

PAVING THE WAY TO SUCCESS

Michael Messier, Class of 1990G, Master of Business Administration

Patricia Garrity
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Photo by Jodie Andruskevich

Innovative HR leader embraces the workplace challenges of the 21st century

Fascinated with the transformation that the information age made on his field and drawn to the challenges of developing strong teams in a global and technology-driven marketplace, **Michael Messier** '90G knew he wanted a career in human resources. "Every business, regardless of its industry, relies on its people to create and sustain a competitive advantage," says Messier. "As human beings, we are

inherently complex and unpredictable, so I've always enjoyed the challenge of determining the best ways to attract, engage, retain, and motivate the best talent to achieve an organization's objectives."

For the last six years, Messier has been Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer at Excelitas Technologies in Waltham, Massachusetts—a leading global provider of innovative photonics products and solutions serving both commercial and defense markets. He is responsible for developing the company's global human resources strategy and leading core initiatives that build a strong global team. With a career spanning three decades, he has held similar positions at Starent Networks Corp., Monster Worldwide, Progress Software, and other technology related businesses. Messier is certified by the Center for Creative Leadership as a 360 Assessment Facilitator and is also a Certified Compensation Professional.

Thriving in this fast-paced, high-growth environment, Messier enthusiastically addresses changes in the workforce with regard to globalization, increased use of technology, remote workers, advancing diversity, and how companies attract and retain key talent. "The biggest change has been technology, and more specifically, the impact of the internet on the human resource field," says Messier. Recruitment that has traditionally been local is now global. Technology has provided companies access to a wider range of applicants, decreased the hiring process time, and allowed for onboarding and training via the web. Technology has also allowed for more flexibility and freedom in the workplace with some employees working from home offices even if home is across the country or around the world. He embraces these challenges, welcoming the fact that no two days are alike, and that constant change is an everyday occurrence in his work.

Messier finds the work he does in individual coaching sessions to be the most important part of his job. "Working closely with someone to help them overcome a developmental or a work challenge, and then to see them thrive and come back and thank you for the role you played in helping them to succeed, is so rewarding." He enjoys mentoring colleagues in his industry and is a Board member at the Human Resources Leadership Forum.

He earned his undergraduate degree in human resource management and his Rivier MBA provided him with the additional education and broad-based business knowledge that positioned him for future success. "I feel that my education, along with my experience, drive, and support from my family, are the main factors in my success to date," says Messier. Completing his MBA in the evening while working fulltime, Messier enjoyed the fellowship of the campus environment, the convenience of the classes, and the fact that the faculty had real-world business experience. "I appreciate that Rivier focuses on the needs of its students by providing opportunities to learn and grow in a challenging but supportive setting," says Messier.

Messier is most proud of the fact that he's been able to balance the demands of his career with the demands of his family, while maintaining a focus on his faith, his friends, and his passions for sports and music.

He offers the following career advice to those that may be just starting out or are in the earlier stages of their careers. "Keep in mind that you control your success and destiny in life," says Messier. "Don't wait around for others to plan it and don't look to blame others for opportunities missed. Make the life you want to live." ■