MARA NEUFELD RIVERA, MS, SHRM-SCP

PEOPLE & CULTURE EXECUTIVE | GLOBAL HR STRATEGY & TRANSFORMATION

802.299.7900 | mara@mararaeconsulting.com | New London, New Hampshire | www.linkedin.com/in/maraneufeldrivera

Executive People & Culture leader and strategic business partner with 20+ years advising CEOs and Boards to align people strategy with business strategy, scale organizations through growth and transformation, and build resilient, high-performing cultures. Proven expertise in enterprise-wide HR transformation, organizational design, talent and succession strategy, performance and career architecture, total rewards, workforce planning, employee engagement, and employee experience across global, multi-entity, and employee-owned organizations. Trusted advisor and master communicator who connects culture, talent, and organizational effectiveness to measurable business outcomes.

Executive Leadership & Board Governance | Strategic Workforce Planning & Organizational Design | Talent & Succession Planning | Culture & Change Management | Total Rewards | Performance Management | Talent Acquisition | HR Operations | DEIB | Mental Health Awareness

EXPERIENCE

MARA RAE CONSULTING — New London, New Hampshire (Remote)

FRACTIONAL CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER :: Oct 2026 – Present

Partnering with CEOs and leadership teams to connect people strategy to business strategy, navigate organizational change, strengthen leadership, and build the organizational foundation needed for what's next. **https://www.mararaeconsulting.com/**

TEXTILE EXCHANGE — Burbank, California (Remote)

Leading global NGO driving sustainability and climate action across the fashion, textile, and apparel industry. Convenes industry leaders and develops internationally recognized standards, data, and initiatives that support responsible material production and climate action worldwide.

GLOBAL SENIOR DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE & CULTURE (CPO, functionally) :: Jan 2025 – Sept 2026

Member of the Senior Leadership Team reporting directly to the CEO. Built and leads a global team of 9 HR professionals supporting 27+ countries and 26+ U.S. states. Drives all people and culture strategy for a mission-driven organization undergoing rapid growth, with full ownership of HR operations, employee relations, engagement, performance management, compensation, benefits, and learning and development.

- ***Architected and launched a comprehensive HR strategy*** aligned with Textile Exchange's climate mission and organizational values, transforming a traditional HR function into a strategic People & Culture department of seasoned professionals. Partnered closely with the executive leadership team to enable rapid global growth from 75 to 170 employees while strengthening a cohesive, people-centered culture across a fully remote, internationally distributed workforce.
- ***Designed and rolled out Textile Exchange's Career Architecture,*** establishing career pathways aligned to competency-based progression criteria across dual technical and people-management career tracks, driving an increase in internal promotion/mobility within the first year.
- ***Introduced Textile Exchange's Culture Framework*** 3 core principles and 9 supporting habits translating organizational values into everyday behaviors and embedded it into performance management, interview evaluation criteria, and Career Architecture work; adopted by 100% of managers within 3 months of launch.
- ***Achieved "Great Place to Work" Certification*** with an 80% employee satisfaction score in 2026, up from an eNPS of 24 (versus the 53-point benchmark average) in 2025, reflecting a measurable transformation in trust, morale, and workplace experience across a fully remote, global workforce.

- ***Redesigned and implemented a modernized annual performance review process*** emphasizing continuous feedback, transparent goal-setting, and clear career progression pathways, with manager training and data-driven insights to inform workforce planning and organizational decision-making, lifting review completion rates to 95%.
- ***Developed and executed an annual employee engagement plan*** tailored to a fully remote global team, incorporating virtual and in-person team-building initiatives, engagement surveys with action-oriented follow-through, and ongoing culture analysis to sustain strong morale and belonging across geographies and time zones.
- ***Championed fair, consistent employee relations policies and practices*** across 27+ countries and 26+ U.S. states, building organizational capability in ER by empowering managers with regional regulatory knowledge, fostering a coaching culture, and ensuring effective change management through periods of rapid organizational expansion.

CHROMA TECHNOLOGY CORP. — Bellows Falls, Vermont

Award-winning, 100% employee-owned, and Certified B Corp manufacturer of optical filters for the scientific and photonics industries with a global customer base and offices in Germany, China, Japan; annual revenue of $65M and 200 employees.

CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER :: 2019 – 2024

Member of the Executive Leadership Team reporting directly to the CEO. Led a team of HR specialists, including environment, health and safety. Provided leadership in full breadth and scope of the human resources discipline. Coached fellow executives, board members, and managers to develop effective people strategies to propel growth and productivity of the company while strengthening Chroma's employee-ownership culture and values. In partnership with fellow executives, developed overall strategic plan and set objectives and goals. Some achievements include:

- ***Guided the organization's trajectory*** during the Covid-19 pandemic as a crucial contributor in PCR testing for the virus, simultaneously expanding the workforce by 45%, shifting to a partial remote work environment, and pivoting to a 24/7 production operation to meet demand. Recognized in the state as an early leader of pandemic responsiveness.
- ***Championed Chroma's leadership through the formulation of its foundational core values and a compelling corporate vision,*** steering the company towards a more robust and purpose-driven future that also preserves its strong egalitarian culture.
- ***Conceived and executed a comprehensive Career Pathway*** with Factors for Progression as a roadmap for professional development and employee advancement.
- ***Originated and spearheaded the DEIB Council,*** an employee resource group with the mission of creating a safe space and building sense of community for individuals and individual growth through support, empowerment, education, and resources.
- ***Instrumental in achieving multi-year award-winning status that recognizes employee-centric practices*** including Deane C. Davis Outstanding Business of the Year, Vermont Business Growth Award, Best Places to Work in Vermont, B Lab's Best for Workers Award, and Vermont Governor's Award for Excellence in Worksite Wellness.

PC CONSTRUCTION COMPANY — Burlington, Vermont

100% employee-owned general contracting and premier design-build company with an annual revenue volume of +$600 million and over 900 employee-owners in multi-locations along the US east coast.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER :: 2018 – 2019

C-Level Executive reporting directly to CEO. Led company's annual strategic planning process and provided executive leadership for the company's people and development-related functions including talent acquisition,

total rewards, corporate university, employee relations, compliance, compensation, Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) administration, succession planning, evaluation, learning, and retention.

- ***Led year-long strategic planning development effort in close partnership with CEO*** to align new common purpose, future vision, and core values with annual initiatives that ensure a successful and enduring company.

SIMON PEARCE INC. — Windsor, Vermont

Lifestyle brand that designs, manufactures, and distributes hand-crafted glass and hand-thrown pottery products in its own retail stores, website, restaurant, and hundreds of points of wholesale distribution nationwide.

VICE PRESIDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES & COMMUNICATIONS :: 2013 – 2017

Member of Executive Team reporting directly to Founder/CEO. Provided strategic direction to and daily oversight of the corporate HR department for this 300+ employee multi-channel, matrix business. Developed and headed the organization's internal/external communication strategic planning process and brand voice.

- ***Turned around corporate culture*** with appreciable increases in engagement, trust, and performance by establishing company commitment to its people.
- ***Professionalized and stabilized all aspects of the HR function.*** Recruited and developed a high-performing and talented team of HR specialists to manage each discipline of HR.
- ***Spearheaded Working Bridges Program.*** First company in region to implement multi-employer collaboration, which dramatically improved workplace productivity, retention, and financial stability for low/medium wage earners.
- ***Conceptualized and created employee-driven Peer Nomination & Recognition Award Program*** based on inspired behaviors that reflect corporate core values.
- ***Redesigned entire benefit offerings*** that reduced employer cost, while increasing employee breadth of choices and more robust plans. Realized a 20% increase in employee satisfaction rating on the Best Places to Work Survey.
- ***Drove safety culture initiative and mindset*** to address mandated and work-specific safety related focus on training sessions, emergency planning, PPE assessments, lockout tagout procedures, ergonomics, accident investigations, etc. Offered Substance Abuse Awareness Workshops.
- ***Built official Apprenticeship Program*** and received a grant from the Vermont Training Program. Article published in The Boston Globe, May 2014.

RESOURCE SYSTEMS GROUP (RSG), INC. — White River Junction, Vermont

A multidisciplinary, employee-owned firm providing consulting services for transportation, natural resources, and technology.

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES :: 2007 – 2013

Led corporate HR supporting short/long-term strategy of a 100+ employee professional services firm. Reported to CEO. Member of Operating Team, which led successful realignment of company structure in 2012; Member of Board of Regents, governing body of the RSG Institute; Member of 401k Committee; Served as Ex Officio Board Member of the RSG CEO Search Committee, 2012.

- ***Instrumental in earning #1 ranking*** for "Best Places to Work in Vermont" 2012 by Vermont Business Magazine and the Vermont Chamber of Commerce. Awarded among the top best places to work every year during tenure.
- ***Advanced consulting staff's capabilities*** and leadership development by creating, designing and implementing the "RSG Institute," a continuous training and knowledge sharing program. Awarded a $30K grant by the State of Vermont.

- ***Linked the performance review process*** directly to the company's strategic plan by developing competencies based on Lominger's Leadership Architect and implementing a SMART goal evaluation process.
- ***Reduced cost of health care*** to RSG by approximately $150K per year and cut employees' premium share in half by successfully transitioning into a new health care plan design.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

HUMAN RESOURCES BUSINESS PARTNER

Firmenich International Fine Fragrance Center — New York, NY :: 2004–2007

Led HR for a 90-employee, $100M fine fragrance division; built scholarship and peer-recognition programs to develop high-potential talent and accelerate new-hire time to productivity.

MANAGER, HUMAN RESOURCES/SALES ADMIN

The Estée Lauder Companies — New York, NY :: 1995–2004

HR and employee relations support for 500+ field sales staff across 250 global accounts; advised account executives and regional marketing directors.

BOARD LEADERSHIP & VOLUNTEER WORK

VERMONT STATE COUNCIL OF SHRM — Montpelier, Vermont

The State Council is a non-profit organization and exists as an affiliate of the Society of Human Resource Management, the world's largest association devoted to Human Resource Management.

STATE COUNCIL DIRECTOR/PRESIDENT and STATE CONFERENCE CHAIR :: 2022 – 2025

As the chief elected officer of the state council, establishes policy, strategies and objectives consistent with those of SHRM. Provides guidance to 20 elected and volunteer members. Advances HR excellence through shared knowledge, connections, and leadership. Chairs the State Conference Planning Committee.

- ***Achieved highest attendance and revenue on record for the Vermont State Annual HR Conference in 2025 (#SHRMVT25),*** with over 500 participants converging for a two-day event that combined over 20 learning and networking opportunities and celebrity keynote speakers.
- ***Represented Vermont state at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.,*** as a SHRM Volunteer Leader and advocate for common-sense public policy and regulations that impact the world of work in the state.

VERMONT BUSINESSES FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (VBSR) — Burlington, Vermont

CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS and Nominating Committee Board Member :: 2021 – 2025

VBSR is a non-profit, statewide business trade organization with a mission to advance business ethics that value multiple bottom lines — economic, social, and environmental. VBSR strives to help its 700+ members set a high standard for protecting the natural, human, and economic environments of the state's residents, while remaining profitable.

- ***Projects include forming a strategic partnership with the Vermont B Corp Collective (VBCC),*** an affiliate of B Labs, to integrate into the VBSR framework as a novel program offering for members.

EDUCATION AND CREDENTIALS

DEGREES

Milano Graduate School of Int'l Affairs, Management & Urban Policy, The New School University — New York
Master of Science, Human Resources Management

Queens College, City University of New York (CUNY) — New York, NY
Bachelor of Arts, Drama/Communication Arts & Sciences

CERTIFICATIONS

Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP), Society for Human Resources Management :: Leadership Upper Valley (Vital Communities) :: Lominger Leadership Architect (Korn/Ferry International) :: Mental Health First Aid (National Council for Mental Wellbeing) :: Lean Six Sigma (Green Belt)

AWARDS

Recipient of the 2020 Vermont Human Resources Professional of the Year Award by SHRM and the Vermont Chamber of Commerce

ASSOCIATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

SHRM Vermont State Council :: Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) :: River Valley Human Resource Association (RVHRA) :: Granite State Learning & Organizational Development Roundtable :: Boston HR Council :: Change the Story Vermont, Leaders for Equity and Equal Pay Employer Cohort (2019–2021) :: Working Bridges Employer Champion, Granite State United Way (2013–2017) :: Cosmetic Executive Women, Inc. (2004–2007) :: New York's Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) Professional Development Committee (2004–2007)

SELECTED PANELS / SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Conference Chair and Co-Host, Vermont State Annual Human Resources Conference — 2023, 2024, 2025
- Award Ceremony Host, Best Places to Work in Vermont, VermontBiz Magazine — 2023, 2024, 2025
- What Can We Expect from Purpose-Driven Businesses? — Panelist, VBSR and UVM SI-MBA — 2024
- The Hennessy Report, Live Podcast Guest Speaker, New England HR Innovation Conference — 2022
- Putting Humanity First in the Workplace — Panel Facilitator, VBSR Annual Conference — 2023
- The Absolute Imperative of Selecting Great Managers — Presenter, Maine HR Convention — 2022

Additional speaking engagements available upon request.