

HRD

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IN THIS ISSUE:

EXCLUSIVE EXTRACTS:

EXTREME TEAMS FOR EXTREME TIMES
BUILDING A MORE RESPONSIBLE COMPANY

ORGANISATIONAL AGILITY

MANAGING ACROSS THE DEMOGRAPHIC

TRENDS FOR 2022

DIVERSITY

DELIVER

“IT COMES DOWN TO A BASIC TRUTH,
WE'RE HUMAN. WE MUST THINK AND
OPERATE ON AN EMOTIONAL AS WELL
AS STRATEGIC LEVEL”

ANNA MCCARRON
HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR
ASENDIA UK



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CONTENTS

05	EDITOR'S WELCOME	III
	Editor's perspective of all the subjects covered in this issue	37
06	LEGAL UPDATES	
	A round up of verdicts from the courts, plus new and adapted legislation explained	
08	COVER INTERVIEW	38
	Anna McCarron, Human Resources Director - Asendia UK	
16	EXCLUSIVE EXTRACTS	40
	Extreme teams for extreme times	
	Pivoting is not simply unilaterally making a change in direction and hoping that everyone else follows	42
20	Building a more responsible company	
	If the next pandemic is a digital virus that takes down the internet, businesses with a physical infrastructure would be better equipped to survive	
I	ORGANISATIONAL AGILITY	IV
25	Enigma machine	45
	Futures thinking is an essential skill in considering possible routes and outcomes - both desirable and undesirable - and thinking through the implications	46
26	House of cards	48
	The importance of overcoming competing tensions that can force a potentially disastrous "fake it 'til you make it" approach to business	
28	Zen	50
	The pandemic exposed unresponsive, clumsy and bureaucratic operating models, gifting businesses the opportunity to exorcise traditional psychological positions	
II	MANAGING ACROSS THE DEMOGRAPHIC	52
31	Hard hat required	
	We cannot build for a better society if our workplaces are not truly inclusive. The business case for greater inclusion is very clear	
32	A plan for all seasons	54
	For the first time in history, five distinct generations occupy space in the global workforce. It's an amazing statistic, but what does it actually mean in reality?	
34	Alice through the ceiling glass	
	The pandemic highlighted inequalities, showed the disproportionate impact of a crisis on women and allowed misogyny to grow	

TRENDS FOR 2022

Equanimity

Clunky legacy systems and unfit-for-purpose tools, is not what modern-day HR professionals want to be shackled to. Time for solutions, not more problems

Heightened state of preparedness

Key decisions cannot occur in a vacuum. Crisis management must find middle ground between effective control and stifling domination

Changing tides

This uprising is not simply an employee revolution, but a driving force for evolution

Hearts and minds

Unravelling the myriad of reasons behind the misalignment between the mindsets of leaders and employees when it comes to change

DIVERSITY

Listen to difference

It's not about acting on every single thing, but listen - and listen well - before making that call

A problem shared

Collaborative identity impacts group dynamics. The more extreme the cognitive differences are, the more likely the cognitive gaps

Spot the difference

Leaders must open themselves up to scrutiny. Not being active in the pursuit of equality is negligent in the pursuit against it

Private investigations

It is short-sighted to think that helping staff through difficult times is problematic and a distraction

TO THE POINT

What lies beneath

In whatever sphere a person has made a living, they leave carrying a suitcase full of skills that can be applied in many different areas

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Who is going where at the top of the HR profession?

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January 2022 / Issue 207

WE BEGIN THE NEW YEAR WITH HOPE AND FACE THE FUTURE, GALVANISED BY HAVING LIVED THROUGH THE MOST CHALLENGING TIME FOR GENERATIONS, WHICH HAS FORCED A NEW WAY OF THINKING ABOUT WORK AND WHAT EMPLOYMENT NOW REPRESENTS IN THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA.



JASON SPILLER, EDITOR

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The role of health, well-being and psychological safety is at the heart of the great return and the development of the hybrid framework. The pandemic has also informed on inequality and revealed a far more complex picture than that which had been long envisaged. COVID has fuelled compassion and understanding and shone a light on the importance of inclusion, belonging and a culture where diversity in people and thought can thrive. Before COVID, the pandemic of concern work-related stress and burnout and there is palpable evidence that nobody wants to return to that.

Many people were able to continue working, operating and connecting through the ups and downs of the pandemic via virtual technologies. For many, it was a lifeline, but for others, the dynamic was starkly obtrusive. No doubt, virtual meeting will be defined by this challenging time and how it maintained the importance of face-to-face communication. Crucially, it candidly opened up people's lives, let us in on their worlds and they ours. The usual guards came down to reveal more reality and, alongside the pandemic's terrible narrative and other shocking world events, revealed compelling reasons to really care and consider others and their myriad of situations, needs and aspirations.

That a solid foundation is fundamental to any organisation holds true, but if that renders a business slow to change, reliant on the tried-and-trusted, risk averse and wedded to legacy, then the outcome in this age of sudden and constant change is inevitable. Regardless of sector, future success will

be predicated on agility, of turning speed-of-thought into action, to disrupt and define new markets and initiatives, not react after a rival has shaken the box. Business growth is set to accelerate, but this volatile time is not the sign for some corporate free-for-all and that is where data and analytics must inform progress, to confidently and sustainably reshape and resource, with the necessary skills and talent for growth, with a seismographic capability to identify potential areas of concern and maintain cost and efficiency.

The outstanding cause célèbre is diversity and it cannot be ignored. But before the pandemic, was diversity ever really the vital issue, or just a CSR and employer brand tick-box exercise that dealt in quotas and tokenism? It seems that the only way that the dial will be moved in any meaningful way, is to demonstrate that highly diverse companies lead to better performance and outcomes more than less diverse rival firms. An organisation that has diversity right through it like a stick of rock, irradiates the destructive influence of a table of "yes men", but many organisations remain underrepresented along all diversity lines, skewed towards the established norms of gender, class and race - particularly in the upper echelons of businesses.

LEGAL UPDATES

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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 *London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham v Keable* an employee from the council's Environmental Health Department was unfairly dismissed for serious misconduct arising out of comments he made in a conversation with another individual when they each attended different rallies outside Parliament. During the disciplinary process within the Council it was accepted that the conversation was about events around the time of the Haavara Agreement of 1933 prior to WWII. The words spoken included

reference to anti-Semitism, Nazis and the Holocaust. The conversation was filmed and then made public through the media and social media. Others posted and retweeted the video clip and expressed their own views about it.

Through those tweets, one of the Council's Councillors identified Keable as a Council employee and invited them to take action. Following disciplinary proceedings, Keable was dismissed. The Judge hearing the claim determined that the dismissal was both procedurally and substantively unfair. She made an order

for reinstatement. She concluded that there were relevant and significant errors in the procedure adopted by the Council employer, including the fact that Keable was not informed of the specific allegation which led to his dismissal and the fact that the possibility of a lesser sanction, a warning, was not discussed with him. In reaching her conclusions the Judge did not substitute her own views for that of the employer. As to remedy, on the evidence before her, the Judge was entitled to conclude that reinstatement was practicable and to make the order she did. Both appeals were dismissed.

EMPLOYMENT LAW

CALLS FOR NEW LEGAL POLICIES ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

An APPG inquiry found that AI is transforming work and working lives across the country in ways that have plainly outpaced, or avoid, the existing regimes for regulation. Their recommendations are aimed at ensuring that the AI ecosystem is genuinely human-centred, principles-driven and accountable to shape a future of better work. They are centred around a proposal for an Accountability for Algorithms Act ('the AAA'). The AAA offers an overarching, principles-driven framework for governing and regulating AI in response to the fast-changing developments in workplace technology.

GOVERNMENT AGREES WITH LPC'S WAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government has announced in the 2021 Budget that the National Living Wage will increase to £9.50 from April

2022. Ministers have accepted the Low Pay Commission's recommendation for a 6.6 percent increase from £8.91, which applies to workers aged 23 and over. For those aged 21 to 22, the minimum will increase from £8.36 to £9.18. This year, Government has accepted in full the recommendations made by the LPC. The key points for employers are: Keep a record - under the National Minimum Wage Regulations there is a requirement to maintain sufficient records to show that the National Minimum Wage has been paid for at least the last three years. Be aware of deductions - if employees opt for increased pension contributions.

NEW LAW ON TIPS

Employment Bill is coming to ensure that workers in the hospitality sector retain tips on a fair and transparent basis. Employers will be required to have a written policy on tips and keep a record of how tips are dealt with.

LEGAL DIARY

- *Last quarter 2021:* 2021 Carer's leave a 'day one' right. The leave will consist of one week of unpaid leave per year for those employees with long-term caring responsibilities, to be taken in full or half days.
- *Dec 2021:* Consultation on right to request flexible working closed 1st December 2021. It is likely that any statutory amendments that are confirmed following this consultation will be included in the anticipated.
- *TBA 2022:* The Government will introduce a duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment and new protections from harassment.
- *TBA 2022:* Parents will have the right to take an additional week of leave for every week their baby is in neonatal care, up to a maximum of 12 weeks.



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ANNA MCCARRON HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR ASENDIA UK

INTERVIEW BY JASON SPILLER
& PHOTOGRAPHY BY STUART THOMAS

IN THE DARKEST DAYS OF THE PANDEMIC, WE EMERGED FROM OUR ISOLATIONS TO APPLAUD THOSE ON THE FRONT LINE, THE ESSENTIAL SERVICES. COVID FORCED CHANGE, NOT LEAST THAT WE ORDERED MORE ONLINE, FROM ESSENTIALS, TO SENDING GIFTS TO INFANTS BORN, NOT YET SEEN. BLEAK TIMES, IN THE GRIP OF AN INVISIBLE ENEMY AND YET LOGISTICS KEPT GOING, ON THE FRONT LINE, SUPPORTING A BELEAGUERED WORLD. LEST WE FORGET.

"AT ITS HEART, A CULTURE HAS TO RADIATE
HUMAN INTERACTION AND COMBINE EMPATHY AND
UNDERSTANDING WITH PASSION AND DRIVE
FOR THE BUSINESS JOURNEY"

ANNA, TELL US ABOUT YOUR EARLY LIFE AND HOW YOU FOUND THE PATH TO A CAREER IN HR. I come from Suwalki in Poland and I studied law at Bialystok. But when I graduated and contemplated what to do next, I really wasn't convinced that law was something I wanted to pursue. That's not to say that HR was calling at that point, I was still young and had no clear direction. So, I decided to travel to the UK and stay with my friends. I settled in London, where I started an HR admin job at Food Partners Limited, which was a "food-to-go" manufacturer and logistics provider. This is how I discovered a world that never sleeps, the world of fast-moving consumer goods. I settled in really quickly and loved the job, which started to drift more towards an HR generalist role, which I found even more engaging. So, very quickly I decided to study for

a second degree, this time in Human Resources Management, at the University of West London. The combination of working in a hectic, fast moving FMCG environment and studying meant that I had very little spare time, but I learnt so much in those early days. It was tough, definitely not glamorous and was all about quick change, fast decision making, tight margins, cost control and foremost taking people with you. It was also a really diverse environment, lots of different nationalities and everyone speaking different languages, so clarity of goals and unambiguity was essential to our success. I learned very early on that people being the most valuable asset, is an inescapable truth and that the most important part of communicating well was an ability to listen. It was a strange and amazing learning curve to be in my twenties and learning a new way of

communicating. It was hard work and I was inexperienced and naïve, but I was gaining a grip on what HR was really about, what motivates and disengages people and how practitioners have to walk that fine line to ensure that we support the business, whilst ensuring that our people are at the heart of it all.

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU WERE DISCOVERING ABOUT YOURSELF AT THIS STAGE? I always believed that I had natural leadership traits in me and that I had loads of ambition, but the world of FMCG is just such a constant whirl of activity, it took lots of my time and energy to keep pace with the business, as well as all the processes and systems. I could see very clearly where I wanted to be - a value-adding business partner - and that started to gain traction as I began to work on a more strategic and holistic level,

focusing on, for example, people capital, challenging behaviours, building capability across the management teams and refocusing them by introducing a more people-centric culture. I look back at those early years and realise how important they were to my development and about how HR's focus is, not only about being aligned with the business, but about being at the heart of it. That realisation dawned when I moved on with my career and joined Bakkavor Group PLC, a very diverse and complex, freshly prepared food (FPF) supplier to key retailers in the UK. The business was run at a constant and fast pace and was heavily unionised. No question, it was a really tough environment with lots of history and legacy and the unions were combative, but again it was great experience in which I learned about the power of relationship building, how difficult it is to win trust and confidence and how easy it is to lose it. In a way, I think my lack of experience with unions helped and I think that says that you should go into any difficult situation with a clear and open mind, avoid preempting anything and if you're going in without having gained trust, don't bother. My big focus at that time was building engagement, which is obviously aligned with trust and transparency and that lead to much greater understanding and mutual respect. That began to pay off through greater engagement, lower attrition and just a generally happier working environment. At this point, I really felt that I should leave on a positive note.

TELL US ABOUT THE NEXT STAGE OF YOUR CAREER. Well, it was a rise in responsibility, but a very similar environment. I was approached about a role leading the HR function for Pasta King Ltd. What really excited me about the post was that I was to be given complete carte blanche to build the HR function from scratch which, up until that point, had been outsourced. From day one, I set out to understand the business from every angle and made a point of, not just talking to the C-suite, mid-managers and leaders, but everyone,

to find out what life was really like working for this company, the positives and, more importantly, the negatives. I set my plan out for the senior stakeholders and it was a culture of trust and passionate people that were the main drivers - they gave me the greenlight - and I set to work, with a newly-acquired and pretty basic understanding of the business. My experience so far informed that the best approach was simplicity, clarity and transparency and I advised the senior leaders that their visibility to employees had to be improved to

"AN ANNUAL KEYNOTE FROM THE CEO SIMPLY DOESN'T CUT IT, IT HAS TO BE COMMUNICATED AND VALIDATED, WITH CLARITY AND TRANSPARENCY OVER VISION AND MISSION AND CERTAINTY ON THE VITAL ELEMENTS THAT JOIN THE DOTS"

demonstrate connectivity and authenticity. The other main area of focus was organisational design, because the business plan was ambitious growth and also to assess the capability development of managers, particularly in the commercial function, who would need to be able to absorb this pressure. Meanwhile, I was recruiting a skeleton crew of an HR department, in a bid to build the capability to support that growth and development. It was a strange experience because it was long-established firm with legacy issues and yet my experience was that this was more like a startup business.

IT SOUNDS LIKE EITHER AN HR PRACTITIONER'S DREAM OR NIGHTMARE, WHICH WAS IT FOR YOU? For me, it was always my dream, as an HR professional,

to have a fresh start and have accountability and responsibility for creating an important part of the company. It was hugely motivational, working at that more strategic level and I could see the future path before me. This role really built my confidence and I began to consider where my next move would take me. Pasta King Ltd was a private equity-backed business and as it grew and became really successful, the plan was to sell the business to Greencore Group plc and I was certain that this was the right decision for both the business and people. It coincided with me becoming a mother, but I continued to work on the takeover and overseeing my team as they dealt with the transfer. Now I had other considerations other than career aspirations, which would form the decision for my next role. It was a really profound moment and I wondered if I would be able to simultaneously manage my ambitions and family. I took a conscious decision at that time to step back and dedicate more time to my daughter. I was also determined that, when I was ready to move on, it would be in a completely different sector.

TELL US WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU RETURNED TO THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD. When an opportunity for a role at PRS For Music came along, I felt compelled to take a closer look. PRS is a not-for-profit collective management organisation and for me, that world was completely different to what I had experienced so far. Everything was new to me, from the pace of the business to the very different set of senior stakeholders, that came from the likes of Sky, Google and the BBC. This was a an unusual culture and vibe for me and I also had to re-learn, catch up and recalibrate the way that I had been operating, in order to fit this type of industry. But I was following my inner compass and here I could see a business with principles, trust, transparency and a massive regard for its people. I understood the challenge, but didn't feel overwhelmed. The great thing about HR, if you parachute in and just take your time to watch and listen, you can adapt to anything. I learnt so

much during this time, but what PRS gave me most was a different dimension of thinking around flexibility, diversity and inclusion, taking the time to really think things through and develop my awareness. Also, in past roles, I could see that the way work was organised, more often than not, it piled more pressure on people who had caring or family commitments outside of work. I could envisage a different, more flexible way of working, but the cultures and mindsets in the industries in which I had worked, could not support it. Being a mother and working at PRS changed that and it is strange that one of the major impacts of the pandemic on the world of work is a commitment for an equitable approach to flexible working. PRS gave me the opportunity to really reflect on my resilience as a leader and, for the first time, I had the time to think about my personal brand and about what I wanted to achieve in my career, rather than constantly running, trying to keep up with the hamster wheel. I set out short and long-term goals and the latter was to progress my business partner role, work on improving the business in a more rounded way and always adding value. Ultimately, it all comes down to a basic truth, that we're all human and we all need to invest in understanding ourselves and building awareness. We need to not be afraid, to think and operate on an emotional as well as a strategic level. We need to have that secure space, where we can try and, if we fail, try another approach, rather than fearing ramifications. When COVID descended, that became even more profound.

IT SEEMS INAPPROPRIATE TO SAY THAT THE PANDEMIC IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE THE FUTURE. BUT THE PAST, IN TERMS OF WORK, HAD SO MUCH THAT WAS WRONG ABOUT IT. If the culture in some businesses was to focus on profits at the expense of all else, the damage to human resources was always inevitable. I believe that COVID has changed many perceptions about the work-related causes of stress and burnout, but also broadened the subject to a more holistic approach to wellbeing. It will be interesting to see how

organisations change and develop post-pandemic and as to whether there will be a return to bad old ways. I really hope not. Now is a perfect time to climb aboard that cliché and think outside the box and really embrace those differences. The pandemic has re-shaped priorities and when people were forced apart by lockdown, that was a profound wakeup call, about what is really important in life. Inevitably, there will be businesses and industries that respond effectively and others that don't and this will be an important benchmark when it comes to talent attraction, employee engagement and attrition rates. So I think all businesses should take this time really seriously and accept that there's no way back.

"I SET OUT TO UNDERSTAND THE BUSINESS FROM EVERY ANGLE AND MADE A POINT OF, NOT JUST TALKING TO THE C-SUITE, MID-MANAGERS AND LEADERS, BUT EVERYONE, TO FIND OUT WHAT LIFE WAS REALLY LIKE WORKING FOR THIS COMPANY, THE POSITIVES AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE NEGATIVES"

INDEED, IT ALL REMAINS TO BE SEEN. IT SOUNDS AS IF PRS WAS A FUNDAMENTAL POINT IN YOUR LIFE. WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO MOVE ON? Well, Asendia came calling and, although unexpected, when I looked at the business, I could see it was a logical career move in consideration of my experience to that point. Asendia is a pure logistics business and so a world I know well, but with a cutting-edge digital IT focus, which was a massive draw. We're one of the world's leaders in international e-commerce and

mail, delivering packages, parcels and documents to more than 200 destinations across the globe. Combining the experience and expertise of our founding companies, La Poste and Swiss Post, the Asendia Group brings together a wealth of international and local know-how. We have a broad reach in the market, encompassing different aspects of e-commerce, from webshop software and marketplace management, to international logistics. As a group, we're also committed to sustainability, offsetting all CO2 emissions for transport within Europe and from Europe to other continents, excluding first-mile and last-mile. Right now, we have over 1,500 people in Europe, UK, Asia Pacific and the USA. From the moment I met CEO Simon Batt it was immediately apparent that his appreciation of HR and wanting the closest association was the driver of the business. This is of course essential and I think if the HR Director and the CEO don't align, it's a non-starter, but this was the opposite and I felt totally engaged and energised with the alignment to the business, the values and the vision. But definitely, for me it was the scale and dynamism that was compelling and although I'm new to the business and still learning, the mission and strategy has already been well defined. So, as HR Director, my mission is to deliver on that and taking responsibility for the fourth pillar of the strategy, which is called SMILE.

YOU'VE SPOKEN A GOOD DEAL ABOUT CULTURE, IT SEEMS LIKE AN ELEMENT THAT YOU ARE PARTICULARLY ATTUNED TO, SO HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE CULTURE AT ASENDIA? I would say it is developmental - certainly not mature yet. Post-COVID, all cultures will have to reflect a new way of working and there will be elements of the existing culture, combined with the new that are in development. At its heart, a culture has to radiate human interaction and combine empathy and understanding with passion and drive for the business journey. Everybody I speak with in the business, across the warehouse and in the boardroom, genuinely cares about the

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business and there's an understanding that we all have to be adaptable, agile and supportive. We call ourselves "Asendians" and there is an amazing sense of belonging and loyalty to this company that you don't ordinarily see in this sector. When a firm has this realness and genuine authenticity, it should be celebrated, because it's so compelling and plays a massive role in attraction, engagement, loyalty and retention, which in a sector renowned for its high attrition, is a major advantage.

HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR ROLE

DEVELOPING IN THE FUTURE? Having the SMILE pillar is useful, because I can refer to it in context with the future plans of the business and it supports the change and disruption. Right now, I'm covering a lot of ground and focusing on learning and development, increasing awareness around diversity and inclusion and creating the place that really gives that employee-value proposition, so people genuinely want to come and work here. Ultimately, we want Asendia to be a great place to work and that is definitely my ambition, as is understanding what motivates people, understanding the challenges and responsibilities in their lives and galvanising that engagement. Nearly 60 percent of our staff work in the warehouse and collectively, they kept the operation going throughout the pandemic. They are all amazing individuals and genuinely take pride in what they do. Where there's lots of passion and commitment, there is a great basis on which to build, but you cannot take anything for granted. You cannot keep moving forward and leave important HR elements to their own devices, they must be considered, addressed, worked on and adapted.

FROM WHAT YOU SAY, ASENDIA REALLY HAS SOME VERY COMPELLING QUALITIES, BUT IN A HIGHLY-COMPETITIVE MARKET, WHERE SPEED OF CHANGE, GROWTH AND EXPANDING THE BUSINESS ARE FUNDAMENTAL, IS THERE A DANGER OF LOSING THAT? Very much so, that danger is always there and always has been. How often do we hear that a business is not

the same since, say, the merger or buyout? For me, it's definitely around constantly making sure that people understand where we are and where we're going and what part they're playing. An annual keynote from the CEO simply doesn't cut it, it has to be communicated and validated, with clarity and transparency over vision, mission and certainty on the vital elements that join the dots. But importantly, it's about putting people in that picture and making sure that there is inclusivity in the availability of learning, development and movement, so that people can meet their ambitions, though accepting of course that some people are quite happy to stay where they are. That's

"IT ALL COMES DOWN TO A BASIC TRUTH, THAT WE'RE ALL HUMAN AND WE ALL NEED TO INVEST IN UNDERSTANDING OURSELVES AND BUILDING AWARENESS. WE NEED TO NOT BE AFRAID, TO THINK AND OPERATE ON AN EMOTIONAL AS WELL AS A STRATEGIC LEVEL"

why individualism is so fundamental, rather than a blanketed, prescriptive approach which usually leads to alienation. There is also a balance to be struck between psychological safety and stretching people outside of their comfort zone. Going back to how my role is developing, I'm increasingly looking right across the business to ensure that, as leaders, we hold ourselves accountable, demonstrate true role-modeling behaviours and keep listening.

HOW DO YOU THINK THE ORGANISATION IS CHANGING IN THE WAKE OF THE PAST TWO YEARS? No doubt it's been a period

of phenomenal change, a real game-changer. But as a business, you cannot hide from change, you can't hold the status quo if it is irrelevant to changing situations. Take Brexit, which was massive to our sector and everything has changed, from policies to ways of operating. I reflected on that - what the key takeaways and learnings are - and inevitably, there is definitely a clear case for providing greater support for change. We need to equip people better. Fortunately, flexibility is in our DNA and I don't think that will ever go away. Being able to adapt very quickly is something that we can generally focus on more and develop those skills. We can only assume constant change and disruption that we will have to adapt to without losing visibility and momentum in our objectives. Times are challenging so we need to invest in building resilience and that brings into frame the wellbeing agenda and the support around mental, physical and financial wellbeing is really important. It's about communication and clarity and it's also about creating that experience of a great place to work in which people genuinely feel happy in. A culture that must radiate out to the talent that we must continue to attract into the business.

MUCH HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT CHANGING MINDSETS, WHAT A JOB AND CAREER REPRESENTS AND PRIORITIES AND ASPIRATIONS ARE ALTERING, AS IS THE EMPHASIS ON CSR AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES. No question, the environmental agenda is critical to the future. Every business has an inescapable responsibility to consider the environment. For years, we've worked together in partnership with the Woodland Trust through their Woodland Carbon Scheme and we're striving to mitigate our carbon footprint by ensuring that we're planting native trees right here in the UK. We have already planted trees on an area the size of 35 football pitches, locking up carbon and creating habitats for wildlife. As part of the global company, we are part of an overarching plan that includes taking a big step by mitigating the carbon fuel emissions by 100 percent in 2022. One

of the projects that we are really proud of are wind turbine farms in China that we have built and, looking at the long journey, the logistics network is gearing up to take more responsibility for its impact on the environment. The greater awareness is encouraging and we're determined to play our part. In terms of changing expectations, we are an increasingly diverse organisation - we have five different generations and 23 different nationalities - and we're improving all the time because we are genuinely embracing and supporting differences. We know the type of talent we want to attract and that is people from the widest possible diversity of backgrounds, to bring a rich collection of knowledge and experience into the business. In terms of difficulty in recruitment, by far the biggest challenge is the IT skill shortage - as it is for everyone and it's such an acute problem - and so we're planning to create our own pipeline, to develop from within. In terms of future attraction, there's so many different levels to consider, particularly as the hybrid workforce takes shape. It will be a challenging balance as we transition into the new normal. We're working hard to promote our proposition as a logistics organisation to the younger generation, because it's not an industry that tends to be on their radar, but as leading edge technology increasingly supersedes our operation, we need to shout louder. We currently have 30 percent shortages in the warehouse and the current resourcing crisis is predicted to grow worse.

HOW DO YOU THINK BEING OUTSIDE THE EU WILL IMPACT ON A GLOBAL SCALE IN THE FUTURE? It will no doubt be an era of both challenge and opportunity and we take a very optimistic and pragmatic approach and see it as a new set of policies and procedures, but giving more freedom on the global map. When I talk to the group's Chief People Officer in Switzerland, there is definitely a positive flow of energy. On a resourcing and career level, I see the future as providing some exciting opportunities as we open up to the world. From an operational point of view, end-to-end

we're an increasingly digital business and have seen global online sales grow 11 percent year-on-year, in this quarter. Let's not forget too, Europe hasn't gone away and is definitely full of opportunities and further growth. Our focus, in terms of business growth, is to build sales, develop new relationships with customers and third-parties and continue to improve our operations. In terms of Brexit itself, I am glad to say the business hasn't been affected, because we have been really prepared in advance. I'm confident that we are ready, we are agile enough and we have the business continuity plans in place to be able to adapt to changing situations. Despite the distractions and challenges, growth is at the top of our business plans agenda and we are ready.

"COVID HAS CHANGED PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WORK-RELATED CAUSES OF STRESS AND BURNOUT, BUT ALSO BROADENED THE SUBJECT TO A MORE HOLISTIC APPROACH TO WELLBEING. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW ORGANISATIONS CHANGE"

IT SEEMS THAT THE PANDEMIC HAS SHOWN BUSINESSES WHAT REAL DISRUPTION IS AND IS INFORMING THEM TO BE MORE PREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED. I look back at my career and I think I've always thrived and become restless when things were stagnant. Is it just me? I don't think so! Change is good because it requires that you do something to meet it and that is stimulating and forces you to think about how something can be improved. It's been interesting to see how different businesses have reacted over the past two years and it shows that some could adapt to making those changes more

successfully and quicker. The pandemic has been a terrible time for so many people, but what we all must do is learn, reflect and make sure that the future is a brighter place. We also need to be more accepting, that none of us are perfect and we don't always get it right. We're not machines, we're human and that needs to be celebrated. As I look ahead and think about what the business is planning to do and the main ambitions from an HR input point of view, without a doubt it is supporting the business growth and that means delivering the plans through attracting and developing the right skills, but equally balancing this up with supporting diversity and ensuring equality and inclusion. We need to make sure that we continue to develop the capabilities of our people and give them the confidence to forge their own destinies, with resilience and agility. As we've touched on, there's a shortage of key skills and rather than playing the victim to this reality and wringing our hands, we need to take responsibility and invest the time and resources to shaping our internal career and development paths and build a reliable and sustainable pipeline of talent. As I look towards the future, we have to be pragmatic and open to the fact that change will be the constant. But what I have learnt, above all else during my time in HR, is that you stand a better chance of succeeding if you take people with you and so we must allow ourselves and them to be human.

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ARTICLE BY
GEORGE KASERAS, FOUNDING DIRECTOR - TEAMUP

*This is an extract from Build Better Teams: creating winning teams
in the digital age by George Karseras.
Published by Mango Publishing*

EXTREME TEAMS FOR EXTREME TIMES

In our places of work, we are enduring digital transformation after digital transformation, each one taking us into unknown territories. Agile working, robotics, automation and AI are all producing huge disruption, as we are forced to innovate, migrate expensive architecture and shed thousands of jobs. Meanwhile, many organisations are grappling with the cloud and how to best leverage it.

The pressures of today are conspiring to make teaming in our places of work exceptionally difficult, more so than any of us have ever experienced before. Understanding these current day dynamics will help us to equip ourselves to better deal with them. Most teams, no matter where they sit in the value chain, are smack bang middle in the world of VUCA. The uncertainty and pace of change is so fierce, for some of us we might as well be in the jungle surrounded by flesh eating piranhas and jaguars. Apparently, the aim of digitalising on our places of work is to leverage advances in our tech to simplify and make life easier for our customers. Most leaders of the teams I work with would say that right now, it is achieving the polar opposite. For many, digitalisation and all that it brings, means you have to move at the speed of light, rapidly learn, innovate, pivot, collaborate across boundaries and influence without positional power.

Pivoting is not simply unilaterally making a change in direction and hoping that everyone else follows suit and learning is no longer achieved simply by going on courses, taking notes and accruing personal know-how. Both are team sports. We all have to become far more intelligent in how to team these days. We have to understand, at a far more pronounced level, how to create the conditions that produce team outcomes rather than individual outcomes.

One of the consequences of tech advancement has been the adoption of virtual working. The reality is, COVID-19 simply turbo-boosted an already existing trend. As we all know by now, it is much tougher to lead and participate in the virtual team - or partially virtual team - than a non-virtual one. It's not just a question of making sure we are presentable and sharp on screen, ensuring the team is on the same page, well-

coordinated, with minimum interpersonal conflict, are the main challenges we face. We all know that diversity is a good thing from a moral and ethical standpoint, but did you know that diverse teams, if well led, perform better than the more homogenous? More diversity means more complexity though and more complexity usually equates to more stress. These days, you have to deal with diversity *in* diversity. Globally, we have seen retirement ages rise from an average of 60 to 65 with some forecasting it will go up to 75 within the next ten-to-fifteen years. Coupled with falling birth rates, particularly in developed countries, this means that we can expect to see the proportion of older workers increasing. Meanwhile it has been estimated that by 2025, the younger Millennial generation, will make up 75 percent of the global workforce. Let's not forget too the Silent generation, those born pre-1946. However, managers are now leading

teams composed of all these generations, all at the same time. The inclusion of an unprecedented four different generations in the workplace, with a fifth on the way, is expected to create more complexity and ultimately more conflict to manage in the team. Telling stories and anecdotes and using language that connects with all ages can't be easy, nor can employing a leadership style that works for all. Baby Boomers are generally more comfortable working alone under a chain of command and are less comfortable collaborating, while their Millennial team members prefer their bosses to be less paternalistic and more socially responsible.

In our places of work, Millennials are less tolerant of role uncertainty than their older colleagues and as a result, they move around more. They are also in a better position to move jobs, as they are more likely to be single - three times more in fact - than "Silents" were at comparable ages. Additionally, they are far better educated and much more likely to be living in cities than their predecessors, both of which provide them with even more mobility. All the above explains why they are more likely to move jobs and take on more jobs over their careers than Gen Xers and spend less time in each job than Boomers. In Western organisations, Millennials are also more ambitious, valuing faster and better career advancement than Gen X, which values promotions more than Boomers. It seems that generations are growing more and more ambitious and while ambition is great, it needs to be thoughtfully managed. A telling statistic is that the median tenure for workers aged 25-to-34, is only 3.2 years, whereas for those aged sixty-five and over, is over three times longer at 10.3 years.

As for gender diversity, there's good news and bad news here. The good news is that we are seeing more equality and, thanks to the #MeToo movement, far more social awareness of gender equality than at any other time in our working lives. The bad news is that we are nowhere near where we need to be and gender bias remains very alive and

kicking, especially at the top of our organisations. More women than ever before are now working, with over 70 percent of those aged sixteen to sixty-four now employed at work in the UK. This represents a sizeable increase from the 53 percent recorded in 1971, yet the percentage of women in senior leadership roles is meagre, at only 22 percent. At the same time, a look at racial and ethnic diversity in the C-suite, there are only eighty-five of 1,050 director positions in the FTSE 100 held by people from ethnic minorities. Although 14.4 percent of the working population in the UK are BAME (Black,

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Asian, Minority Ethnic), only 12.5 percent of employees are BAME and only six percent of management positions are held by BAME individuals. It is expected that the UK working population made up of BAME, will grow over the next few years, from its current level of 12.5 percent, to closer to 20 percent. More recently, the Black Lives Matter movement has helped put racism squarely onto board room tables. However, attending inclusion and diversity training courses is all very well, but sociologists believe that only by actively encouraging interaction of diverse ethnicities in our workplaces, are we able to build greater trust. If you work in a large organisation,

then the chances are your team is now probably composed of members who also belong to other teams. Your team members are not solely "yours," yet you want them to be loyal and committed to you. The reality is, they also have to be loyal and committed to other teams too, as they have to divide their attention, adapt to different leadership styles, adopt different team norms and deal with conflicting demands. Last year I worked with a very senior team in a UK financial institution of fifteen people. The ideal number for a team is between four and six, with many commentators reporting dysfunction when numbers exceed ten-to-twelve. This is because bigger teams are tougher to galvanize. In a team of fifteen, there are one-hundred-and-five relationships impacting the team's performance and the complexity of that team meant I aged five years working with them and I was only with them for two days!

You may have realised this already, but we now live in a more individualistic world with less of a "team comes first" mentality and more of a "what's in it for me" mindset. It has been calculated that individualism has increased by about 12 percent worldwide since 1960. We are moving from a "We" society toward an "I" society. For many, the compassion shown in the COVID-19 epidemic has been a breath of fresh air, but will it last? Most countries are witnessing community spirit diminishing and compassion being replaced by personal ambition. Meanwhile, at the more extremes, the "dark side" of personality is growing darker. Narcissists, psychopaths and Machiavellians are not just selfish, unpleasant people, they can cause serious damage around them. Narcissists are like peacocks, believing they are special and possessing an extreme, grandiose view of their own talents and a craving for being admired by others. They tend to be arrogant, domineering and utterly preoccupied with success and power. Machiavellians, meanwhile, have been busy ingratiating themselves, building their power bases, exiting those who get in their way,

undermining the competition, taking credit for others' work and putting on shows of altruism in order to look compassionate. Machiavellianism also appears to be on the increase and it also seems younger folk are more prone to it than the older generation. Expect to see more of it going forward. Finally, we have psychopaths - an unappetising cocktail of narcissism and Machiavellianism - which at worst, ingeniously combine cruelty and impulsivity with an urge to manipulate. If you want a bona fide pain in the backside in your team, these provide the best bang for your buck. Unfortunately, as they are highly socially skilled and make very good first impressions, they are very adept at being selected for senior executive roles. Equipped with plenty of charisma, smart strategic thinking and buckets of energy and self-confidence, they make for highly desirable leaders, who can fake their interviews.

Mental health is not easy to maintain when working in extreme environments. It's sad but true that, as a species, we are becoming more and more depressed. We know this, not just because sales of antidepressants are going through the roof, but from a plethora of studies conducted in the area. Some of the data originates from the US, where the prevalence of depression increased significantly between 2005 and 2017. In the UK, mental ill health is amongst the most common causes of long-term absence at work, along with musculoskeletal injuries, stress and acute medical conditions. In 2019, more organisations than ever listed mental ill health as a cause for both short- and long-term absence. COVID-19 has made things worse, not better and we haven't even started to cope with the economic impact of the virus. We can expect more, not fewer mental health issues going forward. The impact on leaders? Well, put simply, leaders have to be fluent in the domain. They have to be able to do more to prevent it, do more to spot it and do more to deal with it when it happens - not by acting

as therapists - but certainly knowing when it might be occurring, how to recognise the signs, where to point people and by showing empathy and compassion. So, we can add coping with mental health to the digital age storm and further pressure on team leaders, to be able to build high levels of psychological safety to minimise mental health issues.

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Undoubtedly, team working has never been so important and never been so complex. If you're feeling more under pressure to bring the most out of your team than you have at any time in your career, then perhaps you can now understand why. If you are a leader, you could probably do with a bit of help - maybe a practical tool you could rely on to guide you through this most hostile of terrains would be of some use - perhaps even a code that you could apply - to help gain the most out of your team. Well, after much study and statistical testing to demonstrate its reliability and validity, we have identified a code that met every single one of the criteria we set. No other code is available, anywhere, that can claim to do this. It's a purposefully simple, memorable four-part code for any team to apply with absolute confidence. First, the team Gets Set, by sharing and forming agreed mental models, in order to rapidly build swift trust and to immediately propel

the team forward. While it is making these agreements, it enters the Get Safe phase. Here, it is more purposefully building trust, deepening relationships and forming a climate where the team can freely exchange opinions and feelings and where it is able to learn. When the team accumulates sufficient psychological safety, it will then be in a better position to engage in value driving interactions defined by autonomy, commitment and reliability in the third, Get Strong phase. It is these interactions that then produce the desirable outcomes we all want to see in the Get Success phase. Of course, the reality is that teams don't sit in any one phase of a linear journey at one point in time. Rather, they occupy the Set, Safe, Strong and Successful phases, all at the same time, only at varying degrees of competence. However, when it comes to improving the way a team works, we absolutely advise leaders to follow the code in the order it is set out. The code is structured in such a way that competence in each phase builds more competence in the next phase. In the team development journey, the team focuses its energy on developing its competence at each stage until it has reached a satisfactory level before then progressing to developing itself at the next phase. The code doesn't stop there, there's a code within the overall code. Each of the three development phases are divided into three skillsets, each containing three behaviours. We therefore have three lots of three behaviours, across three phases, totalling twenty-seven high performing team behaviours. The code is therefore simple, comprehensive, measurable, actionable, sequenced and builds swift trust. Finally, we can now say that leaders have a code they can confidently use to build their teams. One they can back. One that tells them what to do and in what order.



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ARTICLE BY
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*This is an edited extract from Business Trends in Practice:
The 25+ Trends that are Redefining Organisations, by Bernard Marr
Published by www.wiley.com*

BUILDING A MORE RESPONSIBLE COMPANY

We are entering an age where businesses will regularly face broad disruption of one kind or another. Indeed, a global survey by Deloitte revealed that six-out-of-ten business leaders believe we will see either occasional or regular business disruption going forward, with three-quarters believing the climate crisis is of similar or greater magnitude than the pandemic. This makes resilience more important than ever.

According to Deloitte, companies that want to build resilience and overcome future challenges - both expected and unexpected - must cultivate five characteristics, all of which were found in resilient companies that successfully weathered the COVID-19 crisis. These resilient organisations are: Prepared - they successfully balance planning for short-term and long-term eventualities. Adaptable - there is a particular focus on building a workforce of versatile, adaptable employees. Collaborative - improving collaboration and reducing silos across the organisation speeds up decision-making and boosts innovation. Trustworthy - resilient organisations work hard to improve communication and transparency with key stakeholders, building trust and leading with empathy. Responsible - successful organisations recognise that their responsibilities extend beyond the bottom line and work hard to balance the needs of all

stakeholders. Although I would argue responsibility also extends beyond stakeholders to the world around us. During the pandemic, organisations that were able to pivot to digital channels or accelerate their digital transformation were clearly better equipped to survive. But if the next pandemic is a digital virus, that takes down the internet, businesses with a physical infrastructure would be better equipped to survive, while those solely reliant on digital channels would face a major existential threat. Therefore, resilience in the fourth industrial revolution may include balancing digital with other channels, such as brick-and-mortar retail.

But even if a global digital virus doesn't hit, individual organisations are extremely vulnerable to cyberattacks, which can cripple operations, hit the bottom line and destroy trust in the organisation. The severity of cyber

breaches is increasing - this is why cyber-resilience is so important. If cybersecurity is the practice of protecting your digital systems and assets (including data) from attack, cyber-resilience prepares the organisation on what to do in the event of an attack. Cyber-resilience is all about maintaining key operations during an attack and returning the business to being fully operational as quickly as possible. These days, as the severity of attacks grows, you cannot have cybersecurity without cyber-resilience. Organisations must train employees to understand the importance of cybersecurity and cyber-resilience and are better equipped to spot cybersecurity threats, such as phishing attempts. Part of this training should include what will happen in the event of an attack. Firms must have robust cybersecurity technology and practices in place, including: firewalls, data backups and the like - along with

separate critical and noncritical systems - so that, should a noncritical system be breached, critical systems remain unaffected. Also, it is essential to have an incident response plan that sets out the technology response - how to stop the attack, maintain business functions, repair systems and so on - and practice running a mock attack and operating the business with restricted resources. Additionally, think about the communication approach - who you need to inform about the attack - including stakeholders and potentially law enforcement and regulatory bodies. Then there is the post-incident investigation procedures. Will you, for example, conduct an internal investigation into what went wrong or hire a third-party investigator?

If resilience - and cyber-resilience - is about making sure your business can continue to operate for the short and long term, then sustainability is of course a huge part of that. If we don't minimise the climate impact of doing business, then it's not just organisations that will suffer, but all of us. Today, every business must look at its operations to minimise the environmental impact and eliminate or reduce the environmental costs of doing business. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), eight supply chains account for more than 50 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions and they are; food, construction, fashion, fast-moving consumer goods, electronics, automotive, professional services and freight. If companies in these sectors can address their supply chain emissions, they will create a bigger impact than solely focusing on their direct operations and power consumption. They can multiply their climate impact, in other words - with only a marginal increase on product costs, according to the WEF. To address supply chain emissions, the WEF recommends nine major initiatives: Build a comprehensive emissions baseline and encourage suppliers to participate with actual data and set ambitious, holistic reduction targets and report on progress. Redesign products for sustainability and reconsider the

(geographic) sourcing strategy. Set ambitious procurement standards that integrate emissions metrics and then track progress against these standards. Work with suppliers to address their emissions and collaborate with peers to align sector targets and initiatives that maximise impact and level the playing field. Use scale by driving up demand - for example, through "buyer groups" - to lower the cost of green solutions. Finally, develop internal governance mechanisms that align the incentives of decision-makers with emission targets. While this is particularly relevant to the eight industries highlighted by

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the WEF, any business can work to decarbonise their supply chain by following these recommendations. If all businesses followed these steps, they could multiply their climate impact several times over and give global climate action an enormous boost. What an incredible thought.

Looking beyond the supply chain, let us quickly explore some simple steps that any business can follow to build a more sustainable business: Understand your current impact - once you understand where you're at now, you can take steps to improve the situation. You can start small by examining your energy usage and water intake and work with energy and water providers to cut your usage.

Switch to renewable energy - this is one of the most powerful ways your business can make a difference. Reduce waste, reuse and recycle - from reducing energy waste to recycling materials like paper and plastic, there are many ways to reduce, reuse and recycle across the organisation. Then, audit the products, materials and services you use and switch to sustainable alternatives. From the toilet paper in employee restrooms and the products used by cleaners, to your web hosting provider, shipping vendors and software providers, because there is often a carbon-neutral alternative out there. Also, switch to sustainable packaging for your products - compostable packaging is ideal - recyclable packaging is a bare minimum. Allow people to work remotely, where appropriate, because fewer people traveling for work means lower emissions. Where you do expect people to travel to work, offer them incentives to travel by bike or public transportation and consider; bike loans, season ticket loans and subsidised fares. Consumers are increasingly concerned about the climate crisis and want to buy from responsible, sustainable businesses. Therefore, perhaps the biggest advantage of building a more sustainable business is increased brand recognition, which in turn helps to attract and retain customers. Therefore, a boost to employer brand can be achieved by promoting sustainability, which in turn can help attract and retain talent. Reduce costs, in some areas - for example, reducing energy waste and water usage can add up to significant savings in the long term. Firms can also take advantage of tax incentives - depending on where you are in the world - you may receive a tax credit for investing in renewable technologies.

Now let's turn these ideas into practice and explore some examples of sustainable business operations in practice. There are so many interesting, inspiring examples I could have included and this selection of use cases is by no means exhaustive. More, it provides a taste of what's possible. Speaking of taste, Tony

Chocolonely is doing great things across its supply chain. The company works to make the cocoa industry fair trade and free from slavery and child labor. Meanwhile, from an environmental standpoint, Tony's doesn't use palm oil and has introduced a number of measures to reduce and offset its climate impact. As an example, Tony's collaborates with non-for-profit Justdiggit, to restore and re-green dry lands in Africa, where the majority of cocoa beans are grown. It's no wonder Tony's has been crowned the Netherlands' most sustainable brand for four years in a row. For me, sustainability isn't just about a businesses' environmental footprint, but also their social footprint. In other words, how we treat people matters. Tony's is a shining example of how businesses can work to calculate and reduce the true social costs of their products and services. Another player in the chocolate world - through its Cocoa For Good initiative - Hershey is investing half a billion dollars by 2030 to create a more sustainable supply chain and end deforestation¹². The company is a founding member of the Cocoa & Forest Initiative (CFI) and as part of its CFI forest protection plans in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, Hershey is distributing 900,000 trees to farms, distributing more than 2.5 million cocoa seedlings to farmers and satellite mapping 50,000 farms. The satellite mapping will aid traceability and support a deforestation alert system. The company is also investing in renewable energy, has set aggressive emissions targets and has promised to make 100 percent of its plastic packaging recyclable, reusable, or compostable by 2030.

A change of scene from confectionary, in the sports and outdoor clothing sector, you might struggle to find a more substantiable brand than Patagonia. Through workshops, Patagonia teaches consumers how to repair their clothing - or the company will fix it for them - whether it's Patagonia clothing or not. The company is working towards being completely carbon neutral by 2025. As part of this, 100 percent of Patagonia's

electricity needs in the US are met with renewable electricity and 64 percent of fabrics - at the time of writing - are made with recycled fabrics. In addition, one percent of the firm's revenue goes to supporting environmental organisations and its social responsibility programs ensure products are produced under safe, fair, legal and humane working conditions. Indeed, several companies are rejecting the idea of sending their waste to landfill. Food company General Mills, for example, finds other uses for

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by-products, such as oat hulls, which are now used as fuel. Globally, the company reuses or recycles over 80 percent of its solid waste⁶. Meanwhile, in 2021, the Estrella Damm brewery launched the world's first aluminium beverage cans to be certified by the Aluminium Stewardship Initiative, a scheme that guarantees high environmental, social and ethical standards across the whole life cycle of aluminium. In addition, Damm works to raise awareness of recycling, has eliminated plastic rings from multipacks and instead uses 100 percent biodegradable cardboard - resulting in a reduction of over 260 tons of plastic per year. Another brewer, Seven Bro7hers has teamed up with Kellogg's to create sustainable beers made from cereal waste (or "upcycled cereal" as they call it). Each beer is made from discarded grains created in Kellogg's cereal cooking process; in other words, grains that aren't quite up to scratch for our morning cereal are used

to make beer. The range includes beers made from Corn Flakes, Rice Krispies and Coco Pops - and with names like Throwaway IPA and Sling It Out Stout, it's clear that sustainability is core to the company's brand. In another part of the alcoholic beverage market too, Mackmyra, the whiskey distiller, has created what it calls the world's first "environmentally friendly distillery." Named the Gravity Distillery - because it makes use of gravity at each stage of the process - the distillery uses barley from local farms (to reduce transport), heats water using bio-pellets and returns wastewater back into the system. Then in the restaurant sector, Yum! brands including - KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell - are creating a clear pathway to reducing packaging waste and removing Styrofoam and expanded polystyrene from packaging at all KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco bell locations around the world. Then by 2025, it has pledged to make all consumer-facing packaging at Taco Bell recyclable, compostable, or reusable and adding recycling and compost bins to restaurants and make all plastic-based consumer-facing packaging at KFC recoverable or reusable. This shows how you don't have to tackle everything in one go. Rather, set out a series of measures and milestones that will make a big difference. Finally, let us take a look at Orsted - ranked as the world's most sustainable energy company - is on track to become carbon neutral in its energy generation and operations by 2025, which will make it the first major energy company to transition from fossil fuels to net-zero emissions. The company is focusing its sustainability on three themes; decarbonising its supply chains, improving biodiversity management to work in balance with local ecosystems and creating shared value with local communities.

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I ORGANISATIONAL AGILITY

THAT A SOLID FOUNDATION IS FUNDAMENTAL TO ANY ORGANISATION HOLDS TRUE, BUT IF THAT RENDERS A BUSINESS SLOW TO CHANGE, RELIANT ON THE TRIED-AND-TRUSTED, RISK AVERSE AND WEDDED TO LEGACY, THEN THE OUTCOME IN THIS AGE OF SUDDEN AND CONSTANT CHANGE IS INEVITABLE. REGARDLESS OF SECTOR, FUTURE SUCCESS WILL BE PREDICATED ON AGILITY, OF TURNING SPEED-OF-THOUGHT INTO ACTION, TO DISRUPT AND DEFINE NEW MARKETS AND INITIATIVES, NOT REACT AFTER A RIVAL HAS SHAKEN THE BOX.

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#HR #Polls | Do you think that your organisation is less or more agile after the experiences of the pandemic?

More

78.6%

Less

21.4%



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ARTICLE BY DAVID BOOTH, STRATEGIST, AUTHOR & FELLOW OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING SOCIETY - STRATEGY JOURNEYS

*David Booth is the author of Strategy Journeys:
A Guide to Effective Strategic Planning
Published by Routledge*

ENIGMA MACHINE

TRADITIONAL APPROACHES TO STRATEGIC PLANNING - DEVELOP A DEFINITIVE PLAN AND IMPLEMENT IT OVER THREE-TO-FIVE YEARS UNTIL IT IS REPLACED WITH THE NEXT - IS NOW CLEARLY NOT FIT FOR PURPOSE. IT NEEDS TO BE DYNAMIC AND CONSTANTLY CHECKED TO ENSURE ROUTE AND DESTINATION ARE STILL APPROPRIATE, IN AN ONGOING JOURNEY, NOT A ONE-OFF PROJECT.

At its heart, strategy is about how people in an organisation make sense of where it is going and how it's going to arrive. It's about people, conversations and questions - not just sophisticated analysis, boardroom workshops and glossy documents - and it is important to demystify strategic planning and focus on strengthening the strategic capabilities, processes and culture within an organisation, to enable such 'sensemaking' and 'rich conversations' to happen. So, what are the key elements to consider in order to build the capabilities for toward dynamism and agility in the strategy design? As is the case with other aspects of building a healthy organisation, several factors need to work together to help make this happen. There are three levels: The ability of people to think and talk, strategically and the confidence and opportunity to do so - to be more succinct, this is strategic thinking capability. There needs to be effective processes to engage people in the discussion of strategy and consequent decision-making and implementation and the capacity to facilitate and manage these, in short, strategic management capability. It requires an ability to achieve consensus for how and when to use such processes and the confidence that these will work well - ergo, strategic leadership capability. All three of these capabilities are required

and they are mutually supportive in developing the organisation's approach and abilities in implementing strategy.

There is no question that a stronger focus on the future is essential, in readiness for the possibilities and their implications, the opportunities and how to realise these. Strategic planning is no

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longer about linear projections extrapolating what is known. Therefore, futures thinking is an essential skill in considering possible routes and outcomes - both desirable and undesirable - and thinking through the implications. Businesses also need to work through how they will accept and deal with uncertainty, including assessing and managing strategic risk and embedding

an agile and adaptive approach so that they can respond dynamically to changes and opportunities. Incorporating this into strategic management processes is vital, to begin to anticipate and think through what might affect the organisation's future and how it will deal with this.

The third key element is to establish a culture that enables and supports such an approach to strategy, encouraging the strategy conversations and processes as an ongoing part of how the organisation functions and engaging people in this. The ability to learn is vital, because strategy is not just about the techniques and tools that can be used in analysis and formulation, it's about what is learnt collectively, from what is encountered, then remembering this, acting on it and applying that learning in future. Indeed, Henry Mintzberg stated that strategy is more about learning than it is about planning. The ability of an organisation to learn is the key strategic differentiator. This is an ongoing journey. It will require investing in strengthening strategic capabilities and ensuring that organisational culture sufficiently supports and engages, to enable a more dynamic approach to strategy. But what is paramount is an openness to learn.

FOR FURTHER INFO
WWW.STRATEGYJOURNEYS.CO.UK



ARTICLE BY MATT SPRY, STRATEGY CONSULTANT AND FOUNDER - EMERGENT

HOUSE OF CARDS

"THE DECISION PART IS EASY WHEN YOU LET THE GUARD RAIL OF YOUR PRINCIPLES GUIDE YOUR ACTIONS, DECISIONS AND BEHAVIOURS, THAT'S THE REASON FOR CREATING THOSE SUPER-BRIGHT LINES, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE THOSE HARD DECISIONS"

At time of writing, Elizabeth Holmes - former CEO of Theranos, the US blood-testing firm - is on trial, indicted by a Federal Grand Jury on nine counts of alleged wire fraud and two counts of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, distributing blood tests with falsified results to consumers. Previously, Theranos raised more than US\$700 million from venture capitalists and private investors, resulting in a \$10 billion valuation at its peak. It's an extreme case, illustrating the importance of balancing competing tensions.

In this fast moving era, organisational agility means quick thought and decision making, adjusting to change before it happens and speed to market. But as this case exemplifies, when ambition comes before preparedness and capability, value is based on promise, which is nothing until it is delivered. Theranos illustrates to every start-up the importance of balancing the competing tensions of raising the profile of a venture - often a "fake it 'til you make it" approach - as opposed to raising money at favourable valuations, with transparency and disclosing the reality of progress. Clearly, Theranos has been accused of allegedly setting this balance disastrously wrong and misleading investors and customers on the capability of their medical devices,

whilst trying to solve fundamental technical issues in secret. The choice of risking the disgrace of public collapse, rather than being honest about shortcomings, is a starkly fundamental one. The reality is, tensions are an essential part of any business and creating balance is a key part of strategy design. Strategic tensions force decisions between competing demands and prioritising what is most important defines the organisation. Indeed, abdicating from these choices is a decision by default.

Now, more than ever, managing competing tensions is critical, as we transition from a carbon-intensive economy to one built around sustainability, where new tensions are being introduced, with an

environmentally sustainable balance to find. Likewise, with organisational structures and how people are managed, a new generation of businesses is emerging that takes a radically more decentralised and people-centred approach, in contrast to the prevailing hierarchical command-and-control model. With new ideas, new models, new tensions, new choices, new opportunities and new balances, it's pretty easy to spot a business that calls it wrong, because we read about them in the news. The glacial pace of acknowledgement of the role fossil fuels play in climate change by petrol and gas companies, suggest a sector that values short term commercial reward above long-term sustainability. Remember how Nokia fell behind because it valued

incremental improvements of existing products over the innovation of touchscreen technology and the mobile web. Then there is the ongoing narrative of workers in Amazon, which suggests a culture of command and control over worker trust and autonomy. Perplexingly, it's much harder to find those who have the balance right, but there are some examples: Patagonia successfully balances the design and supply of their clothes, with their aspirational environmental standards and commercial needs. Buurtzorg has created a way to balance patient needs with regulatory standards, providing medical staff with autonomy to make decisions over care pathways and affordability. But regardless of the type of business, organisations must balance these many competing tensions and it's a never-ending juggling act which, depending on context and sector, may make some tensions more critical than others at different times.

Whilst every organisation is different, there is much common ground when it comes to strategic tensions. All businesses have to consider short-term goals v long term vision and strike a balance between results today and investment for greater reward and impact over a longer time horizon. In consideration of commercial ambition v sustainability, as we transition to a net-zero world, what level of commercial ambition can be sacrificed for sustainability and is it right to wait for sustainability legislation or lead change early and be a pioneer? Then there is control v freedom, in how closely teams are directed and their level of autonomy and freedom in how they deliver. Then there is a balance of pace with transformation v incremental change is it right to make marginal gains or target a step change? Moving onto challenge v support, the balance of challenging teams to take accountability whilst providing support, is a fine line. Finally, the headliner is purpose v profit and, with goals that are beyond the bottom line, such as social impact, what level of financial return will be acceptable.

The first and most essential step is to define a set of strategy or design

principles. These are different from values, which are often too vague to be useful, when facing a difficult choice. Strategy principles set the rules by which everyone in the business will act and can be very specific, when it comes to managing the tensions described above. These rules define the type of organisation you want to be, as this is about creating the guidelines to follow when things are tough. Principles should make difficult decisions easy. A great example of this is the reaction of Crossfit New England to the COVID-19 outbreak. Owner Ben Bergeron's overarching goal is to optimise members' health over the long-term and,

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by long-term, he means their entire life, not just the next few months. When the pandemic first struck the US and cases were rapidly rising, he faced a choice - keep the gym open as long as possible to maximise income, or shut early to protect members from potential infection. For Bergeron, the choice was clear: "When we decided to shut the gym - I believe we were the first CrossFit gym in the United States to make that decision - that was a really difficult decision, except that it's not. When you establish your principles as hard as we have, the decision is easy, the action is hard. That is a litmus test for, 'are you making the right decision.'" The decision part is easy when you let the guard rail of your principles guide your actions, decisions and behaviours, That's the reason for creating those super-bright

lines, so you don't have to take those hard decisions. Now, the hard part is the action.

Of course, words are one thing, but ensuring that they become action is what really matters. Alongside principles, you need to build accountability systems to make sure they are not ignored or overruled, when it's convenient to do so. As Facebook/Meta has demonstrated repeatedly, leaving these decisions in the hands of one person without due governance and oversight is risky. There are many ways you can do this. Firstly, you can use performance measures and metrics, turn principles into measurable behaviours or actions that can be tracked, make them explicit to the organisation and celebrate when they are achieved. Internal communications are critical to embedding principles in teams. Be transparent when you have faced difficult choices and stayed true to your path. The Board also has a key role to play in holding the leadership to account for decisions made and the principles that underpin them. This was exemplified in action earlier in 2021, when JP Morgan Chase's Board rejected the call by its CEO Jamie Damon, to convert to a public benefit corporation. It's a story that reflects the choice every organisation has to make in choosing which stakeholders matter the most and in whose best interests the firm will act. The design of every organisation is a product of decisions made by leaders in balancing the competing tensions they face. Don't leave this balance to chance, instead consciously choose the kind of organisation you want to be and establish the principles and practices that make it easy. Don't abdicate, make the balancing act deliberate and reap the rewards from well calibrated decision-making.

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Z E N

Impacts of the pandemic have created a greater appreciation that agility is not just one thing, or a set of tools, but must be embedded into the way a business operates. COVID exposed rigidity in many organisations and highlighted the many challenges in responding to change, making decisions and working at pace. There are numerous examples of businesses who were responsive, but for those that struggled, it has proved costly. Question is, how can business be better at anticipating and making decisions?

"THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM HAS A LEGACY PATTERN OF TRYING TO FIX THE HERE AND NOW IN FRAGMENTED, FUNCTIONAL AND PROGRAMMATIC WAYS, WHILST MISSING THE MODERATE TO LONGER TIME HORIZON AND ITS BURDENSOME BUREAUCRACY"



ARTICLE BY CHRIS FURNELL, ORGANISATION DESIGN CONSULTANT & MARK LASCOLA, MANAGING PRINCIPAL - ON THE MARK

What is HR's role in being first responder to these operational and strategic shifts, on the frontline of agility? HR needs to be able to connect the dots, between market changes and the burdens and inhibitors buried in the operating model that hinder agility. This requires HR to challenge and intervene, go beyond people processes and sift through traditional and warm data - through both a business and people lens - to influence action. It's about balancing operational needs, whilst maintaining a primary focus on what the business needs to be doing well, to respond to its marketplace.

A few years ago, the UK's National Nuclear Laboratories was up against its outdated, under-performing, bureaucratic operating model, with impending challenges to its revenue in the coming years. Business leadership could see some of the challenges and looked at them in a traditional, fragmented way common to most businesses. The solution was to install a Chief Operating Officer. The CHRO saw it very differently and proactively worked with the executive team to identify firstly, what work they needed to be good at, before any assumptions or decisions are made about the people and skills. This critical agility work of changing the operating model in a more holistic and coordinated way is being carried out by HR, but nowhere as widespread as it needs to be. HR needs to be proactively helping the business define what work it needs to be good at, whilst adapting the operating model. This means balancing operational HR roles and moving from the typical psychological positions from where it bids to help a business be more responsive.

UK Healthcare provides another good example: The healthcare marketplace has changed significantly, with varied customer demands and behaviours pummeling healthcare providers - along with the rise of Integrated Care Systems - being two significant market influences. Progressive healthcare providers are looking at what they need to be good at and have realised significant value can be gained by investing in anticipating and coordinating healthcare needs, before

a customer enters the care delivery system. The focus shifts to not just what care is delivered, but how and crucially when someone requires care and treatment. But like many businesses, the healthcare system has a legacy pattern of trying to fix the here and now in fragmented, functional and programmatic ways, whilst missing the moderate to longer time horizon and its burdensome bureaucracy. In the healthcare instance, HR's role needs to help balance the two time horizons and ensure the work the business needs to be good at in the moderate to long term, is constantly monitored and actioned to

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PSYCHOLOGICAL POSITIONS"

adapt the operating model, to address significant shifts in the market. Of course, HR needs to be good at the things HR does today - including workforce modelling and planning - but must also focus more on integrating its traditional work with the business strategy and demand planning. Progressive healthcare providers are integrating these aspects of work to enrich business intelligence with people intelligence. Yes, operational work may always need to be carried out, but HR needs to add value by looking ahead and acting as air traffic control of the operating model - sensing across the end-to-end work of the organisation - and helping the business connect the dots and take proactive decisions.

Perhaps the starkest of learnings from the pandemic was how to get work done

quickly and the dependency on decision making. Making decisions at pace will always be a central characteristic to agility. But as the pandemic has exposed, there needs to be mechanisms in the operating model to ensure decisions are made at the right place, at the right time, by the right people coherently and in a sustainable way. Driving decisions most local to where customer needs can be best satisfied has been liberating during the pandemic. There is a desire to avoid springing back to how work used to be carried out and decisions made pre-pandemic. Again, HR's role is to help the business design and maintain the structures and management mechanisms to embed local decision-making as business as usual, thus avoiding the assumption "we managed to make it work in the pandemic, let's just carry on." A closer look in many businesses exposes decision-making framework and implications of decisions that were not documented nor fully understood.

One final case in point, a UK Retailer had a framework in place which was principles-based. It was a mechanism whereby everybody from the CEO to the checkout operator was familiar with a common set of principles, by which situational judgement could be applied and decisions made. There is no arguing that the person closest to the work is the one with the best visibility of circumstances in front of them. Agility in this context, requires the business to trust that the individual will do the right thing, but acknowledges that the framework, principles and coaching is required to see more than just what is in front of them. This mechanism is two-way - to aggregate and make sense of the decisions made at a local level - and to disseminate information and decisions which responds to strategic shifts. HR's role is not only to help put the mechanisms in place in the operating model, but to maintain the two-way relationship of trust and empowerment.

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WWW.ON-THE-MARK.COM

II

MANAGING ACROSS THE DEMOGRAPHIC

FOR VIRTUAL WORKERS, LOCKDOWN CANDIDLY OPENED UP PEOPLE'S LIVES, LET US IN ON THEIR WORLDS AND THEY OURS. THE USUAL GUARDS CAME DOWN TO REVEAL REALITY AND, ALONGSIDE THE PANDEMIC'S TERRIBLE NARRATIVE AND OTHER SHOCKING WORLD EVENTS, REVEALED COMPELLING REASONS TO REALLY CARE AND CONSIDER OTHERS AND THEIR MYRIAD OF SITUATIONS, NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS. THIS IS A ONCE-IN-A-LIFE-TIME OPPORTUNITY TO BETTER SUPPORT THE WIDE WORKING DEMOGRAPHIC.

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theHRDIRECTOR @theHRDIRECTOR
#HR #Polls | Do you believe that there is parity and equity across the demographic in your organisation?

Yes

33.3%

No

66.7%



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ARTICLE BY HARVEY FRANCIS, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT - SKANSKA UK PLC

HARD HAT REQUIRED

ALTHOUGH CONSTRUCTION HAS ALTERED IN MANY SIGNIFICANT WAYS, THE PERCEPTION IS IT IS HAVING TROUBLE CATCHING UP WITH CHANGING REALITY. IT'S A MUCH-MISUNDERSTOOD SECTOR FOR SURE, BUT IT IS TRUE TO SAY THAT WE HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO, TO HAVE THE DIVERSITY THAT MOST OTHER SECTORS BENEFIT FROM.

Skanska, the company I work for, has done a lot over the past few years to attract more people from typically under-represented groups, with some success. But this requires an open-minded approach at all points in the resourcing process, as our traditional talent pools are still quite un-diverse. Whilst the number of females graduating from civil engineering degrees is increasing, the change is not happening fast enough and therefore we have been taking a wider approach to early career recruitment, focusing more on apprenticeships and non-engineering degrees. The result is, half of our annual emerging talent intake is now from underrepresented groups. But there is a fundamental issue to be addressed, which is to do with the perception - and, to some degree, the reality - of how inclusive a male dominated workplace can really be. This is where we are placing most of our focus and why we refer to our work in this area as I&D rather than D&I.

If the workplace culture isn't inclusive and appreciative of difference, then there's really no point in trying to increase the number of people from under-represented groups. Organisations must put in place the initiatives, infrastructure and support mechanisms required to retain diverse talent. We have six active Employee Networks, each of which plays a critical role in supporting colleagues and amplifying their voices within the

business and the network leads sit on our I&D Leaders Forum, along with our CEO. This allows us to better understand the needs of our diverse groups and helps us design actions from the point of view of the lived experience of our employees.

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So, with that in mind, we have set about really trying to understand the lived experience of how all demographic groups experience our culture, what helps them feel included and crucially, what is in the way of realising that.

The critical ingredient in making sure we are successful, is leadership. If leaders aren't convinced by the need for and benefits of inclusion and diversity, then simply put, it will not happen. We have run strategic narrative workshops with our leaders, to help them personally develop and articulate their own

authentic business case, as to why I&D is vital to the delivery of their business objectives. If leaders believe in the benefits and want it to happen, they can make it so. HR can't do it, but it must be considered and valued as a priority at business level, not at a functional level. The tried-and-tested approaches used over the past few years have taken us to where we are today, but simply won't take us where we need to go next. Over the last 18 months, we have engaged over 100 of our senior leaders in discussions about, how to have conversations about race and LGBTQ+, helping them understand the different experiences and issues underrepresented groups can face.

Construction has an ageing workforce and historically has under-invested in skills development, due in part to the volatile nature of the work pipeline and the plentiful availability of workers from Europe and elsewhere. This availability is no longer there. Therefore, the key to remaining sustainable is the development of home-grown skills and talent and taking full advantage of the wonderful diversity the whole labour market has to offer. By definition, I don't believe it's possible to build for a better society if our workplaces are not truly inclusive, so the business case for greater inclusion is very clear.

FOR FURTHER INFO
SKANSKA.CO.UK



ARTICLE BY STEVE TONKS, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT EMEA - WORKFORCE SOFTWARE

A PLAN FOR ALL SEASONS

"EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES ARE INCREASINGLY MISALIGNED ON VITAL ISSUES - SUCH AS JOB TRAINING, SCHEDULING FLEXIBILITY AND SALARIES - WHICH ULTIMATELY AFFECTS BOTH EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE AND HEIGHTENS EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORKPLACE"

Much has been written and discussed that, for the first time in history, five distinct generations occupy space in the global workforce. It's an amazing statistic, but what does it actually mean in reality? Undeniably, each group has unique personal, professional and occupational needs, but what is true and what is stereotype? The traditionalist, say, prefer a manual processes and in-person interaction and Gen Z turns to technology to check the weather, rather than look out of the window.

Unquestionably, there is more to understanding each generation's working styles, needs and expectations than meets the eye, in the endeavour to improve employees experience in an equitable way. Perhaps we should approach it like managing a local football team? Each player requires different guidance - goalkeepers need advice and practice on diving and catching, whereas strikers focus on attack, heading and shooting at goal. Some perform better in response to constructive criticism, while others prefer a friendly arm around the shoulder. So, in this example, treating each player the same would be a disaster for team spirit and performance, rendering the club a dead cert for relegation. So to begin, let

us consider what each employee wants most when they come to work: Is it a sense of purpose and more meaningful tasks? Ongoing job training and career development? A better work-life balance, with extra control over working arrangements? The only way to be sure is to ask and then put time and resources into delivering these changes.

When recognising the generational differences, it makes sense to identify the similarities too. Employers and employees are increasingly misaligned on vital issues - such as job training, scheduling flexibility and salaries - which ultimately affects both employee experience and heightens employee perceptions of the workplace. It's important to remain

mindful of the toll that high levels of stress can take on an individual, which can be detrimental, not only to health and wellbeing, but also impacts the overall operations of an organisation. Notably, younger generations are less willing to put up with this than their hard-pushed predecessors. Though much of the conversation around talent focuses on younger generations, it is important to not overlook those at the other end of their career, who bring invaluable experience, knowledge and guidance that is vital to any team. So, what matters to them? Older workers are largely more loyal to an employer - and feel that their job is part of their identity - and this cohort is more likely to value flexibility

that allows them to provide elder care or be a parent or grandparent as well as an employee. On the flipside of this, younger workers are more individualistic, driven by personal development opportunities and autonomy over their working day. Younger generations too are the main protagonists in challenging companies, to be more sustainable and environmentally conscious, as well as more transparent and equitable in how they pay their employees. We are in the throws of the so-called 'Great Resignation' and, in a jobs market where employees hold great bargaining power, young talent can afford to speak their mind.

The bottom line is, employees everywhere want to be heard and valued - and technology is the bridge to enabling this. However, all generations have some working values in common, for example the non-financial aspects of work are of high importance across the board. Meanwhile, almost all of over-65's report that an enjoyable job is essential to living a fulfilled life and 81 percent of employees want their companies to prioritise creating and sustaining a positive culture. Purpose is clearly a shared priority across the workforce, regardless of age. Between August 2020 and January 2021, 1.1 million workers over 55 exited the workforce, leaving a gaping hole in the economy that has not yet been closed and, by 2025, around two-thirds of the workforce will be Gen Y and Gen Z - of course, digitally native, with high expectations of technology and expectation to be heard. That is why digitisation is having a big impact on employee experience, with 78 percent of employees saying that technology provided by an employer is a key factor when choosing a role, whether that be technology that helps them check schedules, request time off, bid for overtime or even engage with their manager.

The pandemic exposed inflexibility in many enterprise solutions, such as; the ability to make changes to sick pay and absence rules, implement contact tracing or pre-shift health screening was very

challenging. Those employers who adopted digital solutions were more able to react more quickly and therefore build resilience into their operations, ultimately providing a better employee experience. Deskless workforces - such as retail or manufacturing - often include a far wider range of ages, from the 16-year-old Sunday worker to those who are beginning to think about retirement. However, despite the many differences, they have one thing in common - they lack the digital tools they need to work efficiently in today's world. For example, 83 percent of frontline workers, don't have a corporate email address and 45 percent

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have no access to the company intranet when at work. While this has long been accepted by the 2.7 billion deskless workers around the world, times are changing. For one, the pandemic brought about several new challenges as most employers of deskless talent were left scrambling to communicate with their employees on, for example; what safety protocols would be in place, when operations would resume, how employee schedules would be impacted and what to do if an employee was infected. A light was shone on the pure inefficiency of not having a digitally connected workforce and that vital information to hand. This

was made even more evident by the Gen Z and Millennial workers within the talent pool. Less than one percent of enterprise software spending is directed at the deskless workers, yet 73 percent are of the digital native generations. These employees are looking for consumer-grade experiences in their work life that match their experience outside work. During the pandemic, frustrated deskless workers found themselves filling the technology gap themselves with self-made WhatsApp groups, for example. This is detrimental on many levels, as it shows a company's lack of investment in meeting the needs of younger, digitally-fluent workers, while also often cutting higher management out of valuable conversations and taking professional information onto personal platforms, a risk any HR or IT professional will recognise.

Managing across a workforce as complex as it is today is no easy task, but there are several actions employers should focus on if they want to improve the employee experience for workers of all ages. From enabling two-way conversations with co-workers and managers, ensuring employee voices are heard and responding to feedback in a timely manner, to integrating modern, consumer-grade technology into their workflows and creating a better work/life balance, by providing flexibility and control over schedules/rosters. For all of these and more, all should start with the same first step, listening. Every employee has a voice to be heard and in today's increasingly competitive landscape, businesses cannot afford to ignore them and accept the churn. It's imperative to provide an experience that empowers all talent, regardless of their age, background - or any other characteristic for that matter - to have a positive and successful working experience.

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WWW.WORKFORCESOFTWARE.COM

ALICE THROUGH THE CEILING GLASS

AS THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC CONTINUES TO UNFOLD, WE ARE ALREADY OBSERVING ITS REGRESSIVE EFFECT ON GENDER EQUALITY THROUGHOUT THE WORKPLACE. THE PANDEMIC HIGHLIGHTED INEQUALITIES, SHOWED THE DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT OF A CRISIS ON WOMEN AND ALLOWED MISOGYNY TO GROW. NOW IS THE TIME TO STEM THE PANDEMIC GENDER-EFFECT AND ADDRESS LONGSTANDING GENDER INEQUALITY ISSUES HEAD-ON BEFORE MATTERS ARE MADE EVEN WORSE.

ARTICLE BY THOM DENNIS, CEO - SERENITY IN LEADERSHIP

Gender inequality was already an enormous problem pre-COVID, but the pandemic has compounded inequalities that women have faced for years such as; lower pay, feeling pressured to work more than their agreed hours, being penalised for choosing flexible work options, facing higher performance criteria, glass ceilings and feeling like they need to continually prove themselves amidst male preferential treatment. Many of us have demonstrated that we can work effectively from home but again, women bore the brunt of a great deal of the increased pressures. According to a report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies*, by May 2020, mothers were 1.5 times more likely than fathers to have either lost or left their job since March 2020 and mothers were also more likely to be furloughed than fathers. The crisis showed society's reliance on women, both at home and in the workplace, - and on the frontline in the public sector - particularly the health, care and teaching industries. It also dramatically increased the burden of unpaid care, which is disproportionately handled by women. Many mothers had to immediately take up the mantle of home-educating their children in lockdown and while some employers recognised this new burden and tried to show flexibility, others implied that mothers - and some fathers - were not prioritising their work or not working enough hours.

At time of writing, COVID is still having an impact and women are continuing to feel the brunt of the pressure, experiencing burnout, lost opportunity, harassment and a lack of empowerment. It sounds really bleak, but there are many ways organisations can redress gender inequality and the myriad impacts that the pandemic has metered out. The bottom line is, women want equal pay and status, as well as equal

access to opportunities at work. Female employees seek to be recognised as the best person for the job - simply because they are - and they want to lead and empower their teams without imposed biases. On average, women earn about 20 percent less than men when performing the same job, so companies need to scrutinise whether they have systemic gender pay gap problems, to ensure that all employees are being paid equally.

It all starts with recruitment and so adjudicating panels should be as diverse as the candidates a business hopes to attract. It's about culture too and women should not have to feel like they need to act like men in order to conform to a patriarchal stereotype of belonging or success. No one should be patronised or seen as 'soft' if they use empathy and compassion in the way they relate to others and this exemplifies the importance of dismantling gender stereotypes and engage men in the conversation. Here, everyone needs to be informed to act appropriately and so having clear and effective policies against harassment in the workplace to protect women and a clear code of conduct and duty of care is essential. There must be clear consequences for bullying and harassment that always come into action. There is a sense amongst many men that things are much better now than they have been for women. This mindset can not be allowed to derail the progress that has been made.

REFERENCES

<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/14860>

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III

TRENDS FOR 2022

BACK TO THE FUTURE. THERE IS A DRIVING COMPULSION TO MOVE THE BUSINESS AGENDA BACK ON TRACK BUT, RUNNING ALONGSIDE THE CORPORATE OBJECTIVES ARE THE ELEMENTS THAT SUPPORT PEOPLE, THE FUNDAMENTAL ROLE OF HEALTH, WELLBEING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY, WHICH MUST DEFINE THE GREAT RETURN. THE COVID CRISIS HAS INFORMED ON INEQUALITY AND REVEALED A FAR MORE COMPLEX PICTURE THAN THAT WHICH HAD LONG BEEN ENVISAGED AND BUILDING A CULTURE WHERE DIVERSITY IN PEOPLE AND THOUGHT CAN THRIVE IS THE NARRATIVE FOR THE NEW ERA.

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#HR #Polls | Do you feel that your organisation is prepared for the year ahead?

Yes

25%

No

75%



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ARTICLE BY PETE BYRNE, CEO - ESPHR

EQUANIMITY

MANY IN HUMAN RESOURCES HAVE BEEN BATTLING AGAINST OVERWHELMING WORKLOADS, WHILE FIREFIGHTING NUMEROUS OPERATIONAL AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS MATTERS DURING THE PANDEMIC. PEOPLE HAVE BEEN WORKING EVEN MORE UNSOCIABLE HOURS AND OPERATING AT BREAK-NECK SPEED, IN ORDER TO PULL BUSINESSES THROUGH THE MOST CHALLENGING OF CLIMATES. AT THIS TIME, THE STRESS IS PALPABLE.

Throughout the next 12 months, along with the business plan, there are many new considerations to prepare a business for a new era of work, that looks significantly different to that which firms were previously calibrated for. From an HR perspective, there will need to be an even greater focus on empowering and safeguarding employees, streamlining processes and integrating solutions-rich technology, that will support battle-weary HR departments, as they set about driving truly transformational change.

In the not-too-distant past, a typical HR tableau would have held a hard-pushed team, labouring with manually intensive spreadsheets, to record critical data, with little option than to outsource more complex ER matters to expensive, on-the-clock employment law firms. But in this fast-moving and unpredictable time, that way of 'coping' should no longer be considered 'the norm'. Attempting to work with clunky, legacy systems and ineffective, unfit-for-purpose tools, is not what modern-day HR professionals want to be shackled to. Like everyone else, they want solutions, not problems and organisations that don't tackle this head on will soon begin to fall behind the curve, allowing more agile brands to pull ahead. This is where data will prove to be most critical, for businesses that are able to challenge the way things have 'always been done' and

understand exactly how to unlock the millions of pieces of insight their firms are currently sat on, are effectively arming themselves with the greatest chance to grow and improve their entire operations.

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Having access to information doesn't mean that 'Big Brother' is watching every move and monitoring each second of the day. Instead, what this critical insight can provide is a single version of the truth, for HR leaders to be able to use and contextualise the information in a way that is specific to their particular business. An example is, if a pattern emerges that an organisation is hemorrhaging money, because employee matters are not being dealt with in a timely and effective way and heading straight for an Employment Tribunal. Using this information, an HR

leader can identify the trend at the earliest opportunity and instead work on how their organisation can improve its ER procedures. This not only provides context and a bigger picture, it also allows more of a chance for the team to stop similar incidents at the source, before they manifest into something that damages both brand reputation and internal culture.

Adopting ER as a strategic imperative frees teams up from energy and resource-sapping fire-fighting, which in turn builds towards a data-driven culture, with ER at its core. When ER and data is combined, organisations are able to work smarter and forward-thinking HR leaders will capitalise if they know what type of intelligence they want to see and manage it in a way that encourages their teams to make commercially-focused, business-critical decisions. This will also help to dynamically upskill colleagues to handle ER matters, saving time and budget, providing productivity gains and offering learning and development opportunities that will go a long way towards retaining and attracting top talent. Today, every facet of a company produces data and throughout 2022, this information-rich approach can go a long way towards ensuring the right insight is put into the hands of the right people at the right time.

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ARTICLE BY GAUTIER POROT, SECURITY DIRECTOR &
MICHAEL WHITLOW, HR DIRECTOR, ASSISTANCE SERVICES - INTERNATIONAL SOS

HEIGHTENED STATE OF PREPAREDNESS

"KEY DECISIONS CANNOT OCCUR IN A VACUUM AND SO HR DIRECTORS
MUST HELP THE CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM FIND THE MIDDLE GROUND
BETWEEN EFFECTIVE CONTROL AND STIFLING DOMINATION"

COVID-19 exposed the HR profession to crisis management in ways not seen or experienced before in the modern era. As we progress through this insidious pandemic, perceptions and expectations of HR have heightened, with people reliant on answers and solutions. That people bore the brunt was inevitable, with many working remotely, isolated, some vulnerable, they looked to HR for support. That a closer relationship with greater understanding and trust between employees and HR has formed, could be an unexpected positive outcome.

While this greater exposure presents an opportunity for HR Directors and their teams, it also brings new challenges and greater scrutiny to deliver results, as organisations navigate through the continuing twists and turns of the pandemic, as well as other major issues impacting employees. Staying on the front foot, planning for a stable future and identifying any potential gaps before a crisis happens, is going to be vital. Clearly, a more collaborative approach to crisis management is required and staff health and wellbeing is integral to that. The inescapable truth is, without healthy people, fully engaged - supported with

clear channels of communication - a crisis response is much less likely to be effective. The latest results from the BCI *Crisis Management Report 2021**, revealed that 87.4 percent of respondents acknowledged mental health as a key consideration within their crisis management plans. A further 40.3 percent of organisations were affected by staff mental health issues in 2020. This all demonstrates how, with many staff working from home, wellbeing and mental support has to be a key factor. Mental health is an issue that has to be addressed head on and requires the right processes and materials in place to help

employees with their health and wellbeing needs. Given the sensitivities involved, this is not an issue to address after a crisis hits, what needs to be in place is an effective and accessible mental health platform that can be easily activated, whenever an employee needs it.

HR has more power and capability to initiate large-scale strategies than ever before, which is great timing, as they are more likely to find themselves on a centralised team managing a crisis. Indeed, centralisation has been accelerated by the pandemic and will continue into 2022, as organisations

require the level of agility and coordination. This is reflected in the report which showed how effective centralisation has been, with 81.3 percent of respondents who adopted a centralised or hybrid approach, reporting their crisis management capabilities were either “good” or “excellent”. This was higher than companies using a decentralised approach, but while centralisation can be beneficial, it’s still important to balance the needs of all stakeholders involved in centralised models. There is clearly a danger that structures that don’t listen and account for the concerns of people across an organisation during a crisis, can become very rigid. One high profile example of this came in Italy after the L’Aquila earthquake in 2009, which was the deadliest earthquake in Italy for over 25 years. In an attempt to handle the crisis, a dominating command-and-control group was established which turned into a major failure, as it overlooked local services, leaving local experts side-lined and residents fearful. As a result, the town effectively became militarised, resulting in many local residents leaving the town in protest.

Examples like this highlight how key decisions cannot occur in a vacuum and so HR Directors must help the crisis management team find the middle ground between effective control and stifling domination, by helping the team actively seek out the input of regional experts. This is because regional experts are often best placed to understand country-specific issues, which is vital knowledge when it comes to effective crisis management. For example, the COVID-19 crisis has impacted different risks all over the world, with rises in petty crime, political corruption and misinformation occurring at various degrees of severity in different regions. To handle this risk complexity, HR Directors and crisis management teams should ensure they have effective resources on the ground, partnering with the right external experts if there are not any relevant internal specialists. These partners can help share actionable local

insight, which can inform crisis management plans and streamline the entire process. HR leaders with regional responsibilities, must also ensure they have a voice at the global table, so that their needs are addressed. They can do this by making sure they remain close to the global function, developing a close relationship - coupled with efforts to highlight how important local insight can be - is a good strategy for promoting the needs of specific regions and developing a truly comprehensive crisis management platform.

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On crisis management teams, HR has an essential role in ensuring that the team does not operate in siloes. By bringing together the expertise of employees working across a company, an organisational culture defined by collaboration can flourish. This is something that HR Directors can be very effective at, due to their close proximity to the entire workforce and ability to make sure different employee voices are heard. Practice makes perfect with these efforts and it is really advisable to hold regular simulations, scenario planning and benchmarking. These efforts can identify where vulnerabilities in particular teams lie and where they personally have gaps in knowledge and capabilities. Using

this insight, they can then proactively find partners who can provide specialist support in these areas. On this matter, HR must play a central role and become the training enabler of this vital cross-functions expertise. Fundamentally, information, processes, deliverables, communications, ad hoc teams, plans and strategies must all be in line with an organisation's risk assessment and identifying vulnerabilities is paramount. Equally, it is important to spot and alleviate blind spots, “unspoken deltas” or bias in companies which may undermine their crisis management function.

Understanding where the gaps lie in policies and plans will be a key task in 2022, both for crisis management and beyond. As businesses learn to adapt to hybrid working, with staff spread out between multiple locations, the potential for new gaps to be created is very real, particularly as many businesses will not have first-hand experience of mass hybrid working. This is why it is all the more important that HR Directors are on hand to help with this transition. They can help their companies account for three essential factors; to control/overview the situation, to be able to activate or communicate with teams and to make sure they are capable/able to solve a crisis. HR's increased involvement in crisis management presents a golden opportunity to exert influence and gain senior level buy-in. Collaborating with other available experts is an important part of this story, to ensure the right internal and external partners are in place to help formulate an effective crisis management response. Utilising regional experts and other essential resources will be a key task for 2022, as many major risks are still a present danger and need to be effectively planned for.

*Report by International SOS

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CHANGING TIDES

The “Great Resignation”, “Big Quit”, “Great Reshuffle”, the media sure loves a drama and all of these headlines have been coined to describe the current talent crisis. But behind the solacious wordplay, the picture is complex. The pandemic has brought into sharp focus what work represents to people, while social injustices have caused a sea change in values and priorities, all leading to a mass re-examination of lives, both personal and professional. However, there are some important nuances to this story too.

"THIS UPRISING IS NOT SIMPLY AN EMPLOYEE REVOLUTION, BUT
A DRIVING FORCE FOR EVOLUTION. BUSINESSES MUST LEVERAGE
THIS MOMENTUM, CREATE MEANINGFUL CHANGE AND ELEVATE
THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE IN A CULTURE WHERE PEOPLE FEEL
INSPIRED, RESPECTED, CONNECTED AND COMMITTED"



ARTICLE BY JILL KISSACK, AMERICAS PRACTICE LEADER,
HR & TALENT ADVISORY - KINCENTRIC

In contrast to an exodus of the disenfranchised, according to recent research*, many employees would much prefer to stay and help create the change they would like to see than leave. So, if we take that as read, perhaps the headline should be “The Talent Uprising”. The sentiment seems to point to workers demanding a stronger hand in their terms of employment and see flexibility, autonomy, compensation and benefits - and real progress in DE&I initiatives - as must-haves, as opposed to nice-to-haves. This uprising is not simply an employee revolution, but a driving force for evolution. Businesses must leverage this momentum, create meaningful change and elevate the employee experience in a culture where people feel inspired, respected, connected and committed.

Let us first address new ways of working and operating models that best meet the needs of the employees, as well as the business. By now, organisations should understand how, where and when their employees prefer to work and should be adapting their policies and strategies accordingly. As hybrid working evolves, there will be inevitable challenges to find the right balance of flexibility and remote working and face-to-face meeting and collaboration. Additionally, as technology dictates, there will inevitably be continuing investment in tools and technologies that enable both onsite and remote workers to have consistent experiences and opportunities for meaningful collaboration. Concurrently there needs to be an agile eye on people strategies, processes and procedures, to make them equitable for virtual as well as on-site employees, ensuring that remote employees are not overlooked for career progressing opportunities and stretch assignments.

Given the profound changes during recent time, it would be prudent to re-evaluate the importance of certain functions, to determine those truly critical to the business, in the wake of the pandemic. For example, think frontline workers in the retail and hospitality industries, without whose presence and continued performance, entire

organisations are destined to fail. Once the most business-critical employees and functions have been identified, there needs to be a doubling down on retention and engagement efforts and a pragmatic mindset that sometimes, turnover isn't always bad, unless you are hemorrhaging high-potential employees or are unable to maintain operations. In this changeable landscape it will also pay to explore new talent pools and capitalise on remote working, as it opens up the potential for a global pool of talent, which will demand a re-think about which roles really do need to be performed onsite and those that do not. Meanwhile, the talent shortage is not noticeably improving and so a new

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approach is required to attract candidates from non-traditional recruitment pools, with an attitude that skills and capability can always be developed, so that recruiting for attitude and alignment with culture and values takes priority over years of relevant experience. The hybrid model is also likely to increase freelancers and contract workers for “tour of duty” projects, with a definitive end date. In all instances, onboarding programmes will have to adapt, to create strong connections early on. Also, it's worth considering the many employees that left the workplace during the pandemic, due to difficulty balancing the needs of their families, for example and may now be ready to return to either full or part-time positions.

So, as we progress into a new era of work that is much changed, what are the key

elements required? First and foremost, this time will demand that leaders are engaged at all levels and not only have the right professional skills, but the right people skills, to lead through a complex transformation of the workplace. Are they focused less on control and more on culture? Are they demonstrating care and compassion? Are they successfully connecting with both onsite and remote team members? In a fast-moving and changing environment, the mantra has to be act-listen-adjust - there has never been a more important time to listen and respond to employees - but it's not just about measuring engagement; it's about using employee feedback to drive talent and business decisions. Identifying and shaping the moments that matter across the organisation will be a must. This means asking the right questions to the right segments, at the right time and then acting on the insights you uncover to create a culture in which your employees can thrive.

That leads us to succession planning and here, it's time to go deep, to ensure that plans are intentional and represent diversity in ethnicity, gender, culture and experience. Again, shining a light on leadership will illuminate whether they are diversely representative and assess whether they are the right talent match for your business. Who is in it for the long haul? Do they have the agility needed to adapt to change effectively? Does their EQ match their IQ? As we look to the future, many organisations now find themselves at a crossroads, challenged with blending pre- and post-pandemic ways of working to meet the needs of the business as well as the expectations of employees. Success is reliant upon leverage the talent uprising, to create meaningful changes for the future.

*Research from Kincentric

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[KINCENTRIC.COM](https://www.kincentric.com)

HEARTS & MINDS

AS 2022 BEGINS, ONGOING CHANGE PRESENTS CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY. BUT WHILE LEADERS SEEM KEENLY POISED FOR BOTH, SUCH OPTIMISM IS NOT READILY SHARED OUTSIDE THE BOARDROOM. RESEARCH FROM FORBES FINDS THAT 87 PERCENT OF LEADERS ARE MOTIVATED BY CHANGE, COMPARED TO JUST 37 PERCENT OF EMPLOYEES AT OTHER LEVELS WITHIN ORGANISATIONS.

ARTICLE BY CELINE FLOYD, DIRECTOR OF LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT &
STEPHANIE HOPPER, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS - CAPPPINITY

There could be several reasons behind the misalignment between the mindsets of leaders and employees when it comes to change. In general, we know that people like change, providing that they have some control over what is happening. Senior employees are likely to have input in the decisions made and will be given more notice, which could be why they might respond more positively than the wider workforce, who may find the changes unexpected. People may also have become weary and drained from coping with the pressures of constant change during the pandemic, affecting every part of their personal and working lives. But whatever the underlying reasons, engaging employees in organisational transformation remains a challenge many leaders will need to try and resolve as they head into the new year.


The hard reality is that 70 percent of change programmes fail and to improve the odds, an engaged, motivated workforce is essential. The first step is to stand back and ask, how well do we understand our employees? It sounds basic but understanding the motivations of the workforce is critical for those leading through change. It can help in mapping talent to new, emerging roles and in creating high performance project teams and working partnerships. Of course, employees will all think and feel differently and by taking time to understand the uniqueness that exists across your workforce, it is possible to build a culture that engages employees and delivers high performance.

Understanding the strengths of people is a great starting point, but that a strength is just a skill that somebody is good at, is only half the answer. The other half is the things that people enjoy doing. This combination is at the heart of performance and productivity, of engagement and motivation, by

putting strengths to work, leaders can build a workforce that is motivated and energised by the changes happening around them. For those at the top of the organisation, understanding their own motivations, strengths and limitations is of course just as critical, as self-awareness is a key element of emotional intelligence, enabling leaders to understand their actions and emotions. This is why self-awareness is touted as a meta-skill for 21st century leadership, as it can aid in the navigation of ambiguous situations.

In the past, leaders could call on their experiences to overcome similar situations. But unknown advances in technology will equate to unknown challenges, so leaders will have to be prepared to embrace the ambiguity and navigate their way through it, without being disheartened. There are three core principles to follow: First, move away from a deficit model that focuses on what your leaders or employees are lacking. A strengths-based approach will help you to identify and celebrate what is great, special and unique about your workforce. Secondly, try not to approach development as a one-off activity, but instead create a development journey based on the unique strengths profile of the individual to support lifelong discovery and growth. Finally, take a holistic approach to achieve long term change, look at the whole infrastructure and consider performance management, career conversations and talent management. But to achieve true large-scale transformation, requires a systems approach that considers your entire workforce. Taken together, these core principles will enable an organisation to develop its leaders using their individual strengths.

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IV

DIVERSITY

BEFORE THE PANDEMIC, WAS DIVERSITY EVER REALLY THE VITAL ISSUE, OR JUST A CSR EXERCISE THAT DEALT IN QUOTAS AND TOKENISM? ONLY THROUGH BUILDING DIVERSITY FROM THE FOUNDATIONS UP CAN WE EVER IRRADICATE THE DESTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE OF A TABLE OF LIKEMINDED DECISION-MAKERS AND A COMPANY OF "MINIMES", PEOPLE MUST HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO HOLD THE STATUS QUO TO ACCOUNT. IN TRUTH, DIVERSITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A DIFFERENTIATOR, BUT WITHOUT EVIDENCE THAT IT LEADS TO IMPROVED BUSINESS OUTCOMES, IT WOULD ALWAYS BE SEEN AS A MANDATORY DISTRACTION, RATHER THAN AN ESSENTIAL BUSINESS ACUMEN.

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theHRDIRECTOR @theHRDIRECTOR
#HR #Polls | Do you believe that your organisation is genuinely committed to true diversity?

Yes

22.2%

No

78.8%



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ARTICLE BY NEIL BRADBROOK, MANAGING DIRECTOR - AHEAD BUSINESS CONSULTING

LISTEN TO DIFFERENCE

MY BUSINESS PARTNER AND I COME FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS AND THAT HELPS WHEN WE MAKE BUSINESS DECISIONS. WE CHALLENGE ONE ANOTHER CONSTANTLY BY STIMULATING NEW THOUGHT AND DEBATE AND OUR BEST WORK IS WHEN WE HAVE BOTH CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROCESS, WHICH ALWAYS CREATES SOMETHING BETTER THAN EITHER OF US COULD DO ALONE.

When it comes to running a business, nothing is more important than diversity of thought. No matter how good a leader you think you are, it is the team you assemble who will determine success. We might have to make the decisions, but we do not have all the answers, which is why it is important that we listen to the team around us. If you can create a working environment where people feel empowered to air their views and it is safe to have different opinions, then the outcome will be so much more. The best solutions always go through several iterations, each building on the last. It is also why all businesses should bring in outside expertise from time to time, because we all tend to stand too close to our own businesses and can benefit from an objective perspective.

Taking onboard views that differ widely from our own can be a challenge, but looking at a problem from every angle is the way to find the best solutions. That means being surrounded by people from different backgrounds, rather than hiring in our own image. That takes a conscious effort - we have all heard of unconscious bias - so self-awareness is key. No matter your position, even if you oversee a huge global enterprise, like Elon Musk at Tesla, never think it is all about you. The best senior managers are those who realise they might not be doing everything right. Good managers should

always be prepared to change their minds when presented with views that differ from their own. That is why the most important skill for successful leaders is the ability to listen. Listen to what your employees have to say, listen to your customers and take advice. It's not about acting on every single thing, but listen - and listen well - before making that call.

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Trying to force people into your own mould never works, embracing them as they are and seeking the value they can bring, will. That can be difficult, as some team members can struggle to engage in a way you understand. They are the ones that require extra investment of time and even greater effort to listen to, because only by accepting that everyone can be

part of the team will you have a truly inclusive organisation. Fail to demonstrate genuine inclusiveness and some people will literally turn off and the business stands to lose an opinion or thought that could really matter. Some managers find it hard to empower the individuals in their team and that is understandable, because few are given the training they need to take on a management position, with most being promoted simply because they excelled in the role they were already in. Without being told otherwise, it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that with power comes responsibility and with responsibility comes the need to make all decisions alone. But if team members feel they understand the organisation's vision and their role within it - and that they have the autonomy and opportunity to contribute and make a difference - it unlocks so much more potential. It's taken as read that if everyone is pulling in the same direction, the collective effort is consistently more effective, because the power of the team is far greater than that of the individual. The most successful sports teams are not those with the best individuals, but those with a clear, unified vision and great team spirit, who pull together and support one another.

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ARTICLE BY JAMES C ANDERSON II, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF
AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP - UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

A PROBLEM SHARED

"THE MORE EXTREME THE COGNITIVE DIFFERENCES, THE MORE
LIKELY THE COGNITIVE GAPS AND THE MORE LIKELY TEAM MEMBERS WILL
COPE BY OPERATING OUTSIDE THEIR PREFERRED STYLE AND ADAPT"

A conversation with an executive coach recently, provided food for thought. She shared an interaction with a client that baffled her, as they complained about the productivity of their workforce and how difficult it was to hold employees accountable, when working remotely. When she inquired why this was difficult, the client expressed how remote working took away the ability to engage in impromptu touchpoints, namely running into employees in the hall or dropping by their offices, that they normally used as social check ins.

This interaction between the executive coach and client immediately brought to mind the impact of cognitive diversity on collaboration and workplace productivity. Unfortunately, because this form of diversity is hidden, it is very rarely recognised as a root cause of collaborative breakdown and is therefore not addressed by managers. Yet, it is a salient part of one's identity that directly impacts behaviour and group dynamics. In order to understand cognitive diversity and how it affects group dynamics, let us discuss the two problems that arise in the workplace when change occurs. The first, "Problem A" is the reason we collaborate; it is the issue with the task at hand, with the result of accomplishing our work to

have a positive impact on business. The second, "Problem B", is brought on by diversity within teams - it is determining how best to collaborate in the face of differing social identities, levels of intellect, educational experiences, motives, values and beliefs and preferences for managing change. Although many managers believe they are focusing on Problem A, they are often focusing on Problem B, because they have not accurately diagnosed the root cause of the unproductive behaviours in a team.

Dr. Michael Kirton introduced one way to identify and measure cognitive diversity of collaborative teams in his origination of Adaption-Innovation Theory. He proposed that all people are

creative and can manage change through the process, but people manage this change in different and often competing ways. Some individuals have a more adaptive style and prefer more structure and incremental changes, focusing on improving the system. They pay attention to details, are more prudent risk takers and are more concerned with group harmony. Conversely, others have a more innovative style, preferring less structure and focus on changing the system, in a different way. They are more comfortable going against the group, are less constrained by traditional structures and are more daring risk takers. When collaborating, these two styles, as measured on a continuum of adaption and innovation, interpret the

situation differently and will approach solving it in different ways too.

In the introductory scenario, it is possible the executive coach had a more innovative style for managing the changes brought on by the pandemic, whereas the client had a more adaptive style. She could not understand why the client was not breaking through the traditional, in-person structure to create a new paradigm for collaborating, because it did not align with her paradigm-shifting perspective. This misunderstanding occurs often in collaborative teams when the two competing cognitive styles must work together to resolve Problem A. Managers and by extension team members, must understand the importance of taking this cognitive diversity into account. A useful framework for managers who are trying to identify and address this Problem B is Kirton's Cognitive Schema. The Schema provides insights into the reciprocal relationship among team member thought processes, their collaborative behaviours and team dynamics.

The following aspects from the Schema can be used to diagnose how diversity on the team is affecting cohesiveness and productivity: Identity plays a huge role in how we interact with others. The first consideration in managing change is understanding each team member's collaborative identity and how it shows up in the workplace. One process that informs this facet of identity is cognitive function. In the Schema, the first mental process to take into consideration is cognitive resource, or what one knows. Through lived experiences or formal education, individuals learn concepts that are stored in memory so that they can be used later to manage change. Accordingly, managers should consider "What do team members know or need to know about the Problem A?" The second consideration is cognitive effect and it is the planning mechanism for managing Problem A. It includes the capacity one has to make meaning of information and the approach they use to turn that information into a solution. Correspondingly to identifying the source of conflict, managers should consider the

question: "Do team members have the capacity to understand the nature of Problem A in order to solve it? If so, are they more likely to view the situation through a more adaptive or innovative lens?" The third and final consideration for this mental process is cognitive affect, or the value one places on the issue. It is the source of motivation because it is where one determines what they want out of the collaborative process and if they are willing to make this collaborative effort a priority. This is also where other forms of identity, like cultural and social, create a lens through which the team member will evaluate the situation. Managers should create open lines of communication to ask what team member attitudes and beliefs are about the Problem A and how they feel about working with the team to solve it.

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Cognitive identity has a direct impact on behaviour and so the climate the manager creates among the team to embrace cognitive diversity will encourage members to either behave according to their preferred cognitive style, or begin to cope by exhibiting behaviours that are different from their preferred style. The more extreme the cognitive differences are, the more likely the cognitive gaps and the more likely team members will cope by operating outside their preferred style

and adapt. Although coping can be beneficial in the short term, it causes an equal amount of stress for the individual to the degree in which they perceive the cognitive gap. Extreme gaps can lead to unproductive behaviours and over time disengagement from the team. Managers must first determine whether team members are working within their preferred style or if they are coping and, if they are, is the behaviour due to a cognitive gap between team members of the team, or between a member and the Problem A? Team members with similar cognitive styles will enjoy collaborating and will feel less compelled to cope. Similarly, team members who have been delegated tasks that align with their preferred style, will easily identify ways to manage this change without the need to turn on coping behaviour.

As with behaviour, collaborative identity also impacts group dynamics. It is within this social environment that judgement of team member contributions and the value of the product created through the collaborative process, will occur. In this social evaluation, team members will reflect on if the change that is being proposed meets their needs. Attitudes, values, beliefs and various facets of individual identity will be used to decide whether to support the change or resist it. To create a safe space where cohesiveness and innovation is occurring, managers should determine what unproductive behaviours exist within the team and their root causes. In addition, encourage a culture of trust, emotional intelligence, empathy and how responsibilities can be delegated to team members in ways that leverage their unique collaborative identities. With a keen understanding of the interaction among the three major components of the Cognitive Function Schema, managers can implement strategies to recognise, appreciate and utilise the unique talents that each member brings to the team.

FOR FURTHER INFO
ALEC.CAES.UGA.EDU/PEOPLE/FACULTY/JAMES-ANDERSON.HTML

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

With digital transformation abound and employees working from home connected via electronic devices at all times, the amount of data and intel we can pull from our workforces has increased drastically. This data can certainly tell a story - it can elaborate on the outline of what our demographics look like, an individual's sense of belonging, mental health and beyond - which is instrumental in identifying trends that impact a business's DEI efforts. But, when it comes to diversity, data's just chapter one.

"NOT BEING ACTIVE IN THE PURSUIT OF EQUALITY AND EQUITY IS NEGLIGENT IN THE PURSUIT AGAINST IT. ALL LEADERS, INCLUDING THOSE WITHIN THE HR DEPARTMENT, NEED TO OPEN THEMSELVES UP TO SCRUTINY"



ARTICLE BY MATTHEW COONS, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION PROGRAM MANAGER - XERO

A workplace DEI report* that surveyed nearly 1,400 working Americans on how they feel their companies are faring in the ongoing conversation around belonging. It revealed that, while 61 percent of respondents feel their company is diverse, only 52 percent feel the same about their organisation's leadership. Despite those 61 percent who feel their company is diverse, 40 percent still agree that they often feel stereotyped. In general, DEI progress reporting is low, with nearly one-in-five say their companies don't report the results of DEI measurement initiatives and nearly one-in-four say their companies haven't shared any action items/strategies to improve DEI with employees. Regardless, talent is key and more than a third, 33 percent, think the most important part of a DEI programme is recruiting new talent from a variety of sources to ensure more diverse candidate pools. Despite the way these figures and internal sentiments may vary from company to company, HR and DEI executives still have a very specific task ahead of them.

Ultimately, cultivating a culture of inclusion isn't a static moment and the sense of belonging we can create for others is hyper-individualised. As such, the following four acknowledgments and activations are extremely important for leadership to recognise: Understand that, with DEI, acknowledging that there is a problem may feel like a risk at first. Of course, naturally, a big part of HR is risk mitigation and, in many ways, HR leaders look to smooth things over and create harmony - internally and externally - for both employees and the brand. But, when an organisation takes the first step in acknowledging where disparities exist, that can certainly create a ripple effect within an organisation that otherwise experiences calm waters. This is a risk worth taking and one that HR executives need to spearhead. What is being acknowledged may be a validation and the first step in building trust with those who have been marginalised or have experienced discrimination.

Creating accessible pathways develops inclusive behaviours - such as

understanding and mitigating bias and microaggressions - which reduces the need for covering and develops a safe space to challenge the status quo. According to this Deloitte report, 45 percent of straight white men say they have covered at least some aspect of their identity - a disability, parenthood and so on - and what this means is that, even if you have many identities that hold privilege, there are still aspects of nearly every life that people hide in the workplace to "fit in", unfortunately. In respect of this, long gone should be the annual diversity training that is conducted in isolation, because all too often, such training is not insightful and often serves to only diminish the importance of the topic at hand and lessen the amount of meaningful behavioural shifts as a result. What really makes a company diverse is representation of all kinds of people and what makes it inclusive is creating the capacity to come together in a safe environment, wherein employees can openly discuss the issues at hand and ways to move forward.

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We all know that many companies don't generally have a diverse set of staff - of course, there's no hiding that. The first instinct of many leaders is to soften those numbers and instill reasons for why that is, but that is not advised in any situation. A company needs to be transparent about where they are in the DEI process - even if just starting - and recognise that such honesty will open up and create a circle of psychological safety. This allows both

employer and employee to address the issue at hand and be present and proactive in the solutions that are implemented because of it. The next step is developing goals and reporting methods, where you can hold yourself and your team accountable. There needs to be a system in place - perhaps an inclusion index of some kind - with numbers around where the business can move the needle, as it relates to DEI. Of course, this needle can be indicative of race, gender and beyond. Ultimately, we need to use data to understand where we started, how far we've come and where we can go.

Crucially, this kind of data needs to be reported back to the business and the broader staff regularly and on an ongoing basis. Not only does this keep everyone accountable for the progress, but also helps shine a light on things that may be going wrong. For instance, are you hiring an increased number of women, but also seeing an increased amount of attrition of women? This may mean that the overall culture is not friendly to this demographic and needs to be addressed immediately and with care. It is suggested to build a specific committee related to DEI efforts and progress, making sure to include at least one person, whose sole responsibility is to manage the programme. This executive could and should create a plan of action, that proactively creates goals and mile markers to keep the company abreast of where they are in their DEI journey and report back consistently, not just at annual revenue meetings, or similar catch-ups. To expand on the last point, it is about moving from data-oriented to people-oriented. Of course, many DEI programmes begin with data and, at the very least, it's a way to understand where a company stands, particularly as it relates to industry standards. To that end, it also shows both progress and where there may be systemic breakdowns throughout the process. However, at the end of the day, data is just one small portion of every company's story; the rest lies within the people.

*Survey conducted by Dynata

FOR FURTHER INFO
WWW.XERO.COM/US/

THE BUMPY ROAD

FACTORS THAT ARE PLAYING A BIGGER ROLE IN DE&I INCLUDE SUPPORTING PEOPLE THROUGH FERTILITY ISSUES, EARLY PARENTHOOD AND MENOPAUSE. IT IS SHORT-SIGHTED TO THINK THAT HELPING STAFF THROUGH THESE EXPERIENCES IS PROBLEMATIC. COMPANIES NEED A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF HOW THEY CAN PLAY A CRUCIAL PART IN JOURNEYS THROUGH CHALLENGING LIFE EVENTS.

ARTICLE BY DR MRIDULA PORE, CEO - PEPPY

Inclusive cultures need to engender a supportive atmosphere for staff going through major life events. DEI is at the heart of making difference in people's lives, supported by a fair and inclusive culture of trust to maintain morale and foster connection. The pandemic has changed employee priorities and will require a more rounded understanding. The great positive for all, is that there is a huge pool of talent that falls into these groups. But to untap the potential requires a different approach of inclusion, support and understanding. Women of menopausal age is the fastest growing workforce demographic in the UK and with one-in-four women considering leaving the workplace because of struggling with menopausal symptoms, it is vital for companies to keep this group in the workplace by offering flexibility and support. Black women are up to twice as likely to have fertility problems and rising numbers of same sex families and single women are having IVF. LGBTQ+ parents represent over 14 percent of all adoptions in the UK. One-in-ten fathers experience postpartum depression after the birth of a baby and 15 percent of new mothers express concern about how to continue breastfeeding post maternity leave.

A supportive and understanding HR department will create policies to ensure their DE&I takes such factors into account, preventing the attrition of talent at this stage in their lives. Yet too many companies are still only paying lip service to DEI. Performative social media campaigns are sometimes merely a statement of intent, not backed up by action. Fewer than one third of UK employees feel that they completely belong within their company and just 40 percent of HR professionals believe that their organisation is currently working hard to foster a sense of inclusion. This needs to change.

In practice, support needs to be offered to all staff equally, ideally including partners where relevant. In some cases, support needs to be given to the company to help change the culture. With a tradition of keeping these personal issues hush-hush and taboo in the workplace, opening up the discussion may not come easily. Line managers need to be conversant with the many ways these challenging life events can affect their teams so that supportive and open-minded conversations become the norm and signposting of practical support is facilitated. Once companies embrace a truly inclusive and informed approach, it can work wonders. Since the many NHS cuts to health services, new mothers at work will find that speaking to an expert for areas as diverse as breastfeeding, adapting to new sleeping patterns, or dealing with isolation to be invaluable. With infertility issues people understandably may not feel comfortable talking about them with their line manager, but the emergence of technology now enables people to discuss their concerns with fertility experts via apps and portals, whether at home or at work. Technology is a boom in the field of DEI and it can be a game changer for companies that embrace it.

It is important that support is inclusive, not just for one employee demographic but the whole workforce, be it a male employee and their male partner looking to start a family, a menopausal woman struggling with symptoms in the workplace or staff struggling to conceive. A DEI policy that understands and benefits all your staff is invaluable and there has never been a better time to start providing support for your people through significant stages in their lives.

FOR FURTHER INFO
[PEPPY.HEALTH](https://peppy.health)



NEW St John Ambulance mental health workplace first aid qualifications

We are launching two new mental health workplace first aid qualifications.

We have worked with FutureQuals to develop two accredited mental health workplace qualifications. We have created these qualifications based on the needs of our customers, **50% of which feel their employer should be doing more to support mental health at work.***

Both qualifications provide solid building blocks to create a positive mental health culture in the workplace by focusing on developing skills which are then assessed to ensure people leave competent in their new role. Now is the perfect time to take our new qualifications and provide mental health support within your workplace.

98% of people think that it is important to recognise mental health in the workplace*

61% say that their organisation do not provide line managers with support in managing their team's mental health*

57% work for organisations that do not have a trained Mental Health First Aider*

Mental Health Workplace Responder

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Mental Health Workplace First Aider

- Level 3 Award in Mental Health: Workplace First Aider qualification
- Be able to respond to a mental health incident including where physical first aid is needed.
- Be equipped with the skills and confidence to identify those who require mental health support and offer assistance.

**For more information and to book online
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TO THE POINT

WHAT LIES BENEATH

A POST-PANDEMIC TSUNAMI OF JOBSEEKERS MEANS THE SELECTION PROCESS - BY HUMAN OR DIGITAL HAND - RUNS THE RISK OF FOCUSING ON SIMILAR JOB TITLES AND EXPERIENCE TO THOSE WHO WENT BEFORE. BUT DIG A LITTLE DEEPER AND THERE ARE REAL GEMS TO BE UNCOVERED.



ARTICLE BY LISA JASPER, TRANSFORMATION DIRECTOR - INGEUS UK

It would be fair to say that when I applied for my current post, I would not have been surprised if my CV had ended up on the reject pile. Or, on a good day, the pile labelled; 'if all else fails, let's take another look at the rejects'. Once, I was a wannabe police officer, but was too short and joined the prison service, where I spent the next 20 years - many as a prison governor - in a working life that varied from the deeply traumatic to the richly rewarding. Not many boxes ticked, you might think, when it comes to the post of Transformation Director in the people services sector. But thankfully, like many in this industry, my employer has learned the value of looking beyond job titles or seeking the clone candidates.

I was 23 when I started working in the prison service and I had to grow up very quickly. I gained empathy for those that, through no fault of their own, started off at a disadvantage and had limited opportunity or positive role models around to change that. It was at this age that I experienced suicide, having to cut down a prisoner who had taken her own life, attempting to resuscitate and failing, because it was already too late.

It was, of course, traumatic and I didn't sleep through the night for three months, as the flashbacks were so vivid and I was diagnosed with PTSD. It nearly finished my career before it had begun, but instead it shaped my future, as I fought to recover and understand the effects of trauma on mental health.

Prison work also helped me to understand the importance of building relationships, giving people purpose, treating them as individuals and seeing that everyone deserves another chance. I realised second chances are important, not only for people who have committed crimes and want to turn their lives around, but also those of us who, for whatever reason, have a change in career direction and need to know that our skills and experience are understood and valued by potential employers.

When I felt it was time to leave the Prison Service, I took advantage of a headcount reduction scheme that allowed me to leave with two years' salary. But within a month I was lost, my purpose had disappeared and depression set in. I realised for the first time what real despair felt like and I needed

medicinal support. A friend of mine was the head teacher of a Pupil Referral Unit. She suggested I come and work at the school as a teaching assistant. I volunteered for two weeks and stayed for three months and it was the tonic I needed. It made me realise that my vocation in life was to work in environments that help people to improve their own circumstances. Those in the HR community have the power to do that and taking the time to scratch beneath the surface of the CV identifies skills and experiences that can be applied in many different scenarios and can bring huge rewards. Job-specific skills can be learned, but these experience-based qualities can be equally important. Yes, it might take a little longer - and yes, I know you are pressed for time - but my experience proves that in whatever sphere a person has made a living, they leave carrying a suitcase full of skills that can be applied in many different areas.

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[INGEUS.COM/UK](https://www.ingeus.com/uk)

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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.



Andy Doyle

ROLE CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER
COMPANY KANTAR

Kantar, the data-driven analytics and brand consulting company, announces the appointment of Andy Doyle to the position of Chief People Officer.

As a member of the executive leadership team, Mr Doyle will ensure Kantar's culture supports the growth ambitions of the organisation. Most recently, Andy was Chief People and Culture Officer for National Grid Plc. Prior to that, he was CHRO and a member of the executive leadership team that successfully floated Worldpay and managed its subsequent merger with Vantiv Inc. Andy has also led the HR function at ITV plc and construction company Morrison plc.

Jay Connolly

ROLE CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER
COMPANY BAKER MCKENZIE

Law firm Baker McKenzie announces the appointment of a new Chief People Officer, Jay Connolly.

Jay joins from Dentons, where he has most recently served as Global Chief Talent Officer, leading the firm's human resources, recruiting and training functions. Prior to his decade

with Dentons, Jay was a senior member of the global HR leadership team at Clifford Chance. He was appointed after an extensive global search and will replace longstanding CPO Peter May. Jay has lived and worked in Europe, UK and the US, and has extensive experience leading teams globally.

Nutan Singapuri

ROLE CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER
COMPANY GOUSTO

Recipe box provider Gousto has appointed former LinkedIn and Microsoft Asia Pacific HR chief Nutan Singapuri as its CPO.

The appointment comes as the firm accelerates its hiring efforts in a bid to double its technology function workforce by the end of next year. Prior to holding senior HR roles at LinkedIn and Microsoft, Nutan worked in talent acquisition for global food giant Cargill. He has relocated from Singapore to take up the London-based role. Gousto announced it will create at least 250 full-time, high-skilled technology jobs in London - taking its tech team to almost 500 members in 2022.

Philomena Gray

ROLE CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER
COMPANY IMAGINATION

Global Experience Design Company, Imagination, has announced Philomena Gray's appointment as CPO, leading talent and HR strategy.

Philomena joins Imagination from Photobox, where she was Human Resources Director of International Operations, across the UK, France, Germany and Spain. Her wealth of experience leading HR in advertising and media companies includes Chief People and Talent Officer at Publicis Communications UK, with responsibility for 1,500 people across brands such as Saatchi & Saatchi, Leo Burnett, MSL & Fallon.

Lizzie Downes

ROLE CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER
COMPANY PENDRAGON

Pendragon has appointed Lizzie Downes as Chief People Officer.

She joins Pendragon from Jaguar Land Rover, where she spent nine years in a variety of roles, most recently as Director of organisational development and people transformation. Lizzie is regarded as a pivotal appointment to the executive team and will lead the HR function, drive cultural change and further the diversity and inclusion agenda. Lizzie has extensive knowledge of the industry and strong commercial acumen, along with a passion for coaching and inspiring leaders. The depth and scale of change going on in the consumer retail and automotive.

FOR FURTHER UPDATES

To see full updates, movers & shakers and much more, please visit our website thehrdirector.com



NEXT MONTH ISSUE 208

If you have an opinion on any of the articles featured in this magazine, please share it by going to this link
www.linkedin.com/company/thehrdirector

INTERVIEW

Carla Barnett, Group HR Director
- Sanderson Design Group

ROUNDTABLE

The Future of Shared Services.
Planning for the future and supporting people across the organisation.

EVOLVING THE HYBRID MODEL & POLY-WORKING

Fixed mindsets, culture for presenteeism and ingrained mistrust, does hybrid have a future?

APPRENTICESHIPS & GRADUATES

Young people held back by the pandemic, businesses struggling for talent, can we join up the dots?

TRUE EDI

During lockdown, we looked into the eyes of colleagues and saw what lies behind the smile.

ATTRACTION & RETENTION

If this really is an employee spring, what will be the essential EVPs and EX in today's race for talent?





HOPE FOR JUSTICE

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