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www.theglobalrecruiter.com | Issue 236 | June 2022

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WELCOME



SIMON KENT
EDITOR



There are times when the way forward is clear and steady, and times when future possibilities seem polar opposites. After a period of uncertainty and stress for the recruitment industry, the current economic conditions are once more presenting challenges. There is talk of a recession, and in the light of this will the emphasis on finding the right talent grow or will organisations seek to cut back – or at least slow down their hiring?

At this month's Global Recruiter UK Summit leading recruiters and experts came together to discuss 'making your next move'. Naturally this was directed at helping recruitment companies get the most from current conditions and to move forward in a positive and sustainable way, but equally there are questions for the recruitment industry as a whole – what must it do if it wants to continue to rise in influence and success?

While there are certainly no short cuts here, it seems clear the industry does have the resources, the technology, the ambition and the commitment to push forwards. For a long time recruiters have wanted to achieve and maintain a level of professional recognition among their candidates and clients. As the push for talent, in the face of strong challenges continues, this could be the time when that status is finally achieved.



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Twitter [News @globaleditor](https://twitter.com/globaleditor) [Events @GlblRecruiter](https://twitter.com/GlblRecruiter)
The Global Recruiter is published 12 times a year by Chess Business Group | Carotino House | Bury Lane | Rickmansworth | WD3 1ED | UK

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ISSN 2049-3401

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WORKING WEAK?

73 per cent of UK want a 4-day week but half don't think their employer will deliver

4 DAY WEEK

5 DAY WEEK

A total of 70 UK companies are currently undergoing a four-day working week trial, labelled the biggest flexible working experiment of its kind. At the same time, exclusive research from recruitment agency, Aspire, has found that almost three-quarters (73 per cent) of the workforce is interested in shifting to a four-day week – however, nearly half (45.2 per cent) aren't convinced their employer will make the change. More than 800 candidates from a range of industries – including marketing, sales, technology and the creative industries – responded to Aspire's survey, which explored the key trends impacting the world of work in 2022 so far.

The six-month pilot trial of the four-day working week will see more than 3300 workers across 70 companies reduce their working hours without a loss of salary. As the UK workforce looks to bounce back from the pandemic, the four-day working

week has been touted as the potential solution to the UK's productivity problem, as well as contributing to the UK's net-zero targets and enabling a healthier work-life balance. But despite the degree of interest in a shorter working week, Aspire's study shows that only one in four workers are confident (14.2 per cent) are very confident (10.7 per cent) that their employer will roll out four-day working week in the future. In contrast, almost half (45.2 per cent) of workers have no confidence or have doubts that employers can deliver a shorter working week, with a further 29.9 per cent unsure. "It's no surprise that workers want to receive five days' pay for four days' work," says Paul Farrer, chairman and founder of Aspire. "The question is, can they be as or more productive? This pilot scheme will make interesting reading. Naturally, not all jobs can as productive when one day a week is lost, particularly manual

work. So the four day week risks creating a two-speed country. Those paid or charging by the hour will be challenged as to how they could make it work." Farrer admits he is sceptical. The early responses of those trialling a four day week found that employees get more rest, but Aspire's research shows that 28 per cent already have a side hustle, with a further 20 per cent intending to create one. What's more, most employees would like to work on the side hustle full time in due course. This leaves employers potentially paying to lose their employees. "In the current competitive jobs market, a shorter working week has obvious appeal, but it also poses huge risks – the biggest of which is actually trialling it," says Farrer. "After the initial honeymoon period of increased activity, businesses must consider how they would address a potential productivity decline. How do you revert back

to a five day week? The pilot will be interesting when four day week companies are measured against their five day competitors. I know of one company that has operated a four day week since January and they are witnessing increased productivity. Taken at face value it proves the concept works, but when compared to their competitors they have fallen behind. "Given the appetite for a four day week, it could be decisive when it comes to attracting talent and retaining staff," concludes Farrer. "But where it might offer an advantage in recruitment and employee wellbeing when the economy is growing, employers must carefully consider if it will deliver a commercial advantage and work logistically in the long run."

FRANK IN MILAN

Frank Recruitment Group's 25th global office will focus on finding professionals for the Italian cloud sector

Frank Recruitment Group has announced the opening of its first office in Italy. The firm, who specialise in finding professionals for talent-short markets across a number of cloud technologies, now have 25 global hubs after opening its doors in Milan. The office will initially focus on finding professionals to work with Microsoft Cloud products, including Microsoft Dynamics and Azure, through its Nigel Frank brand, servicing Microsoft customers and partners across Italy. With reports showing cloud usage nationwide increased almost twofold between 2018 and 2020, going from 23% to 59%, and funding being increasingly available to support digitization across the nation, further uptake to cloud solutions during the

pandemic has resulted in a significant increase in demand for the specialists that can work with those technologies. Italy being is the third-largest economy amongst EU countries and Milan is Italy's financial and industrial heart. "It has always and continues to attract some of the best talent—topping the lists as one of the cities boasting the best quality of life and bustling with professionals looking for great opportunities," said Neil Walker, Frank Recruitment Group's SVP for European Operations. "The pandemic has been a catalyst for the digital transformation, leading businesses worldwide to move to the cloud to communicate, operate and store data and information safely. Even the

most tech-shy put aside their hesitancy, which has upped the demand for talented cloud specialists to levels never seen before. We're looking forward to working on-site in a city where IT professionals are already in demand – and to bringing our experience, industry knowledge and expertise to new and existing clients and partners across the country to help them thrive, especially after two very challenging years." Based just off Giardini Indro Montanelli in the heart of the city, the office will also create a number of new jobs in Milan for people with a wide range of experience in recruitment, from graduates to experienced professionals. "We're thrilled to be opening our first office in Italy," said

Zoe Morris, President at Frank Recruitment Group. "The pandemic has put new strains on businesses, and further highlighted the importance of cloud technologies to help them operate successfully in today's world. Especially now that we're seeing light at the end of the tunnel, there are immense opportunities for growth through companies investing in and growing their digital infrastructure." "Matching talented IT professionals with forward-looking businesses is our greatest passion, and we can't wait to continue doing so in a new area—assisting people in finding their dream jobs and helping organizations take a greater leap in the Digital Renaissance."

ENCORE IN THE DRIVING SEAT

Recruitment company established mobile branch to reach candidates

Leading Midlands recruitment agency, Encore Personnel, has invested in a state-of-the-art recruitment van to tour the UK to help make job searching easier than ever – in essence creating a mobile branch of the business. Today's challenging labour market requires real engagement with candidates and the Encore recruitment van with its team of consultants behind the driving wheel does just that. The specialist recruitment agency, which employs more than 200 people across the business, has already deployed its four-wheeled recruitment strategy to locations across the UK including Peterborough, Telford and Northampton to help make jobs within the industrial, driving, manufacturing, energy, engineering, managed services and professional

services sectors accessible to everyone. The bright orange van can be easily spotted and has even undergone a recent Encore transformation to ensure every side of the van is branded with the number to its texting hotline and a scannable QR code that takes people straight to the Encore website where they can search for over 150 current available jobs. Having face-to-face contact has been essential for the recruiters and so the van enables them to get out amongst the public and answer questions directly. Pete Taylor, managing director at Encore, commented: "It's no longer enough for recruiters to rely on technology to help place candidates in roles, we need to go back to basics, take a proactive approach, and invest in IRL face-time with



our candidates and potential candidates. The van allows us to travel the length and breadth of the UK and really engage with people who need our support when looking for a new job. We understand that there's a real need for our services so by bringing them to local communities and towns we can register new candidates right there and then and get the ball rolling."

The Encore van aims to bring recruitment back to life in a post-pandemic world. With each new location, members of the Encore recruitment team will be on hand to guide people through the process of registering, searching and applying for jobs and offer support on how the agency can help.

BERRY RECRUITMENT GROUP ACQUIRES FRS

Deal gives Berry greater reach along south coast

Berry Recruitment Group (BRG) has acquired First Recruitment Services (FRS). FRS works from three locations in Sussex; Brighton and Hove, Horsham and Haywards Heath. It means BRG has a presence right along the south coast from Cornwall, through Devon and Dorset into Southampton, Gosport, Portsmouth, Sussex and Kent. The deal, for an undisclosed sum, will add around £6m to BRG's turnover which last year came in at just under £70m, with its profits before taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA*) up 49 percent. FRS's business employs 17 staff at its three branches and was targeted due to its focus on the office and light industrial sectors. BRG's brands include Berry Recruitment, Wild Recruitment, Wild Berry Associates and

BuzzHire. Ultimately FRS will operate as a division of Wild Recruitment, which has four branches, in Portsmouth, Poole, London and Milton Keynes. When commenting on its accounts in March, BRG chairman Tony Berry said the company would focus on organic growth and make targeted acquisitions. Managing director Chris Chown commented: "FRS is led by Claire Sipple and she is supported by a very strong and experienced senior management team. "The company's financial figures were impressive as were the staff who have grown it over the years. We're grateful that FRS's managing director, Andrew Kaltz, will be staying on as a consultant. FRS very much aligns with that of Wild Recruitment, both in terms of its focus, dedication to service and its geography. After the interruption

of Covid we were keen to get back on track with the planned growth of BRG through organic means and acquisitions." Chown says the deal shows the business' commitment to developing the group. "Our other acquisitions have bedded in well and that has helped us become a national company that works from nearly 40 locations in England and Wales," he said. "We remain focused as a group on sourcing candidates, who remain scarce, and investing in innovation, such as our BuzzHire and Berry Recruitment apps." Andrew Kaltz, founder of the three FRS branches and majority shareholder and managing director following his management buy-out in 2005, says BRG was the best fit for FRS. "I had a number of offers but held out for a meeting with Berry

Recruitment Group because of its reputation in recruitment," he said. "Its chairman Tony Berry is an industry legend and the company does things in the old-school, correct way, such as seeing clients and candidates face-to-face and making sure every i is dotted and t crossed. "It's been an amazing 20-plus years at FRS, with ups and downs, as well as moments of pure magic. In other words, it's been a blast. The FRS journey continues, and I'm delighted to be a part of it." Michelle Merritt, managing director of Wild Recruitment, said: "We're very much looking forward to having FRS join the Wild team. Their values and ethics align with ours and they have excellent consultants and senior management."



GREAT PLACE

LHi Group is named one of the Best Workplaces in 2022

Great Place to Work and Fortune magazine have honoured LHi Group Inc. as one of this year's Best Workplaces in New York. This is LHi Group's first time being named to this prestigious list, coming in at 40th place. Earning a spot means that LHi Group is one of the best companies to work for in New York.

This year's Best Workplaces in New York award is based on employee feedback collected through America's largest ongoing annual workforce study of over one million employee survey responses and data from companies representing more than 6.1 million U.S. employees. In that survey, 96 per cent of LHi Group's employees said LHi Group is a great place to work. This number is 39 per cent higher than the average U.S. company.

Anne-Marie Butts, CPO at LHi Group comments: "It is our people who make working at LHi Group a really rewarding experience. The past two years through the

pandemic have been challenging for everyone but by keeping to our 'people first' mantra, and looking after the individuals in the business were supporting mentally, physically and financially, we have been able to keep the business whole and have come through with a stronger, more collaborative group. We are so grateful to everyone in the New York office for playing their part in making LHi Group a GPTW."

The Best Workplaces in New York list is highly competitive. Great Place to Work, the global authority on workplace culture, selected the list using rigorous analytics and confidential employee feedback. Companies were only considered if they are a Great Place to Work-Certified organisation and headquartered in the New York metropolitan statistical area. Great Place to Work is the only company culture award in America that selects winners based on how fairly employees are treated.

Companies are assessed on how well they are creating a great employee experience that cuts across race, gender, age, disability status, or any aspect of who employees are or what their role is. "As employee demands and expectations have dramatically changed over the past year, these companies have risen to the occasion – and it's not been easy," says Kim Peters, executive vice president of global recognition, research & strategic partnerships at Great Place to Work. "Their hard work and dedication to listen to and care for the well-being of every employee, and support them in a way that's meaningful to all, is the standard all organisations will be held to."

In 2021, LHi Group's UK business ranked #1 in The Best Companies to Work for – Recruitment and #3 Best Company to Work for in the UK.



HOWGATE SABLE LAUNCHES MIDDLE EAST BASE

Dubai is next stage for recruitment firm's global reach

Boutique executive search firm, Howgate Sable, has launched a new base in Dubai as part of its global expansion. The 35-year-old firm has appointed Andrew Bailey as regional managing director of the Middle East business. Andrew will work closely with the UK-based team along with fellow new hire Navin Govind, who has been appointed manager and will also be based in Dubai. Howgate Sable Middle East will operate throughout the Gulf states with the ability to also support on search mandates into northern Africa. The company's expansion into Dubai follows an increased presence in the region over

recent years, supporting various businesses with securing executive talent in the Middle East. Andrew Bailey, RMD of Howgate Sable Middle East, said: "Howgate Sable delivers exceptional work and has crafted an enviable reputation in the executive search world. The launch of the Middle East arm is an exciting milestone for this heritage business and I am delighted to be leading the development of this new venture." Andrew's team will predominantly focus on the financial services, infrastructure, aviation and transportation, healthcare and

family-office sectors, drawing on Andrew's expertise and connections coupled with those of the UK directors. Andrew has been based in the Middle East for 10 years and benefits from a 20-year career in executive search in both boutique and publicly listed firms across Australia, Asia Pacific and EMEA. Neil Humphreys, director of Howgate Sable, commented: "In recent years the business has developed a global client base and delivered talent worldwide. Our Dubai operation is the first step towards putting feet on the ground in a key territory to help us forge new relationships

and continue to deliver excellence in executive search. I'm delighted to have Andrew in place to lead the charge in the Middle East and look forward to working closely with him to cement the Howgate Sable brand in the region." The firm counts numerous Fortune 250 businesses among its clients and has a UK presence in London, Manchester and Liverpool. It operates in numerous sectors including aviation, consumer, infrastructure, industrial and healthcare.

TESTING TIMES

Global Recruiter spoke with Polish HR Forum director, Agnieszka Zielinska, against a background of economic growth and a border with a country at war.

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

A: Challenges facing the Polish labour market are both chronic and acute. Chronic are the lack of candidates and skills for the job opportunities available – a situation we have faced for some years as our economy has grown; and acute is the over 3.5 million Ukrainian citizens who have arrived in Poland since 24 February having fled the war in their homeland.

Let's start with the fight for talent. Demographics in Poland mean that the working age population is shrinking. Latest predictions are that people aged 16-65 will fall by 17 per cent by 2050. We have difficulty in finding workers across the board, and particularly skilled and unskilled production workers in sectors such as food and pharma production and HORECA (hotels, restaurants and cafes) where Covid lockdowns have prompted many to leave the sector for good, resulting in severe shortages and many vacancies.

In addition, we have a significant skills mismatch – largely due to technology and automation. Candidates do not meet employer needs in a wide number of areas – from engineering, digital and IT through to simple production skills. In many senses it's a sellers' market, with skilled workers able to name their price.

The influx of Ukrainians has added a further twist to our labour market challenges. Even before the war, the candidate shortage meant that there were almost one million Ukrainians working in Poland, particularly in the production sector. Some 40 per cent of all

temporary workers come from third countries – including Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and Russia. Of the new arrivals, 50 per cent are children, 44 per cent are women, three per cent seniors over 65 and just three per cent are men under 65.

With Ukrainian workers no longer needing a work permit to access the labour market, our member agencies have been very busy and placed over 3,000 people in work in the first month. Official statistics show that as of May 23rd some 160,000 Ukrainian refugees had started work in Poland. There is certainly work available, with 600,000 open jobs on the job boards in March. We don't yet have a profile of the competencies of the new arrivals, and as many intend to return home once the situation is safe, we will need time to understand the true picture.

Of course, with challenges, there are also opportunities. The war has prompted some companies, especially in the services sector, to move across the border to Poland, with the result that there is greater demand for our sector – particularly in Business Process Outsourcing services. Often though we still face a skills shortage as industries such as call centres require good English.

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

A: Although there are fewer workers available, the hours that they are working is increasing – meaning that people are working more

and the HR and staffing industry is doing everything to hold onto them. In 2020 the average temp worked 50 days, while in 2021 it had risen to 58 days. Growth has returned strongly post Covid with recruitment up 50 per cent rise last year.

Flexibility is on the rise too. With the candidate shortage it is likely to continue as client companies seek to retain their permanent staff. They realise that people's value sets have changed and are offering packages to accommodate this – such as hybrid working and free days off. Career development and opportunities are increasingly more important than salary – particularly to younger workers.

Our labour laws are not the most liberal and need to evolve to embrace a wider range of contracts and an end to restrictions on open-ended contracts in the temporary staffing sector. A regulatory framework for remote work is currently being dis-cussed and our labour market policies need to strike a balance between freedoms and protections if they are to be fit for purpose.

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

A: With Covid having hastened the implementation of technology across many sectors, our industry has a role to play in supporting people to invest in their careers and keep their skills up-to-date. Overall unemployment is low – 5.3 per cent in April – but in some regions, such as the East of the country, it is higher and people need support in finding work. Advances in technology are also having an

impact on our own industry, with the rise of HR Tech and the use of chatbots, Platforms and other new tools.

Covid and the war have also placed a spotlight on the greening of our economy and energy supply. Poland's mining industry will need to change its profile and we will need more green engineers for green jobs. I believe that the rise in remote work will change both our internal mobility and the levels of cross border mobility as we see a rise in workers who can carry out their jobs from any location.

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

A: We are lucky to have a highly involved membership. We work together to identify and address the challenges facing the sector – from legislative issues and market developments to exchanging best practice. We position ourselves as experts on labour market policy and provide members with a range of tools on a quarterly basis, such as reports on trends, skills and market intelligence. Having spent many months meeting remotely, we are about to embark on a two-day in-person meeting where we will network and exchange views. Yes, there are challenges ahead, but also a host of opportunities and reasons to feel positive about our future. ■

HIGHER GOALS

Mark Braithwaite, Managing Director of Odgers Berndtson APAC, explains why boards now expect more from their CEOs after two years of disruption.

In 2020, just 24 per cent of executives worldwide were confident their organisations were being led by the right leaders. Two years on and that figure is very different. Odgers Berndtson's Leadership Confidence Index 2022, published in conjunction with Forrester, has found 42 per cent of executives now feel that their organisations have the right leaders. In short, leaders are performing better than they were before the pandemic and have subsequently inspired greater confidence. But why is this the case and what does it mean for finding and securing new leadership talent?

COVID-19 resulted in a crisis where business as usual no longer existed. In the newly created environment, many leaders rose to the challenge, adapted to the circumstances, and realigned their organisations with skill and purpose. Ultimately, the pandemic provided an environment in which the best leaders could show 'what they were made of' and their capabilities shone through.

At the same time, the pandemic changed attitudes to enterprise technology. Historically viewed as a disruptor by employees and difficult for organisations to roll out, the necessity of remote working evolved technology into a critical enabler of business. Executives watched their leaders embrace enterprise technology and successfully deliver technology change, leading to greater confidence in those leaders.

The impact on mindset is clear – 44 per cent of executives now view advances in technology as a disruptor, a noticeable drop from 62 per cent two years ago.

A similar story is true of ESG and I&D. Throughout the pandemic, many leaders focused their efforts on aligning their organisation's purpose with the diversity and sustainability agendas. Our Index shows an overwhelming majority (87 per cent) of executives believe their businesses made positive changes in these areas. Most (88 per cent) are also confident in their leadership's ability to keep improving in these areas. With stakeholders at all levels demanding commitments to ESG and I&D, those leaders who progressed these agendas are likely to have gained confidence from their executive teams.

The picture so far is a positive one for organisations. But the fallout has created a more challenging and disruptive environment where leadership succession and acquisition are concerned. With more leaders than expected performing well over the last two years, the benchmark for performance has risen. Large numbers of boards either have or are currently assessing their leadership capabilities and looking to replace those CEOs who they believe no longer meet this benchmark.

The drive for better

Part of this global drive to find higher-performing leaders is the expectation of the disruption to come. What that disruption looks like – whether it's COVID-19 variants, supply chain issues, the war in Europe, or rising inflation – is unclear. But the majority of executives in our Index (79 per cent) believe the level of future disruption will either increase or maintain at the same pace. And of all the C-suite positions, the role perceived as the most important in successfully managing this disruption is, categorically (85 per cent), the CEO. Given this view of the future, it's unsurprising that boards around the world are searching for new leadership talent.

Technology, ESG, and I&D will be among the deciding factors in the appointment of these new leaders. While most agree that the attitude to technology has shifted, the confidence in the ability of the leadership teams to make the right technology decisions shows a clear gap between what is needed and where most leadership teams stand now. Our Index found just 26 per cent of executives have a high level of confidence for this. For years, the notion that leaders should be tech savvy has been gaining momentum. Now it's an absolute necessity. In practice, this doesn't simply mean embracing technology. It means knowing which technologies to invest in, and which ones not to.

Likewise, commitments to environmental, social, and governance agendas must be more than vague assertions of intent and company branding. While our Index demonstrates progress in this area, employee expectations have grown significantly and ESG and I&D have advanced well up their personal priority lists over the past two years. Failure to deliver goals for inclusion, diversity, and sustainability, will result in employees losing faith and leaving. They will go to companies where they believe the leadership team is aligned with their values and beliefs. In an employee's market where companies are struggling to recruit at every level, this is a precarious position for a leader to be in.

There has always been a need for leadership talent, but the current climate is acting as a catalyst for extreme demand. On the one side boards expect more of their leaders and on the other, there is a shortage of leaders who can genuinely deliver on these new expectations. For those in this elite cohort, the trends explored in our Index are worth paying attention to.

Urgency, clarity of purpose, and authentic care for employees is what inspired confidence – this is now par for the course and should be maintained from here on out. Technology decisions are much closer to the CEO – those who purely delegate to their CIOs will lose the respect and ultimately confidence of their teams. The ESG agenda is a top priority for the majority of stakeholders – it should be executed with a combination of urgency, authenticity, and visible leadership. Finally, more disruption is on the horizon and as the pandemic has shown, there is no option but for leaders to embrace it. ■

AN END TO PLEASANTEEISM



**Shaun Williams, CEO & Founder,
Lime Global Ltd on securing
wellbeing post-pandemic.**

It's becoming clear that the legacy of the Covid-19 pandemic will be felt in terms of mental health. Multiple lockdowns, rising health anxiety and the resulting economic downturn conspired to create the perfect storm with mental health bearing the brunt. Now, as we are hopefully putting the worst of the pandemic behind us, we're confronted with new concerns, including geopolitical uncertainty and the rising cost of living. These are just two of the issues fuelling stress and anxiety about the months ahead.

Put simply, people are struggling as resilience ebbs. More worrying is the fact that many are suffering in silence. Our recent research found that 75 per cent of UK workers now admit to putting on a brave face at work to hide how they are really feeling. This is a significant jump from the 51 per cent we saw when we asked the same question in May 2021. It's clear that 'pleasanteeism' – the pressure to put on a brave face regardless of how we're really feeling – is only getting worse.

Allowing pleasanteeism to go unaddressed not only risks the UK sleepwalking into a mental health crisis, but will also be detrimental to the productivity and efficiency of our businesses and overall economy. In fact, our research found that over half (54 per cent) of employees have taken time off work due to feeling like they have to put on a brave face – adding up to as many as 67 million days lost each year across the entire UK workforce.

Despite this, the tide is turning when it comes to attitudes towards mental health in the workplace. Half of UK workers state that their expectations of their employer to support their mental health are now higher than they were before the pandemic. Mental health is now a shared responsibility and organisations must act if they are to attract, support and retain their staff in an increasingly competitive labour market.

So, what can employers do to protect and promote the welfare of their employees?

Open the conversation

The first and in many ways most important step employers can take is to destigmatise mental health in the workplace. Creating a positive, open culture where employees can feel free to speak up and be heard without fear of negative repercussions is critical. Management can take the lead here. It's not about sharing deepest darkest secrets, but rather showing that everyone has their own challenges and that it's OK to ask for help or support when needed.

Understand the needs of ALL your employees

Without a clear understanding of how people are feeling right across the business – at every level, it is extremely difficult to implement measures that truly support the whole workforce. Our research found that 33 per cent of workers are struggling to cope at work, so the problem is widespread. Employers should take the time to ask all of their employees, from head office to the factory floor, how they are feeling and where they feel they would like more support. This will allow employers to answer the important questions – how effective is our mental health support? How can we create a more supportive workplace culture?

It's crucial to take action based on this feedback, no matter how large or small, to show employees that their concerns have been taken seriously and that their employer is committed to finding and implementing long-term solutions right across the whole workforce. Supporting mental health isn't a tick box exercise – and meaningful,

effective support will only come from being in tune with the people you work with.

Banish burnout

To help tackle pleasanteeism, employers have a responsibility to ensure their employees don't burn out. There will always be busy, high pressure days at work, but employers must create an environment where employees feel empowered to take time out and find headspace when needed. Almost a quarter (23 per cent) of employees said that they would like their employer to be more mindful of their workload and work-life balance. It's critical that employers allow staff to extract themselves from work, recalibrate, reset and ask for help when pressure becomes too much.

Look at mental health tools and services to provide professional support

Alongside small, cultural changes, employers should also consider more practical solutions that can provide much needed professional support. There is a huge range of trained professionals and mental health services out there for employers to access and promote across their workforces. It's worth doing some home work to ensure it's the right solution; the most important factors will be ensuring staff are aware of tools available, feel comfortable accessing them and can do so easily. There is no point paying for something that no one is getting any benefit from.

Provide better support and benefits for every employee

Not only do UK workers expect their employers to support their mental health more than they did before the pandemic, they also now expect this support to be offered to every member of staff – regardless of job role, seniority or expertise. In fact, 65 per cent of workers believe benefits should be offered to the whole of a company's workforce, not just the select few – while 45 per cent said that it's unfair that healthcare and wellbeing benefits aren't currently offered to the whole of their workforce.

The provision of mental health support by employers must be provided across the board, to each and every employee. Not only is granting access to inclusive healthcare support the right thing to do, but it is an essential move for employers to attract and retain talent, drive down absenteeism and increase productivity. This, combined with an authentic, wellbeing-friendly company culture which promotes an open dialogue around the challenges that people are facing, will be key steps to producing a happier, healthier and more engaged workforce.

It's time for employers to take long-term, meaningful action to halt pleasanteeism in its tracks once and for all. ■

[The research for this article is based on a survey of 2,049 UK workers commissioned by Lime Global Limited and conducted by Censuswide between 22.11.21 and 24.11.21. Alongside a survey of 2,132 UK workers between 06.05.2021 – 21.06.2021. Censuswide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society which is based on the ESOMAR principles.]

WORK ON PURPOSE

Carol Mote, Founder of People Advisory International makes the case for purpose led working.

The current government dialogue relating to where people should work from does little to clarify the confusion around future work models.

For a start, let's be clear about the conversation; is it about workplace experience, productivity, irresponsible workers or commercial revival? Is there a gender or diversity variance?

For workplace experience such as team based discussions, training and on the job learning, it can be very engaging to be physically close; but little point if you come in and there is no dedicated space to work (you have then spent travel time and expense, unable to be fully effective). Having reached the office, with many working environments now being open plan, individuals can waste time trying to hot desk effectively or worse wander the streets in order to undertake confidential discussions that they are unable to have in a busy workplace.

In cities and areas where there was once high footfall from white collar professionals, those businesses that supported the workforce including provisions of areas such as food, laundry and gyms, have inevitably suffered. The call for employees to come back into the office to support commercial businesses, however, can be considered to be a moot point as the increase of home based workers in towns and villages has revitalised regional areas. Organisational real estate strategies are likely to need reviewing, to reflect future intentions for environmental, employment constructs.

In The Economist special report on The Future of Work*, Callum Williams identifies that people's jobs are perhaps the biggest single constituent of their identity. Further, Williams discusses the pressure to do more to reduce inequality and to better design systems related to employee rights and welfare benefits.

Rather than shoe-horning people into one model or another, it may prove to be the perfect opportunity to take a fresh perspective. Based on years of expertise managing people in extreme change scenarios I am increasingly speaking to companies about Purpose Led Working (PLW).

Trust in the purpose

Purpose Led Working advocates for trusting employees to work where they need to work from, to deliver the best commercial business performance for their role, without over prescribing the formula. For essential workers or employees on a shift based system, this may require ongoing attendance at the principle place of work. However, for employees who are office based, pro-actively extending a purpose-led-location agenda is liberating, building loyalty and engagement. Whilst it is important to treat people as equal, they are not all the same. Progressive employers are now looking for ways to enable their employees to align the delivery of required outcomes for their role, with who they are and the needs of their personal life, understanding that individuals continue to juggle different priorities. The conduct of people is central to business activity, client delivery and organisational values. As businesses return to the office, the concept of introducing PLW is to encourage employees, where it is viable, productive and motivational, to construct a bespoke working schedule that supports their work-life balance.

This new framework naturally includes team engagement, and office attendance, however, prioritises the achievement of purpose led outcomes. From a leadership perspective, maintaining a commitment to providing a high standard of service through a skilled and motivated workforce is core to applying the right approach to directives related to where people are working from.

The pandemic brought to life a new perspective on how work is undertaken. Upholding government directives, organisations had to quickly pivot to a more fluid operational framework and employees responded with flexibility, increasing their collective agility. For many, compulsory home working was liberating. Individuals with child or elderly care issues, those with disabilities (who may previously have found travel

to the office demanding), part time workers or those on home based contracts were accepted in a new way.

Through the pandemic, colleagues were aligned and resigned to working from home and this new, virtual environment created a 'level playing field' with arguably a greater sense of equality, community, acceptance and determination to deliver their job well. For the majority of office based employees, work continued to be highly effective through the lockdown periods, cultural diversity naturally expanded and equity opportunities increased. As a global M&A specialist focused on the people agenda, through the pandemic I was working on several diverse, large scale international projects that were successfully completed in double quick time (without travel) – productivity was simply not an issue.

Beyond the pandemic

Moving on from the pandemic, employees who thrived in the home based working environment are now reconsidering the structure of their future working lives. For those who found the past two years liberating in determining 'how' their role was delivered, appreciating a new level of an increased trust associated with the employment contract. Reversing expectations and or behaviours in relation to location may well feel regressive and unattractive.

The challenge for employers naturally centres around the honest appreciation of whether everyone is required back in the office on a day by day basis. Rather than reverting to pre-pandemic structures could the increased trusted employment landscape established through the pandemic, be matured in a whole new way?

Hybrid working is essentially an updated terminology for flexible working which exists in most organisations; offering a formal structure for employees to apply for their contractual terms to be adjusted to reflect

short or long term preferences to the structure of their work-life balance. A purpose led working framework is a pioneering approach to framing work location decisions in a new way, transferring location decisions to an individual, supported with clear roles, responsibilities and performance management criteria.

Purpose led working focuses on creating the most business value in terms of outcome for the company and the individual. With the current dialogue around office location highly topical, offering a purpose led working framework perhaps through a 'pilot' for a group of staff by level, location or team delivery for a period, would demonstrate maturity of the employer-employee relationship. The proof of concept for PLW could then be agreed before formal contractual changes were applied. PLW discussions should naturally include days per week and a holistic focus on outcomes and timings rather than simply working hours or location. Responding with fluidity to external factors by intentionally adopting an ongoing matured approach to managing productivity, will increase follower-ship, attract and retain talent and create market advantage. Operating at the leading edge of employment provisions can feel exposed, however with the appropriate support infrastructure, what was a sense of vulnerability can be transformed into a robust and dynamic competitive strategy. ■

***The Economist, Callum Williams Bright Future for the world of work, available at: <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2021/04/08/a-bright-future-for-the-world-of-work>**
Carol Mote harnesses over 25 years in the corporate sector to deploy a cutting-edge ap-proach to helping individuals and teams build resilience and thrive. Find her here: <https://www.peopleadvisoryinternational.com>

MOVING UP

June saw The Global Recruiter's UK Summit which gave recruiters the tools and insight they require to push their businesses and practice forward.



The Global Recruiter's UK Summit, held in London this year, took as its theme Making Your Next Move. In a sometimes confusing but always promising recruitment market, the day long conference and exhibition gave recruiters a chance to hear from leading edge speakers on all aspects of the recruitment sector. Over the course of the day presentations and panel discussions covered strategy, technology, ED & I, brand management and more – in fact everything required to push recruitment businesses and recruitment practice further along the road to greater success.

The day opened with a presentation from James Osborne, founder and chairman of the Recruitment Network. Osborne's keynote presentation, Maximum Momentum gave a clear overview of where the recruitment industry currently stood with regard to surrounding economic activity. This was a chance to take stock of the lasting impact of the pandemic and to understand the possibilities which now exist for recruiters to take their businesses further.

Speaking after the conference Osborne highlighted a comment he'd received from one of the attendees: "When you surround yourselves with industry experts, industry suppliers and your peers, even if for just a day, you can sense check your thinking about how to run your business, to give you the confidence to look ahead and invest in the next stage of growth."

"That is exactly what the day was all about," said Osborne. "If you look ahead right now, through the right lens, armed with the right insights, you will see that the outlook, albeit slightly different from today, can be as positive as it has been these last 18 months or so."

"The opportunity is there waiting for you, if you chose to go after it," he concluded.

One opportunity which has been growing across the sector for some time is the potential efficiencies and advance made available through technology. In the first panel session of the day Louise Triance, managing director of UK Recruiter hosted a panel which brought together Matt Coburn – strategic partnership manager at Sonovate, Gary Cordery – Bullhorn's regional sales director, UK&I and Neville James – senior director of sales for CloudCall. All three experts answered questions and discussed the current and future state of technology use within the recruitment sector.

Certainly there is a lot of potential for technology to contribute positively to the industry, but equally there's an emphasis on ensuring solutions are deployed correctly and are, in the first instance, ideal for a specific business. It is frustrating – for technology suppliers as well as end users – if time and effort goes into an implementation which doesn't ultimately pay back or is considered less than adequate by the recruiters who need to use it day in and day out. Naturally, while a high degree of functionality might be advantageous for recruiters, the need for a solution to be easy to use and understand is also paramount.

Speaking after the event, Louise Triance said: "I had a great time at the Global Recruiter conference. The speaker schedule was well put together with a mix of talks that attracted a keen audience. As always the networking was excellent and it was lovely to meet with old friends and make new acquaintances."

Also high on every employer and recruiter's agenda is the issue of diversity and this subject was explored fully by Adam Tobias, co-founder of Inventum Group and APSCo's ED&I Partner. Tobias was clear that the recruitment industry itself wasn't diverse enough and needed to do more to become inclusive for everyone. There are clear advantages for



recruitment companies who can tackle this agenda and do it right: not only will their own business benefit from greater diversity among their employees, but they will have the expertise and insight to be able to pass on that approach to their client. At a time when talent is in demand, ED&I remains an important way to unlock new areas of talent and get the very best out of those people.

The power of brand

Sophie Hopley is employer brand director at Searchability and she and her business saw success at The Global Recruiter's Awards for this last year. In the afternoon session she explained the power of the brand and how recruitment companies can make their brand work for them.

She was followed by another panel discussion, this time among leading recruitment professionals and hosted by Denis Pennel, managing director of the World Employment Confederation. As well as highlighting the need to find – and follow – the candidate in order to maximise any recruitment company's growth, Pennel explored what he terms as 'The Great Mismatch' which now exists between the expectations and needs of different people within the labour market. This is, in part, a result of the pandemic's impact on the labour market which some have ultimately felt has been positive for their work while others still feel confused, searching for how and where they should work. The ongoing evolution of the workplace is something aired by employers, employees and candidates alike, and recruiters and the staffing industry as a whole has a great part to play in resolving or at least brokering the situation.



Denis' thoughts were illustrated and explored by the panel of recruiters – Rhona Carmichael, regional managing director Scotland, Nash Squared, John Gaughan, CEO, Finlay James and Terri Wickett, HR & talent acquisition partner at TritonExec, who brought their own views and experience to the subject.

Summing up the session, Denis Pennel commented: "The GR UK Summit was a great opportunity to exchange views on the Great Mismatch. This gap is one of the key reasons for the shortages of labour that are currently faced."

"Recruiters and employers must understand and integrate in their HR practices the new expectations from people regarding work – freedom of choice, purpose, well-being and professional development," he added. "In times of tight labour markets, the employment and recruitment industry is more than ever part of the solution, delivering work opportunities, flexibility and responsible work intermediation." Finally the day was rounded off with a session from Bilal Khan, associate director Grant Thornton Corporate Finance who gave an insight into the lively M&A market alongside how recruiters could unlock higher valuations of the companies they work hard to build and develop.

From every perspective the UK Summit explored, debated and offered expert insight into the challenges and demands of running a recruitment business in today's economic scenario. While there may be some gloomy looking clouds on the horizon in the form of a possible recession and continued talent scarcity, the stage is set for recruiters to realise greater success and to help power the world of work into the future. ■

SKILL UP

Olly Harris, Global MD at Page Outsourcing believes ups killing is the answer to the Great Resignation.



The increasing adoption of automation, artificial intelligence (AI) and other technologies will wipe out millions of jobs over the next ten years, according to recent research by Boston Consulting Group in partnership with Faethm AI. Net job losses may, however, be significantly lower. Indeed, certain key occupations, such as computing and mathematics, will experience significant talent shortfalls by 2030. The machines aren't taking over, but they are taking on new tasks. The role of humans will shrink drastically in some areas and grow just as strongly in others. And never mind 2030: in a recent McKinsey study, 44 per cent of respondents said their company would face skills gaps within the next five years, and 43 per cent said those gaps already existed. Those gaps can't be filled by recruitment alone.

From podcast producer to bot programmer to cloud architect, the number of job titles that didn't exist ten years ago is astounding. Companies can offer sky high salaries, sign on bonuses and best-in-class perks, but that won't change the fact that there isn't enough talent out there to fill these jobs. However, organisations aren't helpless or at the mercy of market forces. They can mitigate their skills gaps by investing heavily in upskilling and reskilling their workforces. So, where do they start?

You could turn potential into tangible skills

For most businesses, 70 per cent of their cost base falls under employment expenses. During downturns (a global pandemic, for

example), they aim to reduce these costs, but they may not pay close enough attention to the skills they are losing. If you don't know what skills you will need in the future, there's a real danger you could weaken yourself strategically by losing the wrong people. A better approach focuses on emphasising skills. What skills will we need over the next five years? Which employees are smart and hungry enough to learn and apply those skills? Who can we train up? Organisations that conduct these skills audits may be surprised at the results. They may discover, for example, that some of their most eager candidates for upskilling are among the over-55s, who were hit particularly hard by COVID-19. These employees are hugely knowledgeable and experienced, yet they are often overlooked for training. Therefore, the first principle of upskilling is to cast the widest possible net within your company when looking for people who are ready to learn.

What strategies should you adopt when it comes to upskilling?

Upskilling a workforce is far from straightforward. To be effective, you need joined-up strategies that bring together your talent acquisition, learning and development and organisational design teams. Too often, these units are siloed. People looking at organisational design often work in isolation from people looking at the data analytics behind your headcount, churn rate and so on. These teams can only collaborate effectively if the

business has a real understanding of the skills it needs to acquire. With that information, talent acquisition knows who to hire and learning and development knows what to teach them. By breaking down these silos, organisations can help people think more strategically and less reactively about skills. Once everyone is working towards the same goal, companies can implement upskilling programmes that quickly yield tangible results. Larger employers may have campus-style facilities to train or re-train people before deploying them. Smaller companies can partner with external agencies to upskill and grow their talent. For example, employees could spend several hours per week at coding school. HR teams can go on data analytics courses to help them interpret the data they're collecting, empowering them to make better decisions. To succeed, upskilling and reskilling programmes must be treated as long-term plays, not quick fixes. Not every employee wants to learn new skills. And not every training programme will deliver the results you were hoping for. But the upsides of instilling a learning culture in your organisations dwarf any potential setbacks, and with the Great Resignation and subsequent talent shortage rife, now is the perfect time to prioritise upskilling your teams. ■

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

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

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GLOBAL THINKING

Globalization Partners bring full suite of solutions to employers it hire and manage remote talent.

Globalization Partners have announced the global availability of G-P Recruit, G-P Contractor, and G-P API. By offering its full suite of solutions in this way the company hope to make it easier for employers to find and hire talent efficiently and ethically anywhere as quickly and easily as they would hire talent locally. "Globalization Partners' infrastructure comprises a SOC-2 certified full technology stack and in-house HR, tax, and legal resources to support consistent service quality, minimised reliance on third-party ICPs, and data security," said Jeanine Crane-Thompson, principal research analyst at NelsonHall, HR Technology & Services practice. "The company's continued commitment to technology-focused R&D, including AI integration and multicurrency payment options, including cryptocurrency, will attract current clients and prospective buyers." Built in-house by a team of world-class engineers and industry experts, together the products solve today's most pressing issues: finding and managing remote talent. As the industry leading Employer of Record

provider, G-P helps companies mitigate risk and manage compliance, taxes, benefits, and payroll globally without establishing in-country entities or subsidiaries. This powerful combination within the platform provides everything companies need in one place with features that include:

G-P Recruit

Today, growing companies are facing increasing pressure in a highly constrained labour market to find talent, however, finding the right recruiting partners is complex and time consuming. Using G-P Recruit means one contract, a simple fee structure, and a partner that is working in the best interests of the Customer, rather than needing to find, negotiate and manage multiple unknown recruitment partners. We understand international hiring and employment and G-P Recruit provides a technology enabled one-stop shop that removes complexity.

G-P API

HR departments spend close to 60 per cent of their time and resources on transactional and

operational tasks and activities. Even with tools and software designed to save time and improve productivity, juggling multiple dispersed platforms is time consuming without the right infrastructure to unify them. G-P's open API makes it easier for organisations hiring and managing global talent by simplifying and automating tasks across multiple platforms including third party HCM solutions. This makes it possible to maintain a single source of truth for all global talent, thus reducing errors and supporting data governance processes.

G-P Contractor

Every company's global growth strategy is different, however the key to international success is being able to access global remote talent regardless of the employment type. G-P Contractor enables companies to hire contractors in 187 countries, quickly and easily and pay them in 150 currencies. As a part of our Global Employment Platform™, this offering provides support throughout the entire lifecycle of contractors hired for both short- and long-term projects.

"Companies need to act quickly in order to find, hire, and onboard the best talent wherever those individuals are based in the world," said Nat Natarajan, chief product and strategy officer, Globalization Partners. "By continually investing in our Global Employment Platform and adding capabilities which automate global remote hiring processes, we are enabling companies to solve today's talent challenges in the global remote employment landscape and achieve their business objectives." G-P's Global Employment Platform enables companies of any size to expand internationally in days and provides talent with access to a world of opportunities. Families and even communities can stay intact. Smaller companies can better compete at scale with larger incumbents. And companies can gain access to the best talent no matter where they are in the world while also realising the benefit of globally distributed teams.

SKILL UP

Skillsoft and Workday complete Cloud Connect for learning integration

Skillsoft has announced that it has achieved Workday Cloud Connect for Learning Integration status, which means it can now provide customers with a seamless integration that connects Workday Learning with Skillsoft Percipio. Workday Learning engages employees in development through a personalised, contextual platform while arming businesses with the agility and insight needed to drive workforce readiness.

"We're expanding our partnership with Skillsoft at a time when enterprises and their learners have an unprecedented need for accessing on-demand training

and development resources," said David Somers, group general manager, office of the CHRO, Workday. "Skillsoft has been an outstanding partner and the opportunity to strengthen our relationship while driving increased business value, learner engagement, and administrative efficiency for our customers was a natural next step."

Gavin McQuillan, head of learning and development at NatWest is enthusiastic about the move:

"As organisations like ours continue to prioritise investment in our teams and help them develop the skills for today's economy, integration between

our learning management system and content portfolio has never been more important," he said. "We are looking forward to exploring the integration between Skillsoft Percipio and Workday and learning more about the opportunities and benefits it can bring to our learners."

Designed to maximise the value and experience of enterprise learning, the integration enables Workday users to access Skillsoft Percipio's learning assets from anywhere, at any time, and on any device. Organisations will benefit from Skillsoft's immersive content, rich features, and improved UX functionalities

delivered directly within Workday Learning

This partnership underscores Skillsoft's commitment to an open platform strategy and making learning directly accessible through widely used work tools, platforms, and collaboration apps. With its open architecture, Percipio integrates seamlessly with the world's premier learning systems, while operating across devices and presenting an intuitive user experience to provide a frictionless learning journey.

ACQUISITION ENGINE

Adzuna acquires job search engine Getwork

Adzuna has announced the acquisition of leading US enterprise job search engine Getwork. The Getwork team, led by President Brad Squibb, will work alongside the 100-person strong Adzuna business, bringing together decades of job search expertise and accelerating Adzuna's growth in North America. The acquisition will combine the quality reputation and enterprise-focus of Getwork with the international reach and programmatic/tech expertise of Adzuna, creating a better option for jobseekers globally. Getwork connects jobseekers with job openings at some of North America's most exciting

companies, indexing millions of verified jobs every day directly from tens of thousands of employer career sites, including over 50 Fortune 100 companies. Spun out of Minneapolis-based job market data company LinkUp a year ago, the business has been connecting jobseekers with employers for over 20 years. Getwork and Adzuna will continue to operate as independent brands with their own established communities of jobseekers. Together, they will index job ads directly from over 50,000 employer websites including FedEx, Home Depot, Amazon and Walmart, while receiving tens of millions of jobseeker visits every month. It follows Adzuna's launch into



four new countries, Switzerland, Belgium, Spain and Mexico, with the job search engine now operating across 20 markets globally. Doug Monroe, CEO and co-founder of Adzuna, comments: "Adzuna acquiring Getwork will help us supercharge our growth in North America. The Getwork team's stellar reputation for great service and delivery has led them to be trusted by an impressive roster of household name companies in the US. It's also a great fit as their team and mission are so aligned with ours. The US enterprise market is crying out for strong alternatives to existing offerings and we're looking forward to combining Adzuna's marketing

expertise, global footprint and programmatic job matching technology with Getwork's deep industry knowledge and reputation to deliver even better for our customers. The US is the fastest-growing part of our business and this acquisition will accelerate our profitable growth trajectory." "Adzuna is a truly global business, operating across 20 countries, which creates an exciting opportunity for us to scale into new markets with the help of a brand that has already paved the way for international expansion," commented Brad Squibb, president of Getwork. "We can't wait to join Doug and the team on this journey."



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The Global Recruiter Awards are a chance to look back on your achievements and get the recognition you deserve. Created to identify best practice in all aspects of recruitment practice, these are the industry's own awards, a place where newcomers can compete on a level playing field with more established companies. A place where innovation, value and commitment are truly appreciated alongside financial achievement and business acumen.

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LOUD AND CLEAR

Andy Ingham, Senior Vice President, EMEA and APAC, Bullhorn gives five tips on amplifying recruitment marketing.

Recruitment marketing – the task of using marketing tactics to find, engage and nurture new talent – is climbing the agenda for recruiters worldwide in the midst of a turbulent job market and acute skills shortages. According to the latest data from Bullhorn's Global Recruitment Insights and Data (GRID) report, branding and marketing is the number two priority for UK recruitment agencies in 2022. Some form of recruitment marketing has always been a feature of the job, but today, recruiters need to work across more touch-points and more efficiently than ever before. From email and SMS to social, job boards and beyond, modern recruiters must work to streamline how they promote job openings.

Here are five ways that recruiters can get ahead on recruitment marketing.

1. Curate your channels

For marketing to work effectively, recruiters need to meet talent where they are – and that means being active across multiple channels. Bullhorn data shows that 38 per cent of candidates prefer email, but people are far from unanimous, with 19 per cent preferring to talk on LinkedIn and 18 per cent saying that a phone call was their favourite way to interact with a recruiter.

Even considering these preferences, candidates will likely encounter the recruitment process across several touchpoints – and their experience with each is an opportunity for recruitment marketing. Ensuring that they receive a timely response and have a clear understanding of what actions they need to take next, will leave a positive impression. However, successful recruitment marketing isn't about being on every channel at once; it's about focusing strategically on the ones that matter most. Businesses can look to competitors to get a broad overview of the common channels, but they should also look beyond them. It's possible there are untapped pools of talent in locations that competitors have overlooked.

2. Don't overlook the importance of reputation

There is an abundance of recruitment agencies for talent and clients to choose from, but an incredible experience remains at a premium.

According to ClearlyRated, the average recruitment firm has a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of just 29 per cent for clients and 18 per cent for talent. If you provide an incredible experience, make sure your audience knows. Measure satisfaction and collect customer testimonials and incorporate them into your marketing plan.

3. Emphasise employee experience

Too often, recruitment marketing focuses squarely on the job role and its requirements, but this neglects the bigger picture. Those pieces of information are undeniably essential, but so is information about the working environment that a person will be immersing themselves in for a significant portion of their waking hours. People are drawn to a positive, inclusive, engaging setting, so highlighting this is a marketing win.

In addition to the basics, recruiters can focus on important elements such as culture, values and perks. Painting a picture of the real employee experience is not only important to today's candidates, it also gives recruiters an advantage over others that stick to a more simple, work-only script.

Another way that recruiters can market great places to work is by encouraging and amplifying organic sentiments from existing employees. Lots of candidates do an online search for a business before applying for a role, so a social account with plenty of posts about employees' successes, volunteer work, or fun at team-building events can make a great early impression. Recruiters can also point candidates toward a social feed like this to give candidates an idea of a company's culture.

Similarly, recruiters can be confident that most serious candidates will come across a company review site like Glassdoor in their search, so it's worth encouraging existing and departing employees to add honest reviews.

Of course, broadcasting that a business is an excellent workplace is contingent upon it actually being excellent – if it's not, candidates can easily see that something is wrong and recruiters could be doing more harm than good.

4. Choose the right tools for the job

Recruitment marketing depends on tech – it's part of the reason that 84 per cent say their firm is undertaking a digital transformation today compared with just 25 per cent in 2019. Those who have a range of tools available for every aspect of the process – and can use them effectively – will have an edge.

In terms of proactive outreach, recruiters are increasingly taking advantage of powerful marketing tools like paid ads. Rather than spending time scouring job boards, they can precisely target an ad on a platform like LinkedIn and ensure that it reaches the ideal candidates. It's also worth considering establishing a presence on industry-specific or niche job boards, since these offer smaller, more relevant pools of candidates.

Automating email, social media and SMS messaging, is also key, as it enables recruiters to eliminate admin, reach larger numbers of candidates, and be more responsive. This produces a smoother experience, leaving candidates feeling good – and thinking positively about the role.

Personalisation, once a competitive differentiator, has become an expectation in modern recruitment marketing. Candidates expect communications to match their details and personal recruitment journey, and anything less seems like the recruiter isn't paying attention. To personalise communications at scale, recruiters also turn to automated tools. This enables them to ensure that every communication is thoughtful, well-timed, and as likely as possible to get a response.

5. Measure and analyse

Recruitment marketing isn't a one-and-done process. Instead, recruiters should learn from both successes and failures to continually refine their approach and adapt to changing circumstances. This depends on gathering accurate, relevant data from every touchpoint, sorting it effectively, and analysing it to extract actionable insights. However, this is only possible if the whole system is closely integrated and working as intended – otherwise a recruiter could easily spend more time aggregating than acting. A firm with a well-integrated system has a "single source of truth" to draw from, making it simple to make data-driven marketing decisions.

Just 13 per cent of agencies report full adoption of their recruitment technology. Cultivating buy-in from your entire team will ensure that you have the best data possible to make smart decisions about your business.

Recruitment marketing is climbing the industry agenda

The supply-demand balance between recruiters and candidates has still not returned to its pre-pandemic equilibrium. The availability of more job openings means that candidates can be more selective, so it's up to recruiters to up their game at every step of the process.

This is the art of recruitment marketing, and it's the future for our highly competitive industry. Recruiters that dedicate themselves to impactful outreach, smooth experiences, and analytics-powered improvement will have the best chance of success, even in an uncertain market. ■

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TECH

Rob Brodie, Head Of Corporate Sales at JobAdder asks how far the recruitment sector has adopted digital transformation.

Since the birth of the first staffing firm, the one constant within the recruitment business has been continual changes and improvements. Over the last few decades, technology has played an increasingly significant part in pushing these changes, with the introduction of many modern hiring managers' daily staples: from Excel spreadsheets to high-speed internet, from instant messaging to AI and Machine Learning. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has only increased the pressure for more digital transformation within the sector, with the rise of remote and hybrid working. Nonetheless, despite the wealth of tech options available, there remains a level of resistance within certain corners of the industry with many recruiters still relying on antiquated spreadsheets to manage candidates and manually update records as part of their daily routine. I've got to ask: have we, as a sector, really gone far enough in adopting new technologies?

In the beginning

Looking back to the early days of recruitment firms, the pre-Internet-era recruiters utilised paper-based job ads, CV archives, referrals and word-of-mouth to find candidates, while the closest thing firms had to applicant tracking systems were phones, filing cabinets and a Rolodex. The early web era saw a move away from the analogue path, with recruiters beginning to utilise computers and early tracking methods such as Microsoft Excel in the early 1980s to keep on top of a rolling roster of candidate data. Almost half a century and hundreds of recruitment and productivity software suites later, many still haven't moved on from that

early-day mindset. From speaking to recruiters, we have discovered a concerning number who are still hanging on to the more traditional and basic tech tools like Excel spreadsheets. This simply won't cut it in the modern labour market – especially one that's as fast-moving and demanding as the one we're currently experiencing. In order to remain competitive, recruiters need to work smarter – if not necessarily harder – by taking advantage of available tech tools that can automate manual tasks to free up time and make their process more efficient. This is where modern-day applicant tracking systems (ATS) can play a strategic role in the recruitment, hiring, and onboarding processes. A good ATS can streamline many recruiters' daily operations so that repetitive tasks like job posting, interview scheduling, candidate assessments, and paperwork handling for new hires are automated through a workflow, allowing recruiters to focus on the human part of the job: building relationships and nurturing high-demand talent. For evidence of this efficiency, look no further than JobAdder's most recent Global Recruitment Industry Report, where we found clear benefits to taking a more proactive sourcing and hiring approach bolstered by technology. For UK agency recruiters filling both permanent and temporary roles, the average time to place was reduced by 31 per cent from relying on JobAdder's platform versus using external sources. That's equal to a saving of around 10 days per month – valuable time that buys back opportunities for many agencies. On the topic of time, using automated Smart Forms, recruiters around the world have saved an accumulated 50,000 hours of manual work, amounting to £1.58 million in savings. Whoever says you can't buy time?

Future trends

It's safe to predict that the future of tech will continue to involve more automation and workflow and less dependency on manual human efforts. Before you sound the alarm about replacing humans with machines, think of the opportunities that the extra time can open up for recruitment professionals everywhere. They'll have more time for upskilling, more time for doing research – and most importantly, more time to build meaningful, human connections with candidates – something that technology simply can't replace. So, what recruitment tech trends do we have to look forward to over the next few years?

- **Artificial Intelligence** – A.I. application has gained a lot of traction over the last few years, and will only continue to do so, as the underlying technology matures. JobAdder's own built-in AI can now automatically parse our clients' database to make smart recommendations of top candidates for open roles, while tools like AiRecruiter can automate conversations with candidates and clients to find the growth opportunities for your agency.
- **Diversity tools** – The working world is changing and businesses that hope to maintain desirable for modern workers will need to embrace diversity, starting with the recruitment process. From writing job ads to conducting interviews, recruiters everywhere are going back to the drawing board to introduce bias-free enhancements to their existing approach. On the tech front, hiring solutions such as Diversely – which is integrated into our own system – can remove identifiable characteristics from CVs and are a great way of delivering more diverse recruitment results.

- **Better Integrations** – Following the spike in tech investment at the beginning of the pandemic, many firms are now looking at ways to streamline all their different tech tools and eliminate disparate workflows. In the near future, we expect to see a growing requirement from teams to consolidate all their tech into one platform so all components work together seamlessly, speeding up and smoothing out the process for recruiters and candidates alike.

Looking forward

Recruitment technology itself has come a long way, with the market for recruitment CRM and ATS alone predicted to be worth \$3.2 billion by 2026. Born as a simple web-based solution that enabled recruiters to post their ads to multiple job boards back in 2007, JobAdder was at the forefront of this revolution. Over the past 15 years, we've gone through our own tech evolution to become recruitment CRM and ATS platform that powers the work of over 22,000 recruiters across the globe today. From new platform features to integrations with the latest tools, everything we do comes back to the purest original purpose of technology: to make work better and be more joyful for everyone involved in the hiring process. With innovative tech options at their fingertips, recruiters need to let go of outdated tech stacks and embrace the changes that will save them time and give them the best chances of getting ahead in an increasingly challenging hiring climate. ■

THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY

Coram Williams, CFO and Chief Economist at The Adecco Group on how workers are in high demand and their priorities have changed.

The two-plus years since the onset of Covid-19 have been marked by turmoil. There is the pandemic itself, of course – which appears to be under control, but I cross my fingers as I say that. But Covid-19 had longer lasting effects, driving the Great Resignation or Great Reevaluation. Though employment plummeted during pandemic-related shutdowns, it roared back in 2021, fueled by economic stimulus packages, vaccines, the opening of borders, and other factors – resulting in an acute labour market imbalance.

More recently, though, war in Ukraine has roiled the world in both humanitarian and fiscal terms, and the worst economic contraction in two generations is being felt.

When I speak with business leaders, the labour shortage is inevitably their uppermost concern. They know that big-picture demographic trends are not in their favour, and their first question is as fundamental as it is urgent: Will there be enough people, with the necessary skills, to get my organisation's work done?

Together with Economist Impact, the Adecco Group recently developed employment forecasts that break down the labour market outlook at both global and regional levels. Keep in mind that Covid-19 hit markets in different ways, so regional recovery paths should be expected.

Many discussions around employment focus on when levels will return to their pre-Covid state. But we believe the focus should instead be when employment levels will return to the pre-Covid trend – that is, where levels would have been now if Covid-19 hadn't struck.

The Great Recovery

Economist Impact expects the global labour market to fully recover from Covid-19 by next year. Regionally, however, myriad factors could delay this recovery. For example, before the war in Ukraine, employment in Europe was expected to recover in 2022. Now, taking into account the impact of the war, our forecasts suggest that European employment could recover in 2023 in an optimistic scenario, with a downside scenario forecasting recovery in 2024.

To be sure, certain categories of workers are scarce virtually everywhere. A category we call 'skilled non-professional' (think welders and machinists), for example, is in extreme demand worldwide as economies recover.

While the most difficult positions to fill vary by region and industry, the generally tight labour market is a reality for the foreseeable future in many parts of the world. Business leaders must respond accordingly.

Leading in a time of scarcity

Leadership entails constantly forming and revising strategic scenarios. Given facts on the ground today, I propose that a workforce planning scenario must be a key component of the larger strategic scenario. Here are some thoughts on how organisations can thrive while improving workers' lives:

- Focus on resilient, flexible operating models. Many complex factors have combined to create today's labour situation, including the Ukraine crisis, Covid-19 and inflation. Organisations mustn't let this list overwhelm them. By maintaining the focus on resilient, flexible operating models that emerged during Covid-19, and adapting to cope with ongoing uncertainty, it's possible to forge a successful path forward. Indeed, by pushing leaders to be more agile in their staffing efforts, I believe lessons learned in the pandemic offer leading organisations a chance to distance themselves from less resilient competitors.
- Understand the workforce at a skills level and embrace the entire talent pool. At the Adecco Group, we have long advocated reskilling and upskilling workers – and I believe today's labour shortage underscores the wisdom of this approach. Going forward, leaders must take the time and effort to understand skills data in order to better position, develop and upskill all workers. This will entail such strategies as offering 'returnships' after parental leave or absence due to long-term sickness. In a time of labour scarcity, this type of creative thinking will be necessary.

Leaders often ask about the value of automation. My response is that automating certain rote tasks will increasingly be a competitive necessity. But the focus shouldn't be headcount alone; automation should free human workers to focus on high-value-add tasks, and those workers must be treated with respect when an organisation designs and implements human-machine processes.

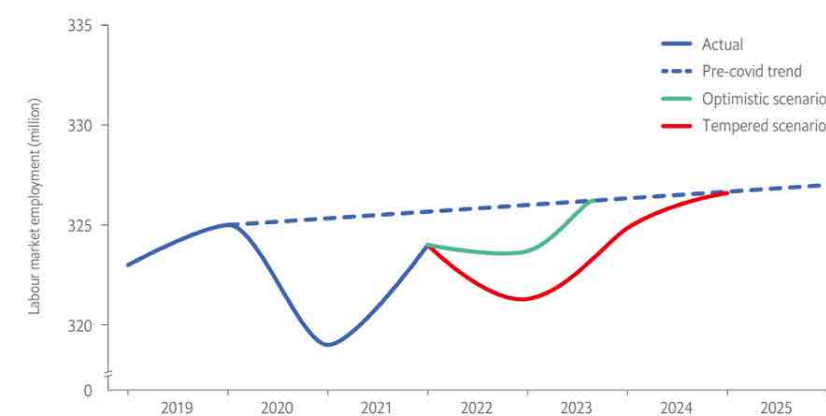
To manage the complex workforce of today (and tomorrow) in a tumultuous time of scarcity, organisations should integrate scenario analysis into their strategic workforce planning in order to keep up with uncertainty and regional labour market differences. Companies can maximise efficiency and effectiveness around sourcing and positioning talent by starting with a skills-based approach and having clarity on which skills are essential, in which regions, and when. Finally, businesses should plan when and where reliable and consistent access to people and skills is needed, and where flexibility can be leveraged to tackle uncertainty.

- Pay attention to new workforce expectations. It's no secret that labour scarcity has shifted the balance of power from employer to employee. Higher salaries are one obvious outgrowth of this shift, but there are others. From true flexible working models, to bringing pets to the office, to demanding that their company actively participate in social movements, workers will not be satisfied with mere pay raises.

The Adecco Group surveyed 15,000 workers to understand their priorities, and we learned that maintaining a good work-life balance is just as important as salary. Career development; up- and reskilling opportunities; feeling trusted; leaders who exercise empathy; and a company with great purpose are also key components for an engaged, loyal workforce.

While this new reality may initially feel confusing, even overwhelming, I urge organisations to view labour's new power as a win-win opportunity. Leaders can contribute to a healthier, more productive global workforce – and, in the process, improve the bottom line. That is, they can do well by doing good. ■

FIGURE 5: Europe employment scenario forecasts



Source: Economist Impact.

THE ZILLENIAL CHALLENGE



Mark Williams, Managing Director of WorkJam on keeping a new generation of workers happy.

As of 2022, there were recorded 16.8 millennials in the UK alone, making them – along with Gen Z – the predominant percentage of the workforce. The impact of the Great Resignation was felt by all industries of the working market and was spearheaded by these two generations, as they sought better working conditions.

A driving force of this movement was the culture of the Zillennials and their attitude towards employment. They are known to value sustainability, inclusivity, and flexibility, and have made a documented and conscious shift to try and find employment that reflects these values. In the wake of these new demands, some employers have found retaining these employees difficult. A vital understanding of the Zillennial workforce and what drives their decisions is key to retaining this group.

How should organisations adapt?

In the aftermath of COVID-19 and the wake of the Great Resignation (an economic trend that hasn't simply ended but is – and has been – ongoing for many years now) employees need to accept that changing the dynamic of their working environments is going to be crucial to remaining attractive to their potential and current workforce.

In the corporate landscape, this is tangibly linked to more flexibility with remote working as well as earning potentials. Workers found that remote working offered a better work/life balance and they aren't willing to give this up to return to 9 to 5 office hours. For frontline workers, the desire for more flexibility is even more prevalent. The solution to providing frontline workers with the flexibility they desire lies in utilising the right technology.

It's key to remember that Zillennials are digitally fluent; they have been raised with the rise of the Internet with front-row seats to the ever-developing range of online platforms and apps. This means that a switch from paper to digitisation with processes such as hiring, training, managing shifts, and communication is going to massively resonate with Zillennial frontline workers.

Offering these workers refined, digital workplace platforms allows them to control the way their shifts are organised from the ease of their own personal devices. Using this kind of technology engages a workforce

that is comfortable communicating and organising themselves in this type of digital manner. This fundamentally offers them flexibility in their hours which, in turn, will lead to greater employee retention for the business.

Engaging trends and themes

For some businesses who have consistently worked in the same way, following the same processes, a shift to digitisation can feel like a huge step. It's true that changing the way a workforce works may cause the need for change management, but this is only a temporary hurdle to being able to attract the staff you need in the long term.

Zillennials are at ease with technology, having grown up with it at their fingertips. It makes sense, therefore, that they would be attracted to roles that have demonstrated their appreciation and own comprehension of the digital era.

With self-employment and contract work becoming more standard practice in the marketplace, demonstrating that a business has quick and painless processes in place that are streamlined to provide effective communication and transparency benefits with all levels of an organisation. It leads to greater efficiency and productivity within a team and ensures greater employee satisfaction and retention.

Processes like onboarding and training can be hugely improved by digitisation and immediately demonstrate a company's willingness to engage with technology. Providing employees with better access to efficiently organised documents and standard operating procedures minimises the risk of human error or misunderstanding, which improves the quality of work and ensures the workforce feels confident in their job role.

How to make Zillennials happy

It has been consistently proven that Zillennials value community within their employment. This sense of community is easily achieved with technology that regulates and controls effective and open communication between all levels of an organisation.

The culture of working that Zillennials are seeking is one that

understands how they value their work/life balance and promotes their empowerment of flexible shifts and digital communication. Sophisticated online platforms encourage Zillennials to actively engage with their working environment.

By supporting open communication through digitisation, you provide space in your business for employees to feel their voice is heard, plus you make it substantially easier for frontline workers to have instant access to communication with back-office and managerial workers. This will also increase diversity, another trait of an employer that is highly valued by the Zillennial workforce. According to Deloitte, 69 per cent of employees who believe there is diversity amongst senior management teams view their working environments as motivating and engaging. Zillennials who feel aligned with their management teams are more likely to stay in their employment, which is going to lead to higher employee retention. This stability can only improve customer experience and positively impact your organisation.

It should also be noted that Zillennials want to feel a sense of understanding the brand of the organisation they're working for – carrying the message of the company and being able to identify and align with their values. Operating from a digital platform that contains all the necessary information regarding the message of the company, and how they believe and encourage their employees to engage with this message is a massive cultural enhancement for frontline workers, particularly in the aftermath of COVID-19.

Embrace the future

As more and more of the Zillennial generation enters the workforce, organisations need to prioritise embracing the new shifts needed in worker flexibility and employment culture. This is one of the fundamental changes that will help to not only attract but retain this generation of employees.

Streamlined processes that are easy to access and understand, and that can provide clear and open communication throughout all levels of the business will result in the transparent and adaptable working environments that Zillennials are seeking. ■

FLEXIBLE FUTURES

Simon Kent hosts an online round table where recruiters discuss the present and future of flexible work.

Supported by:



Earlier this month The Global Recruiter in association with Sonovate held an online round table which brought together a number of leading recruitment professionals to examine current trends and challenges surrounding flexible work. While the intention was to discuss how clients are deploying flexible work and what can be done to incentivise this, the conversation equally highlighted how the recruitment industry had adopted and was adapting to flexible work. Forever an innovative sector, the conversation showed that it may well be that as flexible work continues to evolve, where recruiters lead others will follow.

Those in attendance were:

Jim Denning, CEO, LHi Group

Jidz Khan, Head of TMT, Alexander Lyons Solutions

Melanie Hayes, Chief People Officer, Nash Squared

Dean Jennings, Global Head of Talent Acquisition, Hydrogen Group

Hannah Gardiner, Austin International

Dan Jones, Global Managing Director, Proclinical

Dean Greenwood, Recruitment Director, EMEA, Petroplan

Sarah Ward, Talent Manager - Employee Relations, Meridian Business Support

Simon Kent, Editor, The Global Recruiter

Ben Steele, Business Development Executive, Enterprise, Sonovate

Hannah Gardiner began proceedings by making the point that the vast majority of the workforce now expected to be offered remote and hybrid working options. Given how tough it was already to attract talent, failing to provide this would almost certainly discount an employer from accessing the best talent.

This view was supported by many on the call, including Jidz Khan who emphasised the importance of communicating around this issue. Hybrid and flexible work can mean many things to different organisations: “It’s often unclear exactly what is meant by flexible work,” said Khan, “and people need clarity going forward.”

Flexible and remote working hasn’t just affected the hours people work, it has also affected location. From a recruiter’s point of view the catchment area for talent has expanded with the reduced emphasis on office attendance leading recruiters to offer candidates from further

afield. This has, however, occasionally led to challenges as the pandemic has eased and employers expect to see their staff in attendance more frequently. Some new candidates can find such a commute a challenge or financially prohibitive.

Despite this, Dean Greenwood maintained that some clients have been able to realise significant efficiencies in terms of time and cost by carefully managing the occasions when employees are expected to be present. Once again, however, such arrangements needed to be discussed as a priority in any candidate briefing.

Jim Denning felt that it was now a rarity to discount a candidate through the need to be at a specific location, unless it was for a very specific role. “There are a few employers who need guidance on what to offer their candidates, but a lot of them now see flexible work as an easy way to be a more attractive employer,” Denning noted.

Long term incentives were also now being used by employers to attract and importantly retain staff. Dan Jones was not alone in noting how competition on salary and through counter-offers is rife, but that these trends are unsustainable and likely to be short lived overall.

The shift to flexible and hybrid working was something all of the recruiters have had to do in their own workplace. Indeed there was a general sense that clients, while accepting the new work order, were mainly listening to ideas on flexible work rather than taking the lead themselves. Overall it seemed that the recruitment sector, as represented by these leaders, were streets ahead in considering and implementing flexible work options for the good of staff and managing the implications in terms of productivity and securing talent.

At Hydrogen, Dean Jennings explains a concept called ‘I Own My Time’, which means their flexible approach enables employees to work at a time when they are at their most productive. There are no strict office times which means if an employee feels they can be more effective working earlier or later than usual they can do so. On the one hand this flexibility recognises that a recruiter’s contacts may not be available during usual office hours, but it mainly keys into the working preference of the individual worker. Wellbeing and productivity are boosted if they’re not simply made to log into work because that’s what’s expected. To make this work, Jennings notes that there still need to be times when teams are together but those occasions can be arranged between

everyone and tend to be more productive as specific meetings, rather than a regularly scheduled occurrence.

Sarah Ward said flexible working across Meridian had practically doubled on pre-pandemic levels. The company, she said, was now fairly equally split between employees with flexible working arrangements and those with a more formal arrangement. Perhaps the most significant impact of this shift, said Ward was on employee wellbeing which had increased by 5 per cent on average across the organisation and by as much as 17 per cent in specific sections. Wood noted some clients were now thinking outside the box on flexible work, although the sectors Meridian serves can be difficult for flexible work to be implemented. That said, even where employee presence is required, there can be increased flexibility in shift patterns and the working week.

Dean Greenwood described Petroplan as having a hybrid working environment, requiring three days in the office and two days working from home. All employees finish at 12pm on a Friday and the shift to this pattern has been achieved with sales increasing. At Nash Squared, Melanie Hayes commented that the move back to the office, under flexible work, had meant their employees were able to re-engage with the camaraderie and support that had been missing under the enforced home working of lockdown. “We had been worried about burnout when everyone was working remotely,” she commented, “but now you can be with other people it’s not so bad.”

Again communication is important to make flexible and hybrid arrangements work both for individuals and for the businesses where they work. Hayes pointed out there is also a challenge around company culture to ensure everyone still feels part of the same business. “We need to create and maintain a good culture within teams even when they’re not meeting in person,” Hayes notes. “You need to think creatively about how you do that – as well as how you deal with people who might be remote but in a meeting with people in the office – you need to work to keep that inclusivity.”

Elsewhere, recruitment companies are making some radical changes to the way they work. Austin Fraser’s offer of unlimited holidays for its employees drew interest and questions from others in terms of practicality and impact. Hannah Gardiner explained the company had

very clear policies and procedures around the initiative and at the same time the imperative was on the more senior staff to role model the practice and ensure this flexibility was used correctly. On the one hand employees need to understand their responsibilities for hitting targets and so on, but at the same time there can be a tendency to not take enough holiday. “It’s a conversation we need to have to empower our people,” says Gardiner. “You know when you need to take time away and how long for. At the same time all the leaders get a quarterly update of holidays levels and they have a responsibility there to spot the signs if employees are not hitting their target or if they’re not taking time away.” According to Jidz Khan, Alexander Lyons Solutions have a similar policy. “We want our people to have the best environment in which to deliver what they do,” he says, “and a lot of the time people respect that because they don’t want to take advantage.”

Commenting on the discussion, Sonovate’s Ben Steele said: “It’s fascinating and exciting to hear so many diverse opinions when discussing the future world work of work, both from employers’ and employees’ perspectives. With continued growth expected within the recruitment sector, it is even more vital that we focus on how we deploy flexible working and how to engage our people best. According to Steele, Sonovate’s own research shows that more flexible working practices contribute to a more diverse workforce and remove geographical barriers to opportunities and talent. “The younger generation is driving a significant shift in flexible working, portfolio careers and a values-led approach to work and life which will reshape the sector for years to come,” he said.

While opportunity for flexible work may be achievable through managing the resources and places where work happens, Dean Jennings notes getting the right candidate to do this work – whether for your recruitment business, or by extension for your client – is imperative: “Success depends on the people you bring into the business,” he states. “The sales consultants here have in mind what they want to achieve personally, so we want to support them to do that when they’re at their most productive. We want people to be the best version of themselves. As long as you recruit the right people, people who want to achieve their goals, then you’ve got nothing to worry about.” ■

MORE THAN BEFORE

Gi Group Holding has repositioned to better serve the market and Paulo Canoa, County Manager UK & Ireland explains why.



Growing both organically and through acquisition, Gi Group Holding are now the 5th largest staffing firm in Europe, and the 16th worldwide. In order to bring together our wide suite of brands and services, we have created Gi Group Holding.

Repositioning ourselves as Gi Group Holding ensures we deliver value and care at every level of the business, and to everyone we service through our work. Clients, candidates, career changers alike will all be able to relate to this single corporate brand and structure to access the support they need in whatever format is most appropriate, and at whatever stage in the work lifecycle they find themselves. At the same time the Group's employees within each of the six complimentary brands can also expect a positive and meaningful employment experience.

For UK Country Manager UK & Ireland, Paulo Canoa, the company's stated unique purpose "More Than Work" is about going beyond simply matching people with jobs.

"More Than Work comes with a message of sustainability," he explains. "Sustainability not just for individuals, but for the companies we work with. It's also present in our relationships with government institutions, society and throughout the employment world."

Gi Group Holding is a partner to the organisations with which it works. We support candidates every step of the way – whether they're at the start of their career, at a time of change, or later in their working lives: "We want to help create opportunities at all phases," says Canoa. "That's why we not only cover temp and perm jobs, we also offer training and development, as well as career transition services. If you think of the life cycle of a person in all the stages of work, we want to be there at all times – not just to connect them with a job, but also helping to improve and develop their skills, and taking them through all the stages of their career."

The Gi Group Holding structure offers a unifying identity to what is effectively an integrated HR services ecosystem. This comprises Gi Group, for temporary staff and development, Gi BPO, INTOO for career transition and employability services, Wyser covering middle and senior manager search and selection, Grafton for professional staffing, and TACK/TMI for learning and development. In UK & Ireland, Marks Sattin, a leading brand in senior manager search and selection, also supports the implementation of this strategy.

While working to embed this new structure over the next few years, the business will also concentrate on consolidating its global markets and accelerating growth across Italy, Brazil, UK, Germany, France, Poland, China and Spain. Currently in the UK the business places and develops

around 40,000 candidates every year, taking revenues of £325 million. Worldwide Gi Group Holding provides services to 20,000 companies and generates €3.3 billion. All these figures are set to rise.

The speed of change

"We now live in a world where employment faces exponential changes due to technology, digital environment and globalisation," says Canoa. "Things are moving fast. Some of the most demanded professions today didn't exist a few years ago, and universities are creating degrees for jobs that don't currently exist. Being a professional is completely different to how it was in the past, and people are constantly having to up-skill and update their knowledge to adapt to new realities."

In this fast moving environment, Gi Group Holding effectively delivers across a 360 degree suite of services providing candidates at all levels, in multiple sectors, permanent and temporary, as well as delivering learning, development and career transitioning services. One example of the latter service provided by INTOO is their current work to help manage and redeploy the workforce following the completion of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham this year.

However, as Canoa explains, Gi Group Holding is not just a service provider but also plays a critical part in shaping and advancing the staffing industry. Through partnerships and discussions, Gi Group Holding has earned a presence on a strategic and even legislative level: "Through our institutional work we are promoting a constructive partnership with governments and institutions to help them change the regulation according to the current situation," he explains. One area where he believes this influence has already been seen is in the positive moves made on the equity, diversity and inclusion agenda. In this respect, the work of the staffing industry has had a measurable impact on the employment world.

Alongside this, Canoa strongly believes that clients must realise that the supply of human resources and capital cannot be treated as a commodity, particularly in the UK temporary market where contracts often come down to a question of price: "It is not a commodity," he insists, "we're talking about supplying human resources and that cannot be negotiated only by the price." As far as Canoa is concerned, a market concerned purely with price is not sustainable – after all, a race to the bottom is unlikely to include investing in talent for the future. Sustainability runs throughout Canoa's ideas and approach. He is keen

for expansion in the UK market, to expand the business in blue collar markets in sectors such as automotive, food industry and hospitality, but equally he wants to push for diversification of their portfolio across sectors including warehouse, logistics, pharmaceuticals and IT. Further digitalisation is also on the cards, aimed at improving the candidate experience, while also further advancing the data that can be shared with their clients. As Canoa notes, the company has access to data from diverse markets and geographies, so an employer seeking to expand its operations can benefit from this kind of information if they want to understand where the best place might be to hire the talent they require. The data can also provide insights, for example, into how an efficient shift pattern might appear, what will attract candidates and what will keep them.

Taking things forward the company is also investing in its own workforce, giving it the skills and attitudes it needs for continued success. Canoa says the company has invested in promoting and developing skills around communication and engaging with candidates, as well as enhancing their leadership teams. The business is also working dedicatedly on inclusion within the business, practising what it preaches in terms of diversity and equity.

Alongside this Gi Group Holding are giving its people the ability to live with change. As a company that gained traction, grew and improved performance over the pandemic years, the business has invested in, and benefited from the resilience of its people. However, Canoa is keen to go further than this with the concept of 'Antifragility'. This means being more than resilient. While resilience means an individual can meet adversity and get through it, Antifragile means coming out of a challenge stronger than before: "When you're resilient you face adversity with the same level of motivation," says Canoa, "When you are Antifragile you become stronger as you move forward. If you have a team that works like this, the sky is the limit, because no difficulty you face can demotivate you."

It is an attractive idea and one which will undoubtedly power Gi Group Holding on to greater success in the future. It also equips the company's workforce with the skills and aptitude they need to deliver on the potential created by the new company structure. In effect, every challenge is an opportunity and can be approached with a positive mind-set. Canoa's own positivity is infectious. With a strong background in recruitment, mixed with diverse frontline business experience – and not forgetting the professional career in basketball – he will be a strong voice in the recruitment market in the UK for some time to come. ■