

HRD

The only independent strategic HR publication

the **HRDIRECTOR** DECEMBER 2018 | ISSUE 170

ROUNDTABLE

FROM HUMAN VS MACHINE TO DREAM TEAM: HOW DO WE BUILD SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN AI AND HR?

ALISON BELL, HR DIRECTOR - MTR CROSSRAIL

{ WALK THE LINE }

“THE EUPHORIA WHEN THE LINE FINALLY OPENS WILL BE SHORT-LIVED... THERE'S A SEQUEL TO PLAN FOR!”

ALSO FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

HR SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

We picture businesses as vertical, but the important stuff moves horizontally, through supply chains

HEALTH & SAFETY

Fatal distraction - HSE and the police will want to interview people as either a 'witness' or a 'suspect'

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Leaders cannot afford to be on autopilot, they have serious, ethical decisions to make mindfully

TRENDS FOR 2020

Firms with old, corporate-centric models, rigid hierarchies and silo mentalities will be distant memories



LOST IN CYBERSPACE

The Apple iOS 12 update now shows us our screen time on the iPhone, viewing content, and can even track the amount of times we pick up our phones. The stats are mindboggling! Even Apple's CEO, Tim Cook, said in a CNN interview that the numbers surprised him: "I've been using it and I have to tell you, I thought I was fairly disciplined about this. And I was wrong".



ARTICLE BY
NIGEL MCNEIL
SENIOR DIRECTOR, GLOBAL LEADER FOR
EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE
WILLIS TOWERS WATSON

Technology has the power to affect people faster - in good and bad ways - so finding balance is now critical. But how when technology seems to drive everything we do? Firstly, we must never underestimate the power of purpose. We are seeing the increasingly significant impact of clear and meaningful organisational purpose on employee performance and engagement. It's a way to create an authentic and sincere connection with people and deliver meaningful experiences of work. And it's the differentiator for attracting fresh or hard-to-reach talent. When we think about purpose, this isn't about creating a 'nice to have' or naff statement that appears on your website or above the reception desk in your office. Organisational purpose is about why you exist beyond making money. Unfortunately, the reality is that it's really easy for organisations to lose sight of the 'why' as they grow, merge or evolve. Sometimes, they are caught up in what they do - the products and services they create or provide - forgetting to think about the impact on people and the world.

Understanding or reassessing your purpose is an essential strategic tool for businesses to make operating decisions. And the reason it matters so much to your talent? Well, when people truly connect with the impact you want to have in the world, you can inspire them through the experiences of work you create and help you deliver it. If you want to reach your people, then you have to get personal. Focusing on personal impact - how they as an individual make their contribution - and understanding how you engage on an emotional level is the way to do this. Why focus on emotions? Mainly because we humans are a social species. It's how we've survived and thrived through our evolution, using emotional instinct and intelligence to work together. Today, we still value interactions with others at work - through recognition, guidance, teamwork and banter, and when you're dealing with people, you're dealing with their emotions. It is still the primary way we make decisions another evolution hangover, and we make emotional decisions faster than rational ones, especially if we're hungry, angry or fearful. In short, emotions matter... a lot.

How we now manage this in our organisations is more relevant than ever because of the way the world is changing. In a digital, "always on", fragmented, diverse and global climate, speaking to people's emotions and maintaining the human connection is difficult but vital. It seems ironic, but in an age where we are all more digitally connected, loneliness is increasing and with it the negative effects on wellbeing. The UK Government recently appointed its first minister of loneliness in response to concerns about the impact on society. After all, Instagram followers don't keep you warm at night. In work, the temptation is to apply simple solutions to address the complex, human challenges of our people. However, recognising that people are messy things - with emotions and feelings - it's no wonder that people don't often behave the way we think they should.

High performing and progressive organisations are finding success by being able to articulate a clear, simple vision of work; the impact they want to have on the world; how people deliver on that and the behaviours of success. Importantly, they are using Talent Experience frameworks that help them deliver a more human experience of work, providing consistency with built-in flexibility. They do this by tailoring, segmenting and personalising the experiences, at the critical moments that matter for the different talent they have. For example, if you're all about innovation, then make sure that your experiences of recruitment, through learning, in workspaces and from recognition reinforce, facilitate and unlock that behaviour. Successful organisations also use the Talent Experience

framework to prioritise work and to do “go, no go” on initiatives to make sure they are critical and always driving the right behaviours and experiences. These experiences are delivered through smarter technology, leaner processes and emotionally intelligent and inclusive leadership. These components are key to transforming a culture to become more agile, collaborative, personal and relevant for people - attracting hard-to-reach talent and inspiring existing people to work and perform in fresh innovative ways. And possibly most importantly, they are focused on the future - clearly defining an aspiration for their Customer and Talent Experiences. They might not be there yet, but they're transparent and realistic about what today and tomorrow look like.

Building trust with your people requires a careful balancing act. You should avoid overselling your employee experience at all costs, as selling a shiny promise to talent will often see negative reactions when they fail to deliver this in the day-to-day reality of work. And when you inspire people with your purpose and their personal impact, focus on how you are going to enable and empower them to help deliver these goals. Technology can help you shout about this because it has given people a louder voice to the outside world. Social media gives power to employees, candidates and customers to share insights, experiences and reviews of organisations. The rise of ‘employer’ comparison sites like Glassdoor increase transparency about how well you're doing as a place to work, impacting your organisation's reputation with needed talent and even consumers. Just make sure those reviews are good and react when they're not. Best-selling author and researcher Brene Brown says in her latest book *Dare to Lead*, “Our ability to be daring leaders will never be greater than our capacity for vulnerability”. If you want to build trust and connect to the hearts and minds of people, leaders have to embrace their own humanity, emotions and vulnerability. As always, leaders need to lead by example, driving the behaviours and visibly delivering the employer promise. After all, diversity and positive disruption can only flourish in leader-owned inclusive environments.

As well as freeing up your talent to be able to work remotely, the increase of AI and automation are promising to remove the mundane tasks, giving the opportunity for reshaped jobs with more enlightened work experiences - experiences that celebrate the human condition. It seems that as quickly as we accepted that the “job for life” is a thing of the past, the very concept of a job is now changing - being broken down into components of work, blending life and work across global geographical connections and time zones. So, rather than fearing that we're all going to be replaced by robots, this reconfiguration should be exciting; providing challenging and interesting ways for people to have careers, giving them more freedom to have the work and lifestyles that they want. It also means that different types of talent can work with

organisations more easily, opening up opportunities for more diversity. The question is how do you maintain a fulfilling relationship with work for both your organisation and your people?

The organisation then needs to embrace humanity throughout its whole infrastructure. Recognising the emotional landscape and complexity of people means we can create human-centric solutions that feel authentic, have a personality and express the essence of the organisation. This isn't to say that we need to create more face-to-face human touch-points. This is where technology and digital solutions, when done well, replicate the best attributes of human interaction. HR embraces this most effectively through creating a Talent Experience framework with purpose at its core and with experiences and behaviours designed to drive an aspirational state. Reducing noise and maximising impact. Talent Experience isn't just the latest buzzword. It's a proven way to prioritise your efforts and create unique and inspiring experiences at key touch points. It's about creating cultures that help your people and organisation become stronger and more successful. It's about celebrating the human and finding the meaning of life at work.



HIGH PERFORMING
AND PROGRESSIVE
ORGANISATIONS ARE
FINDING SUCCESS
BY BEING ABLE TO
ARTICULATE A CLEAR,
SIMPLE VISION OF
WORK; THE IMPACT
THEY WANT TO HAVE
ON THE WORLD; HOW
PEOPLE DELIVER
ON THAT AND THE
BEHAVIOURS OF
SUCCESS



FOR FURTHER INFO
WWW.WILLISTOWERSWATSON.COM