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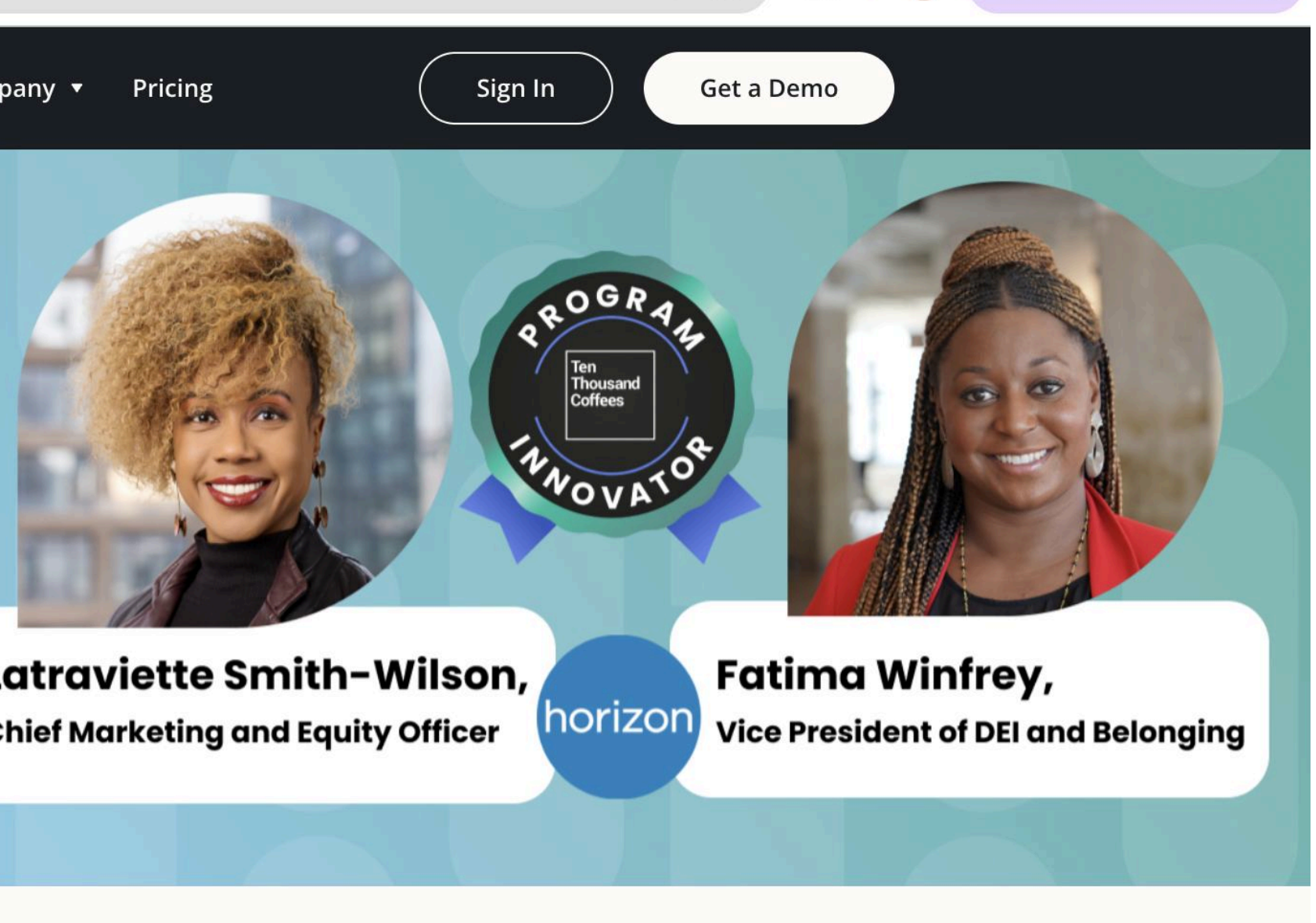
How Horizon Media Scaled an Enterprise Mentoring Program Employees Love


PROGRAM
Ten Thousand Coffees
INNOVATOR
Latraviette Smith-Wilson,
Chief Marketing and Equity Officer
horizon
Fatima Winfrey,
Vice President of DEI and Belonging

10KC Program Innovator Series: Latraviette Smith-Wilson and Fatima Winfrey of Horizon Media

Meet Latraviette Smith-Wilson, Chief Marketing and Equity Officer, and Fatima Winfrey, Vice President of DEI and Belonging at Horizon Media.

These powerhouse leaders and true 10KC Innovators have championed the growth and impact of Horizon Media's beloved enterprise mentoring program, called THRIVE. In a very heartfelt Q&A, they discuss their journey scaling mentorship enterprise-wide to foster engagement and connection in a dynamic hybrid work environment.

Key takeaways:

- **The value of listening:** How Latraviette and Fatima assessed the need for enterprise-wide mentoring through employee feedback to identify areas for growth and improvement.
- **Purpose-driven mentorship:** The meaning behind THRIVE and how it aligns with Horizon Media's "business is personal" mantra.
- **Measurable impact:** The KPIs Latraviette and Fatima track to measure success and how they achieved an incredibly high mentorship conversation rating of 98%.
- **Transformative connections:** How the THRIVE mentorship program fosters meaningful connections and creates real-world impact for both individuals and the organization.
- **The right tools and teamwork:** Why Horizon Media chose 10KC to scale enterprise mentoring and how the partnership fuels their success.

Dive into the full Q&A below and uncover Latraviette and Fatima's secrets to building a successful, scalable mentorship program that employees love.

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What was the a-ha moment that prompted Horizon Media to invest in an enterprise mentoring program?

Latraviette: I wouldn't say there was one a-ha moment per se. It was more the result of our collective listening to our community of employees. It was quite important for us–particularly as we embarked upon a more permanent hybrid journey post-Covid–to ensure we were creating opportunities for deeper connectivity, relationship building, networking, and learning across the full organization.

And that's certainly not something that can be sacrificed, because there are more remote employees than there were five years ago. We're now physically in the office three days per week versus five days per week.

> Previously, we had separate mentorship program initiatives, but they weren't enterprise-wide, nor did they have a really strong capability for success measurement and performance tracking. We aligned that a more scaled mentorship and networking effort would help to support some of our broader culture and connectivity goals and ensure that we're continuing to advance an agency of belonging in a world where we may not always all be together, five days a week.

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What was the feedback you heard from Horizon Media employees that helped shape your current program?

Fatima: Over the course of time we've had different surveys and engagement platforms where we constantly ask people: What do you need or want to continue to grow your career here at Horizon? What could be added to your experience?

One of the more consistent things that our people asked for was a mentorship program and the ability to meet folks across the organization. People wanted, as we grow, to be able to continue to have a place to make connections and have mentorship throughout the organization.

And then we of course invested in some quantitative data as well. We invested in deep DEI benchmarking last year. The audit helped confirm the hypothesis that we needed an enterprise solution like 10KC for connection across the organization and for our mentorship program. For more informal connections and smaller-scale engagement, we also have the Office Hours as well as Introductions.

Learn more about 10KC Office Hours (interactive group learning sessions) and Introductions (automated matching to expand employee networks).

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What's the story behind Horizon Media's mentorship program name:THRIVE?

Latraviette: Horizon's mantra is "business is personal." And that's not something that we just say; we live it. When we took a step back and really thought about what our goals were, it's really about building relationships to enhance everyone's experience here.

We approached naming the mentorship program from the perspective of the end goal: What are we seeking to do? What will be motivational for our people? What does success look like for us? It's for everyone to thrive. It's for every person throughout the organization to not *just* feel like they could thrive, but to be *supported* to do so.

And so there we have it, Horizon THRIVE:

Transforming

How

Relationships

Inspire and

Value

Everyone.

We believe and hope that is exactly what we're doing.

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Now that you have Horizon THRIVE as an enterprise mentoring program, what are the KPIs you focus on?

Fatima: We knew we were moving into a different day and age with onsite presence from a hybrid perspective. So we had engagement at the top of the list from a KPI standpoint, because we wanted to make sure that our organization had a place where they could continue to feel connected regardless of borders or location.

Also, some of the more traditional things, like increasing performance, retention, and making sure that folks have something to lean into inside of the organization that keeps them invested in Horizon as much as we are invested in them.

And then of course, career progression and development. Giving people tools, relationship, connection, skills that help them be able to grow as individuals and grow their career here over the long haul.

Easily scale mentorship programs with 10KC'S Mentoring Solution that increases engagement, retention, and belonging: LEARN MORE

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Why did you ultimately choose 10KC as your enterprise mentoring software?

Latraviette: We assessed a number of different platforms, but our primary goal was to ensure that we had a technology-enabled platform that would help us provide this enterprise-wide solution. We have a few thousand employees. Scale was really critical, but it's also as much about the quality and the employee experience.

As we met with the 10KC team and got to know you all more, we were extremely helpful in addressing all of our questions and challenges. It became evident to us that 10KC would be the best partner to build with.

10KC has been a tremendous resource for us, even since the launch. One of the things that we've appreciated most is that you all understood from the beginning that we are not a template organization. We're not seeking cookie cutter solutions. We need to leverage the platform and the technology, but we also have to leverage the insights that we have about our people in our organization and what we know needs to be done to maximize results. And you have all listened, partnered, and been patient with us.

10KC caught our eye with the technology and the capabilities. But you really gained our trust with how you've shown up with and for us at each step along the way.

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Have fellow Horizon Media leaders been champions of THRIVE? How did you get them on board?

Fatima: We knew that we would need a set of early champions to help inform the organization and support the mentorship program. Our Executive Board, Executive Leadership, and VP+ cohort bought in from the beginning. They have all raised their hands to participate as mentors across the program.

We wanted to ensure any employee that wanted a mentor could have one and that we have the supply for that demand. That executive cohort has been there from the beginning and throughout, but it's really taken on a life of its own.

> It sounds cheesy, but our organization loves THRIVE. When we launched it, we had a sense it would be successful and that would resonate. And based on the numbers and the feedback, it really has.

There are folks throughout the organization continuing to champion the program even beyond initial launch. So we're so excited for how it's taken on life inside of Horizon.

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You've mentioned you've seen great success metrics. Can you share any particular wins?

Fatima: Adoption has been really high and a very strong metric for us that we've seen over time and that was an early measure for us.

When we first launched the program, we had a funny conversation with 10KC's data team. "Is this the right number? Are these exactly how many people are in the program?!" And the answer was, "Yes, this is how many people have opted in!"

Our program feedback and satisfaction rating have been consistently high.

> We have a 98% conversation rating inside of our mentorship program with THRIVE. That's constantly reassuring to see. Not only are people excited to lean in, but as they're having the conversations–as they're leveraging the tools that the platform provides for us–they're seeing success, they're gaining value out of it, and they're rating it really highly.

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We also wanted to measure connection to the company and colleagues. I mentioned earlier we have three offices plus remote employees–almost 3,000–and wanted to make sure people could still feel that "business is personal" thread inside of the program. We have a metric inside of 10KC to see if people feel more connected–or feel like they understand a little bit more about what their colleagues do–that's consistently high for us on a metric standpoint.

Then, career development and personal growth to make sure people are actually receiving something from this program that helps them become stronger professionals at the end of each mentorship session–that is continually measured highly for us.

We've been excited to see how the numbers come in and build around it from an employee engagement standpoint. It's been so valuable to have the qualitative and quantitative data to be able to point back to as we build additional solutions inside of our organization.

See how 10KC's Data Dashboard helps measure mentorship program performance: LEARN MORE

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What do you think contributes most to the success of mentorship and THRIVE at Horizon Media?

Fatima: Consistency. It sounds simple, but as an organization, it can be easy to launch something, and then in 2 months, people forget it's there. There's a consistency for how THRIVE shows up, so that they're always constantly reminded that it's there, and they're leaning into the resources.

Also phenomenally helpful, each session comes with supporting materials that help people from a pre-reading standpoint. There are conversation guides that help the actual mentee-mentor conversation, and homework for people to think about once they leave the session. There's always a purpose to the conversation that they're coming together to have.

And we have an enthusiastic and passionate employee base. There's really been a magic to it that has helped the program take off beyond what we could have anticipated.

Latraviette: And the user and employee experience. It's not clunky. It's not difficult. It really is seamless. The experience is enhanced for people versus…"oh my gosh what is this other thing that I have to spend time figuring out?!"

When we are looking to scale how we are building relationships, the experience that we are providing for people has to deliver.

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About your "people magic" at Horizon Media–are there any stories from the mentors and mentees in your mentorship program that you can share?

Fatima: I met with someone who was just hired.. She was expressing that, before utilizing Introductions, she felt like, "I don't know where to start. I don't know how to meet people." She was overwhelmed at the thought of how she would start to build relationships as a new hire at Horizon, and her manager pointed her to the 10KC platform.

She was so enthusiastic, and we already started to brainstorm other ways that she could support some of our THRIVE programming. We just met, and this person had all these ideas…our conversation flowed in that way and now she's leaned into other communities throughout the organization.

This is a really powerful example of exactly what this platform is supposed to help provide to the organization. And we've heard so many like that.

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What are your favorite 10KC features?

Fatima: I love our dashboard. I'm in it all the time. I'm always curious. I absolutely love it.

> It's self-serve. You all are always there for us. And when we have questions, because we do, we can always go to the 10KC team, but [the data dashboard] is a really good place to go back as a source of information.

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Also, the supporting materials. It was part of the roadblock when we were trying to do mentorship programs in other ways that weren't as coordinated. So that has been a really strong contributor in the 10KC program and one of my favorite features.

Latraviette: We love the technology and data, without a doubt. But the 10KC team is also a favorite "feature" of ours–or shall we say, an asset! You all really are such a great group to work with. You're responsive. You're helpful. Always accepting our challenges and there to meet us in our ideas and our innovation and to help push us further. That is the definition of partnership. Your team has become true partners to ours and for that we thank you.

Last question: If you could have coffee or tea with anybody dead or alive, who would it be and why?

Fatima: Beyoncé! She's the epitome of continuing to push the mark for herself personally. Creative and vulnerable, transformative over time, but still stays authentic to who she is. And that's something I aspire to be as an individual and as a leader with my team and my colleagues. So I'm definitely taking that coffee with Beyoncé…. plus residual conversations on things like fashion, jewelry, and I want to see her behind the camera….all of those things.

Latraviette: Zora Neale Hurston is one of my favorite authors of all time. I discovered her when I was about 16 years old, and I was in Governor's School and just thought this was one of the most amazing writers on Earth. I remain, 30+ years later after discovering her, fascinated by the times she lived in and how she was able to capture them.

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Congratulations, Latraviette and Fatima, on your impressive work scaling enterprise mentoring at Horizon Media!

Latraviette Smith-Wilson and Fatima Winfrey's leadership and commitment to mentorship exemplifies how investing in development, relationships, and engagement drives personal growth for individuals and benefits for the entire company.

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Get the details about this honorary award, showcasing 10KC customers' exceptional leadership, and submit nominees here.

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