



Nicole Martin  
CEO & Founder  
HRBoost, LLC

# Nicole Martin

Taking the Team Forward with Dedicated Efforts

**D**o you know a leader who manages an HR department that delivers a great return on investments to generate award-winning and high-performance talent strategies to scale a high-growth business? The answer is **Nicole Martin**, the **CEO**, and **Founder of HRBoost**, a company specializing in building HR from scratch and implementing practices that add value. Nicole is helping companies contain costs, minimize employer-related risk, and relieve the administrative burden of HR while creating results that rival big competition.

#### Adding Purpose to the Journey

Nicole Martin loves what she does, and she does it remarkably well. *"I'm the accidental entrepreneur,"* said Nicole, *"I looked back after starting my own business and said, 'I started a business. Whoa!'"* Nicole didn't set out to create HRBoost, LLC. She followed her passion for helping clients understand the importance human resources can play in developing a strong business. Today, Nicole is a successful entrepreneur and an HR industry innovator who is dedicated to helping small to midsize businesses realize their potential through their employees.

A self-professed "country girl in disguise," Nicole Martin grew up in Montana, where, she says, *"Everyone knows you and greets you on the street."* She was also lucky to have a great mentor early in life: her mom. *"My mother is highly spiritual, and she raised me with the philosophy of being*

*happy,"* said Nicole. *"She always believed that you are a special person—she ingrained that in me—and you are capable of anything."*

At 18, Nicole was ready to start proving her mom right. She left Montana and moved in with her godmother in Libertyville, Illinois. Right out of high school, Nicole got a job as a receptionist at a pre-Y2K firm, where she found her passion quite by accident. *"They were hiring all these computer experts from overseas, but when they arrived, the company just put them in the reception area because they didn't know what to do with them,"* she recalled. *"It was just inhumane."*

Our vision is to bring JOY and PURPOSE to PEOPLE through their work. It is how we serve our clients and the people that choose to join up on their visions.



Nicole was working on a training program for a college human resources class during the same time. *"I wanted to help these guys out in the hallway, so I just marched into the director's office and asked him if he wanted to see the training program I created for school."* When she finished her presentation, the director created a human resources department for the site, hired a manager, and moved her from reception to human resources.

Nicole has been building HR departments from the ground up ever since. She says that her approach is unique because she begins with the business' vision and creates HR programs that are completely integrated with that vision. From the hiring process to annual reviews, Nicole's programs are designed to further the business, boost productivity, and help employees understand why and how their contributions are meaningful.

### Investing in PEOPLE

The CEO's job is to need a human capital and financial capital to scale, grow, and invest in talent. Nicole took a calculated risk to invest in talent and her bench strength. She put down a process, hired capable talent, and disappeared to let them work, the process proved through; and now, and she believes she can do it again, and again, and again. She focuses on trusting the people and trusting the process. When it is time to take a calculated risk, she invests and works towards maximizing the impact.

She shares, *"Success is relative. Many people would read my resume or some printed article about me, but the real success comes in the joy of doing what you love every day. It is amazing, however, when you turn around and see many others who work for you and source Joy and Purpose*

*through our shared work and creation. Work and life should be integrated, not compartmentalized. I love that there is no real dividing line between work and play for me."*

Nicole is positive about her investment in women. The fact that less than 2% of the money invested in the United States in women-owned businesses is disturbing for her. The bottom line, women remain an opportunity and can develop teams that foster collaboration. She works on creating a healthy work culture. Creating a culture conversation that takes rigor where a two-way exchange is fostered and upheld. Boost is considered the Best & Brightest Company to Work for in Chicago before the pandemic. Regardless, any organization committed to excellence knows culture can change with every promotion, hire, or termination. Put separation and a pandemic in the mix, and more conversations were needed. She explains, *"If you do not have a common language for how leadership lives across the organization, morale can suffer. We implemented pulse Covid Surveys in addition to our standard culture surveys and metrics. Anonymous pulse is important, but we also began more company check-ins across peer levels. We have kept Monday Motivation, Happy Hours, and Wellness Wednesdays with the long term in mind as we feel we created a deeper connection during these tough times. We also had Chaplains in the workplace before Covid-19."* Nicole has created an environment that is psychologically safe for anyone to discuss anything and come up with compatible solutions.

### Building Effective Teams

HRBoost offers small and midsize businesses HR services on an ala carte, project or retainer basis. The team meets its clients wherever they are on their journey to be an employer of choice and also at their pace and budget. The company's Shared Services approach allows it to build HR departments from scratch and align them to business strategy. While the team sees great value in the middle market, it does have some larger companies that augment their internal HR teams with strategic project initiatives from the team. The team focuses on building a high-performance culture that drives innovation and profitability and requires leaders at all



levels. HR infrastructure can uphold the Culture Invitation, and once it is strategically aligned and reinforced, a company can create workforce alignment, empowering leaders to innovate amidst even the toughest climate in business.

Nicole states, *"I feel it is imperative to get hands-on experience doing what you seek to learn. Make sure it brings you joy before investing time, energy, and dedicating your life to it. Enjoy the journey and be prepared to learn, unlearn, and relearn. Surround yourself with people who inspire and support you but also don't patronize you. Remember, even if it gets harder or takes longer, stay diligent. Anything you love will be worth it."*

She feels honored to lead her high-performing team to garner success personally and professionally. She values each team member for their contribution and feels happy when they express their gratitude for making their lives better.

She shares, *"We have always trended with growth year after year; however, amidst the pandemic, we were hard hit like many. Thankfully, we have successfully returned to pre Covid-19 revenue levels, and this is something we are pleased with, given the level of uncertainty in the market. We have revealed some new innovative ways to reach our clients, and as talent shifts occur, we are ready to help the businesses that seek to retain talent. Ironically, the biggest threat to the marketplace is talent, even now. Only the truly forward-thinking companies will make winning moves even in the downturn of the economy."* [2](#)