



Building Relationships and Always Thinking Ahead – Ann-Marie Campbell



Hi! I'm Arlette, your host, and welcome to "Give Me an H." Together, we'll explore the culture of The Home Depot through the eyes and experiences of our associates who live it every day. Let's get started!

As a young girl growing up in Jamaica, Ann-Marie Campbell's first taste of retail was in her grandmother's furniture store. She learned the importance of serving others and having an entrepreneurial spirit. Throughout her 34-year career with the Home Depot, starting out as a cashier and now serving as the Executive Vice President of U.S. Stores, Ann-Marie is passionate about our associates, our customers, and our company.

Listen in as we talk about her journey, as well as where the Home Depot is going in the future.

ARLETTE: Ann, let's talk about your early days. What are some of your earliest memories of growing up in Jamaica? Is there a story or an example that sticks out to you?

ANN-MARIE: Absolutely. I got my first taste of retail with my grandmother. And at a very young age, I remember just sitting and just observing her. And she would sit out on the front of her store. She had a furniture store.

ARLETTE: Oh, what kind of store did she have? Oh, a furniture store? Okay.

ANN-MARIE: Yeah, a furniture and appliance store, but it also sold a lot of other common goods, like shoes and clothing and stuff like that.

ARLETTE: Oh, wow, a general store.

ANN-MARIE: Yeah, like just a general store. And I would just sit there and observe...

ARLETTE: Uh-huh.

ANN-MARIE: ...very early 'cause I was under her skirt. You know, I loved my grandmother. She was everything.

ARLETTE: Yes.

ANN-MARIE: But when people would walk by, she would greet everyone. And I would remember, like, why would she do that?

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: It's like, no matter what type of day she was having, she'd be like, "Hi, Arlette," or, "Hi, Ann." I was 9 years old, and my grandmother -- she asked me to go out and kind of place an order for shoes. She carried shoes then. And she said, "Go back to the back," and there was a list in the back with people's names and the shoe size.

ARLETTE: Okay.

ANN-MARIE: And so I picked the list up, you know, and I called in the order, you know? And she'd really kind of berated me. This is a good word for saying it, right? So, she asked me if I placed the order, and I told her I did. And, you know, I was a pretty good kid, you know, that I thought was kind of pretty bright. And she looked at me, and said, you know -- I would use the word "berate." She probably went in a little bit more detail than that. But she said, "You need to start thinking ahead."

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: And I was -- You know, I'm 9. I'll never forget this. And she says, "The list I gave you was the list of, you know, children from last year." So, she would say, "Arlette, shoe size 7," right? "Ann, shoe size 8." So, this was a year later.

ARLETTE: That's right.

ANN-MARIE: And therefore I needed to order a size up.

ARLETTE: The next size up.

ANN-MARIE: And so she had literally every customer that she's had...

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...right, and their children's shoe size written down for the last four or five years, and she would size up to make sure that she was not out of stock.

ARLETTE: So, she was trying to get you to do some strategic planning...

ANN-MARIE: Yeah.

ARLETTE: ...some forecasting.

ANN-MARIE: Right. I am, like, 9 years old, right, and she was -- She said then, "You always have to be thinking ahead."

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: And she said, "I never write down an adult shoe size because they --"

ARLETTE: 'Cause it's gonna stay the same.

ANN-MARIE: It's gonna stay the same.

ARLETTE: Wow.

ANN-MARIE: But she also said that people don't have any money to buy a lot of shoes.

ARLETTE: [Laughs]

ANN-MARIE: [Laughs] Right?

And so I started to just think through -- This is 1974.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: And she didn't finish high school.

She didn't finish high school...

ARLETTE: Right.

ANN-MARIE: ...and built a business, an entrepreneur who always thought ahead. But I wouldn't then connect the fact, to be honest, that she was talking to those, you know, parents every day.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: And she was asking questions.

ARLETTE: She was building that relationship, too.

ANN-MARIE: And she was building those -- that relationship and probably took down, "Ah, how's Billy doing today? Oh, my God, what shoe size is he gonna need?" And I never even made that connection...

ARLETTE: Mm.

ANN-MARIE: ...until later on in life is that you start putting those puzzle pieces together. And I think that's one of the reasons why I'm in retail and love it so much.

ARLETTE: Love it.

ANN-MARIE: You know, when I look back now...

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...I realize that when you're in retail, it's all about people and it's all around engaging. And I never knew it then.

ARLETTE: Right.

ANN-MARIE: But it came to be a part of who I am now.

ARLETTE: Right.

ANN-MARIE: So, that's one of my earliest memory.

ARLETTE: Well, that's pretty exciting. I mean, it sounds like she was putting customers first before we ever even thought about that.

ANN-MARIE: Oh, yeah. And when you're 9 years old, you don't know about customer first, right?

ARLETTE: Right.

ANN-MARIE: All you know about is that you admire this person and you love this person and you want to be like them in some way.

ARLETTE: Right.

ANN-MARIE: And -- But she was such a great, great entrepreneur...

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...great, great mom and more to me, just a fabulous grandmother.

ARLETTE: Yeah.

ANN-MARIE: And she just engaged. And the power of engagement is the power of getting to know people.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: And when you know people, you know what their needs are.

And when you're 7 or 8 or 9, you don't really understand it, but as you grow and mature...

ARLETTE: Right.

ANN-MARIE: ...you know, in who you are, you look back and say, "Oh, my gosh, I'm more like her now than I ever thought I would be!" And that's pretty cool.

ARLETTE: No, that is cool. And it sounds like it whet your appetite for retail right away 'cause you came to the Home Depot. What got you here?

ANN-MARIE: Gosh, I just needed a job. [Laughs]

ARLETTE: [Laughs]

ANN-MARIE: You know? You don't think about when you're 19 years old or 18 years old...

ARLETTE: Uh-huh.

ANN-MARIE: ...about a career.

ARLETTE: Sure.

ANN-MARIE: Right? And to be honest, when I applied for Home Depot, we probably had less than 20 stores.

ARLETTE: Oh, wow, early days.

ANN-MARIE: I'd been around really, really early days, and I had no idea what Home Depot was about.

ARLETTE: Uh-huh.

ANN-MARIE: I just needed a job. And here I am. It's now, like, 34 years later.

ARLETTE: [Laughs]

ANN-MARIE: Oh, my gosh. I can't believe it.

ARLETTE: But you found it to be more than a job.

ANN-MARIE: That's it. I will tell you that I -- You know, I talk to associates all the time, or I talk to people who ask me, "Why are you there for 34 years?"

ARLETTE: Right.

ANN-MARIE: Because I can't even imagine, right, when I started that I would be here for 34 years.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: But it -- What's interesting for me -- it went from a job to a career...

ARLETTE: Sure.

ANN-MARIE: ...very, very early because when you come into the company and you feel the culture, even a 20-store, where people care about you, they wanted to see you do well, and I just got tremendous opportunity. It quickly shifted for me then -- "Boy, this is just something to make \$4.25 an hour."

ARLETTE: Is that what it was?

ANN-MARIE: Can you believe that?

ARLETTE: Oh, my God.

ANN-MARIE: In 1985.

And, though, Arlette, that was -- The minimum wage was like \$3.35, so --

ARLETTE: So that was big money.

ANN-MARIE: That was -- Oh, girl, I was styling. I was -- I was so happy. But it quickly went from just about money...

ARLETTE: Yeah.

ANN-MARIE: ...to about belonging, about understanding and believing in something bigger than yourself...

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...seeing the opportunities and taking advantage of the opportunities. And the tremendous growth that we've had over the years and tremendous growth in our future -- I think our future is even brighter than my past 34 years...

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...is that, when you have a company that lives values, that drives a culture of engagement and belief in self and belief in taking care of others...

ARLETTE: Yeah.

ANN-MARIE: ...but also give you the opportunity to maximize your potential --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: That is just home run.

ARLETTE: Now, so, it's funny that you say that because numerous stories that I've heard sound very similarly. And it is about helping people. And I remember a story that you've told in the past about Henry, who helped you early on.

ANN-MARIE: Yeah. Yeah.

ARLETTE: Tell us a little bit more about Henry.

ANN-MARIE: Henry was a sales associate, one of those master tradespeople...

ARLETTE: Ah, yes.

ANN-MARIE: ...before we formalized the master tradesperson in the store.

ARLETTE: Okay, so he --

ANN-MARIE: He was a master plumber.

ARLETTE: And he was a plumber.

ANN-MARIE: He was a master plumber.

ARLETTE: Wow. How cool is that, that the Home Depot has that level of expertise in the aisles?

ANN-MARIE: Oh, wow. I -- You know, one of the things that is so fun about the company today -- when I have the conversations with my team...

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...we build a do-it-yourself, right, kind of business...

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm. Sure.

ANN-MARIE: ...and culture over the last 40 years. But think about the millennials coming in today, right? What we did --

ARLETTE: [Laughs]

ANN-MARIE: A baby boomer who's 55 or 60 years today, right?

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: They were in our stores 40 years ago.

ARLETTE: That's true.

ANN-MARIE: And we --

ARLETTE: Taught --

ANN-MARIE: Knowledge and expertise throughout.

ARLETTE: Absolutely.

ANN-MARIE: Now we have a new group. [Laughs]

ARLETTE: [Laughs]

ANN-MARIE: That's the exciting thing, right...

ARLETTE: Uh-huh.

ANN-MARIE: ...is that the Henrys of the world is gonna transform one of the largest groups again...

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...of leaders in the United States...

ARLETTE: Yeah.

ANN-MARIE: ...around do-it-yourself. We are going to teach the knowledge and expertise with the products that are second to none, right?

ARLETTE: Yeah.

ANN-MARIE: And so Henry was that for me.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: And we are gonna continue to create that for others. There was a time, of course, you're working \$4.25 an hour, and you may not be financially responsible.

ARLETTE: [Laughs] What?

ANN-MARIE: And I'm gonna use that. Yeah, you know? I am a young gal, right? And my car breaks down.

ARLETTE: Okay.

ANN-MARIE: I had this Honda Accord, a silver hatchback Honda Accord. And I go out at the end of my shift. I was working part-time 'cause I was going to college.

ARLETTE: Uh-huh. Okay, so, you were in school at the time.

ANN-MARIE: Yeah. Yeah.

ARLETTE: Yep.

ANN-MARIE: While I, you know, worked at Home Depot. And my car wouldn't start.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: And who know, right? But someone gave me a lift home.

ARLETTE: Okay.

ANN-MARIE: It's at night. It's 10:00, 11:00 at night. I get a lift home. And so you go home, and you're like, "Who can I borrow, right, like \$500?" 'cause on my way home, someone told me it may be about \$500 to fix.

ARLETTE: Oh, to fix it. Okay.

ANN-MARIE: To fix it.

ARLETTE: Uh-huh.

ANN-MARIE: I don't have \$500. I don't have a penny, right, in my name, right? I'm waiting until my next paycheck.

ARLETTE: Of course.

ANN-MARIE: And so I get home, and I am trying to figure out who I can call to borrow some money.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: And all my friends are in the same position because we're all broke, right? And I had an aunt, which was kind -- you know, pretty what I would consider wealthy. I don't know if you consider it wealthy today, but --

ARLETTE: Right, but relative to your \$4.25 --

ANN-MARIE: Relative to my -- right. She had some money.

ARLETTE: Got it.

ANN-MARIE: And she had said to me, "Hey, if you ever need something, give me a call," 'cause I also --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: You know, and so I called her the next day, the morning. And you kind of build up to really ask for money, for me.

ARLETTE: Right.

ANN-MARIE: It wasn't one of my --

ARLETTE: So, you had to get your courage together.

ANN-MARIE: It's courage, and you think about what you're going to say, you know? What is the opening volley, you know?

ARLETTE: Right.

ANN-MARIE: But -- But I ended up giving her a call.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: And, Arlette, I spent an hour explaining why I don't have the money, that I'm working and can't have the money to fix my car. Why don't I have savings? How irresponsible am I? "Can't you get a credit card or --"

ARLETTE: Oh, wow.

ANN-MARIE: All of that stuff.

ARLETTE: So, she made it difficult?

ANN-MARIE: Oh. Not only did she make it difficult, at the end of the hour -- and I don't think I'm exaggerating -- she said she wouldn't lend me the money.

ARLETTE: No!

ANN-MARIE: Oh, sugars me. I was so -- I was very unhappy. I remember walking -- I worked in North Miami Beach. The store was on 187th Avenue, and it still stays with me today. Walking out of my apartment on 135th Street...

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...and I walk 50 blocks...

ARLETTE: Whoa.

ANN-MARIE: ...to 183rd Street in the middle of the day 'cause my shift was 4:00 p.m.

ARLETTE: In Florida, no less.

ANN-MARIE: In Florida -- Miami, Florida.

ARLETTE: Wow.

ANN-MARIE: I was sweating like whatever. I get into work and go to the break room, and I sat in the break room. And I'm just trying to reconcile just the conversation, and I was just really unhappy with myself. I felt like just a failure.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: Henry walks in and sees me sweating. I've been, you know --

ARLETTE: After that 50-block walk, yeah.

ANN-MARIE: Yeah. And he said, "What the heck?" You know? And I said -- You know, he said, "What happened?" And I said, "Well, you know, I need my car fixed. My car broke down. I had to walk to work today." I didn't tell him about my aunt.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: And he says, "Hey, I know a friend. He'll, you know -- You know, I'll have him come up here and kind of see what your car needs." And I'm like, "Well, I have no money." "Yeah, don't worry about it, Ann." You know, "We'll figure it out."

ARLETTE: Wow. Wow.

ANN-MARIE: And I remember Henry getting his friend to come and fix my car...

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...not asking me for a dollar. And I remember, tears came to my eyes because I had asked one of my family members --

ARLETTE: Right.

ANN-MARIE: ...and didn't get anything.

ARLETTE: Right.

ANN-MARIE: But then I had asked him.

ARLETTE: But then, I guess, in that moment, you realized this is family, too.

ANN-MARIE: Yeah, and that's when I think I realized what a family Home Depot was not because of anyone else but Henry, but Henry set the stage of my belonging.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: And then I just felt just a better person after that.

ARLETTE: Right. Well, and then you want to pay that forward.

ANN-MARIE: And I -- Yes, and I do pay that forward.

ARLETTE: Well, Ann, so now, 34 years.

ANN-MARIE: Mm-hmm.

ARLETTE: You've been paying it forward. You've been figuring out how to help associates. Now, you've had a number of different jobs over that time. Tell us about your career path.

ANN-MARIE: So, I started as a part-time cashier 34 years ago, and I've had all the jobs in the stores, I think -- traditional jobs.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: Store manager, district manager, retail business...

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: I've been in the regional role in the field.

ARLETTE: Okay.

ANN-MARIE: But I've also been in, you know, roles here -- what you would consider Corporate or Store Support Center.

ARLETTE: Sure.

ANN-MARIE: We call it Store Support Center at Home Depot. And so, I've been in BP merchandising.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: I've been, just -- I would call it sometimes obscure roles...

[Both laugh]

ANN-MARIE:...but also the president of a division, and now I'm the head of stores. So it's just been just a fabulous 34-year career.

ARLETTE: Well, and it's a great example of how cross-functional movement is the opportunity to really broaden not only what you are bringing to the table, but also what you have the opportunity to learn.

ANN-MARIE: Yeah. Well, for me, I will tell you that I learned the most --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...in the jobs that I didn't think I wanted.

ARLETTE: Mm.

ANN-MARIE: Or, to be honest, Arlette...

[Both laugh]

ANN-MARIE...that I said, "Why the heck do I have to go do that job?"

ARLETTE: Right.

ANN-MARIE: But when you get comfortable...I know stores. I know stores well. I love associates. I love customers.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: I felt a comfort level in the stores. But when I got to the Store Support Center and I had to use different skills...

ARLETTE: Yeah.

ANN-MARIE: There's levels of influence, right? Different levels of communication. Levels of kind of understanding the total picture of what we're working on.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: It required different muscles for me to flex that I didn't have.

ARLETTE: Sure.

ANN-MARIE: And I learned how to listen more.

ARLETTE: Mm.

ANN-MARIE: Right, I learned how to broaden my perspective more. But I think more importantly for the job that I have today, it helps my communicate a lot more effectively to people on the side that builds the strategy.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: But also to our associates, for them to understand --

ARLETTE: Understand it.

ANN-MARIE: ...our strategy and our vision and our purpose.

ARLETTE: Understanding is key. Now, you mentioned the job you have today. As EVP of US Stores, you're responsible for nearly 2,000 locations and almost 400,000 associates. How do you keep your team and the frontline associates pumped up and ready to serve our customers?

ANN-MARIE: Gosh, it's...Inspiration and motivation happens --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...at the local level.

ARLETTE: Okay.

ANN-MARIE: And I think the selection of the talent that we have in the stores...

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: Our store managers are, to me, the primary, you know, leaders that drives that.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: And for me, how we keep them inspired and motivated -- we talk about the opportunities.

ARLETTE: Yeah.

ANN-MARIE: We talk about the culture of the company. We talk about the leadership philosophy. We talk about what we do every single day to help our customers --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...fulfill their dreams, how we problem-solve, how we take care of our associates, how the bigger purpose is not just of us --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...but what we are trying to do as a company. And I think, for me, just that level of engagement --

ARLETTE: Sure.

ANN-MARIE: ...right, with our team, and them seeing the value that they bring to the table is what really keeps them pumped up, is that we're here to take care of people, and we're here to solve problems.

ARLETTE: Mm.

ANN-MARIE: And we're here to create opportunities. And when you see that happening in real time, people are inspired and motivated within our company.

ARLETTE: I love that. And, you know, you've mentioned it several times -- taking care of our customers, taking care of our people, which, of course, is one of our core values. Now, your team is doing some really cool things to support associates and to make their jobs easier, which, of course, in turn, helps them to provide excellent customer service.

ANN-MARIE: Mm-hmm.

ARLETTE: Are there two or three things in this area that you are most excited about?

ANN-MARIE: Yeah, so, we are, as a company, investing \$11 billion --

ARLETTE: Yes. Wow.

ANN-MARIE: ...\$11 billion to, you know, continue --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...to be on the leading edge from an experience standpoint, both from an associate perspective --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...and a customer's perspective. So, from the associate's side, what I'm most excited about is the levels of investments we're making to make their jobs easier --

ARLETTE: Yeah.

ANN-MARIE: ...and simpler, where they can do things for themselves and for their families --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...that absolutely make them even more committed to the company. So, for example, right, when you think about how you're going to work --

ARLETTE: Okay.

ANN-MARIE: ...in the future, and the flexible schedules, right?

ARLETTE: Yes. So important.

ANN-MARIE: Or consistent schedules, where you know that you're working 8:00 to 5:00 or 10:00 to 7:00, and that offers a level of consistency that you can pick your kids up.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: Right? We're not only doing that in the stores. We're creating that flexible work environment here --

ARLETTE: Yes.

ANN-MARIE: ...in our Store Support Center, which is really cool. But on the other side, for the customer, we're making investments where they can get in and out of our store as quickly as possible.

ARLETTE: Oh, that's so important.

ANN-MARIE: Like, for our front ends --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...we are making it much easier and simpler to get through our front ends, and quicker.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: We're installing lockers in our stores to make pickup easier, that if they just want to pick a product and they can scan their phone and get the item and they go. We're making investments there.

ARLETTE: Mm.

ANN-MARIE: So we're continuing to make investments in how you, you know, way-find in our stores, find product in --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...our stores, because we believe that the investments we're making is going to drive a level of experience that's differentiated and that's going to sustain us not only today, but in the future.

ARLETTE: No, that's perfect. And it's funny that when we're talking about our stores, our associates are as important as our customers, and the marriage between the two, I think, makes a differentiation for us. So, one of the other things that we're known for, though, is our product authority, and our customers come to us for great products. And when they think about Home Depot, great products go hand-in-hand with our name. Now, tell me, what are some of your favorite products and the DIY projects that you like to do?

ANN-MARIE: Okay. So, I love power tools.

ARLETTE: Oh, wow. [Laughs]

ANN-MARIE: I love power tools.

ARLETTE: Tell me more, tell me more!

ANN-MARIE: And here's why. I love the action of getting things done.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: And using a drill to kind of make a table or to make a chair or just to kind of understand how things work --

ARLETTE: Yes.

ANN-MARIE: It's exciting to me. And we have been known for the sawdust, right? Because of 21, our lumber department --

ARLETTE: [Laughs]

ANN-MARIE: You're cutting plywood.

ARLETTE: Yes. The smell of lumber is distinct. [Laughs]

ANN-MARIE: The smell of lumber is distinct. I've worked in the paint department, and I know how you can transform, you know, a home --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...by just changing the color. And we have some great brands, like Behr and so forth.

ARLETTE: Mm.

ANN-MARIE: But, and I've worked in plumbing. Henry --

ARLETTE: Ah.

ANN-MARIE: My mentor was a plumbing guy.

ARLETTE: Aha!

ANN-MARIE: So people look at me and don't realize that I'm pretty good --

ARLETTE: Good in plumbing. Ah!

ANN-MARIE: ...with plumbing, as well, right?

ARLETTE: You don't find that very often. [Laughs]

ANN-MARIE: You don't find that very often, but the fun I have when I do projects -- and I don't do as many as I used to --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...is when I get a power tool in my hand, and we have great brands.

ARLETTE: [Laughs]

ANN-MARIE: We are... And you -- you are... The power of that, right?

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: You can just...I used to pose with them, too, and get a picture.

ARLETTE: [Laughs]

ANN-MARIE: But the power of that is just phenomenal, so I just love power tools --

ARLETTE: Love it.

ANN-MARIE: ...drills and so forth.

ARLETTE: Now, for anyone listening today who might be thinking about working for The Home Depot, whether it's in a store or anywhere else in our great company, why would you tell them that this is the place to be?

ANN-MARIE: Because it's the best company in the world. And here's why it's the best company in the world. When you think about giving back...

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: When you think about a value-based organization and an organization and a company that has an inverted pyramid or a leadership philosophy that says our customers and associates are number one --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...and we're here to serve them --

ARLETTE: Yes.

ANN-MARIE: ...it creates a place to work that is unbelievable. But beyond the value is when we live it. Arlette, we have something here called the Homer Fund.

ARLETTE: Yes.

ANN-MARIE: And 95% of our store associates, no matter how much they make, donate to our Homer Fund. And a Homer Fund is a hardship fund. That means if you run into any tough time --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm. Yes.

ANN-MARIE: The car for \$500...

ARLETTE: Oh, now think about that.

ANN-MARIE: Right? We are able to help and take care of that expense, right, for any associate in the company.

ARLETTE: Wait a minute. You're saying that the Homer Fund is available to the 400,000 associates?

ANN-MARIE: Yes, and their families. And if there's any catastrophic event --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...right? Just think about that.

ARLETTE: So, a hurricane.

ANN-MARIE: So, a hurricane. And you lost your belongings, and you need \$10,000 next day.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: The Homer Fund will be able to do that.

ARLETTE: Wow.

ANN-MARIE: Right? And that is not something you pay back. That is something about us taking care of our people and giving back.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: But why this is also a great company to work for...

ARLETTE: Mm?

ANN-MARIE: Think about any job out there --

ARLETTE: Okay.

ANN-MARIE: ...for any external. If you wanted to be a data scientist, do you know that Home Depot has data scientists?

ARLETTE: Yes, we do.

ANN-MARIE: Do, right? If you wanted to be in real estate, we have a real estate department. Any job you can think of.

ARLETTE: Yes.

ANN-MARIE: When people think about Home Depot, they think about the retail side of Home Depot.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: But in order for that retail side to hum --

ARLETTE: Yes.

ANN-MARIE: ...there's a back end that makes it hum. And I will tell you, no matter what the job is out there, Home Depot has a place for you. And not only do we have a place for you, we have an environment and an atmosphere that makes you thrive and can do your best work. We believe in maximizing people's potential. And when you join Home Depot, you get to understand what this company's truly about. The retail is the front side of it, but there's a bigger heart with this company, that if you're looking for a company with heart --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...and you can have -- and you want opportunity, sign up today.

ARLETTE: Well said. Last question for you -- What's your favorite day like at The Home Depot? The kind of day when you say, "That's why this place is special."

ANN-MARIE: It is a day when I get a letter...And we talk about the values of the company.

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: And we talk about the heart of the company. But my favorite day is when a customer either writes us or calls us -- and when I say "customer," both our internal customers or associates --

ARLETTE: Sure.

ANN-MARIE: ...or external customer -- that calls us and say, "Wow. You did something for me that no one else has ever done." And we have 400,000 associates, and the number of times that I say tears come to my eyes --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...because someone in our company -- not me, not Craig Menear, our CEO --

ARLETTE: Mm-hmm.

ANN-MARIE: ...but an associate in the store hears a story and is willing to help because of the value and the culture of this company.

ARLETTE: Yep.

ANN-MARIE: Those are my favorite days, when we step up to the plate and say, "This is what Home Depot is all about." And no one has to tell them to do it. They do it because it's absolutely the right thing to do. There's a difference between doing things right --

ARLETTE: Uh-huh.

ANN-MARIE: ...and one of our value pieces is doing --

ARLETTE: The right thing.

ANN-MARIE: ...the right thing. My favorite days is when we just --

BOTH: ...do the right thing.

Ann-Marie Campbell truly believes in The Home Depot's values and is passionate about our associates. To her, we're just one big family. She is committed to our customers, our associates, and our investments in this business. Talking with her was so inspirational, and I hope it was for you, as well.

Thanks for listening. This is Arlette, signing off. Please join me again for our next episode of "Give Me an H."