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& A NEW OPPORTUNITY*

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L&D FOR A NEW ERA

BUILD

“CHANGE REQUIRES PRAGMATISM,
OPTIMISM AND BRINGING PEOPLE
ON THE JOURNEY, EVEN WHEN
THERE IS RELUCTANCE”

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May 2022 / Issue 211

PRE-COVID, A REMEDY TO AMELIORATE CRIPPLING LEVELS OF STRESS AND BURNOUT ELUDED. THEN A CURIOUS PARADOX SAW A BRIEF HALCYON MOMENT EMERGE FROM THE GLOOM OF LOCKDOWN, MINDSETS SWITCHED FROM SURVIVE TO THRIVE AND FOUND GREATER AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE. NOW, EXISTENTIAL QUESTIONS OF THE CONVENTIONS OF THE EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP ARE MANIFEST.



JASON SPILLER, EDITOR

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Individualism, as a mandate could end in one of two very different ways - individualism and collectivism or, portentously, individualism versus collectivism. If the latter, what is at threat is the hard yards made in building towards an equitable world of work, where equality, diversity and inclusion never had to rely upon tokenism and collaborative cross-team effort championed fair reward, as opposed to remunerating an elite few. Instead of freedom and choice, what individualism can represent in the wrong hands, is the dog-eat-dog, all-for-profit toxic culture, leading to the return of the good old, bad old days.

The traditional succession planning process model relied upon markets that never changed, businesses that rarely diversified, job roles that remained the same, reliable staff retention and well signposted reasons for departure. In fact, lining up replacements for the departed, was one of the most predictable elements of people management. But now, social developments, digital business, market pressures, consumer behaviour and emerging technology means that nothing is predictable and everything changes constantly. In the era of so-called "we working", the notion of subordinates answering to middle management - that then reports to business leaders - is as outmoded as a freshly starched collar on a Monday and a bowler hat.

Pre-pandemic, VUCA and one-size-does-not-fit-all were well-worn clichés, but now, unquestionably, both typify the moment. Now, a reality is coming into sharp relief that the post-pandemic, hybrid world is starting to ask hard, probing questions

about existing systems and processes, as the pressure on HR intensifies to provide qualitative, real-time health checks across a much-changed landscape. Technology strategists will never tire of pointing out that crisis times like these are the very worst to contemplate replacing outdated and manual processes that still persist across HR, but what is the alternative? Data science must be the 24/seven, ticking heart of operational reporting and HR must cut the last strings that bind it to transactional process, move towards being a digital profession that is seated in data analytics.

Upskilling, reskilling and multi-skilling must quickly become a constant - not an ordained, management diktat - but a self-motivated necessity, where digital skills is currency and timely relevance trumps years of tenure and experience, every time. In the new era of work, reskilling will be critical to individuals maintaining relevant skills and organisations remaining competitive. But the shifts that must be made to successfully reimagine L&D cannot be underestimated. The march of automation means that all businesses and employees will have to continue to transform, as digital encroaches into areas of work, traditionally carried out by people. This will require future vision, but also stakeholder buy in and self-motivation.

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 *Mr Lewis Smith v Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd*, Mr Smith suffered from 'shy bladder syndrome' which left him too nervous to go to the loo when Network Rail called him in for a random check. He told a tribunal that he said he wasn't trying to dodge it and even offered to carry out a blood test - but still he was fired for refusing to take part. The Tribunal found that the decision to dismiss Mr Smith for gross misconduct, made after a

brief disciplinary hearing, was a flawed and ill-considered decision. It was based on an unsustainable finding that Mr Smith had refused to provide a urine sample when there was no evidence of such culpable and blameworthy conduct. Mr Smith had been unable to provide a urine sample because of an undiagnosed medical condition.

Mr Smith, who previously had trouble going to the loo at social occasions, was later diagnosed with the disorder 'paruresis' by his GP. The condition

prevents people from peeing while under pressure or when other people are around and can be experienced by men flanked by other men at urinals. Mr Smith, who worked for Network Rail for nine years and managed a team of 12 in a safety critical role, successfully sued his former employer for unfair dismissal. But now, after Network Rail failed to follow the tribunal's order to reinstate Mr Smith, claiming he found a 'loophole' to escape drug testing, the firm has been ordered to pay him almost £90,000.

EMPLOYMENT LAW

FOUR DAY WEEK GAINS TRACTION

Moves toward the possibility of a four-day working week are gaining momentum across the UK, with employers beginning to trial the new working week for sustainability, practicality and effectiveness from a performance and production perspectives, as well as being trialled in the context of a hybrid working framework. This traction comes off the back of the Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect, which was introduced in April 2021 as a confirmation statement on employees' rights not to habitually work outside their normal working hours and to "switch off" from work.

WHISTLEBLOWING

Republic of Ireland has introduced legislation that transposes the existing EU Whistleblowing Directive into Irish domestic law. The new law will

expand the protection of the protected disclosures regime. The EU Whistleblowing Directive does not apply to the UK, but is expected to inform on best practice policies. A key element is the directive to provide feedback to whistleblowers within certain specified timescales.

NEW PROACTIVE DUTIES ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Government has promised a new proactive duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, along with a pledge to re-introduce laws making employers responsible, if employees are harassed by customers or other third-parties. Provision could be made in the Employment Bill for these changes. Meanwhile, the Equality and Human Rights Commission may start consulting on its new Code of Practice on Harassment, building on the guidance it published prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

LEGAL DIARY

- **2022 (TBA):** Detailed rules governing gender pay gap reporting are set to be reviewed shortly.
- **2022 (TBA):** By August 2022, EU member states need to have implemented the Work-life Balance Directive, which includes new baseline rights for carers and working parents. The UK doesn't need to implement the directive.
- **2022 (TBA):** 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.
- **2022 (TBA):** New and significant EDI law, whether as part of ESG initiatives or separately, due soon.
- **2022 (TBA):** The detailed rules governing gender pay gap reporting are set to be reviewed imminently.



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HELEN REDFERN CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER KIER GROUP PLC.

INTERVIEW BY JASON SPILLER
& PHOTOGRAPHY BY STUART THOMAS

WITH INTENSE PRESSURE, CUT-THROAT COMPETITION AND CONSTANT SCRUTINY, CONSTRUCTION IS A VOLATILE BUSINESS. THIS IS SET AGAINST THE NECESSITY FOR CAST IRON PROMISES. SHORTLY AFTER CARILION'S COLLAPSE - IN A SECTOR IN STARK SPOTLIGHT - KIER GROUP HAD ITS DAY OF RECKONING, BUT RESPONDED DECISIVELY AND WITH CLARITY, TO EMERGE A STRONGER ORGANISATION TO BECOME A MAJOR PLAYER IN THIS TOUGH AND DYNAMIC ARENA.

"HR WORKS IN A WORLD OF INNOVATION AND
CURIOSITY; NOT EVERYTHING LANDS AND NOT
EVERYTHING SUCCEEDS, BUT WE SHOULD NEVER GIVE
UP OR BE AFRAID TO GIVE SOMETHING A GO"

HELEN, TAKE US BACK TO YOUR EARLY LIFE AND HOW YOU FOUND THE PATH TO A CAREER IN HR. I grew up in Hertfordshire and had a very traditional, middle-England upbringing. My parents really supported and encouraged me throughout my education and instilled my strong work ethic. I have great memories of that time and I was thrilled to be able to move back to my home village with my family about ten years ago. My children attend the same primary school that I went to and happily, it's retained that same village community. Like most kids, I didn't know what I wanted to do as a career, but I had worked at Sainsbury's at weekends since I was 15 and absolutely loved retail and working with customers. However, I found myself working at North Hertfordshire College - by complete chance, in the HR department - where I was involved in

recruitment and generalist HR administration and had the opportunity to study for my CIPD and put theoretical learning into practice. I fell in love with HR and I'm a huge advocate for the profession, because you can transfer across sectors and, in my experience, it's been a challenging and exciting place to be. The people agenda has, over my career, progressed to become an integral strategic imperative for every business. An opportunity came up for an HR training programme at Sainsbury's and I would say that's where I really started to experience HR in a more commercial sense. There was a new CEO in Justin King and it was great timing to be involved with a company that was really at the leading edge of people management.

One of the great things at Sainsbury's was that you were moved around from one

challenge to the next and the approach to talent management in that sense was very advanced. I was a troubleshooter, moving around different stores, implementing a number of HR initiatives. I look back and there was such a good buzz and great camaraderie - the company was changing and evolving under Justin King's stewardship - and he was a very inspiring chief executive who focused on people and engagement. HR was always closely involved in the way that the organisation was changing. Managing supermarkets is like running a mini town, all life is there and they are representative of the communities they serve. There is no better place for an HR practitioner to gain broad experience fast, because it's all about people and relationships, from colleagues and customers, right through the supply chain. It's about dealing with different types of people, engaging with

them in an appropriate way and customer service is so dynamic. I was working at Sainsbury's at the height of supermarket competition, along with the emergence of the cheaper end disruptors, so there was this culture and intent to go the extra mile, to delight the customer and have that commercial edge. Unlike many organisations, where change is something that is feared, people were trained in various disciplines and could move on quite quickly, so there was this momentum, with great career and leadership development. Eventually, I came to a crossroads and had to decide whether to take a general practice or functional route. I decided to stick with the latter and I completed my time at Sainsbury's in a regional role, which had a very operational lens. I managed a programme called Lean Store Operations, which was about finding efficiencies and balances and reviewing people processes across operations. It was all a brilliant opportunity for someone like me, beginning their career, working through transformation and cultural alignment, implementing new values, mission and vision. But it came to a point where I had to decide whether to stay at Sainsbury's or expand my skillset with new experiences and, by coincidence, I was approached about a role working at Wolseley PLC - now Ferguson Group - a distributor of plumbing and heating supplies, at that point to the building trade.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR NEXT MOVE. It was a move from B2C to B2B - but this was about to change for the business - and in fact, my first role at Wolseley was with a company called Bathstore which had been acquired as a B2C business - in essence, a retail acquisition for the group. The entrepreneurial founder, Nico, was still very involved, even though it was now a PLC and although it was a very different type of business, I felt really confident bringing the skill and best practice I had developed at Sainsbury's, as the business was very store and customer-centric. I led an upskilling programme across the business and as part of the move to B2C, introduced things like mystery shopping, along with a more customer-focused sales

training. In many respects, it was familiar territory, visiting stores, which were UK based and speaking to store managers and salespeople, because particularly in retail, you find out things that you cannot see in the data and analytics. I eventually progressed from Lead HR Business Partner, to Head of HR, working with the senior leadership team. I then moved over to Wolseley, where my initial focus was on employee resourcing, relations and talent, so very specialist from what had been a generalist career. Nevertheless, it was fascinating work, as we were early to the

"DON'T BE COMPLACENT,
TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY
THAT MAKES SENSE,
BE ACTIVE IN ASKING
FOR OPPORTUNITIES
AND, ABOVE ALL, LEARN
EVERY DAY"

game in a culture to hire for the right behaviours and attitudes as opposed to just focusing on technical competence and relevant experience. This approach expanded to leadership development. Other areas of work included structuring the talent development programmes and strengthening employee relations, which needed more structure and support, developing an efficient upskilling programme and centralising a shared service desk for employee relations. I was central to some significant change in a business that hadn't changed much for years. The business had been struggling and this called for two leaders coming in to turn things around and here, I had the opportunity to see and learn from Ian Meakins and John Martin. Their focus was on efficiency, customer service, USPs and developing the strategy for the Group and HR was aligned with some quick and timely change around accountability. All-in-all, the new initiatives began to right the ship. The business also embarked on a divestment programme, so once

again, this was new ground for me as I was involved in massive due diligence. It was a very intense period for the business.

IT SEEMS THAT HR'S ROLE IN MODERN BUSINESS IS ABOUT CONSTANT CHANGE. IT MUST BE A CONSTANT STATE OF FLUX. Change is inevitable and requires pragmatism, optimism and bringing people on the journey, even when there is frustration and reluctance. It's a challenge and I don't think there has been a time in my career where the water is still. I look back at Wolseley (now Ferguson) and again, appreciate what an opportunity it was to see the best in action.

I experienced so much career progression that has really propelled me, but I knew the next stage in my career plan was going to be a leap. Ever since I fell in love with HR, I knew straight away that my ultimate objective was to be an HR Director. All along, I have self-evaluated how my career was going and questioning whether I was staying in a role for convenience or safety. It's not the same for everyone, but I've pushed for every single opportunity and I pledged to work really, really hard and do the best that I possibly can. If you love what you do and you really want to make a difference, the rest will follow on. The whole idea of a job for life is completely untenable now. I am a real advocate for HR as a career and when people ask what the key is to progressing, I advise, don't be complacent, take every opportunity that makes sense, be active in asking for opportunities and, above all, learn every day. That of course goes for everybody - no matter what career they're in - it's that curiosity and willingness to take on new ideas. I was experiencing a fulfilling career at Wolseley when I was approached about a role at Kier.

TELL US WHAT APPEALED ABOUT KIER AND THE ROLE THAT YOU WERE OFFERED. Our main client is the Government, primarily education, transport, healthcare and justice. We're involved in construction, highways, utilities, major infrastructure projects, property, FM and housing maintenance. We undertake projects of varying size -

all sorts, from a typical smaller project building a school - through to much bigger projects like, HMP Five Wells in Wellingborough. I love the variety of what we do. In terms of our main infrastructure projects, we're working on the Luton Dart, connecting the airport to the rail station - which will fundamentally change the whole town - and we're also working on HS2. Construction aside, I describe Kier as connecting people - whether that's through travel, telecoms or communications. During COVID, we helped keep the country going, from supporting hospitals to keeping the road network moving and, all-in-all, we have a big impact on the end-to-end infrastructure of the UK.

IT SOUNDS LIKE AN INCREDIBLY DYNAMIC ORGANISATION, TAKE US THROUGH THE HR OBJECTIVES. Well first, I feel incredibly privileged to have this role and really appreciate the responsibility I have. It's humbling to visit our sites and see the sheer scale and complexity. Our people are, as you would expect, incredibly knowledgeable and technical, but what is really striking is how engaged and passionate they are about the projects they're delivering. From an HR perspective, the complexity and variety are compelling, but also hugely challenging. In an unwritten way, we really are an essential service. During COVID, our people carried on, keeping the highways safe and hospitals operating. We were front-and-centre in the construction of the Nightingale hospitals and, as a business, we haven't stopped. However, the pandemic has raised some pressing issues and one significant concern for my HR teams is the skills shortage, which is a challenge in engineering, construction and infrastructure. It is a challenge, but I like to look at the positives and I can see the most fantastic opportunity to make a difference in this sector, by opening up opportunities to the widest possible diversity of background and demographic, while demonstrating that we're a changing sector. I have to say that my own experience of joining the business ten years ago was a rude awakening. I was one of the only female leaders across Kier and

certainly the youngest. It was clear that things had to change and I take the responsibility of playing my part in that change very seriously.

There's no point in trying to put a positive spin on it, the whole of the engineering and construction sector had an image for being white and male dominated. Two weeks into the role I thought, what have I done? I knew it was going to be a tough environment - it was so male-dominated - but I thought the worst thing I could do was walk away.

"DURING COVID, OUR PEOPLE CARRIED ON, KEEPING THE HIGHWAYS SAFE AND HOSPITALS OPERATING. WE WERE FRONT AND CENTRE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NIGHTINGALE HOSPITALS AND, AS A BUSINESS, WE HAVEN'T STOPPED"

If I had taken the easy way out, how would anything change? I was determined to make a difference and not to give up. When I was expecting my first child, I couldn't find the maternity policy. I just sat there thinking, this is a sector with a skills shortage and an ageing workforce and a business with such an amazing opportunity to contribute to the country, with the potential for so many diverse opportunities for people with transferrable skills. I realised that, with so few women in the business, the maternity policy would rarely see the light of day. In frustration, I began to join the dots.

AT THAT POINT, KIER WENT THROUGH A DIFFICULT TIME, IN THE WAKE OF CARILLION'S DEMISE. WITH ALL EYES ON SURVIVAL, TRYING TO BRING IN MATERNITY MEASURES MUST HAVE FELT LIKE AN ISOLATING POSITION. We needed

a positive change in leadership and Andrew Davies joined as CEO. There needed to be some really tough measures, implemented quickly and we spent a year doing that. We spent the first year reducing the cost base - predominantly headcount related - and although we knew it was for the greater good, it was, inevitably, tough going. What we were really focused on at that point was developing a people strategy that was going to address some of the HR issues that had been neglected. Bringing the story up to now, we've just implemented eight weeks paid leave for paternity - previously set at two weeks statutory - and we're above many businesses' maternity leave offers, with 26 weeks paid leave. We're also the first in our sector to implement a pregnancy loss policy and in bringing this in, I worked with an incredible woman who tragically went through her own pregnancy loss when her daughter was born 13 weeks early. We sat down, talked and together developed a policy to bring the right support for people who need it. We also now have a support policy for the menopause, as well as providing digital GP access to all Kier employees and their immediate families. This is all part of a wide-ranging family-friendly offering. COVID accelerated agile working, but we were already on that journey. Last year, we undertook a deep-dive diversity and inclusion audit, including our first Group-wide diversity and inclusion survey. The survey really held a mirror up to all of us about what it feels like to work in Kier, particularly those not in the dominant group, which is white middle-aged men. It told us that some things were not great. My view on life is, if you know what you're dealing with, you can address it and you can put actions in place to make changes.

We've set out a very robust diversity and inclusion roadmap, which we've published on our website. We're determined to be transparent and set our targets and objectives. We have implemented our Expect Respect campaign, which is based around five core principles of respect and we see this as integral to the business in the same



way as we do safety, both physical and psychological. Along with diversity, equity and creating a truly inclusive workplace, these are now my core objectives and priorities. Encouragingly, this is resonating positively across the organisation and now we're going further by launching our I'm Proud campaign, which is about attracting more diversity, not only into Kier, but the sector as a whole. We wanted employees to talk about what they're proud about working for Kier and it's employee advocacy that is really helping with everything we do. We have had thousands of our people posting about the career opportunities, that we support families, that we embrace diversity and that we are involved in some amazing and exciting projects. The feedback makes it feel that all our hard work is paying off, but this is only the beginning. There's much more that I want to do.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE THE ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES TO BRINGING THIS LEVEL OF CHANGE THROUGH? Belief, authenticity and buy in from everyone. If you are trying to change the face of a company - never mind the whole sector, as we're trying to do - you have to live and breathe the culture of inclusion on a daily basis. As I reflect now, I see that the conversation within the business has changed so much since I joined. We now have people talking about sexuality and saying; "this is a business where I feel really comfortable to tell people who I am and bring my whole self to work". I just can't emphasise enough that, for anyone who perhaps has not considered a career in this sector before, being part of this transformation is inspirational. Dare I call it, the construction sector's revolution? It's a societal thing, but it's also generational. Younger generations are well informed, they question everything and don't accept things on face value. This means organisations like us must be doing more than ticking boxes when it comes to things like reducing our carbon footprint because, of course, our sector is a big contributor. We have to demonstrate good progress and a future vision that balances better outcomes,

against what is practical. There are many other levels that we need to focus on including; social values, giving back to the communities that we operate within and, of course, with our diversity and inclusion credentials there really is no room for compromise. If we don't lead with values, if we're not ahead of the curve, we won't attract talent, we won't retain talent and we won't win work that we bid for. We have our charitable foundation, Kier Foundation and are partnering with End Youth Homelessness, where we're able to make a real difference to the lives of young people. The volume of donations that we receive from our employees and the participation in charitable events shows that people really value what we're doing. Employee buy-in is crucial to bringing through that level of change.

"YOUNGER GENERATIONS ARE WELL INFORMED, THEY QUESTION EVERYTHING AND DON'T ACCEPT THINGS ON FACE VALUE. THIS MEANS ORGANISATIONS LIKE US MUST BE DOING MORE THAN TICKING BOXES"

We support serving prisoners and prison leavers into employment through our Making Ground programme and I was talking to a prison leaver on site recently, who was so impassioned about the opportunity he's been given. When people leave prison they're given a travel voucher and no real support to find a worthwhile job to help turn their lives around. It's little wonder that the reoffending rate is so high. If we don't reach out and help people in all areas of society, things will never change. If we can give meaningful employment to people in a sector that has a skills shortage, the benefits are surely there for all to see. The big picture goes way

beyond gender diversity, which incidentally, despite the pandemic, improved across nearly every grade. Our early careers programmes are showing significant improvements in gender balance and representation from diverse groups. We also have our Empower programme, a management development programme for diverse groups in Kier. I'm proud to say we're on a journey and our objective is to change the face of a sector that has for so long needed to change.

HOW DO YOU ENCAPSULATE THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS AND WHAT LEARNING CAN WE TAKE FROM THESE CHALLENGING TIMES? COVID was a really tough time for many people. I think for Kier, it has accelerated many of the programmes that we were already working on and it's informed the development of our wellbeing strategy, as it became clear that wellbeing is multifaceted beyond physical and mental health and we are determined to provide more support and help across a wider remit. We have to be honest in areas where perhaps we're not doing so well, hold up a mirror and constantly evolve our culture. We are looking at how we can improve and it's important to focus on the areas where we need to be tuned in. It's a tragedy that the construction sector has such a high suicide rate compared to other sectors and we need to make sure our people feel safe, supported and able to talk about how they're feeling or know where to go to get support. Having my children - and they were fairly tricky pregnancies, which was tough at the time - raised my game in understanding and empathising with what people go through in life. I take that responsibility very seriously and I want people to feel that they belong and that they are supported. I'm acutely aware that role modeling is essential from leaders in particular and that they walk the walk. The pandemic has been an extraordinary learning experience and now we're beginning to move towards living with COVID, it's about embracing the good bits and saying, 'we need to hold onto those' and not just go back to old habits and old ways of working.

YOU SIT ON KIER'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, HOW DOES THAT INFORM YOU IN WHAT YOU ARE WORKING TO ACHIEVE AT KIER? Without leaders informed and on side, trying to achieve anything is an uphill battle and being on ExCo lets me look at other organisations across sectors and compare and contrast experiences. This helps me on internal programmes such as our D&I committee, which I co-chair with Andrew Davies, Kier's CEO. It's vital that we're joined up in our thinking and not doing things in isolation. Sticking with our D&I committee and employee networks, all employee network leads report into us to make sure our actions are joined up. I also sit on the Gender Inclusion Network as an executive member. This gives our people the confidence that we're driving inclusion from the highest level and personally it's incredibly helpful, because gaining diverse opinions and views is essential if we're going to offer a truly inclusive workplace. Recently, a couple of single parents attended the Gender Inclusion Network and raised that we really need to up our game on supporting single parents. Another contributor spoke of supporting people with cancer and with one-in-two people in the UK being diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime, it is imperative that we support them. The Kier Inclusion Network, where we have hundreds of people contributing, is our umbrella network, where our people can share their experiences and drive D&I across the company. If we want to truly turn the tables on the war for talent, we need to make sure that as a sector, we're not repelling people. Trying to find the balance on all of this is the tricky bit, but it answers a lot of the issues around the shortage in skills. We need to improve how we support women and others back into work after career breaks, so that their knowledge and skillset is not lost.

IS SEGMENTING PEOPLE INTO THE EMPLOYEE NETWORKS, THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF GAINING FEEDBACK, DOES IT NOT CREATE SILOS? The only way to make sure everybody's points of view are represented is to bring them into the conversation and turn the key issues

into actions. Just because something seems hard to correct or improve, doesn't mean that we should stop trying to make a difference. HR works in a world of innovation and curiosity - not everything lands and not everything succeeds - but we should never give up or be afraid to give something a go. If it works, great and if it doesn't, move on and try a different approach. Culture is essential, but it is not a destination, it's a journey.

"THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE SURE EVERYBODY'S POINTS OF VIEW ARE REPRESENTED IS TO BRING THEM INTO THE CONVERSATION AND TURN THE KEY ISSUES INTO ACTIONS"

WHAT ARE YOU FOCUSING ON GOING FORWARD AND WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE NEXT? We're continuing to focus on our people strategy and embedding diversity and inclusion. I could talk about this all day, but will pick out a few highlights! We'll continue to invest in our apprenticeships and early careers populations and will be moving to the next phase of our Expect Respect campaign. In April last year, we rolled out the Real Living Wage to all direct Kier employees and we have a clear plan to expand that to indirect employees; we want everyone who works at Kier to have a consistent experience. We'll continue to collaborate with the business during the work-winning phase to make sure that, from an HR point of view, we really add value, and we're committed to continuing to grow our own talent. We want to do more with our Making Ground programme and our work with Armed Forces veterans and reservists. From an ESG point of view, we're embarking on a behaviours programme. Again, we've done some really good things across the Group, but we're going to be introducing

a Group-wide behaviours programme and I think it will be the glue that brings everything together. It links to a very wellbeing-led health and safety strategy and it's about how we really take that to the next level. Looking ahead at skills, we're on our digital and automation journey later than some, but the sector does need to change how it works to meet what technology is changing in construction. If you go on to a construction site and compare it to 30 years ago, the differences are stark and innovation keeps coming. We need to embrace modern methods of construction and keep on track with our de-carbonisation targets. We need to be realistic about our sector is going to look like in ten-to-15 years and we need to take people on that journey now and really think about strategic workforce planning that's going to help us deliver what we need in the future.

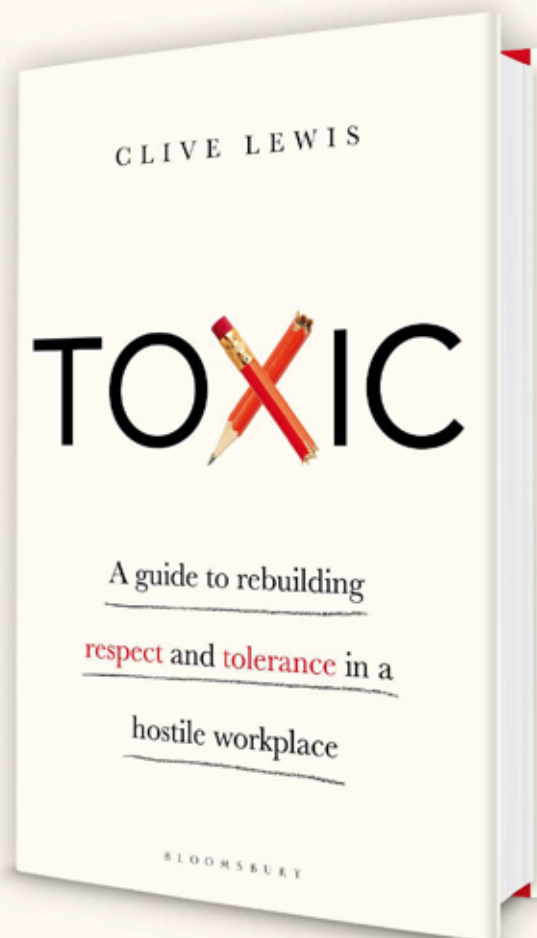
FINALLY, HELEN YOU HAVE BEEN NOMINATED TO INVOLVE'S LIST OF GLOBAL ROLE MODELS, TELL US MORE.

I was absolutely thrilled to make it onto the list, to be honest! It's really around the D&I work we're doing at Kier, holding up that mirror and being very open about what we're good at and where we need to improve and come up with a plan. I feel very proud that I was the only person in the construction sector to be on the list. It's testament, I think, to our attitude and that we are embracing inclusion and diversity so wholeheartedly. I see the list as representing the progress and achievement in our organisation and the influence that we're having more generally across the sector and I'm honoured to represent that.

“This should be required reading
for company bosses across the land.”

– Rosamund Urwin, *The Sunday Times Culture*

For help with addressing the toxic culture at your
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B L O O M S B U R Y B U S I N E S S



CHAIRIED BY JASON SPILLER

3 FEBRUARY 2022 - VIRTUAL DEBATE

HEALTH & WELLBEING AT WORK - A NEW ERA AND A NEW OPPORTUNITY

ORGANISATIONS ARE MAKING IMPROVEMENTS TOWARDS FOSTERING INCLUSIVE WORKFORCES, YET THEY ARE STILL PLAGUED BY A MAJOR CULTURAL TABOO, WHERE EMPLOYEES FEAR ADMITTING TO THEIR EMPLOYER THAT THEY'RE SUFFERING EITHER FROM POOR MENTAL OR PHYSICAL HEALTH. THIS STIGMA AROUND HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE MEANS THAT MILLIONS OF WORKERS MAY NOT BE SUPPORTED BY THEIR EMPLOYERS.

PARTNERED WITH



DELEGATES

HAYLEY SNOWBALL GLOBAL TALENT SEARCH MANAGER & EMPLOYER BRAND LEAD - BACARDI
LEANNE KNIGHT GROUP HEAD OF TALENT ACQUISITION & INCLUSION - SSP
SOPHIE METCALF HEAD OF HR - EXPECT DISTRIBUTION
KERRY YOUNG CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER - VITRIFI LIMITED
CARLA BARNETT GROUP HR DIRECTOR - SANDERSON DESIGN GROUP
DR MARLEECE ESTELLA CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER & SVP GLOBAL HEALTH & WELLBEING - BP
CHARLOTTE FITZGERALD HEAD OF PEOPLE PARTNERING - LLOYDS BANKING GROUP
NAOMI THOMPSON HEAD OF ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT - BENENDEN HEALTH
ZENA GREEN WELFARE MANAGER & FAMILY CARE FLO - AIRBUS
FIONA MCASLAN WELLBEING LEAD - NATWEST GROUP
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GEMMA ABRAHAM HR MANAGER - SENIOR HR BUSINESS PARTNER - OECD
NICOLE WARD HR & PEOPLE CONSULTANT - NHS
DANIELLE VERGE PEOPLE & PERFORMANCE DIRECTOR - ENABLE GROUP
SARAH DANIELS ENGAGEMENT & WELLBEING SPECIALIST - CITY & GUILDS
MANISHA SANGEKAR GENERAL MANAGER - THE CAIRNMILLAR INSTITUTE (TCI)
SHARON NOBLE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE - ROYAL ACADEMY OF ENGINEERING
PETA FRY SENIOR HR MANAGER - ORDER ST JOHN CARE TRUST
KARYN WOOD PEOPLE DIRECTOR - ICP

Benenden Health's research surveyed over 2000 employees and 500 employers and identified that as many as 41 percent of individuals reported that they wouldn't feel confident about discussing any health issues with their employer, with many worrying what it would mean for their career and relationships within the workplace. The ramifications of this lack of communication are clear, rises in absence, lower productivity, decreasing engagement and increasing attrition.

WHAT HAS THE PANDEMIC TAUGHT US WHEN IT COMES TO MANAGING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF PEOPLE?

Hayley Snowball: As a seven-generation, family-owned company, Bacardi has always made wellbeing an absolute priority. We focused on making sure that people felt completely supported during the pandemic and lockdowns managing a variety of different personal circumstances. Leaders were purposeful about empowering their teams to manage their work responsibilities in a way that works for them. We moved to a very flexible working approach encouraging people to 'be where you need to be'. Today we have a mix of closed and partially opened offices across the globe and locally in the UK, we offer a hybrid working model that offers flexibility but also brings people together for moments of collaboration and connection.

Leanne Knight: The last 18 months has really demonstrated how successful individuals can be with a flexible hybrid working model, it has also highlighted the importance of mental and physical wellbeing and how seriously this topic needs to be taken at all levels of the organisation.

Sophie Metcalf: We work in logistics and many of our people have just continued to come into the office and carry on with work throughout COVID. We've made allowances where people have either been at risk, such as being pregnant and other higher risk categories. But what we've actually found is that those people felt quite isolated, because everybody else continued as normal. The impact for us has really been about the pressure that everybody has been under, with people working at a raised level of discretionary effort, because they feel like they should.

Fiona Mcaslan: At NatWest, we recognised through the pandemic from a wellbeing perspective, just how individual everybody's situation is and I think we underestimated that before. A flexible work wellbeing strategy is really essential for us now, but you have to be careful not to overwhelm, it has to be kept simple, comprehensive and accessible. In terms of a broader picture, our EAP is picking up on issues beyond the traditional health considerations, for example relationship breakups.

Zena Green: We have 120,000 employees globally and one of the unexpected areas of concern was a lack of sleep and as a psychotherapist, I was keen to point people to some self-help options and once you can make a routine of it, it creates a habit of sleep. So essentially simple things can make a big difference. In terms of individual need, your EAP could offer support with, for example, autism. If you create a culture of transparency, employees will tell you their personal stories, which can really inform a more cohesive EAP offering.

Charlotte Fitzgerald: One of the key learnings is to help leaders understand their guardrails, but also empower them in the application of these, because they know their colleagues the best. It's the relationship with leader and colleagues that will determine whether the application of that policy can help the employee's wellbeing in the long term. The pandemic bridged gaps between leaders and colleagues by finding common ground. We don't want to lose the connection that's been made. We don't want to slip back into being overly corporate and we are mindful about that. Unfortunately, where we have supported above and beyond the last two years, for a very small minority that creates a sense of entitlement. So, we are at the start of uncovering where our true wellbeing cases are and where we really need to dial-up and focus that energy in support.

Gemma Abraham: The pandemic revealed many issues, such as the younger population - interns or more junior staff - some of whom were in small apartments during lockdown, far from home. We

paid special attention to them, to stay connected. We also offered a service of 24/7 support for the staff members and for their families - most of them were expatriate families - and this was provided in several languages for them as well. Finally, another idea that we put in place that was important for us was the message from senior leadership, that showing vulnerability was an act of being brave, being human and this brought more humanity to the table.

"THE PANDEMIC BRIDGED GAPS BETWEEN LEADERS AND COLLEAGUES BY FINDING COMMON GROUND. WE DON'T WANT TO LOSE THE CONNECTION THAT'S BEEN MADE. WE DON'T WANT TO SLIP BACK INTO BEING OVERLY CORPORATE"

Naomi Thompson: Some of the things that worked really well to help us really listen was creating champions across the organisation. In the early days of the pandemic, we were almost meeting with the champions weekly and asking them how communications were landing, to make sure people were well informed and to understand the challenges of our people. Our own research shows that 51 percent of managers actually experienced burnout during this pandemic, just because of the changes in operating, during which they've had to over communicate and make the workplace safe. We've had to spend a significant amount of time looking after our managers as well and creating a safe space for them, so that they can come and talk about their experiences. We tend to think of managers as somehow superhuman and we need to spend more time and effort in looking after them too.

Manisha Sangekar: There is no one-size-fits-all. We need to think about and provide individualised experiences, which is the work that we're starting to do now, in terms of our wellbeing and people strategy. This crisis has highlighted different needs which require different support mechanisms. Looking at remote working, most organisations were able to pivot themselves through COVID in one way or the other, but despite the digital platforms, the biggest thing that we've

lost is real human connection in the traditional sense. We are having real issues with this, which is also leading to higher attrition and retention challenges. We all know about great resignation hitting us at some point in time if it hasn't already. The challenge is attrition, is gauging the real reasons behind people leaving - is it money, flexibility or other benefits? We are finding engagement and employee experience is really at the heart of this.

Peta Fry: We have 4,500 staff in the organisation, the majority of which are working in care homes and only ten percent of our workforce had the opportunity to undertake hybrid working or work from home. They've been dealing with what's happening - as an adult social care provider, it is part of our life - but also what's been said in the media has had a huge impact. We have some fabulous, reflective practices in place and support for individuals who are dealing with the death of people that they see as family - these are people that they care for - so we've been putting in place a lot of mental health support. Also bringing fun back into the workplace really makes a huge difference on a day-to-day basis. If people enjoy their work, that helps them to manage some of the other wellbeing actions that they need to take for themselves.

AS MANY BUSINESSES MOVE TOWARDS HYBRID WORKING MODELS, WHAT ARE THE KEY FOCUSES FOR YOUR ORGANISATION AND HOW IS YOUR EMPLOYEE WELLBEING STRATEGY ADAPTING TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITION?

Kerry Young: We are a tech startup and we established with a 100 percent, remote-first principle, by necessity, because the UK was in lockdown. As we've started to expand, that creates many considerations

which has informed us in the development an individual, tailored approach to health and wellbeing. Obviously, there will come a time where that might become unsustainable, in having so many different types of individual approaches. But my HR team are currently looking at calibration, what is sustainable and what do we need to look to standardise or potentially remove. People have expectations of what a startup is and how much is established, particularly if they are coming from very steady-state, large organisation and it can be a little bit of a shock for them. But people are interested in joining a startup business, because they have no legacy issues.

Sharon Noble: In the beginning of the pandemic, it was a case of figuring it out on the go and we pretty much moved to a hybrid model early on. We opened our offices as an option for some people, but we had a sort of re-education about what the office now represented, going forward, as a place to come together, a creative, collaborative hub. But we're having to sell that concept and so we've developed a policy called "Your Day, Your Way" and called for feedback via a survey carried out before Christmas. Their comments couldn't have been more varied and it created a sort of impasse because we want a partial return to the office for that sense of camaraderie, but we made remote working work so well, that convincing people with some office/home ratio is tricky, the idea of the commute, for some, does not appeal now.

Charlotte Fitzgerald: We're having really adult conversations about hybrid working and creating compelling reasons for colleagues to come into the office. There's a whole new psychological complexity about what people want.

Leanne Knight: There are many innovative solutions that we can explore, for example flexible benefits that support colleagues' wellbeing, whether that be financial or other areas.

WHAT ARE THE KEY CHALLENGES IN BRINGING HYBRID WORKING TO REPLACE LONG AND WELL

ESTABLISHED PARAMETERS AND THE KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION?

Carla Barnett: We are focusing on principles, as we do not know what the landscape will look like in the future - but we do know that we will need to adapt. We are in a creative industry and the workforce consists of colleagues who work in a factory, distribution and office environment and therefore have very different ways of working. During the pandemic, the colleagues in the factory and distribution continued to work on-site with extensive health and safety protocols, as working from home was not a reality due to the nature of their roles. Our colleagues based in the offices learned that people need to be together, particularly when collaborating creatively. A considerable proportion of people came to that conclusion themselves. However, we have pockets of individuals who do not want to return to the office. While we are not mandating this, we have asked each functional lead to have a set of principles for the respective area and consider other departments they need to collaborate with regularly. Ultimately hybrid working needs to work for the individual, team and organisation.

Hayley Snowball: I just wanted to build on collaborative working being a drawcard for bringing people into the office. Our spaces encourage people to work together when they are in the office, which creates more buzz and energy. We're also supporting flexible working hours, so that people can travel outside of rush hour when it's quieter and cheaper by public transport. This flexibility also allows them to manage personal moments, such as childcare, more effectively.

Manisha Sangekar: You can see why some people are reluctant to return - I used to be on the road for an hour and a half each way - now I have that time to go to the gym or drop my kids to school. Another consideration is the environmental impacts and so there are a lot of positives. Collaboration, for sure is a concern and, although we have been

able to create moments of collaboration virtually, cross-functional collaboration is the piece that we have really had a challenge with. I think the cohesive return is about not mandating it, but gradually supporting people to return.

Nicole Ward: I'm American and I find that people rarely communicate with anyone out of their sphere here in the UK, whereas I go into a business and talk to anyone and everyone - I'm a bit nosy - and I find that people are quite surprised when I strike up a conversation, especially in the elevator. The point is, communication is the key to cohesion, making changes happen and breaking down silos.

Zena Green: I developed slide packs, to help support managers. There is tension, so it's important to reassure people and so we've started to develop short infographics, which I developed with the graphics team. They're not difficult to do, but they're really effective on issues such as burnout and boundaries. It has to be authentic, because corporate waffle, just doesn't cut it anymore.

THERE WAS AN AWFUL LOT OF BURNOUT AND WORK-RELATED STRESS PRE-COVID. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A NEW NORMAL, WE NEED TO REALLY ADDRESS THOSE ISSUES, PARTICULARLY CULTURE.

Danielle Verge: We've focused a little bit on the benefits of hybrid working - stay at home and cost-saving - but our challenge has been our key worker staff who had no choice than to come into work. People were fearful and they became resentful about people that could work from home. The only way we could deal with that is to look at our reward and recognition. We have had financial constraints as much of our industry has and it wasn't a case of paying people overtime, it was as simple thank you, showing that we appreciated their commitment.

Naomi Thompson: There's definitely a bit of a power shift with employees since the pandemic. There is almost a reluctance to come back into the office for a variety of

reasons, but there are activities that are better suited to face-to-face. If the culture's right and they have that psychological engagement with their job, then coming into the office at times should just be non-negotiable for them. We have been surveying and running focus groups in our organisation and bringing managers together to ask what's happening and how they are feeling - and we have seen a shift in mindset. There is certainly more people in the office and people are chopping up the day, so they come into the office for specific meetings and activities and flexing their times to drop off children and avoid rush hour. As a result we have, I think, a much more loyal workforce.

WHAT ARE THE IDEAS AND PLANS THAT YOU'RE FORMULATING AT THE MOMENT WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES?

Leanne Knight: As we develop our wellbeing strategy, one of the things that's important is to highlight the links between wellbeing and sustainability. This way, it becomes important as an overall business priority.

"YOU CAN SEE WHY SOME PEOPLE ARE RELUCTANT TO RETURN - I USED TO BE ON THE ROAD FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF EACH WAY - NOW I HAVE THAT TIME TO GO TO THE GYM OR DROP MY KIDS TO SCHOOL"

Sophie Metcalf: My strategy at the moment is talking to different groups asking; how would this look for you, how would this work and what impact does this have? There are so many practical considerations in remote working, not to mention policies and procedures.

Kerry Young: Indeed, as I said, all our employees work remotely and all new joiners have a virtual ergonomic assessment, to ensure that their home working area is safe for work. Then we have a whole range of different equipment that they can order, based on their assessment recommendations. For hybrid workers, we look at a different version of that virtual ergonomic assessment for their working station at home and their office working space.

Danielle Verge: Playing devil's advocate, I want to pick up on the point of the employer being wholly responsible for the health and wellbeing of remote working employees. These are adults who should be responsible for taking steps to protect their own health and wellbeing. Certainly, an employer has a duty to provide a suitable working environment, reasonable support and a healthy and safe environment, but people's homes is a contentious issue. If we have layers and layers of interventions, are we making things worse? As HR professionals, I feel a slight frustration that we are becoming distracted with the 'next new wellbeing initiative', when ultimately, we provide work for which people are remunerated. We commit to making the environment as nice as we can, we'll give guidelines, purpose and equipment and we'd love you to have a good work/life balance.

Karyn Wood: When restrictions eased, we decided that we were going to give everybody the opportunity to make the decision themselves. We said we were going to use employee feedback to make that action plan. Since March last year,

we've probably had about 20 people at most turn up into our offices both in London and Atlanta - our largest offices - at any one time. We are moving offices soon and that space is geared more towards collaboration than desk space, very different to what our offices looked like previously. But as of April, we will be enticing people to come back in. If after three months, we're still seeing that people are not turning up, we'll consider the situation and adapt. As to employer responsibility, I get the sentiment about people being adults, but I do think as an employer, we do have a responsibility for the health and wellbeing of our people, whether that is office or remote.

Naomi Thompson: We've found that a wellness action plan is a brilliant tool to

really help managers have conversation about wellbeing, but it has to be a two-prong approach. It's about what can we do to support the individual, but also what can the individual do to be at their best as well. There's significant amount of research about how stressed people become in the workplace and that can be for a variety of reasons - a lack of clarity about what's expected of them - or the pressures of the job, which can have mental and physical impacts. Encouragingly, there is a shift in terms of employers realising, that if they want to be competitive they have to start supporting their employees. We talk about the big resignation and this is employees waking up to a lack of support and understanding that they have options.

Nicole Ward: Leaders are those who can have those real conversations and broach topics that may not be of popular opinion, but are crucial to have, in order to establish clarity and to manage expectations realistically. There are options - although limited - to establish a good work/life balance here, but in most cases it involves a reduction in salary that may not be suitable for people. It also comes, down to recognising and changing the employee engagement position and being really transparent and realistic. The psychological contract of work is not the same in every industry. That's just a fact.

Manisha Sangekar: There is a lot of that ideation involving people in the design process, feedback loops and then tweaking what's working and what's not working. There has to be a real focus on the preventative part, the policies and frameworks. It's about looking at this holistically as an employee experience. Mental health and wellbeing is one aspect, we also need to think about discrimination, bullying and harassment and creating safe and happy environments. Matching skills, passions and interests to the jobs, is really the next step and creating that employee-centric workplace.

Carla Barnett: Everybody's employed to do a job, I think we all understand that, but it's about ensuring you bring the best out of the people, for mutual benefit and

you need to lead with empathy and compassion, from the top and filtering down through to line managers. As an example, we had an employee who worked for us for 30 years, a fantastic performer, but who was going through a challenging time. They reached out to a mental health first aider, who wasn't an HR person, for the support they needed. If we were to lose that person because they didn't have that level of support, that would have been really damaging for our business due to the person's skills and technical knowledge.

WHEN IT COMES TO PROVIDING SUPPORT, HOW IS THE EXPECTATION OF YOUR EMPLOYEES SHIFTING AND WHAT WILL NEED TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THE NEW GENERATIONS ENTERING WORK?

Kerry Young: I'm going to challenge the question and say, it's not just the new generation coming into work that have shifted their expectations. One of our major learnings of the pandemic has been that every single generation that's currently in work, has individual needs and wants. It has been a really significant pause over the last two years and it's given everyone an opportunity to really reflect on what their true purpose is. So, we will be focusing on new generations coming in, but also right across our workforce demographic.

Leanne Knight: Indeed, we have five generations of colleagues in our business and listening and learning about what really matters to everyone as individuals is critical when building out future plans.

Nicole Ward: In my experience, incentives don't necessarily have to be expensive and elaborate offerings, when it really just should be creative, accessible and relevant to the individual. There's no point being tied into an incentivisation programme that may have been in place via SLA for years, when our workforce and employment life cycle may not be measured in the same way. There is a lot more movement in employment now. We need to enable staff to make their own choices - let's take the parent role away from HR - and let them choose

what works for them. It's a fairly simple equation, does the incentives on offer meet the needs and expectations of staff in the various different points in their career paths?

Carla Barnett: Pre-pandemic, there was the perception that it was millennials that wanted to work in the way that almost all of us have had to adopt and the revelation is that other age groups also benefit from greater flexibility. But setting this right for your business and employees has to be informed by regular good and honest feedback and not assume anything. It's about engaging with people and asking the question but most importantly, really listening to the detail.

Gemma Abraham: We have to be wary of survey fatigue, because we tried to do them on a regular basis and asking the same questions can be counterproductive. You're right about listening but you also need to act. We started piloting our 'You said, we did' initiative in order to report back on what people have voiced and how we have tried to take action on this - and if not, why - and what are the steps that we are taking. After two years remote working, I don't think we can underestimate what is a definite shift in mentality and it's something that we are listening to, but we're not ready to change our contractual modalities, although it may be considered in the future.

Manisha Sangekar: I agree with the potential for survey fatigue, but there is technology that many of us are already using, that can fill the remote working void, in terms of feedback. Take for example, the Microsoft Viva platform, which can perform organisation network analysis and here are a lot of tools out there that provide information and intelligence - for example, who people interact and collaborate with, where they spend their time, what people are focused on and even productivity detail. The data from these tools can provide you with rich information and so it's worth investigating beyond the obvious usages of, say, virtual meetings.

Naomi Thompson: The challenges with data and insights is that you can end

up going into that one-size-fits-all approach, it has to be a balanced approach, as delegates have attested, with quality conversations and treating people as individual human beings, rather than a collective.

ARE WE POTENTIALLY LOOKING AT BETTER WORK/LIFE BALANCE BEING DERAILED BY ANOTHER SET OF STRESSES AND PRESSURES CAUSED BY THESE CHANGING WORK CONVENTIONS?

Naomi Thompson: We've all become aware of this emerging macro trend of Zoom fatigue. Again, it sounds like a cliché but it is prevalent and requires attention. Significant research has shown the intensity of back-to-back virtual meetings can be more intense than in-person meetings. We've worked with people individually to put together a digital well-being commitment last year, which is a free initiative, but had a huge impact on our people. It showed that we're listening to them, but it also enabled them to commit to each other and the detail is important, because it's almost become a faux pas now for anyone to call a meeting around lunch. We're making sure that people are thinking about colleagues and not increasing pressures, on the basis that remote working is privilege. It may take a reworking of discipline, etiquette and protocol, in order for people to really integrate sustainably in the hybrid working framework.

Carla Barnett: It's worth remembering that the changes haven't impacted everyone so significantly. For our factory workers, their way of working didn't change - other than social distancing and having to go on breaks at specific times - compared to the office environment, where, as we know, the differences in operating are huge. Stress and burnout are a possibility in every setting, but even if you provide support, experientially, the challenge is take-up. People might talk to a mental health first aider, but do they want to pick up the phone and speak to that EAP? That's a challenge and a concern, because if people keep relying on the same individual but the problem

never moves further than that, it's unlikely to be identified and supported.

TRADITIONALLY, THERE'S THIS PROBLEM WITH UPTAKE WITH WELLBEING INITIATIVES. WHAT DO YOU THINK IS BEHIND THAT?

Karyn Wood: It's probably a mixture. It could be workload, but more often, it's people not wanting to show that they are vulnerable or struggling. Changing that culture has to be role modelled by leaders who are prepared to show their vulnerability and ask for help. In organisations where this has occurred, it has brought a culture of greater openness and honesty.

"IT HAS TO BE A TWO-PRONG APPROACH. IT'S ABOUT WHAT CAN WE DO TO SUPPORT THE INDIVIDUAL, BUT ALSO WHAT CAN THE INDIVIDUAL DO TO BE AT THEIR BEST AS WELL"

Leanne Knight: Agreed, developing a wellness culture has to start at the very top of the organisation. We are holding an event to explore the four pillars of health and we're going to look at nutrition, exercise, relaxation and sleep and the impact that this has on our own productivity and leadership.

Manisha Sangekar: I concur, it's fundamental to developing a wellbeing culture, for leaders to role-model those behaviours and for employees to take those cues from them. I would also add two other dimensions to those four pillars and that is focus and financial, as stress is also caused by these factors, especially in these testing times for the economy and impacts on living costs. As a tech advocate, I go back to this idea of 'nudges', which can be created through technology, like taking breaks and exercise. I love my Apple watch, as it tells me to stand up and move about a bit, when I've been glued to the laptop screen for too long.

Hayley Snowball: It's about connection too and we've been encouraging leaders to not just talk about work to their teams, but to have an opportunity within the working

week to have a huddle about non-agenda topics and really take the content out of it and really just talk to the person. It's like that human-centered design approach, iterating and reiterating and making sure that we create something that really supports people. We've talked quite tactically but it's those little things that mean a lot - I would recommend reading *Atomic Habits* - it's those little shifts that can really affect behaviour and how people feel. Our CEO is a pretty amazing leader and at the beginning of the pandemic, he held regular global town halls, in which he said: "Your family is important, your wellbeing is important and that is the most important thing to us. Yes, we need to succeed as a company and yes we want

to continue to perform, but we're not going to perform unless you feel at your best. Take the time to do your meditation, go for a walk, whatever works for you."

Danielle Verge: During these testing times, the experience has allowed people to talk a little bit more freely about how they might be feeling and what works and what doesn't and that's a healthy dialogue and one that I advocate and would endorse absolutely. I think it's fabulous that there are champions that are happy and willing and rightfully, taking this dialogue further. I believe in activism and I believe in empowering people.

HOW DO WE MAKE SURE THAT THE BALANCE IS RIGHT AND OUR INTERVENTIONS ARE ACTUALLY WANTED AND OF USE?

Carla Barnett: I think it comes back to having a test and learn approach, so that you can adapt accordingly. We are using the data from our wellbeing hub, which links to the four areas of wellbeing - move, mind, money and munch - and we are looking at who is using it, what areas are they in, what do they use frequently and when do they interact with the tool.

From this we can create initiatives to support accordingly. I think it's essential to have principles, not policies. Once something is a policy, it's set in stone and difficult to modify and adapt.

Karyn Wood: There's more burnout post-pandemic than pre-pandemic and arguably, that's because there is greater awareness and a more open culture, more action surrounding DE&I and more awareness in general and so perhaps if people more readily access the support, we'll start to see the tables turn.

Zena Green: I've started to pull back from surveys to a degree, because what we were asking was kind of prescriptive and based on feedback, we introduced yoga and just three people joined and we moved it online and only ten joined. We pulled yoga and suddenly lots of people said, "where's the yoga's gone"? If there is an understanding that things will be dropped if they're not used, people may try it. Additionally, I think a culture that champions self-responsibility for wellbeing is key.

Naomi Thompson: I think there is the potential for dichotomy between asking everybody what they want versus what's actually reasonable. It's also important to trial things out, with the understanding that often these things don't land, but sometimes they do and occasionally, a trial run can turn into a game changer. It also demonstrates that the commitment is there, not just ticking boxes.

WHAT DOES THE WORKFORCE EXPECT FROM LEADERSHIP IN UNDERSTANDING HEALTH AND WELLBEING AND WHAT NEW SKILLS AND VALUES DO LEADERS NEED TO DEVELOP IN THE NEW WORKING ERA?

Gemma Abraham: People expect more empathetic managers, who ask questions and have genuine conversation with them. That in-the-moment feedback enables adaptability and leads to more authentic, caring and well targeted interventions. When we have asked questions around expectations, emotional intelligence comes up time and again. How we build and develop this aspect in

our managers and leaders, EI will be increasingly important, going forward.

Carla Barnett: Compassion too, because recognising how somebody feels and acknowledging it is one thing, having the capacity to help them to move forward is something else. As a leader, the capacity for real empathy comes from self-awareness and a sense of your own vulnerability.

Nicole Ward: Much of my work is in the NHS and empathy is of course a driving factor day-to-day. EI is unquestionably a foundation of leadership.

"IT'S ABOUT LOOKING AT THIS HOLISTICALLY AS AN EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IS ONE ASPECT, WE ALSO NEED TO THINK ABOUT DISCRIMINATION, BULLYING AND HARASSMENT AND CREATING SAFE AND HAPPY ENVIRONMENTS"

Leanne Knight: Creating an environment where there's psychological safety, where there is a positive team climate, one where team members really care about each other's wellbeing.

WHY DO WE THINK THAT EMPLOYEES ARE RELUCTANT TO BE OPEN WITH THEIR EMPLOYERS AND HOW CAN THESE TABOOS BE ERADICATED?

Naomi Thompson: The research that we did, specifically looking at employees and employers, revealed disparity between employer and employee surrounding wellbeing support. Leaders were saying: "We've got mental health first aiders, policies and a suite of initiatives in place." But what employees said was a stark comparison as there was trepidation about accessing interventions, because of the fear of damage reputation and even losing their jobs. We have to break the stigma. Today we've talked about leader role modeling vulnerability, showing it's okay to talk about mental health. I still come across leaders who say with conviction: "We don't need more support for my team, because we haven't any mental health issues." Mental health is the same as physical health, we've all have it. It's about how we practice good mental

wellbeing, like we do physical. If we're talking about looking after our mental health in the same vein as we're talking physical for example going to the gym and watching our nutrition, then we can start to normalise the conversation.

Carla Barnett: In terms of the taboo, people still confuse mental health with mental illness and that's just a basic distinction that needs to be clear. People are afraid to speak up because they think they may be treated differently and negatively targeted previously when they have, or they know people that have. As HR professionals must be at forefront

of shifting those experiences and expectations, but it comes down to - and this has been visited already in today's conversation - trust and authenticity.

WHAT DOES A FUTURE-READY HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN LOOK LIKE? WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS THAT NEED TO BE INCLUDED TO MEET THE NEW ERA OF WORK?

Sophie Metcalf: We must not assume that managers have the skills naturally, we need to help them develop those and make sure they are part of that learning process.

Nicole Ward: I think the future of health and wellbeing is down to self-empowerment and encouraging people to actually take up what is being offered and continue to signpost and build on the resources we have and can offer each other. There are so many creative things that we can do to improve health and wellbeing, but we must actively encourage and support their participation with peers, colleagues and managers and put the human back into human resources.

Carla Barnett: Even though we talk about flexibility, having guiding principles in place across the wellbeing piece is

fundamental. Supporting a culture for people to have a personal responsibility around their own wellbeing is also key and I think the onus is on HR - as well as leaders in general - to be showing the way, role modeling and showcasing good wellbeing practice.

Haley Snowball: The pandemic has certainly changed the way we view wellbeing at work. Moving forward, we see belonging as being important to wellbeing and have developed a program in our organisation, which we will continue to build on globally.

Leanne Knight: It is so clear that wellbeing means different things to different people. We need to find more ways to listen and learn from others and we need to keep it simple for our business. Finally, we must create and sustain a wellbeing culture and it has to be part of the fabric.

Carla Barnett: What is clear is that there is no one-size-fits-all in the approach and what is important is experimenting with new practices, tailoring the strategy for the organisation and employee needs and ensuring sustainability. This will be high on my agenda going forward.

Naomi Thompson: For me, it's about taking responsibility. Whilst it can be quite overwhelming for the HR department, the good news is that responsibility can be shared and that's not just across the business, it's with the employees as well. These dialogues help, so let us please keep asking those important questions about what people want and need. Again, it's crucial that we set an expectation of what's reasonable, what is balanced and keep adapting. We also need to take an honest look at our leaders and help lead from the top with the skills that have dominated today's agenda and topped with compassion and empathy and we need to do this in a way that is going to land in the business and make that real difference.

To download Benenden Health's *National Health and Wellbeing at Work Report*: <https://forbusiness.benenden.co.uk/nationalhealthreport>

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HRDEBATE

TRANSFORMING THE MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH & WELLBEING

23 JUNE 2022 12:00-16:30 LONDON

COMPLIMENTARY REFRESHMENTS THROUGHOUT,
HOT BUFFET LUNCH AND POST EVENT DRINKS.



Join the **HRDIRECTOR** for a crucially-timed roundtable, focused on **Transforming the management of health and wellbeing**. In this 'in-person' debate partnered by **GoodShape**, we will look at how new approaches to wellbeing management can increase operational efficiency, inform smarter workforce strategies, reduce the risks to employers and employees, and achieving improved outcomes for both employers and their people. We will reflect upon the many changes in organisational structures and workforce frameworks, as hybrid working formulates and discuss how wellbeing management can turn the tables on; absenteeism, increase productivity and performance, reduce employee risks and build VP and employer brand. Employee wellbeing is not just the right thing to do, it is the ticking heart of the competitive advantage and will be an essential component to future competitiveness and improved health outcomes.

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I

SUCCESSION PLANNING

THE TRADITIONAL SUCCESSION PLANNING PROCESS MODEL RELIED UPON MARKETS THAT NEVER CHANGED, BUSINESSES THAT RARELY DIVERSIFIED, JOBS THAT REMAINED THE SAME, RELIABLE RETENTION AND WELL SIGNPOSTED REASONS FOR DEPARTURE. IN FACT, LINING UP REPLACEMENTS WAS ONE OF THE MOST PREDICTABLE ELEMENTS OF PEOPLE MANAGEMENT. NOW, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS, DIGITAL BUSINESS, MARKET PRESSURES, CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGY MEANS THAT NOTHING IS PREDICTABLE AND CONVENTIONAL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE IS OUTMODDED.

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organisation has an effective succession
plan in place?



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ARTICLE BY IRENE VAN DER WERF, PEOPLE PARTNER - OMNIPRESENT

SUBS' BENCH

TRADITIONAL SUCCESSION PLANNING WAS SPECIFICALLY AIMED AT SENIOR LEADERSHIP. BUT IN THE HYBRID WORKING FRAME - PARTICULARLY IN CONSIDERATION OF MULTIPLE, GLOBAL LOCATIONS, A MYRIAD OF DIFFERENT TIME ZONES - BUSINESSES NEED TO ADAPT THE SUCCESSION PLANNING FOCUS TO CONSIDER A WIDER REMIT OF ROLES AND LEVELS, PARTICULARLY THOSE WITH SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE AND INTEGRAL TO BUSINESS CONTINUITY.

That it's crucial for work to carry on in the absence of key people is taken as read - not only for business continuity, but for individual wellbeing - inasmuch as the pressure to constantly deliver, in the knowledge of uniqueness, is a heavy burden of responsibility. So having another person aligned to a role along with better and supportive team structure, can help relieve workloads and reduce burnout. For business, this structure supports performance, increases motivation and engagement and reduces bottlenecks. It also means that not only is there a successor in place, should an individual depart, but workload can be shared when it comes to process, productivity and absence.

Focus tends to be on recruitment to support growth, but in actuality, when succession planning is considered in its widest sense, it aligns business resourcing needs with employee aspiration and development and this goes some distance to supporting engagement and performance, as well as retention. There are core considerations to this style of succession planning: Starting small is good, as wholesale change isn't the necessary first step. So, begin with a testing ground - perhaps within the people management team - and assess what works and what doesn't - and go from there. It also pays to be aware of cultural and emotional obstacles.

Emotions can run high if company culture, ethos and business structure are unaligned. Indeed, protectionism, jealousy allegiances and even trust, are potential emotional obstacles in succession planning.

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People don't want to feel replaceable and if the business culture is not strong and succession planning is secretive - which often is the case - they are likely to protect their own interests. In such instances, there is likely to be distrust of those around them and HR objectives. That's why it pays to communicate intent from the start, about new, company-wide succession planning. For example, letting everyone in a team to 'know just enough', so that people can go on holiday or be absent, without leaving others in the

dark. This succession planning style is about; workflow, career development, wellbeing, morale, contribution and reducing bottlenecks which leads to a better business function. Knowledge about what basic elements within the business make it tick, is key. For example, knowing who has key knowledge - what processes are crucial to business flow, risk and growth - as well as what the most important processes are and how everything is documented, if, indeed, it is being documented.

HR is the enabler, but the business needs to be active in company-wide succession planning and managers and employees have an integral role to play. Team leaders need to ensure business continuity in their own function and make sure that the people around them understand their goals and actions, creating deputy positions to support managers in key areas. In short, everyone needs to understand their part in the organisational goals, so they can show up in the best possible way and participate. This type of succession planning isn't about 'talent' and leaving the rest behind. It's about everyone supporting business plans and highlighting the way towards individual and organisational growth.

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ARTICLE BY PETER HOWARTH, CO-MANAGING DIRECTOR - ARMSTRONG CRAVEN

CALCULATED RISK

"HIGH LEVELS OF TRUST ARE NEEDED ACROSS AN ORGANISATION AND THE POWER TO UNITE, INSPIRE AND DRIVE PERFORMANCE IS NO LONGER ABOUT INFLUENCING IN THE OLD CORRIDORS OF POWER"

Organisations had to change with the onset of the pandemic, not only with incredibly quick reactions to keep afloat, but also in other more gradual and nuanced ways. Three shifts in particular - investor activism, risk committee interest and changing leadership needs - mean CHROs and HR Directors, need to look at succession planning with a new lens of mitigating risk. Leadership is itself a core business risk, but it has never been as business critical as it is right now.

Some of the largest organisations are adapting succession planning to prepare for changing risks, different leadership needs and cultural shifts and, make no mistake, investor activism is becoming a guiding factor for succession planning. Issues around ESG are triggering larger numbers of investors to vote against the re-election of directors based on annual reports, strategies that don't align to their views, or perceptions of excessive remuneration. With investors considering board restructure or pushing out leaders that aren't taking key issues seriously, CEOs are finding that they have much less autonomy. A lack of effort around board diversity, climate goals or gender and ethnicity pay gaps, are having real impact. Indeed, investors for

organisations, such as AllianzGI, have stated they are willing to vote against all large UK and European companies that fail to link executive pay to ESG metrics in the coming year. Risk committees are also increasingly turning their attention to leadership risk and although their traditional domain has largely been around financial, competitor and macroeconomic risk, they are also acutely aware of the power of investor activism. This runs alongside a growing desire to ensure the organisation must be future-proofed. Too many companies have a single point of failure at the top and, should that position become unexpectedly vacant - for whatever reason - the damage caused by not having a smooth transition can be extensive.

Taking a look at recent research by the *Harvard Business Review* backs that up, citing the amount of market value wiped out by badly managed CEO and C-suite transitions in the S&P 1500, as being close to a staggering \$1 trillion.

Many businesses are now realising that there is a whole new set of skills and behaviours needed in leaders, who today have to be able to make brave decisions and change tack at the drop of a hat. Organisations that were unable to 'pivot' - to coin the popular pandemic term - were left behind, or ultimately went under. Those organisations whose leaders steered them to change, won out, but these decisions and changes had to be made in a considered and empathetic way. Indeed, there are way too many examples over the

past two years, where a command and control leadership style - together with a lack of emotional intelligence - resulted in a disastrous outcome for the organisation. So, this empathetic, high EQ leadership style continues to be important in the hybrid era of working, where high levels of trust are needed across an organisation and the power to unite, inspire and drive performance is no longer about influencing in the old corridors of power. At this moment in time, critical questions are being asked; are current leaders a good fit for the future? What sort of behaviours, values and skills does the business need to succeed? Are the right people here that can be developed and, if not, where will they come from? Problematically, while many organisations may have pinpointed a need for new behaviours from leaders, others don't even know where the new risks for their leadership and succession planning lie. Even for those who have identified the risk, there's often a lack of visibility around what should happen next. Mitigating risks means having a clear sight of issues, areas for improvement and the best way to evolve and this takes data analysis and insight. Internally, it's about the leaders who will change, the time period of this, the behaviours, skills and development needed from successors, as well as the high-potentials who align with business needs. Externally, it's important to understand the market landscape, risks, opportunities and challenges, as well as potential successors.

With strong data, a CHRO can put forward a meaningful succession planning strategy to the board and risk committee, showing full support for corporate strategy and investor requirements. However, problematically, not all organisations have systems in place to capture data company-wide, let alone analyse it and realistically, systems need to allow for three-to-five years' worth of data to give insightful views. Ultimately though, organisations armed with data will be better equipped to decide where they will find new leaders, either internally or externally and, for many organisations, this means a cultural shift. Consequently, It's important that

leadership positions are open externally as well as internally, to the people who will help the organisation move forward, align to internal and external pressures and solidify leadership structure.

Commonly, firms start by assessing skills and potential internally and although it's fairly typical that people with technical and specialist expertise will be awarded the top position - the best marketeer will gain the CMO role and the best financier will land the CFO role - this is too often sealed without considering whether the individuals can actually lead a team in line with the organisation's behavioural needs and values. By assessing

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behaviours and values, instead of purely relying on technical skills, organisations can start to shift the dial. A strong leader, who displays the traits of high EQ and adaptability, will inherently know how to effectively build a strong team of technical experts around them and the end result is good leadership that doesn't come at the cost of technical know-how. In part, the success of this cultural shift is reliant upon good communication of succession plans, but this can be complex. There are understandable fears from people currently in a role, as well as concerns that those not chosen for development will be disappointed. Also, if an organisation looks at external talent, current employees may feel they are being overlooked or that they are not skilled or capable enough. To improve this, thorough, sensitively-aligned

communications can help shift this way of thinking - moving from secrecy to openness - and explaining why the process is changing.

Mitigating business risk, supporting career development and offering promise to all, is key. But change rarely happens easily and CHROs are understandably conservative when much C-suite power lies with the CEO, CFO and Chair. Perhaps helpfully, it's possible to play the necessity card when it comes to leadership development. Leaders who strongly support ESG initiatives, for instance, are now essential for business success and solid reporting. Encouragingly, big strides are being taken by some organisations to improve succession plans, ensuring as much business continuity as possible when leaders change.

As succession plans rise up the corporate agenda and more begin to understand their importance in today's climate, the role of HR, talent teams and in particular, the CHRO, can become more powerful. It's been the case that CHROs struggled to make an investment case for succession planning, but now they are likely to be able to do so - either with the CEO or the risk committee. Where the board chooses to hire for behaviours - perhaps against the wishes of those who want talent with direct role and industry experience - the CHRO can shift to broker, helping inform decisions based on internal data and market intelligence. Ultimately, preparing future leaders will rely on the robustness of succession plans, as well as their ability to incorporate large cultural shifts when finding the next generations of leaders. Then backed up by data, analysis and intelligence, CHROs can create a strategy and a long-term business case that can mitigate against the risks organisations will face in the disruptive and challenging journey ahead.

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THE MATRIX RESURRECTIONS

We all reflect upon the future of work, but focus on where and when we work, not how we work and what new leadership looks like. Whether in the office five days a week or zero days a week no longer matters, what does matter is that systemic and deep-rooted processes and structures at work, are much simpler to change than previously thought. However, approaches to succession planning too will have to adapt to altered frameworks and flattened hierarchical structures.

"ONE DOWNSIDE TO HAVING NO FORMAL POWER STRUCTURES IS THAT INFORMAL POWER STRUCTURES EMERGE, OFTEN WITH NO ACCOUNTABILITY, CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT, WHERE BULLYING AND HARASSMENT CAN THRIVE"



ARTICLE BY LINDSAY KOHLER, LEAD BEHAVIOURAL SCIENTIST - SCARLETTABBOTT

During lockdown and the rush to remote working, collaboration between different parts of the business became more difficult and created communication barriers and unnecessary levels of bureaucracy, which reinforced silos within the business. Reflecting on all that we have experienced, those businesses that insist on returning to the old working hierarchy model risk losing talent, as well as access to the innovation and creativity that alternative working models unlock. A more fluid work structure allows teams to change tactics more quickly and adapt more easily to shifting demands. It also allows more room for experts from other departments to move around teams as needed. That said, leaders must go in with eyes wide open, a distributed workforce - and the hierarchy that emerges to best support it - needs clear accountability. Ambiguity in job duties and ownership arises more easily in a distributed workforce, so constant communication on expectations is key. So, what alternative hierarchical models will emerge and how might this impact succession planning?

Different businesses and industries will, of course, have different models that emerge as predominant, but many will discover that traditional hierarchies are an inappropriate framework to base a distributed workforce's leadership structure on. One key reason for this is that it better lends itself to distributed networks of power. Networks are decentralised and often lack visible leadership or figureheads, which comes with many benefits. However, a cautionary note on going too far in the other direction is that the opposite of a traditional hierarchy is one that is completely decentralised and solely reliant on self-organisation and self-management to work. The most famous example of this so-called 'Holarctic' style is the shoe retailer Zappos, which rolled out a 'no job titles and no managers' organisational style, only to find out quickly that wasn't the worker's Utopia it had envisaged. One downside to having no formal power structures is that informal power structures emerge, often with no accountability, creating an environment, where bullying and harassment can thrive. So, the winner

is likely to be a blend of the two styles, one that favours skills and competency.

Importantly, succession planning in the future has to be about skills, not favourites, as seen in the traditional succession planning culture, which was based on direct lines of reporting and grooming someone for a particular role. Indeed, Harvard Business School research shows that the concept of an 'old boys' club' at work is real and found that men managed by men are promoted faster than any other group. One caveat is that this research was conducted when physical presence in the office was still the norm and it is too early to tell if a shift to hybrid working will reduce the promotional effects of proximity bias. But the point is, promotions of the past were largely based on factors that, in many cases, had little to do with competency and efficiency.

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So, what measures will we use to identify potential successors and base promotions on going forward, if not the markers of high visibility to peers or best friendship with the boss? Skills and impact, of course, because the prominent skills needed to propel a business forward become more obvious when everyone is less physically visible. Those with business-critical skills - versus those in close proximity to the powers that be - will rise into positions of power, based on the respect they gain as subject matter experts. But this rise won't follow traditional hierarchical structures. Rather, more heavily matrixed organisations will emerge because of this shift in what traits a business values in a leader and how it

chooses who leads. A matrixed structure helps to embrace leaning on the most 'qualified person' to make a decision, rather than the most 'senior person'.

Matrixed organisations aren't necessarily new, go back to 2016 and a Gallup poll reported that 84 percent of employees had experienced matrix working at some point, to differing extents. But matrix organisations will become more common in a distributed workforce and one driving reason for this is that a key area that matrixed organisations thrive in is collaboration. Embracing new ways of collaboration - and collaborating with more people across the organisation - was one of the pandemic's key wins. This is because a distributed workforce evens the playing field between remote-only and onsite workers and simply functions more cohesively, if the organisation structure is matrixed. So, the burning question is, do we still need bosses in a distributed workforce? The answer is yes - and likely more than one - because in matrixed organisations, employees have more than one direct reporting line. But this manager will not look like the bosses of yesteryear because, while teams that self-organise don't require a manager to assign work, they still need someone to encourage, mentor and help develop their skills. So, an increase in leadership coaching among people at all levels of a business - not just the C-suite - will become more common. Above all else, adaptation, flexibility and resilience will be the keys to making a matrixed hierarchical model thrive and distributed working encourages all three. As we adjust to the changes required in succession planning, leaders must take a moment for self-reflection and focus on being a force of support for their people, enable them to do their best work and move out of the way, rather than being a hindrance. We need to go the extra mile to clarify roles within the new structure that emerge in the business. The alternative is to double-down on control, cling to outdated management models and risk losing talented people.

FOR FURTHER INFO
WWW.SCARLETTABBOTT.CO.UK

II

HR & DATA SCIENCE

HR MUST CUT THE LAST STRINGS THAT BIND IT TO TRANSACTIONAL PROCESS AND MOVE TOWARDS BEING A DIGITAL PROFESSION.

REALITY IS COMING INTO SHARP RELIEF AND PROBING QUESTIONS ABOUT EXISTING SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES IS INTENSIFYING FOR HR TO PROVIDE QUALITATIVE, REAL-TIME HEALTH CHECKS ACROSS A MUCH-CHANGED LANDSCAPE. WITHOUT DATA SCIENCE, AI AND MACHINE LEARNING, NO BUSINESS CAN COMPETE IN THE GLOBAL TALENT MARKET, AGAINST THOSE IN WHICH DATA SCIENCE IS LEVERAGING INFORMATION ON RECRUITMENT, PERFORMANCE, ENGAGEMENT, RETENTION AND EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE.

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ARTICLE BY ALEX GRAVES, CEO - SILICON REEF

DATA WITH DESTINY

SIX MONTHS INTO THE PANDEMIC AND EXPERTS SUGGESTED TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION WAS THREE-TO-FOUR YEARS AHEAD OF WHERE IT HAD BEEN EXPECTED¹ AND NOW IT FEELS AS THOUGH 2030 HAS ARRIVED EARLY. THE WORLD OF WORK HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF THIS MONUMENTAL SHIFT, WITH THE ADVENT OF NEW COLLABORATIVE AND INNOVATIVE TOOLS.

While there are pockets of excellence, data science, analytics and the use of AI are not where they need to be in the HR profession. It's seen as something other departments do and has been long neglected. In fact, looking at some of the top HR degrees in the UK, not many have data as a focus. One course mentioned "managing data" just once among nearly 40 modules². Furthermore, if you scrape under the surface of HR leaders' motivations, it's about relationships³. In short, the sector prefers soft skills to analytical ones. The CIPD is all too aware of this⁴. It says that too few organisations use HR data and analytics to help inform strategic decisions about how they invest in, manage and develop their workforce to deliver.

The fact is, we're now in a world where we create data merely by being alive. As a result, the attitude towards data in HR needs to change and it needs to be at the table with those decision makers that value data. The reality is, all this information provides insight and insight provides understanding, understanding prompts solutions and solutions achieve results. There are quick wins, simply by looking in the obvious places, for example, the Microsoft suite of tools. Most businesses have Outlook and Teams and the programme for HR teams to focus on is Viva Insights. Employees can use this to help plan time more effectively, but it can also offer managers insight

about work patterns that might lead to burnout and stress, such as regular after-hours work, meeting overload, or too little focus time. Leaders can use this to help teams strike a balance between

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productivity and wellbeing and HR teams can use it to answer critical questions about organisational resilience and work culture. Importantly, it doesn't just present raw data, it benchmarks it against other businesses in similar industries and gives scores and suggested actions. This is vital as it takes away the need to become an expert in data analysis and does the heavy lifting before the data reaches a human.

With the basics in place, HR teams will find themselves becoming more strategically valuable and able to present real-time information to the board and show improving metrics. This will go beyond simple and generic stats such as; retention rates and staff satisfaction. At

this point, HR can begin to widen its use of data, looking for useful pools of information that can inform strategies. This can be found in any number of places, for example, there are new tools that integrate Microsoft with LinkedIn, to listen to how staff are communicating and acting. This can illustrate how they feel; are they stressed or happily challenged, facing burnout or 'boreout', considering a new role or being advocates for the business? It's all aggregated and de-identified, to ensure privacy, but this level of data can help HR teams identify problems and strengths, allowing them to act and offer recommendations to the board. It's like constantly having a finger on the pulse of the workforce.

HR teams need to be able to answer the toughest questions they've ever been asked about a workforce in flux. They must harness the huge volumes of data available to them, make sense of it and take action. Considering every single person now creates about 1.7 MB of data every second⁵, HR needs to put data skills at the heart of what it does and quickly.

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ARTICLE BY IAIN STEWART, PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT, CUSTOMER ADVISORY - SAS UK & IRELAND

ANALYZE THIS

"BURNOUT, WORKPLACE STRESS, FACTORS AT HOME THAT MAY BE AFFECTING SOMEONE AT WORK, ARE ALL EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO PICK UP ON WHEN YOU HAVE THIS PHYSICAL DIVIDE"

It's never been more difficult to spot the signs of an unhappy, distressed or overworked colleague, who may be thinking of leaving. Pre-pandemic, most businesses had their teams all in one place and in line-of-sight and, if a colleague was having a bad day, visual or verbal cues would indicate that something was not right and you could make an effort to resolve the situation with the best course of action. But what now in the hybrid setting?

In the post-pandemic working environment, where many businesses now operate hybrid working models, gaining real-time knowledge about the mood of employees, has become a whole new challenge. There might be members of the team that never come into the office, or those who - only by coincidence I'm sure - never seem to come in on the days you are in. Without that physical contact, it's so difficult for businesses to keep an eye on the wellbeing and engagement of their people. Burnout, workplace stress, factors at home that may be affecting someone at work, are all extremely difficult to pick up on when you have this physical divide - and not every colleague is going to be vocal and seek support for what they are experiencing. Yes, we now have regular virtual meetings and video calls, but a colleague can put on a 'brave face', so to speak, for that half-an-hour or

an hour. So, it's unlikely to help business and HR leaders understand the signs of a colleague that is struggling or indeed at risk of leaving that organisation. These are just two examples of how the way we work has changed the dynamic for HR leaders. But what is the answer to solving the challenge and how do businesses gain a new understanding of their teams?

It goes without saying that a happy and healthy team helps to foster a more productive, enjoyable and successful workplace. The statistics agree; happy workers are 13 percent more productive. Caring for employees, therefore, should be central to organisations, both ethically and economically. While keeping track of employee sentiment may seem more complex than the market analysis or competitor tracking that businesses do on a daily basis, HR analytics is also vital for any business that believes knowledge

is power. Using advanced cloud analytics and AI is one way businesses can begin to gain a better understanding of their team's behaviour, whether they are in the office or remote. It may seem crass at first, but taking time to analyse your people as well as your customers and competitors is a route to success. Adopting the principles of HR analytics long-term can help to develop better relationships which ultimately produce positive results for all. The potential size of the issue is difficult to comprehend. If we were just to take public sector departments and the health service as an example - among the UK's largest employers - not forgetting tens of thousands of civil servants employed by the likes of DWP, HMRC and Ministry of Justice - plus a workforce of nearly one million within the NHS - caring for employees' physical and mental wellbeing can have a positive impact on so many

individuals' health, productivity and desire to continue in their current role.

We all know that burnout is a serious problem in the workplace, and the effects of COVID-19 on the way we work has certainly played a part in increasing its prominence. Google trends data shows searches for 'burnout symptoms' have increased by 75 percent in the last 12 months and 248 percent since before the pandemic. This increase is likely down to the blurring boundaries between where work starts and finishes. Many colleagues start a little earlier and finish a little later when working remotely without the commute to physically stop them. It means over time, they are accumulating many more hours of work and this leads to strain on their mental wellbeing. Most companies want to protect their staff from work-related stress but identifying who is struggling is difficult for HR teams. This might well be the case even in situations that, on the face of it, look like the organisation has been successfully delivering results. A few companies think of these events as preventable, but just like losing a customer, a team will want to spring into action to keep talented individuals. As with customers, it may be possible to prevent the loss of key staff. However, it's possible to predict and identify cases of dissatisfaction at scale through finding its source in untapped data. This has been achieved elsewhere by others ahead of the game, in the deployment of HR analytics, so the references are out there.

Quitting a role is rarely a knee-jerk reaction - no matter how sudden it may seem - it's usually an accumulation of factors that will have likely built up within a colleague over time. Frustrations and stresses that have not been resolved forms a narrative that compounds issues, builds on problems and leads to inevitable results, such as raised attrition. We are seeing with the Great Resignation, this has been happening to UK and global workforces during the past 12 months. So how can businesses begin to understand when individual stressors and events add up to something more than the normal day-to-day? A central decision

hub can assess employee behaviours and patterns on multiple levels to provide a unified view throughout their employment lifecycle. By looking at a huge variety of internal and external data - such as the existing performance of the team, the average salaries for a particular role respectively, the screen time colleagues are racking up - it's entirely possible to spot the triggers which lead to dissatisfaction. As important, is the fact that organisations can also better understand what to offer dissatisfied employees in terms of changes to their role or employment package to both keep them and avoid costly backfill and hiring.

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To help manage this volume of data, AI and machine learning can be trained to spot problematic combinations of factors, and produce insights that could mitigate a resignation or at least enable you to pinpoint where you need to offer support to teams and individuals. From here, HR can work with department leaders to devise an appropriate plan, for example, if a lack of work/life balance is the driving force, then the plan needs to decrease the individual's responsibilities or bring in new team members to share the load. It can help to drive initiatives and investment in teams too. Investing in people creates mutual relationships that must be preserved - not least because it is expensive and time consuming to have a heavy employee turnover. Attentiveness is therefore key. Only by having a full view of the available opportunities and

the existing skillsets can an organisation open the right doors and make the right judgements to keep talent fulfilling its potential around the business. Fulfillment is just as important as wellbeing to a happy workforce and in the dispersed working framework that we are now coming to grips with, advanced analytics may be the only way to ensure the right opportunities are realised. The role of advanced analytics and AI can't be understated in helping businesses to better understand, nurture, encourage, care for and support their teams. Both remote and in the office, where stressors lead to something more serious - it's important to remember that we are all human and if someone is having a bad day, you still need the right people skills to effectively address the matter. A culture of nurturing the employee/employer relationship through analytics, alongside good communication and other soft skills, can help strengthen the organisation and provide long-term resilience and wellbeing across the workforce.

In addition to employee retention and wellbeing, HR analytics can be used in many other ways by HR professionals. Those advanced in this capability are already using it to better align an organisation to deliver its goals strategically, and to forecast 'what next' in terms of the shape and make-up of an organisation. All of this just adds to the importance more broadly - in the face of the Great Resignation - of HR analytics in enabling both organisations and people to stay healthy and on form. Those organisations that do not look to harness the power of data and insight are likely to suffer in future as a consequence.

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EQUIPOISE

EMPLOYEES WANT TO SEE TANGIBLE EVIDENCE, BEYOND MERE WORDS, THAT DEMONSTRATES THAT THEY ARE VALUED, TREATED FAIRLY AND ACKNOWLEDGED BY THEIR EMPLOYER. THERE IS NO MORE DIRECT MEASURE OF HOW AN EMPLOYER VALUES AN EMPLOYEE THAN COMPENSATION AND SO IF AN EMPLOYER PAYS PEOPLE UNFAIRLY OR INEQUITABLY, IT IS A GLARING RED FLAG. AS THE SAYING GOES, 'WHAT ISN'T MEASURED CANNOT BE MANAGED'.

ZEV EIGEN, FOUNDER AND CHIEF SCIENCE OFFICER - SYNDIO

With no end in sight to the heightened transparency expectations and reality of modern employers in a digital age, ensuring pay equity is more critical now than ever before and can and should be informed using the most current data. In fact, the UK has codified this and defined reporting parameters in the 4th April deadline for mandatory gender pay gap reporting. If nothing else, it's a wake-up call to companies who are not already deploying proper data analysis to inform HR processes. While the need for a data-scientific led approach to cementing company values goes deeper than its payroll applications, it is a good place to start. Pay equity is the first step in furthering workplace EDI, ensuring employees feel valued and acknowledged for their contributions and levelling the playing field around pay equity. Achieving this, positively impacts and accelerates any company's approach to diversity, inclusion and overall equity. When the UK mandated gender pay gap reporting in 2017, it was a critical step towards improving equity by providing transparency around pay data. The move helped to increase pay parity in the UK over time and made a significant impact on expectations globally.

Advancing pay equity will be increasingly important as companies cope with the rise in work flexibility and hybrid working as well as fluctuations and trends ahead, such as changes to the traditional five-day working week. This will demand a proper analytics-focused approach, incorporating data beyond base pay including; bonuses, share options and the inherent value of many other benefits. Combining this information with demographic data will assist HR to ensure the company is operating within parity. There will also have to be a reimagining of the workplace, to ensure that equity isn't left on the back burner when making strategic decisions around pay, hiring and promotions. Beyond gender pay equity, companies should be

taking a more holistic view of how they ensure equity is part and parcel of every facet of the hiring process and the workplace at large.

Data analytics are critical to helping organisations achieve their diversity and inclusion (D&I) goals effectively and in making strategic, informed and optimised decisions relating to hiring, management, promotion and rewards. Above all, it's important to go beyond gender to also analyse other demographics such as race, age and sexual orientation. Incorporating a more thorough demographic analysis broadens initiatives beyond pay equity, thereby helping to create a more diverse, fair and equitable workplace. Crucially, effectiveness requires that these analyses are executed flawlessly and quickly, using specific tools designed to deliver accurate information on which to base decisions. Optimising data science requires a flexible and dynamic software platform, capable of bringing together different areas of HR for a thorough analysis and ensuring a direct and seamless connection between employees and actionable analytics. So, what's next for data-led approaches to HR? The future presents a great opportunity for data to play a key role throughout all areas of the organisation. Data and the technology to analyse them properly, will be essential to managing remote work, along with ensuring fair compensation and improving D&I initiatives to optimise equity and productivity. Taking this approach becomes part of HR's transformation from a process-driven function into a strategic, digital role, that elevates its function to the broader decision-making of the C-suite. Ultimately, organisations that make better decisions for employees will also make the organisation function better.

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III

RISE OF INDIVIDUALISM

IN COVID'S FUG AND GLOOM, EMPLOYEE MINDSET SWITCHED FROM SURVIVE TO THRIVE, DISCOVERING GREATER FREEDOM, STIMULATING AUTONOMY AND RAISING EXISTENTIAL QUESTIONS OF WORK CONVENTIONS. INDIVIDUALISM IS A MANDATE WHICH COULD END IN ONE OF TWO VERY DIFFERENT WAYS, INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM OR, PORTENTOUSLY, INDIVIDUALISM VERSUS COLLECTIVISM. IF THE LATTER, AT THREAT IS THE HARD YARDS MADE IN BUILDING AN EQUITABLE WORLD OF WORK, WHERE EDI DOES NOT HAVE TO RELY UPON TOKENISM AND COLLABORATIVE CROSS-TEAM EFFORT RESULTS IN FAIRNESS.

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theHRDIRECTOR @theHRDIRECTOR
#HR #Polls | Do you believe that the rise
in individualism is a threat to a collaborative
culture?

Yes

33.3%

No

66.7%



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featured in this section, please share it by going to this link*
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ARTICLE BY VICKY WALKER, GROUP DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE - WESTFIELD HEALTH

INDEPENDENCE DAY

THE MODERN WORKPLACE IS BUILT ON THE ETHOS OF COMMUNITY AND TEAMWORK, WHERE EMPLOYEES ARE A COLLECTIVE ENTITY, WORKING TOWARDS THE SAME GOALS, UNIFIED. BUT THERE IS A SHIFT OCCURRING, WHEREBY THE VIEW OF COLLECTIVISM BEING CRITICAL TO COMPANY SUCCESS, IS BEING CHALLENGED BY A GROWING MOVEMENT TOWARDS GREATER INDIVIDUALISM.

Over the pandemic, there has been a change in the way we work, shifting the employer/employee relationship towards an individualistic view. This was outlined in the *Fjord Trends* report 2022¹ which found that, employees are re-assessing what they want and expect from company culture and employee value proposition. It stated that, in the era of post-traumatic growth, people are questioning who they are and what matters to them. There is a growing humanisation of the workforce, where professional and private lives are blending more and admitting to not being okay is no longer a sign of weakness at work.

People now feel a stronger sense of agency over how and where they spend their time and attention, which is the causal inference of the rise in individualism and independence. So, what does the individualistic employee want? A recent report² found that 28 percent of employees wanted long term changes to the way they work, 27 percent wanted more wellbeing support and 25 percent wanted more mental health support. In large businesses (over 250 employees) almost a quarter (23 percent) said adjusting their working pattern was a priority. This points toward independence in the workplace and individual preferences. The report also found that top of their financial benefits package, employees are increasingly exploring whether their job is a good fit for them -

in particular, the organisation's culture and whether their personal values interlink with company values.

"IN THE ERA OF POST-
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WORKFORCE"

Working habits have adapted to individual circumstances and a 'whole-of-population' approach means introducing flexible ways for employees to engage with their workplace, while striving to provide equal access to support. It should be visible, varied and above all versatile. But the most engaged employees in an individualistic era are those who are a good fit, both in terms of skills and experience and their contribution to wider purpose. In fact, The WEF found that 60 percent seek a better fit between their own and corporate values, beliefs and behaviours, ranging from being valued more, to wanting to work for a more socially engaged or inclusive company.

The first steps are to revisit company values and build their brand and remember that while appealing to these new priorities is important, it must be authentic. Flexing values in an attempt to appeal to every candidate will dilute the message, making it more difficult to find the right people and meet employee needs and expectations. This is where collectivism comes into place. Many businesses that have been physically apart for long periods, have struggled with team dynamics, effective innovation and collaborative working. The rise of individualism means employers need to offer better individual support, whilst ensuring team spirit remains. They face an important leadership challenge, one which will require balancing the flexibility they offer to individuals, with the needs of the team. While collectivism unites around a single purpose, ignoring the alternate paths to achieve a common goal can create issues for the individual employee and so, fundamentally, individualism should build upon the 'ideas of many'. So above all, keeping in place the values, views and motivations of the collective, alongside individual preferences, is key to the new era of work.

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FOR FURTHER INFO
WWW.WESTFIELDDHEALTH.COM



ARTICLE BY GUY LUBITSH, PROFESSOR IN LEADERSHIP AND PSYCHOLOGY -
HULT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS SCHOOL

*Guy Lubitsh is co-author of Connect - Resolve conflict, improve
communication and strengthen relationships
Published by Pearson/FT*

HOLD THE TENSION

"THERE IS A DANGER THAT THIS MOVE TOWARDS INDIVIDUALISM COULD
GIVE RISE TO A COMPETITIVE, DOG-EAT-DOG ENVIRONMENT, THREATENING
THE PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN MADE ON EQUALITY AND INCLUSION,
LEADING TO MISTRUST, STRESS AND LACK OF ENGAGEMENT"

Faced with a whole raft of operational, commercial and global challenges, another tension is emerging, which cannot be ignored. It is caused by the necessity for complex, collaborative working on a global and organisational scale, whilst at the same time, acknowledging the rise of individual freedom and autonomy. Organisationally, this has been exacerbated by hybrid working and changing mindsets - both a result of pandemic disruptions - but in truth, this a catalyst for something that has been percolating for years.

Hybrid as business as usual, presents organisations with something of a paradox. On the one hand it has the potential to offer greater opportunities for collaboration than ever before, bringing people together across functions, departments and geographical boundaries and leading to unprecedented levels of connectivity. But on the other hand, the changing force for individualism, flexibility and greater autonomy is compelling and cannot be ignored. At a macro level, there has been a growing recognition that we need these high levels of interdependence and connectivity. Collective and connected working has, however, had its downsides, as seen in a recent survey by HBR, with more than 1,500 respondents in 46 countries, which

showed that burnout is rising, as the boundaries between work and home life blur. Indeed, 85 percent of respondents said that their wellbeing had declined, 30 percent said that they felt unable to maintain a strong connection with their family, 39 percent with colleagues and 50 percent with friends (Moss, 2021). As hybrid takes hold, there is also the danger of exclusion and the potential lack of a level playing field between home-workers and those who are mainly office based. Some employees feel resentment, stemming from their perception that work is being allocated unfairly, or that they have become 'invisible'. This impacts on everyone's willingness to seek advice or ask for help from others. Perhaps most significantly, the new work context we

now find ourselves in has opened up opportunities for individuals to discover greater freedom, autonomy and better work/life balance. But if not managed carefully, there is a danger that this move towards individualism could give rise to a competitive, dog-eat-dog environment, threatening the progress that has been made on equality and inclusion, leading to mistrust, stress and lack of engagement. Going forward will require holding the tensions of both increasing connectivity across the organisation, whilst maintaining the individual freedom and autonomy, which employees have now become accustomed to. These are some of the key actions leaders and managers, with the support of HR, can take to achieve the necessary balance.

Understanding and adapting communication style: When we are working on delivering complex tasks in a hybrid environment, we need to recognise our own unique style and adapt our behaviour to complement others. Someone who is goal-oriented, for example, can disclose to others their preference for achieving objectives, as well as their personal difficulty with slow pace, reflection and silences. More reflective employees can explain why they need the space to discuss and develop new ideas as part of the group process.

Increase psychological safety: Given the loss of connection, it is important to invest more in a climate of psychological safety in which people can express themselves without fear of sanction. Amy Edmondson from Harvard Business School argued that, leaders should not be afraid of showing vulnerability and should focus on learning oriented behaviours such as; asking questions, raising concerns, admitting mistakes and offering ideas.

Ensure cognitive diversity at all levels of the organisation: Effective and innovative teams and organisations are diverse. It's important to recruit and build teams that have individuals that are not just diverse in terms of age, gender and national culture, but also have a different way of seeing and experiencing the world.

Learn from mistakes and failures: We are taught from early on in our careers, that in order to progress, we need to 'play the game' and win. However, our most profound learning and real confidence comes from mistakes.

Hold regular open forums: Businesses tend to focus on the more tangible aspects of organisational life, such as targets, actions and bottom-line performance. However, as we discovered during the pandemic, it's important to organise forums where staff at all levels can discuss difficulties and concerns from a remote working perspective, including; in-person communication and anxieties about the future.

Understand what is real and what is not: When we are disconnected and lack the information that is naturally present in face-to-face interaction, we tend to compensate by creating internal 'stories' about the situation. Leaders need to find ways to connect so that they can distinguish between what is real (information, facts) and what is not (assumptions and fears).

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PRODUCTIVITY"

Reset expectations: Leaders need to reset expectations with their team and key stakeholders, in order to avoid unnecessary conflict. This could include having regular meetings to discuss the ground rules of working together post pandemic, such as 'how is my role shifting, what are the 'open' as well as the 'hidden' expectations around being at the office and the workload? How do we communicate and make decisions?'

Insist on staying connected and provide virtual working skills: As humans, our natural genetic make-up favours face-to-face connection. Where possible, aim to bring teams together. At the same time, it's important not to lose some of the progress made via virtual connectivity. Our recent research (Lubitsch, Schofield, 2022) highlighted that employees are asking leaders to help them develop new skills on how to maintain connection with people working from home.

Be adaptable: Under pressure we tend to make thinking errors and our fears take us over into virtual fantasies such as; 'people are not interested in my views', or 'no one is willing to help me'. Our thinking can become too rigid and we 'become stuck on one solution' and lose flexibility. People need to recognise when they get stuck in unhelpful patterns and know how to reach out to managers, colleagues and stakeholders.

Allow time for Micro Moments of connectivity (MMC): This means making time for yourself in a busy schedule to keep in touch outside of formal meetings with good colleagues and strategic partners, so that you can ask for and offer support.

Don't give up on difficult conversations: The virtual space has made it easier to avoid difficult conversations. Use face-to-face opportunities to create the space for conversations on difficult strategic choices and any other painful decisions or issues.

Practice humility and show concern to others: Leaders need to be humble and praise others for their success. Google employees reported that managers who expressed interest and concern in other team members, outperformed their colleagues in both the quality and quantity of their work (Zak, 2017).

Since April 2021, four million workers have quit their jobs (EBN, 2022). In order to reverse this trend, HR should provide strategic insights to the board on the implications of the emerging hybrid models, especially on how to achieve the right balance between individual and organisational needs. Holding the tension between individual needs and organisational culture is vital. Focussing on one at the expense of the other will have negative consequences on both organisational talent pipeline and productivity.

FOR FURTHER INFO
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ONENESS

The ongoing debate between individualism and collectivism in the workplace has long been one that intrigues me. Mostly because it tends to be labelled as a competition between the two concepts of a worker/employer relationship and positioned as either one or the other, that one is right, the other wrong, there's a winner and a loser. Is that really the case? There is no doubt that there has been a growth of workplace individualism, but has it really triumphed over collectivism?

"A CRISIS REINFORCED THE NEEDS, TOGETHERNESS AND
VALUES OF BEING IN A SOCIETY AND HIGHLIGHTED THE POWER
OF A COLLECTIVE EFFORT, EITHER IN FIGHTING A COMMON
CAUSE, OR IN SUPPORT OF OTHERS"



ARTICLE BY ALISTAIR PATON, SENIOR DIRECTOR,
LABOUR RELATIONS & CHANGE - ASDA

There is no doubt that there has been a growth of workplace individualism, defined as the idea that each person should think and act independently rather than depending on others. The last three decades have witnessed the rise of Human Resource interventions such as individual pay, performance management, employee communications and involvement initiatives all designed to foster individual loyalty and embed the employee/line manager relationship. Individualism, in one respect, was further embedded during the pandemic as millions had to work alone, at home and find a different way of working with support from employers. But even before the pandemic, workplaces had been responding to the ongoing need to respond to individual employee preferences with increased flexibility, hybrid working, reward options and responding to growing employee needs to provide support for life moments.

The overall work experience caters for individual preferences and lifestyles and continues to evolve and develop and yet, while individualisation continues to flourish with new and emerging trends, there were also collective actions, some enabled by technology, that started to emerge and grow too during the pandemic, both in the workplace and outside. Not only were we all being asked to join together and do our bit for the common good, we also came together - albeit socially distanced - in our communities. The point being, a crisis reinforced the needs, togetherness and values of being in a society and highlighted the power of a collective effort, either in fighting a common cause, or in support of others. We see it in the workplace too, whereby the need for employers to recognise the individual remains absolutely critical to be truly diverse and inclusive. We also see the re-mergence of the collective, whether that be in organised groups or uniting behind a common issue. Indeed, the emergence of "workspace collectivism" - is increasingly evident. A good example is that be Uber drivers or independent couriers, working individually, but joined together by the platform they all rely on to work. Interestingly, Uber drivers, used to

working alone, have become increasingly organised as a group with recent trade union recognition of the GMB.

Online collectivism is also apparent in the growth of platforms such as Organise, with over a million members - more than double the size of some unions - where workers can mobilise virtually as a broad collective behind an issue and "campaign for positive change in working lives". That is influencing that can be done from an employee's living room with the press of a button, but enables joining together with others in different locations and industries to unite behind a single issue. Companies such as; Amazon and Weatherspoons, are currently a focus of campaigns on business practices and on pay. In the UK, overall

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trade union membership has risen in each of the past four years to reach 6.56 million members in 2020. The emergence of different local organising models in the UK also points to a different approach with Unite's General Secretary, Sharon Graham, recently committing to bring together all Unite representative, so they can negotiate as a bloc, rather than different workforces being pitted against each other in the same sector. The aim being that best-in-class agreements in each sector would become the starting point for those companies. They have also played their role in dealing with crisis situations and demonstrated how the power of the collective can influence. The TUC played a key role in discussions with the UK Government and CBI, to influence the introduction of the Furlough scheme and in workplaces across the world, played

their role in policing and influencing on health and safety, as organisations grappled with managing and responding to COVID regulations. With the high inflation environment and the rising cost of living, trade unions have a stronger role to play in collective bargaining with there being numerous examples of them negotiating pay agreements in a high inflation environment.

The future workforce is demanding greater appreciation from employers of broader collective issues in society and that organisations play their role in influencing, as part of having a wider social purpose. The Deloitte *Global Millennial and Gen Z Survey 2021* found that this influential future workforce understands that, as individuals, they can only do so much. They want organisations to take a stand and influence broader issues in society and businesses will increasingly be held to account by this group, shareholders and investors. So where does that leave us in the "battle" between individualism and collectivism? To me, it's not a battle and it's not an "either/or". Both individualism and collectivism are playing their part in organisations and so I don't think we can conclude there is a rise in individualism, without acknowledging the development and emergence of new forms of collectivism, whether that be the role of society or evolving methods of organised campaigning, whether online or in a more traditional format. This poses challenges for leaders across organisations, as it will require a range of responses that they need to be prepared for. They will need to listen to the individual more and meet their growing expectations, but also acknowledge that collective voices continue to play a key role in organisations and giving attention to that too by ensuring organisations have the skills in place to respond to this is an increasing necessity.

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FOR FURTHER INFO
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TENSILE STRENGTH

ORGANISATIONS OPERATE WHEN PEOPLE COME TOGETHER AND FIT INTO A SYSTEM TO PRODUCE SOMETHING COLLECTIVELY. BUT BEING FORCED TO WORK IN A MORE INDIVIDUALISTIC AND ISOLATED WAY RAISED A LOT OF QUESTIONS. IF THIS RISE IN INDIVIDUALISM UNDERMINES EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY, THERE IS A DANGER THAT ORGANISATIONS COULD ONCE MORE MOVE TOWARDS BEING PLACES THAT WORK FOR A FEW AND EXCLUDE MANY.

ARTICLE BY EMILY HUTCHINSON, OCCUPATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST
& CAROLINE BROWN, COACH PRACTITIONER - APPLY PSYCHOLOGY

How we balance people working more independently and autonomously, whilst still working together collectively, could be seen as either a challenge or an opportunity, to re-write the psychological contract, to one that can support hybrid working¹. Individuals tend to identify - especially at work - as being rational, logic-driven and autonomous and most people feel they have knowledge of and control over their behaviour. In contrast, psychologists suggest emotions play a far greater role in determining behaviour than generally recognised and working with this - rather than ignoring it - can release performance gains. The strengths approach is one way to engage with emotions in practice and apply this in the workplace. Strengths are identified at the individual level and are defined as something that, when applied, feels energising and leads to sustainable and high performance. Strengths are personal resources that are unique to an individual because they evolve from a mix of personality, experiences and environment and the interaction of all these things over time. They are not static but are always developing and are intimately linked to emotions. We also want to belong, as people have a biological drive to be social and this connection with others is needed, to be healthy. All are at their best when they can be themselves, have personal agency, but also live and work collectively. This is the aim when creating a strengths-based organisation, an environment where people use their strengths in pursuit of a collective goal². Marcus Buckingham uses the phrase of strengths-based leaders taking; 'the best of me to create the best of we'³.

Implementation of a strengths-based approach requires a maturity of leadership and culture, where employees are treated as equal adults rather than as

children, to be controlled by managers (parents). Leaders need to communicate where the organisation is heading, what success looks like and employees need to know what they have to deliver and expectations of behaviour. Then they need to be encouraged to deliver in their unique way, using their strengths and combining recognition of individuality with collective working. The payback is huge, applying a strengths approach creates a healthier workplace and more efficient business. Research suggests that, as well as having a positive impact on inclusivity and wellbeing, benefits of a strengths-based approach include; increased engagement, innovation, improved customer service and ultimately, bottom-line performance.

This individualistic approach only threatens collectivism, if there are structural biases within an organisation, whereby only people with certain strengths are recruited, rewarded, or promoted. For example, if those with strengths such as competitiveness and drive are rewarded above those with humility and empathy, it may create an organisational culture that is less likely to be diverse and psychologically healthy. The important question for leaders at the top of organisations is, whether the strengths they value - and consequently reward - are the strengths that will build the culture that they need for sustainable organisational success.

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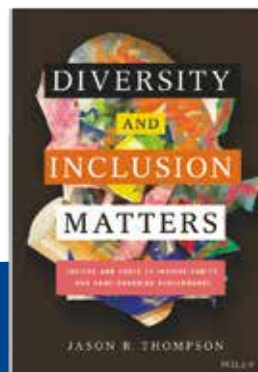
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IV

L&D FOR A NEW ERA

UPSKILLING, RESKILLING AND MULTI-SKILLING MUST QUICKLY BECOME A CONSTANT - NOT AN ORDAINED, MANAGEMENT DIKTAT - BUT A SELF-MOTIVATED NECESSITY, WHERE DIGITAL SKILLS IS CURRENCY AND TIMELY RELEVANCE TRUMPS YEARS OF TENURE AND EXPERIENCE, EVERY TIME. THE SHIFTS THAT MUST BE MADE TO SUCCESSFULLY REIMAGINE L&D CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. THE MARCH OF MACHINE LEARNING, AI AND AUTOMATION MEANS THAT ALL BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYEES WILL HAVE TO CONTINUE TO TRANSFORM, AS DIGITAL ENCROACHES INTO AREAS OF WORK TRADITIONALLY CARRIED OUT BY PEOPLE.

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ARTICLE BY CHRIS WEBBE, CHIEF LEARNING OFFICER - FEED YOUR ELEPHANT

ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL

IMAGINE A SCHOOL WITH NO LESSONS, JUST BLOCKS OF TIME LED BY SPEAKERS, DRONING ON AND ON AT STUDENTS UNTIL THE TIME ALLOTTED IS OVER. THAT'S IT, INFORMATION IMPARTED, JOB DONE. IN THAT SCENARIO THE FOCUS IS NOT ON THE STUDENTS, IT IS ON THE SPEAKER'S ABILITY TO RECITE INFORMATION.

In this dull and uninspiring tableau, it is not a lesson and they are not a teacher. Knowledge has not been accessed and feedback has not been given. If any learning has taken place, or any progress has been made, it remains a mystery. Organisations do not adequately think of their learners when planning learning opportunities, which is not just ill-considered, but certifiable, given data suggests around 86 percent of employees say job training is important to them and 74 percent make the effort to learn outside of work hours¹.

Great teachers know they need to engage their students and there is no more powerful moment than during the assessment of learning and subsequent feedback. According to the Education Endowment Foundation, feedback "has a high impact on learning outcomes", with teachers the most powerful source of feedback, but digital technology also achieving positive outcomes². Good feedback embeds knowledge and orientates the learner towards further progression. Research has culminated in a wealth of theories on feedback models in the 1990s. However, as Panadero and Lipnevich point out: "In contrast to the earlier conception where "feedback was done" to the student, in the most current feedback models, the learner is not only at the centre of the feedback process, but

is now an active agent. They not only process feedback, but respond to it, can generate it and acquires feedback expertise to engage with it in more advanced ways"³.

"DO ANY ORGANISATIONS
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EVEN IF JOB TITLES SAY
SOMETHING ELSE"

Do any organisations even think of their employees as "learners" or "students"? Great teachers would, even if job titles say something else. Responsive and caring organisations are the ones supporting their employees to improve, achieve better work/life balance, to reskill or upskill. As much of the evolving workforce strives for greater autonomy and freedom, so L&D solutions need to match this evolution. This is the human element we have become so much more aware of these past few years. This is about thinking emotionally as well as strategically. Indeed, employers are

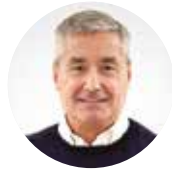
increasingly aligning L&D strategy with business priorities⁴, which is strategic thinking. The question is, have they aligned it with learners' priorities?

There are still huge barriers to great teaching, time and money being the usual culprits. Learners need to know that their precious time is well spent. Apathy, disengagement and even wider disillusionment are the by-products from learning opportunities that do not adequately support learners. Great L&D teams don't teach, they put systems in place to replicate great teaching, because they understand that learners value feedback. If an organisation doesn't have insight into whether knowledge levels are increasing and the subsequent impact this is having on the business, something is seriously wrong. Emerging technology has all the potential to solve not just the issues around budget and employee time for CPD, but also to support DEI initiatives. All this will increase employee retention and fuel growth.

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ARTICLE BY JIM O'BRIEN, CEO - TACK TMI

DISCOVERY CHANNEL

"ONE-IN-FOUR WORKERS ARE NOW PLANNING A JOB CHANGE AND AS THE 'GREAT RESIGNATION' PLAYS OUT, EMPLOYEES WE USED TO KNOW ARE NOT THE ONES WE SEE NOW. THEY ARE MORE MOBILE, WIELD MORE ECONOMIC POWER AND THEY CAN AFFORD TO LEAVE JOBS"

According to a recent CIPD study, 66 percent of employees surveyed do not understand why they are engaging in L&D¹. This a shockingly high figure considering the money invested in L&D and the skills shortage many organisations are facing. If the majority of employees do not see why they need to learn, as HR professionals, we have a serious problem on our hands. So, what is going wrong and why are employees losing interest in their learning?

We need to understand the challenges employees face. A recent survey by Microsoft revealed that 39 percent of employees feel exhausted, 54 percent feel overworked and 46 percent feel less connected to their companies. With the additional challenges brought about by the pandemic over the last two years, it is easy to see how employees may feel so overwhelmed by their everyday roles. They have little bandwidth to even consider their development, let alone take the time out to review the learning on offer and take part in it.

Knowledge is ubiquitous these days, employees can learn quickly and more easily than ever before. It could be argued that much of the traditional L&D training that was typically delivered,

could now be found online for free, which means that the perceived value of corporate learning has decreased. In the industrial era, people would stay in an unfulfilling role - often for life - content with the pension and the gold watch. But now, with one-in-four workers now planning a job change² and as the 'Great Resignation' plays out, employees we used to know are not the ones we see now. They are more mobile, wield more economic power - they can afford to leave jobs - and they want more than just remuneration. Yet we know from the work of psychologists like, Susan Fowler and Dan Pink, that people need that sense of mastery in their work and they need to feel like they are increasing their capability.

This disengagement in learning could have serious consequences for our employees' longer-term motivation and performance. We have to help them create the space for and see the value in, the learning on offer. So, what does that mean for the learning we make available? Well, it has to be good and it must help people build their capability. Despite what we know to be learning best practice, many organisations are still pedalling dull, dusty, dated one-size-fits-all training and it is likely to be tight timeframes and budgets that are to blame. It is rare these days that organisations invest in skills gap analysis, to really understand the learning needs of people. As a result, even when new learning is created, the content does not

always land, the examples might not feel relevant and people do not walk away brimming with practical new skills and an eagerness to implement them. If we zoom out and look more broadly at the labour market, organisations in which learning is left behind the curve, are in real trouble. In the developed world, the balance between employer and employee is undoubtedly shifting. Job vacancies are at an all-time high, a so-called “war on talent” is raging across sectors and businesses are in a battle for the best candidates. In this climate, experienced and skilled individuals have more choice than ever on where they work. With so many options available to them, they will look to the details to decide between roles, two of which is bound to be career development and learning opportunities. Elevating L&D could become one of the significant hooks to bring in the best talent and keep it. If we zoom out even further and look at society, there are clues as to what we need to do. Everything is becoming more personalised and more automatic, our tastes and preferences are noted and remembered. Think of the frustration we now feel if we have to enter our card details instead of them auto-populating. We have become very quickly accustomed to a heavily personalised user experience and L&D needs to catch up. Above all, digital learning must engage, the content has to be expertly curated, the user experience must be seamless and the platform has to lead them on a journey that encourages them to consume more. Beyond these big ideas, there is more we can do to revitalise the L&D brand and here are five suggestions that can make the biggest difference.

Make learning aspirational and exclusive: Make it seem special. The last ten years have seen a move away from residential training, taking people off-site, giving them a nice lunch and an inspiring speaker. Perhaps now is the time to add some sparkle back into our learning. Spend some money, take people out of the workflow, out of the office, out of their homes and give them the space they need to think differently. There was a

time where training was used as a treat or a reward, it made people feel valued and recognised for their contribution. For the programmes that matter, consider lavishing the learning with a bit of luxury, to create a “pick me!” dynamic.

Recognise and reward learning - including certification: If people feel they are gaining something tangible out of the learning - something for themselves, for their careers as well as something that adds to their social or career capital - they will be more likely to prioritise it. Consider offering learning that comes with a credible, recognised, industry accreditation, helping employees see learning as a personal gain, not just something their manager tells them to do.

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Create dedicated time for learning: Time out of your day-to-day work must be made up elsewhere - there is no side-stepping that. If you take people out for a day, they will have a day's worth of work to catch up on. But by formally blocking out time on the calendar and giving people permission to take time out of their roles to develop themselves, leaders are sending a strong message that learning is a strategic priority. Some companies such as Google even give employees dedicated development time and they are very much encouraged to take it. This commitment to nurturing an individual's career development can be a real differentiator for candidates looking for new roles.

Deliver just in time digital learning - with the right support at the right time: A bloated Learning Management System full of self-led learning is not the answer to addressing the ennui surrounding L&D. By taking a step back from existing methods and thinking differently about the idea of just in time training, you can pre-empt the needs of your people accurately, giving them the training they need when they need it. For example, that means putting people on management training before they step into a manager role, rather than after they have been struggling.

Harness collaborative and community learning: Encourage employees to set up specialist groups on platforms like Yammer where they can share expertise. Think, The Project Managers, The People Managers, The Coding Crew, these communities become places where people can post questions and access the help they need within minutes. Rally some big fish to start posting updates and motivate their team to share the projects they are working on, while they are working on them, so people have the opportunity to offer input and insight. This is how people crowdsource learning in their home lives - on the likes of Facebook or Nextdoor - so the behaviours are usually easily transferred to a work context.

If we are to really address the disconnect between employees of today and L&D we have to look at the broader talent landscape and the changing world of work and reflect this in the learning we offer. Instinctively, people want to learn, but in a way that is more unique than ever. Meeting their specific needs, desires and motivations is essential. Relying on a push strategy is dead. We need to ignite the 'pull' in each of our people, by connecting with them as individuals.

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BITE-SIZED

We are only just beginning to appreciate the full impact of remote and hybrid working. In L&D terms, traditional, classroom-based training, with the opportunity to bring whole groups of people together, is diminished with the continuation of hybrid working. Those organisations that had digital learning implemented, reaped the rewards during the pandemic and have a head start in the war for upskilling and retaining talent, yet even online development and the way employees prefer to learn, is changing at a rapid rate.

"ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING, IN A PERSON'S OWN TIME,
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TODAY. BITE-SIZED PIECES OF INFORMATION ARE FAR EASIER
TO FIT IN TO TODAY'S LIFESTYLE"



ARTICLE BY CYNDI SAX, VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS - TALOGY

Despite a universal pause while organisations switched their focus to the systems required to work from home, the appetite for learning and development has continued. Increasingly, asynchronous learning, in a person's own time, is preferred in response to the way we consume media today. Bite-sized pieces of information are far easier to fit in to today's lifestyle, as opposed to allocating half or full-days out of work. Learning in chunks has been proven to be more effective. Several studies show that half of new information is forgotten within a day. This continues to decline the longer the period between learning. By the end of a week, three-quarters of learning can be lost if not actively supplemented with opportunities to implement it.

Delving into a three-minute learning exercise, while waiting for the kids to come out of school or supplementing social media use for learning is far easier in today's lifestyle, where any spare time tends to be spent on our phones. The introduction of gamification into learning has also been well-received. Zoom fatigue during the pandemic has created a hunger for interactive, more engaging ways to learn. This way of learning particularly appeals to a younger generation, which has grown up around computer games. Usually undertaken via an app, gamification in learning encourages problem-solving, collaboration and critical thinking while keeping the learner engaged and willing to continue with the experience. It's taken as read that the skills required across generations differ, as well as how individuals prefer to learn and a one-size-fits-all approach has become outdated. Some people may favour collaborative learning and coaching, particularly if they feel isolated from the workplace or need to make new connections. Others may prefer to learn in their own time, taking snippets of information and going back to it as they encounter situations in the workplace. Research shows that learning, is improved by introducing a range of delivery methods, both passive and active. To gain maximum impact, HR needs to blend asynchronous e-learning with opportunities to interact with others, such

as facilitated webinar sessions, chat rooms, coaching, or traditional classroom training sessions. This helps to reinforce learning from asynchronous activities through discussions and reflection with others.

Whichever blend of training is delivered, creating a competency framework will provide a strong foundation and objectives from which a learning and development strategy can be set. A competency framework sets out what employees are expected to do to meet organisation objectives and can serve a variety of purposes, including employee selection, induction, performance management and succession planning.

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It can also be used as a benchmark from which to assess individuals and their training needs. Performance data and 360-degree feedback is useful in providing an insight into the competencies which need further development. A successful employee development programme does not end simply with knowledge gain, true value comes when learners do something different. Learners need real scenarios in which they can practice and apply the lessons learned, develop their skills and sustain behavioural change. To make learning go further, HR professionals should look at ways to reinforce training content, whether that is through additional written resources, group activities or coaching. Perhaps the best way to support individuals in learning and development is to provide them with the time and space to do it. During lockdown, when many people were furloughed, it

gave time for individuals to re-focus. To turn a lens on what they really want out of life and whether their current role was giving it to them. According to one survey¹, post pandemic, one in three people had retrained to change industry, or had upskilled through retraining.

In an economy where there is a reduction in labour, companies need to do all they can to upskill and retain employees. The combination of post-pandemic resignations and a shortage of labour from overseas has caused significant problems for some industries. Another challenge has been finding the right people with the right skillset, causing a skills mismatch which has been hard to plug. For this reason, the competency framework needs assessing, being too prescriptive can create a barrier to talent. By looking more broadly at the skills required, it may be possible to recruit from different industries, that have similar skillsets. According to a report, *UK Skills Mismatch in 2030*², 80 percent of the workforce in 2030 will be from talent that is in employment today. Learning and development plays an important part of the arsenal towards greater employee engagement and loyalty. It helps to create an environment where everyone understands their impact and contribution to the company. Providing training which promotes diversity and inclusion can have far-reaching benefits in the future, helping to widen the talent pool, as well as bringing new ideas and innovation that reaches beyond an existing customer-base. Blended learning, combining a variety of approaches, is certainly accelerating due to the necessity to embrace digitalisation during and post-pandemic. This figure will have undoubtedly shifted out of necessity. Technology has ignited a training revolution, the beginning of which has been marked by a world-wide shift in how we do business.

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FORCE OF HABIT

IT IS TIME TO TURN CURRENT L&D PROGRAMMES UPSIDE DOWN. TEACHING HAS FOLLOWED A 'MASTERCLASS' FRAMEWORK FOR THE BEST PART OF A HUNDRED YEARS AND HAS FAILED TO DELIVER CONSISTENT AND SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENTS. THE TRADITIONAL TEACHER, TRANSFERRING KNOWLEDGE TO STUDENTS - WHO THEN TRANSLATE THE COMMAND INTO ROUTINE AND PROCEDURE - URGENTLY NEEDS UPDATING.

DAVID ARNOWITZ, CEO - HABIT LEARNING COMPANY AND ARNOWITZ CULTURE AGENCY

Transferring information is not the same thing as learning and this approach for corporate training has been an unmitigated failure. Numerous studies have shown how billions of dollars are wasted in corporate training that rarely engages learners and is even worse in producing critical business outcomes. It's time to flip the emphasis from knowledge transfer to habit development. Many companies are trying to implement microlearning-based programmes to address the long-term failures of current L&D programmes. Breakthroughs in brain science, behavioural science - and specifically the impact of this research on habit formation and data science - have driven four insights into overcoming the shortcomings of 'masterclass' learning.

Performance breakthroughs and significant innovations are formed through the aggregation of small improvements. Hacking existing routines with tiny habits can lead to massive enhancements when stacked over time. People learn better by experiencing a new habit through practice. Experiential learning should impact L&D learning framework practices to use tiny habits in addressing performance gaps. Regular exercise of these micro-habits creates the space for the new habit to take root. Measuring progress is a crucial component of the habit formation process. Metrics are typically the 'old school' stick of compliance, but the new science-driven habit formation motivates, rewards and reinforces employees. Understanding and developing meaningful metrics are vital to encouraging, developing and sustaining habit improvements over time. So-called habit stacking enables the aggregation of small improvements into breakthrough business results. Habit stacking provides a bridge between addressing performance gaps from sales practices to diversity and inclusion issues.

Together, these insights address all the pain points of the digital age, dealing with shorter

attention spans, fast programme development, iterative and agile business requirements and the daunting stress of information overload. Putting these four insights to work requires an authentic implementation of the continuous learning mental model across every department and all leadership within an organisation. Subscribing to the continuous learning journey model means every action, failure and success is an opportunity to learn and improve. By identifying performance gaps, we can measure the success of implementing habits to address these issues and their effect on business outcomes. Because the habit changes are small and easily defined, they are also easier to measure progress, or lack thereof. Masterclass approaches are ill-suited not just because their scope and size take too long to develop and implement, but also because they are difficult to measure, motivate and sustain.

The most crucial aspect of any performance improvement is to create space for it. Making room for habit improvement often is why change does not occur. But with micro-habits, there is no excuse not to try. It's a small-time commitment because it is a tiny change. Start by identifying business touchpoints - meetings, daily or weekly sales activities, manufacturing processes, report development, employee career planning - then, meet with the team and identify improvements they want to achieve. Make sure the habit changes are small - it might be starting meetings on time or setting aside the first five minutes of a meeting to do a check-in - and here is the big secret, it does not matter where you start. The only vital criteria are creating a small space that the team can easily practice and track the habit. Creating that space is the beginning of your continuous learning journey.

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PRIVILEGE VERSUS PRINCIPLE

IN THE FILM *VIVA ZAPATA* A YOUNG PEASANT STRUGGLES TO HAVE AN AUDIENCE WITH THE COUNTRY'S PRESIDENT AND FINALLY BRINGS TO HIS ATTENTION THE PLIGHT OF HIS VILLAGE, WHICH IS SUFFERING AT THE HANDS OF A LOCAL LANDOWNER WHO IS ILLEGALLY SEIZING THEIR LAND. INSTEAD OF A SYMPATHETIC HEARING, HE IS THREATENED WITH PRISON FOR HIS IMPERTINENCE.



ARTICLE BY BLAIR MCPHERSON, FORMER DIRECTOR, AUTHOR & BLOGGER

Directed by Elia Kazan and with the peasant portrayed by Marlon Brando, the harsh indifference of the ruling class turns our protagonist into a revolutionary, who successfully overthrows the regime, whereupon he reluctantly accepts the post of President. A few years later, a young man burst into a presidential meeting, pleading to speak to the leader. Before the guards can throw him out, he says he is from the same poor village the President himself came from. The President allows him to speak, only to be told that the villagers are still suffering at the hands of a cruel and arrogant local landowner who is illegally seizing their land, leaving them with no means to support themselves or their family. It's a familiar theme, leaders invariably let people down and it's the ordinary people who suffer.

This doesn't just happen in politics, it happens in organisations. This isn't about the personality traits of leaders, but something inherent in the role. All leaders move from seeking power to seeking to hold on to power. All leaders become frustrated that what they want to happen isn't happening, or isn't happening

quickly enough. Power does not so much corrupt as compromise leaders as pragmatism erodes their idealism and makes hypocrites of them.

When I worked in local government, managers would often complain about what they saw as hypocrisy from local councillors. Managers felt let down by councillors who voted for a strategy, but subsequently opposed its implementation. Councillors would vote in favour of closing libraries as part of budget savings and then lead the campaign to save the library in their electoral ward. This was defended on the basis that councillors wore more than one hat, they voted for the strategy as loyal members of the majority party and led the local campaign against closure as the representative of their constituency.

The sacrificing of values in order to achieve strategic goals is of course a classic leadership move, whether in the public or private sector. It's captured in the expression "the end justifies the means", of which most leaders would refute in theory, but their practice tells another story. But are they acting any differently

to the average person? The supporters of a football team are happy to accept the massive investment from a Russian oligarch, until the Russian invasion of Ukraine highlighted once again the issue of sports wash - sponsoring sport to improve the image of a country or organisation - and the hypocrisy of leaders in Government or business, that are prepared to do deals with those who represent everything they would publicly oppose. More to the point, as a consequence of COVID-19 and the trend referred to as the 'Great Resignation', there is evidence of employees - particularly younger people - having a re-think about what they want from work and what type of organisation they want to work for. Indeed, there's a clear voice expressing a preference for organisations that have a clear set of values, that are not simply finance-driven, but operate ethically and therefore are led by people with a strong moral compass.

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



Marion Brooks

ROLE CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER
COMPANY APOGEE CORPORATION

Apogee Corporation has announced the appointment of its Chief People Officer, Marion Brooks onto the Executive Leadership Team.

Marion will take a strategic HR lead on the Executive Leadership Team, leading the People & Culture function to drive the organisational culture, by cultivating and championing it to create an environment that fosters integrity, diversity, inclusivity, agility, wellness and open communication. She brings more than two decades of UK and international HR experience to the role and has previously held senior HR roles within the retail, engineering and technology sectors.

Anne-Marie Andric

ROLE CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER
COMPANY FORTO

Forto, a provider of digitised freight forwarding and supply chain solutions, has announced the appointment of Anne-Marie Andric to the executive leadership team, as Chief People Officer.

Anne-Marie will lead the company's human resources functions as it continues its international expansion, with responsibilities

including direction of talent acquisition, leadership and team development, employee experience, engagement and relations. She will also further drive the company's diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. Anne-Marie brings more than 25 years of HR experience with a wide range of companies and industries to Forto. Most recently, she served as Vice President People and Organisation/Internal Communications for the Husqvarna Division at Husqvarna Group.

Justin Rigden

ROLE HEAD OF PEOPLE
COMPANY RETAIL MARKETING GROUP

RMG, the multichannel marketing agency, has announced the appointments of Justin Rigden, Head of People, to strengthen its senior leadership team, at a time of rapid growth for the company.

The firm is working alongside sister company Storey, to provide end-to-end retail solutions. Justin Rigden has extensive experience in delivering operational and talent development strategies and over two decades of experience in field marketing. Justin was previously Group Operations Director at Acosta and has worked across commercial, operational, and people functions.

Marta Ilbak

ROLE GLOBAL HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES
COMPANY EQUITI GROUP

Equiti Group has announced the appointment of Marta Ilbak as Global Head of HR, bringing a wealth of diverse people management experience.

Marta has worked in a range of HR roles across Europe, the Middle East and Africa and joins Equiti from tech unicorn Deliveroo, where she worked as Head of People. In this role, she was mainly responsible for business expansion, organisational design and talent evaluation and development programs for human capital. She also managed a major redesign of HR processes and systems in the Middle East in preparation for the company's IPO in April 2021.

Leisa Docherty

ROLE CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER
COMPANY CAUSEWAY TECHNOLOGIES

Causeway Technologies announces the appointment of Leisa Docherty as its new Chief People Officer.

As a member of the Board, Leisa will define and deliver the company's people strategy and continue to develop ways to make Causeway a great place to work. She brings extensive experience, working across the people spectrum in growing technology businesses, including six years as Chief People Officer for the UK and Ireland at Sage.

FOR FURTHER UPDATES

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INTERVIEW

Fiona Cicconi, SVP and People Operations & Chief People Officer – Google

EMPLOYMENT LAW REVIEW

What new legislation will be introduced and will existing law need to be adjusted?

SHARED SERVICES

Pressure is on to deliver and interpret real-time and intelligence-enabled data for decision-making.

REWARD & REMUNERATION

R&R is in the perfect storm, mixed with an employee spring, juxtaposed with hybrid working, changing employee motivations and ambitions.

EMPLOYEE VOICE IN CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

It is often said that Corporate Governance is about four Ps - process, performance, purpose and people. But louder than anything is employee voice.



KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE FROM HARM IS TOUGH

**BUT WE'VE BEEN DOING
IT FOR 25 YEARS.**

**AND WE WON'T STOP UNTIL
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LIVE ON THE STREETS.**

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