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Issue 250 | September 2023



## MAN AND MACHINE

TECHNOLOGY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH RECRUITMENT  
THE PLACE OF AI

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# WELCOME



**SIMON KENT**  
EDITOR

The arrival of a heatwave at the very end of summer has been something of a surprise and for many another element to deal with as work picks up after the summer break. Trying to concentrate in the heat while not also grudging the weather for not being like this when holiday season was in full swing is an added distraction as the market picks up and recruiters eye their next period to Christmas.

But then recruitment has always been full of the unexpected. Sudden surges in demand, changes in compliance regulations, trends in skill requirements and roles. This issue we embark on another series of special article addressing another challenging area – technology in recruitment. Here too there is unpredictability and potential going hand in hand. There is speculation on the impact of technology on the sector, insight from those already engaging with the technology and all kinds of promises as to what it could mean in the near and more distant future.

Rather than becoming blinded by promises of a brave new world, we're taking a more practical view on current practice and thinking. We're looking at technology in terms of strategy, practice and its impact on the wider economy. As such we hope to help you prepare for what to come and gain some perspective on how you can make the most of the technology that's being targeted at the sector.

You can explore this, together with some of our usual features in this issue. And let us know what you think - what technology has changed your practice and business and what do you anticipate being the next big thing for you too? ■



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**Publisher: Gary King**  
gary@theglobalrecruiter.com

**Editorial: Simon Kent**  
editorial@theglobalrecruiter.com

**Advertising:**  
sales@theglobalrecruiter.com

**Digital Communications: Leigh Abbott**  
leigh@theglobalrecruiter.com

**Design & Production: Ioan Lucian Sculeac**  
lucian@theglobalrecruiter.com

Subscribe for free: [www.theglobalrecruiter.com](http://www.theglobalrecruiter.com)



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## STAY FOCUSED

**HMRC should maintain responsibility for tax debt warns REC**

The REC is calling on the government to stay focussed on regulating umbrellas and scrap their grossly unfair proposal to pass the buck of umbrella tax debt to employment businesses.

An umbrella company is a business sometimes used by recruitment agencies to pay temporary workers, often at the behest of clients or workers. The world of work is changing, yet the government has been slow to regulate umbrellas despite years of pleas from REC and other labour market stakeholders. Although a consultation has concluded on the issue, there is still no clarity of if and when any regulation would become law. On top of that, the consultation is misguided in some of its attempts to maintain tax compliance around umbrella practices.

The REC responded to the consultation in which the Treasury suggests ways to lessen tax non-compliance such as fraud and disguised remuneration by umbrellas. Among the suggestions is transferring an umbrella company's payroll tax debt to employment businesses if the debt is uncollectable from the umbrella. The Treasury is even considering widening this proposed policy to include non-employment taxes such as VAT.

"Employment businesses should report obvious or suspected tax avoidance to protect temporary workers, themselves and ensure tax is paid," said REC Deputy Chief Executive Kate Shoesmith. "But it

is grossly unfair for recruiters to shoulder liability for another company in their supply chain over which they have no control. That is near unheard of in business.

"Unethical umbrellas can open and close overnight, which under this proposal risks leaving employment businesses to try and survive after taking a big and unexpected tax hit.

"There is also the broader risk that exposing compliant businesses to additional tax risks when engaging with an umbrella undermines the UK's world-class flexible labour market at a time when organisations are relying on temps to get through the economic downturn."

Shoesmith added: "The alarming thing is that it looks like a quick fix – but it will put employment businesses in quicksand. We really want the government to act more broadly, by widening the scope of current regulations to include all employment intermediaries, including umbrellas, and then enforce them.

"If HMRC is just after a quick fix, they should take simple proactive action such as more cross-referencing of Real-Time Information (RTI) and intermediaries' reports. This could have a significant impact on curbing tax non-compliance. HMRC should also consider reviewing the VAT flat rate scheme and the employment allowance scheme to stop any misuse." ■



# TECH PAY RISES

**Pay rises in the tech sector outstripping UK averages despite vacancy decline**



The latest Robert Half Jobs Confidence Index (JCI) – an economic confidence tracker produced in partnership with the Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr) – has found the average earnings in the IT sector have increased at a greater rate than the wider UK economy, despite a slowdown in hiring. This trend indicates the sector’s continued struggle with skills shortages.

According to data published earlier this month, average weekly earnings in IT were up 11.1 per cent –above the growth noted across all UK industries (8.2 per cent). The JCI also indicated that earnings in the sector were 74.1 per cent higher than the average wages reported across all other sectors.

While the report does reveal a 40.5 per cent annual decline in vacancies, which is indicative of businesses reigning in hiring as layoffs were reported across the sector, the increase in earnings suggests that employers are still using financial incentives to attract the best talent. With uncertainty still rife, firms are also seemingly turning to temporary resources to fill demand, rather than committing to permanent headcount increases, with the share of employees with a temporary work arrangement growing by 0.5 percentage points.

“It’s been a difficult year for the technology sector so far, with layoffs reported by a number of leading brands,” commented Craig Freedberg, Regional Director, at Robert Half. “However, this has largely been the result of over-ambitious recruitment activity during less uncertain economic times. We’re finding that demand for the best tech talent remains rife – particularly with SME and growing businesses – but skills shortages are continuing to plague the sector.

“We haven’t seen the influx of talent into the market that we might have expected following redundancies, but we are beginning to see a greater reliance on temporary and contract tech experts,” Freedberg adds. “This trend is likely to continue while uncertainty remains. What is perhaps the most notable trend, though, is the significantly high levels of pay that workers are able to command as the skills crisis continues. With wages on an unsustainable upward trajectory, employers are going to need to look at alternative means of attracting tech talent.” ■





# DREAM JOBS ON HOLD

**Two-thirds of young people say they have lowered their expectations for the future**

A report from The Prince's Trust and LADBible Group suggests that the younger generation do not feel able to chase their dream jobs, citing a lack of opportunity (36 per cent) as the number one obstacle. Other factors that are holding young people from having a dream job are money (35 per cent), lack of self-confidence (32 per cent), lack of experience (33 per cent) and the increased cost-of-living (30 per cent).

The top three characteristics Gen Z look for in a "dream job" are doing something that makes them happy (64 per cent), something they enjoy (60 per cent) and feeling financially secure (49 per cent). Working part time (10 per cent), running their own business (20 per cent) and working remotely (24 per cent) were the lowest priorities when thinking about a "dream job". Despite this, only 7 per cent of respondents say they have and are currently in their dream job.

Overall, the younger generation is only planning for the short term, against the backdrop of economic uncertainty. 60 per cent of young people say they need to prioritise any job over their dream job at the moment, and 40 per cent have changed their career plans in the past year. More than half (57 per cent) say they have lowered their long-term aspirations over the past two years, suggesting young people are having to become more pragmatic in what they prioritise when it comes to their working lives.

The cost of living (57 per cent), the UK economy (44 per cent) and their mental health (39 per cent) are cited as having the biggest impact on young people's future plans. Half of those surveyed say they are not planning beyond the next six months. When asked about their long-term life goals, maintaining good physical and mental health, and living happily were amongst the top answers.

Lindsey Wright, Head of Future Sectors at The Prince's Trust said: "In the current economic climate, young people are prioritising a job that provides financial stability, as the cost of living rises and long-term planning feels out of reach for so many.

"This report shows that although aspirations and expectations are being lowered among this generation of young people, the dream job is not being abandoned but being redefined. It is absolutely crucial that we continue to support young people, particularly those who are already facing disadvantage, to achieve their potential. At The Prince's Trust, our free courses offer support and guidance that help young people gain the skills and confidence they need to thrive in work."

Emily Driscoll, Head of Data, Intelligence & Planning at LADBible Group, said: "This research offers an in depth look at how younger people are planning their careers, and the impact the cost-of-living crisis is having not only on the now but on young people's futures and aspirations. We are proud to have partnered with The Prince's Trust on this and to shine a light on the barriers facing young people, and to highlight what support is on offer." ■



# MCMANUS LEADS SPECIALIST GROUP

Specialist Staffing Group Announces New President



Specialist Staffing Group has announced the appointment of Matt McManus as its new President based in Houston Texas. With almost three decades of unrivalled experience in staffing and talent sourcing, Matt brings an impressive track record to his new role, which includes more than six years working with Specialist Staffing Group in the US. As President, Matt will be tasked with growing the STEM-specialist staffing Group within the US market, as well as across the Americas.

On accepting his new role Matt McManus stated: "It is an honour to accept the position of President of Specialist Staffing Group. I am deeply privileged to align myself with a group that persistently expands the scope of possibility within our sector. The Group, with its unwavering commitment to growth, has been instrumental in reshaping STEM industries, enhancing livelihoods, and is continuously committed to sculpting a brighter future. As I undertake this leadership role, I emphatically encourage our team to embrace innovative technologies and concepts, cultivating a culture that fuels creativity, fosters innovation, and emboldens ambition."

With 28 years of rich experience in business leadership, Matt is a fervent advocate for digital transformation and organisational success. Formerly the Executive Vice President of Commercial Operations at Specialist Staffing Group's parent company SThree, he was a catalyst for change, working closely with the Executive Leadership team to develop a comprehensive business transformation plan that is currently being executed.

Prior to this role, he served as President of Progressive Recruitment, a global engineering staffing business within Specialist Staffing Group. During his tenure, the company experienced remarkable growth and solidified its standing as a premier provider of specialised staffing solutions in diverse sectors such as renewable energy, food and beverage manufacturing, and oil and gas. ■



# CONTINUITY AMID CHANGE

World Employment Confederation  
Renews Leadership



**Bettina Schaller**, Head of Global Public Affairs at The Adecco Group, has been re-elected as President of the World Employment Confederation (WEC) at the members' General Assembly on 14 September 2023. She already served a three-year mandate at the helm of the global trade association for HR services, after being involved as a Board member and President of WEC-Europe for the past decade.

"I strongly believe in our industry and the solutions that we bring, in times when labour markets face such profound transformations. I am looking forward to building on the solid foundations that we have laid collectively over the past years and to accelerate our efforts to further increase our impact," reacts Bettina Schaller.

Elections of WEC's leadership maintained continuity amid change, with **Charles Cameron**, CEO of RCSA, the Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association of Australia & New Zealand, also re-elected as Vice-President. Cameron has been sitting on WEC's Board since 2016 and also chaired the National Federations Committee.

"The World Employment Confederation brings together voices from all around the world. This diversity is invaluable to find innovative solutions to our common challenges, and I am very much committing my second mandate to better showcase all those different perspectives. Together we can change the world!" Cameron says.

The novelty comes from the election of **Bart van Kempen**, General Counsel for Northern Europe at Manpower Group, as the second Vice-President. van Kempen has been a Board member since 2020. The two Vice-President functions aim at ensuring representation of the WEC membership by having one coming from the National Federations members and one from the Corporate members.

"I am keen to support the World Employment Confederation's efforts in helping policymakers to define the right solutions for the challenges that the world of work currently faces. Work can have such a profound impact on a person's life and our industry is instrumental in providing access to work and (re)development of skills."

Three other members were also re-elected in their current mandate:

- **Ann Cattelain**, Federgon/Belgium (Treasurer)
- **Lohit Bhatia**, Indian Staffing Federation/India (Regional Representative APAC Southern)
- **Menno Bart**, The Adecco Group (Representative of the Corporate Member)

The election process was rounded up with **Han Oey**, taking a Board seat as the representative of Corporate Member RGF Staffing, and **Geraldine King, Alfred Budschitz** and **Florian Swyter**, all seeing their mandate extended until December 2023. Another round of elections is foreseen on this date for a further slate of Board seats. WEC's leadership will then be fully in place for the next strategic phase of 2024-2026. ■



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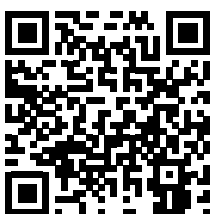
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# INDUSTRY AWARDS 2023

## FINALISTS ANNOUNCED!

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The time has come, the selections have finally been made. The entries have been judged and the shortlist announced. With a fantastic celebratory event on the horizon to truly do justice for those included in this year's shortlist, The Global Recruiter is proud to be able to give the recruitment industry the celebration it deserves and to honour those leading lights who have shown the best the recruitment industry has to offer.

The Global Recruiter UK Awards 2023 will be held on Tuesday 14 November 2023 and is returning 'home' to Lío London, formerly Café de Paris. We are excited to exceed all expectations and deliver a fantastic celebratory event to highlight the strengths and achievements in the recruitment industry, and to recognise how these companies have demonstrated the amazing performance of the recruitment sector over the past 12 months.

The afternoon will commence with a welcome drinks reception, followed by canapes, 3 hours of unlimited selected drinks, and the much-awaited Awards Ceremony, finishing with lively entertainment to let your hair down! Standard tickets and VIP Tables are available now.

### Awards Ceremony

Lío London, 3-4 Coventry Street, Piccadilly, W1D 6BL London  
[www.ukawards.theglobalrecruiter.com](http://www.ukawards.theglobalrecruiter.com)

**#GRAWARDS23**

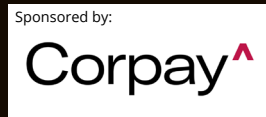


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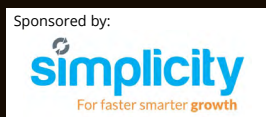
### Best Marketing Campaign

Harrington Starr  
Morson Group  
Randstad  
Visuna  
Zitko Group



### Best Permanent Consultant

Amy Hambleton – RedLaw  
Callum Stevenson – Reuben Sinclair  
Jack James – Carrington West  
Matthew Grout – Daksta  
Steve Gray – Zitko Group

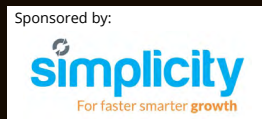


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STR Limited  
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# HEALTHY GROWTH

Denis Pennel, managing director World Employment Confederation, on how healthcare is presenting opportunities for agency workers.

Healthcare services represent an increasingly important feature in modern economies and this is creating significant opportunities for the agency work sector.

While the global pandemic saw a spike in demand for staffing in the healthcare sector at the start of the decade, ageing societies across the developed world mean that cost-effective, quality healthcare will continue to be a growing priority in the years to come.

OECD data show that Covid-19 has prompted an unprecedented reduction in life expectancy around the world. Those countries with modern, effective healthcare systems were better able to weather the pandemic storm and, as we look to the future, societies will need to invest in resilient healthcare and hospital systems able to withstand shocks from everything from pandemics and economic crises through to climate change. >





Meanwhile, the HR services industry, and its agency work services sector in particular, are becoming increasingly important in the healthcare segment. The external contracting that they offer can be essential in ensuring and maintaining services and adapting to crises. In an environment where staff absences or shortages can pose a risk to patient safety, staffing agencies are able to fill the gaps in a cost-efficient way and ensure that high-quality service provision is maintained. Not only do work agencies support organisations to become more efficient in work process organisation and management, they also attract quality talent as workers seek greater work/life balance, flexibility and attractive working conditions.

### Global view

The share of agency workers in healthcare services across the globe ranges from 0.5 per cent in France, 1 per cent in Brazil and Norway, 1.4 per cent in Germany, 2.9 per cent in Belgium and 4.4 per cent in the US to a substantial 26 per cent of healthcare workers in South Africa. Regulation of the sector varies too with markets taking a variety of different approaches to issues such as equal pay, equal treatment and working conditions – even within the European Union, where the provision is regulated by the Temporary Agency Work Directive.

Our World Employment Confederation (WEC) regulatory survey shows that regulation on equal pay and/or treatment is applied in 27 out of the 29 countries surveyed around the world and is applied on either an occupational level – including regulated via a Collective Labour Agreement, regional/state level, or national level.

Specific approaches to establishing regulation on equal treatment or equal pay are essential in the context of the debate on agency work in healthcare and hospitals. They have important implications for the costs of using agency work and staffing in the sector. >



We have observed increasing discussions focused on the corresponding regulation at national level, pay and working conditions for agency workers and the costs of using agency work and staffing services. On this last point, the main elements of the costs charged to healthcare institutions are made up of wages and social security contributions and the agency fee is not significantly different from that charged to other sectors seeking flexible, adaptable, HR services solutions.

Practices among our WEC member countries show considerable diversity in the systems - mirroring national discussions on the use of agency work in the health sector. While countries including Australia, Belgium and Ireland largely recognise and value the benefits of agency work as a service provider and instrument to cope with the fluctuating demand in the healthcare sector, other markets continue to debate the issue. In some, these debates are leading to disproportionate regulation and unjustified restrictions - trends that have been observed in Denmark, France, Germany and South Africa.

The best basis for using agency work effectively is of course to take a balanced and appropriate approach to regulation and in most countries agency workers' pay is equal to that of directly employed workers doing the same job. In some markets, agency workers working in healthcare have been able to negotiate more favourable pay and conditions, reflecting the rising labour shortages in healthcare and hospitals.

### Call to futureproof

As the penetration of agency workers in the healthcare sector continues to grow, WEC is calling for three key actions in order to futureproof healthcare provision for citizens while also offering appropriate working conditions for staff: Firstly, the role of agency work in healthcare and hospitals should be recognised and valued so that societies can adapt to ageing demographics and emerging risks. Next, appropriate and fair working conditions should be the norm for all healthcare professionals – regardless of the type of work contract that they hold. Finally, in these times of rising labour and skills shortages, we urge jurisdictions around the globe to acknowledge the importance of adaptable and diverse forms of work and to apply them to their healthcare services sector in order that they can deliver optimal care to citizens. ■

For more insights take a look at our Strategic Issue Paper released this past summer








# JUST DISCONNECT

Wendy Muirhead, Managing Director and Regional Leader for Ceridian, EMEA on avoiding burnout.



Annual leave, PTO, vacation time, holiday. Whatever you call it, British workers aren't using all of it. Studies have shown that [62 per cent of UK workers](#) didn't use all their annual leave allowance in 2022, which is especially concerning when you consider that [87 per cent of workers globally](#) have experienced burnout in the past year. >





The correlation between not taking leave and burnout is clear, but it seems not enough is being done about it. Time away from work improves productivity, boosts morale and reduces the likelihood of staff taking sick days, so ensuring staff feel like they are able to take holiday is critical to ensuring businesses can continue to operate given existing labour and skills challenges. Businesses have a responsibility to their staff to provide a working environment that prioritises the welfare of staff, and this includes encouraging employees to take time off, and truly switch off when they do.

### Preventing burnout before vacation

Stats show only [51 per cent of UK workers completely disconnect from work while they are on holiday](#). Any successful vacation policy needs to be built on a foundation of trust, transparency, and boundaries, so that an always-on world of work doesn't encroach on time away. Managers need to set clear expectations for their teams and trust they will accomplish those goals. This includes them themselves setting an example and also feeling like they can disconnect on holiday – a company mindset, rather than a mandate. To enable a culture of disconnecting, leaders need to set clear guidelines and expectations for handovers in the run up to a holiday – so that people don't feel the need to be 'always on'. Managers and HR leaders shouldn't necessarily be mandating time off for employees, as dictating how employees spend their time can backfire, but they should

communicate expectations clearly: taking vacation is a good thing, and managers will contact them directly if something urgent arises that requires their attention. Other than that, employees shouldn't feel the need to check in while they're away.

A gentle approach is always recommended when it comes to welfare and wellbeing conversations, but managers can create a culture of encouragement when it comes to annual leave by:

- Reminding people that it actually improves their productivity to take time off. They are not being more productive by continuing to work, it diminishes as burnout begins to set in.
- Being clear about how you will contact them in the case of an urgent situation, so employees don't feel the need to constantly check emails or messaging platforms.
- Leading by example – managers should be taking time off and disconnecting. If you're on meetings and taking calls while on vacation, people will think they have to do that too if they want to get ahead. And if you can't disconnect, make sure to clearly communicate that it is not your expectation.
- Tracking how much time people are taking off, make sure they're taking enough, and send gentle encouragements if there are people who aren't taking enough vacation. >



## Disconnecting on vacation

With the culture being set from the leaders of a business, employees should feel comfortable to take annual leave without constantly checking their emails and messages. This begins with an effective handover process; the priorities employees should be thinking about include:

- Tackling your 'must do' list: about a week before you go on vacation, put together a list of things that you really need to finish or appropriately hand over before you leave, and then spend your last few days completing them. Knowing that your most important tasks are taken care of will give you peace of mind while you're away.
- Designating a decision maker on your behalf. Whether it's your manager or someone on your team, pick someone that you trust to make decisions on your behalf while you're away. That way, you'll know things are progressing and you won't have to check in to give approvals while you're on vacation. Then, when they're on vacation, you can return the favour.
- Accepting that things will continue to happen while you're away, that work will be there when you get back, and that there's no need to worry about it while you're away. Make sure your leader knows how to contact you directly if something urgent happens that only you can handle, and that way you won't feel as obligated to check email or messaging platforms while you're on vacation.

## Balancing the burnout challenge

While it's important managers are aware and empower workers to fully step away from work, [seven-in-ten UK employees](#) who work remotely say it's easier to take vacation since they can work virtually. This points to the need for flexibility in vacation policies as there is no one-size-fits-all approach to how and when employees work anymore. The key is to create a culture that encourages time to rest and recharge without the expectation that they have to be available 24/7.

While you can't mandate that employees take their annual leave, creating the best environment for them to feel comfortable with this is critical. This way, leaders can build teams that trust one another to complete handovers, and not dread the first days back in office picking things back up from before their holiday. In summary, it is important for modern businesses to have modern vacation policies that reflect the nature and values of the business, and its employees. From here, the culture can be built and morale improved. ■





# EARNING STRIPES

Zachary Harris and his company deliver a fresh approach to talent acquisition.



**Zachary Harris** is head of recruitment for **32 Stripes**, an up-and-coming talent recruitment service aiming to help alleviate the skills shortage in the digital and information technology fields. We sat down with Zach to discuss his experience as a specialist informatics and IT recruitment consultant, and learn more about how 32 Stripes supports technology sectors. >



**Q:** Could you tell us more about 32 Stripes and the kind of roles you recruit for?

**A:** 32 Stripes provides specialist solutions for senior and technical roles across several different sectors. While my personal experience is within the laboratory informatics and life science job market, we operate across a broad range of technical industries. We source candidates for a myriad of both functional and technical roles, such as project leads for laboratory information management systems (LIMS) and electronic laboratory notebooks (ELN), as well as business analysts, implementation specialists, and solution architects. Our specialised, in-depth knowledge of these roles and their requirements helps us to source candidates for niche positions that may otherwise be difficult or time-consuming to fill.

**Q:** How important do you think this service is?

**A:** We believe that there was a gap in the recruitment market for the service we provide. The digital transformation market is expected to grow rapidly over the next few years, and demand for 'hard' technology skills and commercially-aware technology professionals is going to exceed supply.

As such, candidates for these positions are likely to become increasingly challenging to find. Established networks and good relationships with experienced professionals can help us to source these hard-to-find candidates. We know where to look and what to look for, meaning we can streamline the talent acquisition process and help to alleviate the skills gap issue.

**Q:** How is 32 Stripes different from other recruiters?

**A:** We definitely prefer to act as a recruitment consultancy, rather than simply an agent. We offer an in-depth understanding of our clients' needs, and take a bespoke approach towards every vacancy and opportunity. We understand the roles on offer in this industry and the skills they require, and we use that in-depth understanding to find the ideal candidate for even the most challenging of positions. We also maintain regular contact with a wide network of industry professionals, which gives us a quality talent pool that we can source suitable candidates from.

We get to know our clients really well, and invest a lot of time in learning every client's needs and business goals. Building ongoing, trusted relationships is paramount, as our ultimate goal is to provide the client with a candidate that we know is the best fit, so they come back to us for future roles as the company grows. >





**Q:** How would you describe your approach with clients?

**A:** Honesty and transparency are core, non-negotiable values – you shouldn't over-promise or under-deliver to a client. We prefer to have open and candid conversations, laying out what the client can realistically expect, and how we can help them to achieve their recruitment goals. Establishing trust with the client is key to achieving long-term success, so we can hopefully work together for the long-term. Our role is to make the process as smooth and as stress-free as possible for the both the candidate and client.

**Q:** Can you tell us a bit more about the type of client you typically work with?

**A:** Small to medium sized companies, ranging between 10 to 200 employees, are typically our main customers. It's enjoyable working with both these smaller, growing companies as well as larger companies with over 500 employees. With larger organisations, we often work alongside internal recruitment teams as part of a collaborative joint effort. They trust our experience in sourcing candidates for more difficult, niche roles, so we can complement their own recruitment drive.

**Q:** What do you find most rewarding about your role?

**A:** It can be extremely rewarding, helping both candidates and businesses. There have been occasions where, for one reason or another, candidates were being severely underpaid at their previous jobs and we have found them roles with fair pay increases.

From a client perspective, we spend a lot of time researching and resourcing the ideal candidate for the role, so seeing that process materialise when the candidate is hired is rewarding in itself. It is always a job well done when the recruitment process is concluded and all parties are happy, and that is what we are here to facilitate.

**Q:** What's next for 32 Stripes?

**A:** We are very excited for the future. Digital transformation in the laboratory space is creating new roles and opportunities all the time, and we are well placed to help clients fill these roles with high-quality employees. We are looking forward to creating opportunities for clients and candidates alike, focusing on matching people and companies.

We also plan to extend our reach in other sectors, and bring in recruitment consultants with experience in other markets, to develop more connections and expand our talent pools even further. We love to help technology-driven industries succeed, and help clients secure the right candidates for roles where the talent can be hard to come by. ■





# IS AI DE-HUMANISING RECRUITMENT?

||| THE RECRUITMENT  
NETWORK™



# THE HUSTLE

In a tougher market – recruitment businesses are managed so much better. That's just the reality.

We saw this during the pandemic.

They are tighter on their cost management, they look for ROI in everything they do.

They obsess about doing the basics brilliantly and consistency.

They do the things that matter the most and throw out the vanity projects.

They are deliberate about their decision making.

They hustle to find opportunities.

They dig deeper. ■







# ... THE THINGS I COULD BE DOING DIFFERENTLY

“Sometimes this job is very lonely so it was great to spend time with people doing similar roles. I’m so busy, it’s really hard to justify being out of the office but it was really worth it - to share ideas, learn from others and realise the things I could be doing differently”. ■



# SLIPPAGE

On the flip side, in a boom market as we have had for the couple of years post pandemic, many recruitment businesses do well because of the market despite the fact that they are run in a less efficient way.

Complacency and slippage creeps in.

Some tend to become more introverted as businesses and spend less time in front of customers, too busy transacting.

They chase turnover irrespective of net profit conversion.

They grow but in doing so, become sub-optimised.

So when the markets turn again, as they inevitably did at the back end of last year, you end up with sub-optimised business going back into a tougher market.

This is what a large proportion of the recruitment industry has been facing for the last 6 to 9 months.

Many have continued to do very well, but many less so.

Look out for some of the leading Red Flag indicators, such as:

- GP to NPBT conversion – sub 30%
- Remuneration costs vs your GP – over 45%
- Overhead Vs GP – over 25%
- Minimum activity standards – sub 2018 averages
- Client penetration
- Channel conversion ratios
- Average GP per employee ■







# PRODUCTIVITY

We know the market is once again shifting, for the better, and all the indicators point to another very strong Q4 of 2023 and into 2024.

But Irrespective of the market, you need to be running at maximum productivity, maximum capacity, maximum performance. Optimised.

To be able to navigate the tough times successfully, and to properly maximise the opportunity that come with the good time.

Which leads us nicely into this whole AI (r)evolution that is going on.

Not here to dumb down recruitment, or dehumanise it.

But to make us far more productive, more efficient and create more capacity for our recruiters to spend more time doing the human stuff – the stuff that really matters right now. ■





# PERFORMANCE, PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY

The Recruitment Network provide recruitment leaders with the tools, advice, guidance, training and support to maximise the performance, productivity and profitability of their recruitment businesses.

We are absolutely committed to the success of our members.

To achieve this, we have brought together some of the recruitment industry's most successful entrepreneurs, advisors, thought leaders and recruitment business leaders to collaborate and work together to achieve their strategic objectives.

This is not about networking... this is about making a very measurable difference.

To find out more, visit [www.therecruitmentnetwork.com](http://www.therecruitmentnetwork.com) ■



# WHERE TO START WITH AI?

If you are just starting out on your AI journey, start by building out the various workflows across your business.

Your BD workflow.

Your marketing workflow.

Your delivery workflow.

Your account penetration workflow and so on...

Then look at the tasks within each workflow to identify which tasks are repetitive. Which tasks are non-core. Which tasks need to be done more. Which tasks are better off being automated than need to be human centric. Or a blend of all four.

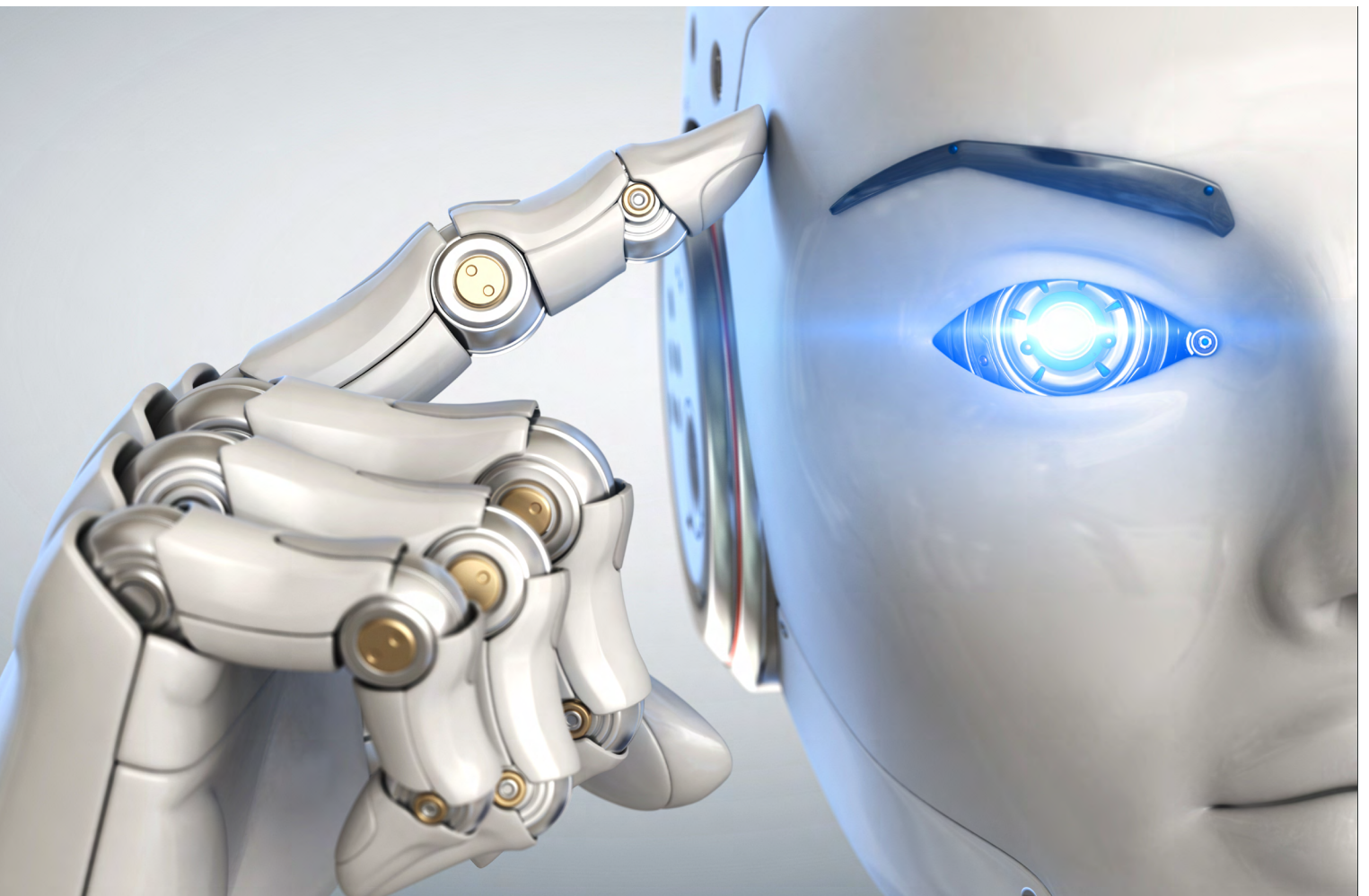
That list will be the start of your AI wish list, against which there are multiple applications that could, in essence, take those tasks out of the hands of your consultants and into the hands of technology.

From the generation of interview and screening questions, to the translation of candidate outreach messaging into multiple languages and country specific terminology.

From the creation of an employer branding campaign to breaking down job descriptions to match against key words from candidate profiles. To keyword identification on customer calls to generate training needs, to the creation of customer and candidate personas that link to your content creation strategy.

This year, TRN (link to [www.therecruitmentnetwork.com](http://www.therecruitmentnetwork.com)) has relaunched the Createch programme, enabling recruitment businesses to not only navigate their AI / tech journey better, but to also ensure that AI and their tech stack actually drives their business performance forward.

Get in touch with [james@therecruitmentnetwork.com](mailto:james@therecruitmentnetwork.com) if you want to find out more. ■







# FREE TRN EVENTS THIS OCTOBER

Every week, TRN host a series of free one hour roundtable events for Recruitment Leaders. Come and join us – you don't have to be a member to get involved.

**Event:** [Hiring and Retaining Recruiters](#)

**Time:** 09:00 – 09:45 (GMT) 3rd October 2023

**Event:** [Candidate Sourcing](#)

**Time:** 12:00 – 12:45 (GMT) 4th October 2023

**Event:** [Key Account Management: Maximising Client Lifetime Value](#)

**Time:** 09:00 -09:45 (GMT) 4th October 2023

**Event:** [Commission Structures and Incentives, including EMI Schemes and Flowering Shares](#)

**Time:** 14:00 – 14:45 (GMT) 10th October 2023

**Event:** [All Things AI and Future Tech](#)

**Time:** 09:00 – 09:45 (GTM) 10th October 2023

**Event:** [Flowstate](#)

**Time:** 10:00 – 10:45 (GMT) 11th October 2023

**Event:** [High Performance Recruitment](#)

**Time:** 14:00 – 16:00 (GMT) in Southampton – 12th October 2023

**Event:** [Event: Business Development Strategies](#)

**Time:** 09:00 – 09:45 (GMT) 17th October 2023

**Event:** [Optimisation](#)

**Time:** 10:00 – 10:45 (GMT) 18th October 2023

**Event:** [Onboarding, Training and Developing Employees](#)

**Time:** 09:00 – 09:45 (GMT)





# MAN AND MACHINE

Technology in partnership  
with recruitment





Simon Kent, Editor,  
The Global Recruiter

“As flash and amazing as technology might appear to be it must always serve the business, the consultant, the client and the candidate concerned.”

## TECHNOLOGY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH RECRUITMENT

This year has witnessed a huge amount of discussion and hand wringing over the role of technology in the world. Principally led by apparent leaps forward in the capability of AI – although this is more likely simply a leap forward in the awareness around the technology – headlines have been written, grabbed and re-written forecasting everything from an efficient and smooth running life to outright chaos where machines rule over people.

Over the forthcoming issues of The Global Recruiter we’re focussing on the truth behind the cliches. We’re exploring where exactly technology rests within the recruitment industry - not just with regard to AI, but more broadly speaking, to identify the area which bring real value to the sector. We’re looking at the policy and strategy behind technology, but we’re also ensuring we take a practical stance – how can the sector get the best from the technology on offer and convert this into real value for clients and candidates alike.

This has already proved to be a contentious subject area and there is no doubt that one business’ use of technology may not fit with another. But this is, at the end of the day, the point. As flash and amazing as technology might appear to be it must always serve the business, the consultant, the client and the candidate concerned. Getting this balance right is the real challenge and one which stretches from the implementation of the first CRM to where we stand today. ■





# NEW TECH, NEW JOBS

Harnham explores the job roles being created to handle AI and the skills they require.

The buzz in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) market has led many leaders and organisations to question how they will be impacted by this new digital world order. AI has been around for some time, but recent developments in the sector have brought the opportunities and its potential risks to the forefront of many people's minds. >





[Rosie O’Callaghan](#), Business Manager for Data Science and Machine Learning (ML) at [Harnham](#), the global leader in data recruitment, works with some of the biggest employers in the industry. Recruiting professionals into AI roles has granted O’Callaghan a birds-eye view of what specialisms and opportunities are emerging, and the key areas where those seeking a career in AI should focus their attention. [Harnham](#) has also recently released its [2023 UK Salary Guide](#), the definitive source of salary information for the data market. It includes research on what new roles are emerging and what markets these may impact.

O’Callaghan comments: “We are beginning to see increasingly niche roles pop up in AI. More recent developments in ChatGPT and neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), for example, will likely trickle down into different types of emerging roles in the coming year. There is also increased interest in generative AI-related job listings and a demand for ‘full stack’ data scientists who can manage data processes from ideation to deployment.

“Our Salary Guide shows there’s been growing demand for professionals able to straddle multiple teams or have a mixture of data and business skillsets,” she adds. “For example, demand for ML engineering roles has been steadily rising, with hiring managers recently seeking ML ops engineers – professionals able to bridge the gap between data scientists and data engineers. Some companies are even building brand new ML ops teams. By sitting within and working alongside both teams, they can focus on building, deploying and maintaining platforms and pipelines to facilitate the work of data scientists.

“But this is a very new area,” she adds, “not many companies have yet developed this function and, if they have, the role within the business is still quite undefined. New roles are likely to emerge as companies figure out what they need from AI and ML specialists. The people we’ve placed so far typically work alongside data science and data engineering teams. >





“However, the most important skill remains stakeholder management. Being able to explain technical work to nontechnical people in a clear and jargonfree manner, and sell the value of data science to key stakeholders and decisionmakers within the business, is essential in almost every role for which we hire. In the data and engineering space, a lot of people aren’t keen on presenting data. Having that combination of skills will provide many opportunities.”

### Paying up

Harnham’s Salary Guide shows that 47 per cent of respondents believe AI is set to be the biggest disrupter of the data market. However, one of the greatest problems that organisations face in implementing AI and ML roles is lack of talent. 26 per cent believe this could limit organisational growth and opportunities for competitive innovation.

Despite this, O’Callaghan sees university courses in AI and data analytics becoming more popular and niche, and believes this trend is likely to continue as more specialist AI and ML roles emerge. She adds: “Data science courses are becoming increasingly prevalent. For candidates, getting a master’s degree relevant to their area of interest is the first step. They should look at toplevel universities; for example, Edinburgh is well known for AI and deep learning, but UCL might better suit classical ML statistics type roles. So far, it’s uncommon for employers to expect candidates to have a degree in AI or data science, but the degree level and university reputation is consistently mentioned. Unsurprisingly, this is having a knockon effect on the candidate makeup of the market. At Harnham we are starting to see more people coming through with specialist degrees.

“It’s then important that candidates find the right company to help them get essential exposure, whether they want to transition to a big company or join a start-up where they’ll wear lots of hats. Joining a larger company with lots of trainees or somewhere doing a combination of data science and deep learning and AI can act as a steppingstone to more specialised roles, particularly for those retraining.” >



## Economy could limit growth

Despite surging interest in AI and data science, Harnham's researchers believe the current economic climate could limit sector growth and the availability of roles. The Salary Guide data shows that compared to last year there were far fewer data professionals hired, salaries increased and job opportunities on the market.

Rising inflation and increasing business costs means businesses cannot maintain the same level of growth as in 2022 and are more cautious in hiring for emerging roles, particularly as candidates seeking specialised AI, ML, and deep learning roles can expect to earn on average £50,000 at entry level and up to £120,000 as Directors. Despite this, 28 per cent of people left data engineering roles in 2023 due to uncompetitive salaries, and some may have been disappointed to earn only a 16 per cent increase in pay, compared to the expected 22 per cent, when moving roles.

O'Callaghan concludes: "The disconnect between salary expectations and reality reflects a widespread trend – tech companies, and more often tech giants, can offer much higher salaries than most companies, establishing a benchmark that cannot be matched. Data science is also still viewed by some as a luxury, rather than a necessity. Economic challenges mean budgets have been stretched and costs cut, and companies are unable to sustain the same financial incentives from previous years." ■







## IN THE BALANCE

Matt Fryer, Managing Director of Brookson Group asks if recruiters should favour personal service companies again.

The government's consultation on non-compliance in the umbrella company market recently closed, meaning the UK's system for employing temporary staff will soon operate differently.

Whilst any changes announced are unlikely to come into effect until April 2024 at the earliest, recruiters who want to stay ahead of the curve on the flexible labour market can already anticipate the direction of travel.

The key takeaway is that all of the options put forward in the consultation would make umbrella companies riskier and more expensive to work with.

This will make working with independent contractors outside IR35 contracts through their personal service companies (PSCs) a more attractive option for the market. This was the preferred way to engage contractors prior to the 2021 changes to

the off payroll working rules, and it offers a number of advantages over working with umbrella companies.

### **Umbrella companies will be the riskier option**

The consultation has targeted improving outcomes for contractors, supporting a level playing field in the market and reducing the loss of tax revenue that results from non-compliance of umbrella companies.

The government has proposed three options that they could introduce to combat non-compliance of umbrella companies. One of these routes would include a mechanism for the transfer of tax debt to another party in the supply chain, in the circumstance that HMRC cannot collect the unpaid tax from the umbrella company. The low level of capital these companies hold, and the common practice of non-compliance means it would be highly likely that recruitment agencies would be forced to pay significant amounts of unpaid tax should they be working with a non-compliant umbrella. >





If the government chooses to go down this route, recruiters will need to be extremely careful when engaging umbrellas and ensure they do the correct due diligence before engaging a temporary worker in this way. In this scenario, engaging workers through a PSC would become a less risky option for recruiters and other elements of the supply chain, despite the complications that IR35 can cause.

Another possible option being considered, although widely rejected by many commentators, is moving the responsibility of operating PAYE to the employment business that has supplied the worker to the end client. This would reduce non-compliance of umbrella companies, but at recruiters' expense. Agencies will need to introduce the necessary technology and systems to be able to make the correct deductions of Income tax and NICs and ensure the right amount of tax is paid. This will come at a cost to the recruitment sector and bring an element of risk if it is not done correctly.

### A changing balance of risk

If the proposals in the umbrella consultation become law, then recruitment agencies may be better off engaging genuinely independent contractors through PSCs and avoiding the added cost and difficulties that

working with umbrella companies would bring.

Based on the current understanding of the off payroll working laws, end hirers might be reluctant to work with PSCs again due to the tax liability that they could face. The recruitment sector will need to demonstrate to end hirers that, not only is the risk now lower, but it is worth it.

The government's recent proposal to offset some of the end hirer's IR35 tax liabilities against those paid by the contractor could help with this. If made law, the liability for the deemed employer could halve, therefore significantly reducing the risk of hiring PSCs. Early signs from HMRC are that this is likely to be introduced in the forthcoming Finance Bill and be effective from 6 April 2024.

### PSCs are advantageous for recruiters

Employing contractors through PSCs comes with advantages regardless of the potential changes.

A large number of temporary workers have refused to work for umbrella companies, meaning there is a pool of talent that can only be accessed by offering outside IR35 contracts available for PSCs.

One of the reasons for the refusal is due to the poor treatment of workers by umbrella companies. In some cases, money has been deducted from earnings and taken as profit by umbrellas, on top of the money earned by paying less tax than required.

When such practices are conducted by umbrella companies on a preferred supplier list, these actions damage the reputation of recruiters themselves.

### Preparing for the market shift

In order to prepare for this change in the market, recruiters will need to educate their clients in the advantages of correctly applying the off-payroll rules thereby allowing contractors to choose whether to operate via a PSC.

If agencies can get ahead of the game in this way and ensure their own recruitment processes are fit for purpose, they will be prepared for the forthcoming shift in the market. ■



# TAKE YOUR PICK

**Rebecca Napier**, project manager at GI Group, discusses the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for the industry as AI develops at pace.



A new dawn of decision-making is well and truly upon us. From how we write our LinkedIn content to who we 'speak' to when renewing insurance policies and now to certain stages in the recruitment process – Artificial Intelligence is becoming an established part of our everyday lives. Sometimes we might not even notice we've been 'helped' by AI, which shows how quickly this new tech has become assimilated into our day-to-day experiences. AI is perfectly placed to support businesses with data crunching and sorting, but is it ready for the sharp end of human centred tasks such as interview selection? >





According to the [World Economic Forum](#), the most accepted definition of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is ‘the ability of machines to perform tasks that are typically associated with human intelligence, such as learning and problem solving.’

In our business, which specialises in placing the right candidate in the right role, essentially matching people with jobs perfectly, there is certainly an emerging space for AI. While many alarm bells have been sounded cross-industry about bots replacing humans, and rightly so, it is important we remember how early on we are in the evolution of the application of AI, particularly in the recruitment sector.

### Understanding improvements

At Gi Group, our global team has invested heavily in understanding how AI can be used to improve not only the service we offer to our customers but also the experience of work and development we can offer to our colleagues in the business. We’ve employed a team of AI scientists and machine learning experts to investigate all of the ways in which AI could (not necessarily should) be adopted.

At this stage (Q3-4 of 2023) the investigation team is focusing on smart screening, which is the process by which candidates are selected once they are in our system. The smart screening functionality will allow us to present a consultant with a pool of available candidates who have been matched to specific vacancy criteria within seconds – a huge step up for high volume recruitment. Gi Group is already ahead of the pack when it comes to data collection and storage, with a best-in-class CRM system in place. This puts us in a very strong position when looking at how we can leverage and elevate our existing database of candidates to maximise our support for clients.

Historically, databases can be full of excellent candidates which are either ‘invisible’ due to how they have been stored, or hidden because of an outdated CV. We say in our sector that a good candidate is only as findable as a good CV. This challenge can be particularly prescient for new recruits in our business, who have less experience and knowledge than long standing recruiters in how to use complex search language to unearth harder to find skill sets. So, we’re looking at how we can use AI to support new recruiters in their search process. This in turn will free up time for experienced consultants in induction sessions and allow them to spend more of their energy and focus on developing their new starters’ recruitment knowledge bank. >





## Skills and careers

Further down the line, we will be considering how we can adopt AI to help us manage challenges associated with skills gaps. AI will be able to predict a skill-based career path of an individual based on their existing data, resulting in a higher percentage of skilled candidates than a manual search would present.

This is a more complex application of AI, as it looks at more details about the candidate than the basic search criteria. We've had some early-stage successes with this function but it is very much in the infancy of development.

Currently, AI is showing promise in helping us with the pre-screening stage in the application process. We're exploring how chatbots with WhatsApp integration can support us in screening candidates, which is a very time consuming task that, if carried out by AI, potentially would free up time for consultants and apprentice consultants to spend developing their skills and their relationships with clients.

## Still focussing on people

It is crucial to point out that while AI shows great promise in respect of manual and data-driven tasks, we believe there will always be a critically human centric element to our business. Our customers choose to work

with us because we are a people focused, passion driven team of experts who have a collective experience of placing people with companies that precedes the internet. We know that 'people buy people', by which we mean people are most likely to make a purchase or a decision based on a human interaction. This is why we will always want to ensure the most important part of the candidate journey, the final interview and selection, is done in person with an expert consultant. We take the time to understand our clients and their goals, which means we provide perfect match candidates – aligned with both skill set and culture. The nature of our business is such that a fast turn around is key. Some customers require a candidate within an hour, and we know that the most certain way of matching the right person to the role is for one of our experienced and talented consultants to lead this process.

In terms of the broader picture in our industry, it is fair to say that most recruiters are at the exploration stage with AI, while some have yet to fully understand its potential. Everyone is aware of it, but to different degrees. At Gi Group, we are investing time and resource in understanding the potential of AI we know that we are future-proofing our business and the careers, development opportunities and work satisfaction levels of our talented teams in the process.

For more information about Gi Group in the UK, please visit: [uk.gigroup.com](http://uk.gigroup.com). ■





# IMPORTANCE OF AN APP & PLATFORM FOR TEMPORARY RECRUITMENT

Anthony O'Neill, founder AER Temp

Temporary recruitment accounts for 85% of the total global staffing revenue. By 2027, it is estimated that over half of all workers in the US will be gig workers. This change in the workforce dynamic opens up huge opportunities for recruitment companies in this almost \$600B market. In order to capitalise on this opportunity, staffing agencies must have their own app & platform.

Research shows that recruitment agencies who have a temporary desk have greater gross and net profits. Healthcare dominates the temporary space, but other sectors are growing. Within professional services there is an increase in education, finance, legal and IT and within commercial staffing there is growth within events, hospitality, call centres, industrial and tradesmen.

The dynamics of a good temporary recruitment desk all revolve around having a large pool of candidates to hand to fill these temporary roles. Temporary roles could be single shifts right through to a few weeks or months. However, building and managing a large database of candidates throws up its own challenges. These include issues around communication, sourcing, matching, onboarding and compliance checks to name but a few.

This is where an app and platform becomes important in helping you build your temporary recruitment business. If you look at the dynamics of permanent recruitment, the main goal for the technology at the outset is to identify and attract talent to apply. The recruiters job is then to whittle these numbers down to the best applicants for a role. Any sort of checks be it compliance or reference are done at the latter stages and usually with just a handful or possibly a single candidate. >







# THE PLACE OF AI

CIPD policy advisors Hayfa Mohdzaini, Claire McCartney and People and Transformation Director Amanda Arrowsmith give their view on positioning AI in people processes



Recent developments in generative AI have captured the public's imagination, and renewed discussions on ethics and compliance. Generative AI creates new content like text and images from existing patterns of data. For example to transform detailed role profiles into candidate centric job adverts or to help employees craft their performance and development objectives. >

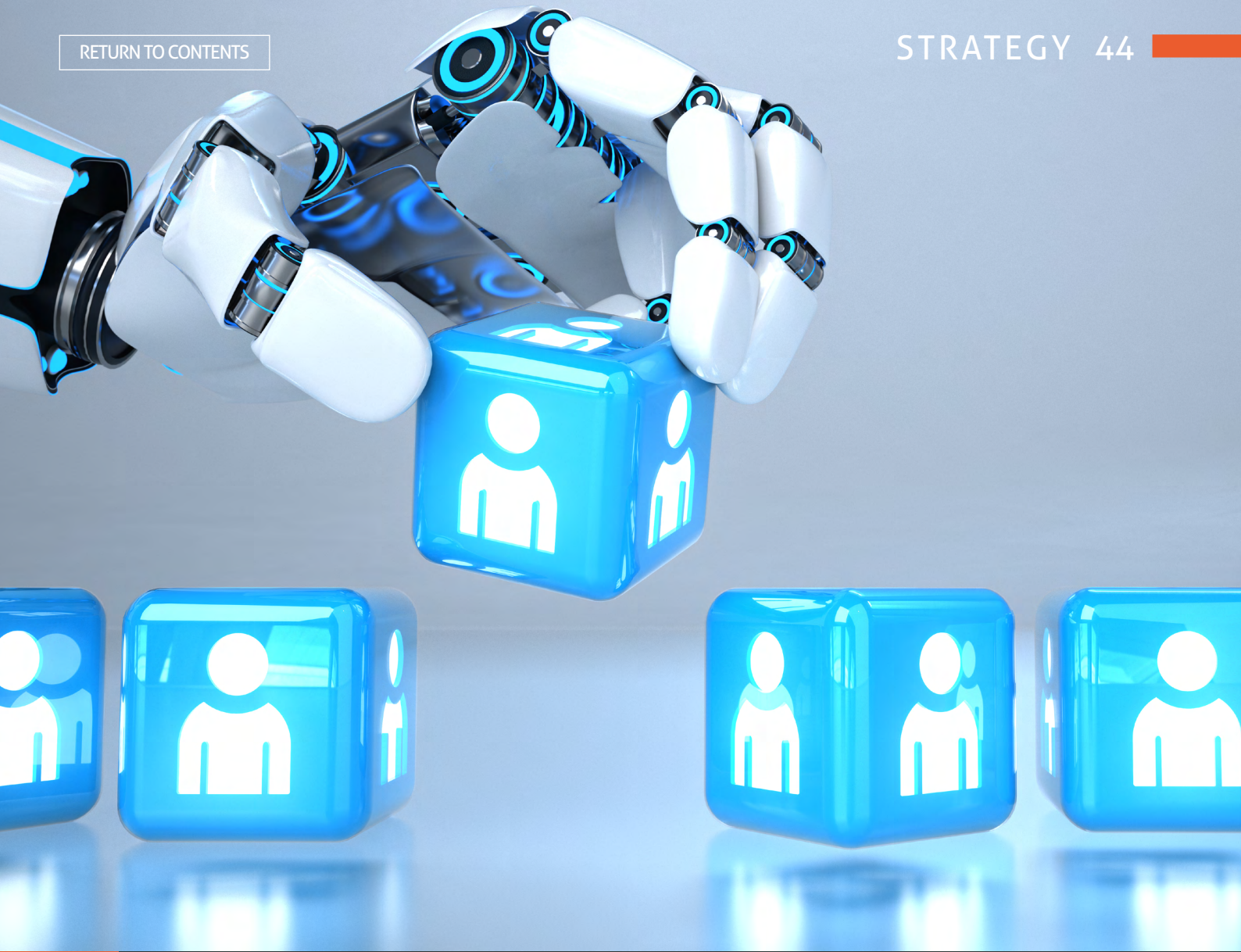




Tools with generative AI have been around for some time but arguably only went mainstream after OpenAI launched ChatGPT in November 2022. ChatGPT is free and more general purpose than the specialist AI chatbots that featured in the CIPD digital transformation series in partnership with Personio in 2021, e.g. [to answer employee queries](#) or [interview and give feedback to candidates](#).

Before public excitement around generative AI, we know [only a minority of people professionals said their organisations use AI-embedded technologies in recruitment](#) (16 per cent of 1,055 respondents surveyed in April 2022). According to the CIPD Resourcing and Talent Planning Report in partnership with Omni, the most cited use of AI in recruitment was in sourcing candidates (8 per cent of respondents), for example, to interpret job requirements or to search for relevant candidates. And that those from large organisations (with 250 or more employees) were more likely to state that they used AI in their recruitment processes compared to those from small organisations (fewer than 250 employees) – 24 per cent vs 6 per cent respondents. The majority of respondents believed their use of technology has been limited by lack of resources, skills and knowledge. It could also be that some of the respondents were unaware that AI is embedded in some of the free or paid technologies they use for recruitment. Or that they don't recruit enough candidates to justify paying for AI-embedded technologies. >





### Ethical practices

We also know that **bosses' moral compasses were largely in tune** when gauging whether certain people management practices were ethical, according to a survey of 814 bosses conducted between June and August 2022 for a CIPD thought piece in partnership with Hibob. The greater the negative impact on people's job prospects or risk to the organisation's reputation, the more uncomfortable bosses were with delegating the task to AI. More bosses were uncomfortable with the idea of letting AI dismiss underperforming employees where the performance criteria were unclear (87.1 per cent), compared to showing the optimal route for picking items in a warehouse (12.7 per cent). Indeed, where automated decisions have significant effects on individuals, the UK General Data Protection Regulation **limits its use to certain scenarios** and allows affected individuals to challenge those decisions.

With generative AI in the hands of the masses, the problem of plagiarism has grown. How do you know whether a job application was written by a person or AI? Fear not, some software vendors have rolled out solutions to detect this. But job applications written with some help from AI isn't necessarily a bad thing – it's easier to assess an application with clear sentences that are free from grammatical errors.

Against this backdrop, how should organisations approach the introduction of AI in areas such as recruitment and talent management? New uses of AI need careful consideration, particularly in areas that affect people's livelihoods – like whether they get hired or promoted. In most instances AI would've been 'introduced' seamlessly through new features rolled out in the free and paid technologies that organisations already use. Again, these should be audited periodically particularly those that impact people's livelihoods. >



At the bare minimum, AI or any technology introduced should comply with the laws and organisation's policies. Do look at [CIPD's guide on preparing your organisation for AI use](#) for tips on shaping an AI use policy. For example, a policy might prohibit entering sensitive information into open source AI tools.

Beyond this we should be thinking about ways in which AI and other technologies can enhance candidate and employee experience and improve the accuracy of decisions. The way in which AI is used in recruitment [can influence candidates perceptions of an organisation's brand](#). In certain settings, AI-generated performance feedback has been shown to be an effective management tool [where the performance review is structured](#).

For a people centred approach, follow the CIPD's nine guiding principles for using technology in recruitment and workforce planning (read the guide in full [here](#)):

- Be clear on what problem you are trying to solve with technology
- Ensure the right people are involved in key aspects of decisionmaking
- Consider how the technology will impact jobs and the way things are done
- Consult with employees to identify unforeseen risks and gain buy-in
- Plan and monitor for equality, diversity and inclusion
- Scrutinise products before procurement to understand how technical functions work and what ongoing management is available
- Ensure data security and other compliance practices consider people principles
- Communicate how technology is used to applicants and employees
- Embed good people management practices to facilitate an open and responsible culture

By following the CIPD's nine guiding principles, organisations can ensure that AI is used in ways that enhance candidate and employee experience, improve the accuracy of decisions and build a more inclusive and equitable workplace. ■



# TAKING THE ADVANTAGE

Adam Hawkins, Head of Search & Staffing, EMEA & LATAM, LinkedIn discusses how recruiters can maximise Generative AI's potential



The recruitment industry is experienced in adapting to changes in labour markets and the wider economy – and if there's anything we've learned over recent years, it's that change is the only constant. The world of work is continuing to evolve, and most recently it's become clear that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is starting to usher in a new era of work – redefining not just how work gets done, but also the type of work that gets done. >





At LinkedIn, we're [already starting to see this shift in the labour market playing out](#) in the new skills that employers are adding to job postings, and that members are adding to their profiles. According to our latest [Future of Work Report: AI at Work](#), AI-related skills like machine learning, natural language, and deep learning are on the rise as more members than ever before are adding AI skills to their profiles. For instance, in June 2023 the number of AI-skilled members globally was nine times larger than in January 2016. At the same time, companies are increasingly looking for AI talent – the share of job postings on LinkedIn mentioning GPT or ChatGPT has increased by 21 times since November 2022.

### AI and the role of recruiters

Given all the workplace upheaval throughout the pandemic, it's perhaps no surprise that the remit and expectation of recruiters has expanded significantly. According to LinkedIn [data](#), nearly 9 in 10 (87 per cent) of recruiting professionals globally say their role has become more strategic. Not only are recruiters expected to fill open roles, but businesses are also challenging them to future proof against any future skills

gaps, and anticipate the capabilities and competencies that companies will need.

Many recruiters have already embraced data and analytics tools to rise to the challenge. This has enabled recruiters to diagnose problems and identify patterns more effectively – helping them to improve DEI efforts, unlock and expand new talent pools and boost candidate engagement as a result. However, there are even bigger advantages available to recruiters that leverage the next big technological wave: Generative AI.

Two-thirds (68 per cent) of hirers recently [surveyed](#) by LinkedIn said they were “very hopeful” or “cautiously optimistic” about the impact of Generative AI on recruiting. They cited “automating repetitive tasks” (74 per cent), “making it faster and easier to source candidates” (67 per cent), and “engaging candidates” (59 per cent) as the key areas where Generative AI can play a key supporting role in their day-to-day work.

So, as recruiters adapt to technology innovation, here are some practical applications of Generative AI which recruiters can use to help free up time so they can focus on the people aspect of their roles. >





### AI-assisted messages

In May, LinkedIn [announced](#) the initial rollout of AI-assisted messages in LinkedIn Recruiter – which is now available in English to all Recruiter users. Using our own in-house generative AI model trained on successful InMails, the new feature uses the information from a candidate’s profile, job description, and the recruiter’s company to draft a highly personalised message to get the conversation started.

LinkedIn data shows that when recruiters personalise InMails, they see up to a 40 per cent increase in acceptance rates – but manually researching each candidate and personalising every message is nearly impossible to do at scale. By using generative AI to supercharge these efforts, recruiters can save time, increase candidate engagement, and build meaningful connections.

### AI-powered job descriptions

At LinkedIn, we [announced](#) earlier this year that we would be testing AI-powered job descriptions, leveraging an advanced OpenAI GPT model to help hirers find qualified candidates.

With AI-powered job descriptions, all job posters need to do is provide starter information – like job title, company name, workplace type, job type, and location – and a draft description will be created for the poster to review and edit. This new experience is being tested in English to a limited number of global job posters.

### Personalised writing suggestions

Generative AI is also being tested in other areas of LinkedIn’s business. In March, we announced that we are testing a [new tool](#) which provides personalised writing suggestions to our members – identifying a candidate’s most important skills and experience, and crafting suggestions to make their profile stand out.

Recruiters have a strong track record of leveraging technology to improve processes and solve problems. The massive efficiencies Generative AI can unlock will enable recruiters to stay in the boardroom and remain focused on the bigger, strategic priorities – and what we’re seeing now is just the beginning of the technology’s potential. ■