

The voice for the global staffing industry

GR

THE GLOBAL RECRUITER

www.theglobalrecruiter.com | Issue 228 | September 2021



STICKING POINT

Digital 'Right to Work' checks
Remote working and mental health

VIEW THE MAGAZINE ONLINE | www.theglobalrecruiter.com/digital-magazine/

monitoring

/'mɒnɪtə/



verb

1. observe and check the progress or quality of (something) over a period of time; keep under systematic review.
2. more game-changing innovation in the IR35 space.

IR35 SHIELD
THE IR35 COMPLIANCE STANDARD



WELCOME



SIMON KENT
EDITOR

The pandemic has had some predictable consequences, but it also continues to throw curve balls – challenges, ideas and processes which may not have been obvious at first. Certainly the mental challenge of working and living through this time cannot be underestimated, but as one of our contributors highlights in this issue, issues such as employees hiding the way they feel by putting a 'brave face' on the situation means the situation is far from straight-forward.

Similarly as the shift back to the office occurs – or is at least offered – there needs to be an understanding of what new practices could be held on to. Discussion and pressure around the continuation of remote Right to Work checks is one example, but so too is the use of remote onboarding as an effective method of bringing new candidates into organisations with greater efficiency.

Technology is absolutely an area where permanent change has occurred and where rapid change continues. Our technology special this month – and indeed the Global Recruiter's UK summit – has provided a focus for the trends and areas where recruiters should be particularly vigilant. These trends don't just offer the leading edge for recruitment practice, but in time they will become standard practice.

CONTENTS

- 05 NEWS
- 10 VIEW FROM WEC: WORKPLACE OF THE FUTURE
- 13 FRONTLINE: IMPROVE EMPLOYEE RETENTION
- 18 WORKPLACE: BRINGING EMPLOYEES BACK INTO THE WORKPLACE
- 23 DIGITAL RECRUITER NEWS
- 26 DIGITAL RECRUITER: THE USE OF VIDEO
- 28 DIGITAL RECRUITER: VIRTUAL HIRING IN THE LAW SECTOR
- 30 DIGITAL RECRUITER: DIGITAL 'RIGHT TO WORK' CHECKS
- 34 REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT: KOREA'S BIG TALENT CHALLENGE
- 36 WORKPLACE: REMOTE WORKING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Subscribe online: www.theglobalrecruiter.com

Publisher: Gary King [E gary@theglobalrecruiter.com](mailto:gary@theglobalrecruiter.com)
 Editorial: Simon Kent [T +44 \(0\)1923 723990](tel:+44(0)1923723990) [E editorial@theglobalrecruiter.com](mailto:editorial@theglobalrecruiter.com) [E simon@theglobalrecruiter.com](mailto:simon@theglobalrecruiter.com)
 Advertising: Trevor Dorrell [T +44 \(0\)1923 723990](tel:+44(0)1923723990) [E sales@theglobalrecruiter.com](mailto:sales@theglobalrecruiter.com) [E trevor@theglobalrecruiter.com](mailto:trevor@theglobalrecruiter.com)
 Digital Communications: Leigh Abbott [T +44 \(0\)1923 723990](tel:+44(0)1923723990) [E leigh@theglobalrecruiter.com](mailto:leigh@theglobalrecruiter.com)
 Design & Production: Julie Harris [T +44 \(0\)1923 723990](tel:+44(0)1923723990) [E julie@theglobalrecruiter.com](mailto:julie@theglobalrecruiter.com)
 Twitter [News @globaleditor](https://twitter.com/globaleditor) [Events @GlbrRecruiter](https://twitter.com/GlbrRecruiter)
 The Global Recruiter is published 12 times a year by Chess Business Group | Carotino House | Bury Lane | Rickmansworth | WD3 1ED | UK

Contributions: Contributions are invited, but when not accepted will only be returned if accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. Articles should be emailed or delivered on floppy disk. No responsibility can be taken for drawings, photographs or written contributions during delivery, transmission or when with the magazine. In the absence of an agreement, the copyright of all contributions, regardless of format, belongs to the publisher. The publishers accept no responsibility in respect of advertisements appearing in the magazine and the opinions expressed in editorial material or otherwise do not necessarily represent the views of the publishers. The publishers accept no responsibility for actions taken on the basis of any information contained within this magazine. The publishers cannot accept liability for any loss arising from the late appearance or non-publication of any advertisement for any reason whatsoever.
 ISSN 2049-3401

www.theglobalrecruiter.com

Recruitment Consultant Goes from Start-up to 7-Figure Sale

The Recruit Venture Group believe in a cycle of startup to success and a secure future. The 7-figure sale of GotPeople shows how well their business model works.



When Mary Cox launched GotPeople in 2011 her aim was to build a recruitment business that would deliver a secure future. Now, just ten years later, she's set to sail off into retirement having sold the company in a 7-figure deal.

Mary had worked tirelessly for years in recruitment running desks for other businesses and decided in 2011 it was time to do it for herself.

For some time, the fear of failing or not being able to meet the monthly bills had held Mary back from launching on her own and then in 2011 she discovered an investment partner in The Recruit Venture Group.

'It was February 7th 2011. I took my business idea for a new recruitment consultancy to The Recruit Venture Group. It was quite possibly the best day of my life when I look back now' says Mary, 'I'm so thankful for The Recruit Venture Group. They provided the backing I needed which gave me the confidence and ability to go out on my own without the fear of financial restrictions or loss and we got trading with volume clients immediately'.

GotPeople launched in late September 2011 and Mary produced a turnover of half a million in her first eight months of trading. She pushed the figure up to £1.5 million in the next, her first full, year. Within four years GotPeople had a turnover of £4million per annum.

Asked about the key to her business success Mary is forthright in her praise for The Recruit Venture

Group. 'If you're a recruitment consultant, with the ambition to run your own consultancy, this is the way to do it. It gives you the perfect mix of support and autonomy. It meant I could build my business quickly with full focus on what matters'.

The rapid growth of turnover was, says Mary, generated because she could focus purely on recruitment, on the clients and candidates and forget all the back office and administration that would normally bog-down any new start-up.

Mary is proud of GotPeople's track record in generating not just turnover but, more importantly, healthy mark up, margins and gross profit. 'They are the real keys to success'. Mary sees the support she's had as a major factor in creating the right conditions for her and her team to drive the business forward.

'You have to have the vision, and the drive' she says. 'That's why The Recruit Venture Group back you. But when they back you - they back you all the way'.

Were there any major challenges along the way? 'Of course,' she says, 'we faced the ups and downs that any business faces, but we were able to deal with them, ride them out, because we had the support of The Recruit Venture Group, under the inspiring leadership of Paul Mizen'.

Paul Mizen, Managing Director of The Recruit Venture Group, speaking on the same day said, 'We are thrilled for Mary. GotPeople is a fantastic example of the success that can come from being a joint venture with us. Our culture is rooted in the cycle of create, invest, support, grow - and ultimately succeed. We specialise in recruitment companies, because we're experts in the sector. We're there to enable. To encourage. To facilitate. And we're there for our joint venture partners through the entire journey, helping them meet the daily challenges of running a business'.

This last year of course has brought the unprecedented demands and challenges of Covid. 'Even then', Mary adds, 'The Recruit Venture Group were there for us. As they have been throughout the whole journey' they have been instrumental in my success, at every stage. Even my brand was created with their help and input'.

And now Mary Cox is planning another journey. She will visit her children in South America as soon as it's possible. With a new home at the coast, and plans to learn to sail, Mary Cox is living proof that, with support from The Recruit Venture Group, a successful recruitment business can deliver a secure future.

gotpeople

www.recruitventures.com



The Recruit Venture Group
create | invest | support | grow

MIT REVEALS ITS RETENTION SECRET

Are you seeking ways to improve retention rates? It's the burning question that organisations struggle to answer.

The issue is top priority for every recruitment agency. When your employees need to be replaced, a time-consuming hiring and selection process arises, which turns out to be costly as well.

Business growth effectively depends on your pool of candidates and skilled employees. The bottom line is that low retention rates should be avoided at all costs. Besides disrupting productivity, it can also negatively impact client relationships and employee morale simultaneously.

It's estimated that more than 50% of global organisations strive to retain some of their most valued employees. In the UK, the average employee turnover rate is reported at around 15%. The reasons why

people quit vary, from being attracted by a higher salary to the opportunity for career development.

Today's workforce has more employment options.

So, if they are not satisfied with what employers are offering, they can easily search and apply for a position from their mobile phone. If you don't want to lose your top talent, offer them a compensation package (other than an hourly wage or base salary) that they can't refuse.

"Listen to your employees. Find out what they really want. Independent research shows that employees seek for more learning and development programmes, more benefits, enhanced pensions, etc..." says David Callaghan, the CEO of MIT.

According to Mr Callaghan, simplifying the accessibility to benefits packages for employees is vital. "We help HR agencies combine a wide variety of benefits into one user-friendly

platform, which include phone access to a GP or webcam consultations, thousands of pounds worth of retail discounts, health and wellbeing perks, and more." A targeted employee benefits plan adds value to both employees and businesses alike. Savvy recruiters understand that tailored benefits, satisfying workforce needs, will lead to better retention rates.

Many people who are currently employed yet open to new job opportunities seriously consider benefits when evaluating a vacancy.

Offering the right range of benefits can keep your talented staff members happy and loyal for years to come. Mr Callaghan believes that recruiters who don't invest in a comprehensive benefits strategy "could face devastating staff turnover figures in less than a year!" He notes that "offering employees significant discounts on cinema,

food shopping, travel and insurance could have a greater impact than a typical pay raise.

"It's a win-win situation for our clients," he says, "as they gain better staff retention without losing their profit margin, which means that they are not paying significant fees to recruit new employees."

Benefits truly are the innovative approach for retaining talent.

Get in touch with MIT today to discover how we can increase your staff retention and save you time, money and resources.

☎ 0800 211 8709
✉ ee@mitventures.co.uk

MIT
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



The Financial Impact of Low Retention

£16.9B

is the potential cost of post-pandemic staff turnover for UK & Irish businesses.

(Personio, 2021)



Retention Facts

88%

of UK employers say that a positive employee experience is a key driver of attracting and retaining talent.

(Willis Towers Watson, 2021)



Employment Trends

38%

of employees in the UK & Ireland are looking to change roles within the next 6 or 12 months or once the economy has strengthened.

(Personio, 2021)



Benefits Data

86%

of millennials would not leave their current position if their employers provided training and development programmes.

(Lorman, 2021)

NOW HIRING

MANPOWERGROUP POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Jobs boost triggers UK's best ever hiring.

The latest ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey suggests employers in the UK have ambitious plans to increase their headcount at a record rate as they enter the fourth quarter. As London powers ahead of other regions, the national Outlook is at an all-time high of +32 per cent, a 39-point increase compared to Q4 2020 as the UK adapts to life post-lockdown. Similarly, all sectors have swung back from negative Outlooks in 2020 to record highs for this coming quarter.

The ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey is based on responses from 2,033 UK employers. The research asks employers in the UK if they intend to hire additional workers, maintain current headcount or reduce the size of their workforce in the coming quarter (October to December). It is the most comprehensive, forward-looking employment survey of its kind and is used as a key economic indicator by both the Bank of England and the UK Government. This coming quarter, a record, half of all employers (50 per cent) intend to increase headcounts.

"The labour market has roared

back to life for the fourth quarter, and it has topped last quarter's already record Outlook to hit +32 per cent," said Chris Gray, director, ManpowerGroup UK. "This follows the rapid vaccine rollout across the UK and the end of restrictions this summer. However, the market is still reeling from Brexit and the turmoil of the last 18 months and demand for talent is fast outstripping supply. The economic re-bound and growth in hybrid working means employees are being more selective about where they choose to work and are being presented with far greater opportunities than before. It's a perfect storm."

Gray continues: "More than a quarter of employers in the UK are increasing wages as an incentive to fill roles, however we need to see a comparable rise in productivity to sustain these wage bumps. Some are turning to other benefits to entice new workers, we're seeing many offer joining bonuses, additional annual leave, enhanced training opportunities and hybrid working options – such as employees selecting their own shifts. These non-financial incentives are particularly popular in industries such as hospitality

and retail where profit margins don't allow significant wage increases. Some of these changes aren't sustainable as a long-term solution to the talent gap. Employers need to think carefully about their potential to upskill and reskill workers in preparation for potential ongoing talent supply issues."

London's Outlook was the lowest of all regions in Q4 of 2020 (-13 per cent), however businesses in the capital now have one of the highest Outlooks at +40 per cent, a 53 per-centage-point increase year-on-year. The Outlook in London correlates with the finance and business services sector as the industry's intention to hire is also breaking records, with an Outlook of +46 per cent. Gray continues: "As London represents a quarter of the UK's economic output, strong hiring intentions in the capital bodes well for the economy as a whole. Although a third of employers plan to offer hybrid working, people are returning to offices, amid an expected rise in hybrid home/office work in Q4, as a third of employers plan to offer flexible working locations. Employers across London are anticipating this shift,

with coffee shops, restaurants and retailers all expecting a surge in footfall which goes hand in hand with increased demand for staff."

Elsewhere in the UK, firms are similarly keen to increase headcounts in the coming quarter, many are trying to hire their way out of a backlog caused by the last 18 months of turmoil. Gray added: "Take the Utility sector, reporting a huge surge in hiring, up 38 per-centage points to +46 per cent for the coming quarter."

"What we're hearing from our clients in this sector is that UK homeowners have been reticent to let people into their homes during the course of the multiple lockdowns, meaning meter readings and upgrades have been put on pause. With restrictions now relaxed energy companies are pushed to meet the backlog before the end of the year and turning to temporary staff to meet demand. Yet across the UK temporary roles are just as hard to fill as permanent ones, as a result 42 per cent of employers are changing their terms and offering a 'choose your own shift pattern' to remain competitive."

RISK TO RECOVERY

Recruiters concerned labour shortages are putting economic recovery at risk

A survey by the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) has found nine in ten recruiters (88 per cent) believe labour shortages are one of their biggest concerns for the remainder of 2021, while skills shortages are a major concern for two in three (65 per cent).

With shortages hitting every sector of the economy and many staffing companies reporting the tightest labour market they've ever experienced, the REC is calling on business and the government to take urgent action to solve the problem.

Recruiters have a significantly higher number of roles to fill than before the pandemic, with three in five (58 per cent) having at least 30 per cent more vacancies than pre-COVID. Almost every respondent to the REC survey (97 per cent) said that it was taking longer than usual to fill those vacancies, compounding the problem. Half (50 per cent) reported that it now takes more than a month to find suitable candidates.

"Worker shortages are a huge problem for employers and their recruitment partners, across all industries and regions," said Kate Shoesmith, deputy CEO of the REC. "Vacancy numbers are far higher than pre-pandemic, and it is taking much longer to fill them. This is putting the recovery at risk by putting capacity constraints on the economy, as last week's

GDP figures showed. In our survey, recruiters also highlighted a wide range of factors that have combined to cause these shortages – this is a complex problem with no one easy fix. "As such, we will only solve these shortages through a collaborative approach," she said. "We're glad that multiple government departments are coming together in a joint forum to tackle the issue, but to be effective it must also include business and industry experts. Government must allow more flexibility in the immigration system so firms can hire essential workers like drivers from abroad, and also improve training opportunities for lower-paid and temporary workers. Meanwhile companies need to focus on how they will attract and retain staff through improved conditions and facilities, not just pay."

Recruiters reported a number of factors were affecting their ability to source candidates. The top reason was skills shortages (cited by 65 per cent of respondents), followed by the new immigration rules (57 per cent) and their clients not being able to offer competitive salaries (53 per cent). The REC has set out a number of asks for both government and business to help solve this crisis:

- Set up a cross-government forum including the Business, Education and Work and Pensions departments, as well as business organisations: This

would restore the importance of workforce planning in the economic debate between business, government and other stakeholders, not only focusing on skills.

- Broaden the apprenticeship levy and increase funding for training at lower skill levels: This would improve progression and transition opportunities for lower-skilled and temporary workers who need them most, and encourage business to do more here in the UK, not less.
- Allow flexibility in the point-based immigration system and a visa route for lower-skilled workers: This would allow firms in the worst affected sectors like logistics to access staff at times of pressing need.
- Increased focus from businesses on workforce planning, staff engagement, attraction and retention policies: Firms need to raise workforce planning up to the senior leadership level, and work with key professional partners like recruiters to boost performance, productivity and staff wellbeing.

This also follows recent research from British Future, which found increasingly positive public attitudes towards immigration. Two thirds of the public (65 per cent) agree that employers should be allowed to recruit from overseas for roles in shortage – showing that a more flexible immigration system

would be popular as well as helping businesses to fill crucial vacancies.

"These findings are incredibly timely as we have seen a record high in vacancies across the economy," commented Kate Nicholls, CEO of UKHospitality. "Hospitality was amongst the last sectors to emerge from restrictions and we are still playing catch-up. Yet it is clear that these labour shortages are affecting many sectors. A collaborative approach must be taken to tackle the causes of these.

Some of these measures will be long-term – through reforms to education, careers advice and training – but Government also has the opportunity to look at shorter-term issues, such as the operation of the Kickstart scheme and immigration policy post-pandemic."

Sally Gilson, Policy Manager, Skills at the Road Haulage Association (RHA) commented: "There is an immediate need for fully-qualified HGV drivers that can only be fulfilled by temporary visas if we are to keep the supply chain running through peak time. Significant investment is being made by businesses to train UK workers, however a lack of funding within lower-level qualifications has limited the ability for people to upskill and retrain. Government needs to invest in all qualification levels, not just level 3 and above."

PHAIDON'S NEW LAUNCH

Phaidon International launches legal and regulatory talent partner, Larson Maddox

Phaidon International have revealed the launch of Larson Maddox – a specialist subsidiary talent partner for the legal and regulatory market. Adding to the group portfolio, Larson Maddox sharpens the award-winning firm's service offering and provides a platform for exponential growth. Phaidon International Group COO, Steve Yendell, comments: "In response to consistent demand from our client partners and candidate network, we are launching Larson Maddox to focus exclusively on the legal and regulatory talent challenges across a broad range of sectors." He continues: "Larson Maddox

complements our existing specialist brand portfolio perfectly by enabling us to help clients from all sectors secure talent to navigate the rapidly evolving legal and regulatory landscape." For Phaidon International, the creation of a dedicated brand is imperative to support their clients whose rapid growth in key industry verticals must be met with top tier legal and regulatory talent. Today, the Larson Maddox team partners with industry-leading organisations to help them solve their talent challenges, focusing on placements from experienced to senior executive roles within the Legal and

Regulatory disciplines. Drawing on years of experience and sitting alongside established brands in the Phaidon International group, such as Selby Jennings and DSJ Global, Larson Maddox will deliver the best-in-class legal and regulatory talent across financial services, technology, life sciences, manufacturing, consumer goods, and more. Larson Maddox global head, Jake Knowlton-Parry, reports, "with dedicated, industry specific verticals, we have the ability to access and navigate a highly competitive market, drawing upon established and trustworthy relationships in order to meet our

clients' requirements." He further comments, "at Larson Maddox, we are passionate about fuelling our client's growth across multiple industries through utilising a quick, transparent, and accurate search process to deliver results faster." The dedicated Larson Maddox team will mirror their successful parent company's commitment to be true market specialists, whilst continuing to offer relationships underpinned by speed, accuracy, and global reach, to be a talent acquisition partner of choice for candidates and clients alike.

FUNDING MOVE

Adecco completes financing to acquire AKKA

Adecco has carried out financial processes in order to position itself ready to buy AKKA Technologies. The exercise involved placing EUR 1 billion senior notes and EUR 500 million inaugural hybrid bonds. According to the company it placed two tranches each of EUR 500 million fixed rate notes, maturing in 2028 and 2031, under its EUR 3.5 billion EMTN Programme. At the same time it placed its inaugural subordinated fixed-to-reset rate hybrid bond of EUR 500 million maturing in 2082 (the "Hybrid Bond"). All three issuances are to be listed on the main market of the London Stock Exchange.

The placement of these senior and

hybrid notes completes the balanced financing package that underpins the Group's acquisition of AKKA Technologies, says Coram Williams, CFO of Adecco Group whilst maintaining the company's strong investment grade capital structure. "We are pleased to have secured very favourable financing conditions for these long-term notes which were more than 4.5 times oversubscribed," said Williams. "The AKKA Technologies transaction accelerates our strategy and provides a significant value creation opportunity for investors, being growth, margin and earnings enhancing in year one. We expect the deal to close in early 2022."

WORK IT OUT

Denis, Pennel, managing director, WEC describes the workplace of the future.



Hybrid: when it comes to the post-Covid world of work, that's the buzzword on everyone's lips. Hybrid work, hybrid workplaces, hybrid teams...

It is well documented that the pandemic has resulted in the double digit growth of remote working. By choice or by constraints due to lockdowns. According to different but consistent surveys, at least 50 per cent of workers expect to keep on working partly from home in the future and this is being acknowledged by 72 per cent of leaders.

So what will the new, hybrid workplace look like? It will offer a flexible way of working comprising the possibility to be both physically present in the corporate office and to work remotely online in a distributed manner, leveraging cloud technologies. In summary, it will be multi-space, customised, touchless (as much as possible) and collaborative/interactive.

The New Normal office will be multi-space, combining an articulation of three different places: the corporate office (the 'basecamp' of the company), the home office and third-party workplaces. This last one could be a dedicated coworking space (there are already 14,000 coworking spaces around the world), a fablab, a coffee shop or an airport lounge, but also an hotel room (it is increasingly possible to book a room for daytime use); this latter option will give people access to a private, comfortable, quiet and well-connected working space. However, within this hybrid work model, the corporate office

will remain the centre of the work ecosystem. As the basecamp, it will represent the heart and soul of the company, the place where employees will come for social interaction, where the corporate culture and values can be promoted and lived. It will remain an essential factor for the cohesion of the company.

Work and work style

There will be a need to decouple traditional work and workstyles from the corporate office. Hybrid work will be the answer to providing greater employee choice, so they can customise the way in which they work. Indeed, the different workplace expectations of workers must be recognised and taken into account. While 24 per cent want to work exclusively from the office, 50 per cent are asking for a hybrid approach and 26 per cent would prefer to work exclusively outside of the office.

Clearly, going to the corporate office still affords many advantages: to manage or be supported by management, to work in a collaborative way and run meetings, to access on-site resources (IT, printers, meeting rooms to welcome clients, access to amenities). But for certain people, home might be seen as a quieter and more comfortable office, especially if you don't have young kids playing around. When it comes to learning and growing or to socialising,

third-party coworking spaces are sometimes better placed to deliver. They offer the possibility to exchange with peers and/or experts working on similar projects for other employers or customers. 43 per cent of workers would find the possibility to work from a coworking facility close to their home appealing (and six per cent already benefit from this option).

So, the location that we are working from will be related to the tasks we have to perform, and might change during the day. That means that the workplace has to be customised to the needs of the employee and offer different solutions to meet a diversity of work situations and types. Companies will have to adapt to these new requirements and expectations, especially if they want to attract and retain the best talent.

In the same way that many companies are already offering luncheon vouchers to their employees, the next step might be for employers to offer office vouchers, so that employees can pick and choose the third-party places that they want to work from.

In addition to becoming multi-spaced and customised, the new office will have to be as touchless as possible. In recent years, companies have developed frictionless workplaces relying on touch technology – kiosks that require navigation via touch, conference room booking screens outside of the door, sign-in tablets and even biometric fingerprint scans. In the wake of the Covid pandemic and

other viral threats all of these conveniences start to look like health risks! As much as possible, the workplace of the future should include automatic soap dispensers, touchless trashcans, automatic doors, facial recognition and voice control tools in order to avoid the spread of germs through community and shared devices. And the way in which people circulate within the office should also be designed to avoid any unnecessary crossover while maintaining a certain level of fluidity within the office.

Finally, we should question why people are being asked to come back to the office. If the main reason for commuting several hours a day is just to sit at a desk in front of a computer, it does not make sense! The new workplace must facilitate interactive and collaborative work, offering brainstorming/idea creation spaces, readily available meeting rooms, facilities to promote teamwork, amenities to meet socially and flexible desk policies to avoid silos. The motto here is aiming at being better together! That means that the corporate office should become the best place to work collectively and that people should be excited to come back to the office.

Office sweet office, or coming back to a familiar, welcoming, cosy workspace! ■

Disengaged employees are 60% more likely to make mistakes compared with their engaged colleagues*

Research has shown that employees who are engaged in their work tend to be happier and healthier, which can lead to greater employee retention and productivity – those who aren't are more likely to make mistakes and be less productive. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic when thousands of employees found themselves furloughed or working remotely for the first time, it's been challenging for employees to feel connected to their organisation, leading to record rates of employee disengagement. A recent survey cited more than 40% of employees are considering leaving their employer this year.

There's no denying that feeling engaged is good for your people, and it's also good for business. Levels of engagement can be measured across many important metrics including customer satisfaction, productivity, innovation, staff retention, and efficiency. In today's predominantly virtual environment, it takes more than the basics to create an engaged culture across your business.

Designing and implementing an effective people engagement strategy to support job satisfaction and overall performance and productivity is a step in the right direction.

Create an organisational mission

Whether it's for your own employees, or you're working with clients on how they can attract and retain the best employees, creating an organisational mission is key. Having a clearly defined mission can help your employees better understand your organisation's collective purpose. According to a study conducted by Gallup, '67 per cent of millennials are engaged at work when they strongly agree that the mission or purpose of their company makes them feel that their job is important'.

Promote company values

Incorporating core company values into your mission can create a connection between your employees, your customers and your organisation. If you don't currently have established company values, ask your employees what they need. Seek feedback to understand what's important to them. Gathering input from employees can increase engagement. Planning training sessions or inviting guest speakers to talk about the company values can help bring them to life.

Incorporate a benefits programme

When communicated well, an employee wellbeing and benefits programme can be an excellent way to reward people and demonstrate your business cares about its people, which can increase morale, loyalty and performance. What might be perceived as an expensive outlay, can be a very affordable investment in people with a longer-term return.

As we emerge into the post-Covid workplace, it makes sense to consider positive people risk solutions that can help people manage their health, boost their engagement and, ultimately, improve their motivation and performance.

If you would like to speak with an adviser who specialises in the recruitment sector about your people risk strategy and a 360 degree view of your business, please get in touch.

*<https://www.clearreview.com/15-employee-engagement-statistics/>



Advice that makes a difference.

Partners&

t +44 (0) 3300 940177
 e insuremyagency@partnersand.com
 w partnersand.com



Connect with us on:



Partners& is a trading style of Partners& Limited, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Registered in England and Wales. No 00497227. Registered office MRIB House, 25 Amersham Hill, High Wycombe HP13 6NU. +44 (0) 3300 940177

STICKING POINT

Adam Day, President and CEO of time and attendance provider Time Rack on how staffing agencies can improve employee retention.



There has been an ironic turn of events in the economy in what is known as the Great Resignation. Even though the pandemic caused the steepest economic downturn since the Great Depression, more than four million people quit their jobs in April alone. What's more, in recent research conducted by Microsoft, 41 per cent of employees surveyed said they were considering quitting.

This marks an existential paradigm shift that some experts are calling an economic reset - commencing an era where more power is placed into the hands of employees rather than employers. With the tides turning and 47 per cent of HR professionals saying that retention is the top talent management challenge they face, businesses need to reconsider tactics on how to keep employees.

For staffing agencies, the great resignation presents a conflict, both as a huge opportunity as well as a threat. On the one hand, businesses will be relying more than ever on staffing agencies to fill vacancies as quickly as possible. Still, on the other hand, staffing agencies will have challenges retaining the talent they place into positions. Therefore, staffing agencies need to act now – putting practical steps in place that will help boost retention and will put them into a strategic position to take advantage of this moment.

Getting a smart recruitment strategy

There is one quintessential challenge for staffing agencies presented by the great resignation, and that is trying not to rush recruitment. By pushing the bill, ill-suited candidates could be placed into positions that were never right for them. And with 80 per cent of all employee turnover resulting from poor hiring decisions, this will most likely come back to bite them. When staffing agencies spend more time in the recruitment stage, they match the right candidates to the right vacancies – which makes for longer-term employees.

But that doesn't mean having to exactly match candidates' previous positions with the ones you're trying to fill. Quite the opposite, in fact. Now, more than ever, agencies need to be assessing candidates' aptitudes in order to be confident that they will flourish in roles they perhaps have no previous experience with.

Start by categorising the common skill sets and competencies required across each of your open positions. Then map keywords from candidates within your ATS to the skill sets you've identified. Take it one step further by thinking about aptitudes that may not be instantly visible from resume analysis alone. If you're looking for leadership candidates,

for example, service personnel who have finished their military duty could be a good fit.

Another trend among some staffing agencies is reskilling, in order to equip candidates with the skills they need to step into unfamiliar roles. This can range from lighter touch training that can be delivered online, such as food safety training, to in person sessions such as first aid training, or more intensive programs such as fork truck training. Ultimately, the harder it becomes to find the right talent for the job, the more creative staffing agencies are going to have to be. But this mustn't come at the expense of proper candidate selection. Placing candidates into ill-fitting jobs will just create more problems in the long run.

An amazing onboarding experience

A major issue across industries is 'candidate ghosting', where a new hire will just drop out unannounced between an offer being accepted and their first day. This is not only costly and highly inconvenient, it also creates a terrible impression with clients if the new hires you've promised them fail to show up.

To combat this growing problem, all staffing agencies should be putting focus into their pre-onboarding process. Some of this can be automated, with welcome emails that provide orientation on employee first day essentials such as car parking, office facilities and even who their teammates will be. While some of it should be more personal, such as one or two phone calls to check in with each candidate – this is also a good way to identify any potential no shows, such as those who don't answer their phone or return messages.

But it's not just candidate ghosting that effective pre-onboarding can reduce, it can also help with longer term retention. According to a study by Bamboo HR 91 per cent of employees who received constructive onboarding and training feel strongly connected to their work and company. This causes a ripple effect of increased job satisfaction, long-term engaged employees, and increased employee retention.



Other important aspects to add to your onboarding process include setting up a one-to-one with your employee's job site manager on their first day, as well as providing a structured first few days for them, so they know what to expect.

If you have the resource, send a quick email, or better yet, make a quick phone call to see how they are getting on during their first week. This can help to identify any issues that need to be quickly resolved, or flag any problems the employee may be experiencing, which you can then find a solution to.

Stimulate career development

According to the American Staffing Association, 90 per cent of staffing companies provide free training to their temporary and contract employees, which is a great value add for both workers and companies alike. But the training is often focused around the 'must-have' competencies that an employee needs in order to perform their job safely and proficiently.

Less emphasis is placed on providing training that helps with an employee's career development. Yet, this is in spite of the fact that 94 per cent of employees say that they would stay at a company longer if it invested in their career development.

This is where more forward thinking agencies can seize an opportunity. Talk to candidates about their longer term goals before placing them into positions and see what additional training you can offer to help them with their career development. This could be delivered in house, or you could set up partnerships with training organisations, enabling you to offer your employees training at a discounted rate.

It may seem counterintuitive to some; won't upskilling your employees mean they'll leave as soon as they land a higher paying job? Well, everyone leaves eventually, and often for the purposes of career advancement. But by offering them discounted training or qualifications, at little or no cost to your agency (often delivered over a longer term timeframe), you can build loyalty and satisfaction. This can often lead to employees staying in post longer, compared to those that are offered no advancement and have no reason to stick around.

Employee career development can also become a virtuous circle for agencies, employees and clients. By offering training in skills that you traditionally struggle to recruit for, you can build a pipeline of talent that can move up into more specialist or senior positions with your clients' companies.

If the great resignation comes to pass at anywhere like some of the levels being predicted, then the staffing industry is going to hit an intense period without precedent. But those agencies that focus not just on the immediate goal of filling vacancies, but on the longer term retention and development of their employees, will be in a much stronger position to seize the opportunity, build stronger relationships with clients and greatly increase satisfaction among employees. ■



JUST RECRUIT

Take control of your day

Easy to use, intuitive CRM/ATS & integrated websites

All the functionality you need, without the unnecessary overcomplicated bits you don't. Spend less time on admin and more on delivering success.

Created with the belief that the best things don't need to be the most expensive and with simplicity, intuition and ease-of-use at the heart of our platform, alongside exceptional customer service and affordability, you'll never have to change systems again.

- ✓ SMS messaging
- ✓ Reporting
- ✓ Website integration
- ✓ Ongoing development
- ✓ Assists with GDPR compliancy
- ✓ Email tracking
- ✓ LinkedIn Chrome extension
- ✓ CV parsing
- ✓ Mailshotting
- ✓ Top support
- ✓ Cloud based
- ✓ Powerful search
- ✓ Clever notification tools
- ✓ Minimal click live job management

CRM/ATS

£39 per user
per month

Websites

£49 per month

Send us an email : hello@justrecruit.co

Check us out : [justrecruit.co](https://www.justrecruit.co)

Give us a call : +44 (0)203 475 1789

Looking for an Accredited Member?



FCSA launches new accreditation logos to reinforce transparency for the supply chain

The Freelancer & Contractor Services Association (FCSA) announces the launch of a new suite of Accredited Member logos; one for each of the current payroll intermediary services it awards accreditation for:

The FCSA Accreditation logo with its distinctive orange crest is recognised by agencies, end hirers, and contractors as confirming the highest standards of compliance for the payroll intermediary companies that successfully achieve it.

However, as the FCSA's membership grows and it responds to market demands by developing new codes for emerging business models, the FCSA identified a need to make it more transparent for its supply chain partners to see exactly what services each member has successfully achieved accreditation for.

The new logos will replace the former generic FCSA Accredited Member logo as illustrated below with immediate effect.



Greater transparency for agencies, end hirers, and contractors in support of due diligence checks

The benefit of launching this new branding structure is so that our member firms can only display the accreditation logo for the service it has been awarded accreditation for.

"Transparency is key for our supply chain partners, which is why the FCSA is always looking for ways in which it can reinforce this."

Phil Pluck, FCSA Chief Executive

The FCSA has also been listening to agency partners who routinely get in touch to run checks on group or subsidiary company names. These will also shortly be listed for each member firm on the FCSA's online Directory of Accredited Members, again making it easier for the supply chain to undertake those important due diligence checks.

Only companies that have completed the FCSA's stringent pre-requisite and due diligence checks and robust independent, evidence-based assessment can use the FCSA Accredited Member brand marks.



Agencies, end hirers, and contractors searching for an FCSA Accredited Member or checking the accreditation status of a company can visit the FCSA's online Directory of Accredited Members at any time via its website <https://www.fcsa.org.uk/members/>



PLEASANTVILLE UK

Sam Hill, head of people and culture at BizSpace discusses bringing employees back to the office.

The past 18 months have had a huge impact on many aspects of people's lives. From juggling home and work like never before, to job uncertainty, and concerns over physical health, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a tidal wave of upheaval – and it's no surprise that this has posed significant challenges to the nation's wellbeing and mental health. Through multiple lockdowns, isolation, home schooling and social distancing, it comes as little surprise that many have seen personal resilience levels plummet. Our recent research, *Keeping up Appearances: How Pleasanteeism is Eroding Resilience*, found that a quarter (26 per cent) of people feel as though they are struggling to cope at work, and over a third (34 per cent) feel the same way about everyday life. Yet for some reason, we're not opening up about these concerns. Suffering behind the scenes, findings within the report also revealed that UK workers are experiencing workplace 'pleasanteeism' – the feeling that they have to hide their true selves or conceal their anxieties by putting on a brave face. In fact, over half (51 per cent) of people admitted to feeling this way, while a quarter (25 per cent) were worried about having to be the best version of themselves when they return to work.

Changing expectations

Allowing workplace pleasanteeism to go unaddressed will not only be detrimental to the mental health of thousands of UK workers, but to the prospects of many UK businesses as they start to emerge from the pandemic. Nevertheless, the tide appears to be turning on mental health in the workplace. Our findings highlighted that many now have new expectations of their employers and rightly so. No longer will people allow businesses to sit on the side-lines when it comes to their mental health – 40 per cent even admitted that they would look for a new job if their employer didn't support their mental wellbeing.

Employers have a clear responsibility to open up the conversation and support their employees' mental health at work. Not only because it's the right thing to do, although clearly that's of primary importance, but also because it will improve their business prospects in the long term. So, what steps should businesses take to better protect the wellbeing and resilience of their workers?

Understand what's happening in the business

It's important that employers understand why and how their staff are struggling. Taking the time to actively ask people what's working, and what's not, can be invaluable as well as helping people feel listened to. A quick employee survey can reveal a huge amount about how people are feeling, and this feedback, when used in tandem with absence data,

can provide a good overview of employee sentiment in the business. Knowing where the pain points are in the business is the crucial first step required before making any large wellbeing decisions.

Connect and level the playing field

If there's anything we know it's that mental health does not discriminate, no matter your position, age or authority at work. It's important that managers therefore lead by example and are transparent about their own struggles. It doesn't mean that senior leaders have to lay everything bare, but rather just admitting to some vulnerability or talking about difficulties of any form they've had in their lives. This approach works particularly well when combined with efforts to level the playing field – finding opportunities to talk and connect as humans rather than colleagues, for example, this could include setting up a book club or a fantasy football league. This can go a long way to encourage an open dialogue that brings people together and out of their shells. If staff can start to open up and look beyond their employee-employer relationship, they will see a team that is approachable, relatable, and most importantly one that is human. Once these barriers are broken, employees will be more inclined to open up about how they are really feeling.

Consider mental health tools and services

Beyond company insights and cultural changes, employers can consider more practical, tangible solutions. Mental health tools and services add an additional layer of support for employees. In fact, looking back to our research, nearly one in five (18 per cent) workers said they would like their employer to support them with access to counselling, and a further 16 per cent would welcome access to tools that help them recognise what support they might need with their mental wellbeing. It doesn't have to involve significant investment to provide something that can make a difference, the most important thing is that it's easy to access. That was top of mind for us as we designed our wellbeing and mental health support service, Mind-Matters.

Workplace pleasanteeism – and its masking of challenging mental health issues – poses a significant problem for employees and businesses alike – but with every problem comes an opportunity to recalibrate and grow to be stronger than ever before.

It's only by drawing attention to and recognising the importance of mental health that we can start to fully support one another to be as healthy, resilient, and happy as possible. And, with the UK's return to the workplace on the horizon, now is the time for business leaders and senior leadership teams to put an end to pleasanteeism once and for all. ■



KB Secure
Products And
Services

 £12.50 Price Per User/Monthly	 £25 Price Per User/Monthly
---	--



KB Secure Products And Services



 £12.50 Price Per User/Monthly	 £25 Price Per User/Monthly
---	--



For More Information Call:
0330 335 4444

Or Visit:
kbsecurity.co.uk

in association with Keybridge IT

Advanced End Point Protection with 24x7 SOC * Protect your Computers and Laptops against advanced Ransomware attacks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dark Web Scanning Monitor leaked credentials found on the Dark Web	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Microsoft 365 Risk Watch Service 24x7 Monitoring of Mailbox related risks including Risky Logins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vulnerability Scanning Checking for Vulnerabilities on all your devices	Annual	Continuous
Microsoft Defender for 365 Advanced Email Protection Advanced Spam Filtering, Phishing protection and more	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced Microsoft 365 Monitoring with 24x7 SOC Full 24x7 Security monitoring and Remediation of ALL events within 365 including Outlook, Teams SharePoint and One Drive access		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced Network Monitoring with 24x7 SOC Full 24x7 Monitoring and Remediation of all network devices for any suspicious activity		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Annual Security Assessment NIST / Cyber Essentials Style Security Assessment to ensure all policies and procedures are in place within your business – including the set up of Cyber Security Policy, Risk Policies, Business Continuity Policies and more		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cyber Essential Annual Certification Become Cyber Essentials certified to prove you are taking security seriously and to help win new clients		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Regular Phishing Simulations & Training Realistic email phishing simulations to test your staff and tailored training to help make your staff Cyber Security Aware		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

* Utilising Sentinel One and a fully staffed 24x7 Security Ops Team



INDUSTRY AWARDS 2021

Headline sponsor



Shortlist Announced!

The time has finally come, the selections have finally been made. After a year of disruption, The Global Recruiter UK Awards, headline sponsored by MIT Employee Engagement, are back. The entries have been judged and the shortlist drawn up. Despite a global pandemic, in the face of uncertainty and incredible challenge these companies have shown how resilient the recruitment industry is, how dedicated recruiters are and how recruitment businesses can still push forward even when times are hard.

With a fantastic celebratory event on the horizon to truly do justice for those included in this year's shortlist, The Global Recruiter is proud to be able to give the recruitment industry the celebration it deserves and to honour those leading lights who have shown the best the recruitment industry has to offer.

Book your tickets for an Awards Ceremony like no other, to celebrate the strengths and achievements in the recruitment industry, and to recognize how these companies have demonstrated the amazing performance of the recruitment sector over the past 18 months and more.

Awards Ceremony: 14 October 2021 East Wintergarden, London

www.ukawards.theglobalrecruiter.com

#GRUKAwards21



Associate sponsors



Category sponsors



Technology for the global staffing industry



To keep up to date with the latest technology in the staffing industry, please visit www.digital.theglobalrecruiter.com



SKILLZMINER LAUNCHES

Job matching platform seeks to be game-changer.

It's a big claim, but Skillzminer is declaring itself to be the world's smartest job platform – giving people a chance to change their career fortunes in just four minutes.

Users sign up, answer a few quick questions in the time it takes to make a cup of coffee and find jobs they are suited to based on their skills, interests and styles – often jobs they never thought they could do. With access to 750,000 live UK jobs and 50 million jobs worldwide, Skillzminer helps unearth people's potential by looking at transferable skills and supports people to find people jobs they love.

Filling jobs quicker with the right candidates, Skillzminer will help employers be more productive, help reduce unemployment and boost the economy – with local authorities, employability providers and training companies already on

board to use the platform. The platform has already proven to be an effective tool, matching candidates with 12 times more jobs than they would through a traditional job search and helped to support thousands of unemployed people find work and training. The technology also claims to remove any background or gender bias, meaning employers improve their social responsibility by recruiting people based on their true skills, abilities and potential. The platform has been developed by a team of experts from the world of teaching, employability and technology.

Kirsty Mitchell, managing director at Skillzminer, said: "The UK is at a critical stage where the labour market is shifting considerably, demonstrated by what's happening with hauliers where demand exceeds supply

whilst simultaneously there's a current oversupply within travel and tourism operators. And looking ahead, we know there will be a huge shortfall in the number of care workers.

"Too many people are still being placed in work based on their past experiences, rather than the actual skills they have," she adds. "We have an opportunity to change the face of recruitment to help employers be more productive, help the economy to rebound after the coronavirus pandemic and to support hundreds of thousands of people into real, sustainable jobs. "We've been building Skillzminer for the last 18 months, listening to our customers and jobseekers, making improvements every step of the way. Our team have developed something truly remarkable – something that will change the way people find jobs. "We have had great feedback

from the people who've used Skillzminer so far and now is the time for the rest of the world to see it.

"Everyone benefits from Skillzminer – jobseekers, employers, local authorities, educators and the government. Together, we're rebuilding the economy, job by job and eliminating the skills gaps in a volatile labour market." As well as immediately matching people with alternative jobs, Skillzminer has partnered with education providers to suggest training pathways and the platform itself is packed with 15,000 UK college qualifications, 50,000 educational resources and very soon thousands of online courses to help bridge the skills gap and help people on their journey towards different careers.

FISHING FOR SUCCESS

Glassdoor set to run fast-growing professional social network

Glassdoor has announced that through its parent company it has completed the acquisition of Fishbowl, a fast-growing social network used by more than one million professionals. Fishbowl hosts conversations where professionals engage in candid conversations about anything career, industry and workplace-related. Financial terms are not being disclosed.

With more than 55 million unique users each month, Glassdoor is on a mission to help people everywhere find a job and company they love by increasing workplace transparency. With Fishbowl's focus on building meaningful connections and more personal conversations for working professionals, the two platforms are highly complementary and help people get the information they need to make more informed career decisions.

The acquisition of Fishbowl comes at an especially challenging time for workers. A new Glassdoor survey

of US employees conducted by The Harris Poll reveals that 48 per cent of employees have felt isolated from coworkers during the COVID-19 pandemic, and 42 per cent of employees have felt their career stall due to the lack of in-person connection. In addition, nearly half (45 per cent) of employees expect to work hybrid or full-time remotely going forward. To help meet the changing needs of today's working professionals, Fishbowl by Glassdoor will deliver even more workplace transparency, empowering professionals to have candid conversations, connect with one another, build communities and gain helpful insights to advance their careers.

"The world of work is dramatically changing and so are workers' needs," said Christian Sutherland-Wong, Glassdoor CEO. "Glassdoor and Fishbowl provide a look inside the ongoing transformation and what's crystal clear is that workers

need more information, more connection and more community, no matter where they're located. With this acquisition, we're giving job seekers and employees an unmatched real-time look into the employee experience across companies and industries.

"More than ever, professionals are seeking communities to have valuable career conversations and get more information from people beyond those they already know," he added. "No one brings transparency to the workplace better than Glassdoor, and with Fishbowl's platform for real-time professional conversations the opportunity together is incredibly powerful," said Matt Sunbulli, Fishbowl Chief Executive Officer. "We're excited to have Glassdoor's support to power Fishbowl's growth."

Launched in 2016 by co-founders Matt Sunbulli and Loren Appin, Fishbowl has more than 18 million

conversations, comments and direct messages in thousands of bowls where professionals can discuss career, industry and workplace-related topics. Before posting or commenting on Fishbowl, people have the option to choose how to represent themselves for every comment they make – by job title only, by the company they work for, or with their full name, title and company. Starting today, employees and job seekers on Glassdoor will see relevant Fishbowl conversations from people working in related companies and industries. This integration comes as more than two-thirds (69 per cent) of employees wish they were able to learn more about the team they would be working with when deciding to accept a job, and 64 per cent of employees wish they had a way to ask questions of industry peers around the country, according to the Glassdoor survey.

TECHNICALLY ASSESSED

CodeSignal announces new assessment capabilities fuelled by a \$50M Series C Funding led by Index Ventures.

CodeSignal, a technical assessment platform dedicated to helping companies, including Facebook, Roblox, Zoom, Robinhood, and others, make data-driven hiring decisions in tech recruiting, have announced \$50M in Series C funding and the launch of CodeSignal's new advanced Integrated Development Environment (IDE) that unlocks highly relevant assessment experiences. This round, which brings CodeSignal's total funding to \$87.5M, was led by Index Ventures, with additional participation from Menlo Ventures, Headline, and A Capital. Job assessments, whether at the top of the funnel or in later stage interviews, that feel like a simulation of the job provide the best indicator of skill and also create a better candidate experience, even for those who don't ultimately get the job. Until today, it has been hard to achieve a true flight simulation of the coding environment, limiting hiring managers ability to

assess skills, and candidate's ability to demonstrate them. With CodeSignal's newly launched advanced IDE, candidates will now be able to interact with code, files, a terminal, and a preview of their application in a persistent, fully configurable environment. This means candidates will have a similar experience to coding on a local machine, and the assessment provides a more powerful and familiar environment for them to solve tasks just as they would actually do on the job, showcasing their full range of skills. Likewise, employers can now assess all of an applicant's skills at the same time through a single coding task. This innovation is essential for hiring full-stack developers, a highly sought-after specialty, and it revolutionises the online IDE-based assessment experience to create the most realistic simulation of software engineering jobs that's available on

the market. "From the very early days, our investments have always focused on building a platform that can help technical recruiters and hiring managers #GoBeyondResumes to make unbiased data-driven recruiting decisions," said Tigran Sloyan, CEO and co-founder of CodeSignal. "As the demand for technical talent intensifies, hiring teams need better ways to identify qualified candidates while at the same time creating a great candidate experience. This funding will help accelerate our product and go-to-market functions to continue helping companies make data-driven hiring decisions, while creating a phenomenal candidate experience along the way." "CodeSignal has seen astounding growth this year, which speaks volumes to the need for companies to re-imagine their hiring practices to attract and hire the best candidates," said Nina Achadjian, partner at Index

Ventures. "Today's job seekers have options and they are looking for companies that value fair and unbiased business practices. There is an amazing opportunity in front of us to change hiring culture and CodeSignal is the company making that happen." CodeSignal's Assessments provide an objective measure of a candidate's qualifications, enabling recruiters to compare several scores and strengths at once before hiring decisions are made. The platform allows companies to set their own threshold for qualifications and customise assessments with comprehensive testing options for each team and job opening and safeguards against cheating. By standardising the technical assessment process, CodeSignal is changing traditional hiring practices and focusing on the applicant who can do the job and do it right. ■

RecWebs

Time for a new website?

Enter RecWebs.

We combine the best design with unrivalled customer service.

It's time for a recruitment website provider that not only cares but will make sure your business is succeeding.



SCAN ME



recwebs.com

FUTURE CALLING

Simon Roderick, managing director of Fram Search on the use of video interviewing.

I've been in the recruitment industry since 2000. It's an industry you either love or run a mile from, and I've loved it from the first day I set foot in a recruitment office. I've worked in search, and in agency recruitment and I've seen the highs and lows of the industry from the boom times of the early noughties to the panic of the financial crisis. However, nothing felt like the week after the budget in late March of 2020.

People talk about atmospheres almost being tangible and nothing I've ever experienced felt more tangible than the atmosphere that week. Simply put, everyone I met was scared. As whole industries realised they'd either have to close or work remotely, I think many thought we'd bought a speed pass back to 1929. It was only when furlough was announced at the end of that week that some calm returned, but for the recruitment industry, so ingrained in an office culture, so used to meeting people face to face, many firms had two questions: Can we operate 100 per cent online? Will anyone actually hire?

Fortunately, the industry is resilient, and having worked through two major recessions I'd tell anyone starting out in the industry that someone is always recruiting somewhere. However, I appreciate each recruitment firm supports a different industry, and I feel very lucky that Fram supports the financial services industry, which has proved to be very robust.

Race to online

The recruitment industry, though, needed to adapt quickly and overnight we had to go from one that prides itself on meeting people face to face, to meeting them virtually. We had to become Zoom, Teams, and Hangouts experts and to find some intellectual books to put on our background shelves. Candidates and clients wanted guidance on what video interview etiquette was at a time no culture had yet developed (now we all know it's smart casual). We all wondered if anyone would hire without ever meeting the candidate, but many firms now have and the results have been fabulous.

I would say that the results for recruiters have been fabulous too. One of the most valuable commodities recruiters have is their time, and many don't realise how valuable this is. In London, it's not uncommon for consultants to venture across town for a speculative coffee, without realising the true cost of the meeting (your annual billings divided by the hours you work may give you more insight into the cost of that quick coffee). Of course, recruiters still need to meet people to build their network and not every meeting will add revenue immediately, but by cutting out the travel time and by not leaving a desk, productivity has improved enormously.

Will we go back to meeting people face to face? I can't wait, but we mustn't lose the productivity gains of the last year and many candidates will prefer an initial video meeting. I suspect a high percentage of first interviews held by clients will also remain online.

Clients too have been amazed how attendance to their events have increased since they've gone online. Perhaps online events are lower commitment, many have also commented that they are more inclusive. It's easier for working parents to log into an event than to have to rearrange childcare commitments. Of course, you can argue that during lockdown online events were a welcome distraction, but I think events will continue to have an online element, as will education, and of course many of the new internet food shoppers won't return to stores.

How big and lasting is this shift is something we'll be debating until the evidence is in, many years after the pandemic has passed. My own preference is for a hybrid of the 'old world' and the 'new world'. Is the office finished? In my view definitely not, and I suspect they will make a strong comeback a year or two after the pandemic passes. However, will more people work from home occasionally? Undoubtedly. Will many first interviews be conducted online? Yes, hiring managers don't want to go back to interviewing until 7 p.m. in an office, only to face a long commute home.

I feel very positive about the recruitment industry's future. Whilst the last year has been the most dramatic in its history, many firms will emerge better and the dynamics for the industry could be very good for some time once the threat of the pandemic, and restrictions, have passed. ■

Ready to start up or scale up your own business?

Enjoy the financial rewards with our **45 YEAR WINNING FORMULA!**



"The back-office support offered in areas such as HR and IT have been instrumental to our success. It has always been a can-do response to getting things done... and left us free to win more business."

Director, HR GO Recruitment Liverpool



Get in touch for a confidential chat
Call 01233 722 452

hrgopl.com/JV

JOIN US

Seamus Hoar, Senior Partner at global legal search firm Major, Lindsey & Africa on virtual hiring in the Law sector.

Uncertainty and nervousness were dished up to our planet, unordered; the global pandemic had arrived in the form of COVID-19 and there was no sending it back. Very little, if anything, has not been affected either directly or indirectly by this unforeseen and awful arrival. This article may seem inconsequential, but rest assured it is not a polemic or a diminution of the impact it has had on too many lives; it is merely an observation regarding how the pandemic impacted on business in general and law firms, in particular, in relation to hiring processes.

A major concern was how organisations would continue to find, screen and acquire senior individuals whilst all being locked down. Necessity is the mother of invention or, to be a little more practical, the mother already had some kids in the form of Teams, Zoom and existing conferencing technology. Law firms, the clients I work with, were able to rise to the challenge and virtual hiring came to the fore. In fact, in the legal sector (after some sonorous knee-knocking) went into overdrive and the appetite to acquire individual partners and teams drove recruitment processes into the badly-lit embrace of virtual hiring.

Legal recruitment and the pandemic

Traditional business practises were turned on their head almost overnight. However, initial anxiety quickly gave way to levels of business activity unseen since pre-GFC days. In the wake of Covid's social and economic 'upper-cut', practices such as M&A, private equity, finance and technology (amongst others) boomed. As such, there was – and remains – a real and rapacious need to hire lateral partners. The result has been a transfer market which is red-lining. To execute on securing top level hires and, importantly, to continue servicing client demand, law firms have been impressively agile. Remote interviewing and virtual onboarding were introduced almost overnight.

Speed is both helpful and critical

The pandemic's key change to all recruitment is obvious: the physical became digital. Pre-pandemic, in industries like the law, it was typical for a senior move to be preceded by a string of face-to-face meetings both domestic and international with inherent and real confidentiality concerns. But in 2020, with one (maybe two) prods of the 'Join' button and a deft ability to 'Unmute' the meeting was convened. Firms were able to congregate large groups of partners, across time zones, without the prospective lateral having to leave a library-backgrounded home office.

Clearly, the efficiency technology afforded has been immense. Intense competition to secure lateral partners amongst top law firms in key practice areas meant the ability to secure a marginal gain was or is a 'must'.

As the markets open up with capital being deployed, we know that hiring is on the up in many sectors, with many partners also receptive for new opportunities. As the lateral battle intensifies, what the legal market shows us is that swift decision making is no longer just desirable, it has become essential for pulling ahead of the pack. There is no doubt that at the senior level there is no real substitute for in-person meetings. Hiring is not an exact science; it is an art. In the case of law firms where the business structure is a partnership, each partner has a financial interest in the success of any new partner or team. The same goes for the partner joining the firm. The economics of the deal on both sides must work, of course, but it will be the personal chemistry which seals it.

Getting to know digital faces

What's more, 18 months ago, very few partners, if any, would have considered joining a firm without meeting a courting firm's senior team or visiting its offices, a sentiment that I am sure is mirrored in many other 'people-driven' industries. However, the pandemic has changed attitudes as much as it has changed processes.

It is a lesson useful to all. There is no substitute for in-person meetings, but we have been thrown a curve ball and, in a very short space of time, have adapted, admirably, to a new normal. I, and many of my colleagues, have completed lateral processes conducted entirely remotely. Some candidates have been fine with this, others more reticent. Nonetheless, there is proof of concept albeit one that we have had little choice in employing.

By way of example, we were working with a senior candidate in the early, in-person interview stages when the pandemic first struck. Fortunately, the hiring firm was on the front foot in adapting to virtual meetings and the candidate's process was minimally disrupted. In fact, we found that they had quicker and easier access to the firm, as they were able to schedule more frequent calls with the senior team and ultimately gained exposure to a greater number of people, including international colleagues. Finally, once the partner had started, the entire integration process was executed successfully by way of remote meetings.

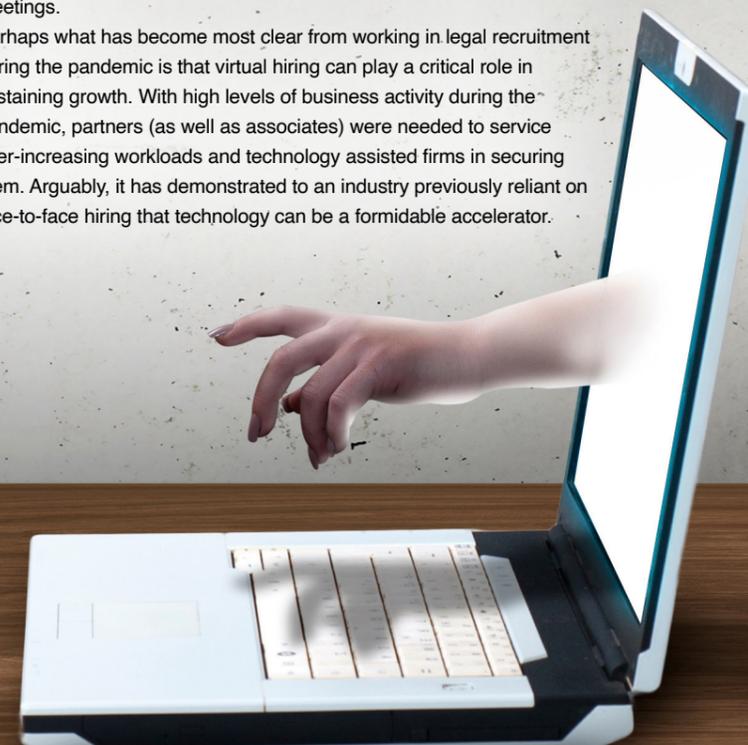
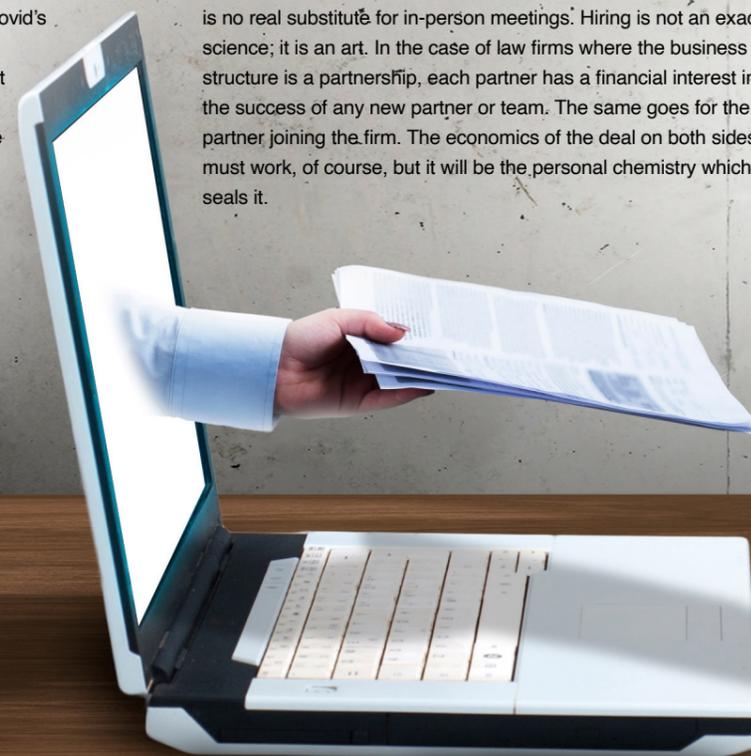
Perhaps what has become most clear from working in legal recruitment during the pandemic is that virtual hiring can play a critical role in sustaining growth. With high levels of business activity during the pandemic, partners (as well as associates) were needed to service ever-increasing workloads and technology assisted firms in securing them. Arguably, it has demonstrated to an industry previously reliant on face-to-face hiring that technology can be a formidable accelerator.

Where now?

The pandemic has changed attitudes to working life, principally around the need to be permanently based in an office. There has been more than enough commentary around the various ramifications of a new attitude towards office attendance but, for what it's worth and as it relates to the sector in which I operate, law firms seem to have taken a pragmatic view on accommodating this change to working 'norms'. Nonetheless, this has been balanced with the fact that law firms, like many other businesses, work hard to maintain a culture. In pursuit of this there will be, and is, a return to being able to meet prospective partners in person.

Many of the law firms, particularly US, remain hungry to acquire accretive, high-performing partners in a transfer market which is hugely competitive. The use of virtual meetings will, in my view, now play a fundamental role in allowing firms to act swiftly and efficiently in securing important hires. It will not, of course, replace in-person meetings; rather, it will be an additional piece of hiring firepower. Law firms who embrace the use of technology as it relates to lateral hiring will have that all-important marginal gain.

I'm now on mute... ■



DIGITAL RIGHT

Julie Dawson, Head of Policy and Regulatory, Yoti on the last-minute reprieve for digital 'Right to Work' checks.

For any business employing staff in the UK, right to work checks are an essential requirement. Prior to COVID-19, these checks had to be carried out in-person – physically taking a passport or driving licence to your employer or HR to be verified and usually photocopied – an outdated process and personal data security risk.

Fast forward to the COVID-19 outbreak with lockdowns and stay at home mandates issued, digital hiring swiftly became the norm. Identity documents were provided digitally and checked via video call – a system that became incredibly popular with employers. Over half a million people were able to enter new employment this way during lockdown. But despite its success and the sentiment from businesses that Digital ID checks are a more secure, agile and efficient method of identifying people, in March of this year the Home Office announced a decision to revert back to in-person hiring.

Thanks to pressure from the business community, we then saw extensions to the plans – firstly to June 21st, then to 1st September 2021 and now another extension – to April 5th, 2022, has just been announced, just days away from the reintroduction. It appears that calls from the likes of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) to urgently request a further delay have finally been heard!

Digital by default

It begs the question of why has it taken so long for the government to listen and respond to industry voices – and a U-turn coming just days before the in-person checks were to be reinstated? If the UK government is serious about 'building back better', the 'levelling up agenda' and promoting a 'digital by default' strategy, they need to commit to a permanent digital solution. The key to supporting a thriving and internationally competitive economy is to embrace modern and flexible working practises, reduce regional imbalances and support people who may be able to be recruited and work remotely.

Rather than implement a further extension, we should be celebrating the success of digital checks as a rare silver lining from the pandemic that has updated our screening and recruitment practises and made them more equitable.

The update from the government implies that they're undertaking a review of specialist technology which could support the permanent implementation of digital Right to Work checks – good news for all, but why has it taken so long to get to this point? It would be helpful to know what success looks like and the areas that they are tracking – this way, leaders can help the government in their reviews and support the right decision.

Still, consultation on the topic is healthy and hopefully it will lead to a long-term digital strategy for employer right to work checks, spanning HR, recruitment, civil society, disability charities and technology professionals including digital identity experts, absolutely key to this being successful.

The evidence is already here – digital identity checks are more efficient, reducing recruitment time and getting people into jobs faster (the estimation is that face-to-face process adds 75 per cent more in time terms) and they streamline the process for both job seekers and employers.

The process also reduces travel costs for new recruits and enables a wider pool of applicants to apply for roles and reduce geographic barriers to employment. If a return to in-person checks next April is still on the cards, considerable thought will need to be given to how in-person checks will be achieved for organisations whose offices still might not have reopened or have closed their doors, with home working the new norm. Should we be asking candidates to meet in informal venues such as cafes, bars, public places or people's homes to review sensitive identity documents? Do we want to risk identity documents being posted to HR and recruitment staff at their home addresses – creating wider risks of theft, fraud and loss? The mind boggles.

There are many industries here in the UK that are struggling to rebuild their workforces and reopen at capacity in the backdrop of the pandemic. We need to continue to embrace solutions that help relieve the pressures, not leap from one extension to another – or even stand a chance of turning back the clock. Our leaders must continue to listen to industry voices and make sure that building back better happens on a permanent basis. ■

Join the collaborative community for recruitment leaders to drive performance and profitability with purpose.

At The Recruitment Network we have a variety of areas to help our members run a more profitable business, increase shareholder value and scale their recruitment business.

Through your membership you get access to .

<p>Knowledge centre hundreds of articles, guides and videos</p>	<p>Toolkit A fully stocked library of tools and templates</p>	<p>Training & courses A suite of online video based training courses</p>
<p>Leadership Academy equip leaders with confidence, tools and techniques to impact performance</p>	<p>Webinars & Podcasts Weekly podcasts and seminars run with industry leaders</p>	<p>Community Peer-to-peer community of leaders to share ideas & support</p>



Supported by...



IN A CANDIDATE SHORTAGE YOUR RECRUITMENT WEBSITE NEEDS TO WORK EXTRA HARD

By David Malham, Wave Client Services Director

It wasn't long ago that recruiters were experiencing an influx of candidate applications as redundancies mounted and jobs fell away. We're now experiencing the opposite problem - high jobs, low applications. WaveTrackR data for August revealed that jobs had risen to a huge 327% over the 2020 average whilst applications had dropped for the third month in a row. The result? A war for talent the likes of which we haven't seen since those distant days before the start of the pandemic. The likelihood is you're flat out trying to attract talent and could do with all the extra help you can get.

At times like this, it is even more important that your website works hard for you and really proves its worth. And that's exactly where your recruitment website comes in. Your recruitment website should provide a first-class candidate experience from the second candidates land on it to the moment they apply for one of your jobs.

Make your website work hard for you by:

Strengthening your brand and values

The design of your website is paramount to building brand trust, ensuring positive perceptions of your business and promoting your values – all of which help to make candidates feel confident that you are the recruiters that will find them the perfect job. Tie your branding into your website design and integrate that throughout the entire site. Expert design that reinforces branding goes a long way to create positive associations.

Making your jobs easy to find

Most candidates will come to your website to search for jobs - and that is exactly what you want them to do. Make it easy for them by placing a link to your jobs page in highly visible places - in the main header and as calls to action on other relevant pages. Further, your jobs should be easy to find even before a candidate lands on your site. For Google to find your jobs and rank them in relevant searches, several details must be included in your job listings, including salary, location, skills,

responsibilities, and qualifications. By optimising your job listings for Google for Jobs, candidates searching for jobs like yours are more likely to see them.

Ensuring a positive candidate journey

A positive user experience is vital to keep candidates on your website, and the journey starts here. Applications should be easy to submit, and a candidate dashboard will make it simple to view, make notes and rate each one. Being able to track where they are in the process, for example, a new application, post-interview or archived, will mean that candidates never get lost in the system or left waiting. It will help you to keep on top of your communications with candidates, making them feel valued and instilling trust.

Utilising your candidate database

If your recruitment website offers a candidate portal, you may already have the talent you need sitting right there within your website. By allowing candidates to register their CVs you can curate your searchable CV database, which can be invaluable at times of low candidate availability. With an internal talent pool, you will have top talent at your fingertips whenever the right opportunity arises.

Optimising your website for search engines

Your website should be built with best SEO practices in mind and have in-built SEO functionality so that you can continue to optimise your jobs, blogs, page titles and meta descriptions as you add them. That way your website stands the best chance of appearing in candidate searches.

Your recruitment website should be an integral part of your talent attraction strategy. If it's not, it's not doing its job properly. At times like this you need every weapon at your disposal. Utilise your recruitment website to its full potential and it will help you find talent and encourage that talent to apply for your jobs. And that is worth its weight in gold.

GENERATION WORK

Christina Ahn, MD Morgan Philips Korea discusses Korea's big talent challenge.

Despite being hit by the pandemic like all the major developed countries, Korea's recovery has been impressive to say the least, recording the fastest GDP growth in a decade in the second quarter of 2021. A recent surge in COVID-19 delta variant infections has however caused concern but the economy is proving extremely resilient.

"If we go back to the second half of 2020, government statistics revealed that recruitment activity by multinationals had fallen considerably, by around 80 per cent," says Christina S. Ahn, MD Morgan Philips Korea. "For Korean domestic conglomerates that figure was closer to 50 per cent. Yet boosted by the optimism regarding the vaccine rollout, the pick-up in the first two quarters of 2021 has been significant."

Ahn, who has studied, lived and worked across the world, including stints in the US, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan is perfectly placed to provide insight into the leadership and cultural awareness skills needed to successfully conduct business in Korea and what organisations can do to attract top talent so that they can stay one step ahead of the competition.

Agility the key to success

So what are the specialist skills that are most sought after in the current market and which are the industries that are booming? "We are seeing a steady increase in demand for digital and tech talent, including cloud computing and AI expertise. But experienced leaders in this area are scarce, so identifying and attracting senior executives is proving to be a stern challenge for many companies. Korea is also a world leader in medical devices innovation so the demand for life sciences and biotech professionals is high; consumer and FMCG brands, including luxury are thriving as are the semiconductor and automotive industries."

The pandemic has made the big Korean multinationals such as LG, SK and Hyundai – all family owned conglomerates or 'chaebols' – re-evaluate their hiring strategies, particularly their graduate programmes. Ahn continues: "The biggest change to recruitment during the pandemic was the shift from mass hiring of new university graduates by major Korean conglomerates towards a more on-demand recruitment of experienced hires. These organisations have realised that they must remain agile if they're to thrive – organisational agility has become the new normal in retaining a competitive advantage during these uncertain times."

Local knowledge, global experience

There is also a growing trend towards the hiring of Korean nationals who have gained international global experience but who equally appreciate local mores and ways of doing business in a country whose population exceeds 50 million inhabitants. "With the demand for high quality bilingual candidates increasing and executive recruitment becoming more about skills than national borders, there is a real growth opportunity for global and bilingual candidates," Ahn explains. "Making the right hire, in other words bringing in people with the right mix of experience and local knowledge, is imperative. MNEs in Korea have realised that you need a combination of global experience coupled with an in-depth understanding of the complex cultural nuances of the local business and employment markets."

With this in mind, an opportunity has presented itself for executive search providers to stand out in a crowded marketplace and provide a level of service that multinationals desire but haven't received up to this point, argues Ahn. "Until now, the 600+ headhunting firms in the local market have largely been unable to meet clients' expectations for global standard of professionalism. Morgan Philips Korea aims to engage with customers at this level of high touch consultancy to ensure that we can provide organisations with suitable and relevant talent for their increasingly global outlook."

Diversity and an increase in female role models

In a recent interview with the AMCHAM Korea Journal, Ahn spoke about the importance of aligning executive search and HR consulting. She specifies, "Traditionally, recruitment was seen as more of a transactional function within HR. But the changing business landscape and the need to engage the workforce in creative ways, whether in remote or hybrid work situations, has meant that culture, values and hiring based on alignment of such values is becoming more important. The role of HR has turned more into a highly strategic and advisory role, especially more so in the last two years and following the pandemic. The need for alignment of a company's organisational culture, HR strategy and the transactional aspect of recruitment is being felt now more than ever."

Although gender inequality remains an issue, there is an increased demand for more diverse and inclusive talent which has led to an impetus to promote more women leaders into senior positions. This has been spurred by recent regulatory changes requiring the implementation of Environment, Societal and Governance (ESG) practices. Although this is good news and a move in the right direction, as Ahn stresses, "Women in Korea lack proper mentors and role models, so we have to collectively bring about change. There are a number of organisations doing just that, which bodes well for the future." Ahn herself sits on AMCHAM Korea's women's leadership committee, the board of the German Chamber of Commerce women's mentorship programme and the British Chamber of Commerce's women in business committee.

Cultural gulf between MZ and Gen X in Korea

Although recruitment practices are becoming more diverse and inclusive in Korea, making it easier for individuals to be considered for roles, there are still obstacles to overcome. "The government has initiated 'blind' hiring practices that remove information such as gender, school name etc. but a lot of recruitment still takes place based on age in Korea due to cultural norms related to language and seniority," states Ahn. "This unfortunately often results in great talent immediately being ruled out due to a very narrow age difference from the age range specified in the job description." Hiring isn't made any easier as a result of the dichotomy among generations and notably the rise in what Koreans refers to as the 'MZ' generation (combination of Millennials and Gen Z). Although these two different age demographics share many values, including caring about climate change and social justice, not to mention their digital and tech savviness, the fundamental difference in work ethic between the MZ generation and those who come before them remains a societal challenge. According to Ahn the difficulties in recruiting "can be partially attributed to a generational shift taking place with a large cultural gap between the 'MZ' generation and Gen X."

As for giving themselves the best chance of success at interview, what do Korean candidates have to do? "Promote themselves better! This is very unique to our culture as Koreans are educated and taught to show a lot of humility, which can equate to not being assertive in fear of being perceived as arrogant or too self-serving. But how do you showcase your talent without being more assertive and aggressive? Of course there is a fine line between arrogance and confidence. While humility is an important leadership attribute, to get to those upper corporate echelons you have to also put yourself out there, raise your visibility, understand how others perceive you and increase your sphere of influence." ■

REMOTE STRESS

Research from Morgan Philips has studied the toll remote working takes on mental health.

A 2021 report by independent think tank Autonomy revealed that there is an 'overtime epidemic' in the UK as workers are putting in far longer than their contracted hours and paying the price with mental health issues such as stress, depression and anxiety. The authors argued that we all have a 'right to disconnect'.

Smartphone apps make it much harder for us to switch off, given our propensity and ability to check emails and messages throughout the day. While remote working ought to mean more flexible working and freedom, the reality is very different for the majority as we've become slaves to technology, effectively working from anywhere and at any time within our own four walls.

Morgan Philips conducted its own LinkedIn summer 2021 poll to find out more while also getting the thoughts of one of the UK's foremost stress and wellbeing in the workplace experts, Sir Cary Cooper CBE, Professor of Organisational Psychology & Health at Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester as well as holding the distinguished positions as President of the CIPD and the Institute of Welfare.

The findings did not make for pretty reading. The majority of workers said that they were indeed working overtime (59 per cent) and that over 4 in 10 (42 per cent), irrespective of whether they were or weren't working extra hours, were struggling to 'disconnect'. Remote 'presenteeism' is rife as is the ability to switch off and find a healthy work/life balance. Just over a quarter (26 per cent) were 'totally fine', which leaves an astonishing 74 per cent who were either putting in overtime, struggling with their mental health or both.

Adding structure to combat long hours culture

Commenting on the results, Professor Cooper said: "The majority of people who are working remotely are over-working and have trouble

disconnecting, with just under half of those not coping with their workload and disconnecting from the tech. Given the job insecurity that people were feeling during the pandemic, they had to show commitment given that their jobs were 100 per cent remote. Now with the advent of a hybrid model, that job insecurity is still there with the furlough support coming to an end in September.

"It will be in the interests of employers to maintain a hybrid model and in order to keep their capital costs down, organisations can scale back on their office needs, so workers will be working more flexibly. And with the exception of younger professionals, they will be working from home at least a good part of the week, whether it's 3/2 or 2/3, or whatever the split might be. As we move from remote working to a hybrid model of flexibility people will still need to think about how they structure their days more, otherwise they will work longer hours, extremely long hours."

How the recovery pans out will be critical and things could get worse before they get better. Professor Cooper continues: "A lot will depend on the economy and if we end up with a recession and job losses, then we're going to find that people will struggle more with their mental health as they'll be working longer hours. This will not get better in the short term given that workloads will likely increase as organisations cut back on staff. Statistics from the ONS have already revealed a worsening of stress, depression and anxiety post pandemic."

Focus management training on emotional intelligence

Leaders, managers and HR teams all have a part to play in checking on the mental health of their people, actively encouraging their teams to take breaks and time away from their screens. Yet another Morgan Philips survey found that incredibly two in three line managers never ask their team members how they're coping – the remaining third

said that their managers would either 'often ask' or check in 'only occasionally'. Individuals have different needs and concerns, and everything ought to be done to ensure that everyone can achieve an optimal work/life balance.

Training lies at the root of the problem according to Professor Cooper with managers' soft skills scores falling woefully short. "It is critical that organisations train line managers to deal with each one of their direct report and recognise when their workload is unmanageable. We really need a different generation of line managers with more EQ and not as is the case now managers who are promoted based on technical and not people skills. A lot of training is now needed for line managers." What exactly is emotional intelligence? It's defined as the managing and expressing one's emotions while understanding those of others. This includes being self-aware and empathetic towards others and different personality types. Some people will naturally possess higher social skills than others but these can be developed and worked on and can help us with a number of workplace situations such as conflict resolution, collaboration, coaching and motivating others – all part of the manager's toolkit.

Flexible working to attract and retain millennials

Several high profile executives have expressly stated their wish for their staff to return full time to the office. To those, Professor Cooper offers a word of warning: "The CEOs who want their staff to return full time to the office will be in trouble and lose their millennial generation. Individuals should be afforded flexibility based on the nature of their roles and tech. This should be achieved in negotiation with their bosses and HR to see what fits best for them."

Professor Cooper makes the important distinction between remote working and flexible working with the former being forced upon us. But it wasn't what individuals had in mind. "Pre-pandemic only two to three per cent of the population wanted to work from home, what they wanted was flexible working as they now feel socially isolated. The ideal solution is the hybrid model, which has accelerated a trend that was happening before COVID."

Clearly, there is a lot of pressure for workers to be at their desks all the time for fear of losing their jobs with micro-managers monitoring their every move. Financial and family pressures too, as many are concerned for their livelihoods. This has pushed them into feeling that they need to prove their loyalty and commitment to their employer, while working from home has made it harder to separate work from home life. Even though the hybrid model may make things easier in terms of the social dimension, individuals must still take care of their mental health.

Illness related absences and presenteeism cost the UK economy an estimated £92bn in 2019, which equated to a loss of 38 days per employee according to research carried out by health and life insurances provider, Vitality, prior to the pandemic. Productivity took a huge hit as a result, which meant that the UK's first productive day of 2020 was actually 21 February. As Centre for Health Chief Executive Sarah Hughes said, "Employers that take steps to support mental health at work will benefit from a more productive, happy and loyal workforce." ■