



Kirby Amacker,
Change Management Architect,
Pacific Northwest National
Laboratory

Kirby Amacker is enthusiastic about her career in change management and shares her story about her career path evolution at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. Read on to learn more and get a glimpse into what she's proud about, what she likes to do in her personal time, and why she has spent the last 30 years in the Tri-Cities.

More on our conversation with Kirby . . .

ACMP PNW: Tell us about your background. What is your education and where did you grow up?

Kirby: I grew up in the Tri-Cities (Richland/Kennewick/Pasco) and bolted to Seattle to attend the UW as soon as I graduated high school. I never planned to return, but things changed. After two kids and a realization that I needed a lot more sun and a lot less traffic, I found myself back in my hometown where I've been for the last three decades. I have a BS in Biological Sciences which I secured from WSU Tri-Cities after moving back from Seattle with my young kids in tow. While my diploma is of the crimson and gray variety, I bleed purple and gold.

ACMP PNW: How long have you been working in Change Management? How did you choose this career?

Kirby: I have been fortunate to spend close to three decades at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory or PNNL, joining the lab shortly after moving back to Richland. If you haven't heard of PNNL, we are a multi-disciplinary research and development laboratory located in Richland. We have over 6,000 staff and conduct over \$1 billion in research for government and industry sponsors.

We are one of the US Department of Energy's national laboratories focusing on the mission areas of national security, energy and environment, physical and computational sciences, and earth and biological sciences. The first half of my career was spent in various HR roles, including as the HR Director. After some serious soul-searching, I pursued a new path 15 years ago and started building a change management capability at the lab. I feel like I was able to take the best parts of my HR roles (helping people reach their goals) and

reinvent my career. We have grown our internal change team to five people and have the opportunity to support other DOE labs in establishing change management capabilities.

ACMP PNW: What's the biggest obstacle you overcame in getting established, and how did you overcome it?

Kirby: The biggest obstacle I had to overcome in reinventing my career was building a reputation beyond my HR roles. The relationships and networks I built through those roles were invaluable, but I had to shift that reputation away from being an "HR person." We were very intentional around the organizational alignment as we built the change management function to help reinforce that delineation. I also focused on how I engaged and communicated, so that the change aspect was clear.

ACMP PNW: What's the biggest reward you get from this career?

Kirby: The most rewarding part of my career is helping people navigate what they see as an insurmountable challenge and showing that through careful planning and execution they can achieve their outcomes in a way that surpasses their expectations. I also love to see that look in a leader's eye when they "get it" around their role in leading effective change. We have a rock star team, and I am so thankful to be a part of a crew that is having a significant positive impact on our lab's outcomes.

ACMP PNW: What's one "fun fact" about you?

Kirby: We like to travel, and I usually end up dragging my husband to race-cations where I participate in some combination of swim, bike, and/or run.

ACMP PNW: What's on your bucket list yet to accomplish?

Kirby: While I've put aside triathlons for the time being, I now spend a lot of time on my gravel bike and have been tackling single-day events. My goal is to do a stage race in the next few years where you ride on multiple days in a row.