

HRD

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SOAR

“WE NEED TO MOVE FAST BUT SAFELY - IN A HEAVILY REGULATED ENVIRONMENT - WITH OUR VALUES VISIBLY NAILED TO THE MAST”

SUSANNA YALLOP
CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER
STARLING BANK



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STATUES OF THE ONCE LAUDED ARE BEING WRENCHED DOWN FROM THEIR PLINTHS, BECAUSE THEIR FAME - NOW INFAMY - WAS BUILT UPON THE WHIP-SCARRED BACKS OF PEOPLE, TORN FROM THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN AND FORCED TO WORK AS SLAVES. ABRAHAM LINCOLN SAID: "IF SLAVERY IS NOT WRONG, NOTHING IS WRONG."



JASON SPILLER, EDITOR

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Those fallen effigies represent a past that cannot be forgiven, but slavery is a contemporary problem for today and it's a growing concern. As consumers, we are appalled, but we trust/hope that the three quid tee-shirt we have purchased from a respected high street/web brand, was manufactured by people who are being looked after by their employer. However, we are squeamish to look too closely and are happy to leave that to the discretion of corporates which, if found to be complicit, we then express our outrage at being duped, after the fact.

In conventional times, knowledge management was controlled, binary, closed-face, prescriptive and information was accessible, only on a timely, need-to-know basis. The digital era opened people up to unprecedented loads of data, information and knowledge, across organisations and turned employees from solid state receivers to active contributors. However, it also exposed security risks and fuelled fears over intellectual property which, in this transition to hybrid and remote working - along with a wave of third-party, transitory contributors - has heightened considerably.

The pandemic caused many catalysts, accelerated change and, where it was actively engaged, HR EBHR and decision science became a beacon across broiling seas of disruption and uncertainty. DS became a seismograph, while

analytics advised on consequential and recurring decision-making processes and, through the combination of critical thinking and scientific evidenced business information, those businesses were able to continue operating. Decision science then underscored connections between effective practice and organisational research and big data transcended its clichéd status, with transformative potential in HR analytics.

Businesses are picking their way through the post-pandemic rubble, energised by some kind of organisational adrenaline, yet sanguine, pragmatic and vowing to learn from an unprecedented crisis, to "build back better" and capitalise on the resilience and collaborative spirit that employees adopted during the dark days of the pandemic. There is a deep longing to welcome workforces back on *their* grounds, with promises of understanding and supporting individualism, of work/life balance and making good on purpose statements that have been swept under boardroom rugs. Don't rub your eyes, this is actually happening.

THE WORLD OF EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION CONTINUES TO EVOLVE AND REACT TO THE FAST CHANGING WORLD OF WORK. HERE IS THE LATEST ROUND UP OF VERDICTS FROM THE COURT, PLUS NEW AND ADAPTED LEGISLATION.

COURT CASE REPORT

In the case of *Mrs R Malone v The Chief Constable of the Police Service of Scotland* a tribunal has ruled that a firearms officer was the victim of a sexist culture. The Tribunal accepted in evidence the examples of the 'absolute boys club' or 'horrific' culture given by Mrs Malone's witnesses. There was also a WhatsApp Group which was used to send both work and leisure related messages including images of topless women. An Inspector was overheard calling one of the female Police Investigators 'a wee lassie'. Two

other female officers transferred out of the division because they were not confident that the sexist culture within the ARV division was going to change and felt that their sex was always going to be a barrier to promotion.

The Tribunal also accepted the evidence of Mrs Malone and two other female officers that an email was sent which contained an order or direction from a senior police officer to the effect that women could no longer be deployed together when there were sufficient male staff on duty. Mrs Malone's solicitor,

Margaret Gibbon, described the employment tribunal's judgement as "damning".

"The employment tribunal's findings lay bare the misogynistic attitudes and culture within armed policing and the hostile treatment police officers face when they try to call it out," she added. "Of equal concern is the employment tribunal's findings that it did not consider credible much of the evidence it heard from Police Scotland's witnesses, including testimony from high-ranking police officers."

EMPLOYMENT LAW

STATUTORY ENTITLEMENT TO LEAVE FOR UNPAID CARERS

A Government consultation on a proposal to give employees a week of unpaid leave each year to provide care has concluded and a new statutory entitlement to leave for unpaid carers who are balancing working alongside their caring responsibilities will be introduced. The consultation received strong support across the range of respondent types, including individuals, businesses, charities, and trade unions. It showed the importance of flexibility in meeting the needs of unpaid carers, whose personal circumstances and responsibilities can vary greatly.

Employees will have the right to take carer's leave to care for a spouse, partner, civil partner, child, parent, a person who lives in the same household or a person who reasonably relies on them for care. The individual being cared for

must have a long-term care need. This will be defined as a long-term physical or mental illness or injury, a disability (as defined under the disability discrimination legislation) or issues relating to old age. There will be limited exemptions (for example, in the case of terminal illness).

Carer's leave may be taken flexibly, in either individual days or half days, and up to a block of one week. Employees will be required to give notice which is twice the length of the leave being requested, plus one day. A leave request may not be denied but may be postponed by an employer where they consider that the operation of their business will be unduly disrupted. Those taking carer's leave will be protected from suffering a detriment for having done so, and dismissals for reasons connected with exercising the right to carer's leave will be automatically unfair.

LEGAL DIARY

- **1 December:** BEIS consultation on proposal to reform flexible working regulations closes.
- **1 December:** ET rules have been changed to allow a prospective claimant to provide the names of more than one prospective respondent on an early conciliation form.
- **17 December:** Member states need to comply with the EU Whistleblowing Directive.
- **April 2022:** New enforcement powers will be introduced to strengthen trade union regulation and in particular to bring role of the Certification Officer in line with other regulatory positions.
- **Q1:** PRA/FCA to publish a consultation paper on Diversity & Inclusion.



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SUSANNA YALLOP CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER STARLING BANK

INTERVIEW BY JASON SPILLER
& PHOTOGRAPHY BY STUART THOMAS

THE DAY THE FINANCIAL SECTOR CRASHED IN 2007, CANARY WHARF WAS SHROUDED IN CLOUD. WHAT HAPPENED NEXT WAS STUNNING, A COLLECTIVE HUMBLE APOLOGY. THE FOUNDER OF STARLING BANK, ANNE BODEN WORKED THROUGH BANKING'S MOST SHAMEFUL GEKKOESQUE ERA AND, WHEN THE TIME CAME TO FLEDGE THAT GLASS AND STEEL EYRIE, HER OBJECTIVE WAS TO CHANGE THE FACE OF BANKING FOR GOOD.

"WE NEED TO CALIBRATE A BALANCE OF
FLEXIBILITY WITH FUNCTIONALITY AND IT HAS TO BE
COMPREHENSIVE, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE"

SUSANNA, TAKE US BACK TO YOUR EARLY LIFE AND HOW YOU FOUND THE PATH INTO HR. I took my degree in Human Biology at King's College London - I guess the only link there being the human part - but towards the end of my studies, I decided that life in the lab wasn't for me and I started to think about options. I started my career with a short stint working in recruitment, where I also commenced my CIPD studies. I joined an evening course and it was there that I was chatting with a fellow student, who suggested I apply for an entry-level HR position at the insurance firm Hiscox. That's where I really started my HR career, and it was five years covering every square inch of the HR field, where I rose

to the position of HR manager. Hiscox was part of the traditional London insurance market, its differentiation was a real emphasis on quality of product and quality of its people. At this time, the company was broadening its retail insurance products, as well as the traditional London market operation and I worked on setting up some of the regional offices outside of the capital in; Colchester, Birmingham and Glasgow. This really opened me up to a new dimension of HR, because it was back to basics, setting up new sites, recruitment and the myriad of hygiene issues. It was engaging working with some great people, but I was coming to the point where I was thinking about the next stage

of my career and whether to continue as a generalist practitioner or specialise. I had started to focus more on the employee relations area; I studied a post-graduate diploma in employment law and also worked on compensational benefits projects. So, I had covered a lot of bases.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR NEXT CAREER MOVE. I wanted to stay in financial services and an opportunity came up to go into banking with ABN AMRO, as a Senior HR Business Partner working with their corporate finance function. This was a real investment bank, a hugely challenging environment. During my time there, I took a role working in transactional banking and ended up

being responsible for that area of the business right across Europe. Later on, the financial crisis (of 2008-2009) was to change the world of work in the sector - for the better it has to be said - but this was and always had been a collaborative business and, looking back at the culture at ABN AMRO, it really contrasted with the widely-held perception of banking. A Dutch-led organisation, it was very collegiate in the way it operated and people were driven by making the right decisions. My time at ABN gave me great experience of working for a global business and delivering HR practices through a matrix model. But this was an era of takeovers and soon there was rumour that one was on the cards. There were a number of potential suitors on the table and then RBS came in as the front runner and subsequently acquired the business.

Understandably, there was a good deal of disruption and, from an HR perspective, it was all hands to the pump. It was hugely challenging to keep a semblance of calm, as these two businesses started to bump and collide and the initial task was to keep people engaged and focused on business continuity. It's difficult trying to calm nerves when personally you are considering what's right for you and your career. But HR has to have this stoic persona, which is not quite like the band on the Titanic, but certainly about showing a calm complexion in the face of uncertainty. You have to take all experience and learning as a positive, even though it doesn't always feel like that at the time and so experiencing M&A from the acquired side, taught me a lot about how we respond in stress and uncertainty. I've worked on acquisitions on both sides and it has really helped to understand. I stayed on with ABN to support the transition team for a short period of time, before I moved on and went to BP. It was definitely the right time to go.

AT THIS STAGE AND AFTER A HECTIC TIME AT ABN, WHAT WERE YOU LOOKING FOR IN YOUR NEXT CAREER MOVE? The new role at BP was still financial services based, even with an energy company - as

I was supporting the European Gas and LNG trading business - so it had a similar environment and focus, but was hugely different from a culture perspective. While I was there, the company suffered periods where the brand was making headlines around the world for all the wrong reasons. It wasn't a great time for the business and had a big impact within the organisation because, despite its size, this was a traditional firm run by people, some of whom had dedicated their entire working lives to the business. I joined at

"YOU HAVE TO TAKE ALL EXPERIENCE AND LEARNING AS A POSITIVE, EVEN THOUGH IT DOESN'T ALWAYS FEEL LIKE THAT AT THE TIME AND SO EXPERIENCING M&A FROM THE ACQUIRED SIDE, TAUGHT ME A LOT ABOUT HOW WE RESPOND IN STRESS AND UNCERTAINTY"

a time where the HR function itself was going through a big transformation - with the onus on business partnering - and this was my initial main focus. One of the great things about HR is you can parachute into any situation and be reasonably confident that, at the end of the day, you're dealing with people.

THE SCALE OF A BUSINESS LIKE BP IS INCREDIBLE, HOW DID YOU COME TO TERMS WITH THAT? The amount of people and the diversity is compelling and I enjoy working on a global scale. What you deliver in HR is never prescriptive, it has to be balanced and adapted for some incredibly diverse settings, from city hubs to the most remote areas on the planet. I reflect that, during the pandemic, we've been

supporting people that we have not met and that's similar to when you are working on a global basis. Connecting with people and delivering support is all about empathy and understanding of different circumstances - balanced against the necessity to drive massive global HR agendas - it is very much a mindset that you have to adopt and become accustomed to. For example, managing talent on trading floors is clearly going to be different from managing talent on oil rigs, but you need to have defining principles of how you deliver HR.

BP IS THE TYPE OF PLACE YOU COULD STAY FOR AN ENTIRE CAREER, SO WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO MOVE? I made the decision to leave, so that I could spend more time with my family. During this career break, I was often being asked to advise businesses on HR issues and it soon became clear that I could turn this into a business. So, I set up an HR consultancy company, focusing on organisations that were big enough to have people issues, but not big enough to have fully-pledged HR functions. I soon discovered there was plenty of work out there and that working for myself provided the flexibility I needed and I could pick and choose my clients. As it transpired, they were as far away from financial services as you can go and I found myself on factory floors, in charities and the public sector. A range of new experiences and much more direct, as I was often coming in when issues had reached boiling point. It brought me back to managing people on a more individual level and required me to deploy HR in different ways. When you face people in stress situations and listen, you are at the crux of what pure HR is all about, people matters. Many of your readers will be with large corporations and I would urge them at some point to go back to grassroots level, just to re-live those core people experiences. Not only was setting up the consultancy ideal for my situation at the time, it truly added extra dimensions to my skillset, as I was touching on a myriad of issues, from gender pay gap analysis through to advising on ER issues and it was less

about grand scale strategic planning and more about immediate, localised action. I also became an external investigator for Eversheds and so, all in all, this was a richly diverse experience and full of personal learning and development. It was through this work that I came into contact with Starling Bank.

TELL US WHAT IT WAS ABOUT THIS FLEDGLING BUSINESS - TO COIN A PHRASE - AND WHY IT PRESENTED A COMPELLING ALTERNATIVE TO WHAT SOUNDS LIKE A VERY SUCCESSFUL CONSULTANCY THAT YOU WERE BUILDING? I started work with Starling on a consultancy basis and, at the time, there were around 300 people in the business. There was a small HR function in place, but the business was rapidly growing and they needed more support, so I came in to help out with a couple of projects and ended up staying. To answer your question, what compelled me, Starling was started up, partly as a challenge to the banking market at large. Our founder and CEO, Anne Boden, is rare in the cut-and-thrust of banking and is one of the significant elements that makes this a different organisation to the norm. Anne balances entrepreneurial spirit and hands-on leadership and she founded Starling to rival other banks, to do things better, quicker and easier. Also, with recent history in mind, to be more honest with customers and transparent about actions and intentions and no ambiguity. It has been an enormous challenge for Anne and I think it has been her determination and enthusiasm to beat the odds that has drawn really great people to Starling. From the beginning, Anne struggled to gain the funding she needed and there was definitely an attitude of “not taking a woman seriously”, in what is a traditionally male-dominated sector, although not so much today, which is encouraging. Now we're in a really good place and although the company has grown significantly, that personal touch still remains. So that's the background of how Starling began and seven and a half years on, the fledgling grows stronger.

FOR A COMPANY THAT PLACES ITS VALUES AND CULTURE SO VISIBLY, HOW HAS YOUR WORK IN HR MANAGED THE BALANCE OF EFFICACY IN THE FACE OF HUGE AMBITION? From first sight when I was consulting, to this day, the energy was all about growth and, during my tenure, we have increased our employee count five-fold. We're now about 1,600 people and growing and so recruitment has been a significant part of our work in the people team. I came in at the time where we were starting to branch out of London, opening offices in; Cardiff,

"I JOINED AT A TIME WHERE THE HR FUNCTION ITSELF WAS GOING THROUGH A BIG TRANSFORMATION - WITH THE ONUS ON BUSINESS PARTNERING - AND THIS WAS MY INITIAL MAIN FOCUS. ONE OF THE GREAT THINGS ABOUT HR IS YOU CAN PARACHUTE INTO ANY SITUATION AND BE REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT, AT THE END OF THE DAY, YOU'RE DEALING WITH PEOPLE"

Southampton and Dublin, so a multi-site organisation rapidly forming out of one floor in a London office block. That has posed a number of challenges for delivering a people agenda in, not just finding the right people to fill those offices, but also to manage them and make sure that the culture and values that make Starling different are diffused throughout. Growth at this pace is challenging with no respite or time to take stock before the next big step

forward. So, the speed of activity has stretched a relatively small people function. When you hold a caring and respectful culture as being what defines the company, one bad customer or employee experience stands out as a stark challenge to a statement of intent. The other consideration is that we have a light managerial style and we don't have huge amounts of bureaucracy - we need to move fast but safely, within a heavily regulated environment - with our values so visibly nailed to the mast.

YOU'VE SPOKEN ABOUT CULTURE A GOOD DEAL, BUT WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE MAIN DIFFERENTIATOR OF STARLING IN THE BANKING SECTOR? As an organisation, it feels less like a bank and more like a tech company and that's exactly what we say to people when we're interviewing. We tell them to expect to come into a fast-paced environment - they nod in a “yes I'm prepared for that” confident way - and later, when we catch up with them, they invariably say, “you weren't kidding!” It's light years away from the traditional bank setting and it's incredibly innovative and creative, because our tech teams are building the technology infrastructure out as we grow and develop. But the innovation involves everybody and the sharing of knowledge and openness means that customer-facing colleagues are informing and contributing to the creativity. In fact, despite a hugely competitive skills market, I'm convinced that our ability to attract exceptional people is the dynamic of positive feedback that radiates out beyond the business and into the wider world. When people hear about the outstanding innovation in a business, it is a critical calling card, along with the culture and values. Conversely, when people are frustrated by legacy issues and intransigent leaders, that type of negativity is a red flag, particularly in the world of digital talent.

THE NUMBER ONE CAUSE CÉLÈBRE BAR NONE, IS DIVERSITY OF BACKGROUND AND THOUGHT AND OPERATING WITH EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVITY. BUT STILL BUSINESSES SEEM TO BE DRAGGING



THEIR HEELS, PAYING LIP-SERVICE AND DEALING IN TOKENISM. WILL THAT EVER CHANGE? You have to genuinely want to make those changes and if we consider gender imbalance, historically banks have been male-dominated, especially in leadership and boardrooms. Thankfully, that is moving in the right direction, but nobody can stand back and admire their handiwork yet. As I've previously said, with a woman founder who experienced inequality, DEI is a big driver. It is just a fundamental part of what we do. We hire a lot of women, who then hire a lot more women and 40 percent of our board are women. We don't have a problem attracting women to the organisation, because of the many role-models across the business. We've recently launched a returners programme aimed at people who have been out of the workforce for a period of time. This is something that is particularly important to me as I appreciate what it's like to return to work after a break. I'm really hoping this will encourage more women into Starling. Similarly, we have programmes that support women in tech programmes, to broaden our diversity in that area. We do well in attracting women, but we're always looking for more and we're very mindful that the DEI dynamics are way more than gender balance and we are on a very determined journey, which will continue to form why we differentiate in the sector.

YOU MENTION ROLE-MODELLING, WHICH IS FUNDAMENTAL TO MOVING THE DEI DIAL. DO YOU THINK EMPLOYERS COULD DO MORE AND SHOULD THEY NOT START TO CONNECT EARLIER IN SCHOOLS? Without doubt, the more that students from a young age can see people from the world of work that they can identify with and learn what great and exciting careers they are having, the greater chance of bringing those legacy conventions down. I think going in at grassroots level is so important. From a business perspective, we're working with Loughborough University to look at how boys and girls under ten manage money, what they hear at home and what schools teach someone about

managing money. So, we're using our expertise to be closer to schools and no doubt, every organisation in every sector has more work to do. We're mindful that our strong female role modelling attracts more women into Starling than is the norm across the sector and so we have to be pragmatic and determined to address the entire DEI objective. For example, in supporting our black colleagues, we introduced a reciprocal mentoring programme as part of our action under the *If Not Now, When?* campaign. Pairing a black colleague with senior members of the company has fuelled positive debate and conversations. This is the direction of

"IT'S LIGHT YEARS AWAY FROM THE TRADITIONAL BANK SETTING AND IT'S INCREDIBLY INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE, BECAUSE OUR TECH TEAMS ARE BUILDING THE TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE OUT AS WE GROW AND DEVELOP"

travel that our people expect and demand. I don't want the next generation having to have the same conversations as we are having now, surrounding the need to keep the diversity issue top of the agenda, it needs to be organic. That's why making these connections with young people in education and also through our values and actions in society, is so important.

PRE-COVID, WORK-RELATED BURNOUT, STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH WAS AN EPIDEMIC IN ITSELF. BUSINESSES WERE PROFIT AND MARKET SHARE GROWTH OBSESSED AND PUSHED PEOPLE TOO HARD. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE SO THAT WE DON'T SLIP BACK INTO THAT WAY OF OPERATING? I think it has been

an experience that has informed us all, especially those that work HR. I'm extremely grateful that, over the 18 months we've been able to continue operating and continuing to grow the business, because so many companies were not able to. Being a tech firm, the rapid rollout to remote working was pretty smooth and we made sure that everyone was communicating across all our sites. Anne gave broadcasts three times a week, to keep people informed and answer any questions. When things were bleak in lockdown, we ran a campaign called Never Home Alone which included information about what welfare support was available, how colleagues could engage with the people team and how we could help. We even introduced fun and informative elements beyond business such as recipes and cooking tips, which have proved very popular and have definitely helped keep people together. The next issue is how we manage the transition into hybrid working, which is both a challenge and a fantastic opportunity to make positive improvements to how we all work in the future. For me, the old way didn't work for everyone, but that doesn't mean hybrid working is some kind of panacea to an age-old problem. We need to calibrate a balance of flexibility with functionality and it has to be comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable. All of this is predicated on mutual trust, we have to treat people like adults and have a wholeheartedly pragmatic approach that works symbiotically with people's lives. This will be a huge change to, not only how we operate, but mindsets.

IF AND WHEN COVID BECOMES A DISTANT MEMORY, IS THERE A DANGER THAT WE ALL REVERT STRAIGHT BACK INTO THAT WHOLE MADNESS OF THE DAILY MIGRATORY COMMUTE? It's very difficult to say, I really hope not because, as I said, the old way did not work for everyone and that caused exclusion and inequality. As leaders today, we have a massive obligation and duty to make this happen. I believe we can achieve if we focus on the positives and advantages,

such as the huge talent pool that is open to us through the hybrid model - and find solutions to negativity and the inevitable problems and obstacles along the journey. All along the way, we have to keep aware and encourage feedback; listening at all times will be absolutely fundamental to outcome.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN OBJECTIVES FOR THE BUSINESSES AND WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE BIG CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR STARLING? We are a bank and we're a regulated company and that means we have to continue to build our business sensibly and safely. With those parameters in mind, we are committed to providing and supporting our workforce in an organisational framework that works for our people. That presents opportunity and advantage, but also very considerable challenges. We cannot rush anything we do or take anything for granted, it is safety first as we forge ahead. From an HR perspective, we have to play to our advantages. As a new company, we don't have legacy issues and so we can innovate with more freedom and alacrity than most and we can adjust and tweak as we go as challenges and obstacles present. For us, change has always been constant and we are always changing our processes - and the way we do things - it's just the way that we work and that's why we took the pandemic pretty much in our stride. Again, when I've looked across at businesses in hard hit sectors, I feel that we've been incredibly fortunate that we've managed to keep progressing, growing and have stayed positive. For sure, there were hard times, but I think it takes a crisis to really test people and businesses, anyone can manage in good times.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR NEXT PLANS AND OBJECTIVES FOR YOUR HR DEPARTMENT TO BRING LIVE? We still have huge growth plans and that inevitably means that our People team will be at the forefront of that. Right now, my mind is on improving and building on our talent and learning offering. Over the last 12 months the People team has moved to a model where we have centers of expertise and we've real experts currently focused

on those elements. We have continued to hire really strong talent throughout the pandemic and I want to be able to make sure that we retain that talent and we make the best use of capabilities, by providing them with the development that they need. We're very good at spotting talent and we're very good at supporting people to reach their aspirations. We hire people from a wide variety of backgrounds and we have some unusual tactics. For example in customer service, we tend to hire from customer focussed industries such as hospitality or retail, because they can bring that all-important customer-centric attitude and we can develop and train them. We have some really talented people here with some interesting backgrounds and experiences that we can develop and that is the strategy that we will continue.

"AS A NEW COMPANY, WE DON'T HAVE LEGACY ISSUES AND SO WE CAN INNOVATE WITH MORE FREEDOM AND ALACRITY THAN MOST AND WE CAN ADJUST AND TWEAK AS WE GO AS CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES PRESENT. FOR US, CHANGE HAS ALWAYS BEEN CONSTANT AND WE ARE ALWAYS CHANGING OUR PROCESSES"


HOW WOULD YOU SUMMARISE YOUR CAREER SO FAR? I'm really glad that I've always been in roles that have been challenging and have stretched me, which has made me resilient and resourceful. I believe that equal to your own efforts, it comes down to the people that you are working with, as well as the culture of the

organisations that you become a part of. I always say when people join Starling, that you make a decision to join - not purely based on the job itself - but as a commitment to be respectful of the culture and values that guide us and that has to ring true with you personally. Reflecting back over my career, I can see I was happiest when being tested and stretched, but without feeling unsafe and so one of my main objectives is to provide that culture of a balance of safety and self-responsibility. I also see the pandemic as an opportunity to really innovate and to be mindful that many of the workplace conventions from the past, will simply not survive in the new world of work. With many lessons learned, it could be a truly exciting future.

Watch our video interview with Susanna as she talks more about the challenges that covid presented for the bank and their future strategy: www.youtube.com/watch?v=_PVuZkDV5W0&t=15s

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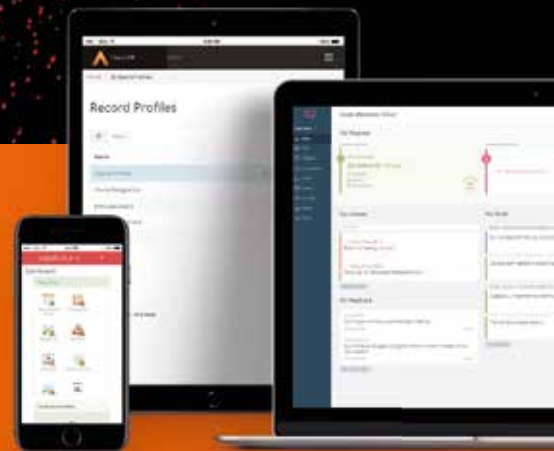


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CHAIRIED BY JASON SPILLER

21 SEPTEMBER 2021 - VIRTUAL DEBATE

HOW DATA CAN SUPPORT EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE IN THE NEW ERA OF WORK

HISTORICALLY RIGID WORK CONVENTIONS ARE YIELDING
TO AN EVOLVING FUTURE AND UNDERSTANDING
CHANGED MINDSETS, NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS IS KEY TO
ENGAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE, IN THE HYBRID WORLD.
THIS IS NOT JUST ABOUT EMPLOYEE TURNOVER, SICKNESS
LEVELS OR DEMOGRAPHIC MAKEUP, IT'S UNDERSTANDING
HOW EMPLOYEES FEEL ABOUT THEIR WORK, WHAT
MOTIVATES THEM, HOW THEY CAN DEVELOP AND WHAT
THEIR ASPIRATIONS NOW ARE.

PARTNERED WITH



DELEGATES

JAMES SHIPWAY, PRACTICE DIRECTOR - HUMAN EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT UK&I - NTT DATA
LYNDSEY DENNING, GROUP HR DIRECTOR - RECONOMY
NICOLE WARD, SENIOR HR BUSINESS PARTNER - PEABODY HOUSING
PHILIP ASTON, UK COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT MANAGER - SIG
KULAN KANDASAMY, SOLUTION DIRECTOR, HUMAN EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT UK&I - NTT DATA
RYAN CAVANAGH, HEAD OF HR SHARED SERVICE & SYSTEMS - HOVIS
VANESSA LUCAS, SENIOR HR DIRECTOR - SMITH & NEPHEW
JO TYLER, LISTENING & ENGAGEMENT MANAGER - WHITBREAD GROUP PLC
JAMES RULE, DIRECTOR, DIGITAL HR TECHNOLOGY - KPMG

HOW DO YOU THINK YOUR EMPLOYEES
WILL WANT TO WORK IN THE FUTURE
AND WHAT CHALLENGES AND
OPPORTUNITIES COULD THIS PRESENT?

Vanessa Lucas: Employees are likely to want flexibility to work differently from a location perspective, where their role allows. We have launched a process where all roles have been assigned one of four personas to determine the level to which a role requires site presence. Employees can request variations to their working arrangements which are then reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If there is a positive from the impact of COVID, I think that many employers were nervous about encouraging remote working opportunities prior to the pandemic and now we are seeing more opportunity to take a more flexible approach.

Ryan Cavanagh: Our business was 24/7 throughout the pandemic and we supported our colleagues throughout that process. There was a lot of anxiety as we were key workers, but from day one, we were very much a business that was COVID-ready in terms of social-distancing and having the correct hygiene procedures. A lot of the COVID protocols still remain onsite as we transition forward from a head office perspective and we're encouraging our workers to come back as we move forward and shape what that type of working environment looks like. Having a finger on the pulse is essential to understanding exactly what that could look like and will help form decisions and policies.

Jo Tyler: We had to close most of our 800 Premier Inn hotels and all of our 450 branded restaurants, within a matter of days after the Prime Minister's lockdown announcement. Hotels, by their very nature, are open 24/7 and not designed to be locked up, so our operations teams had to work out very quickly how we were going to secure our buildings. Throughout, we had to act quickly and decisively. We had 39 hotels open in the first wave of national lockdown to support the nation's key workers and our senior leaders personally stayed close to the people who were working in those hotels, so we could ensure that they had the tools and support they needed to keep our teams and guests safe. The learnings from those sites and managers were hugely informative as we re-opened our estate. From the start of the pandemic, we've been relentless on health &

safety and our elected employee representatives helped us understand the concerns we needed to address. We measured sentiment on how teams felt about measures in place. It's not easy to work in hospitality right now, whether that's because of global supply chain issues or a shortage of labour. Those issues put pressure on our teams when they serve our guests, so we need to demonstrate to our people that we hear their frustrations, that we are acting on their feedback and that we care about supporting them and fixing those issues. So, listening, acting and clear communication is really important. The long period of furlough that many people in the sector have experienced over the last 18 months, is likely to have changed priorities and we need to continue to listen, so that we can adapt impactfully.

Lyndsey Denning: We have to be mindful of how a dual-tier workforce could potentially evolve. My opinion is that behind the phrase hybrid working, there are some realities to consider, such as employees choosing how, when and where they work and whether that is practical in meeting business needs. There are related cost and management implications and managing people will have to change - as will infrastructure - to make that work from a practical perspective. There is no question that this is the direction of travel, but there is a lot to consider, from a structure and policy point of view. It's unknown territory and will require trying out different strategies, because hybrid working per se, divides opinion, which means we will have to consider as we progress the cultural implications too. No question, there are big challenges ahead.

James Shipway: We need to carry out surveys and really interrogate feedback as the future unfolds and we evolve to this new way of working. There's no doubt that timely and qualitative data and analytics are essential to the next stages and beyond.

Jo Tyler: We run regular surveys to understand employee sentiment. We have an online recognition platform called MyRewards that encourages peer-to-peer

and manager recognition. The platform allows managers to award points to team members as part of that recognition, for great contribution and team members can build up points to purchase items. Recognition is such a really important part of our culture and also encourages people to give us feedback. In fact, we had over 7,000 responses to our most recent pulse survey for our frontline teams.

"WORKFORCES HAVE TO BE MORE AGILE, WITH PEOPLE FEELING CONFIDENT ABOUT CROSS-SKILLING AND TAKING UP OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK ACROSS THE ORGANISATION, RATHER THAN KEEPING THEIR HEAD DOWN IN AN EXISTING ROLE, FEARFUL OF DISRUPTION TO THE STATUS QUO"

Nicole Ward: My sector, care and support, has been very hard hit by COVID. Staff can't work from home, they have no option and, because of the reactive and contractual nature of the care industry, a lot of times, we are unable to tailor specific work hours. With this move towards recognising differences regarding flexibility, we have launched a new people management framework, which is more people focused and features more friendly policies. Being mindful in management and listening more to staff and acknowledging staff choice is the key to unlocking the future. However, in the communication to become more flexible, there is seemingly no communication that flex and remote working cannot be applied practically to all staff. It's quietly ignored that all staff won't be included. So, a two-tier outcome would be a concern and there is already an issue with staff retention and attraction. It's a sector that relies on discretionary effort, staff giving more of themselves, but I think people are burnt out. It's hard to predict the future and there are many pressures - take the law, which says our staff must be vaccinated - we have to react and we have to exit people who are not vaccinated, in an industry that is already struggling with staff shortages.

Kulan Kandasamy: With such a variety of viewpoints about flexible and remote working and the changes in motivations and ambitions, this will inevitably be a

time of disruption and change. But as has been said, here is a great opportunity to reset and bring in improvements that, let's face it, have been a long time coming. Technology will play a huge role in the reformation of work and business.

James Shipway: Indeed, I'm very interested to explore how technology can play its part in finding solutions.

Although delegates come from a variety of sectors, each one has had to overcome some incredible challenges during the pandemic, which are helping to inform in the post-COVID rebuild.

HOW IS YOUR ORGANISATION ADAPTING ITS WORKFORCE PLANNING TO MEET THE CHANGEABLE AND UNCERTAIN NEEDS OF THE FUTURE?

Ryan Cavanagh: For us, the future is the difficult part, given the uncertainty and instability of the last 18 months. The landscape is hardly recognisable and sure, we can look to forecast with intent, but we need to be as adaptable as we are reactive and agile. Take a typical challenge such as absence, how we now deal with it has to change, in view of the time we have all lived through and the ongoing issues that will inevitably follow. The forthcoming weeks and months are going to be resource and energy sapping, not only from a supply chain perspective, but also labour markets and there will inevitably be curveballs all along the way. But we have to keep looking ahead, planning for better - although at times this seems like firefighting day-to-day - because, come what may, bread has to be baked and delivered.

Jo Tyler: For Whitbread, in the hard-hit hospitality sector, one of the big focuses is about being an employer of choice. We

have a commitment to no barriers to entry and no limits to ambition. Here, the listening space is so important, in order to understanding the critical parts of the employment experience, right across the demographic, so that we can personalise for a better experience. This feedback data is unlocking some useful insights to help us design improved outcomes. Workplaces also need to evolve so that they become part of the destination of choice to work and also supports people to be collaborative, innovative and productive.

Lyndsey Denning: We utilised downtime last year to really accelerate our technical development, within a new HR information system. But equally, from a supply chain point of view, there's been a lot of effort invested in leveraging APIs, to bring efficiency to our supply chain process. This has accelerated the need for more tech-enabled people with data competency and people who are technically literate and so our competency framework has been updated to reflect that. From a career perspective, in our most recent survey, the feedback suggests we need to be clearer about how people can progress in the business, so we are communicating with much more clarity and guidance.

James Rule: One question for us is, can we really continue with remote working when we typically work in consulting teams? Customer-interfacing in the context of remote working, is bound to be a different dynamic. Like most, we've relied upon collaboration platforms such as Teams, but for the long term we really need to investigate how we can utilise the software more impactfully, to improve employee experience and client service. From a workforce planning perspective, the key focus now is on employee experience. Our challenge is, we can't hire fast enough and since people have been returning and businesses have started to operate more fully, demand has gone up sharply.

Kulan Kandasamy: Workforce planning is all about knowing what resources, talent and skills are available in the organisation at any one time and quite a few

comments today have eluded to part of the answer in tight talent markets, as turning the focus on retaining existing employees and developing, reskilling and upskilling them. This is something that a business can have more control over, rather than being at the mercy of the external market and, of course, if learning and development looks active and dynamic in an organisation, it will draw talent in, as well as retain existing people, who feel they are valued and are being invested in. If it is sustainable and well planned, it can be the proverbial win-win.

James Shipway: Agreed, it's also about presciently identifying where skills gaps may occur ahead and planning and preparing for those eventualities. In these unprecedented times, workforces have to be more agile, with people feeling confident about cross-skilling and taking up opportunities to work across the organisation, rather than staying in an existing role, fearful of disruption to the status quo.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT SKILLS YOU HAVE AT YOUR DISPOSAL, WHERE THE GAPS ARE AND WHICH EMPLOYEES WILL REQUIRE UPSKILLING, RESKILLING AND CROSS-SKILLING?

Nicole Ward: The interesting thing about cross-skilling is that it seems to come just from the perspective of what the organisation needs and there's very little conversation other than that. We need to be mindful that there are some employees who may not really wish to take on anything else other than what they're doing, they may be comfortable in that area. Upskilling is somewhat different as people are able to upskill at their own discretion and pace, but it takes the effort of the individual. So there needs to be some sort of enticement, because it is discretionary effort that you are trying to elicit from current employees, in order to plug gaps. But that relies upon some incentive, along with those soft skills from managers, to activate discretionary effort from employees.

Lyndsey Denning: That really resonates with me and, in terms of our competency

framework, we've wrapped around a number of e-learning sources, so that people can self-learn. Gone are the days where you had a PDR, where you log in training requests and six months later, you might complete a course. We are trying to create a mindset that, if an employee identifies an L&D requirement, or a skills gap that needs filling, they can instantly access the material and the resources. But people need to be incentivised, to see the positives for themselves, the advantages they can unlock and where it will take them in the business.

Jo Tyler: Our ethos is "no barriers to entry, no limits to ambition", because we can recruit for behaviour and develop the skills for the job, plus we also offer "pay for progression", so as team members develop in roles, they earn more. We are also really proud of our Apprenticeship programme, which will support people to progress from an hourly-paid team member into a salaried role, whilst achieving a nationally recognised qualification. Our internal insights are showing us that, internally developed and promoted managers have higher performance metrics and stay longer than those we recruit externally. It's a great example of how doing the right things for your people is also right for the business, commercially and operationally.

Vanessa Lucas: In the Global Business Services function that I support, as an example, we are working to develop more skills around robotics and automation and provide specific learning around this. As a business, we have launched a new learning platform this year, which supports the online learning process and provides employees with the opportunity to pick programmes that meet their skill learning needs and career aspirations. We have also launched remote based international assignments, that enable opportunities without the need for relocation.

James Rule: Technology has moved along to a point now where it can intelligently serve up a piece of information that supports someone's learning experience. It's fascinating that Google answers

questions even as you're typing it, the intelligence and machine learning around is phenomenal and there now is the opportunity to bring this to people's experience of work. This means we can do more in terms of using technology in a much more intelligent way, to give people that content. However, in a world where change is fast and we want to achieve things quicker, we must create psychological safety for people to learn. There also has to be progression and mobility, taking people on a learning journey on which they will inevitably make mistakes, but have the confidence to know that it is part of the learning.

where we want to go as an organisation is based on the engagement, that will underpin the HR strategy and informs on what we need to do differently. Listening is our most important forum, in terms of unsolicited feedback.

Lyndsey Denning: Our biggest asset is our people - and I know most businesses say that - but we have no assets and so it literally is the individuals that work in the organisation that are valued most. Historically, we have been commercially-led - putting business needs first, with human resources conduit to achieving corporate objectives - but that's been

our business, we can never lose sight of what our customers want and so our people strategy has to be designed with our customers at the heart of everything that we do. On the subject of strategy longevity, raised by delegates today, there's a piece for me that plays through that, about making sure your strategy is absolutely underpinned by the values you hold as an organisation. It's been a tumultuous time, but if you can stand behind those values and they are wholeheartedly shared by your employees and are absolutely part of your DNA as an organisation, you can withstand any challenges that come along. There was no playbook for COVID, but to be able to go to those values stabilises and enables us to move forward and to take on whatever comes along.

"COMBINE BLENDED LEARNING WITH GUIDANCE AND MENTORING AND YOU HAVE A POWERFUL PLATFORM. WE NEGLECT THIS AT OUR PERIL AND A COMPETITIVE LEVEL OF INVESTMENT IS REQUIRED, TO REDUCE TURNOVER AND INCREASE ATTRACTION"

Kulan Kandasamy: Often, organisations have strong learning platforms with rich culture and rich content to motivate the learning, but focus just on plugging gaps, without considering people's aspirations. Now more than ever, that is a key requirement if we want to create a self-driven learning culture. When the learning portal and career framework is in unison, outcomes are inevitably more positive and sustained.

James Shipway: Indeed, one of the huge incentives to retaining people is to be really clear and transparent about where their skills, accrual of competencies and ongoing learning can take them in the business. Combine blended learning with guidance and mentoring and you have a powerful platform. We neglect this at our peril and a competitive level of investment is required, to reduce turnover and increase attraction.

HOW CAN YOU BUILD AN HR STRATEGY THAT IS ROBUST, BUT ALSO AGILE AND FLEXIBLE TO SUPPORT THE BUSINESS PLANS AND OBJECTIVES?

Ryan Cavanagh: For us, it's about understanding and listening to our people right across the business. A big part of

flipped and we focus on employee experience, to attract the best people, rewarding and recognising and supporting them to achieve the business strategy. There's also a change in mindset, in terms of how far ahead we set strategy and plans - we traditionally talked about a three-year plan - but we're more looking at short term, with agility, greater speed of decision making and pragmatism, so that we can react to change with fluidity and minimal disruption.

Vanessa Lucas: It has been said more than once today, but one of the key learnings from the pandemic has been communication and listening, which is essential to achieving a positive experience. That means listening to the workforce, listening to the business and aligning the two, to inform on the strategy that will be a fit for the changing work agenda.

Jo Tyler: Agreed, with so much change and ambiguity, you need to have confidence in your decision making and strategy and that relies upon the flow of data and information to flex situation change. The strategy may well remain the same, but you're prioritising different elements of it to suit the circumstances. Another key focus is, in hospitality and in

Nicole Ward: HR strategy has become more people-focused and that's great. However, it presents a difficult balancing act between wanting to meet every employee's aspiration and meeting the needs of the business. I would also say that the people strategy depends on manager and leadership abilities to have those conversations with people, but I find that managers aren't always equipped to do that. For many senior managers, effective people management is not a part of what they are trained for - they were hired for their skills in the role - and still, there is not much assessment given to their skillset in effectively managing a team of people. It's great to have people strategy that is noble, but to be effective, it hinges upon management and leadership communication and relationship. There are plenty of people change strategies with the premise of wanting to appease everything and everyone and personally, I don't know if that is necessarily going to work.

James Shipway: We need to make sure HR strategies are realistic, because if the mantra is "employees first", but the reality does not back the claims, the negative impacts are inevitable.

Kaylan Kandasamy: Every organisation should be treating their employees like their customers. It's the priority, because all employers are trying to do the same

thing - attract the best people to run a successful business - and with such shortages in available resources, none of this can be left to chance, it requires positive action.

IN THIS MUCH-CHANGED WORK LANDSCAPE, HOW CAN WE ENGAGE EMPLOYEES TO OPTIMISE OUTCOMES, MAINTAIN PERFORMANCE LEVELS AND MEET BUSINESS OBJECTIVES?

Jo Tyler: This is where we absolutely must go back to basics and, once again, it's about listening and I think this is where you need to take a multi-disciplined approach in terms of using surveys, to reach as many people as you can, as regularly as possible, ideally anonymised. In our business, we encourage our operators to lead a lot of the listening - we call it "operators listening to other operators" - so that it's not seen as something that is coming from the center, it's more seen as regular conversation, about how things can be improved. That for me is at the crux of how we can lift the lid and optimise that employee experience. I also think it's about really starting to dig through the data to identify those moments that matter. The employee experience is just so broad, I think you also have to be really targeted, so that you don't lose your way.

"HISTORICALLY, WE HAVE BEEN COMMERCIAL-LED - PUTTING BUSINESS NEEDS FIRST, WITH HUMAN RESOURCES CONDUIT TO ACHIEVING CORPORATE OBJECTIVES - BUT THAT'S BEEN FLIPPED AND WE FOCUS ON EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE, TO ATTRACT THE BEST PEOPLE"

James Rule: I couldn't agree more and there are so many perspectives to consider. Take someone moving from one company to another. It is a moment that matters, because there are the emotions involved in leaving the old, mixed with the apprehensions associated with joining the new. In most cases, they are looking forward to joining the new company and all goes well. But we need to be aware of the quality of someone's joining experience and we need to be direct and encourage candour: "So what was it like joining us? Where can it be improved?

Was it easy? Was it difficult?" This type of experiential information is crucial to our cultures, brands and operational outcomes and informs on change and improvement. In this hyper connected world, by default, people tell more people about their experiences and that is just one fundamental reason why these things are important.

Vanessa Lucas: So true and those manager/employee relationship are even more important with the massive increase in remote working. You don't tend to have those "in the moment" opportunities for a quick check-in, so managers need other ways of catching up with their teams.

Lyndsey Denning: Agreed, but there is the perception from leaders and managers that engagement is an HR initiative, which I believe impacts their understanding of relationship building, as well as their accountability. We need to shift the dial on this, because we are talking less about preordained and more official interactions and more ad-hoc, in-the-moment connectivity. There's no place for token gestures and routine check-ins, which lack individuality. In this new work era, it's absolutely in the gift of the manager to really take that to the next level, to increase awareness and

responsibility, to create moments that matter and create that psychological and emotional engagement.

Nicole Ward: Engagement is not an HR project to adopt. As a professional interim, one of the first things on day one is say "hello"... to everyone! I don't need to ask any personal information, I merely say, "hello, my name is Nicole and this is why I'm here". In one firm, it was what I call a "fish tank office", with all of the leaders and directors in aquarium-style areas on the same floor. There was no physical

separation from staff and management, but when I went up to one member of staff she said: "Nobody from management has ever come up and introduced themselves to me - you are a first!" It's not rocket science, often it can be a simple hello and if even that is missing - you have to wonder about the emotional intelligence within such an organisation. That's what I would have to say about engagement, it's so basic and doesn't always require a budget and strategy.

Ryan Cavanagh: The pandemic certainly brought home the importance of those simple personal human touches, that ability to have the small conversations that go a long way. As we look at the new era of work, there will be a rethink on engagement, reward and recognition and perhaps the building blocks are the basics. We need to have a more flexible and agile approach to engagement and realise that, more now than ever before, a one-size-fits-all is not going to cut it.

James Shipway: Employee engagement will inevitably change as the hybrid working framework takes shape and with it, the role of managers at all levels and leaders need to alter too. Many organisations expect managers to have that skillset, but as has been discussed today, that is not always the case. As businesses, we must support the development of those skills and competencies, because experience and technical knowhow does not cover it.

Kulan Kandasamy: I concur and reflect that the outstanding theme today has been the importance of listening to employees and that includes managers at all levels and leaders. They also have to be vocal, display role model values and be proactive and visible, in order to reach people in ways that surveys never can.

HOW IS YOUR EMPLOYEE WELLBEING STRATEGY BEING ADAPTED TO SUPPORT THE CHALLENGING ROAD AHEAD IN THE TRANSITION AND BEYOND?

Jo Tyler: We've upweighted our wellbeing strategy and activity, because we recognise it's been really important to our

employees and key has been enabling our line managers to support their teams. In a large organisation, that isn't always easy because wellbeing is personal to the individual. But creating regular and clear communication about the wellbeing support on offer has been a key focus, because we had a lot of support in place before the pandemic, but we probably didn't communicate it clearly enough and join it up into a package.

"PEOPLE GENERALLY DON'T WANT A WELLBEING INITIATIVE TO COMPENSATE FOR THE IMPACT THAT WORK IS HAVING ON THEM, THEY WANT YOU TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM THAT IS CAUSING THE HEALTH ISSUES, SUCH AS STRESS AND ANXIETY"

Vanessa Lucas: We were already on a path before we went into COVID and the pandemic meant we have moved things along more quickly. In the UK, we had developed a team of mental health first aiders - or mental health champions - and we're in the process of extending that globally. We also have the employee assistance programme, which is available for all employees and their families. In the Global Business Services environment, we dedicated the month of February to wellbeing and had various events that people could join from; webinars on a variety of topics to creative sessions like a paint-along. Also, we hold regular coffee break session for the leadership team, to chat about all kinds of non-work topics. We also have quizzes and other activities, giving people the opportunity to come together across the world and kick back for half an hour.

Lyndsey Denning: The difficulty around wellbeing is trying to provide something that is comprehensively relevant to all. Also, people generally don't want a wellbeing initiative to compensate for the impact that work is having on them, they want you to address the problem that is causing the health issues, such as stress and anxiety. There needs to be some separation between providing wellbeing as "a benefit". It needs to have a more rounded approach, so that people can be happy and healthy and the best they can be. We've spoken a lot about culture

today and as a company, we do like to think of ourselves as almost an extended family, personable, able to speak to and support each other. That's where I would suggest there is some crossover with the engagement piece, because it is about being personable, more individualistic.

James Rule: I agree and I also think it comes down to personal choice and balancing that with organisational need.

I like being able to work remotely, but I do miss the ability to just congregate, talk, have a broader perspective, collaborate and support each other. In terms of employee experience, the challenge is to hit the sweet spot, where the organisation can optimise performance and individuals are working how and when they want. I believe if you reach that point, then your plans and strategies are working well. COVID has been a terrible thing, but also an experiment in human experience and the impact on our working lives is going to be more than just the economic, it is changing societal behaviour and I think that impact is going to be sustained.

James Shipway: It's always been a challenge to measure wellbeing on a corporate level across the whole organisation, because the culture has, in general, been to keep quiet about issues that might be a sign of weakness and not being able to cope. Now - and certainly since the pandemic impacted - that has changed and I believe this will be an era of more openness and empathy.

Kulan Kandasamy: I concur and it's clear that wellbeing is directly related to sustainability and productivity and so ignoring it is counterproductive.

HOW CAN WE OPTIMISE THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE AND PROMOTE AND CAPITALISE ON THE MOMENTS THAT MATTER?

Jo Tyler: We need to measure the experience and overlay demographics that help us understand the moments that matter to different people at different stages of their career or life. We need to remain curious and be led by the data and then we'll know where action or investment is needed.

Lyndsey Denning: Throughout people's time with an employer, there needs to be those moments on a personal as well as on a professional level. Increasingly, there is no one-size-fits-all and the growing challenge is trying to find solutions that tick the boxes for the majority.

Nicole Ward: The employee experience starts from the moment a candidate interacts with you and it really comes down to the actions versus the talk. When the experience is bad, people remember and share more of their bad experiences than the good ones, if for nothing else than to warn other potential employees about their poor experiences. For those who remain in one job for long periods of time, it's about the moments that matter to them and management's awareness of that - to capitalise that good employee momentum - which contributes to the ongoing employee experience. Again, communication and feedback is key and you need to elicit some engagement, so that you know what moments might matter and not just rely on guesswork.

Kulan Kandasamy: There's no doubt, first impressions count. When I joined NTT Data, I received a personal, handwritten card from my manager, welcoming me to the team. I think that made me feel that I'd made a good career choice and, although it was a simple gesture, it felt very personal and had a profound effect on my general wellbeing.

James Shipway: It's the sort of personable human gesture in a world that is increasingly digital and automated. That said, technology holds an important place in keeping us all advised and informed about what is going right and wrong within the day-to-day operational processes. That's why it is important, why the experience is still fresh in mind, to ask

people through surveys, about their experiences, whether that be onboarding or a performance review. This is the best way to identify good and bad practice and provides the opportunity to make improvements where necessary. Automating this process of collecting timely data means that the very latest data informs in the moment.

HOW EFFECTIVE DO YOU THINK YOUR EMPLOYEE DATA CURRENTLY IS IN SUPPORTING AND ENHANCING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE AND DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE A SYSTEM TO CAPTURE ALL DATA IN ONE PLACE?

Jo Tyler: There's more we want to do, because understanding the relationship between customer experience and employee experience in an organisation like ours, presents some exciting prospects. However, we always need to be mindful about how we use and protect our employee data.

"THE CHALLENGE IS TO HIT THE SWEET SPOT, WHERE THE ORGANISATION CAN OPTIMISE PERFORMANCE AND INDIVIDUALS ARE WORKING HOW AND WHEN THEY WANT. I BELIEVE IF YOU REACH THAT POINT, THEN YOUR PLANS AND STRATEGIES ARE WORKING WELL"

Vanessa Lucas: It is work-in-progress for us and we have made some great steps forward in recent months. We review feedback on the HR service using tools such as NPS and a Voice of the Customer survey. This informs us where we may need to do deeper investigations and make improvements.

Lyndsey Denning: In the realms of employee data, we're all on a journey and I'm yet to speak to anybody that feels that they're fully established when it comes to employee data. We're starting to collate, have access to, manage and manipulate data. We are collecting data from different points, whether that be surveys, employee sentiment and just general feedback, through word of mouth. The next challenge for us is considering it in the context of employee experience, to identify issues, to predict where we might have some obstacles, address negatives

and capitalise on positives that we want to replicate. We're at a challenging, but potentially important stage.

Ryan Cavanagh: I would echo that sentiment, we're absolutely on a journey to how we can harness technology better. We have had disparate systems in the past that don't communicate well. But as we move towards a more cloud-based scenario, the tech is improving and it's making things easier and clearer. It means that we have data that is more available to us, in a way that it never has been before - touch of a button reporting - and so far so good. But we have some way to go to connect things up and it isn't going to happen overnight.

Kulan Kandasamy: Reassuringly, there aren't many organisations that say they have arrived at the end of their data journey. It will always be a veritable WIP, because new capabilities will always present themselves. Most companies

have strong HR processes, but they lack the cohesion in data to find the insights. But gaining momentum in data efficacy is the best way to continual improvement, as more decision makers in the organisation become data champions. The best advice is, harness what you currently generate and make the most of the technology you have, until you can make the case for more investment. Don't try to boil the ocean, start small and optimise what is available.

James Rule: My impression is that many organisations haven't invested in HR technology for some time. Those investments that have been made are typically platform or application level - such as, Workday, SuccessFactors - and there is generally low maturity on how you knit these together, to unleash the value held within the data. I believe the exciting area is, how we shape people's

experience of work - this would both be in making the human experience of work as effortless as possible - but also making it deeply personal to the individual. That builds a connection, which taps into the human condition, as long as it doesn't cross over into creepy probing. We do need to recognise that HR data is emotive. If we want people to trust, we need to be as transparent as we can.

Jo Tyler: It's interesting how we are facing common challenges despite being from different organisations. We're certainly expecting a lot from line managers in the future, so focusing on equipping them to support us will be critical.

Vanessa Lucas: I do take the view that HR is HR, even though the nuances of an industry or organisation change some of the elements of focus and priorities. I feel somewhat reassured that we seem to share similar experiences.

Ryan Cavanagh: Agreed and, in this new era of work, there are a great deal of unknowns and uncharted territory. But that points to exciting times, where we can innovate and make some really important changes that could make the future of work so much better than that of the past.

Nicole Ward: As leaders, it's our responsibility to lead and show that, although times are tough and we're not going to please all the people all the time, we are listening, we have learned and we're determined to build back better.

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I

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

THE DIGITAL ERA OPENED PEOPLE UP TO UNPRECEDENTED LOADS OF DATA, INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE, ACROSS ORGANISATIONS AND TURNED EMPLOYEES FROM SOLID STATE RECEIVERS TO ACTIVE CONTRIBUTORS. BUSINESSES MUST URGENTLY DEVELOP A CLEAR AND EFFECTIVE KM STRATEGY, WHICH CAN HANDLE THE CONTINUOUS, SUPERFLUIDITY OF DATA, ENABLES CROSS-COLLABORATION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING, BUT REMAINS SECURE TO THE RISING, EVER-PRESENT THREAT OF SABOTAGE. THE FUTURE OF KM MUST BE SUPPORTED BY A CULTURE THAT ENCOURAGES KNOWLEDGE SHARING.

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#HR #Polls | Does your organisation have a culture that encourages knowledge sharing?

Yes

66.7%

No

33.3%



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ARTICLE BY MOSTAFA SAYYADI - SENIOR MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT - THE CHANGE LEADER CONSULTING INC

REVOLUTION

TECHNOLOGY INCREASINGLY FACILITATES ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND IMPROVES THE SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE AND WHEN INTEGRAL TO OPERATIONS ACHIEVES INCREASED REVENUES, BETTER SATISFACTION FROM EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS AND MOST IMPORTANTLY ENHANCES LEADER EFFECTIVENESS.

Unquestionably, IT plays a critical role in integrating knowledge within companies. Leaders can also use information technology as communication mechanism manifestation and deployment and decision-aid technology. For example, communication technology provides the ways to enhance interactions among members and departments within a business. This type of technology eliminates the barriers of organisational communications, while improving the extent of knowledge sharing and access for all followers at various levels. Therefore, communication technology develops relationships - aggregates human capital into social capital - so as to provide further information and opportunities for all members and subsequently create valuable resources throughout an organisation. Furthermore, decision-aid technology develops cohesive infrastructures to store and retrieve information, enabling followers to create more innovative solutions to problems and managing operational risks. Ergo, information technology supports knowledge by enabling interactions and providing more comprehensive and effective solutions to solve problems.

Knowledge creation is highly dependent on developing organisational communications and interactions. Information technology overcomes space constraints in communication and promotes the depth and range of

information access and sharing within companies. More specifically, communication technologies can be employed to enhance the conversations and exchanges. Information shared through technology, it can positively

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contribute to knowledge management and sharing itself can develop more innovative climates and facilitate knowledge creation. So, communication technology is in itself an internal resource that develops and integrates organisational knowledge as the most strategic factor of competitiveness, informing on strategic and operational decision-making. As mentioned, decision-aid technology can also be considered a facilitator of the creation process, through providing the essential infrastructures to store and retrieve knowledge.

Information technology enhances learning and sharing, by providing access and stimulating new ideas and generation, transferring an individual's knowledge to other members and departments and improving capturing, storing and accumulating, aiming at achieving goals. KM has been a focal point of executive span of control, but has not been associated with information technology enough to make it an integral part of organisational success. However, IT is clearly a major factor for success and advances the current business literature, by offering novel insights into how information technology affects performance. Particularly, I feel that information technology enables KM and, without a grasp on these two tenets, executives are bound to fail. In addition, when knowledge management becomes increasingly valuable, information technology manifests as a catalyst to facilitate, transfer and simultaneously explores more innovative solutions to problems.

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ARTICLE BY ALAN MULLEN, PRODUCT OWNER - MHR

SYNCHRONISED SWIMMING

"CULTURE IS THE FINAL PIECE OF THE PUZZLE AND BUILDING AND PROMOTING A CULTURE OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING MAY REQUIRE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES WITHIN THE ORGANISATION'S VALUES"

With Statista finding that 306.4 billion emails were sent and received each day in 2020, there is an ocean of data and a constant wave of information hitting our collective shores. The digital era has been a race to find ways of capturing and disseminating information and knowledge, as a fundamental element of competitiveness, but many businesses have found out that the challenges associated with conventional operational working were multiplied by highly distributed workforces.

The repercussions of failing to ensure knowledge is easily accessible can be extremely costly and results in wasted time and resource. Consequently, with the amount of information generated within businesses showing no signs of slowing down, it is now a matter of urgency that organisations implement clear, effective and robust management strategies. There are two main types that emerge, tacit and explicit - the former being knowledge gained through experience - and the latter, information that can easily be codified and taught. Having undergone a paradigm switch from information to experience-based, KM is now also ideas-based. All three types are incredibly important for businesses to improve process efficiency,

enhance employee skills and drive revenue growth, with that importance growing every year. With numerous advancements, hybrid working models and a shift in approach, KM is continuously evolving, harnessing the tools that are at our disposal today, while utilising emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and hyper-automation. This shapes a future where information is within easy reach to all and seamlessly integrated, while leveraging a social aspect of learning to facilitate huge growth.

KM strategies are more than just training and development initiatives or for onboarding new starters. Particularly with the increasingly popular hybrid and remote working models, these strategies

must ensure sharing first and foremost, closely accompanied by cross-collaboration throughout all departments and teams. To ensure the efficacy of these strategies, they must be underpinned by technology. That way businesses will be able to securely collate and share the full spectrum of information and assets they have with all relevant parties. Whether working in the office or remotely, employers should facilitate on-demand access to information to all employees, so that they can remain engaged at all times. Long gone are the days where employees would be happy to wait until they are granted permissions to a shared folder. Effective knowledge management strategies are, however, not just about accessibility. They should encapsulate

how businesses identify, capture, evaluate and retrieve information assets too - including everything from database, documents, policies and procedures - and not forgetting the expertise and experience of workers. Sometimes, even happy employees move on as they reach a point in their career that requires a change. Therefore, an effective KM strategy prevents a loss of knowledge and makes knowledge transfer easy. Bringing together people, processes, technology, structure and culture, businesses can successfully implement strategies. Culture is the final piece of the puzzle and building and promoting a culture of sharing may require significant changes within the organisation's values.

It is a common misconception that knowledge management should only be the responsibility of an HR practitioner or L&D manager. Certainly, HR departments can lead the charge in implementing effective strategies and the tools that will give the strongest foundation for success. However, everyone working in an organisation should and is responsible for sharing ideas and experiences to solve problems and drive the business forward. Nonetheless, what companies need is a custodian, who will coordinate the chosen KM approach and guard the solutions. Although knowledge is power, too much can actually weaken organisations. That is because information can be contradictory, missing or outdated, leading to confusion amongst employees and more problems than solutions. Therefore, a manager should take the role of identifying and safeguarding the single source of the truth, to ease frustrations and encourage widespread use of the company's knowledge base. Rapid technological advancements have compelled management to mature from a static activity of documenting information, to dynamic AI-powered platforms that help organisations act on data more effectively than ever before. These self-service platforms help form a central repository that puts an end to siloed information in multiple places, allowing employees to obtain answers as and when they need.

With no more delayed responses, wrong files and out-of-date information, workers can gain confidence that what they are learning is true and accurate. At the same time, if they spot inconsistencies, they will feel empowered to proactively push the right information to the right person, acting as the guardian of the company's knowledge management strategy.

Scalability should be high on the list of requirements to future-proof the business and allow it to grow and adapt to the changing needs over time. The solution should go beyond the standard internal database as the aspect of social

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learning is incremental to the effectiveness of any knowledge management strategy today. By facilitating greater internal communication through the implemented platform, employees can be better informed and more productive. In addition, the tools have to offer high levels of security, as more sophisticated data breaches pose a threat to critical assets every day. A culture of sharing and a long-term approach, can also make businesses more attractive to new recruits as they can see they are forward-thinking with a clear plan and a direction for the future. Candidates value organisations where knowledge is cherished and celebrated as they can leverage it to the greatest possible benefit and become better professionals. Tapping into the synergies that exist among all their colleagues, they form a more creative, collaborative and supportive work environment, which is

highly sought and valued today. Not only does it allure the best talent, but it also helps retain it. With knowledge within easy reach, employees are set up for success, leading to their higher satisfaction and engagement. They can solve problems easier as they are clearly documented and they are empowered to share their own ideas and experiences with the team, making them feel respected and valuable and the business more innovative and attractive to customers.

Modern-day platforms can streamline knowledge management processes, allowing employees to search and find the materials they require. Not only does that relieve HR staff of answering the same questions over and over again, but also speeds up decision-making and problem-solving. This enables workers to be more efficient and keep pace with changes in a rapidly evolving landscape and businesses have a competitive advantage, as they become more agile and responsive to changing customer needs and expectations. Agility is crucial in today's post-pandemic world for businesses to recover and thrive in the future. As organisations search to develop and rethink their knowledge management strategies, they should implement solutions that will help them achieve their goals and embrace the benefits. AI-powered platforms not only improve the quality and ability to collaborate, but also facilitate access to expertise and leading practices to enhance business decisions. With an effective strategy and tools in place, businesses can make accurate information flow, reaping the benefits of a more productive and supportive workforce. After all, an investment in knowledge pays the best interest.

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THE WOOD FOR THE TREES

It's true that the continual leaps in technology over the past 40 years has utterly transformed the way in which information is generated, stored, made available and shared. Data and information were once expensive commodities to produce and, when turned into knowledge, heavily protected by those companies whose bottom line depended on it, government agencies whose decisions on how people lived their lives were driven by it and academic institutions and research companies, whose reputations were made by it.

"IT ISN'T ABOUT THE DATA OR EVEN THE INFORMATION
DERIVED FROM THE DATA. IT'S ABOUT CAPABILITY, INFRASTRUCTURE,
PURPOSE AND PROTECTION"



ARTICLE BY DAVID WILDE, OWNER & MANAGING DIRECTOR -
DWILDE CONSULTING LTD

Wisdom is the pinnacle reached through data, information and knowledge, but knowledge is also power and the two don't always go together. It is also true that it is not created just by building data lakes and information portals. The Knowledge Economy is a term used often and by many, but what does this really mean? The World Bank's definition of this is refreshingly short and to the point. The four pillars are, an educated and skilled population to create, share and use knowledge. A dynamic information infrastructure, ranging from radio to the internet, to facilitate the effective communication, dissemination and processing of information. A regulatory and economic environment that enables the free flow, supports investment in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and encourages entrepreneurship is central. A network of research centers, universities, think tanks, private enterprises and community groups, to tap into the growing stock of global knowledge, assimilate and adapt it to local needs. So it isn't about the data or even the information derived from the data. It's about capability, infrastructure, purpose and protection.

First, let us take capability; businesses operating in a knowledge economy are faced with several challenges and opportunities. The challenges are around protection of information in a world of cloud computing, where storage is virtual and transmission is instant and large scale. Here, cybersecurity and the ability to track data in transit, are the cornerstones of protecting and maintaining integrity, but there are also major challenges with skills. Technology skillsets require constant updating as the tech evolves and completely reinvents itself every couple of years. Therefore, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) must be at the centre of all workforce development plans in the digital age. With infrastructure, the world has moved from millions of islands of technology isolation to a virtualised ecosystem of global platforms, linked together by immense data highways which reach into virtually every home in many parts of the world. This means workforces really can work anytime,

anywhere and increasingly anyhow, just look at the developments in virtual reality. Organisations today are reconciling themselves to the office becoming a transient part of the machine - somewhere to collaborate with others - and not always within the company. A building is certainly not the bastion of knowledge it used to be, indeed the new office is - like data, information and knowledge - virtual for at least some of the time. As such, the concept of omni-

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DEVELOPMENT"

channel availability is the workspace of today, spanning virtual and real environments and no longer bound by being in one place. Lastly, innovation systems are perhaps the greatest game changer in the knowledge economy and perhaps best demonstrated in the last 18 months by the global response to creating and distributing vaccines to tackle COVID-19. The sharing of knowledge to solve common problems, using the power of modern technology to achieve results at pace and without the constraints of geography or timezones, enables organisations to create new knowledge in weeks, where before it could take years. But with this comes the challenges of IP protection, definitions of ownership and accountability when many organisations are involved, probably with many governments too.

Businesses today need to ensure they have a clear understanding of their information assets and how they are looking after them. Aligned to that is an equally clear understanding of what KM

is and what the strategy is for deriving and using it. Fishing in data lakes to "see what we can find" just isn't legal. Purposeful and defined data analysis for the creation of knowledge to answer the questions that need addressing, is the way to go. So, for businesses looking to ride the wave of the knowledge economy, there are a few "must do's" to support success: At all levels, absolute clarity on the rules about data, information and knowledge is required, surrounding ownership, treatment, sharing, access, disposal and retention. Any shortcuts or mistakes here and the consequences are severe. CPD must be supported and ongoing learning and curiosity encourages. An enquiring workforce will ask questions around which new knowledge will be created. So it isn't about the data or even the information derived from the data. It's about capability, infrastructure, purpose and protection. Ensure the technology being used across the organisation is secure and always protected and that anything or anyone it connects to is the same. Flexible workspaces, virtual and physical, are a reality so embrace them and ensure the workforce can operate in an omni-channel world where they can use the tools of preference to deliver. Invest in research and development capacity and encourage the whole organisation to take part. Rarefied research environments, tucked away out of sight, are a thing of the past. They need to be part of the active business to engage and inform development. Knowledge management has never been about the data or the information, it has always been about how best they can be used to answer those challenging questions for society, create new business opportunities, develop new solutions for problems old and new and to bring wisdom to how best to progress in our chosen fields.

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II

DECISION SCIENCE

WHERE IT WAS ACTIVELY ENGAGED, HR EBHR AND DECISION SCIENCE BECAME A BEACON ACROSS BROILING SEAS OF DISRUPTION AND UNCERTAINTY. AFTER YEARS OF PROCRASTINATION AND FRUSTRATION, HR HAS FOUND THE CAPABILITY THAT HAD EVADED IT. CALLING UPON REAL-TIME PULSES AND IMPERATIVE INSIGHT INTO THE STATUS OF AN ISOLATED AND BELEAGUERED WORKFORCE, FOR THOSE THAT ENGAGED DURING THE PANDEMIC, DS BECAME A SEISMOGRAPH, WHILE ANALYTICS ADVISED ON CONSEQUENTIAL AND RECURRING DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES.

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#HR #Polls | Do you think that your
HR department uses decision science
effectively?

Yes

22.2%

No

77.8%



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ARTICLE BY NATALIE CRAMP, CEO - PROFUSION

FLESH, BLOOD & NUMBERS

WHEREVER YOU SIT IN THE DEBATE, THERE IS NO ESCAPING THAT THE HUMAN CONDITION IS INCREDIBLY COMPLICATED. THEREFORE, IT STANDS TO REASON THAT WHEN WE DISCUSS USING DATA SCIENCE IN HR, THERE IS PLENTY OF PASSIONATE DISCOURSE ON HOW BIG A ROLE IT SHOULD PLAY IN DECISION MAKING. CAN DATA REALLY LIFT THE LID ON WHAT MAKES HUMANS TICK AND THROW LIGHT ON THEIR POTENTIAL PERFORMANCE, POTENTIAL AND IMPACT?

One of the most obvious areas of debate is just how influential data should be on decision making. Some may argue that when it comes to promotion or personal development, an algorithm would be a poor substitute for experience and intuition. Although, what is experience other than years of information collected by an individual and 'analysed' in a way that will let them recognise and respond well to similar situations? Such a position also ignores the fact that data science capability goes far beyond measuring simple productivity stats - it can take into account a huge range of sources from the structured to the unstructured - such as behaviour on a video call meeting. Then again, to gain enough data points, does that not mean workers will be under an unprecedented level of monitoring? Perhaps privacy issues matter less, if it is an algorithm crunching numbers, rather than a nosy boss keeping tabs?

Advocates of data science in HR argue that it is inherently fairer. Rather than leaving decisions up to the personal whims or potential human error of an HR rep or line manager, give the power to a dispassionate machine. This argument is particularly powerful when it comes to finding ways to improve diversity and inclusion within an organisation. The problem is, thinking about human or data based decision making in HR as a binary choice, can

lead to the worst of both worlds. Amazon saw how an unchecked recruitment algorithm, designed to eliminate the gender gap actually, ended up perpetuating it. The answer is to keep the 'human' in HR, data science is a

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powerful enhancement, but it is not a replacement. Although it has the capacity to make decision making fairer, more transparent and tackle systemic problems such as discrimination, it will not work properly if it is left to its own devices. Amazon's problem could have been avoided if there was closer monitoring and scrutiny of how its algorithm actually impacted the wider business in practice. Ideally, HR and data science should work hand-in hand, with both parties collaborating in the collection of data,

how algorithms are designed, how they are refined and, critically, how the outputs are interpreted to make decisions.

For this to work, an HR professional must upskill and educate themselves on the basics of data analysis to be able to properly understand its benefits and limitations and to be empowered to scrutinise how it functions in a business. Data scientists will be better able to design and build new HR solutions if they fully understand the needs of HR and a company's employees. This way, neither party is beholden and a system of checks and balances can be developed that maximise its benefits and minimise its risks. The final piece of the puzzle is communicating with the wider business. Data science-driven HR is only fairer if it is a transparent process that everyone understands. This may require company-wide education on data science to demystify the whole process. The benefit is that it will empower people to challenge decisions they feel are unfair. Planning and starting small can help the transition avoid the risks of employees feeling they are being reduced to numbers, with HR professionals being sidelined and algorithms running amok.

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ARTICLE BY ALISON ETTRIDGE, CEO - TALENT INTUITION

A MATTER OF FACT

"NOW IS THE TIME TO CAPITALISE ON THE HEADWAY THAT ANALYTICS MADE DURING THE CRISIS, TO MOVE AWAY FROM A MINDSET OF USING DATA TO AFFIRM AN ASSUMPTION, TOWARDS ONE WHERE DATA PROACTIVELY SUPPORTS DECISION-MAKING"

Evidence-based HR practices are no longer constrained to internal or historical data. Combining internal data with external talent intelligence has enabled HR decision-science to become future focused, big picture and benchmarked against competitor activity. Using newer and more powerful analytics, HR can uniquely bring a holistic talent perspective to business decision-making.

Industry guru Dave Ulrich warned earlier this year that HR needs to wise up to the potential and drawbacks of evidence-based HR. Delving a bit deeper into his advice, he suggests that HR needs to look forward and not backward, to attend to patterns rather than events and to use information to make knowledge productive. Critically, he challenges HR Directors to ask themselves, 'what do I uniquely bring to a business discussion to help deliver results that matter?' This is the crux of decision science and evidence-based HR and the answer to this question is the one that will ensure HR is not only at the table, but that it's a first port of call for strategic decision making. Although HR has made advances in terms of people

analytics, there are still too many instances of the practice only being able to present part of the picture, looking at individuals rather than trends, looking internally without a lens on the external market and looking at specific events, rather than patterns in the data.

While many companies now have a mature internal people analytics team, increasingly more are starting to bring in talent intelligence - which we can view as external people analytics - inhouse, as bigger and better data becomes widely accessible. When the two teams of people analytics and talent intelligence work together to combine internal and external data-driven insights, the data is incredibly powerful. Plus, it's more relevant and

more necessary than ever in the post-pandemic world, where working patterns and locations are in constant flux. The critical role of steering people strategy has never been in more evidence than over the last 22 months and HR is in the limelight like never before and, as we rebound from the pandemic, people are at the forefront of the rebuild. So, in an increasingly data-led era, how can data guide future talent strategy, without having to become an expert in every application of internal and external data analytics? A healthy relationship with data is one that enables HR leaders to inform the board about the latest trends, keep an eye on competitor talent strategy, build a compelling EVP, enable the

business to attract diverse talent and future skills and centrally, answer the questions that only HR can answer.

During the pandemic, many businesses surprised themselves, by their capacity to turn things round in days, that before would have taken months. For them, this is an awakening of potential. The fact is, people don't ask the right questions of the data, they look at data to provide evidence of what they think they already know. Although the pandemic was in some ways an epiphany for data analytics, in order to maintain the head of steam, HR needs to take a more thoughtful and sophisticated approach to data. Now is the time to capitalise on the headway that analytics made during the crisis, to move away from a mindset of using data to affirm an assumption, towards one where data proactively supports decision-making. Those teams and organisations that are thriving have won trust through accurate, credible, accessible data that can be used to answer questions at tactical and strategic levels. Moving towards data-led decision making requires investment in technology and building the business case for a talent intelligence team is a challenge for many who struggle to demonstrate value from the outset. To start with a broad answer to how this can be achieved, illuminating the answers to these three questions is a key aspect of highlighting the strategic value of data: What are the big challenges your organisation is facing? Who needs to be involved and what data do you need to answer those questions? Importantly too, what are the pain points for your stakeholders?

Once these questions have been well researched and answered, try splitting the challenges into tactics that can be addressed by data at three levels; battlefield, tactical and strategic. Turning focus on stakeholders pain points, at the strategic level, they will likely cover areas such as, a lack of skills availability, real estate optimisation, diversity and workforce composition. At a tactical and battlefield level, this might translate into time and cost to hire and employer

value proposition. Once the business case is built, it's essential to translate stakeholder requirements into key performance indicators (KPIs) for the team. One of the most important questions is, how do you know whether the team is successful? How can you prove that investing in the tools that make data-evidenced HR possible are saving the business money, making the business money and mitigating risks? The success of the team cannot be measured by tactical and battlefield level KPIs alone, KPIs must be strategic and linked to business decision making. By setting strategic and focused KPIs, you can

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demonstrate how the team is achieving, avert the cost of poor decisions, reduce consultancy spend and accelerate the speed at which the business can access insight. As examples, these might include cost avoidance, such as hiring an external specialist versus the cost of the internal team, repeat business from customers, decreased time to hire, decreased cost to hire and increased quality of hire. They can also include project-related metrics such as; maintaining project over run at less than five percent or team utilisation at over 85 percent.

Once the team is delivering on its KPIs, the next big consideration is how to demonstrate ROI to the business.

You know your team is delivering value, but it's hard to prove the value of not doing something. If a team is saving the business the cost of poor decision making, how can you demonstrate it? Again, the ROI of an HR analytics team sits at three levels: Battlefield, for example attrition rates, retention rates, competitor moves; Tactical, for example growth rates, the cost of unfilled roles and time to fill roles and Strategic; understanding the skills you are hiring for compared to your competitors. ROI at the strategic level can also include scenario modelling to measure the cost of not acting on intelligence, or the cost implications of the wrong decision, including lost market share, decreased revenue and increased competitor advantage, to name but a few. Joining the dots between challenges, stakeholders and data at all three levels is the first step to building the business case for investing in data-based decision-making. From tactical measurements such as attrition rates, or losing talent to competitors, or strategic measures such as lost market share or risks mitigated, there is indeed a strong argument to be made that data has the potential to help organisations see the whole picture when it comes to talent.

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SYMBIOSIS

AUTOMATED DECISION MAKING, INSTEAD OF HUMAN INSIGHT, APPEARS TO BE THE NEW SHINY THING CATCHING THE ATTENTION. BUT NOT ALL IS AS IT SEEMS AND SOME OPINE THAT DATA BASED AUTOMATION IS AN INCOMPLETE APPROACH TO DECISION-MAKING IN BUSINESS. SO CAN AUTOMATION BE RELIED UPON TO MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICES, OVER-RULING HUMAN GUT FEEL AND INTUITION? OR IS THERE A SYMBIOTIC BALANCE THAT NEEDS TO BE STRUCK?

ARTICLE BY KIRAN PASHAM, CHIEF ARCHITECT, CO-FOUNDER & PRESIDENT - SPLASHBI

As businesses embed their data in the cloud, improve scalability, improve data infrastructure and generate high-impact insights, they are investing heavily. When applied to the strategy of insurers, these investments are valuable, but there are a number of potential pitfalls, firstly, data changes constantly and is not one hundred percent accurate. Therefore, it should not be leveraged as the final say and that means that teams should rely on the data to influence them, not lean on it solely. The emerging picture is that data cannot replace the human element of industry expertise or experience and that human experience is reliant on how to approach things in a humane way, rather than a robotic one.

So, does it come down to digital versus human, or is there symbiosis in this unnatural alliance? Automated decision-making may have the upper hand on traditional, gut feel, but there is a neutrality between them, which comes from having a process that starts with all relevant, real-time data and ends with understanding the full scope of the options, relying on a combination of experience and data to make a choice. Businesses looking to increase return on capital, decrease expenses and engage employees, should consider that all of these objectives are attainable with the right information. As data plays a more significant role, human perspective is needed for reliability, because there are too many variables impacting employees for it not to be incorporated as thoroughly as possible, especially when businesses have access to tools and platforms that enable it.

Data is pivotal within a business, but when action is required, particularly when it impacts employees, the leadership in the room matters. Their expertise and experience with customers,

partners, competitors and the market, matters and it should ultimately impact, regardless of the automated insights and scenarios new technologies can provide. It is crucial to put clear, useful data into the hands of decision-makers, who typically only receive brief summaries or recommendations. These individuals should have the tools and experience to understand the impact of different outcomes, as well as tools to monitor those outcomes, in order to adjust and refine the process moving forward.

To find the balance, businesses should start by identifying gaps in their decision making process and looking for opportunities and tools to fill them. This is an important first step in understanding how to leverage both data analytics and human expertise to help guide in a balanced way. Building in additional time to examine different scenarios and their potential consequences, is another important step to refining assumptions and understanding the impacts data can have. While it is not an easy process to undertake overall, these steps can ultimately help businesses transition toward a scientific approach, which allows businesses to leverage human expertise and data and to treat the process like a science. Doing this not only gives businesses a better understanding of how different decisions perform and supports them in solving problems, without the headache that many traditional approaches involve. Automating a process without sacrificing the human element is one of the biggest benefits. Rather than dictating choices for decision-makers, a DS approach can help make sure that the final decision is the right one.

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III

MODERN SLAVERY

STATUES OF THE ONCE LAUDED ARE BEING
WRENCHED DOWN FROM THEIR PLINTHS,
BECAUSE THEIR FAME - NOW INFAMY - WAS
BUILT UPON THE WHIP-SCARRED BACKS OF
PEOPLE, TORN FROM THEIR COUNTRIES OF
ORIGIN AND FORCED TO WORK AS SLAVES.
THOSE FALLEN EFFIGIES REPRESENT A PAST
THAT CANNOT BE FORGIVEN, BUT SLAVERY
IS A CONTEMPORARY PROBLEM AND IT'S
A GROWING CONCERN. IT IS AS INSIDIOUS,
LEACHING, DEPRAVED AND GREED-DRIVEN
NOW AS IT WAS WHEN ABRAHAM LINCOLN
DECLARED: "IF SLAVERY IS NOT WRONG,
NOTHING IS WRONG.

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#HR #Polls | Have you ever been concerned
that a third-party supplier that your
organisation works with could be involved
in modern slavery?

Yes

75%

No

25%



*If you have an opinion on any of the articles
featured in this section, please share it by going to this link
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ARTICLE BY TIM OGDON, HEAD OF PARTNERSHIP OPERATIONS - HOPE FOR JUSTICE

CHAINS

AN ESTIMATED 100,000 PEOPLE IN THE UK TODAY SUFFER THE CONDITIONS OF MODERN SLAVERY. EXPLOITED AND CONTROLLED, LIVING AND WORKING IN ATROCIOUS CONDITIONS, STRIPPED OF SELF-WORTH AND THE RIGHT TO MAKE THEIR OWN CHOICES. THE REALITY OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND FORCED LABOUR IN SUPPLY CHAINS IS CLOSER THAN MOST WOULD THINK.

Suppliers whose costs are abnormally low, might be able to offer such 'competitive' pricing because they or their own suppliers - wittingly or unwittingly - are benefitting from exploitation or forced labour, whether in the UK or abroad. Many departments have a part to play in ensuring slave-free operations and supply chains. HR is one of the absolutely critical roles and has more responsibility than most. A good anti-slavery strategy must be championed at board level, with HR often tasked with assembling internal teams to implement and monitor the associated policies.

Structured and tailored training should be considered for the entire workforce. This could mean 'spotting the signs' training for site-level, factory floor or frontline staff, managing risk and escalation for supervisors and managers, knowing how to ask appropriate questions to uncover indicators of modern slavery for HR and line managers conducting one-to-one sessions or wellbeing meetings - it is also important to dive deeper into disciplinary issues if other indicators of modern slavery exist - could the issue be linked to abuse, exploitation or a living environment consistent with a human trafficking situation? Beyond that, refresher training is essential, as is a methodology to evaluate delivery and comprehension, even quizzes on the subject can keep awareness top of mind. Collaborative

working groups too can introduce fresh ideas and help to cascade processes and policies to ensure they become 'lived' and common practice. Organisations must be ready in case something is found

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and this means having grievance mechanisms and effective processes around escalation and remediation and being prepared to take action based on the lessons learned. HR should have a role in developing these, alongside senior management, compliance, legal and operations, or equivalent functions. As with any initiative, this all needs to be budgeted for, protecting against modern slavery is not free, but the costs of

leaving an organisation exposed could be many times higher.

It is important to understand that victims of modern slavery will rarely see themselves as such or ask directly for help. The methods of control they are subjected to are insidious and highly manipulative, so don't make assumptions about the people in your supply chains. Some victims may look mistreated or malnourished, but not all and others will be kept in line through threats and intimidation and be far too scared to seek help. Many of the UK modern slavery cases involve a recruitment agency at some point and this includes the country's biggest-ever modern slavery investigation and prosecution, in which firms in a wide variety of sectors were found to have inadequate or insufficient processes in place. Supermarkets, manufacturers, banks, waste and recycling companies, recruiters, logistics specialists and others were mentioned in court, in relation to an estimated 400 people being subjected to modern slavery in the West Midlands.

That is why just having internal standards and policies is not enough. All suppliers and procurement partners must be brought into the conversation and encouraged to implement their own consistent standards, even those who are smaller-scale or are less aware of the issue, or believe themselves low-risk.

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ARTICLE BY BARRY STANTON, EMPLOYMENT PARTNER - BOYES TURNER

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

"HAVING A ROBUST RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS TO UNDERSTAND THE
AREAS AT MOST RISK OF ABUSE IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN IS ESSENTIAL.
ENSURING THAT SUPPLIERS ARE COMPLYING WITH THEIR LEGAL, FINANCIAL
AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IS A GOOD STARTING POINT"

Modern slavery is often described as an 'unseen crime' because it can be hard to spot. Many of us will have unwittingly come into contact with victims 'working' in takeaways, hotels, carwashes and nail bars. The exploitation will be happening in many supply chains and there is a moral imperative for businesses to look into these issues. This is a pressing issue, but it is not a simple task. As a starting point, it is important to think about what modern slavery is.

The Metropolitan Police describes modern slavery as "the illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain." Modern slavery takes many forms including; sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour and criminal exploitation. Control can be physical, financial or psychological. Forced labour, where victims are forced to work against their will, can happen in many sectors. Victims often work long hours in unpleasant conditions for little or no pay due to the threat of violence against them or their families. Victims may also be controlled by debt bondage, where they are forced to work to pay off a debt. Modern slavery victims can be any gender, race or age and the Modern

Slavery Helpline points out, that although victims come from across the population, modern slavery is more prevalent amongst the most vulnerable, minority or socially excluded groups.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics show an increase in victims of modern slavery in the UK. There were 5,144 modern slavery offences recorded by the police in England and Wales in the year ending March 2019, an increase of 51 percent from the previous year. The number of potential victims referred through the UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM) increased by 36 percent to 6,985 in the year ending December 2018. The Modern Slavery Helpline received a 68 percent increase in

calls and submissions in the year ending December 2018, compared with the previous year. Greater awareness of modern slavery along with more reporting and improvements in police recording, are likely to have contributed to this increase, since the introduction of the Modern Slavery Acts across the UK in 2015, but it is clear to see this is a growing issue. Spotting the signs of modern slavery is difficult, because it often requires concerted effort over time. Signs can include people being under the control of others and being reluctant to interact, having few personal possessions and wearing the same clothes. Other signs include people lacking personal identification, always being dropped

off and collected in the same way and living on site in overcrowded, poor quality accommodation.

Mitigating against modern slavery requires an extensive and ongoing due diligence. Businesses must examine their supply chains, ideally by sending people in person to meet with suppliers. Having a robust risk assessment process to understand the areas at most risk of abuse in the supply chain is essential. Ensuring that suppliers are complying with their legal, financial and social obligations is a good starting point and there are other steps that employers can take in the UK, to verify the strength of their supply chains. This includes amending contracts to require suppliers to comply with specific modern slavery obligations, ensuring these obligations cascade through supply chain contracts and monitoring compliance. Terminating or suspending contracts where there are breaches is a powerful and necessary message to send to suppliers. In complex and high-risk supply chains, it may be worthwhile seeking external, specialist support to carry out assessments.

Not surprisingly, the pandemic has created more risks of modern slavery, particularly in high demand sectors that have had to recruit quickly. The pressures in some areas may mean that recruiters and agencies have not followed stringent checks and processes. In light of this, when reviewing the supply chain, it is important to spot suppliers where there is a significant increase in recruitment of temporary labour and, in such cases, exercise extra due diligence. In all circumstances, if anything is found that is of concern, action must take place. The longer and more complicated a supply chain the greater the risk as margins come under greater pressure. Having risk assessed and acted on the assessment, it is imperative that there are periodic reviews of the assessment to ensure that it remains valid. Questions to consider include, are suppliers following through on their commitments? Are there effective grievance mechanisms in place? In some instances, auditing and monitoring on the ground, by visiting

suppliers and meeting their workforce, will be prudent. How frequently specific areas will need to be reviewed will depend on the business sector and the level of risk identified. Staff training is also an important way to mitigate against modern slavery by generating awareness across your organisation of the issue and how to spot the signs.

Where risks are identified, it is important to work with suppliers to mitigate those risks and ensure that the risk does not develop into a problem. There needs to be time bound commitments and clear milestones to be achieved and, if there are weak

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areas identified in management systems, they should be considered and remedied. It is important that when considering risk, an holistic approach is taken and undue reliance is not placed upon a single magic bullet that will prevent modern slavery. The whole engagement process needs to be considered. Larger businesses - with a turnover of more than £36 million - have an obligation to publish a Modern Slavery Act statement each year, to report on the steps they are taking to eliminate modern slavery. However, all businesses cannot afford to ignore the issue, as consumers become increasingly aware.

Looking to the future, it is clear that we can expect further Government

action. In 2019 the Government commenced a consultation on reform to the Modern Slavery Act regime and it published its response to that consultation in September 2020. It commits the Government to "an ambitious package of measures to strengthen and future proof the Modern Slavery Act's transparency legislation." This includes requiring Modern Slavery Act statements to cover mandatory areas and will be, as a minimum, the current voluntary areas. The Government will consider how additional topics may be included and it said that it will publish guidance to highlight the importance of transparency, risk-based action and industry level challenges and best practice approaches to reporting. There will be a requirement to publish on a Government portal and there will be a single reporting deadline (30 September). Reporting will be over a defined period (1 April - 31 March). Modern Slavery Act statements will have to include the date of approval by the board and be signed off by a director. For groups, the Modern Slavery Act statements will have to name the entities covered by the Statement. Public Bodies will also be required to report on Modern Slavery. The Government has also indicated that it will consider enforcement options further. The criminals behind modern slavery and human trafficking networks are quick to adapt and exploit the most vulnerable. As such, it is not enough to prepare a modern slavery report once a year and leave it in a drawer. Businesses need to continue to look out for the signs of modern slavery in their supply chains and take action. This issue will not go away soon, but companies can play a key role in helping to tackle it.

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STATUTE OF LIBERTY

Modern slavery is a pernicious and ubiquitous threat up and down the supply chain. There are some countries and industries where the risk of modern slavery is particularly high, but this is a globally collective problem. Several countries, including the UK, have introduced legislation designed to incentivise organisations, to take the threat of modern slavery seriously and introduce steps to avoid it happening in their supply chains. Yet the recent scandal surrounding boohoo's UK supply chain, highlighted many salient points.

"THERE IS NO SILVER BULLET FOR MODERN SLAVERY AND THE MULTIPLICITY OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE THREAT NEED TO BE TACKLED BY A MULTIPLICITY OF RESPONSES, WITH ALL KEY ACTORS WORKING TOGETHER"



ARTICLE BY MARK STEVENSON, PROFESSOR OF OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT -
LANCASTER UNIVERSITY UK

Whether purposely or inadvertently, the penalties and ongoing damage of being caught up in modern slavery cannot be underestimated. There is no silver bullet for modern slavery and the multiplicity of socio-economic issues that contribute to the threat need to be tackled by a multiplicity of responses, with all key actors working together. It's a very human issue in which people are the perpetrators and victims and only people can bring an end to it, by contributing to the detection of indicators of modern slavery, dealing with the threat through remediation and ensuring a company's own practices do not exacerbate the problem. UK modern slavery legislation is concerned with an organisation's entire supply chain, but a firm only has limited human resources to invest in detection and remediation. Therefore, it needs to determine how best to deploy these assets to protect, not only its own workers, but also those of its supply chain partners. One way of doing this in the short-term is to target the low-hanging fruit. For example, an organisation can seek to focus its detection efforts on the most high-risk nodes in its supply chain, informed by supply chain intelligence and modern slavery risk indices. Intelligence gathering can be aided by collaborating horizontally with competitors, who may share the same supply base. It is also important to collaborate vertically, for example, by training first-tier suppliers in how to spot modern slavery so that they supplement the human resource base and become a firm's eyes and ears at the second-tier suppliers. Investigating whistleblowing data from workers with lived experiences of modern slavery practices, is a compelling body of evidence.

Modern slavery has been linked to the use of some third-party recruitment agencies and so increased scrutiny of a recruitment agent's policies and procedures is prudent, to mitigate the threat of modern slavery. Meanwhile, where recruitment fees are charged, a dialogue could be opened up with the agent, to determine how these can be removed. As they are unfamiliar with the local market and regulations, migrant workers in particular, often use recruitment agents to gain employment,

paying a fee in exchange for the agent's expertise. If a worker does not have the means to pay this fee upfront, they can end up in debt bondage, either to an unscrupulous recruitment agent or a loan shark, until the debt is repaid. This can make them extremely vulnerable to modern slavery. Furthermore, recruitment practices and third-party intermediaries often fall outside the remit of a standard social audit that an organisation might conduct on its supply chain partners. Audits could therefore be extended to detect illegal HR recruitment practices

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and to scrutinise suppliers' employee records. For example, multiple workers having the same address or bank account details, may be a sign of people trafficking and bonded labour. This resource-intensive approach, however, is difficult to scale up to the size and complexity of many contemporary supply chains, meaning it either needs to be targeted at the most high-risk nodes, or requires vertical and horizontal collaboration with other parties. In general, there is a need to develop the same level of transparency over the flow of people in supply chains, as is now expected over material and financial flows.

An organisation must remain vigilant to the threat of modern slavery in its own operations and look at how its practices might inadvertently exacerbate the threat. For example, by demanding low prices and short lead times, it is possible that the procurement function of a business can induce a supplier to subcontract to

another, cheaper and unaudited factory, that pays below the living wage and works longer hours. This can happen in the extended supply chain of a company, without its knowledge. With this in mind, the procurement function should look to work more closely with a supplier, building a sense of trust whilst understanding its constraints, paying a fair price and providing greater visibility of future orders, to avoid subcontracting unregulated behaviour. It is critical to raise awareness of the threat of modern slavery, the forms it can take and the contributing factors. This can be the foundation for detecting early warning signs within the organisation or supply chain, avoiding behaviours that might enable the threat and taking remedial actions when a threat has been uncovered. When modern slavery is detected, a firm must decide whether to report this criminality to the authorities or work with the perpetrators to improve the situation. The former is the legal responsibility, while the latter is arguably a moral responsibility, if walking away may further endanger the workers. This demonstrates the complexity of modern slavery, which means it warrants a dedicated programme of training and awareness-raising that is distinct from general CSR training, both in the organisation and supply chain.

While the HR function can play a role in creating this culture, it starts at the very top of the organisation and is reflected in a firm's internal structure and what this signals. Many organisations have been criticised for the disclosure statements they have produced in response to the 2015 UK Modern Slavery Act, such as when their statements have not been signed off by the executive board. Bringing them to the board raises awareness and suggests that modern slavery is being taken seriously. The threat is not subsiding despite efforts so far. Therefore, it is imperative that the HR function collaborates with other actors, including suppliers, communities, NGOs, competitors, government agencies and legal enforcement teams.

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EYES WIDE SHUT

THERE IS NOW WIDER RECOGNITION OF THE SCOURGE OF MODERN SLAVERY IN SUPPLY CHAINS, AS WELL AS LABOUR MARKET ABUSES. LEVELS OF ABUSE CAN ESCALATE FROM SEEMINGLY INNOCUOUS BEGINNINGS SUCH AS, FAILURE TO PAY THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE (NMW) OR UNLAWFUL DEDUCTIONS FROM PAY, LEADING ONTO FREQUENT OUTSOURCING AND SUBCONTRACTING OF WORKERS (INCLUDING MIGRANT WORKERS) PARTICULARLY IN CERTAIN INDUSTRIES.

ARTICLE RICHARD RYAN, EMPLOYMENT BARRISTER - PARKLANE PLOWDEN CHAMBERS


Some of the more low-key practices can fuel future dangers, that can lead to heightened abuse and so organisations must think more about ethical recruitment and consider where in their operations and supply chains there could be a risk. This also brings into play auditing methods and whistleblowing policies, which could all help to provide a more holistic approach to meet the challenges of avoiding modern slavery and ensuring the protection of vulnerable workers, who can sometimes be hidden in the supply chain. Notably, HMRC now publicly “names and shames” employers who breach the NMW and they are looking at types of roles or industries that can sometimes be more susceptible to abuse, particularly where employers may operate a pay arrangement which is opaque. For example, roles involving tied accommodation and the agriculture industry are areas of focus. Under the authority of NMW legislation, there is a multi-agency approach with both the police and HMRC taking place in quasi-dawn raids at locations suspected of housing vulnerable workers, that are allegedly working in conditions which amount to slavery, or a breach of NMW legislation.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 (MSA) was introduced to deal with slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking, by encouraging business to tackle the issue. Therefore, HR professionals and senior management in the procurement fields may wish to consider the wider aspects of this modern problem. Businesses can mitigate against these dangers, but must recognise the potential issues and be generally aware of criminal and civil enforcement in this area. It is advisable to set up an internal working group from across their functions, to agree an action plan or

strategy. Also, consider due diligence checks when forming and developing relationships with business partners, to ensure they align with their own values. Consider too issuing a statement in accordance with section 54(1) MSA (even if the business does not meet the threshold). It is advisable to retain previous statements, so progress can be monitored and carefully consider the contents of that statement, every year. This may involve a brief analysis of supply chain and due diligence processes and should also include instances where any risks have been identified and where any training has been provided on the issue.

By considering changes to the annual statement every year, the focus should be on continuous improvement. In contrast, those statements with no appreciable change, year-on-year, are less likely to be effective. In raising and maintaining awareness, consider any HR training around whistleblowing and code of conduct policies or other slavery-related issues, to ensure values are well-known and people know how to raise any concerns. Also, extend any whistleblowing helplines across the supply chain. When developing specific modern slavery policies, consider the existing procurement or third-party supplier policies, as well as any questionnaires to be sent to suppliers, seeking any reassurances. This is not a conclusive to-do list, but it is part of the journey to taking responsibility, mitigating risks and improving investor, stakeholder, customer, employee and potential recruit confidences. Modern slavery is a growing concern and so vigilance and risk-based action, to avoid being complicit in this widespread scourge, is highly advised.

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IV

COLLABORATIVE ORGANISATIONS

BUSINESSES ARE PICKING THEIR WAY THROUGH THE POST-PANDEMIC RUBBLE, ENERGISED BY SOME KIND OF ORGANISATIONAL ADRENALINE, YET SANGUINE, PRAGMATIC AND VOWING TO LEARN FROM AN UNPRECEDENTED CRISIS. THERE IS A DEEP LONGING TO WELCOME WORKFORCES BACK ON THEIR GROUNDS, WITH PROMISES OF UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE NEEDS, SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALISM, RAKING SILOS, ELIMINATING BUREAUCRACY AND EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES WITH PREVIOUSLY UNTESTED POLICIES AND PARAMETERS.

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#HR #Polls | Do you think that employees
in your organisation believe that their
contribution is recognised and rewarded?



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ARTICLE BY MATTHEW CLAYTON, PARTNER AND HEAD OF EMPLOYMENT LAW
& BUSINESS IMMIGRATION - WILLANS LLP SOLICITORS

THINGS HAVE CHANGED. HAVE WE?

PRIOR TO MARCH 2020, FLEXIBLE, HYBRID, MATRIXED AND EVERY VARIATION IN BETWEEN, WERE SEEN AS RELATIVELY UP-AND-COMING WORK CONCEPTS, RESERVED FOR “COOL CORPS”, LIKE NETFLIX AND MONZO. HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED, PRIOR TO COVID-19, ONLY AROUND FIVE PERCENT OF THE WORKFORCE WORKED MAINLY FROM HOME. POST-PANDEMIC, THE LANDSCAPE IS DRASTICALLY TRANSFORMED.

One thing is for sure; flexible working is here to stay as organisations race to form their version of the new way of working. As it stands, businesses adopting long-term hybrid working policies may be seen as trailblazers, but in the coming months and years, those that attempt to revert to pre-pandemic norms will be the outliers and risk being left behind. A 2020 report by the Wharton School and Microsoft says 73 percent of business leaders find that employees are either equally or more productive working in a hybrid model. From a financial perspective, employers may be able to downsize office space, saving on expensive rental costs. However, there are some risks and downsides to keep in mind as we enter this new era of working practices.

As a relatively new area, the transition to hybrid work models will not be without bumps in the road. Employers will need to introduce a specific remote working policy to ensure they have covered which positions will be eligible for hybrid working and the process by which employees can request it. The policy will also need to set out some key expectations, to ensure this new form of working isn't abused, such as explaining what output is expected from employees and what their hours of work should be. There have already been rumblings of dissatisfaction, whereby

managers believe people abuse work from home policies and attempt to work part-time on a full-time salary. There are those that claim that work is taking longer to be completed and is, as a result, becoming

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CHANGES"

more expensive. There is, of course, a risk that any workplace policy will be abused by certain staff members. It will be down to the employer's discretion how they mitigate those risks to the benefit of both staff and company.

So how are businesses finding hybrid working? Well, it's early days, but a number of large organisations have reported positive results. The Bank of Ireland, which had more than 75 percent of their staff wanting to adopt hybrid

working post-COVID, is rolling out a model which includes access to a network of 11 remote-working hubs, with large offices being redesigned to focus on meetings and collaboration. With that in mind, they are cautious about the mental health impact, expressing that a return to office life, even on a hybrid basis, could impact on employees' mental health. It's also worth pointing out that for some professions, hybrid working is not a practical solution. Those in jobs that require attendance at the workplace, such as frontline health workers and those who work in hospitality or manufacturing businesses, may want to consider how they can provide flexibility to their staff in other ways. That might look like offering flexible hours for those with children, offering holiday buy-back schemes and increasing availability of other paid leave. Whatever the future holds, the choice is clear, employers can either use this as an opportunity to innovate, creating a healthy, productive and ultimately profitable workplace, or they can resist these changes and eventually be dragged into 2021 kicking and screaming, risking losing great staff and productivity in the meantime. The future is there for interpretation.

FOR FURTHER INFO
WWW.WILLANS.CO.UK



ARTICLE BY KERRY GARCIA, PARTNER AND HEAD OF EMPLOYMENT, IMMIGRATION & PENSIONS
& SARAH TAYLOR, SENIOR ASSOCIATE - STEPHENS & BOLTON LLP

PLAN THE WORK, WORK THE PLAN

"FIRMS SHOULD CONSIDER CONDUCTING RISK ASSESSMENTS OF
EMPLOYEES' HOMEWORKING ENVIRONMENTS, TO IDENTIFY ANY HAZARDS,
INCLUDING THE RISK OF BURNOUT FOR EMPLOYEES WHO STRUGGLE TO
DISCONNECT FROM WORK"

This autumn has been a pivotal moment for employers, assessing the advantages of remote working, responding to employee demand for more flexibility and implementing new working arrangements. As we go forward, hybrid working will be a working bench test, which will require adaptability and pragmatism, but when it comes to legislation, policies and the health, safety and wellbeing, there is no room for gray areas and ambiguity.

In Spring 2020, the move to large scale, full-time remote working was implemented, by necessity, at speed. The focus was on the practicalities of ensuring efficient remote-working and were forced to deal reactively with many unprecedented challenges, as and when they arose, rather than having the luxury of planning such a significant transition. During the intervening months, it has been about firefighting, managing the workforce through national lockdowns, the closure of premises and many other restrictions on their businesses and supply chains, while also dealing with the economic and HR consequences of the pandemic. Now is an opportunity to consider new arrangements strategically,

while also putting in place safeguards and protections. In consideration of whether a hybrid working model is best for the business, the detail is fundamental. How much office attendance is preferable? Should employees have set days in the office or be able to vary these as they choose? Should all members of a team be required to attend on a certain day? Which activities should be conducted in person where possible? How should staff be supervised? What is the best way to develop junior staff when most people work remotely for a large proportion of the week? How should new members of staff be inducted and trained? Should line managers be required to attend the office more frequently? Should working

arrangements be consistent across the business or be decided by individual teams? It pays to be mindful about the risk of discrimination claims, where the working arrangements disproportionately impact protected groups and also of the duty to make reasonable adjustments in respect of disabled employees.

Establishing clear policies for remote working will ensure that employees have an appropriate working environment and are able to perform their role free from distractions. Employers will need to consider whether, for example, it is expressly stated in the policy that employees must have childcare in place when working remotely and must have a suitable place in which to work.

Geographic limits on where employees may work remotely should be considered, perhaps requiring that an employee's home address is within reasonable commuting distance of the office, especially if the employee is required to attend the office frequently and on short notice. Businesses will want to control where their people are working remotely, especially if there is the possibility that they are working outside the UK, given the legal and practical implications that arise when an employee works remotely from overseas. There is a statutory duty to take care of employee health and safety, which includes the mental and physical health of employees when working remotely. Firms should consider conducting risk assessments of employees' homeworking environments, to identify any hazards, including the risk of burnout for employees who struggle to disconnect from work. Another consideration is implementing mandatory rest breaks during periods of remote working. Long periods of relative social isolation caused by the pandemic, combined with increased pressures for those with caring responsibilities, has no doubt negatively impacted the mental health of some employees, with a resulting decline in productivity and engagement. In this context, it would be wise to implement strategies to combat poor mental health.

Where a hybrid working model is in place, employers are unlikely to agree to reimburse the cost of travel between the employee's home and office on the days when they attend the office. However, there may be an agreement to cover this expense for those who move to a permanent, full-time remote working arrangement. It is also worth considering at this stage, longer-term financial strategy in the context of new working arrangements. Location-based salary premia, may be considered no longer necessary or appropriate where employees spend all or most of their time working remotely. Similarly, employers may seek to dispose of travel allowances previously paid to employees, who are no longer required to commute. Before implementing such changes, it is

advisable to carefully monitor the market and competitors, to ensure the packages offered to new recruits remain competitive. Advice should be sought before attempting to reduce the pay of existing members of staff. When considering financial strategy, be mindful to avoid creating a two-tier workforce, where those attending the office are more highly remunerated than those working from home, especially where there is no discernible difference in output and productivity. There also may be a risk of equal pay and discrimination claims, so vigilance is advised.

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OR THOSE WITH
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Once decisions have been made on the preferred arrangements and future strategy, any changes to existing employment contracts and policies should be formalised. Many employers may choose to implement a comprehensive hybrid working policy - in preference to making changes to employment contracts - on the basis that the working arrangements set out in the hybrid working policy are discretionary and can be revoked. However, where there is a need to strengthen conditions and responsibilities associated with remote working, it may be more appropriate to seek contractual changes - for example, where an employer wants to make office attendance on specific days, a contractual requirement or seeks to strengthen contractual clauses relating to protection of confidential information. It

may also be necessary to make contractual changes where the new arrangements impact pay and other benefits.

If the employer seeks to make contractual changes, it should consider whether the existing contract permits such variations, as there may be an express clause permitting the changes envisaged, such as a mobility clause addressing a change in place of work. Caution should be exercised in relying on more general flexibility clauses, which are often given a restrictive interpretation by tribunals. If you cannot rely on a flexibility clause, it may require obtaining employee consent before making changes to the employment contract. Where the changes are material and are likely to be contested - and at least 20 employees are impacted - the requirement to collectively consult may be triggered, with the risk of a hefty protective award for failure to do so. Legal advice should be sought as early as possible. It may be helpful to support policy changes with training, for management and the workforce at large, setting out expectations for the new working arrangements and ensuring staff understand how to mitigate associated risks such as data security. Employers will need to consider and respond to requests of flexible working in accordance with statutory requirements and be alive to discrimination risks in rejecting a request. Dealing with flexible working requests is often time intensive, so it is worth seeking to accommodate a range of possible working arrangements under the hybrid working policy and to seek employee engagement in the policy, to limit the number of flexible working requests received. As discussed in this article, flexibility and greater freedoms are the objective, but there is much planning required and policies to be set.

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WWW.STEVENS-BOLTON.COM

E Q U I L I B R I U M

The evolving workplace is a phenomenon that will fundamentally alter how we all perform our jobs. Returning to the office after a truly unprecedented time, has been more difficult to define than anyone could have anticipated. Predictably, there have been a myriad of reactions, opinions and recommendations, regarding what next, but what we can say with some confidence is that the future will hold greater flexibility, but that the advantages and disadvantages of remote work will need thoughtful scrutiny and discussion.

"BUSINESSES WILL BE IN SOME FORM OF PERPETUAL ADAPTATION REGARDING WORK STYLE. IT WILL TAKE TIME, TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION AND ONGOING ANALYSIS TO ENSURE THAT IN THIS CHANGING WORK WORLD, WE ARE MOVING TOWARD BEST OUTCOME"



ARTICLE BY CHRIS SIMSON, GROUP HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES -
MUNICH RE SPECIALTY GROUP

Several things seem certain, a one-size-fits-all approach is not possible or advisable and ensuring employees have a voice is key. Some form of remote work as a standard will clearly be a focal point in the new workplace and face-to-face collaboration will - and should - remain an integral part of the work experience. How this unfolds, relative to day-to-day workplace activities, is not a simple equation. A survey* of 190 respondents across 40 businesses in the London markets, examined more closely what is shaping the “new normal”. Approximately 76 percent of respondents fell into the broker category with a majority engaged in financial/professional and commercial property lines. A full two-thirds were senior or C-Suite level and the survey centered around a key question, “will hybrid working become a permanent feature of work life in the London markets”? Topics included; when will firms return to the office? Do companies favour an all-in-one approach or staggered approach to returning? What are the potential benefits and challenges of remote working?

Survey responders clearly noted the pros and cons of a hybrid schedule that allowed for some form of remote work, putting several areas at the top of the “contributing to job satisfaction” column. Better work-life balance, greater job satisfaction and better time management topped the list of benefits. For employers, advantages included being more attractive to prospective employees, providing a bigger pool of talent to recruit from and contributing to greater resiliency against potential future pandemic situations. Attitudes in the London market differed from the UK insurance market more generally, with companies already prepared for a return to the office sooner than later. Notably, the return-to-work schedules could shift based upon changing pandemic and government guidelines. Of businesses surveyed, five percent said they would mandate a return for all employees and 40 percent said they would allow anyone to return once an office reopened. A strong 43 percent indicated they would have partial return dates determined based on job role.

While there is consensus regarding the “when” of returning to the office, how people will return has more variables. One common thread is that remote work was overwhelmingly accepted as a given; less than two percent of respondents said their firms will not accommodate work as part of their longer-term future. Most respondents - 77 percent - plan to accommodate remote working in the longer run. There was, however, a lower acceptance of remote working in the London markets than in

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the broader market. Brokers made it clear - via a 96 percent response - that face-to-face working will still be integral to their role, specifically related to their relationships with underwriters. Accommodation for this preference will mean, at a minimum, hybrid work for London employees, with tasks being “triaged” to determine what must be done face-to-face. In terms of the degree of remote working hours, survey results showed that before the COVID-19 pandemic, working from home averaged one day a week. Projections are that the new remote norm will be 2.25 days a week, even post pandemic.

There is also a consensus regarding the need for the right balance between office and remote work. Both offer benefits and successfully retaining those positives - while minimising potential negatives in the new office environment -

will be challenging. Clearly, office work is overwhelmingly considered critical to learning from colleagues, meeting with clients face-to-face and providing the best environment for creativity and innovation. Remote work offers the benefits of better work/life balance, higher employee satisfaction, and on a more cost-driven level, reduced need for office space. Networking opportunities, time management, space to collaborate and fostering corporate culture - while slightly less critical to respondents - seemed equally unaffected by being in an office or a remote environment. Notably, inconsideration of potential negatives inherent in a hybrid working future, such as; decreased staff interaction and creativity to more technological threats like cybercrime, were not viewed as significant. Productivity loss and “creepage” in staff workloads also did not rank high as key concerns, but respondents did show some concern, over possible lost opportunities for creativity, career development and mentorship.

Management will need to incorporate ongoing feedback from their teams as our workplace reality evolves. There is no precedent for what we have gone through, no tried-and-true road map for going forward. What hybrid means will take time to define and will continue to evolve. There seems little doubt that businesses will be in some form of perpetual adaptation regarding work style. It will take time, two-way communication and ongoing analysis to ensure that in this changing work world, we are moving toward best outcomes. Too much has changed practically, culturally and even emotionally for decisions to be made rapidly or narrowly. Business goals will still be set - and may not be altered much. How we reach them, no matter where we are located globally, will take a thoughtfulness and determination we have not seen before. We have a unique opportunity to improve service to employees and customers, by working smarter, healthier and better in a way that will benefit everyone.

*Survey conducted by Munich Re Specialty Group in conjunction with Accenture.

FOR FURTHER INFO
WWW.MUNICHRE.COM

NEVER THE TWIN

THIS IS A TRUE STORY, ONLY THE NAME HAS BEEN CHANGED. PETER WAS A SOCIAL SERVICE LOCAL AUTHORITY DIRECTOR AHEAD OF HIS TIME. WHILST COLLEAGUES CONTINUED TO KEEP HEALTH AT ARM'S LENGTH AND SEE THE ROLE AS MAKING SURE "THEY" PLAYED FAIR, WHEN IT CAME TO CLOSING LONG STAY HOSPITALS, OR SHARED THE COST OF EXPENSIVE PLACEMENTS FOR PEOPLE WITH SEVERE AND MULTIPLE DISABILITIES, PETER SAW A FUTURE WHERE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY (LA) AND NHS TRUST OPERATED SEAMLESSLY OR, AS WE MIGHT NOW REFER, AS A HYBRID ORGANISATION.

ARTICLE BY BLAIR MCPHERSON - FORMER DIRECTOR, AUTHOR & BLOGGER

Peter was an idealist, but also a pragmatist. As a social services director, he was in a position to demonstrate his willingness, by addressing the issues that his colleagues in health thought important - such as hospital discharges - whilst at the same time convincing the leader of the local council and board members that he was not letting health take advantage and that good will and cooperation would pay off in the longer term. In this he was more successful with his LA board members than his own social workers, who complained bitterly that their day-to-day experience was proof that this was a one-way relationship in which health - mainly hospitals - called the shots. As such, they were not at all surprised at the announcement that he was being seconded to the local Acute Hospital Trust, initially for three months, but eventually for 12 months. At first, it seemed that this was a part-time role, but later it became full-time. His position on the NHS board, where clearly he impressed, went from Director to acting Chief Executive.

Initially, it appeared to be a huge breakthrough on both sides, only it wasn't, because the local authority thought he had "gone native". The Trust appointed a new Chief Executive and the end of Peter's secondment coincided with the new CE taking up post. Peter returned to his substantive post as Director of social service, but instead of his experience being seen as a bonus, he was considered not the best person to undertake some tough negotiations with Health. He took a sideways move to become a social services director elsewhere. I am fairly certain he had expected to be in a position to

apply for the local authority chief executive post, but his experience in Health didn't turn out to be the advantage he assumed it would be.

What does this minor episode in the story of the integration of health and social care illustrate? Well, in the years since, there have been a very small number of isolated attempts to repeat this experiment in other parts of the country. The skills of senior managers in the NHS and Local Authority - whilst in theory are transferable - in practice, has not been reflected in appointments. So, for all the rhetoric, conferences, workshops and regular joint senior management team meetings prior to the pandemic, health and social care organisations were still a long way off from providing an integrated service. As is often the case, crisis leadership can overcome traditional barriers, tribal loyalties and stifling bureaucracy, as everyone pulls in the same direction to beat the common enemy. As we emerge from the pandemic, we need to recognise that "peacetime" leadership doesn't benefit from the same collective sense of urgency or shared purpose. Old attitudes, conflicting priorities and mutual distrust will gradually re-emerge. Now the time is right for organisations in general to forget historic grievances and mistrust and it's worth remembering this cautionary tale, which illustrates how difficult it is for both board members and front-line employees to forget history and make short-term sacrifices for long-term mutual benefit.

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WWW.BLAIRMCPHERSON.CO.UK

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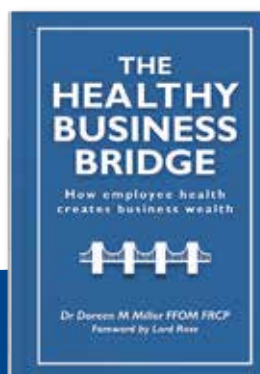
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RACISM IS RACISM

NO ONE IS BORN WITH RACIST ATTITUDES, BUT FROM AN EARLY AGE, PEOPLE ARE EXPOSED TO INFORMATION THAT INFLUENCES THEIR THOUGHTS, ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR AND CAN LEAD TO THE FORMATION OF STEREOTYPES. THESE AUTOMATIC ASSOCIATIONS CAN RESULT IN UNCONSCIOUS BIASES THAT ARE DIRECTED TOWARDS OR AGAINST PEOPLE.



ARTICLE BY DR STUART FLINT, PRESIDENT - BIASPROOF

Unconscious bias refers to attitudes or stereotypes that a person has no direct, introspective access to, whilst conscious biases refer to attitudes and stereotypes that we know we have. As such, biases such as racism, occur due to a learning process. As Nelson Mandela puts it in *Long Walk to Freedom*: “No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate and, if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” For decades, research has found workplace cultures of bullying, harassment and victimisation towards minority ethnic groups, including racial stereotyping and microaggressions. These actions are conscious, reflecting an awareness and intent, whilst in other instances, people are unaware of their differential behaviour or judgement.

Conscious and unconscious racism affects many aspects of an organisation, including recruitment and promotion processes where people from minority ethnic groups are scored lower on suitability ratings for employment, promotion or leadership roles. For instance, due to conscious and

unconscious racial biases, an applicant's name, the language they use, or their previous experiences may lead to an unjust outcome. Unconscious biases can also lead to unfair expectations, assignment of group tasks and inequitable judgements of assertiveness compared to white employees. Racial biases can also have an impact externally, damaging relationships with clients and suppliers and affecting perceptions of an organisation's ethos and values. The good news is employers can measure and identify racial biases in their workforce and use this information to assess the effectiveness of initiatives to address bias. Measures for conscious racial biases include self-report questionnaires or scenario tasks. For unconscious racial biases, organisations can use measures where only the individual receives their personal bias score, with the employer receiving an aggregated workforce score. Because unconscious racial biases are outside of a person's awareness, tests that provide an objective measure are particularly useful.

Due to the often-prolonged process of forming and potentially strengthening racist attitudes, addressing them may not be easy or quick. However, it's imperative that HR departments take proactive steps

through a meaningful commitment to diversity and inclusion. The England men's football team manager, Gareth Southgate, actively spoke out against “unforgivable” racism before, during and following the 2020 European Championship tournament. He called for action to be taken against fans found to have engaged in racist abuse and made it clear that racism will not be tolerated. It is imperative that HR leaders take similar action to enforce a culture of inclusivity and to stamp out racism. Like Southgate, this may mean putting your head above the parapet, to lead from the front and implement systemic change. The first step for leaders is to consider their own biases and how these impact their behaviour and decision making. The next step is to identify how biases are impacting workplace processes and decision making and in doing so, develop actions to counter biases and facilitate diversity and inclusion. After all, building an inclusive workplace goes beyond simply amassing a diverse group of people.

Dr Stuart W. Flint is Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Leeds UK and Honorary Academic for the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities.

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WWW.BIASPROOF.COM



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WELCOME TO THIS ISSUE'S ROUND UP OF THE PEOPLE AT THE TOP
OF THE HR PROFESSION, WHO HAVE MOVED TO NEW JOB ROLES.



Caroline Gillard

ROLE CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER
COMPANY MARSHMALLOW

Digital insurance unicorn Marshmallow has appointed Caroline Gillard as its first Chief People Officer as it accelerates its drive for growth.

Caroline has 20 years of experience and joins Marshmallow from Babylon Health, where she held the post of People Director. Her previous posts include People Director at Moonpig, Group HR Director at McArthurGlen, Global HR Business Partner at Skype and Head of HR at Pizza Express. As part of her remit, she will lead the organisation's people, talent and learning operations. The appointment comes as the company prepares to hire 400 people over the next 24 months, as part of expansion plans targeting new markets and products, following a year that saw a 200 percent increase in the employee headcount.

Patricia Andrei

ROLE HR DIRECTOR
COMPANY CEC BANK

Patricia Andrei is the new HR Director of CEC Bank, a position from which she will coordinate the entire human resources activity of the bank.

Patricia has held various positions within the HR department of ING Romania and in the last two years, she has worked in the role of Management Consultant, with a focus on organisational development solutions and implementation of inclusive and sustainable HR policies and practices, as a vector for business performance and growth.

Coreen Bone

ROLE CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER
COMPANY NORTH

IoT service and solutions provider, North, has announced the appointment of Coreen Bone to the position of Chief People Officer.

Complementing the company's bold growth strategy, Coreen will join North's executive leadership team, reporting directly to the CEO. This follows North's recent investment from Livingbridge and the acquisition of Data Techniques. With experience working across a variety of sectors, Coreen has delivered strategic and operational people solutions at a global level, to support large-scale growth and integration of acquired businesses.

Salma de Graaff

ROLE VP PEOPLE
COMPANY SKYSCANNER

Global travel marketplace Skyscanner has appointed Salma de Graaff as VP People, joining the company's executive team.

Formerly Chief People Officer at Travix, Salma joins Skyscanner to head up the travel company's end-to-end People function. Salma is an internationally experienced HR leader, having lived and worked in three continents throughout her career and, most recently, has been supporting modernisation and growth in engineering, product and finance teams in an OTA environment.

Manuela Montagnana

ROLE CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER
COMPANY CRITEO

Global technology business Criteo has appointed Manuela Montagnana as its new Chief People Officer.

In the role, Manuela will lead the organisation's people team and will drive the strategy and execution of attracting, engaging, developing and retaining top talent, playing a key role in defining the future of work for the global workforce of more than 2,500 employees. In addition, she will be ensuring equitable, transparent and inclusive processes and practices to support an "engaged and high-performing" team. Manuela has more than 20 years of experience as a people executive, leading global teams in the manufacturing, service and technology industries.

FOR FURTHER UPDATES

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NEXT MONTH ISSUE 207

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INTERVIEW

Anna McCarron, HR Director - Ascendia UK

TRENDS FOR 2022

We have lived through a crisis which has forced a new way of thinking about work and business.

ORGANISATIONAL AGILITY

Traction in ever-shifting times will rely on the prescience that sound analytics can bring and being ready ahead of the curve of change.

DIVERSITY

We must study what was wrong about Before Covid (BC), in order for AC to be defined as a diversely people-centric future.

UNDERSTANDING NEEDS ACROSS THE WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHIC

During virtual get togethers, guards dropped to reveal more reality and compelled us to reach out, care and consider others and their myriad situations.





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