



## **Webinar: Future of work: Ask a behavioural scientist**

### **Speakers**

Kate Went, marketing manager, scarlettabbott

Lindsay Kohler, lead behavioural scientist, scarlettabbott

### **Kate Went**

Well, let's begin. Hello, happy Friday. Welcome to another one of our Q&A sessions on the Future of Work.

So, as the world work shifts and changes, how will this evolution impact our people, our workplaces and our ways of working? After months and months of major turbulence, HR and comms teams have a lot to tackle, from mental health and burnout to onboarding and "the great resignation". Bringing teams back together post-pandemic won't be without its challenges. But there are also lots of incredible opportunities.

How can we create cultural cohesion in a hybrid workplace? How has trust changed in our organisations? And what do we need to be doing right now to foster greater diversity and inclusion as our talent pools widen?

Well, we're here to tackle some of those questions. I say "we". By that I mean my wonderful colleague, lead behavioural scientist, Lindsey Kohler. I'm simply here to ask the questions, help you out behind the scenes with some of the technical things. And basically nod, smile and soak up the smart stuff! Please feel free to fire over all your future of work questions throughout the session. We want to cover as many as we can. You should see a question function on the right-hand side of your screen to ping through all your thoughts, questions and observations. We love to hear them.

So on that note, Lindsey, let's dive in. What does future of work mean to you? Are you sick of that phrase yet?

### **Lindsay Kohler**

I think you can tell by my face what my answer is going to be! Yeah, I'm really tired of that phrase. I think it's right up there with "new normal". And the reason that I don't like it is I think the phrase is actually a bit problematic, and that it creates, like, a false dichotomy, right? It's this kind of binary designation between past and future where what we're really doing is, I think, just adopting a more agile mindset and evolving every day a little bit, while we figure out, you know, what works for our people and look to see what others are doing.

So I don't think there's really any end future state that will signal that we've arrived at the future of work. I think it's, like I said, an ongoing evolution as we see what works and learn from one another.

**Kate Went**

Well, I think that's a fair observation. So, when I was putting out information about this session over the last week, I actually put a call out on LinkedIn, using a poll to ask my network what's the most pressing issue on their minds when it comes to a hybrid future of work challenges. And the options that I gave were cultural cohesion, office logistics - so literally, the practicalities of being in and out of the office, wellbeing and mental health, or something else that might be on their minds. Well out ahead, neck and neck were, culture and wellbeing. What are your thoughts on that?

**Lindsay Kohler**

Hmm, I mean, I'm not surprised. I think office logistics, we're figuring out. Cultural and wellbeing have always been the more nuanced and tricky topics to uncover. So, I think I'm going to talk about wellbeing, Kate because selfishly, that's my favourite topic and in my background. I know that COVID surfaced so many nuanced aspects of wellbeing for teams to manage.

And I guess I hope that now the floodgates are open a bit that we continue to feel confident in tackling what would have previously been a taboo topic in the workplace. And now that we've all, I think, collectively experienced some sort of impact to our mental health, whether that's loneliness or anxiety or fear, I think we're all going to have a lot more empathy with one another, and a willingness to talk to our colleagues. So, I really hope that HR and IC teams kind of keep that openness alive that's been started with COVID and really keep iterating on it and doubling down because wellbeing it's always important and and now more so than ever.

**Kate Went**

I think you're right. And we've talked about this quite a lot recently, about stigma and taboo topics and you know, things that obviously were not brought up in the workplace and you're right, COVID has kicked open a door to those kinds of conversations. Do you think that's going to go broader in terms of stigmatised subjects and the types of issues that land on HR and comms teams desks to talk about?

**Lindsay Kohler**

Yeah, I do. I think we're already seeing it. We're seeing programmes for menopause, like who would have talked about menopause in the workplace before? We're seeing companies give leave for being on your menstrual cycle. Who would have openly said yes, here's 10 days a year to use when it's that time of the month and you just want to be home, you know, with chocolate and a heating pad? And I think those actual words, were in some of the comms that I saw for one of the companies that announced that leave.

I think we're going to talk a lot more about money, right? because money is a big motivating factor when, you know, we've just had quite a year and we're sort of thinking, "gosh, what am I doing with my life? What am I doing for work?" So, I think that we're going to continue talking about the subjects that impact who we are, and how we show up at work every day, that maybe before in the past, we thought, oh, gosh, I can't possibly say "it's that time of the month and I'm having a bad day, I need to take the day off". You would have never said that even a year ago. So it's nice that these issues - I hate even using the word "issues", right. It's not an issue. That's

part of the human experience. And I think now we can bring kind of our fuller selves to work because we can talk about it.

**Kate Went**

So true. And I love what you said there about "it's not issues" you're right, it is the human experience. These are parts of what makes us complex, human beings. And I think it's great that that those conversations are coming to the fore.

On what you said there about people evaluating what things look like in their lives and the balance that they want and their priorities: I mentioned in the intro "the great resignation", which I've seen lots of articles pinging around on. Do you really think it's coming? And if so, how can employers guard against that?

**Lindsay Kohler**

I absolutely think it's coming. And I guess I challenge everyone here on this call to be honest with yourselves. I mean, are you looking for a new job? I know that I've never had this many friends and colleagues looking for a new job. At the same time, I probably get two to three emails or calls a week asking if they can, you know, talk to me about something, you know, can I keep an ear out for them? Can I use my network to help them find that next gig? So, what's happening? And it makes sense, right? When you sit back and think about it, it makes sense. We've had a lot of time on our hands to really reflect on how we spend our days and what we're doing with our life. Plus, I think there's just this profound sadness over the missed year that we've had. And I think there's just a desire to go out and make up for lost time.

So, I think I think the second part of your question was, how can employers guard against it? I don't know that you can necessarily guard against it. But I think companies that double down on purpose, will have a better shot of keeping their people because, you know, we need to feel that what we do every day at work has meaning when we're searching for meaning in our lives after this ... I don't even know what to call this year. After this year.

**Kate Went**

It's hard to know what to call it without using a swear word!

**Lindsay Kohler**

Okay, can I use swear words?

**Kate Went**

I think it's certainly been an "experience" and you're right, I think "purpose". We've long been talking about purpose sitting at the heart of companies that are greater aligning their people and driving things forward. But I think more than ever, it's something that's going to be doubled down on as a way to maybe get that cohesion back together.

And "hybrid", "working flexible", whatever it looks like and whatever you call it, a lot of organisations are definitely talking about opening up that sense of autonomy over choosing where to work. You know, one of those things we have is "dress for your day". I've heard now "locate for your day", you know, going where you

want to work and dictating that for yourself. What do you think the benefits are, but also the risks in terms of company culture?

**Lindsay Kohler**

Yeah, I think let me start with the risks because I think those are probably really top of mind for those of us that we know that negative tends to be twice as strong as positive.

So, I think some of the risks that we're going to see is a formation of in groups between those who work in the office, and those who don't. I was reading about it recently, there's something called flexibility stigma. I don't know if you've heard of it, Kate? Before COVID, it was the idea that those that worked flexible schedules, and oftentimes because they needed to be a carer, there was a stigma against them. There was this idea that they were less committed and that they were less productive, and that they made more work for people. So I'm really hoping that, that sort of on-site versus remote, I'm hoping that, because we've all had the experience of working remote, we know in ourselves that we weren't less committed or less productive, that may erode some of that flexibility stigma. I also think the danger is that there's those that don't work on site or come in not that often, they have less of an ability to pick up on the visible parts of culture, such as symbols around the office, and thus maybe feel less integrated.

Last Fall – no, maybe the fall before that? Time is just a construct, Kate, I don't know what year it is! But I think it was fall of 2019. We were doing a culture audit for a large insurance company. And one of the findings that surprised us at the time was that those who worked on-site spoke in terms of "we" and "us" and the company, and those that worked remote spoke in terms of "I" and "it". And so there was already this removal between, it was like one step removed from feeling integrated if you were remote. So that was even like pre-pandemic. So I thought that was a really interesting finding. And I think it's going to be a big challenge to keep everyone integrated. And yeah, I don't know that we have the answers for that yet. That's part of experimenting slowly and piloting and figuring out what works for you. Because what works in one culture will not work for another. What works in a company of 150,000 will not work in a company of fifty.

So it's that kind of agile mindset that's going to help us kind of unpack this element of culture that we need to keep and preserve and figure out how to replicate that, no matter where you're located. And then maybe, maybe we can identify the parts of our culture that, maybe we don't want to keep. Maybe there's some things COVID surfaced that we're like, yeah, you know, that's a really backwards way of interacting with each other or doing things like let's, let's get rid of it.

**Kate Went**

I think that's a really interesting point, actually. Because when you remove us all from a situation that we're kind of doing in autopilot, really, Going into the office, doing the same routines day in and day out, used to all those kind of familiar things around us. And then you take us out of that situation for over a year, and work in completely new ways, and stumble through and learn and adapt, and then put back in the situation having removed us from it. Then you look at some of the ways that we worked before and think, "how were we doing this?" Unless you do the big experiment, and you take everybody out of that situation which - leave aside a pandemic - there wouldn't have been any other giant reason to do that, as fast and as sudden and as globally as we all did. So I think, yeah, it's a lot of putting things back under the microscope and really questioning it. And I

guess, now more than ever - I hate that phrase! However, we do need to be measuring and listening and asking questions and measurement is that sticky part of IC that a lot of organisations struggle with. The right metrics and the right kinds of measurement. But I think we need to be paying even closer attention to that than we ever did before.

### **Lindsay Kohler**

It's asking the right questions. I know that sounds so basic, we start with the right questions, but, and I don't think I'm speaking out of turn with those on the call, we've seen a lot of the standard employee engagement survey questions. And to be frank, they're not they're not always well written. They're not really measuring the right thing. It might be like a point in time look back, there could be ordering issues.

So, I mean, your questions set and the way that you design it to really dig under the elements of motivation and burnout and wellbeing, it's actually quite a quite an art and a science to it. And, and I think that that's sort of an area that collectively needs to improve across the field.

### **Kate Went**

I agree. We've got some great questions coming in. I'm just distracted because I'm looking down these and wondering "How are you going to answer that?" Just a note on this one, and which is just an interesting point to the "re-evaluating your life and your priorities and where you want to go". I think this is probably resonate with quite a few people.

"I just resigned from a 14 year career at my banking employer wanted to realign and prioritise my life differently. So, I'm just having some time off this summer. Any advice on exploring where I should go next, finding a second career taking a different direction?"

### **Lindsay Kohler**

Well I'd say get yourself a really good career coach, honestly, one or two sessions makes a big difference. And if you ping me after I've got a recommendation, but I think what you're doing is so smart. And I guess you need to be in the right environment to reflect. So, I think reflection exercises such as writing down, like, I know, it's trite, but "Where do I want to be? In a year?" Like, where if I looked back, you know, a year in time, what do I want to be proud of? What do I want to be famous for? What part of my job do I actually like? And what parts don't I like? What part of the culture do I like and what parts don't I like? So, I'll share a personal story. I was in a similar boat, maybe two years ago, before I came to scarlettabbott. I had gone back to grad school I knew I needed a change. But I wanted to be really smart about my next move. So, I took the time to really think through like those elements like what does my ideal day to day job look like? What does my ideal company look like in that size culture that founder led? And that helped me to really narrow down sort of a shortlist of companies that helped me to write the job description that I could use to pitch.

So, you're definitely on the right track to take that time to reflect. And, you know, I think for our HR folks on the phone, it may seem counterintuitive, but creating reflection activities for your people, I think could go a long way to actually keeping them. Because I think good employers, you want to help your people get to where they need to be, and hopefully it's within your organisation. But if it's not, that's okay, too. But that's the type of

support that I think people want from their employers right now to feel like no matter what I do, they've got my back. And even if that means I'm going to end up leaving, they're still doing it with your support, because it's, those are the type of things that are the difference that makes a difference when we're all kind of feeling the way that we're feeling right now.

### **Kate Went**

Absolutely. And that's such a good point about, you know, the whole employee lifecycle, it would be remiss of anyone to expect that someone will stay in the job for life. Now, that's just not the way that things are. So creating that whole hiring through to leaving experience that is consistent, and that you leave with just a good impression as you had when you started. I think that's really important. Because you never know, that person may come back, they may recommend new talent into your workforce. So, you know, it's such an important point.

A great question here. "If you believe physical presence in the office is important to your culture. How do you protect that in the current environment?"

### **Lindsay Kohler**

Well, I guess I would throw the question back at you slightly and say "how have you been protecting it over the last year?" And if you haven't been, have there been negative impacts? And the reason I ask is that sometimes we have a belief about what's important, but we haven't actually always been able to test it or dig into it. So, if you haven't felt negative impacts the culture of the last year then in person isn't as important to what you do as you thought. But what I will say is, I've gotten a lot of questions over the past year about like, "how do you recreate in person experiences?" and I'm honestly going to say you, "you can't". I'm one of those people that firmly believes you can do your job remotely. But I do think coming together for certain tasks, or certain times a year to create that connection, in person is really important. And I don't think that you can replicate it.

So, if you do take a model where people are fully remote, which means they're not even within commuting distance. So let's say, you're in a different country, or it's six hours to get to the office, then you do really need to think differently about how to get those people over, at least once or twice a year, but also, maybe certain roles shouldn't be done that far, remotely. That's probably an old school opinion, but I just think there's something about - it's gonna sound weird, but then go with it - the intimacy of being that next to your colleagues that helps you collaborate much better. I'll start to learn, like your tics, I start to learn what makes you happy, what really frustrates you in the workday, I get a feel for your style. It's just like all these little intimate gestures that you can't get via Zoom. That's a bit of a rambling answer.

So, I guess to sum up, the first one is check that in-person is actually relevant to your culture, and if it is, really think about how you're creating those moments for connection. Because I don't think in-person connection and cooperation will ever be fully replaced by virtual, I just don't think that's how humans are wired.

### **Kate Went**

Great answer. Federico is asking: "What are some ways that we can transition visual cues out of physical environment and into a digital and remote slash hybrid environments?"

### **Lindsay Kohler**

It's an interesting question. I'm gonna think about that and get back to you after this. because no one's asked me that before. And I think it's so interesting.

The way that I would start to answer, and this is why I need a little bit more than on the fly, is I would probably identify what those visible symbols are that are most important. So, is it the big mural when you come in? Is it the company logo emblazoned on the building? For one of our clients, a very high-end fashion retailer, they have this iconic factory where they make like the fabric. That's one of those symbols and in-person experiences. So, I think I would start by identifying what the most prominent ones are of your culture, and then start to think about ways to replicate.

Or, if you can't replicate the thing itself, like walking in and seeing the logo, maybe think about the associated emotion. So, if the emotion is like, awe, like in connection with the brand, what can I do to create those like, awe moments? That would probably be the way that I would go about problem solving that, but without kind of having that list of visible symbols, because they're going to be different for every company, I wouldn't be able to translate it on the spot. But hopefully, that's can help get you going!

### **Kate Went**

Great place to start with that. I love how you sort of wind that back from the solution to the emotion. What do you actually want people to feel? And how do you want them to respond? I think that's a great way of opening the question up wider.

Claire is asking sort of a two-part question here. "So now that we're all doing learning in a virtual format, what is your advice on how to make the learning stick?" And "How can managers best help their team members absorb and put their new skills and knowledge into practice?"

### **Lindsay Kohler**

Yeah, it's a great one. So, I guess the first part of it is learning in virtual format and making it stick is to make it shorter. When universities had to move all of their training modules online, they weren't recording hour-long lectures. Instead, they were sort of doing like 15-minute segments. So, it was like shorter bursts because it kept them more engaged. Because it's hard to sit and watch an hour-long video, it's hard to sit and watch an hour long webinar, right? Which is why we're like, okay, we'll go 45 minutes - a little bit easier on the attention span.

It's why TED talks are between, you know, 12 and 18 minutes. So, chunk your learning up. First of all, it's going to be much easier to absorb, it's going to be much easier to comprehend and stay engaged. And then I guess the second part, so I'm just reading it, "how can managers best help their team members absorb and put their new skills and knowledge into practice?" Oh, I love that one. I think there's a lot of ways that you could go about it, depending on how your team is structured. But I even think it could even be something like, taking the learning and putting it down, like one level, like, let's make it tactical. So, if you're learning about your company values,

what's a behaviour that's associated with the value that you could do, So how are we saying, "okay, if my value is accountability, what does that look like in the day to day behaviour?" and it's like, "oh, I'm making decisions and know that I stand behind them. And here's an example of that".

So, I think it's just making it more tangible because sometimes learning can be a bit up there and it's one and done. And then we forget about it sort of like those annual compliance trainings will have to do. So sorry if we have compliance numbers on the phone! But you know, your trainings are really dry, you know that! So, I think it's just making it more tangible. And also, I think reinforcing it via sort of the ways you work or performance.

For example, in our company I'll use us as example, we have a new three-year strategy. And it's based around four different pillars. And so, when we have our monthly meeting where everyone gets together, are MD changed the format. It used to be colleagues, clients, and commercials. And now, he organises it around the four pillars. So, it's looking for those areas where you can reinforce the knowledge. And that could be the way you structure meetings, it could be the way that you create a brainstorm brief, it can be a new process that you introduce.

Okay, and I'm getting my NHS call, I hope that they call back! Quick aside team, I snuck off to Greece for a few days in that little golden time where it's still sort of allowed. It's a bit of a hassle. And so you have to self-isolate. And they like to call everyday right about now to make sure that I am in fact in my house. Hopefully they call back. But yeah, looking for those ways to reiterate it and put it into your processes.

### **Kate Went**

That's a great answer. And I think it really depends on the learning objectives as well, doesn't it, and what kind of objectives you have for the learning and what kind of knowledge you're trying to impart.

One of the things that we do that's much less formal at scarlettabbott, but I love is our monthly Hive sessions, which is an opportunity for different people to get involved and playback something that they've learned over the previous month. And it gives everybody an opportunity to put their hand up and get involved to present and to sort of playback smart stuff and share, and a big part of that I think, that works so well for us, because we're so busy, is actually protecting that time.

One of the biggest obstacles that we have with our team and just being busy all the time, and having to be agile, is really portioning out a bit of protected time to dedicate to switching your mind from delivery into absorbing, and actually giving yourself permission to learn and digest and ask questions. So a big part of that I think is is really protecting that time and sectioning that off and saying "it's okay, this is learning mode. and that's important for us". So yeah, that was a great question,

Claire. Thank you for that. Let's see what else. We've got loads of questions. "Are there any learnings about human behaviour post pandemic type events?" anything that you would recommend? There's probably going to be a lot of learnings aren't there?



**Lindsay Kohler**

Clearly. One of my favourite memes that I've seen is we have to retire the saying "avoid it like the plague" because clearly humans don't do that. So I think what we've learned is we all have really different risk tolerances toward health that I don't think anyone had really thought about.

And so, I think with, you know, events as well, we're so human, we're gonna go, we're gonna be back in those seats just as soon as they let us. And we've already seen it right. We're seeing it with the Euros, Kate, you know, You're seeing it with concerts, it's already happening, people are already getting back together with events. So. I think it's just going to be sort of a trickle, as people get their comfort levels up. But I don't think there's going to be really big changes to things like event gatherings, and so on and so forth.

But one thing that I saw the other day, that was really cool. If you're thinking about getting people comfortable back in the office, and there's more of them, is there was this bracelet system, and they came in and it was green was like, "I'm ready for hugs. I'm fully vaccinated". Yellow was like, "maybe give me a little bit of distance, I'm still getting my feet under me" and red was like, "don't come within six feet and don't touch me". And that way, no one had to like guess or ask, you could just tell by looking at their wrist where they were on that spectrum. And I think that's a nice way to ease people in and also make coming into the office like less awkward. And we're still sort of figuring that out. Because I'm American, obviously, which means I'm a big hugger. So, I would immediately if I hadn't seen my colleagues in ages, I would go in for the hug. But if they had a yellow band on then I would know that maybe I shouldn't do that.

**Kate Went**

That's great answer. Karen is asking "how do you balance promoting well being and resilience when individuals and teams are being asked so much in terms of delivery? For example, along the lines of I haven't got time to look after my wellbeing - my to do list is too long?"

**Lindsay Kohler**

Yeah, that is such a great question. And it's not the question itself, but what I see happening that really bothers me is a lot of companies tend to think that burnout and wellbeing is a self-care issue. And I'm like, "no, it's not. You have a duty of care to your people."

So, this really starts with how much the company itself wants to commit, because there's no point in telling someone to take time for their wellbeing when you A don't give them the permission and B don't give them the space. So, when we think about burnout, it's really a mixture of resourcing workload, it's a mixture of motivation, morale, and then your environment, right? Is it a supportive environment? Is it a civil environment? And so, I think what we have in our remit is the ability to help with motivation, we have the ability to help with morale, we can create psychological safety. And the other ingredient that we can do - and this kind of starts from the top - is creating that permission to take time, sort of like Kate was saying, we protect the time to learn in our organisation.

Leaders have to create the permission to take the time, and that starts with things like them, saying, "hey, they're out of office should be, 'oh, you know, what, I'm taking two hours for a meditation class' or their email signature should say things like, 'just because I'm in or emailing at this time doesn't mean I expect a response.'"

There's so many ways that leaders can model protecting time that shows the rest of us it's okay. But obviously, I mean, the fundamental issue is if it's a resourcing issue, then I'm sorry, no amount of wellbeing comms is going to help the fact that you didn't hire enough people for whatever reason, and I just have to take a kind of a hard line on that. Because otherwise, it's just hypocrisy to say like, "oh, we care about your wellbeing but you know, you work 60 hours a week, because we're too cheap to hire two more people."

**Kate Went**

Yeah, so downloading a meditation app is really only throwing a band aid on the problem really, isn't it?

**Lindsay Kohler**

Yeah, it's like "oh, take care of your wellbeing". And we're like, "great, can you hire more people?" And it's like, "oh, no, we just met like, maybe take a yoga class." I guess to reiterate, with something tactical is of all those areas, you can work on motivation, morale, psychological safety, and that's all within the remit of HR and IC. And then the next one to tackle is creating permission. And that means getting your leaders on board. That's so helpful. just hire more people hire more people.

**Kate Went**

That's so true. We've seen in the last, I think, it's the last week Bumble's CEO, giving everybody a paid week off, which is a quite radical step and something that's, you know, within their gift to do. But it's not something that every organisation can do. I like the stand that it's making. And yes, it's good PR. But I think it's a big gesture in terms of like, "we recognise that it has to be more than pizza Fridays, we have to take a big leap into showing demonstrating that we're committed to wellbeing".

Laura is asking a question, "what are your predictions on attrition? Do you think colleagues will start to look for new roles and leave their current organisations? If their employers approach to hybrid working isn't aligned with what works for them? If so, what do you think the long/ short term impact will be?"

**Lindsay Kohler**

So, the first part of your question, yeah, absolutely. Like, we've gotten used to this. We like it. And we know that it's no longer the exception, but it's the norm. So why would I stay in an environment that I don't like, when I know that now the world is my oyster. So yes, I think people will leave. And then what's the second part of the question?

**Kate Went**

"What do you think the long and short term impacts will be?" So, for a start there, we were just saying in the previous question about needing to hire more people, that's even trickier with people leaving.

**Lindsay Kohler**

I think in the short term, it's going to be chaos, as we see lots of people leaving, I think in the long term, it's going to stabilise because people will settle down into companies that align with what they want, because some people want to be in the office every day, some don't. So I think short term, definitely chaos as we all reconfigure it to get into our ideal working environment, but then it should steady out over the long run. But I do think that there also need to be - I know a lot of recruiting teams, you know, we have brochures that we put out about our benefits. I think your flexible work policy needs to be in your recruiting materials so that people know right away if it's worth their time, because if the company said, "Lindsay, you need to be in the office five days a week", I'd say okay. pass, you know, swipe left.

### **Kate Went**

Yeah, I think you're right. I think we're seeing a definite trend to a lot of information people are wanting upfront actually. There's a real feeling that I'm sensing that people just don't want to waste their time. So tell me the salary upfront, tell me your expectations for where you want me to be working, you know, tell me all these things, don't let me get down the path of, you know, writing my application, getting into interview stage, and then finding out. There's a real sense of like, let's just be upfront with what we expect from each other right from the beginning. And I think that's got to be a good thing.

And Melanie is asking, "Where some leaders are not feeling the love of ongoing working from home and feel that their team must be in an office together? Do you have a recommendation for helping them to see the benefits?"

### **Lindsay Kohler**

Yeah, I think that's another question where they need to look inward and ask themselves "why do they feel that way?" Is there a lack of trust? Do they not think their people are getting the job done? And if that's the case, it's like, well, why are they on your team if you don't trust them? So, I think the first part is sort of that inward soul searching to really push them on as to why they feel that way. And I think if they uncover that, you know, you may not even have to push them on the benefit. I think just uncovering their own sticking point and helping them see the light is probably a good way to start.

But then if you want to talk about benefits, I mean, there's so many stats out there, this is where, you know, playing a little fast and loose with statistics will get you everything, you know, cherry pick the statistics, or the productivity. I shouldn't be saying this as a scientist! I'm like "cherry pick the data you like", gosh, this is why we have the replication crisis. But yeah, you know, pick the facts that you like that prove your point. There are so many studies out there about productivity, retention's impacts to the bottom line. If you can't persuade them with emotion and feeling then use cold hard cash. Play loose and fast for statistics - let's pretend I didn't say that guys!

### **Kate Went**

So, we've seen a rollercoaster of motivation and morale since the start of the pandemic, we were all running on adrenaline at the beginning, there was a sort of sense of pulling together and we just got to get through this because we have no idea how long it was going to go on for. So, without that knowledge, we just lived day to

day, week to week pulling through. Then inevitably we got tired. Then we got hopeful. And then more waves, more lockdowns and we burned out en masse. Where do we go from here in terms of motivation and morale?

**Lindsay Kohler**

So motivation? If we unpack it into its component parts, motivation is a mixture of: do we think we have the ability to do something? Because if we don't, then we're not motivated to do it? Do we think that it's going to have an impact? And do we think there's going to be some sort of reward for it? So if we look at those three things together, then I think that can help teams start to develop campaigns. So maybe it's a campaign showing the impact of all of your efforts.

Maybe it's upping rewards, whether it's bonuses, salary, extra days off. And then ability to so if we are just exhausted, are we giving our people the tools to do the job, the training to do the job, the permission to take the space to take care of themselves to do the job? Those are the three factors that you need to play with to improve motivation.

And then morale is really more about how we're feeling in any given moment. And it's also about do we feel? Like, do we sort of align with what our organisation is doing? Do we feel like we're in the right place to be feel like we believe and trust in their future? Because the answer to that is no, then it's gonna be really hard to keep people. But if you want to improve morale, it's really like I said about that instant mood boost. So, it's really reporting out what good in the community are companies doing? What's your organisational purpose? How are we doubling down on that? Even things like producing feel good campaigns, just for the heck of it? It's like, how do we inject some fun, a little life into the day to day. Those little things can really be an instant morale booster. So those would be the levers that you have to play with to boost either of those.

**Kate Went**

I love that. Anything that can bring more positivity in is a good thing.

I'm conscious of time. So, I'm going to ask this last question. "What do you see as the top three issues organisations will have to deal with in the next 12 to 24 months?"

**Lindsay Kohler**

Retention is a big one. It shouldn't surprise you that I'm saying that. I think onboarding. So on the other end of it, right, how are we getting people in and training and getting them to feel like they're part of the team? And I think, related to mental health is purpose, I think people are really, really looking for that individual purpose, and how can they find some of it through the work that they do? Yeah, I guess that would be my three.

**Kate Went**

That great. And are those topics that you're definitely starting to have conversations with your clients about now?

**Lindsay Kohler**

Yeah, I mean, we always have those conversations. It's just the meat of it is different now. You always talk about retention, you always talk about onboarding, but now all the factors and leavers and the environment, it's all different. So it's kind of a different game all of a sudden. So yeah, so we've always been talking about it, but it's just evolved.

**Kate Went**

Yeah, absolutely. I think that's, that's key to every part of the employee experience, every part of internal comms, every part of HR is, it's what we know, but not as we know it. Everything has been upended to some degree. So yeah, I think I think it's going to be a lot of big changes, and lots and lots of micro changes, as well, as we go on over the next 12 to 24 months.

That's brilliant. I think we will wrap it up there. Thank you so much for all those questions, a really nice mix of things for us to dive into there today. Really appreciate it.

I'll be in touch after the session with a link to the recording and transcript and key questions. And hopefully we will see you at another one of our sessions soon. So have a lovely weekend. And thank you so much for joining us today.