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People's Corner: Sales Interview with Pamela Litka & Jimmy Robert

Introduction

It is said that one of the rules that Einstein's work revolved around was "In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity." As we reflect on the past year, I am certain it's quite difficult for some of us to see the opportunity in the middle of all that surrounds us. It might not be comfortable sometimes, but at [Bently Nevada](#) and in the Sales & Commercial function we can see the opportunity. The opportunity to provide our customers not only the solutions they need today, but the solutions our customers will need tomorrow. This takes partnership, willingness to listen and commitment to move towards the opportunity. In Bently Nevada Sales & Commercial this is how we want to move forward.

1. Jimmy, please tell me about yourself.

Growing up in the southern United States in New Orleans, Louisiana, it didn't take too long to understand that I had come up in quite a distinct culture for the US. Although I didn't travel too far from home for University (more on that some other time), this certainly set me on a path of really enjoying and learning from different global cultures including customs, cuisines, and dialects later in my career.

After graduating from Louisiana State University with a BS in Mechanical Engineering and a short stint in Project Engineering, I decided to join General Electric through the Commercial Leadership Program. Well I can tell you that Sales & Commercial and in particular leadership stuck with me as I've had the fortunate opportunity to lead regional and global sales and commercial organizations for over 15 years and across the Commercial, Industrial, Power Generation and Oil & Gas spaces.

In "Louisiana French" we use the word lagniappe, which means "a little something extra". Here's a little lagniappe that most people might not know about me. My family including my wife, two daughters and son live in Houston, Texas. Houston has been a great place to raise a family and has provided ample career opportunity over the years, but it was the one place we agreed we would never want to move. So much so that I even took a new job, but declined the request move to Houston. Six months later with six feet of water in our home from Hurricane Katrina, suddenly our perspective changed. We were ready to consider the move and it turns out it was the right move all along. All this to say that sometimes our difficulties can shape our trajectory in very positive ways. I probably wanted to rip that chapter from the book in the moment, but today I can see the opportunity was in the middle of the difficulty.

2. What has been your career history with Bently Nevada, or prior?

Over my career I have come in and out of direct contact with Bently products and services starting with my time as a Power Services Sales Director in General Electric. This was my first real exposure to the strong brand and reputation that Bently had in the industry. Since then and through multiple regional and global leadership roles, I have had the opportunity to either partner closely with the Bently business or even directly lead the lead the commercial, sales & services organizations for Bently in North America.

3. Please share with us your evolving role with BN Sales and how it differs from your previous role(s)?

There are a lot of similarities to some of the previous roles that I have had, but I also think this is a very special and focused time particularly in the Bently business. First, we have brought renewed focus into the Bently business and created a Global Sales & Commercial organization that is fully aligned to Bently and our customers. This will only improve our ability to leverage our scale and increase our effectiveness in identifying opportunities and providing solutions for our customers. Second, there is potential for significant transformation and growth for the Bently business as we look to deliver more value across our customers at an Enterprise level, drive Digital Transformation both within Bently and our customers and become a solution provider in the Industrial space.

4. What are the take-aways from your previous role that you have brought into your role?

A very consistent ask in every organization I have had the privilege to lead has been to continue to advance the organization into the future. This has always meant some level of organizational refinement, talent identification and development and reshaping of our commercial focus & skillsets to the future of our customers and industries. We will always need to grow and to continuously improve, so this is a mindset that we need up, down and across our organization. The best way to instill this mindset is to 1) surround yourself with it 2) demonstrate it personally and 3) spread it both with our colleagues and customers.

5. Who does your team comprise of?

The Bently Global Sales & Commercial organization includes 400+ people in over 45 countries across the globe. This includes our outside/inside sales, application solution architects, commercial application engineering, commercial management, customer care and commercial risk personnel. We truly have countless years of experience and expertise in every corner of the globe.

6. What is unique about Bently Nevada Sales?

A couple of things stand out to me about Bently Sales & Commercial, which for me are a unique combination compared to some of the other organizations I have had the privilege to lead. First Bently has a fantastic brand, legacy, and history of delivering value for our customers. At the same time there is a tremendous opportunity in the future for a solution provider like Bently Nevada. Second Bently has a strong global sales and commercial (and execution) footprint that allows us to understand local customer needs along with what might be happening at a global level. This sort of true global scale across all customer facing functions is uncommon. Finally, the ability to provide customer solutions that span from new hardware and software to long term services and even subscription solutions puts Bently in a great position to continue to develop truly meaningful outcomes for our customers.

7. Please share with us the direction and future of the BN Sales organization through the lens of a Sales leader?

If you like an environment where we transform, grow, and win by delivering for our customers...Bently Sales and Commercial is going to be an exciting place to be. We are going to grow the overall Bently business by both by transforming what we do day in and day out to add incremental value, but by also expanding into new frontiers and markets for our customers. In many ways we will need the Sales & Commercial organization to be on the leading edge of this growth and transformation. We have already begun to expand our expertise to bring value at the enterprise level, expand our industrial capabilities and bring the future of BN hardware, *Orbit 60*, to our customers as fast as possible. These will only continue to gain momentum over the next couple of years. In addition, we are going to expand our capability to be a true digital transformation partner from the edge to the cloud and site to enterprise. This will mean additional skillset development and talent injection into our strong regional footprints.

8. During Covid 2020, how has the Sales team pivoted to support our employees and customers? How will they continue to support through the pandemic into 2021?

As a Sales & Commercial organization and like many others we have seen many challenges from Covid-19. Notably our teams have in large part had to learn to work remotely, access customers remotely and balance constantly changing local regulations across the regions and globe. Adjusting to the changing landscape, shifting priorities and constant protocol adjustments have all been part of the learning experience. At the same time and in the face of these challenges our teams have risen to the occasion to continue to deliver for our customers. Our Customer Care teams have learned to maintain or even improve our level of customer service in some cases all while working largely remotely for the last year. Further, across the pandemic we have seen even stronger collaboration and connection with customers across multiple regions. This includes delivering new Proof of Concept technologies and solutions in record time despite the circumstances. We are so very thankful for our customers that continue to put their trust in Bently and our dedicated employees that continue to rise to the challenge and deliver.

9. What does Sales mean to you? To our employees? To our customers? Why is it so important?

Sales & Commercial carries a huge responsibility of representing the overall Bently Nevada business. We are often the most common if not the only interface that some customers may have in any given period. This means we must be able accurately represent Bently Nevada from people to technology to brand and to the Bently culture. Conversely, we are also in most cases the primary representation of our customers into the Bently business, which means we must understand and be able to communicate our customer's needs and values accurately. In a sense Sales & Commercial is the bridge that in many cases brings us together... Bently and customer. For this reason, Sales & Commercial is one of several critical functions to both parties.

10. Is there anything else you'd like to highlight that we haven't discussed?

I am greatly looking forward to the to the time when I can interact with our Bently employees and customers face-to-face once again. Until then stay safe, find opportunity in the middle of difficulty, and I hope to see you through the lens of a camera soon.



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