

## Shellie McKinney

Human Resources Business Partner

Rexnord

As the Human Resources Business Partner for Rexnord Industries, Shellie McKinney's strength is her love for people. When applicants come in for an interview, she puts them at ease with her mellow demeanor.

"I'm not like other HR people," said McKinney, whose office contains a disco ball, a gift from a co-worker after a discussion about McKinney's favorite music genre. It has been a fixture in her office ever since. "In HR, people can be so stiff, lacking personality, and straight-laced when interacting with the workforce. I like to show my personality, and by doing so it helps people to relax and be a little more comfortable with themselves."

When McKinney began her career in HR, she was often the only person of color on the staff, so she felt pressured to fit in. As she worked for companies with more diverse workforces, she became more comfortable being herself at work. She connects with employees by being authentic while coaching and counseling them around their issues. With applicants, she is not afraid to critique their employment search habits, even if sometimes that seems old fashioned to her colleagues.

"Some of my other supervisors will laugh at me because someone might come in with a hat on, and I'll ask them to remove their hat," laughed McKinney. Like a relative who loves her family, McKinney knows how to show love even as she is correcting applicants. "There was one young man at another company that I worked for who knew the company dress code was business casual. He was expected to wear khakis and a shirt, but said he didn't know how he was going to make it in this job, because he didn't have any casual clothes. So I took him over to the Goodwill next to our building, bought him a

couple pairs of pants and a couple of shirts. He

was so happy, and I would like to think that me doing such a small thing made a lasting impact on him. I left that company so I don't know how successful he was. But I think that planting that seed may somehow grow into something down the road for him."

This type of gesture is what distinguishes McKinney. She is not afraid to spend a little money to help an applicant feel good at work, but one of her more helpful gestures did not cost her a thing. When a young applicant let her lack of a high school diploma dash her hopes of succeeding in manufacturing, McKinney became her biggest cheerleader.

"When we interviewed her, she just seemed to have so much personality and potential, way more than what we were hiring for. I felt that she possessed more than what an assembler required," recalled McKinney. The applicant was only in her late 20s, but felt too old to return to school. McKinney convinced her by sharing her own journey of going back to school at the age of 30, spending the following ten years getting her education.

"When I started telling her my story, it was like a light came on in her," described McKinney. "Some of the things that I have been through in life, I have used as encouragement for other people. So I told her, we're



going to go ahead and hire her, with the condition that she get her GED. I gave her little small goals to reach and she did that. She got her GED, enrolled in a technical school, and now she says that she will invite me to her graduation. She was just thankful to have somebody in her corner encouraging her.“

McKinney’s love for her colleagues and helping them succeed is why Rexnord loves her, disco ball and all. She believes that even if she did not have a job, she would be doing something to improve lives, one person at a time.

“The reason I really like Rexnord is because when I interviewed here four and a half years ago, I told the hiring team, the person that you’re talking to today, is the person that you will have here, next month, next year, and however long,” explained McKinney. “I’m not coming in here, trying to say the things you want me to say or act a certain way. I want you to know that if how I am now doesn’t fit into the company culture or the climate, then it’s not going to be a good fit long term. So they knew who they were hiring from the beginning.”

McKinney loves that she has a platform to build, inspire, encourage, and give hope to job applicants and employees. Though her platform is small, it provides people with a much needed second chance and opportunities for advancement that they did not know were possible. She finds it challenging to support the underdog, but knows that they just need someone to coach them with love to get to the next level.

“Sometimes we need people to take a stand for those who aren’t in a position to speak for themselves.”