

[Conscious Capitalism Sum & Substance](#)

Christin Swansinger, Business Development Rep for Televerde Video & Transcript



TRANSCRIPT: I served my first prison sentence from 2008 to 2014 and I came right back for the same reasons. I wasn't ready to change my life.

In 2015, shortly after I came back to prison, I received a letter for my daughter. It says, "Dear Kristen, my name is Kylie Hamilton. I don't even know if you know me but I'm your daughter."

And this just broke my heart because of course I knew her. As I was reading, she is telling me about her battles, struggles and addictions in life. My daughter was going down the same road as I did. I knew then I needed to change my life.

The Application Process

I heard about Televerde. I knew the job paid well but, most importantly, I knew it provided you with tools to be successful. The other thing I heard was that it took ladies three to four times to get the job but I didn't care. It was my turn to change my life so I applied.

The application process is stressful. You go through pre-screening with the prison to make sure you meet all the requirements such as no disciplinary actions and making sure you have your education on file.

Once approved, I walked three-quarters of a mile to a building the size of a tuna can but inside that tuna can seated 70 women ready to change their lives. I had interviews with three different managers. The first manager asked me questions like, "How did you get here," and "How are you going to get there." Weird questions, right? But he was doing things to make me feel comfortable.



The other two managers asked questions about my past work history. I didn't really have too many jobs but I talked to them about how I became a manager at McDonald's at the age of 18. They asked what I would bring to Televerde and I said drive, teamwork and dedication.

The Job

I had to wait three days. I chased one girl around the yard to ask her if I got the job but it wasn't in her scope to tell me. On that third day, there was a list posted at 5 p.m. of all the accepted applicants. My name was on it. I was so excited.

For two weeks during boot camp, I was training 11 hours per day. I was so exhausted. I even cried because my brain could not fathom value propositions. But I graduated and I was ready to give back to everyone who gave me this chance.

Shortly after getting on the floor, I became a sales development representative for Republic Services. One day my manager brought me into the office and told me that the client decided to take the account in-house. I thought I had done something wrong but he assured me I didn't. He said I was going to train to become a business development representative for Pulse Secure. My mouth dropped open and my eyes got so big. I was so scared. I couldn't believe it because I watched these girls on Pulse Secure and they were just so smart and they sounded so well-rounded. I was intimidated by them.

I mean I had literally been talking waste and recycling for the last six months...like literally talking trash. I didn't think I could do it. I didn't know how many more responsibilities I would have as a business development representative. I went to one of my manager's, Mr. Doyle, and I asked him to please give somebody else a chance. He said, "Swanny, let's go smoke."

The Cigarette

So, we're outside. I'm crying to Mr. Doyle, basically telling him that I didn't think I could do this. I didn't think I could even learn how to do this. He says, "Swanny, as managers we don't make choices to make you fail. That's not what this company is about. We make choices to help you succeed and grow, and we provide you with the tools to do it every day. We know you can do it or we wouldn't have chosen you."

So, every day after that I worked harder and harder to be my best. And today, I'm having conversations with c-level executives, driving real opportunities for my reps. But if it weren't for my managers—the pushing, the feedback—and the training from my team and my clients like Mr. Sudhakar Ramakrishna [CEO of Pulse Secure], I wouldn't feel the confidence I feel today.

I know I'm going to succeed. I know I am going to do my best. I know now I'm going to see my kids again. Nothing is ever going to be in my way to be the mom I need to be.

The Challenge

I get out of prison soon but I have a challenge for you and it's about the felon box. Many of you don't know what that box is but all of us in prison do. Every time you see that box is checked, you throw our applications away.



So, my challenge to you today is this: look passed the box. In fact, remove it completely. People make mistakes but we learn and grow from them. I know I can go into a low-wage, low-skill job. It's a job, right? But can I support myself and my family on a minimum-wage job especially when the cost of living continues to rise?

Look behind the prison walls and see the true human potential of those of us in here. We want to learn but most importantly we can learn. And when given the chance, you'll watch us grow with your company and get to levels you never expected. Judge us for who we are today.

You see me. I'm in orange. I am a felon. But I am also confident, dedicated, empowered and encouraged. **Would you hire me?**

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