



The Culture Catalyst

Unily's Chief People Officer **Jenny Shiers** on building people-first cultures that fuel velocity, outpace disruption, and transform talent into a competitive edge.

By Tracy D. Holloman

What slows a business isn't usually strategy, it's people stuck in silos, drowning in noise, and waiting for permission to act. Jenny Shiers has spent her career solving that problem. After guiding people-strategy through rapid growth at Salesforce, she joined Unily in 2023 as its first Chief People Officer. Her mission: build cultures where speed is instinct and talent drives advantage. For leaders facing constant change, Ms. Shiers offers a candid look at how to move faster without losing alignment.

IQ: What does true “organizational velocity” look like in practice, and how does it translate into sustainable competitive advantage when markets are shifting daily?

Ms. Shiers: As you mentioned, we are in an era of extreme and unprecedented change. The companies who successfully embody organizational velocity are the ones who can mobilize their employees to adapt and pivot as seamlessly as possible.

In practice, this means having a workforce that is crystal clear on company strategy, and how they contribute to this. It also means they’re not being held back by silos. Regardless of what department or location people work in, communication and collaboration should be agile, so decisions can be made and implemented at the speed required.

These businesses are then in a stronger position to get ahead of change. While the competition is still in reactive mode, high-velocity organizations are acting decisively and pivoting quickly. Having this ability is now the true competitive advantage, rather than size or strength.

IQ: From your perspective, what are the most effective ways leaders can move their enterprises forward (at speed) without sacrificing alignment, clarity, or strategic focus?

Ms. Shiers: It’s important to build deep engagement with employees, so they’re aligned with what is required. Employees will naturally move faster when they understand why they’re doing what they do.

A key element for leaders is to make sure they’re regularly communicating



Jenny Shiers
CPO, Unily

Jenny Shiers is Unily’s first Chief People Officer, having joined in 2023 from Salesforce where she was VP of Employee Success UKI & North EMEA. She has significant experience working to develop and execute innovative people strategies, with a focus on equality and attracting, developing, and retaining the best talent in the market. She is passionate about maintaining and scaling Unily’s strong and unique culture to support its phenomenal growth and believes that enhancing employee experience and engagement is the secret sauce for any business. Previously, she worked as an employment lawyer in city law firms.

with and receiving feedback from the people that are ultimately responsible for executing company strategy. This two-way communication ensures clarity on both sides, even when things are moving at speed. For example, if an employee can quickly pass insights from the frontline to leaders, this can help shape and refine company strategy fast.

IQ: In your experience, what hidden bottlenecks most often slow large organizations, and how can leaders remove them while building systems, rituals, or frameworks that enable rapid pivots?

Ms. Shiers: Today’s employees are drowning in a wave of digital noise. A recent Unily study saw 50% of employees reporting being distracted every 30 minutes, and nearly 60% saying that digital tools add to their stress.

This distraction and constant context switching is a huge productivity drain, negatively affecting performance. Finding ways to streamline things like communication and critical information can ensure your operations are able to run faster and with less friction.

IQ: How can technology—particularly digital employee experience platforms—be used to remove friction, keep teams aligned, and increase execution speed without adding unnecessary complexity?

Ms. Shiers: Employee experience platforms act as a single source of truth. They can centralize all the tools and information employees need, eliminating friction and

the need to app switch that I touched upon earlier. They also ensure that employees get easy access to the information they need, whenever it’s required. Rather than having to hunt across multiple systems for answers, they can self-serve or solve problems at speed, ultimately increasing the speed of execution.

IQ: What leadership behaviors and cultural traits separate organizations that adapt and thrive from those that stall when disruption hits?

Ms. Shiers: Creating a culture of trust is absolutely imperative to ensure your talent is resilient and capable of thriving during periods of uncertainty. This starts at the top with leadership communicating openly, building trust by normalizing failure, and asking for input.

Where this happens in an authentic way, employees learn that it is safe to take measured risks, which drives innovation and can help to unlock new solutions during periods of disruption.

All of this can be achieved by clearly communicating expectations to employees, facilitating employee input and driving alignment.

IQ: How can leaders design employee experiences that actively accelerate execution and decision-making across the organization?

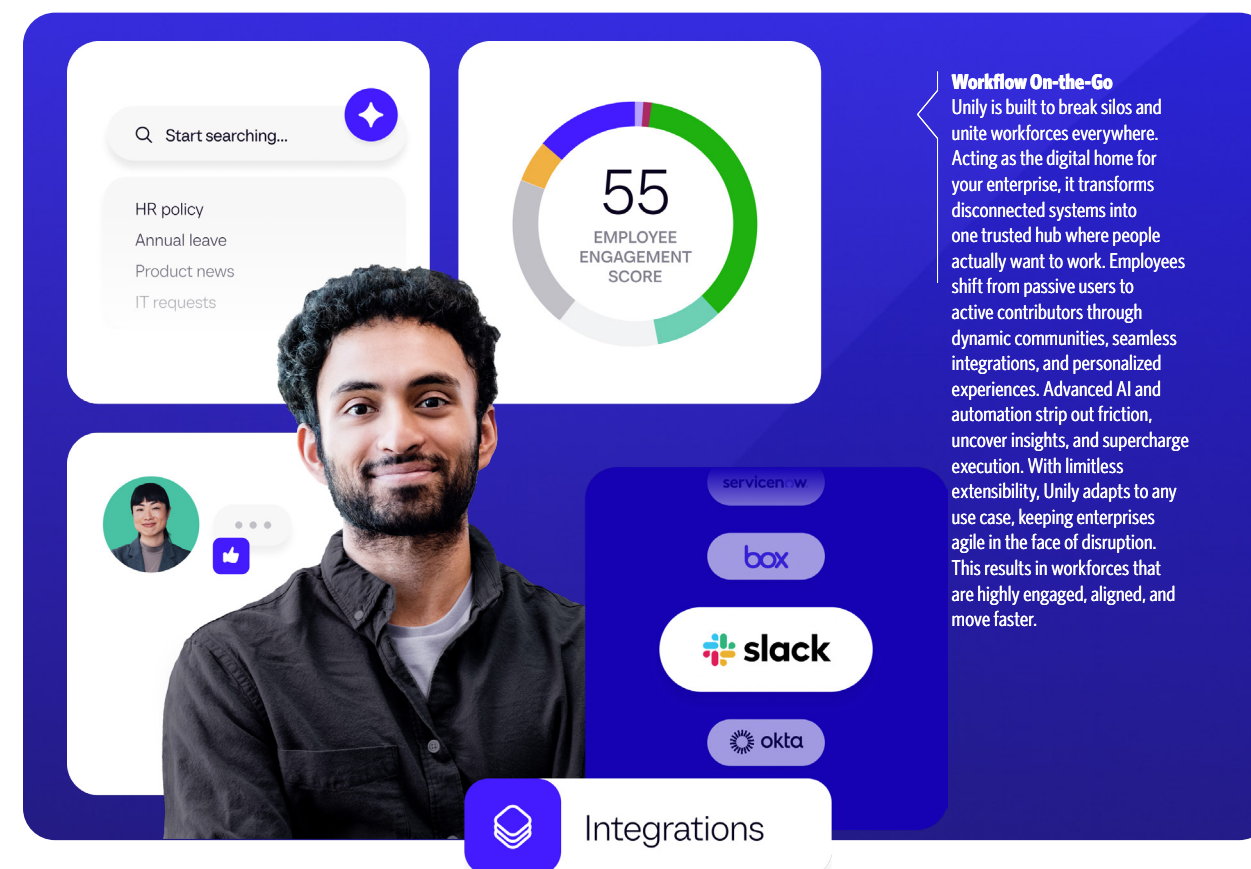
Ms. Shiers: The first thing is to tie employee experience to business outcomes. It’s important that leaders don’t treat it as a soft initiative – it needs to be seen as a strategic enabler of speed and performance.

When designing employee experiences, you should always look to eliminate complexity where possible. There’s sometimes a feeling that complexity is inevitable with large enterprises in particular, but with the right mindset and technology, this doesn’t have to be the case.

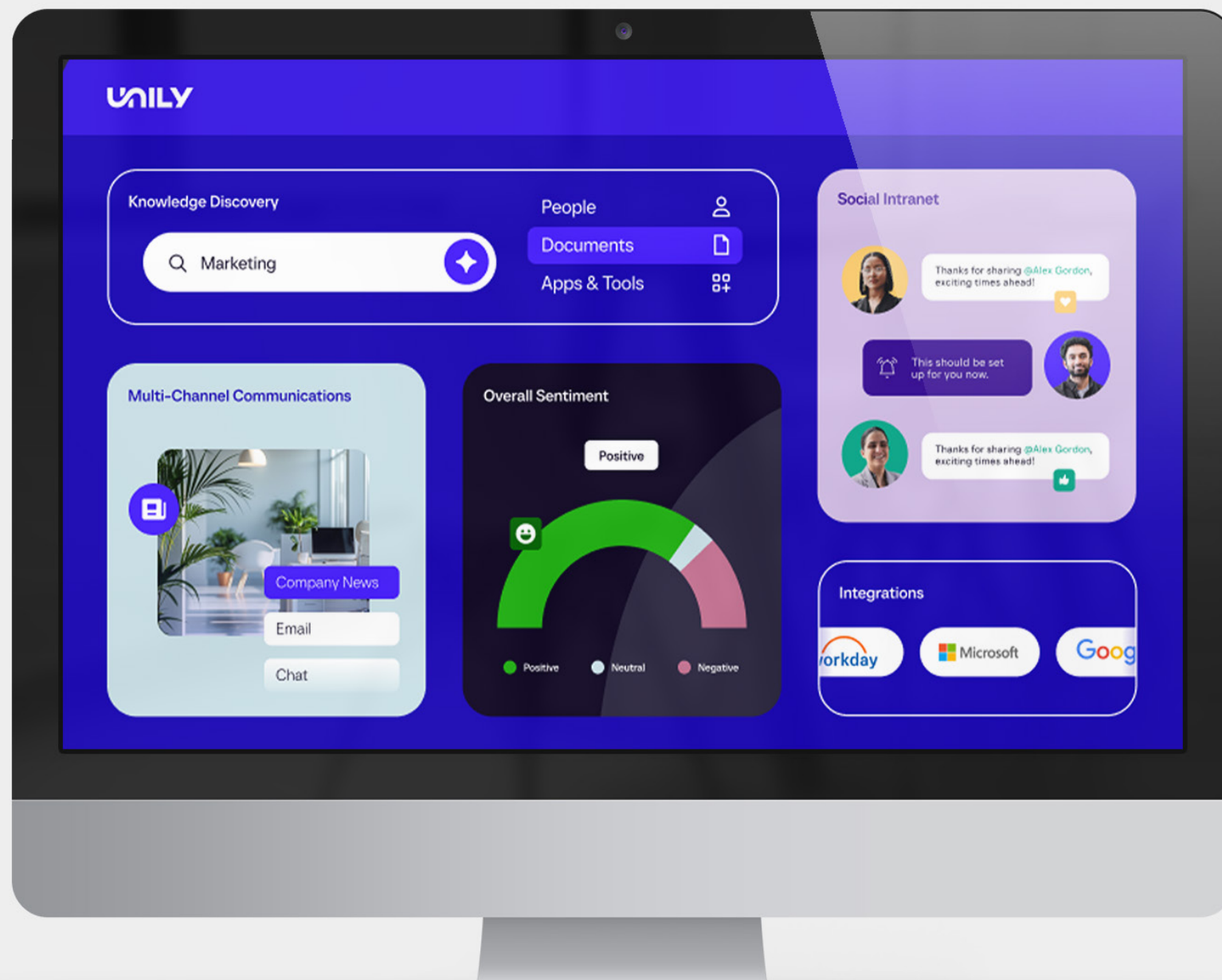
It’s also important to use data to drive decision-making. A good employee experience has things like real-time

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Workflow On-the-Go
Unily is built to break silos and unite workforces everywhere. Acting as the digital home for your enterprise, it transforms disconnected systems into one trusted hub where people actually want to work. Employees shift from passive users to active contributors through dynamic communities, seamless integrations, and personalized experiences. Advanced AI and automation strip out friction, uncover insights, and supercharge execution. With limitless extensibility, Unily adapts to any use case, keeping enterprises agile in the face of disruption. This results in workforces that are highly engaged, aligned, and move faster.



One Stop Shop
Unily's Employee Experience Platform unifies communication, engagement, and productivity for large enterprises. Built on four pillars—Reach, Engage, Amplify, Extend—it offers a personalized hub with AI-driven campaigns, analytics, and integrations. By reducing digital friction and aligning global workforces, it empowers senior leaders with velocity, insights, and scalable, enterprise-wide employee experiences.

analytics and feedback tools, so decisions are made with both speed and confidence, as opposed to guesswork.

IQ: During periods of high uncertainty, what people strategies keep top talent engaged, focused, and performing at their best?

Ms. Shiers: It's critical to ensure that top talent understands the role they are playing and how their contributions matter, particularly during times of change. It is motivating for employees to have a deep connection to the mission their employer

is on, and to feel that their contributions add value and are seen. Therefore, finding ways of connecting your employees' day to day to company strategy and finding ways to reward and recognize those going above and beyond is highly effective.

IQ: During your tenure at Salesforce, you guided culture and people strategy through rapid expansion. What were the biggest 'velocity' lessons from managing change at that scale—and how are you applying them at Unily?

Ms. Shiers: The key for me was truly embracing change and viewing it as something exciting, as an opportunity rather than a challenge. Working at pace and 'building the plane as you fly' helps build resilience, while keeping you and your teams flexible and future solutions focused. Over time, this culture enables an organization to stay agile, responding to change and challenge with enthusiasm and innovation rather than dwelling on the past. At Unily, I get to help our customers build this type of culture using their employee experience platform, which is a key value add.

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IQ: Having worked across EMEA, and in customer-facing HR and internal leadership roles, do you have any recommendations or best practices for tailoring velocity-building strategies to different regions, industries, or business functions?

Ms. Shiers: For complex, global organizations, it's critical to build velocity by keeping employee experience consistent globally for the big ticket items but allowing for personalization by region or locale where needed. This is actually one of the things Unily's customers value most about our platform, as it allows them to tailor messages and language where required. Landing key messages, setting expectations, and linking employee goals to company strategy is vital, so a balance of consistency and personalization works well.

IQ: What aspects of your work fill you with the most passion and pride? Conversely, are there any issues or challenges that keep you up at night?

Ms. Shiers: Building culture, getting employees behind the vision and unlocking their potential to drive business growth are things I'm really passionate about.

I wouldn't say it's an issue, but I am constantly thinking about engagement and the experience of our employees to ensure we're delivering best in class career journeys.

IQ: If you could give the C-suite at large one piece of advice for creating an organization ready to "win at the speed of change" over the next five years, what would it be?

Ms. Shiers: Being able to adapt and pivot isn't a one-off project. It's a continuous need and is fast becoming a non-negotiable. Build a culture where agility feels like a default behavior. **IQ**

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