

HAYS JOURNAL

GLOBAL INSIGHT FOR EXPERTS IN THE WORLD OF WORK



FEELING ISOLATED?

How loneliness could be putting your employees' mental health on the line

ISSUE 17
2019

INFLUENCING DIRECTION
How 'internal influencers' are changing their organisations

BACK IN PLAY
Should your organisation introduce a returnship programme?

WATCH THIS SPACE
How businesses can decide if a co-working space is right for them

HAYS JOURNAL



WHETHER IT'S INVESTORS keeping their faith in an organisation's ability to drive profits, or customers putting their trust in the quality of a product, it's hard to overstate the importance of confidence in business. And it's never been more vital to inspire it in your workforce than it is today.

In this issue of the Hays Journal, there are many examples of its impact. We explore why employees need the confidence to talk with colleagues or managers about feeling lonely (page 10), how it affects those returning to the workforce after a break (page 35) and why instilling it in middle managers could give such a big boost to your business (page 44).

There are many different ways to make your staff feel more assured about themselves and your organisation. For example, some companies are implementing internal influencer programmes to gain insight from their staff and boost their profile externally (page 32).

Others are changing their culture to help their people feel more comfortable and confident in co-working spaces (page 40)

We've also spoken with Heidi B Capozzi, Senior Vice President of Human Resources at **The Boeing Company** (page 24). Following an announcement that the company would be spending an additional US\$100 million on training and investment, the aerospace giant asked its people to suggest how this money could be spent. It received over 40,000 suggestions. Capozzi explains why she believes Boeing's employees have confidence that they will be listened to.

Digital transformation is a recurring theme in the Hays Journal, and in this issue we look at voice search (page 18). As this technology gathers momentum in the consumer space, what opportunities and challenges does it present in the workplace? We also examine why every employee needs access to digital tools that will enable them to both do their work effectively and share it with colleagues, with tips for facilitating digital inclusivity (page 22).

Elsewhere, we've spoken to Chatelle Lynch, CHRO of **McAfee**, about how motherhood changed how she approached her work; while Michael Moniz, CEO of **Circadence**, discusses how he balances leading a business with his love for high-altitude mountaineering.

We'll be back later in the year with more insight into how the world of work is changing. In the meantime, I hope this issue fills you with confidence to take advantage of the opportunities available in the world of work.

ALISTAIR COX, CEO, HAYS

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worldwide

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Hays Journal is published on behalf of Hays by Wardour.

www.wardour.co.uk

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You can also view or download past issues at hays-journal.com

TOP STORIES

What's changing in the world of work?

JAPANESE WORKERS OFFERED NAPS ON THE JOB

GROWING NUMBERS of organisations in Japan are offering employees the chance to take a nap at work.

Businesses are being driven by an epidemic of sleeplessness that, according to a **RAND Europe** report, costs the country \$138 billion a year. IT service provider **Nextbeat** began offering strategic sleep rooms last year at its Tokyo headquarters.

The rooms are designed to maximise sleep. Staff are banned from using mobile phones and other technologies, background noise is blocked out and the two rooms (one for men and one for women) are aroma-infused.

According to the **Kyodo** news agency, Emiko Sumikawa, a member of the Nextbeat board, said: "Napping can do as much to improve someone's efficiency as a balanced diet and exercise."

Excessive overtime has come under increasing scrutiny in Japan in recent years, with several deaths blamed on it. In fact, the country even has its own word for death from overwork, 'Karoshi'.

Other organisations are offering financial incentives to their people to avoid overtime and to get a good night's sleep.

Wedding planning organisation **Crazy** has awarded employees with points for sleeping six hours a night. Sleep is monitored by an app and points can be exchanged for cafeteria food worth up to 64,000 yen (£458) a year.

“NAPPING CAN DO AS MUCH TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY AS A BALANCED DIET AND EXERCISE”



THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW...

133M

THE NUMBER OF JOBS GLOBALLY THAT COULD BE CREATED OVER THE NEXT DECADE WITH THE HELP OF RAPID TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES IN THE WORKPLACE, ACCORDING TO A STUDY BY THE **WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM**. THIS IS COMPARED TO 75M THAT COULD BE DISPLACED BY DEVELOPMENTS.



“THINGS WE SHOULD GET RID OF: FORCED DISTRIBUTION IN PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS, HIERARCHY-BASED BENEFITS, AND DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION BASED ON NUMBERS”

SHWETA SHUKLA, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES – ASIA PACIFIC, **NETFLIX**, SPEAKING AT TECHRR SINGAPORE 2019

SPAIN'S 22% MINIMUM WAGE RISE COULD LEAD TO JOB LOSSES



Announcing the news, Spain's Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, said that "a rich country cannot have poor workers". The minimum salary in Spain is now €12,600 per year, effectively increasing the monthly wage from €736 to €900.

The increase is expected to cost the state an additional €340 million annually and will apply to permanent, temporary and part-time workers.

Sánchez is leading a minority government in Spain. The minimum wage increase is part of a wider budget agreement between his Socialist Party and the left-leaning anti-austerity party, Podemos, which has been calling for a wage rise for some years.

Spain's **Unión General de Trabajadores**, one of the country's biggest trade unions, expects 2.6 million people to benefit from the wage rise, although other estimates put the figure at 1.2 million.

The government hopes that, contrary to critics' concerns, the rise will also help to boost employment and economic recovery, while reducing poverty and wage inequality.

CRITICS OF SPAIN'S astonishing 22 per cent minimum wage rise have warned that the country could witness thousands of job losses during 2019 as employers struggle to meet the additional salary costs.

Estimates vary from 40,000 job losses, according to the **AIReF (the Independent Authority for Spanish Fiscal**

Responsibility), to as much as 125,000, according to Spain's central bank, **Banco de España**.

The increase, effective since the beginning of the year, is the largest annual minimum wage increase that Spain has witnessed in more than 40 years. The 2018 increase was just four per cent and the 2017 increase was eight per cent.

2,700

THE NUMBER OF JOBS THAT COULD BE LOST AS A RESULT OF CARMAKER **FORD'S** DECISION TO CLOSE ITS OLDEST FACTORY IN BRAZIL AND PULL OUT OF THE HEAVY COMMERCIAL TRUCK SECTOR ACROSS SOUTH AMERICA. THE FACTORY, IN SÃO PAULO SUBURB SÃO BERNARDO DO CAMPO, HAS BEEN IN OPERATION SINCE 1967

SOURCE: REUTERS

FURTHER COUNTRIES CONTEMPLATE UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME PLANS

MORE GEOGRAPHIES ARE

considering, or have announced plans for, universal basic income trials.

The Mayor of Newark in New Jersey, US, has revealed that the city will be implementing a pilot programme that will provide residents with \$400 a month regardless of employment status.

Meanwhile, a report from the **Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce** recommended that their model for a similar scheme should be implemented in the UK as the world of work becomes more automated.

Proponents of universal basic income believe it could increase uptake of lower income or temporary employment opportunities. However, initial reports from a completed experiment in Finland suggest this may not be the case.

The trialled scheme failed to deliver on one of its key objectives – to provide recipients with an incentive to work.

The **Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela)** said year one data revealed that receiving a basic income did not boost



employment levels among participants, although it did improve wellbeing in several ways.

Recipients experienced fewer stress symptoms, fewer health problems, less difficulty in concentrating mentally and were more confident about their future.

The two-year experiment, which took place between 2017 and 2018, saw a random sample of 2,000 unemployed people aged 25 to 58 paid a monthly basic income of €560, with no requirement to seek or accept work. Those who did take a

job during that time continued to receive the no-strings-attached payment.

Economists say the results of the experiment are unsurprising, given that many jobless people have few skills and struggle with difficult life situations and health concerns – problems that cannot easily be solved with a guaranteed monthly cheque.

Kela said it was not possible to draw any firm conclusions from the preliminary data analysis and that further results would be published during 2019 and 2020.



REPORTING TO A ROBOTIC MANAGER STILL A STEP TOO FAR FOR MOST BRITS

WHILE BRITONS MAY consider working with or befriending a robot, reporting to them as their manager is a step too far for most, according to an analysis of British attitudes to robotic companions.

The study by online marketplace **OnBuy.com** is based on a **YouGov** survey of 2,041 British adults aged 18 to 55 years-plus. It reveals that 33 per

cent of men and 22 per cent of women would be comfortable with a robot as a colleague. However, most said that they would not want that robot to be their manager.

When asked about that possibility, 66 per cent of men and 75 per cent of women felt 'uncomfortable' at the thought of a manager that would be a robot rather than a human.



CANADA AIMS TO GROW SKILLED WORKFORCE

A new training fund that aims to grow Canada's skilled workforce has been unveiled by the federal government.

The Canadian Training Benefit, which is worth C\$1.7 billion, will be available over the next five years and has been created to encourage workers to take on mid-career training.

Workers can claim half the cost of a course or training programme and will be eligible to take four weeks off work to do so. They will also receive employment insurance coverage equal to 55 per cent of their average weekly income.

"Canadians at all stages of their working lives should have the opportunity to learn new skills to take control of their future," said Finance Minister Bill Morneau in his speech to the House of Commons.

However, Dan Kelly, President of the **Canadian Federation of Independent Business**, raised concerns that the fund could create challenges for businesses if training did not link to an employee's work.

"Will small businesses be required to hold open a position if an employee has always wanted to take paid leave from work in order to study Latin or interpretive dance?" Kelly asked.

UK TO CONDUCT REVIEW ON DISCLOSURE OF YOUTH CONVICTIONS

UK JOB CANDIDATES may no longer be required to disclose minor youth convictions from their past, following a ruling by the highest court in the land.

The Supreme Court ruled that the UK Government must conduct a wide-ranging review of the criminal records disclosure regime for children and young people, finding that it was in breach of human rights law.

A group of claimants took the UK Government to the Supreme Court, claiming that the rules were holding them back in life.

The Supreme Court agreed that having to disclose minor youth reprimands – such as a caution – to a potential employer was incompatible with human rights legislation.

Enver Solomon, Chief Executive of children's charity **Just for Kids Law**, which represented the claimants, said: "This judgment makes clear that the disclosure of reprimands and cautions – the legal equivalent of a slap on the wrist – is disproportionate and damaging



to the future rehabilitation of children, preventing them from moving on from their past."

The government's Disclosure and Barring Service, which helps employers make safer recruitment decisions, said it would consider the steps necessary to ensure it adhered to the findings of the judgment.

“DISCLOSURE OF REPRIMANDS AND CAUTIONS IS DISPROPORTIONATE AND DAMAGING”

INDIA'S WORKING HOURS TOP ILO'S RECOMMENDED LIMIT



WORKING HOURS IN INDIA

are among the highest in the world, according to the first official estimate made by a statistical agency in the country. The **National Sample Survey Office's** first *Periodic Labour Force Survey* revealed that a majority of workers put in more than 48 hours a week – higher than the time limit prescribed by the **International Labour Organization**. Based on data collected between June and July 2018, workers in cities were found to be working an average of 53-54 hours per week.

BEING THE CHANGE

CHATELLE LYNCH IS CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER OF CYBER SECURITY COMPANY **MCAFFEE**. SHE EXPLAINS HOW HAVING CHILDREN HAS MADE HER MORE AWARE THAN EVER OF THE PREJUDICES MANY GROUPS FACE, AND HOW THIS HAS PUSHED HER TO TACKLE THESE CHALLENGES IN HER WORK



Growing up in Australia, I had a pretty clichéd small hometown childhood, but my father loved to travel and we went to a lot of different countries. That started my love of other cultures and at an early age I became a little enamoured with the US.

I did an internship at **Colorado State University** and after I finished my degree in Australia, I wrote to every company I could think of to get an internship. One company replied to me and they ended up hiring me in an HR role.

I left that role when my husband and I moved to Texas, which was when I joined McAfee, and I've now been here for 15 years. I've grown through the company to become Chief Human Resources Officer.

I'm married to an amazing man who happens to be African American, and together we have four African American children. I have never been more aware of what inclusion means since having children. I thought I had a good handle on it, but people making overt references to my children's skin colour is something I've noticed.

Recently my eldest son, who is 11, said to me: "I know that there's equal rights now. I know that even back when Dad was born, you wouldn't have been able to get married because you were white and Dad was black. I think we've done well with the equal rights, but I don't think there's equal respect, Mum."

“WE ASKED OURSELVES HOW WE COULD GIVE CHILDREN EXPOSURE TO NEW EXPERIENCES SO THAT THEY THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT THEIR FUTURES”

I don't understand why people get pulled over just because they're black. I don't understand why there's not the respect there, even though equal rights are."

It hit me so hard that he recognises the difference between rights and respect, and those are the things I'm mindful of.

With my girls, sometimes I see nuances in how they are treated too. My daughter sometimes gets called bossy. I tell her: "No, you're not bossy, you're a leader."

At McAfee we asked ourselves how we could give children exposure to new experiences so that they think differently about their futures. Our answer was to create the McAfee Explorers programme. It brings children into the workplace from around the age of 11 to spend a day with an engineer, a data scientist or an IT specialist, or any other professional within our organisation, to give them exposure to a profession that maybe they couldn't have experienced otherwise.

We're also working to ensure our staff are treated equally. In December 2018, the **World Economic Forum** calculated that it would be 202 years before we reach gender pay parity around the world. That is entirely too long and at McAfee we're committing to achieve full pay parity this year.

Despite these challenges, I am so encouraged by the progress that I've seen in my short career. For my kids, I want to see a world where people are respected. Sometimes people approach it like it's too big a problem or like they can't make a difference, but collectively we all can. ■

ALONE IN A CROWD

WHILE WE HAVE MORE WAYS THAN EVER TO CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER, WORKPLACE LONELINESS IS A DAILY STRUGGLE FOR MANY EMPLOYEES. IN FACT, A STUDY BY FUTURE WORKPLACES FOUND THAT MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES SPEND NEARLY HALF OF THEIR DAY COMMUNICATING VIA TECHNOLOGY, NOT IN PERSON. HOW CAN ORGANISATIONS WORK WITH STAFF TO ENSURE NOBODY FEELS ISOLATED?





FEELING AS THOUGH you ‘belong’ is one of our most basic, primitive needs, yet the onset of the digital age has made it easier than ever for employees to hide behind their computer screens and use email as their primary form of communication. But is this making us feel lonely and more detached than ever before?

Professor Sigal Barsade from **The Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania**, says that people can be just as lonely in an office, surrounded by colleagues, as they can working from home five days a week. “Loneliness is a self-constructed assessment that an individual makes, based on their own psychological and social needs,” she notes.

Barsade, co-author of the report *Workplace Loneliness and Job Performance* (a study of 672 employees and 114 supervisors, published in December 2018), says that loneliness isn’t related to age or gender but depends largely on someone’s outlook or perspective. Furthermore, an employee doesn’t need to have a large group of colleagues to connect with to prevent them from feeling lonely. Just one co-worker who they have a good bond with could be enough to stave off loneliness.

One of the main issues, however, is that loneliness was found to be what Barsade describes as “self-reinforcing,” that is, it can become the norm and can make people become sensitive, distrustful and socially inept. “The paradox is that people who are lonely are often the ones who seem the most aloof and least likely to reach out to others,” she says.

Crucially, this sense of loneliness and detachment has a direct impact on performance, engagement and wellbeing.

“The greater the sense of loneliness, the lower the performance and the more likely the employee is to take time off sick,” says Barsade. “The results also show that co-workers can recognise this loneliness and see it hindering team effectiveness.”

She explains that simply understanding loneliness at work can be a significant issue for many employers, yet is one of the first steps in overcoming it. “Just having one good-quality connection with one colleague or your manager can keep loneliness at bay, but they need to have the right working environment and company culture to foster this,” she notes. Ensuring remote workers and home workers come into the office once a week and are kept up to date with everything that’s going on is also important.

Ultimately, HR professionals need to recognise that loneliness is not an individual problem. “They should consider it to be an organisational problem that needs to be addressed, both for the employees’ sake and that of the organisation,” says Barsade.

IDENTIFYING ISSUES

But how can employers spot loneliness issues in their business? David Price, CEO of wellbeing provider **Health Assured**, says: “Managers may notice that an employee’s productivity is down, or that certain members of staff are reserved and are not taking part in both social and work-related conversations and activities. There may ▶





▶ also be instances when the employee is rude to their colleagues or members of the public, or starts to get a bad reputation among their co-workers.”

Loneliness, says Angela O’Connor, CEO of consultancy **The HR Lounge**, is a major issue for many workers. “Detachment has an impact, not only on performance but also on confidence, leading to reductions in engagement and performance. It can also lead to increases in turnover where staff seek more meaningful work.”

If you are seeing higher turnover, less engagement, less innovation and less productivity, you may have a detachment problem, says O’Connor. “We can all think of times when having a few friends at work was the factor that made us enjoy the job, share problems and find common ground. Discussing the reality of roles with staff and sharing stories of how other staff find ways to connect can be really helpful.”

However, Ian Adams, Director of Membership and Stakeholder Engagement at **NHS Resolution**, says that loneliness shouldn’t always be viewed as a negative. “I think it comes down to the individual and their working style. What might make one person feel lonely might benefit another,” he says. “Some people might prefer working on their own, without distractions, and actually relish the solitude, especially when channelling their creativity.”

UNDERSTANDING IMPACT

While the study by Barsade established that workers in an office could be just as susceptible to loneliness, the change in our working habits, with more than two million people in the UK now working remotely, is also a significant contributing factor.

“**DETACHMENT HAS AN IMPACT, NOT ONLY ON PERFORMANCE BUT ALSO ON CONFIDENCE**”

— ANGELA O’CONNOR, THE HR LOUNGE

Brian Hall, Chief Operating Officer at health and wellbeing provider **BHSF**, says the option to work from home is one of the most highly valued employee benefits and can be the defining factor when it comes to staying with an organisation.

“There are many advantages to working from home: avoiding a lengthy or stressful commute, the flexibility to work around other commitments, plus the peace and quiet to concentrate on an important task,” he acknowledges. “But spending long periods of time alone can cause feelings of isolation and loneliness.”

Humans are social creatures and although we might enjoy working from home for periods of time, we also need regular interaction, Hall says. “In our recent survey of home workers, we asked them how working from home made them feel. The most frequent responses were ‘free’ and ‘in control’, but about a quarter also reported feeling ‘isolated’, ‘remote’ and ‘lonely’. While many people appreciate being able to manage their work in a way that fits in with their



life, there is also a need to feel part of a team and connected to others.”

So how can organisations help those working remotely? Firstly, says Barsade, they must recognise that loneliness exists and is a real issue. “HR professionals need to realise that they have to pay attention to this and that it’s not just the employee’s problem,” she explains.

She adds that organisational culture is a significant contributing factor, and that organisations need to look at ways of adopting a more inclusive, emotional and cognitive culture that endorses and promotes ‘companionate love’ – affectionate, caring relationships between co-workers.

This can be fostered by small gestures, she explains. “It’s the five-minute morning chat you have with someone, for instance. It serves as a buffer to loneliness and brings people together.”

FINDING THE CAUSE

Of course, it’s not just changes to where we work that can have an effect. Josh Graff, UK Country Manager & VP EMEA at **LinkedIn**, says the proliferation of technology in the workplace has had a revolutionary effect on the way we work. “Businesses can crunch and share information faster and connect teams more easily than ever before,” he notes. “It has also given professionals more flexibility in how and where they do their job and can do amazing things for productivity if it’s used in the right way.”

Being constantly connected can, however, make it harder for us to switch off. “LinkedIn’s research among 2,000 UK adults showed that, even while on holiday, a quarter of Brits were unable to relax without

checking emails on their smartphone,” Graff says. “This is why many companies now have a greater focus on improving their employees’ wellbeing.”

Robert Hicks, Group HR Director of employee engagement company **Reward Gateway**, says it can be more natural for younger workers to feel part of an online community than other colleagues.

“I think the younger generations are fully switched on, the ‘always-connected generation’. They see online as their home, so working remotely will not be different for them,” he notes. “They grew up creating teams and groups who play video games together, and so are used to talking, planning and connecting without being together in person.

“For folks like me, we did not have that, but we all use Skype, Hangouts or even WhatsApp to talk and video call, and as that increases, so will our understanding of how we can engage these workers more effectively. We are all on the same path, using the same tools in work, and that it is pretty amazing.”

But Price says that, although younger workers may be more familiar and comfortable with the online virtual world, it could actually make them lonelier. “Some younger workers may use a virtual world as a way of escaping the real world, which can be the cause of increased loneliness. A workforce that is over-reliant on technology in the working environment can also miss out on developing key communication skills that other workers may have, such as how to have difficult conversations face to face, empathy and an ability to read body language,” he notes.

This over-reliance on technology can ultimately lead workers to become disillusioned and lonely in their job through the lack of face-to-face interaction, he adds, ▶



▶ so employers should try to ensure they have digital disconnects and time away from their screens.

“While there is no legal obligation for companies to enforce a digital disconnect, it is advisable that steps are taken to encourage workers to come away from their computers and interact with colleagues. Examples of ways to encourage colleague interaction include holding meetings to discuss potential social activities that take into account diverse interests, having a public eating area so employees can socialise during breaks, and arranging the office so that it is more open.”

HURTING HEALTH

Emma Mamo, Head of Workplace Wellbeing at mental health charity **Mind**, says loneliness and feeling isolated isn't a mental health problem but can be a contributing factor. “Feeling lonely can contribute to developing things like anxiety and depression, while

“**IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT THAT EMPLOYERS TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN HELPING EMPLOYEES STAY WELL**”

— EMMA MAMO, MIND

people living with mental health problems are more likely to feel lonely,” she notes. “If you're feeling low or anxious, you might feel like withdrawing from those around you – such as your colleagues or manager – and it can be difficult to reach out to others, especially in a working environment.”

Work has a huge impact on mental health, Mamo explains. “If, for example, there is a lack of internal communication or if staff are often required to work on their own, you can see why, when left unsupported, employees may experience a deterioration in their health and changes to their performance. That's why it's really important that employers take an active role in helping employees stay well and supporting staff when they need it – as well as looking after themselves.”

Prioritising employee wellbeing is essential, Mamo adds. “By actively encouraging staff to talk – with other colleagues, line managers or their HR department – it can help mitigate risks of disconnect or isolation.”

At Reward Gateway, for example, they hold meetings to bring everyone across the organisation together. Hicks says: “We run the ‘all hands meetings’ to bring everyone together, and we also record the meetings so that anyone who can't attend can watch it later. It allows people to openly discuss concerns and any current issues they have.”

TAKING ACTION

So what can employers do to help tackle loneliness? To start with, they must create an inclusive and accepting working environment, says Donna Miller, European HR Director at car rental company **Enterprise Holdings**. “It's about giving employees the freedom to make decisions about what works for them – whether it's working in a busy team or in a quieter environment or a mix of the two,” she notes.

FOUR WAYS TO FIGHT LONELINESS IN THE WORKPLACE

1. CONCENTRATE ON CULTURE

Try to build a culture that focuses on inclusion for all colleagues in your organisation.

2. ENCOURAGE CONVERSATION

Ensure your people feel comfortable talking to each other or their line managers if they are struggling with feelings of loneliness.

3. MAKE THEM MEET

Ensure that staff who work in an isolated location regularly get some time in the office working with their peers.

4. START SOCIAL

Establish social groups in your organisation and ensure staff who may feel lonely, such as remote workers, are invited and encouraged to attend.



Enterprise also tries to involve homeworkers, those who aren't in the office every day and those with alternative work arrangements. "Our business support team is primarily comprised of homeworkers," says Miller. "Though dispersed throughout the country, the team conducts meetings via Skype and training sessions are held via a connected online platform, so employees can see their colleagues as well as the facilitator."

It's essentially about using technology to make people feel connected rather than disconnected, she adds. "We always try to invite remote workers to meetings on different days each week, to give every team member the opportunity to attend. We remind people that being considerate of colleagues and thinking of others is a deliberate act – you need to remember to do it."

"Tackling loneliness means prioritising employees' wellbeing," Miller says. "We offer employee assistance programmes that provide additional support for employees who prefer to speak to someone not directly linked to their day-to-day work. We have set up internal outlets such as our charity, diversity and wellness committees, which encourage office-based employees to build connections and network with colleagues. These groups are extremely important, as they allow employees to get involved in something that matters to them, while meeting colleagues from different departments who share similar interests."

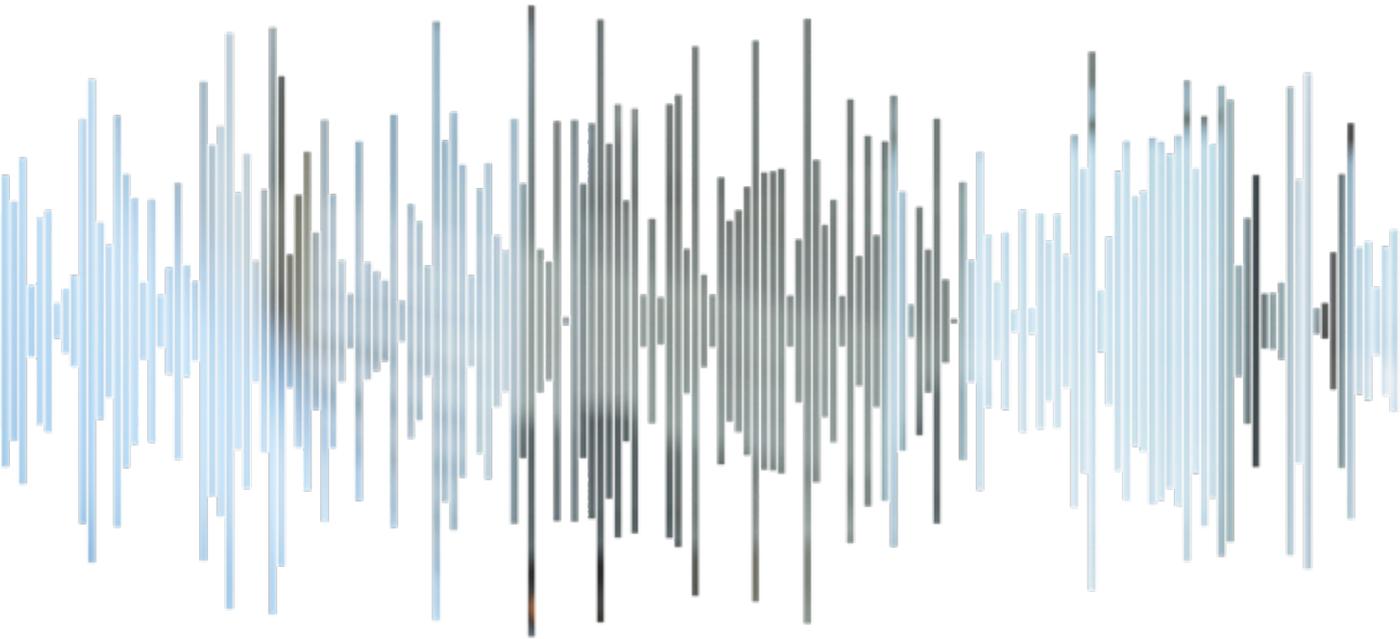
Ultimately, including people so they feel engaged and comfortable at work is a daily practice that requires conscious effort. "Like any practice, the more you reach out to people, the greater the rewards," concludes Miller. ■

44.8 million

The number of people employed in Germany up to the beginning of 2019, the highest figure since reunification in 1990. This represents a year-on-year rise of 1.3 per cent, or 562,000. The country has enjoyed a 13-year period of increasing employment, with many positions filled by foreign workers.







FINDING ITS VOICE

VOICE SEARCH IS FAST GAINING MOMENTUM, WITH SOME EXPERTS GOING SO FAR AS TO SAY IT COULD BECOME THE DOMINANT METHOD OF SEARCH WITHIN YEARS. WHILE THESE CLAIMS ARE FACING SCRUTINY, ITS IMPACT IS UNDENIABLE. SHOULD HR LEADERS AND ORGANISATIONS BE PREPARING FOR THIS TECHNOLOGY TO ENTER THE WORKFORCE?

WHILE HAVING CONVERSATIONS with smartphone and smart speaker virtual assistants such as Siri and Alexa is now an everyday occurrence for many, it's fair to say their impact on the workforce has been limited so far. But as use of the technology grows, is that about to change?

Digital giant **Google** says that the proportion of queries on its mobile app and on Android devices that are made by voice has already passed the 20 per cent mark in the US¹, while market researchers have found that 24 per cent of US households now own a smart speaker² (which of course *only* responds to voice activation).

These figures are likely to go on rising and are indicative of a worldwide trend. It's hardly surprising – asking for information and giving instructions by talking is usually easier and quicker than typing. And besides, the power of speech is something humans are uniquely good at.

Meanwhile, advances in machine learning and speech recognition driven by artificial intelligence

(AI) mean that voice-activated and conversational technologies are getting better and better at communicating in a human-like way.

Matthew Cain of global research firm **Gartner** reports that “consumers and workers increasingly interact with applications without touching a keyboard”. According to Gartner's *2018 CIO Survey*, while less than four per cent of organisations have already deployed conversational interfaces (including chatbots), 38 per cent are planning to implement them or are actively experimenting with the technology³.

So, is it possible that voice technology could be used by HR to support workplace wellbeing and engagement? And what are the opportunities and challenges around its use?

PLAYING BY THE RULES

Conversational technology's breakthrough was with text-only chatbots – software that could mimic human conversation in writing. It was typically a customer service tool that could search a database to answer



straightforward 'frequently asked questions' (FAQs). Next-generation chatbots are now voice-activated, but it is the FAQ function that many see as the most obvious HR use, freeing up HR professionals for conversations with staff that voice technology isn't yet up to.

Professor Chris Ivory, Director of the **Innovative Management Practice Research Centre at Anglia Ruskin University**, says: "The AI behind this technology works best in HR areas that are rule-bound, ensuring compliance with law." He adds that, freed from having to deal with these areas, "I see HR professionals increasingly moving towards more strategic activity – planning and implementing cultural change, implementing reward systems and so forth."

Jonny Gifford, Senior Advisor for Organisational Behaviour at the **Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development** in the UK, has this to say about the "doom-mongers" who predict that automation such as voice technology will mean job losses: "AI replaces tasks, not jobs. So, typically, they cut some of the heavy lifting within jobs. Research that we released this April shows that, overall, people's jobs are upskilled by AI."

INFORMATION AVAILABLE

Gifford points out that a clear advantage of an automated approach to FAQs for employees is they can get answers "as and when they need them". He says: "You don't have to wait until Monday when the HR department have time. It would be the same with training delivered in this way. And you wouldn't have

to sit through a part of a course that you already know. A virtual trainer doesn't mind if you skip that bit."

Jeff Adams, founder and CEO of US-based **Cobalt Speech**, has worked on speech and language technology research for more than 20 years: "Voice technology is simply a more natural interface for people to interact with systems, databases and machines," he says. "I can imagine that you would pick up a telephone and dial a number that connects you with an 'assistant' that can talk to you about arranging annual leave or logging your hours." ▶

IS IT GOOD TO TALK?

Some considerations to bear in mind when introducing voice technology to HR functions:

- Work out up-front what the benefits will be for employees
- While voice recognition software may be familiar to tech-savvy younger workforce, it may be offputting for older employees
- Be transparent about plans to use voice technology. Start with a trial period and get staff feedback on how effective it has been
- Build in consent mechanisms so employees can easily say no to voice technology
- Ensure that the data gathered is anonymous and secure

“RESEARCH THAT WE RELEASED THIS APRIL SHOWS THAT, OVERALL, PEOPLE’S JOBS ARE UPSKILLED BY AI”

— JONNY GIFFORD, CIPD

- ▶ Adams, whose career includes time spent developing the Amazon Echo smart speaker, continues: “You could ask about benefits, where to find something, or about rules and regulations. It would be easy to get information in a friendly way.”

BOOSTING MORALE

Meanwhile, market research and insights business **Kantar Analytics** has been looking at how voice technology and analysis can help HR teams to gauge employee morale and sentiment. The company recently used this approach at a large UK bank to assess the management team’s feelings about the company’s new corporate vision.

“Hundreds of face-to-face interviews were organised,” explains Tom Evans, Director for Data Science at Kantar. “Historically, analysis of the emotions of those interviewees would mean listening to all the conversations and writing lots of notes about what was said and how things were said. That’s difficult to do on a large scale, and expensive too.

“We applied the technology and analysis tools we’ve developed with US company **Affectiva** to recordings of those meetings and were able to retrieve the same insight as the traditional method, but more quickly and cheaply at that scale.”

Other potential voice technology applications Adams can envisage include a system that would not only take notes in a meeting, but also automatically red-flag proposals generated by that meeting that don’t comply with company policy or employment law. “Some people might find that a little Big Brotherish,” he acknowledges, “but most of us are more afraid of doing something inappropriate out of ignorance and would appreciate the protection.” Big Brother or not, this compliance application would

mean another task made easier for HR professionals, who could spend more time creating good company policy and less time enforcing it.

He adds: “A number of companies are already using systems that monitor employees. For example, call centres have automated systems listening in on calls to ensure that agents are being polite and are giving the right answers. You can imagine similar applications for sales people, to make sure they aren’t making inappropriate claims to potential customers. That might be useful for a company, but employees might find that intrusive – so a balance has to be struck.”

GENERATIONAL FIT

How voice technology is introduced to a workforce could be just as important as its application. Alan Price is Group Operations Director at HR and employment law consultancy **Peninsula**, which operates in the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. He says: “Consider the impact on your existing processes and staff. Voice recognition software may engage better with a tech-savvy younger workforce than an older group who aren’t used to this level of technology. It is therefore a good idea to implement a test period first in order to see just how useful the software will be. During this time, staff should regularly be consulted to outline if they are finding the technology useful or if it is having a negative effect on their daily activities.”

Adams agrees that the technology should be phased in with transparency. And, where possible, it should be available as an option, “but with the HR department’s door still open to people who want to approach HR person to person”. He adds: “It’s also worth remembering that what works for a large company might not work for a small company, and what works for a law firm might not work for an accountancy firm.”

TALK ABOUT RISKS

It can’t be overlooked that there could be disadvantages to voice technology for both HR teams and employees.

Evans says: “Anything that is perceived as throwing up a barrier to HR could have negative impacts on employees. Whatever you use the technology for, it needs to be of benefit to employees and thought about up front. Otherwise, the results could do some damage to an organisation.

“HR should ensure that any data gathered by the technology is anonymous and that consent

RESEARCH SUGGESTS 24 PER CENT
OF US HOUSEHOLDS NOW OWN
A SMART SPEAKER



mechanisms are in place so that people can easily say no to it. And ensure that data is secure – but that is a risk with any information you hold about your employees.”

Perhaps the biggest risk with voice technology is over-estimating what it is capable of. Adams explains: “We’re taking great strides in developing a conversational interface with machines, but it is composed of a lot of parts and I don’t see it being able to replicate everything a human can do in the foreseeable future.

“In the area of speech recognition, for example, there’s quite a way to go to match a human. In ideal circumstances it might feel like it is, but as soon as there’s a lot of noise, or an accent, or what someone is saying is a little bit nonsensical, the technology isn’t there yet.

“It simply can’t yet carry on a long, meaningful conversation and mimic humans. Ten years ago I would have said it would be 10 years before it could, but I’m still saying that now. That achievement feels like it’s a bit elusive at the moment.”

ADDING VALUE

Voice technologies may still have shortcomings, but someone who is convinced they have a big future is Rishi Kudale, spokesperson for Bengaluru-based Indian start-up **Reverie Technologies**, which has

created the Gopal voice assistant. In a country of 1.3 billion people, their product is aimed at accommodating those Indians who speak one of the local languages rather than English.

He says: “There’s no doubt in my mind that voice technology has a lot of potential. In an HR context, it can help ease the load on HR resources by powering automated channels like helplines that can receive and answer queries. In addition, voice-based systems are a great platform for truly anonymous feedback collection, with the technology being able to record voice, transcribe it to text and store it securely.”

Andrew Spence, HR Transformation Director for **Glass Bead Consulting**, also believes it can help HR professionals: “I agree that, in theory, using this kind of automation could get rid of some administration work and add some value to HR’s efforts by pushing more resources into people performance.” But he adds: “My experience is that HR needs new people to help achieve that, such as data scientists, technologists, behavioural scientists – and they are beginning to enter HR.”

One voice technology experiment that intrigues him is at Boston-based **Humanize**, where employees wear ID badges around their necks that record location, voice intonation during conversation and who they’re speaking to, but not the content of their conversation. “The idea is that the data collected can be used to understand how people use office space and how teams are integrating after things like company mergers. Pattern-recognising AI can then work out the best layouts for office space.

“It’s controversial, but it does rely on employees opting in – and while the technology certainly analyses speech, they are anonymised. It just produces results on a team level; for example, team A had better social interaction in the canteen when they sat at bigger tables.”

Whatever the possible applications for voice technology as an aid to HR functions, Spence shares the view of many when he concludes: “The best way to ensure that the technology is going to work is that both an organisation and its employees share the benefits.” ■

1. <https://searchengineland.com/google-reveals-20-percent-queries-voice-queries-249917>

2. <https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2018/smart-speaking-my-language-despite-their-vast-capabilities-smart-speakers-all-about-the-music.html>

3. <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2018-08-30-gartner-2018-hype-cycle-for-the-digital-workplace-classifies-seven-technologies-to-reach-mainstream-adoption-within-the-next-two-to-five-years>

BUILDING A DIGITALLY INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

MICHAEL AFFRONTI, SVP, PRODUCT AND DESIGN AT ENTERPRISE COMMUNICATIONS AND COLLABORATION PLATFORM FUZE, EXPLAINS WHY COMPANIES MUST FACILITATE DIGITAL INCLUSIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE



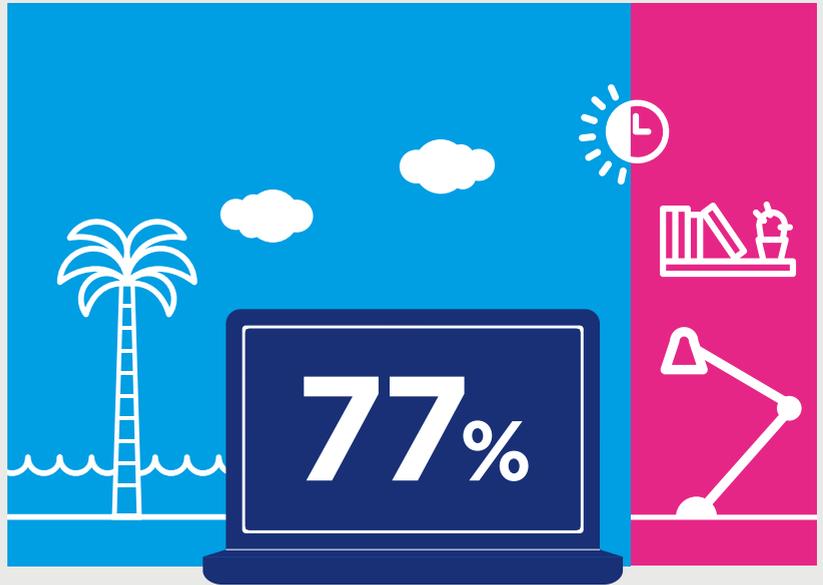
Michael Affronti
SVP, Product and Design, Fuze

DIGITAL INCLUSIVITY means providing employees with the technology they require to do their jobs effectively. While some require specialised tools, others require simpler approaches – yet they still need to be able to share information with each other.

Traditionally, new communications tools have been built for information workers only. People outside of that space, and particularly frontline workers, were often given standard tools, no tools at all, or very specialised tools that only worked for very specific tasks. When they wanted to share results with the rest of the organisation, the ability to communicate across different channels was often left out.

Now, it's incredibly important for organisations to consider a digital inclusivity strategy that allows all workers to use, and benefit from, the best tools for them while being able to share things with their colleagues.

In the recent **Fuze** report, *Workforce Futures*, we explored some of the challenges that organisations are finding themselves facing by not including employees in their digital strategies. Here are some of our key findings, and some tips for organisations looking to improve digital inclusivity.



1. 77% OF WORKERS WANT TO INCORPORATE WORK OUTSIDE OF THE OFFICE INTO THEIR JOB

Most people want a high degree of flexibility and I think what has changed is that, in the past, that was a privilege that was earned. That's a very rigid way to think about flexibility. Because many workforces are spread across the globe, you have to think about flexibility differently. Employees want to be able to work when it is most effective for them.

Leadership teams and managers should be challenged to make sure they effectively offer that flexibility. This means

setting clear expectations for your people to meet without feeling they have to physically report in.

One of the things we do at Fuze is that we don't just talk the talk to our customers about this, we actually live these values and experiment with our own internal culture. For example, we have a 'work from anywhere' policy that's written into our HR guidelines, and in certain countries, including the US, we have an unlimited vacation policy.

“IT’S INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER A STRATEGY THAT ALLOWS ALL WORKERS TO BENEFIT FROM THE BEST TOOLS”

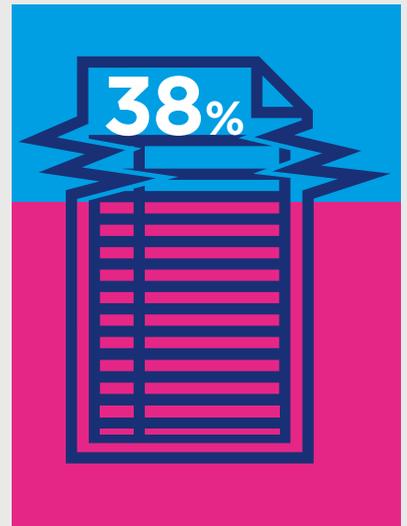
2. 38% OF EMPLOYEES SAY THEY ARE PROVIDED WITH TECHNOLOGY THAT DOESN'T OPERATE CORRECTLY OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

The days of just deploying software and expecting employees to use it and be happy with it are gone. One of the things we do as part of our sales process is to help our clients interview different departments to find out what tools they're using and the gaps they have in communication itself.

It's vital for employers to remember that app stores for mobile devices represent the single biggest threat to any technology they want to try to deploy for their employees. The access people have to convenient and fit-for-purpose software in their personal life means they expect the same quality in programs they use at work.

You need to find out what they are using and what works best for them. Data collection is key. Don't underestimate the value of getting a few key employees from a couple of departments and sitting together for an hour to find out what is working well and what isn't.

Use those conversations to come up with a strategy. This may include technology changes, or it may include cultural changes. Either way, encourage staff to be a part of the solution, as opposed to dictating to them. At Fuze, we find out who the 'super users' of software are in each of our departments and ensure that they're involved in the decision-making processes around new technology.



3. 52% OF WORKERS AGED UNDER 35 ARE SCEPTICAL ABOUT AI IN THE WORKPLACE, WHILE JUST 36% OF OVER-55s ARE

Leadership teams need to have a perspective today on how they think automation is going to impact their workforce. They need an automation strategy, but not necessarily an AI strategy, as most businesses are pretty far away from understanding the implications of an actual artificial intelligence platform. But, as explored in Issue 16 of the *Hays Journal*, they should have a basic understanding of how automation from available machine learning platforms might affect their organisation.

At Fuze, we're starting to use machine learning, which I think of as a stepping stone to real AI. To keep our internal user base on board with this process, we've explained the stepping stones we're taking to first experiment with machine learning and how we could potentially move to AI-based solutions.

We're trying to demystify it. Organisations that don't do that run the risk that people will feel like these things that could impact them are getting decided and they're not going to know about it until it's too late.

This combination of digital inclusivity and AI is really powerful because it allows for the repetitive work to fall away over time. Over the next few years, the thing I'm most excited about is how efficient information workers can be in the organisations they work for.

This creates space for them to be more creative and to be more productive at a different level. ■

All statistics from Fuze's *Workforce Futures* report. You can download the report here: www.fuze.com/workforce-futures



BUILDING THE FUTURE

HEIDI B CAPOZZI, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES AT THE BOEING COMPANY, EXPLAINS HOW A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE AND A COMMITTED DIVERSITY STRATEGY ARE STEERING THE ORGANISATION INTO THE FUTURE

WHILE THERE ARE PLENTY OF GOOD REASONS to join an industry-leading company, ultimately it was the culture that attracted Heidi B Capozzi to her current role as Senior Vice President of Human Resources at **The Boeing Company**.

“Our people have such an intense passion and commitment for the mission of this company, and the work that we do,” she says of the organisation’s 150,000-plus employees. “I am privileged to work alongside some of the best talent in the world, and I’m proud of the way we harness that talent by working collaboratively as one team.”

She says this collaborative culture stems from the knowledge all employees have of the company’s history. From helping to send astronauts to the Moon to revolutionising commercial air travel multiple times, Boeing has been at the forefront of the aerospace industry for over a century. However, Capozzi says it is the collective understanding of where the company is going that cements the pride employees have in their work.

“You can look through the past 100 years of aerospace and recognise the incredible influence that Boeing has had in the world,” she explains. “Then you think about our mission going forward, which is to connect, protect, explore and inspire the world through aerospace innovation. There aren’t many companies that can claim to do that.”

LIFTING PEOPLE

Boeing has a lofty history and a purposeful path ahead, and one of the keys to its long-term growth is its workforce. But, like many companies that require a large number of STEM specialists, building a diverse workforce can be difficult. Capozzi says that to tackle this, Boeing leaders are taking a hands-on approach. ▶



CV

HEIDI B CAPOZZI'S CAREER

- Senior Vice President, Human Resources, The Boeing Company, 2016-present
- Vice President, Leadership, Talent Management and Organization Effectiveness, The Boeing Company, 2013-2016
- Director, Human Resources, Airplane Programs division, Boeing Commercial Airplanes, 2011-2013
- Director, Human Resources, Surveillance and Engagement division, Boeing Military Aircraft, 2009-2011
- Vice President, Human Resources, Internal Services and Quality, Insitu, 2005-2009
- Principal, Human Resources, Northrop Grumman Corp/TRW Inc, 1998-2005



- ▶ “Diversity and inclusion are enduring values that we hold as a company. Our senior leadership team meets regularly to guide our diversity and inclusion strategy and assess progress.

“As part of our strategy to develop and attract STEM specialists, Boeing has established strong links with schools and universities to introduce students from all backgrounds to STEM and the company, in the hope of securing future talent for the business and the wider industry.

“There are plenty of things we can do to improve diversity at Boeing,” she continues, “and we can boost our efforts by partnering with organisations like the **US National Science Foundation** to drive interest in STEM fields and expand the talent pool.”

The company is also taking steps to retain diverse talent. The company offers a range of benefits - some of them unique - that Capozzi believes will further improve representation in its workforce.

“We have an industry-leading tuition assistance programme that provides up to US\$25,000 a year for employees to pursue degrees beyond what they have today,” she says. “We also offer mentoring programmes, reverse mentoring programmes, on-the-job training, rotational assignments and a variety of other opportunities to help employees continue to learn and grow within our organisation.

“We work to provide benefits, leave policies, training and development practices that support a diverse workforce. At the start of this year, for example, we rolled out 12 weeks of paid parental leave as part of our evolving total rewards strategy.”

CLEAR PATH

With this much effort going into building a diverse workforce, it's perhaps no surprise that Boeing is also heavily invested in retaining and developing future leaders. One of the core behaviours the company encourages is empowering colleagues.

“We rolled out a new Boeing Behaviours framework, which is all about creating the culture we need to accelerate performance, and one of the behaviours is: Invest in our team and empower each other.”

Having spent her entire career in HR, Capozzi has extremely broad knowledge of best practice in the role. However, this is an area she is particularly close to. Prior to taking on her current role, she led Boeing's Leadership Centre, a programme that the company believes will help it continue to flourish far into the future.

“The Boeing Leadership Centre is a space for leaders from across our enterprise, as well as some of our suppliers and customers, to come together and focus on leadership development. We serve all levels of leadership in that regard,” she explains.

“The centre is part of our strategy to ensure that we are growing and building a pipeline of future leaders for the company.”

And it's not just leaders that benefit from training and investment. In June 2018, Capozzi announced the company would be spending US\$100 million on workforce development. In looking for ideas about how this money could be used, the organisation asked employees to make suggestions. To some organisations, even a few hundred ideas might be a good response: Boeing received over 40,000 suggestions from its employees.

But why were its people so responsive? “It's something people care about: their own development and improving their ability to contribute to the company,” says Capozzi. “Our employees want to be involved in shaping their environment and their futures.

“Most importantly, they believed that we would listen to what they told us they wanted, which was modern, accessible learning, opportunities to upskill in technical areas or in areas that are disrupted by technology, and more support for first-line leaders.”

Capozzi says that this confidence from the company's employees is justified. It has already

begun rolling out some of the ideas, such as the Boeing Digital Campus, a collection of online education resources hosted by **Degreeed.com**. The site provides resources and certification classes for employees who wish to learn new skills relevant to their work. Capozzi says the uptake has been incredible: “More than 30,000 employees are registered and actively learning in this new forum.”

FIRST CLASS

Capozzi is also a great believer in the importance of organisations giving back to those outside of their business – something Boeing takes very seriously. She says that a focus on corporate social responsibility, while certainly beneficial to worthy causes outside of the organisation, also pays dividends in terms of employee engagement.

“Social responsibility is the right thing to do, but it’s also very good for our business,” she explains. “It’s very important to the talent pipeline that we seek to attract and retain people who believe in giving back and investing in our collective future.”

“PEOPLE CARE ABOUT THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVING THEIR ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMPANY”

The organisation focuses on three areas to engage with the communities it operates in. The first is ‘Our future’, under which Boeing’s partnerships with educational institutes fall. This outreach in particular aims to grow diverse STEM talent pools for the future.

“The second area, ‘Our heroes’, is our commitment to veterans and their families,” Capozzi continues. “We support them through their transition from military service into the civilian workforce.”



A BOEING 767-200 LANDING AT THE ITAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN OSAKA, JAPAN



- ▶ “And the third area, ‘Our home’, is about supporting the communities where we live and work.”

She says the company understands how important charitable giving is to its employees, and looks for ways to help them do more.

“For example, we just had the opportunity, on the back of company savings from US tax reform, to enhance the work that we’re doing in community engagement by increasing the employer match that we provide to participants in our Employees Community Fund, an employee-owned and -operated community fund contributing to thousands of non-profit organisations.”

ON THE HORIZON

While employee development and engagement is hugely important for the company, Boeing has also needed to be constantly conscious of staying ahead in a fast-developing industry.

“Innovation has been the life-blood of this company for more than 100 years now,” says Capozzi. “Right now, we’re creating commercial aeroplanes like the 777X that have folding wing tips. We’re developing rockets to take us into deep space, and we’re working on new technology to accelerate underwater exploration.

“We know the opportunity for future innovation is greater than ever – that’s why we invest several billion dollars in research and development annually.”

Boeing also sets clear goals to guide it in the immediate future. “We’ve defined our goals for 2025, and in that timeframe we want to be not just the best aerospace company in the world, but a global industrial champion,” she says.

But with such diverse talent needs across the business, how do Capozzi and her team set a central strategy that works across the many sectors Boeing operates in?

“As an HR team, we asked ourselves, ‘Are we equipped today to fuel a global industrial champion?’ Our answer was, ‘Not as well equipped as we should be,’ and so we launched a pretty significant transformation for our function focusing on our business model, simplifying our HR processes and implementing new HR technologies.”

She says that by changing how the HR team works at Boeing, they have already made significant steps forward in building a recruitment strategy that works across the organisation.

“We have really strong collaboration between the businesses and the support functions, and our HR team understands the skills we’re going to need to serve the business in the future.

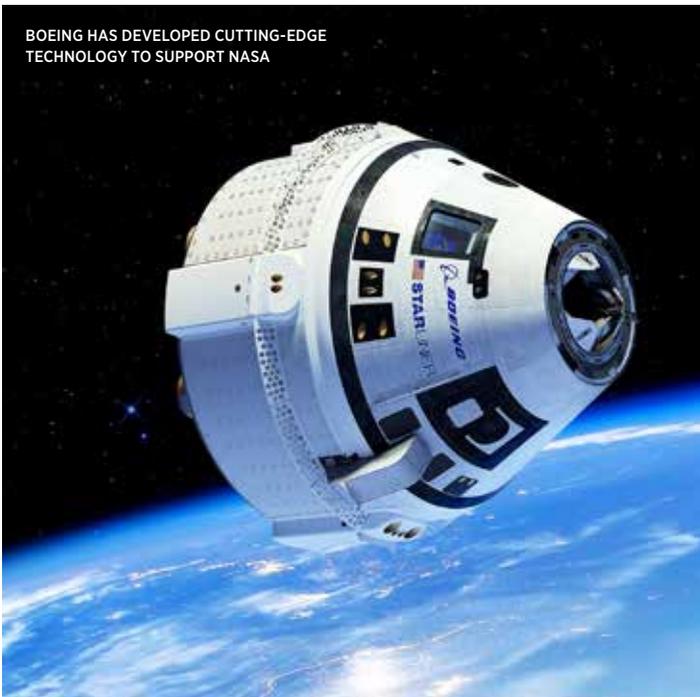
“We’re making sure our talent acquisition and HR capabilities can be effectively deployed across the enterprise to add value.”

While Capozzi has a clear passion for where the Boeing team is heading together, she also recognises the need to set personal goals. With this in mind, what does she hope to achieve during her time in this role?

“It’s important for all of us to think about how we can make things better than we found them,” she concludes. “One of my goals is to build on the work of my predecessors in terms of creating a world-class HR function.” ■

“THE OPPORTUNITY FOR FUTURE INNOVATION IS GREATER THAN EVER”

BOEING HAS DEVELOPED CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT NASA





HEIDI B CAPOZZI AT A GLANCE...

WHO IS YOUR HERO? My parents. They modelled a very strong work ethic, but as much as they invested in their professions, they invested back in our family and made family a priority.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BEST MOMENT OF YOUR CAREER TO DATE? Taking the job that I have today. I was incredibly honoured and appropriately overwhelmed, but most importantly, I was really excited. The change that we can make and the impact that we can have on the future is significant.

OUTSIDE OF WORK, WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST PASSION? I am a committed traveller. It started at the age of 14, spending a summer in Germany without my family and with some family friends. Today, when I go out on business trips, I make sure I've got the opportunity to take in some of the sights and the culture. I also love spending time with my daughters.

WHAT'S THE BEST ADVICE YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED? Prepare for the job you want, but focus on the job you have.



AGE OF CHANGE

Japan, the US, the UK, Switzerland and many more countries are facing the daunting prospect of ageing workforces. This can put pressure on governments to balance the healthcare and social benefits they offer with their populations' needs – but what does it mean for businesses?

The first *U.S. Longer Working Careers Survey Report* by **Willis Towers Watson** uncovers the struggle employers are facing as they try to support ageing workforces.



Failure to prepare

83% of employers report a significant number of employees at or approaching traditional retirement age (65)



54% believe that the loss of talent due to retiring workers will be more significant than labour risks over the next five years

81% think it is an important business issue for the organisation to manage the timing of employee retirements



1/4 of organisations effectively manage the pace and timing of employee retirements

Financial strain

36% have modified working conditions to conform to the preferences of older employees, and this is expected to increase to 43 per cent by 2020

A widening gap

48% worry about the loss of organisation-specific knowledge



83%

ranked transfer of knowledge within the organisation as the top concern



Half expect difficulty finding workers with similar skills and knowledge over the next five years

3/4

view older employees as crucial to their success

Operational barriers

3/5 pointed to concerns over workforce productivity

33% cited roadblocks in promoting younger employees



37% worry that workers who stay in the job past normal retirement age will block promotions for younger employees

1/5 reported keeping older workers on the payroll



41% are concerned they will increase wage and salary costs

49% of employers allow their retired employees, who are collecting benefits, to work as consultants or contingent workers. This may increase by 10 per cent by 2020. A similar percentage of organisations hire experienced retired employees in their industry on a consulting or contingent basis

INFLUENCING DIRECTION

WHILE MOST BUSINESSES AGREE THAT STAFF CAN BE THE STRONGEST BRAND AMBASSADORS, USING THEM AS SUCH CAN BE A CHALLENGE. SOME ORGANISATIONS ARE NOW APPOINTING 'INTERNAL INFLUENCERS' TO ENGAGE WITH STAFF, PROMOTE NEW WAYS OF WORKING AND HELP TO ATTRACT NEW TALENT

TODAY, MANY PEOPLE associate the word 'influencer' with social media – people with hundreds of thousands of followers who can make or break a brand just by posting one photo. Increasingly, however, organisations are realising that they can harness the influence of their own employees.

Given that traditional marketing can be perceived as 'being sold to', a message coming from a happy, engaged employee can seem more authentic. In fact, non-branded messages are shared 24 times more frequently than those shared by official company channels, according to communications company **MSL Group**. One of the areas where harnessing the power of internal influencers can be most powerful when facing external audiences is recruitment. "It's a missed trick if companies don't realise that their most powerful branding tool is their employees," says Craig Hunter, Sourcing Director for EMEA at **American Express**.

Jo Crellin, from PR and social media company **spottedog communications**, runs employee social

media channels for clients including **Mitchells & Butlers**, one of the UK's biggest pub chains. She uses a 'cascade plan' that she shares with the company's recruitment team so there is a schedule for what employees share across their personal and professional networks (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter). "This means the story is drip-fed over a sustained time period without any clashes," she explains. Enlisting the social media power of employees has led to increased awareness of vacancies at the company and a growth in applications.

According to workforce communications company **SocialChorus**, employees have on average 10 times more social connections than a brand does. They're often prolific social sharers; PR company **Weber Shandwick** estimates that 98 per cent of employees use at least one social networking site, and 50 per cent of those people post about where they work. By encouraging them to share positive stories about your brand, these influencers can amplify your investment in employer branding and recruitment advertising.

Claudia Varela Herrera, a marketing and diversity expert based in Colombia, has seen this manifest itself in a number of ways. She says: "Small companies, often with millennials as CEOs, like to show employees as influencers with different profiles that match perfectly with the company. Another trend is to position the company's values using leading women as role models. In that way, they enhance their leader's personal brand while taking advantage of their image endorsement and boost to their reputation."

While your internal influencers showcase the positive employee experiences, businesses can also recruit employees to become impactful brand ambassadors; the key difference is that the latter's message is much more externally focused and customer-facing. Good brand ambassadors can be a source of honest reviews of your products – buyers trust reviews from family and friends over 'traditional' advertising because they feel they are more authentic.



US department store **Macy's**, for example, recently launched an initiative called Macy's Style Crew with 20 employee ambassadors who would post pictures of themselves on social media wearing the store's merchandise. This has grown to more than 400 employees actively sharing their photos across channels such as Snapchat and Instagram. The workers have built up a loyal following and Macy's has reduced the amount it spends on external marketing.

READY TO ENGAGE

Influencers can be strong advocates for an organisation internally too. They can fire up engagement among teams and help to push through change where employees may fear it.

The University of Glasgow in Scotland has recently embarked on a transformation programme aimed at helping the institution respond to the uncertain future that higher education in the UK is entering. This includes redesigning how the university offers assessment and feedback, and updating support services that enable academics to undertake teaching and research. As part of the 'World-Changing Glasgow Transformation Programme', it appointed Chris Green as its first Chief Transformation Officer in April 2018.

He is in the process of building a network of staff and students who he hopes will embed this change. "We're building a network of people who will challenge the status quo and who are curious about how people and institutions do things," he explains. Everyone from the staff and student body is encouraged to join so that there is a range of different people and experiences.

The network is currently comprised of around 140 people, but the intention is to grow this to 300 or 400. "There are 8,500 employees at Glasgow and we can't talk to all of them. We need our community to design, embed and deliver the change as well as let us know if we're doing anything wrong," Green adds. The network leaders send out a monthly bulletin containing an overview of change projects and there

are regular face-to-face engagement sessions on particular initiatives, as well as how to manage projects and deal with change. In order to build influencers' networking skills, the university set up randomised coffee meets with others in the change network so they could share insights.

DIRECT INFLUENCE

One of the characteristics of Glasgow's change programme is that the vision comes from the very top of the organisation, but the influence spreads from the bottom up. Vicky Williams, People Director, HR and Development at the UK's **LTA, Tennis For Britain**, talks about internal influence as a process of "osmosis". When she joined the organisation in 2013, she drove the development of a set of four values (and associated behaviours) expected of the organisation's employees and the 25,000-plus volunteers who are involved in grassroots tennis around the country.

Because employees and volunteers had a role in coming up with the values and in driving internal change, they have been easier to embed into the culture. "If values are initiated by a set of consultants, they're not truly owned by the people. It can be top-down led, but it needs to be initiated from the bottom up," she says. "We try to catch people doing good things." One of the simple ways the organisation does this is by sharing recognition postcards with employees who have done something that embodies the LTA's values. Their colleagues see these behaviours in action and the influence spreads. Since the values were launched, both volunteer and employee satisfaction (as measured in employee engagement surveys) has increased, says Williams.

To identify internal influencers, it pays to look beyond the senior leadership team, argues Jenny Perkins from leadership consultancy **Cirrus**, who has worked with clients such as **Tesco Bank** and **Marks & Spencer** on building engagement.

"It's crucial for senior leaders to be role models for



INTERNAL INFLUENCERS CAN ACT AS AN AUTHENTIC VOICE FOR ORGANISATIONS

▶ your brand values, but organisations should also identify and encourage others to become brand ambassadors,” she says.

“When I’m working with a client on an engagement programme, we always work together to create a network of influencers – if you communicate your goals effectively and invite people to get involved, it’s likely that you won’t be short of volunteers. And don’t overlook those who may be sceptical of what you’re trying to achieve, she adds. “People who may be cynical and disengaged to begin with and who subsequently become enthusiasts also make wonderful ambassadors – they are particularly good at engaging other cynics.”

AUTHENTICITY MATTERS

Crucially, organisations must give influencers the freedom to speak freely with colleagues, as the more authentic they are, the more likely others are to trust their opinion. Perkins says: “Ensure that your influencers understand your business goals, but don’t expect them to communicate using ‘corporate-speak’. If they can engage people using methods that are close to their own hearts, they are more likely to enthuse and spread excitement.”

This can take on an unexpected form – at one company Perkins worked with, influencers from different parts of the organisation who had never met before formed a choir through their own initiative. “The choir initiated a ‘disruption’ activity by singing about a key message outside the canteen,” she says. “They also performed for the board and became widely respected across the organisation.”

A good network of internal influencers can also help to spread the brand message outside of the business. This can be as simple as leaving reviews on careers site **Glassdoor** or sharing new roles across their personal social networks.

Simone Weber-Korol, Head of Global Human Resources at chemical company **BASF**, says: “Employees are our strongest brand ambassadors, and from a recruiting perspective they are also our strongest and most influencing ‘channel’. Their talent recommendations mostly fit best, not only from a technical and educational perspective, but also culturally.”

Carl Hoffmann, CEO of **Talentry** (a software platform for employee referrals), agrees and notes that organisations can leverage this, even without formal programmes, by identifying which employees tend to be vocal about the company or have referred someone to the company. “Those contacts are most likely happy employees who act as brand ambassadors in their time at work, but also in private, when meeting people or on social media,” he says.

And if there are concerns that one group of influential individuals will simply attract the attention of similar people, ensure that your network of influencers is itself made up of people with different roles and interests, advises Susy Roberts, executive coach and founder at **Hunter Roberts**. “A diverse group of influencers will target an equally diverse group. The content they share can demonstrate which values are lived in their company,” she says.

“Satisfied employees lead to a healthy corporate culture and vice versa,” adds Hoffmann. “Ultimately, this equilibrium is what wins awards and good reviews on platforms like Glassdoor. Such awards will be communicated by your employees who act as influencers. And that will attract new talent.” Whether the goal is to promote your employer brand, boost engagement or embed a major change, a team of champions could be the best tool at your disposal. ■

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

IDENTIFY YOUR INTERNAL INFLUENCERS:

Either use a call-out for volunteers or identify which employees are most active on social media. Ensure they understand the company mission and values, but allow them to voice this in an authentic way.

BUILD A PLAN FOR OUTREACH:

What messages do you want to send out and when? Having a plan for employees’ social sharing will help ensure messages don’t overlap, while still allowing them some freedom over what they contain.

MEASURE THE IMPACT OF INTERNAL INFLUENCE:

Identify whether increased engagement with your influencers has led to growth in sales or a rise in employee engagement. Tools such as LinkedIn’s Social Selling Index can help.



BACK IN PLAY

FOR A WIDE VARIETY OF REASONS, WORKERS ARE INCREASINGLY TAKING TIME OUT FROM THEIR CAREER. 'RETURNSHIP' PROGRAMMES CAN HELP ORGANISATIONS EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY BRING THEM BACK. BUT WHAT DO YOU NEED TO CONSIDER BEFORE PUTTING SUCH PROGRAMMES IN PLACE?

THERE'S NO LET-UP in the war for talent and skills. Availability of key skills, in particular, is a matter that continues to disturb CEOs' sleep. And then there's renewed anxiety around economic growth, not to mention the pressure to build diverse workforces that can outpace the competition.

This is forcing employers to eye up parts of the labour market that may be being squandered – a pool of candidates already trained, qualified, and highly experienced. Who are they? Workers who have stepped out of their careers for all manner of reasons, including taking a sabbatical, taking time out to care for a loved one, raising a family or because they have had to deal with long-term sickness.

Hence the surge in 'returnship' programmes, a relatively new tool in the hiring strategies of organisations, aimed at encouraging those on a career break to dip their toes into the world of work again. They are growing in popularity because they benefit both the 'returnee' keen to restart their career in a

supported and phased way, and the organisation, which can tap into much-needed new talent without having to train up a new person from scratch.

There are now more than 90 returnship schemes globally, with activity based mainly in the US, UK and India, according to **iRelaunch**, a US-based consultancy for employers and returners. Examples of large firms adopting this approach include **PayPal, Willmott Dixon, Target, Microsoft, Unilever, IBM, Vodafone** and **Dell**.

And it's likely that they will continue to mushroom, particularly as life expectancy increases. The concept of the 100-year life, which we explored in the last issue of the *Hays Journal*, will see many people dip in and out of employment for a wide range of reasons, requiring employers to be flexible enough to support them.

As they currently stand, returnships are mainly aimed at professionals who have been out of the labour market for, typically, upwards of two years. Although each is run slightly differently, they usually



- ▶ comprise formal paid placements that may or may not (there's no guarantee) lead to a permanent offer being made to the individual. A key characteristic differentiating them from other kinds of placement is the amount of support provided to ease the transition back into work. This can include buddying schemes, training, coaching or mentorships.

And while most returnships are usually open to both men and women, undoubtedly it's mainly women being hired to the programmes – hardly surprising given that it's women who are most likely to take a career break to have children or be a carer. For example, figures from the UK's **Office for National Statistics** published in February 2018 showed that 1.9 million UK women and 240,000 men were not in paid employment because they were looking after family and home.

ADDRESSING DIVERSITY

Dr Jo Ingold, Associate Professor of Human Resource Management and Public Policy at **Leeds University Business School**, says that more and more employers are investing in returnships, driven by the need to attract and retain talent and address skills shortages, as well as to further the diversity agenda.

“Businesses have found value in building a more diverse workforce because they want to reflect their customer base or because it has a positive impact on the bottom line,” she says. “Returnship programmes can be one way of creating opportunities to be more diverse; for example, by getting more women into senior roles.”

There are myriad benefits for both the employer and individual from such schemes, she explains. “Returners often feel valued as a result of the investment that has

WHAT TO DO WHEN INTRODUCING RETURNSHIP PROGRAMMES

- Use quality data or evidence for building the business case for a returnship programme. For example, assess where potential skills gaps are and where returners would fit into the business model to plug these
- State your aims and objectives from the outset
- It's better to start small and then expand the programme gradually rather than being too ambitious from day one. It also means you can remain flexible and more bespoke
- Keep connected with the group to ensure they have all the support they need. Providing returnees with a point of contact who they can turn to for any issues can work well. Evaluate the programme through feedback to explore best practice
- Garner senior-level sponsorship and buy-in from the wider business. For example, ensure that managers running projects and hiring managers are trained and fully briefed
- If placements are run in different regions, ensure that knowledge and best practice are shared so that there is consistency of experience for returners

been put into their career. Evidence shows that this, in turn, makes them more productive and engaged. It can also mean that they speak highly of their organisation, which reinforces a positive business culture and reflects well on the employer.”

REACHING POTENTIAL

The prime advantage for the returner is, of course, the chance to relaunch their career and work in a job that properly utilises their skills and experience – something that remains unattainable for the majority of those coming back after a career break. These programmes often allow them to return in a supported part-time or flexible role before taking on a full-time position later.

Research published by **PwC** in 2016 highlighted that two thirds of returning professional women actually work beneath their potential. This is down to a combination of factors, says the study *Women returners, the £1 billion career break penalty for professional women*. These include a lack of flexible

“**RETURNERS OFTEN FEEL VALUED AS A RESULT OF THE INVESTMENT THAT HAS BEEN PUT INTO THEIR CAREER**”

— DR JO INGOLD, LEEDS UNIVERSITY

and part-time roles in higher-skilled jobs, but also biases in the recruitment process; managers can be instantly put off by CV gaps, assuming that a candidate no longer has the relevant skills.

A programme called Career by Choice (CBC) run by **Hindustan Unilever Limited** (HUL) in India has recruited more than 80 returners since it began in 2011, across roles or projects in marketing, HR, finance, IT and more. It is seen as a valuable opportunity to access an untapped source of talent – qualified and ambitious women currently on a career break (although it is now open to both men and women) – and is helping to build a potential talent pipeline for full-time managerial roles in the company, says a spokesperson, who adds that the programme has proved rewarding: “It has become the go-to programme for business leaders seeking out highly capable and flexible talent in their teams. CBC consultants are highly sought after for part-time or full-time roles in the company at the end of their projects.”

BALANCING INVESTMENT WITH BUY-IN

Given the effort, time and resources being ploughed into returnship programmes, realistically their cost is

A CANDIDATE'S PERSPECTIVE

Marie Truelove, a senior credit analyst, is now looking for a new role after she left the corporate world in 2008 to set up her own business and be more available for her family. She recently applied to **Santander's** returnship programme, which she described as a standout experience. But what made it so memorable?

First of all, Truelove says, the programme offers permanent employment from day one, so there's no uncertainty while undergoing the 20-week returnship programme.

She also describes how Santander held a 'recruitment readiness' day for potential recruits which was both practical and inspiring. “It included workshops on topics such as preparing your CV, and a guest speaker talking about mindset. Several of its business leaders also attended and were passionate about what they believed we could do for the organisation. It showed they weren't just paying lip service to this, but were really committed to it. It was very impressive.”

Truelove believes that programmes like these are invaluable for employers that are serious about recruiting talent or addressing skills shortages.

“There is so much talent going to waste. Employers need to be more creative and be able to see beyond CV gaps to what a person can really offer. I ran a small business while away from the corporate world and that's taught me such a huge range of new skills.”

going to be high. So there is a real risk for organisations that are considering going down this path that the outlay could be substantial, but that retention rates will fail to meet expectations.

“It's problematic if companies think they can pin all their hopes on a scheme such as this,” says Ingold. “There has to be a lot of effort put into making a scheme work.”

First and foremost, she advises that returnship programmes shouldn't be treated as a 'bolt-on' initiative, but should be part of a consistent and embedded approach to promoting diversity and inclusion.

“A returnship programme won't work if a business's wider policies around recruitment and selection or job design, for example, aren't geared towards diversity,” ▶



CASE STUDY: OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Helena Fernandes, Director of HR and Head of EMEA Campus and Internal Mobility/Diversity Recruitment at **Credit Suisse**, enthuses about the success of its returnship programme. Real Returns was initially launched in 2014 in the US and the UK only; the innovative scheme was one of the first of its kind in the US and a pioneer in the UK. Now it has expanded, offering placements to candidates in Switzerland and India too.

“When we started the programme in the UK, we were experiencing problems retaining female talent, particularly at VP level and beyond,” Fernandes explains. “We thought that reaching out to a highly experienced pool of candidates – whether alumni or external individuals – and then bringing them back into the workplace through a targeted programme could be an innovative way to address that. It fitted in well with the organisation’s priority of building a more diverse workforce.”

While the programme is open to both men and women, Fernandes says the vast majority of participants are women. She explains that it is unique in that it focuses on transferable skills, thus helping to overcome a common barrier faced by returners who are keen to resume their career but who would prefer to explore new directions.

“We don’t assume that a returner from, say, M&A banking will only want to go back into roles in that area. We look for other opportunities where they can use transferable skills. One of our returners was a repo trader and is now

in public policy, for example. Another was in capital markets and moved to risk.”

Numbers on each programme vary, with just over 50 per cent of returners globally being retained as a permanent employee, says Fernandes.

Yet the success of the programme is not just pinned to those numbers. “That figure underrepresents its impact,” she adds. “Our returners are very high calibre and recognised for their work and contribution – they have made such a big impression. They also give so much back to the Credit Suisse community, acting as mentors and being ambassadors for the programme and the firm.”

Furthermore, the returners are helping to bring about a profound shift in attitudes and mindsets about skills – more precisely, the value of transferable skills.

“Anecdotally, I think the returnship programme has started to change the view of managers, who now see that gaps in CVs are not such a big deal and are willing to consider their experience more broadly,” says Fernandes.

Credit Suisse returners are supported by soft skills and technical training, speaker events involving senior leaders, mentoring, and a buddy scheme pairing up former returners with new ones. The company also ensures that returners are plugged into networking opportunities and that the business at large is a partner to the programme, with senior management sponsoring the scheme and giving it visibility.



▶ she says. “It’s about having the right mindset and it has to be supported with the right organisational infrastructure and policies.

“We know that managers can be reluctant to hire people who have taken career breaks. The assumption can be that they are no longer work-ready, while previous experience is ignored or questions aren’t asked about the skills they may have acquired while not in paid work.

“So managers need to be properly trained and empowered to root out bias, as well as being fully on board with a scheme such as this, to prevent it stalling.”

A REWARDING CHALLENGE

Sarah Churchman is UK Head of Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing at PwC, which introduced its Back to Business returnship programme around three years ago. She agrees that employers shouldn’t go down this route thinking it’s an easy option.

“People returning to the world of work are very diverse,” she says. “They have all got different career histories – some of them have been away from work for two years, others for up to 10 years – and personal lives. It’s difficult to develop a one-size-fits-all programme. We learned early on that it’s important for the scheme to be flexible, so you can really meet the needs of the individual who joins you.”

PwC found that it had to adjust the length of its placements, for example, quickly discovering that it had made them too short.

“Originally we set it as eight to 12 weeks, but it’s now 16 weeks, as there was too much to fit in,” Churchman says. She also notes that PwC has had to be responsive to returners’ needs around working patterns or hours. “We realised that returners don’t necessarily want to return to work full-time or on a permanent basis, which had been our original intention. Now we plan to bring them back into the

business and upskill and deploy them when they want to work and when we need them. It’s like a corporate version of the gig economy and it keeps us relevant and attractive to talent professionals.”

The support offered during the placement is also critical to help reintegrate returners back into the workplace. In this respect, Helena Fernandes of Credit Suisse (see panel, opposite) advises not to overlook the power of the group itself. “The level of support a cohort will provide for each other is immense. That’s invaluable when they are facing challenges or a dip in their enthusiasm. Organisations should help to encourage that bond.”

HUL also advises that, while a returnship programme should be properly structured throughout – from identifying projects to recruitment, compensation and development of the cohort – actively engaging the group is essential: “Ensuring their inclusion in important events, training and celebrations is important for them to get a sense of belonging.”

Churchman admits the numbers being recruited to the Back to Business programme (around 12 a year) remain small. “It’s something we are keen to grow,” she says. “However, it’s such a valuable channel for attracting talent. Individuals we have recruited on the back of it have really wowed us. Their experience means we are learning from them, so we benefit hugely. We would have missed out on that talent were it not for the programme.”

HUL concludes by reflecting that while its programme certainly offers something for the individuals that take part in it, it is really the company that benefits: “For returners, it offers an excellent platform to work on live projects and enhance their skills while maintaining flexibility around work,” it says. “However, the ultimate return for the organisation is the passion shown by returners who invest all their energy into opportunities they are given.” ■



WATCH THIS SPACE

CO-WORKING SPACES ARE BECOMING EVER MORE POPULAR WITH LARGE AND SMALL COMPANIES ALIKE. BUT HOW CAN ORGANISATIONS DECIDE IF THIS APPROACH IS RIGHT FOR THEM?

THERE HAS BEEN a perception that communal workspaces are just for start-ups. More recently, big business has also begun to embrace the 'co-working' revolution and to reap many benefits beyond cheap and flexible rents. However, some companies have discovered the hard way that one size does not fit all.

Co-working chains have grown rapidly and globally. **GCUC**, a co-working conference company, and **Emergent Research**, a research and consulting firm, found that there were 11,790 co-working spaces globally in 2017, with 1.74 million members. They expect membership to rise to 5.1 million by 2022. The industry's poster child is **The We Company** (formerly **WeWork**), which has more than 400,000 members at 425 locations in 100 cities across 27 countries. A third of **Fortune** 500 organisations occupy space within WeWork.

In Asia, the proportion of The We Company's space occupied by big business is even higher in some cases. In Singapore, companies with more

than 1,000 employees comprise 45 per cent of its membership, and in Greater China the figure is 38 per cent.

"We are seeing a huge shift towards a new way of working and living; people are focused on meaningful connections and being part of something greater than themselves," says Turochas Fuad, Managing Director of WeWork Southeast Asia.

BUILDING BRIDGES

One huge attraction of shared workspaces is networking. Most co-working companies want to foster a community and many use open-plan desks, as well as hosting regular social events, wellness sessions, product launches and investor meetings.

Expensify, a financial software company based in Portland, Oregon, has been a tenant at a co-working space in London for four years. Lindsey Peckham, Expensify's EMEA Marketing Manager, says the beauty of the space is that employees can easily mingle with their counterparts in like-minded businesses.

“There are events that are great networking opportunities,” she says. “It allows us to engage in the tech community – more than we probably would if we just had a small, private office.”

By working alongside start-ups, large companies such as professional services firm KPMG hope to spot emerging trends and opportunities to support them earlier in their lifecycle. Kirsty Mitchell, Director of Growth for **KPMG** in the UK, says: “By placing small KPMG teams into co-working spaces, we are part of a fast-paced ecosystem, working daily with businesses to help them as they grow, and to identify key issues and opportunities for them as they arise.”

She believes these environments could help KPMG project teams come up with new solutions to problems as well, rather than internal project rooms which, she suggests, can stifle creativity.

Robert Duggan, Managing Partner, London for the international law firm **Mourant**, says the move into a co-working space has enabled larger cultural changes across the organisation. While the firm was initially simply looking for options when its office lease came up for renewal, it took the opportunity to innovate more of its processes.

“Before this move, everybody turned up in suits,” Duggan explains. “We probably hadn’t embraced agile co-working in the way we should have done.”

“PEOPLE ARE FOCUSED ON MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS AND BEING PART OF SOMETHING GREATER THAN THEMSELVES”

— TUROCHAS FUAD, **WEWORK SOUTHEAST ASIA**



He says the starting point was changing the dress code to stipulate attire that was appropriate for the office, with access to an outfit that was suitable for meetings. However, the firm found this had little impact and people continued to wear suits.

“I didn’t want people to feel self-conscious when we moved to this more open environment. So we embraced a more formal dress-down policy and an agile working policy about three months before we moved, and I had to lead the way. It was actually really hard – I had to buy a whole new wardrobe!”

But as he and other senior leaders made these changes consciously, more junior staff were given the confidence to do the same. This, coupled with the open layout, has led to a more collaborative, personal and socially dynamic culture within the firm.

The transition hasn’t been without its challenges. “When we first came in, telephone etiquette was a disaster,” Duggan laughs. “It made for a very loud and disruptive environment, but people have tempered the volume with which they approach telephone calls.” He says this behaviour has naturally been regulated by staff. “It’s actually a lot quieter now than I thought it would be,” he says. “People take conversations into social areas and, culturally, that’s been helpful. It forces people together.”

A SPACE THAT FITS

The modern design and layouts used by many co-working companies can also be a boost for workers. Simple steps like increasing the amounts of greenery and sunlight can have a great impact on engagement. This is known as ‘biophilic design’ and a **Robertson Cooper** report found that it can increase workers’ levels of wellbeing, creativity and productivity by 15 per cent. Another study, published in the journal *Building and Environment*, found that employees in ‘green certified’ buildings scored 26.4 per cent higher on cognitive function tests (controlling for





▶ salary, job type and education) and had 30 per cent fewer sickness symptoms than those in non-certified buildings. The benefits are clear: presenteeism, or working when sick, costs US employers US\$150 billion per year in lost productivity.

There are several other benefits of co-working, especially when it comes to attracting and retaining talent in a competitive recruitment market. Co-working spaces tend to come with the perks younger employees now expect, from free coffee and beer on tap, to meditation yurts and kick-boxing classes.

But simply taking teams away from an organisation's main offices and putting them into co-working spaces to look cool, cut costs or increase capacity won't help achieve business growth, Mitchell insists.

One reason for this is that workers have different needs – it's not a one-size-fits-all market. Software engineers, for instance, cannot have glare on their screens, but some salespeople may prefer to have

more light and to be able to make noise. It's important to make sure each element of a space is designed for you. The We Company has consultations with potential tenants to learn about their needs and to create a space that suits their operations.

"Workspace is more than a lease, it's truly a dynamic environment that shapes the whole employee experience," says Fuad.

Co-working companies have to tailor their offices to fit in with the local culture, too. For instance, The We Company's Jakarta locations have prayer rooms, as the majority of the Indonesian population is Muslim. Conference rooms are also bigger in some of The We Company's Asian markets, such as Greater China, as there is more demand for them there.

HEALTHY EXPERIENCE

If companies tailor spaces correctly to employees' needs, there are other health benefits that can come from working in them. Lyndon Garrett, Assistant Professor of Management and Organizations at the **Boston College Carroll School of Management** in Massachusetts, explains: "With loneliness and social isolation pervasive, people crave social connection. Workplaces are being asked to provide community in a way that will attract workers, especially millennials who are seeking meaningful careers."

A study in *Harvard Business Review* found that working among people doing different jobs – the bread and butter of co-working – can enhance workers' identity. This is especially true for small

“THE FLEX MARKET ALLOWS ORGANISATIONS TO INSTANTLY EXPAND SPACE FOR THEIR PEOPLE AND CLIENTS”

— ANDREW O'DONNELL, JLL

business owners, who often experience stress and loneliness. Co-working is communal, which is what encouraged Jin Kwon, founder of Korean beauty company **TONIC15**, to join a shared workplace provider in London.

She says: “When times are really tough, it’s inspiring to talk to people in the community. Everyone is willing to help. They are genuinely interested in your success.” She received advice from fellow tenants on securing investment, for instance, and co-hosted a product demonstration event at her co-working space.

KEEPING IN CONTACT

Of course, the most tangible benefit for companies is that shared spaces are flexible and affordable, and they don’t have to tie themselves into long leases. Andrew O’Donnell, UK Real Estate and Workplace Director at real estate services company **JLL**, says: “The flex market allows organisations to instantly expand or contract space for their people and clients.”

Yet there are problems with shared workspaces. Some organisations use them for individual teams which can make it difficult to keep them connected to the main business. The issue can be exacerbated by a co-working company’s own culture.

O’Donnell explains. “Employees can sometimes get subsumed into the culture of the operator’s co-working space, not that of their employer.” As a result, he recommends that businesses avoid sending new hires to shared co-working workplaces, and recommends choosing spaces close to their own office.

To address this problem, some co-working operators offer tenants video conferencing software to ensure they have a connection to their broader team. Bobby Marhamat, CEO of a start-up in Los Angeles, has taken a different approach by using a private office within a co-working space that is separate from the communal areas. Many big businesses prefer this approach to shared working, particularly those that deal with sensitive information. It addresses some of the common drawbacks of co-working: overcrowding, noise, mess and lack of privacy.

“We have a company personality that we enjoy within our four walls,” Marhamat says. “But as we walk out into the common spaces and the lounge, we are surrounded by a bunch of people who share our passion for entrepreneurship.”

The We Company has other solutions to the privacy problem. “We might use privacy vinyl, or strategically position certain design elements to provide the necessary privacy,” says Sern Hong Yu, Vice President of Product Delivery for WeWork Greater China. “We also have electrostatic-controlled switch glass in special large meeting rooms to make sure our members feel comfortable

while conducting highly confidential meetings.”

Peckham advises trialling shared workplaces to find the perfect fit. “Every co-working space brings something different to the table,” she says. “Some spaces don’t come with all the bells and whistles but have a strong community [and vice versa].”

But, most importantly, companies need to have a clear business objective for using a co-working space.

“Co-working because it’s the cool new thing isn’t the right approach,” says O’Donnell. “But if it’s about increasing relevance to, and attracting, clients and talent, or being able to adjust your office portfolio faster, then you have fantastic reasons to join.” ■



THREE CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMPANIES EMBRACING CO-WORKING

CAPACITY:

Shared workspaces can become crowded, and a common complaint is that there are not enough meeting rooms or private areas in which to meet clients or have private conversations. It’s a good idea to visit a shared space and check that there is enough meeting room availability.

TENANTS:

Networking is one of the most cited benefits of co-working. Indeed, the people in a space can be just as important to your experience as the space itself. So it’s important to find out which other businesses are in the space before you sign up, and whether they align with your goals.

PRICING:

Many businesses sign up for co-working to do away with costly, inflexible leases. Shared offices can come with plenty of perks, but make sure you know what is included in your membership plan before signing on the dotted line, so that you aren’t hit with any hidden fees.

MAKING THINGS TICK

IN MANY ORGANISATIONS, MIDDLE MANAGERS WILL OFTEN FIND THE VALUE THEY BRING BEING SCRUTINISED BY BOTH SENIOR AND JUNIOR STAFF. BUT WITH THE RIGHT RESOURCES AND TRAINING, ARE THEY ACTUALLY THE BIGGEST ASSET AVAILABLE TO BUSINESSES?

FOR MANY YEARS, the roles of middle managers have come under scrutiny; whether it's for not living up to the expectations of their leaders, or for failing the team they lead by not giving clear instruction. Furthermore, middle managers themselves have reported feeling under pressure. In fact, the *UK Working Lives Report 2018* from the **CIPD** found that 30 per cent of mid-level professionals described their workloads as unmanageable and 28 per cent said their work negatively affects their mental health.

When used correctly, however, middle managers are, or should be, an essential part of how any business operates.

"Great middle managers build relationships with junior managers quickly, and they're very often the ones who embody the culture of an organisation," says Catriona Scott, Director of People, **Explore Learning**. "When you want to engage junior managers with a new initiative or change, middle managers will be your go-to group of people to make it happen."

"These are the people who are held accountable for delivering results, delighting customers, implementing changes, driving employee engagement; in fact, pretty much everything to do with safeguarding the day-to-day performance of the business," says Dr Maggi Evans, Director of **Mosaic Consulting**, and expert in leadership and talent. "These are typically not the visible heroes of the organisation; they do not carry the status of being leaders and their influence on future strategy is often limited. But without them, the organisation would quickly fail."

The undervaluing of middle management is all too common – something organisations are now starting to realise, says Dr Zara Whysall, Head of Research at talent management specialists **Kiddy & Partners**. "For years, middle managers have been overlooked

when it comes to talent management, falling into the no-man's-land between 'top talent' and 'rising stars,'" she says. This can also have a knock-on effect on wider talent management, she adds, as middle managers who are uncertain about their own career development are less likely to be able to support the progression of others.

This is compounded by a tendency to appoint the wrong people to middle management positions in the first place. "Often, middle managers are those who have achieved in a technical discipline and been promoted by way of progression," says Robert Ordever, Managing Director of workplace culture specialist **O.C. Tanner Europe**. "However, emotional intelligence is a key skill in its own right. We have to take more responsibility in the way we recruit and promote to the middle management level."

TALENT FIRST

Failing to recruit the right people or value the role means organisations miss out on the value middle managers can bring, Evans believes. She describes a state of "learned helplessness", where managers seek to conform despite having the insight and ideas that could help the business flourish.

"They may see that the objectives they've been set are counter-productive, that restructuring the team could reduce cost and improve customer service, or that they can massively speed things up by talking with someone in a different area," she says.

"To tap into this, we need to switch our thinking. Instead of controlling and dictating, we need to create an environment where middle managers are genuinely empowered, where their ideas are welcomed, and where they can try things out without fear of reprimand."

Other issues can also arise from failing to have





GET THE MOST FROM YOUR MIDDLE MANAGERS

Luiz Francisco Campos, CEO, Andino Markets (Colombia & Ecuador) of **Liberty Insurance**, explains how organisations can develop fantastic middle managers.

GIVE CLARITY ON THE ROLE

“Some companies don’t get the most out of their middle managers because they don’t help them in their understanding of the role. If they focus too much on the execution of the work over results, they will become overloaded and won’t find time to delegate.”

DEVELOP SKILLS AND TAKE ON FEEDBACK

“There can also be times when organisations don’t invest in individual development plans for these roles. Managers will need a wide range of support, including letting them give feedback, offering them training and mentoring them.”

MAKE IT A POSITION PEOPLE WANT

“We empower middle managers through exposure and experience. They lead strategic initiatives and can participate in global projects, and there are possibilities for international mobility for short periods or promotions. We’ve designed a development programme based on evaluations of leadership skills which derive from individual development plans. This helps us to improve the engagement and experience that our employees have with the company, as the middle managers have one of the most important roles in improving employee satisfaction.”

an effective middle management team. Dan Lucy, Deputy Director, HR consultancy and research, at the **Institute for Employment Studies (IES)**, says middle management is often most notable when it doesn’t work. “Change efforts often fail as a result of ineffective middle management,” he says.

“Communication and engagement efforts also often break down at this layer of management. Middle managers are bedevilled by relentless, conflicting demands and priorities, and to be successful they must learn to manage relationships effectively – upwards, downwards and across the different parts of their organisation.”

Whysall believes the whole concept of middle management needs a rebrand, to a position that is recognised as a skilled craft. “The role needs to be seen, and treated, as a destination in itself,” she says. “Ensure middle managers are benefiting from good-quality career conversations, to help them understand what they want from their careers. If they want to progress further, work out what the options are. At the same time, share succession

requirements and provide clarity about what’s needed for them to move to the next level, if that’s of interest.”

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

The geographical culture in which organisations are based and operate can also have an impact. This is commonly the case in Colombia, according to Luiz Francisco Campos, CEO, Andino Markets (Colombia & Ecuador) of **Liberty Insurance**. However, he says this can be overcome through a concerted effort to change organisational culture.

“Rigid hierarchies are very common in this market, so in the last couple of years we have worked to have a much lighter structure, with the aim of improving decision-making at different levels, as well as communication, as this directly improves the empowerment of the teams.”

Charles Jennings, Co-founder of learning and development consultancy **70:20:10 Institute**, advising organisations across the world on getting more from their middle managers, agrees. ▶



▶ “Of course, national cultural ‘ways of working’ and cultural norms impact the opportunities to support the effectiveness of middle managers,” he says. “However, organisational culture and environment is, in my experience, more important than national culture and environments.”

Jennings adds that a focus on communication is a good starting point for those looking to change. “If corporate culture lacks a culture of open, two-way communication, it is likely that middle management will suffer ‘squeeze’ and become unclear about strategic direction. This, in turn, leads to middle management being ill-equipped to set clear direction for first-level management and their teams.”

DEVELOPED APPROACH

Businesses – and HR – also need to improve the way they develop middle managers. Dan Robertson, Director of diversity and organisational development specialists **Vercida Consulting**, suggests several key areas where managers can develop new skills.

The first is to draw on the diverse perspective of organisational stakeholders when making decisions. “This means they see their own biases and work with others to mitigate them,” he says. “They strive to see the world through the eyes of others.”

They must also develop a curiosity that can lead to questioning rather than telling people what to do. “This is one of the most critical management skills in the 21st century,” says Robertson. “Curiosity leads to questioning as opposed to telling. It requires managers to connect with colleagues in different teams and departments. This is critical when working across borders and with different cultures.”

A final point is to connect the dots in operational activity. “They need to think ahead of the problems and spot cracks in operational systems before they appear,” he says, adding that managers tend to feel most empowered when they feel part of a shared vision, listened to, and trusted to implement agreed goals.

Gordon Tinline, an independent business psychologist and author of *The Outstanding Middle Manager*, says that as many organisations become flatter in their structure, the more important middle managers are becoming. “As formal organisational structures increasingly become delayed, the manager or senior specialist in the middle of the hierarchy faces the threat of being more exposed to both strategic and operational pressures.

“However, they also have the opportunity to exert a greater influence on both. This is a powerful position from which to craft delivery and front-line roles and inform business direction.”

It’s important to remember that this means some will need development of their skills. Tinline identifies networking as one area that managers often need support.

“Middle managers in large organisations have got more links upwards, downwards and sideways than most other people in the organisation, but probably don’t take advantage of that,” he says.

“Managers need to learn how to use and develop networks, particularly in larger organisations, where a lot of it is influencing rather than having line-management power over someone.”

“THE ROLE NEEDS TO BE SEEN, AND TREATED, AS A DESTINATION IN ITSELF”

— DR ZARA WHYSALL, KIDDY & PARTNERS

Learning to delegate is another key skill, which requires an understanding of how the different levels of management interact with each other, says Lucy from the IES. “When under pressure to deliver, senior managers may tend to ‘suck up’ power and responsibility, disempowering managers below them who then lack ownership and investment in any change, feeling that their own knowledge, experience and ideas are not valued,” he warns. “Ultimately, this means they will not be engaged and give their best in making the change happen.”

For HR professionals wondering quite where to start with improving their approach to middle management, Mosaic Consulting’s Evans has a simple suggestion. “Perhaps the best thing to do is to talk with middle managers in your organisation,” she suggests.

“Ask them what they love about their job, what frustrates them, what gets in the way of them doing their best, and what changes would make it easier for them and their teams. I don’t have the answer, but I expect your middle managers do.” ■

SWITZERLAND

TAKING AN OPEN APPROACH



AS SWITZERLAND CONTINUES TO ENJOY A STRONG ECONOMY, ORGANISATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY FACE A BATTLE TO ATTRACT CANDIDATES WHO ARE ALREADY IN WORK

WITH A STEADILY RISING GDP, the economy in Switzerland has enjoyed a solid and stable few years. Many organisations have used this time to modernise their processes, and this has certainly been the case when it comes to recruitment, according to Oliver Matthes, Head of Strategy, Innovation and Processes, **Hays Switzerland**.

“The whole recruitment industry has changed to a more overall solutions-orientated business model,” he says. “But organisations are now starting to find that one of their top three limitations is access to talent. To help them set their strategy and achieve their business goals through talent, we are moving into a talent partnership role where we help them underpin their overall business strategy with the right talent strategy. Typically, we’re evaluating a company’s people strategy as a whole: what is the right contract type, the right proportion of freelancers, the right proportion of temp specialists, and what does their permanent workforce look like?”

Matthes adds that this shift is a reflection of the deeper understanding many organisations now have of talent. “Access to the right talent has become much more significant than it used to be,” he says. “The roles of HR people and talent acquisition people have become very strategic and very important.”

BROADER REQUIREMENTS

While the recruitment and HR functions are becoming more relied upon, they are also facing real challenges. Matthes says that one of the biggest factors has been Switzerland’s strong economic outlook.

“All highly skilled professionals already have work,” he explains. “They’re in roles and they’re happy, receiving good salaries. They don’t intend to move jobs at the moment.” As a result, it has become quite difficult to attract talent in existing roles and the market largely consists of passive candidates – people who already have a job and are not actively looking for a move.

Marc Lutz, Managing Director, Hays Switzerland, says that one solution could be to try to attract talent from abroad. Under the Freedom of Movement Act, almost all nationals from countries in the EU or the **European Free Trade Association (EFTA)** have the right to move to Switzerland, although they have to register to work and apply for residence permits for stays of over three months.

“Switzerland is really specialised at hiring people from the EU,” Lutz explains. “You find huge numbers of people in the workforce from France, from the UK, from Germany, from all over Europe. Around 30 per cent of people living in Switzerland are not Swiss.”

SWITZERLAND



ISTOCK

- ▶ But he adds that hiring candidates from further afield is a challenge: “It is theoretically possible to hire people from outside the EU, but it’s a very administration-heavy and complicated process.”

There are also sector-specific challenges. In IT, for instance, organisations are now looking for candidates who not only have the technical capability to do the role, but also understand the industry they are moving into.

Patrick Schulz, Head of Engineering, Hays Switzerland, says that the country’s healthy

economy means that there is a lot of stable work in the engineering sector, but talent is limited. “Switzerland has a comparatively small population, so the number of high-level engineers is naturally limited, too,” he explains.

Matthes agrees and adds that this is coupled with a desire from organisations for candidates with both technical skills and the ability to work with a widening variety of stakeholders. “They’re all looking for project managers with a specific engineering background,” he says. “Project managers need an additional skill

› OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

We asked our experts what opportunities are available to organisations recruiting in Switzerland in a challenging market. Here are their top tips



▶ **Marc Lutz**
Managing Director,
Hays Switzerland

“Organisations have to focus on integrating their talent progression schemes into their overall strategy. They need to have the best strategy for finding these talented people first of all, and then for keeping them.”



▶ **Patrick Schulz**
Head of Engineering,
Hays Switzerland

“We are suggesting to our clients that they consider opening up even more to flexible working models, and to candidates who don’t speak fluent German. This would allow them to access a much larger pool of qualified candidates and help them fill their vacancies faster.”

set which is almost the opposite of typical engineering talent. They need to be customer-facing, they need to be able to push colleagues at the right times and they need to have interpersonal skills.

“People who match those requirements with technical skills are very hard to find.”

CHANGING APPROACHES

With the demand for talent outstripping supply, organisations may need to rethink how they approach potential jobseekers. One way to stand out from other prospective employers is to remember that a one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to work on passive candidates.

“Organisations need to be more intelligent so that they’re able to attract talent in a different way,” says Matthes. “Many are posting their job advertisement and just hoping for the right applications, and that’s not going to work. The messages are very generic.”

“The best candidates in our country are almost all in the passive market, so organisations need to attract them with the right story and an individual recruitment message for each role, because that is what their competitors are doing.”

Matthes adds that, within engineering, staying up to date with technology is more important than ever for employers. “One thing that is very important for candidates in that sector is working with state-of-the-art technology,” he explains. “We did a survey at the start of 2019 within the sector and found that one of the key differentiators is the technology on offer.”

Dominik Rainer, Senior Department Manager, IT and Banking, Hays Zürich adds that, within the IT sector, organisations may need to reassess the overall skills they request. “We are working with line managers to help them filter the must-have skills from the nice-to-haves,” he explains. “This makes the searches more realistic and the pool of potential candidates larger.”

For organisations that are reaching out to international talent, Lutz says that selling the lifestyle that is available in Switzerland can be a major selling point for candidates.

“ALL HIGHLY SKILLED PROFESSIONALS ALREADY HAVE WORK”

— OLIVER MATTHES, HAYS SWITZERLAND

“Even if they don’t speak the local language, they can basically communicate with everybody, because the most commonly used language in many organisations is English,” he explains. “If you get a work permit, your partner is allowed to move to Switzerland as well. It’s a very attractive environment. That’s probably the biggest opportunity for organisations looking to bring in these people to Switzerland.” ■



➤ **Dominik Rainer**
Senior Department
Manager, IT and Banking,
Hays Zürich

“The candidate market is changing so fast. Social media and social networks are influencing young people more and more. Most organisations are a couple of years behind and are carrying on recruiting like they used to do in 2014. Organisations that are able to restructure their internal recruiting processes to catch up with the speed of the candidate market can really gain an advantage.”



➤ **Oliver Matthes**
Head of Strategy,
Innovation and
Processes,
Hays Switzerland

“Organisations need to fulfil the promises they made during the talent acquisition phase – just having the right message is not enough. Those organisations that can show they are agile, with clever compensation and benefits models in place, have a great opportunity. Businesses need to have that right.”

SCALING NEW HEIGHTS

Michael Moniz, CEO and co-founder of cyber security and learning platform **Circadence**, is also an experienced mountaineer. He discusses how he achieves peak performance, both professionally and personally, through his passions

DISCOVERING A PASSION

I picked up rock climbing as a freshman at the **University of Colorado** and continued to climb throughout that time.

What got me into high-altitude climbing was a chance to go up to Everest base camp in 2007. I opted to take my son Matt, who was nine years old, with me. We had fairly low expectations about how far we might get, but we thought we'd give it a go. It turned out that he loved the sport and we talked the entire time. It was a phenomenal experience for the two of us.

LIFE LESSONS

One thing I get from mountaineering is that it resets my expectations of what's a want and what's a need. I have lived in a tent at 5,500m and had a chance to spend time just reading books and talking with friends. It gives you a sense that you can live with a lot less than you think you can, which empowers you to be bold and continue to take risks.

Sometimes you reflect back on an experience and realise that what you gained from it was far more impactful than actually standing on top of the world.

FINDING TIME

My family have a cabin in the mountains of Colorado at about 9,000ft. Sometimes I'll leave on a Friday afternoon and get there by five and do a climb on one of the passes that we cross by car. I'll park there and use alpine touring skis to climb up to the top of a mountain.

That way I spend a couple of hours getting a good workout and keeping my body well adapted to high altitude. I know that if I'm not healthy, I don't do my job well; I'm not as articulate, as creative, as supple in terms of my ability to respond to customers' complex problems.

I do a tremendous amount of backcountry skiing, which keeps my fitness level really high. I always like to feel like I'm within 30 days of being able to be really focused and able to climb an 8,000m peak. That's where I want to be.

REAPING REWARDS

The benefit for me, for the company and our shareholders is that the time I spend out there, often alone, gives me a lot of space to think. Some of my best creative ideas have come from the times when I'm in a really disconnected world where I can just think.

We certainly encourage, applaud and support this mindset of finding time for passions in our company. We can relate to the value it brings in terms of the whole person.

My suggestion for those who struggle to find balance is that they immediately force themselves to find time to take a week off. They should identify one thing they've been putting off and just go and do it. Disconnect yourself, and then, while you're there, try to explore the things you're passionate about. ■



MICHAEL MONIZ

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