



## VALERIE RIVERA

### CEO/Founder of Take Back Work, a workplace culture consultancy

Valerie Rivera is on a mission to help organizations create workplace cultures where people thrive. She incorporates best practices in organizational behavior, design thinking, and coaching for change that sticks, and partners with clients to develop practical strategies tailored to their needs. She is a speaker, writer, and thought leader who specializes in growing cultures of innovation within the military and government.

Prior to earning her MBA at Stanford, she served in the United States Air Force, where she teamed with her squadron commander to transform a bureaucratic unit into a powerhouse of creativity and innovation, leading to intelligence breakthroughs and sky-high employee morale. The impact of her work reached beyond her 300-person Squadron to the 480th ISR Group, 480th ISR Wing, 25th Air Force, and the National Security Agency – over 10,000 people.

Valerie began her career as a linguist in the United States Air Force in 2000 and served in various roles at the National Security Agency, to include mission manager of a highly-classified research and development mission. Regardless of the role, the one unifying element has always been the element of change – leading both technological and cultural transformation efforts. During her last active duty assignment in Hawaii, she stood up a new team designed to introduce new capabilities and tradecraft to 1,800 analysts. Based on their novel approach to workforce engagement, her team won NSA’s Learning Innovator of the Year award in 2015. She concurrently coached her commander to establish a new Squadron culture of “Airmen Reaching Their Highest Potential through Autonomy, Mastery, and Purpose.” It worked, and they co-authored a paper on the experience.

In addition to her role as CEO/Founder of Take Back Work, Valerie currently serves as a Senior Master Sergeant (E-8) in the USAF Reserve. Most recently, she assisted the Air Force CyberWorx team at the USAF Academy with refining their purpose, values, and vision. Valerie also continues to be an active member of the defense community. She coordinated the first Defense Entrepreneurs’ Forum in Silicon Valley in 2016, maintains strong connections with DIUx, and attends Defense Innovation Board meetings.

Valerie holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Stanford University (2017), a Bachelor of Science in Diplomacy and Military Studies from Hawaii Pacific University (2013), and an Associate of Arts in Mandarin from the Defense Language Institute (2009).