



Connie Nelson

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Rising to the Occasion

As a young adult, I sang in a musical that was a huge Easter production. We were dressed in heavy costumes and gowns, and there was an extremely bright spotlight pointed in my direction. As the choir launched into “He Arose,” I fainted!

Carrying the weight of 124,000 employees on her shoulders isn’t easy, but Connie Nelson handles it with aplomb.

The senior vice president for Verizon Telecom human resources accepted the challenge just this year, after a promotion from a previous position as vice president of Telecom human resources operations. Nelson’s Eagle Award nominator, Anthony A. Lewis, president of Verizon Washington, DC—himself an alumnus Eagle Award winner—says it best. “Verizon chose Connie to lead its Telecom HR department because we see in her everyday actions the traits that we want from every employee. She successfully works to ensure that our employees are customer focused and performance driven, while providing them with a workplace environment that allows them to achieve personal and professional goals.”

A native of Indiana, Nelson develops and implements human resources policies and strategies that help Verizon meet its business imperatives in a competitive broadband and entertainment marketplace.

Nelson readily acknowledges that telecommunications is evolving at breakneck speed and says, “I stay abreast through targeted research and constant industry and trends reading. The Internet also provides a quick and efficient means for grabbing valuable information.”

Grabbing valuable information—and experiences—helped Nelson climb the ladder of success. One of two twin daughters raised by a mother widowed very early in life, Nelson experienced what she describes as her mother’s “version of take-your-daughter-to-work” long before it became a bona fide shadowing experience for working parents and their children. She and her sister often accompanied their mother

to work and quickly learned to help out when necessary. Nelson credits that experience as the start of her business aspirations at a very young age.

Following her mother's stellar example and advice—her mother often reminded Nelson that “education is your ticket to the future”—she has sought to impact Verizon similarly. She does so by demonstrating that she cares about the business winning and about the people who deliver the win. Plus, she has provided leading-edge solutions that have attracted and accelerated talent development, increased efficiency, reduced costs, improved productivity, enhanced training, and strengthened the customer experience.

One experience with an indelible lesson dates back to Nelson's childhood, when her mother and some friends decided to take her and her sister swimming in the neighborhood pool. Little did the girls know at the time that they had just integrated the Whites-only pool. An article later published about the history-making incident failed to name the parties involved, so there's no record of Nelson or her family's connection with the story. The lesson, according to Nelson, is this: “People may leave you nameless with regard to your contribution, but that doesn't make your contribution any less.”

As a mother, Nelson describes the birth of her daughter Adriel as one of the most significant events of her lifetime. “My most significant achievement,” she says, “will be that my husband and I have raised a daughter who is a person of integrity, is gifted, talented, and intelligent, and is a performance-driven individual with a giving spirit.”

According to Lewis, Nelson already demonstrates such characteristics and leads by example with amazing character, integrity, accountability, and performance.

CareerFOCUS Magazine[™] and the National Eagle Leadership Institute[®] salute 2007 Eagle Award winner Connia Nelson.

Nominating Company

Verizon

Current Position

Senior Vice President,
Verizon Telecom Human Resources

Professional Milestones

- Recipient, Stevie American Business Award
- Recipient, SHRM Human Capital Leadership Award
- Finalist, SHRM Strategic HR Leadership Award

Community Leadership

- Board of Trustees,
Post University — Waterbury, CT
- National Leadership Team,
International Civil Rights Center
- The Life Christian Church

Leadership Principle

Invest in the lives of others.

Education/Training

- Bachelor of Science in Business,
Indiana State University
- Master of Arts in Organizational
Management, Dallas Baptist University

Birthplace

Milan, IN

Current Home

West Orange, NJ

The Leadership Promise at Verizon

Next-generation technology creates next-generation jobs. Verizon employees design, build, and operate some of the most technologically advanced networks being deployed in the world. That's why Verizon provides its employees with extensive technical training—both in house and at colleges and universities—to work with the complex, sophisticated broadband, mobile, and IP technologies that make up the growth segments of our company.

At the same time, Verizon strives to create a culture that respects the individual and taps the full range of talent and potential inherent in our large workforce. We need employees with the skills required to succeed in a technologically sophisticated industry, the multicultural perspectives to relate to our customers, and the tools to successfully manage the demands of their careers and families. To help employees discover and develop these talents, Verizon offers a variety of programs and opportunities to enhance skills and promote individual growth and leadership.