CAT BREET

Executive HR Business Partner & Digital Transformation Strategist (Former CHRO)

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Transformational HR Executive & former CHRO with 20+ years of experience growing people and profits, partnering as thought partner and coach to CEOs and senior leaders to shape scalable strategic people agendas that are tightly aligned with P&L performance, organizational design, and digital workforce transformation across complex, highly matrixed / distributed national and global environments. Uniquely bridges C-suite human capital governance with a foundational 6-year commercial background at global Spherion Technology Group partnering directly with CTOs, CIOs, and engineering leaders. Expanded that work at global consulting firm Aquent and as a consultant for a wide variety of clients (including tech firm Analysts International). Proven recent strategic C-Suite advisor on AI workforce strategy and risk governance, deploying 7 enterprise cloud platforms (generating 429+ hours in manager productivity), and executing four executive searches (CIO, CRO, COO, President). Unique background in sales and consulting give a very sharp lens on business needs, delivering significant operational and financial results, such as recent wins in last role as CHRO for Merchants Bank: $3.6M in cumulative HR-related financial savings, 24% faster time-to-fill, 4.5% below-market turnover, 9% engagement increase, 9.56% savings on healthcare, and a cost per hire 85% below-market.

CORE COMPETENCIES & STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

- **Tech & Engineering Org Support:** CTO/CIO partnership, GTM alignment, technical talent acquisition & retention, people risk mitigation.
- **Strategic Workforce Planning:** Talent planning and management, succession planning, technical skill gap analysis and training program design.
- **AI Strategy & Workforce Analytics:** Deployed 7 AI-enabled enterprise cloud systems, automated workflows, HR tech architecture & workforce analytics.
- **Organizational Change Leadership:** Centralized 4 divisions, replaced operating models using ADKAR change framework, led communication & training, driving acceleration of user adoption.
- **Strategic Business Partnership:** C-suite advisory, Board governance, executive coaching as executive team member and consultant.
- **Financial & Commercial Acumen:** Extensive commercial & financial performance including sales, ESOP sustainability, Board-level due diligence.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

HR Executive Consultant | Independent Practice (Minneapolis – St. Paul, MN) — 2026 – Present

- **Interim HR leadership:** Stand-in executive HR leader.
- **C-Suite & Board Advisory:** Advise executive leadership teams and Boards of Directors on organizational alignment, AI workforce strategy, executive succession planning, and high-growth organizational design.
- **AI Adoption & Workplace Enablement:** Change agent adept at guiding innovation, HR tech stack evaluation, AI risk mitigation, organizational change, talent strategy and operational efficiencies, such as automated workflow integration, to accelerate manager productivity and data-driven talent decisions.

Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) | Merchants Bank ($2.8B Institution) (MN and WI) — 2022 – 2026

Executive team member, leading Human Resources and Training across the enterprise.

- **AI Strategy & Workforce Governance:** Co-led bank-wide AI strategy and risk management, guided Learning & Development (training) Center of Excellence for all implementations and collaborated with CIO, COO and senior stakeholders to automate ticketing/onboarding workflows across 23 regional locations.
- **Enterprise Systems & Productivity:** Selected and deployed 7 AI-enabled enterprise cloud platforms using the ADKAR change management framework, generating significant results including 429+ hours in manager productivity gains.
- **Strategic Workforce Planning:** Developed talent strategies using predictive analytics and scenario modeling. In partnership with CIO, conducted technical skill gap analysis, talent re-skilling and AI workforce enablement.

- **Executive Succession & Talent Sourcing:** 20+ years of significant Talent Attraction and Management. Architected enterprise succession planning programs including CEO succession and very recently executed 4 executive searches (CIO, CRO, COO, President) plus 23 senior hires. Sharp focus on operational efficiency and cost containment, recently achieving a 24% faster time-to-fill than industry benchmarks and 4.5% below-market turnover.
- **Organizational Design and Change, M&A & Culture:** Co-led the centralization of 4 departments, overhauled enterprise compensation models, active participant in Board M&A due diligence, and raised Gallup employee engagement scores by 9%.
- **Strategic Cost Optimization:** Delivered significant financial and operational wins: some were noted in the professional summary above; others include $1.6M in balance sheet liability reduction (PTO right-sizing), 9.56% negotiated savings on healthcare renewal, $398K in fraud prevention (through targeted training), and $151K in overtime reductions through predictive analytics and better workforce planning.
- **Learning & Development:** Led the L&D team and oversaw all training across the enterprise, including compliance, leadership development, emerging leader development, onboarding & culture workshops, technical training.
- **Thought Leadership – Keynote Speaker:** Panelist for McLean & Co CHRO Roundtable on **Generative AI**; Host Monthly CHRO Roundtable; Speaker at FinComp (annual conference) as well as various groups and associations.

Executive HR Consultant, Cloud-Based Course Development & Global Speaker | ARBEZ, Inc. (Global) 2006 – 2022

- **Global HR Strategy & Tech Optimization:** Advised global Fortune 1,000 companies and scaling organizations on HR technology selection, system optimization, workforce planning, and large-scale change management across complex, highly matrixed environments.
- **Thought Leadership - Keynote Speaker & Workshop Leader:** Delivered keynotes at 1,061 events reaching 167,000+ attendees globally. Hosted 'Planet Work' LinkedIn Live show (220 episodes, 214,000+ global attendees) analyzing workforce innovation.
- **Online Course Development:** Subject Matter Expert (SME) guiding the design and management of designing online curriculum for colleges and universities, workforce centers and consumers.

Account Director – Marketing & Digital Services |AQUENT (Global firm, Minneapolis MN office) 2004 – 2006

- **Enterprise Account Management & MSAs:** Negotiated Master Service Agreements (MSAs) and expanded strategic enterprise accounts, including UnitedHealth Group, Target, General Mills, Cargill, and Blue Cross Blue Shield.
- **IT Process & Technology Audits:** Conducted comprehensive sales and recruiting process/technology assessments for a global IT consulting firm, identifying operational gaps and recommending scalable cloud workflows.

Director of Recruiting & Sales Executive | Spherion Technology Group (Global firm, MN office) 1997 – 2003

- **CTO/CIO Advisory & Technology Partnering:** Acted as a trusted commercial and human capital advisor directly to CTOs, CIOs, and engineering business leaders across Fortune 1000 accounts (**including Thomson Reuters**, 3M, UnitedHealth Group, Target, Express Scripts, and MoneyGram International), aligning technical talent acquisition directly with client software delivery goals.
- **High-Tech Talent Sourcing:** Led specialized IT recruitment operations (team of 12) sourcing scarce technical talent across complex software development, systems engineering, and technology consulting domains.
- **Global #1 Team Turnaround & Performance:** Spearheaded the complete operational turnaround of an underperforming technology recruiting unit, building the #1 team globally out of 1,244 offices.
- **Operational Excellence & Metric Wins:** Slashed new-hire turnover by 43%, increased job offer acceptance ratios to 89% and established global director training curricula and scalable IT talent pipelines.
- **B2B Consultative Solution Selling:** Pitched, negotiated, and delivered complex IT consulting engagements, MSAs, and custom technical workforce solutions, driving multi-million-dollar commercial growth.

EDUCATION, CREDENTIALS & CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Graduate School of Banking (Human Resource Management) | University of Wisconsin–Madison
B.A. in Sociology | Longwood University, VA
Executive Certifications & Training: Anthropic Academy (AI – Claude) | Spherion Management Training Course | Richardson Consultative Sales | Sandler Sales Seminar | Inside Out Coaching | Positive Intelligence (Brain-based coaching model)

TECHNICAL ENVIRONMENT & SYSTEMS

HCM, HRIS and Enterprise Platforms: Dayforce, Bullhorn, Salesforce CRM, SharePoint, Teams, AppSpace, TalkDesk
AI & Automation Tools: Microsoft CoPilot, Gemini Notebook, Anthropic Claude, Dayforce Performance & Ticketing Workflows