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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

How many people in this room want to make a difference in the world?

How many of you think the best way to do that is to work for an oil company?

I'm not surprised. But don't worry – I'm not here to convince you that you need to work for an oil company. Even though, technically, that is my day job.

I'm the Chief People Officer at Cenovus Energy, which is a Canadian integrated oil company. My team is responsible for working with our leaders to attract talented people to be part of our growing company. And to engage and challenge them with interesting work, providing ongoing development in a career with Cenovus.

Personally, I'm focused on influencing the change and culture required to continue to be a leading, innovative and responsible oil company – and ultimately a great place to work.

My job is to help Cenovus make a difference through its people.

In the next few years, you're going to have to make some decisions about what you want to do next. Some of you might already have a plan. Your experiences through AIESEC have likely opened your eyes to a world of opportunities.

And some of you probably have no clue about what comes next.

But I am willing to bet two things.

First, that everyone here wants to make a living doing something you love.

And second, that you want to make a difference.

I'm the exact same way.

I think it's pretty obvious, but just in case - I didn't graduate from university 23 years ago, and get handed the role as Chief People Officer for a leading oil company in Canada.

If only it were that simple!

The path that led me here today took a number of unexpected twists and turns. At times, it made me question myself and my decisions. But I attribute my success to one simple thing: I have a personal vision of what I want to accomplish. And I measure all of my decisions against that vision, that picture of myself.

This doesn't mean I have everything all planned out. Far from it! It took a while to paint the picture of what I wanted to do. And trust me, even with a picture, you will continue to be surprised by the opportunities that present themselves.

So today, I'm going to share my picture with you. I'm going to talk about why it's important to love your job. Then we're going to talk about what it means to make a difference. And finally, I'm going to challenge you to come up with a personal vision – your picture of yourself.

Why you should love what you do

Here's a secret: a good company should want you to love your job. Why? Because you'll probably be a lot more productive.

People who are doing what they love make ideal employees. They're passionate and motivated. They want to keep improving and building new skills. They're energetic and engaged. They want to succeed.

So how do you decide what you love?

Everyone here has heard some variation of "follow your dreams." I agree with that, but I do want to inject a little bit of reality here.

For example: I love to listen to music and dance. Nothing would make me happier than dancing every day, all day. Unfortunately, while I'm an enthusiastic music lover, no one is lining up to pay me for my dancing abilities.

It's a tragedy, I know.

So, after graduating high school, I packed up and headed to Western with the goal of being a lawyer.

Well, all it took was a few poli-sci courses before I realized I really didn't want to be a lawyer. So I decided to get a degree in something I love, but am also good at – French.

After I graduated, I worked for two years to pay my way and figure out a plan and start to paint my picture. I knew I wanted to do something important – and work globally.

I chose to complete an International MBA at McGill University. I lived in Montreal for two years and studied overseas in Europe for about six months.

It was amazing. I made lifelong friendships while discovering a new side of myself and what I wanted to do with my life.

I learned that I am quick to connect the dots. I ask thoughtful, but tough questions. And I'm not afraid to challenge the status quo.

My personal vision was slowly starting to take shape.

I thought a career in marketing would be the perfect place to start. With my MBA in hand, I started working in brand management with Lever Ponds, a division of Unilever.

Lever Ponds was a great place to learn the marketing “ropes.” I started off as an assistant brand manager and helped to launch Dove’s moisturizing body wash.

Then I made the switch from lifestyle brands into hi-tech by joining Nortel. At the time, hi-tech was exciting. And Nortel was the talk of the town.

As much as it pains me to admit it, some of you may be too young to know about Nortel. Let me educate you. It was a Canadian tech company that essentially paved the way for the industry in Canada. At its peak, Nortel was Canada’s largest public company and employed more than 93,000 people around the world.

In 2000, the stock price peaked at \$124.50, which would be the equivalent of over \$1,200 today.

In 2008, Nortel announced its shares may no longer qualify for the New York Stock Exchange because they had an average closing price below \$1 for more than 30 days.

And in 2009, Nortel filed for bankruptcy and its shares were delisted by the Toronto Stock Exchange.

It was a wild ride.

I was at Nortel for 11 years, through the spectacular rise and subsequent fall. At its peak, Nortel was the epitome of innovation – if you had passion, were bright and worked hard, the opportunities were endless.

Nortel gave me the opportunity to have different careers within one company. I moved from marketing and communications to sales, then into HR. And it was here that I really sculpted my personal vision.

I love helping leaders articulate a goal, and rally their teams to achieve it. I like to influence people to challenge the status quo and think creatively to solve problems. I like creating environments that support innovation.

My picture was becoming more clear. No matter what I was doing, I wanted to be in a position to create positive change and rally people to find creative solutions.

I thrived at Nortel, where breaking boundaries, connecting the dots and making it happen were all in a day’s work.

The hi-tech industry was fun, but intense.

I got to travel the world ... but I worked 24/7.

It was demanding. By then, I was a new mom and had two kids under the age of four at home. But I loved Nortel.

Ultimately, I decided to leave because I could no longer match my personal vision to my work environment and I didn’t think Nortel had the right leaders in place to turn the company around.

I made the jump over to the financial world by joining RBC. Here, I learned I could influence and drive fundamental change at a senior level in a large, global organization. I was helping improve how people worked together for a common purpose and evolve RBC's corporate culture.

One of the coolest things that happened was the opportunity to expand my role as vice-president of HR in Global Wealth Management and take on marketing as well.

I have always had a passion for people and a love for branding. This gave me the best of both worlds.

At the time, this was unheard of. Making a role for yourself that crossed boundaries between disciplines. And I made it happen.

So, how did I go from my "dream job" at RBC in Toronto, the obvious centre of the universe, to uprooting my family and moving across the country to work at an oil company in Calgary?

Here's more truth for you. When you turn 40, you realize you still want to make a difference. But your personal vision starts to expand. It's not just about you and your career anymore – it's about what's best for your family.

I am a firm believer that you can have it all. A fulfilling career, a lifestyle you enjoy and a family that supports you.

Calgary offered all three. Career, lifestyle, family.

Never mind that HR, marketing and sales aren't necessarily the top roles in the oil and gas industry. That didn't stop me. In fact, it only made me believe the possibilities were untouched and mine for the taking.

It wasn't easy. The first oil and gas company I joined ultimately didn't value HR as a strategic role. This was the first time my passion and my personal vision had truly been tested. Could I still make a difference? Is this what oil and gas is about?

I had just moved my husband and my kids across Canada. Was this adventure a big mistake?

I tried to make a difference where I could, but after two years, I decided the culture was just not able to support the necessary change. My talents were best suited elsewhere.

Now, life has a funny way of working itself out. At the same time I had decided to leave, Cenovus came calling. I knew after my first meeting that Cenovus was a different kind of company.

Cenovus was already making a bold move by hiring a Chief People Officer. This sent a strong message that people and culture are key to an oil company's success.

For example, Cenovus's purpose is to "inspire bright minds to fuel world progress."

It's not just about increasing oil production. It's about inspiring people to make a difference.

This is the epitome of my vision. I can influence change. I rally bright minds to fulfill a really exciting purpose.

Trust me, I could never have imagined that oil and gas would offer this kind of opportunity.

The truth behind making a difference

We've already determined that many of you aren't driven by a burning passion to work at an oil company. Don't worry, that's okay.

I wasn't either.

Truthfully, until I started in oil and gas, I really didn't think much about energy. Like you, I flicked a switch and the light turned on. I jumped on a plane when I wanted to go on vacation.

I can't believe how much I didn't know about energy before I came to Calgary. That's a bold statement for someone coming from Toronto.

Now, I believe one of the greatest challenges we face as a society is access to energy. And I'm excited my personal vision can make me part of the solution.

I think we can all agree that people around the world deserve reliable access to affordable energy. Unfortunately, that's not the case. Today, 1.5 billion people have no access to electricity. And about 2.6 billion people still rely on wood, charcoal, even dung, for cooking¹. That's nearly 40 percent of our world population.

It's hard to believe.

As our populations grow and developing nations demand the same quality of life that we enjoy in North America, demand for energy is only going to grow. In fact, it's estimated that global energy demand will increase by a 56 percent over the next three decades².

As we all know, all energy development – in fact, everything we do as a society – has an impact on our environment.

So this is our challenge. How can we meet this huge global demand while reducing our impact on the environment?

This is a challenge worth solving. I hope many of the people in this room are interested in helping to solve this challenge. In fact, members of AIESEC are the best people to help solve this challenge. We need bright minds that have a global perspective, and that want to make the world a better place.

Now, the reality is, oil is going to be a big part of meeting that energy demand.

You might want to challenge that. After all, there's wind, solar, hydro ... The list goes on. Let me be clear: I completely agree that we need all forms of energy to meet the world's growing demand.

¹ United Nations Development Programme *Human Development Report 2011 Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All*, p.67

² U.S. Energy Information Administration *International Energy Outlook 2013* (July 2013)

But even with the development of alternatives, we're nowhere near being able to replace oil. Nothing is even close to filling the versatile roles played by oil.

Especially at a reasonable price.

Oil is a big part of our energy mix. And if we want other countries to experience the same quality of life that we enjoy, we need to provide oil that's being developed responsibly.

Now, I know some of you aren't fired up about working at an oil and gas company. But if you're passionate about energy and reducing our environmental impact, I would argue that being on the front lines, down in the trenches, will give you the best opportunity to change how we produce and consume energy.

I'll use Cenovus as an example.

We believe that doing right by the environment is good for business. That means that when we reduce our water use, greenhouse gas emissions or any other environmental impacts, it generally saves us money. This improves the economics of our projects, which in turn allows us to keep hiring locally and investing in the community.

Isn't that one of the goals of sustainability? To strike a balance between economic, environmental and social factors?

I know I sound a bit like a commercial for the oil sands.

But what I want you to take away from this example is this: if you have a problem with how something is being done and if, like me, you are driven by the desire to be part of a change, you should think critically about how to be part of the solution. That's how you make a difference.

Sometimes this might lead you to an opportunity that you never considered. Like working for an oil company.

It doesn't matter what the challenge is. Urban planning. Agriculture. Hi-tech. Financial services. Every single industry has challenges and opportunities to be better.

Articulating your vision

Now, your work begins.

I challenge each and every one of you to come up with your own personal vision. What does success mean to you? What do you love to do, and how can you use it to achieve your vision? What are the challenges you want to solve, and how can your vision help you be a part of the solution?

Here's the kicker – you, and only you, are accountable for painting that picture. And only you are accountable to making that vision of yourself into a reality. Trust me, no one is going to be checking in to see if the work you're doing aligns with your personal vision. That's on you.

Your vision acts as your compass. It's the lens through which you can evaluate opportunities.

If you're passionate about building strong communities, make sure you're doing something that allows you to put your skills into action. If you see yourself being part of a technology revolution, make sure you're choosing to spend time in an environment that stimulates innovation.

And if you ever want to work for an oil company, give me a call.