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WELCOME



SIMON KENT
EDITOR

The year seems to be speeding by and recruiters are barely taking a breath between dealing with one challenge and another. For this reason we decided to dedicate our annual industry summit to creating a space where recruiters could take stock, take on board business critical information and ideas, and get the knowledge and inspiration they need to do more.

Making Your Next Move is The Global Recruiter's UK Summit 2022. Held in London on 9th June, it's a free to attend day where you can access leading thinkers and practitioners, debate ideas and work out how your business can achieve more in the months and year ahead. From the economic environment to diversity, from technology to brand, the Summit will be the place to be to discover how you can make more of what you're doing and drive your business to greater success.

Be sure to register your attendance today and mark 9th June in your diary for the day when you can ensure your business does the best it can for clients, candidates and consultants.



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9 June 2022



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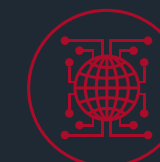
Our comprehensive programme will include:

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An overview of where recruitment is now, how it fits in with surrounding economic activity and what trends are emerging within the marketplace. We will look at what some of the fastest growing recruitment organisations are currently doing to address these trends and how to best capitalize and maximise the moment.

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Technology leaders give an insight into the impact of technology on the recruitment sector and future trends. Is automation and AI the goal to create the most efficient company, and are there alternative uses of tech which will give agencies a competitive advantage.



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[View the full programme here](#)

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The Summit is free of charge to attend. Limited space is available, so early registration is advised. If you are a supplier to the industry or R2R, there is a £1,500 fee to attend.

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Entries close: 27 June 2022

Shortlist announced: 27 July 2022

Awards Ceremony: 17 November 2022

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SPRING BACK

Recruitment industry responds to Chancellor's measures at critical time



The Chancellor's spring statement today was greatly anticipated, coming as it did at a unique and highly challenging time. Continuing Covid cases, significant rising prices, the energy crisis and the Ukraine war have all played their part in dampening down the 'bounce back' from the pandemic. In response, Rishi Sunak produced a number of measures including cutting fuel duty which he hopes will help over the months to come, though he also confirmed the increase in National Insurance will go ahead. "Today's spring statement comes after the announcement that inflation is at its highest for 30 years," noted Neil Carberry, chief executive of the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC). "There are also many tax rises coming into force next month, and the war in Ukraine is causing further uncertainty. Now is not the time to be raising

the threshold for employees is sensible and will help to soften the blow, but 60 per cent of National Insurance is paid by businesses – this tax rise will place an extra heavy burden on them, especially in labour-intensive sectors like hospitality which are already struggling. "The Chancellor's cuts to fuel duty and business rates for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses are welcome," Carberry added, "And his plan for incentivising business investment, including looking at the failed apprenticeship levy, sounds promising. But employers have been promised change before – this time, he has to deliver. It will require a real end to policy thinking being restricted to Whitehall. The recruitment industry is ready to come to the table and help government to ensure these new measures work." Elsewhere Crawford Temple, CEO of Professional Passport commented: "Whilst the

Chancellor's increase in the NI threshold will soften the blow for some, umbrella workers will still suffer as the income received by the umbrella covers the Employers National Insurance reducing the amount available for the workers pay. They then pay Employees National Insurance on their income, so he has not gone far enough to help all workers. "It was also interesting to hear his plans to increase the employment allowance as the Government is still struggling to find and shut down mini umbrella companies," he said. "The worry is that this latest move by the Chancellor will serve to further incentivise and motivate such firms to create more tax avoidance strategies. There was no reference to any increased resources of budget towards enforcement which is vital in ridding the industry of disguised remuneration schemes and it is not happening quickly enough in my opinion. "It was also notable that the Chancellor made no reference to

the Single Enforcement Body," concluded Temple. Finally Qdos CEO, Seb Maley, commented: "The Chancellor may have pulled a rabbit from his hat with the one per cent cut to income tax, but the reality is, by 2024, it could be too late. What's more, this headline-grabbing measure will do little for limited company owners who slip through the cracks – just as they did during the pandemic. "The cost of living crisis called for bold measures and so a £3000 rise in the national insurance threshold was a welcome and dare I say it, surprising development. It's also one that will ease the pressure of rising costs for all self-employed workers, whether sole traders or limited company contractors. "Having been hit hard by recent tax reforms, relieving at least some of the recent tax burden will come as a relief to small business owners who were likely fearing the worst," said Maley.

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

Spring Statement response from recruiters as workers face tough times

Measures announced by Chancellor Rishi Sunak in the Government's Spring Statement have been welcomed by the CEO of Liverpool-based Redwigwam. Lorna Davidson said: "Several of the measures announced demonstrate that he has listened to the concerns of businesses and workers and recognises the additional pressures caused by the Ukraine situation."

"I welcome the announcements regarding the cut in the basic rate of income tax to 19p in the pound and the equalising of the thresholds for National Insurance and income tax," Davidson remarked. "I was also pleased to hear about the cut in fuel duty by 5p a litre until March next year, although I'm worried this doesn't go far enough."

"The vast majority of my staff and Redwigwam's workers are driving to work and around the country, so the current high costs of fuel are a big concern for them," she noted. "Workers are really feeling it where it hurts most and that's in their pockets."

David Hedges, partner and head of employment taxes at accountancy and business advisors Azets commented: "The Chancellor has stated the Employee National Insurance starting threshold will

rise to £12,570 from July 2022 with no employee NI paid below that sum. This helps employees but there was no mention on the employer threshold. However, the Employment Allowance for employers will rise by £1,000 to £5,000. The eligibility for Employment Allowance is where an employer's NIC liability is less than £100K in the previous tax year. This will be a helpful easement for small employers which goes some way to mitigate the fact that there is no change in the Employer National Insurance threshold and which the Chancellor estimated will benefit around half a million SMEs. Hedges said he welcomed the planned discussions on reliefs such as training, qualifications and R&D tax credits, but for SMEs, these measures in combination as well as the temporary cut in fuel duty are unlikely to fully mitigate the inflationary impact of the Health and Social Care levy from April 2022. "This means there will be more pressure on SMEs from their employees to increase wages to offset the effects of increased inflation – which is predicted to rise to eight per cent this year – in order to retain valued staff." The tax cuts outlined for 2024 were also positive, said Hedges but

since SME employees are already struggling with rising living costs the support may come too late. "The Chancellor rightfully acknowledged that talent is the backbone of the economy," said Ged Mason OBE, Morson Group CEO, "and whilst it's disappointing to hear of the confirmed hike in National Insurance Contributions that directly impacts a business's bottom line, the one per cent reduction in the lowest rate of income tax was a positive boost for millions of workers."

"We're currently experiencing a hiring boom, and there are further plans to mobilise 500,000 job seekers into work by the summer," said Mason. "For the last two years, the recruitment industry has had to think innovatively about redeploying workers into sectors experiencing the most demand for resource; but today, recovery is universal, and facilitating people that are out of work back into the economy is a positive step forward to meet the inevitable talent drains that will arise as industries continue scaling back up. However, more needs to be done to ensure those entering specialist sectors for the first time, or who are retraining in new career paths, are given the support and training required."

Mason added that the Ukraine conflict and the cost of living crisis has shone a light on the UK's need to be more self-sufficient in terms of energy, and though it wasn't directly mentioned in the Chancellor's statement, the government would soon be setting out its energy security plan, which will rubber stamp investment to scale up hydrocarbon, nuclear and renewable energy generation.

"This is what this country needs today," he said, "and we're well versed in these core markets to support ongoing skills demands, be it niche and volume labour requirements." Mason argues that businesses working in these markets need immediate support to ensure the next generation is engaged with the type of work being undertaken. Without that, the country's energy ambitions may never materialise to their full potential. "It was reassuring to hear the Chancellor say that he is about to embark on a consultation of the apprenticeship levy, its effectiveness and whether it is incentivising organisations to invest in the right kinds of training, all whilst ensuring the UK taxation system works to support future pipelines of talent," said Mason.

SENIOR STRATEGIC APPOINTMENT

Globalization Partners names Nat Natarajan as Chief Product and Strategy Officer

Globalization Partners have announced the appointment of Nat (Rajesh) Natarajan as its new chief product and strategy officer. Natarajan will report to Globalization Partners' president, Bob Cahill, driving the company's innovation strategy, product vision, and roadmap. He will play an essential role as the business continues to build innovative world-class products to meet rapidly growing customer demand. A highly accomplished, operational

growth executive, Natarajan has over 27 years of experience leading global technology and engineering organisations. With a strong focus on customer experience, Natarajan most recently served as executive vice president and general manager, product and technology at RingCentral, where he led a global team of over 3,500 people, guided innovation for remote work and set the product strategy for the future of the company.

"The appointment of Nat underlines

our commitment to innovation and technology that enables the global remote workforce of the future," said Bob Cahill, president, Globalization Partners. "He is an innovator and strategist and under his leadership, our global employment cloud-based software platform will continue to lead the market, and enable us to meet the ever-evolving needs of customers around the world."

"I have followed the success of Globalization Partners in recent

years and have been hugely impressed by their transformational impact on business worldwide," said Natarajan. "I am delighted to be joining a company that combines a focus on innovation with a strong and supportive culture. There is tremendous potential to build on what's already been accomplished, and I look forward to leading our growing team."

AI IMPACT ON SKILLS

Data Literacy to be Most In-Demand Skill by 2030

Just one quarter of employees believe their employer is preparing them for a more data-oriented and automated workplace (25 per cent), according to new research from data analytics company Qlik. This is despite most business leaders predicting an upheaval in working practices due to the rapid onset of artificial intelligence (AI). With 32 per cent of employees surveyed reporting they had changed jobs in the last 12 months because their employer wasn't offering enough upskilling and training opportunities, the research has shown the need to better upskill workforces to support the workplace transition that is already underway. The report, Data Literacy: The Upskilling Evolution, was developed by Qlik in partnership with The Future Labs and combines insights from expert interviews with surveys

from over 1,200 global C-level executives and 6,000 employees. The findings, which were largely consistent across all geographies surveyed, reveal how the rapid growth in data usage is extending enterprise aspirations for its potential and, in turn, transforming working practices. As organisations shift from passive data consumption toward a state of Active Intelligence™, where continuous data becomes integrated into working practices to trigger immediate actions, the report predicts how this will impact skills requirements and professional opportunities.

The study found that business leaders and employees alike predict that data literacy – defined as the ability to read, work with, analyse and communicate with data – will be the most in-demand skill by 2030. And 81 per cent of executives

believe it will become as vital in the future as the ability to use a computer is today. This reflects the greater appreciation of data in the enterprise. Global employees surveyed report their use of data and its importance in decision-making has doubled over the past year. While 86 per cent of executives now expect all team members to be able to explain how data has informed their decisions. "We often hear people talk about how employees need to understand how Artificial Intelligence will change how they complete their role, but more importantly we need to be helping them develop the skills that enable them to add value to the output of these intelligent algorithms," said Elif Tutuk, VP of innovation & design at Qlik. "Data literacy will be critical in extending workplace collaboration beyond

human-to-human engagements, to employees augmenting machine intelligence with creativity and critical thinking." "Over the past few years, investments in digitizing most business processes have transformed the data resources available, and this will continue as we move toward a more intelligent and automated workplace," said Dr. Paul Barth, global head of data literacy at Qlik. "But investment in leading-edge data platforms has revealed a large – and expanding – gap in data literacy skills in the workforce. To become a data-driven company, where employees regularly use data and analytics to make better decisions and take informed actions, business leaders need to make investments in upskilling workers in every role to close the data literacy gap."

ENERGY SECTOR SKILLS REQUIRED

Report shows skills shortages as decarbonisation takes hold.

The sixth annual Global Energy Talent Index (GETI), the world's most established and comprehensive energy recruitment and employment trends report has revealed the transition to clean energy is accelerating a mass migration of skills from traditional to renewable sectors and a growing technical skills shortage across the energy industry. The report by Airswift and Energy Jobline found a major technical skills shortage means recruiters across all energy sectors are more likely to seek technical skills outside their company than in-house. The accelerating transition to clean energy means engineering skills are the most in-demand technical skill across all sectors. The skills shortfall is tilting the balance of power towards professionals with salaries rising across all sectors. The skills shortfall is also seeing many companies turn to automation over recruitment or talent development. Four energy sectors – power,

petrochemicals, oil and gas and renewables – are now more likely to adapt their skills to a changing energy landscape through AI and automation than through mentoring existing employees or recruiting from outside. Evidence also indicates the transition to clean energy is being accompanied by an exodus of skills from traditional to renewable energy which could exacerbate skills shortages in some sectors. Over three-quarters of professionals in traditional energy sectors would consider switching to another sector within three years and most potential career-changers in oil and gas, power and nuclear would move to renewables. This is partly influenced by concerns over climate change with over 80 per cent of professionals across all sectors saying that ESG concerns are now a factor in whether to join or leave an energy firm. Yet many renewable workers also moved to traditional sectors such as oil and gas in the last 18 months and half

of professionals in fossil fuel sectors say their organisation's ESG policies are sufficiently robust. This indicates that recent decarbonisation efforts are helping boost employee retention and recruitment across traditional energy sectors. Accelerating digitalisation to drive decarbonisation is also creating an acute shortage of digital skills, with the power, petrochemical and renewable sectors equally, or more likely, to seek digital skills outside the industry than within other energy sectors. Spiraling demand for digital skills is demonstrated by the fact that 30 per cent across all sectors list new digitally-enabled skills and competencies as the biggest opportunity for their sector over the next three years. Janette Marx, chief executive officer at Airswift, says: "Growing industry convergence around clean energy has created more porous borders between sectors and renewables is increasingly attractive because of its

sustainable mission and long-term career prospects. Instead of fighting for a limited pool of existing talent, the industry should expand the talent net to sectors such as technology where there are growing skills overlaps." "The skills shortage has made this a dream market for employees with a strong salary bounce across all sectors and a growing willingness among energy firms to hire from other sectors. An engineer on an offshore oil rig has many of the raw skills needed for an offshore wind-to-hydrogen project. That said, some firms will simply look to fill skills gaps by automating more jobs and we are already seeing automation increasing." Airswift and Energy Jobline surveyed 10,000 energy professionals and hiring managers in 166 countries across five industry sub-sectors: oil and gas, renewables, power, nuclear and petrochemicals. The report is available to download at <http://www.getireport.com>.

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Great Resignation continues as more than half of UK respondents look to change jobs

The latest Talent Index research from lifecycle management platform Beamery, has found almost half (47 per cent) of UK workers say bonuses and salaries are not rising enough to compensate for the increasing cost of living. The Index has recorded a shift of opinion from Q3 2021, when 1 in 4 workers cited a desire for work-life balance as their top priority. A total of 55 per cent of respondents now say that an increase in salary will be what helps them determine whether or not they stay in their current role. Whilst respondents felt that higher pay would encourage them to stay with their current employer, they also added it would be commensurate with the longer hours they are now working, with as many as three in five employees (59 per cent) commenting that they feel some pressure to always be online or

available outside of contracted hours. When asked where this pressure comes from, 21 per cent said it was self induced, due to notifications on their phone, a fifth (18 per cent) said being available outside contracted hours was expected by senior management, and 18 per cent said it was in response to their own general anxieties and insecurities about work. Abakar Saidov, co-founder and CEO at Beamery, said "The shift to hybrid work has clearly brought many benefits, but it has also created unforeseen issues like an always-on culture. Employers should be mindful of this and encourage managers to take a more proactive role in determining best practices that work for the business, the teams and the individual. Adopting a skills based approach to filling new roles and opportunities within the business, for

example, leads to increased interest and understanding from staff on the value of internal movement across departments. Encouraging employees to be part of new projects that will boost their skill-sets will also increase levels of motivation and commitment. The Great Resignation has, in part, been driven by an employee's lack of fulfilment from their work but talent-focused businesses are in a powerful place to proactively tackle this issue." Eager to develop and learn new skills, UK employees are already starting to take up gig jobs within their organisations. 35 per cent of men, and 22 per cent of women, said they have already taken on an internal project within the company they are employed by, whilst 67 per cent overall said they are considering doing so. This data certainly suggests that talent mobility

is a valuable area for businesses to invest in. One way to gauge employee sentiment about a role and a company is a 'stay interview'; an open conversation about an employee's career path, and their feelings towards it. Beamery's data indicates, however, that more than half (55 per cent) of employers do not yet have a stay interview process in place, which suggests businesses are missing a critical step in employee retention best practices. The Talent Index findings also share a cautionary word about making a new career choice in a hurry; with almost half (49 per cent) of UK respondents admitting that they had left a company in the past and later went on to regret it – specifically, 55 per cent of males said this, versus 45 per cent of females saying the same.

DIVERSITY LACKING

Robert Half FTSE 100 CEO Tracker reveals only nine FTSE 100 companies headed by women

a Analysis of the FTSE 100 by Robert Half has found that despite a drive for diversity at the top and numerous initiatives to support the progression of women in the workplace there are still only nine women CEOs running FTSE 100 companies. The Robert Half report considers gender, career and educational background, age and nationality of the world's most successful companies. Of the nine female CEOs in the FTSE 100, four hail from the financial sector, covering insurance, banking and asset management. These include 44-year-old Italian born Milena Mondini-de-Focatis of the Admiral Group, the youngest female CEO on the list, as well as Amanda Blanc of Aviva, Alison Rose-Slade of NatWest Group and Anne Farlow of Pershing Square Holdings. "Despite significant progress by companies to improve female representation over the last few years, there are quite simply not

enough female bosses filling the top spot in the UK's most successful companies," commented Leyla Tindall, managing director for Robert Half Executive Search. "There are a myriad of reasons for this," she added, "but the most significant is the shortage of females in leadership positions – so shortlists for C-suite roles are often not as diverse as they could be. While the introduction of shared parental leave and better support for women returners is encouraging, the time spent away from the workplace to care for a family still sets women back, while their male counterparts continue to progress." The research reveals that 68% got the top spot via internal promotion, up from 46% in 2019, suggesting that businesses are enhancing their succession planning strategies. As most CEOs move from a senior role in the same company, they are able to bring a deep understanding of the

business to their new role, but other companies may opt to headhunt someone who can bring a fresh outlook to the organisation. Once in a senior role, executives may have a clear route to the top but educational background could affect the likelihood of reaching the top echelons of the business world. Close to half (47%) have achieved some form of post-graduate qualification, with 23% holding an MBA, showing that higher education still plays a role in senior career progression. In previous years, as many as one in five (18%) of CEOs had attended Oxford or Cambridge, but their dominance in the boardroom is fading with only four from the current list of FTSE 100 CEOs having been educated at these faculties. More than two fifths of CEOs (42%) have a background in finance and banking, despite only 19 of the top 100 companies belonging to

the financial sector. Of these, 16 CEOs are Chartered Accountants or Chartered Management Accountants, making this by far the most common profession at the top. Speaking about the prevalence of finance professionals in the FTSE 100, Leyla Tindall added: "During a financial downturn, it becomes common to promote more Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) to the top job, which might explain the high proportion of CEOs with a background in finance. "We are seeing more appetite for CFOs to take over running companies as the strategic mind-set and strong financial acumen they bring are widely recognised as being vital for navigating companies through a financial downturn," she said. "However, as the economy improves, companies will look to employ visionaries to focus on growth and recovery."

'PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT' RESIGNATIONS

LHH research suggests preferential treatment for new hires could be pushing existing talent out the door

A survey conducted by recruiters LHH has revealed the factors that are tipping the scales in favour of resignation for the UK's workforce. Results suggest that as job vacancies soar to historic highs, preferential treatment of new hires tops the list of grievances that make UK employees say 'I quit'. The research, which examined the views of 2,000 UK workers, as well as more than 1,000 HR directors (HRD) and heads of learning and development (L&D) found that nearly half of employees have witnessed new hires receiving preferential treatment over the last 18 months. Close to half (45 per cent) of employees have discovered that a new hire is getting paid more than them, and a similar number (44 per cent) said their employer has advertised better benefits packages for new hires, which include benefits they don't currently receive. The findings come as the numbers of workers quitting their roles increases across the world. In the UK, job vacancies reached an all-time high

of 1.25 million between October and December 2021; more than half a million more vacancies when compared with the same period in 2020. With pressure firmly on businesses to recruit new talent, increasingly aggressive recruitment strategies may be on the horizon. However, survey findings suggest that business's focus on attracting new hires could come at the expense of their existing workforce. When employees were asked about the factors that had pushed them to hand in their notice over the last 18 months, the top three reasons cited were:

1. Finding out that new hires were receiving better benefits packages than me
2. Finding out a new hire was being paid more than me
3. Having to take time out due to burnout

Other reasons cited by employees included being denied flexible hours to accommodate last minute commitments (such as doctor appointments and childcare duties) and being contacted by colleagues

out of hours. This suggests that businesses are expecting their existing to employees to be increasingly available and committed, but that this commitment is not being properly recognised or rewarded. "There are usually multiple reasons when an employee chooses to hand in their notice, and in some instances, this is not a negative reflection of their current employer, they may simply be ready to move onto new things," explained JC Townsend, CEO of LHH UK and Ireland. "However, there are some resignations that are preventable and usually borne out of frustration with an employer. Without listening to your people or addressing their frustrations, they can build up and one final tipping point can cause an employee to hand in their notice." Findings suggest, however, that employees are not being wholly open about the reasons why they are leaving. Despite HRDs reporting increased complaints from employees about all of these grievances, only three per cent said they were cited as reasons for an

employee handing in their notice. "These findings are the tip of the iceberg and should serve as a warning to businesses," Townsend added. "Even if grievances of this nature are cited by just one employee, you need to be aware that there could be a much larger proportion of your workforce who are feeling frustrated by the same issues. Companies need to recognise the warning signs that great talent could soon be walking out the door and take steps to address this before it's too late." "This has to include open and honest conversations about things like compensation and benefits, but also how people are coping generally with their level of work and responsibilities. The historic highs we're seeing when it comes to job vacancies are not just a business challenge – they have a very real impact on the people who are picking up the extra work or putting in extra hours, in order to cover these gaps."

RECOVERY AND INNOVATION

The Global Recruiter spoke with Agostino di Maio, General Manager of Assolavoro, the Italian National Association of Work Agencies about the the Italian labour market.

Q: What are the main challenges and opportunities currently facing your labour market?

A: The Italian labour market is characterised by wide geographical (North-South) and gender (male-female) differences and cannot be assessed as a whole. In the South of the country the difficulties lie in the employment rate, which is significantly lower than in the North, while in the North the real challenge is up-skilling, re-skilling and skills shortages. A particular hurdle is the lack of specific skills for existing vacancies during a period of economic recovery, especially digital skills and those in sectors that will receive particular support from the European plans for post-pandemic recovery. Training is therefore the main asset for growth, and today we have the opportunity to support the development of a training system that can concretely guarantee the employability and professional reintegration of workers. Through Forma.temp, the bilateral fund dedicated to the training of temporary workers and financed entirely with private resources, the Italian Agency Work sector ensures the employability of workers through a tailor-made training that meets the real needs of the market. Thanks to this asset, agencies can be a driver of growth in the country.

Q: How do you see the industry's role evolving in both the short and longer term? What is the outlook for flexible staffing?

A: Over the last year, the pro-cyclical nature of agency work in Italy has been confirmed. It grew by 23.8 per cent in 2021, reaching a peak of over 510,000 workers in December 2021 with an open-ended contract rate of over 27 per cent. This confirms the effectiveness of agency work in meeting the needs of companies. Agency work in Italy is a best-in-class example and, thanks to strict regulation, workers have the same rights, the same protections and the same pay as workers employed directly by companies. Agency work represents two per cent of total employment in Italy, a number that is growing compared to 2020 (1.7 per cent).

Q: WEC is promoting social innovation as a way to accommodate new challenges. What does this mean in your market? Has that changed with the Covid crisis?

A: Italy's agency work sector was the first to react to the pandemic by guaranteeing workers, thanks to specific agreements with the sectoral trade unions, prompt payments of salary integrations (through the Solidarity Fund) and a series of specific welfare measures (through Ebitemp Fund). The actions taken in Italy have been highlighted by the OECD in its Employment Outlook 2020 as among European best practice – notably the initiatives undertaken by Assolavoro with the trade unions at various levels for the protection of workers. Recently, Assolavoro's role in social innovation has also been recognised at a global level: we were proud to be winners in the 'leadership in social innovation' category at the 2021 World Employment Confederation Awards.

Q: How prepared is your market for the post-Covid world of work?

A: The Italian labour market is reacting positively to the post-Covid phase, although in a "patchy" way and with all the contradictions and differences already mentioned. The increasingly transitional nature of the labour market and the need to guarantee the right balance between the needs of flexibility for companies and those of protection for individuals are acknowledged with difficulty: Agencies are candidates to play a leading role in this new phase of the labour market.

Q: What actions are you taking to support your members, their client companies and workers to lead in the new normal?

A: Assolavoro is constantly at the service of its members and workers. It also enjoys a fruitful dialogue with the sectoral trade unions which led to the signing of the National Collective Agreement in 2019 – something that we are now preparing to renew in the current year. The Agency Work sector in Italy supports workers through the Ebitemp Fund, guaranteeing sectoral welfare with dedicated benefits that have been enhanced with ad hoc services during the pandemic. In this complicated period, further aggravated by the war waging in Europe, we wanted to demonstrate to the Ukrainian Ambassador to Italy our full solidarity and willingness to support the Ukrainians who are in our country, or who will be arriving in the coming weeks to the best of our ability. We are also verifying what the best concrete support initiatives can be, in conjunction with the Ministry of Labour and trade unions. ■

HITTING THE ACCELERATOR

Gavin White, CEO, Autotech Group on why the UK automotive industry needs long term solutions to attract and retain talent.

The entire UK automotive industry is facing a series of challenges which are underpinned by a long-term skills shortage. The talent pool within this sector has rapidly depleted over recent years, an issue which has been acutely felt by the automotive aftermarket where there are too few vehicle technicians sufficiently trained and qualified to service and repair vehicles which have become increasingly technical over recent years. Widespread automation, together with the electrification and increased connectivity of cars, is shaking the industry to its core and demand for skilled workers is rising exponentially.

Undoubtedly, the impact of the skills shortage is reaching across all areas of the automotive industry, from, vehicle manufacturers uprooting and moving to EU countries, and the 2030 ban on new petrol and diesel car sales – a deadline which is looming ever closer. A report from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) states that the UK could suffer 90,000 automotive job losses if the Government fails to help the sector 'Build Back Better' after the COVID-19 crisis.

While this reflects the entire industry, including manufacturing, the automotive aftermarket is taking a financial hit daily as a result of labour gaps. In fact, an empty ramp can negatively hit the bottom line of a single garage by about £3,000 per week – equating to millions across the entire sector.

Many factors have contributed to the skills gap felt by the aftermarket. From vehicle technicians leaving to follow the pull of more money and

opportunities from other industries to a lack of apprentice recruitment, and the demise of the industry as a viable career option in the eyes of younger generations who only see an oily, outdated trade. Being a company entrenched within the automotive industry for over a decade now, we can honestly say that the need to implement measures to recruit and retain talent has never been more urgent. Recent surveys have revealed that many automotive businesses are putting recruitment and training into higher gear. For instance, the National Franchised Dealers Association's (NFDA) HR Survey disclosed that over 75 per cent of dealerships were looking to recruit vehicle technicians in the latter part of 2021. This is encouraging news, but to effectively implement a recruitment drive an automotive business, regardless of size, needs to take a fully rounded approach, developing and executing a well-considered plan which will see permanent employees skilled and valued, staff shortages covered, career paths clearly defined, and future talent harnessed.

Tapping into the gig economy

The pandemic put the gig economy into overdrive, upending the traditional 9-5 working world and causing many blue- and white-collar employees to pursue a freelance career.

With all the signs pointing to a future made up of hybrid workforces

focused on skills rather than tenure, growth in the freelance market is not expected to slow down any time soon. While originally the mainstay of marketeers and IT specialists, all industries, including the automotive aftermarket are now tapping into the gig economy as it's about having the right talent, in the right place, at the right time.

Just a decade ago, freelancing was relatively unheard within the motor trade. However, the industry no longer spurns the idea of taking on a temporary vehicle technician or MOT tester, regularly employing them on a short-term basis to cover any labour gaps and demand is currently outstripping the current supply.

A blended workforce will likely prove the most profitable solution for an aftermarket business, combining the expertise of permanent staff with outsourced temporary workers who can cover any shortfalls in labour or skills. Having a good understanding of the periods of time when a business may need additional support is vital and will enable them to plan and source additional resources well in advance. Undoubtedly, as a result of the pandemic, these business peaks have taken on a new pattern, but garage owners should now have a good idea of this and be able to plan for the year ahead. Whether it's to provide cover for high demand peaks, for a vehicle technician or MOT tester's prearranged absence, or to find expertise that permanent staff do not yet have, highly skilled temporary vehicle technicians are in high demand, so pre-planning is essential.

Develop and upskill existing workforce

Training needs to be a vital element of an annual strategy. Vehicle technicians need continual upskilling to ensure they have the relevant ability to service the vehicles of today – from ADAS to EV. It's also worth noting that technicians seeking new employment frequently cite lack of training as a reason for leaving a position. Its increasingly becoming an employment package must-have, and managers of an automotive business need to ensure that training is offered.

Due to the fast-paced progression of technology, there is no such thing as a fully qualified vehicle technician anymore and continuous upskilling should not be a matter of choice, but a priority. Companies who invest in the ongoing training of their technical staff and offer opportunities for progression, are not only more likely to attract and retain talent but will also gain the competitive edge over other businesses.

Harnessing a pipeline of new talent

While the need to retain talent is important, the sector unequivocally needs to be made a viable option for incoming talent.

While apprenticeships are a route to creating this necessary pipeline there is another avenue which has become an issue – and that's the lack of openings for newly qualified technicians. Every year 10,000 Level 1 to 3 automotive students who are lost to the automotive industry each year because they struggle to secure a role after qualifying.

The aftermarket's inability to retain these college leavers is down to a number of factors. Firstly, a lack of time from a garage owner's perspective. Running a business which is already struggling under the weight of a lack of resources can be detrimental to employing, and dedicating time to, a technician who lacks experience. However, newly qualified technicians hold the most up-to-date theoretical knowledge and are ready to hit the ground running and, within a matter of months, a garage could have a 'grow your own,' brand loyal, employee. Secondly, pay. The general pay scales across the sector regardless of skill, position, or job title, are low and a major hurdle to overcome, especially as a college leaver could earn more stacking shelves in a supermarket. There is movement being made with regards to pay and those garages who have adopted a higher payer structure are already reaping the rewards by employing the best available talent. But it is important that qualified technicians entering the industry are offered a good starting salary.

To break the bottleneck between colleges and the automotive industry, we have launched an initiative which is creating a steady stream of new talent into the motor sector, while providing newly qualified vehicle technicians with a first foot on the automotive career ladder through a paid internship. With the help of colleges, students are identified and interviewed before being placed on 3-12 month internships. They are equipped with tools and uniform and offered any essential training to turn them into well rounded vehicle technicians on the path of a successful automotive career.

The initiative has already been taken up by leading dealer groups, from Ford, Peugeot and VW along with independent fast fit companies – all of which is demonstrative of how the industry is beginning to explore new avenues to populate the talent pool.

The automotive industry needs a flexible, highly skilled, and productive workforce with a framework in place to attract a younger generation to safeguard its future. Without plans in place to make this a reality now – it may be a case of too little too late. ■

FLEXIBLE FOR GOOD

Monika Szabova, Environmental and Social Impact Officer and Maddie Milton, Marketing and Communications Manager at Arc discuss their business evolution.

Without a doubt, 2020 caused every business to pivot into unfamiliar territory and assess what they stood for. Nationwide recruitment and staffing agency, Arc, always wanted to be more than just a recruitment company but were so absorbed by the pre-pandemic events industry that they rarely had the headspace to strategically plan it out.

While our normal work stood still, our casual team members swapped stadia and racecourses for hospitals and Covid-19 testing centres.

Meanwhile, our directors, Michael and Paul, spent a lot of time during lockdown re-discovering the “why” of their business and exploring where they wanted it to be.

They realised that they could have a positive and lasting effect on the recruitment industry, and so formed our new vision: ‘To shape the world of flexible work into a better place for all.’

We know that our business has the power to reach so many people, businesses and communities, and our expertise in staffing and recruitment can be used as a force for good. We want our team and candidates to leave us in a better position than when we met them. This means going above and beyond the industry minimum in regard to two aspects of the triple bottom line that are often neglected – People and Planet.

Our vision has become the guiding force behind every decision we make.

We constantly ask ourselves: “Will this have a positive impact on all our stakeholders?” We looked at the bigger picture, and where we want our business to sit within that picture, and realised our pre-pandemic brand didn’t match up to our broader ambitions.



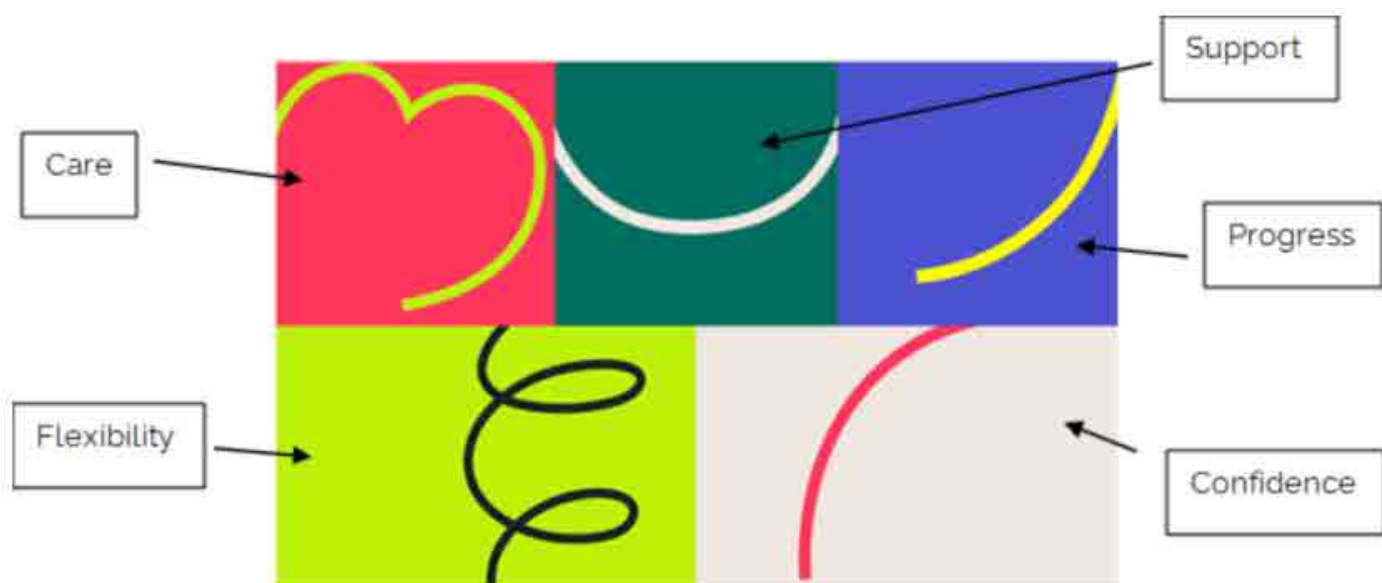


The old brand

Our old brand felt corporate, outdated, and stuffy. It didn't stand out as a business with a purpose. It did what it said on the tin but lacked depth and passion at its heart. Our new branding now has our vision at its very core. We spent time working with our employees to establish how they would describe Arc and what they associated with the brand. The idea of Arc being a journey or part of one frequently came up.

As a company, we place a lot of focus on development, investment, and support, so we wanted a bold brand that reflected this. Our new brand colours symbolise Passion, Growth, Honesty, Energy, Pragmatism and Optimism. Our graphic devices reflect Care, Support, Progress, Flexibility and Confidence.

These arcs reflect a journey from point A to B, illustrating that it doesn't matter how you get there and that every journey is different. Whether we're a small part of someone's journey or a long-term partnership, we want to support our people on their path. Our sustainability journey started by exploring B-Corp and looking at our business in a bottom-up approach. We escalated this commitment by hiring an External Sustainability Consultant to sit on our board and by creating a brand-new position in the business, an Environmental and Social Impact Officer. From here, we began devising our long-term sustainability goals in the form of an Impact Strategy. Before this, we lacked direction for our sustainability focus and had been trying to do a bit of everything. Strategising our long-term goals allowed us to focus on the issues we were most passionate about and that we had a real chance of impacting.



We settled on three core issues that our stakeholders felt most passionately about, creating three main pillars of our Impact Strategy:

- Social Inequalities
- Barriers to Employment
- The Climate Crisis

Fairer Recruitment and Staffing

We start the strategy with a focus on social sustainability, challenging social injustices and archaic views when confronted with them. We have a diverse workforce of over 12,000 casual team members, and in 14 years of business we have seen discrimination and bias first-hand. That unfortunately includes both direct and indirect discrimination.

Our research shows that casual workers may be at even greater risk of unfair and discriminatory treatment in the hospitality sector. This means it's paramount that we educate our employees on how to be an ally and stand up for those experiencing discrimination. Our overarching goal for this pillar is to lead our industry to make recruitment and staffing fairer for all. To achieve this, Arc will work with our team members, employees, industry peers and partners to develop an industry-wide initiative to change the recruitment industry for the better, for everyone.

Reducing barriers to employment

We believe everyone should feel supported and confident in their job search. The pandemic saw a surge in unemployment and people pivoting to new industries and unfamiliar positions. This Impact Strategy pillar centres around supporting people into work with consistent follow-up so they can learn and grow. Struggling to find work doesn't just affect people's income and economic prospects — it affects their health, wellbeing, and long-term life prospects, too.

Our overarching goal for this pillar is to support 1,000 people facing barriers to employment into work. We will achieve this through our employability programme — Arc Academy — where our full-time team provide a one-stop shop to support those most in need to upskill, improve their CV and interview techniques, work with job coaches and mentors, and build their network so they can find fulfilling work.

Tackling the Climate Crisis

The climate crisis is one of the biggest threats we face. Human activity is causing our planet to overheat — and we're on track to experience much more extreme and devastating weather events like heatwaves, droughts, flooding, and wildfires. We believe every business, big and small, must step up and take climate action. In our own operations, we're switching to renewable energy and cutting our carbon emissions to reach net zero by 2025. As a people-focused business, we know there's a lot of potential to inspire others to create change. That's why our overarching goal for this pillar is to educate our own people on the climate crisis and engage 5,000 of them to take climate action.

Moving forward

Our Impact Strategy will no doubt teach us lessons on the way. Our vision centres around the idea that we will continually be improving. It's not an end destination but a journey to being better. We hope that through our strategy and our vision, we will be able to take our clients, team members and even competitors on this journey, helping to shape the whole recruitment industry into a better place for all.

We hope you are as excited as we are to see our Impact Strategy in action. To read it in full, please visit www.WeAreArc.co.uk/about/OurImpact ■

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TECH APPOINTMENT

Page Outsourcing appoints PageGroup veteran Jamie Hart as Global Director of Technology Solutions

RPO specialist, Page Outsourcing, has announced the appointment of Jamie Hart as director of technology solutions. Jamie, who has most recently been leading a cross functional digital transformation team at PageGroup, joins Page Outsourcing with over 20 years of experience working in both recruitment and technology for the wider business. The move will see Jamie bring his experience of heading up the company's CRM, ATS, Global Processes and Adoption Programme teams to support the growth of PageGroup's newest and rapidly expanding Outsourcing brand.

Reporting into Page Outsourcing's global managing director, Olly Harris, Jamie will be primarily responsible for providing and applying strategic direction to the business's technology stack. Olly Harris commented: "I am delighted to welcome Jamie to the Page Outsourcing team. His decades of experience working across both technology and recruitment at PageGroup make him a great fit for us as we continue to go from strength to strength. Jamie will be able to provide best practice knowledge and ensure we're leading the market and providing the most effective recruitment technology for our clients' needs."



A PARTNERSHIP FOR TECH

Recruitment company and SaaS platform aim to bridge education gap.

Arrows Group and Unibeez a SaaS platform specialising in Gen Z talent, have announced a strategic partnership designed to bridge the education gap between tech and data. The two companies will now work together to source, train and mentor top emerging talent, pipelining the way to a brighter future for the tech and data industry.

Unibeez is a digital start-up; a platform connecting students and graduates with paid remote project work, internships, and placements they can do while they study, helping them to build skills and experience whilst getting paid. Companies like Sky, InformaTech, Ascential and Just Giving are working with Unibeez, with the unique proposition of

being able to engage, test and train candidates before taking them on in graduate positions. The platform uses AI technology to match its (predominantly) Gen Z cohort to roles, by their skills alone, with a strong social mission to eliminate hiring bias and ensuring equal access to all.

Arrows Group already runs programs such as FutureScaleTM, an accelerated careers program, which sources the top 1% of STEM talent, training them into highly skilled consultants to be plugged into tech and data roles for two-year placements, with the option to take on permanently from there. The Unibeez partnership will give Arrows Group unlimited early access to a vast pool of skilled and diverse student talent to their

existing customers, helping them to bridge an ever-widening gap between education and entry level jobs in tech and data and giving them first mover advantage on Gen Z skills.

Unibeez and Arrows Group will together drive innovation and technological advancement in hire and strongly advocate the removal of hiring bias. Unibeez is already proving highly successful at this, with over 70% of its cohort female and over 40% STEM.

"We have been hugely impressed with the Unibeez offering from the beginning," says Charlie Sell, group MD of Arrows Group. "The calibre of students we've met through the platform has been exceptional and we're delighted to extend this offering

to our customers through our new partnership. We put great importance on supporting and investing in the UK's future workforce by connecting them with the best hiring brands, and Unibeez allows us to do just that." Chris Keenan, co-founder and CEO of Unibeez commented: "Collaborating with Arrows Group allows us to connect the brightest young talent with the most innovative hirers in the marketplace, helping to secure their futures and driving diversity in hire. We offer Arrows' customers enhanced access to position their brands to Gen Z, helping them to 'win the war for talent'. Together we are driving dynamic change in talent hiring practice from the ground up."

RECRUITMENT TECH FOR COMPASS

inploi partners with Compass to enhance its recruitment process

Compass Group UK & Ireland, the UK's largest food and support service provider has partnered with fast-growing talent attraction technology provider, inploi, as it upgrades its recruitment marketing function and enhances the applicant experience.

The widely reported labour shortages fuelled by the pandemic have generated a marked industry shift that has particularly affected the hospitality sector, with competition

for workers increasing. Commenting on the partnership, Kerry Crompton-Harris, people director at Compass Group UK & Ireland said: "Last year we witnessed a significant increase in competition for roles within the hospitality sector, so we looked at ways in which we could improve and simplify the recruitment process. This led to us launching a new recruitment strategy and campaign, taking a more data-driven solution to reaching job seekers and creating a

more efficient application process. By implementing inploi's technology we've been able to keep our existing HR systems in place and provide our prospective employees with an engaging experience that gives us full visibility of the process. As a result, we have seen upwards of a 30 per cent increase in completed application numbers." inploi's data-driven approach to reaching, engaging, and converting relevant candidate audiences is

gathering significant traction, with a number of high-profile clients adopting their technology and marketing services. Speaking about this partnership CEO Matthew de la Hey said: "We're thrilled to be working with Kerry and her team at Compass. Compass Recruits is at the forefront of innovation in talent attraction and championing the candidate experience - it is really exciting to be on this journey with them." ■

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SPEED TO TALENT

Scott Baxter, director of First Internet argues recruiters need to get their online offering up to speed to reach the best global talent.

Recruitment has gone truly global since Covid and organisations need to ensure that their online presence reflects this, in order to attract the best talent.

HR managers are seeing the impact of homeworking at every level, with 74% of people now viewing it as the norm. If not operating full time homeworking, a hybrid approach is commonplace, with 75% of global companies now allowing their employees to split work between home and an office.

There could be more cultural shifts ahead, as the UK is starting to seriously look at a four-day week – already successful in Japan and popular in the US - and big businesses are signing up to trial a longer weekend.

These changes are being felt across all sizes of organisation and all types of profession. The main thing it means for recruiters, is that staff don't have to be round the corner from their place of employment any longer - which means the pool of talent is much larger and spread over a much bigger location. Of course, this also means that for that talent, the scope of job opportunities now open to them is huge. There were a record 1.2 million UK job vacancies last September and many of these vacancies were offering home or hybrid working, in order to attract the best candidates. Businesses in the north are now competing directly with their London rivals, who can offer new employees a higher salary while still allowing them to work remotely. We've felt this ourselves, as we've grown and found ourselves competing with London digital agencies for the best candidates. This is mirrored in other countries where larger cities are pricing competitors out of the market. With less face-to-face meeting and a larger area to cover, it really does put the emphasis more on the website of any employer or recruitment consultant. This is not new in itself of course, but if old habits and approaches are continued without shifting to suit this new international world of work, recruiters may find their visibility shrinking, giving their clients a much smaller share of voice within the larger, more competitive field.

New approaches

The answer is for recruiters to adapt their online behaviour and look beyond the out-of-the-box online platforms and approaches that might have worked in the past, or that appear to be an easy solution.

There are a number of companies that offer specialist recruiter website solutions that come with all the functionality they think they need, at a relatively low monthly cost. However, there are a number of pitfalls associated with this approach.

The very first issue here is that a platform such as this is very much a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. By trying to appeal to all types of recruitment businesses, there's usually a lot of functionality that isn't needed. This isn't removed by the provider however and results in a bloated website, packed with unnecessary code, that becomes slow to use and is viewed negatively by both user and Google, which values site speed extremely highly as a ranking factor.

In addition, these kinds of platforms limit the levels of interactivity with third party websites. This can seriously reduce the visibility of jobs that you post. A quick template, off the shelf website may seem more cost-effective and convenient at first, but when you deploy a job to your site, you want to see it uploaded to the larger players that feed all the other job boards. It's all about maximising your reach and having a share of voice in a very crowded market.

Integrations with BroadBean/Logic Melon can automatically sync the data between your website and hundreds of recruitment platforms like Reed Jobs, Total Jobs, Monsters CV to name a few, doing this will enhance your reach to a wider audience. Choosing a bespoke, rather than off the shelf, solution, allows you to integrate with many CRM systems, ensuring data is kept up to date, for example, when your internal team make a change to the applicant, the system can also push this change to the website.

If your website does not provide optimised user experiences – on both the site itself and the job boards - then it will not reach its potential. Good recruiters need to move away from these kinds of platform which work on a subscription basis. Paying for a site in this way is not ideal for many reasons – one of which is that, should you ever choose to move away, and stop paying this subscription, you don't own your own site and it will simply be taken down. Also, this small, monthly fee, has to be paid for the lifetime of the time, often in excess of what a one-off website cost would be for a site that you would own.

Strategic thinking

It's time to think more strategically. If you want to attract the best candidates and clients, your algorithms need to be up to date and your integration levels tip top. This means you need to retain control of your website and invest a little more upfront, in order to create a fully owned site that you manage – with content that is automatically uploaded to third party websites to get the best reach. Once you have set time aside to create this site, it's about getting the content right as well. Google now gives priority to websites that behave in the same way as the user. It's all about questions. Online habits have evolved over recent years and people now tend to search for things specifically, for example: "What sales roles are there in Manchester?" "How can I get into journalism?" People are not going online and looking for companies or brand names. Instead we either type - or increasingly ask out loud, thanks to voice search - full questions. You may have noticed this change with the introduction of the "people might also ask" box on the first page of Google results.

Google has therefore changed things, so that the websites that make the effort to answer questions, and mark them up with the appropriate code to alert them to this content, will be nearer the top of the search results from them. If your potential candidate is looking for a particular

role in a specific location, you need to talk about that those types of roles and towns on your site and add a small bit of code to mark it up. Luckily, this is a relatively easy thing to do and doesn't require huge changes to your website. It does however, mean a little more time in getting the tone of your content right. Your blog or news section can be adapted, or a new page added, in which frequently asked questions are listed. Or you can be more sophisticated about it, and plan regular advice articles that answer questions: simply plot out the list of roles you recruit for and the areas or industries you serve, and put together a strategic programme of advice articles. This provides interesting, sharable content that people will want to read, as well as satisfying Google's new search requirements.

The changes Google has made over the last 12 months have had quite an impact on SEO for all professions, so changing things to respond to this, as well as the changing employment landscape, should be a priority.

Aside from ensuring your jobs are getting enough traction, demonstrating your awareness and use of technology is key for both clients and candidates. Interviews and meetings are now carried out online: the personal touch is still important of course, but organisations that embrace technology more effectively are likely to attract the best talent and the best roles, as professionals of all ages look to the future. Sticking with the status quo in a changing economic landscape is not the best option, and picking the cheapest, easiest online platform for recruitment could end up being a false economy. Investing more upfront and then ensuring your content is right will be key, in order to compete effectively in this global market. ■

GENERATION GAME

Gernot Hacker, Sales Engineering Manager EMEA at Appgate says diversity is good for tech talent.

Multigenerational workforces are one of the fundamentals to business success. Each generation has grown up in a different time, witnessing new technological developments and lifestyle shifts. Those experiences shape each individual and can bring varied perspectives and significant value to an organisation.

Appgate launched a report, in conjunction with intergenerational expert Henry Rose Lee, exploring these generational differences and the impact they have on the cybersecurity industry. The study included desk research and in-depth focus groups with key generational segments. Baby Boomers witnessed the evolution of tech and are known as 'legacy system gurus.' Millennials are tech savvy and are brimming with new and exciting ideas. Finally, Gen-Xers are proficiency conduits who form the perfect link between the older and younger generations. Age is sometimes a significant factor for some organisations, impacting general recruitment decisions. With the pandemic driving the Boomer generation toward early retirement, businesses need to recognise the value they're about to lose if they fail to harness the skills of a multigenerational workforce.

Ageism in cyber

Judging people by their age is unfortunately nothing new, and it is still having a massive impact on the progress of many industries. Within IT and cybersecurity, there are two typical ends of the spectrum. Either individuals are seen as too old and unable to work with modern technology, or they're perceived as too young, without the life experience to cope with the pressures of the industry. These views are influencing daily business, as Gallup found that Boomers are often neglected when it comes to development and career progression. On the other side, Millennials are often viewed as trend followers with limited life experience and emotional intelligence. To make matters worse, this ageism exists between generations. Our research found that while Gen-Xers are concerned about Millennials' misplaced confidence in technology, some of the younger generations do not feel that the loss of Boomer skills is that severe – any IT specialist can be replaced. It's time for attitudes to change. The old saying 'age is just a number' is accurate. Building the ideal workforce means recruiting individuals of all ages with invaluable and unique skills.

Appreciating the values of each generation

When it comes to cybersecurity, employers often feel obliged to go with what they consider to be the safe option when making any decision. This could mean holding onto the more experienced workers and

avoiding younger generations, or vice versa. But they risk missing out and will ultimately hinder their workforce – especially as the Boomer generation moves into retirement.

Our focus group research found that as they have observed major technological evolutions, Baby Boomers have broad and strategic mindsets when it comes to cybersecurity and have the natural advantage of greater emotional intelligence that increases with age. Their unmatched knowledge of legacy systems is invaluable, and they are in the unique position of being able to help integrate legacy tech with newer solutions like Zero Trust Network Access technology. As the middle generation, Gen-Xers benefit from experiencing the transition from analogue to digital, and that experience can help them form the link between Boomers and Millennials. They're known for being resilient, adaptable and independent, as well as being the most adept at collaborating with others, according to Health Education for England.

And finally, we have the Millennials, the first generation to grow up with smartphones and social media. While they lack deeper life experiences held by Boomers and Gen-Xers, Millennials are more welcoming of new technology and prioritise productivity and flexibility, two crucial elements of today's workforce.

Closing the skills gap

The beauty of a multigenerational workforce is that one group's strengths can make up for another one's limitations. Instead of seeing these gaps as weaknesses, businesses should view them as learning opportunities and commit the time to encourage mentoring and the transfer of skills. This way, no value is lost, and each individual has the opportunity to learn and develop.

Currently, research reveals that 50 per cent of UK businesses lack the technical, incident response and governance skills needed to implement an effective cybersecurity strategy. These skills are commonly found in the Boomer generation, but this group is rapidly approaching retirement. An intergenerational approach to IT security is therefore critical. Our report found that 80 per cent of Boomers would be willing to re-enter the industry as consultants. This would offer organisations the chance to establish mentoring programmes so that more experienced workers can pass on their knowledge to younger employees, especially for integrating legacy tech with modern security frameworks. Behind every generation is a unique set of skills that will prove invaluable to an organisation's security posture if given the chance to shine. It's time to look beyond the stigma of age and bring the workforce together to prosper in the face of adversity. ■

THE GIG CONTINUES

Andy Ingham, Senior Vice President at Bullhorn on what recruiters need to know about the gig economy.

The 2008 economic crisis left many people unemployed or underemployed. Consequently, in the aftermath of the crisis, individuals were looking for ways to supplement or replace their income, causing a dramatic rise in demand for temporary work. This sparked a definitive trend that became known as gig work.

As gig work started taking hold on a larger scale, it became a major influencer in the economy, the world of work and subsequently, hiring. Now, in the wake of another crisis sparked by the pandemic, these domains have changed shape – perhaps irrevocably – leaving the gig economy in a mild state of limbo.

According to our most recent talent survey, gig work's greatest appeals are superior flexibility and work-life balance. Ironically, the pandemic has now compelled all kinds of employers to provide greater flexibility. Simultaneously, the unpredictable environment brought about by the pandemic has heightened the appeal of a stable, regular job. As a result, many gig workers are looking to exchange their jobs for something more stable.

In fact, our survey found that around two in three UK freelancers (69 per cent) and temporary workers (63 per cent) exchanged, or considered exchanging, their gig work for permanent or full-time work last year.

Drawbacks of the gig economy

Job security remains the top concern for gig workers. According to Bullhorn's data, 52 per cent of freelancers and 42 per cent of temporary workers expressed anxiety about this aspect. The next biggest concern is pay, with 46 per cent of freelancers and 29 per cent of temporary workers listing it as a major concern. These findings echo the deep-rooted concerns traditionally associated with the gig economy and are likely also the reason for permanently employed people's hesitance to make a switch. Just 2 per cent of survey respondents in this category say they would consider gig work.

The lack or limited amount of legal support for gig economy workers is another burning issue. Gig economy workers range across a broad spectrum of professions – from highly paid professional contractors to delivery drivers earning below-minimum wages. Most in the latter category have minimal job security with no guarantee of work hours each week, while many have limited or no benefits.

The pandemic has exacerbated these drawbacks – most gig workers didn't qualify for government support, such as the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) or furlough. Our survey indicates that during the pandemic work was difficult to come by for nearly one in four freelancers and temp workers.

Gig workers and their needs

Despite the current arrangement not being perfect, most freelancers (72 per cent) and temporary workers (63 per cent) are still very satisfied with their work circumstances. The primary advantage, listed by 44 per cent of respondents, is the ability to set their schedules and work as much or as little as they like.

However, if employers want to continue reaping the benefits of the gig economy and counter The Great Resignation, they will need to provide more for these workers. This includes making the working conditions more predictable, less stressful, and safer. Plus, where possible, increasing wages and improving benefits.

In the longer term, employees could also benefit if employers lobby for greater clarity, legal or otherwise. The current grey areas do more harm than good to gig workers, leaving them with fewer employment rights and standard protections offered to most other worker categories.

For instance, many gig workers feel that the tax burden on them is unfair given the nature of their work. To ensure greater protection and establish

conditions conducive to a healthy gig economy, employers could apply pressure on government to implement appropriate changes.

Plugging skills shortages

Gig work plays a significant part in alleviating skills shortages, an issue that has long been a chronic problem for several industries. The pandemic has exacerbated this dilemma, and the demand for temporary workers has sharply increased.

While employers can follow a range of approaches in a competitive hiring environment, few are as compelling as salary. Increasing the wage on offer with the promise of bonuses is a tried and tested way of plugging the skills gap in the workforce. Equally, well-compensated freelancers can take on work on a piece-by-piece basis to stimulate the company's progress. However, plugging gaps isn't a long-term solution to the problem, and neither is throwing money at it. The exercise needs to be part of a more comprehensive solution to retain conscientious employees and fill positions with capable candidates.

The boon for companies is that, since freelancers and temporary workers are increasingly looking for greater stability, there's a big likelihood that they'll be keen to take on full-time positions. However, flexibility will still be an essential requirement since that is why people became gig workers in the first place.

It will be to companies' advantage if they can accommodate this prerequisite for their new hires. Ensuring their freedom with enacting policies such as remote work and flexible hours coupled with an appealing pay package may just be the decisive incentive freelancers need to join up permanently.

Tools for recruiting gig workers

Over the last decade, technology has transformed the nature of how and where work gets done. As a result, the way people search for work, the types of jobs they look for, and the kinds of companies they want to work for have all evolved. At the same time, employers' appetite for hiring more contractors to cope with demand cycles and the desire to tackle skills shortages by recruiting outside the company walls continue to increase as well.

Online talent platforms have played a significant role in driving the gig economy's growth by making it easy to both enter it and find and hire freelancers. Platforms like Upwork, Shiftgig, and Catalant make it easy for workers to find hourly, part-time, project-based or contract assignments. These self-service applications allow job seekers and employers to find each other on-demand, making it easy for the latter to directly engage with gig workers willing to do such temporary jobs. They also allow users to get to know one another on both a professional and personal level. The most successful platforms foster a sense of community among users rather than acting as a recruitment firm.

Though the gig economy does not mean the end of traditional recruitment, it's clear that agencies can no longer ignore the growing omnipresence of online talent platforms. It's therefore encouraging to see that a sizeable number of global recruiting professionals view online talent platforms as friend rather than foe – making it easier to source and recruit candidates for sought-after roles.

Where to next?

While the gig economy is still firmly entrenched in the world of work, it is undergoing a sea change. After a tumultuous two years, freelancers and contractors are more vocal about what they want from their employers, with stability and predictability topping the list. Businesses will have to accommodate these shifting values to successfully recruit the best talent from the gig economy. ■

HEALTHY PROSPECTS

Donna Torres, Director — UKI Sales & Global Partnerships at workplace management platform Planday, on how employers can improve mental health in the workplace and retain staff.

Over the course of the pandemic, conversations around mental health in the workplace have been at the forefront. Whilst increased awareness and conversation about mental health is an important step in the right direction, brands need to be held accountable for their approach to improving staff mental health and wellbeing and ensure that this isn't just performative. Shift-based staff, in particular, are seeing an increase in stresses and demands due to the aftermath of the pandemic, which can make managing their mental health even more challenging. Despite this, it's an absolute necessity for employers to acknowledge these factors and put the right processes into place in order to prevent overworking employees, and inevitably losing them for good.

With this in mind, Planday's most recent survey looked to pinpoint where employers are going wrong, and how to improve in order to boost morale, improve employee wellbeing and retain staff.

Our findings saw that one in five Brits don't enjoy work (19 per cent), with a further two in five stating that their workplace doesn't have a positive impact on their mental health, or are unsure whether it does (43 per cent). So, what elements of the workplace are causing such a large proportion of employees to have a negative experience?

The research found that the most common contributing factors towards a workplace having a negative impact on its employees' mental health include:

- Toxic behaviours within the team (35 per cent)
- No clear progression path (34 per cent)
- The inability to switch off from work (29 per cent)
- Receiving no positive praise from peers (29 per cent)
- The inability to voice worries and concerns about work (27 per cent)

When looking into these results more granularly and comparing industries, hospitality, catering and leisure are the least desirable, with a quarter (24 per cent) of these workers stating that they don't enjoy their jobs, as well as being the most likely to say that they don't see themselves in their current role long term (44 per cent).

Considering the ongoing staff shortage crisis that hit the hospitality industry last summer, it's important to recognise the areas in which hospitality workers feel could be improved in order for them to stay in their current roles.

However, it's not all doom and gloom and there are key factors – some of which can be implemented with a switch to digital tools, more flexibility and better information sharing – that will not only help you attract talent in a challenging market, but help retain the people you already have.

Our survey concluded that hospitality staff would be more likely to stay put in their current role for longer if the following areas were improved:

- Employee benefits (33 per cent)
- Fairer pay (31 per cent)
- Flexibility (28 per cent)
- Communication (27 per cent), Better management style (27 per cent)
- Mental Health Support (22 per cent)
- Training (21 per cent)
- Shorter shifts (17 per cent)
- Culture (17 per cent)

Employee mental health needs to be a key focus for managers and business owners, with more than one in five hospitality workers surveyed stating more mental health support is one of the main things that would make them more likely to stay in their role longer term. Considering that almost half of workers state that their workplace either doesn't, or they're unsure whether there are any processes in place to support their mental health (46 per cent), there is a lot of work to be done to rectify this.

Your people are your best asset and investing in their wellbeing and their career growth not only benefits the employees themselves but the company as a whole. A happier workforce will ultimately do a better job, stay in their jobs longer and help your hospitality business stand out. Here are our top tips on how to improve wellbeing and ultimately retain staff in your business:

1. Plan shift schedules far in advance

Where possible, create your staff schedule at least one month in advance. This might be a difficult task especially when your every day is so varied and can look completely different, but it's still important to try to schedule as far ahead as possible. According to psychologists, planning things in advance leads to less stress and more happiness. Unfortunately, one of the most stressful things about shift work is that you often don't know when you'll be working and when you'll be off. Whether it's trying to balance something like family commitments, or study – or even something like finding the time to exercise and look after yourself – unpredictability can complicate your self-care no matter what you do for work. This can be particularly difficult in fast-paced industries, such as retail.

Too many managers post their staff's work schedules once a week, for the coming week. For example, a manager might post their schedule every Sunday, and that schedule begins the very next day. Or some stores simply post a paper schedule on the wall, so employees who don't work on Sundays have to either come in on their day off or call to find out when they're working next. Investing in staff scheduling software will make this task much easier to manage and provide an effective solution for both you and your employees.

2. Respect employees' requests to work or not work particular shifts

In addition to planning work schedules in advance, it's important to allow your employees to choose which days and times they want to work. According to research by Office Team, flexible scheduling was employees' top answer when they were asked about benefits that best support work-life balance.

People have other responsibilities besides work. We all do! And it seems we're all less willing to sacrifice our personal lives for work post-pandemic, and the 'great resignation' is proof of this. Whether it's family needs, medical appointments or social functions that they want to attend. Whatever the reason, giving staff this bit of autonomy in their schedules will help to reduce stress and improve their mental health.

3. Allow employees to swap shifts if necessary

As a manager, you know that urgent needs often pop up at the last minute. Perhaps an employee's child gets sick or there is a death in the family, or maybe the employee just really needs a day off to unwind and focus on their mental health.

In these situations, it's important that you give your employees the option to change their work schedules by swapping shifts. This doesn't have to be complicated, for example, investing in planning software gives you this capability with zero effect on your business operations. As above, planning your shift schedules in advance, allowing employees to share their availability, and giving them the option to swap shifts, will go a long way toward caring for your employees' mental health.

4. Provide a clear progression path

When it comes to workforce management, if you're looking for staff loyalty but aren't considering how you will help team members reach the next step in their career, then you're most certainly going to lose your team over time. It's so important that your staff feel there are opportunities to develop their skills and progress within the company – just as they would in any other business.

Perhaps you could give junior team members the opportunity to shadow senior staff members once or twice a week in order to develop their skill set and gain experience in different roles. Or provide training sessions for senior members of staff to help them build on the experience they already have, with the prospect of bigger responsibilities.

Following these steps will take you towards being a more mindful employer, with your team's mental health at the forefront, which will not only create a happier workforce, but help retain and attract new staff. ■

UPWARDLY MOBILE

Gary Clark, Academy Director at SIA Austria on why upskilling is increasingly important.

Up until a few years ago, obtaining your undergraduate degree was a pass to the vast world of employment. Unfortunately, a higher education certificate might not take you that far nowadays.

Upskilling – the evolution of a person’s abilities and career path – has become a buzzword in today’s job ambience. Both employees and employers have begun looking at ways to maximise the available opportunities and minimise skills gaps.

The world of work is changing at the speed of light, and you need to be able to adapt to it, otherwise you’ll fall behind. Here is how to stay on top of your game at all times with upskilling.

Why should upskilling enter your vocabulary now?

Upskilling has been known to humanity for a long time, and it’s become integral to our upbringing. But just like the world of work has changed, especially after/amidst the pandemic. The necessity of upskilling has changed too. While the half-life of professional skills was once 10-15 years, it’s now been shortened to five years. For technical skills, this can be even shorter. This means that workers must constantly update their skills to stay relevant.

According to the ILO Global Commission of the Future of Work, “today’s skills won’t match the jobs of tomorrow, and newly acquired skills may quickly become obsolete.” Things like technological advancements, climate change, globalisation, and COVID-19 are dictating changes in the workplace and the need for upskilling.

Automation calls for new technical skills

The question of robots replacing humans in the workplace has been pressing for a long time. The 2013 movie *Her* narrated the possible future of humanity where robots have replaced not only human labour but also human romance. It seems that the line between sci-fi and reality is becoming more and more blurred. According to experts at *Fortune* magazine, “40% of the world’s jobs will be replaced by robots capable of automating tasks”.

Yes, around 1.5 million jobs in England are at risk of being automated in the future, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This means that human labour won’t be needed. Such jobs include elementary occupations, as well as process, plant, and machine operatives. As worrying as this sounds, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Although automation and digitalisation may replace low-skilled and manual jobs, they will create new job opportunities too. The areas that will see the most growth will be within the cognitive and metacognitive categories. We must adapt to technological innovations and this calls for continuous learning. Digital literacy, numeracy, creativity, and innovative thinking must improve continuously to keep up.

Globalisation, Brexit, and COVID-19: how are jobs shifting shape?

It’s fair to say that most job sectors are shifting and so is the workforce demand. Globalised businesses are making way for both high-skilled and low-skilled jobs. However, medium-skilled jobs are being left behind. The job polarisation is due to the increased labour-intensive production, liberalisation of trade, and international transportation and communication. Workplaces within leading economies are looking for highly skilled people who are ready to operate on a global level. Conversely, they are also looking for cheaper low-skilled labourers.

However, both Brexit and COVID-19 have had an immense impact on disruptions to supply chains and trade. The UK is facing a workforce shortage, and Brexit has only worsened the situation. Those who thrive in this changing socio-economic environment will have transferable skills. These skills can be adapted and applied to different occupations and skills. You might be wondering, is my job at stake? While many businesses are set to recover from Brexit and the pandemic, others might remain in the shadows. That’s why it’s more critical now than ever to upgrade your core skills. It’s also important to upgrade your more alternative skills that are useful as a backup plan. For example, learn how to become a ski instructor, a reiki healer, or an English language teacher. Obtaining such qualifications will make you an even more desired candidate. They will show employers that you are willing to adapt to new environments and learn new skills.

New jobs to drive the green economy forward

With the increasing focus on sustainability, employers are looking at ways to transition to a green economy. The International Labour Organization (ILO) advises that 24 million new jobs will be created worldwide by 2030. All this is in response to the growing green economy.

Employers are receiving support from governments to fund their sustainable recruitment initiatives. In the UK, the Sustainable Innovation Fund has been introduced to help innovative firms commercialise their ideas while contributing to national and global sustainability objectives. Such new careers include energy auditors, energy engineers, agroforesters, and air quality forecasters. These roles call for a whole new set of skills and abilities. Thankfully, there are a number of programs and courses designed to support sustainable development.

Apart from the emergence of new jobs within the eco sector, existing jobs are also being affected by the transition to a green economy. Upskilling is always essential. Such ‘green’ skills include eco-awareness, waste prevention, and efficiency improvement alongside core interpersonal skills in the likes of digital literacy, strategic and innovative thinking, and leadership.

The world is changing faster than ever with a lot of socio-economic factors at play. In order to adapt to the new world of work, employees are being urged to upskill their abilities and implement innovative thinking. In turn, this will drive both the economy and their personal development forward. ■



THE PERFECT FIT

Nick Adams, Vice President of Sales, EMEA, Globalization Partners on finding international candidates.

The pandemic pushed companies to adopt new workforce models in the wake of quarantines, lock downs and work-from-home mandates. As a consequence, remote work is now the preferred choice for many. Having overcome the technical and operational barriers that prevented remote work in the past, the last 18 months have seen many industry sectors undertake a significant structural and cultural shift with regard to where work takes place. For business leaders building teams in a post-pandemic world where the entire workforce already functions virtually, a question comes to mind: Why not hire the best talent, anywhere in the world you can find it?

Of course, while going global has numerous benefits, making the entire world your talent pool can seem like a daunting task - one that begins with knowing how and where to start.

Building talent hubs: some key considerations

Rather than spreading the net wide and opening up a job to anyone anywhere in the world, initiating a centralised geographic hub strategy will provide a focus for recruitment and hiring efforts.

There are, however, some key criteria to consider. For example, hiring talent in regional hubs where time zones and geographies are well aligned will support more effective team-wide collaboration and enable integrated work schedules. Similarly, the economic and geopolitical stability of geographic regions must be assessed and understood, while the availability of a good communications infrastructure and reliable internet will be a must have.

Many businesses identify these hubs broadly as The Americas, APAC and EMEA – let's take a closer look at each.

The Americas

While South America has the obvious attraction of a well-educated, bilingual talent hub in locations such as Mexico City and Costa Rica, certain cities such as Monterrey (Mexico) and Medellín (Colombia) attract specific types of talent - in this case, both cities are home to large

engineering populations and the total cost of employment makes it easier to find and retain talent at a lower cost. North American cities like Atlanta (Georgia) and St. Louis (Missouri) also have the added attraction of a lower-cost benchmark for salaries, ideal when rapidly building teams with a diverse mix of roles. In recent years, thanks to Canada's progressive visa system, Toronto's highly skilled, world-class engineering talent has made it the place to look to hire the best-in-class and, at around 15 per cent less cost than Boston or San Francisco, this is set to continue.

Asia-Pacific

Many professionals in Asia-Pacific are highly skilled, multi-lingual and have experience working with international companies. The advent of new tech hubs outside of the region's capital cities means international employers looking to fill highly specialised roles can take advantage of locations where a lower cost of living means they can offer highly competitive salaries that will prove attractive to top talent.

Taking a look at specialist skills on the ground, Sri Lanka annually produces around 40,000 internationally certified accountants, and the vast majority of this talent pool is prepared for BPO work. These skilled professionals earn a tenth of the average accountant's salary in the US and a third less than finance employees in neighbouring India. All of which makes Sri Lanka a popular offshoring destination for banks and insurance companies looking to access high quality and highly educated English-speaking talent to undertake specialist work.

With a government committed to growing digital proficiency through business and education programmes, Malaysia also offers a diverse and educated talent pool that features multilingual professionals who have strong ties to India, China and Indonesia. In Penang, most locals speak English, Mandarin and Hokkien, plus French and the city boasts a cost of living that is 59 per cent lower than New York.

The government in Seoul, South Korea is committed to promoting research and innovation making it another key destination for companies

looking to participate in a strong tech-based economy that supports innovation and R&D operations. The city's high number of universities and research institutions, combined with impressive high-speed internet connectivity, has proved an added draw for high-tech and bioscience firms looking to take advantage of the wealth of inter-firm R&D collaboration programmes and innovation networks on offer. But Seoul isn't the only driving force in the region, and organisations looking to recruit top tech talent to drive forward their digital transformation plans have a wealth of other potential locations to choose from.

Home to world-class banks as well as major electronics, biotech and energy industries, Singapore's rigorous intellectual property laws make it the ideal destination for high-growth technology companies. While not the cheapest destination for startups, Singapore is still the go-to launchpad for companies looking to establish their first hires in Asia thanks to the availability of talent capable of supporting business growth. The ideal place to find executive talent, Singapore's sophisticated IT infrastructure makes it an established and mature gateway city for companies with no existing employees or branches in the region.

Taipei in Taiwan is another great option for high tech firms looking for high-quality engineers and R&D specialists. Alongside a high-tech infrastructure, the government is highly amenable to offering a home to growing companies and is keen to welcome foreign investment. However, be prepared to pay above-average local salaries due to the already high demand for top talent.

As an alternative, tech firms on the hunt for accessible talent that won't break the recruitment budget should consider Manila in the Philippines. A large English-speaking graduate-level talent pool, combined with median salaries in the range of USD 12,000 a year, makes Manila an attractive destination for firms looking to establish tech talent hubs in Asia-Pacific. Bangalore in India is another great option for companies looking to tap into IT talent and establish an operations base in the region.

Finally, companies looking to establish a presence in China will find Hangzhou represents an excellent alternative to Beijing and Shanghai. In recent years the city has become the start-up capital of China and

a leading tech incubator, thanks to local government policies designed to support high tech development in a variety of ways that includes attractively low office and technology park rents, the funding of innovation and collaboration forums, and a commitment to attract, nurture and develop talent.

Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA)

Leaders looking for English-speaking talent in budget-friendly locations could look to any of the 24 countries in Africa where English is the official language. Across Europe, Poland, Finland and Belgium together with Serbia, Romania and the Czech Republic all boast a great English proficiency rating. Meanwhile, in the Middle East, Egypt, Iraq and the UAE all have populations that have mastered English at school. In Eastern Europe, Warsaw in Poland is considered the business centre of Europe while Kraków is home to many top-ranked engineering schools that produce 100,000 graduates a year.

Estonia represents another rich source of talent. Tallinn in particular is a renowned speciality hub for location services, electronics, hardware, STEM and cybersecurity. Meanwhile, Estonia's pioneering e-residency policy enables entrepreneurs to launch EU-based businesses online and access numerous services such as company formation, banking, payment processing and taxation.

Finally, Abu Dhabi and Dubai have become key tech hubs, thanks to impressive connectivity and technology ecosystems and a government determined to incentivise and attract overseas professionals to work and live in the principality. Home to a growing number of fintech firms, UAE is working with academic institutions to upskill local talent and attract yet more highly skilled tech and science professionals. While not a country to look for cheap labour, it is a key hiring destination for companies seeking top-shelf talent.

Bringing the global talent strategy together

It is clear from these examples that building talent hubs isn't just a case of choosing lower-cost jurisdictions, there are many factors to consider when choosing a talent hub. Alongside the practical issues of having the right infrastructure, governance, and talent with the appropriate languages and business skill sets, organisations also need to take into account other important factors. This includes the cultural norms related to the world of work as well as the general 'business friendliness' of any selected country. The key to building talent hubs is first identifying where the best talent acquisition opportunities lie, whether that's seeking specific skills sets or a particular calibre of personnel for executive roles at a cost that makes it possible to offer a highly competitive salary and benefits package.

The criteria that drives an international talent acquisition strategy will vary depending on whether companies are looking for skilled support outside of the tech hubs where they traditionally hire, and at an advantageous cost. Or whether they are on the hunt for world-class global experience and people to fill highly specialised roles, in which case cost quickly becomes a secondary factor.

Ideal for building global remote teams in new locations and markets or finding well-educated bilingual talent to fill a multitude of roles, international talent hubs are a great way to tap into a wider talent pool and attract the world's best and brightest talents.

Today's virtual workplace environments mean that teams can now truly work across borders. This means firms can move beyond traditional geographic recruitment boundaries to find and hire the engineering, R&D and professional talent they need to fuel growth. ■