

The voice for the global staffing industry

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THE GLOBAL RECRUITER

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12



22

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WELCOME



SIMON KENT
EDITOR

Change is constant. It's true the over the past few years there have been huge challenges for everyone but the recruitment industry has always been at the forefront of change. Agile, adept and ready to flex according to circumstances the sector has also been keen to take on new ideas, techniques and technologies to bring a better service to the clients and candidates it serves. Standing still is never an option. The industry constantly strives to be more efficient, accurate and value-adding.

On 9th June in London The Global Recruiter is holding its UK Summit. Against a backdrop of change, it will be a day of advice, opinion and value for the recruitment industry. With presentations and discussions covering the issues recruiters need to consider now it promises power recruitment companies forwards, helping them to identify the opportunities and successes that are out there.

In this issue of The Global Recruiter we've include three articles from the keynote speakers on the day. James Osborne, Sophie Hopley and Adam Tobias give a taster of what they'll be bringing on June 9th, in the areas of strategy, branding and diversity. Take a look at what the day promises and register for your attendance now. You business will thank you for it for months to come.

CONTENTS

07 NEWS

12 VIEW FROM WEC: TALENT POWERED GROWTH

15 ANALYSIS: THE GREAT SHIFT

18 STRATEGY: GAIN MAXIMUM MOMENTUM

20 WORKPLACE: HOW TO HYBRID

22 DIVERSITY: A TIME FOR ACTION

25 DIGITAL RECRUITER: NEWS

28 DIGITAL RECRUITER: TOO MANY APPLICATIONS?

30 DIGITAL RECRUITER: MIX AND MATCH

32 BRANDING: SHAPE YOUR BRAND

34 TALENT: KEEP THEM KEEN

36 SKILLSET: BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Subscribe online: www.theglobalrecruiter.com

Publisher: Gary King Gary@theglobalrecruiter.com

Editorial: Simon Kent [T+44\(0\)1923723990](mailto:T+44(0)1923723990) editorial@theglobalrecruiter.com simon@theglobalrecruiter.com

Advertising: Trevor Dorrell [T+44\(0\)1923723990](mailto:T+44(0)1923723990) sales@theglobalrecruiter.com trevor@theglobalrecruiter.com

Digital Communications: Leigh Abbott [T+44\(0\)1923723990](mailto:T+44(0)1923723990) Leigh@theglobalrecruiter.com

Design & Production: Julie Harris [T+44\(0\)1923723990](mailto:T+44(0)1923723990) julie@theglobalrecruiter.com

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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.

Candidate powered growth

In the wake of trends such as 'The Great Resignation' and the ongoing search for talent across certain sectors, what can recruiters do to extend their search and make their candidate attraction more effective? Agency owners discuss where can new talent be found, how it should be managed and what does it want from a new job?

Building a strong recruitment brand from the inside out

Your business is your brand. How do recruitment agencies discover and shape both a unique corporate brand and employer brand to stand out in a competitive market, and how can they activate this through both experience and external marketing to attract and engage top talent.

Why Recruitment companies are failing at Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

The recruitment industry stands at the gateway of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace, driving change and providing opportunities for diverse and underrepresented talent with employers. However the recruitment industry isn't doing enough itself to be fully inclusive and representative. What should Equity, Diversity & Inclusion mean for a recruitment business?

[View the full programme here](#)

Register for free!

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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.

For Exhibition and Sponsorship enquiries, please contact:
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HIRING DAMAGE

Hiring taking double or triple the time and hampering business performance

A Talent Works survey has found fifty-eight per cent of HR managers believe delays to hiring are having a negative impact on business performance. Sixty per cent of HR leaders say it's taking significantly longer to hire people compared to 2019. The Recruitment Processing Outsourcing (RPO) provider, surveyed 400 HR leaders on their experiences on recruitment and employment in 2022 in both the US and UK. The survey found that half of HR leaders say it's taking double the time to hire talent as compared to 2019, and a further 21 per cent say it's taking triple

the time. The leading reason for it taking time to hire (28 per cent) is reported as it being harder to find quality candidates. In terms of 2022 priorities, Employer Branding was rated even higher than hiring at speed. Getting an Employer Brand developed or updated and out to market was identified by respondents as the top priority, with thirty-one per cent relaunching/developing their employer brand in 2022, and a further 20 per cent having already done it. Twelve per cent of HRs said they didn't have the time to focus on it.

Other priorities followed, with employee retention (21 per cent) and adapting processes to hire at speed (20 per cent) ranking closely. When it comes to brand awareness, just under a third (29 per cent) believe it has an impact on their ability to hire. However, 42 per cent don't believe they have a strong awareness as an employer or don't measure their brand awareness. "These statistics clearly show that 2019 thinking isn't going to work in the 2022 employment market, which is the most competitive we've ever seen," said Neil Purcell, CEO and founder

of Talent Works. "Companies need to get strategic about how they can speed up hiring to accelerate business performance, and as the research indicates, effective Employer Branding is the most widely recognised way of doing this. It's great to see that companies are beginning to think differently in such an oversubscribed market, but over one in ten companies surveyed were still unaware of the Employer Brand concept, which shows that there is still work to do."

GROWING STRONG

UK Employment Outlook triples in 12 months

Employers in the UK have ambitious plans to increase headcount at a record rate in the third quarter of 2022, according to the latest ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey. Businesses are aggressively recruiting following the pandemic, yet still struggling to fill vacancies. The national Outlook has reached an all-time high of +35 per cent – a 22-percentage point increase compared to Q3 2021. Firms in the banking, finance, insurance, and property sectors continue to lead the way, with hiring intentions of +49 per cent, jumping 14 percentage points since last quarter. Businesses in IT and Technology remain committed to their recruitment efforts, increasing seven percentage points to +49 per cent in the next three months. Manufacturing employers are

also at the employment forefront, with a hiring intent of +38 per cent, up 27 percentage points year on year. Continuing the positive theme, employers in London are the most optimistic this quarter with hiring confidence jumping 10 percentage points since the last quarter, to +41 per cent, fueled by the positive hiring intent of the banking and finance sector, IT and Tech. The survey is based on responses from 2,030 UK employers and asks if they intend to hire additional workers, maintain current headcount, or reduce the size of their workforces in the coming quarter (July to September 2022). It is the most comprehensive, forward-looking employment survey of its kind and is used as a key economic indicator by both the Bank of England and UK

Government. Chris Gray, UK director at ManpowerGroup, says: “These record hiring plans demonstrate the continuation of an employment trend, which sees businesses keeping their feet firmly on the gas, despite the familiar challenges with the UK labour market. Despite a shrinking workforce and with a large proportion of inactive workers, employers are still keen to recruit fresh talent to help them deliver their services, and to surf the wave of growth for as long as possible. “We are seeing an active labour force confident enough to switch employers in the search for higher salaries, across both permanent and temporary categories,” Gray adds. “This is being driven by the rising cost of living and the need to chase higher wages to combat

a dwindling disposable income. Demand for staff still outstrips supply, so the choice for candidates remains plentiful. “On the other hand, we are seeing businesses work hard to bring in new talent but struggling to retain existing employees. Companies find themselves caught between a rock and hard place, in an effort to strike a balance between hiring new talent and being mindful of the needs and pressures felt by their existing employees.” Finally, employers in the hospitality sector seem ready for summer, with a drop of nine percentage points to +25 per cent. With travel and tourism back and fully open for business, employers will be balancing the automation of services and a lower headcount to manage the expected high demand now that travel restrictions have eased.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH GOOD

INTOO provides outplacement support for Birmingham 2022 jobs & skills legacy

Two years ago Birmingham 2022 appointed Gi Group (INTOO UK & Ireland's parent brand) as Official Recruiter for the Commonwealth Games. The appointment would see the business help find 1,500 people, and to join the team in planning and delivering the biggest sports and cultural event ever to be held in the West Midlands. As part of Gi Group's appointment, INTOO UK & Ireland were also appointed as the Official Outplacement Services Supplier for the Games. In this role the company will support employees who have been recruited specifically to deliver the Games to transition their skills into new and exciting careers once the Games comes to an end on 8 August and the Cultural Festival programme ends in September. The move came as the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee recognised the event was a finite project and it wanted to ensure support is available to all those who worked tirelessly to deliver the largest sporting event the West Midlands has ever seen. Providing outplacement support

aligns with the objective of continued commitment to its jobs and skills legacy – particularly across Birmingham and the West Midlands – by helping employees to transfer their careers and skills into new roles in the region. Starting in Spring 2022, INTOO UK & Ireland is providing a range of outplacement support delivered through in-person and virtual workshops along with face-to-face coaching sessions with additional online support to help employees prepare for new opportunities. This support includes helping employees to identify their transferable skills, uncovering local opportunities and ensuring they are ‘market ready’ to continue their careers once the curtains come down on the Closing Ceremony. “We are proud to be working as the Official Outplacement Services Supplier for Birmingham 2022,” says Managing Director of INTOO UK & Ireland, Owen Morgan. “Full credit must go to the Organising Committee for recognising the hard work and talent of all the individuals who have dedicated several years



of their careers to ensuring the smooth running of the Games – and appointing a specialist outplacement services supplier to support their transition. We look forward to helping them take this dynamic, high-profile experience and additional skills they have acquired and use it as a springboard into the next phase of their career.” Director of Human Resources for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, Clare Miles, added: “Our brilliant team is the heartbeat and the driving force behind the most exciting Commonwealth Games yet -

delivering an incredible 11 days of sport and the biggest cultural spectacle the West Midlands has ever seen. The team is diverse, talented and have the unique Birmingham 2022 experience under their belt, all great assets they will take with them to their next employer. We are excited and committed to supporting our colleagues, with a range of outplacement services, provided by INTOO from Gi Group, to help make those connections and prepare them for that next chapter, beyond the Games.”

LIVING CRISIS HITS PROFESSIONALS

Research finds 1 in 3 professionals set to walk amid mounting personal pressures

Research carried out by global recruiter Robert Walters found a third of white-collar professionals stating that they are ‘very likely’ to leave their job in the coming months, unless more understanding and assistance is directed toward personal matters which impact their work. The research has identified three major ‘living crisis’ that will further drive The Great Reshuffle which companies need to be tuned into in order to attract & retain talent:

1. Rising Cost of Living
2. Post-pandemic Mental Health ‘timebomb’
3. Purpose before Profession

“Just because hybrid and remote working has become more prevalent it doesn’t mean that the role of the workplace isn’t needed just as much,” says Toby Fowlston, CEO of Robert Walters. “Over the course of our lifetime, we would have spent a third of our time at work – and so employers really do have a role to play in ensuring the wellbeing of their staff. “Companies need to be more in tune with the issues impacting their employees if they want to avoid ‘The Great Reshuffle.’”, he adds. “The crucial act here is for employers to listen and play an active role in alleviating some of the personal issues in employees’ lives before they reach that irreversible ‘crisis’ point.” According to a survey of 6,000 professionals by Robert Walters, 48 per cent feel that their pay is not an accurate reflection of the work that they do – with a further 45 per cent stating they feel underpaid. When asked around pay in relation to cost of living, just 5 per cent stated that they had a

generous disposable income – with the vast majority (41 per cent) stating that they live sensibly to cover their cost of living – and just over a quarter make enough to warrant savings. Worryingly almost a fifth (14 per cent) of white-collar workers live ‘pay cheque to pay cheque’. Almost a tenth of professional workers (8 per cent) are resorting to other means to supplement their cost of living – more commonly referred to as ‘side hustles.’ A recent poll by Robert Walters has found that most popular side-hustles in 2022 to be:

1. Pet sitting whilst working from home using apps such as Rover.com
2. Freelancing via sites such as Fiverr and People Per Hour
3. Selling self-made or upcycled crafts and clothes on Etsy and Depop
4. Weekend creative roles primarily in baking, décor, or make-up

Toby adds: “Just as much as it can feel like an uncertain time for employees, the same can be said for companies and so it is important that employers do not get dragged into a wage price spiral whereby they find themselves fighting against a somewhat unpredictable inflation rate. “Instead in the lead up to mid-year appraisals employers should look at how else they can add financial value to their employees’ lives – such as small things that can take the burden off day-to-day living costs. “Whilst there are much fewer people in the office on average, now more than ever breakfast

provisions, fruit baskets, snacks and drinks will be appreciated. Also consider pushing the flexi-working agenda further and allowing your staff to travel in on off-peak trains or once traffic has died down to alleviate high fuel costs.” A total of 30 per cent have stated that the long-term working from home has had a negative impact on their mental health – citing lack of physical interaction with the team (69 per cent), inability to separate home & working life (59 per cent), and distractions at home (47 per cent) as the leading reasons. Despite this, 87 per cent of professionals are still reluctant to give up the option to work from home – with a third stating that they want to maintain homeworking for at least one day of the week. The result of these conflicting patterns of thought is what Robert Walters refers to as the ‘Keeping Up with the Workplace Joneses’ effect – where professionals are feeling the pressure to feel grateful and take advantage of a fully flexible world. Toby comments: “It is an unexpected phenomenon, but we are now starting to hear about fatigue setting in from professionals who tried too hard to go back to their ‘old work life’ of being a work/social butterfly – all whilst trying to maintain the perks of ‘slow living’ when working from home, building in lunchtime walks and personal tasks. “It is taking us all some time to settle into the new norm. Pre-Covid we had no qualms about doing the food shop, laundry, or gym session either after work or

on the weekend – but now that we have had a taste of ‘lockdown working’ we are not quite sure how our working patterns play out in a hybrid world. “The pressure to ‘balance it all’ in a flexi-world – mixing our pre and post Covid behaviour – is what is causing the general mental health fatigue, and I think senior leaders can be more vocal on this to help take the pressure off.” In a survey conducted by Robert Walters, 51 per cent of professionals state that it is important that a company’s social values align with their own – citing workers rights (66 per cent), diversity, inclusion & equality (62 per cent), mental health awareness (59 per cent), climate control (34 per cent), political matters (29 per cent), and charitable causes (27 per cent) as the primary values a professional would decline a job offer on. Toby comments: “Increasingly we are seeing more professionals be more selective about where they work – not because of the salary, job role, or career path, but because of what the company stands for. It is no longer ‘I work for an employer, but that employer works for me. “This expectation is being driven upward, where CEO’s who once sat behind their desk are increasingly expected to be more visible and vocal on topics that are important to themselves and their employees – such as inclusivity in the workplace. Young professionals want a CEO who is authentic and passionate, and willing to step forward on values close to their heart.”

MBO FOR MERIDIAN

Management buyout and additional shareholders appointed at MBS

Meridian Business Support has announced the completion of a management buyout and the appointment of 11 new shareholders. Founded in 1989 by Rod Kavanagh, the national recruitment specialist supplies temporary, contract and permanent staffing solutions to clients across multiple sectors. The MBO was led by Meridian's CEO, Derek Skelton, and financial director, Jeanette Barrowcliffe. Since Derek's appointment in 2017,

Meridian has grown from strength to strength, exceeding all expectations for profit and cash management. The company has thrived in the challenging socio-political climate and had a turnover exceeding £100 million in 2021. "Meridian's exceptional performance over the last few years has proven that the company is in very capable hands," commented Rod Kavanagh. "I am confident in this decision and know that the future of Meridian will be bright."

The completion of the deal has also meant Meridian's new owners have invited an additional 100 of its team to take shareholder options, as part of an EMI scheme – a rarity within the recruitment industry. Commenting on plans for the future, Derek Skelton said: "This seamless deal represents an exciting new chapter for Meridian. We have a word-class culture, as demonstrated in our 2022 Best Companies 3-star accreditation, and the move

to include more employees as shareholders and share option holders will only strengthen this as we work together to identify new opportunities and developments for our future. "We will continue to work closely with our clients, suppliers and candidates, and guarantee that they will always receive the same high standards of service that they expect," he concluded.

'ASK GAP' DANGER

Women at greater risk of cost-of-living crisis as they're less likely to negotiate starting salaries

SUCCESS SHARED

Petroplan launches pioneering employee share scheme

Specialist global energy talent acquisition group, Petroplan has launched an employee share scheme, believed to be the first of its kind in the recruitment sector. Its introduction comes at an exciting time for the company which is undergoing a strategic shift to sharpen and adapt its service offering. The scheme, developed and rolled-out by the newly appointed senior leadership team, means that all Petroplan employees

across the globe can build an ownership stake in the business. Options are granted to all employees at the time of joining the company and are exercisable on sale. The key difference with Petroplan's scheme is that everyone gets their own personal stake in the organisation. Petroplan is updating the scheme every quarter, so new employees are able to join the scheme without delay. It is hoped that the sense of ownership will drive

productivity, performance and employee engagement and the scheme will strengthen the group's continued mission to attract and retain high quality talent within the industry. "Our people are our greatest asset," said CEO of Petroplan, Christopher Honeyman Brown, "that is why we have implemented a scheme that puts our employees at the heart of what we do and what we will become. Its introduction significantly

strengthens our ambition to become the partner of choice in energy recruitment. "At Petroplan, we are champions of talent and an exceptional place to work," he added. "We are building a culture that's inclusive and rewarding recognising that our success is our employees' success, and we're proud to break the mould with what we believe is an industry first."

New research commissioned by reed.co.uk has found that only 41 per cent of women were likely to negotiate their salary when moving roles compared with 61 per cent of men. The research was carried out among 250 hiring managers and 2,000 jobseekers and highlights how the cost-of-living crisis could potentially become more pronounced for women as the gender 'ask gap' persists, with many not securing the highest salary possible when changing jobs. The study shows that while many jobseekers feel awkward talking about money, women (27 per cent) are twice as likely as men (13 per cent) to state they feel uncomfortable discussing salary with prospective employers. Indeed, more than half (51 per cent) of people have never negotiated wages when offered a job. Again, the reluctance to talk about salary is more prevalent among women as 59 per cent admitted to not once negotiating salary when offered a new role compared to just 39 per cent of men. However, the research offers a promising insight for those who do enter salary negotiations with their employer as nine in ten (90 per cent) workers who

negotiated their most current salary were successful in getting an increase. The most common increase in salary was between £1,000-£2,499 (42 per cent), followed by over a quarter (27 per cent) receiving a raise between £2,500-£4,999. Men (42 per cent) were more likely to secure this higher pay increase when compared to women (31 per cent). The research also shows that negotiating salaries is a sought-after skill, with as many as seven in ten (70 per cent) workers believing that salary negotiation should be taught in school. The research also shines a light on how minority workers in particular value education on salary negotiation. Three-quarters (74 per cent) of women think salary negotiation should be taught in school compared with 65 per cent of men, while around eight in ten LGBTQ+ (78 per cent), BAME (83 per cent) and disabled (82 per cent) respondents agree that the skill should be taught in school in comparison with their straight (70 per cent), white (67 per cent) and non-disabled (69 per cent) counterparts. It's not only a skill that is revered among workers but also employers. Over three-quarters

of business leaders (77 per cent) positively perceive candidates who negotiate their salary during the interview process, characterising them as ambitious and determined. While the research shows a need to support workers to understand how they can best negotiate a salary, it also reflects an increasing openness from younger employees to discuss their salary. The findings reveal that 91 per cent of employees aged between 18-34 have disclosed their earnings to someone while over a quarter (26 per cent) of older workers, aged between 55-64, do not share their salary details. Overall, almost three-fifths (58 per cent) of jobseekers share their salary details with their partner, while 44 per cent share their salary with their family. Interestingly, business leaders are seeing this shift in the workplace, with over half (53 per cent) seeing an increase in employees discussing their salaries with each other. "The latest Reed.co.uk data sheds new light on how the gender 'ask gap' is perpetuating unequal pay," comments Simon Wingate, managing director of Reed.co.uk. "While the government

has taken important strides through the pay transparency pilot, the research shows that more needs to be done to address the disparity in confidence between men and women when discussing salary. "By introducing salary negotiation skills into school education," adds Wingate, "future generations across society will be able to understand and implement negotiation strategies during the hiring process – and across other life experiences such as purchasing a house or car. This will enable them to secure a higher starting salary and help close existing pay gaps. "At a time when the cost-of-living is rising, the study also shows the value in employees pushing their future employers for a salary increase when being offered a new role and confirms that finding a new job is one of the best possible ways to secure a pay rise," Wingate concludes. "Reed.co.uk has a wealth of career advice on the subject of salaries to help people get paid what they're worth."

TALENT POWERED GROWTH

Denis Pennel, managing director, World Employment Confederation (WEC) explores some of the themes of the forthcoming summit.

I am excited to be joining the Global Recruiter Summit next month and chairing the Talent Powered Growth session with a panel of recruiters.

We will certainly have a lot to get our teeth into. The past two years have upended the work environment more than anyone could have possibly imagined. The global Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated trends that might otherwise have taken decades to emerge. Remote working is now well established – enabled in no small part by greater automation and digitalisation; there is a wider use of diverse forms of work, and labour markets have polarised.

In short, labour markets have increased in complexity. Just-in-time approaches have been replaced with a just-in-case mindset. Sanitary issues in the workplace have become significantly more important and we have had to totally reinvent our social interactions. Covid has also led us to redefine critical skills and work has become more output oriented.

The third trend that we observe at the World Employment Confederation is the significant pendulum swings that have created a totally new business environment. Almost overnight our societies saw global supply chains replaced by insourcing; witnessed growth in the reach of the welfare state and restrictions to cross border labour mobility, and saw a shift from focusing on business growth to prizing resilience and efficiency.

The Great Mismatch

All of this has led companies, workers and governments to re-evaluate the role of work – and has prompted what has become known as ‘The Great Resignation’. Personally, I see this rather differently and would prefer to classify it as ‘the Great Mismatch’ between the expectations and needs of the different labour market players. The fact is that the Covid pandemic strained and tested the worker-employer relationship beyond anyone’s expectations and we are in urgent need of intermediaries like private employment services that can provide solutions to bridge the gap. Let me elaborate.

While the Covid crisis put over 110 million people out of work worldwide, it has also led to many more inactive people who are no longer working or seeking work. Not everyone was able to work remotely through the pandemic and OECD figures demonstrate how those with lower paid jobs worked fewer hours than those with high paid jobs over the past two years. Worryingly, their figures also reveal that more young people are neither in education nor employment and this youth gap could last for many years and have a significant detrimental consequences. It goes without saying that negative employee wellbeing has been

one of the most marked effects of the Covid pandemic – upending our work-life balance and quality of work and leading workers to take drastic action.

The Great Mismatch has meant that job vacancies are now above their pre-pandemic levels as our economies reopen and demand for labour outpaces supply. Worker shortage is now the number one issue for employers, with a recent Manpower survey finding that 69% of employers at a global level have difficulties in hiring. And that’s not all. 53% of employers also report facing greater employee turnover and believe that this situation will only deteriorate.

The employee’s view

Employees on the other hand, are at an inflection point, with 41% saying that they are considering leaving their current employer and 46% planning to do so soon as they can now work remotely. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the labour market has failed to recover from the impact of Covid and that more US workers are quitting their jobs. Many economies have experienced a surge in excess retirements as a result of Covid, with people also retiring early due to sickness.

However, the greatest mismatch is seen between businesses and workers who have widely differing views on the evolution of their working conditions. Research by the Adecco Group shows that leaders and managers regard almost every aspect of their working lives as having improved over the past 12 months – from time management and professional learning through to work-life balance and productivity. This is not the case for non-managers. Many fewer feel that their working conditions have improved, and workers are feeling particularly despondent about their ability to collaborate on new ideas in the new normal world of work.

Quite simply, the average worker does not feel that his/her expectations are being met. Particularly when it comes to ongoing guidance, training and upskilling and care for their mental well-being. Indeed only 53% of employees are satisfied with the senior leadership of the companies for whom they work. So where does this all lead us? Clearly skilling and reskilling must be the top priority for HR leaders in 2022 – from building critical

skills and competencies through to diversity, equity and inclusion. I am confident that the staffing industry can play a key role here – it already upskills or reskills more than 13 million workers each year. And the career guidance expertise from career management services providers is also critical in building sustainable pathways to employment.

The staffing industry’s role

The sector is well placed to support labour markets in the new normal. It helps organisations to manage HR uncertainties such as seasonal peaks; it improves business agility by providing flexibility which reduces reaction time; it fosters better and faster job matching – including using digital solutions for sourcing and hiring; it delivers demand-driven skilling and it designs tailored workforce solutions that offer diverse forms of work.

The staffing industry already sources and places more than 60 million workers annually. Through direct recruitment and temporary work the industry plays a vital role in tackling seasonal peaks, sickness and unexpected peaks in production. It also delivers a full range of workforce solutions through permanent hires, time limited contracts, contracting and career guidance, and it offers a flexibility that helps to manage the complexity of workforce planning. I like to classify these four services as Buy, Borrow, Rent and Build. To facilitate and speed up the matching process, the sector has developed a range of more digital, diverse and specialised solutions – from job boards and consultancy services to online platforms and crowdworking. Indeed, recent research by Randstad reveals that

staffing companies are the channels most used by people in finding a job – a figure that is up almost 20% since the pandemic.

As we adapt to the new normal and address the great mismatch, the staffing industry has a wealth of tools and experience at its disposal that can make a real difference in supporting the transition to new economies and driving social purpose and social innovation. By simplifying increasing labour market complexity, private employment services act as solution providers that helps to manage risk.

So there you have it. Some food for thought that I hope will guide our discussion at the Summit. While the great mismatch has marked a significant turning point for labour markets around the world, I am convinced that as responsible intermediaries the staffing industry can play an important role in oiling the wheels of the jobs market and making it work. ■



TALENT

Denis will be presenting at The Global Recruiter UK Summit on June 9. To join us please visit www.summit.theglobalrecruiter.com and register for FREE

CHANGING THE GAME

Globus show how technology can give you the edge in temporary recruitment, writes Vince McLaughlin, Senior VP Global Sales & Marketing, Globus.ai

Einstein called compound interest the strongest force in the Universe and described it as the Eighth Wonder of the World.

It's more commonly known as an investment approach, but apply it to temporary staffing and the advantages start to stack rapidly.

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It's unsustainable. We have human limits and recruiters often pay the price for driving performance with longer hours, shorter weekends, and doses of burnout.

In 2022, it's a choice. You can leverage technology to work smarter, deliver compound gains, and cultivate a better lifestyle for your teams. It's win-win.

Consider that recruiters managing shift workers spend up to 58% of their working hours locked in low-value, but essential, activity.

Being smart with automation allows us to redeploy that time into high-value human engagements at almost all of the earliest stages.

Move the starting line to where your recruiters matter most

You really have to ask "what activity are my recruiters able to move the needle on and where can their intuition, expertise, and personality play a decisive role?"

Candidate availability, compliance, and competency aren't going to change because you had a recruiter rather than a machine involved in the process.

How many unnecessary links in the chain can you replace and redeploy to where your recruiters' knowledge is going to truly impact change.

- Parsing emails
- Standardising incoming job requests
- Prioritising their urgency
- Sourcing shifts
- Screening competency
- Confirming candidate availability
- The back-and-forth volley that follows

Automation moves the starting line after these necessary actions so that you can accelerate the recruitment process by three conversations. To where the focus shifts to relationships.

Minutes into hours into millions

Temporary staffing accounts for six percent of the UK workforce and eleventh-hour requests are par-for -the-course.

A shift request comes in and multiple agencies compete for the regular spot from a shortlist of candidates spread across thirty different tabs on their desktop.

It's created a culture of fastest finger wins, but the reality is that the finger that doesn't have to click will always win.

Self-learning machines can identify patterns and behaviour in candidates that automate the process of matching the most likely candidates with the regular shifts.

With every recruitment cycle automation begins to pay compound dividends and learns more about the patterns and processes that can be improved.

It's a way to secure predictable revenue and focus on new placements. To do more than is humanly possible.

Automate the repeatable to focus on the new

Warren Buffet said that reading 500 pages every day is how knowledge works. It builds up like compound interest.

Recruitment is formulaic and cyclical, but that leaves it prone to devolving into low-value loops of the same recurring activity.

Shift management meets Groundhog Day.

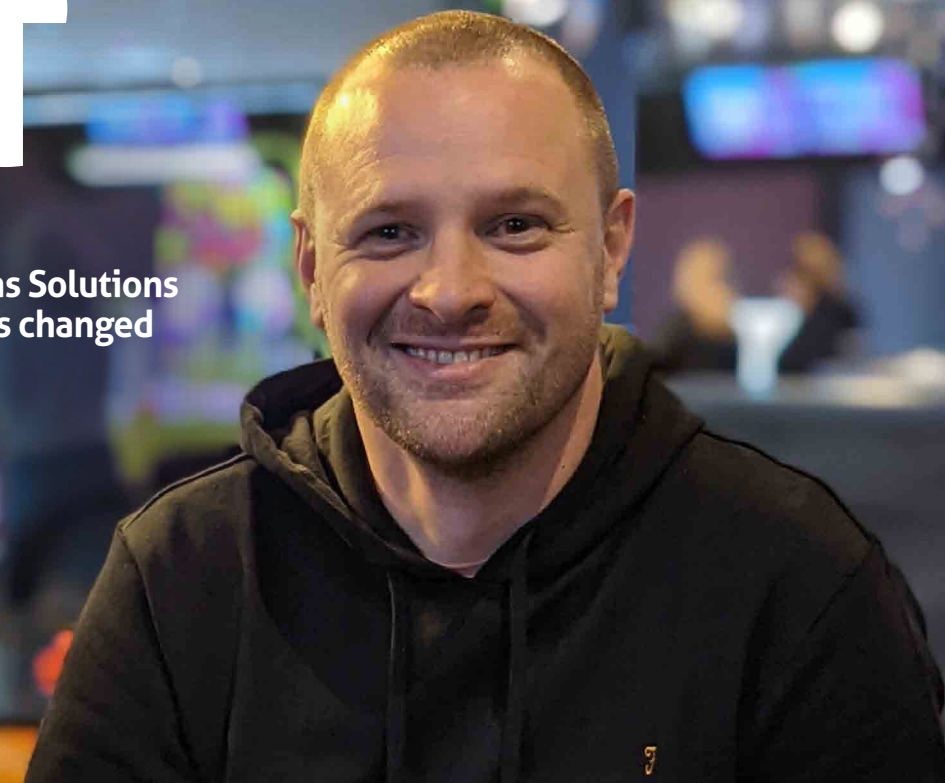
Once you're managing 20-30 candidates each week you have to claw back time from every pocket to engage in any net-new activity.

We're essentially re-reading the same 500 pages and hoping we can squeeze another sixty pages on the end to push our NFI up. Every automated intervention across your day wins time for your recruiters to grow their book and take back their evenings.

Do you ask why your recruiters aren't managing more than 30 shift workers a week? Are they asking how they can achieve that without sacrificing their personal time? ■

THE GREAT SHIFT

Alex Dick, CEO of Alexander Lyons Solutions on how the Great Resignation has changed employer/employee dynamics.



Calculated to strike fear into the heart of every employer, the phrase 'Great Resignation' has captured the imaginations of many a human resources professional by gesturing towards the idea that workers might give voice to their dissatisfaction – and leave. These fears are reflected in surveys like Microsoft's Work Trends Index 2021, which claimed 41 per cent of people were likely to consider leaving their jobs during the course of the subsequent year.

The danger, when discussing this kind of report, is to focus too much on the 'leaving' element – as if these employees have just vanished in a puff of discontentment or teleported to an alternate dimension in which they're treated fairly. In reality, they're neither evaporating into the aether nor settling into retirement at the ripe old age of 25 – they're getting new jobs which better reflect a desire for agency, autonomy, work-life balance, and respect.

This distinction was nicely articulated in a recent article from the Harvard Business Review, which points out that "most workers are not simply quitting. They are following a dream refined in pandemic adversity."

Looking at the Great Resignation – or, as the HBR report calls it, the Great Aspiration – in this light reframes the issue altogether. Rather than asking themselves how to stop or prevent workers from resigning from their posts, employers might find their time better spent in ensuring that they're running the kind of business that people want to quit for – becoming the kind of place that fulfils workers' aspirations.

Treating your employees right

In order to fully achieve this kind of aspirational status, many employers will now need to reflect on the dynamic they cultivate between themselves and their staff. In many ways, this dynamic needs to be built upon the simple but overarching premise that your team are adults – and should be treated as such. This might sound obvious, but recent surveys suggest that, to a disappointingly high number of employers, it really isn't.

According to Pew Research Centre, "feeling disrespected" was one of the primary reasons for workers to quit their job in 2021 – and, when you combine this with the fact that "adults younger than 30" were "far more likely" to voluntarily leave their jobs in 2021, it's difficult not to conclude that some employers aren't treating their employees like grown-ups. So how can employers address this?

To my mind, the single most important way to cultivate that sense of respect is to allow workers their autonomy – or, to put it in simpler terms, micromanagement is out.

Obviously, it's much easier to avoid micromanagement when you encourage remote or distributed working – but such practices can, as a recent Gartner report points out, equally make the temptation to do so loom larger.

It's worth breaking free of this cycle, though, since remote working not only allows workers more freedom (and, implicitly, respect) but also ensures that workers are getting something out of their work in the form of better work-life balance.



How do your employees treat you?

Of course, remote working shouldn't come at the cost of human interaction – especially since those interactions will form the bread and butter of a working culture towards which prospective hires will aspire.

This isn't just limited to treating your employees well. That would be an endless and (to my mind) largely common-sense checklist, and such changes – though important and associated benefits like increased customer satisfaction, according to Glassdoor – only represent one side of the Great Resignation coin.

The other half of that coin isn't so much about how you treat your employees, but how your employees treat you – whether as a confidant, collaborator, or other figure of mutual trust. Achieving this kind of two-way dynamic involves a multi-pronged approach, establishing not only that employees are free to air their views about (for example) best practice, but that you're open to the suggestions and issues your employees raise.

Establishing the necessary atmosphere of openness isn't easy – it requires making meaningful promotions (i.e., with pay raises!), taking employee ideas seriously, and contributing to regular check-ins before employees reach the point of resignation.

Expressions of support and a sense of upward trajectory like this are increasingly vital – the above-mentioned Pew research found that while disrespect was the major reason for resignation for 35 per cent of respondents, this was mingled with a further 33 per cent who felt there were no opportunities for advancement at their workplace.

Human beings, not human resources

Clearly, addressing the shift in employer/employee dynamics is a more involved process than popping a note in the staff room announcing that you're now a fully certified Respectful Employer. It's all about demonstrating that you genuinely have your workers' best interests at heart – as opposed to those fair-weather employers who only offer support on the proviso that their employees don't actually need any.

Or, to put it another way: I can't imagine that firms who treat workers like human beings with hopes, dreams, and ambitions are particularly worried about the Great Resignation – and many will be benefitting from the fresh influxes of talent ready to take on employers who treat them with respect. ■

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The recruitment industry is one of the most important, valuable and life changing sectors in the UK. We're giving it the recognition it deserves.

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Entries close: 27 June 2022

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Awards Ceremony: 17 November 2022

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MAXIMUM MOMENTUM

James Osborne, Co-Founder of The Recruitment Network sets the tone for recruiters to take their next step forward.

"Extraordinary... unprecedented... frenetic... record breaking!"

I have been hearing these words continuously from recruitment business leaders over the last 18 months or so, words that to me perfectly depict what the sector has been experiencing. These are truly unique times and the freneticism of the markets has been unrelenting, testing recruitment businesses' ability to manage significant levels of job flow with the firepower they have left from Covid or built up since. But what fascinates me the most is how both our collective industry, as well as our individual businesses, continue to ride these high highs and low lows so well. We proved this back in Q2/Q3 of 2020 when we reorganised (in many cases, for survival) and then again from Q4 onwards as we looked to maximise the growth opportunity that was presented to us. Of course, as with any economic cycle, we are acutely aware that the markets will turn at some stage soon, some predicting a slowing down of the growth trajectory we are currently on, others more a flatlining, and other forecasting a widespread downturn pushing us towards another recessionary period, all fuelled by the macro challenges we are seeing around the world all coming to a head at the same time. The end of 2022 is undoubtedly going to look quite different from the start of the year and 2023... from an economic perspective. But the reality is, with all that is going on around us, this is not a typical economic cycle by any means and the recruitment sector and many of those within it, will continue to be part insulated as the market does change.

Even more significantly, we as recruitment leaders, have the ability to further insulate our businesses by the way we structure them, the way we run them and the way we engage with our customer base. We said this back in 2020 "you can choose to take part in the downturn or not – it's up to you" and the same is now true at the end of 2022 moving into the new year. We now know how to create our own growth pathways, despite negative changes in the economy.

Building foundations

Over the past year or so, the savvy recruitment businesses have been building. Building strong foundations to both capitalise on the market conditions today, but as importantly to ensure they can continue on an upward growth curve even as the market changes. They are focusing their resources and investing not just in headcount, but in digital transformation, user experience, employee engagement, reskilling and redeployment and new product development. They are building intentional purpose in their businesses that in turn creates intentional profit.

They are transitioning to embedded partnerships, long term contracts that deliver mutually high levels of yield for both them and their customers. They are embracing technology, diversity, borderless workers and remote working to gain access to far deeper and wider communities of talent.

They are better positioned than ever before to service their customer base. Their businesses are becoming more sustainable, stickier and more scalable and their businesses are becoming more profitable, normalising conversion rates of +30% of their NFI to the profit line. Quite simply, many recruitment businesses right now are doing well, not just because of the buoyancy of the market, but because of what they are doing and how they are doing it – lessons that have been learnt over the past 24 months.

Two years ago, our industry took a masterclass in cost and crisis management... and passed the test. Around 18 months ago, we learnt about the importance of true customer relationship building, even though we were in a remote virtual world... and we did a pretty damn good job of it. We learned about the real value of our people and purpose internally and how that relates directly to profit... and we re-engaged our workforces.

And for the last year or so, we have demonstrated the importance of being just seriously good at sourcing, recruiting and delivery and we are converting jobs at scale, despite a lack of candidates in many areas. These four qualifications alone have been and will continue to serve us well moving forward into the next economic cycle. Our somewhat casual grasp on the financials pre-Covid has now been replaced with a healthy obsession with waste elimination and productivity. Our supplier/customer relationships are now mutually beneficial and sticky partnerships. Our emphasis on KPIs and presenteeism has been swapped out with a renewed focus on outputs, productivity and trust. And our candidate attraction strategies have taken a serious upgrade. We are better businesses, better leaders because of what has happened these past couple of years and we are stronger, more resilient and more agile to capitalise on any market conditions moving forward. We have maximum momentum, and whilst the markets may slow down, we certainly won't be!

James will be presenting at The Global Recruiter UK Summit on June 9. To join us please visit www.summit.theglobalrecruiter.com and register for FREE

HOW TO HYBRID

The workplace has changes and Bjorn Reynolds, CEO at Safeguard Global discusses how to make your place work.

Survey after survey shows as we come out of the pandemic, most people want to keep working remotely or in hybrid environments – with a mix of home and office work. At the same time, there's a labor shortage – or at least people are willing to change jobs to better fit their lifestyles. Therefore, if companies want to recruit and retain top talent to be competitive in this tight job market, they have to consider that:

- 60 per cent of workers say they want work from home all or most of the time, according to a recent Pew Research Center study
- 67 per cent of employees cite schedule flexibility as the main reason for deciding to leave or stay at a company, according to a new Humanyze report

The future of work has changed – companies need to evolve to offer Work in Any Way experiences. It's critical that leaders listen to their employees and make flexible and people centric work part of the core business strategy. Hybrid work is just the beginning.

The key is implementing a flexible work model that puts people first and makes them feel valued, but also sets the organisation up for success, regardless of unexpected market forces – after all, it was an unforeseen pandemic leading to a seismic culture shift that got us here.

However, this also means considering how flexible work policies affect compliance with labour and payroll laws. This is especially true for companies with operations and employees in different countries.

Rethinking the idea of 'hybrid'

When many people talk about hybrid work, they're referring to the traditional mix of home and office. Often, that means a specific set of days at either location, with everyone following the same schedule. The thinking behind this model is that it's the best of both worlds: time to connect with colleagues in person and time to focus on work at home without office distractions. But when companies put people at the forefront of their hybrid work model, it's not just about mixing home and office. It's about mixing preferred work styles based on team and/or individual needs—flexibility is paramount. Many companies have even chosen to go the asynchronous route, where employees work in their own time zones or preferred time blocks; schedules are personal not organisational.

With flexibility, hybrid work can mean different things at different companies:

- Individual teams determine where people work based on business needs. For example, some teams may decide only to come into the office for special projects that require collaboration. Other departments may decide that team meetings must be held in person and require in-office days to accommodate them. Still other teams may decide to follow an office-first culture and only work remotely on an ad hoc basis. The thinking behind this model is that team leaders know what their people need and how they work best.
- Companies provide offices for employees to use as needed or wanted, but overall, it's a remote-first culture. These offices often have been retrofitted to make more meeting spaces available, either for individual teams or with clients/customers, and to add “hot desks” or hoteling, which give people a temporary place to work (because their main workspace is at home).
- Teams are fully distributed, with no official or permanent office. When teams or individual workers need to get together in person, they must rent a space, usually paid for by the company (like a co-working facility) or meet at a public place.

Regardless of which hybrid model a company adopts – and make no mistake, top talent is seeking people-centric, flexible companies – compliance should also be carefully considered, especially if a company has operations and workers in multiple countries. Three key compliance areas to pay close attention to when extending hybrid or remote options are working hours; entitlements and benefits; and taxes.

1. Working hours

Compliance challenges can arise when flexible schedules encourage employees to work hours beyond what's spelled out in their employment contracts or the local labor laws. Even with an asynchronous schedule, employees should work according to local standards – and, depending on the country's laws, they should be compensated if they work additional hours.

For most employees in Europe, working hours are clearly defined

(although sometimes senior managers or workers under special collective bargaining agreements have different standards). So, for example, if a company has workers in:

- **France.** The standard workweek is 35 hours, and employees aren't allowed to work more than 48 hours in a week. Employees who work more than the standard are entitled to overtime.
- **Germany.** The workweek is Monday to Saturday, and employees cannot be expected to work more than eight hours a day and 48 hours a week.
- **Spain.** The workday can't exceed nine hours, and workers can't work more than 40 hours a week, averaged over a year.
- **The U.K.** The maximum workweek is 48 hours averaged over 17 weeks; however, employees can opt out of the limit by giving written consent.

If, as part of flexible work, an employee lives and works remotely from a different country than where company offices are located, it's important to understand and comply with the regulations for working hours in the employee's home country.

2. Entitlements and benefits

Just because hybrid and remote employees may not work at the office doesn't mean they lose out on entitlements and benefits. Workers' compensation, for example, is an area to pay close attention to, because even if employees aren't in an office, if they're injured while working remotely, they're likely still entitled to workers' compensation. Employers can help reduce risk by enacting a policy that sets expectations for remote or hybrid work safety. Another area for companies to consider with flexible work is the expectation for how employees use leave benefits – and whether the expectations comply with the reality of the legislated entitlements in the countries where their employees live and work. With remote or hybrid work removing or lessening the likelihood of spreading sickness to colleagues, many workers – sometimes influenced by their employers – are taking fewer days off. Problems can arise, however, if workers are denied – either outright or because of a presenteeism culture – any leave due. When employees are on

leave, it's also important to consider whether a country's labor laws give employees the right to completely disconnect while not at work. France and Spain, for example, are two countries where there are rules governing off-hours connection.

3. Taxes

Hybrid and remote work give employees flexibility for extended travel or even relocation, and this could potentially introduce risk of tax law noncompliance, especially when employees begin working in countries where a company doesn't already have operations. Of note: Payroll taxes. Are the workers just visiting, or are they making their permanent residence in another country? The country and its residency requirements, as well as whether the company has operations there, all determine if workers would likely be subject to the local income tax laws and withholding requirements. Permanent establishment. If remote employees' work means that they're conducting business in another country, they could put the company at risk of becoming a fixed place of business subject to corporate taxes in the country. When allowing employees to work from another country, it's important to have clear rules defining the scope of work to help guard against permanent establishment. One way companies can protect themselves and reduce risk of tax noncompliance for these “digital nomads” is by partnering with a global workforce solutions provider that has local HR expertise. In particular, an employer of record provider specialises in making it possible for companies to offer international remote work, even in countries where they don't currently operate. Despite these considerations, offering flexible, hybrid work experiences are just the beginning of the new future of work. Today's market leading companies are evolving into Work in Any Way organizations – providing flexible and people centric work experiences to attract top talent and retain valuable employees. And the long-term benefits of getting hybrid work right outweigh any potential short-term compliance challenges. Those can be fixed, after all. Missing out on top talent is much harder to overcome. ■

A TIME FOR ACTION

Adam Tobias, Co-Founder Inventum Group and APSCo E,D&I Partner discusses how recruitment companies can push ahead with Equity, Diversity & Inclusion.

The UK staffing industry is not diverse. We are not representative of the talent we work with, the clients we serve or the communities in which we operate. One of the things that I always loved about our industry was the meritocratic nature of success; you didn't really need qualifications, or connections, or experience, to get a foot in the door. I thought that ambition, an appetite for hard work, the desire to help people and a high degree of emotional intelligence were the key ingredients for success. However, I recognise now that I've been kidding myself. We are not a meritocracy. We are not inclusive. I have never seen enough black recruiters, or disabled recruiters, or mature recruiters, or recruiters who speak English as a second language. Look around your offices (or Teams meetings), speak to your colleagues. How many of them are pretty much like you?

Conversations about Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the UK staffing industry have increased substantially since the introduction of gender pay gap reporting legislation in 2017, when any organisation with more than 250 staff had to start publicly reporting on the average pay between male and female staff. It would have come as absolutely no surprise to anyone that men, on average, get paid more than women despite the fact that the Equal Pay Act was enshrined into law over 50 years ago. Simply speaking, men tend to occupy more senior and higher paying jobs than women. Whilst any executive would simply have to glance at their peers to recognise that women remain underrepresented at the upper echelons of the business world, perhaps it was the fact that this information was now in the public domain, and posed a reputational risk, that has driven some action. Whilst progress has been slow, the UK gender pay gap has fallen from 18.4 per cent in 2017 to 15.4 per cent in 2021, with many organisations now mandating a minimum percentage of female representation at board and senior executive level, and this has had an impact on their hiring processes.

Further, the Black Lives Matter movement, which began in 2013 in response to the murder of US teenager Trayvon Martin, and the subsequent acquittal of George Zimmerman, and grew internationally after the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers, has also had a fundamental impact on the way many UK organisations seek diverse and underrepresented talent. Whilst there is no (current) legislation requiring race/ethnicity reporting, make no mistake – non-white, ethnically diverse individuals are significantly underrepresented at all levels in the UK workforce, especially at leadership level.

Executive study

According to one recent study published by People Management Magazine, of the 300 top executive positions at FTSE 100 companies (Chair, CEO and CFO) only 11 are held by people from an ethnic minority background, which is only one more than in 2014. The figures for female leadership don't fare much better, with only 36 of the top 300 roles held by women.

The recruitment industry should be at the forefront of this drive for greater gender equality and ethnic representation. Recruiters are beginning to actively seek more underrepresented talent, nurturing relationships and providing more balanced shortlists. Clients have demanded it, and many have tried to respond – although how successfully is up for debate. Whether that response by recruiters has been driven by ethics or a desire to remain relevant (and commercial) is questionable, but it is the outcome that matters most. However, diversity is not just gender equality or race and ethnic representation, of course. Other forms of diversity aren't yet high enough on the agenda, either because clients are

focussed on gender and ethnicity, or there is a lack of knowledge from both the client and the recruiters. Diversity can mean many things, not least the nine legally protected characteristics in the Equality Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, and sex) as well as social mobility, thinking styles, family background, culture, language, and lived experiences, to name just a few.

As a disabled person, I am disappointed that the conversation about disability is lagging somewhat behind. This is especially significant given that almost 20 per cent of the UK working-age population has some form of disability, and disabled people are undeniably discriminated against in the workplace. However, I do hope that we will become more sophisticated in our understanding of what diversity really means and have a greater appreciation for the tremendous benefits that a diverse workforce can bring. The evidence has long been clear; organisations that hire diverse and underrepresented talent, foster inclusive practices and create an equitable environment that is fair and welcoming to all, generally outperform organisations that do not. Don't take my word for it – a quick internet search will lead you to a huge quantity of empirical research conducted by the likes of McKinsey & Co, Boston Consulting Group, Deloitte, and many other consultancy firms that provide all the evidence required to make this a business imperative for all industries, staffing included.

The need for change

I spend a lot of time with staffing industry leaders, recruiters and search consultants, training them to recruit inclusively for their clients, to identify diverse and underrepresented talent, to help to educate their clients and to make a fairer, more representative employment market. However, the battle to encourage recruitment companies to adopt these same processes for themselves is very real, and I often encounter a resistance to change that surprises me. Our industry is poor at change and transformation, and there remains a short-sighted reluctance to invest in our people, processes and culture. We are experiencing a huge boom in the industry due to this current crazy war for talent. Everyone (and I do mean everyone) is hitting record numbers and recruiters are in demand like never before – according to a recent survey, there are more vacancies for recruiters on LinkedIn than there are for software engineers. The potential problem with this scenario is that the drivers for change aren't necessarily obvious. Why change when we are all doing so well? What is going to drive the staffing industry to bring fresh talent that looks, thinks, acts, and feels differently than what we have had before? Perhaps it is that very demand for our own talent that can be the driver of change. Every single recruitment company I know is seeking recruiters, and there simply aren't enough experienced people to go round.

To redress this talent shortage, and to better serve our candidates and customers, we need to do the same things we are advising our clients to do. We need to change our requirements for talent, be they experienced hires or those entering the industry for the first time. We need to think about how we utilise, develop and upskill our talent. Let's use flexible working practices to bring back those people who left recruitment because of caring responsibilities (which, sadly still mainly fall on women in our society) and let's seek individuals from communities that may not have previously considered a career in recruitment. It is time for our industry lead the way – those organisations that do will reap the rewards long into the future. ■

Adam will be presenting at The Global Recruiter UK Summit on June 9. To join us please visit www.summit.theglobalrecruiter.com and register for FREE

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A study from academics at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) has found that AI hiring has the potential to create great strides in inclusive recruitment. According to The Inclusion Initiative (TII) at LSE, Artificial Intelligence (AI) hiring is equal to or better than human hiring. Nonetheless, the general public is still sceptical about the automation of recruitment. The study included a systematic review of the implications that consider the effectiveness of AI in the hiring process. The findings illustrate that AI hiring improves efficiency in hiring by being faster, increasing the fill-rate for open positions, and recommending candidates with a greater likelihood of being hired after an interview. The research also found that while AI

had limited abilities in predicting employee outcomes after being hired, it was a substantial improvement over humans. The authors also assessed whether AI could decrease biased decision-making and improve the diversity of selected candidates. Overall, AI hiring still resulted in more diverse outcomes than human hiring. Finally, the experts looked at how candidates and recruiters are reacting to AI hiring. Their analysis revealed overwhelmingly negative responses to AI hiring. The upshot: people trust AI hiring less than human hiring. Paris Will, Lead Corporate Research Advisor at the Inclusion Initiative, London School of Economics, said: "Collectively, these findings lead to a gap between how AI is performing and how it is perceived. While

AI hiring practices on average showed an improvement over human methods, people are reacting negatively to it. This is significant for the adoption of AI hiring methods and may be holding back better hiring techniques from being implemented." "The media typically portrays AI hiring negatively and emphasises how AI can discriminate against candidates and disadvantage them," commented Dr Dario Krpan, Assistant Professor in Behavioural Science at the London School of Economics. "Our analysis, however, shows that even if AI is not perfect, it is fairer and more effective than human recruiters. Rather than focusing on AI in isolation, it is important to compare it to the alternative hiring practices to understand the value it brings to

the recruitment process." Dr Grace Lordan, Associate Professor and Founding director of The Inclusion Initiative at the London School of Economics added: "There is evidence that current hiring processes are plagued by cronyism and bias. It is time that human's hand over the hiring process to machines who do not have these tendencies. Biases embedded in algorithms can be mitigated somewhat with more care from those writing them, and compliance folk, who do not have skin in the hiring process can monitor the process to abate any concerns on fairness. Let's progress AI in recruitment AND workplace inclusivity at the same time."

ENTERPRISING MASTERCLASS

Growth platform for Black, Asian and ethnically diverse professionals launches enterprise-focused website

The online career growth platform for Black and ethnically diverse professionals, Career Masterclass, has launched a new website to showcase its suite of enterprise solutions. This is in response to the growing interest from businesses who seek to improve their attraction and retention strategies for diverse talent. While the previous website was more tailored toward individuals looking for advice, knowledge resources and mentoring, the new website showcases Career Masterclasses' offerings for businesses and enterprises seeking high impact,

award-winning interventions and programmes to help attract, develop and retain diverse talent within their organisations. The offerings include talent accelerator programmes, specialist recruitment for mid and senior levels, content licensing, and more. Career Masterclass' talent accelerator programmes are a key highlight in this suite of solutions, as they have a proven track record of supporting organisations who have goals of charting clear paths to progression for their ethnically diverse staff, inspiring diverse talent engagement, and

fast-tracking high performing diverse talent into leadership. One of such programmes won an award at the European Diversity Awards in 2021. Founder and CEO of the career development platform, Bukola Adisa comments: "We have been on a mission to leverage technology to democratise career growth and progression for Black and ethnically diverse professionals since 2015, and now, we are opening up to support forward-thinking businesses with the insights and strategies they need to build diverse and inclusive workplaces.

"The launch of our enterprise -focused website is our response to the uptick in interest from organisations looking to drive change around the lack of diversity within their firms, particularly at the mid and senior levels." Adisa adds that while the needle is moving on Diversity and Inclusion policies more needs to be done. It is hoped the new website will drive 'positive systemic change' to ensure no Black or ethnically diverse professional is left behind.

ID-PAL LAUNCH

Global identity verification provider ID-Pal launches in the UK

ID-Pal, a leading identity verification provider, has announced it is formally entering the UK market following six years of exponential growth. The Dublin-based technology company supports businesses of all sizes in more than 30 sectors, across Ireland, the US, EU and UK. Current clients include large enterprises such as Grant Thornton and Zurich International, as well as SMEs such as UK Adviser and Trust My Travel. It was also the winner of Best Customer Facing Experience at the 2021 Pay360 Awards and its most recent awards include Best Customer Facing Experience at the Pay360 Awards and IT & Fintech category winner at the Irish Times Innovation Awards 2022.

The accelerated move to online during the pandemic, paired with the recent growth in new legislation including potentially conflicting regimes such as 6AMLD and GDPR, has made businesses and their customers particularly vulnerable to the reputational and monetary damage caused by financial crime. Led by founder and chief executive officer, Colum Lyons, ID-Pal has developed a fully customisable solution for identity and address verification to protect businesses against these risks, available off-the-shelf or as an API/SDK. The GDPR-compliant solution is ISO 27001 certified and can be configured for any jurisdiction or legal requirement in any

language in just minutes, offering more robust compliance that is adaptable to support SMEs as well as large, enterprise scale firms. ID-Pal offers coverage of over 6000 ID documents across 200 countries and jurisdictions using a multi-layered approach that includes Biometric, Facial Matching, Liveness Testing, Address verification and Document checks. "The way in which identity verification has been done historically is just not sustainable in our digital-first mobile-ready world," commented Colum Lyons, founder and chief executive officer. "Verifying identity documents manually is inefficient and insecure, and the risk of data flight

and simple human error can make businesses vulnerable to fraud. Our unique blend of ID checks, all powered by a completely technology-first process, means multi-layered verification takes place on any ID document in real time. Using AI and machine-learning offers greater accuracy in correctly classifying a document and reduces the margin for error and need for manual intervention. "We're looking forward to officially launching in the UK market and empowering more businesses with simple, secure convenient identity verification for their business and their customers," Lyons concludes.

RIGHT TO WORK CHECKS

Mark O'Hara, Enterprise Sales Manager in ID-Pal, on using IDVT to increase operational efficiencies.

Using a digital Right to Work checking solution can bring key operational efficiencies and prevent liability for a civil penalty. Choosing a solution that delivers robust compliance with a friction-free experience is the challenge for businesses.

Keeping up compliance with employment legislation is a struggle for many businesses. The UK Government confirmed that companies will be able to use certified identity service providers (IDSPs) or providers they are satisfied can provide the required identity verification checks necessary to establish Right to Work (RTW). But to balance regulatory obligations with a seamless experience for faster onboarding, how can businesses get it right?

Compliance and convenience

Changes to legislation mean it will no longer be necessary to depend on manual processes for RTW checks. In the past companies had multi-step manual processes to gather copies of necessary documents to confirm their validity and that they belong to the document holder. Given the current recruitment crisis, a candidate could abandon the process completely if it's not easy. Making the experience friction-free will keep a potential candidate engaged for longer.

Relying on people to carry out partial or full RTW checks leaves businesses vulnerable. It means a higher chance of human error leading to false documents slipping through the compliance net. At the same time, employers are required to keep copies of the documents they checked for the duration of the person's employment and for a further two years after employment ends. When these copies are not securely stored there is a greater risk of non-compliance. The potential fines this could result in, not to mention the reputational damage, are considerable. As such, using a digital RTW checking process with an IDSP not only improves team efficiency and onboards new recruits faster, but it also ensures robust fraud prevention and GDPR compliance. From the wide range of IDSPs currently in the market, it will be up to recruiters to ask the business-critical questions to ensure the vendor they choose is fit for purpose.

Making the right choice

When choosing a RTW checks vendor or IDSP, recruiters should look to secure the most seamless and convenient experience for their candidates. However, it is equally as important to ensure the solution is GDPR compliant. This is especially true considering the nature of the data being processed. According to GDPR, special category data, like, passports, visas and birth certificates, is sensitive, and requires more ironclad protection.

It is therefore vital that businesses only work with vendors that are committed to authenticating valid documents against the actual document holder and securely processing the data at all times during verification. Some solutions supplement technical checks by transferring customer data to offshore operations- putting the data at risk of falling into the wrong hands. In this scenario, if the technology is unable to interpret an identity document, the data is transferred for a manual review somewhere else. It is a human process, and like any other human process, it is vulnerable to error.

Look for a solution that:

- is geo-locked for the right region
- encrypts the processing of any personally identifiable information
- checks all the right databases for your business to be compliant

Gain efficiencies and save time with an IDSP that includes:

- real-time document verification, facial matching, and liveness testing to prove the document and document holder are real
- instant address verification to check a potential candidate's identity against existing local bureaus and registers

Fraud will exploit every loophole – it's the job of IDSPs to have advanced technologies designed to future-proof your RTW checks and securely process data. Implementing a solution that answers these questions means a higher number of RTW checks completed in a shorter time frame on more candidates, without compromising on compliance and reducing vulnerability to fraud. ■

TOO MANY APPLICATIONS?

Robert Symons, General Manager EMEA, SmartRecruiters discusses how businesses can manage a wave of candidates.

The job market has transformed over the course of the last two years. Talent shortages, the pandemic and the Great Resignation have given candidates the power when choosing their employer. But how does the dynamic change when a role receives an influx of applications? On average, one vacancy attracts 250 resumes. Of course, certain events or specific jobs may cause a greater influx in applications than others – for example, a summer internship, graduate programme, or new management role. External factors also influence job popularity, with one entry level vacancy receiving over 4,000 applications during the pandemic.

Whilst receiving 'too many' resumes is better than receiving none, it can be overwhelming for the teams that have to sift through them. Sometimes the filtering process falls on just one or two employees which can drastically increase the length of the task. With all these challenges in mind, what should an organisation do to help hiring teams manage these increased workloads?

Prevention is better than cure

The first step in dealing with an influx of applications is doing as much as you can to prevent teams being overwhelmed in the first place. By creating a job description that clearly lays out what you desire in a candidate, you're more likely going to find the ideal individual with the right experience. It's important to keep in mind it's unlikely you'll find a candidate that ticks every box, but a clear description does ensure you only receive applications from individuals that believe they're able to do the job.

With a pilot scheme initiative from the UK Government set to improve

pay transparency, being open about the salary is also a great tool to ensure you're receiving quality applications. Individuals are able to easily gauge whether they fit your expectations and vice versa. This can be incredibly beneficial in the long run, especially when offering a role to a candidate. Pay transparency also eliminates any potential prejudice in pay. Candidates will be more likely to accept a role if they know they are getting the same salary treatment as other applicants. Furthermore, don't be afraid to close applications early. If you have already earned a high number of responses in a short space of time, there's little benefit in keeping the vacancy open. This is especially true for postings where there's only one position available. If you have 100 applications for one role, it doesn't make sense to add weight to your hiring teams' workloads. However, this does greatly depend on the quality of the applications already received, which is time-consuming when done manually. Applicant tracking systems can pick this task up, as they can quickly scan resumes efficiently and effectively, determining the quality of applications.

Automation allows more time for other tasks

Using automation in instances where processes are fiddly, lengthy and have room for human error can increase efficiencies within businesses. Some positions generate more applications than others and organisations often know which roles perform better. In these cases, teams should plan ahead, and manage the workloads of the staff who will have to manage the influx. Applicant tracking systems (ATS) filter candidates based on skill and experience, store all applications, as well as allowing you to monitor

and carry out all hiring/onboarding processes from one place. It aids with the shortlisting process, revealing the most suited to the role. Those candidates who don't quite match the criteria you've laid out and inputted into the system will be weeded out without intervention but kept on file to ensure a wider talent pool for the next vacancy. As the filtering process is particularly lengthy and repetitive, automated systems can make room for human error. The manual method requires recruitment teams to carefully scan each CV, make judgements but due to the repetitiveness, teams may miss key information. Afterall, on average employers look at resumes for six to seven seconds before deciding whether to take the application further. This can be avoided with the automated systems. Algorithms are designed to pick out specific things so, no matter where the information falls on the page it will be picked up by AI. This gives an equal chance to each candidate who has the right experience regardless of the presentation or creativity of their CV. For recruiters, this means that every candidate that is invited in for an interview will be qualified and they don't spend time speaking to candidates who aren't suitable for the role.

Automation of admin

Administrative tasks associated with work and recruitment can be overwhelming. The thought of having to go through each email, navigating which ones are relevant to everyday work or the job you're recruiting for can be intense. Then there's the need for storing them, keeping hold of email threads to ensure you can send follow-ups, and keep the talent pool fresh.

ATSs are made to manage applications more effectively meaning less time is spent on administrative tasks. These systems allow recruiters to send automated emails, schedule interviews, and follow up with candidates all in one place. As it is separate to your recruitment teams' emails, it offers a chance for recruiters to step back and do other important tasks. In addition, utilising automation also gives organisations somewhere to build a talent pool without draining on their own company hard drives. Candidates who missed out on interviews can opt to have their information stored by the business, providing another opportunity to be called upon in the future when a suitable role arises. Organisations can retrieve these details whenever and can store as many applicants as they want as Applicant Tracking Systems use the cloud to operate. As 76% of hiring managers say that attracting top talent is their greatest challenge, building a searchable talent pool is the first step in solving this problem.

Finally, your staff will thank you for it!

The more sense you make of your own recruitment strategies, the easier it will become. Increased workloads due to an influx of applications can cause teams to burnout quicker and reduce their performance. Organisations need to get ahead of the game, ensuring when these influxes appear they don't end up overwhelming staff. By doing this and supporting teams through a busy recruitment period, employees can focus on other important tasks and will ultimately be happier in their roles. And, as a result, businesses may even see higher employee retention! ■

MIX AND MATCH

Novo Constare, COO of Indeed Flex, discusses how technology supports the evolution of the temporary workspace.



As The Great Resignation morphs into The Great Reshuffle, two post-pandemic recruitment trends look like they're here to stay. Both trends are interlinked, and in many ways they are an evolution of what was happening before months of lockdowns upended great swathes of the UK economy.

The first is a steady shift in people's attitude to temporary work. The most recent data from the ONS reveals that a higher proportion of the UK's temp workers actively chose to temp because they didn't want a permanent role, rather than because they couldn't find a permanent job. This change can't be attributed to a shortage of permanent jobs – there were a record 1.29 million UK vacancies in the first quarter of 2022 – but rather to temping's ability to offer workers something they regard as increasingly precious; total flexibility over when and where they work.

Temp talent pool is deepening

In the past year alone, the number of people regularly using the Indeed Flex platform has more than doubled. Many tell us that flexibility – and the ability to control their own work-life balance – is what they want most from a job. The other side of the coin is the increasing willingness of employers to include temporary workers in their staffing strategy. True, many of these firms switched to flexible workers out of necessity, as a quick solution to the post-lockdown battle for talent. But it's becoming apparent to these recent converts that using temporary workers to fill shifts brings efficiencies and benefits beyond the obvious upside of having a flexible workforce able to respond instantly to peaks and troughs of demand.

The rising prominence of temporary work has drawn a wider range of people to it. The days when temping was the preserve of students are long gone. Our data shows that a high proportion of those using Indeed Flex to find shifts also work as entrepreneurs, actors and creatives, and many have a range of skills and experience. If there's one thing they have in common, it's that they tend to be highly motivated self-starters –

making them a hugely valuable addition to any staffing strategy. However, managing large numbers of temporary workers is a complex and time-consuming task, and enterprise-scale employers will often want to outsource some or all of this function. Fortunately there are an array of solutions on offer, each of which offers distinct pros and cons.

MSP vs VMS

At one end of the scale is the fully outsourced model, often favoured by bigger employers, in which everything is handled by a Managed Service Provider. MSPs tend to be large staffing companies, who agree a multi-year contract with the client to provide end-to-end management of the contingent workforce – engaging with agency suppliers and delivering temporary staff to the client when and wherever they are needed. The workers might well be sourced from multiple local agencies, but the MSP controls the process and often forms close human relationships with the client business; MSP staff may even be based on the client's site, or at the very least will be in regular phone contact with the client's shift managers.

It's this analogue relationship, and the client's lack of visibility over the staff supply chain, that has led some to describe the experience of using an MSP as being like ordering a pizza; you pick up the phone to place an order and the food arrives – but you have no idea where the ingredients came from.

By contrast, a Vendor Management System relies chiefly on technology rather than people. It's essentially a software solution that enables the client's in-house HR team to manage agency suppliers (vendors), place orders for staff to appropriate vendors, track headcount and attendance and so on.

Typically cloud-based, the software can help with much of the heavy lifting of managing a large and dissipated contingent workforce – which is why it often appeals to clients operating across multiple sites.

Opting for a VMS solution might be superficially cheaper than using an MSP, but it does still require investment in a skilled and well-trained in-house team to operate it. In addition, the lack of an MSP's structured approach – which can drive down supplier costs – can quickly erode any headline savings.

Crucially, while a VMS system itself may not make value judgments about vendor suitability, it will collect reams of data that give the client total visibility and control of the staffing supply chain, thus allowing the client to make well-informed decisions and secure best value.

Certainty and choice for the employer

However as the market matures, employers are increasingly able to enjoy the best of both worlds – the ease and speed of using an MSP with the visibility and value of a VMS.

As a technology company, Indeed Flex might be expected to be a cheerleader for the VMS approach – and we are. Our experience shows that the data collected by good VMS software doesn't just give the employer visibility of their staffing supply chain, empowering them to pick the best staffing agencies, but that the benefits can flow both ways. The transparency of a vendor neutral VMS can foster a culture of fairness and meritocracy for vendors. While staffing agencies often face intense competition to place their workers, they do have the reassurance of knowing that the playing field is level. This in turn delivers best value for the employer and increases not just shift fulfilment rates but also the quality of workers they receive.

But we've also developed a hybrid model which combines all this with the convenience and reassurance of working with an MSP.

While no two solutions will be exactly the same – different employers will have different priorities and different capabilities in-house – we've seen a surge in demand from businesses keen to embrace VMS technology while also retaining the certainty of working with an MSP partner.

That's why we've evolved our original incarnation – a digital platform

which connected employers to thousands of pre-screened temporary workers – to become a full-service staffing partner who manages multiple agency relationships to provide the best staff on demand. So while we still offer businesses frictionless access to our pool of committed 'Flexers', we also enable clients to continue using their favourite staffing agencies, collecting all the analytics they could need to judge both performance and value.

In some cases our people work at our clients' sites – providing a familiar and friendly face for both management and the temporary workers – and our teams focus on dovetailing seamlessly into the client's HR department, to handle the running of their contingent workforce.

Both competitor and champion for agencies

Ultimately changes to the status quo only stick if they provide benefits for everyone. And we believe the hybridisation of the MSP and VMS models will endure not just because it offers employers an attractive blend of certainty and control.

It's because it also enshrines fairness for agency suppliers, by being vendor neutral and highly transparent. For example, while Indeed Flex's pool of 'Flexers' provides a competitive spur to staffing agencies, we make no margin on bookings made with other agencies. Meanwhile the impartial performance data that our VMS software collects ensures the playing field is level for all agencies, encouraging everyone to raise standards and consistently rewarding those who provide best value for the client.

After a rollercoaster few years, the temporary staffing sector is innovating fast, and while the conventional MSP and VMS models still have a valuable role to play, I believe the future increasingly belongs to a fusion of the two that delivers better outcomes for employers and rewards the best staffing agencies. ■

A BRAND APART

Sophie Hopley, Employer Brand Director at Searchability on discovering and shaping your unique recruitment brand.

It's no secret that the recruitment industry is highly competitive. We compete to be the preferred supplier for those big client names, to secure the most in demand candidates for our vacancies, and of course, to attract the best talent to work in our recruitment agencies too. To be successful, your brand (both corporate and employer) must stand out from the competition. If marketing and branding isn't on your list of priorities in your agency, then now is absolutely the right time to start. I'll be sharing our top tips and insights at the Global Recruiter Summit on the 9th June, but this article outlines a few areas that we will be covering to help you get started in your journey to discover and shape your unique recruitment brand.

Why is branding so important?

Branding goes way beyond elements like your logo and your website. It helps to communicate the essence of who you are as an organisation and often exists throughout the entirety of your customer and employee experiences. Your brand allows you to build familiarity and recognition in the market, it showcases your personality, and it acts as the vehicle to sell your proposition to your audience. Recruitment organisations that understand the power of brand are reaping the benefits when it comes to attracting and converting clients, candidates, and internal hires.

Corporate vs employer brand

When discovering and shaping your recruitment brand it's important to understand the differences as well as the crossovers between the corporate and employer brand. Your corporate brand is the public face of your recruitment organisation, communicating directly with your clients and the candidates you place within them. Your employer brand however exists as an intrinsic part of your employee experience, and is often communicated by showcasing your culture, environment and employer value proposition (EVP) to prospective candidates. Each should have its own distinctive voice and presence, however as recruitment organisations are driven by their people you will find that a strong employer brand will often boost the reputation of the corporate brand, and vice versa.

Discovering your unique brand

To be successful, you need to pinpoint exactly what your brand is and what makes you unique. You may be tempted to take inspiration from a website you like, or content that your competitors share on their socials, but emulating others is unlikely to get you the success that you are searching for from your brand. The discovery phase is crucial to create a solid foundation for both your corporate and employer brand in recruitment.

You'll need to assemble a team and ask key questions such as, "What is our company vision?", "What are our core values?", "What is our personality?", "Who is our audience?", "How do we communicate with our audience?", "What is our key USP?", "What makes our recruitment organisation unique?" etc. Workshops like these that welcome insights from different departments of your business are a great starting point for your corporate and employer brand discovery. You will want to back up your findings with market research as well as customer and employee feedback to ensure you are building a brand architecture that truly represents your organisation in an authentic way.

Your digital presence

Branding is not restricted to the digital space, however it is undoubtedly one of the most important areas you should look at when it comes to showcasing your recruitment brand.

Firstly you'll want to look at how this is represented on your website, with everything from the colours, imagery and user experience impacting the way your brand is portrayed. You need to be sure that the key selling points and USP's are clearly communicated across your website as you often only have a short window to convince your audience to choose you. In addition to your website you will want to consider which social channels you use, and how your voice may differ across different platforms. Some recruitment brands may choose to retain a more corporate voice on their LinkedIn for example, particularly if they use this platform to communicate predominantly with clients. Whereas they may opt for platforms like TikTok to showcase a more approachable and fun side of their employer brand. Not every agency needs to be active on

every social platform, you'll see far better results from finding the channels that work for you and ensuring you post regular relevant content to these, rather than posting to every platform.

Standing out with your content

Which leads us on to the most exciting part of branding, content! Content comes in many shapes and forms. It could include the information on your website, articles and blogs you post, YouTube videos, podcasts, graphic images/GIFs and much more! Content helps you to communicate your recruitment brand to your desired audience in the here and now, helping you to build engagement and drive conversions for both your corporate and employer brand. A content strategy and calendar will help you stay focused in your aim to promote your brand, whilst leaving you the flexibility to adapt with any trending topics and company updates as you move through the year. Again the key here is to look at the content that is relevant for you, your brand identity and your audiences. You want to share posts that prick the interest of your followers, showcases your position as a desirable agency to work with or as an employer of choice, and encourages your audience to choose you. A few examples of these include:

Example content for clients

- Whitepapers/eBooks around recruitment in your industry
- Blogs / Podcasts that discuss key challenges in recruitment
- Case study examples of how you help your clients to recruit

Example content for candidates

- Blogs/Podcasts that provide advice such as building your personal brand
- Candidate testimonials and feedback of how you work
- Insights to your vacancies and the clients you work with

Example content for internal hires

- Virtual tours of your offices
- Videos showcasing your social events
- Employee generated content and employee advocacy shares

Great content takes time to produce, so it's always better to choose quality over quantity here and create a plan that is achievable for the resource and budget you have. If you are reliant upon 100 per cent organic traffic you will need to invest time into growing your audiences, whether it's building up your email marketing database or inviting your contacts to follow your social channels. An easy way to increase the reach of your brand without using any extra budget is to champion your employees to help promote your brand, whether they create content themselves or simply like and share your posts to their network. If you have the budget though, paid social and PPC campaigns are a brilliant way to get your content seen by more relevant people. So there you have it, a short snapshot of how you can discover, shape and promote your unique recruitment brand to stand out in a competitive market. You can find out more at the Global Recruiter Summit on 9th June 2022 where I will be discussing "Building a strong recruitment brand from the inside out". ■

Sophie will be presenting at The Global Recruiter UK Summit on June 9. To join us please visit www.summit.theglobalrecruiter.com and register for FREE



KEEP THEM KEEN

In the face of 'The Great Resignation', Breedon Consulting highlight six ways to help retain staff.

Founded by managing director Nicki Robson in 1999, Leicestershire HR consultancy Breedon Consulting has received an influx of enquiries from SME owners looking for guidance on how to retain employees and help prevent staff from being poached by the competition amid 'The Great Resignation'.

During 2021 it was reported that 1 in 4 workers left their jobs in search of better benefits, flexibility, and higher salaries as the last two years propelled employees to reevaluate their work and personal values. The large scale of employees resigning and moving elsewhere has posed a huge threat for businesses reliant on their skilled workforce – therefore, it is becoming increasingly evident that competitors are actively seeking to poach staff due to such a limited pool of candidates.

To help navigate 'The Great Resignation', the HR experts at Breedon Consulting believe that retaining employees is of the utmost importance and will prove a lot less costly than hiring new talent in the long term.

"The volume at which people have been changing roles is unprecedented, alongside a large spike in business hiring for new positions," says Bev Brady, operations director at Breedon Consulting. "Quite simply, the talent pool just isn't large enough, especially in specific industries. Therefore, it's extremely important businesses seek to retain staff where possible, which is also a much cheaper alternative than the recruitment process. Businesses must adapt to the changes propelled by the pandemic, otherwise they'll be at risk of losing their best workers.

"Whether it's providing new career development opportunities, financial relief perks or other incentives, the key is to understand the different motivators for your employees. An employee engagement survey is a good way of encouraging teams to express any areas with which they are not happy," she says.

"Addressing minor concerns before they become big issues is always better than trying to act after the horse has bolted."

Six steps to boost employee retention:

1. Recruitment process

Retaining talent always begins with the recruitment process. Although advertising a job vacancy is straightforward, hiring the right people is one of the most challenging tasks employers face.

It's important to not over promise to candidates at the first stage without the intention to carry forward those promises once the employee has been hired. Setting transparent expectations of the role and their responsibilities is a must.

Asking the right questions is also essential when recruiting. It is easy to ask the same interview questions out of habit but to find the right person, employers need to start asking those challenging questions to ensure the applicant has researched the business, the position and holds the correct skills.

Although employers should remain vigilant of gaps in applicants' knowledge, identifying candidates who exhibit research abilities, will fill those gaps when the need arises. Carrying out profiling exercises is a great way to improve your likelihood of recruiting the right person who will fit your business.

2. Incentives

With the battle between the cost-of-living rising and some SME's remaining unable to compete with larger businesses to increase salaries, considering alternative incentives can ensure you are supporting your employees in a meaningful way whilst helping to relieve them financially.

Examples could include paying for parking permits or transport, offering remote working to save expenses or signing up to employee benefit and reward platforms such as Perkbox, for employees to receive discounts on retail, entertainment and travel. Incentives such as gym memberships, health insurance, dental plans are all becoming an expectation.

3. Company culture

The way an organisation operates and communicates its values helps to attract and retain talented people who want to be part of a great place to work, and who will in turn thrive in the business. The key to retaining talent is enjoyment and satisfaction – if the employee enjoys and feels proud to be a part of your vision, they will remain engaged and feel a sense of community.

Organising opportunities for staff to interact is key for establishing a healthy and positive company culture. Lunches, after work drinks or volunteer opportunities are a great place to start.

4. Wellbeing programmes

It was reported that 822,000 workers suffered from work-related stress, depression or anxiety (new or long-standing) in 2020/21 in the UK, with 449,000 of those attributed to the effects of the pandemic. Looking after employee mental health and wellbeing should be of paramount importance to business owners, along with open communication in the workplace to ensure workers feel supported. In response, Breedon Consulting has partnered with health and wellbeing coaches Wellbeing4life, to offer the Breedon Workplace Wellbeing Programme, to provide SMEs the opportunity to access a variety of content such as first aid for mental health awareness training, manager check-ins, 1:1 coaching and workshops.

This holistic style approach can translate to reductions in sickness absence, presenteeism and staff turnover and increases in productivity and creativity.

5. Flexibility

Office-based staff have become accustomed to the benefits of working from home, such as financial relief from travel costs and avoiding the added commuting time.

Flexibility will continue to remain crucial when retaining staff, as employees request remote working days to remain part of their working life, despite the government lifting all restrictions. Employers should agree what the expectations are for working from home and flexible working, whilst keeping in mind that the more trust and freedom you can give employees to find the right hours and right working location, the more chance you have to retain them.

6. Invest in upskilling and personal development

According to Challenger Hiring Survey, 70 per cent of employers who are actively hiring report a skills shortage.

It is essential to communicate the vision and direction of the company with your employees. On an individual level talk to them about how they will play their part in this and how their career could develop within this plan. Offer employees budgets for training and books, to help expand their knowledge.

By promoting continuous learning and development, by using tools such as skills gap analysis, employers can boost employees job satisfaction, remain competitive, and bring out the full potential of its existing workforce as part of its company culture. ■

BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND RESILIENCE IN THE WORKPLACE



Psychotherapist Noel McDermott looks at ways employees can build their self-confidence and develop key skills to overcome common workplace challenges.

It's important to understand that self-confidence isn't an emotional state – it's a set of skills and behaviours that other people label as self-confidence. Most folk to whom the label is applied to are as normally neurotic as you and I. The difference is they have learned to feel the fear but do it anyway, and they have probably learned that the 'doing it anyway' approach has over time lessened their sense of anxiety about the tasks they used to avoid from anxiety. There are some people undoubtedly who seem to feel no sense of insecurity, but they are in the minority and it's not necessary to become like this to be successful and achieve greatly.

The other thing to learn about self-confidence is that it isn't measured by how you feel about yourself but by the outcomes and goals you set yourself. Success is its own reward when you start to measure yourself against yourself. Achieving a personal best, a personal goal is much more useful in developing self-esteem and self-confidence than beating someone else. Our esteem grows from overcoming our own fears not overcoming other people's achievements. Seeking 'other esteem', by asking for approval from others increases insecurity in ourselves.

Here are a few tips on developing that skill set:

Tip 1 – Cover The Basics:

You can't reach new goals unless you're feeling good in yourself, so start there. Mostly, we're in distress because we've not met our basic needs. Make sure you've covered things like being fed, watered, well-rested and loved. In any situation you are the most important person and meeting your safety needs are crucial, when you do this, you will be able to take risk. Recognising your anxiety signals for what they are, learned responses that can change, will allow you to put aside the fear and do it anyway.

Tip 2 – Seek Out People To Emulate:

Find your risk-taking tribe for inspiration, whether it's within your existing social circle or through networking. Whoever you surround yourself with is who you'll become. We're social animals and we learn from others. Risk is most easily mitigated by changing the peer based social signals. Social experiments have shown we are much more programmed in our responses by the reactions of those around us than by reality, for example a famous experiment put some strangers in a room together with some actors, the room had smoke pumped into it under a door to simulate a possible fire. In one scenario the actors were told to react to the smoke and in the other to not react. Even though smoke was pumped into the room both times only in the scenario where the actors had been told to react did the strangers follow proper fire safety protocols and leave. Social cues trumped the objective cue of smoke. Change your social cue to change your behaviour, change your behaviour to change your emotional responses.

Tip 3 – One Step At A Time:

Break up whatever challenge you're undertaking into small bits. Once you're confident with one part, add in new elements until you've reached your goal. Take your time and take it in stages, because then it becomes habitual. Don't make mountains when you can make molehills, the trip of a thousand miles starts with the first step. Breaking tasks down into bite size chunks allows you to avoid being overwhelmed by the size of a task and also allows you to play to your

neurological strengths, which is to develop habits. In this case we want the habit of asserting ourselves in situations that make us afraid. So, find less important (emotionally smaller) situations that make us scared, for example returning goods to a shop, or returning food that's not cooked the way we want in a restaurant or dealing with a supplier of services etc. Practice being assertive in these types of situations, having cue cards to help for example, as a way of developing the habit of assertive and clear communication. When these types of situations are mastered possible, add the next level of emotional size by for example joining a public speaking forum, maybe a local choir or am-dram group where you can practice your skills in a supportive group of others. Then maybe progress to speaking up at the work meeting.

Tip 4 – Stop With Unhelpful Comparisons:

We're all on our own paths with our own challenges, so don't worry about measuring up to anyone else. Don't tell yourself off for being who you are. If you love who you are, stop comparing yourself with others, you can then develop new habits. Top class athletes are trained to look at their own performance only because it is well known in sports psychology that progression can only really come with improving one's own best performance. The same is true in every aspect of our lives. It is based on the principle that looking at positive achievement is always more motivating and encouraging than focusing on failure. Motivation is an emotional state, and we need to facilitate its presence. Studies in psychology show that developing a negative internal dialogue leads to anti-social and alienated behaviour, to isolation and lack of achievement.

Building a resilient workforce benefits businesses in many ways, it also improves employees' overall health, as resilience and wellbeing in the workplace are closely linked. Resilience is defined by the strength of our connections to others that provide support. These connections grow stronger with staff who have strong esteem and are confident in taking measured risks. Attachment theory, the process whereby as infants we build strong emotional binds, teaches us that the stronger the bonds the more risk the infant can bear. The more they can explore, grow, and develop. This remains true for the rest of our lives. Strong emotional bonds to each other allow us to be able to take on tasks with greater risk, emotionally, intellectually, and relationally. It makes us comfortable with learning new ideas, new skills, accepting new people into our lives, adapt to changing circumstances. The core skill set all employers want in their staff flow from this emotional state of feeling bonded to others, feeling safe to explore.

Working as an employer to both facilitate your staff in challenging themselves by acquiring and developing greater knowledge and skills around self-confidence and self-esteem and also creating the emotionally bonded culture that encourages growth and learning naturally, will have many benefits for your organisation. Innovation, creativity, new work processes, fun, play-fullness, commitment, loyalty, reduced illness, and absenteeism are some of the benefits you are likely to see. ■

