

FUTURE OF WORK

04 DO WORKCATIONS
WORSEN BURNOUT?

06 HOW TO MAINTAIN GOOD
LABOUR RELATIONS

12 MANAGING A TRULY
GLOBAL WORKFORCE



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FUTURE OF WORK

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HYBRID WORK

Three tips for developing a hybrid strategy that works

Many businesses are splitting the working week into two days at home and three in the office, or similar. But the best hybrid strategy is to focus on the tasks that need doing, rather than ‘arbitrary’ rules around where people work

Sam Forsdick

As the Covid pandemic recedes and many aspects of life return to normal, the debate around hybrid working has picked up. Despite many companies offering a balance of at-home and office working, there are still some business leaders demanding a full-time return to pre-pandemic habits.

Elon Musk is perhaps one of the highest profile to wade into the debate, demanding in an email to all staff that Tesla workers return to the office full time or resign. Politicians have also suggested that civil servants should be back in the office, with Jacob Rees-Mogg touring Whitehall buildings and publishing a league table of government departments based on how many staff are present.

Other organisations are still experimenting to find the right strategy for them. Lloyds Banking Group’s Work:Lab lead Tom Kegode, who advises the company on the future of work, is not surprised that disagreements remain over hybrid-working arrangements.

Speaking at the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development’s Festival of Work conference in June, he said: “This is not an end state. We haven’t realised the future of work now that we’re starting to work in hybrid ways; that will continue to evolve. Now it’s about how we bring people along on that journey.”

Currently, a three-day office week is the most popular with British workers, according to data from workspace provider IWG, with Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays accounting for the highest office footfall.

However, allowing the day of the week to determine hybrid-working policy is the wrong approach for businesses to take, according to Kegode. “Think about the percentage of time you spend with other people and colleagues, rather than days of the week,” he said.

Gary Cookson, author of the book *HR for Hybrid Working*, agrees. He said: “One thing I would strongly advise against is to be led by days of the week and creating some arbitrary split between two days in the office and three at home. You need to think about the tasks, the team and the way that team needs to work.”

While some firms have focused on worker preferences, Cookson suggests that finding the right working environment for the current task



should be the priority. Although individuals will have their own preferences and circumstances, which can be taken into account, he believes it is about “the task and the need of the task as opposed to the need of the individual”.

A common reason cited by business leaders for a return to the office is the need to rediscover some of the creativity and collaboration that came from spontaneous in-person conversations in the office. But Kegode believes that too many organisations are fixated on finding

“the panacea of productivity and creativity that was the water cooler”.

Coming into the office doesn’t lead to collaboration in and of itself, he pointed out. “It’s actually about community and connection. If we get those two things right, collaboration will be as a byproduct of that.”

Cookson also believes that notions of the ‘spontaneous water-cooler moment’ are a myth. He added: “It was the organisation’s design that allowed that to happen and the structure that brought two or more people together, doing jobs

at the same time in the same place. We need to consciously design for those types of things.”

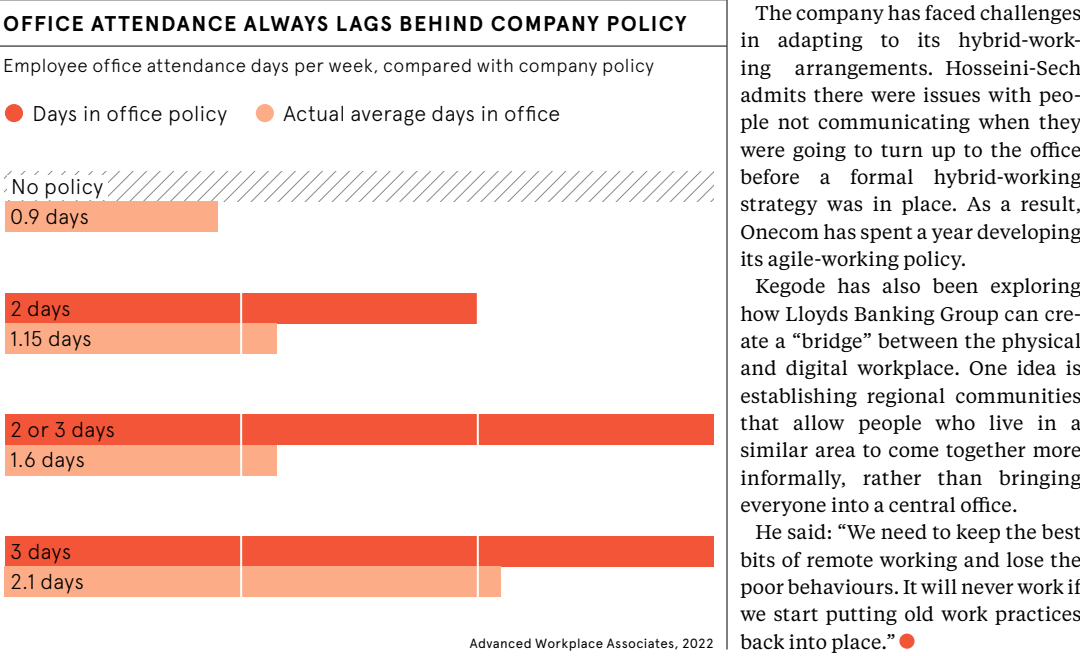
One way business telecoms provider Onecom is trying to do this is by bringing a social element back to the workplace. People and culture director Parysa Hosseini-Sech said the company is “creating opportunities for people to meet up that are slightly more informal”.

She added: “It’s not always got to be about a specific meeting or task, but just creating opportunities for people to get together. It comes back to keeping people engaged and being productive.”

The company has faced challenges in adapting to its hybrid-working arrangements. Hosseini-Sech admits there were issues with people not communicating when they were going to turn up to the office before a formal hybrid-working strategy was in place. As a result, Onecom has spent a year developing its agile-working policy.

Kegode has also been exploring how Lloyds Banking Group can create a “bridge” between the physical and digital workplace. One idea is establishing regional communities that allow people who live in a similar area to come together more informally, rather than bringing everyone into a central office.

He said: “We need to keep the best bits of remote working and lose the poor behaviours. It will never work if we start putting old work practices back into place.” ●





Thomas Barwick via Getty

WORKCATIONS

Going the extra mile for work/leave balance

The work-from-anywhere perk is evolving apace. So-called workcations are set to become increasingly popular, but how can employers ensure that these alleviate, rather than fuel, burnout?

MaryLou Costa

Photos of laptops perched on beaches and mountainsides are popping up all over people’s LinkedIn feeds, illustrating how working from anywhere (WFA) is fast becoming a signature benefit of the new world of work.

The number of adverts for jobs offering remote work on LinkedIn and Indeed in the UK increased by 329% between January 2020 and March 2022, while the number of related searches leapt by 790% over the same period.

In the first quarter of 2022, remote tax consultancy The Work From Anywhere Team published a survey of firms employing more than 2.7 million people around the world. It found that 54% of respondents allowed WFA and a similar percentage believed that this would become a core employee benefit in their industries within a decade. Half of those operating such a policy allowed staff to work from anywhere for more than 60 days a year.

Ecosia is a Berlin-based green search engine that allows its employees to work from anywhere for up to six months each year, although it encourages people to avoid flying wherever possible. Meanwhile, Pleo, a Copenhagen-based fintech unicorn specialising in expenses management, lets its staff work from anywhere indefinitely. Its flexible benefits programme even enables employees to buy an extra 10 days of annual leave.

Ecosia’s chief marketing officer is Hannah Wickes, an Australian who’s planning to work in Scotland and Portugal for the next two months. She sees the allowance as a way of rewarding people who may have been barred by Covid travel restrictions from visiting relatives and friends overseas for the best part of two years.

“This approach means that employees often want to combine their annual leave with a workcation and make the most of their travel

time,” she says. “It’s not uncommon for team members to spend up to two months a year taking advantage of our flexible policy.”

Pleo’s “people person”, Jessie Danyi, is “living and working around the world, one continent at a time”. Having spent April to July this year in Morocco, the South African is currently visiting relatives in Hungary. Next, she plans to return to Africa to spend six weeks on the coast of Kenya.

“To avoid the fear of missing out, you need to know when you’re working and when you’re actually experiencing the location you’ve travelled to

Although the carefully curated LinkedIn posts glamorise the digital-nomad lifestyle, anyone seeking a workcation will need to consider the more mundane realities of WFA. For instance, employees at Ecosia must first run their travel plans past their colleagues, particularly if they’re planning to be in a different time zone.

Numerous practical challenges might deter would-be travellers. Danyi acknowledges that it can take a lot of effort to sort out visas, travel arrangements and suitably equipped accommodation. Finding a decent Wi-Fi connection takes priority over admiring the scenery, for instance. What’s more, you are actually working – meaning that you’re unlikely to get as much time to explore as you might have hoped. Not having a base or a local friendship network can also be exhausting, she admits.

“Travelling with work brings trade-offs on how adventurous you can be,” Danyi says. “If you’re working full time, that leaves mornings, evenings and weekends, of course. Sometimes, if you’ve had a busy week, you just want to watch Netflix and catch up on your sleep. But maybe you need to drive to the nearest city to buy an ethernet cable because your Zoom calls are lagging, so you end up using your weekend for admin.”

While she was in Morocco, Danyi was able to gain a deeper appreciation of the country’s culture, while also finding enough time for some surfing. Overall, she believes that the rewards of her experience there outweighed any downsides.

Workcations might also be the only method by which self-employed people, especially entrepreneurs starting a new business, can get away. Rachel Allison, who founded communications agency Axe & Saw in London in March 2021, recently spent a fortnight working from an Airbnb in Porto, where she enjoyed the local cuisine and also went surfing.

Allison admits that it was tricky to get the balance right initially. But, once she managed to “nail it”, she reaped the benefits.

“In the first week, I was putting in my normal hours – on Zoom calls all morning, during lunchtime and even at 5pm. That left me feeling frustrated and frazzled,” Allison admits. “But I was keen to make things work. I became aware that usually there’s not so much going on from Monday to Wednesday, so those were the times to get my head down. Once I’d cracked that, my productivity rocketed.”

Is a workcation an adequate replacement for annual leave? Not for Allison, who says that her time in Portugal “allowed me a rest during an extremely busy period for my business, which is still new. But a proper holiday would undoubtedly still be the best way to recharge.”

Danyi believes that firms embracing WFA will see more of their employees adopting a partial digital-nomad lifestyle that follows the seasons. Brazilian entrepreneur Marcos Carvalho agrees, predicting that more people will become autonomous workers in decentralised

- Leading cities for ‘workcations’**
- Based on 10 factors, including internet speed, monthly price of a flat and hours of sunshine
1. Bangkok, Thailand.
 2. New Delhi, India.
 3. Lisbon, Portugal.
 4. Barcelona, Spain.
 5. Buenos Aires, Argentina.
 6. Budapest, Hungary.
 7. Mumbai, India.
 8. Istanbul, Turkey.
 9. Bucharest, Romania.
 10. Phuket, Thailand.
 11. Chiang Mai, Thailand.
 12. Madrid, Spain.
 13. Jakarta, Indonesia.

companies, giving themselves more time to pursue their passions.

If travel is one of these and you also have young children, how to care for them properly while you’re working abroad adds to the list of challenges. Carvalho co-founded Boundless Life in September 2021 to address that very issue. His business offers accommodation, childcare/education and co-working spaces in countries such as Portugal, Greece and Italy.

While Boundless Life does attract corporate nine-to-fivers, it has built a significant following among self-employed people and entrepreneurs who share Allison’s discomfort about leaving their nascent businesses unattended.

“Being with us helps them to feel they’re in the right place to achieve a better balance with their families, while giving them more creativity to direct towards their work,” Carvalho says. “That’s why entrepreneurs are attracted to this lifestyle.”

While Carvalho is comfortable with the fact that his own lifestyle regularly blurs work and leisure travel, Wickes, Danyi and Allison are all conscious that a workcation could do the opposite of its intended purpose and actually increase the risk of burnout.

It’s therefore crucial to establish strict work/life boundaries while taking one, according to Rowena Hennigan, an Irish national who runs her training and coaching business, RoRemote, from Zaragoza in north-east Spain.

“Exhibiting self-discipline in your work, downtime and wellbeing matters even more in this context,” she stresses. “To avoid the fear of missing out, you need to know when you’re working and when you’re actually experiencing the location you’ve travelled to.”

Hennigan believes that unrealistic expectations and blurred boundaries will inevitably cause tension, making the experience unbalanced and, ultimately, counterproductive. Being clear about when you’re an employee and when you’re a traveller, she recommends, is the key to getting the maximum mileage from a workcation. ●

The skills revolution: shaping the future of work

Skills have become the new currency for organisations that want to remain competitive in a rapidly changing world and build a productive, future-fit workforce

Businesses are feeling the pressure to transform their ways of working in an increasingly complex world.

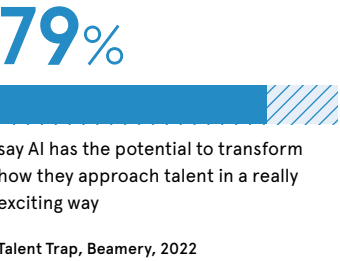
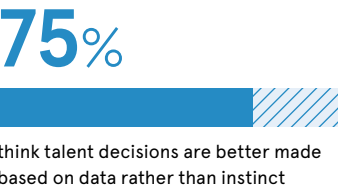
The pandemic accelerated the shift towards digital and automated technology, and provided employees with more flexibility and freedom when it comes to how and where they work.

The intensifying climate crisis has sharpened minds around how to operate businesses more sustainably, and supply chain disruptions have raised the prospects of a shift away from globalised trade.

Fundamental transformation

“Every enterprise is going through a major transformation, and the skills their workforces are going to need in the next five to 10 years are fundamentally different to the ones they have today,” says Ben Slater, senior vice-president of marketing at talent lifecycle management platform Beamery. “They may not know what those future job titles will sound or look like, but they do know the skills they will need. As such, the process around recruitment, talent development and talent planning for all firms must be centred around present and future skills rather than the specific job titles of the past.”

Those skills range from digital programming and sustainability and environmental management, to emotional



intelligence and written and verbal communications, to name just a few.

Given increased competition and the emergence of skills gaps – from basic digital knowledge to mechanical engineering and truck driving – the chase for that much-needed future talent is heating up.

Organisations therefore need to understand how they should obtain these precious skills – do they hire new people, or develop their own employees? The answer is, of course, a bit of both.

Identify and hire for potential

Slater says the first step businesses need to take is to identify what specific skills their business may need to compete in the future, and whether they already lie within their current workforce.

To aid them, employers must replace out-of-date processes around talent identification. “The way people make decisions around talent and employees is largely based on a set of heuristics tied to where someone was born, where they were educated, and their experience,” explains Slater.

Instead, he argues, hiring should be much more personalised, focusing on the skills every individual has today, and the potential they have to be something different tomorrow.

This allows companies to deploy people more effectively across key projects, and understand where the need to invest in the upskilling or reskilling of workers.

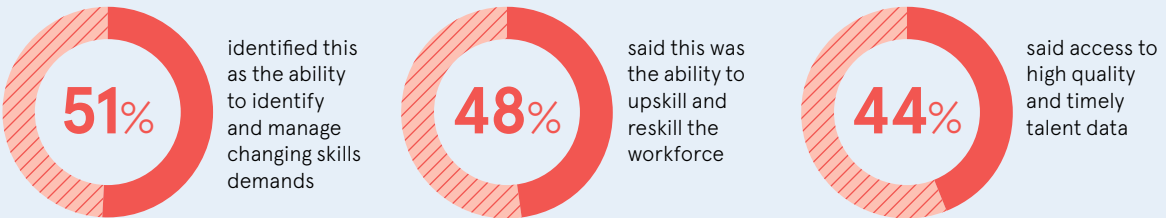
AI-powered analytics

Beamery – which works with a ‘who’s who’ of Fortune 500 companies – is tackling this shortfall by utilising AI technology.

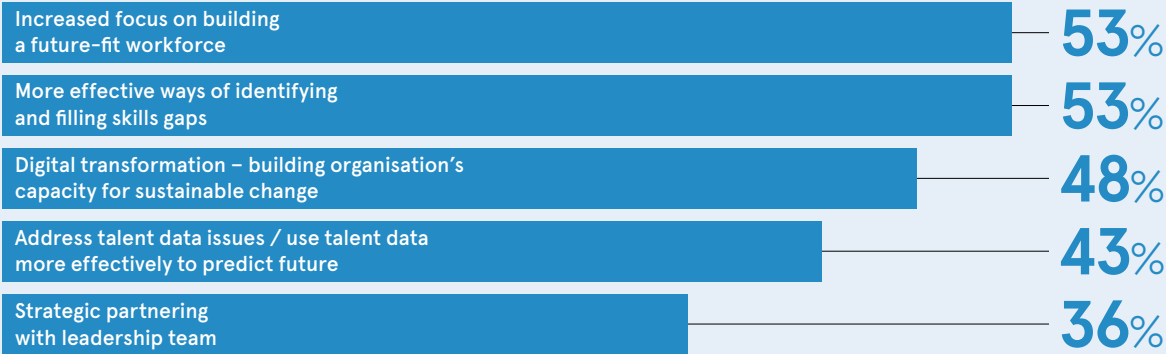
Its talent lifecycle management platform helps its customers discover more about the skills of their existing employees as well as potential external candidates, and even alumni who have left the business. Beamery calls it “hiring for potential”. Using AI to enrich data and enhance the analytics, it helps organisations identify and engage internal and external candidates with the right skills and potential to become high performers in the future, and stay with the business for the long term.

“Our AI-powered technology gives organisations a clear understanding of what someone’s skills are today. Moreover, based on those talents and their experiences – such as the industries they have spent time in and previous companies they have worked for – it uncovers the skills they are likely to be able to learn,” explains Slater. “It allows organisations to see the pockets of skills

CHARACTERISTICS OF A TALENT-FIRST ORGANISATION



TOP FIVE WAYS BUSINESS LEADERS SAY HR COULD DO MORE TO SUPPORT THE BUSINESS STRATEGICALLY



Talent Trap, Beamery 2022

“We’ve moved on from this linear concept of a job for life. Rather than a career ladder, people are seeking a career jungle gym

they have and make decisions around the learning and development opportunities they can offer to help upskill their existing talent. It also allows them to make decisions around where they need to recruit externally if there are still gaps in their future skill needs.”

The platform can also help organisations identify the skills in their current group of high achievers, and match those skills with candidates on the database.

Engage and retain talent with personalised career mapping

Beamery also produces an AI-powered career map for candidates, showing them exactly what the organisation can offer them as they seek to build up their skills base.

“It is like a Google Map for their career at the organisation. It allows businesses to offer a very personalised experience to people visiting their career websites, at recruitment events, career fairs and those already in their organisation,” Slater says. “The map can give candidates and managers a clearer understanding of the types of jobs they are capable of doing and can apply for, as well as learning and development opportunities.”

Organisations today also need to be considering their alumni network and look for intelligent ways to re-engage and recruit top talent. “We can help businesses retain relationships with past employees. They can keep track of the new skills and knowledge that alumni have gained elsewhere, and recommend roles back at the old firm which might be a good fit,” Slater states. In doing so, organisations have unlocked another pool of top candidates for future roles in order to meet business demands.

‘Netflix career experience’

Slater believes that the Beamery approach is beneficial for post-pan-demic workers seeking a more consumer-style personalisation around their career and skill base: a kind of ‘Netflix for your neurons’.

“We’ve moved on from this linear concept of a job for life. Rather than a career ladder, people are seeking a career jungle gym, exploring new skills and trying different types of roles. They also want their different styles to be acknowledged: there are those who enjoy collaborative working and those who seek deep thinking time. By using a more personalised approach, you can develop a very holistic picture of who someone is and how they might be successful in your company.”

In short, the great resignation phenomenon – figures from the most recent Beamery Talent Index, a quarterly pulse survey of the talent market, suggests 53% are looking to move jobs in the next 12 months – can be met head on by HR managers.

“By focusing on skills and development, organisations can increase tenure, engagement and productivity,” Slater says. “You can get the best out of your employees and build your workforce of the future.”

For more information please visit beamery.com



INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Give peace a chance

There has been more industrial strife in the UK over the past year than we’ve seen in a generation. What’s the best way to prevent a breakdown in employment relations?

Cath Everett

Wherever you look in the UK these days, it seems that there’s a group of workers who are either on strike or threatening to take some form of industrial action.

Travel disruption has been widespread as the country experiences its most significant rail strikes for a generation. Meanwhile, public sector workers are becoming increasingly restless as the cost-of-living crisis worsens and their pay offers fail to match inflation. Such is the scale of discontent that it’s even leading to talk of a general strike.

To exacerbate matters, the Bank of England’s warnings of a long and deep recession starting from Q4 2022 suggest that the situation is unlikely to improve for at least the next year.

Kevin Rowan is head of organising, services and learning at the Trades Union Congress. While he believes that headlines referring to

a summer of discontent have been “hyperbolic”, he does cite anecdotal evidence from both the unions and the government’s Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) indicating that the number of active disputes, mainly concerning pay, is on the rise.

“Without question, there has been more industrial action in the past 12 months than we’ve seen in a generation,” Rowan says.

This upsurge in militancy has come as no surprise to David Liddle, founder and CEO of conflict-resolution consultancy The TCM Group.

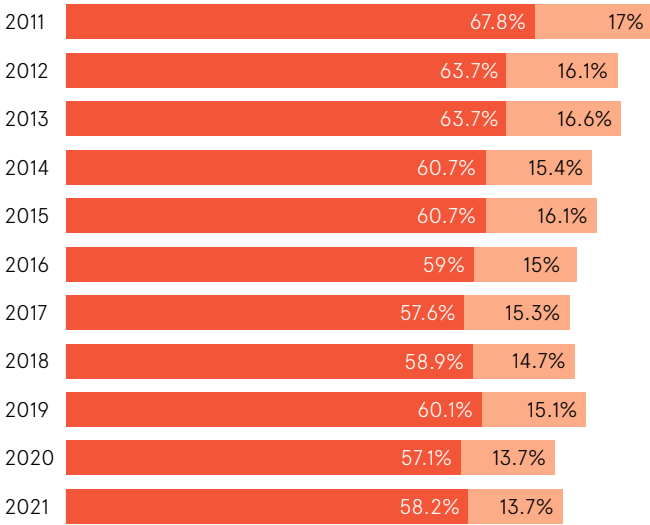
In his view, the economic fallout from the Brexit vote and then the Covid crisis had been causing a “slow build-up of tension” in the years leading to Q4 2022.

“The cost-of-living crisis and the inflationary pressure on wages have simply brought these structural challenges into sharp relief,” he says.

UNION COVERAGE IN THE UK

Share of UK employees whose pay and conditions were agreed between an employer and trade union

Public sector Private sector



GOV.UK, 2022



Guy Smallman via Getty Images

Liddle also believes that many employers had been taking good industrial relations for granted – for instance, by neglecting to renew long-standing partnership agreements – which has compounded the problem. Some companies have no such deals in place to update.

These agreements are important because they set the ground rules for how business leaders and employee representatives, including unions, interact in both good times and bad. They will typically cover matters such as how often the parties should meet and how disagreements between them should be addressed.

As Mark Grimley, group director of people and corporate services at the government of Jersey, puts it: “If you haven’t set the foundations and the day-to-day things aren’t working, how are you going to deal with the trickier stuff?”

Equally important in stopping discontent from turning into a dispute is ensuring that effective communication channels exist between front-line staff and senior executives. These channels enable information to be shared openly, which in turn fosters mutual understanding, trust and respect.

“If the unions are coming to you with an issue and it’s the first you’ve heard of it, you have a problem, as it shows that you’re not in touch with your front line,” Grimley warns. “In effect, you’ve outsourced your engagement with staff to the unions. They can play a very positive role. But, if you’ve abdicated responsibility to them, they’ll have that mandate without reservation.”

Any failure to build constructive relationships with either employees or their representatives is unlikely to engender trust in the leadership team, he adds.

“If you’re having to come out of your gilded cage for the first time to

The UK has been hit by the biggest wave of industrial action in decades

face workers in a dispute, no one will listen to you,” Grimley says.

Trust also forms the bedrock of effective talks. As Liddle notes: “If you’re negotiating during a dispute and the parties are suspicious of each other’s motivations, they’ll feel as if their backs are against the wall. Then positions will tend to get entrenched.”

The best approach to a negotiation, therefore, is to be accessible, open and honest. Keep the dialogue constructive and professional, rather than pointing the finger of blame and making things personal.

Another secret to mastering the art of negotiation is to treat the process as if it were a high-level chess match, which means ensuring that your players (authorised senior decision-makers) are well prepared.

“Chess masters will plan carefully, be clear about the positions they want to take and study their opponents so that nothing they do is likely to surprise them. But don’t think that you have to ‘win,’” Grimley says. “Effective negotiation is about finding the positives in the situation for everyone.”

For example, after listening carefully to the other side’s position and understanding what is of most and least value to employees, it may be

possible to take a more creative approach than simply offering a percentage pay increase. You could offer extra annual leave in return for certain productivity improvements, for instance.

But executives must also be prepared to walk away from the negotiating table – without issuing ultimatums, which never work – rather than do a deal at any cost, according to Grimley. And that’s even in cases where industrial action is likely.

“This doesn’t signify failure. What you’re saying by doing that is: ‘I’ve reached my limit and can’t continue,’” he says. “There shouldn’t be a blame game. It’s simply about going away and allowing everyone to rethink their approach.”

One way to avoid any potential deadlock is to hold informal discussions with someone influential from the other side. Another is to involve a senior executive who has been held in reserve but who could bring new momentum to proceedings. A third option is to bring in an experienced third party, such as Acas, to mediate and get people back to the table.

Ultimately, Rowan says, the only real way to end any dispute is to “talk to each other and keep communicating”. This is ideally done out of the public eye, as “I’ve never seen any conflict resolved through the media”.

Once a resolution has been reached, though, it’s important for everyone involved to learn from the experience and try to repair any damage to the relationship.

“Most people, whether they’re employees or employers, want good relations, so it’s important to explore what went wrong and consider how to prevent a recurrence,” Rowan stresses. “But having a regular dialogue and tuning into each other’s situations will also go a long way towards solving any problems.” ●

“If the unions are coming to you with an issue and it’s the first you’ve heard of it, you have a problem, as it shows that you’re not in touch with your front line



Invest in net-zero skills to meet net-zero ambitions

Employees must embed net-zero thinking into all projects, argues **Keren Deront**, European business lead at Project Management Institute

Climate change is no longer the elephant in the room – yet while the goals are clear, there remains uncertainty about the best route to tackle it.

In April, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stated it is “now or never” to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

In the interim, global governments and businesses of all sizes, and in all sectors, are evaluating whether they have the resources or talent to make their own net-zero ambitions a reality.

But to turn net-zero aspiration into action, businesses require net-zero skills. This means bringing individuals together that possess the right combination of sustainability expertise, project management capabilities and business acumen.

Defining net-zero skills

So, what do I mean by ‘net-zero skills’? Naturally, a degree of sustainability literacy is essential. This can be as basic as understanding the impact of recycling, or more advanced in the form of carbon accountability – one of the most desired skills on the job market today.

Businesses need their people to understand how their own day-to-day actions impact the bigger picture and help or hinder progress towards climate goals.

This is the most critical global project for a generation and the road to net zero will be most smoothly

travelled by those with strong project management capabilities.

Project management is at the core of net-zero skills. From stakeholder engagement and risk management to budgeting and success measurement, project managers have the fundamentals required to integrate sustainability into the organisational fabric.

Equally, those managing projects in other business areas – such as IT – must also consider from day one the environmental impact of their processes and deliverables. To make tangible progress towards climate goals, the whole workforce must pull in the same direction.

Refreshing employee training

A business-wide focus on sustainability can only be achieved effectively with a skills refresh. Net zero is a modern challenge and brings new demands for skills that may not have been considered even 10 years ago.

At PMI, we encourage partners to follow our Talent Triangle when evaluating the skills of their employees. As you can see below, this is also applicable to developing qualities that can enable progress towards net zero:

• **Business acumen.** A suitable understanding of an organisation’s sustainability goals to recognise how their day-to-day role can impact real-world climate challenges.

• **Powerful relationships.** Deploying soft skills – or ‘power skills’ as we label them – to build and maintain stakeholder relationships and ensure green projects continue to make headway throughout turbulent periods.

• **Navigating new ways of working.** Ensuring net-zero progress is not hindered by external challenges or volatility – such as the switch to working from home. Progress can be made in any environment.

Businesses can benefit from implementing lifelong learning practices; for example, consistently upskilling or reskilling employees of any seniority. This refreshes knowledge and adapts them to the latest challenges.

But this can no longer fall into the ‘one for next year’ category. At PMI, our PMP Certifications can form the first step in optimising an employee’s project skills. These foundations are ever more important, especially as our Talent Gap

“A business-wide focus on sustainability can only be achieved effectively with a skills refresh

report indicates employers will need to fill nearly 2.3 million new project-oriented roles each year until 2030.

Engage young people now

While this process is applicable to every level of seniority, it is next-generation talent – those just starting their careers – who will be responsible for leading businesses through critical points of the net-zero journey over the coming decades.

With green values now being promoted from primary school age upwards, young people are developing a sustainability-first mindset that will help them tackle climate challenges throughout their careers.

This passion must also be layered with the right skills. By applying the Talent Triangle to junior career development, leaders can build changemakers – those with the skills to turn ideas into reality – throughout their businesses.

When this process aligns with a communicative culture to encourage employees of all levels to share their ideas, younger workers can make active contributions to the wider climate goals of the business.

Additionally, with sustainability talent at a premium on the job market, a new approach to skills acquisition is required. A LinkedIn global report published in February predicted the desire to hire in green jobs will outstrip supply over the next five years. Businesses can get ahead by pivoting to create talent internally.

Learn from past challenges

A key practice we encourage at PMI is to learn lessons from past projects – whether successful or not – and use them to improve processes.

While net zero is a unique challenge, we can certainly learn from how businesses tackled digital transformation projects during the pandemic and urgently elevated the digital literacy of their employees.

Overnight, the global workforce was able to transition to remote working and deploy the necessary technology to maintain productivity.

This is the kind of urgency net zero demands. Cross-industry collaboration was an invaluable tool in addressing digital challenges and we witnessed large organisations working with SMEs to develop and rollout solutions to benefit all.

When coordinating sustainability projects, managers should consider thinking laterally and opening their doors to industry peers in pursuit of a collective goal. Net zero is a global issue – it cannot be tackled by organisations working in silos.

Green skills and project skills are no longer separate for businesses looking to progress towards climate goals.

At PMI, we believe the below set of values are the next steps towards embedding sustainable practices into your business:

• **Climate skills at the core.** Integrating green skills into talent acquisition and internal upskilling programmes will ensure organisations develop sustainability knowledge that’s embedded at all levels, avoiding silos and building a green-first culture.

• **Climate in the culture.** An organisation’s overall health depends on the health of the environmental and social system in which it operates. All employees, at all levels, should be encouraged to suggest climate change initiatives.

• **Climate in collaboration.** Learn from different industries through collaboration. This also includes working with competitors for legitimate net-zero progress, pooling resources, capacity and skills.

Read more about PMI, and how we can support you in deploying project management principles to address your business challenges, at pmi.org

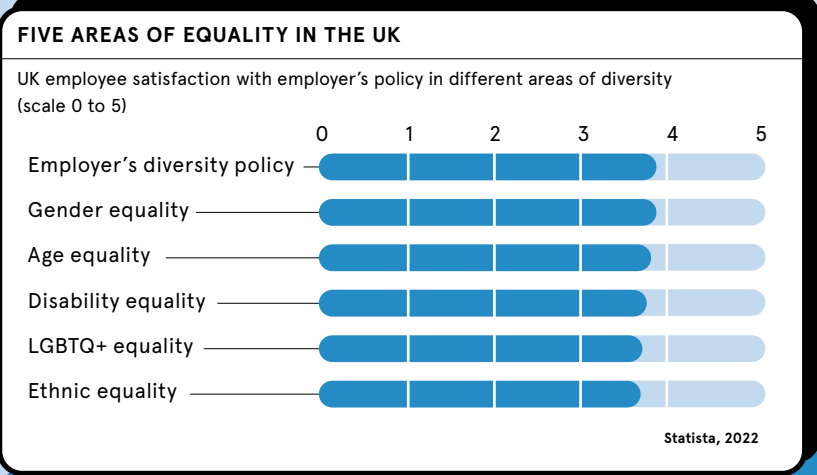
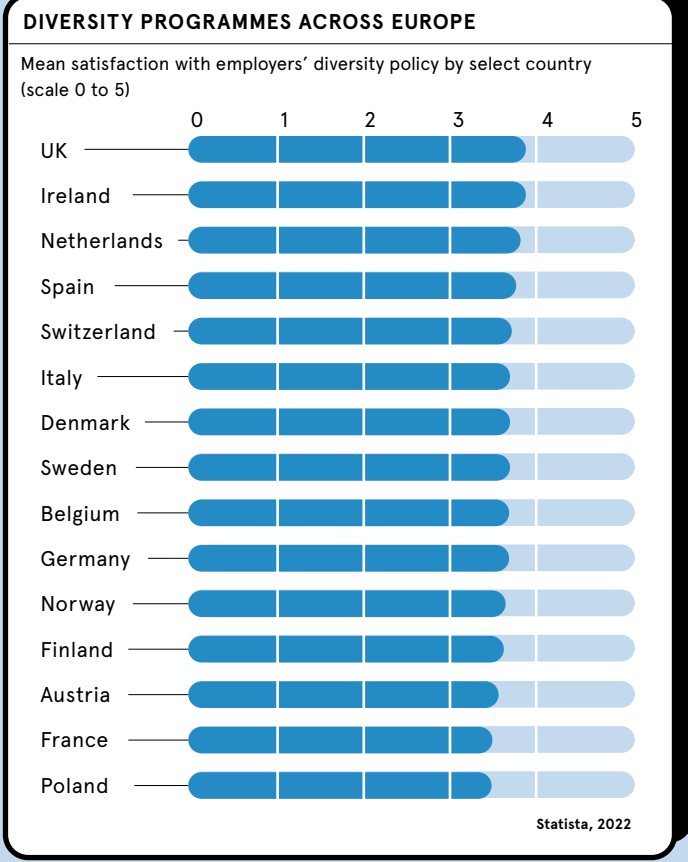
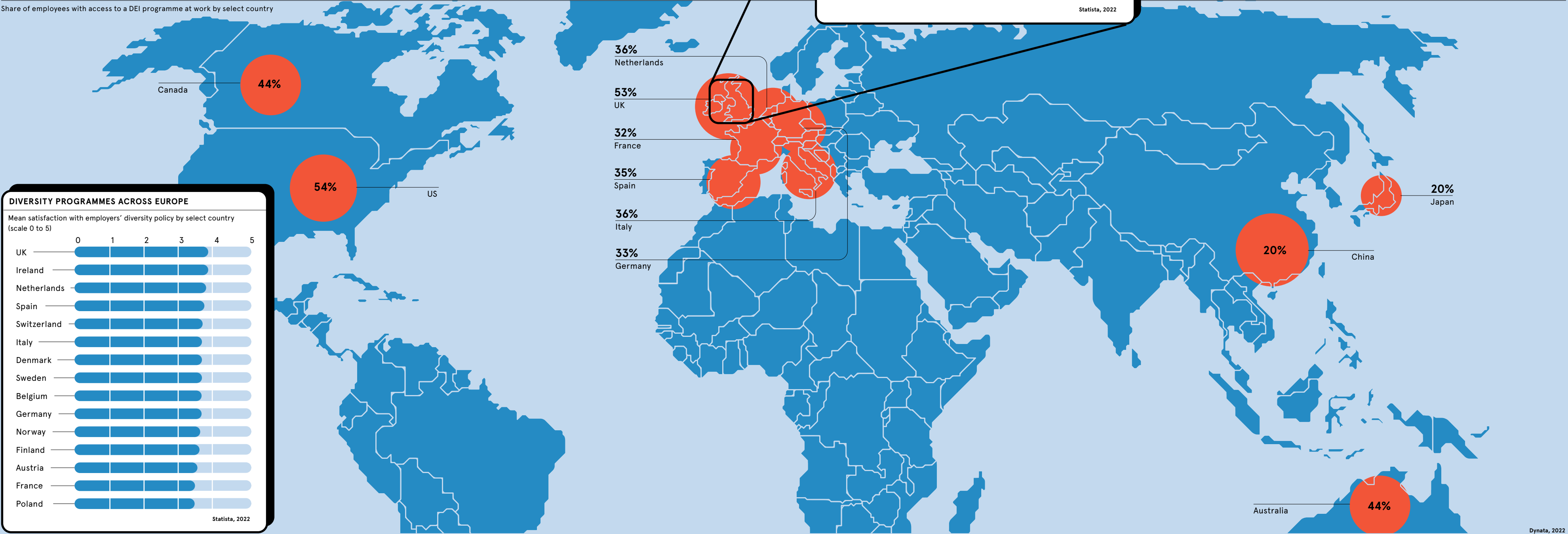


DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Diversity is a cornerstone of progress in the workplace, and there are various business cases to be made in support of getting under-represented groups into the workforce. But most importantly, when left unaddressed, workplace diversity gaps perpetuate a cycle of inequality. That makes addressing diversity an imperative for forward-thinking firms

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI) PROGRAMMES WORLDWIDE

Share of employees with access to a DEI programme at work by select country



61.8%

of UK employees believe workplace diversity has improved

Measure Protocol, 2021

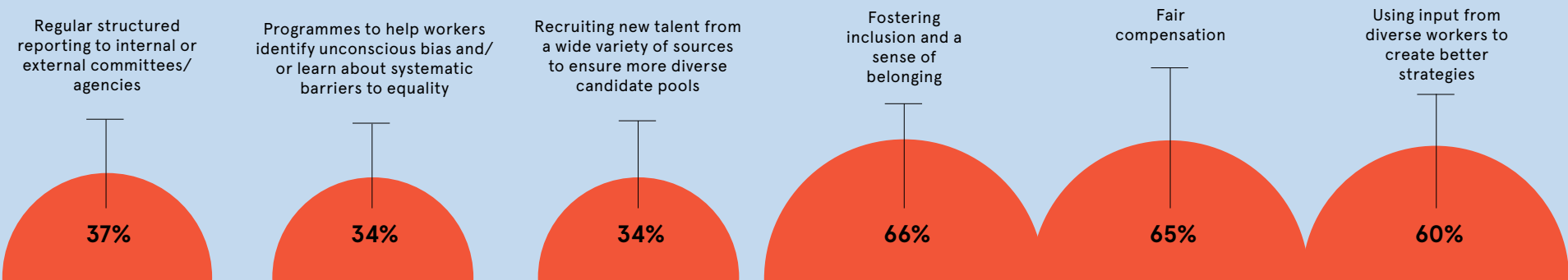
2 in 3

job candidates seek companies that have a diverse workforce

Glassdoor, 2021

DEI PROGRAMME GOALS

Most important elements of a DEI programme for employees worldwide



DEI PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

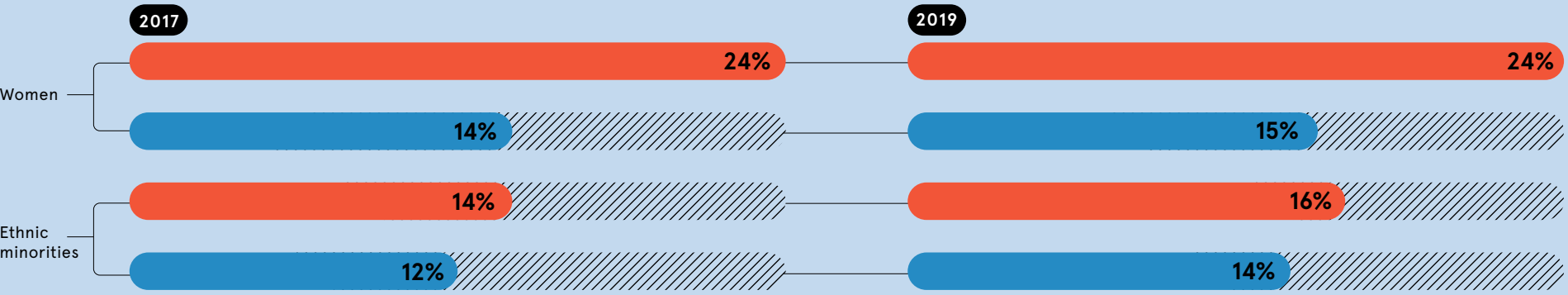
Most important outcomes of a DEI programme for employees worldwide

Dynata, 2022

DIVERSITY AMONG THE LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN STAGNANT

Share of representation in leadership teams in the US and UK

McKinsey, 2020



APPRENTICESHIPS

Vocation, vocation, vocation

Apprenticeships have long been seen as poor substitutes for university courses, but that attitude is changing. Work-based programmes leading to degree-level qualifications could be the key to solving the UK’s skills crisis

Morag Cuddeford-Jones

Tens of thousands of A-level students missed out on their first-choice university courses this year. Competition for places in the clearing system was tougher than it has been in living memory, while even high achievers had their dreams of studying medicine and dentistry crushed. Only 16% of applications for these popular courses were accepted.

Even though employers view some degrees as being of limited value in the workplace, the burden of undergraduate debt keeps growing. The government has estimated that university students in last year’s intake will each borrow about £45,800 on average before they graduate. So it’s hardly surprising that the received wisdom in the UK – that university is the natural progression for most able students – is now being challenged.

Rising to fill the gap are apprenticeships. Once dismissed by students, parents and employers as inferior to degrees, work-based vocational programmes that culminate in a degree-level qualification are becoming more popular. Could the UK finally be losing some of its academic snobbery?

Employers are certainly coming to view apprenticeships as an effective way to meet the evolving skills needs of their fast-changing workplaces, especially if they can get involved in designing such schemes. They include Formula One team McLaren Racing.

“Apprenticeships are now being developed by industry to ensure that they are relevant to today’s technology and practices, and to align them with future skills requirements,” says McLaren’s head of diversity, early careers and development, Kate O’Hara-Hatchley.

“Companies can therefore create unique apprenticeship programmes that, in combination with the

Apprentices add significant benefits to their teams through fresh, innovative ideas that may challenge industry norms



Hinterhaus Productions via Getty

apprenticeship standard, will build true home-grown talent.”

Many companies offer apprenticeship schemes running from level 3, which is equivalent to two A-level passes, through to level 7, which is considered comparable to a master’s degree in disciplines such as accounting. They also support a learning path that leads to the many accreditations required by certain sectors. Taking insurance as an example, Lloyd’s of London offers a level 4 professional apprenticeship, which is an important step towards the Chartered Insurance Institute’s diploma qualification. It also offers a level 6 digital and technology solutions professional standard, which incorporates a BSc honours degree.

Meanwhile, Vodafone offers qualifications at levels 3, 4 and 6 in fields such as software engineering, data analytics and network engineering. Leading Vodafone UK’s apprenticeship schemes is its talent and capability manager, Asha Jagatia. These schemes are “fundamental”, she says, given that the company often finds it difficult to recruit people

with “business-critical skills” in a tight labour market.

“Our programmes are key to bringing in diverse talent. They result in apprentices who are fully fledged members of their teams and have real responsibility,” Jagatia says.

The idea that apprenticeships produce employees who tend to have a little more initiative than the average graduate recruit, who will have spent years steeped in academia, is widely accepted among employers that take on apprentices. “The great benefit of apprenticeships is that participants don’t just learn technical skills. They build professional skills and work-readiness at the same time, creating well-rounded talent,” O’Hara-Hatchley says.

Sara Gomez, chief people officer at Lloyd’s of London, agrees. “Most of our apprentices are from Gen Z. They’re often more interested in, and informed about, sociopolitical, technological and environmental issues than

previous generations were at their age, and they want to make a tangible impact as soon as possible.”

Enabling apprentices to sample academia (many schemes require them to attend college or university one or two days a week) while also earning a salary is a key benefit of such programmes. Employers report that participants view establishing some financial security rather than running up debt on a full-time degree course as a big plus. But the ability to establish their own ‘employee brand’ early on is another major attraction to apprentices.

Ian Levers, technical excellence portfolio manager at engineering consultancy Mott MacDonald, describes how one of his apprentices has grasped the opportunity. “Apprenticeships really are what you make of them,” he says. “Our apprentice has done exactly this, taking on new challenges,

The great benefit of apprenticeships is that participants don’t just learn technical skills. They build professional skills and work-readiness at the same time

developing herself and raising her profile on LinkedIn to grow her internal and external networks. She was named Apprentice of the Year 2021 by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors – clear evidence of what’s achievable with a growth and learning mindset.”

Levers adds that apprentices are also important in bringing new perspectives to the business, which can learn from them too. “They add significant benefits to their teams through fresh, innovative ideas that may challenge industry norms.”

While there has been a significant increase in the number of students exploring this route instead of university, it is widely agreed that apprenticeships are proving particularly useful in both attracting people who have traditionally been excluded from higher education and diversifying the talent pool generally.

“Given that university isn’t an option for everyone owing to the cost, apprenticeships are an inclusive route,” O’Hara-Hatchley says.

Her company runs a diversity, equity and inclusion programme called McLaren Racing Engage. This is an alliance with the Women’s Engineering Society, EqualEngineers, Creative Access and The Smallpeice Trust to attract people from under-represented groups into the motorsport industry through long-term investments in grassroots initiatives and schemes such as mentoring programmes.

Gomez reveals that 30% of Lloyd’s intake this September will be people from ethnic minorities (“above the market average”), while 27% will be applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds. This is not pure altruism, she stresses, adding: “We need curious minds from diverse backgrounds, so we’re looking for people with fresh

perspectives and the confidence to share them.”

A range of government support packages are on offer for employers seeking to provide apprenticeships. Chief among these is the apprenticeship levy, which is funded by a 0.5% tax on the wage bills of companies with annual payrolls above £3m.

The levy has changed how HR teams “deploy their talent strategies”, according to Gomez. “It can be used to attract and retain talent, providing a breadth of opportunities across a range of fields. It can be used to help entry-level talent develop both soft and technical skills, while also increasing the function-specific expertise and future management skills of existing staff.”

But, as with many government schemes, the system does not yet work as smoothly as it should. Critics complain that its complexity is deterring employers from participating. More than £3.3bn in levy funding has been returned unused to the Treasury since 2019.

And what of all the disappointed would-be students of medicine and dentistry? Surely apprenticeship schemes can’t compete with university courses there? Not so. In July, Health Education England announced a new medical degree apprenticeship offering the same standard of education as that provided by a university course.

Welcoming the development, Jennifer Coupland, CEO of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, neatly sums up the rise of apprenticeships in recent years.

“For many, seeing that an apprentice can become a doctor will be a big surprise, but employers are driving a change in the way we think about skills in this country,” she said. “Not everyone’s journey to career success has to be the same.” ●

The tipping point for women at work

A new landscape of hybrid work means businesses must address a need for community and networking to close the gender gap or risk losing their most valuable resource

It’s no secret that championing women in the workplace brings tangible business benefits. But, as organisations make the shift towards hybrid working models, women’s needs may be underestimated.

Despite a proven ability to deliver professionally within male-dominated sectors, many female employees still struggle, particularly in leadership roles. The ability to be heard, influence change, and advocate for their well-being continues to be a significant stumbling block.

“Increasing levels of burnout and a lack of tailored support when it comes to women’s progression is leading to decreasing job satisfaction. This is all amplified by a disrupted work-life balance and a lack of internal network, as our ways of working have become increasingly hybridised” warns Ella Vize, head of academy and learning programmes at AllBright.

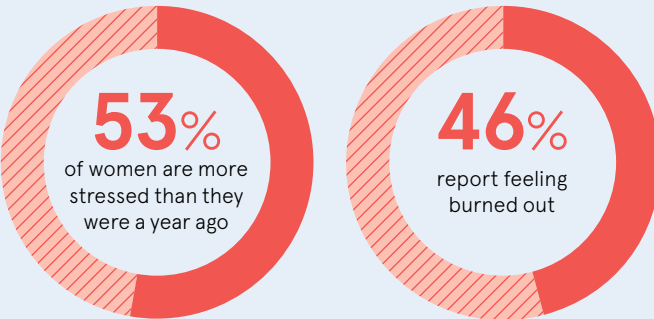
Vize describes a Venn diagram that converges on what many female employees view as a problem for which resignation is the only clear solution. If left unchecked, businesses risk stoking the flames of the Great Resignation, or the ‘quiet quitting’ phenomenon.

“On the flip side, we’re seeing businesses who invest in women’s upskilling and community-building, and who understand the unique challenges women can face really turn things around. Organisations have to wake up to it and commit to change, or they’re going to lose a huge portion of their workforce” Vize continues.

Deloitte’s Women@Work 2022: A Global Outlook report found widespread burnout among female staff post-pandemic. A need to seek out flexible working patterns has meant leaving otherwise established roles, with 40% of women actively looking for a new role due to burnout. As of 2022, only 10% plan to stay with their current employer for more than five years.

Remote working has meant that many women have lost vital support networks. There is a demand for

BUSINESSES STRUGGLE TO RETAIN FEMALE EMPLOYEES UNDER HYBRID WORKING MODELS



Deloitte, 2022

businesses to help women connect, upskill and thrive, in person and online. “The ability to get together and share ideas and advice, to know that there are groups of people you can reach out to, is a very powerful tool in helping women rise to the top,” says Vize. “In 2022, the hybrid working model has a great many benefits but one of the drawbacks has been a difficulty in re-establishing those networks.”

A significant cohort of women between the ages of 45 and 55 are increasingly vocal about the lack of support from their employers. Making up the largest workforce demographic, these women are likely to be highly experienced, occupying vital senior leadership roles. The threat is clear, a great resignation here could prove disastrous for business stability.

Many companies are starting to take an active role in supporting this key group, looking to suppliers such as AllBright to deliver formalised training and community resources to support their female workforce in every area of the business.

The newly launched AllBright Alliance is a global coalition that brings these businesses together. Members receive access to exclusive research, insights

and events as well as workshops, membership packages and community-building opportunities, tailored to championing women in the workplace. “AllBright is all about driving change through upskilling, networks and community, and AllBright Alliance brings those things together for our partner organisations. Employers who join will be part of a powerful community – it’s an opportunity to foster real, lasting change”, Vize concludes.

This investment allows businesses to meet their goals for success and equity whilst providing stability for women and the organisations they work for. Members will also be entitled to the ‘BrightMark’ certification, signifying their commitment to current and prospective employees. A badge of honour in the ongoing war for talent.

To find out more about certification, training, and membership opportunities, visit allbrightcollective.com/allbrightalliance

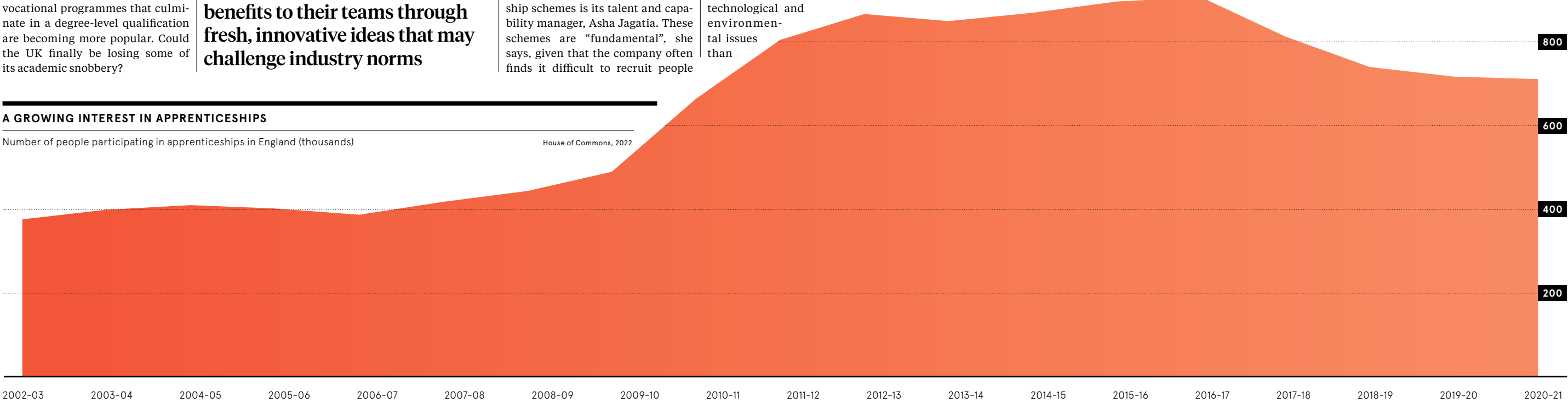
ALLBRIGHT.

Organisations have to commit to change or they’re going to lose a huge portion of their workforce

A GROWING INTEREST IN APPRENTICESHIPS

Number of people participating in apprenticeships in England (thousands)

House of Commons, 2022





Work-from-anywhere policies have enabled firms to recruit the most talented people, no matter where in the world they’re based. But getting the best from these remote workers is a different challenge

Chris Stokel-Walker

The world of employment has rarely seen such tumult in such a short period. The pandemic has upended the job market and forced employers to adopt practices that many would have dismissed out of hand before 2020 – particularly remote working. For some, that has meant adopting a hybrid approach, allowing employees to work a day or two at home each week. For others, it has required a far more profound shift. Companies that have embraced a fully remote model have expanded the pool of talent available to them, competing for candidates who may not be based in the same country as their employer, let alone within a commutable radius of head office. Indeed, the emergence of the work-from-anywhere policy has attracted great interest among

white-collar workers who were freed from their daily commutes during the Covid lockdowns. The number of so-called digital nomads – people working remotely while travelling – rose from 7.3 million in the US before the Covid crisis to 15.5 million in 2021, according to research by HR software specialist MBO Partners. If your organisation has decided that building a distributed workforce that spans several time zones is worthwhile, it’s clearly not just a case of ensuring that everyone has a stable internet connection. There are several hurdles to overcome to assemble a global dream team and run it smoothly, although these are far from insurmountable. “British enterprises that employ people who are living and working overseas must consider a raft of potential non-UK obligations,” says

Lee McIntyre-Hamilton, tax partner at Keystone Law. He calls this “an employer compliance minefield”, largely because there’s no one-size-fits-all solution. Regulations applying to pay, benefits and taxation will differ from country to country. The more distributed your team is, the more complex the situation is likely to be. McIntyre-Hamilton points to India and Canada, where foreign firms must register with the tax authorities and operate a payroll in those countries. “This applies irrespective of whether the UK employer has a corporate presence there,” he says. You might think that regulatory compliance should be less of a challenge if your workers are living in the EU. Not so, he says. British employers hiring residents of any EU member state must register to

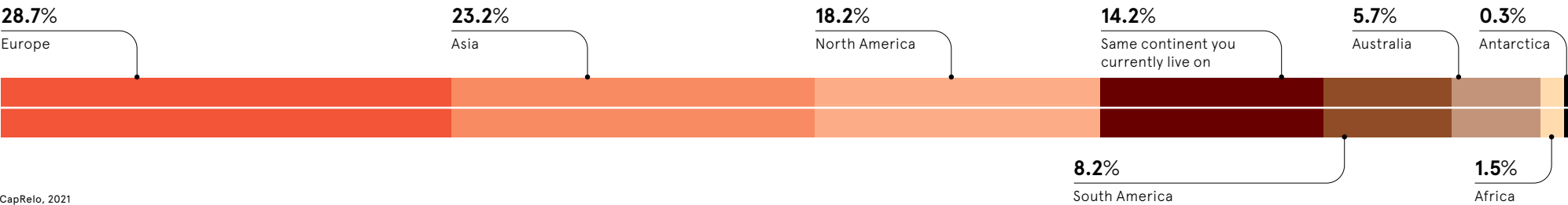
operate a payroll in that country, including paying the relevant social security contributions. “This can come as a shock to UK firms that expect to pay National Insurance but then find that they’re required to make substantially higher social security contributions in countries such as France,” McIntyre-Hamilton says. And it’s not just the taxman you need to appease in each jurisdiction. “There are also immigration considerations. For instance, does your employee have the right to live and work in the country in question?” He adds that it’s possible for workers to inherit employment rights in their country of residence that could be different from, or even

contradictory to, those they would have in the UK. For Jessica Nordlander, formerly a Google employee and now serving as the COO of Canadian tech firm ThoughtExchange, the prime consideration for business leaders should be how to establish an effective digital working environment. “The reason why so many companies are struggling with this is that the people responsible for designing our digital workplaces aren’t the same people who designed our physical workplaces,” she argues. “ThoughtExchange is a fully remote organisation and has worked hard to create a digital workplace where all employees can thrive. For instance, the company decided to limit the number of software packages it uses to avoid tech fatigue among staff. “The reality is that the working world is becoming increasingly remote and hybrid. More and more organisations are going to look like this.” That’s the view of Brian Kropp, chief of HR research at Gartner. He believes that companies should plan to have between 20% and 25% of employees fully remote, between 55% and 60% working on a hybrid basis and the remaining 15% to 25% purely office-based.

“If you were to ask any gamer, I’m pretty sure they’d say that it’s possible to work really well with people across the world whom you’ve never met

WHERE IN THE WORLD TO WORK?

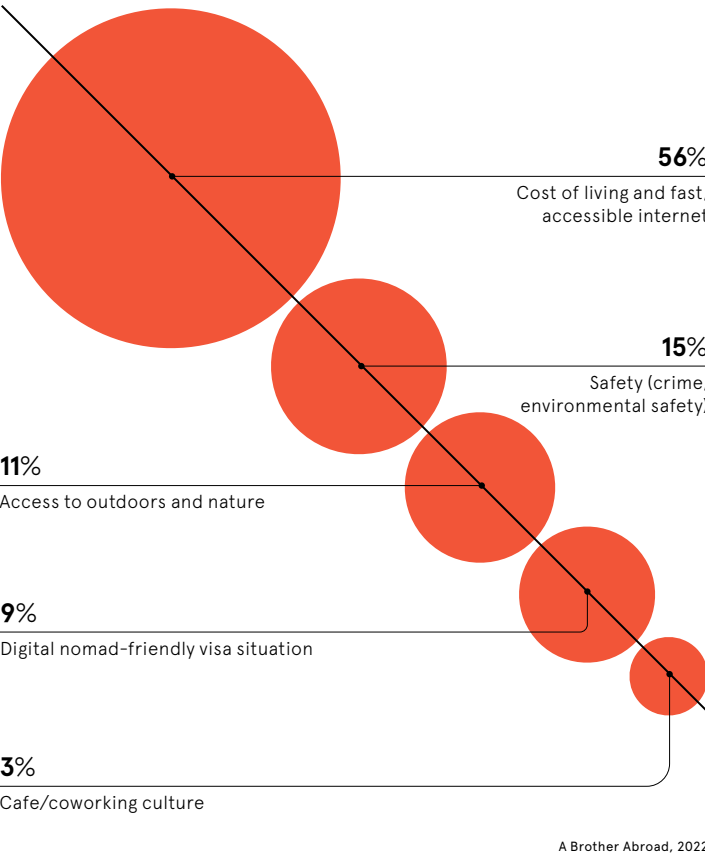
Most desired relocation areas to work remotely full time, worldwide



CapRelo, 2021

DIGITAL NOMADS

Leading factors in choosing a working location worldwide



A Brother Abroad, 2022

Such a mix creates more for HR teams to do in addressing these employees’ varying requirements, notes Kropp. “HR executives will have to address the question: ‘How do I make this workforce work?’” Being more proactive in every element of HR management is vital, he stresses. Positive interventions might range from checking in regularly with remote workers to stimulating the conversations that people engage in outside the confines of their work.

For that reason, Kropp suggests allocating some of the money saved on office space to funding occasional face-to-face meetings at HQ, including the cost of flying employees in from abroad. “One or two days every six months is more than enough in-person interaction to build those connections,” he says. Many people believe that a globally distributed workforce, contactable only through digital means, cannot possibly form a cohesive organisational culture. That simply isn’t true, according to Nordlander. “It frustrates me when I hear the argument that it’s impossible to collaborate and build a culture in digital environments,” she says. “If you were to ask any gamer, I’m pretty sure they’d say that it’s possible to work really well with people across the world whom you’ve never met.” Nordlander adds that sceptics have taken her to task at conferences where she has extolled the virtues of a globally distributed workforce. They ask how her approach to working can help graduates fresh out of university to develop the interpersonal skills that will be crucial in their careers. Her response? That this can be achieved through a mentoring scheme in which each new recruit is paired with a compatible

“HR executives will have to address the question: ‘How do I make this workforce work?’”

experienced employee whom they will meet regularly online. “The employer must take a much bigger responsibility for facilitating those social interactions, compared with what happens in a physical environment,” Nordlander explains. Dan Hughes is director of international research and development at Talogy, a provider of HR services. He stresses the need to find “a variety of ways to transmit your culture and values to all employees, regardless of their working arrangement”. “When thinking about your culture, consider how to implement this across all settings and include every employee,” he says. “For example, if you’re trying to develop a more innovative culture, don’t simply create a ‘brainstorming room’ in the office and then call it a day. Find a solution that will engage distributed workers as well.” That approach needs to be led from the top, Hughes says. “Many leaders need to adapt to having a more distributed workforce, adjusting their leadership style and ways of communicating accordingly.” Finally, he adds that managers must beware of the risks of proximity bias, whereby they favour employees who are physically close to them over those working remotely. ●

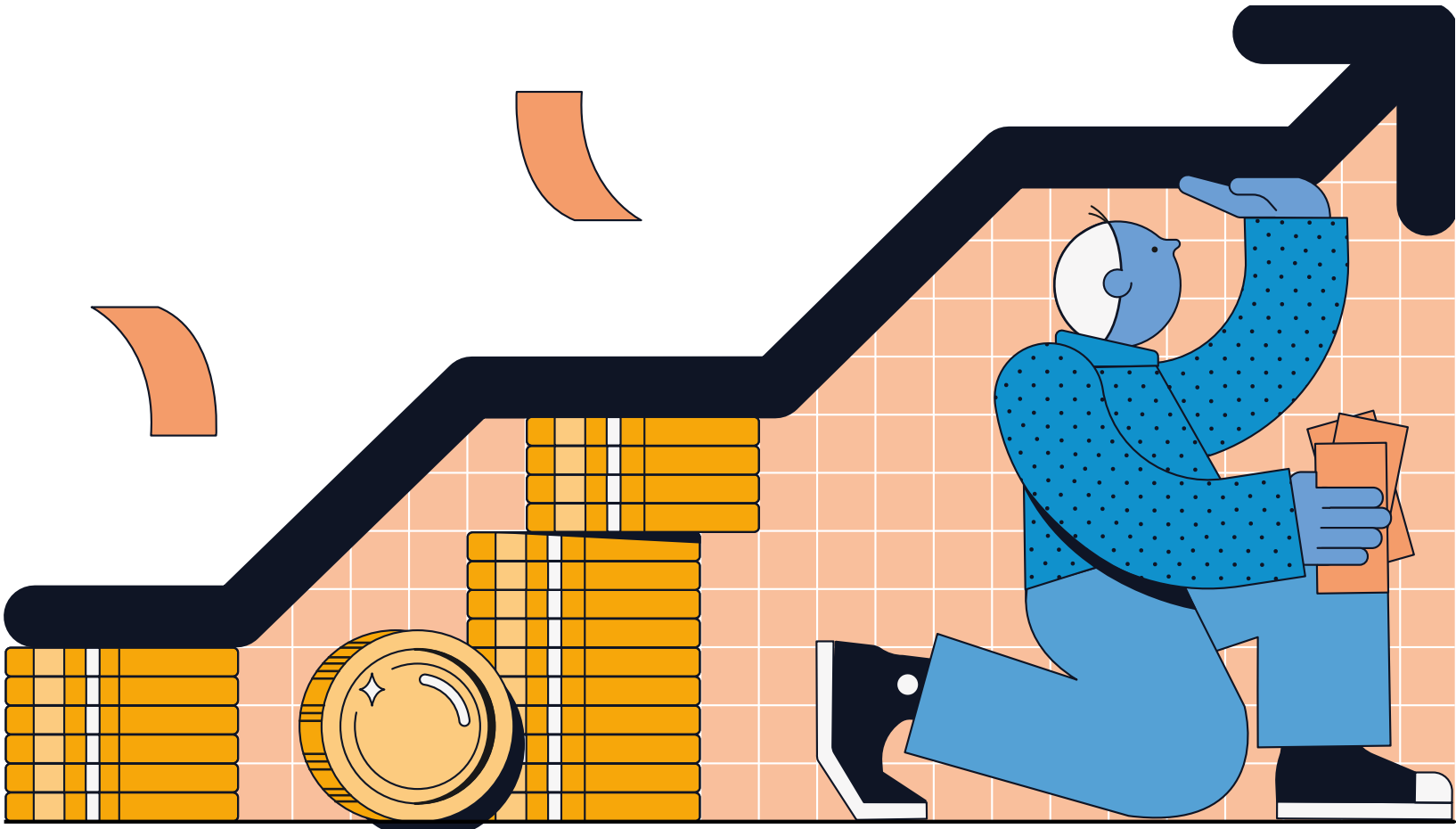
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REMUNERATION

Should employers show wage restraint to help stem inflation?

As inflation continues to climb, Bank of England officials and government ministers agree that employers and their staff need to show restraint to avoid a wage-price spiral

Sam Forsdick

Speaking on *Good Morning Britain* in June, deputy prime minister Dominic Raab warned that wage restraint would be necessary to avoid “a vicious cycle of inflation going up – and staying higher for longer”. Similarly, Andrew Bailey, the governor of the Bank of England – who is himself on a £575,000-a-year salary – has repeatedly asked workers to “think and reflect” before asking for pay increases.

It all stems from a concern that additional salary costs would be passed on to consumers, which would push inflation even higher.

But with the consumer price index reaching 40-year highs, this will be a bitter pill to swallow for many UK workers. When adjusted for inflation, real wages fell by 3.4% in April compared with the previous year. This represents the biggest drop in earnings in real terms since

2001, according to the Office for National Statistics.

Many employers will find themselves caught in the middle: should they heed the warnings of ministers about the risks of spiralling inflation or provide staff with the pay rises needed to help them to keep up with the rising cost of living?

George Dibb, head of the Centre for Economic Justice at think tank IPPR, believes that looking at inflation purely in terms of wage restraint is an oversimplification. He explains that although inflation is a measure of the price increases, many different components contribute to it, from energy prices to businesses’ profits. “I don’t think anyone is served well by a debate where we pretend it’s just one factor influencing inflation,” he says. “Talking about wages alone doesn’t help the discussion.”

While the Bank of England has expressed concern that companies

could push prices higher if they don’t exercise wage restraint, Dibb believes two factors show that this is not yet a risk. First, when measured against inflation, wages are at a low ebb and falling at their fastest rate in more than 20 years, and IPPR’s research reveals that the profits of the largest non-financial companies were up 34% at the end of 2021 compared with pre-pandemic levels.

“When prices are going up, profits are going up and wages are going down, that translates to a transfer of wealth away from working people and towards shareholders, and we don’t think that’s fair,” Dibb adds. “Wage restraint may be a concern in the future but not at the moment. The most pressing thing that we need to worry about right now is profit restraints.”

Many leading economists agree. In June, 65 academics wrote a letter to prime minister Boris Johnson,

saying that suppressing wages is “the exact opposite of what is needed in response to this current wave of inflation”. Instead, they suggest the government should “use all the tools at its disposal to hold down energy costs, clamp down on excess profits, and unblock global supply chains”.

But not all businesses are seeing record profits now. Most of those profits (90%) were concentrated in 25 companies, many of which are in the gas or commodities markets.

“For companies that are seeing increased profits, the answer is clear: they should be passing those benefits to their employees and bringing their prices down,” Dibb says. “For companies that aren’t, I understand they’re in a very difficult situation and there are no easy answers. I think the question then becomes a political one: how to get out of this inflationary period without seeing the economy tick over into a recession and seeing these businesses collapse.”

Calls for wage restraint from the likes of the prime minister and the governor of the Bank of England may provide some form of justification for employers seeking to limit pay rises. But James Willis, head of employment law at Stevensdrake Solicitors, warns: “Legitimate concerns about the looming cost-of-living crisis are likely to weigh much

more heavily on the minds of many workers than the opinions of politicians and technocrats.”

He admits that “most contracts of employment reserve a wide discretion to award whatever pay rise an employer thinks is fit – or no pay rise at all”. There remains the risk, however, that employees who do not feel properly compensated will seek employment elsewhere.

Adding to this challenge is the wider labour market which, due to a combination of record high vacancy rates and low levels of unemployment, is extremely tight right now.

Steve Tonks, senior vice-president for EMEA at employee management platform WorkForce Software, recognises that employers face a difficult choice. “They either increase employee wages – when many businesses themselves are only just beginning to recover from pandemic-induced losses – or they risk losing staff to higher-paying employers,” he says.

Some companies have sought alternatives that recognise the challenge many people face now, while also being conscious of the ongoing business costs.

For example, following action from Unite, Lloyds Banking Group has offered 95% of its staff a one-off



payment of £1,000 to help them handle the rising costs of living. Similarly, publisher Bloomsbury will reward staff with a 6% bonus, following record annual sales. In these instances, the advantage of offering a one-off bonus means that employers are not locked into paying higher wages the following year, should inflation or their profits come down again.

Tonks suggests that earned wage access – a payroll scheme that allows employees to access their pay as soon as they’ve worked the hours – could be another way to alleviate pay pressures. He adds: “Although increasingly important in today’s climate, pay is not the only consideration for many employees. Considering the overall employee experience is a way to retain staff when pressure on wages is high.”

So, while some employers might be conscious of adding to the current inflationary pressures, many economists believe that wage restraint is not the right course of action currently. Equally, unless some form of support is offered to employees, the consequences of losing staff to higher-paying competitors may end up being a bigger (and just as costly) challenge. ●

“
For companies that are seeing increased profits, the answer is clear. They should be passing those benefits to their employees and bringing their prices down

Q&A

How to make your workplace more efficient and productive

As people return to work after the holidays, employers need to make their workplaces as attractive, efficient and productive as possible to encourage people back explains **Dan Drogman**, chief executive of Smart Spaces

Hybrid working has become the norm thanks to the pandemic. That doesn’t mean the office is dead, though. With the cost-of-living crisis prompting people to reconsider working from home, the workplace is set for a renaissance. Dan Drogman, chief executive of smart building operating platform Smart Spaces – used by the likes of 22 Bishopsgate, Three Mobile, GPE, JLL, Norton Rose Fulbright, Workspace and Brookfield – explains how smart tech can improve building efficiency and help attract people back to the workplace.

Q How has the pandemic changed the way employees use the office?

A People want and need to feel in control. They want to be well-informed and clear about their boundaries. On our app, Sunday evening activity clearly shows us the level of staff engagement with the workplace. Everyone can now plan their entire week on a single platform. Companies that have already moved to hybrid working are asking colleagues to book desks and rooms in advance. This enables effective planning of team meetings, socialising and catering requirements, while minimising unnecessary journeys and food waste. Smart Spaces allows companies a level of transparency that was sorely missed during the working from home spell. This has greatly benefited individuals, too. They now feel empowered to not just negotiate but sometimes demand a level of self-determination in their working week, proving they can work from anywhere in lots of situations.

Q Why should businesses consider using smart tech?

A I think the key reasons that a business would deploy a platform like Smart Spaces is the desire

to drive sustainability and productivity, while balancing wellbeing to both attract and retain the best talent and meet their ESG agenda. Despite the rise of new working models such as hybrid, for many employees, breaking free of the old mindset is still difficult. Companies need to give them multiple reasons to engage with colleagues in person, at the office, and that’s where smart tech really helps. You can now understand where people are going to be and ensure the resources you are providing, such as office space, rooms, facilities and so on, are being maximised, or decide whether you need a rethink.

Q Why now?

A It’s about ESG and making the most of the real estate they’ve invested in. It’s expensive to move and everyone wants to get it right. Selecting space that’s fit for purpose is a top concern right now, especially with rising energy costs and Grade A offices commanding ever greater premiums. The right smart platform will shine a spotlight on your assets and enable you to optimise all the resources you have and ensure your teams are working as productively and efficiently as possible. Optimise the physical space and your colleagues will use it more effectively.

One client had a huge office, but downsized it to a much smaller, more high-end space. They used the booking productivity tools and occupancy analytics to use that space as efficiently as possible. They actually worked out that not only did they find it easier to attract more talent to the business but that the business is operating more efficiently. They can grow into their space even more by looking at the sensor data in the app and determine that they won’t need to buy any more office space for another two years.

Commercial feature



“
The right smart platform will shine a spotlight on your assets and enable you to optimise all the resources you have

Q How can companies use smart tech to engage with hybrid workers?

A Smart Spaces enables them to maximise their investment in the space. An app is a direct channel to the user, in their pocket and ready to use. And because our app is the access pass for the building, the whole company is exposed to the Smart Platform. We see smart tech adoption being driven by the magnetising effect of showcasing and promoting space-as-a-service to colleagues so they can make the most of their time at the office. This means companies can showcase content surrounding the office, send notifications and promote events to colleagues as they arrive or when selecting resource booking tools ahead of coming to the office.

Q What impact will the rise in energy costs have on the use of office space?

A Another aspect of smart tech is its ability to drive significant efficiency with building management costs. What really resonates at this time is the cost savings because we

have never seen energy costs like this. If you use our platform to make the workplace ultra-efficient, you could easily save up to 30% of the energy costs straightaway. And, if you can showcase that to colleagues, then they will make better choices about their energy consumption. We think that this winter, you’re going to see more people come into the office if they can save on their home energy bills. That’s better, because it’s more efficient to heat one space than hundreds, even thousands of homes. We can benchmark that on live dashboards as more people use office space rather than WFH.

Q What is the future of workplace tech?

A I think the future is artificial intelligence, but don’t worry, not Hollywood AI. It has already helped us identify when there have been a lot of last-minute changes to a meeting where attendees decide to attend virtually, yet the meeting room never gets resized. Thanks to our cutting-edge AI, we can automatically reallocate that room. It will cancel that booking, create a new booking for the appropriate size and then send out the new invite, fully automated. Our product can make decisions on your behalf and optimise the workspace for you, without you having to think about it.

Q What impact does smart tech have on staff recruitment and retention?

A I think it shows that the employer is a tech-forward company. People want to work in a smart office. Everyone is becoming

more conscious of the impact they’re having on the planet. And if you can truly understand what that impact is and you’re working for a company that’s actively addressing that, it’s fantastic. You can literally see how many kilos of carbon you’re consuming and what the financial cost of that is. As a business on the journey to net zero, you really need to know exactly how much you’re consuming. And then once you understand how much you consume, you can reduce it and optimise it. Smart Spaces will allow you to do that across your real estate.

Q How can Smart Spaces help businesses create a more productive and efficient workplace?

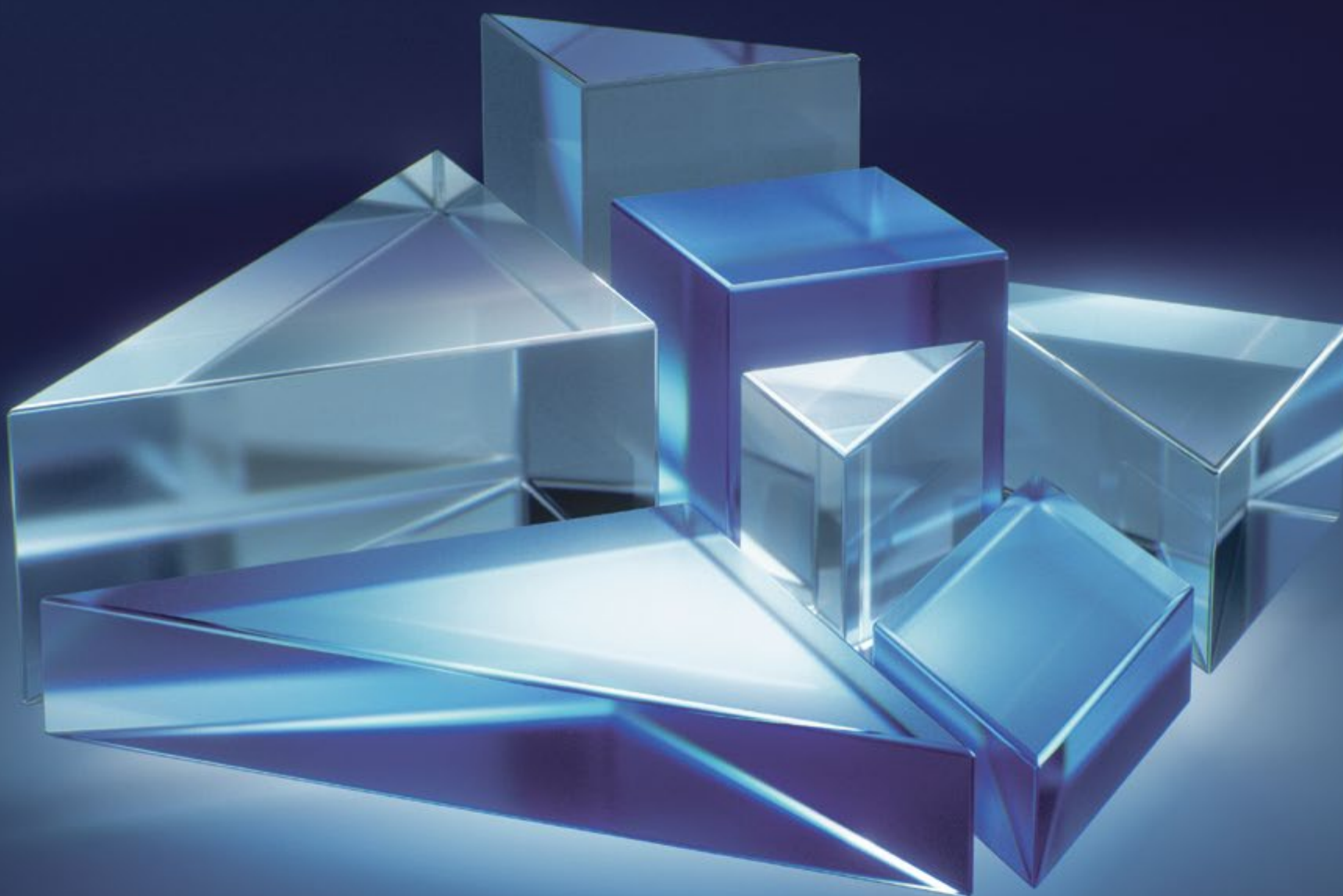
A The key questions are: How do I reduce my carbon footprint? How do I make sure my staff are using the office as effectively as they can? How can I attract my staff to the office? Smart Spaces accesses the physical environment, allows people to book desk space, meeting rooms, car parking and wellness spaces. It can really maximise the value in a company’s real estate to ensure that it is as efficient as possible and make sure its employees are as productive as possible. It gives employees access to those resources in an easy-to-use, simple platform.

For more, please visit smartspace.app





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need the right partner
to lead the way...



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