

# HRD

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*HOW TO CREATE THE NEXT  
HR OPERATING SYSTEM*

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GENDER IDENTITY

NEW APPROACH TO LINE MANAGEMENT

TACKLING BIAS & DISCRIMINATION

# STARTUP

“IF YOU'RE COMING IN WITH THE  
MINDSET OF: "I'M ONLY GOING TO  
DO HR," IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK  
IN A STARTUP ENVIRONMENT”

KERRY YOUNG  
CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER  
VITRIFI & ALLPOINTS FIBRE



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## April 2023 / Issue 222

THAT IT TOOK A PANDEMIC TO FORCE MANDATORY WORKPLACE MODERNISATION THAT SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED YEARS AGO, SAYS SOMETHING ABOUT AVERSION TO CHANGE AND A RELUCTANCE TO CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO, DESPITE THE NINE-TO-FIVE REGIME BEING PATENTLY OUT OF STEP WITH MODERN LIFE RHYTHMS FOR DECADES.



JASON SPILLER, EDITOR

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Now the cocktail mixer has been primed with fresh and exotic ingredients and vigorously shaken, as businesses big and small, across sectors, offer up elements, trial procedures and bench-test policies for flexibility. But where will this land, what is feasible, what is sustainable, equitable and mutual? Unquestionably, the most obvious change is the reduction of physical contact and so EX (employee experience) - as well as a sense of belonging across the void and creating deeper connections with work, colleagues and the organisation - is at the top of the priority list. Driving EX is not prescriptive or a fait accompli, it is a complex transition to mesh new rules of engagement in a remote, flexible and virtual setting.

Where "fairer, more tolerant societies" grapple with irradiating conscious bias - that which explodes into discrimination, intolerance, rivalry, animosity and violence - unconscious bias is far more complex and nuanced. Bias is obvious and blatant, but unconscious bias is more insidious, difficult to define, variable, quiet and less obvious and, consequently, more difficult to detect and deal with. Indeed, unconscious bias exists in our subconscious and is normally triggered automatically and often without our awareness. But that it impacts on how we perceive, interact and engage with others is unquestionable and needs to be tackled head on.

Management potential and capability, for generations, was too often predicated on industry knowledge, experience, skills, knowhow, charisma, toughness and air of authority. Rarely, if ever, was empathy, pragmatism, fairness and understanding considered essential attributes. Barely an outline

remains from the deeply-defined and foreboding lines of command-and-control and gone are the departments and silos that demarcated areas of responsibility and lines that should not be crossed. In its stead is a broad and open landscape - part real and part virtual and digital - in which collaborative teamwork, a universal voice and active and authentic listening are the foundations of engagement.

The LGBTQ+ journey is one of optimism and frustration, momentum and inertia, progress and setbacks. As it develops and evolves, detractors point to its complexity and nuance and the route to ridicule and dismissal is easy to find. Yet there is one undeniable truth and that is, everyone deserves equality and failure to provide an inclusive workplace and protect employees from bullying and harassment is firstly illegal and can lead to discrimination claims, decreased morale, engagement and lower productivity among employees, as well as loss of talent and not just LGBTQ+ people. So, with all the other distractions and challenges, how can progress in gender identity and equality be maintained going forward? What is first base to providing gender diversity and inclusion training to managers and employees, to build understanding of the issues faced by employees with complex gender identities? How can employers ensure that prompt and effective action is taken if allegations of bullying, harassment or discrimination arise or are raised as part of a grievance?

## LEGAL UPDATES

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THE WORLD OF EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION CONTINUES TO EVOLVE AND REACT TO THE FAST CHANGING WORLD OF WORK. HERE IS THE LATEST ROUND UP OF VERDICTS FROM THE COURT, PLUS NEW AND ADAPTED LEGISLATION.

### COURT CASE REPORT

In the case of *Shirley Lyons v Starplan Furniture Limited*, Shirley Lyons, 60, had been working for kitchen and bedroom designer Starplan in Portadown, Northern Ireland, for four years when her previously good working relationship with colleagues turned sour. An employment tribunal heard that the designer and sales consultant was the only woman to attend the company's Christmas party in its showroom on December 16, 2017, along with six male employees. Ms Lyons said that when the party moved on to a restaurant, she was

subjected to unwanted sexual attention. The tribunal found that one of her colleagues had made comments about her breasts and cleavage and hugged her from behind without her consent. He also suggested to her that they might have an affair and touched her bottom in the restaurant. The tribunal was 'satisfied that these matters amount to both verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature'. Four days after the party, Ms Lyons reported to her line manager that she had been sexually harassed by a male colleague and she lodged a formal written grievance, the tribunal heard. The panel upheld a

number of complaints from Ms Lyons that she had been victimised by three colleagues following her complaint. It said this included ignoring and excluding her, threatening to 'take her down' and intimidating and abusive language and behaviour. Ms Lyons resigned from the company in April 2018 after nearly five years of service. Her case was heard that year and she was awarded £18,857.18 in compensation after her complaints of sexual harassment and victimisation were partially upheld. The panel found her claim of unfair dismissal was well founded but lesser claims were not upheld.

### EMPLOYMENT LAW

CURRENTLY, IN THE UK, REDUNDANCY WHILE ON MATERNITY IS LEGAL, SO LONG AS THE PERSON'S PREGNANCY HASN'T FACTORED INTO THE DECISION-MAKING.

Proposed bill will protect new and expectant mums from redundancy. In a Protection from Redundancy (Pregnancy and Family Leave) Bill, pregnant people and new parents will have more protection against being made redundant. Protection will begin once the pregnancy is disclosed at work until the child is 18 months old. The new law is expected to come into place later this year. Research from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) found that three in four working mums believe they have experienced pregnancy and maternity discrimination. While it's illegal to discriminate, many mums can

find themselves hard-pressed to prove that has taken place in a legal system that doesn't offer much in the way of protection as it stands. Labour MP Dan Jarvis is behind the new bill that now has the backing of MPs and is due to be debated in the House of Lords. Provided it is approved as expected, the law will affect England, Wales and Scotland. The MP wants it to help the 'tens of thousands of women pushed out of the workforce every year simply for being pregnant'. The Pregnant Then Screwed charity said this was a 'step in the right direction', but until it is legal, more work needs to be done.

### LEGAL DIARY

- **May 8th 2023:** Has been announced as an additional, official UK Bank Holiday, to commemorate the coronation of King Charles III.
- **Q2 2023:** Right to request a predictable work pattern. Government is supporting the Workers (Predictable Terms and Conditions) Bill.
- **Q3 2023:** Government set to consider extending the time limits of workplace sexual harassment claims from three to six months.
- **Q3 2023:** New guidance regarding time off for fertility treatment to be announced.
- **Q4 2023:** The Government intends to introduce a Data Reform Bill in parliament next year (2023), which will introduce wide-ranging proposals.



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## KERRY YOUNG CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER VITRIFI & ALLPOINTS FIBRE

INTERVIEW BY JASON SPILLER  
& PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADRIAN SHERRATT

WE TAKE 24/SEVEN CONNECTIVITY FOR GRANTED - ALMOST A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT - SO, WHENEVER WE HAVE LIMITED CONNECTION, THAT'S A SERIOUS PROBLEM. WE WONDER HOW - IN THE UK OF ALL PLACES - THIS CAN HAPPEN. EVERY "NEW G" LAUNCHED PROMISES TO REMEDY THE PROBLEM, FOLLOWED BY AN EMBARRASSED, COLLECTIVE INDUSTRY SHOULDER SHRUG. NOW, ONE COMPANY IS OUT TO DISRUPT THIS LETHARGY.

"THE UK IS PRIMED TO BECOME A SIGNIFICANT TECH HUB, BUT IT'S GOING TO REQUIRE REAL CONCERTED EFFORT FROM ALL STAKEHOLDERS"

*KERRY, TAKE US BACK TO YOUR EARLY LIFE AND HOW YOU FOUND A PATH INTO HR.* When I reflect on all the different choices I've made in my life and career, there's always been a common thread, people. My initial aspiration was to become a barrister and my subject choices at school were geared towards studying law at the University of Queensland in Australia. In my final year of high school, my work experience was at a legal firm and, by the end of the first week, I knew that a career in law was not for me. Subsequently at University, I dropped the law component and focused on political science and psychology for my undergraduate and I couldn't have picked better subjects for my future career. I graduated from university and decided that I wanted to go on a big adventure. Back then, the majority of Australian grads would head over to the United

Kingdom and have their adventure in London. But I've always done things a little bit differently, so I decided to go to Japan instead. I had studied Japanese and so had always had a fascination, as it is a completely different culture to Australia. So, with a basic grasp of the language, embarked on what became a totally immersive and character building experience. I was working for an organisation called Nova Group, the largest private education company across Japan and Taiwan, teaching six languages, along with a travel agency side to the business. At its peak, there were 10,000 branches across Japan and Taiwan. I started as an English teacher and I was really fortunate to be mentored by my boss, another Australian expat, who had been in Japan for some time. He sponsored me to join company leadership programmes and I was promoted

incredibly quickly, which in Japan was unusual then, because the culture was very conventional, particularly in the workplace. So, a young, white female climbing the career ladder quickly did not go unnoticed and this rapid ascension led to me becoming VP of HR and Business Operations.

From an HR grounding perspective, it could not have been a better early set of experiences - working with multiple nationalities and supporting countless contingent workers certainly expanded my knowledge of international HR regulations around the world. It also gave me a great appreciation of the necessity of streamlining processes whenever possible. We had a contingent workforce, along with permanent international staff that were making Japan their home, teaching hundreds of thousands of students across

Japan and Taiwan. I initially thought I would be in Japan for six months, but I ended up staying for a decade. When I moved back to Australia I soon realised that the scale of the role I'd grown accustomed to in Tokyo, couldn't really be replicated in Australia. So, I decided to move into consultancy, mainly because I wanted to experience a variety of HR challenges in as many different organisations as possible. I focused on HR, organisational development, change management and transformation and these have been my core focus ever since. As planned, I really did work with a wide range of sectors and companies in Australia and New Zealand, ranging from international blue chip to more early stage companies, or startups as we now call them. But I quickly realised that what I had learned in terms of HR strategy and interventions in Japan, Australia really wasn't ready for and I experienced what can only be described as reverse culture shock! I did a lot of work with the treasury department - which is part of the Queensland Government - on transformation and removal of one of their public service arms into a corporate offering. That company was QSuper and it managed the superannuation and pensions of all public sector employees and state politicians across Queensland. This was a highly unionised workforce and so a shift of a public sector department to commercial private sector organisation that would ultimately go up for IPO, was some undertaking. But it was an incredibly successful transformation programme that I was part of in many different roles and we were able to extract that public sector organisation as planned. We were fortunate in that, for it to occur, we had to gain a ballot vote of 80 percent union member agreement and we achieved 95 percent. Since then, it's recently merged with one of the other large superannuation funds in Australia, so it's on that commercial journey.

*WHERE ARE THE COMPROMISES WHEN YOU'RE DEALING WITH SUCH FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE?* We had to sell the advantages of this change to our staff,

primarily that this was going to really open up career opportunities. Similar to the UK, there can be a bit of an old boys' network in Australia, particularly in the public sector and so this change went on to provide more opportunities to a much more diverse range of employees. The other key improvement was, instead of only having wage rises based on the CPI index, we introduced more opportunity to reward high performance more frequently. When you are part of the public sector, you must be mindful that it's public money and, of course, the way that you spend it is always publicly scrutinized. So the move to private sector presented an opportunity to trial some cutting-edge approaches to developing staff and rewarding people appropriately, based on their input and contributions.

"IF YOU'RE COMING IN WITH THE MINDSET OF: 'I'M ONLY GOING TO DO HR,' IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK IN A STARTUP ENVIRONMENT"

I also carried out some interesting work with some of the motoring clubs across Australia. Each state has its own member body and I was involved with RACQ in Queensland, RAC in Western Australia and RAA in South Australia, which also looked after Northern Territory and Tasmania after hours. I travelled a lot with that role and my input was part of a strategy to build a national consortium, to look at how they could leverage their outstanding brands. These bodies are some of the most trusted brands in Australia and the changes would go on to provide opportunities to further improve customer service. There were some interesting external dynamics too - for example, a drastic reduction nationally in young licenced drivers - and so the membership base was decreasing accordingly. So, there was a strategy to commercialise other non-motoring

opportunities, such as insurance and introducing home assistance - for example plumbing emergencies or a locksmith, at home - you would just call an RACQ approved quality tradesperson, capitalising on the renowned reliable brand.

*YOU WERE REALLY EARLY TO THE GAME WHEN IT COMES TO CONSULTANCY IN HR, WHAT WAS IT THAT MADE THAT SO ATTRACTIVE?* I've always been an early adopter, an experimenter and I like to try things before they're common. The fact that I went to Japan to work before it was a popular thing to do for young Australians typified that. I tend to look for organisations in which I believed in, even though I wasn't contemplating becoming a permanent employee, because I do my best work when I absolutely feel in tune with the values, purpose and business strategy. Reward for me is seeing my capability and experience making a lasting and positive impact. For example, I worked with Westpac - one of the top four banks in Australia - and they were early to digital banking and, from an HR point of view, I was seconded in to carry out some work, to enable key staff to work remotely. This really was cutting-edge in the financial sector at this time, because of the key concerns surrounding security and so I draw some interesting comparisons now as we transition en masse to remote working, seven years on from my time there.

*TELL US ABOUT THE WORK YOU CARRIED OUT AT QANTAS.* Again, another blue chip brand, an airline internationally renowned for its standards and reliability. I was involved in the personalisation transformation of their breadth of services. Like most airlines, they had diversified into other non-flight services, including lucrative loyalty programmes, shopping and banking. We delivered a machine learning engine, utilising artificial intelligence - to collate all customer and member information - to ensure communication and marketing activities were delivered seamlessly towards more personalised approaches. It was an enormous undertaking fine-tuning

the algorithm, to really understand customers and stay competitive across the sector. From an HR perspective, the range of roles across Qantas are quite extraordinary and you couldn't help but be impressed by the passion of Qantas staff and this was reciprocated by unprecedented engagement figures. It's a massive organisation with tens of thousands of employees globally and there was a lot of cross-fertilisation between functions, multiple brands and areas. What impressed me was, for such a large company, there were limited siloes, people were well-informed and everyone was committed and focused on making sure the brand lived up to its reputation. Above all, the camaraderie and respect was hugely compelling and it was a lot of fun. Concurrently, I've also lectured at two Australian universities, University of Sydney & Griffith University in HR, Project Management and Leadership courses - to both undergraduate and postgraduate cohorts - building up the next generation of practitioners, conveying my love for the profession and hopefully making more students excited about people management as a career. I've also carried out a lot of transformation work specialising in programme and change director roles, including establishing change practices from scratch in university and higher education functions including Griffith University in Queensland, the University of Sydney - which is Australia's oldest university - and TAFE NSW. My most recent work at the University of Sydney was an enterprise customer service transformation programme, across multiple years, focused on improving the student experience for all - onsite, offsite, international, domestic, undergraduate and postgraduate cohorts. One workstream was focused on curriculum enhancement, to ensure the University degrees were meeting the requirements of employers, through including cohesive work integration, learning components and technology improvements. This enabled students to optimise their studies, as well as supporting academics and other support staff to deliver cutting-edge learning.

*WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MODERN FACE OF HR?* The advice that I always share is to make sure that you understand the business you are supporting, don't just look at it through an HR lens. The most effective practitioners have multidisciplinary, multi-department and multi-industry experience and I look back at the role that originally propelled me into HR - where I was an operations manager - as well as the HR manager. I had responsibility for the P&L accountability for the region

*"AS A DISRUPTOR, WE REMAINED IN STEALTH MODE FOR ABOUT 18 MONTHS, WHICH INCREASED OUR RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES IN A CANDIDATE-LED MARKET CONSIDERABLY"*

and that broadened my understanding of how business is run and how you can effectively improve the people practices, to deliver even more profit, if that's the kind of organisation that you're working for. While it's pleasing that so many universities around the world now offer HR specific degrees, including other disciplines through dual degrees does make for a richer and more rounded HR practitioner.

*TELL US ABOUT YOUR MOVE TO THE UK AND YOUR ROLE AT VITRIFI.* I was in lockdown in Sydney, due to the pandemic and I was remote working on several projects in the Asia-Pacific area. I was approached about a Chief People Officer role to help establish a software startup company from scratch, based in the UK, which at the time, was also in lockdown. The founding CEO and CTO both realised the people and talent element was fundamental and so wanted to bring in a Chief People Officer at the earliest

point. This was a compelling reason for me, because a good deal of my recent consulting work was transforming long established organisations and so the brief at VitriFi was perfect. From day one, it was clear they valued the people element deeply and gave me the greenlight to establish the people function in the most effective manner, which made up for the fact that I was giving up my flexible consulting life. To give you an idea about VitriFi as a business, it was created to empower the UK wholesale fibre broadband market, using next generation tooling, which reduces the cost to serve and will provide a data-driven customer experience. We're a disruptor in the broadband infrastructure sector, with the core objective, to overcome the poor connectivity in black spots around the country. The reality is that good access to internet connectivity is a basic human right now - you simply can't live your life without having really good connectivity. So, I see this as an opportunity, to do some nation building across the UK and provide an essential service that generations after are going to benefit and capitalise on.

*TALK US THROUGH THE MILESTONES OF DEVELOPMENT.* We established VitriFi as a UK company in January 2021 - we three were the first hires - and since then, we've now successfully scaled the business up to 55 permanent staff. We have a contingent roster of primarily DevOps software superstars, that rotates between ten-to-20 each quarter - depending on requirements - to scale out different capability levels. Moving to this stage was not without challenges, I was still in Sydney in lockdown for the first seven months of operation, which meant I was carrying out recruitment screening and candidate interviews in the middle of the night in Australia. It was quite an extraordinary time to be looking at recruiting staff into an unknown brand - and we were in stealth mode - so there were some very long days and equally long nights in the early stages. Finally, I was able to travel to the UK and it was fantastic to be in the same time zone as our directors, leaders, colleagues and candidates!



"THE REALITY SCHOOL  
LEAVERS AND UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATES ARE FACING IS,  
THE JOBS THEY WILL HAVE  
IN TEN YEARS HAVEN'T  
BEEN INVENTED YET"



We then established a second startup organisation in August 2021, AllPoints Fibre, a wholesale fibre broadband provider that is transforming internet connectivity in the UK, with a new deployment method that minimises customer disruption and streamlines the fibre installation process. AllPoints Fibre will be using Vitrifi's software to achieve this. We're based in the West Midlands in Warwickshire and our investors, Fern Fibre Trading Limited, have recently announced that they are bringing together their retail and wholesale fibre businesses to accelerate UK full-fibre delivery. This is a critical launchpad for the next stage and it means that now, instead of Vitrifi only providing their software to an area in the West Midlands, we can support the existing fibre companies under the Fern Trading umbrella, which covers from Devon all the way up to Yorkshire. Not surprisingly, the development teams within Vitrifi are thrilled about this new opportunity, because they can continue to work on a much larger, national scale. To say the least, these are hugely exciting times.

*WHAT IS THE HR SUPPORT THAT NEEDS TO BE IN PLACE FOR THIS STAGE?* From day one, my primary focus has been on building our employee lifecycle and experimenting with different approaches, including remote, hybrid and asynchronous working models, to both attract and retain diverse talent. I've also prioritised implementing just-in-time processes - avoiding being overly bureaucratic - to make sure that we can identify, recruit and onboard the talent we need as quickly as possible, mindful that process lag is frustrating for candidates and likely to lead to them snapping up opportunities elsewhere in this candidate-led market. As our organisations are maturing, I've also brought in HR, learning & development, talent acquisition and safety practitioners, as we start to build out other areas of the employee lifecycle and our operations. We have designed and delivered a bespoke in-house Modern Manager leadership programme across both organisations, with our first cohort of

staff recently graduating. We've also put considerable effort into experimenting with cutting-edge technology and developing bleeding-edge learning and HR approaches, to equip our managers to effectively address the challenges of a multigenerational workforce and changing workforce demands. That we've been able to do all of this within two years, partly during lockdown, is something I'm immensely proud of and it really shows what can be achieved, even in challenging circumstances.

*"WHEN COMPETING FOR TALENT WITH THE LIKES OF AMAZON, FACEBOOK AND GOOGLE, WE CAN'T WIN ON SALARY OR PERKS. WHAT WE CAN OFFER IS AN INTERESTING PROBLEM TO SOLVE"*

*WHAT ARE THE FUTURE PLANS FOR THE BUSINESS?* Our long term business plan was to go national, so as I designed my HR function and support model across our organisation, as I was always mindful that we would need to scale and quickly. When you're in an early-stage startup, moving rapidly is fundamental for your people, processes and product/services. What this means is, you need to think about what are the most essential elements that need to be in place to support growth and ensure they are easily completed and that nothing disrupts progress across the business. The reality in startups is that you have people filling multiple roles - it really is all-hands-on-deck - as you try and fix a problem and hand that partial solution over to the next person to support. If you're coming in with the mindset of: "I'm only going to do HR," it's not going to work in a startup environment. As we continue to scale and mature, that's when the opportunity will come for people to focus and specialise more on their core

competencies. As startups scale and mature, there's a mindset shift required from early-stage employees to integrate new staff, new approaches and new ideas and that certainly creates some interesting cultural changes and challenges! The dynamics of including contingent workers and the often short tenures in tech, along with streamlining knowledge transfer and knowledge succession, has been a real focus for my HR team, to build that capability within and across the business.

*HOW DO YOU KEEP THE DISRUPTOR MINDSET AND AVOID COMPLACENCY?*

First and foremost, our purpose is to disrupt the market, absolutely, but we're very much about improving the industry and market too. Certainly, what has worked for us in attracting and retaining staff is focussing on the opportunity they have to work on pioneering architecture and software that really will positively disrupt our sector. We've stayed committed to our end goal of improving wholesale fibre connectivity across the UK and we still have a lot of work to do. As a disruptor, we remained in stealth mode for about 18 months, which increased our recruitment challenges in a candidate-led market considerably. It required real innovation and channeling the right messages to pique candidate interest, without giving the game away to the rest of the sector and our potential competitors. Of course, the reality is there is a global talent shortage, particularly in tech, but it's experienced in different ways in different locations. The world of work is constantly changing and it's been shifting recently at such a pace that businesses and whole sectors are having to shift and transform their recruitment and retention practices.

When I was teaching in Australian universities, students would frequently ask me: "Will my studies and qualifications still be valid when I graduate? Will this career I'm studying for still exist?" The reality school leavers and university graduates are facing is, the jobs they will have in ten years haven't been invented yet. We should be approaching this dilemma as an opportunity to teach all

our students how to learn and foster a lifelong love of learning and relearning. This is a global issue and partly down to the failures of successive governments around the world, to provide education that does more than teach students how to pass tests. What's needed is an integrated skills-based curricula, that enable students to know how to learn and how to improve, rather than only looking at a specific skill for a specific job. Additionally, the UK is facing a lack of mathematics capability and indeed, the UK Government has been recently proposing that students must do mathematics until they finish school - which is the case in Australia, by the way. In our sector, software-development and the ability to code, is based on math and so a lack of a good foundation in this essential discipline is reducing opportunities and negatively impacting our future digital talent pipeline. But it takes more than words from politicians and, from my observations as an expat here, there needs to be some fundamental changes at the curriculum stage, because the UK schooling system appears to pigeonhole students early on in their development and without targeted support, lower achieving students are rarely exposed to the richness of the math curriculum as older students. To fix this, it's going to take cross-party support and implementation and it will likely take years for this kind of curriculum change to be fully implemented. I firmly believe that we have an obligation to educate our children to fully optimise their potential and be successful in the future and strong math skills are a key part of this.

*IS RECRUITMENT AS HARD AS THE REPORTS AND STATS SUGGEST IN YOUR SECTOR?* For us, timing is one challenge - having the right skills in place when we're ready to roll on a project - but the real challenge is that, as a scaling organisation, your brand is not widely known and so when competing for talent with the likes of Amazon, Facebook and Google, we can't win on salary or perks. What we can offer is an interesting problem to solve and the opportunity to create pioneering technology, which is

a very powerful magnet in this market. There is no doubt that there's a shortage of STEM skills and, as we've discussed, education has a major part to play. But also, I think it's about being really clear to students and their parents early on about the impact of GCSE subject choices on future career paths.

*DO YOU THINK THE CONTINGENT WORKFORCE WILL PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE HYBRID ERA?* I do and it's interesting to draw some parallels as I recall my own career in this interview and the importance of agility for both companies and workers. I spent a decade working in Japan - which was very much a job-for-life country - and when I moved back to Australia, I was a contingent worker through a range of different areas and now I'm in a permanent role in the

#### "THE TWO DEFINING ELEMENTS THAT INFORM ME IN EVERYTHING THAT WE CREATE IN HR PRACTICES, IS COLLABORATION AND EXPERIMENTATION"

UK. The flexibility that contingent workforces provide cannot be underestimated - it's not just about availability - it's about the variety of skillsets, experience and diversity of thinking that they bring to an organisation. It makes sense that, the most effective staff are those that have experienced a wide range of industries and companies, so they can bring those different perspectives, enhanced skillset and their high performance into an organisation. Businesses will have to continue to be pragmatic because, while we train people and they will often go on to work for competitors, that talent may subsequently return to your business with even more skills. I'm a big supporter of utilising contingent labour, I know that it has played a significant role in my own

career and I think increasingly, the type of experience that I've had will be increasingly the norm.

*WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU KERRY?* Well, I'm still very heavily focused on scaling our business and maturing our HR practices, to really address the challenges that the future of work is presenting. I'm incredibly passionate about DEI and ensuring that our HR practices meet or exceed requirements, to create a truly inclusive and diverse workforce. We have a neurodiverse workforce and that provides immense opportunities for learning for our leaders and staff, on how to create work approaches that support our people and enable them to deliver their best work for us in an environment that works for them. The two defining elements that inform me in everything that we create in HR practices, is collaboration and experimentation into new approaches, in the quest to deliver effective outcomes for our staff and our businesses. Pleasingly, there is an increased employer focus on a collective effort across the telco sector, to address gender parity and provide targeted programmes to support diverse candidates to role model. The objective is, unequivocally, that anyone can have a career in software, fibre and telecommunications. I've recently taken on an additional new role as Chair of the Labour and Skills Special Interest Group with INCA, which is the Independent Networks Cooperative Association in the UK. It's a membership-based organisation and it represents a real opportunity to influence how employers, community groups, councils and the UK Government, can continue to work together to encourage and support diverse talent to consider a career in the telecommunications sector. I'm determined to play my part in creating a groundswell, to make fibre a real example in the tech sphere, as an area that has DEI at its heart, showcasing the widest possible variety of talented people in this exciting area of tech.



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CHAIRIED BY JASON SPILLER

17 JANUARY 2023 - LONDON

# HOW TO CREATE THE NEXT HR OPERATING SYSTEM

WE ARE LIVING THROUGH THE MOST CHANGEABLE ERA  
THE WORLD OF WORK HAS EVER SEEN. ARGUABLY THE  
FIFTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, A HUMAN REVOLUTION.  
THIS WILL REQUIRE BOLD HR TO DEVELOP NEW HABITS  
AND PRACTICES IN PEOPLE MANAGEMENT, WHICH  
CREATES SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS CAPABLE OF ABSORBING  
THE FUTURE SHOCKWAVES AND CAPITALISING ON THE  
OPPORTUNITIES THEY BRING. ABOVE ALL, ORGANISATIONS  
NEED TO CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR PEOPLE TO BE  
RESILIENT, FOCUSED AND ENGAGED AT WORK.

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HELEN KETTERINGHAM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR PEOPLE - NCFE  
KERRY YOUNG CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER - ALLPOINTS FIBRE  
CHRISTOPHER TALBOT GROUP CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER - GEDU GLOBAL EDUCATION

IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF CONTINUING  
CHANGE, HOW MIGHT THE NOTION OF  
DISRUPTION BE HELPFUL?

*Vishal Gandhi:* Disruptor businesses are literally setting the pace and direction of change. For traditionally analog businesses, the fifth industrial revolution - the digital era - dawned without much preparation and now businesses in all sectors are playing catch up. Meanwhile, automation is the driver.

*Mark Taylor:* Our business has historically been b2b until we launched cinch, post pandemic, which linked to one of the big disruptors in the automotive sector - buying online. The other two significant disruptions are the change from combustion to electric vehicles and ownership moving to a more subscription model. For us, this market disruption was ultimately helpful, as it fundamentally challenged the traditional automotive sales mindset.

*Kerry Young:* I also see disruption as an opportunity. The most creative and innovative ideas appear when there's been a challenge or disruption to the status quo. We certainly reframe disruption as a positive. People are the architects of the future.

*Helen Ketteringham:* For us, mindset is key, as we strive to continually adapt and respond to change. Coaching is a powerful tool in helping us to prosper from disruption, reach new goals, operate outside of our comfort zone and frame opportunities.

*Christopher Talbot:* Agreed, education and training is critical, particularly for employees that have been out of education for a long time. But it's not just older workers that have to be supported, Universities are failing to prepare students for the world of work.

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT EMPLOYERS  
AREN'T FINDING THE CRITERIA THAT  
THEY'RE EXPECTING IN CANDIDATES?

*Emma Nicholls:* There are many things that could be done, such as utilising the apprentice levy and reaching out to the huge talent pool of young people in diverse communities. Meanwhile, there's a tension between employers reaching out to colleges and training providers and there is a need for a more mature conversation.

*Tabassum Fatima:* Modernisation is a continuous journey and communication is key to success in transformation. Disruption can be divisive and frustrating and so giving people voice, vision and transparency is essential to keeping all stakeholders in the frame.

*Tracy Noble:* Our company was very traditional and before the pandemic, remote working was unheard of. But we grasped technology and flexibility, we kept operating and colleagues discovered better work/life balance. Now we are helping our customers to be ready for new EV technology and we are running reskilling programs.

*Nicole Ward:* Talent and its availability is a matter of perspective, in one company there may be no opportunity for ambitious employees and new talent will quickly realise if there are limited opportunities for any future or longevity and that leads to an unattractive employer brand, so far as careers go.

*Siân Ferguson:* I wonder to what extent reframing the story around re-skilling could be helpful? It's not possible to predict the future with any degree of probability, so we all have the same sense of the unknown. The aim is to learn faster than your competitors.

*Emma Nicholls:* We've all heard of change-fatigue - it's almost like, people are done with change. Life is all about change, but the word itself is meaningless. Open learning is fundamental to supporting people in a more positive, inspiring way.

*Cathie Donaldson:* The fact that we call it change means that we are limiting ourselves. If we create a narrative which is around a constant state of evolution, we know that this is just how we progress. Empowerment is also key - how we create the conditions from a cultural perspective.

*Kerry Young:* People struggle with transformation being a "business as unusual" status, because humans use cognitive frames to navigate the world. When something is being disrupted, we form a new cognitive frame and it takes time and effort to do this.







PICTURED  
(PREVIOUS PAGE)  
NICOLE WARD  
STRATEGIC HR BUSINESS PARTNER -  
HAVERING COUNCIL

PICTURED LEFT  
TABASSUM FATIMA  
SENIOR HR BUSINESS PARTNER -  
NETWORK RAIL

KERRY YOUNG  
CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER -  
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR  
PEOPLE - NCFE

CATHERINE DONALDSON  
DIRECTOR, CONSULTING -  
KINCENTRIC

*Christopher Talbot:* Why do we categorise different generational types? Being inventive, creative and engaged should not be just assigned to one generation. It starts with bringing people together and treating people as diverse and equal.

HOW MIGHT OUR UNDERSTANDING OF RECOVERY HELP US WITHSTAND FUTURE CHALLENGES?

*Kerry Young:* Real insight into best practice for recovery is with professional athletes and the way they prioritise active recovery and rest time. How critical do we make recovery time in our own organisations? Aren't we also professional athletes in what we undertake in our own businesses? It's about balancing working hard, while prioritising recovery.

*Siân Ferguson:* There is so much we can learn from how athletes prepare and recover and there are some important points to consider in neuroscience too - such as the parasympathetic nervous system - and it is our rest recovery that holds the key to creativity, conceptualising, redesign and everything we need for complexity. Yet we are predominantly drawing on our sympathetic nervous system - fighting, flying and freezing.

*Emma Nicholls:* We all rallied through COVID and generally responded well to the crisis and this time is really important for reflection and deciding how we go forward. But if you ask people, most say their targets are back to pre-COVID levels. So where's the recovery period?

*Mark Taylor:* A lot of this is down to muscle memory and it's important that we don't revert back to old mindsets, where people working hybrid were assumed to be disconnected or unproductive. There is a need for balance.

*Emma Nicholls:* We go back to what we know, feel in control of and have power in. Agreed, revelations came from that crisis experience and our responsibility is not to snap back, but to work towards embedding the new and the different.

*Vishal Gandhi:* What is happening here is a lot of traditional organisations are back

in their comfort zones and a lot of startups are capitalising. There are many businesses and industries that are not really fighting to be fittest, they're fighting for survival.

*Nicole Ward:* We need to feed and nurture if we want to retain and attract the talent we desire. We must trust people to make the right decisions in how they carry out their duties and responsibilities, wherever they are based. We will of course need to interject, measure and adjust. We also need to refresh, invigorate, excite and bounce back.

*Kerry Young:* It's the shift, broadly, from synchronous work to asynchronous work. We're looking at how we can disrupt how work is completed in our organisations and it's not the face- or desk-time - or how early people start work or how late they finish - it's about contributing to vision and goals.

"DISRUPTION CAN BE DIVISIVE AND FRUSTRATING AND SO GIVING PEOPLE VOICE, VISION AND TRANSPARENCY IS ESSENTIAL TO KEEPING ALL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE FRAME"

*Helen Ketteringham:* People are the architects of the future in any organisation - the answers lie within the workforce - and so connecting, involving, listening and responding to people are critical levers of success.

IS THERE STILL A SUBCONSCIOUS FEAR OF TECHNOLOGY AND ITS PART IN CHANGE?

*Emma Nicholls:* Like the word change, technology and digital is misconstrued as something that cannot be controlled. Fundamentally, if the tech is aligned, the user experience good and it is a force for good - enabling people to be freed from repetitious work and free to focus on value added - that's the greenlight.

*Tracy Noble:* It's about selling the right story, "what's in it for me?" There's that fear factor about a threat to livelihoods - it's why all the barriers go up - and then it becomes a harder road to encourage people to make the journey.

*Kerry Young:* It's also showing that when technology causes change, it creates new careers and opportunities and that's where the re-skilling piece is so critical. It's how you reframe the future and critically, because people are used to almost seamless tech experiences as consumers, this does not always transfer to tech experiences at work. Staff expect personalised technology experiences at work and organisations need to strive to provide this.

*Vishal Gandhi:* There needs to be a better understanding that technology is not driving change for no reason, it is a response to behaviour - for example as we change our habits from the high street to shopping online - technology is reflecting and supporting it.

*Mark Taylor:* There are different mindsets across any business and leadership and management teams need to stop and really think about the different types of

people, understand how they work, what they need and be pragmatic.

*Nicole Ward:* There's a lot of pressure on employees to buy into things. People may wish to do things differently, but when there is no choice and they are dragged kicking and screaming into a tech space change, no wonder they react as they do. It's about enabling people to embrace it in their own time, to see transition happen and the improvements brought by the incoming tech.

DO YOU THINK WE UNDERSTAND WHAT A TRANSITION IS?

*Kerry Young:* The reality is, there's an even bigger mountain beyond adoption, ensuring the utilisation and return on benefits of a change. Staff can often be quite checklist-driven, so the mindset can be, "I've delivered that activity it's now complete". With organisational change, using the "change curve" to understand and drive behaviour can be more

powerful, as change is not always a straightforward checklist-driven journey.

*Siân Ferguson:* William Bridges' work in this space is very pertinent, as it very helpfully articulates, in a very straightforward way, the need to move away from some aspects and go towards others. I've experienced these shifts with individual leaders I coach, but also in organisations, where there's been an articulated culture change - a shift from command and control to accountable freedom, for example - or from perfectionism to experimentation. Some aspects are much easier to go towards, but some, you really have to let go of or move away from what is holding you back. I've seen companies that probably could go further, faster, if they didn't have both the brake and accelerator pressed at the same time. Understanding those two things - and the critical place the space in the middle serves, that "neutral zone" where the experimentation occurs.

*Mark Taylor:* The good thing about the Bridge's model, is that it shows the gap and that people move at different speeds.

*Siân Ferguson:* When we combine that with the concept of immunity to change - that one may state an aspiration to transform, but see little evidence of change towards it - that understanding is enhanced. Individuals and organisations are often serving a competing goal, which makes that transformation challenging, if not impossible. Often this "hidden" goal is linked to reputation - what has served that individual or organisation well to date - and is related to what their success has been based on.

*Emma Nicholls:* The beauty of diversity is that we all come at things from different perspectives and that's where you gain the best outcome. If we are all aligned around the purpose, then with some parameters and some safety nets, it doesn't really matter how we achieve the goals. Another important point is, if we create too strong a picture, we kill the opportunity to have the discussion around it.

*Helen Ketteringham:* Education plays a key role in preparing the future

workforce, developing a growth mindset and the ability to navigate ambiguity with agility and resilience.

*Christopher Talbot:* In general, organisations don't allow ideological conflicts and don't create a culture where people can speak up because of the consequences if they do. We have encouraged cultures of blame, instead of being able to openly discuss the real cause of a problem and fixing it.

#### HOW DO WE MOVE AWAY FROM BINARY THINKING AND TAKE A SYSTEMIC VIEW?

*Tabassum Fatima:* Organisations which have been through the change need to align this with their culture. The visibility of objectives and a systematic approach to the change, will allow buy in.

*Kerry Young:* A systematic approach and systems thinking is useful, but there's often additional complexity after leveraging and harnessing talents and ideas from within each network to provide clear outcomes and requirements for implementation and embedment outside of each network. I believe in allowing people to help create and co-design what the future looks like.

*Cathie Donaldson:* You do need an element of top-down led change, where the vision is talked about and shared from the top. But you have to empower people across the organisation to actually contribute to realising vision and implementing it.

"BEING INVENTIVE, CREATIVE AND ENGAGED SHOULD NOT BE JUST ASSIGNED TO ONE GENERATION. IT STARTS WITH BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER AND TREATING PEOPLE AS DIVERSE AND EQUAL"

*Emma Nicholls:* What puts people off moving to more systematic adoption is that it becomes too big and continuous, making it appear that there is no end to the tunnel. We don't need to change everything all at once, it's like the art of actually giving focus and choosing one priority has been lost and there's a lack of transparency around what's changing.

*Vishal Gandhi:* Technology is definitely distracting. When people talk about employee engagement, when we plug in the gig economy as a concept into the future, I think that the composition of organisations will have to change drastically.

*Siân Ferguson:* It's interesting that we're referencing both systematic and systemic. I'm wondering if being drawn to systematic on occasions, is a reflection of what our brains prefer to do.

*Cathie Donaldson:* A good deal of focus work that we've done is about positive intent with values, but then it becomes something that is posted on a wall and people don't actually live and breathe the values. That leaves people not believing the values, when they don't see it demonstrated or reflected in behaviours.

#### WHAT DOES BOLD HR LOOK LIKE?

*Vishal Gandhi:* The role of HR will definitely change from what we do today, to a very different setup and portfolio of what we manage end-to-end, particularly in the talent supply chain. Fundamentally, we need to end this paternal relationship with employees, stop babysitting them and start treating them like adults.

*Christopher Talbot:* Focusing on what we do and how we inspire, support and develop staff to gain the best results, is what will be required, rather than results at all costs which usually generates toxic cultures and management. If we go back to results at all costs, organisations will fail.

*Helen Ketteringham:* Retaining talented people is about valuing human capability more holistically and regularly. It's a continued shift, purpose-led work combined with human-centric measures, curiosity and growth. Sharing experiences through meaningful conversations remains key.

#### HOW MUST HR ITSELF TRANSITION SUCCESSFULLY?

*Mark Taylor:* Going forwards, I want HR to be a function that is not dealing with admin and focuses instead on driving the business forwards more strategically and ensuring we have the right short, medium and long-term people capabilities and engagement levels everywhere.

*Vishal Gandhi:* HR's final achievement in the future will be when it is not required. Some 50-to-70 percent of our work is purely operational and for the majority of HR enquiries, chatbots can cover it.

*Siân Ferguson:* There is a shift required in the paternalistic nature of HR - a shift in power dynamic - and there's an opportunity to reset expectations. The big question is what is the future role of leadership?

*Emma Nicholls:* HR will become the relationship managers - the people that understand humans in commerce - or at least should understand better than anyone else in the business - as well as project managing core elements such as capability planning, succession planning and skills attraction.

*Christopher Talbot:* HR must shift from being the bastion of rules and regulations to a position of consultation, coaching, advising and supporting and not occupying the middle ground.

*Nicole Ward:* A bold HR is one that is confident to change/correct sensitive things, such as faulty leadership behaviours. We all know that the worst kept secret is a manager or leader who manages badly. So, the future of HR needs to be able to challenge those behaviours, as well as to change those default settings.

#### WHERE DO YOU SEE LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONING TO?

*Cathie Donaldson:* We've been talking about EQ and empathy in leadership for years, we've debated whether coaching leadership supports these fundamental values and we've been fixated on the triple bottom line - people, planning and



profit. Yet the headlines constantly scream examples of bad leadership. So, we have to be honest and say, things need to change in how we develop future leaders.

*Mark Taylor:* This all points to a need to change mindsets. Businesses have to broaden their definitions of success beyond constant profit growth. Leadership and the transition to a new type of leadership therefore becomes something very different. The big question is - from a business model and leadership mindset point of view - if not growth, if not profit, then what? My take is it's the balance of people, planet and profit.

*Helen Ketteringham:* In current times, leaders need to focus on humanity and recognise their responsibility to represent people authentically, provide a duty of care and influence social value. Leadership is a privilege and an opportunity to shape the future.

*Emma Nicholls:* Interrogate the word growth, look to redefine our perceptions of success and we could have a better conversation with our leaders around this. Instead of looking at a business strategy that's locked on revenue targets, refocus on outcomes, experiences and contribution.

*Mark Taylor:* This is surely the true essence of ESG - as part of corporate governance - to remind businesses to focus on more than just profits. It also goes back to KPIs and what we measure in performance and productivity.

*Kerry Young:* Growth is not just about expansion, it's also about change. There is a finite limit to expansion from a resource perspective, but you can also grow by changing the way you approach something and new opportunities can arise out of that growth mindset.

*Helen Ketteringham:* It's that shift from shareholder value to stakeholder value and really thinking and understanding what stakeholders need.

*Mark Taylor:* It's also important to think about who the stakeholders are and they are a much more broader group than has previously been perceived.



#### PICTURED RIGHT

EMMA NICHOLLS  
PEOPLE INSIGHTS & EXPERIENCE  
DIRECTOR - CITY & GUILDS

TRACY NOBLE  
GROUP HR DIRECTOR -  
ALLIANCE AUTOMOTIVE

MARK TAYLOR  
PEOPLE DIRECTOR -  
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GROUP CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER -  
GEDU GLOBAL EDUCATION

VISHAL GANDHI  
HEAD, TALENT SUPPLY CHAIN -  
TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES

*Tracy Noble:* Without the shareholders there is no funding and so you have to change the shareholder mindset to accept that the business is not going to be looking at profitability and increasing the share price year-on-year. You would need to convince them not to withdraw their funding at that point.

*Tabassum Fatima:* Future leaders, must have flexibility, because where failure lurks is in the lack of adaptability with the younger generation, failure to respond quickly to changing economic needs.

"PEOPLE ARE THE ARCHITECTS OF THE FUTURE - THE ANSWERS LIE WITHIN THE WORKFORCE - AND SO CONNECTING, INVOLVING, LISTENING AND RESPONDING TO PEOPLE ARE CRITICAL LEVERS OF SUCCESS"

*Vishal Gandhi:* Leader competency is not so much the issue, it's more to do with the level commitment.

*Cathie Donaldson:* A good case study is, a tech company that needed to change, because it had been revealed in the media about its lack of diversity. The investors elected to scrap the financial target and insisted that the only target for the business to focus on was DEI." Now, that's my idea of bold, taking that radical shift in thinking. Is this a philanthropists spring, I wonder?

#### HOW COULD DATA INSPIRE CONSCIOUS CHANGE?

*Emma Nicholls:* Curiosity around data is really important, especially for diversity and inclusion work. By disaggregating our data, we've been able to really understand key issues - for example, ethnic pay gap reporting has been so powerful. It's not just cold analysis either, it can lead to having those conversations that turn out to be really proactive.

*Helen Ketteringham:* We have an opportunity to combine technology with diverse human data and psychometrics, to form a transparent data set to inform creative people solutions and decisions. Matching skills, valuing difference and including people to best effect in

alignment with business goals is a thoroughly modern approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

*Kerry Young:* Data acts like a language and it can be shared in a consistent manner, articulating activities in an organisation, expands vision and providing a way of articulating concepts more meaningfully.

*Helen Ketteringham:* An understanding of our strengths, traits and aspirations can build confidences and enables the usage of personal insight, to drive our own progress

and possibilities - particularly relevant in the growing market of portfolio careers.

*Vishal Gandhi:* Data is the most fundamental and foundational skill that HR practitioners need. We need to play with data, experiment with it. However, huge data is available for everyone, it's the insights that few use as intelligence.

*Kerry Young:* Data not only gives you insight, it helps demonstrate value and articulate to investment managers, the board and shareholders why they need to invest in these HR programmes.

*Vishal Gandhi:* How we link this data to all the other disciplines is also very important. It's not just singularly HR, it's how does this impact different areas of the business.

*Siân Ferguson:* We all know that, at a fundamental level data provides visibility of and access to information to support decision-making. But even now, the data that businesses use or pay attention to is underutilised and a lot of important data doesn't even see the light of day. We have to take an honest and pragmatic view surrounding data usage and ask questions about what we are monitoring and reporting on and for what purpose, versus exploring, interrogating and creating new thinking.

#### WHAT IS IN YOUR FUTURE VISION?

*Kerry Young:* One of the fantastic things about being in HR currently is this wider recognition outside of HR of inclusivity and the value that brings both to HR teams and to organisations and society. Looking at how can we leverage and capitalise on that, that's where our challenge as HR Leaders lies. We must stay people focused above all else.

*Tabassum Fatima:* It's not expectation of change that is challenging, it's how it is implemented. We must avoid causing anxiety and instead build confidence.

*Nicole Ward:* I have four words, "improvise, adapt, overcome, solved". Short and sweet. The reality is, you're going to have to improvise if you haven't made a contingency plan and you're going to have to adapt.

*Mark Taylor:* Sometimes you just need to let people be and let it happen naturally. Everybody changes every day. One thing to avoid is panic and knee-jerk reaction, we need time to reflect and think about how big any problem or threat is.

*Christopher Talbot:* There's something in having a healthy paranoia.

*Nicole Ward:* It's good that leaders are still talking and still actively wanting to find a solution. I say, keep talking, let's keep coming up with some actions and some solutions.

*Helen Ketteringham:* At the heart of an organisation is its human capability, which naturally brings diversity, creativity, imagination and choice. It is about harnessing curiosity and responding to opportunities with a growth mindset.

*Siân Ferguson:* Letting go of the need for a model is a "hoorah" moment. Our conversation leads me to the conclusion that our future is less about capability and more about choice and commitment. The possibility to reclaim parts of ourselves that we already have, as we go forward.

# HREVENTS

## HRWEBINAR

### HOW HR CAN ENSURE NEW PARENTS STAY ENGAGED, PROGRESS THEIR CAREERS AND ACHIEVE A WORK/LIFE BALANCE

18 APRIL 2023 – 2-3PM

Join our insightful FREE webinar, learn how to ensure new parents stay engaged, progress their careers and achieve a work/life balance - hosted by **theHRDIRECTOR** and partnered by **Bright Horizons**.

Starting or growing a family can be a major life event for employees. It is also a 'moment that matters' in the employee experience. If employees feel unsupported before their leave or on return, experienced and talented employees may start looking elsewhere if they feel their company's culture doesn't 'get' it. In the competition for talent, doing something to smooth people's transition to parenthood and their ongoing worklife fit has become almost a hygiene factor, whether that's offering parental leave coaching or a fully integrated programme with digital resources, management training and internal networks. Feedback shows if you help expectant parents plan a well-managed handover, remain visible and influential with key stakeholders, feel well-prepared for return and helped to manage day-to-day life as a working parent, their confidence, wellbeing, focus and loyalty all increase.

Join us for our free 'discussion-based' webinar where we will be running a series of polls and invite questions throughout to our panel who include:

#### **Simone Reilly, Senior Business Partner - People, Burges Salmon**

For over 20 years, Jennifer has been relentless in pursuit of innovation, identifying, defining and sharing best practice and 'next practice' for leading global employers in flexible working, family-friendly and wellbeing programmes, closing the gender pay gap and promoting gender-inclusive parenting. She is a sought-after speaker, writer, conference moderator and consultant on these topics and more.

#### **Jennifer Liston-Smith, Head of Thought Leadership, Bright Horizons**

Jennifer set-up, and for a decade led, the Coaching & Consultancy side of what became Bright Horizons Work+Family Solutions advising employers in banking, professional services, STEM and wider sectors on programmes for working parents and carers and evaluating their impact and ROI, as well as developing coaches and coaching capability. She now focuses on identifying overarching trends through research and through advising employers and translating these insights into solutions and practical actions.

#### **IN THIS WEBINAR WE INVESTIGATE:**

- What needs to be in place for a positive parental transition and ongoing success for new parents of all genders?
- What are the ways to retain and engage employees with wider family life such as ongoing parents and carers?
- The impact a parental focus can have for both employees and the employer and how to gauge ROI
  - The role of the Manager and to engage and equip them
- What does best practice look for parental leavers, ongoing parents and carers to attract, retain and engage them.

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# I

## ENGAGEMENT IN THE HYBRID ERA

ABSENCE MAY MAKE THE HEART GROW FONDER, BUT NOT IF VITAL TALENT IS LEFT UNINFORMED AND FEELING ISOLATED. WHAT IS FEASIBLE, WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE, EQUITABLE AND MUTUAL? UNQUESTIONABLY, THE MOST OBVIOUS CHANGE IS THE REDUCTION OF PHYSICAL CONTACT AND SO EX - AS WELL AS A SENSE OF BELONGING ACROSS THE VOID AND CREATING DEEPER CONNECTIONS WITH WORK, COLLEAGUES AND THE ORGANISATION - IS AT THE TOP OF THE PRIORITY LIST. DRIVING EX IS NOT PRESCRIPTIVE OR A FAIT ACCOMPLI, IT IS A COMPLEX TRANSITION TO MESH NEW RULES OF ENGAGEMENT IN A REMOTE, FLEXIBLE AND VIRTUAL SETTING.

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theHRDIRECTOR @theHRDIRECTOR  
#HR #Polls | Do you believe that hybrid working is improving engagement?

Yes

44.4%

No

55.6%



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ARTICLE BY ORLANDO MARTINS, CEO - ORESA

# EX MARKS THE SPOT

IT'S NO LONGER THE OFFICE THAT HAS TO BE A GREAT PLACE TO WORK, PEOPLE EXPECT A GOOD EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE (EX), WHEREVER THEY ARE. AFTER THREE YEARS OF FORCED EXPERIMENTATION, BUSINESSES ARE STARTING TO LEARN WHAT DOES AND DOESN'T WORK, BUT WHAT PEOPLE NOW EXPECT VARIES DRAMATICALLY, SO HERE ARE FIVE EMERGENT PRINCIPLES.

*What people really want is choice:* Some employees believe that they work better and that work fits better into their lives, at home. Others have entirely the opposite view. What no one disagrees about is how it feels to have no choice in the matter. The on-and-off lockdowns of 2020-21 gave millions their first taste of empowerment over where they worked, as they were encouraged to return to workplaces at their own pace. Empowerment has well-documented positive effects on EX, wellbeing and productivity. Taking it away, unsurprisingly, can have an equivalently toxic effect.

*With rights come responsibilities:* Freedom always comes with limits and rights with responsibilities. To make hybrid work for the business, there needs to be some kind of reciprocity. Make it clear that you are empowering people to make the best decisions for the business as well for themselves and ask them to consider how their choices can affect the wider team. If I come to the office for buzz and camaraderie, but no one else shows up, what will that do to my EX? What would it do to an isolated junior colleague who wants to learn from face-to-face interactions?

*Structure helps:* Mixed working patterns can introduce friction, particularly when people don't know when or where others are working. This can lead to disconnection and resentment

between groups and logistical headaches for managers struggling to bring disparate teams together. It can help to create some structure around people's choices, while still respecting their autonomy. Many

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companies offer pathways, where employees can select different levels of remote working, but are then expected to stick to them. The key, as always, is that the way these choices are communicated is clear and consistent.

*Find new ways to engage:* One-size-never-really-fit-all with employee engagement, but hybrid creates additional complexity. Working parents in their 40s are likely to present different EX challenges to 22-year olds on the graduate scheme. To understand people's different experiences and needs, ask them. Use employee voice surveys to discover not just what they want, but why and how

you can help. This may reveal ideas for engaging employee segments that you haven't thought of before. For example, people who prefer home working because of childcare needs may benefit more from one day a week in the office if the whole team can be present. Someone who suffers from social anxiety, meanwhile, may prefer days with smaller groups or benefit from a buddy system.

*Beware the law of unintended consequences:* Hybrid working can be more inclusive of groups that were previously disadvantaged, such as people with disabilities and working mothers. It's harder to make snide remarks - "a half day, is it?" - about people taking time away from the office for childcare commitments, when everyone is doing it. However, there are new and sometimes subtle ways that people can be excluded with hybrid working. The distance between in-groups and out-groups can be magnified when important conversations take place at quiet lunchtimes in the office canteen. Some LGBTQ or neurodiverse people, meanwhile, may experience less psychological safety to be their authentic selves, if most of their colleague interactions are on Zoom. As above, managers need to watch and listen for signs of unintentional exclusion and react accordingly.

FOR FURTHER INFO  
[ORESACOUK](https://oresa.co.uk)



ARTICLE BY AMANDA KERLEY, COO - TRICKLE

# SPIRIT OF LIBERTY

"LIKE THE MARGINAL GAINS THEORY, IF YOU CAN CATCH THE SMALL ISSUES  
EARLY AND TAKE ACTION, THIS CAN STOP ESCALATION AND LEAD TO  
SIGNIFICANT AND NOTICEABLE IMPROVEMENTS IN MORALE"

*Never has so much changed for so many, so dramatically and so quickly. The accelerated arrival of this new generation of working has opened up a whole new debate over work culture and one word is at the centre of this particular revolution, democracy. This is a gentler type of elected power for the people - albeit with just as much clout - and, along with that other cause célèbre, wellbeing at work, the rising voice of the people cannot be muted.*

There is a new democratic process, which is about ensuring that all staff are happy and comfortable with the way they work, about employees being actively encouraged to provide feedback from the ground up, that is listened to and workers themselves deciding and choosing what processes and arrangements work best for them. From the initial introduction of working from home to avoid COVID, 'remote' moved rapidly to the much-coined term 'hybrid working' and then to some workplaces becoming exclusively 'digital spaces'. Then in the fullness of time there came a far wider economic acceptance that many offices will simply never return to full capacity. As has been widely reported, Boston College and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge,

recently published findings from a six-month trial testing the costs and benefits of a four-day week. This has proved a fantastic example of this newfound embracing of workplace flexibility unimaginable before mandatory lockdowns and the advent of hybrid working. Sixty-one employers across the UK were asked to take part in a pilot and nearly all ended up wanting to keep the new work pattern, thanks to its "extensive benefits", particularly for the betterment of wellbeing. Participating teams were happier, absenteeism shrank by two-thirds and applications for jobs increased. That's a big set of results, which have been generally mirrored in separate numerous studies on the benefits of hybrid working.

This massive shift in thinking towards happier employees delivering better results for their employers through a hybrid model, has also reopened the world of work to many groups and individuals that had previously thought their working days were numbered, limited or even over. These included a vast array of people - new or single parents, families who cannot access or afford childcare, those with medical conditions that made commuting impossible, people caring for an elderly relative - the list is long and varied. I'm a mother of three myself and hybrid working has been a godsend for me. Homeworking gives me more time with my family, professional flexibility and I can see how much my team loves it - all

for their own personal reasons. I do, however, like to go to the office sometimes to connect with the team and feel energised by doing so. Because of this, I'm passionate everyone should have more say in how best they can work, creating an environment and culture of feeling more connected and comfortable - whether working at home or in the office. Remember, too, that everyone's appetite for remote working isn't necessarily fixed and can fluctuate. The parent who wants to work at home more in the school summer holidays, for example, may prefer to be in the office more in winter, due to the current cost of heating their home. So don't assume that because you have asked people once about where they want to work, this is now set in stone, keep asking. Ensuring a happy and engaged, fully remote or hybrid team is no mean feat, but it's something our company has been doing since it was founded in 2019. We were pre-pandemic adopters. The wider societal shift to hybrid working has forced a stark change in the traditional rules of how to build and strengthen work culture. Previously, when people mingled in the same space for seven hours a day, it could be argued that it took care of itself. Now, in many cases, staff can be scattered across numerous locations, even time zones.

As humans, we can sense when someone is struggling mentally when we are physically together, not just through office chit-chat, but by reading body language that can be as simple as a drop of a head. This can be lacking when people work remotely, so extra effort is needed to ensure these workers have a way to ask for support if they need it and that they feel comfortable with using. What has bubbled fastest to the surface in this new remote democracy, is that employee engagement is paramount, not only to levels of wellbeing, but also much wider aspects of organisational success too. Keeping their team fully engaged by ensuring their needs are met, is at the top of many of our leaders' agendas just now and, above all else, it's about listening and responding quickly. To this end, employee feedback platforms that allow

anonymity have rapidly become vital in helping employers to listen and better understand their people's needs.

There is an excellent series of BBC podcasts, *The Listening Project*, which are recordings of two people in conversation about what simple or complex issues affect them. It has a fantastic catchline - "it's surprising what you hear, when you listen" - if we listen, the solution might be easier than we thought. Opening lines of communication from the ground up can allow for real change, where employees can genuinely feel part of the whole process and managers are still responsible for doing what they have always needed

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to do - listen, implement and manage. Today, that means creating an atmosphere where work is no longer a place we go, but a thing we enjoy doing and where we do it from is largely irrelevant. Just as a high level of employee engagement can have a positive impact on the workplace, low engagement can of course create an environment of pervasive negativity, resulting in lost productivity and retention issues. But the biggest contributors to low employee engagement or poor wellbeing aren't always the typical big problems you might expect. It's the accumulation of smaller and easily solvable issues that mount up, such as; not having access to the right tools to do the job properly, for example, feeling that rotas are unfair, not having the annual

leave so desperately needed - even something like the temperature or lighting in the office not being 'right' - can build up and eventually explode. Like the marginal gains theory, if you can catch the small issues early and take action, this can stop escalation and lead to significant and noticeable improvements in morale.

Listening to what people actually want - rather than making assumptions - takes the guesswork out of the equation and it might end up being a much easier fix than originally thought. By listening, one company discovered that staff were dehydrated as there weren't enough accessible drinking fountains and that was directly impacting wellbeing. It installed more fountains and right away found a significant improvement, the very next time they asked their staff how they felt. Without exception, organisations that engage employees the most and in which leaders actively encourage people to come forward with their views are more likely to benefit from consistently engaged people. It's that constant, direct, two-way dialogue and engagement that can nip so many problems in the bud, by giving everyone an instant voice, in confidence, to share their opinions, challenges and make suggestions. "My door is always open" should no longer be a soundbite, but a reality - and this does require leaders to be brave, as they must be prepared to act on what they hear. But the rewards - in terms of a happier, more engaged team - are undoubtedly worth being courageous for.

FOR FURTHER INFO  
[WWW.TRICKLE.WORKS](http://WWW.TRICKLE.WORKS)



## ZOOM ... AND BEYOND

*There's no doubt that virtual communication platforms - along with headliners Teams and Zoom - played a major role in enabling hybrid working to flourish. Indeed, many businesses will now be asking, 'what did we do without them'? As a result of the pandemic, Microsoft announced that Teams was used by 270 million people in 2022, up from 145 million in 2021 and 70 million in 2020. Likewise, Zoom - which was launched in 2013 - only truly entered the workplace consciousness during lockdown.*

"EMPLOYEES SHOULD NOT FEEL ISOLATED FROM THE TEAMS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR WELLBEING AND HYBRID WORKING HAS THE POTENTIAL TO WEAKEN THOSE LINKS"



ARTICLE BY MAUREEN ROBSON-NORMAN, FOUNDER & CEO - WHYAYE

Unquestionably, Teams and Zoom make communication easier, but they don't necessarily provide the structure to underpin a consistent employee engagement experience. That's because driving true engagement is about more than keeping people connected via video calls, which brings us to cloud-based HR technology platforms, such as ServiceNow. These platforms can connect team leaders, HR functions, other crucial business functions and employees and provide great insight into employee experience. They can help overcome some of the challenges they might face when implementing hybrid working models. So, what are the benefits? We know that keeping employees well connected to the organisation is a key factor in driving engagement. Employees should not feel isolated from the teams responsible for their wellbeing and hybrid working has the potential to weaken those links where, for example, an employee is working remotely, hundreds of miles away from their team leader or HR specialist. Clearly, connections need to be strengthened.

An employee can access services, advice, processes and content through a personalised, cloud-based portal or mobile application - and at a location and time that suits them - they are more likely to feel supported. In this scenario, employees are also less likely to be frustrated by delays to simple information requests, which may have an effect on their personal lives - think dealing with a letting agent when they're house hunting or handling an HMRC issue. Payslips, leave entitlement periods, training information and travel expenses policies, can all be accessed via a single dashboard. It's the simple things that can make a big difference. Concurrently, machine learning and automated intelligence insights generate content suggestions based on previous searches and this helps to channel employees to the information they need or the right person to support those moments that require human interaction. Additionally, tailored content, targeted at users through desktop-accessible portals, can also keep employees informed and on track with developments in the business.

Cloud technology platforms can enable an omnichannel approach and provide options through which to engage - think chat bots, live chat or mobile applications - while keeping their communications on-record, protected and auditable, it works for both employees and the organisation. Taking the hybrid model a step further, picture an employee working in a different country and time zone to their usual base. How might they easily access an HR professional? Is it fair or practical to ask them to wait until 11pm for a call, when they would prefer to be tucked up in bed? A technology platform, which can automatically align their request with an HR function in the same time zone, gives

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them a route to the support they need, when they need it. A cloud-based platform can support businesses in successfully onboarding remote workers. This can help to bring relevant departments such as HR and IT together and create a workflow building up to the employee's start date. From the new employee's point of view, it's a seamless experience. But perhaps more valuable from an employee's perspective would be the use of a mobile app, linked to the HR platform, which could provide a map of the onboarding process and a clear structure to follow. From the moment a contract is signed, they can then start accessing onboarding information and be guided through each stage in the journey, from ordering their laptop to completing the induction activities. It's a cleaner and simpler onboarding process and it can create more positive perceptions of the business from the start.

But a positive employee experience is about more than streamlined admin - take social interactions, for example - the sense of community that is created by employees working shoulder-to-shoulder with each other can be difficult to foster in hybrid working models - despite the best efforts of Zoom quizmasters and Teams lunch organisers. Without it, employees can become detached from their co-workers and their personal ties to a company are weakened. Friendships matter, we are social animals, after all. Making the day-to-day employee experience more positive is just part of the picture though. Automating administrative processes as discussed, cuts down the time spent by business functions on repetitive tasks. This gives specialist teams the opportunity to focus on dealing with more complex enquiries.

An effective technology platform can ensure that an employee is connected to the right advisor, first time. This can alleviate the frustration caused by an enquiry being passed from team to team, without a resolution in sight. Data gathered on enquiries can also help HR functions to resource their teams to an appropriate level. For instance, if through a technology platform, HR teams can have greater visibility over enquiries or knowledge requests, they can identify trends and surges in demand. This can trigger a strategic response. A company, for example, may recruit more specialist expertise into its HR teams or upskill existing HR personnel in line with employee requirements. Again, this ensures support of employees to the highest level possible and provides them with the information they need. So an effective cloud-based HR technology platform, embedded into an organisation, can empower both employees and specialist teams and, as for the transition to hybrid models, technology can do far more than provide video call functions and virtual conferencing, it can transform the connections between company and employee and supercharge long-term engagement.

FOR FURTHER INFO  
[WHYYETLD.COM](https://www.whyyetld.com)

# II

## GENDER IDENTITY

SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW? THE LGBTQ+ JOURNEY IS ONE OF OPTIMISM AND FRUSTRATION, MOMENTUM AND INERTIA, PROGRESS AND SETBACKS. AS IT DEVELOPS AND EVOLVES, DETRACTORS POINT TO ITS COMPLEXITY AND NUANCE AND THE ROUTE TO RIDICULE AND DISMISSAL IS EASY TO FIND. YET THERE IS ONE UNDENIABLE TRUTH AND THAT IS, EVERYONE DESERVES EQUALITY AND FAILURE TO PROVIDE AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE AND PROTECT EMPLOYEES FROM BULLYING AND HARASSMENT IS FIRSTLY ILLEGAL AND CAN LEAD TO DISCRIMINATION CLAIMS, DECREASED MORALE AS WELL AS LOSS OF TALENT AND NOT JUST LGBTQ+ PEOPLE.

### SOCIALLY CONNECTED



theHRDIRECTOR @theHRDIRECTOR  
#HR #Polls | Do you think employees in your organisation feel comfortable with revealing their true gender identity?

Yes	0%
No	100%



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ARTICLE BY JOANNE LOCKWOOD, FOUNDER &amp; CEO - SEE CHANGE HAPPEN

# TRANSCEND

ACCORDING TO THE RECENT CENSUS COVERING ENGLAND AND WALES, TRANS AND NON-BINARY PEOPLE MAKE UP AROUND 0.2 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION AND IT WOULD BE FAIR TO THINK THAT WOULD BE REPLICATED ACROSS THE WHOLE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM. SO WHY IS THERE SO MUCH FOCUS ON THIS SMALL, MINORITY OF PEOPLE?

Trans people know we are important, but in the outside world, we seem to matter for all the wrong reasons still. The narrative is relentless and the abuse on social media is fuelled by extremely limited incident cases, that tar all trans women with the same damning brush. At time of writing, we see the thwarted Scottish Gender Recognition Reform legislation - blocked by the UK Government - becoming a wedge issue, in the battle for devolved power and Scottish independence. History has taught us that this kind of demonisation and marginalisation, where a section of society is pushed to the fringes, leads to unfair treatment, discrimination and worse. Without the protection of the law - and lacking allies and role models - we are led to a situation where any marginalised group has no rights or protection at all. So, I find myself asking, have we learnt nothing from history? At this point, you might well be asking yourself, why is this relevant to you? You are perhaps an HR Director, a CPO, or in a leadership position in your own organisation. You care about diversity, equity and inclusion, right? You are determined to do your bit.

I recently ran a training course for an organisation in the UK - the topic itself was not gender identity focused - and it was aimed at their leadership team, to talk about conscious inclusion and included segments on bias and privilege. On this

course of 12 delegates, one person was intent on disrupting the flow, by constantly demanding to express their right to be heard on their gender-critical views. I agree, we must ensure all voices are heard and that people's perspectives are clearly understood. What we cannot do, however, is allow people who hold

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protected beliefs to express and weaponise against others, with impunity. Not one person in the room spoke out and nobody was willing to step up and challenge this individual. Yet, two people came up to me afterwards and told me that they had trans or non-binary children in their families and this "bullying behaviour" made them feel extremely uncomfortable. Notably, they said that they didn't know how to speak up.

People who hold gender-critical views work off a well-rehearsed playbook of false narratives, myths and stereotypes. There is no evidence to back up the wild claims that are made, but if they become repeated enough, that doubt is seeded in the minds of good people. Myths then become pervasive and are taken as fact, especially when people with power give them oxygen. Employers have an obligation to ensure all people, including trans people, can come to work without fear for their safety, mental health and wellbeing. But if you really want to make a difference, take a close look at your culture: Is it one where bullies with extreme views can take hold and spread toxicity and hate, or one that fosters allyship, through clearly set boundaries and expectations of good behaviour and conduct? Is there training and open dialogue, so that everyone can feel psychological safety and do people feel confident to challenge and call out bullies? Or is it an organisation that turns a blind eye to discrimination and sweeps wrongdoing under the rug? The answers here are critical to DEI outcomes across all society, not just the trans community.

FOR FURTHER INFO  
[SEECHANGEHAPPEN.CO.UK](https://seechangehappen.co.uk)





ARTICLE BY SOPHIA SUNG, TEAM LEADER FOR GOVERNANCE,  
PAY, GENDER-EQUALITY INDEX - BLOOMBERG

# MEASURE FOR MEASURE

"TO IMPROVE GENDER PARITY AT ALL LEVELS, COMPANIES NEED  
TO BETTER EQUIP WOMEN TO ADVANCE IN THEIR CAREERS AND SEIZE  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTION"

*The old adage has that; "you can't manage what you don't measure". Fortunately, more businesses are now taking steps to measure diversity and inclusion, but not all. Companies measure what's important to them - revenue, growth, profitability, employee turnover and so forth - if it's a business priority, most organisations will find a way to track, monitor and optimise it. Conversely, if an enterprise isn't collecting and reporting data on, for example, gender equality, it speaks volumes about how dedicated leaders are to progress.*

Since 2016, the Gender-Equality Index (GEI)\* has tracked the performance of public companies committed to transparency in gender-data reporting, as well as supporting gender equality through policy development, representation and transparency. The GEI is a modified market capitalisation-weighted index that scores companies on over 70 metrics across five pillars: Leadership and talent pipeline, equal pay and gender pay parity, inclusive culture, anti-sexual harassment policies and external brand. The 2023 Index comprises gender data reported by 484 companies with a combined market capitalisation of \$16 trillion, headquartered in 45 countries and regions across 11 sectors

and 54 industries. Tracking and disclosing the metrics that make up the framework is the first step toward advancing gender equality in the workplace.

HR leaders should be mindful that when it comes to gender and other DEI issues, the tone is set from the top. More than 75 percent of represented companies have a Chief Diversity Officer or equivalent whose primary function is managing the company's diversity and inclusion initiatives to drive strategy and achieve tangible goals. Members of the C-suite and other senior executives who lead by example can reinforce a company culture that effects real change throughout the organisation and the 2023 data illustrates this principle in

action. This leadership from the top is especially impactful in women-led companies, with evidence that they are narrowing the gender pay gap. Among 2023 members, the average mean gender pay gap for companies without a woman CEO was 18 percent, while the average mean gender pay gap for companies with a woman CEO was nine percent. This means, on average, the mean gender pay gap is 50 percent lower for companies with women CEOs. The data also shows that corporations with more women executives are more likely to conduct a gender-based compensation review to understand the gender gap in pay.

A total of 620 companies across 50 countries submitted their gender-related

data this year, which represents an 11 percent increase, year over year. In the realm of HR, this year's data indicates that companies are taking meaningful steps forward. As of this year, 65 percent of members have implemented diversity and inclusion goals for managers in performance reviews, an eight-point increase from last year. The vast majority of member companies - 86 percent - offer unconscious bias training, with 74 percent of those companies tracking manager completion. In addition, more businesses are taking measures to embed gender equality into their technology, as they uncover new ways to leverage the power of artificial intelligence and machine learning. This year too, there was a seven percent increase in member companies that use machine learning to prevent algorithms from perpetuating gender bias. This is a fantastic example of companies applying technology designed for other use cases to better understand gaps in gender equity across their businesses. Companies of all sizes from all over the world can apply machine learning technology to improve diversity and inclusion across gender and other categories.

Supporting women throughout the talent pipeline is one of the most pervasive challenges companies face in achieving gender equality. According to the data, companies are hiring more women than they are losing to attrition - on average, 44 percent of new hires during the 2021 fiscal year were women - compared to 41 percent of those who left their companies during the same period. This contributes to net positive growth in the number of women within represented workforces and it also displays potential for career growth among women. However, for the moment, the proportion of women employees at a company steadily decreases as they advance to more senior roles. On average, 50 percent of entry-level employees at the companies in question, are women, compared to 24 percent of executives and only eight percent of CEOs.

This data illustrates a common pattern in the corporate world. Even at companies

that value women's contributions and make concerted efforts to achieve gender equality in hiring, the number of women in the talent pipeline tends to plateau as they approach senior management. In order to improve gender parity at all levels, companies need to better equip women to advance in their careers and seize opportunities for promotion.

Lack of transparency around compensation and the existence of gender pay gaps is also a pervasive barrier to improving gender equality in the corporate world. The first step in addressing inequities around compensation, is to determine where

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gaps exist and to disclose those findings and companies have been slow to prioritise this issue. While company disclosure of pay quartile data increased by 15 percent from 2022, a year on and gender-related pay data disclosure is still significantly lagging, compared to other pillars within the Gender Reporting Framework. Of the companies that did provide data on equal pay and gender pay parity metrics, the global mean raw gender pay gap was 17.6 percent. To effect long-term, meaningful change, businesses need to conduct regular pay equity reviews and adjust their policies accordingly as their workforces evolve.

When it comes to resolving challenges like those mentioned above, there are areas where businesses - and the HR function in particular - have room to improve their gender equality efforts. For example, when it comes to hiring,

progress still needs to be made at all levels, as the fiscal year 2021 data shows little to no improvement, compared with previous results in job functions, where parity has yet to be reached. In particular, the slow pace of progress in revenue-generating roles, IT and engineering may not be adequate to support gender parity in an increasingly tech-oriented future of work. It's also important to note that just over half (58 percent) of this year's recorded companies, have a time-bound action plan, with targets to increase the representation of women in leadership positions. Also, among companies that provided relevant gender pay gap metrics, less than a quarter (19 percent) have publicly shared a specific, time-bound action plan to close the gender pay gap in their organisations. For companies that lack specific action plans to address gender equality issues, the first step to developing these plans is listening to their teams to determine where to focus their efforts. Collecting feedback via an engagement survey can help leaders understand where action is needed and hold themselves accountable to a timeline for making change happen.

It's important for business leaders to understand that gender equality and other social change initiatives aren't just feel-good projects or branding exercises. Indeed, investors are urging corporations to take action on DEI, to ensure that workforces reflect the overall diversity of the population and there have been a total of 226 resolutions for this year's proxy-voting season. The growing focus on DEI, including gender diversity, has significant implications for HR leaders and the global business community. The sooner corporate leaders commit to creating diverse, supportive workplaces, the better positioned their organisations will be to thrive in a future where social issues like gender equality are critical components of business success.

#### REFERENCES

\*All statistics courtesy of the Gender-Equality Index (GEI) from Bloomberg

FOR FURTHER INFO  
[WWW.BLOOMBERG.COM](http://WWW.BLOOMBERG.COM)

# BINARY TO UNITY

BINARY DOESN'T DO NUANCE, THAT'S NOT THE IDEA. BINARY IS ONE OR THE OTHER, SIMPLE, PREDICTABLE AND EASY TO CATEGORISE. YOU ARE EITHER/OR, GAY OR STRAIGHT, MALE OR FEMALE, MAN OR WOMAN. BUT THANKS TO THOSE WILLING TO SHARE THEIR STORIES, WE KNOW MUCH MORE TODAY ABOUT IDENTITY AND THE INTERSECTIONS OF SEX, GENDER AND SEXUALITY, THAT MAKE UP THE LGBTQ+ RAINBOW.

ARTICLE BY ZOE YOUNG, DIRECTOR - HALF THE SKY

Sex, gender and sexuality have come to be understood as distinct aspects of the self, that can flex and change through life. As much as this new visibility signals progress, where there is nuance there is complexity and where there is complexity, there is potential for exclusion and harm. That is why it is essential for organisational diversity and inclusion to continue to evolve and to promote equality for LGBTQ+ people. A good place to start is actions around a Prevent, Protect, Respond strategy (PPR) - this is aimed at preventing harm to performance, health and wellbeing through good policies - through clear communication of expectations and education. Protecting diversity and its benefits relies upon a range of channels and mechanisms to respond appropriately, effectively and quickly to bullying, harassment and discrimination.

There is no universal measure of inclusion so how should we navigate towards an inclusive culture and who is included? Surveys might enquire how well someone feels they fit in, but how much will the contributors feel that their contribution is welcomed and valued? To really understand what is going on, leaders must ask better questions and listen to the experiences of 'non majority' groups. Incivilities and micro-aggressions typically account for many of the exclusionary experiences of LGBTQ+ colleagues. These verbal slights, snubs and insults can be explicit or subtle. A typical example is when trans and non-binary people are 'deadnamed' - addressed by their former name - or denied use of their chosen pronouns. They might be avoided by colleagues, sidelined from activities or subject to intrusive questions about their lifestyle, anatomy and their bodies. Whether intentional or unintentional, micro-aggressions communicate hostile, derogatory or negative messages. These may

be perceived as small daily occurrences, but their impact is significant, which is why recognising and countering them is important.

Those working in this field for a while, will have reflected that unconscious bias training was not the silver bullet solution that many hoped. Where bias training went wrong was to focus more on the science and less on what individuals could and should be doing, to prevent biased outcomes. Action here demands more than being an active bystander and calling out obvious discrimination, it requires intervening in those subtle interactions that diminish and exclude LGBTQ+ people. The challenge becomes how to help people to notice these everyday exclusions and encourage them to challenge them constructively.

People need insight and well facilitated story-telling sessions are powerful and effective, as colleagues benefit from listening to and asking questions of a willing expert in their own lived experience. A film or speaker series, celebrations and commemorations all help educate about LGBTQ+ journeys, lives and experiences. But when it comes to tools, what people really struggle with is, what to say and do in the moment, when they see or hear something inappropriate or exclusionary. This might mean speaking up in a group situation, or to a colleague or a manager about their language or behaviour. That all feels risky, but it must happen. Every time a joke is made at an LGBTQ+ colleague's expense, they are mis-named, mis-gendered or simply left out and it is left unchallenged, it is normalised and challenging norms is culture work. Policies set the frame, but everyone must play their part.

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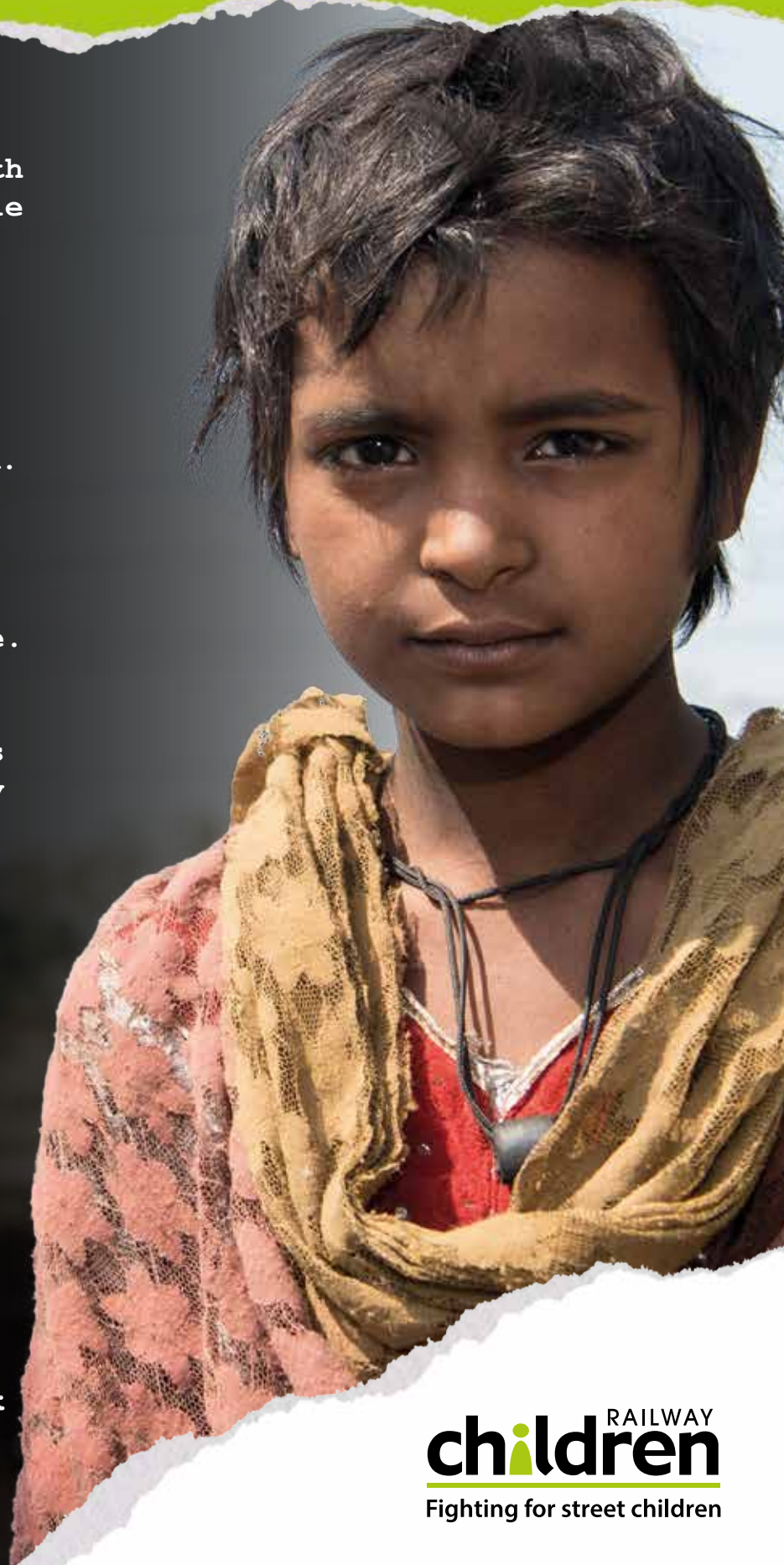
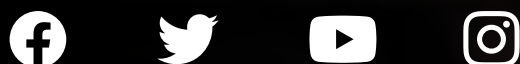
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# III

## NEW APPROACH TO LINE MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT POTENTIAL AND CAPABILITY, FOR GENERATIONS, WAS TOO OFTEN PREDICATED ON INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE, SKILLS, KNOWHOW, CHARISMA, TOUGHNESS AND AIR OF AUTHORITY. RARELY, IF EVER, WAS EMPATHY, PRAGMATISM, FAIRNESS AND UNDERSTANDING CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES. CONSEQUENTLY, THE OLD CLICHÉ "PEOPLE JOIN A COMPANY BUT LEAVE A MANAGER" CAME INTO HR PARLANCE. NOW, BARELY AN OUTLINE REMAINS FROM THE DEEPLY-DEFINED AND FOREBODING LINES OF COMMAND-AND-CONTROL.

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#HR #Polls | In your experience, are line managers managing well with hybrid working?



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ARTICLE BY JODIE HARRISON, INSIGHTS CONSULTANT - INPULSE

## THE SQUEEZED

LINE MANAGERS ARE STRESSED, STRETCHED, UNDERRATED AND AN OFTEN-OVERLOOKED SECRET WEAPON IN ENGAGEMENT. CREATING A THRIVING TEAM CULTURE, WHERE PRODUCTIVITY AND MOTIVATION ARE HIGH AND THERE'S A STRONG SENSE OF COMMITMENT, REQUIRES LINE MANAGERS THAT CAN CAST INSPIRING VISION AT LOCAL LEVEL AND GIVE SUPPORT ALONG THE JOURNEY.

Great management involves running the business in an efficient and reliable way that facilitates the best possible outcomes. Those whose focus remains on the more traditional, transactional elements of the role - planning tasks, distributing workload and giving feedback - are being left behind and are becoming out of touch with the reality of the new ways of working. Today, managers are required to take a people-centric approach, prioritise relational factors and empower their teams to perform at their best, on top of ensuring the smooth running of day-to-day business operations. Understanding the needs and wants of individual team members and having the ability to flex to suit different styles requires strong interpersonal skills, high emotional intelligence and a well-developed sense of self-awareness, to assess how people's behaviours influence those around them.

The quest to evolve sees many businesses now developing and investing in their management team. But line managers are already spread too thin and people in this role are twice as likely to feel that they have an unmanageable workload, compared with both senior leaders and team members. Unsurprisingly, this means that stress levels, caused by an unachievable workload, are 50 percent higher for this group. Line managers are being squeezed from both sides: Senior leaders are placing more demands on managers to

cascade information, share the big picture with those on the ground and serve as local leaders to guide their teams in the right direction. At the same time, employee needs and expectations are only increasing, with managers being required to support their team's wellbeing, coach them through challenges and encouraging their personal development.

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Interestingly, while managers are overwhelmingly the most stressed group, they are also the most committed and these conflicting emotions mean that while managers are struggling to carry out their work and support their teams, their desire to do a good job and be part of their organisation's success remains intact. The starting point to reclaim and redefine the line manager role must be acknowledgement of the pressure they are

under. Recognising and appreciating the efforts goes a long way towards alleviating negativity, as these acts of acknowledgement demonstrate to people that their concerns are being heard and there is a commitment to taking meaningful action.

It's clear that expectations of line managers themselves have also evolved and, in practice, this looks like people carrying out the role in different ways, with varying degrees of efficacy. Therefore, a review of these expectations is timely, to refine focus and clearly communicate to line managers to discuss requirements when setting new expectations, to give all parties clarity and confidence in the relationship. This will empower line managers to take ownership of their responsibilities and build trust, that the output will more likely meet the required standard. Shifting the focus of the line manager role and creating a people-centric culture to optimise performance needs support from senior leaders, to role model the cultural shift to line managers by encouraging camaraderie and making space in their day for 'human' moments, where the main purpose is to connect with others and build relationships by removing barriers and focusing on reciprocity.

FOR FURTHER INFO  
[INPULSE.COM](https://www.inpulse.com)





ANNA RASMUSSEN, FOUNDER & CEO - OPENBLEND

# UP SCOPE

"IT'S GLARINGLY OBVIOUS THAT TRADITIONAL LINE MANAGEMENT NO LONGER FITS WITH THE DIVERSE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF TODAY'S WORKFORCE AND, TRUTH BE TOLD, IT NEVER DID"

*It's safe to say that few, if any of us would make a willing return to the authoritarian managers who reigned supreme during the 1990s and noughties. These 'bosses' were universally uninspiring and harmed the employee experience at virtually every touch point. Thanks to modernising attitudes - and the rapid changes witnessed over the past three years - autocratic managers are slowly being resigned to the history books. What is left is an opportunity to swap old-school line management for people enablement.*

At the heart of this renaissance in line management lies the growing realisation that the human element is critical. The goal is to create a culture in which managers are encouraged to build human connections with their employees by recognising their individual needs and investing in their success. It's a cultural shift that marks the first step towards a more enriching and more effective manager-employee relationship - one in which autocracy is replaced with autonomy and where trust, partnership, collaboration and inclusivity are ever-present. It just so happens that these same elements - trust, collaboration and inclusivity - also breed the thing that employees want most of all, purpose. In other words, coaching, developing and enabling people creates building-block benefits and, in doing so, it paints

a polarising comparison. Unlike the invisible boundaries and restrictions that epitomise 'line' management, people enablement presents an infinity of opportunity. Of course, most HR leaders are already onboard with this evolution, the real question is how to emulate this thinking in the minds of managers and employees.

*Start (and continue) with conversations:*

The manager-employee relationship is by far the biggest factor for success here and conversations provide the best route to strengthening that relationship. Crucially, these conversations need to happen regularly, they must be focused and more than anything, they have to be effective. Why? Because regularity creates consistency and ample opportunity for discussion, focus ensures that the most important topics are given the biggest

airtime and conversations can only be effective if they lead to positive action. The employee must also be encouraged to express, without fear of judgement or penalty, what they need and want to reach their full potential. When right, these two-way conversations will provide managers with the single fastest route to understanding and building connection with their direct reports. What are their goals? What motivates them? How might their individual circumstances affect their ability to perform? What do they need in order to thrive? This is the definition of meaningful conversation - and it's the foundation for enabling people at work. Organisations that promote and facilitate these conversations will reap a multitude of benefits, as well as improved ability to attract and retain top talent, reduce time to productivity for new hires, strengthen

engagement, improve performance and, by extension, increase loyalty. To put it simply, effective conversations are not only the backbone of the manager-employee relationship, but also the cornerstone of improved business outcomes.

*Re-define the manager-employee relationship:* Conversation is also the vehicle that enables managers and employees to cross the very lines of demarcation that have long inhibited a broader and more human relationship. It is through these conversations that HR can positively redefine the manager's role, so that the employee comes to view them, not as a boss, but as their supporter, champion and coach. Someone who has their back and who actively works to shape their performance and career. Key to achieving this is the manager's ability to help employees talk openly about their individual needs and wants - and it's a point that highlights the importance of behavioural role-modelling. Far from hiding their own weaknesses and failures, managers must be encouraged to show their human side as a means of inspiring others to follow suit. In direct contrast to the figurative masks that managers used to wear in the office, the new world of work emphasises the value of authenticity - and not just because it's the HR term du jour - but because it's a key component for psychological safety.

*Steering the mindset shift:* As with any change, HR should also be prepared for pushback from the naysayers, who are yet to join the dots between effective conversations, increased motivation and improved performance. The message to that minority is this, are we to keep applying the same formula and expect a different outcome? It's glaringly obvious that traditional line management no longer fits with the diverse needs and expectations of today's workforce and, truth be told, it never did. All evidence points to the greater potential that lies in a human-centric approach - and ironic as it may be, enabling this transition will remove the very boundaries and formalities that prevent employees from becoming the architects of their own performance. This is the mindset shift

that HR must set in motion to pave the way for a successful evolution and it starts with educating managers as to why enabling effective conversations makes infinitely more sense than the existing approach. As part of this, HR leaders should not be afraid to communicate the scale of the transformation at hand, so long as the benefits to managers and employees are clearly and continually reaffirmed. Such is the importance of these early-stage communications, that HR is also advised to call upon cross-functional expertise from internal communications and marketing teams which have the requisite tools and expertise to ensure the right messages reach the right audiences at the right time.

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*Prioritise soft skills development:* Of course, not every manager is a born communicator and inevitably some will feel more comfortable talking about personal topics than others. In fact, research shows a clear gap between the 'informal' elements that employees most want to talk about - wellbeing and motivators - and the more formal, structured and process-driven topics (objectives and ratings) that managers lean towards. In other words, it's the human stuff that managers struggle with most. Upskilling managers in how to have regular and effective conversations that extend beyond day-to-day performance, is clearly a big part of the solution and the soft skills that underpin these discussions ought to be prioritised

on the corporate learning agenda. Managers must also be equipped with the right tools to support and guide them in how to have these conversations. After all, the overwhelming majority of managers want to help their employees to thrive and they have a vested interest in optimising their performance.

*Technology, the enablement engine:* So, if conversation provides the best vehicle for enabling people, technology can be thought of as the engine that drives those conversations. Of course, in a digital and hybrid world, choosing the right technology will have a direct impact on the success (or not) of any cultural transition and so it's a decision that HR needs to make the right call on. Beyond goal-setting and ratings, HR teams can also look to technology as a means of complementing manager upskilling. Bespoke conversation frameworks, for example, can provide managers with the insight they need to steer highly effective conversations around the issues that matter most to the individual employee. It goes without saying that managers can only do so much without the right tools to help them and especially when it comes to navigating those more informal and often sensitive topics of conversation. By integrating the right technologies, HR can empower managers to feel more confident in their own abilities while creating a more inclusive experience that enables employees to excel at work. So, the long and short is that it's good to talk and great conversation leads to improved business performance, because it marks the fundamental difference between managing people and enabling them to perform.

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## P U S H   P U L L

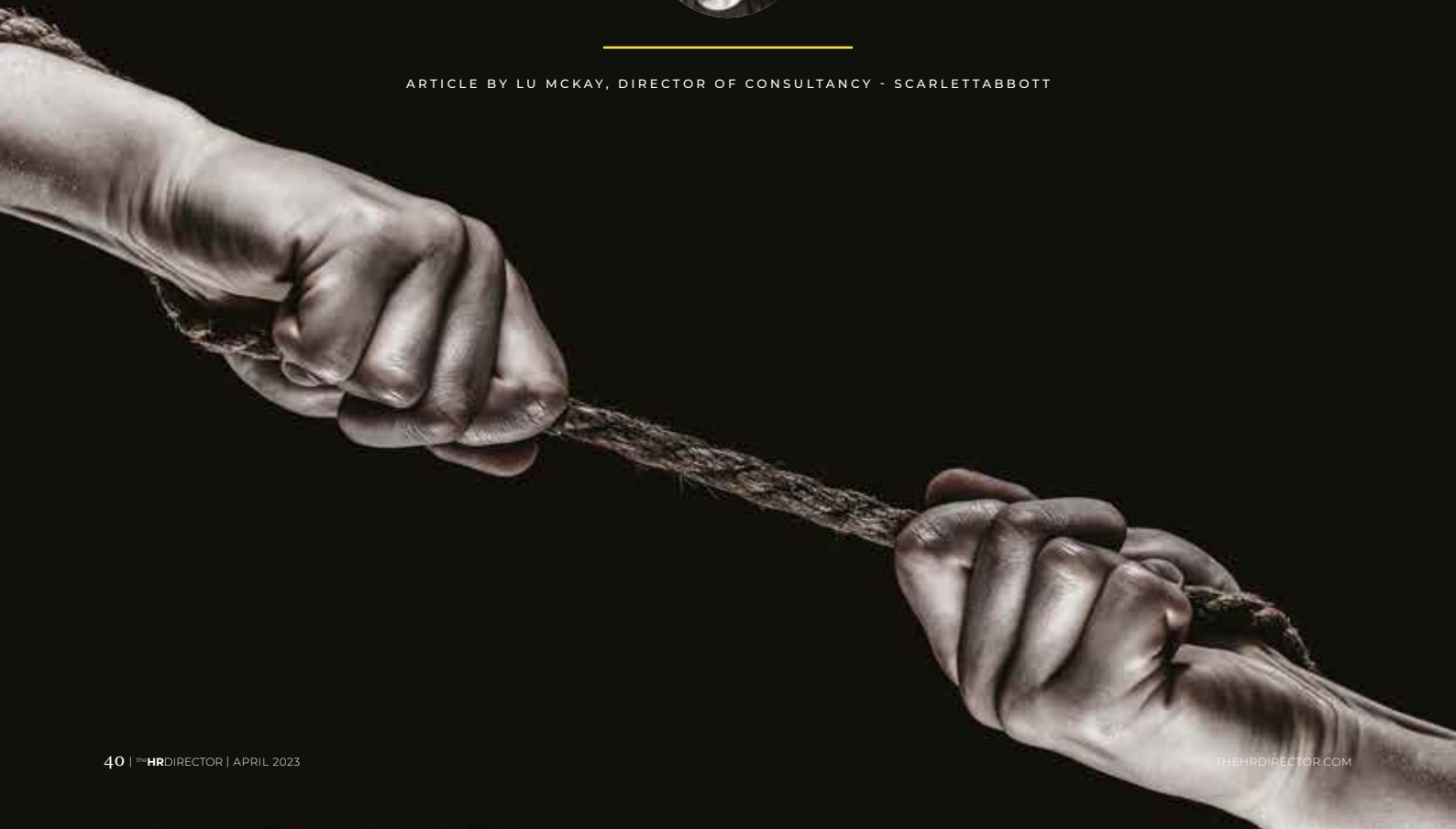
*Despite all the fearmongering about robots taking over jobs, the skills we will value even more in the future are, how to be human. In fact, the future's so bright, we've gotta wear shades, as our new roles will be about being more creative and innovative, as we leave the drudgery behind. Line managers are the catalyst to unlocking the potential in people and, ergo, their performance. So why are they so notoriously underdeveloped, ill-supported and lonely? A radical rethink is required.*

"COMBINED WITH THE BRITTLE VENEER OF PLAY-ACTING  
'BUSINESS BAD COP', TECHNICAL FAULT-FINDING AND PRESSURE  
TO SUCCEED, IT'S EASY TO SEE HOW A 'GRIND MINDSET' AND  
'HUSTLE CULTURE' CAN MANIFEST"



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ARTICLE BY LU MCKAY, DIRECTOR OF CONSULTANCY - SCARLETTABBOTT



Line managers are going to need a different set of skills to match the demands of the modern workforce. Technical prowess doesn't prepare for managing a team and many managers are not 'people people'. Combined with the brittle veneer of play-acting 'business bad cop', technical fault-finding and pressure to succeed, it's easy to see how a 'grind mindset' and 'hustle culture' can manifest. In this fast-changing working era now, more than ever before, organisations must be extremely clear on what they expect from their people leaders, make sure those expectations are fully communicated and offer support to achieve them. Fail to do this and the so-called 'sticky middle' will render any business with weak characters in positions of power, delivering little and stressing everyone out. So, what makes a great people leader? They have a passion for progress, a deep interest in people and crucially, an eye for potential. Line managers need to be focused on achievement, see the vision and have a thirst for strategic direction with a determination to deliver. As a multi-directional lynchpin, it's their role to interpret what's coming down from the business and empower their teams to deliver it. Managers also play a key part in helping people understand how their role contributes to the success of the business, and rewarding them when they do well.

Strong communications skills matter - but that doesn't mean spoon feeding - rather, it's about making sure people have the insight they need to make smart decisions. Managers who invest time to help their teams understand the direction of the organisation and make their contribution to the strategy clear, will reap the rewards of a more motivated team with a purpose. So, giving them the knowledge to align with the corporate strategy is key, as are regular updates, support and praise from the senior leadership team. It's not a selfless mindset, but managers do need a fascination for what makes people tick and to know how to motivate someone to perform at their best. Everyone is different and diversity-of-thought makes for stronger outcomes. But that does mean effort on the part of the line manager, to shift focus from

solely delivering, onto who their people truly are. They need to understand their people's strengths and help them play to them to shine, while making sure their team is well-rounded enough to sustain itself. As long as the team is hitting the objectives it has been set in the agreed timeframe, that's what managers should be judged by. Managers must lead with connection, be open to everyone's perspective, avoid blame and treat everyone with respect and fairness.

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AT BEST"

Equally, caring about a team as people cannot diminish the standards they expect, it's an intrinsic part of motivation and reward, but their team is being paid to do an excellent job. So caring about people can also mean challenging them when they are not achieving what you know they can. While the old ways of working were unsustainable, business will no longer function if work is a walk in the park. While new generations expect managers to be impartial, consistent and have a keen sense of integrity, that all has to be in service of the business strategy, otherwise, what's the point? Fairness can also mean firmness. Expectations must be high on both sides and a rewarding job comes from a sense of achievement, progress and growth. So line managers need to help their people achieve, expect that they do and challenge them when they don't. Coming to work for an easy ride won't make people happy in the long-term and if they choose to coast, perhaps they are not in the right role and company for them.

If line managers have an interest in people, they are more likely to spot their potential. But they need to have an optimistic mindset, to look for the best in people and situations and spot opportunities as well as talent. They should also consider, what makes people 'light up'. Are they showing extra interest in a topic or asking more questions? If so, it's time to innovate and flex to drive the best outcomes. That means giving teams the freedom, permission and autonomy to play to their strengths and seek out ways to propel, not only the team, but the individuals within it. All this requires the confidence to be surrounded with talented people, knowingly providing them with development opportunities that will stretch them. Managers are a crucial pillar of any organisation. But over time they've earned a reputation - sometimes unfairly - for mediocrity and ineffectuality at best, or as perpetuators of undue pressure at worst. At middle management level, the job can be extremely reactive and there's a lot they can't control, that they then have the strain of dealing with repercussions from. They have less control over the direction of travel and often fall prey to changing headwinds from above. Yet, just imagine the size of the opportunity and the dials you could turn if you empower your managers and create an environment where they are rewarded for their team's success. So how do we give people the value they deserve? What's the environment for success? It's time for a rethink. We need to promote, develop and hire line managers who are interested in people, partnering and performance. We need to trust them to deliver, empower them with the tools and training to nurture collaborative, high-performing teams that are unafraid of failure and set clear expectations around the role they can play in the business. That will result in the confidence to inspire and enable people to flourish and, while we might argue that this is the true reward of management, let us not forget to compensate their efforts fulsomely.

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# CULTURE SHOCK

WE HAVE SEEN PROFOUND CHANGES TO MANY ASPECTS OF WORKING LIFE OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, DUE TO GLOBAL EVENTS, CULTURAL SHIFTS AND CHANGING MINDSETS.

ORGANISATIONS THAT EMBRACE THESE CHANGES FOR THE BENEFIT OF BOTH THEIR CUSTOMERS AND THEIR WORKFORCE ARE EXPERIENCING INCREASED SALES, ENGAGEMENT AND BELONGING. THOSE WHO HAVE NOT EMBRACED THESE CHANGES ARE EXPERIENCING CONFLICT, ATTRITION AND STAGNATION.

ARTICLE BY SUZIE WALKER, MD & FOUNDER - SUZIE WALKER EXECUTIVE SEARCH

There is a balance to be found and the solutions are not always easy to find. But that balance is essential for teams within businesses to thrive. The hybrid model is more than just a different approach to running businesses, it's about a cultural reset, which represents both challenge and opportunity for organisations to find and retain talent and to prepare for the future. One of the greatest changes in leadership over the past few years is the emergence of soft skills to promote this shift in culture and change in mindset for the benefit of the wider workforce. Soft skills are now featuring higher on the agenda than technical competence with a view that, soft skills are harder to establish, but technical skills can be taught. The soft skills that most organisations are looking for in their leaders are; empathy, open-mindedness and collaboration. This comes from the top and is then embedded within teams. A more inclusive and collaborative workplace is moving leadership styles firmly into the 'democratic' zone, where feedback is encouraged and leaders actively listen.

The workplace of 2023 and beyond, will be more diverse and inclusive, with hiring policies ensuring that equal opportunities are available for all. We have certainly seen the emergence of ESG driving this change, with many organisations publishing a clear and in-depth framework for their environment and social policies, along with how those policies are governed. We are seeing an increase in independent assessment and certification of these policies, including B Corp, EcoVadis and others, ensuring that organisations are accountable. We are also seeing a call for women-owned-businesses, through certification with organisations like WEConnect International. With only one

female CEO in a FTSE 100 company, there is a lot of levelling up to be done for senior leaders, to inspire those within the workforce and those looking at the organisation from outside. Consumers have become more conscious and discerning about who they buy from and the workforce has become more conscious and discerning about who they work for. We also know that many leaders are seeking more purpose in their careers. It is not a choice for organisations anymore - they have to walk the talk when it comes to their values, policies and practices.

In addition, we are seeing an increased focus on meaningful collaboration. There have been numerous conversations about hybrid working, but we have moved further than that. Organisations are now looking at a full reset for how, where and when they work, collaboratively and autonomously. Many have found that hybrid working does not always gain the best out of their workforce and there is a smarter way of working. In fact, we have heard hybrid described as, 'a cut and shunt of two things'. Leaders are looking to create opportunities for creativity and collaboration, to develop their people differently and to utilise both in-person and at-home working, in a way that is most effective for both the organisation and the workforce. This new way of working is not only attracting and retaining talent, it is also fostering a sense of belonging through a new and dynamic workplace design, utilising technology, individual working styles and underpinned by shared values.

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ON THE TOPICS THAT ARE IMPACTING  
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Each stakeholder has a different role and responsibility in creating a culture of wellbeing and each is dependent on the other. We will discuss how Health & Wellbeing doesn't need to be complex and difficult to integrate, providing it is centered around communication and has the buy in, confidence and constant involvement by all. Not just existing employees, but potential candidates and new joiners will expect wellbeing policies and initiatives in place to provide them with a healthy working environment, flexibility, and work/life balance.

Health and wellbeing in the workplace has changed dramatically. Employers now have a much more active role in the health and wellbeing of their employees. The pandemic has accelerated this shift, but many of the underlying trends have been build for some time. This includes an increased focus and awareness of mental health being as important as physical health, the need to address health inequalities, with a particular focus on women's health and the talent challenge meaning employers need to work harder to attract and retain talent.

Over the next few years, there are likely to be increased challenges. From helping employees adapt to the cost-of-living crisis, adapting to climate change and an increased focus on ESG and create fairer and more inclusive workplaces. All-in-all, we are faced with a perfect storm, which could lead to a huge spike in unwellness across the workforce. Despite challenging times ahead, employers cannot afford to reduce their commitment to health and wellbeing. Indeed, with attrition at an all-time high and talent and skills in short supply, health and wellbeing is an essential component of the employee value proposition.

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# IV

## TACKLING BIAS & DISCRIMINATION

WHERE "FAIRER, MORE TOLERANT SOCIETIES" GRAPPLE WITH IRRADICATING CONSCIOUS BIAS - THAT WHICH EXPLODES INTO DISCRIMINATION, INTOLERANCE, RIVALRY, ANIMOSITY AND VIOLENCE - UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IS FAR MORE COMPLEX AND NUANCED.

BIAS IS OBVIOUS AND BLATANT, BUT UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IS MORE INSIDIOUS, DIFFICULT TO DEFINE, VARIABLE, QUIET AND LESS OBVIOUS AND, CONSEQUENTLY, MORE DIFFICULT TO DETECT AND DEAL WITH. INDEED, UNCONSCIOUS BIAS EXISTS IN OUR SUBCONSCIOUS AND IS NORMALLY TRIGGERED AUTOMATICALLY AND OFTEN WITHOUT OUR AWARENESS.

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theHRDIRECTOR @theHRDIRECTOR  
#HR #Polls | Do you feel that your organisation acts quickly and effectively in tackling bias and discrimination?

Yes

50%

No

50%



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ARTICLE BY JANE JOHNSON, FOUNDER - CAREERING INTO MOTHERHOOD

## THE PARENT TRAP

NEW POLICIES AND PRACTICES POINT TO A POSITIVE SPIRAL OF ATTENTION TO GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND WAYS TO CREATE EQUALITY, MAKING IT EASIER TO BE A WORKING MUM TODAY. BUT PARENTHOOD AND THE WORKPLACE STILL DON'T MIX AND NEW EVIDENCE SUGGESTS ORGANISATIONS STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND OR APPRECIATE THE VALUE OF WORKING MUMS.

Policies don't make a culture. What matters is how the principles work in practice. It's about manager attitudes and conversations with individual women as employees and as working mums and what affects everyday decision-making over how roles are designed, how promotions are awarded and how responsibilities are shared out. Anecdotally, there's still a nagging sense among so many women that the 'deal' they're being offered at work - and perhaps also at home - is not as progressive or supportive as it might appear. So, what is really happening and what does HR need to know in order to understand the actual experiences and needs of working mums? From a group of 2,152 working mums\* with children under 18 at home (46 percent of the mums are full-time employees, 30 percent work part-time and 15 percent are self-employed and four percent were on maternity leave at the time of the research.

Working mums worry about fake flexibility, where organisations offer reduced working hours, but expect the same outputs. In fact, 89 percent said their work routines had changed since becoming a parent and 40 percent reported they had needed to do more work tasks outside of normal working hours. The real issue is the potential for hidden implications - a change in attitudes to them as employees, to their reliability, their ability to take on extra

responsibilities and their level of ambition. Notably, it's not a case of a gender divide, with male staff not able to understand or appreciate women's experiences, many working mums report some of the worst

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PUSH BACK ON WHAT IS  
UNREASONABLE"

instances of negative attitudes and discrimination coming from female colleagues. Almost half of working mums believe their chances of promotion have been negatively impacted by asking for flexible work arrangements. Indeed, 65 percent feel there have been fewer career opportunities available to them since maternity leave and around half believe that asking for flexible working negatively impacted on their chances of promotion.

Meanwhile, the majority of returning mums remain ambitious. Around two-thirds of working mums say their level of ambition had either increased or stayed

the same since having children. With a family to support, parents often feel even more motivated to increase their earnings, protect their job security and progress to more senior roles. But the mix of being a mum with a career can lead to new pressures in relationships at home.

So, what can help employers access the untapped potential of returning mums? Re-designing work to be more inclusive will mean access to a stronger stream of talent, of untapped ambition and ability. Women need to play an active part in that re-design of ways of working, given the confidence to re-negotiate their roles, push back on what is unreasonable and take on the jobs they actually need and want. That means practical support in terms of coaching women and managers before they go on maternity leave and on their return to make for more of a smooth transition. For genuine change to take place, there needs to be a foundation of cultural change, with more visible senior role models among both male and female parents. In terms of practical measures, there is the need for a fundamental shift to outcomes-focused roles and, from Government, affordable childcare and enforcement, rather than guidance around child-friendly work policies.

### REFERENCES

\*Survey from Career into Motherhood

FOR FURTHER INFO  
[WWW.CAREERINGINTOMOTHERHOOD.COM](http://WWW.CAREERINGINTOMOTHERHOOD.COM)





ARTICLE BY WILLIAM S. HUBBART, HR CONSULTANT & AUTHOR

*William S. Hubbard, MSIR, SPHR, is the author of Drawing a Line: A Look Inside the Corporate Response to Sexual Harassment and Drawing a Line (WordPress Blog)*

# STREAM OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS

"AS WE INTERACT WITH OUR ENVIRONMENT, OUR BRAIN MAKES ASSOCIATIONS AND GENERALISATIONS. OUR MIND SEEKS OUT PATTERNS AND TAKES SHORTCUTS"

*While most managers will assert that they objectively make employment decisions, the reality is that our decisions are substantially influenced by life experiences. Opinions are a matter of perspective, formed over a lifetime of experience. We look at a situation, each observing the same event, yet invariably we describe what we saw differently than others, who witnessed the very same event. Indeed, it is this experience and social conditioning that are among the factors that influence implicit or unconscious bias.*

In the human resources arena, an element of human nature rears its head when we seek a consensus about a particular job candidate, elicit group input for performance management feedback or obtain agreement on other decisions involving the workgroup. Knowingly or unknowingly, biases may creep into our decisions. In most organisations, managers are well-tuned to the admonishments of the HR Director, regarding the importance of making unbiased employment decisions to avoid discrimination claims. Yet, managers roll their eyes when HR announces new training to address unconscious bias in LGBTQ+ employee relations. A common reaction may be, "I know all about employment

discrimination. My decisions are objective and made in the company's best interest."

*Recognising unconscious bias:* The human brain operates on conscious and unconscious levels. As we interact with our environment, our brain makes associations and generalisations. Our mind seeks out patterns and takes shortcuts and experience and social conditioning influence unconscious thinking. Consider the lament of one employee cited in a recent LGBTQ+ national survey by the Government Equalities Office survey: "People often assume I am straight, due to wearing a wedding ring and having two children. However, in the instance when they ask about my husband, I have to consciously evaluate whether me telling

them I have a wife will impact the choices they make in relation to the company." Concerned about disclosing personal information, the speaker was a middle-aged gay woman from Wales. LGBTQ+ employees suffer a greater frequency of bullying and harassment incidents than heterosexuals according to data from the National Institute of Economics and Social Research (NIESR), 39 percent of gay men and 33 percent of lesbians said there were jobs they would avoid because of their sexual orientation. Meanwhile, 11 percent of LGBTQ+ individuals report that peers or managers have disclosed their sexual status without permission and causing a reluctance to disclose their sexuality at work. Further, nine percent reported

experiencing verbal harassment, insults and even violence. Unconscious bias against LGBTQ+ people still exists in the workplace says the Council of the European Union. The Council reports that 37.7 percent of LGBTQ+ employees report experiencing at least one form of harassment at work because of their sexual orientation or gender identity during their lives. In addition, one-in-four surveyed individuals hide LGBTQ+ status at work. Further, the Williams Institute, a unit of the UCLA School of Law, reports that as many as 43 percent of LGBTQ+ people report experiencing discrimination in the workplace. Survey respondents reported differential treatment due to sexual orientation in the form of denial of employment, unequal pay, denial of promotion, negative performance evaluations, verbal or physical abuse and discharge.

*LGBTQ+ protections under the law:*  
In the UK - the Equality Act of 2010 provides a legal foundation for protecting individuals from discrimination or unfair treatment. The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of certain personal characteristics, including age, disability, sexual orientation, parental status, religion, pregnancy and sexual harassment. The law protects individuals when interacting with a variety of sectors including consumer services, health services, public service and employment. In the EU - Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights addresses non-discrimination. The article states: "Any discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age, or sexual orientation shall be prohibited." Treaties and member state laws provide additional protections. In the US - EEO laws at the federal, state and local levels prohibit discrimination based on certain protected class categories. Federal EEO laws are administered by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The various federal laws prohibit discrimination because of race, religion,

color, national origin, sex, pay, age, pregnancy, disability, genetics and retaliation for protected activity. A 2020 U.S. Supreme Court decision expanded protection to prohibit discrimination because of sexual orientation and gender identity. State or local laws may define added protected class categories.

*Eradicating discriminatory behaviour:*

It is clear that the passage of laws to prohibit discrimination does not by itself prevent discriminatory behaviour. As HR Directors continually seek ways to achieve equal employment opportunities, the role of unconscious bias as a causal factor has been recognised in recent years. One or

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two prior interactions with another individual can lead to a conclusion that all other like individuals are similar in nature. Such experience may be positive or negative and its recollection in memory can be generalised as an imputed characteristic of all like individuals. The result can be unconscious bias against other individuals because of their gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, disability, or other bases. When employment decisions are made based on these protected class categories, viable discrimination complaints may be presented.

Acas, a UK professional service specialising in conciliation and arbitration suggests that employers adapt their recruiting and decision-making processes to minimise the adverse effects of unconscious bias. Some suggestions include: Recruit through two or more sources to reach a greater diversity of job

candidates, consider using a process called "blind sifting" where certain tell-tale details - such as candidate name or gender or age - are hidden in the job application process. Include a diversity of individuals in recruiting and interviewing and include a telephone screening interview to avoid a physical appearance-based decision. Coach recruiters to be aware of unconscious bias and stay alert to avoid stereotyping. Leading firms like; Starbucks, Google, Sephora and Papa John's, have undertaken training in unconscious bias as part of their diversity and inclusion efforts. But unconscious bias training has come under fire from some sectors according to Christine Ro's article in *BBC Worklife*. Ro reports that UK's Civil Service scrapped such training in 2020. The unconscious bias training is intended to make participants aware of their biases in a non-blaming manner. Training may be leader presented or online. Some resources include an implicit association test in which participants respond to images and react to display judgments reflecting a "good or bad" perception. Role play with mock candidates can be another way to examine common work-related interactions evaluating for evidence of bias. Ro reports that University of Buffalo researcher, Katerina Bezrukova said that such training often makes participants uncomfortable, but adds that learning occurs when the participants confront social differences rather than take an easy way out by avoiding sensitive topics. A key benefit of including unconscious bias in an organisation's EEO and DEI curriculum is that it raises awareness through discussion of sensitive issues.

FOR FURTHER INFO  
[DRAWINGALINE175408723.WORDPRESS.COM](https://drawingaline175408723.wordpress.com)



## WEIGHT OF HISTORY

*Forget about unconscious bias, it's time for conscious inclusion. Most of us understand by now that we have inherited a world that doesn't work well for everyone and there is plenty of evidence that the mandatory training approach has not led to authentically diverse leadership teams and organisations. A question often asked is, why is the work of equity, diversity and inclusion so hard? To understand how we arrived at this point, we can learn a lot from UK History.*

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NEUROTYPICAL MEN AND THEY DESIGNED THE WORLD BASED ON  
WHAT MADE SENSE TO THEM"



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ARTICLE BY CATHERINE GARROD, FOUNDER - COMPELLING CULTURE

*Catherine Garrod is the author of **Conscious Inclusion:  
How to 'do' EDI, One Decision at a Time**  
Published by Practical Inspiration Publishing*



If we look back to the industrial revolution (1760-1820/40), work and families were separated, resulting in men becoming the primary income provider and women becoming the primary care provider. Before 1918, no women were allowed to vote. It wasn't until 1928, less than a hundred years ago, that women and men had the same voting rights. It is said that we were influenced in 1926, to adopt the working hours of nine-to-five, from the routine and repetitive world of manufacturing cars. It was illegal to be gay just over 50 years ago in the UK - and still is in many countries - until The Sexual Offences Act 1967. The Disability Discrimination Act only came in 1995 and it's not that far back in our history, that people with disabilities were forcibly removed from families and put into mental institutions. The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to consolidate previous discrimination acts, covering nine protected characteristics and legally protecting people from discrimination. Today's workplace is typically better suited to extroverts and neurotypical brains, despite estimates suggesting at least a third of people are introverts and one-in-seven are neurodiverse.

You might be thinking, thanks for the history lesson, so what? Well, those in positions of power for the longest time, were typically upper class, heterosexual, White, able-bodied and neurotypical men and they designed the world based on what made sense to them. So, our laws, policies, research endeavours, services, workplaces, marketing, broadcast content, products and everything in between, work better for you, if you share that same demographic makeup and less well if you don't. Is it all their fault? Absolutely not, but we must acknowledge that the world is rigged in the favour of people who share a similar profile to the people making decisions about how everything works. The global population has increased from just over one billion to eight billion in 200 years and it's our collective responsibility to make the world work better for everyone. So how do leaders move to conscious inclusion? Leaders today need to consider how history will judge their impact on society

100 years from now and the pendulum needs to swing from understanding bias and signing up to an organisational commitment, to understanding inclusion and making changes for personal accountability. Here are the five habits leaders can adopt to influence their everyday thinking.

*Habit one:* Make sure there's a mix. Whenever you are putting a group of people together, make sure there's a diverse mix. Start with the people that come to mind immediately, then look to see where you have overrepresentation and extend your invitations to address it. This applies to meetings, recruitment shortlists, guest speakers, project teams, customer feedback sessions, research groups, product testing, advertising campaigns, gathering feedback and anything else you can think of.

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*Habit two:* Invite everyone to join the conversation. Once you have the mix, make sure you value, hear and involve the people you invited. This is how you bring together the knowledge from new hires, long servers, people with different thinking styles and personalities, mixed demographics and cultures.

*Habit three:* Deliberately seek alternative perspectives and go beyond your usual 'go to' people for feedback and advice. This is a big one for me personally. I was guilty of being in a hurry, going to the people who already knew my work and knew how I liked to receive feedback. Whilst they gave constructive feedback,

they usually shared a similar profile or perspective. When I started deliberately seeking feedback from people who knew less about my work or who had different life experiences, I learnt so much more and my work has been better ever since.

*Habit four:* Ask what would make people included. This might look like saying: "Hey, Catherine, I noticed you didn't speak up in that meeting and I really value your thinking, is there something I can do differently so the team can gain the value of hearing your perspectives?" Notice how the focus is on what you can do, not what Catherine can do. The response might be as simple as letting Catherine know you'd welcome her contribution on a certain subject, ahead of the meetings so she has time to reflect and provide her most valuable contribution.

*Habit five:* Get to know people who aren't just like you. Think about the five or six people closest to you in your work or home life. Chances are you have lots in common, as that's how we're socialised and how we form friendships and that's fine. If that's true for you, next is to recognise how heavily influenced you are by those five or six people and curate a wider circle of influence. There are many ways to do this at work including active sponsorship for employee networks and inviting a more diverse mix of people to the meetings you regularly host. There are plenty more ways to learn in private. For example, you can curate the mix of people you follow on social media, the authors of books, hosts of podcasts and the writers, producers and directors entertaining and educating you on TV.

These five habits are deliberately simple and don't take much effort and, with practice, they will increase empathy and improve awareness about how decisions might be affecting people. It's that awareness that will underpin the success of the organisations that remain relevant in the future.

FOR FURTHER INFO  
[WWW.COMPELLINGCULTURE.CO.UK](http://WWW.COMPELLINGCULTURE.CO.UK)



# CULTURE OVER STRATEGY

THE ONUS ON DEI AS A STRATEGY HAS BEEN MISPLACED. AS RECENT EXPOSÉS IN THE MET AND LONDON FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE SHOW, THERE IS A RISK THAT TOO MUCH STRATEGY COMES AT THE EXPENSE OF CULTURE. THE MISTAKE ORGANISATIONS MAKE - AND MANY OTHERS BESIDES - IS TO VIEW DEI IN ISOLATION FROM EVERYTHING ELSE THAT IS GOING ON.

ARTICLE BY BLAIR MCPHERSON, FORMER DIRECTOR, AUTHOR & BLOGGER

*Blair McPherson is the author of  
An Elephant in the Room - about equality and diversity  
Published by Russell House*

It's a management truism that the leadership sets the tone in an organisation. It is therefore very revealing that when an organisation is forced to confront the reality of a culture of bullying, misogyny, racism and other forms of discrimination, that senior managers frequently claim not to have appreciated the extent of the problem. "Nobody told us". Well, they clearly didn't ask the right questions! Many organisations claim to be keen to hear what their employees have to say and, in support of this, they refer to their annual employee survey, consultation exercises on proposed changes, a grievance process if people feel they have been treated unfairly and a whistleblowing mechanism, to alert senior managers directly of a serious problem. If you have ever been present when senior management teams discuss the findings of annual surveys, the all-too common response to negative comments is, "well, they would say that wouldn't they"! Their reasoning is, unpopular management decisions around changes to working practices, reorganisation of services, budget cuts and redundancies, have led some disgruntled employees to refer to management bullying and to express a lack of confidence in the grievance process.

When it comes to whistle-blowers, organisations have very mixed feelings. There is a tendency amongst the leadership to want to protect the reputation of the organisation and therefore to see problems as isolated incidents and a few "bad apples" not a problem with the culture in the organisation or how managers manage employees. If an organisation is serious about the health and wellbeing of employees, then it wants all employees to feel included, to feel they belong, to feel valued and to feel safe. It should not tolerate bullying,

whether that is an overbearing, unreasonable management style or colleagues picking on a team member, because of their sexuality, gender, race or religion. Yet many organisations still appoint managers on their technical ability, with little regard to their people management skills or their understanding and commitment to tackling bias and discrimination. So, an employee returns from an unconscious bias course, but finds the "banter" the sexism and homophobic bullying by colleagues goes on regardless, unchallenged by their managers.

In organisations where such behaviour no longer happens, this does not mean that bias and discrimination are not in play. Certain words and phrases are banned - employees say they are uncomfortable talking about race, sexuality or faith for fear of using the wrong words, being called a racist and disciplined - but attitudes have not changed and stereotypes and myths remain unchallenged. Openness is essential, so people understand how others feel and are more sensitive to those feelings. Yet managers and even senior leaders, often lack the confidence to manage such conversations. In the absence of leadership too, much is expected from HR which is often left to "police" as well as advance, the DEI strategy. Tackling bias and discrimination requires leadership at every level, every manager modelling the expected behaviour, every manager reinforcing the standard of behaviour expected and every manager or supervisor challenging inappropriate language or behaviour. Have the management culture right - one that focuses on people - and you will not only deliver the DEI strategy, you'll have a winning culture too.

FOR FURTHER INFO  
[WWW.BLAIRMCIPHERSON.CO.UK](http://WWW.BLAIRMCIPHERSON.CO.UK)

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# LOUD QUITTING

WE HAVE ALL HEARD ABOUT QUIET QUITTING IN RECENT TIMES - THAT SUPPOSED PHENOMENON, WHERE DISENGAGED EMPLOYEES SILENTLY PULL BACK FROM PUTTING IN ANY ADDITIONAL EFFORT AND DO THE BARE MINIMUM, DUE TO FALLING OUT OF LOVE WITH A COMPANY. BUT NOW, QUIET QUITTING IS BEING REPLACED BY A MUCH MORE NOISY AND DISRUPTIVE KID ON THE BLOCK FOR 2023.



SEAN BUTCHER, CULTURE CONSULTANT & FOUNDER - REFLECT CONSULTANCY

Loud quitting is the latest controversial career strategy trending on Gen Z hangout TikTok and, unlike its timid cousin, it involves talking loudly and openly about looking elsewhere for work, using the prospect of leaving as a negotiation tactic. So, is this a trend that we should be taking seriously? Disruptive employees will come and go, but there are a number of things that can mitigate against the chances of having a loud quitting epidemic. Salaries are increasing, but the issue is, they aren't increasing anywhere near in line with the high levels of inflation. Yet despite the economic turmoil, competition for talent remains hot and employees are still able to use this to their advantage. In other words, if pay fails to match their perceived worth, it's more than likely that they will find an employer who will. So, keeping on top of sector and industry salary trends will keep the best people from regularly looking elsewhere and equally importantly stop them from telling everyone else what they are doing.

Early in their careers, younger and less-experienced employees will look to move around frequently. Long gone are the days of a job for life and with any

economic crisis, it's inevitable that younger workers will bear the brunt of organisational cutbacks. With pay increases and promotion opportunities harder to come by, this can further accelerate the desire to leave and seek career ambitions elsewhere. So, along with ensuring pay rates are competitive, it pays to keep employees engaged with clear, transparent development plans and have accessible progression processes in place. Giving people clear steps to follow to reach certain pay grades or promotions, provides direction. Additionally, offering incentives to take on training - providing dedicated training budgets and setting up internal knowledge sharing sessions - all ensure that employees are able to pursue a path to improvement and career advancement. Importantly, this is not just relevant for younger employees, but for people of all ages and levels, throughout the breadth of the organisation.

Now is the time to ensure performance review processes are up-to-scratch and that managers are up-to-speed with them. Having these systems in place will enable quick assessment of performance levels and this will inform

on how seriously to take any loud quitting instances. Engaging higher performing employees to a positive outcome for both parties should happen sooner rather than later, whilst reminding them of their obligations to the organisation. For lower performers, there may need to be tough decisions made, including moving them on, if necessary. The main thing is that this process is fair and carried out in a methodical manner. Referring back to Gen Z again, more than ever, this cohort wants to work for organisations that are ethical, have a clear mission and purpose and align with their own personal values. For that reason, keeping all decisions related to people and culture behind closed leadership doors is no longer an option. The only way forward is meritocracy, transparency and clarity and showing the thinking behind certain decisions in an open and honest way.

FOR FURTHER INFO  
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# DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS TRAINING

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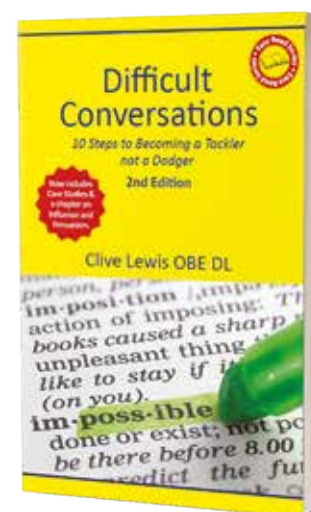
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WELCOME TO THIS ISSUE'S ROUND UP OF THE PEOPLE AT THE TOP OF THE  
HR & PEOPLE MANAGEMENT PROFESSION, WHO HAVE MOVED TO NEW JOB ROLES



## Uzair Qadeer

**ROLE** CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER  
**COMPANY** BBC

The BBC has announced the appointment of a new Chief People Officer, who will sit on the Executive Committee.

Uzair joins the corporation from Carbon Health, a healthcare provider in the US, where he was CPO and will also sit on the Operations Committee and will be a key adviser on the Board Remuneration Committee. He will also oversee Children in Need, the Salford-based independent charity. Uzair will have global HR responsibilities across the Group and will be responsible for driving the Corporation's vision of employee experience, cultural transformation and organisational change, shaping the people strategy and supporting inclusivity, in line with the BBC's ten-point DEI plan and ambitious Value for all objectives.

## Kieron Galloway

**ROLE** HR DIRECTOR  
**COMPANY** UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

The University of Winchester announces that Kieron Galloway has been appointed as Director of Human Resources.

Kieron Galloway will join the University from Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, where he was Chief People Officer and has been instrumental in developing the Trust's Great Place to Work strategy and in supporting colleagues through the pandemic. Kieron has extensive global HR experience, spanning a range of sectors, including engineering, pharmaceuticals and healthcare and has a track record of driving cultural transformation and change, as well as developing and implementing people strategies that create the conditions for sustainable high performance. Kieron joins at an exciting point in the University of Winchester's history, as it launches its new strategic plan.

## Tim Hopgood

**ROLE** HR DIRECTOR  
**COMPANY** HOWDEN UK & IRELAND

Howden, the international insurance broker, announces the appointment of Tim Hopgood to the newly-created role of HR Director of Howden UK & Ireland.

The role reflects the importance Howden places on its 'people first' principles and on the retention and attraction of top talent to drive its ambitious growth strategy. Tim reports to Carl Shuker, CEO, Howden UK & Ireland, and Diahann Williams, Group HR Director, Howden Group. He brings over 20 years of experience in HR, having worked for a number of companies including; Lloyds Banking Group and Starbucks Coffee Co and most recently, Danone, where he spent the last 12 years in

a variety of roles, including; Business Services HR Director. Tim has a proven track record in transformation and has had a significant impact on organisations that have seen a strong rate of growth and pace of change.

## Helen Stephenson-Ellis

**ROLE** HR DIRECTOR  
**COMPANY** MARSHALL AEROSPACE

Helen Stephenson-Ellis has been appointed Human Resources Director for Marshall Aerospace.

Helen brings a wealth of experience to the role with an accomplished background in the global pharmaceutical and financial services industries, working for organisations such as; AstraZeneca, Aviva and Oxford BioMedica. She has extensive experience in delivering all aspects of the people agenda including; skills growth and development, reshaping and resizing of organisations to meet changing business needs, acquisitions and engagement. Helen joins Marshall Aerospace at an important and pivotal time for the organisation, with plans for growth and transformation across the business and its global strategy. Helen brings her strong capabilities in change management to continue to develop and improve the organisation and support its business ambitions.

## FOR FURTHER UPDATES

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## NEXT MONTH ISSUE 223

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### INTERVIEW

Andy Moat, People Director - B&Q.

### ROUNDTABLE

Critical steps to building an agile and resilient workforce.

### 2030 NOW - THE FUTURE OF WORK

Like the iceberg in "the unsinkable" Titanic's path, the watch sees it too late.

### REVERSE MENTORING

The old adage, "never criticise anybody until you have walked in

their shoes", has taken on a new and contemporary meaning.

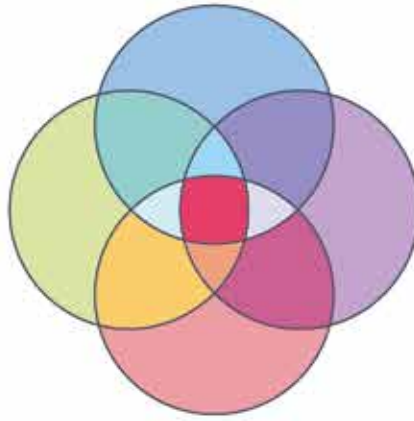
### L&D - THE NEXT GENERATION

Uniformed learning compounds the "one-size-fits-all" cliché that is the primary killer of L&D.

### MANAGING & SUPPORTING MENOPAUSE

It is bewildering how half of the world's population can have the same life-changing event unsupported and even derided.





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