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Announcer: Welcome to HII Talking Points, a Huntington Ingalls Industries podcast. Twice a quarter, we'll sit down with HII leaders to discuss topics of interest about company and industry.

Phoebe Richards: I'm Phoebe Richards, and this is an episode in our special miniseries about transformation at HII. HII president and CEO, Mike Petters, has said we will not remain successful by being complacent. And that's where transformation comes in. It's about changing the way HII does business, as an enterprise and as individual employees.

In this series, we'll hear from division presidents on transformation and what they think we can do to transform the business. Our kickoff episode featured an interview with Scott Stabler, HII executive vice president and chief transformation officer. So if you haven't listened to that episode yet, I recommend you go back and listen to it. For this episode, I'm talking with Newport News Shipbuilding President Jennifer Boykin. Jennifer, thank you for joining me.

Jennifer Boykin: Thank you. Happy to be here.

Phoebe Richards: Good. So, to kick things off starting from the top, what are some of the most exciting transformation initiatives occurring at Newport News?

Jennifer Boykin: Well, we like to say it's a very exciting time to be a shipbuilder. We are actually in the early stages of I believe a generational digital transformation in shipbuilding. As you know, we're going to be building CVN 80 as the first paperless carrier to be built here ever. And of course we're a major subcontractor with Electric Boat to build the *Columbia* class, which will also be a digitally built ship.

So we're preparing our workforce. We're preparing our factory. We're preparing our business processes. And it's very exciting, the incoming workforce – the future shipbuilders – obviously have grown up with digital capability. And even our existing legacy shipbuilders who have much wisdom and knowledge about their craft are recognizing the art of the possible using the digital tools. So it's a very exciting time here for transformation.

Phoebe Richards: Nice. So what are some of the examples that your division is doing to support HII's transformation?

Jennifer Boykin: Well, like the rest of the corporation, we're certainly making sure that we bring the voice of every shipbuilder to the transformation process. So the way that we're transforming I think is very engaging and it does support sort of the raising engagement and also empowering the least empowered voice in the room. So for example, a couple of the key ways that we're doing that is through agile teams.

So instead of kind of the traditional, the engineers and the IT folks go off in a floor on their own and come up with a solution and then bring the solution to the work team who decides if it's helpful or not, we're actually doing that in an agile way. We've invested in an MX trailer, which is a mobile experience trailer. With that we're able to take the trailer down to different parts of the yard and bring in the craft and bring in the support organizations that actually support the craft to get the work done.

And they can look at what the tools are doing and they're able to articulate what's the next step in this transformation. What do I need next? And then really working as a collaborative team, the folks who are implementing the changes and the team members who use the new tools work together. It's really, it's very, very powerful.

It's really transforming not only how we run the business, but how we implement these changes. The other thing that we're doing I think that's really focused on every voice being heard is some of our basic quality of life components of our business, which are also transformational. We've always had a problem here at Newport News with the amount of parking spaces we've had, and we've taken that on and we're really working to make sure that some basic quality of life needs of our workforce are high on our agenda.

And technology even as a part of that, we actually have an app now that our employees can use that track where the shuttle buses are running so they can see when it's going to arrive at a certain stop and when it's going to go to a certain stop. But beyond just parking, we are investing in having breakrooms where these teams can work out problems and sort of problem solve on the go.

And also just to have a place to meet, to talk about safety or to talk about the quality of their work. One of the other ways that we're investing quality of life of our workforce is really through investing even in the restrooms across the shipyard. We're trying to make sure that they reflect the honor of the work that the people do and the folks that maintain those started their own campaign where there are posters on each of the restroom doors that basically say, "Help me help you."

There's a lot of pride and ownership. And it allows every person and every function to feel like there's an opportunity to participate in what we're trying to do from an employee engagement standpoint, as well as from a business transformation standpoint. And I think that's really important.

Phoebe Richards: So it sounds like you're not only transforming how you're building, but the environment in which our shipbuilders are building these ships.

Jennifer Boykin: Yes, that's exactly right. It's hard work. The work we do is really hard. We have shipbuilders that work in all kinds of extreme weather, as you know. If it's a wet, rainy day they're still walking through that to get the work done. They work on hot days, they work on cold days, so it's appropriate that we pay attention to the conditions that they work in and that part of our transformation, part of our investment and our workforce is focused on that.

We're putting more and more work undercover. We're investing in facilities that make it safer and that just keep people more comfortable as they do this really hard work. I believe that the workforce understands if we invest in them then they're going to believe that their ideas matter and they're going to bring more ideas to the forefront and we have a lot of examples of where we're seeing that.

Phoebe Richards: So what does a transformed HII look like to you?

Jennifer Boykin: That's a really good question. When I think about a transformed HII, I sort of think about it in three components. One is the workforce that we're bringing in. The second is how the leadership factory works and how we develop our future leaders and then the third really is the bit about leveraging technology that exists today.

So let me just talk about the first. As I mentioned, the workforce that's coming in is much more digitally savvy. But in addition to that, the workforce that's coming in hasn't necessarily gone through sort of vocational technical schools the way they would have in the past. And so our training pipeline before hiring and even during has to really keep up with that workforce that's coming in.

Secondly, I think the leaders in a transformed HII have to understand that the job of the day is really more about how you manage change. I think that change is coming and what we really need to think about is how we develop leaders that don't look at change as something that's happening to me, but rather something that's happening for me.

And so I think the way we talk about leadership development and the way we invest in leadership development has to transform. And then that third piece really is about the technology. We're partnering – we don't want to be a software company, and so we're partnering with some of the smartest people in the industry, companies like Siemens and SAP and AWS, so that we can leverage what they know and the capabilities that they have developed.

We have developed strategic partnerships that allow us to really share with these experts what we're trying to accomplish and they're able to bring solutions sets that they've seen in maybe in other industries to help find solutions that suit us in a much faster way. So that's sort of what transformation looks like to me in the future – a different workforce, a different leadership model and really new technologies.

Phoebe Richards: How can employees get engaged in this transformation?

Jennifer Boykin: I think that for employees – no matter what part of the business they're in – there are opportunities to become involved. And that really starts with understanding what your team accomplishes, what products or services do you produce and who are the users of those? It really starts with kind of this continuous improvement mindset.

Are the people who are using the products and services that my team produces in the value stream able to make best use of them or are there ways that I can help my team transform what we're doing so that it's more efficient, it's more immediate, there's higher quality. And all of us have that opportunity. All of us within our own team have the opportunity to really think about what does it mean to continuously improve and how is that a continuous view of transformation if you will?

Beyond that, we're really trying to publicize a lot of what we're calling the big rocks of our transformation. And we're already seeing when people know more about what we're doing, they're able to contribute more specifically about where their interests lie. And also where they've seen solutions to some of the same problems in other parts of the business.

And the other way is we've got very active employee resource groups. The employee resource groups and the leadership teams are, I mean they are just superstar employees. They're all awesome. And they really pull on us to come talk about what we're doing from a transformation standpoint. What are we doing from an employee engagement standpoint?

What are we doing with our quality life initiatives? And through each of those encounters and each of those events we really are able to get more employees more directly involved. In fact, we've on top of the employee resource groups we also now have a very active community of both engagement champions and inclusion and diversity champions.

And the champions groups are working very closely together to make sure that they're helping us, the leadership team, connect the voice of our employees with what we're trying to do. There are, I call them the communication bridge across those two and they're so effective and they're able to feed back where we're missing something in our communications and feedback to the employees where there really are more opportunities to become involved and to make a difference within their own work team than they may be aware of. So the employee resource groups, as well as the champions group, give employees another voice and a way to be involved.

Phoebe Richards: That's great advice and good opportunities for your employees. I want to say thank you for the insight and for taking the time to chat with me today.

Jennifer Boykin: Absolutely. Thank you.

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