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MAKIN' A SPLASH

GLOVER'S WATER PASSION IMPACTING LIVES

By Symone C. Skrzycki

Heavy rain and booming thunder are no match for the sparkling Zoom conversation with Megan Glover, CEO at 120Water.

Nothing can drown out her enthusiasm for the cause that propelled her to co-found 120Water in 2016: providing safe and clean drinking water.



2017 Rise of the Rest competition: Megan Glover with AOL co-founder Steve Case and Hoosier native Robin Ward, who does executive and founder coaching in California.



Diving in: Packaging test kits with a colleague early on.

Headquartered in Zionsville, 120Water combines cloud-based software and digital sampling kits to help execute water safety, compliance and wastewater monitoring programs. It offers an end-to-end solution for government agencies and municipalities that either regulate or provide drinking water to their consumers.

“As we were launching the business – and this is how I got so passionate about this industry – there was a tidal wave of new

regulations and an emphasis on water quality.

“We’re still very new in our technology, but what we’ve built is really a way to help (customers) synthesize the data and automate workflows,” Glover remarks. “And at the end of the day show that trail of compliance, right? No surprises. They can be a lot more proactive in their work. It helps people feel more in control, which definitely reduces some of that anxiety and uncertainty.”

Allos Ventures, based in Indianapolis and Cincinnati, is among 120Water’s investors. Managing director David Kerr calls Glover “a unique voice in her industry.”

“Any time you’re running a business, it’s a roller coaster,” he says. “There are days that are high highs and days that are low lows. Megan always has a smile. Always has a fresh outlook. Always taking the optimistic road. The positive view she takes is really helpful and inspiring.”

To date, over 15 million lives have been impacted through the programs run on 120Water’s platform, which is used at more than 500,000 sample sites across the nation.

Being ‘present’

Glover, a family-oriented mother to two young children, credits her own mom with shaping her views on work-life balance.

“She was one of five (mothers) in her Indiana law school class,” Glover recalls. “And she was a partner at her law firm. I remember visiting her office. Looking back, it was a very important influence in my life to show me that you can be present for all of the important (family) events, but you can also have a career outside the home.

“And having a career inside the home is just as meaningful and impactful. Don’t get me wrong. But I saw her work outside and contribute inside, and that was pretty meaningful for me growing up.”

Getting her feet wet

Glover was born and raised in Rensselaer, a small rural town in northern Indiana.

“I’ve always been competitive and independent,” Glover notes. “Just very motivated to put myself in leadership-level activities.” High school hobbies included theater, choir and golf. While attending DePauw University in Greencastle, she joined a sorority and served as president of the Panhellenic Association.

Like her mom, Glover’s father also was an attorney. That’s the route she foresaw her own career taking until her senior year of college.

Congratulations
Megan Glover

Thank you for all your leadership!
 - The 120Water Team

120Water™

“When it came time to do the (law school) applications where I was going, I couldn’t really picture what my path was going to be in five years.”

As it turned out, it was filled with career exploration.

Glover graduated with a bachelor’s degree in communication arts and sciences in 2004.

Over the next year, she traveled the country as assistant director of DePauw’s annual fund and ran the young alumni program.

Her first foray into marketing was with a two-year stint at Angie’s List (now known as Angi).

“That’s where I really got that (feeling of), ‘This is what I want to do. I want to be a CMO (chief marketing officer),’ ” she emphasizes. “I love marketing. I love everything about it.”

Among her accomplishments at Angie’s List was launching the business’ digital marketing division.

In 2008 she joined Compendium Software, a content management software start-up, as employee No. 5.

“That’s where I like to say I fell in love with the software as a service (model) – actually marketing products and software products,” she recalls. “That was pretty awesome.”

While at Compendium, Glover met Abby Warner, who today is vice president of client success at 120Water.

“We’ve been friends since that moment,” Warner declares. “We connected. We have a lot of similarities. I joke because we’re both Capricorns and a little bull-headed and go-getters! We get the work done when we see something that we know needs to be done, which is one of the things I love about Megan.”

Glover continued to build a marketing career over the next five years at businesses such as Delivra, DyKnow, RICS Software, hc1.com and 3 dots marketing.

Customers = ‘center of our universe’

This year, 120Water has grown nearly 400% in its customer base. The organization serves 200-plus customers across more than 30 states. The company doubled its workforce (currently totaling more than 70) in 2021.

Upon its inception in 2016, 120Water was a business-to-consumer model.

“But around 2017, we ended up pivoting the business to really focus on who we are today – which is serving that municipal market,” Glover explains. “Our platform is comprised of a cloud-based software. We have point-of-use kits and services that our customers use to do everything they need to manage lead reduction programs as our primary solution.”

During this timeframe, that mission pitched by Glover won AOL founder Steve Case’s first Rise of the Rest competition in Indianapolis – and with the win, a \$100,000 investment in 120Water.

“I don’t think we’d actually be where we are



Glover encourages team members and young professionals to “look for the opportunities” for career advancement and in mentoring others.



Inspired by her mother's career success and commitment to family growing up, Glover pursues a similar work-life balance today with her husband and two children.

today without winning. We were trying to raise our first seed round. We'd had some friends and family pass the hat (with) great early successes, but it was really hard to raise money. ..." Glover reflects. "They (Rise of the Rest) came in and said, 'You're serving an industry that needs innovation and we want to fund your company.' We literally closed the (funding) round within a matter of weeks."

Glover's vision was validated and it helped spur her on to stay the course.

"Since day one, we've approached the market with an open mind of bringing what's served other industries well into water. Not being in water (the industry, prior to launching the business) actually has helped 120Water because we came in with a whole new way to do sampling at the point of use.

"We've also approached it as realists, knowing that this is an industry (centered around compliance) that takes time (to change)," she acknowledges.

"We've gotten to know our customers. We put them at the center of our universe and then we apply what works well in other industries to them."

120Water has partnered with the Indiana Finance Authority (IFA) since 2017. The first project revolved around a lead sampling program for public schools.

"The question posed was, 'Are our public school children at risk for lead exposure through water in their school facilities?' imparts Jim McGoff, IFA COO and director of environmental programs. "As you might imagine, it's somewhat of a daunting task. ... Megan and her staff were extremely helpful in organizing an overwhelming task that resulted in (approximately) 1,000 facilities being tested in a little over a year's time.

"They were instrumental in organizing the testing, the facilitating, the results, providing an online platform where schools could track the progress of their samples and letters ... to summarize the results," he offers.

"That has continued into a Phase 2. 120Water has expanded their database capabilities to include private daycares and are starting to test

in that area."

Antony Rhine, chief revenue officer, joined 120Water three years ago.

"Built into this company is this undertone of – when our customers are successful, the general interest of the public is served. Meaning children – especially children in at-risk communities where there's a lead prevalence," he emphasizes. "They're not drinking that water. They're drinking clean drinking water."

Mentoring matters

One of Glover's longtime mentors is Chris Baggott, a co-founder of 120Water and a variety of other businesses such as ClusterTruck, a software-driven delivery-only restaurant with eight locations nationwide (five in Indianapolis), where he serves as CEO. They met at another of Baggott's start-ups: Compendium.

"She has a solid hustle – if you will – and she has a tenacity," he asserts. "The thing with 120 (Water) is – we're very far away from the original vision of the company. And that's all Megan. She wasn't going to quit. And she was going to find out where the opportunities were in this space. We all knew that water was a big, big space and really important and there wasn't a lot of technology being applied to it."

Glover shares her take on the challenges of being a woman in a male-dominated industry.

"Working your way up – especially as one of the few female executives around the table – you have to be very personally aware," she stresses. "You need to be able to synthesize the input you're given and formulate your own point of view.

"You have to have some thick skin. I think (my) mentors found a way to convey how to get ahead in a way that was candid, helpful and actionable. That's what I try to do. Not beat around the bush and instead just kind of say, 'If you want to get here, let's put you on a path and figure out how to do that.'"

Glover also embraces ways to be a "sounding board" in areas such as salary negotiations, how to avoid being overlooked for other positions and navigating interpersonal issues.

"I think everywhere I've been in a professional setting, there are

at least a couple of – generally young women, but they certainly can be men as well – that I’ve gravitated to,” she comments.

Rhine cites Glover’s ability to “float between roles” with family, team members and the industry as a powerful strength.

“She moves between being my champion and promoter – all the things you would expect your boss to do – to being a mentor and if there are any (areas where I can improve), she’s good at helping me pull on that thread and get stronger. She’s really genuine in the way she does it.”

Tapping into talent, compliance resources

Talent development is paramount at 120Water.

This summer, the company launched a technical assistance program in partnership with the O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University to further develop and access talent.

“It really helps our business kind of scale beyond our core regions,” Glover notes. “We’re lucky to have an amazing environmental science school. We leverage their top talent to help us – whether it’s data science projects, data management, research projects – that we

then actually deliver to our customers.

“What’s awesome about that is, we’re exposing them (college students) to a sector that needs their help,” she muses. “People need to be joining the water industry. There’s a silver tsunami happening. There’s not enough people joining the workforce to replace the retirees over the next 10 years.”

120Water also concentrates on resources to help customers remain in regulatory compliance.

A recent example is a partnership with the National Rural Water Association.

“Rural water accounts for the majority of water systems in the country,” Glover explains. “In the United States, our water systems are all very fragmented. We have roughly 52,000. As a comparison, the United Kingdom has nine. So what you have are these rural communities that have to comply with the same standards that Indianapolis does, but they are lacking a lot of the resources.”

She adds, “We’ve always wanted to be able to find a way to apply our solutions to rural water and having relationships with these associations will really help us reach a part of the market that’s going to be impacted the most with the new regulation and infrastructure demands.”

Beyond 120Water

In the community, Glover serves on the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet and is a founding member of the Indiana Technology and Innovation Association. She also volunteers with Water for People, which promotes lasting access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

While free time is a scarce commodity at the Glover household, she emphasizes that “it’s important to find time for self-care. If you don’t, that’s a very slippery slope – particularly as an entrepreneur and with all of the things you’re juggling.

“I make sure that I carve out time (for me). I’m an avid runner. I love to cook. My husband likes to cook too and we’re always battling for the kitchen,” she shares with a laugh.

A prolific reader, Glover tends to forgo business books in favor of a good novel. She adds, “I actually read a hundred pages in a sitting!”

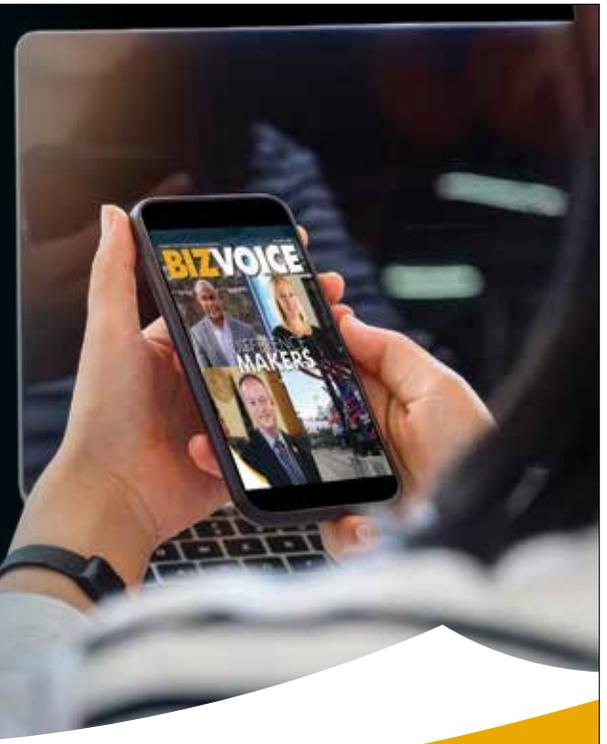
That eagerness, drive and inquisitive nature is also part of what makes Glover successful.

Warner ties everything back to this: “She has no fear. She just keeps pushing and going. And that’s probably what I get most from her as a leader.” ■

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