

Relationship Reintegration

How Heather Niskas, HC Leader, is Finding a Fresh Perspective In Office

Over the next few weeks, we will be talking to PWC leaders about Ways of Working, and the impactful opportunities and connections they have found while being in the office. Today, we bring you the first of the series—the perspective of HC Leader, Heather Niskas.

“I’m a real relationships person, I thrive on people’s energy, so being able to walk through the halls and catch up with people—there’s a real energy to that. I think that you feel in-person something that you can’t duplicate from home. “

A 13-year veteran of PWC currently leading the HC function, Heather Niskas thrives on relationships and face-to-face interactions. Because of this, the London, Ontario resident has opted to make her way into PWC offices in London and Toronto two to three days per week. For Heather, it’s all about balance, but she is quick to laud the energy and value she gets on her in-person days and is big on encouraging the same for colleagues.

Early on in her time with PWC, Heather honed her leadership and client delivery style over casual coffees and spreadsheets with senior leadership. Now a seasoned leader herself, she is quick to impart the value of exposure opportunities and building in-person relationships with her team.

“I certainly think you learn more when you’re in person just by way of listening and shadowing. When you have a structured day --all virtual--you miss that ad hoc coaching and shadowing. There’s a missing development and networking opportunity that you get standing at the coffee shop or seeing somebody and joking with them. That’s how relationships get built,” she says. “We try and provide our people with meaningful work. And I think that sometimes meaningful work happens organically through those connections and relationships.”

A self-described extrovert, Heather realizes that networking isn’t second nature for most people. For these colleagues, she advocates starting small and building social momentum, staying motivated by the career opportunities that can come from making strong connections.

“Look for opportunities to network. Book a coffee with someone and connect with people. Maybe you work a lot with someone but have never met them in person. Try saying “Hey, I’m going to be in the office tomorrow. Let’s grab a coffee or let’s do a working lunch.” I think that you need to own your career and you need to own the network that you’re trying to build,” she says.

But it’s not just new colleagues who Heather thinks can benefit from coming into the office. She is quick to point out that even the simple effort of changing locations has given her a fresh, invigorating perspective.

“Regardless of the stage of your career, I think we can all benefit from the change of scenery. Just coming in today, I’m feeling a little bit more energized. I’m looking at the same spreadsheet, but I’m looking at it differently. I just think humans benefit from changing things up.”