

A COMPANY WORTH WORKING FOR

Kaitlin Stevens works at Vanderfield, one of Australia's largest agricultural machinery and truck dealerships, operating for over 50 years with 13 branches across regional Australia. But she didn't know a thing about trucks and tractors when she started!

Kaitlin is also currently studying business, majoring in Human Resource management at Queensland University of Technology, graduating at the end of the year. She says: I've always loved business and I was told to study what I enjoy, so as soon as I graduated from high school I enrolled in business. But when I realised I had to choose a major study area I was stumped. Through researching I found human resources, and from there I haven't looked back.

What exactly is Human Resources Management (HR)?

That's a very good question. People are actually the basis of a business. You can have the best products but HR needs to recruit, employ and train people talented at what they do. For example, your sales people need to know their stock and know how to communicate effectively with the customers. HR has to ensure employees fit into the unique culture of the company and have the right attitude. Their performance has to align with the company's vision, goals and values. There is also a lot of administrative work involved. HR simply makes the organisation run smoothly.

How does this work in practice for you at Vanderfield?

The company is very focused on building relationships, not only with customers but with their employees too. Everyone treats each other like family and it's been such a welcoming environment to work in. Despite not knowing anything about tractors, I was still hired by Vanderfield and I am able to help the company achieve profitability and reach their goals through their people. As I do work in a male-dominated industry, sometimes it can get a little intimidating, but I've really come out of my shell and I'm a lot more comfortable working with the guys than I was a year ago.

How do you balance study and work at the same time?

When I first started working at Vanderfield I was amazed at how flexible they were in granting time for me to study. It's still been tough – during the university semesters I don't go out at all. Every weekend is spent studying. Once I'm on holidays though, it's a completely different story. I catch up with friends, attend music festivals, hike and go to the beach. As soon as I go back to university, it's head down and study, study, study. You do have to make those sacrifices when you're studying and working at the same time. I just remember you can't have everything all at once, and it will be worth it in the end!

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