

The Future of Work podcast is a weekly show where Jacob has in-depth conversations with senior level executives, business leaders, and bestselling authors around the world on the future of work and the future in general. Topics cover everything from AI and automation to the gig economy to big data to the future of learning and everything in between. Each episode explores a new topic and features a special guest.

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Jacob: Hello, everyone, welcome to another episode of the Future of Work Podcast. My guest today is Barbara Humpton, the CEO of Siemens USA. Barbara, thanks for joining me.

Barbara: Hi, Jacob. It's a pleasure to be here.

Jacob: So lots of questions for you today. But why don't we start off with just some background information about you and how you became CEO because from what I understand, it's actually a pretty interesting story.

Barbara: Yeah, this has been quite a journey. I'll share with you and your listeners that when I started my career, it never occurred to me that I would one day be CEO of a multi-national corporation, I'm responsible now for the 50,000 employees here working with Siemens US. Part of an organization that has 380,000 people in the 190 countries around the globe. But here in Siemens largest market, I think the reason that I'm here and the reason I'm a good choice to lead the organization right now is because I've spent my entire career focused in on first, national security and now global security.

Barbara: When I got started, my thought was that I was going to be a math professor like my parents, and I went off to school to get the education I needed, but got an offer to join IBM. And when I joined IBM, they introduced me to computer programming, we can talk more about the kind of on the job that [inaudible] got through that experience. And then, as I built my career learning more and more, I guess I always had my eyes on what I currently had to do, the most important job was the one right in front of me. And then I got invitations to partake in more and more interesting projects. So, from working on the global positioning system to border security to biometrics for law enforcement, every mission was absolutely fascinating.

Barbara: And recently, Siemens reached out, Judy Marks who you had interviewed recently as well invited me to come. Judy now leading the Otis Elevator company had invited me to come join her when she joined Siemens. I had been thinking a lot about national security and hadn't really thought about the power of energy and infrastructure, the future of automation for really transforming global security. So this has been a fantastic opportunity, and to first be engaged in Siemens work in the federal government and now have the opportunity to work with the entire portfolio and our full customer landscape here in the US, it is truly an honor and a privilege.

Jacob: As CEO, what do you do? What does a typical day look like for you?

Barbara: Yeah, well, it's funny because we have these conversations. There are a lot of folks who think, oh, it must be so stressful. Well, there is a fantastic team here at Siemens. So, think about the kind of work we do. We have companies focused in on building technologies, companies focused on power production and its transmission and distribution. We have a separate company focused on healthcare and other renewable energy. I mean, the list goes on. Every one of those businesses is being led by a very capable leadership team.

Barbara: So, my number one job actually is to really think about the culture we're creating and the future we're driving toward. I have the fun every day of thinking about what are the things we need to do to meet the national priorities of the US? How do we really address the needs of society as Siemens. And then to work with that leadership team, to make sure that we're helping reach the right stakeholders in our ecosystem, that we're focused on the right sources of innovation as we try to learn and grow? And boy, one of the big topics is really focusing on how do we build the workforce of the future.

Jacob: Yeah, that's a huge theme. I'm going to ask you a little bit more granular about your day. So, people are really curious, there have been lots of articles that have been written about how CEOs spend their day. So maybe you can walk us through like, even from when you wake up to what that day looks like it. Is it meetings, are you doing meditation or exercising in the morning? People really, really fascinated by that.

Barbara: Cool. Well, I'm more than happy to share. First of all, I'm a big believer in the restorative power of sleep. So, I put a high priority on getting enough sleep every single day. It's one of those things people say they can catch up. No, I don't believe it. You need to sleep as you go.

Jacob: So you're not sleeping two, three hours a day?

Barbara: Oh, no, no, no, no, no. If I don't get six, I'm no good at all, and I love to get eight. But, you know, up in the morning, my favorite thing to do in the morning is work out. So making sure that I guard that time pretty jealously too. But you know, hey, we all have to compromise somewhere. That's going to be my first compromise. What I've been doing this a lot of weight training and then mixing in aerobics. One of the things I'm doing is volunteering with the American Heart Association and heart health and whole education about heart health has really grabbed my attention. So that's a priority first thing in the morning.

Jacob: Nancy Brown I think is the CEO over there, right?

Barbara: She sure is.

Jacob: Yeah, I interviewed her for my new book on leadership as well. So we had a good chat.

Barbara: And she's an incredible leader. And what they've accomplished as an organization is really phenomenal. And so, when I'm getting about my day, obviously, working in a global corporation, there's always cool stuff that's happening. China has already gotten through their day, Europe is in the middle of theirs. Everybody has important action items that need attention, and we really do communicate as a global leadership team. So always cool to wake up and see what's happened in the rest of the world, get tuned in and find out what are the things that are priorities today. Oh, and by the way, checking in on the news here in Washington.

Barbara: We're the largest corporation headquartered within the DC city limits. And so, we actually do a lot of work with our stakeholders, lawmakers and administration alike here in DC. So keeping up with what's been going on in geopolitics has also been something important and a great way to start every single day. But a typical day for me at the office, if it is in the office, will typically unfold with a series of meetings and phone calls with our leaders in various parts of the business. Planning for upcoming events, talking about what we have dubbed the US agenda, our own work we're doing on the future of innovation and the workforce for ourselves and how we're interacting with the community.

Barbara: And then as the day closes, often, I'll have the opportunity to meet with folks in the evening. So, you know, a dinner out with a team, with other stakeholders, you know, just staying in touch with the things that are going on in this beautiful city. Lots of times, though, I'm out on the road. And just last week, had the opportunity to meet at a university at a leadership conference, the chance to drop in at a medical customer of ours and see how they're employing Siemens technology. And every time I've been going on the road recently, what I've been trying to do is build in time with our local Siemens employees. And I have to tell you, it is just so energizing to have the chance to sit down at a round table, talk to people about the priorities in our business and get their feedback. What are they hearing? What are they seeing? What are the things that we need to be paying more attention to as a leadership team?

Barbara: And the number one thing I keep finding is that, really, the key thing that comes out of all of that is alignment. You know, the idea that we're all trying to pull in the same direction and you can't communicate enough to help people understand where are we headed, how do their efforts fit into the big picture, and then to hear back from them great ideas for accelerating progress.

Jacob: Well, I got to say, you sound so calm. I mean, running such a massive company, you read the news and you keep hearing about panic and all this crazy stuff that's happening out there. But talking to you, it sounds like you very much have things under control and figured out. I mean, how do you maintain that composure and that just kind of like, I got this taken care of without freaking out?

Barbara: Without freaking out. I think there's something that I've been trying to share with as many people as I can, about the power of really focusing on the positive, the what's possible. We're surrounded all the time by things that should be threatening and scary and things that could pose a real issue or challenge to our organization. It's a tough competitive world we're living in right now. But something I learned very early in my

career is the idea that every situation, every challenge, at the same time presents opportunities. It's a matter of really looking at the situation and saying, hey, we have a force at work here that's going to drive change. How do we get as much positive change as we can get out of it?

Barbara: Something as simple as we know that companies have to constantly restructure, I learned a long time ago that we can't look at restructuring as negative. I mean, yeah, it impacts us, it changes the way we work, maybe it changes who we work with. But you take a situation like that and what you discover is, it's really an opportunity for people to reshape what they're personally engaged in and how we address the market. So hey, you know, I guess I come naturally to a pretty optimistic point of view on business and current events. I actually think that's one of the key jobs of a leader is helping people to see through the stress into the world of what's possible and then work on making that happen.

Jacob: I love it. I mean, I think that level of optimism is important. You can't be very good leader if you're walking around screaming like, oh my God, panicking, that's not going to be very good for anybody, let alone 50,000 people.

Jacob: Now, I was going through some articles about you and I read that you were once told you were never going to be able to be a mother and an executive at the same time. Was that true?

Barbara: Yeah, yeah. You know, it's funny, I remember it like it was yesterday because I think each of us have those moments in our careers where we're focused so much on doing well and doing the right things, and we're focused on what our superiors think about us. And so, we get those rare days when we're invited into a key manager's office and we sit down and we're offered the opportunity to share a little bit and maybe glean some pearls of wisdom. And so, I'll never forget the day I had that opportunity to sit down with a really well respected manager in the organization I was in, and was told, hey, he's actually assigned as your mentor. This is a mentoring moment that I thought actually it might turn into those things you hope for an advocacy moment, you know, where somebody then would be my sponsor for future career moves etc.

Barbara: We sat down to talk and we got to talking about the future and the focus and where things were going and he just made this one observation, "Well, Barb, you're going to have to choose. This question of can you be a mother and also go grab that brass ring in the the corporate rat race, you know, you can't do both." I remember having that sinking feeling of, well, I'm already the mother of two darling children so that ship has sailed. And that's the other thing about maybe that era when I grew up, I sort of took that then as the book. Okay, well, I guess I'm off the list. This is not an option for me. And from that moment, I was really focused in on well, you know, I really like the job that I'm doing now. I'm here, I'm going to do it very, very well and making the best of it.

Barbara: It actually took me several years before I got into situations when faced with a comment like that, you know, I could say back to the person who was speaking to me, I hear you and I understand my situation is a little bit different. But honestly, I think our organization needs more of what I have to offer. After making that kind of statement a

few times, what I also discovered is that the people on the other side of the desk started to nod their heads in agreement. And I got asked to do some really neat jobs that ultimately resulted in an appointment to an executive position in the company.

Jacob: How do you deal with rejection? I'm not sure if you have any examples or stories you can share about a time that you got rejected from something or maybe you wanted to propose an initiative and you kept getting told no. In the workplace, a lot of people oftentimes get very discouraged when they get told no, either when they even apply for a job and they get told no or even if they're working at a company and they're already a senior leader and they want to propose something and nobody else agrees with it. So how do you deal with that rejection when people tell you no or you can't do it?

Barbara: I think about everything that we do every day. We get faced with that all the time. I actually think there are a couple of aspects to this. One is having the grit to say no is not the end. And there's a lot that people are writing and talking about right now around grit. I'm a big believer that that whole idea that if you're driven, if you feel passion for your purpose and you have the perseverance to keep going, that grit can carry you through a lot of no's, especially when you just know in your gut that what you're proposing is right and is important.

Barbara: But then there are some neat techniques. It's funny, about midway through my career at IBM, then Lockheed Martin, we were working on some things that required some real transformation. Remember when the Department of Homeland Security was formed and suddenly customs from the Treasury and Border Protection were put together. Here was this new agency, Customs and Border Protection. And I was with a team of IBM and Lockheed Martin at the time helping them transform their operations with information technology systems. Cultural change. I mean, people had done things a long time one way and it was just a monumental task to get things changed. And what we learned as a team is all kinds of techniques for changing the dialogue, change the problem, change the question so that what you're going to get back is not a no.

Barbara: And here's an example. Do you want me to change the day to day tools that you're using to check paperwork at the border? The answer would typically be no, don't change. But if you ask a different question, hey, are you interested in how we can help the US government use the data that we gather from custom screening to help prevent crime and lower the risk of terrorism in the United States? Well, that's an answer anybody can say yes to. So the technique is kind of, hey, let me get on the same side of the table as you and lets you and I work together a common problem that we know we can defeat together. You get a whole lot more yeses when you're working with someone to solve a bigger problem they've got than trying to head on confront them with making them do something that you want them to do.

Barbara: So, you know, for me, this whole idea of, lots of times the way to get to yes is just never go down the no path. Does that make sense?

Jacob: Never go down the no path. I wish it was that simple. Never go down the no path. I like it. So, when you say never go down the no path, I mean, how do you avoid going down the no path? Is it just how you frame things or the types of things that you bring up?

Barbara: Well, yeah. I mean, let's think about things that we're involved in at Siemens today. What does this world need to do when it comes to greater sustainability and energy efficiency? A no path question would be, hey, would you like to spend some more money on energy efficient equipment that is going to help us? And the answer to that can very often be no. But what we're finding is that when you talk to people, frame this differently and look at the way technology can help to solve a real problem that a stakeholder is having, oh, you get to yes very quickly. Not only yes but what more can we do.

Barbara: So, I'm really pleased to be able to say that for the kinds of things we're trying to do at Siemens today, boy, there's really pretty universal support for the kinds of technologies we're bringing to the table and the kinds of things we're trying to accomplish as a team. And in most cases, it's simply a matter of us getting to the right stakeholder, the one who is capable of authorizing the resources and saying, yes.

Jacob: Okay, that makes more sense. A couple of minutes ago, you talked about driving change and I know that this is a big issue that a lot of people keep telling me about. One of the common things even at conferences and events, I always hear this from people, whether I talk about the future of work or employee experience, somebody always says, how do I convince my managers or my leaders, they don't get it? They are not aware of how things are changing? How do I get them to see that the future is going to be different than it is now?

Jacob: So, let's say you were in that kind of a position, and you weren't the CEO, and somebody else was the CEO of Siemens USA. And you had to try to convince them that it's important to think about this US agenda, the future of innovation, re-skilling the workforce, how do you go about having these conversations?

Barbara: I did have exactly that situation when I was the CEO of Siemens government technologies. 10 years ago, Siemens recognized that the US government is the world's biggest customer. You look across the portfolio and you say, what is it that the US government might need out of Siemens portfolio? And frankly, the answer is everything. They're the biggest landlord, they're the biggest energy user, they're the biggest health care system on their own etc, etc. And that's when Judy ended up coming to Siemens, that's when I joined Siemens. And we had this beautiful opportunity to introduce this federal customer to counterparts and Siemens who frankly, are very, very busy addressing the needs of their existing commercial portfolio of customers. And think about the early 2010s as a time when the audio industry was really booming with all kinds of new technology and automation. So lots of competing interests.

Barbara: And really, the key challenge ahead of us was how do we grab the attention and the imagination of these folks to show them the potential of addressing this particular customer's needs and then get engaged? And it I'll tell you, I think it really takes a multi-faceted approach and I think we're in the midst of this now on a broader scope with the digital transformation that's taking place in industry. So change is going on around us, people have needs we've never addressed before, how are we going to get familiar with what those needs are and then figure out how to address them?

Barbara: Well, I think number one is that very practical, try to walk a mile in the customer's shoes. I think the more we as leaders can do to give our management teams real face to face time with the customers they'll serve, with the stakeholders they're going to be I'll say sitting on the same side of the table with, get them into situations where they get a deep understanding of what is that other person, that other organization really wrestling with. I mean, this is really vital and I think now more than ever, taking the opportunity to get out on field trips, going to visit manufacturing sites, getting into the hospital and having those face to face conversations makes all the difference in the world.

Barbara: And as we make the digital change, expanding that to the idea that there are people who grew up digital natives who at the same time are helping us in industries where we have 40 year veterans who personally haven't even picked up their first digital device. These are the challenging generational changes that we're going through right now. The more I work on this, the more I'm convinced that it's the people that matter, it's the person to person connection, and the ability to relate on the priority and the mission level so that those who need to make the change and those who are helping to facilitate the change both have an appreciation for the point of view of the other side.

Jacob: And I suppose that's where empathy comes in. Putting yourself in somebody else's perspective, putting yourself in someone else's shoes, seeing things from their side so to speak, which is pretty much exactly what you said. What are some of the big trends that you are paying attention to in the world of work right now?

Barbara: Well, digital is clearly the most dramatic, I would say. The need that we have to bring people along, we've been doing a lot of thinking about everything from what does the educational system need to be or what does government policy need to be in order to support the workforce of the future. And thankfully, as Siemens, we get invitations to the table so we get to have a voice in those conversations. As I think about the way the educational system is transforming, I think that because of the rapid change of technology, [inaudible] is this ecosystem, where yes, universities are relevant, universities matter because they provide the foundation that kind of charts out a career. They give people the background and the perspective that's going to guide them through a long, long life.

Barbara: And then we think that we're going to need career technical education and to your colleges, special purpose training schools and all to help us keep pace with evolving technology, and give people training when they need it as big changes are happening in our technological worlds around us. So, think about people who are going to be working for longer periods now. When I started my career, the idea was start at IBM, and after a 25 or 30 year career, a gold watch, and retirement. And boy, the 30 year mark is way in my rearview mirror, and what I'm looking forward to is maybe 50. And frankly, I just heard a stat the other day that the first person to live to be 150 has already been born. So think about how longevity coupled with dramatic changes in technology are going to be guiding us and affecting us as we step our way through long, productive careers. I think those things really matter.

Barbara: Now, there's a lot of questions right now about what's the role of the corporation when it comes to guiding that or should this be something that an individual guides as they go? Should all of this be portable for me incorporated so that the education I get, the certifications I get, the benefits I get are all mine and go with me as I accept sort of position after position with different organizations. I could see that working for certain kinds of employment. But when you have the kind of work and the kind of challenges we do at Siemens, what I'm hoping is we won't lose the attention of people to consider a career where the kinds of things we work on literally take decades of planning and are decades in the making so that they really are going to persist for long periods.

Barbara: This whole tug of war between feeding sort of a fast moving, consumer driven technological cycle versus the kind of technology that goes into significant infrastructure, they're kind of two different things. I think as we move forward into the future of work, it's going to be fun to draw people in two different kinds of careers.

Jacob: You have, I think you mentioned 50,000 employees, and the annual revenue, I think you said it was like 23 or 25 billion for you guys?

Barbara: Yeah, 23 and growing right now.

Jacob: Okay. So massive company, 10s of thousands of employees just in the United States. Can you talk about some of the things that you might be doing inside of Siemens USA or globally at Siemens around skills and training and preparing your own workforce for the future?

Barbara: Yeah, I'm happy to share information about that. Let me come at this, again, first, from the educational angle. We traditionally have hired from STEM fields, we're very, very quick to go to mechanical engineering, electrical engineering now more software engineering, data science, and all of the digital fields that are being added to our world. And so, where we go to find the right candidates is still key and actually really challenging. Now that Siemens is one of the top 10 software companies in the world, we're competing with the top tech companies for the kind of digital talent that everyone is going to need for the future.

Barbara: And so, let's broaden this to think about, well, how else would you draw people into the workforce. We've had a tremendous veteran hiring program. Years ago, we took part in joining forces and actually sought programs that would help veterans find their way to Siemens. And we've discovered that it's an incredibly talented group of individuals whose skills really align well with what we need to do here. A great example is about 25% of all the wind technicians, the people who service the wind turbines that Siemens puts up for those who own wind farms, about 25% of them are coming in as veterans willing to take those very physically demanding jobs and with highly technical skills. But the list goes on and on. We brought veterans into truly all levels of our organization and in all kinds of skills.

Barbara: A quick aside, we worked with Google on the new tool they've created to translate military operation codes into the kind of position descriptions that are a match for us in



industry. So that if there's a vet coming out of service and they are looking for a job at Siemens, they can type in their military code and be presented with the matching opportunities at Siemens. I mean, little things like that, to make life easier, make it easier for people to find us, that makes all the difference.

Barbara: Now, with a workforce of 50,000, of which about 10,000 are in the manufacturing area, one of the top questions right now is, man, with the transformation going on in manufacturing, how do we help those employees make a shift and take on more digital knowledge.

Jacob: That's a huge area because most of the people say that that's the space that's going to be most heavily impacted by jobs. So I'm very, very curious what you guys are thinking about there.

Barbara: Yeah. There are a couple of interesting things you begin to discover when you dig into this. One, you may not know this but a lot of our manufacturing workforces are actually long tenured. A key question would be, what are they thinking about retirement, when are they planning to go? Are they like me where they're saying, oh, I'm having fun, I'm going to keep going. So it's not uncommon to go into one of our manufacturing sites and find someone with 40 plus years of experience.

Barbara: We've gone through and done a lot of [inaudible] who are the best candidates for the digital training of the future. And we've come down to these two real differentiators. If somebody has curiosity and is willing to take the initiative, then boy, there's nothing preventing them from getting up-skilled, re-skilled, and it's hard to call it up-skilling because many, many of our manufacturing jobs are incredibly technical. But adding new skills to the portfolio I'll say in the digital arena. Honestly, for folks who want to make the effort, the training is there. We're investing about 50 million annually in curricula and opportunities that we can make available to our own employees to help them be ready and be capable of taking some of these other digital jobs.

Barbara: We also make investments in tuition reimbursement, things like that, so that, for instance, if somebody wanted to go out and really dive deep into cyber, we would support that because we have a tremendous need for that kind of skill as well. But it really does take an employee expressing the desire to do that and then taking the initiative because, frankly, on top of a demanding job to also spend time on education, that can be pretty taxing. But honestly, Jacob, that's there for the taking and I think people are going to really enjoy getting into that.

Barbara: And that brings me to apprenticeships because really I think the most effective way of learning in this world today is this combination of sort of academic education coupled with hands on experience. And we've taken the German model of apprenticeship, we've obviously tailored it for what we need to be able to apply it here in the US. And starting first in Charlotte, North Carolina a decade ago, when we needed new employees in a gas turbine factory and literally could not find enough qualified applicants, we worked with the local community college, created an apprenticeship program and then since then have not only for our own operations, expanded that to nine states. But we've also

shared our playbook with the Department of Labor and the Department of Commerce so that we can help other companies take advantage of the model and bring this to life.

Jacob: Very cool. Yeah, it sounds like you have a lot of interesting programs going on there, which is fantastic. And I think more companies need to spend time in some of those things. And I love the notion of apprenticeships because you don't really hear much about those anymore. People always refer to apprenticeships as those things that we used to have way back in the day but I love the fact that you are bringing them back and really making them kind of a focal point of your training and up-skilling for your employees.

Jacob: Also, one of the things that I find is when we talk about up-skilling or re-skilling or retraining, a lot of people tend to assume that that is for knowledge workers. People that sit in an office or people that need to learn data science and stuff like that. But there's actually a lot of jobs that are out there, like you said, whether you're operating on a wind turbine, whether you're an electrical engineer, like there are a lot of those other high skilled, very technical jobs that I feel like we don't talk about enough. I think you mentioned this in an article that you had 1500 jobs open. I think you said you had like 10,000 candidates but you weren't able to find enough people to fill those jobs. Was that right?

Barbara: That's right. That was the story at Charlotte. We had literally thousands of applicants but could not fill the jobs that we needed to fill at the factory. So, one way that we've been talking about the particular, I'll call it the particular segment of skills that we really need to address, we think of them right now as middle skills. So, people used to talk about white collar jobs and blue collar jobs and we are like saying rip the collars off, these are new collar jobs. This is a new way of looking at the way work gets done today, which says we're all knowledge workers. For every job we have, there's going to be elements of interaction with technology. Digitalization is entering every aspect of our lives. So, if you're working in a factory, more digital technologies are coming in, you may need to be able to program the machinery that you'll be working with. But you also need to know what is this physical thing I'm building and how do I ultimately craft it. You need both.

Barbara: So for those middle skills, a couple of years ago, the Siemens Foundation, our arm, our 501(c)(3), where we have the opportunity to really reach out into the community and do productive work. We decided to focus all of our efforts on this real issue. How do we get more focus on these middle skill jobs and how do we help, working with other partners, how do we help elevate awareness, create programs, highlight the educational institutions who are making progress on this. And I'm really pleased to say that what has resulted is a wonderful advancement of these middle skill initiatives.

Barbara: And a couple of examples, you think about buildings, you know, are buildings high tech? Well, the answer is most buildings today do have high technology in them. And the kind of person you would bring in to be your building maintenance specialist really needs to be a building automation specialist as well. So, in partnership with the automated controls professionals organization, we're working with them to create a non-proprietary curriculum around building automation. And this is just a public entity that building automation companies work with but this is the first time that a company has

stepped forward and said, I'm not going to be teaching my own proprietary systems, I want this to bring a certification that applies to the entire industry.

Barbara: Now, if we can help attract people into the world of building automation, it means that there will be more talent available to help our customers deal with their implementations. And so yes, will it help Siemens, by all means. But more importantly, it's addressing a need we have. Similarly, last week, I was at Texas Children's Hospital, and had the opportunity to see a room of data technicians who were analyzing EKG and EEG graphs for patients who were in the neurological unit. And I asked them what technical background they had, what kind of training lead them to this career path. And their answer was there were two small colleges in Texas that offer this very special program. And I shared with them, that's the second big investment we'll be making at Siemens is in a career path for healthcare, technical data analysts. I really think this is one of those critical gaps that we're going to need to work hard to fill.

Jacob: What are your thoughts on the sites like Coursera, Khan Academy, Udemy, micro degrees, these courses that people can just take online within, you know, sometimes even a couple of days? Are you a fan of that stuff as well?

Barbara: Bring it, I say bring it, bring it all. And you'll hear us talk about stackable credentials, right? I love the idea of people following their passion. Exploring more, getting qualified to be proficient in various skills, technologies etc and then bringing those to the table and going, hey, I've got all this in my kit. Now, how do I participate as productive member of a team where we've got a really diverse set of skills and tackling some larger problem.

Jacob: We talked a lot about technology. Anybody that reads the news now or any of these studies or reports that come out from various institutions, the general kind of vibe on some of these things is doom and gloom and panic and automation and AI is going to impact a lot of jobs and it's not going to be pleasant. What's your sort of perspective on AI and automation in the future? Are you more of an optimist or you a little bit fearful and worried about what's coming?

Barbara: Yeah, well, you already know I'm an optimist. But also, I'll share with you I'm practical. So think about the first time a human picked up a rock and used it as a tool. It elevated the role of a human. It made that human more capable of doing things. By the way, that same rock could be used as a weapon, right? And so, you look throughout history and you see these advancements where we find new tools to use, we realize that some people are going to use those tools for good, some people are going to use them for evil, we got to find ways to ensure we have checks and balances in our world so that evil does not prevail.

Barbara: But think about the good, you know, every time we've brought new tools into the equation, yes, it has changed work. We have to know that, we have to embrace it, and we have to start asking ourselves, okay, given that I now have a tool that will do this, what should I the human be doing instead? And I'll go back to health care. I think that artificial intelligence, augmented intelligence is absolutely going to help us with analysis, it's going to help us with diagnosis, it's going to help us with treatments. But I think only

people will be able to provide the care. And it's that element that I think is the human element. And this whole journey that we're on and especially here at Siemens is to really help find what's humanly possible.

Jacob: I like that, that phrase, what is humanly possible because it kind of has a double meaning, right? Bringing humanity to the organization and also trying to figure out the limits that humans can reach by working with technology. So I love that phrase. I also heard you talk a lot about this idea of a digital quotient. And I thought maybe you can expand a little bit on what that is.

Barbara: Yeah. We've already been talking a little bit about how leaders have to have empathy. We learned a couple decades ago of this thing called an EQ that supplemented what we already knew about the IQ. So, we already know that people need to have intelligence to be able to take on some of these tough jobs and we know that it really helps and is an advantage if they have EQ. I'll say, partly jokingly, but really seriously as well, talking about the digital quotient, because just as you think about this change that's happening, first of all, some people are embracing the digital changes around us, others are wishing that it just wouldn't happen.

Barbara: So, if I've got an opportunity here at Siemens to select the leadership team and I know that I've got a group of candidates who are qualified, talented people, who've worked hard and really are aspiring to do great things with us, one of the questions I like to ask is what about their digital quotient. And what I'd like to be able to do is when I'm looking at a pool of candidates and considering strengths, weaknesses, and who should take this next opportunity, ask myself, who's the strongest candidate to lead us in our digital future.

Barbara: And if I can give this next development assignment, even if it's not a pure digital assignment, if I can give this next development assignment to someone who has a strong IQ and a strong EQ, and they also happen to be someone who is embracing digital and is challenging their team to try new things, bring new tools into the realm, I want to give them that shot because they're already on the right path and they're going to be in a better position to lead others who may be a little bit more afraid of what digital is going to mean in terms of its disruption.

Jacob: I know another area that you are extremely passionate about is leadership. And this also seems to be, well, a, this is the topic of my next book is what is the leadership, what is the future of leadership going to look like over the next decade. But it seems to me that with a lot of these new trends and things that you're talking about, with it, it also means that we need new types of leaders, new skills, new ways of thinking about leadership. So can you talk a little bit about what kind of leaders we need in this new world of work?

Barbara: Yeah. I really enjoyed my conversation with you as you were preparing for the book and I know you had the chance to talk to a lot of very diverse leaders and I can't wait to hear what you've learned from all of us. But, you know, one of the things I talked about with you in our earlier discussion was this idea that I believe that we're going to see more and more diversity in leadership for a couple of reasons. One is that we're just more

conscious of it these days. But another is the idea that followers are getting more tuned in to different kinds of leaders. We're all hardwired to follow leaders. Everybody's looking for someone with a vision and someone who has a compelling way to inspire and spur people to action. I mean, those are just natural reactions we all have.

Barbara: Now to discover that that doesn't necessarily have to come in one single size and color and shape, but that leaders come in all kinds of forms and that we're finding leadership in some remarkable areas, I think that's a lot of fun myself. I think part of what's getting us there is our digital tools. We've got this ubiquitous communication. We can see the impact that people are having in all kinds of realms, be they political or social and the arts and in business.

Barbara: And so, we're starting to get used to this idea that, boy, there are very many different leadership styles. I think this digital quotient brings with it something else, which is interesting, the ability to communicate across different media, the ability to work remotely. We at Siemens often form teams across oceans. In the old days, when someone felt, hey, I need to be in the same room and be able to look my followers in the eye, you know, that kind of person is going to find themselves really lost in an environment where now we actually communicate voice to voice over telecommunication equipment. Maybe someday we'll have fantastic holography or something like that. But today, this is the state of the art and leaders have to be able to inspire and move others through all kinds of different media. These are just a few of the things that I think are sort of fundamental and exciting and really intriguing as we make this turn.

Jacob: Yeah, not just about commanding control anymore. So we definitely need that kind of new type of leader going forward. So, with all this stuff that we talked about, what do you think that we need to be doing? And I suppose when I say what should we be doing, that can probably take on a couple of different angles. Maybe let's start with just employees. So people listening to this podcast that are thinking about how to future proof their careers, things that they should be doing to stay relevant. I mean, what advice would you give for employees inside of companies?

Barbara: Okay. I actually think there's one fundamental piece of advice that if I had gotten this advice earlier in my career, I think I would have been much more self aware through the process. Purpose. All of us need to be thinking about our own personal why. What is it that makes us tick? I'm going to assume somebody like you, you have this tremendous burning curiosity about how things work and you're off learning about that by talking people. I've shared with you my personal purpose is I want to change the world for national security, global security. I have a real desire and almost a need to be engaged in things that are going to positively affect future outcomes for the globe.

Barbara: And my sense is that when leaders and when employees are aligned in their own personal purpose along with the purpose of the organization they're in, boy, everything just moves more smoothly. I'll just share this Siemens story. So, a lot of people know that there are business to business organizations out there, there are business to consumer B2C. We're actually a business to society company. We at Siemens have really chosen to apply all of our talents and our resources to solving the world's biggest

problem bombs, the mega trends that are affecting the globe, urbanization, the change in demographics as we have an aging population. More interwoven global supply chain, climate change, digitalization itself. All of these mega trends actually drive our corporate strategy.

Barbara: So for me personally, being someone who has this as my personal [inaudible 00:50:24], this is the perfect place for me to come to work every day. And my encouragement to everybody who's listening is to think deeply about what brings you joy, what are you passionate about, and then seek out those opportunities that will give you more of that.

Jacob: I love that you mentioned purpose. I was actually just going to ask you about that. How do you figure out purpose? This is like a tough thing for a lot of people. Sometimes people can be happy in their jobs but maybe they don't feel that sense of purpose or meaning or understanding how their contributions are having an impact. Can you talk a little bit about how, I mean, how can you figure out your purpose? Does the organization play a role in this at all to help employees make that connection?

Barbara: I think an organization can and should, and maybe sometimes doesn't do enough. So, here's something we're very conscious of now as Siemens USA is being able to articulate our agenda. And actually saying to employees, it matters, what we work on matters. And actually having conversations manager to employee about what you're doing makes a difference. The work you're doing today, if you think about it this way, is the most important job. If you weren't here to do this, this wouldn't be getting done and the whole doesn't work as well as when you're here and doing this.

Barbara: Now, are you familiar with Marie Kondo who's doing the joy of tidying up? All right, here's the way I like to think of it. Think about the things you do each day. And sort of mentally pick it up, hold it in your hands and ask yourself, does it bring you joy. And if it sparks joy, keep it. If it doesn't spark joy, find someone else you can delegate it to.

Barbara: I went through years of my career where people were trying to fix me. They were trying to tell me that I didn't do something well enough and that was a weakness and I needed to work on it. And what I've ultimately found is that no, that means I need to find someone else who really loves doing those things and I need to give all those things to that person so I can spend more of my day picking up those things that spark joy.

Jacob: It's sort of like trying to solve a jigsaw puzzle, right? Where all the pieces are, and you know, your piece, you focus on what you're good at and move that other stuff to somebody else and find who's good at that piece.

Barbara: That's right.

Jacob: I like that analogy of kind of picking it up and if you like it, keep it, if not, get rid of it. What if you're maybe not a leader in a company. Is that just a matter of having conversations with your team and with your manager and just letting them know what you're struggling with and what you might be good at and not so good at?

Barbara: Yeah, and actually, something else I learned is that another great way to figure this out is by talking to your peers. Sometimes talking to your manager, that's a really loaded conversation. It feels like, oh, can I talk about the negatives, can I talk about weaknesses etc. Instead, those closed door conversations with a peer saying, man, I liked that. I didn't like that, what do you think they meant when they introduce this new idea, how's that ever going to work? Hashing things out is a way of getting through this and figuring out are you aligned or not.

Barbara: I think there's a lot of merit in this new idea that maybe the real power of the corporation is not in this command and control as it has historically been and more in the network. More in that, you know, finding peers that you work well with, forming up teams to meet a special purpose, more on an ad hoc basis, depending less on the organization chart and job descriptions and depending more on collaboration and agreement about how we're going to [inaudible] So, I'd really encourage everybody to be thinking more about their peer network than about the hierarchical structure.

Jacob: How do you balance, and this will be the last question before I jump into some just quick rapid fire ones for you to wrap up. But last kind of a businessy question for you is how do you balance this idea of making money with doing the right thing? Because obviously, you're a large company, you have a lot of people invested in it. So you want the company to do well but how do you balance that with this idea of purpose and meaning and passion and doing the right thing? Because sometimes I would imagine they might clash together.

Barbara: You'd think so, but as we go about our business, I'm not finding too many conflicts here. And I'll tell you why. You know when you're on an airplane, they say, if the oxygen masks deploy, put on yours before taking care of anyone else in need beside you. So this idea that you have to be strong in order to fulfill your mission in order to help others. I mean, the fact is, we have to be successful in this business. Siemens is 174 years old, getting older, and we're looking forward to the next 174 years. You don't get to be that if you're not successful at your business. In fact, we believe we've really got to be among the strongest in each of the markets that we pursue in order to really fulfill our obligation. We want to be leaders, we want to shape the landscape, we think we have the best talent in the world to invent the future in these areas we've chosen to serve.

Barbara: So this is really one and the same. We are in business and the business that we choose to do addresses this purpose. And the world needs us to be strong so that we can keep fulfilling that purpose.

Jacob: Makes sense. Okay, rapid fire, couple of fun questions for you. Starting off with what has been your greatest business failure?

Barbara: Oh, my greatest business failure. Probably the time that I got told that they were taking my job away from me and handing it to somebody else, and that's subject for another conversation someday.

Jacob: Oh my goodness. I sense there's a good story behind that one.

Barbara: It's the whole reason I'm at Siemens.

Jacob: Wow. I'm going to have to ask you about that later. What has been your most embarrassing moment at work?

Barbara: Oh, gosh. I mean, literally, there was a time when we were giving a presentation and the guy presenting with me dropped something, reached down to get it, split his pants. True.

Jacob: That must have been, you know, interestingly enough, I've heard that story a couple times on this podcast, so it kind of has me wondering about what's going on out there. What are you most proud of?

Barbara: Oh, gosh, there's so many things. But when the director of the FBI said that rapid DNA had revolutionized law enforcement, and it was my team just a few short years before that who had introduced the FBI to the idea that rapid DNA was possible in our lifetimes, and they said, really, and they did it. I'm so proud of that.

Jacob: Wow, very cool. I sense that you've worked on some pretty amazing projects during the course of your career, probably a lot of which you can't even talk about.

Barbara: Yup, a little bit of that too.

Jacob: What has been the hardest business decision you've had to make?

Barbara: Well, early in my career, the hardest business decision was, oh, gosh, when we had the Global Positioning System, it was terribly behind schedule and over budget. And we realized the only way forward was to cut the team size in half. And we were going to have to place half of the team on other projects elsewhere, maybe they would leave the company. And that was one of those as an early career middle manager, that was hard. I'm sharing with you that that's where I finally got the aha, that actually really good things come from some of the hardest moments in our business history.

Jacob: What's your favorite business or non business book?

Barbara: Boy. I loved Thomas Friedman's Thank You For Being Late. It kind of explains everything about what's going on in technological change today.

Jacob: Okay. And last two questions for you. Who was the best mentor you've ever had?

Barbara: Again, fantastic mentors. I'm going to tell you, my husband has been, and he's not even in business. He's a city manager. And yet, he is the one whose voice calmly says, you love what you do, do the next thing. Yeah, stay with it.

Jacob: Yeah, it's important to have that good, I think you call it a good life partner. That is important. Very last question for you. If you were doing a different career, what do you think you would have ended up doing?



Barbara: I would have been roving trades person. I love, no, seriously, I love learning new things, I want to learn how to do plumbing, I've never done that before. But you name it, if it's putting things together, hands on stuff that's creative, I honestly think I would have loved just being a craftsperson.

Jacob: Very cool. Hey, it's not too late. You can leave everything you're doing and start plumbing and putting furniture together. You never know.

Barbara: Well, maybe I'm the person who's going to live to be 150 and I'm going to need a few more career reinventions before it's all over.

Jacob: Yeah, you never know. Well, Barbara, thanks so much for your time. Where can people go to learn more about you and Siemens? I know you have a lot of jobs that you're looking to fill, so anything that you want to mention for people, please feel free to mention away.

Barbara: Oh, hey, I'd love for people to follow me on LinkedIn and Twitter. I'm easy to find. Either Barbara Humpton, B. Humpton or Siemens USA CEO. And of course, come to [siemens.com](http://siemens.com) calm and learn more about all that Siemens is doing in this digital transformation.

Jacob: Perfect. Well, Barbara, thanks again so much for your time. I really appreciate it.

Barbara: Thanks, Jacob.

Jacob: And thanks everyone for tuning in. My guest again has been Barbara Humpton, CEO of Siemens USA and I will see you next week.