

Rise of the Spiky Profile

Ethical AI
Robert Half at 50

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From the editor

• ENTRIES ARE OPEN •





The Global Recruiter UK Awards are designed specifically to reward on impact, on innovation and industry leading ideas.

Simon Kent, Editor,
The Global Recruiter



This month saw a welcome session of Recruitment Live, the chance for an invited selection of recruitment leaders to get together (in this case online) and explore the current topics around the industry. In this instance we explored the financial challenges currently felt across the sector – and with the closure of Silicon Valley Bank still smarting, challenges were easy to spot.

But even in this environment where uncertainty and problems seem to dominate, the recruitment industry still proves itself to be adaptable, strong minded and determined. The industry is not just enabling the employers it serves to get the talent it needs, it is also finding new solutions for its own issues – deploying flexible conditions, engaging proposals, and creating company cultures that retain talent.

It is these type of initiatives that The Global Recruiter UK Awards are designed to highlight and reward. They can occur anywhere, in a business of any size and in any area of the recruitment industry. The Global Recruiter UK Awards are designed specifically to reward on impact, on innovation and industry leading ideas. And you can be part of them too by registering your entry at:

<https://ukawards.theglobalrecruiter.com>

Make no mistake, this is not a testing ground. The ideas, practices and innovations delivered by the recruitment industry are necessary and valuable. They make the industry what it is and have driven businesses forward to new markets and territories. It is this ability and determination that the industry should always be renowned for: not just a great service industry to business, but great businesses in their own right.

Simon Kent
Editor



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GR Awards Open for Entries

The industry awards await your response to show us what fantastic looks like



SThree announces net-zero target

Recruiter publishes 2022 Impact Report and heads for SBTi-verified target



Vacancies Fall Says Cpl Life Sciences

Scientific vacancies in the Golden Triangle behind 2021 levels



Are You Covering That?

New survey of recruitment and tech professionals suggests cover letters are not essential



What Gen Z Wants

Gi Group Reveals Gen Z's Workplace Red Flags



The Workforce Challenge Dominates

Workforce challenges outrank inflation and interest rates as a top concern for mid-sized businesses



UK workplaces letting down LGBTQi+ women

Report from Robert Walters shows how LGBTQ+ women still not being 'seen' in the workplace



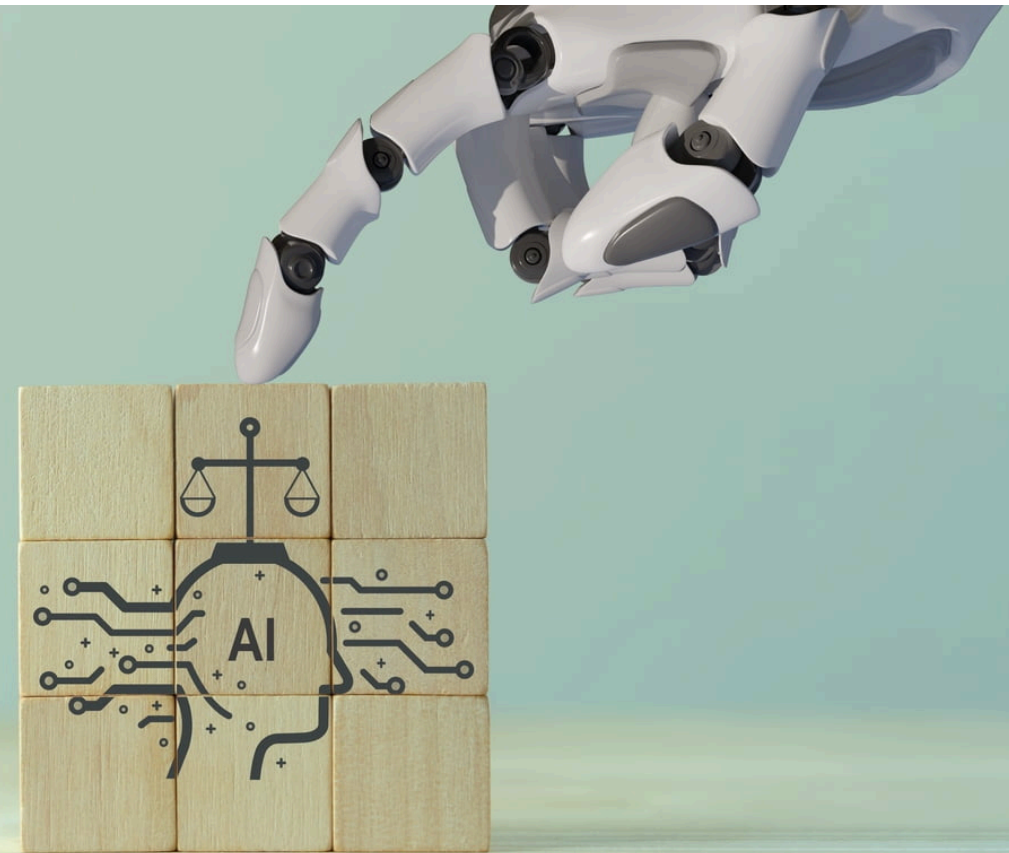
Deverellsmith group acquires Daisy Chain

Acquisition allows property recruitment consultancy to strengthen holistic solutions

Ethical AI – The North Star

View from WEC: John Healy, Vice-President, and Chairman of the Digitalisation Task Force, World Employment Confederation on unlocking AI's potential.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers strong potential to support both workers and employers in their labour market journeys. AI plays a role in ensuring better and faster matching of supply with demand, improving the user experience, grounding labour markets in skills, and unlocking the data needed to do it.



However, as with introducing any new technology or system, we need to ensure that the use of AI in the HR services sector is grounded by the application of ethical principles that place the needs of individuals and society at their heart. As the global representative of an

industry that plays such a crucial role in connecting people with work, the World Employment Confederation deemed it essential to take a stand early in the evolution and define a set of standards that we could align on. As a result, our Taskforce on Digitalisation led a

cross-industry collaboration resulting in the adoption of a Code of Ethical Principles for the use of Artificial intelligence. It defines ten core principles that we require our members to apply in how they develop products, deliver services, and engage partners when using AI.



Artificial Intelligence refers to systems that display intelligent behaviour by analysing their environment and taking actions to achieve specific goals. When applied to HR services, AI can contribute to a variety of operational improvements, including the current market focus on increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion by mitigating the likelihood of unconscious bias in recruitment processes and improve the candidate experience.

Because AI has the capacity to break down large amounts of information, identify

patterns and produce key learnings, it offers promising outcomes for companies, helping them to improve their performance by supporting them in assessing the skills of their existing workforce so as to understand better their in-house talent and how to develop it more effectively. And AI brings benefits for individuals too. It can help workers understand their own skills profile and how it can best be developed to both achieve their career goals and present themselves to prospective employers.

The evolution

Our Code recognises that AI is evolving, and so represents a set of 10 living principles which can be adapted over time. Unsurprisingly several principles focus on the need for human characteristics in AI systems used in the recruitment and employment industry. **Human Centric Design** – that provides beneficial outcomes for individuals and society; **Human in Command** – in order that they are designed to augment human capabilities with clear processes in place to ensure that they always

remain under human direction and control; and **Building Human Capacity** – enhancing workers and managing fair transitions through the implementation of life-long learning, skills development, and training.

Other principles focus on the need for openness and responsibility. **Transparency, Explainability, and Traceability** – to ensure that those using AI systems are transparent about their use of technology and provide workers and employees with information about their interactions with AI systems, explaining how these systems arrive at their decisions; and also, **Accountability** to ensure that those deploying AI systems take responsibility for their use at all times.

Protection & safeguards

The protection of people and systems is also addressed in our ten principles, with **Privacy** requiring that AI systems used by the recruitment and employment sector should comply with the application of general privacy principles and protect

individuals against any adverse effects of the use of personal information in AI; and **Safety & Security** to ensure that systems are technically robust and reliable, with monitoring and tracking processes to measure performance and retrain or modernise as necessary. Naturally, **ethical governance** also features as a principle, with WEC encouraging frameworks to ensure the ethical development and use of AI – including the involvement of relevant stakeholders such as government, civil society, and academia in the decision-making process.

Two further principles focus on broader societal objectives: **Fairness and Inclusivity by design** seeks to ensure that the AI systems used by the sector treat people fairly and respect the principles of non-discrimination, diversity, and inclusiveness. It requires that appropriate risk assessment and mitigation systems be implemented throughout the AI system lifecycle. **Environmental and societal well-being** aims to ensure that AI systems are designed and used in a way that considers the environmental and societal impacts of their use.

Keeping those principles in mind will guide us in our continuous evaluation of the perspectives offered by AI and in ensuring that its promising elements serve to impact the worker experience positively and speed up connecting that individual to the best work opportunity, while mitigating the risks that so many others choose to focus on. We recognise the potential for AI to introduce bias, but this is also a risk in analog business processes. Our industry is therefore committed to training staff to remove personal biases from recruitment processes, fully respecting the principle of non-discrimination enshrined in WEC's Code of Conduct.

The discussion around the ethical use of AI is not unique to our industry. Yet, with so many people entering or re-entering, the workforce through our industry and its members, we recognise the importance of coming together to take a stand and, will actively monitor feedback from the candidates and workers whom we collectively support on a global basis.

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Templeton's **diverse and international recruitment team** make the tech world more inclusive. We are:



68% Female



55% Black & Ethnic Minority



11% LGBTQ+



82% Diverse

"In my recruitment career I have never seen such a **truly diverse, positive and supportive environment**. It's extremely liberating to be your **authentic self**."

Liliane, Senior Consultant

"Templeton's **amazing group of people** are my genuine friends. We celebrate together, and they have **guided and supported** me throughout my career."

Mark, Team Leader

"I've been here **10 years**: that says it all! Balancing a career with young children is a handful but **Templeton is very supportive**."

Karen, Director

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Hold Steady

Recruitment Live: Simon Kent reports from a Recruitment Live discussion where sector challenges were explored and resilience and initiative clearly in evidence.

This month The Global Recruiter held an online Recruitment Live round table in association with Corpay to examine the financial challenges faced by recruitment companies. The aftermath of the pandemic took up only a small part of the discussion, and Brexit wasn't mentioned by name, both issues being dwarfed by the impact of interest rate rises and the continuing cost-of-living crisis. The discussion also took place only a week or so after the failure of Silicon Valley Bank, and with fallout from this still being felt, the business leaders and financial chiefs on the call seemed on high alert for the next problem to raise its head.

On the call were:

Peter Hart, Co-Founder & CEO, Austin Fraser

Nick Robeson, Managing Partner, Boyden

Cathy McGlynn, Chief Financial Officer, Futureheads

Andy Carpenter, Senior Director of Operations SMS, Gi Group

Charlie Wood, Head of Contractor Solutions, Head Resourcing

Ken Morrice, Founding Managing Partner, MM Search

Nick Edwards, Group Finance Director, Venquis

David Earl, Business Development Manager, Corpay

Simon Kent, Editor, The Global Recruiter

Trevor Dorrell, Sales Director, The Global Recruiter



Andy Carpenter was first to raise the impact of interest rates on recruitment company finances. As a high volume recruiter working with thousands of contractors he explained how extra debtor days taken by clients pose a cost to recruitment businesses. At the same time Carpenter noted how the business was also experiencing clients trying to negotiate extended credit terms as part of their engagement. There was also an increased propensity among clients to query invoices with subsequent delays for payment.

Nick Edwards agreed these pressures were common although they were experienced on a different scale within the smaller business of Venquis. His company was among those using Invoice Finance (IF) services to mitigate the stresses they are currently encountering. With a relatively new operation serving the Netherlands Edwards noted this

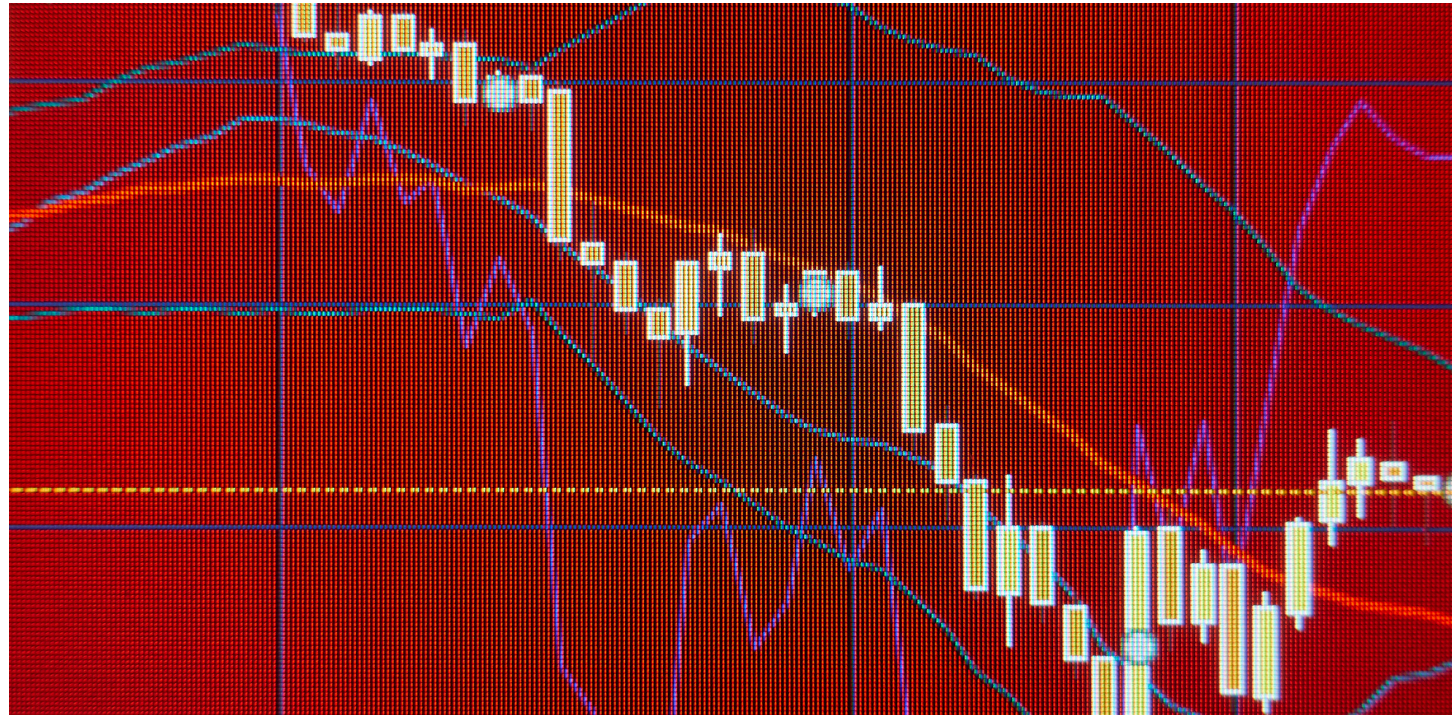
Nick Robeson raised the practice of carrying out company checks on new and existing clients, a practice taken on through online and other channels by many on the call. Some businesses had been burnt by clients going out of business with debts owing – and it wasn't always obvious that this would occur. Regular checks on clients now ensure this risk is kept to a minimum. Some recruiters will check company records at the point where a consultant flags that they may start working with the business. In this way resources are not focused on work which might not pay. In some cases the outcome of credit checks will influence the terms of business set between client and recruiter.

Some recruitment businesses are now seeking upfront payment from their clients, particular clients who are new or who operate in sectors perceived as particularly risky at the moment. Both Peter Hart and Cathy McGlynn were among those placing more emphasis on a 'margin only' model, relying on the client to pay the worker. At the same time many recruiters highlighted

flexibility on payment terms as a way to create a more certain cashflow. A lower rate, for example, could bring with it shorter payment terms than a higher rate – creating a situation where the client would feel satisfied with the deal while the recruiter gained more financial security.

Peter Hart also noted that his company's ability to track down and act upon back door hires had opened up a significant revenue

stream. The company uses a piece of software to track down possible back door hires, but rather than going in immediately with a penalty fee, finding these instances meant the company could first open a dialogue to explore and resolve this issue. Sometimes the hire has been a genuine mistake, but such instances have also enabled the recruitment company to discuss future business to mitigate the situation.



Despite all these challenges there is still a clear resolution among recruitment businesses to expand and do more. Many businesses are either seeking to open or are currently developing overseas operations – frequently coming off the back of servicing clients who are themselves working in the country. However, while it is possible to serve clients through a remote location there is a feeling that overseas operations do require a physical presence if they are to be successful. There also seems to be a general view that we are now far enough from the pandemic for client meet-ups, lunch appointments and in-person visits to be back on the agenda.

The recruitment companies on the call had all proven themselves to be agile in one way or another, adapting and surviving not only the pandemic but also the slings and arrows of recent months and years. And they're gearing up to be ready for more.

All the companies are investing in their own staff – Andy Carpenter noted that their business had redesigned their benefits

package in recognition of the need to attract and retain consultants in the business. Part of this package includes comprehensive wellbeing support such as coaches and mental health resources.

Similarly, Ken Morrice added that the wellbeing of their staff has always been their top priority, offering every individual in the team a personal development session with their kinesiologist and talent coach to help them feel balanced and happy.

Resilience is also high on the agenda. There's one eye here on ensuring Generation Z – and other employee groups – understand and perform well in the current climate, but one company also explained they were now running courses to improve their leaders' 'executive presence' – enabling them to better lead their organisations in person rather than virtually.

Whatever happens next, it is clear that the recruitment industry is prepared and ready for every opportunity.

“With the 2023 well under way, hearing the different challenges and financial obstacles the recruitment industry was facing enabled us all to learn something. Corpay has been lucky enough to sit in and contribute to several GR Recruitment Live sessions. This one was by far the most collaborative and aligned. The support for one another was second to none, and that is what the recruitment industry is all about.”

David Earl, Business Development Manager, Corpay.

Making Contract Work Worthwhile

Analysis: Áine Fanning, Managing Director of Cpl Talent Evolution Group discusses attracting and retaining contract workers in a blended workforce.



Increasingly, organisations are embracing blended workforce models. This is a means of incorporating a wide range of different kinds of employees into your company structure – including permanent, temporary, contingent, project, consultant and gig workers. In my role as managing director of [Cpl's Talent Evolution Group](#), part of my brief is to investigate how this approach works in practice – where it succeeds and where it falls short.

A blended workforce model has much to recommend it. For example, agility, scalability and access to diverse talent – but they also raise challenges about how best to attract and retain quality talent. How inclusive should an employer be to their broader blended workforce pool on initiatives like wellness supports? How connected and engaged can a blended workforce be to the core organisation?

In the case of contract and temporary workers, these challenges are particularly acute. The rising cost of living necessitates a competitive pay and benefits package – one that will incentivise skilled workers to stay rather than leave for greener pastures. Yet pay is only part of it – the modern worker also seeks a fulfilling work experience that aligns with their values and provides opportunities for growth and development. How can employers cater to these needs? We think it starts with a mindset shift.

Nine mental models to evolve your workforce

From multiple working sessions with Cpl's Talent Evolution Group clients, we've identified an entrenched mental model of how organisations should be structured and run.

That model is a moderately empowered, moderately hierarchical approach to the workforce. There's some integration of mixed employment – for example, an understanding of how permanent, temporary, contingent

and freelance employees differ – but the focus strongly rests on the so-called ‘owned workforce’, the employees who spend all their time working with one organisation.

But we can do better. One powerful paradigm is the “Nine Workforce Mental Models”, a mindset defined by the [Future of Work Institute](#). The nine models are as follows:

- Network
- Eco-system
- Blend
- Organism
- MOOC (Massive Open Online Course)
- Club
- Community
- Gig

Though none of these models is definitive, they all offer a subtly different way of viewing your workforce. For instance, if you view your talent pool or pipeline as a ‘club’, your mind will quickly turn to ways you can make that club a worthwhile place to spend time. Perhaps you’ll start providing more interesting



content; or you’ll help employees access useful career tips and insights; or maybe you’ll develop new engagement mechanisms to ensure every day at work is different. See your workforce as a crowd, and soon you’ll be brainstorming ways to gather aggregate data to help you overhaul processes.

When we think about contract and temporary workers, one useful mental model could be to see this segment of the workforce as a ‘gig’. We can ask the question: what makes a temporary gig an appealing prospect? From here, we can identify key factors such as speedy onboarding, a

welcoming environment and flexible working hours. Relatedly, we can also consider how temporary workers fit into the workplace 'blend', and how they play a special role in the workplace 'eco-system' to provide a type of value that differs from what full-time employees offer.

Ways to attract and retain temporary workers

At its core, configuring your workforce blend to suit the needs of contract and temporary workers means tapping into their needs and setting up your organisation accordingly. That means:

- Providing flexible working arrangements. Employers can offer flexible schedules, remote work options, and part-time arrangements to appeal to this group of workers.
- Facilitating upskilling. Offer training, mentorship, and coaching programmes to help temporary workers develop new skills and advance their careers.
- Being upfront about expectations. Create

onboarding programmes that help workers understand their roles and responsibilities.

- Investing in culture. A welcoming company culture can help contract and temporary workers feel like they belong. Team-building activities, social events and mentoring programmes can all contribute to a positive culture.
- Offering competitive pay and benefits. Pay isn't the be-all and end-all, but it's still highly important. Organisations should ensure pay lines up with industry standards if they want to secure the best talent.

The common aim of all these measures is to bring temporary employees closer into the fold, affording them the same privileges and sense of belonging enjoyed by permanent employees.

What does the future hold for temporary workers?

We've all heard of the 'great resignation' – the idea that workers, in response to diminished feelings of fulfilment at work, are increasingly opting out. In 2021 [research from Gartner](#), 65% of employees revealed

that the pandemic had prompted them to rethink the role work played in their lives.

This sense of dissatisfaction with work applies especially to temporary workers, who are all too often with unwelcoming organisational cultures that make them feel replaceable and disposable.

To combat this issue, organisations must move away from a focus on permanent employees and upgrade their blended models to better meet temporary workers' needs. This way, employees of all stripes can efficiently collaborate to further a collective mission. Everyone is treated fairly, and everyone has a stake in the organisation's success. And everyone feels included.

For more insights on the workplace of the future, read Cpl TEG's white paper [Catching the Next Wave of Talent Innovation](#).



Make Some Noise

Retention: Bill Armstrong, President
of Recruiting, Safeguard Global on
how employee advocacy can
address 'quiet' trends.



‘Quiet’ is the HR buzzword of the 2020s so far, with trends like ‘quiet quitting,’ ‘quiet firing’ and ‘quiet hiring’ going viral on social media and creating consternation in C-suites worldwide. As a result, employers must act now to address employee disengagement and disillusionment. But do these trends describe new phenomena, or have old behaviour patterns been given a fresh name by a new generation?

It’s a little of both. Most of us who’ve been in the workforce for a while can share stories of colleagues who only did the minimum required to keep their jobs, coworkers who left because they felt like they were frozen out of career development and training opportunities and companies that raised

required skill levels or supplemented capacity without adding headcount.

What’s new, however, is not that these ‘quiet’ trends exist, but rather that we hear people sharing their work experience stories with millions on social media. This further exacerbates the issues faced by some executives and line managers who are still struggling to adapt to the rise of remote work and its implications for the post-pandemic workforce. According to the latest research from global leadership consulting firm DDI, only [27%](#) of company leaders were found to be very effective at leading hybrid or virtual teams – a needed skill that will only grow as younger talent continues to enter the workforce.

“

Only [27%](#) of company leaders were found to be very effective at leading hybrid or virtual teams

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Companies can address the ‘quiet’ trends and build better workplaces by proactively adjusting to employee expectations, communicating responsibilities and decisions more clearly and transparently and using metrics to create an accountable culture.

Why Employer Action Is Essential Now

The ‘quiet’ trends aren’t happening in a vacuum; there’s a widespread [employee engagement crisis](#) in the workplace, and employees venting on social media are expressing the feelings that millions more share. The pandemic overturned the traditional work experience, and it’s not possible to revert to previous patterns just

because its muscle-memory and comfortable for executives. It's also not desirable to – we've learned valuable lessons on how adaptable and innovative employees can really be when allowed to work in ways that encourage their autonomy and creativity.

LinkedIn's 2023 Workplace Learning Report found that [93%](#) of surveyed organisations are concerned about employee retention, and there's good reason for that – a [Safeguard Global](#) study found that almost half of employees are actively pursuing or considering a new job. The same study reports that employees are looking for roles that offer greater transparency and authenticity, and 40% of surveyed employees ranked flexible hours as the most important feature they're looking for in a new opportunity.

The past several years have stressed HR teams, but other employees have been under enormous pressure too, and those who have worked steadily through uncertain times want recognition from their employers. It's no coincidence that employees are turning to

their TikTok and LinkedIn communities to critique employer relationships, often racking up millions of views from like-minded individuals – it's a signal that employers need to take disengagement and burnout seriously.

Those who don't will pay a price in the form of higher turnover costs, which can average [\\$15,000 per departure](#).

Organisations with disengaged staff may also take a hit to their brand since [39%](#) of consumers report that they consider employees the most credible representative for a business on social media. So, retaining your best employees is critical to reach your business growth goals.

Setting Expectations and Establishing Boundaries

Quieting the 'quiet' trends involves acknowledging what's changed and making adjustments by applying lessons learned during the aftermath of the pandemic and continuing to evolve in the workplace. For example, remote work used to be available

Are your clients suffering from a 'quiet' trend?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Post answer

only to certain classes of employees in cases where it served a specific purpose, such as trips to meet prospective business partners or visit certain company locations but employers now have evidence that many more workers can be productive offsite and on nontraditional schedules.

The pandemic was a time of increased transparency, vulnerability and trust among companies. Employees know that too, which is why they are demanding flexibility, along with the expectations that their

employers will continue to look after their teams' best interests, create psychologically safe environments and share the rationale behind decisions.

Employers who respond with greater transparency, establish reasonable boundaries and implement productivity metrics to create accountability can build more productive, engaged teams. For example, if employees are required to come into the office full time or on a hybrid schedule for specific reasons, it's a good idea to share the business rationale behind the decision so it's not perceived as capricious. Employees and team leaders may even be able to come up with different solutions that weren't previously considered.

It's also critical to make sure employees know what is expected of them and set targets that aren't shrouded in metrics of faux productivity such as computer idling time – that way everyone always knows where they stand from a performance perspective. This will give staff a clearer

sense of the value they contribute, while also allaying the concerns of managers, who may still be adjusting to remote or hybrid teams, with the proof that employees who work offsite are putting in the effort.



“Organisations with disengaged staff may also take a hit to their brand since 39% of consumers report that they consider employees the most credible representative for a business on social media.”

Communicate Confidence Loud and Clear

Clear targets can also give employees more leeway to arrange their work schedules, providing the freedom to take care of family and personal obligations as long as they're meeting their deadlines and completing high priority tasks. Building in flexibility when possible and explaining 'why' when schedules must be more rigid builds trust between employees and employers. Programs that help employees develop skills as well as benefits such as wellness and family leave that signal they're valued, can also create trust.

The employer-employee relationship has transformed fundamentally over the past few years. Now is the time for employers to decide whether they want to lean into this change and acknowledge its ever-evolving state, while navigating how it can be embraced for the betterment of their organisation.

Employers who understand what employees want and need, respond proactively and

transparently to their concerns, outline responsibilities clearly and set unambiguous targets will be best positioned to attract the right candidates, while retaining their best people who'll uplift the company as a whole. Ultimately, it's about employee advocacy, and whether employers care to overcome the quiet trends by communicating their confidence in their team loud and clear. Unburden the workers

According to The Centre for Ageing Better, in the UK, older people are generally seen as hostile, difficult and a burden on wider society. These unpleasant stereotypes are damaging, inaccurate and can have a profound impact on the well being of older workers, who are thought of as having less ability to learn new skills, being more costly than younger workers and having significantly lower levels of performance.

A third of over-50s believe that their managers are not good at managing intergenerational teams and favour younger workers, and many now actively hide their level of experience when applying for new roles.

It is ironic that these prejudices are felt so strongly at a time when the workforce is ageing in the UK. We have more over-65's in employment now than ever before. In 1992, only 20% of the UK workforce was over the age of 50. Now its 30%. The reality is clear – unless older workers remain in the workforce for longer, total employment growth in the UK will slow. We should be celebrating older workers and yet they are ridiculed, ignored and denied opportunities for development and progression. According to a survey by the Department of Work and Pensions, older workers reported higher job satisfaction, and had increased job retention, which reduced overall turnover, lowered recruitment costs and had a net positive impact on workplace wellbeing. Of course, supporting older workers also benefits the economy in other ways such as providing increased tax revenues and lowering the welfare bill.

So what can we do? The recruitment industry can play a very significant role in reducing all types of discrimination in the workplace. Sadly, still too many recruiters are willing to

endorse and condone discrimination by ill informed clients or by their own assumptions. The fear is that putting older workers forward will reduce their opportunity to fill the role and make a fee.

We have the opportunity (some would say a moral obligation perhaps) to educate and inform our clients, and explain the benefits of a diverse workforce, whilst at the same time increasing our pool of available talent. Surely that is a rare case of a genuine win-win?

In the post-Covid workplace, when workforce flexibility is king, providing our clients with a motivated, experienced, seasoned professional should be easier than ever. The stark reality is that if we don't embrace older workers, we will see even greater shortages of talent, and experience the economic impact that has on all parts of society. So, whatever your motivation, be it ethical or financial, now is the time to embrace older talent.



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Coming together is the beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.

The Rise of the Spiky Profile

Diversity: Dan Kentley, Practice Manager at Onebright on how to support the strengths of neuro-diverse individuals.





According to a UK Government survey, nearly 15 per cent of the UK population is neurodivergent. To follow [Neurodiversity Celebration Week](#), which took place on 13-19 March, there is an important opportunity to recognise those who experience neurodiversity and spread awareness and information about the best ways to adapt working and learning environments to best support them. By regularly updating the advice you provide employees, you can ensure your workforce mental health policies are as effective and efficient as possible.

Traditional views of neurodiverse conditions, such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and dyspraxia, can often encompass a linear scale when represented visually, where an individual is perceived as 'more able' or 'less able' depending on their skills, abilities, and how they interact with their surroundings.

However, this concept fails to recognise the many strengths that neurodiverse individuals possess. A lack of comprehensive knowledge or understanding can lead to non-inclusive

environments and a negative perception of abilities that is not representative of true skill sets.

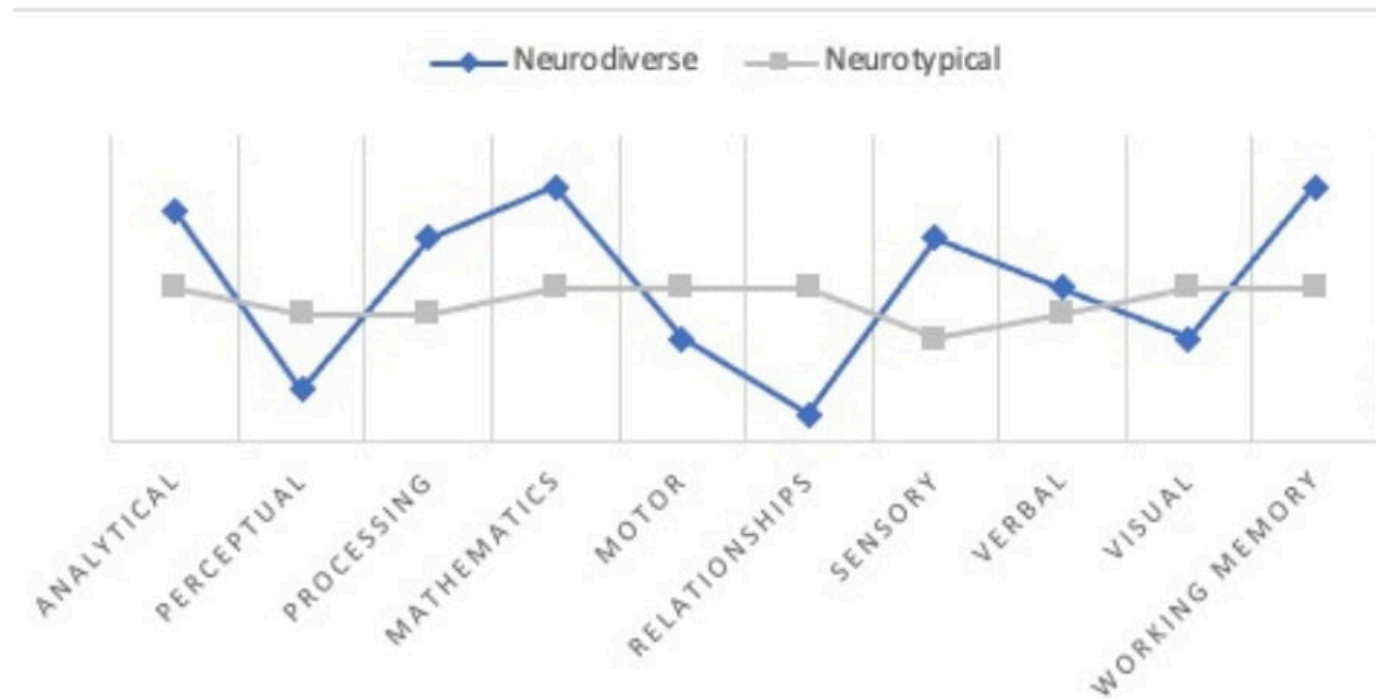
Where many 'neurotypical' individuals may perform generally average across the board (a 'flat' profile), neurodiverse individuals often excel in some areas, but find others more difficult. In order to leverage the unique skills of neurodiverse individuals, it can be helpful to understand their wealth of abilities in the form of a 'spiky profile.'

What is a spiky profile?

Although everyone has some variation across their skills and abilities, a spiky profile is the concept that this variation can be more pronounced for neurodiverse individuals, who have strengths in many areas but struggle with others. This means that their skill profile looks 'spiky' with peaks and valleys, rather than showing a consistent middle ground.

The variety of skill performance will look different for different individuals in different

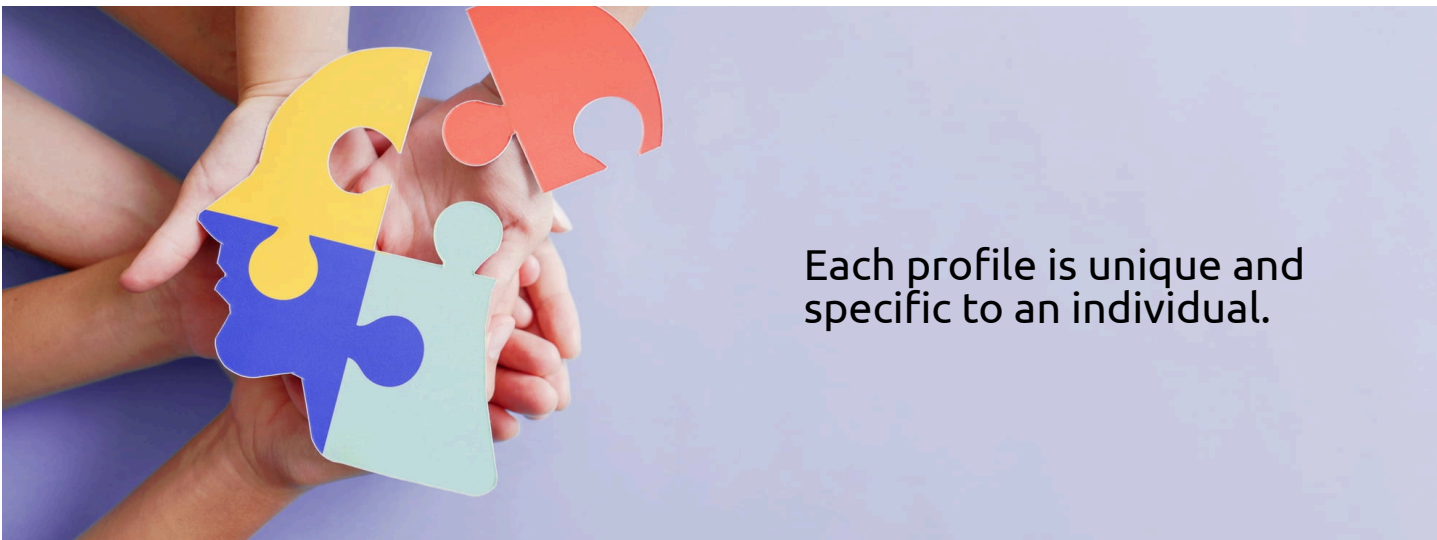
Example of a spiky profile



situations, so it is important that working environments foster inclusivity and offer flexibility for a range of working styles.

The skills and abilities that constitute a spiky profile can vary in terms of which areas are identified and examined, but they often include:

- Analytical skills – how we solve problems by absorbing and analysing information
- Perceptual abilities – how we interpret and give meaning to what is happening around us
- Processing speed – how quickly we process and recall information from long term memory



Each profile is unique and specific to an individual.

- Mathematical skills – how we interpret and make sense of numbers and time
- Motor skills – how we coordinate our body movements to complete tasks
- Relationships – how we develop and maintain social relationships
- Sensory sensitivities – our awareness and processing of sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch
- Situational skills – how we interact and interpret different situations
- Verbal comprehension – how we communicate and understand speech and its meaning
- Visual perception – how we interpret our visual environment and surroundings

- Working memory – our short-term memory that assists us with decision making and problem solving

Each profile is unique and specific to an individual. For example, one person with an autistic spectrum condition may excel in mathematics and working memory but struggle with sensory overload and appear 'clumsy.' Another autistic individual may have below average mathematical skills but exceptional motor skills and deal differently with stressful environments.

Why can this approach be helpful?

As well as identifying the areas in which certain individuals may excel or experience difficulty, a spiky profile approach can provide insight into preferred learning and work styles and help establish the type of environments that are most supportive. When these insights are shared with employers, they can be implemented to promote inclusive work and learning spaces that augment their strengths and remove barriers which may inhibit productivity, creativity, or wellbeing.

Some examples of workplace adaptations include:

- Assessing the accessibility of job application processes to ensure interviews or assessments are inclusive to all learning styles
- The use of assistive technology such as text-to-speech, speech-to-text, and mind mapping software to aid expression, comprehension, and organisation

- Additional line management or pastoral support to regularly review strategies for maintaining healthy employee wellbeing
- Mentoring and coaching that is individualised for a diverse range of working styles
- Environmental adaptations to promote focus, concentration, and memory, such as minimising noise and distractions
- Flexibility in expectations around working hours and location
- Giving individuals the opportunity to take a 'spiky profiles test' so peers and employers can better understand each person's unique skill set with a visual representation
- Increased awareness and understanding of general skill profiles amongst colleagues, peers, and managers, allowing others to adapt their behaviours and communication styles

Understanding that there is no 'one size fits all' adaptation or support strategy is key to ensuring that individuals are supported with dignity and compassion. Regardless of whether any individual has a formal diagnosis or not, using their skill profile to inform the

support they receive can ensure that strategies are personalised and effective.

How do I find out more?

There are a wealth of online resources including forums, blogs, and spiky profile 'self-assessments' which can provide helpful information. Sharing these insights with managers and senior leaders can also open the door to constructive conversations and a better understanding of individual needs.

Neurodiverse individuals can be incredible assets to organisations of all shapes and sizes. By fostering inclusive and supportive working and learning environments, we can all help reduce stigma around neurodiversity and embrace different perspectives and ways of thinking.

Top level equity

An equitable attitude to senior hiring, centred around fairness and transparency, sets companies apart from the wider field. In turn,

this point of difference is likely to attract an increasing number of candidates, having an ultimate impact on the quality of the individual that is appointed. Diverse candidates, including those who identify as LGBTQ+, are increasingly sought after, and it's in the best interest of businesses to attract them to their workforces. Just a few of the business cases for achieving diversity within workforces include [stronger financial performance](#), as well as [improved employee well-being](#) and increased levels of [creativity and innovation](#) within teams.

Despite its importance, progress towards reducing bias in senior recruitment and expanding horizons for LGBTQ+ individuals mustn't be where the focus on DEI ends. The spotlight on inclusion must continue throughout the onboarding process and beyond. LGBTQ+ individuals should continue to feel supported and included within their workplaces – programmes such as an [Emerging Leaders' Programme](#), which is designed for high potential LGBTQ+ talent to build their confidence, capability and leadership skills, can be leveraged to demonstrate ongoing support.

Anti-bias Hiring

Talent Pool: Beccy Roycroft, Vice President of Global Emerging Talent and Reskill Operations at Wiley Edge on widening tech talent.



While plenty of graduates are on the lookout for their first big career move, many will face barriers when trying to break into the STEM industries. Students work hard for several years to attain their qualifications, but when it comes to job hunting, they may find they lose out on top tech roles because many companies only recruit from a small talent pool.

Oxbridge and Russell Group universities have long basked in their reputations as the highest-performing educational institutions in the UK, but admission to these institutions is often very exclusive. Students who go to these universities may have a better chance of getting top tech graduate roles after their studies conclude as there are companies that mostly target these talent pools. But these businesses could subsequently be missing out on welcoming diverse and talented individuals into their workforce.

As the findings of Wiley Edge's latest 'Diversity in Tech' [report](#) so starkly highlight, recruiting diverse talent is a widespread problem across the tech industry. Around

"More than half of respondents in our survey (55%) said that they struggle to recruit diverse entry-level employees."

15% of the tech workforce are from ethnic minority backgrounds. More than half of respondents in our survey (55%) said that they struggle to recruit diverse entry-level employees. 28% struggle to recruit diverse employees for mid-level positions, and 17% struggle to appoint diverse employees for senior roles too. Only 15% of respondents said they have no difficulties at all.

Despite many businesses reporting issues with recruiting diverse talent, our survey found that many are still only recruiting entry-level talent from a narrow pool. Of the businesses surveyed, 21% said that they exclusively hire graduates from top universities. Another 39% said they are more likely to hire graduates from those institutions, while 28% said they consider



applications from all universities equally. Only 8% said they consider all types of higher education qualifications.

These statistics show that prestige bias remains a key issue in the recruitment process for many graduate tech roles. Swathes of talented students may have faced blockades when applying for top-tier universities, with issues like social class and household income potentially dissuading people with educational merits from applying to Oxbridge and other Russell Group universities.

Diversity increases slightly

Government [data](#) from the Higher Education Statistics Agency show that the percentages of ethnic minority first-year undergraduate entrants across the board increased slightly from 2015 to 2020. The percentage of Asian students rose from 10.5% (2015/2016) to 12.2% (2019/2020), while the percentage of black students rose from 8.2% to 8.7%. The percentage of mixed students climbed from 3.8% to 4.5% in the same period, while



students classified in the data under other rose from 1.5% to 2%.

While this data suggests that the percentage of ethnic minority entrants to universities is slowly starting to increase, data also shows there is a significant issue with the recruitment of ethnic minority students into Russell Group universities. [Research](#) from 2018 showed that UK universities have a cohort of approximately 8% black students, whereas, for Russell Group universities, this figure stood at below 4%.

In addition to missing out on diverse talent, focusing on top-tier universities in the recruitment process could mean businesses are left with holes in their workforce unnecessarily. According to our research, 35% of businesses that consider all applications equally struggle to recruit entry-level software engineers. But of the businesses who focus recruitment on more prestigious universities, the figure jumps to 62%. Narrow talent pools can also negatively affect recruitment for other tech roles, as 23%

of such businesses are more likely to struggle to recruit entry-level data scientists. 28% were more likely to find it difficult to source entry-level cyber security specialists too.

Hire, train, deploy

To improve the diversity of their workforces, many businesses are implementing anti-bias hiring strategies, or introducing diversity and inclusion training for staff. Another strategy many companies are beginning to explore to fill their tech talent gap is hire, train, deploy. A vendor will help graduates from all backgrounds to get their first job by training them in a high-demand skill or discipline that is required by a certain employer. Typically they are paid during their training too, which is a welcome relief after many graduates have shelled out thousands in university fees.

Hire, train, deploy models invest in graduates, and springboard them into their careers with all the relevant tech training they might have missed out on on a traditional degree course. Once they are fully trained, graduates will be

deployed to a company. The process helps graduates to take their first steps on the tech career ladder of their dreams, and the recruiting companies also benefit from the addition of diverse, talented, and trained-up individuals within their workforce.

Through employment strategies like hire, train, deploy, doors at top tech companies are opened up to graduates who may have been ignored by other businesses in the sector, just because they didn't attend a top university. And for these businesses, long-term they will benefit from a diverse pipeline of talent, each of whom can bring a host of new and unique skills, experiences and viewpoints to their operations.

For more information on hire, train, deploy, and how it can help fill the talent gaps in your business, visit <https://www.wiley.com/edge/>

50 Years in the Making

Up close: Robert Half are celebrating 50 years of business. The Global Recruiter took the opportunity to talk to Matt Weston, Senior Managing Director, UK&I, BeNeLux & UAE.



Recruitment has changed significantly in the last 50 years. Gone are the days of sifting through print CVs or applications and scrolling through a Rolodex for business leads. If we look back through the history books, 1973 was the year that the UK first entered the European Economic Community, women were admitted into London's Stock Exchange and rail workers and civil servants went on strike (perhaps not everything has changed, then).



For Robert Half, the world's first and largest specialised talent solutions firm, 1973 also marked the first year of its UK operations and the opening of its first office outside North America. But how have things changed in the last 50 years and what lies in store for the recruitment expert?

A proud history – a bright future

“In many ways, we have stayed true to our mission of connecting opportunities at great companies with highly skilled job seekers,” says Matt Weston, Senior Managing Director, UK&I, BeNeLux & UAE. “The difference is scale. Having opened our first London office in 1973, we have since expanded across 16 different cities in the UK and Ireland alone. Globally we now have more than 300 offices, while our specialised practice groups have also evolved. When we first launched in the UK, we kicked off with a very targeted approach to temporary staffing solutions with our Accountemps division.

“Since then, we’ve continued with our specialised focus, building strong UK divisions

which now includes Accounting & Finance, Technology, Legal, Administrative & Office, Marketing, Risk & Compliance and HR.”

While this expansion into professional disciplines may be a familiar story for some recruitment firms, it is the collaboration that Robert Half has with its sister firm, global business consulting firm, Protiviti, which certainly stands the recruitment business out from the crowd.

“Back in 2002, the business recognised the need for solutions that go beyond the one-off job or contract placement,” says Weston. “As client demands evolved, business leaders began to seek a partner that could provide answers to their broader business and talent challenges, including process optimisation and digital transformation, and the skills necessary to deliver these change projects. That’s why we launched Protiviti – our business consulting practice.

“Protiviti and Robert Half provide a seamless approach to today’s biggest business problems, many of which require advisory

and managed services. Working together has enabled us to become more of a strategic business and talent solutions partner for organisations on a long-term basis.”

Culture and integrity drive success

What, then, has been the secret to the success of the business? According to Weston, there’s one key denominator: “Our people are the key to our culture and commitment to great standards. Recruitment is a human-focused sector and doing the right thing is what makes or breaks a firm. As a business, we are committed to giving our staff opportunities to excel in their career. We don’t focus ourselves on technical skills solely, but rather on drive and potential when hiring. I’ve often said that the only minimum requirement to do well in Robert Half is to make a difference in the lives we serve while putting ethics first.

“Looking around, I am proud to say we have valued employees who have been with the



"Candidates are what keeps our business going both now and in the future. As a well-established brand, we find applicants we placed a decade ago coming to us as employers looking for recruitment solutions. "

business for more than 10 years – in fact, we have over twenty who have been with the business for 20+ years – which, being frank, is unusual in the recruitment profession. People have grown their careers and developed their skills within the business and stayed with us because we give our staff the tools and training to really achieve their full potential, whatever that may mean to them as an individual."

The approach to integrity has led to the brand achieving a range of accolades as an employer of choice, including being named among the Fortune® World's Most Admired Companies, Forbes' World's Best Employers and Great Place to Work's UK's Best Workplaces for Wellbeing 2023.

As Weston explains this people philosophy extends to both candidates and clients. "Candidates are what keeps our business going both now and in the future. As a well-established brand, we find applicants we placed a decade ago coming to us as employers looking for recruitment solutions.

The reason they come back is that they trust our approach and know first-hand that we don't focus on simply filling roles, we concentrate on putting the right people in the right places. That ethos has sustained our UK growth over the last 50 years and I truly believe it will bolster our success in the next five decades and beyond."

Fostering collaboration and inclusion

For a brand with 50 years of operating in the UK and 75 years operating globally, Robert Half has weathered many economic cycles, each of which having presented the company with opportunities to help businesses navigate challenges. As Weston makes clear: "The year we first launched in the UK was also the year that saw the beginnings of a banking crisis, public sector strike action, a decline in GDP and rising inflation. Today, however, in the information age, the skills and talent challenges are unprecedented, and the tight labour market requires responses like never before.

"We would normally see demand for contract surpass permanent roles in moments of economic stress, but this hasn't yet happened on a significant scale. In fact, according to our recent [Jobs Confidence Index \(JCI\)](#) – developed in conjunction with the Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr) – employees and job seekers remain optimistic about their job security and career progression prospects. This means that we're facing an unprecedented scenario where the macroeconomic environment is being hit, while recruitment remains a top boardroom discussion."

Asked what makes him jump out of bed today, Weston talks about two themes the firm is passionate about – societal inclusion and tech. Working with Amazon Web Services on their [re/Start programme](#) is just one example: "Even though women make up nearly half of the workforce, the field of technology jobs is still dominated by men. In fact, women hold only 20 percent of the roles in this sector. We know that part of the reason for this is that girls and young women are less likely than their male counterparts to

"People want to do business with, and work for, a company they can feel good about. Our emphasis on getting the job done is one reason clients and candidates continue to turn to Robert Half. In short, we have the best team in our industry."

study STEM subjects in secondary education and university. The AWS re/Start programme provides free training in cloud development skills that can support the goal of inclusive workforces. We provide interview skills and facilitate access to roles in a new and exciting career. The feedback from employers and alumni we connect is truly heart-warming."

So, what does the future hold according to Weston? "We remain the professional services industry leader because of our data-driven and AI-optimised business model, as well as the innovative solutions we provide to support our workforce and optimise the experiences of our clients and candidates. But above all, it's

our talented people who set the benchmark. People want to do business with, and work for, a company they can feel good about. Our emphasis on getting the job done is one reason clients and candidates continue to turn to Robert Half. In short, we have the best team in our industry."

"I don't worry about tomorrow because our model allows us to respond to business needs at an unmatched pace. In every downturn so far we've come out stronger and the reason for that is our focus on human solutions delivered by real people who are committed to making a meaningful change in the professional lives of others. I don't expect the future to be any different," said Weston.

Thank you