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LEADERSHIP THOUGHTS

Diversity Champion: Andrea Cornwell, Head

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To help drive diversity, equity, and inclusion in the global commodity industry, HC Insider recently launched Diversity Champion, a new leadership thoughts series. We will be speaking to diverse individuals in the commodities sector to explore their career journey and learn how they are fostering an inclusive workforce. Meet our Diversity Champion: Andrea Cornwell, Head of Marketing and Sustainability Lead at Peak Rare Earths.

We are seeing more awareness about the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, making the business case for a diverse workforce stronger than it has ever been. However, the corporate world is moving very slowly towards closing the global economic gender gap, achieving gender

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Peak Rare Earths, to understand the challenges she overcame in her career, her role as a mentor, and her advice for others looking to advance in their career.

HC Insider: Please tell us about your career leading up to Peak Rare Earths.

Andrea Cornwell: I have an undergraduate degree in International Business Relations and after university I became a BHP graduate in 1992. I have 30 years of experience in marketing and commercial roles in the mining sector. Over the years, I have worked for several of the larger mining corporations, and I've worked across multiple global jurisdictions in the marketing space. I have had the joy of dealing with international clients, and globally diverse employees, and I've experienced working with many different cultures as a result. Just over a year ago, I made the switch from a larger mining company to a small junior miner, ASX listed company Peak Rare Earths (Peak). With regards to leadership, I started managing people halfway through my career, around the time I came back from maternity leave. This leadership journey has been a key facet in the second half of my career.

HC Insider: What does your role at Peak Rare Earths involve?

AC: Peak is in the process of developing a greenfield rare earths mining project in Tanzania, Africa. My role as Head of Marketing requires me to develop and deliver the 'go to market strategy' for the future rare earth product/s. The key short-term deliverable I am accountable for is negotiation of the offtake agreements for the Ngualla project. We are a small team at this stage of the project's development, which also gives me an opportunity to contribute outside of the commercial arena. From company values and purpose to Sustainability, I'm enjoying moving out of my comfort zone and working in other areas of the company. Especially, in areas tied to social and economic development in the local communities near the project. I am also supporting local entities like TAWOMA (Tanzania Women Miners Association) and the new strategic plan they are developing. This isn't my first Africa project and I know when a mining project is done well – which means it is sustainable, economically viable, and a key contributor to the social and economic development of the local communities - how rewarding and beneficial it is for the local communities.

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HC Insider: How did your passion for leadership and people management first develop?

AC: I thrive on the energy of working with others. For me, it's important to understand what makes people tick, checking in with them to understand their motivations and seeing how I can contribute to their development, happiness, health, and well-being. Often in business we're focused on the 'numbers' because that is what you must report back to Management and Executive teams, as it is ultimately the primary measure of the company's success and shareholders need to see this. For me, I am really conscious of what is behind the numbers - and that's the people that delivered them. I think it's important to know what motivates the team to deliver those numbers, good or bad. Also, when you are someone's manager, you are temporarily holding their career in your hands. That is a huge responsibility and I take it very seriously. As a leader you have to guide and help people to progress and feel a sense of accomplishment.

HC Insider: Has your global career, with roles in Australia, Asia, and Europe, had an influence on how you build and grow talent?

AC: Within Asia, Australia and Europe, there are so many nationalities and ethnicities, and working in these regions fast-tracked my understanding of cultural diversity. These experiences have allowed me to be an empathetic leader because it has built up my awareness of cultural norms and differences. When going to different countries to negotiate a contract, for example, I benefit from an acute awareness of the region I am going into. I have to think about what the right contract looks like and how we are going to deliver the needs on our side while building trust and meeting the needs of the stakeholder on the other side.

At South32 a few years ago, I had seven direct reports of seven different nationalities. Between us, we spoke about 10 languages. When you sit together and really listen to one another, you realise the power of inclusion and the collective contributions from that diversity. The flipside is you can get very different pathway options. However, it's the leader's accountability to make a decision. Often this can be a combination of several of the options. The diversity of thought in this situation is where the magic happens. It's so much better than seven nodding heads agreeing to one single option. I have built teams from scratch and the last thing I want for the company are multiple versions of 'me'. I can guarantee that I will not have the best solution to a problem or a strategy, only a diverse team holds that privilege.

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HC Insider: What were some of the challenges you faced during your career and how did you overcome them?

AC: You face challenges like not getting the job you wanted, not meeting your targets one month, not meeting a strategic goal and the impact of that on your bonus. There are many challenges you face in your career. But the lesson for me is how resilience is key to overcoming the challenge. If your mindset says, “This is okay and not unexpected. (You aren’t likely to hit every target every month of your entire career). How do I do it better next time? Just be resilient and keep moving forward”, then the situation becomes more manageable. You need to review the situation, see what you can learn from it, what you can improve, move on, and don’t beat yourself up about it.

For me, the harder challenges at work were personal. I sought more support when I was returning to work from maternity leave. My children are 19 and 16 now, but I remember that was a challenging time. Like most returning mums, I battled with exhaustion and mother’s guilt. Another challenge that I faced was coming back to work after a period of medical leave. This was also physically and mentally challenging knowing I wasn’t necessarily bringing my best self to work every day. It’s very important to reach out to people for help and share the burden. I felt no shame in this and found it was the best way to build resilience, by surrounding myself with people that were understanding and encouraging (both inside and outside the office). I always encourage people to speak to their line manager as well. We won’t always have a line manager that is emotionally empathetic, but it is part of their role to provide support. We’re all human. We all need support from time to time.

HC Insider: What have you learned from your experience as a mentor?

AC: Mentoring for me is all about helping people to grow and become the best version of themselves. My view is that we can’t do this on our own. If there’s this idea that you have to go out and be a superhero all by yourself, I really challenge that thinking and tell people to let others in and be a part of your journey. The motivation to mentor comes from knowing I received help throughout my career and wondering how I can pay that forward. Mentoring formally came about for me eight years ago when I was asked to take part in a mentoring program, Protégé, in Singapore. I was a bit worried to start with as I didn’t have formal mentor training, but Protégé offered that training, and I loved it. I soon had a mentee that worked in television production, and another mentee who was a lawyer in Singapore. They both worked outside the mining industry and so I was able to learn so much about other industries, but most importantly I learned how rewarding helping others to grow really is, especially when you see their

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AC: We founded WIMARSG with a goal to bring the mining network together to address important topics like inclusion and diversity. We also had a goal to provide mentoring to the membership. Nine years on with dozens of corporate members, WIMARSG has been a platform for the Mining community in Singapore. Members come together and network, discuss diversity and inclusion practices, debate emerging trends in the sector, and run mentoring and other personal development programs like Leadership. It's a place to share your voice, hear from others, learn, network and with all of this, build confidence to address and action personal and sectoral goals. It's a voluntary organisation and the operational structure is also designed to give our volunteers various management experience as well.

HC Insider: How can companies approach understanding co-workers from different backgrounds?

AC: Have fun with it! Ask questions! Ask them how many and what languages do they speak? Where were they born? What is their nationality? What passport(s) do they travel on? Where have they lived? One favourite activity of mine is getting a world map and providing everyone in the team with different colour dots. Red dots depict where you were born. Green dots depict the countries/cities you have lived in. Yellow dots can depict the languages you speak. It opens up everyone's eyes to the level of diversity in the workplace, and a reason to invite a colleague to lunch to learn even more about their background. All of this really allows you to have a better perspective on what each individual can bring to the corporate table.

HC Insider: What advice do you have for companies who want to be DEI advocates and aren't sure how to start?

AC: This is hard to answer because different companies are at different stages in their DEI journey, but I think it simply starts with having it on the corporate agenda at all levels, all the time. It becomes a natural topic to discuss, like discussing the weather, or having a safety share at the start of a meeting.

An understanding of what sort of advocacy is required in a company can come from a self-assessment. Is the company deliberate in searching for talent and diversity of thought? Are they recruiting with diversity in mind? Are they on a journey that makes their employees feel heard and empowered? Do managers provide regular one-to-one review conversations? Are they actively picking up on the corporate culture and striving to change it for the better? Do leaders walk the talk? Are employees being developed? Are minority groups truly equal? Is poor

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Andrea's three top tips for career success:

Progress: Be willing to learn new things and keep evolving. Embrace change and be open-minded. I use a mentoring tool to help understand the benefits of getting out of your comfort zone. If your comfort zone is a 'square', but you push out of it and build confidence with the new thing, it then becomes part of your comfort zone. Meaning you have grown by making your comfort zone square bigger.

Connect: Have you connected or reached out to someone today? It could be your boss, peers, subordinates. There is such power in an active network. Connecting with others helps build your exposure. For example, think about having people speak about you when you're not in the room (in a positive way of course!) because you are a known entity worthy of someone further discussing opportunities for you. Organisations have too many invisible people and they are losing out because of it. But you have to action this deliberately by networking and connecting to people regularly.

Inspire: Think about how you can support and inspire others. Remember that thrill you had when someone inspired you? What can you do to be the one inspiring others? Remember, you don't have to be in a leadership role to be inspirational.

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