



JAMEO D. POLLOCK M.ED.

COMPANY:

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

TITLE:

Statewide Technical Training Manager

TRAINING ORGANIZATION OR COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY:

Northcentral University and Strayer University

CERTIFICATION/DEGREE:

Doctorate of Education (Candidate) in Global Training and Technology Development, Master of Education in Adult Education and Curriculum Development, BBA in Management and Finance

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Q: How did you select your certification program or college major?

A: Some people select their degree. For others, the degree chooses them. For me, it was the latter. During my BBA, I discovered a love for education and training. After completing my BBA, I enrolled in an MBA program. I realized very quickly that the MBA track was not for me and my love for education and training was too strong to ignore. I was unsure of where I would fit within the realm of education but after some self-reflection realized it was in training. The rest, as they say, is history. I began researching any and everything related to training, including adult education, curriculum development, training technology, and instructional design, all of which fell under the Adult Education and Curriculum Development program that I eventually enrolled in and completed. After a few years of working for two community colleges, the urge to take training to a new level struck, leading to the pursuit of my doctorate. I have always considered myself an autodidactic, omnivorous learner. In other words, I am a hybrid, and my doctoral program illustrates it with five focus areas: international training, technology, human performance, organizational behavior, and consultancy. As with all education, I strive to use what I have learned to make a difference. The interesting thing about training is that I get to do more than just train. I also get to develop organizational strategies, complete ROIs, create statistical dashboards, monitor outcomes, identify training gaps, and write articles..

Q: What was the biggest influence in your selection of career pathway?

A: Opportunity to make a difference and the challenge to do so were the two biggest influences in my selection. Corporate training was on the rise during my time of career contemplation, so the opportunity was not only present, it was rapidly increasing. Of the two aspects, I would say that challenge was the strongest attraction. I could not resist either in providing value and impacting change. Regardless of the industry or organizational structure, learning and development has to be at the table of strategic planning. Some consider training to be a separate aspect of the organization when the two should intertwine. I like to look at training as the tactics and information needed to get the organization to its desired destination. Being at the forefront of the changing transportation industry and having a front row seat to witness the change is very fulfilling.

Q: What attracted you to the transportation industry?

A: It was the opportunity to be in the "right" place at the "right" time. Whether the impetus is money, changing demographics, or technological advances, transportation is changing. It has to; and it will be training, learning, development, and education that will lead the charge. The transportation industry provides me the opportunity to, once again, make a difference and help people. The ability to find new creative ways to merge business, education, and technology excites me. Apprenticeships has once again become a hot topic and leading this initiative at VDOT is exhilaratingly challenging.

Q: What is your favorite aspect of your job?

A: Continuous improvement, ever-changing technologies, and changing workforce needs are a few of the favorite aspects of my job. Also knowing that the decisions and changes that I either make or influence today will impact the organization tomorrow and into the future in a ripple-type effect. Training and Development is not exempt to the changing world and it vaguely resembles training of yesterday. I would argue that training of today will look nothing like training of tomorrow. From online learning to adaptive learning to microlearning, training delivery will continue to change but the end goal of closing gaps and increasing the learning transfer will not. It is all of these aspects that excite me.

Q: How do you/your company make a positive impact on society/our community?

A: Our organization's tagline is "We keep Virginia Moving," and we do it in a myriad of ways. Safety typically pops into one's mind when discussing the transportation industry. However, VDOT goes beyond that. Whether the situation involves stranded cars, accident assistance, or spill support, VDOT and its Truck & Trailer Mounted Attenuator (TMA), are often the first on the scene to help. If you have ever seen a truck with the flashing arrows on it, then you have more than likely seen a TMA. The TMAs redirects traffic for work zones, stranded cars, and other emergencies. In fact, it is not uncommon that this crew may assist in delivering babies that did not want to wait to get to the hospital.



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Q: What's the most interesting thing you have been able to do in your professional career?

A: I struggled with this question because a few things are competing for the title of "most." After some thought, I think the most interesting thing was my selection as a chair and facilitator of a Think-Tank group for a county in Virginia. Based on some of my past work, the Director of CTE and the Business Manager for the Economic Development Authority approached me with the opportunity to lead a group of business leaders in preparation for two innovation centers. My role was to provide leadership and direction to the group to determine which courses need to be offered based on future workforce needs. The courses will dictate the physical design of the innovation centers.

Q: What makes you get up each morning excited about your profession?

A: Being a part of something as intangible as change is difficult because it is virtually an invisible process. The exciting part for me is seeing how our efforts both create and influence the change. Sometimes it is winning buy-in from a group that initially opposed an idea or direction. Other times it may be getting the green-light for something for which you fought so hard. Each step, win, and effort represent the ingredients for the outcome. I liken the process to looking for an unchartered island. The crew conducts research, exerts copious effort, and remain patient. Day after day, week after week, month after month, they work with no tangible return on their efforts. However, one day, boom. Everything they worked so hard for finally materializes in the form of the island. Interestingly, sometimes we find other things along the way. Other times we find something totally different than we anticipated. For me, it is so much about the journey (process) and I love the journey.

Q: If you could go back to high school and select any elective course to take that would have better prepared you for college, what would it be?


A: Although I took many of them, I would take all of the psychological and sociological courses I could because my job is all about people and understanding them. Other classes I would take are anything related to strategic planning and decision-making.

Q: What advice would you share with students or anyone considering your profession?

A: Know thyself represents the first step of consideration. Figure out what it is that excites you. Stop, look, and listen. By this I mean to never stop reading or learning and always remain curious. If one is looking to influence change at every level of an organization, training is a good choice. If one is looking to inspire people to rise to their best selves, training is a good choice. If you love technology, training is a good choice. If one wants to be a key driver of an industry, training is a good choice.


Regardless of your career choice, it is important to understand that the world is moving at an incredibly fast pace and not continuing to learn will guarantee that you eventually be left behind in your industry. Continue looking for new ways to do old things keeping in mind that sometimes the old way may be the best way. Work with people in other industries. One may be surprised to learn that they could use a cross-country process or tactic to solve a current problem. As an example, many would not initially consider the plethora of similarities between a hospital and a hotel. I know I did not. At least not initially.

TRANSPORTATION SPOTLIGHT



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