

How the CEO of Hyundai North America Is Steering the Global Auto Brand Through Crisis, Uncertainty and Change

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In my conversation with Randy Parker, CEO of Hyundai and Genesis Motor North America, we touched on everything from his upbringing to the emotional and professional weight of leading a global auto brand in an unpredictable climate.

Parker talked about the values he grew up with, starting with his father – a former military veteran – who instilled discipline, respect and curiosity early on. Those principles became a quiet throughline in our interview. When Parker spoke about the many relocations his career required – moving his family, adjusting to new markets – it didn't sound like a complaint. It sounded like the reality of what it takes to build a leadership career in a competitive, global industry.

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One of the more grounded themes of our talk was how taxing that kind of life can be. Parker opened up about the personal sacrifices of the job, especially being away from family. You could feel the weight of those experiences as he talked about trying to balance work and presence – not perfectly, but with intention. This wasn't a man eager to sell a brand. This was

someone reflecting on the choices and trade-offs that come with professional success.

We also spent time talking about the cultural dynamics within Hyundai and Genesis. Parker made it clear that he's intentional about leading with empathy and making people feel valued. He shared that sometimes, in highly structured or hierarchical organizations, voices can get lost. As a leader, he sees it as his job to make sure that doesn't happen – to ensure the culture doesn't just look good on paper, but feels real to employees.

Tariffs came up as well – naturally, given the auto industry's exposure to international trade policy. Parker didn't shy away from the challenge. He acknowledged the tension between political rhetoric and operational strategy and discussed how Hyundai navigates those uncertainties without losing sight of its long-term plans.

The ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raid was another tough moment we touched on. While he didn't offer political commentary or much specific details, Parker talked about the reputational and human toll events like that can have – not just on a company, but on the people who show up to work every day. He was measured but clear: Leadership during those moments requires calm, transparency and a commitment to the people who count on you. "Control what you can control."

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Walking away from the interview, I wasn't thinking about quarterly earnings or the next electric vehicle. I was thinking about how Parker's leadership is shaped by lived experience – by a military dad, by corporate relocations, by the weight of representing something bigger than himself. These aren't bullet points on a press release. They're the

elements of a human story, and for anyone leading in high-stakes environments, there's something worth studying here.

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