

SPOTLIGHT ON AIMEE HOYT

SVP & Chief People Officer
at **Illumina**

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Aimee Hoyt joined Illumina as SVP and Chief People Officer in January 2018. Most recently CHRO at the cloud computing company Rackspace, Ms. Hoyt has held senior positions at some of the world's best-known technology companies, including Hewlett-Packard, Cisco, and Sun Microsystems. She has a successful track record for leading workforce transformation, driving business growth, and creating high-impact teams.

Illumina is an established global leader in DNA sequencing and array-based technologies, serving customers in the research, clinical, and applied markets. The company's products are used for applications in life sciences, oncology, reproductive health, agriculture, and other emerging segments.

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Q+A

In the past year, you have introduced the Culture of Care mindset and programs to Illumina's 7,000 employees. What were the driving forces behind this initiative?

Aimee Hoyt: Illumina is a company whose mission is its shining star. We are here to improve human health by unlocking the power of the genome. Not only is our business incredibly innovative, it is also incredibly personal for people. We find that employees often join Illumina both to advance their careers and to advance our mission.

Thinking about this, we decided that we wanted to elevate our people practices to make them equally as innovative and personalized as our external products. Given Illumina's business focus on care and human health, it was in our DNA to develop a stronger Culture of Care, and build upon that foundation in a purposeful way to benefit our employees.

What are the central elements of the Culture of Care?

Aimee Hoyt: We identified some core tenets. The first is transparency. When we initiate programs and policies, we want to make sure they are clearly and easily understood. For instance, we are adding innovative elements to our medical benefits, and as we roll out changes, we want to be totally clear about what is covered and what is not covered, any limitations, and so forth. That is incredibly important.

Second, we want to embrace the desire of today's employees for more flexibility, and with that goes trust. We are a clinical sciences company with highly educated employees, they are certainly trustworthy. And with an average age of 38½, they also have extremely busy lives with many responsibilities—raising children, caring for parents, juggling all this around a partner's schedule. Their lives simply demand flexibility.

Our third tenet is personalization. When something is personalized, that means the employee has choices, and our employees truly appreciate those choices.

Can you describe some of the new programs and policies you have launched so far?

Aimee Hoyt: We launched a policy we call Compassion and Care Time Off, which offers employees up to 30 days of time off, with full pay, to be used at their discretion during

a personal crisis. Historically, companies have had rigid rules around employee time off. But a crisis for me may be very different than a crisis for you. So, we've flipped that lens and put trust at the heart of this program, allowing employees to tell us when they need time off for an emotionally significant event. We believe this is unparalleled in the marketplace. Some employees have taken time off to manage a major illness in the family. Some California-based employees have needed time off due to wildfires. And I recall that when this policy was announced, one employee came to me in tears. Her adult daughter needed surgery, her son-in-law had been deployed, and our employee needed time off to care for her three grandchildren, but she could not afford to give up her salary. This program was going to support her. Those are the stories we create around taking care of people and offering trust.

We also adopted a flexible time off system, without a defined number of vacation days. Employees and their managers will need to have conversations, both to ensure that work responsibilities are covered, and that employees get the needed time away from the office. We trust our people to have those conversations. For wellness, which is so unique to each individual, we offer each employee a \$500 annual allowance to spend as desired—no tedious record-keeping required. Employees have been posting photos and stories of how they used the money—including yoga, new sneakers, and running a first marathon. This program is generating so much appreciative community.

Our Culture of Care also responds to issues that arise. In our U.K. office, fully one third of the employees are continental citizens, not U.K. citizens. They are worried about the impact of Brexit. We currently offer onsite legal advisory services for every employee and family member. During our first conference call regarding Brexit, 250 people participated.

The common thread is transparency, trust, flexibility, and personalization. This comes from the heart of our company culture, and we want to deliver it in an agile and innovative way that contributes to Illumina's continuing exceptional performance.

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