

The voice for the global staffing industry

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THE GLOBAL RECRUITER

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CURIOSITY IS KEY

**Xcede Expectations
Working with the great resignation**

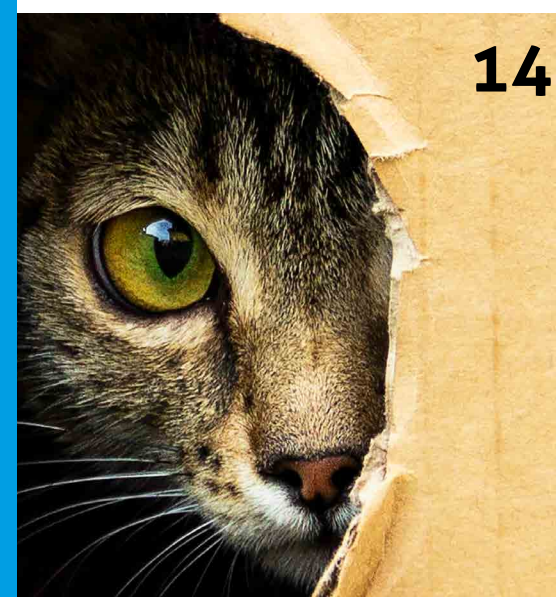
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WELCOME



SIMON KENT
EDITOR

As we get into for the year The Global Recruiter is preparing to both support the recruitment industry going forward and to celebrate its ongoing success. We are already planning our UK Summit set for June 9th in London. Under the theme of 'Your Next Move' it will be a day to find out exactly what your recruitment business' next move should be – the steps to take to grow, to be more efficient, to improve the services you offer. From technology to finance to strategy there will be a wealth of information, knowledge and experts at the event so be sure to reserve the date right now.

At the same time we're also planning our annual industry awards. Long established as the industry's own awards, The Global Recruiter UK Awards are design specifically to give a level playing field on which recruitment business can measure up to clear criteria. The awards are judged by industry experts and professionals – people who know what it takes to deliver the best in recruitment. If you've enjoyed significant wins and achievements over the last year, this is your chance to prove it and celebrate in style with your peers.

Naturally alongside this both The Global Recruiter and The Digital Recruiter will continue to bring you the best in industry news, features, stories and analysis. It continues to be an intriguing, challenging and rewarding time for the industry and it great to be at its heart.

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IR35: What does it mean to 'take reasonable care' and protect your business?

IR35, also known as "off-payroll working" rules, was introduced to help HMRC tackle tax avoidance through off-payroll working. In April 2021, the off-payroll working private sector changes 'ripped up the rulebook' when it came to determining IR35 status and who faces tax liability. The changes created two entities for HMRC to target: end clients and fee payers. If you engage with PSCs (or Limited Company Contractors) this relates to you.

A key date to bear in mind: 6 April 2022 marks the end of HRMC's 'light-touch' approach to these new rules in the private sector, meaning that **businesses working with contractors where the end client cannot demonstrate that they have taken 'reasonable care' in their IR35 decision-making could be facing penalties on top of any tax bill.**

The reasonable care requirements are set out within in [HMRC's Employment Status Manual](#).

What is does it mean to 'take reasonable care'?

Under the new regulations, HMRC is in essence placing a spotlight on the processes and systems which end client engagers have put in place to determine the status of each and every engagement with a limited company contractor.

In practical terms, end clients and recruiters must ensure:

- contracts, schedules and statements of work of the entire chain are aligned
- client policies do not impact upon the candidate's independence; and, above all that
- contractual terms and working practices support each other.

Be wary of using online assessment tools in isolation

For many, the initial prospect of online assessment tools appeared to be a sufficient method of dealing with the changes. However, reflecting on the fines paid by the Department for Work and Pensions, Home Office and other public sector bodies which used HMRC's Check of Employment Status for Tax (CEST) tool, simply utilising these tools in isolation is not sufficient to demonstrate 'reasonable care'.

Embrace a holistic approach

Not every end client has in-house IR35 expertise, so 'seeking the advice of a professional adviser' is deemed reasonable; and as long as the client 'checks and reviews processes where it subcontracts the determination process to another party', this is also an acceptable way to approach matters.

The evidence suggests that a more holistic approach is needed: specialist consultancy to ensure contractual terms are fit for purpose; a robust system for determining working practices; and a protection net for if/when HMRC challenge, including tax liability cover, if HMRC are successful.

The specialist recruitment team at Partners& is working in collaboration with strategic partner Markel Tax to provide a solution that complements our existing recruitment insurance portfolio and supports recruitment businesses to adapt to the new regulations.

Not only will Markel Tax ensure contracts are fit for purpose, clients will also have **access to a newly developed compliance assessment platform with three key benefits**

1. Ease of operation
2. Clear outcomes
3. The ability to deal with volume assessments

More than that, the solution is supported by specialist IR35 consultants from a team that has been involved with this legislation since 2000 and has had more IR35 tribunal victories than any other consultancy, including winning the first case in 2002.

Benefits of a 360° solution to recruiters

If clients can demonstrate reasonable care, the liability could be yours. That's where the due diligence pays dividends: contracts are compliant; working practices have been properly assessed; and when you insure the liability, you have a specialist team to defend your position and cover which pays the liability. By creating a solution that focuses on building resilience into a business, we can help agencies to mitigate risk, demonstrate "reasonable care" and achieve a more attractive proposition, enabling them to attract and retain the best contractor talent.

To understand more about what this opportunity could mean for your agency speak to our recruitment team today:



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NEW RECRUITER TRAINING

APSCo partners with expert in inclusive talent solutions

DIVERSITY
EQUALITY
INCLUSION

The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) has partnered with Adam Tobias from Inventum Group, a leader in inclusive talent solutions, to deliver a game changing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) training programme for the recruitment sector. With staffing firms facing a shortage of both recruitment consultants and candidates for end clients, the trade association for the professional staffing sector has launched its Inclusive+ Recruiter ED&I training programme. Those who complete the course and pass the end of course online assessment will earn an industry recognised Inclusive+ Recruiter badge to demonstrate to end hirers

that they are fully trained in diverse recruitment practices. The course covers:

- Building the business case for diversity, overcoming objections and how your clients can benefit;
- Unconscious bias and how it impacts the recruitment process;
- Attracting talent through inclusive job ads and building an inclusive brand;
- Conducting and scoring inclusive competency-based interviews;
- Ensuring legal compliance with the Equality Act.

"It's no secret that the staffing sector is facing a significant talent shortage when it comes to their own people and the candidates they source for end clients," said Ann Swain, CEO of APSCo. "While

inclusive hiring practices should be a priority regardless of the talent market, in such a candidate scarce environment, diverse recruitment becomes more critical. This new training course has been designed specifically for the staffing sector and is delivered by an expert in the field of inclusive recruitment. For those businesses looking to give their company an edge, having Inclusive+ Recruiters will certainly be of benefit."

"Everyone's looking for new talent at the moment," Adam Tobias added, "but in order to bring new people in, understanding the importance of equity, diversity and inclusion is critical. Around 80% of new entrants in the job market see ED&I as a key factor in their

decision to join a business – or in some cases, not to. For staffing firms looking to source not only candidates for clients but also new consultants for their own business, being a inclusive recruiter is crucial to success.

"People get the business case for diversity," Tobias said. "The challenge to overcome now, though, is building the confidence across our businesses to enable everyone to have meaningful conversations with clients, candidates and colleagues, without fear. This training course will provide individuals with a practical toolkit to help them become a more inclusive recruiter."

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NEW LIFE

New life sciences staffing agency launched by tech recruiters

Technology staffing firm, Engtal has launched a brand-new company to support clients with life science talent solutions. Biotat is the brainchild of Chris Atiyah and Mark Znowski, who also established Engtal in 2017, one of America's leading technology staffing specialists. After a period of significant industry growth, Biotat was founded to connect companies in the life science, biotechnology, pharmaceutical, and healthcare industries across the US, with the best talent in the world. Biotat's client portfolio includes growing life science start-ups to Fortune 500 enterprises.

The life sciences sector is witnessing accelerated growth, unprecedented levels of innovation, and increasing demand for talented and experienced professionals; Biotat will support clients to access talent across the marketplace and to all aspects of the life sciences, biotech, and pharma functions. Biotat is founded by Christopher Atiyah, founder and CEO of Engtal, a fast-growing staffing company specialising in tech talent. Christopher has over 15 years of global staffing experience, specialising in talent management services and is highly regarded across Europe and the US for his expertise in talent management,

previously scaling one of the world's leading staffing firms before embarking on building Biotat's position in the marketplace. President and chairman, Mark Znowski is an entrepreneur who, throughout his 20-year career, has worked extensively in the technology, finance, and energy industries. In 2003, Mark founded Staffgroup, a multimillion-dollar recruitment firm with global offices in the UK, Germany, and the US. Leading Biotat is Alexis Hood, a life sciences recruiter with a micro specialist focusing on life sciences, biotech, pharma, and medical devices industries. Alexis is highly regarded for her solution-focused approach and has quickly become the recruitment partner of choice for global life sciences companies across the USA. Joining Alexis is Gabrielle Johnson, a highly professional and capable recruiter with a wealth of industry experience in the life sciences market.

Christopher Atiyah, CEO of Biotat, said "Life Sciences is a fascinating sector, seeing incredible advances in science and technology, and the demand for experienced professionals is high. With leading expertise in the sector, Biotat will support some of the most innovative and exciting companies to change the world. As a high-growth sector, this is an exciting opportunity, and I am delighted to appoint Alexis and Gabrielle to the team to drive us forward on this journey."

"The expansion of Engtal with the addition of Biotat is extremely exciting in the past few years we've seen overlap in the tech and medical industries," said Alexis Hood, head of brand – Biotat. "We are honoured to have the opportunity to launch a life science focused brand and work within the biotechnology, medical device and pharmaceutical sectors. Engtal already feels like home for the Biotat team and we're ecstatic to help employees find theirs!"

GLU GROWS

New website and rebrand for Glu Recruit to kick off a year of growth

Glu Recruit, the South Yorkshire based specialist recruitment consultancy, have kicked off a 'year of growth and new opportunities' with the launch of a new website, along with the evolution of their brand identity. The new website has been developed to make the job seeking process more streamlined for candidates, enabling them to easily register for job alerts and apply for vacancies tailored to their individual skills sets and job requirements. Designed to generate more inbound candidate enquiries, the website will in turn benefit employers across the Sheffield City Region as candidates are matched quickly and more accurately to vacancies across Glu's specialist areas of recruitment. Rob Shaw, managing director of Glu Recruit said: "This is so exciting for us at Glu Recruit, and a real line in the sand to kick off a year of growth and new opportunities for the business and all our staff."

"We're expanding rapidly, registering a record number of candidates in January 2022, as well as building more new client partnerships than ever before, which is resulting in a big expansion of our team as we continue our own internal recruitment drive to make sure we continue to provide the best possible recruitment service. The development of our brand alongside this growth has therefore become essential to ensure we continue to evolve as a company. "A big part of the new website is allowing candidates to sign up to real time personalised job alerts direct to their inbox or mobile, enabling them to act fast when a suitable vacancy arises. Job alerts can be tailored to the type of role and location a job seeker is looking for, saving them time and the hassle of having to search multiple job boards." Shaw also said the company had made it easier for candidates to register for permanent or

temporary employment, upload their CV and identification, register for job alerts, and apply for vacancies directly from the website. For employers, the process is just as simple, providing an easy portal for them to add and value their current vacancies. "Huge thanks go to everyone involved in the process; our wonderful staff, web agency Fishtank and marketing consultancy Hallmark Branding. We're thrilled with the results and can't wait to see how this helps with the next stage in the evolution of Glu Recruit."



SUPER START SUPERTEMPS

North Wales recruiters start the year with new partnerships and expansion plans

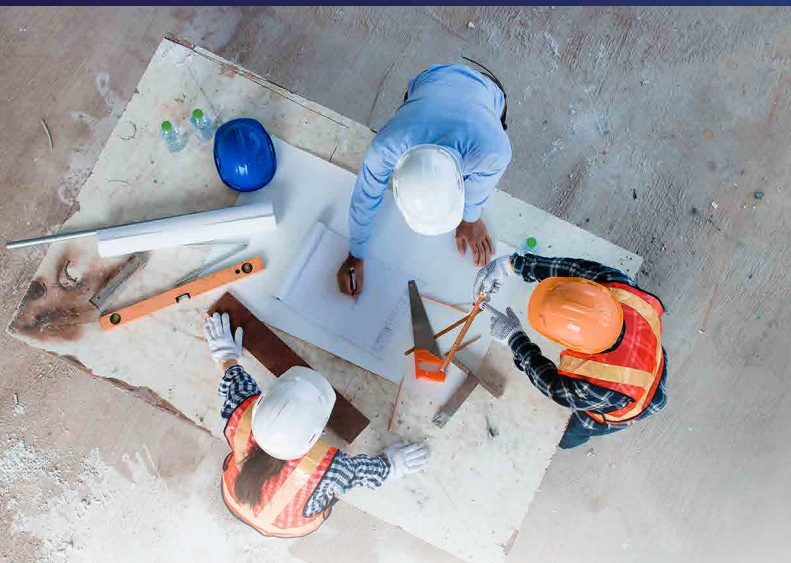


The team at Colwyn Bay and Bangor-based Supertemps have been inundated with clients seeking employees in multiple industries over the winter months. Managing director Sarah Ellwood says demand is increasing for staff in sectors including IT, hospitality, retail, and manufacturing, but warned bosses to move fast for fear of losing out on their ideal applicant. "The market has been candidate-driven for quite some time but since the onset of the pandemic it has reached new levels," said Sarah. "Often businesses will have to make

the decision immediately because if they wait even a few hours another offer will have been made and the applicant snapped up. "We are urging managers and their HR departments to move quickly or miss out." With burgeoning private and public sector contracts in place – North Wales Fire and Rescue Service among them – and plans to take on new staff of their own, Sarah is thrilled to see the long-standing firm make its way back from the challenges of the Covid-19 crisis. Llinos Gutierrez-Jones, head of

Human Resources for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, said: "We have a number of support staff vacancies being advertised currently, and Supertemps are playing a key role in helping us recruit the right people for these rewarding roles." Sarah added: "It has been a tough time, for Supertemps and so many of the companies we work with in this region and beyond, but the green shoots are appearing. "As before we have a lot in store for the year, including our annual employment law event with Manchester-based JMW Solicitors,

so we hope to see lots of people join us for that. "The pandemic has raised many HR and recruitment issues that were unprecedented, so they will be on hand to answer any questions you may have. "Thanks as always to our amazing clients, collaborators and partners for your support – we wish you all the best of luck for 2022." The free employment seminar and Q&A will be held virtually on Tuesday March 8 from 10am. To register, visit <https://employmentlawupdate2022.eventbrite.co.uk>.



ENGINEERING DEMAND

Hays expands engineering recruitment service to meet demand

Hays, the leading recruiting experts has expanded its engineering offering to meet growing demand in the market across the UK and Ireland. Headed up by Paul Gibbens, director of Hays Engineering, the business area has grown it's headcount by 289 per cent since 2020 and is continuing to hire for both experienced and entry level recruitment professionals. Its Centres for Excellence for engineering recruitment are based London, Bristol, the Midlands, Leeds, Scotland, Liverpool,

Northern Ireland, Grimsby, Burnley and in March, the team will begin recruiting for engineering talent in Dublin, Ireland. Since 2020, Hays Engineering has quadrupled its fee performance as demand for engineering talent has continued to grow. The team specialises in the supply of technical engineering personnel throughout the UK supporting major projects within the areas of nuclear, petrochemical, defence, rail, MOD & aerospace, manufacturing, oil, gas, petrochemical, ports, marine & aviation, power, nuclear &

utilities, scientific, pharmaceutical & chemical, renewables and green energy. The aim is to support the UK's net zero targets with an unrivalled network of high quality and engaged professionals, with the skills to meet the green ambitions. Paul Gibbens commented: "Career opportunities within engineering are at a peak. Requirements for renewables and green energy roles are increasing by the day, whilst manufacturing, power and nuclear job requirements are increasing by the hour across the UK and Ireland. "The demand for talent is real, with

engineering and manufacturing sector requirements at their highest levels in the fifteen years I've been working in recruitment," he added. "This has been further hampered by a reduction in the numbers of skilled engineers, given that many decided to take early retirement since the pandemic." As demand continues to increase, Gibbens believes Hays Engineering has a big part to play in supporting organisations with the engineering talent they need.

FURTHER RESIGNATION

One in two British workers considering new role

Research by Ipsos has found that in the last three months 47 per cent of British workers have either looked for another job (29 per cent), thought about quitting their job (26 per cent), applied for another job (13 per cent) or spoken to their employer about resigning (6 per cent). The research suggests that 2022 will be a turbulent year in the jobs market, putting pressure on employers to do more to retain staff. More than a quarter of workers (27 per cent) have either asked for a pay rise (12 per cent), a promotion (9 per cent) or spoken to their employer about changing their role (13 per cent). Worryingly for employers, 51 per cent of workers who did not receive a pay rise last year have subsequently thought about leaving or actively looked to leave – but so have 44 per cent of those who did receive a pay rise. Younger workers are the most restless – 56 per cent of those aged 16-34 say they have considered quitting or are looking or applying for a job outside their current company. They are also the most likely to demand a pay rise or promotion – 42 per cent of 16-34 year

old workers have tried to negotiate improved job conditions compared with 24 per cent of those aged 35-54 and 11 per cent of those aged 55 or over. Men are more confident than women about asking for a pay rise, promotion or change of role (32 per cent compared to 22 per cent), although there was no gender difference in the percentages looking for a new job or considering quitting. For those who are happy with their job, salary, while important, is not the main cause of job satisfaction. More important factors are the type of work they do (43 per cent), work/life balance (38 per cent), colleagues (36 per cent), how interesting their work is (35 per cent) and how secure their job is (35 per cent). Thirty-four per cent say salary was a factor in job fulfillment. However, amongst those who are dissatisfied with their current job, more than half (55 per cent) cite pay as the main reason. This is easily the most significant factor – other reasons given are issues with their line manager (28 per cent) or senior management (24 per cent); their workload (27 per cent); how interesting their work is (27 per

cent); the type of work they do (24 per cent); and the overall culture at work (26 per cent). Almost half of British workers (49 per cent) say they did not receive a pay rise, or any increase in their income, in 2021. Even amongst those fortunate enough to have received a pay rise, two in five say it was less than the rate of inflation (40 per cent), whilst 33 per cent received a raise of about the same as inflation. Only 20 per cent received a pay increase higher than inflation. Men fared much better than women – 55 per cent say they received a pay rise, compared to 39 per cent of women. Across the workforce, there is widespread pessimism about financial prospects in the coming months. Almost six in ten workers (57 per cent) think it is unlikely they will receive a pay rise higher than inflation – which is estimated to peak at 6 per cent in April – whilst only 31 per cent believe they are likely to receive an inflation-busting pay rise. "A new year might make workers take a fresh look at their job, and our data suggests many are at least

thinking about this – although they are more likely to consider leaving their job than asking for a pay rise or promotion at their current place of work," said Trinh Tu, managing director of public affairs at Ipsos UK. "People who are dissatisfied with their job are, of course, particularly likely to consider leaving, with pay a key driver of this. But it should be noted that they are in the minority – most people are at least fairly happy at work, and for reasons that extend beyond pay, such as for the type of work they do, their work-life balance, their colleagues and job security. "That doesn't mean there is much hope among workers that their pay will outstrip the cost-of-living crisis," Tu added. "Only a minority are optimistic that they will get an inflation-busting pay rise this year, and even fewer report receiving one last year. This, combined with continued gender differences in pay rises and asking for promotions, suggests British employers shouldn't take job satisfaction among their workers for granted."

THE GREAT MISMATCH

Denis Pennel, managing director, World Employment Confederation
on how HR services can contribute to a better world of work.

When it comes to workplace expectations, employees and employers are often not on the same page. In some cases, they are reading entirely different chapters! The Covid-18 pandemic has significantly increased gaps in the labour market, leading to an unprecedented level of dissatisfaction and mismatches. The HR services industry has a clear contribution to make to build back labour markets better.

As an individual or an organisation, there are always many opportunities to reimagine how we want to work. But only once in a lifetime, are we faced with the chance to implement an entirely new way of working. This is the unique situation that we are facing today. Much has been said about the impact of the Covid pandemic on the world of work. Now is the time to regenerate work and to implement new ways of working – both on-the-ground and in management practices. The good news is that there is no other way to move forward, the status quo is not an option and most of the trends that have affected labour markets over the past two years have been accelerated and amplified by the pandemic. Those trends include a wider use of diverse forms of work, remote working, digitalisation, and polarisation of labour markets. In addition, several new trends have emerged, such as the rise in output-oriented work, the need to re-invent social interactions within the workplace and the growing importance of physical and emotional wellbeing issues at work.

The one-million-dollar question is: what will be the world of work's Next Normal resulting from the pandemic? Many articles and studies have tried to coin a term describing the new situation: the Great Attrition, the Great Reshuffle, the Great Resignation, the Great Re-evaluation etc. What is beyond question is the fact that the pandemic strained and tested the worker-employer relationship beyond anyone's anticipation,

resulting in a situation where labour markets are facing what I call 'The Great Mismatch'. This new situation, in which employee and employer expectations have never seemed to be so unaligned, is characterised by tight labour markets and skills shortages, a workforce that feels disconnected and less motivated, and people willing to go back to the office on their own terms but not willing to give up the flexibility and autonomy that they have gained over the past two years.

Expectation and practice

What are the concrete symptoms of this Great Mismatch and the increasing gap between worker expectations and employer practices? Well, 19 million US workers have quit their job since April 2021. 54% of the 800 million LinkedIn users have changed their jobs on their profile, reflecting either a new position or a change in their career. People have re-evaluated what work means to them and acted consequently. At a global level, 41% of employees are considering leaving their current employer and 46% are likely to move because they can now work remotely. 73% of employees want flexible, remote work options to remain. From the employer's side, 64% of them expect voluntary turnover to remain elevated or to increase within the next six months. Indeed, more workers want to shift from an hours-based to an outcome-based working environment but employers struggle to gauge productivity based on "output and merit" as teams have become remote and dispersed. Moreover, only 36% of workers feel that their managers are assessing their performance based on results. And while mental health is a big issue for many workers, 67% of them say that leaders don't meet

their expectations in checking up on their mental well-being. As a consequence, satisfaction with leadership at non-management and worker relationship levels is low. Motivation and a sense of team and company culture have clearly deteriorated over the past year... Another illustration of the Great Mismatch is the fact that many people have deserted the labour market altogether. In several developed economies, early retirement and sickness (whether long term or temporary) have led to an increase in levels of inactivity/decline in employment levels. Besides, because of lockdowns, people have realised that, without the social interactions with colleagues, their job proved to be useless and meaningless (the famous "bullshit jobs") or jobs that were simply underpaid and over painful (the Great Covid Reveal). Many parents (mostly women...) have also disappeared from the world of work to take care of their families, due to the difficulties in accessing adequate childcare during lockdown situations. As a result, many countries are experiencing tight labour markets, with a high level of skills shortages, especially in the construction, manufacturing, leisure and hospitality sectors. Employers are struggling to recruit talent and to retain their best employees: 69% of companies around the globe are reporting talent shortages and difficulty in hiring – at a 15-year high. Against that background, the HR services industry is on a mission to address those mismatches and create labour contractual arrangements that would reconcile the expectations of both sides – workers and employers. The labour market's Next Normal will require a full diversity of working arrangements, with decent and fulfilling work opportunities and adequate social protections for all. This is precisely what the HR services sector has been striving for in recent decades via social innovation!

The Great Rethink

The HR Services industry is there to support employers in rethinking how employees should be recruited, managed and retained, providing career planning and guidance. Thanks to their expertise, private employment agencies assist companies in reviewing how their employees' working conditions can be adapted, in a flexible way, including possibilities to work remotely, non-standard working hours, and offering different options to formalise the contractual arrangement (part-time, fixed or agency work contract). One thing that we can be certain about in the Next Normal is that when it comes to the employer-employee relationship we will need to abandon a one-size-fits-all approach.

Adapting to a changing world of work is in the DNA of the HR services industry – contributing to aligning the expectations of employees and employers and creating a workplace that meets the emotional and career needs of its workers, as well as the HR & business needs of the company. One thing is for sure: employers will have to satisfy the new expectations of workers. Higher pay, more flexible hours, enhanced benefits and perks, better treatment and more autonomy are the new demands for those who have remained in the labour market. These are issues that the HR services industry has been working on for many years, developing expertise, innovative practices, and demand-driven solutions.

As the world of work reinvents itself, the future of the HR services industry can only be bright as it contributes to making the employee-employer relationship more pleasant, agreeable to as many people as possible, meaningful and enjoyable! ■

WORKING WITH THE GREAT RESIGNATION

David Leithead, COO, Morgan McKinley discusses their report into the current workforce.

If you've moved jobs recently, then you're certainly not alone. There has been a mass movement of professionals leaving their employment in search of new opportunities.

Referred to as the Great Resignation, research suggests the pandemic has triggered people around the world to re-evaluate the direction of their careers. For some organisations, this is an unparalleled threat. For others, it is a golden opportunity to secure accomplished talent that will add value for years to come.

To gain an understanding of how organisations are trying to combat this challenge and attract, hire, retain and engage people, we surveyed key hiring decision makers from 62 companies across a range of industries. Comparing those insights to the findings from 4,134 professionals who also responded gives a picture of whether there is a mismatch in expectations between employee and employer in the current hiring climate. People were surveyed across Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Mainland China, Japan, Canada, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. Respondents were from a variety of professional industries, giving a global and diverse representation of what companies are doing to combat the Great Resignation, as well as what professionals value most.

1. Talent Attraction: The Most Effective Methods Of Hiring

Every individual has different motivations for wanting to leave their current job and move into a new role. Hiring organisations are constantly adjusting their offerings so they are aligned to the most recent 'job seeker desires' trends.

The top three reasons that professionals outlined for moving into a new job – in order of importance – were:

1. Increase in salary/compensation package
2. Career growth and professional development
3. Increased flexibility

These findings were relatively consistent with the reasons given for wanting to leave their current role:

1. Current salary/compensation package
2. Lack of career progression opportunities
3. Relationship with manager

It's clear that receiving a pay rise largely dictates an individual's career

choices, and they also want to continually improve their long-term prospects by embracing progression opportunities. But that shouldn't be the be all and end all...

The employer respondents outlined 'Offering increased salaries/compensation packages' as the most frequently selected talent attraction strategy in the current competitive hiring market. Closely behind was 'Engaging (specialist) recruitment agencies' and then 'Improving our Employee Value Proposition'.

When it comes to the most effective approach, organisations have seen the most success (by some distance) in securing the talent they want by increasing salaries/compensation. The next two most effective methods were 'Improved Employee Value Proposition (EVP)' and 'Reduced time to hire'.

In a market where job seekers appear to have the upper hand, organisations are upping their remuneration offerings in an attempt to 'outprice' competitors, relying on the expert assistance of specialist recruiters who have access to less obvious and more diverse talent pools, and rethinking how they market their company to prospective employees in terms of adjusting their values to be more aligned to professionals' expectations. For those employers who are losing team members to other companies that are willing to pay more, perhaps keeping abreast of market rates by using salary guides and offering more regular pay reviews would stem the flow.

2. Hiring Process Length: How Long Is Too Long?

A lengthy hiring process has always been listed as a prominent reason as to why job seekers drop out of a move to a new role.

When the 4,134 professional respondents were asked 'How long should a hiring process be – at the maximum – before you would consider accepting a competitor's job offer?': 50 per cent responded '2-4 weeks', 31 per cent said '1-2 weeks', whilst 18 per cent stated '1-2 months'. The remaining 1 per cent selected 'Other', with an enormous range of responses covering <1 week, up to 6 months and beyond.

When gauging this against the 62 hiring decision makers' responses, it's clear that candidates' expectations for hiring process length are unlikely to be met: 44 per cent of hiring organisations outlined 1-2 months as the average length of their hiring processes, with only 29 per cent selecting 2-4 weeks.



When you consider that shorter hiring processes was the third most successful strategy for hiring talent, those organisations who continue with hiring processes that are unnecessarily lengthy are less likely to secure the talent they need.

This appears to be confirmed by hiring organisations in response to our question 'Have you ever lost your preferred candidate due to a lengthy hiring process?' – a 65 per cent majority responded yes. Interestingly, there was an almost even split when asking whether professionals had ever declined a job offer due to the length of the hiring process: 52 per cent said no, whilst 48 per cent have rejected an offer that took too long (in their opinion) to be made.

3. Flexible Working: High On The Agenda, And Here To Stay

With the hybrid work approach now firmly established in most industries across organisations globally, it is not surprising that the overwhelming

majority of employer respondents (81 per cent) stated that their organisation 'Offers flexible working' in some capacity.

Interestingly, the proportion was smaller across the professional respondents: 70 per cent of professionals said that their company offers flexible working.

Looking deeper into the type of flexible work on offer from organisations:

- 27 per cent allow employees to work fully remotely
- 26 per cent have 2-3 mandatory days in the office
- 16 per cent have 1-2 mandatory days in the office

The remaining 31 per cent responded 'Other' and outlined an enormous range of flexible working options, including: "Employee preference", "2-4 days from home monthly", "In the office once per quarter" and "Fixed days in the office only by project need".

A number of respondents mentioned how their hybrid working policy was still a work-in-progress. Taking the time to make the right long-term call is a better approach than implementing something for the interim and then backtracking further down the line.

“Employers might be wary of the risks and would be well advised to make whatever policies they have about remote working abundantly clear to their workforces. A straight reversion to what was in place before the pandemic might not sit too well with a number of your employees.”

Lionel Kaidatzis | Managing Director, Morgan McKinley Japan

Just to signify how important flexibility in the workplace is to professionals, respondents were asked ‘Would you consider leaving your current organisation if they didn’t provide you with your preferred flexible working options?’. 62 per cent responded ‘Yes’, showing that employers should acknowledge their team members’ preferences on this matter or risk losing them to another role where flexibility is more available.

4. Retention Of Talent: Attempts To Combat The ‘Great Resignation’

In an attempt to combat the ‘Great Resignation’, organisations have looked at their retention strategies and realigned them to be more relevant to the expectations of professionals. When key hiring decision makers were asked what their organisation is doing to hold on to talent, the most common response was ‘Offering professional development and upskilling opportunities’, followed by ‘Offering more flexible and remote work options’, and ‘Investing in technologies to make work easier for our employees’. Some organisations are thinking outside of the box when it comes to retention, hoping that their innovative differentiators will prevent employees from wanting to move. Some things that were highlighted include: “Implementing effective employee recognition techniques that work well with remote teams”, “Offering retention bonuses”, “Offering a wellness package comprising coaching, mental health care, medical cover, and financial wellness”, and “Increased communication on corporate strategy and programmes”. The picture painted by professional respondents is quite concerning. Startlingly, the most common response to ‘What is your employer doing to retain talent?’ was ‘I don’t know’. This lack of visibility over how an organisation is attempting to hold on to its own employees is a worrying display of a breakdown in communication across a business. As you well know, communication is an integral part of creating and maintaining an engaged workforce.

The next three most frequent answers from professionals around what their employer is doing to retain them were:

1. ‘More flexible and remote work options’
2. ‘Professional development and upskilling opportunities’
3. ‘Investment in technologies to make work easier’

It is positive that companies are offering a heightened level of professional development opportunities to better equip their workforce for the future – especially as it’s the second most important thing for professionals in terms of looking for a new job, and a lack of it is the 2nd most common reason for leaving their existing role.

This said, employee retention strategies – whatever they are and whether they are old or new – should always be communicated to the entire workforce.

Despite the rejuvenated attempts at retention from organisations, it still seems like the ‘Great Resignation’ is a prominent threat. As an employer, improving your approach to retention may become a more urgent focus sooner than you think: An overwhelming 84 per cent of professionals who responded to our survey are ‘considering a career move in the next 6-12 months’.

At a time when the job seeker has the upper hand, companies have to continue adjusting their retention strategies, as well as their methods of talent attraction, in order to maintain a workforce that will help them achieve their business objectives over the coming year and beyond.

Times Have Changed...It’s Time To Adapt And Act

For organisations, the one key takeaway from this research should be around the need to adapt. The working world has changed significantly in the last two years, and the attitudes of professionals have shifted accordingly.

You will have to be more accommodating in terms of flexible working, job seekers will push you (potentially to the limits of your budget) when negotiating their salary and if you can shorten your hiring process, then you stand more chance of success. ■

A HEALTHY APPROACH

Richard Holmes, Director of Wellbeing at Westfield Health discusses how to embed wellbeing into your workplace.

Wellbeing at work means a lot of different things to a lot of different people and at the moment there’s a renewed focus on supporting your people’s health at work after nearly two years of pandemic mayhem. Your initiatives can range from the large to the small, and an employee wellbeing strategy should have many strands. Half of businesses have a standalone wellbeing strategy according to a CIPD survey, while over 80 per cent have updated it to support employees’ mental health and their personal needs during the pandemic. It’s positive to see that many businesses’ strategies are evolving with employee needs. There are some fun and interesting ways you can keep your wellbeing strategy fluid. Here are some innovative ways you can embed wellbeing deeper into your workplace.

Staff care packages

The last two years have been challenging for your people in varying ways. Some have had to juggle childcare while working from home. Others may have caught the virus and been very ill. Many people have lost loved ones. A lot of us have struggled with loneliness. You can show not only your appreciation for your employees but also how much you care about them by gifting them personalised care packages. If winding down after a stressful day is difficult for some of the team, consider providing a care package with relaxing bath salts and soothing teas. Equally, if sleep has been a problem, include a lavender-scented spray and an eye mask. If physical health is also part of your wellbeing strategy, you could include a range of healthy snacks and drinks to keep your people satisfied and motivated at their work. Because, let’s face it, it’s all too easy to reach for the chocolate and crisps snack box when you hit the 3pm slump.

Create wellbeing areas

Your wellbeing strategy should include initiatives to reduce employee stress, whether that’s through workload management or remote working days. But sometimes, your employees can still experience stress in the workplace. Having dedicated areas for them to take a moment away from their desk and the bustling office can help.

We’ve all seen images of the likes of Google’s offices, which have ample spaces for beanbag chairs, crazy golf, classic arcade games, and designated personal pods for privacy. But what if your office doesn’t have that kind of space?

Turning one of your meeting rooms into a dedicated wellbeing zone could be an option for businesses in smaller offices. Even if all you have in there are some comfy seats, it’s a much more relaxing environment than the busy office floor. Adding things like arcade games, pool tables, or TVs will add an extra layer of fun for your people, but ultimately a safe, quiet space is the biggest priority. Pepper in some oxygen-releasing plants for extra stress-busting properties.

Offer a range of wellbeing activities

A lot of people want to improve their wellbeing but may feel like they don’t have time to dedicate to it between busy work and home lives. So why not offer them the opportunity to do this during the workday? Firstly, identify what type of activities your employees would like to see. If they’ve struggled with their mental health during the pandemic, virtual mental health seminars could help. Equally, you could provide confidential telephone counselling services so they can seek one-to-one help. You could also offer classes before, during, or after work on a range of activities. Yoga is a great one for office-based employees who may be tense after a long day of sitting at a desk. Dance classes can encourage physical activity in a fun, no-pressure environment. According to the CIPD Only a quarter of businesses offer onsite exercise or relaxation classes, so this is an area where many organisations can improve. Your business’ approach to employee wellbeing should be multi-faceted. Alongside a high-level business strategy that takes into account workloads and employee stress, there are fun and innovative ways you can embed wellbeing into your organisation. Although businesses prioritised wellbeing in 2021, 66 per cent of employees still want more wellbeing support. Whether you set up some dance classes to let your people blow off steam in a healthy way or you provide regular care packages, there are so many ways to show your people that you care.

SEEKING NEW

Curiosity is now a coveted job skill says Laurie Miles, Director of Analytics, SAS UK & Ireland.

Curiosity helps businesses address critical challenges, from driving productivity, creative thinking and stronger collaboration, to improving job satisfaction. It's why, amid the Great Resignation, there is increasing value being placed on curiosity as a workplace skill. According to recent research by Deutsche Bank, people in the UK are quitting their jobs at a rate not seen in over a decade, leaving businesses trying to figure out how to retain top talent.

Managers and directors are finding it especially challenging to keep employee morale and motivation high. It is part of the reason businesses are finding it more difficult to retain people and encourage employees to push beyond just basic job duties and drive cross-collaboration with other teams and departments.

Managers agree that curiosity has a real business impact and that employees who have more curiosity are higher performers. Our research, Curiosity@Work paints a powerful picture that curiosity is no longer just a 'nice to have'. It is a business imperative that helps companies address critical challenges and foster innovation to gain an edge over their competitors.

With this in mind, the key question for managers and those in charge of recruiting and retaining talent is, how do I encourage curiosity?

The majority of managers SAS surveyed believe curiosity is valuable, but many face challenges identifying and nurturing this skill. In fact, more than two in five managers admit they feel only somewhat or not equipped to pinpoint curiosity in job applicants (56 per cent), and direct reports (52 per cent).

Even when managers feel they are equipped to identify this trait, many say they struggle with connecting curiosity to job performance (48 per cent), developing curiosity in employees who don't naturally have it (43 per cent) and identifying situations for which curiosity is most useful (40 per cent).

Commitment to encouraging this skill among the workforce must come from the top down. It should be reflected in an organisation's mission, vision and values, performance reviews, and hiring practices. It is not enough to establish curiosity in company dialogue and procedures; curiosity cannot sustain itself on lip-service alone. Instead, organisations must earnestly devote themselves toward developing curiosity-rich environments through employee education, opportunities and skills building, increased availability of data, and advancements in digital integration.

Curiosity has to be embedded within a company's culture to allow them to truly reap the benefits.

How does SAS promote curiosity?

At SAS, curiosity is our code. Without curiosity the work we do with businesses around the world wouldn't be possible. It takes curiosity to question the data and information we analyse to unlock the full power of AI and analytics.

In fact, we sometimes need to be curious at the very outset about the problems the business is trying to solve – is it the right business problem to be addressing or should something else be looked at first? Here are some examples of how we integrate curiosity into our teams, starting from an individual's very first day;

Job descriptions framed around curiosity – this shows how and why we value it as a critical skill to be successful and happy. All job description templates start with: Are you a problem solver, explorer, and knowledge seeker – always asking, "what if?"

Interview questions – hiring managers are equipped with questions that they can ask during the interview process to: a) help them recognise a curious person, and b) give potential hires an opportunity to express their curiosity.

New hire orientation – From day 1, SAS employees are reminded that their curiosity matters!

New hires' curiosity about working at SAS is encouraged with a lineup of engaging sessions about SAS' impact, brand, culture and rewards.

Training – at SAS, managers are encouraged to check in with employees around core competencies in regular 1:1s and evaluate employee performance based on these factors.

Curiosity Day – a day set aside to celebrate and foster employees' curiosity.

What are the benefits from embracing curiosity?

From our Curiosity@Work research around half of managers strongly agree that curiosity drives real business impact and that employees who have more curiosity are higher performers.

Businesses are recognising that their people are their number one resource, particularly in the age of advanced technology which brings new opportunities. AI is increasingly automating repetitive tasks which is freeing up employees' time to be creative, so the importance of a curious mindset will only increase.

Curiosity can address key business challenges and drive new innovations. For organisations that can effectively tap into the power of curiosity among their employees, it provides a powerful competitive advantage, leaving those organisations who fail to embrace this trait at risk of falling behind and losing some of their best talent. ■

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VENTURE FORTH

Bullhorn launches Bullhorn Ventures to support high-potential, early-stage staffing and recruitment companies

START UP

Bullhorn has announced the launch of Bullhorn Ventures, a dedicated corporate venture capital resource that will invest in and partner with high-potential, early-stage companies focused on helping staffing and recruiting firms improve operational efficiency and boost top-line growth. Bullhorn Ventures will launch initially with \$20 million allocated for investments. The staffing and recruiting industry is going through unprecedented change as employment bounces back from lows during the pandemic. Firms are challenged by the growth of online talent platforms, rising expectations from talent set by the consumer digital experience, and market growth, which has put

a premium on talent acquisition. Bullhorn has long been a technology innovator for the staffing industry and will continue to advance and innovate on the Bullhorn platform to help customers solve their most pressing challenges. In addition, Bullhorn Ventures will look to invest in startups that uniquely address these challenges and others, helping firms navigate and grow in the current environment. Bullhorn Ventures will build relationships with early-stage companies via investment as well as by offering expertise and insights through Bullhorn's partnership programs, which are designed to help companies serve Bullhorn customers' needs. Bullhorn has directly acquired

several ecosystem participants, and these investments return consistently strong performance. Past acquisitions of ecosystem partners include PeopleNet (time capture), Herefish (automation and candidate engagement), Sirenum (workforce management), and Cube19 (analytics). Expanding to be able to invest in early-stage companies is a natural evolution of Bullhorn's M&A strategy, which has always been focused on providing customers additional capability and choice. "The pace of innovation within staffing and recruitment is always accelerating, and we're excited to be investing in the technology to help our customers put the world to work, especially during

these times," said Art Papas, CEO of Bullhorn. "Forming Bullhorn Ventures will build on our successful track record of scaling innovation and advancing the staffing and recruitment industry." "We have deep experience investing in innovation," said Nina Eigerman, senior vice president, alliances and business development, Bullhorn. "We will build on this experience by providing capital to our venture portfolio companies and helping them scale more rapidly through commercial relationships with our global teams. This is an exciting opportunity to accelerate innovation and effectively bring new solutions to the staffing and recruitment space."

SAAS POWER

Recruitment SaaS platform Manatal seeks to transform recruitment globally

Recruitment and onboarding SaaS platform Manatal have closed US\$5.1 million in seed funding from Sequoia India's Surge alongside angel investors. This funding round comes as the company is quickly scaling. They have placed close to 100,000 people in jobs since 2019 and are used in over 130 countries while revenues have grown three times every year. The fresh funds will be channelled into engineering as the startup looks to enhance their product offering and AI-recommendation engine in the following months.

Thousands of SMEs, tech

companies and startups have joined Manatal as it aims to become the leading recruitment platform for millions of SMEs while ensuring the highest security and confidentiality with user data. According to a case study by McKinsey & Company, companies can realise a 40 per cent increase in the quality of hires and a 12 per cent decrease in first year attrition after they become more thoughtful and data-driven about hiring. As the war for talent continues to intensify amidst changing employee expectations and an increasingly borderless world, companies

are also looking for simplified technology-based platforms to enhance their candidate experience. This is to ensure that recruiters have time to focus more on strategic interactions with stakeholders and candidates and less on the tactical aspects of the process. "Manatal was designed to hire faster and better in a world where getting the best talents is critical for any company's success," said co-founder and CEO of Manatal, Jeremy Fichet. "With Manatal, companies can now match the perfect fit for positions they are

recruiting for in minutes. We're proud of the success the platform has seen and are looking forward to further expanding our global reach."

Manatal was founded in January 2019 by Jeremy Fichet (French) and Yassine Bel Mamoun (Moroccan) in Bangkok, Thailand. Jeremy has held senior positions in companies like Cdiscount, Orami and Groupon for over 15 years. Yassine has worked as an IT Consultant at Agility Factory, Data Scientist at Orami and served as a Quantitative Research Analyst at BNP Paribas.

FLEXIBLE IT, FLEXIBLE WORKFORCE

GoTo introduces GoTo Resolve – IT management for a flexible workforce

GoTo, formerly known as LogMeIn has announced the release of a new IT management & support (ITSM) product, GoTo Resolve. GoTo Resolve modernises IT support by bringing together all the tools small and mid-size businesses (SMBs) need to manage and support employees in a flexible, secure, and conversational way. GoTo Resolve includes a feature-rich free-tier making premium, secure IT management & support accessible to businesses of all sizes.

With IT teams supporting employees in locations that range from corporate headquarters, to dispersed home offices, to those on-the-go, IT problems have grown and evolved, placing additional stress on these teams and causing greater frustrations for employees. GoTo Resolve will simplify and create much-needed experience

consistency to IT by bringing together GoTo's years of expertise in world-class IT management & support functionality with an all-new conversational ticketing feature set in a single, consolidated product. The new product is built with the IT needs of today at the forefront in a modern, intuitive interface, with enterprise grade security including first of its kind zero trust access controls, consumer-grade ease of use, and the ability to deploy in minutes for free, or at a value-tested price point.

"GoTo Resolve offers IT leaders a holistic approach to supporting the IT needs of today's digital-first workforce," said Dave Campbell, vice president of product for GoTo Resolve and Remote Solutions Group at GoTo. "What we have brought to market will fundamentally change and democratise how employees engage with service

desks and how IT responds to problems. Whether it's by bringing together reactive and proactive support features into a single interface, developing a conversational approach to problem requests and resolutions, or introducing a first of its kind zero trust security architecture, we've developed a product that takes direct aim at the struggles IT teams are facing every day. Over the past few months, positive feedback from GoTo Resolve's beta has been very encouraging citing benefits such as the speed and ease of use, to GoTo Resolve serving as a tool built with the agent experience in mind. GoTo Resolve improves the overall experience for everyone by helping to keep devices secure and functional while employees stay productive from wherever they choose to get work done."



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PEOPLE TECH

Pierre Lindmark, founder and CEO of Winningtemp discusses how HR tools can help rather than hinder employees.

There is one department shouldering much of the stresses as employers continue to embrace hybrid working. You guessed it – Human Resources (HR). HR teams are now a corporate priority, as companies are learning that sustaining a positive work environment is vital for an organisation's success. For example, a report by the American Psychological Association found that 89 per cent of workers at companies that supported wellbeing initiatives reported being more likely to recommend their company as a good place to work. By contrast, half of those working at companies with little-to-no support for wellbeing said they intend to leave their job in the next year. In other words, the Great Resignation is apace, and now is a critical time to put the employee experience top of the HR agenda.

The HR tech conundrum

While hybrid working is giving employees more flexibility to manage their day as they would like, the lack of in-person meeting makes it harder for employers to ensure each employee has a great experience. As a result, many companies have become reliant on tech tools and data collection to assess the quality of their employee experience.

Access to these tools and data sets is critical to measure employee wellbeing. But make no mistake: employers must use them to both keep an eye on the current health of the organisation and identify trends and patterns over time. These trends allow employers and HR departments to take action to retain employees and improve their wellbeing. Unfortunately, many HR tech tools are currently used to surveil employees. For example, algorithmic productivity tracking tools track the activity of individual users and provide personalised reports to managers and leadership. This can be problematic from an employee experience perspective. A recent report even stated that tracking employee productivity through AI was damaging for employees' mental health, resulting in all party parliamentary group combining forces to create an 'accountability for algorithms act', which will be designed to regulate the use of AI in the workplace. Luckily, some HR tools are applying this technology in a different way

and are focussing on understanding the employee experience and the conditions that staff need to thrive. So, how can organisations ensure the applications being used are improving staff wellbeing and increasing employee retention, rather than negatively impacting employee's mental health and wellbeing?

Tracking employees is wrong

As businesses scrambled to transition to home working, there was an increase in algorithmic productivity tracking tools, which track the activity of individual employees closely by recording keystrokes, hours spent active online, or tracking GPS and email. In these cases, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithms to track employees is problematic and can be detrimental for employee's health as it can undermine trust and commitment amongst staff and increase pressure, stress and burn out.

The tracking of individuals in this manner is also short sighted, as the UK is now facing 'The Great Resignation', where record numbers of employees are leaving their organisations in search of better balance for themselves. If this employee exodus has taught us anything, it's that competition for talent is intense and employees are aware that they hold the cards as much as employers do.

As an employer, companies need to motivate people to continually choose their organisation. This means prioritising and evaluating the types of HR tools they use. Organisations should prioritise tools which improve the employee experience and engage with employees in a sensible, caring and respectful way. Once organisations do this, the HR platforms they implement are more likely to be used in a way that impacts employee experience more positively.

Using HR tech to improve employee wellbeing

If we flip the coin, HR tech tools have a central role to play in helping organisations invest in their employees' wellbeing. Used wisely, tools that help HR teams and employers gather better data around employees

will help shape, fortify, and continually optimise a people strategy. These include metrics such as employee engagement, relationships with managers, friction or lack thereof and career fulfilment – all of which were traditionally recorded once a year in an all-encompassing employee survey. This format is no longer suitable in a digital-first world where employees' voices can – and should – be heard regularly.

Today, we are able to provide much closer support to employees and help address pain points much faster through technology. Data-based tools have replaced traditional employee surveys, offering a platform based on AI and machine learning that automatically measures and gives qualitative insights into how the employees of an organisation compare to set data points. Tools can then identify at-risk employee groups and suggest immediate measures. The system automates which questions should be sent to an employee, based not only on their previous answers but also on the patterns and learnings. For example, there is a matrix of triggers that typically lead to a departure and platforms can recognise these when a team member displays behavioural patterns in their responses that are like those who have left their position in the last 3-5 months. These triggers typically include several factors such as stunted career growth, compensation, lack of personal development, tenure, disengagement, unclear communication, or a sense of futility.

It's worth clarifying that these surveys should always be anonymised to maximise employee engagement and provide workers with a safe space to express themselves freely. These anonymised survey results should then be presented at the group and organisational level – never at an individual one, which would beat the purpose of creating an open environment in the first place.

Once the AI-powered tool has gathered the data and analysed patterns, employers can use these trends to work with HR to figure out how many people are quitting, where the highest turnover risk is, why they are leaving, and how to minimise the triggers that lead to employees leaving the company. Using this aggregate data, HR and business leaders can also create a data-driven, employee-first strategy to develop and retain talent.

When used effectively, AI HR tools can be a positive force for checking in on employees to see if conditions are trending towards burnout, high turnover, or sickness absence. Organisations can then use this insight to create accurate suggestions on how to rectify this situation before the employee decides to leave. This form of intervention is particularly vital to safeguard mental health and wellbeing with a more distributed workforce and decreased facetime.

The future of work

Remote and hybrid working disrupted almost every industry and the rapid uptake of AI and algorithm tools that track individual employees closely have come under criticism.

By utilising AI tools which rely on anonymised, valid data, and aim to give employees a means to voice their perspectives, organisations can not only fix issues before they snowball but also significantly bolsters productivity, understand staff and optimise their people strategy.

While it's clear that recruitment will always be an important part of HR's mission, it shouldn't be in response to employee exodus that could have been prevented with efficient and frequent employee surveys. Instead, recruitment should be focused on growing headcount in organisations that promote employee wellbeing and work-life balance, safe in the knowledge this sentiment is shared by their workforce. ■

MEETING DIGITAL DEMAND

Victoria Neeson, CEO of Dreamtek and Rachel Peters, EVP at Team People
on why companies are turning to external support to get the edge.

Attracting and obtaining tech talent has become increasingly challenging over the past few years. Technology is now in every industry and with an estimated 75 billion connected devices in the world by 2025, it's becoming more difficult for businesses to service customer needs. As demand often surpasses supply, the need for customers to gain access to credible staff is rising – but with this often comes a lengthy and costly hiring process that can actually hinder progress. As a result, Dreamtek's Talent Division was born, helping the global video production company deliver enhanced production value through premium managed staffing services. Recognising the increased demand for niche and specialist skills, Dreamtek combined forces with the 4th largest creative staffing provider in the US TeamPeople through a strategic acquisition that allows both our companies to fulfil changing customer demands on a global scale.

As the pandemic drove businesses from IRL to online-only, the world of virtual has soared. So much so that companies are struggling to develop strategies and events that are optimised for a digital experience. It's now crucial that companies understand and implement virtual tech tools as the virtual and hybrid world continues to develop – Zoom, OBS and VMix are all key. The fast-paced nature of these evolving technologies is something that many companies aren't equipped to keep up with and for those working in events and production, the level of understanding required within the tools used is extensive and often niche. With Dreamtek's technological and production expertise combined with TeamPeople's creative workforce solutions, we have the added capability as a specialist staffing agency to manage global services from conception and planning to build, delivery and operation. As the experts, our teams ensure that the technology is not only understood but also delivered and exceeded against the expectations of the role. As an extension of a client's team, we're able to really hone in on the methodology and manage the production/service efficiently (including providing direct access to our recruiters and extensive database, handling all vetting and curating a refined roster of talent), helping businesses focus on their core offerings.

From technological advancements to the new normal of virtual-based working, businesses have moved beyond the standard office etiquette – gone are the days of businesses being confined to one office or market. The advanced technology used to create virtual and hybrid based work has allowed employers to tap into much wider talent pools and as a result, instead of needing to source talent from a location within the company's geographical reach, companies are able to broaden their search.

Going global

We recognise that sourcing talent individually across global markets can be time consuming and opens up space for businesses to lose cultural cohesion. It's so important for clients, especially those that span multi-markets, to align on culture, vision and mission to ensure company growth and success. Together, we have the capabilities to provide talent services both locally and globally, and have a proven track record of success in placing international talent at some of the world's leading companies. This provides a scalable model to help support client events and content creation operations; with the added benefit of working with a company that has specialist knowledge in the type of skills, experiences and technologies that are required in order to maximise the quality of output and services offered under the request and/or contractual agreement.

The only certainty over the past two years has been knowing that uncertainty lies ahead. Businesses have had to learn how to be versatile and adapt to the constant changing needs of society. Interests have evolved and businesses have shifted in brand values and the sectors in which they operate.

Right now, recruiters are dealing with a large and increasing number of open requests as people change careers and leave the workforce. This is only going to continue but here at TeamPeople, our solution offers a 30-50 per cent reduction in time-to-fill. As companies and societies change, it's becoming increasingly more difficult for staff

members to align and keep on top of trends. Our diverse client base spanning a number of sectors, including four of the largest international NGOs in the world and some of the world's biggest tech, social media, fashion brands, requires an in-depth understanding of what makes these sectors tick and has enhanced our proposition of helping businesses adapt to cultural and societal changes and in turn, executing successful projects.

Our recent acquisition allows us to introduce new services and expertise for existing clients and offers new clients a fully integrated staffing service. Together, we're able to scale and customise our managed services as a way to help prepare for whatever comes next. With Dreamtek's proven expertise in creative video production, TeamPeople are able to expand on its mission to build dynamic media teams for a variety of outlets, including in-house studios, creative services, video content creations, marketing operations, and live and hybrid events – and vice versa, TeamPeople's global and US clientele offers a significant evolution and expansion in Dreamtek's services and expertise on a global scale.

Whilst there are certainly more challenges and changes ahead, this is an exciting opportunity for companies to revolutionise and grow their services. Specialist staffing and talent divisions offer specific expertise that meet both consumer and client expectations, whilst being affordable and providing long-lasting relationships. The future of external staffing services is growing, and an exciting future it is. ■

XCEDE EXPECTATIONS



Simon Kent talks to William Jacques, CEO of Xcede Group, on restructuring within a challenging year.



Even in the middle of the pandemic, recruitment companies have been mindful to evolve in order to bring their services to their clients in the clearest, most efficient and logical way. For Xcede Group, the transformation they have undergone has not just enhanced their existing services to clients but helped to boost performance levels throughout the business. Against a backdrop of change and challenge the company has recorded an increase of Net Fee Income by 40 per cent while also carrying out repositioning and re-branding exercises across the business.

According to William Jacques, CEO of Xcede Group, changes within the company began with a realisation that the organisation required a refresh following the merger of Xcede with Etonwood and TechStream. The resulting new structure, he argues, is a simpler and more relatable proposition for clients and ultimately staff alike. Their brands now include Xcede, EarthStream, and Etonwood with the AutoStream, CloudStream and CyberStream brands moving to operate as part of Xcede.

"It started with the realisation that we needed to refresh the feel of the organisation as a whole," says Jacques. "Three businesses coming together under one group brand, offering two technology and energy brands simplified the sales proposition. It's helped our clients understand the markets we operate in."

While giving the business some valuable and clear touch points for clients, the new model also unleashed the potential for the business to accelerate growth. This has been seen not least in the relocation of three offices to bigger spaces alongside that impressive increases in Net Fee Income.

Deciding on the new brands required a consideration of three specific channels. Firstly the business spoke to their own clients about their market perception and how the company was currently viewed. The company's marketing consultant Marmalade Marketing also gave some input and the business spoke with and received feedback from their own company staff. From this there was a clear opinion that the business should retain Xcede Group as the overall brand, retaining the value, reputation and visibility the brand held in the market.

The change certainly gave the business new energy, not least because it mirrored the potential of the market it serves: "The idea of transformation is a powerful message," says Jacques. "All the industries we serve are at the cutting edge of how new business is being formed and changed. Businesses are going through decarbonisation through the use of renewables. They are also very much engaged in data digitalisation and so on, and we're finding the talent to deliver to the heart of those programmes."

Alongside the market repositioning – or perhaps more accurately, clarification – the business has also invested internally in its own talent. An experienced HR director joined the company and is now rolling out a training and development package which includes leadership development and graduate support. At the same time the business has shifted to a more regionally driven model, enabling staff to take more responsibility for growing their part of the business while optimising the environment in which they can perform. Jacques reports that the staff have been enthusiastic and energised by the changes, very much taking advantage of the new business structure. In the midst of these changes Xcede Group has also created a more consultative talent business for its clients. In many ways, Jacques says, the new service offering capitalises on the strength of its existing businesses. Rather than providing a complete new service, it has been another opportunity to offer existing value in a more tailored way to suit the clients. The service is a great way for Xcede

Group to develop ongoing valuable partnerships with their clients, adding more value to their services and going beyond simply offering candidates to fit vacancies.

From Jacques' point of view the shift of emphasis to a more regionally driven model has also made more of the business' territorial strengths. Local knowledge and expertise is proving very popular and the new business can now deliver consistently for clients wherever they may be. The new structure has enabled different parts of the business to work together and improved communications around the world means everyone is more aware of how and what the business is doing globally.

This is another benefit of the step changes taken by the business. There is now more transparency around the business which enables Jacques and his senior leadership team to take timely and informed decisions as the business moves ahead.

"The new structure is much easier to visualise and report on," says Jacques, "and we have the technology in place to support that visualisation." On a practical basis this means the business can identify and interrogate data and trends as they emerge, responding swiftly to new opportunities. "I am able to spend more time working with the global leadership team and management teams to find further ways of leveraging the local knowledge we have in the business," explains Jacques. "The structure and the technology now means I have the toolset to support good strategic decisions. For a company recruiting into the data industries it's important that we also make use of those kinds of resources. It shows that we're doing exactly what our clients are doing and understand their businesses and the challenges they face."

Jacques also points out that the company data is not just available to him, but shared across the business so that leaders and management can also make their own informed decisions to move the business forward. He notes that there was always a very clear appetite and ambition within the business to do more, to expand, grow and do better, and now the tools are in place for the business' own talent to deliver on this.

Indeed, the new structure and brands are undoubtedly built for the future. There is the opportunity now for the separate businesses to collaborate where this helps, but the branding has also given clarity for the separate markets. Client service can be designed and dedicated to each sector as a specialist service rather than one part of a larger more general recruitment service. This structure, as Jacques suggests, doesn't 'muddy the waters' for clients, but gives them the best of both worlds – a great recruitment service that understands exactly the business sector clients are working in. As the business looks forward to, perhaps, a less challenging set of circumstances in the forthcoming year, there is no doubt that Xcede Group has created a dynamic launch pad from which it can push forward to meet existing and new client expectations. But more than that, it has created a business structure and working environment which has effectively unleashed the potential of its own workers, the leaders, managers and consultants whose job it is to meet those client expectations.

There is a sense that the reorganisation and rebranding has been a process of removing barriers and challenges for the recruitment professionals in the company, giving them clear pathways to their markets, a clear view over the direction and operation of the business and the skills and knowledge required to use these to their full potential. ■

PUSHING BOUNDARIES

Gordon Stoddart, Co Founder, The Recruitment Network considers business drive.



What's possible for this business? What might stop us?

These are two critical questions we should be continuously asking ourselves as business leaders as they've never been more critical to ask than right now, after a couple of quarters of recruiters breaking business, team and personal 'bests'. Records have been tumbling. What a time to be in recruitment! And what an opportunity for recruitment business leaders to not only ride the current wave but also unlock the magical formula of sustained success and growth for the next couple of years. It's been so good to see recruitment agencies in demand and earning well after the pandemic led disruption. However, ultimately any successful business leader is judged by their ability to deliver over the long term, rather than in a market such as the one we're experiencing now. Although I don't buy into the 'anyone can make money now', as it's still a competitive market and employers are relying on recruiters to find the talent they need, we can see the market conditions are favourable. It's been really positive to how many members of The Recruitment Network have evolved their businesses in the last 12 months, investing in best practice and aligning their service offering and talent solutions to be as relevant and valuable to clients as possible.

The challenge

Looking back, Q1 of 2021 was one of the hardest periods since lockdown 1 in March 2019 for many people. I remember at the time reviewing the challenges employers were facing and the subsequent opportunities for anyone in the talent space, including recruiters. Apart from outplacement support and IR35 advice (both of which were very much Q1 2021 issues), the range of talent related priorities offered significant opportunity to any recruitment agency who wanted to evolve the support and value they offered their clients. Employers were looking for talent; however for anyone who wanted to shift from being a transactional supplier to being a talent partner, the opportunities were endless and many TRN members have seized the opportunity. Whether it's becoming more of a strategic talent advisor, offering different workforce solutions, developing training

solutions, shaping D&I strategies, developing talent intelligence, providing information on markets and talent, helping to build employer branding strategies or simply working smarter to access the best talent pools, we have seen some real innovation from our members. Most of the challenges faced by employers 12 months ago still exist today, some of them exacerbated by a talent short market. However the continued evolution of the best recruiters won't change and others will get left behind by anyone not focused on the value they can bring. At the end of January 2022, we brought together 170 recruitment business leaders – TRN Members and TRN Partners – together at the Oval Cricket Ground for a day to review and share business strategies that would enable members to really exploit the opportunity of the next 18 months and beyond. Based around the theme of Pushing Boundaries, we investigated with input from thought leaders and experts how recruiters need to evolve to stay ahead, stay relevant and outperform the competition and what's required to build on the current momentum. The objective was simple – to ensure that the short-term performance 'high' can turn into long term success to ensure we are building a sustainably profitable business which will thrive moving forward.

The market

Keely Woodley, head of UK Corporate Finance Advisory at Grant Thornton and Business Services Sector M&A Specialist, along with corporate finance partner Mike Tillson, joined us to share their overview of the market and highlight the opportunity for any recruitment business looking to create value in the medium term. Mintel UK Recruitment Report 2021 forecast growth from £57.9 billion in 2021, growing to £65.7 in 2022 and £71.4 billion in 2025. What we have experienced in terms of increasing job vacancies and recruitment firms' profits meant that recruitment is very much back on the radar of financial investors (e.g. private equity), particularly in niche in demand markets. For those recruitment business leaders focused on creating shareholder value, in whatever shape that might be, there were some clear messages about where potential investors see potential value and Keely and Mike

shared the KPIs which drove that value from an investor perspective. These included working with diversified highly skilled candidates from in demand sectors and placements which involved high margins, long term contractors and reoccurring revenues. Equally important was the expertise and performance of the consultant team and the ability of the business to ramp up and scale, low churn and long term incentivisation. Diversified client bases and reoccurring revenues with continued growth were also high priorities for investors. These KPIs helped shape much of the discussion in terms of strategies we need to focus on in 2022. Continued focus on reoccurring revenues, continued focus on being niche experts in whatever sector we operated, continued focus on becoming even more sticky with our clients and on developing candidate focused strategies that would create competitive advantage in a candidate short market. 'Focus' was a big part of the agenda all day and it was evident when we were joined by Mike Gawthorne. Mike shared his story of the last 20 years of building the ARM/Serocor Group, including taking the business to overseas markets, mostly as managing director and as CEO, working with VCs, and concluding with a successful MBO. What was really interesting from hearing Mike's story was the leadership lessons from his experience and how Mike developed laser like focus to align the resources and energy of the business to realise their ambition. A single page vision of success and three priorities – without suggesting there weren't challenges along the way – he epitomised the principle of success being '1 per cent vision and 99 per cent alignment'. Running an SME business as it's leader can be challenging, stimulating, exhausting and hugely rewarding. The highs are higher and the lows lower than when working for someone else. The 'laser like' focus that Mike Gawthorne achieved can be difficult to achieve when you are balancing everything – short term performance vs long term success, being a manager and a leader, consolidation vs scaling, cost management vs investment, all that while working and building the team. There's a lot going on. So many of us crawled into the Christmas break on energy 'fumes'; exhausted by a tough year which even though finished well for many,

had taken its toll on people. It's so important that we learn to manage ourselves in a way that means we have that focus, avoid distraction, achieve the strategic ambition for the business while enjoying the journey. In short, we need to become even more effective leaders.

How to be productive

We were joined at the Oval by the brilliant Zena Everett, bestselling author of Crazy Busy Cure who shared with everyone how to manage ourselves in 2022, in this very demanding digital world in which we live. Zena shared how to create 'the flow' – where we are five times more productive, maximises our impact as leaders and avoids us being like so many others who spend on average only 39 per cent of their time doing 'real work' vs 'crazy work' which adds minimal value. Apart from listening to Zena and the ground breaking Cally Beaton (corporate success story and stand up comic – a great combination), the day was spent in true TRN fashion shaping and sharing strategies and tactics and benchmarking what we were doing and included workshops on building the ultimate culture, building reoccurring revenues and attracting talent to your business. The TRN community has emerged so strongly out of the last two years because of the willingness of the community – members, partners, strategic advisors and experts – to collectively learn together (successes and failures), push boundaries and support each other in the decision making and implementation of innovative strategies. We've all heard before that 'What got you here won't get you there' but it's never rung truer than in the world of 2022 recruitment... Which is why Pushing Boundaries makes so much sense as a theme this year and why we are incredibly excited at The Recruitment Network about what our members will achieve this year and beyond.

If you want to find out more about The Recruitment Network and how we help ambitious recruiters achieve their ambition, drop us a line on support@therecruitmentnetwork.com. ■