO, business-unit presidents, and senior HR leaders to align talent priorities with enterprise growth and workforce objectives.
- Stabilized a brand reorganization by leading talent data collection and analysis on 178 leaders, giving executive leadership the workforce visibility to make placement and retention decisions during a high-uncertainty transition.
- Pivoted executive-hiring strategy for executive talent search by introducing Hogan Assessment data into the selection process, strengthening leadership fit and de-risking a high-stakes succession decision at the top of the organization.

Senior Director, Learning & Development

September 2025 – April 2026

- Architected enterprise talent growth strategy spanning 6 brands and 4,200 employees, integrating leadership development, succession planning, capability heatmaps, and career pathways into a single governance framework reporting to the CPO and CEO.
- Diagnosed succession and retention risk enterprise-wide through 9-box calibration across 6 brand rosters, surfacing critical roles with no viable successor and prioritizing intervention for 126 flight-risk leaders, achieving 100% completion of development plans for identified talent.
- Identified early gaps in cross-brand succession and capability visibility before they surfaced as attrition risk, launching enterprise-wide 9-box and skills-heatmap analysis ahead of the annual Talent Day executive rollup.
- Translated the Great Day Way into observable leadership behaviors embedded into performance enablement, promotability, and succession decisions — creating a common leadership standard across brands with historically independent cultures, contributing to 25% of program participants advancing into senior leadership roles.
- Scaled leadership development to approximately 800 leaders across the enterprise through Great Day Way programming and manager onboarding, contributing to a 2% improvement in engagement, culture, and eNPS scores over a six-month timeframe.

- Partnered with HRBPs and business-unit presidents on talent reviews, job architecture, and branch talent health, connecting development actions directly to EBITDA, NPS, attrition, and workforce-capacity indicators.
- Drove LMS and learning-operations adoption from approximately 10% to 40% across 4,200 employees by redesigning communication cadence, leader accountability tracking, and reinforcement mechanisms.
- Promoted from Senior Director to Vice President within seven months in recognition of enterprise-scale impact on talent strategy, organizational capability, and succession readiness.

Jet Aviation | Remote

Sr. Manager, Standards and Training

May 2023 – 2025

- Re-engineered training programs and standard operating procedures across multiple career paths, stabilizing service consistency during a period of scheduling and staffing volatility; implemented SLA accountability resulting in 25% growth in managed aircraft.
- Navigated compliance and regulatory pressure across scheduling and dispatch teams, maintaining service-level integrity for managed aircraft clients throughout organizational change.
- Operationalized cross-functional efficiency initiatives — new systems, processes, and communication routines — improving team readiness and customer experience across distributed teams.
- Led enterprise deployment of the Gallup employee engagement survey, translating results into targeted action plans that informed culture and process change.

Cirrus Aircraft | Duluth, MN & Knoxville, TN

Director, Learning & Development, Customer Experience

June 2022 – May 2023

Director, Enterprise Learning & Development

October 2021 – June 2022

Manager, Enterprise Learning & Development

October 2014 – October 2021

- Co-architected Cirrus University, unifying technical operations, product development, and customer experience training into a single enterprise standardization framework.
- Launched The Cirrus Experience, a customer-experience training program that standardized world-class service delivery inside Cirrus and across its partner network.
- Led enterprise talent review and workforce planning — including HiPo development, critical-talent visibility, and Korn Ferry-based assessment — surfacing retention risk years ahead of it becoming attrition.
- Scaled Enterprise Learning & Development functions over 7 years from a single-manager role to a multi-level Director function spanning enterprise and customer-experience learning, budgets, vendors, and systems.

EDUCATION

Master of Science in Education, Counseling, Human Relations — University of Wisconsin–Superior

Bachelor of Arts, Behavioral Science — Western International University, Fort Huachuca, AZ

Noncommissioned Officer Leadership — Community College of the Air Force

CERTIFICATIONS & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

- Principal, Elevated Teams Consulting | June 2008 – Present
- Hogan Assessment Certification | August 2025 – Present
- DiSC Assessment Certification | May 2024 – Present
- Prosci Certified Change Practitioner | September 2022 – Present
- Certified Korn Ferry Leadership Assessment Practitioner | February 2022 – Present
- Certified StrengthsFinder Facilitator, The Gallup Organization | May 2009 – Present
- Certified MBTI Facilitator | July 2001 – Present
- Ritz-Carlton Leadership Center Certificate | October 2021
- Board Member, Lake Superior Association of Training and Development | January 2015 – June 2022
- National Association of Talent Development Conference | August 2020