

**WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

*The climate crisis is affecting both where and how we work*

Page 5

**CITY LIMITS**

*How new "Zoom towns" could supplant office-filled cities*

Page 7

**LABOURED EXCHANGE**

*The businesses coming to terms with the reality of a labour shortage*

Page 16



# BUSINESS REPORTER

THE FUTURE OF WORK • OCTOBER 2021

BUSINESS-REPORTER.CO.UK



# The Z factor



There's a new generation shaking up the world of work - and businesses need to get wise if they're to harness its unique energy

**guidant global**

guidantglobal.com



**Struggling to recruit the people you need?**

Read our guide to **successful candidate attraction strategies**



# The changing work habits of a nation

*“It is clear the nature of how we work has shifted forever. Work is no longer a place: it’s what you do and how you do it”*

**W**HAT DOES it mean when you say, “I’m going to work”? Clearly, after the most horrific pandemic of our lifetimes, it does not mean what it did just a couple of years ago.

Our homes have become our offices, classrooms and gyms. Most, if not all, of our interactions with colleagues went virtual at some point over the past 18 months. Even now, with the success of the UK’s huge vaccination programme, it is unlikely working habits will return to “normal” any time soon.

For business leaders it is clear the nature of how and where we work has shifted forever. Work is no longer a place: it’s what you do and how you do it.

This sea change was set in motion before the pandemic, however. Businesses were already benefiting from increased data infrastructure capabilities, more sophisticated communications and an ongoing digital



transformation. Covid-19 acted as fuel to the spark, accelerating the digital transformation that was already beginning to reshape the working world.

Research by industry analyst Gartner shows 74 per cent of companies will permanently shift

to more remote workforces. By 2024, Gartner expects there will be 600 million remote workers worldwide. Our customers agree. They expect all meetings to have at least one remote attendee in the future, and therefore for all meetings to need video facilities.

Meeting rooms will have to change dramatically as a result. In the past, we built conference rooms that looked and worked just like the last hundred rooms before them. We installed complex control technology that forced people to learn how to use it, and we conducted our meetings to conform to the requirements of that design. Our conversations were about “endpoints”. And, I might add, we’ve been just about universally disappointed.

The hybrid working future will require a more comprehensive approach. We need to offer customers the combined hardware, software and services to connect people, spaces and technology. Analysts estimate that of the roughly 50 million conference rooms in the world, fewer than 10 per cent are video-enabled. Clearly that will no longer support the vastly increased numbers of remote workers.

The technology for many improvements already exists. Artificial intelligence and machine

learning mean one no longer needs to pick up a remote control or decipher a complex touch panel to start a meeting or adjust camera shots. The cameras are now smart enough to make quality images and follow all the action automatically. Unwanted background noise can also be cancelled out, leaving just the speaker’s voice.

More innovations are on the horizon, including indexing and analysing video meetings, automatic transcriptions and highlights, simplifying meeting initiation and measuring sentiment after a call.

Our mission is to connect people, technology and spaces so that we can work together seamlessly, wherever we may be. This is how we will deliver the future of work. We’re well on our way there.

#### INDUSTRY VIEW

Dave Shull is CEO at Poly  
[www.poly.com](http://www.poly.com)  
[@PolyCompany](https://twitter.com/PolyCompany)

## Raise your profile



BR

Lead the global business debate with video content that inspires and educates  
See [business-reporter.co.uk/br-studio](http://business-reporter.co.uk/br-studio) to get involved



# New study suggests the home is (nearly) the perfect workplace

**T**HE AVERAGE home is a better place for supporting work than the average office, according to a new report.

Researchers from employee workplace analysts Leesman polled 860,000 office-based employees and 221,000 employees on their experiences of working from home.

The findings, collated in a new report, *Why Workplace?*, show that 84 per cent of employees felt that where they lived helped them to work productively, while 85 per cent said they were happy that their domestic infrastructure – such as computing equipment – was sufficient to let them efficiently do their jobs.

Although the report suggested working from home was seen in an

- The majority of employees who worked from home – 84 per cent – felt they could work more productively
- Only 37 per cent of employees plan to spend a single day or less working from a traditional office space

overwhelmingly positive light, employees still felt they were missing out on certain aspects of the old-fashioned physical office, such as personal interaction – only 63 per cent felt a proper connection to their colleagues while working from home.

The 64,000 people surveyed who had experience working in both environments, meanwhile, believed that informal social interaction was lacking in a home-working environment (42 per cent) when compared with a traditional office (82 per cent).

The report also found that many people working from home had evolved beyond tapping away on a laptop from a sofa or behind a kitchen table: 34 per cent reported having a dedicated home-working set-up, when compared with equivalent figures from 2019 (24 per cent).

And a significant proportion of employees – 37 per cent – reported that they planned to spend a single day per week in the office, if they were going to turn up in person at all, with only 16 per cent intending to spend

most of the working week (four to five days) there.

“More than ever, leaders need to think strategically about the spaces they are going to offer employees to work from,” said Leesman CEO Tim Oldman. “Many are moving towards converting offices into places of collaboration, but focusing on this alone would be to their detriment.

“The tasks an employee does as part of their role varies greatly throughout any organisation, and as such workplaces need to support a range of types of work, and a new hybrid workforce.

“It’s up to leaders to co-create workplaces that will draw employees in, or else they run the risk of keeping them away.”

## Female employees less likely to ask for a pay rise

**M**ALE EMPLOYEES are twice as likely to ask for a pay rise as their female colleagues, reveals a new whitepaper.

Cendex, part of XpertHR, reported that nearly a quarter – 23 per cent – of male employees were likely to ask for a pay rise, compared with just 11 per cent of females. Even entry-level male employees (11 per cent) were more than twice as likely than women on the C-suite (4 per cent) to request a raise.

Nearly half (47 per cent) of HR departments reported their employees asking for pay reviews on a yearly basis, the paper found, with fewer than one in ten asking for a review every six months.

Although the pay freeze of last year has thawed somewhat, the enforcement of gender pay gap reporting was suspended



by the government last year, and many companies have put this on hold.

“During the pandemic, some organisations put a hold on their gender pay gap reporting. While such a move may have been necessary during a challenging time, it’s essential that awareness of, and action against, pay inequality does not stop,” said Scott Walker, Cendex managing director.

“With such a disbalance in pay rise requests, it’s vital that HR workers benchmark roles and understand the gaps in their payrolls. It’s concerning to see that women are still holding back from negotiating a salary review but it’s clear employers can do more to empower women in scenarios involving pay negotiation.”

## Report: 88 million working days lost to financial stress last year

**M**ORE THAN 88 million working days are lost in Britain to financial stress – and more than half of HR leaders believe they need to do more to combat the issue, according to two new studies.

A report commissioned by Scottish Widows, which surveyed more than 500 HR leaders from UK firms, found that financial concerns during the pandemic have led to almost half of workers experiencing increased anxiety and stress, with four in

ten employers reporting an impact on productivity and motivation. And workers aren’t shy of letting their employers know, with 65 per cent of HR managers saying that their employees were willing to raise their mental health with bosses – and 54 per cent of them agreed that their businesses needed to do more to support them.

Mental health in the workplace has become a central issue during the past 20 months, and that doesn’t look



like changing any time soon. A separate study conducted by YouGov, commissioned by

salary advance provider borofree, found that 3.05 working days were taken off by British workers last year as a direct result of financial stress – the equivalent of 88 million working days being lost.

“The past 18 months have brought unprecedented challenges for everyone, and many people will have seen their finances drastically affected,” said Graeme Bond, workplace pensions director at Scottish Widows. “Left unchecked, this problem could be a ticking

time bomb for both employers and employees.”

Minck Hermans, CEO and co-founder of borofree, agreed the issue shouldn’t be pushed to the wayside in the post-pandemic reconstruction. “While it’s great to see that businesses are prioritising incentives to build stronger employee productivity following a challenging 18 months, it’s crucial they do not overlook initiatives to promote greater financial wellbeing among teams,” he said.

# Consumer behaviour has changed forever in a world of digital choice

**F**OR THE past 18 months, we've relied on applications and digital services in almost every aspect of our lives – to stay connected with loved ones, access critical services, keep entertained and, of course, to work remotely.

Applications have become a lifeline to normality for people all over the world during the pandemic. It's almost impossible to imagine how we would have navigated it without them.

A recent AppDynamics report, *The App Attention Index 2021: Who Takes the Rap for the App?*, revealed that the number of applications people are using has soared by 30 per cent when compared with two years ago.

Lockdowns have forced many people to explore applications and digital alternatives they might not have considered otherwise. In fact, 84 per cent of people report that digital services have had a positive impact on their lives during the pandemic, enabling them to get through this challenging period and to cope and function in most areas of their lives – both inside and outside of work.

## A new landscape of digital alternatives

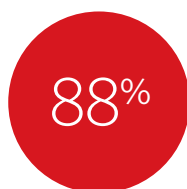
Even once the pandemic has finally passed, consumers won't simply switch back to the habits they had in 2019 – in fact, 88 per cent of people expect their reliance on digital services to stay the same or increase over the next 12 months.

This is primarily because the pandemic has proved to people that in almost every part of their lives, there is now a convenient and effective digital alternative to the old ways of doing things. They had no choice but to rely on applications during the pandemic but, in doing so, people have actually come to recognise the benefits digital services can offer in their busy lives, whether that's doing exercise classes at home, ordering the grocery shopping or accessing healthcare services through an online GP.

Consumers will continue to have this option of using applications. From now on, there will always be a genuine choice to make in how we do things, between the online and offline worlds. For many people, this will mean reconfiguring working habits, changing travel and commuting patterns, and rethinking how they communicate with colleagues, friends and family.

Our attitudes and behaviours towards digital services have changed forever, and these shifts will have significant consequences for the brands we interact with every day.

*“The pandemic has proved to people that in almost every part of their lives, there is now a convenient and effective digital alternative to the old way of doing things”*



The percentage of people who expect their reliance on digital services to stay the same or increase over the next year

Source: AppDynamics

## Opportunity and risk for application owners and brands

In this new environment of “digital alternatives”, brands have a massive opportunity to drive customer loyalty by providing consumers with the faultless and engaging digital experiences they have come to expect and rely on over the past 18 months.

Already, we're seeing consumers looking favourably on brands that have innovated at speed to deliver applications that supported them through the pandemic and enabled them to access the services they love and rely on. More than two thirds of consumers (67 per cent) say that some brands have gone above and beyond with the quality of their digital service during the pandemic, and it has positively impacted their loyalty to that company.

On the other hand, application owners need to consider the implications of

delivering anything other than a seamless digital experience.

As consumers have become more sophisticated in their use of applications, and been exposed to the very best digital experiences, they've come to understand what digital services can and should be like in 2021. Expectations have risen dramatically and, at the same time, tolerance for poor digital experiences has diminished. Sixty-one per cent of people say their expectation of digital services has changed forever during the pandemic and that they won't tolerate poor performance anymore.

## One shot for brands to deliver incredible digital experiences

When consumers encounter problems with an application – and it really doesn't matter to them what the cause of the issue is – they now take it almost as a personal affront.

Many feel that it is disrespectful for brands to be delivering poor digital experiences in the current environment.

People are no longer willing to make allowances or to give second chances. In fact, 57 per cent of people state that brands have only one shot to impress them and that if a digital service does not perform, they won't use it again.

That's the situation that application owners now face. Even the smallest slip-up in performance can lead to more than half of their customers walking away, quite possibly never to return.

## Responding to soaring consumer expectations

As the pressure grows on application owners to deliver flawless digital experiences at all times, it's essential that they have real-time visibility into IT performance. Technologists have recognised the need to monitor the full IT estate, from traditional legacy IT systems to newer hybrid cloud environments. This concept is known as full-stack observability – the ability to monitor the entire IT stack, from customer-facing applications down to core network and infrastructure, and it's vital for technologists wanting to identify and fix performance issues before they adversely affect customers and the business.

But on its own, full-stack observability isn't enough to tackle the layers of complexity now engulfing IT departments. Across an increasingly sprawling IT estate, with IT departments being overwhelmed by a constant deluge of data, technologists need a business lens on IT performance data to cut through the noise and pinpoint the data that really matters most.

They need to understand which issues could have the biggest impact on customers and the business so that they can best prioritise their actions. Full-stack observability with business context is critical to meet soaring consumer expectations. By connecting full-stack observability with real-time business metrics, technologists can optimise application performance at all times and ensure they're able to meet heightened consumer expectations.

By doing this, application owners can set themselves up to exploit new opportunities in a world of digital alternatives and deliver incredible application experiences to customers.

## INDUSTRY VIEW

James Harvey is EMEAR CTO, Cisco AppDynamics

[@AppDynamics](#)

[www.appdynamics.com](http://www.appdynamics.com)

**I**F YOU'RE a wind turbine service technician, you're in luck. Over the next decade, demand for your skills will outstrip just about every other career. Not far behind: hydrologists, solar and environmental engineers.

Search for "climate change" on LinkedIn and you'll get more than 2,000 results, many of them for analysts to prepare government departments, large corporations and consultancies for a more vulnerable world.

According to the sunnier forecasts from major research groups, the world's response to the climate emergency will yield a vast crop of jobs in the coming years.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) anticipates an economic transformation that will create "more and better jobs" through mitigation, adaptation and climate-resilient infrastructure investment. McKinsey reckons that every €150 billion invested in a European low-carbon recovery will generate up to three million new jobs, while reducing carbon emissions by up to 30 per cent. And in January 2021, US President Joe Biden said: "Building a modern, resilient climate infrastructure and clean energy future" will create millions of new jobs.

Both Biden in the US and Prime Minister Boris Johnson in the UK campaigned last year on the same election promise: to "Build Back Better" using stimulus payments to spur a job-led recovery from Covid-19 while tackling the climate crisis simultaneously. But does the neatness of this phrase belie the complexity of the problem?

"Many of the new jobs relating to climate change are low skill and low pay, such as solar panel installers," says James Roaf, climate change policy co-ordinator at the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The growth of new "knowledge" jobs in green technology may simply replace those lost in fossil fuel, he warns.

Roaf is himself a beneficiary of a knowledge job: he is a former British Treasury economist who transferred in 2019 from his role as the IMF's Russia head, as the Fund began to take the climate crisis more seriously. He advocates carbon pricing as a simple, cost-effective way to reduce emissions, with revenues funnelled into green investment and reduced labour taxes. Roaf, with his colleagues at the Fund, is broadly optimistic about the future, so long as efforts emerge soon: "The cost of inaction is much greater than the cost of action," he insists.

Yet successful carbon pricing depends on political will, which



*"The International Labour Organisation anticipates an economic transformation that will create 'more and better jobs' through mitigation, adaptation and climate-resilient infrastructure investment"*

# A change in the weather: how the climate crisis is affecting working life

The working climate is changing – quite literally, writes **David Nicholson**, as rising global temperatures are beginning to impact how and where we'll work, and the kind of jobs we'll even do

is where most of the optimistic job forecasts run into hard reality. Corporations are reluctant to fund climate crisis mitigation, for all their CSR manifestos, and politicians are equally reluctant to tax either companies or individuals to prevent an amorphous future threat. Meanwhile, demand for climate crisis analysts is booming – 16,800 are needed in the US by 2030 – and both public and private sectors are wrestling with the practicalities of reaching net zero emissions, despite general agreement on its importance.

Economist Joseph Stiglitz called the climate emergency "humanity's Third World War". If governments fund a global army of workers to prosecute this war, every sector will necessarily transform, as the life-threatening urgency of the situation becomes clear. Flooded New York subways may be just a taste of the horrors to come, before the world's decision-makers begin to act in unison.

**Above: wind turbine technicians will be in obvious demand – but the climate crisis will also have less direct, and far more wide-ranging effects on the world of work.**

Instead, there is a growing gulf in the employment impact of climate crisis on the developing world. At the sharp end, millions face displacement and unemployment through rising temperatures, floods and other climate catastrophes. According to McKinsey, up to 200 million people live in regions such as northern India, which has a 5 per cent annual probability of a deadly heatwave by 2030 (above 34°C). India could lose 4.5 per cent of its annual GDP as working hours decrease, says one report, with the greatest burden falling on agricultural workers.

Breadbasket regions will come under pressure, causing unemployment and migration, while urban flooding poses indirect risks to jobs: in Florida, homes face being devalued by 35 per cent by 2050, slashing property tax revenue and therefore public sector employment. Warming oceans will deplete fish populations, affecting the 800 million people whose livelihoods depend on them.

In Europe, relatively insulated from climate extremes, prospective employees are scanning the horizon for growth careers. High on the list are renewable energy-related jobs: retrofitting and installing smart systems into buildings; electrifying transport and urban infrastructure; developing cycleways and walkways; urban food production and flood defence management.

Sam Lloyd graduated with a Master's in Environmental Science from Sussex University in 2016 and now oversees flood defence projects along the Thames, liaising with counterparts in New Orleans and the Netherlands on best practice. "Climate change-related work is a highly competitive, because so many graduates are looking for something that will make a difference," he says. "But once you've secured a first job in the area, it's easier to progress." His work includes managing the Thames Barrier – an increasingly

important line of defence against rising sea levels.

When major urban centres face existential threats from climate crisis-related events, such as New York's floods in September and Sydney's bushfires in 2020, businesses and individuals naturally question their future. Can they justify remaining in a climate war zone, paying outsized insurance premiums and risking people's lives?

The arguments for remote working and more localised commercial centres with less carbon-intensive supply chains and transport – for example, people walking or cycling to work – will grow louder. Prompted by the pandemic and facilitated by digital technology, the world of work is already adapting to the climate crisis. With each successive climate-related disaster, this will accelerate. And the outlook for wind turbine service technicians will be rosy for years to come.

SOME DAYS, it feels like we start Zoom and never shut it down. Between morning updates, coffees with co-workers, presentations and even after-work socialising, we are more online than ever. And we're really feeling it, too.

The fact is that online fatigue, or online burnout, is real – and it can be detrimental to your workforce.

A great starting point to fighting fatigue could include planning fewer meetings, building in breaks between meetings, and designing processes to maximise the flow of work.

Let's home in on that last point, though. What does it mean to design processes to maximise the flow of work? In my opinion, you can't have a conversation about flow without first thinking about attention fragmentation.

### What is attention fragmentation?

We depend on technology a lot. We use it for almost every part of our "technical" work, in addition to the "human" work of hosting meetings, attending conferences or sharing a coffee break. In many ways, we now rely on technology to do almost everything related to work.

Interruptions, even a tiny interruption (which we'll explore a bit more later), can result in a cluster of distractions that takes your attention and splits it into multiple pieces. It also involves the time it takes to pick those pieces back up again.

In an environment where there is little to no separation between our work life and online life, our attention is not only more valuable than ever, but more under threat. We need time to focus on our work, but at the same time we're facing a wave of interruptions.

Ultimately, it matters because your attention is everything. It's how you focus your time to be productive, and a loss of attention bears both a psychological and a business cost. It all starts with what experts call "micro delays".

### What is a micro delay?

Think of it this way: you're at your computer, hard at work on something, and a notification pops up on your screen. You need to provide feedback on an important presentation.

Next, you get an email that you have a performance review you need to complete. Then, your phone buzzes or you need to quickly answer an important message that just came in.

All these distractions, coming at you from all angles, pull you away from your work. Each one represents a micro delay, and although they seem small they have a cumulative effect across your business.

In fact, did you know that each micro delay can be quantified? One micro delay is worth approximately 36 minutes of time (considering not only the time the delay takes but the time it takes to get back into the flow of work).

So all of a sudden, three micro delays turn into more than an hour and a half of lost work. With 12 micro delays, your whole morning is a wash. While each delay may



# It all adds up: why micro-delays are hampering your business's productivity

seem insignificant on its own, they can really start adding up.

### Why do micro delays matter?

While technology can be incredibly beneficial, your technology ecosystem and ways of working may not be well designed for a human-centric workforce.

According to a recent study performed by Personio (Counting the Cost: How Businesses Risk a Post Pandemic Talent Drain), an average of six tools for people-related tasks and insights are required by companies across Europe.

Technology can help with nearly every aspect of work, but too much technology can have the opposite effect, resulting in too many tools, too many logins, and too

*“All of these distractions, coming at you from all angles, pull you away from your work. Each one represents a micro-delay, and although they seem small they have a cumulative effect across your business.”*

much time spent switching between them (and the time lost in that process).

It even helps to think of the switch between platforms as a micro-delay in and of itself. That adds up to 36 minutes of uninterrupted focus lost to switching between tools or a quick task such as an approval or comment.

Worse yet, we start to get used to the fragmentation of our attention, looking for those quick tasks that let us skim the surface of real work without achieving the flow that is required for deep problem-solving.

### What's the next step?

Let's start by thinking about all the different applications that an average employee might work with, on any given day, at your organisation.

One employee might find themselves tracking their time; a hiring manager might be logging onto their recruiting tool; or a team leader may be doing some online training or conducting a performance review. Someone else might be submitting an expense report.

This is a handful of possibilities, but it's only the tip of the iceberg. So, when we

think about handling fragmentation, we need to think about both centralising and optimising tools and workflows to minimise interruptions.

### Unlocking your productive potential

When it comes to solutions, the fact is that you might be spreading your workforce too thin. This might cause more distractions, less focused work, and more micro delays that simply get in the way of the best work being done.

So it's not simply about digitising things, it's about doing so in a way that keeps the human element top of mind. For this to work, you need to focus on the right tools to design "human-centric" workflows.

This way, your solutions are exactly that: solutions. They shouldn't hold back your workforce. Instead, they need to help unlock its full potential.

### INDUSTRY VIEW

Laura Schroeder is Head of Brand and Comms at Personio, Europe's most valuable HR tech company  
hello@personio.com  
www.personio.com

# City limits: how post-Covid work is escaping the metropolis

There is much talk in the US of the rise of “Zoom towns”, smaller urban centres supplanting traditional city-based office work in the wake of the pandemic.

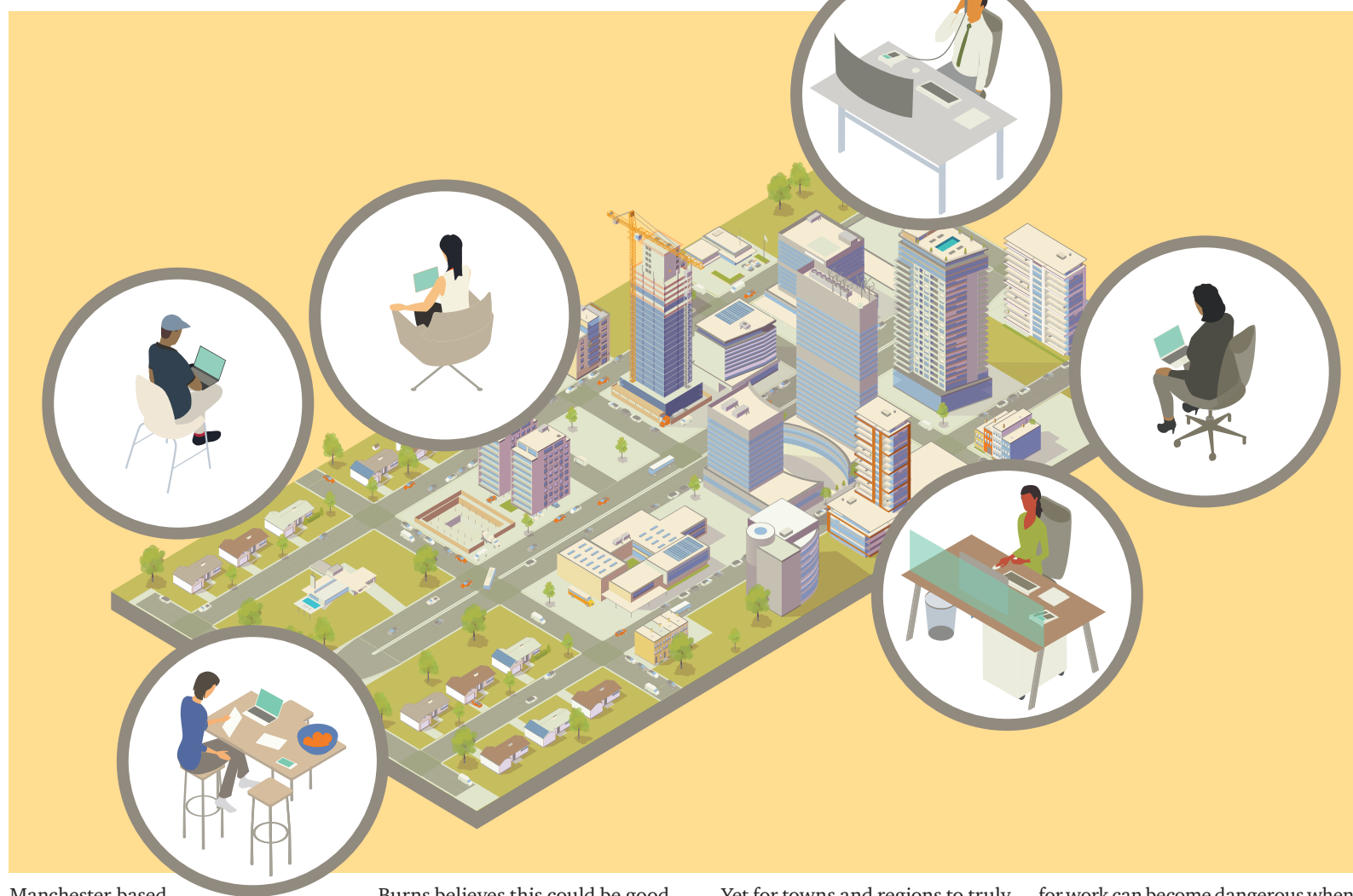
**Nick Martindale** looks at whether this anticipated trend will manifest itself in the UK – and what it means for traditional Big Office employment

ONE OF the longer-lasting legacies of Covid-19 is likely to be how we work. Having been plunged into a world of remote working, many organisations are now pondering whether they really want to keep hold of expensive offices in city centres, while employees are reluctant to return to a life of expensive five-day-a-week commutes.

It is, of course, early days when it comes to assessing the impact of the pandemic, or how we may work in a few years' time. But if fewer people are commuting regularly into city centres and spending more time where they live, it stands to reason that local areas may benefit, both in the short term as people spend more money there, and longer term as the reasons to up sticks and leave for the bright city lights in the first place become fewer.

Welsh broadband firm Ogi has already benefited from talent seeking to escape London, as well as helping to develop the infrastructure necessary for this to work in practice more generally. “Some of the communities we're building in, such as Haverfordwest, Abergavenny and Rhoose have always been lovely places to live and visit, but they are suddenly realistic places for people to work from home part-time, set up a business or grow a global venture,” says Ben Allwright, CEO. “We see ourselves as playing a central role in both creating and tapping into that opportunity.”

Jenny Burns is CEO of consultancy firm Fluxx, which advises firms on issues around the future of work. It recently merged with



Manchester-based magneticNorth, and is seeing at first-hand the regeneration that can come from a more diverse geographic base. “Historically we've seen talent drain from areas around the UK and head south seeking promising career opportunities,” she says. “We're seeing Northern towns level up; with the attraction of more space and affordable housing, top talent doesn't have to travel. We're seeing this in Greater Manchester with the rise of local, town-based co-working spaces; folks seek variety and the opportunity to network with other locals, outside of their homes, without the burden of actually commuting to their nearest city.”

Quite how any regeneration will be distributed, though, is not clear. Sam Fisher, head of dynamic work at software firm Okta, believes organisations will swap fewer large offices for more numerous smaller ones in various UK towns. “These will function as hubs where employees can drop in and out, collaborate with co-workers and customers, and meet with partners, like an experience centre similar to the Apple stores of today,” she suggests.

Burns believes this could be good news for post-industrial towns, as well as seaside and rural locations. “As more people take advantage of home and hybrid working, they will look to capitalise on the opportunity to buy bigger properties with more land further afield,” she says. “The places that stand to benefit will be those that are near enough to large clusters of employment, as not all work can be conducted remotely, but now offer the things people value most: reliable transport, affordable housing, good education and a high quality of life with access to green space.”

But Nigel Wilcock, executive director of the Institute of Economic Development, stresses that only certain jobs will be able to be performed in this way, largely professional services, and that any trickle-down factor may be limited. “The already more affluent places in the London commuter belt, and the locations where professional services staff would travel into London from the regions or would love to live, will feel the greatest benefit,” he says. “It's more likely to benefit Woking, Wilmslow and Windermere than Wigan, Wolverhampton or Wallsend.”

Yet for towns and regions to truly prosper, there needs to be a degree of planning for the new world order. “In terms of urban planning, more green space and pedestrian areas will be helpful, as will park-and-ride schemes, parking and electric charging points, and central stations,” says Andrew Armitage, managing director and founder of design firm A Digital, based in Cumbria. “In some cases, smaller communities that develop in outlying suburbs may become more popular. They tend to be easier to reach with shorter journeys, cheaper parking, lower rent and more independent shops and cafés.”

Cities, too, will have to adapt. Ian King, COO of fire protection technology firm Zeroignition, predicts a rush to convert space designed as offices into accommodation. “This repurposing concept is a brilliant one, and it has the potential to create a really positive change for our cities,” he says. “We could start to see communities revitalised in city areas, as offices become apartment blocks, with local shops underneath.” But it's important that fire safety is factored into any conversion, he adds, as open spaces designed

for work can become dangerous when subdivided into apartments.

Organisations also need to think about their approach to offices and city work, believes Lara Ramsay, head of people at engineering consultancy BJSS. “Rather than having a big office in central London, businesses could open several satellite offices throughout the city to make it easier for employees in those areas to get in,” she says. “But gone are the days of just buying some office space, throwing in some computers and a kitchen and expecting employees to come in. The biggest shift will be making the office a purposeful space, giving employees compelling, meaningful reasons to go there.”

Underpinning all this is the power shift that is now putting skilled workers in certain sectors firmly in control. “Skilled talent will be far more likely to choose to work at an organisation that encompasses all their wants and needs in a job role, no matter where it is based,” warns Fisher. “Organisations naturally need to balance what's best for the business in line with this, but by completely disregarding what their employees want, they risk losing talent.”

Labour leader Keir Starmer joins McDonalds employees demanding union recognition and better pay at a protest in November 2019



# New trades, new unions

The headlines are filled with tales of food shortages and energy crises – and trade union membership is spiking. But fears of a return to the combative industrial relations of the 1970s are too reductive, writes **Francis Andrews**

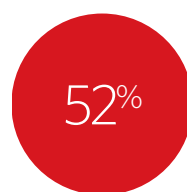
**T**RADER UNIONS are making a comeback – in the public sector at least. Just as the UK economy began its sharp contraction following the first Covid-19 lockdown last year, more than a quarter of a million public sector workers joined a union.

The increase in itself isn't surprising – membership has been steadily growing since 2017. But what has captured the attention of economists is the broader trend the increase points towards: not since the 1970s has membership grown four years in a row. The terminal decline that many thought would one day end in the disappearance of trade unions in the UK has been arrested: nearly a quarter of the workforce now holds membership, and unionisation appears to be once again back in vogue.

## The tough gig economy

The reasons for this emerging trend are many and complex. At its core, however, it tells a story of a broader shift in the relationship between employers and their staff in the United Kingdom, and the ways in which the changing shape of the employment landscape – for instance, the rise of gig working, an increase in freelancing, stronger demands around paternity leave – have created new pressures on workers, and new incentives for representation.

Although there has been a parallel fall in private sector union membership, down by 110,000 this year according to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, rumblings of discontent – exemplified by, for example, striking



The percentage of public sector employees who are currently members of a trade union

Amazon and McDonalds workers in 2019 – point to an increasing lack of tolerance for low pay and long hours among even the most browbeaten of employees.

Take the case of Uber. For a long time, the taxicab business was publicly criticised for keeping its drivers on precarious contracts as independent workers, unable to enjoy the benefits staff are given – minimum hourly wage and workplace pension, among others – and pocketing less than three quarters of a total fare. The situation reached a crescendo in September 2019 when Uber drivers in New York held a rush-hour protest, blocking traffic and demanding better working conditions. Similar disquiet emerged among drivers in the UK, who had gone on strike in their hundreds across the country in May 2019.

Uber had become synonymous with the exploitation of drivers, as well as for encouraging the growth of a vulnerable gig workforce. By no means was it limited to Uber, but the company knew it had become a lightning rod, and unions began to take note. By February this year, after lobbying by the newly created App Drivers and Couriers union, the UK Supreme Court ruled that Uber recognise its drivers as workers. In May, following months of negotiation, the UK's GMB union, which represents workers across nearly all industrial sectors, reached a recognition agreement with the company to represent its employees.

The move was hailed as an example not only of rare success in a wider push by gig workers to gain stronger employment rights, but also proof of the leverage that unions still have, following decades during which

*“The skills gap in the job market is widening. That places a greater onus on employers to accommodate the demands of their workers. But it also provides an opportunity to examine how they can build a workplace that meets the needs of both employers and staff”*

they were considered to be marginal forces within the UK employment landscape.

## Disunited kingdom

The relationship between employers and unions has, unsurprisingly, long been a fraught one. The first ever union, the London Trades Council, was established in 1860, spurred on in part by the London builders' strike the previous year, when firms refused to meet workers' demands to reduce the maximum ten-hour working day to nine hours. Margaret Thatcher saw unions as obstacles to economic growth, given their frequent use of strike and lock-out strategies to bring employers to the negotiating table. Her government's weakening of union power precipitated their decline from the late 1970s onwards.

Yet the recent re-energising of unions isn't exactly a finished project. In the private sector, membership has fallen sharply, by more than 100,000, largely due to mass lay-offs of private sector workers last year as the pandemic took hold. The shift from

many of these workers into public sector roles, where union membership has always been higher (it currently stands at 52 per cent), may account for some of the increase. But still, the imbalance is glaring.

There is also huge sector variation: in education, more than 50 per cent of workers are unionised, while in hospitality – an area hit hard by the pandemic, and where representation should therefore be strong – the proportion stands at less than five per cent. Young workers are also underrepresented: less than eight per cent of 16-to-24-year-olds are unionised.

Perhaps most important, and puzzling, of all is the continued poor representation of low-paid workers. The Resolution Foundation notes that fewer than one in 10 of workers on the lowest salaries in the country hold membership. They tend to populate roles in which job security, quality of work and level of salary remain pressing issues. As the US-based Economic Policy Institute has written: “Unions, especially in industries and regions where they are strong, help boost the wages of all workers by establishing pay and benefit standards that many non-union firms adopt.”

## The hard sell

Whether the current trend towards greater unionisation continues remains to be seen. What is clear, however, is that the pandemic has brought into full view the changing face of employment in the UK, and shone a harsh light on the inequalities that continue to exist. The skills gap in the job market is widening, and employers are struggling to secure the talent they need – so much so that it's now widely considered a candidate's market.

That places a greater onus on employers to accommodate the demands of their workers. But it also provides an opportunity for them to examine how they can build a workplace that meets the needs of both employers and staff. Issues around transparency and honesty – acknowledging past mistakes and providing clear routes forward to ensure they are not repeated – are central to this. A workforce will quickly start to splinter if there is distrust of management, but by providing space in which grievances can be aired and errors addressed, the threat of disruption is reduced.

Central to this effort to build greater transparency is the growth of a culture of honesty. In terms of unionisation, that means honesty around what cannot be achieved, or which measures aimed at improving workplace culture and employee rights will take time. If expectations are repeatedly raised and not met, the natural response of employees will be one of anger and distrust. It's a small step from that to seeking forms of representation outside of the workplace. Early and frequent communication between all levels can help mitigate this. Employees need to know they are being listened to.

Thanks to the fates of Uber and others, workers are now more aware of the role that unions can play in securing rights. But employers should see this not as a threat, but as an opportunity to develop a more open, transparent, and ultimately productive business.



# How the pandemic has altered the sales landscape

THE PAST 18 months have pushed many businesses into a head-spinning state of rapid change. The abrupt end of face-to-face interactions forced companies to look to digital tools to help streamline their processes and keep their workforces engaged. McKinsey reports that three-quarters of B2B decision-makers currently prefer digital self-service and virtual engagement with salespeople, and [Sales Enablement PRO](#) found that having highly engaged employees correlates with a 30 per cent improvement in quota attainment.

However, with change comes risk, especially in the world of sales. Sales leaders need consistency and predictability as they navigate unpredictable times. Your organisation's revenue depends on it.

The pandemic has forced rapid evolution in many industries, though there is a difference between a hasty decision and an agile one. An agile decision is strategic and scalable. It is also based on data and is subject to rigour. Though change can be challenging at first, an agile decision will pay off long-term. It is what sets apart good and great sales organisations. Sales leaders at agile organisations are asked by peers at organisations that make hasty decisions how they did it.

Many companies were forced to make hasty decisions in 2020, as uncertainty clouded the waters of just about every industry. Though rushed decisions may sometimes pay off, they are often harder to replicate and scale if the sales team doesn't have a thorough understanding of why they led to success. That is why data-backed insights are imperative. This information is the difference between sales teams where reps consistently hit targets and those who struggle.

## An agile solution for moving targets

But how can we steward our teams amid so many unknowns, be agile and ensure our strategic decisions are scalable and effective? This is where the practice and technology of sales enablement can assist companies looking to map their strategic initiatives to training, marketing content and sales analytics. By doing so, you can create scalable and repeatable processes, driving consistent behaviour for salespeople. In essence, it is about writing a recipe that you know works.

When done well, [sales enablement drives revenue](#), rep attainment and retention of talent. In one study, businesses with a formal enablement charter, vision and strategy achieved 12 per cent higher win rates and a 35 per cent increase in the

*“The pandemic has forced rapid evolution in many industries, though there is a difference between a hasty decision and an agile one”*



number of salespeople achieving quotas compared with those without.

A good sales enablement tool is about optimisation, scale and precision. While every team will have high performers who have already acquired the behaviours to consistently hit their goals, many salespeople struggle to get their footing, leading to an average of 30 per cent seller turnover every year. A sales team with a robust sales enablement strategy can dramatically reduce this through the creation and delivery of a comprehensive onboarding programme that arms new salespeople with what they need to understand what to know, say, show and do in every selling scenario. This makes sellers more effective faster, which has a knock-on impact on team morale and average rep attainment, retention and customer experience.

## Sales enablement in action

Let's examine what this looks like in reality. Your company is trying to launch a new product. Many members of your sales team continue to work remotely, so how do you get everyone rapidly educated on the new product features across so many schedules and time zones? How do you land new marketing content? How do you prepare salespeople to make effective calls and send compelling emails to buyers? And how do your managers identify those who are

struggling and then coach and guide them towards a more effective approach?

The rise of sales enablement platforms has delivered an effective answer to all the above. By providing salespeople with content, guidance, training and coaching in one easy-to-use tool, you can quickly and effectively translate strategic initiatives such as a new product launch into bite-sized best practices. Sales enablement tools give your teams one source of truth while providing insights into your team's performance, allowing them to reinforce winning sales behaviours at scale. According to LinkedIn, the tools a salesperson relies on are closely correlated to their sales performance. Its report notes that 77 per cent of sales professionals say their sales organisation plans to invest “significantly more” in sales intelligence tools. To convince buyers to move through the sales process, your salespeople need to feel confident and ready to engage buyers. This is best accomplished by arming them with new tools and training that are dynamic, digital and easy to use.

## From handshakes to webcams

Video conferencing has come a long way in the past year, but even if sales managers could record and review every call, that is not a scalable solution. But by arming sellers with the right content at the right time through dynamic sales plays, you can use

analytics to measure the business impact of everything from content to sales training.

Without the opportunity to meet buyers in person, salespeople must ensure they clearly demonstrate their value during every buyer interaction. Forrester finds that 74 per cent of buyers choose to move forwards with the seller who first demonstrates value and insight. It is crucial that your salespeople provide valuable information from the very first interaction with their customers.

At its core, sales enablement is about equipping your team with what they need, when they need it and then optimising based on data through focused training and coaching. Every sales leader should be able to answer the following questions: does my team understand the overall strategy? Are they executing that strategy? Is the strategy delivering revenue results? Sales enablement is the difference between driving change that is effective and repeatable and change that fails to deliver results. In our current business climate, sales enablement is the key to making the agile decisions that drive revenue instead of hasty ones that may leave your team struggling to keep up.

## INDUSTRY VIEW

Andy Champion is VP and general manager, EMEA at Highspot [www.highspot.com/en-gb](http://www.highspot.com/en-gb)

# The Z factor

## How businesses can harness the power of the next generation

By 2025, Generation Z are forecast to represent a quarter of the workforce – and they come with their own unique needs, foibles, strengths and weaknesses. If businesses are to move forward, they'd do best to pay attention. **Paul Bray (60)** goes on an intergenerational fact-finding mission

EVER SINCE Noah looked at Shem, Ham and Japheth and muttered, "I don't get young people today," each generation has viewed its successors with a mixture of perplexity, horror and secret admiration. The latest brood to fly the nest are Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012 and, according to the World Economic Forum, set to make up 27 per cent of the workforce by 2025. Often caricatured as "woke", oversensitive and glued to their phones, they are an enigma wise employers must crack to attract them, keep them and harness their talents.

They certainly seem able to think big. "A report by US ad agency Sparks & Honey says 60 per cent of Gen Z want to have an impact on the world, compared with 39 per cent of millennials," says Zoe Wallace (37), director of Agent Academy, a training programme that helps young people to enter the creative and digital industries. "They've seen the devastating impact of war and greed on the world around them, so they stand up for what they believe in."

"Young people are definitely obsessed with the idea of a job being 'meaningful' and doing something that 'makes a difference'," adds Emily Shead (21), an account

executive at PR and marketing agency Aspectus Group.

It could be argued that this not because they are Gen Z, but because they are young. My friends and I felt much the same when we graduated in 1982. Now, by and large, we don't. But that is hardly the point. What matters is who Gen Z are today, not the cynical old codgers they may become. And they do seem possessed of a sense of tolerance and fairness that even advancing age is unlikely to dim.

### Diversions of thought

An acceptance of diversity and a commitment to human rights are second nature to people who grew up in an era that legalised gay marriage and elected the first black US president. Gen Z may look homogeneous to their elders, but they are genuine individualists: only half identify as totally heterosexual, for example.

It follows that they expect potential employers to have an equal commitment to diversity and equality.

"Our research has found that three quarters of recent graduates in the UK strongly expect or require employers to be committed to diversity and inclusion (D&I) in hiring practices," says Jewell Parkinson (47), chief people



*"Employee reputation is crucial. Seventy per cent of prospective employees look at online review sites such as Glassdoor before applying, and according to Forbes, they'll be 69 per cent more likely to apply if the company manages its brand well" – Harvey Morton, Harvey Morton Digital*

officer at recruitment tech company iCIMS. "Other things being equal, they may choose one employer over another based on how their commitment to D&I is reflected in the hiring process."

While it makes them demanding jobseekers, once recruited, Gen Z's empathy and emotional intelligence can be a real asset to their employers, believes Elaine Bowker (60), principal and chief executive at The City of Liverpool College. "It's invaluable to any workplace, whether that's through exceptional customer service, brilliant management or simply great team communication."

"Soft skills – collaborative leadership, emotional intelligence, innovative mindset and empathy – have often

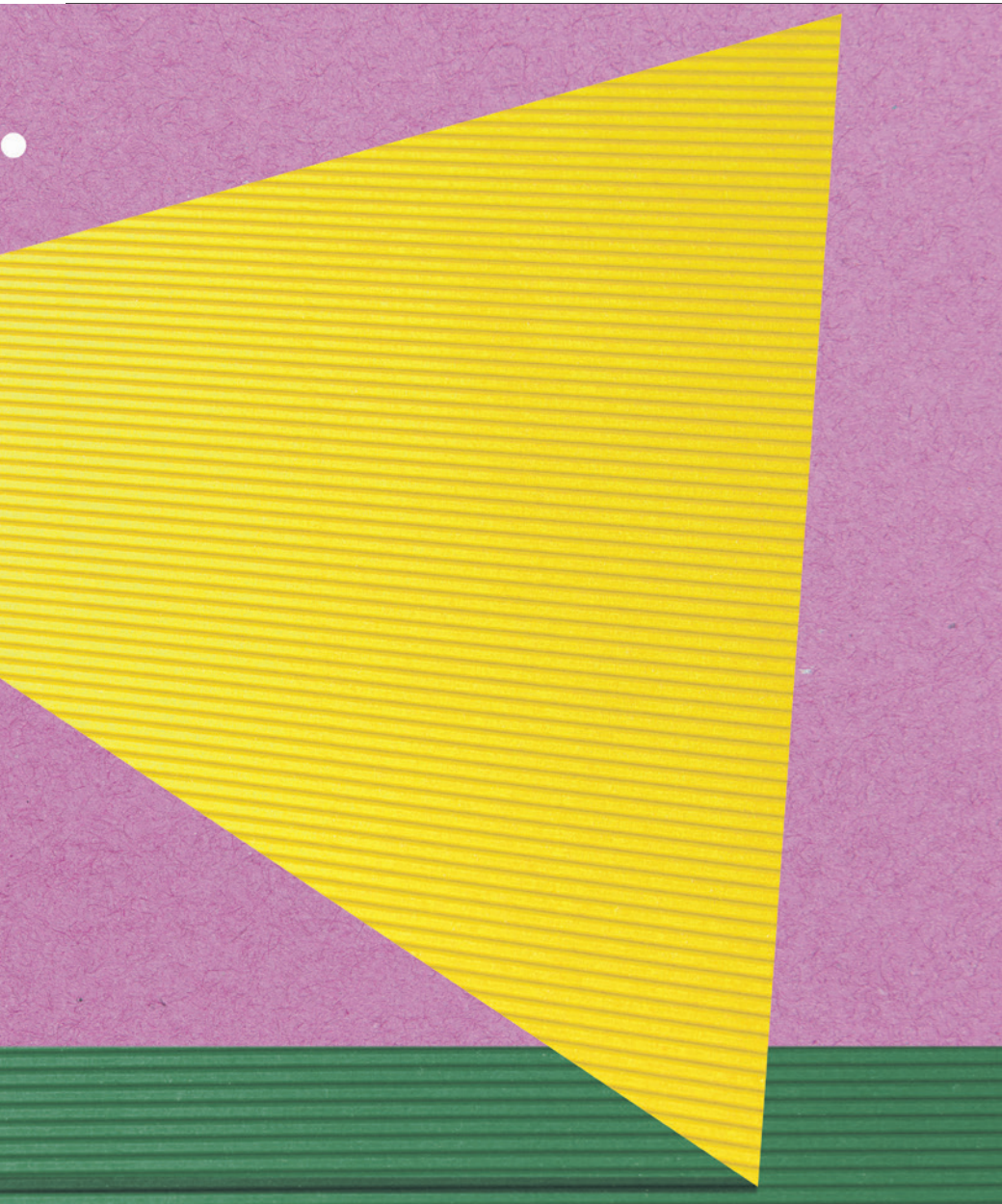
been undervalued in business," adds Ashwini Bakshi (54), managing director of the Project Management Institute. "Our recent Pulse of the Profession research found that talent development in the UK is now focused more on collaborative leadership and building an innovative mindset."

### Getting responsible

Hand in hand with D&I goes Gen Z's commitment to corporate social responsibility. "They seem to want to work in businesses that care about climate change and their impact on the planet as well as diversity and inclusion," says Ben Tyson (31), CEO of social media agency Born Social. "They're more likely to ask these questions during interviews, and to hold us to a higher standard of account than millennials do. They hold our clients to account, too."

"Employer reputation is crucial," says Harvey Morton (23), founder of social media and website design firm Harvey Morton Digital. "Seventy per cent of prospective employees look at online review sites such as Glassdoor before applying and, according to Forbes, they'll be 69 per cent more likely to apply if the company manages its brand well."

Brand image is vital to super-self-conscious Gen Z. "Their social media-first approach means they're motivated by image, and a dream job



can be as much about the perception of the job and awareness of the brand, as it is about how much they earn or what they do,” says Wallace.

Ah yes, social media. If there is one thing that really characterises Gen Z, it is total immersion in technology. If millennials have quickly learned to become expert swimmers in the oceans of the internet, Gen Z are, quite simply, fish.

“For them, ‘on-demand’ isn’t a buzzword, it’s a way of life,” says Jaime Silvester (40), UK head of retail at research firm IRI.

### Breaking the connection

As Wallace points out, umbilical connection to the internet can have contradictory effects – on one hand, hypersensitivity, heightened anxiety and lower levels of self-esteem and concentration; on the other, open minds and a better grasp of world affairs, politics and ethics than any previous generation.

For employers, too, it is a double-edged sword. It means that to recruit from Gen Z they must make full use of online media and make hiring decisions quickly. According to research by recruitment platform Yello, half of Gen Z will not even apply to an employer they feel has outdated recruitment methods, and more than 80 per cent expect a decision within a fortnight.

**Gen Z are stereotyped as “woke” and ultra-sensitive, but they can have a passion and a work ethic that’s connected to a desire to be heard and contribute**

“Take a look at Uber’s early careers page,” recommends Parkinson. “It’s a great example of how an employer can personalise the job search by leveraging TikTok-like video content to engage with potential interns and entry-level talent.” Indeed, Gen Zs naturally expect the same state-of-the-art technology at work as they use in their private lives. “They’ll check the hardware, tools, BYOD (bring your own device) policy and remote access arrangements before accepting a job,” warns Paul Mitchell (56), chief people officer at technology firm Content Guru.

Digitally induced short attention spans (or what previous generations might call butterfly brains) may need careful handling, too. “Gen Z value communication but it needs to be concise, and preferably using a variety of media,” says Fiona Cottle (52), people director at used car dealer CarShop, where a quarter of the workforce is Gen Z. “Similarly they like to learn in diverse ways, often in bite-size chunks using digital and video content.”

But the upsides of Gen Z’s technical fluency can be huge. “Pre-Covid, businesses were already looking at digitisation as their next major transformation project,” says Seb O’Connell (49), president of recruitment firm Cielo Talent. “This has accelerated dramatically during the pandemic,

## The generations game

Don’t know your Gen Alpha from your elbow? Try our crib

### Baby boomers

**(b. 1946-64)** Born in the shadow of the Bomb, they grew up to be the first true teenagers, with their own subculture and purchasing clout. They’re now either retired or counting the days, and raking in the profits of the property boom.

### Generation X (b. 1965-80)

The latchkey kids and city slickers of the Eighties boom and Nineties bust. Although their outlook can be very different, they often relate to Gen Z better than millennials

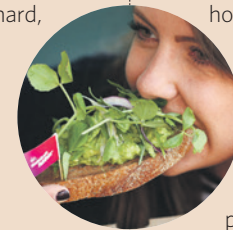


do. At least they know them better: they’re their parents.

### Generation Y/ Millennials

**(b. 1981-96)** The first digital natives, they went to uni in droves before it cost the earth. Caricatured as Generation Me, they’re also team-oriented and globally aware. They work hard, play hard, and wonder why they still can’t afford their own home.

### Generation Z (b. 1997-2012). They



look at five screens a day and their attention span is shorter than a goldfish’s. When they’re not polishing their social media profile you’ll probably find them at a BLM march, a climate change demo, or their second job.

### Generation Alpha (b. 2013-present)

Too early to say how they’ll turn out, although lockdowns and homeschooling may leave their mark. One thing you can bet on, though. Gen Z will look at them and mutter, “I don’t get young people today.”

BR

so digital skills are now highly coveted.”

“This generation consumes technology with a voraciousness that’s spawned new market sectors,” says Amanda Fone (57), CEO of f1 recruitment. “TikTok is just the tip of the iceberg. Gen Z live and breathe the zeitgeist, and any company seeking to engage with it should look to them to open the door.”

Interestingly, their obsession with technology does not necessarily mean that Gen Z are uninterested in face-to-face contact.

“They’ve actually been shown to want more face time with colleagues than previous generations,” says O’Connell. “Their dream job consists of a daily variety of interpersonal interactions and an internal support network that satiates their need for belonging.”

“It’s not surprising that younger employees are keen to return to the office, as so much of what we learn about company culture is gained through osmosis, observing how others operate in the workplace,” adds Alex Arundale (47), chief people officer at software and services firm Advanced.

### Not sticking around

It may not be the same office for long, however. Yello found that just over half of Gen Zs intend to work for their current employer for less than three years.

“Gen Z are rejecting the conventional career ladder in favour of a holistic approach to their careers,” says Fone. “They’re moving between companies after short stints, often because employers tend to prioritise vertical over horizontal career paths. People at the start of their careers are looking to try new things rather than climb a greasy pole by the quickest possible route.”

*“This generation consume technology with a voraciousness that’s spawned new market sectors.”*  
– Amanda Fone, f1 recruitment

Gen Z’s whole attitude to work can appear fundamentally different from previous generations, with an employer-employee contract that is about far more than merely selling their labour.

“They’re widely rejecting the idea of simply putting one’s head down and working hard, because they don’t think it’s benefited their millennial counterparts,” says Fone. “Instead, they’re offering hard work and application in return for working in a socially conscious and meritocratic organisation that will look after them over the short to medium term.”

Looking after them means looking after their health as well as their career. “Gen Zs share a huge passion for mental health and work/life balance,” says Frasier Crouch (23), customer insights manager at IRI, who wrote his degree dissertation on Gen Z. “These are crucial elements to attract and retain Gen Z talent, as they value them more than income or brand reputation. Especially during the recent Covid-19 pandemic, Gen Z are huge advocates of having the ability to switch off from work and focus on themselves and their minds.”

“Life is much more of a holistic concept for Gen Z,” says Alex Cleveland (38), strategy director at brand and design agency fst. “I don’t even think it’s appropriate to think in terms of ‘work/life balance’ anymore. Everything is one, so the work environment needs to include freedom, flexibility, creativity and fun. The fact that they expect to enjoy work gives Gen Z a genuinely progressive and positive outlook, which can breed a great team atmosphere.”

### It’s all me, me, meritocracy...

This does not mean they lack ambition, believes Cottle. “They just see life as a meritocracy and aren’t bound by what they might call ‘old fashioned’

## Generation Z in their own words...

"I wouldn't say we're all really woke. I would say that large chunks of our generation are aware of social justice issues and use public platforms to advocate the wellbeing of others." **Emily Shead (21), account executive, Aspectus Group**

"Growing up in a culture where everything is instant, Generation Z have developed a shorter attention span, but can soak up a bundle of



information in seconds. With this lack of patience but ability to multitask, we're always looking for new ways to develop our skills," **Frasier Crouch (23), customer insights manager, IRI**

"Gen Z are less attracted by free breakfasts or offices with slides than by fair and equitable working conditions. A greater culture of openness and transparency has given them the knowledge and confidence to speak up for themselves at work." **Lottie Hanwell (24), behavioural analyst, Canvas8**

"I wouldn't want to work somewhere that I'm not making a difference and that



isn't fulfilling me in some way. I feel older generations thought less about this and more about the practicality of the job." **Mabinty Taylor-Kamara (22), creative apprentice, Ogilvy UK**

"A digitally literate generation with a deep ethical calling sounds like just the sort of people employers should be looking for." **Harvey Morton (23), founder, Harvey Morton Digital**

BR

norms. The way they see it, if you're good enough, you're old enough."

Nor are they entirely indifferent to the pursuit of financial reward. "In our research, 43 per cent of Gen Z said salary and benefits were among the most important factors when choosing an employer, compared with 29 per cent of millennials," says Ali Shalfrooshan (40), head of R&D at talent assessment and development company PSI.

This is not because Generation Z have abandoned their woke and self-obsessed (sorry, inclusive and individualist) principles, but because of economic uncertainty. A Harris poll in the US found that Gen Zs were three times more likely to lose their jobs during the Covid pandemic than Gen Xers.

"As a generation that grew up in the wake of a recession, with ever-increasing costs of higher education, and is now moving into the workforce post-pandemic, it's not surprising that Gen Zs will want to feel secure in their work," says Shalfrooshan. "It's also not surprising that they'll feel anxious about their performance in the workplace. Offering real-time feedback can provide them with insights into how they're doing and relieve this pressure."

### A bit on the side

One way to increase financial independence – and/or indulge their creativity – is to do extra work on the side. According to iCIMS research, 72 per cent of recent UK graduates say they are likely to get a gig economy job to supplement their main income, and Fone finds that many Gen Zs are rejecting traditional contracts that ban part-time jobs.

"This generation is highly creative, so to be fulfilled in their work they need the freedom and flexibility to

tap into that, and we're seeing a lot of entrepreneurialism in our students and the desire to strike out on their own," says Bowker.

This spirit of entrepreneurship can be a benefit in the workplace, according to Crouch. "Gen Zs naturally exhibit huge amounts of creativity and passion, which allow teams and businesses to continuously evolve."

But it must not become a distraction. "Managers should watch for signs of burnout," cautions Parkinson. "By providing clear paths for career advancement and investing in learning, development and cross-functional projects, companies will be able to ease Gen Zs' financial anxiety and prevent the 'side hustle' from becoming the main hustle."

So there you have Gen Z. Wedded to technology, yet craving human company. Proud to be different, yet paranoid about their image. Reluctant to commit to a career, yet happy to do two jobs at once. Mouthy, demanding, impatient. Tolerant, caring, passionate.

A bundle of contradictions. But the future would be a lot less bright without them.



# Digital threats may be closer than you realise

**D**EFENDING A perimeter is a concept that is as old as the first time anyone had something of value. And there is a natural perception that we can better control and keep an eye on something in close proximity to us.

It's tempting for organisations to see their computer systems in the same way, to hold them physically very close. But in the context of a modern enterprise trying to become digitised as fast as possible to keep up with and beat the competition, the abstract nature of blending on-premises, cloud and partner resources can blur the lines in favour of the bad actors. We have to start thinking of all of our computing resources as being in hostile territory.

"Zero trust" is a term that has been used recently to represent a set of principles that help network defenders see their home networks as hostile territory. A person who walks through a cyber-security vendor hall, or consumes marketing collateral, might come away with a lot of conclusions about exactly what "zero trust" is, but I think that the penny has finally dropped and everyone now understands that this is very important to get right.

Taking advantage of vulnerabilities in on-premises systems

is one beachhead that has recently become popular with attackers. Ultimately, systems that are on-premises are there because they are sensitive – well known examples include the Microsoft Exchange server, SolarWinds and even the holy of holies, Microsoft CA. Many organisations have moved on and started to use cloud versions of their email server, their security management and their public key infrastructure (PKI),

*"The abstract nature of blending on-premises, cloud and partner resources can blur the lines in favour of bad actors. We have to start thinking of all our computing resources as being in hostile territory"*

but tens of thousands of organisations haven't, and have suffered.

What all of these trusted on-premises systems have in common is that their vulnerabilities have invited attack, and enabled the attacker to establish a beachhead. In the case of Microsoft CA, recent research shared at the Black Hat conference has introduced tools to attack configuration weaknesses and steal root keys to forge identities in home networks. Thankfully, researchers have also released tools to help

mitigate those weaknesses, but it requires work and technical knowledge to do it right. We have to face the fact that these on-premises systems are showing their age. Keeping aging systems close to the chest, and placing too much trust in what is nearest, is becoming a weakness not a strength.

Call it zero trust, or whatever you need to justify the effort to change, but the age of overestimating behind-the-perimeter systems is over. The new perimeter is the identity of the nodes connected to you. Using the right credential form factor is important to express that identity. Digital certificates are the right form factor in many cases, and lifecycle management of those identities has evolved to handle the scale.

Protecting the integrity of data going across hostile network boundaries starts with authenticated sessions with encrypted communication. The goal is that, in the event of an attacker achieving a beachhead, their next lateral move in your network won't be as easy as it is now.

### INDUSTRY VIEW

Jason Soroko is CTO, PKI at Sectigo  
020 4519 2097  
[sectigo.com](https://www.sectigo.com)

# Why changing workplace culture demands better technology

80%

The percentage of people who believe easy-to-use tech can make both virtual and in-person meetings easier.

Source: Barco

A RECENT BARCO report analysing changing workplace culture since the onset of Covid found that hybrid working – a blend of remote and office work – is the new preferred way of working. Even as restrictions lift and employees enjoy returning to the camaraderie of the office in greater numbers, there is still a desire for remote work. However, despite this trend people are struggling with virtual and hybrid meetings.

The Barco meeting barometer, published every quarter – which measures how people experience meetings – has plummeted since 2019, from +63 on the index to -25 in 2020. The main issue behind the drop is low participant engagement. One contributing factor was that remote collaboration did not come naturally to 49 per cent of those polled.

That said, 80 per cent of respondents believed easy-to-use tech could make not just virtual meetings better, but also in-person ones.

## Employees expect more from meeting rooms

These figures show a clear need for improved tech in order to foster greater participant engagement, while at the same time supporting hybrid working methods.

As far as the technical barriers to hybrid meetings are concerned, meeting rooms are not adequately equipped for hybrid work. Sixty-five per cent of employees struggle with different setups in meeting rooms, especially when moving from one meeting room to the next.

Meanwhile, 48 per cent of respondents reported having trouble connecting to the AV peripherals such as display, camera, speakers and microphones, often not knowing which cable is the right one. A whopping 78 per cent said they wished they could just walk into an in-person meeting room and join a call without having to connect to cables (78 per cent).



In short, employees want to be able to brainstorm and collaborate without the interruptions caused by technical issues. The predominant feeling among those returning to the office is that if they are going to physically make the commute, they want much more from a meeting and meeting room than they did previously – otherwise they'd just work from home, connecting via Zoom or Teams. But even in the virtual realm, the sheer number of online meetings everyone attended over the past year and a half has not just given the work world Zoom/Teams fatigue, it has also led to higher standards for tech, from gear such as cameras, microphones and speakers, to screen sharing.

## New methods of working

Naturally, bring your own meeting (BYOM) and bring your own device (BYOD) have become de rigueur, especially as laptops have become the interface to the world since lockdown. Video conferencing is not just the new normal, it's the new expectation that meeting rooms be equipped with the best this technology has to offer in terms of audio and video. Added to this is the new focus on employee-centricity. Employers are well aware that employees have had a lot more time during lockdown to think about what they want out of life and, by extension, their jobs. They need strong incentives to come back to the office, beyond just the social interaction aspect.

workers can connect with each other instead of wasting time wrestling with meeting set-up parameters.

## Connect to the future with ClickShare

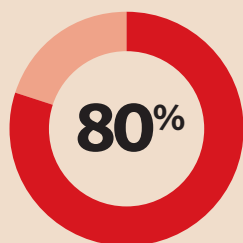
Barco's ClickShare offers a possible solution. Agnostic, wireless and fully integrated, the ClickShare hub makes hybrid meetings as intuitive and straightforward as face-to-face ones. With ClickShare Conference, meeting participants can host video calls from their laptop and go beyond what is possible with a traditional UCC platform such as Zoom, MS Teams or WebEx alone. With ClickShare Present, users can even enhance collaboration and interactivity in fixed conference rooms by bringing their own device.

Whatever they prefer, ClickShare gives the power back to employees. People can enter the conference room, turn on their laptop, plug in the ClickShare button or use the desktop app, and join the conversation. Whether they bring their own device or go fully agnostic by choosing their own UCC, ClickShare meetings can always start on time and without IT-related delay. Meeting hosts also feel more comfortable and confident, as they are running the meeting from their laptop or mobile device.

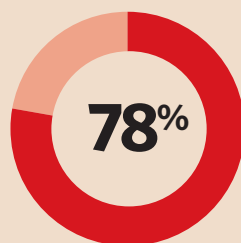
## Employers need to prioritise and invest in tech

This means offering flexible options that meet employee needs from a compatibility standpoint and collaborative tools that boost meeting productivity through enhanced interaction. The result is a meeting experience that is inspiring, immersive and has a better all-round flow. It's also no longer affordable to have to spend time trying to sync systems or get on the same page technologically speaking. To thrive in today's climate, employers need to foster a dynamic meeting environment through technology that is user-friendly and which requires no training or setup management so that

## The importance of usability



...believe easy-to-use technology can make meetings easier



...wish they could simply walk into the meeting room and join a call without having to connect cables



## INDUSTRY VIEW

Discover more from our 2021 Hybrid meeting research whitepaper at <https://bit.ly/38FXp84>

# A new, more agile generation will reshape the world of work entirely

**Will Sillar** is insight partner at Chaucer. Here he makes his rallying cry to organisations to adopt agile thinking and approaches to industrial structures and organisations

THREE YEARS ago I was asked by one of the world's leading banks to transform the 100,000 employees of its retail banking operation into an efficient, dynamic and agile workforce capable of facing the challenges of the 2020s. At the time I thought this was fanciful. Today I think it was prescient.

I'm 57. Even before the pandemic, the customs and assumptions of my generation, in business as in life, were in question. In business, the concept of a select few calling the shots based on superior information, experience and connections was already looking threadbare. Today the need for the agility, efficiency and resilience my banking clients were seeking is urgent. We have reached the tipping point, not least in the form of the jump-shift in consumer and workforce expectations and needs we have seen in the pandemic. Meanwhile a little-recognised phenomenon encapsulates the new dynamic and provides, perhaps, the basis for that drive for into agility for businesses everywhere.

## The inversion of the organisation

In organisations of all kinds, the people with first-hand knowledge of markets and customers are those on the front line who deal directly with both. While organisations have long used systems to gather intelligence about their operations, that intelligence is broadly financial, inferred and retrospective. Decisions were – and still are – taken in forums away from the customer, based on limited intelligence and shaped by the collective experience of the “executive team”.

The advent of digital channels and teams which combine technical knowledge, iterative

development methods and direct feedback from real-time customer behaviour has permanently diminished the role of marketeers and strategists. The greatest insight into customer behaviour and commercial strategy in the digital organisation lies in these teams, and, with the democratisation of wider market knowledge, the inversion of the traditional organisational pyramid now seems not just desirable but inevitable.

## What will shape the new sociology of the workplace?

With the logic of organisational inversion growing clearer, so too are a series of factors that are also reshaping the present and future workforce. As the future accelerates toward us, three principal legacies of our collective past stand in the way and pose additional challenges.

The barriers of bias, which have kept so many from gaining and holding positions of influence and creativity, are being dismantled. Businesses and individuals now increasingly accept that it is not just the macro-inefficiencies of discrimination that matter, but the moral stance and values of the organisation themselves. McKinsey will tell you that companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35 per cent more likely to have superior financial returns. I can tell you that if your organisation is not avowedly fair and responsible, in this and many other dimensions, young people will not want to work for you, nor will they buy your goods or services.

True digital natives are emerging. We are now seeing the first children of the 21st century enter the workplace and their attitudes and expectations have been shaped wholly in the



era of the internet. Armed with information, resources and opportunities that their parents struggle to comprehend, these people are our biggest opportunity for new skills and innovation, as well as the prime consumers of the future.

There may be fewer of them, but they will have a greater impact on the success of modern business than any previous generation and their values and expectations will be far more influential. The gig economy, Black Lives Matter and Me Too have taught them harsh lessons in both the uses and abuses of economic and social power. Now the post-pandemic working model has given them huge scope to work where, how and for whom they like. They will gather information and exercise those freedoms far more assiduously than any generation before.

Climate change will transcend all other challenges to organisations and businesses in the widest sense. Almost unimaginable changes to consumption, infrastructure and activity will be required. Our collective ability, in business and in society, to face, solve and overcome the

problems of decarbonisation are now the sternest test of our industrialised society, and the greatest force compelling change in how we organise and mobilise capital and assets in commerce and in public service.

## A new paradigm for the 21st century organisation?

Our societies need organisations and structures to which people align and contribute at different stages of their lives and careers. There will never be a nation of freelancers: coordination, collective learning and economies of scale will be needed for efficiency and effect on the global basis on which we now work.

New structures and dynamics in our organisations and in critical employer/employee relationships are needed. Already, young people are demanding flexibility, responsibility, development and a sense of deeper meaning and purpose in their organisations. They see new choices in where and how they work. The employee bargain is, for them, different.

To meet these ideals and attract the skills and energy that are sorely needed within the

continuing imperatives facing any enterprise in our capitalist economies, we must accelerate the development of the agile organisations that my banking clients dreamed of.

Agility, in the sense now current in business, is no longer just the be all and end all of the digital economy. In their digital homeland, agile practices bring decision-makers and frontline staff into the same debates and rooms in search of better and faster developments in products and services of every kind. The deeper implications of this sea-change for whole organisations are now sensed by many business leaders; for others they will become clear soon enough. The greater resilience, creativity and energy available to organisations formed and working in this “agile” way may not be enough to take us through this critical period of our development as a society in the widest sense. But they can, and should, be an essential part of our response to the gathering challenges ahead.



**Will Sillar**, insight partner, Chaucer

**INDUSTRY VIEW**  
+44 7760 178970  
will.sillar@chaucer.com

# What UK employees expect from organisations in 2021

“Conversations on diversity and racial biases perpetuated across the year in the UK”

IN OUR recent Employee Expectations 2021 Report, we analysed more than 150 million employee survey responses from around the world to uncover the common themes impacting employee engagement – and which hold the key for organisational success in the coming months.

UK employees face similar challenges to their international peers with regards to health and wellbeing and flexible work, and are calling for organisations to provide more support for diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) as well as future growth opportunities.

These findings are based on 12 million responses from more than 140,000 employees across more than 300 UK companies. They reveal unique insights into how organisations can support their people to perform at their best.

## Diversity, equity and inclusion remains a key issue

The proportion of UK employee comments on the topic of DE&I increased by 31 per cent in 2020, compared with a 38 per cent year-on-year increase globally.

These increases are closely linked to social movements such as Black Lives Matter, which first appeared in an employee comment on 1 June 2020. The increase in DE&I comments was lower in the UK than it was in the US, where we saw a 48 per cent rise.

Regardless of magnitude, conversations on diversity and racial biases perpetuated across the year in the UK – and increased rapidly following the globalisation of the Black Lives Matter movement in June 2020.

## The evolution of when and where we work

The proportion of comments about remote or flexible work support increased by 47 per cent in the UK last year, compared with a global increase of 125 per cent. This might seem low in comparison with the global increase, but UK employees were already talking about flexible work before the pandemic – a significant and ongoing trend that needs to be addressed.

Spikes in comments on this theme aligned with global lockdowns, with nearly 25 per cent of all the comments on remote and flexible work occurring in April and May.



## A concerning lack of growth conversations

Comments related to growth in the UK decreased by 8 per cent in 2020 compared with the previous year, highlighting a trend of fewer growth conversations.

In the context of a global pandemic and struggling global economies, there were fewer opportunities for growth in 2020,

with many employees also less likely to start a conversation about career progression in the face of ongoing uncertainty.

The average growth score of employees that remain with a business is 13 per cent higher than that of departing employees. Growth is also a key predictor in our attrition algorithm, and the second best after organisational loyalty – making it essential for retaining top talent.

## How to respond in 2021 and beyond

The findings of this year’s report highlight not only the fundamental needs of employees (inclusion and growth), but also the fact that employee expectations are tightly interwoven with the current social climate (wellbeing and flexible working).

With each passing year, employee expectations will continue to evolve, meaning the employee experience needs to become a core part of any organisational strategy.

## INDUSTRY VIEW

Patrick Cournoyer is chief evangelist at Peakon, a Workday company <https://peakon.com/heartbeat>

# Finding, and keeping, the right people when talent is scarce

THE COVID-19 pandemic has made the longstanding talent scarcity problem even more acute. In manufacturing, for example, the problem is reaching a crisis point, with most organisations that manufacture goods struggling to resource their operations. Across multiple geographies and sectors, increasing demand is creating vacancies that talent acquisition teams simply can’t fill – on both the permanent and contingent workforce.

This high demand/low supply dynamic is creating a candidates’ market, as individuals with highly sought skills enjoy more choice than ever before about who they work for. The result? Rising wage inflation and a worrying trend of desperate employers offering attractive incentives to secure available candidates.

But these financial incentives, or “golden hellos”, are clearly an unsustainable, short-term fix for what is a chronic issue. From a retention point of view, they’re also likely to be

counterproductive. Workers who accept a role purely on the promise of a one-off financial boost are likely to move on to the next highest bidder at the first available opportunity.

So what should employers be doing instead to attract and retain the people they need in such a sparse and competitive market for talent?

First, organisations must develop compelling talent acquisition strategies that are based on far more than financial reward. The starting point for this employer value proposition, or EVP, is one simple question: why should an in-demand candidate choose to work for us instead of the competition?

The answers will differ for contingent and permanent workers but, in both instances, they will incorporate elements such as: your corporate values; learning, development and progression opportunities; flexible working arrangements; your technology stack; opportunities to do meaningful work; and your approach to collaboration



and line management. An important step for many organisations right now is to recognise that contingent workers value these things just as much as their permanent counterparts do – and that both are equally scarce right now.

The second part of an effective attraction and retention strategy is finding the right route to market. While talent scarcity is very real, it’s also true

that many organisations could combat this to some extent by broadening their horizons – both in terms of who they want to attract, and how they do it.

A tight market for talent can often be eased with relatively simple measures. Modifying pre-employment screening processes, for example, can open a wider pool of talent. Suppliers that specialise in recruiting historically

overlooked segments of the workforce – talented mothers looking to return to work, minority groups, former members of the armed forces, people with past convictions – can also help organisations find the talented people they need in places they hadn’t previously thought to look.

These steps can be truly transformative when taken in partnership with an experienced workforce solutions provider. By leveraging that provider’s access to a supply chain of specialist recruiters and technology to unlock overlooked talent, and expertise in designing and implementing compelling EVPs for both permanent and contingent workers, organisations can start to overcome the challenges of talent scarcity – and perhaps find that talent isn’t quite as scarce as they imagined.

## INDUSTRY VIEW

Brian Salkowski is chief operating officer at Guidant Global [bsalkowski@guidantglobal.com](mailto:bsalkowski@guidantglobal.com) [www.guidantglobal.com](http://www.guidantglobal.com)

# Staying afloat in the face of a labour shortage nightmare

After a maelstrom of Covid and Brexit, staff shortages are the next big problem businesses must contend with. How can firms attract a diminishing and more demanding talent pool? **Paul Bray** talks to firms grappling with the UK's labour shortage

**A**T BELLE Aire Holiday Park in Hemsby, Norfolk, the restaurant manager is sweating in the kitchen while the park seeks a new chef. "We've been advertising for weeks at a salary 25 per cent higher than we've ever paid, and not had a single applicant," says general manager Sally Burrell. "For other roles, we've offered jobs, had them accepted, and people simply don't turn up on their first day."

In Telford, industrial firm Corbetts the Galvanizers won some major new contracts coming out of lockdown, creating more than 45 potential new jobs. After three months of searching it had filled just half. "We're after general operatives we can train from scratch. Team leaders, HGV drivers and forklift drivers: all seem in short supply," says finance director and general manager Sophie Williams.

Welcome to the world of the labour shortage, a perfect storm that has seen the short-term effects of Brexit and Covid layered onto longstanding issues of an aging workforce, a popular distaste for manual jobs, and long-term underinvestment in skills.

It does not just affect blue-collar workers. "All the media attention has been on lorry drivers, food processing, hospitality and construction," says Neil Carberry, chief executive of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation. "But recruiters tell us that every sector is facing serious shortages, from health and care roles to HR, accountants, engineers and IT specialists."

An obvious first salvo in the war for talent is to increase salaries, and not only to attract new hires. "We're also seeing employers offer up to 25 per cent pay rises to hold on to their existing staff," says David Morel, CEO of Tiger Recruitment. "Many are even introducing substantial retention bonuses to encourage temporary workers to remain in post."

But employers should not just focus on wages, advises Carberry. "They should also think about

*"We've been advertising for weeks at a salary 25 per cent higher than we've ever paid and not had a single applicant. For other roles we've offered jobs, had them accepted, and people simply didn't turn up on the first day" – Sally Burrell, Aire Holiday Park*

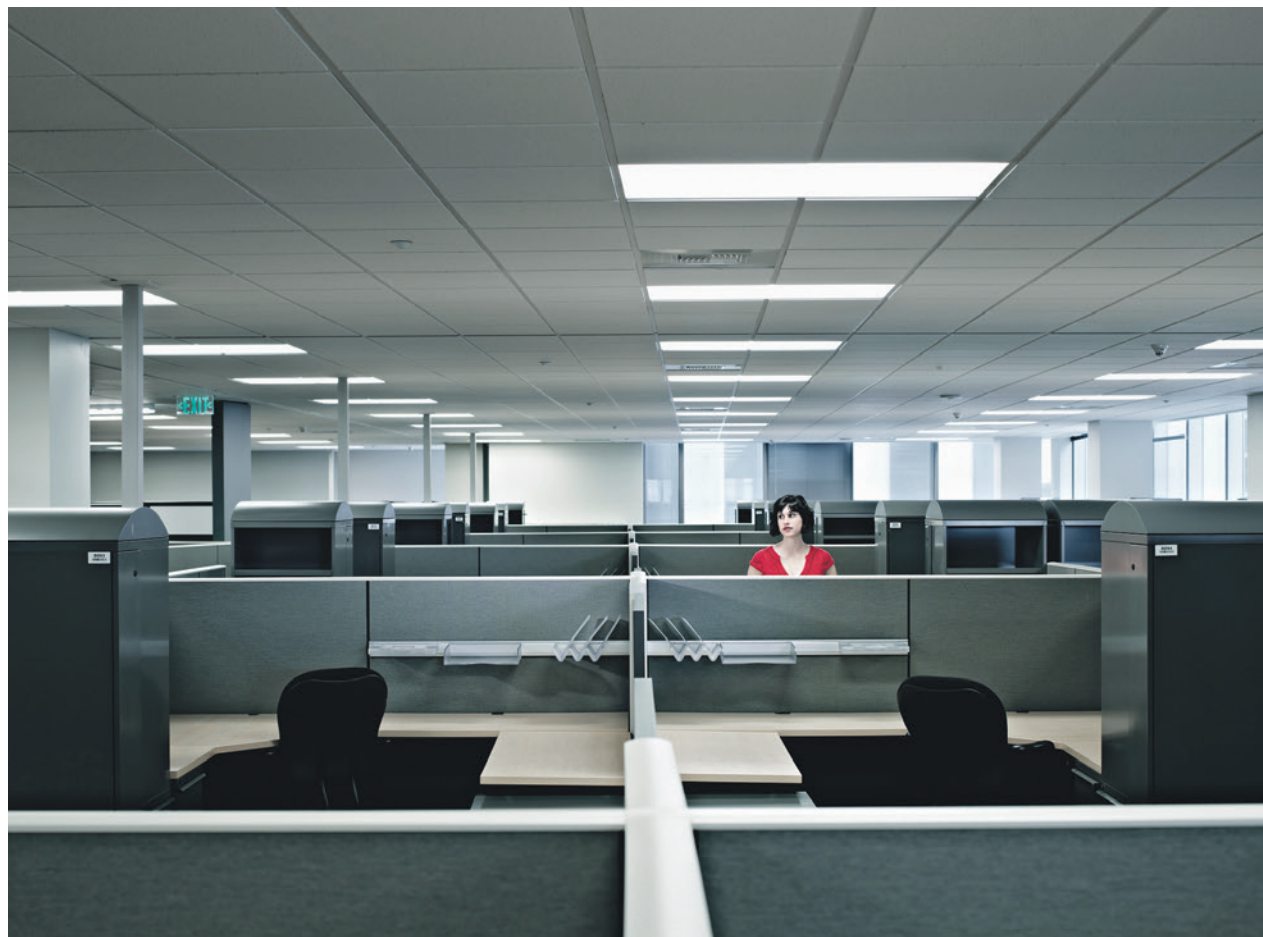
things like workplace facilities, parental leave and flexible working policies, pensions or holiday entitlement. Companies often underestimate the importance of these kinds of benefit to workers."

Something unusual may help. Corbetts has introduced "softer" benefits including free hot drinks, Christmas vouchers, Easter eggs for workers' families, and regular fish and chips as a thank you for hard work. At Belle Aire, offering free accommodation by the beach has worked wonders for recruiting students as summer temps.

Flexible working is a must, believes Morel. "It's so highly prized that candidates are turning down jobs that require them to be in the office five days a week."

"A lot of professional businesses are increasingly reliant on working parents, particularly mums, who are unlikely to be interested in returning to the office for a traditional working week," says Charlie Ball, senior consultant for labour market intelligence at education and skills consultancy Jisc. "Firms who embrace hybrid working wholeheartedly may well reap rewards later in employee loyalty. Virtual working may also be a way to access overseas talent."

Recruitment firm Hays finds that job-hunters are increasingly seeking employers with a social conscience. "Opportunities such as offering volunteer days, supporting charitable organisations and having a clear strategy for sustainability are all really



important to prospective candidates," says managing director Simon Winfield.

And everybody wants to feel appreciated and listened to – a fact that some employers seem to have forgotten.

"There's been a long-term failure to recognise the work people do in sectors such as driving and food production, which has resulted in low pay and often poor terms and conditions," says Kate Bell, head of economics at the TUC. "So employers need to offer people what everyone wants – decent pay, job security and a voice at work. That means raising wages, no zero-hours contracts, and recognising a trade union that can help them understand what matters to their workforce."

"We say, if you join our team you're here for the long run if you want, and there's plenty of training and development for you to progress," says Williams. Corbetts has introduced an internal "academy" featuring the kind of training programme and rotation through

different areas of the business more usually associated with graduate schemes.

"Employers that offer generous training and career development opportunities will have an edge," believes Morel. "People, especially younger workers, are eager to learn new skills and get their careers back on track after a year of uncertainty."

Some potential employers need a reality check, suggests Ball. "In graduate recruitment, we still hear of employers expecting significant experience at entry-level salaries, and advertising an unrealistic 'laundry list' of requirements."

Casting the net wider may also bring in a better catch. Ball points out that graduates with apparently non-relevant degrees may actually have all the core abilities an employer seeks, while Winfield suggests dipping into "unexpected talent pools" such as ex-service personnel, ex-offenders and the young unemployed.

Janice Burns, chief people officer at education technology

company Degreed and former chief learning officer at Mastercard, believes that sharing talent across industries will become more common. "We saw the beginnings during the pandemic, when 1,000 airline cabin crew were redeployed as carers. Sharing talent from low-demand to high-demand sectors will help businesses navigate changes more quickly and build more transferable skills."

In the longer term, staff shortages could precipitate more fundamental changes in the way we work. "More organisations will move towards project- and task-based work, partly because labour shortages will lead them to find new ways to plug the gap," says Burns. "Future teams will be formed around projects and disbanded at project end, and may consist of a mix of permanent employees, freelancers, robots, automation and machine learning. Today's business leaders should seek to understand this new work style and where it can fit into their current strategies."



# Tailoring an appropriate response to a seismic shift in working habits

Fora CEO and co-founder **Enrico Sanna** explores the arguments for working from home versus the office and highlights the new office model that employers must adopt to keep their workforce happy and productive

**A**S THE country returns to some semblance of “normality”, the only certainty about the future of the office is uncertainty. Will you return full-time? Will you adopt a hybrid or flexible model? Will your staff stay home permanently? These are all legitimate questions, without simple answers.

Around 75 per cent of employees want a hybrid working model, according to a recent YouGov poll. Indeed, two-thirds of UK businesses plan to keep staff working from home for at least part of the week, according to professional body the Institute of Directors. A combination of home and office working seems inevitable in this brave new world. But deciding what that blend will look like can be problematic.

Fora offers a solution to the immediate need for flexible and adaptable workspaces that put people and experience first. Banning the antiquated one-size-fits-all hot desking approach, an activity-based working model identifies the needs of each business to deliver a bespoke design, particular to the required tasks of the company – from presentations, ideation and soft collaboration to team or quiet focus.

More and more businesses understand that a workplace should not be centred around a desk but rather a well-designed, engaging work environment. Organisations are increasingly realising that the office must be fit for purpose, delivering agile settings from collaborative spaces to places to work quietly and focus. What’s needed is a bespoke approach where a company designs its office around its employees. This is what Fora aims to provide with Tailored Office, a space with different “settings” that address the various needs that organisations have.

What matters is that these “settings” are designed around tasks. The theory is that an office fit for purpose will boost effectiveness and creativity. And “tailoring” doesn’t end with the fit-out. Fora will



monitor the space and report monthly on how it’s being used, so that it can be tweaked if necessary. At a time when we are reimagining what an office is, the idea that it can be designed for how a business actually works – especially in how it can provide spaces for tasks not easily achieved remotely – makes sense. The office’s role as a gathering place is critical, and the workplace must create a sense of community and connectivity – meaningful, human, productive. Without this, businesses will find themselves at major risk.

Business owners are going from “chaining people to a desk”, which was the most cost-effective way to organise an office, to working from home. They’re saving more, but without considering the value of all the added benefits that a properly designed office produces.

If employers and landlords do not understand what people want and create spaces that fulfil those basic human needs, then it goes without saying that the office is not fit for purpose. Solemn, soulless cubicles and grey meeting rooms are not conducive to encouraging office working, especially after a year spent at home. If employers don’t

*“If employers and landlords do not understand what people want and create spaces that fulfil those basic human needs, then it goes without saying that the office is not fit for purpose”*

create an environment that is better than being at home – sofa-bound with the cat and surrounded by one’s creature comforts – then it is hardly surprising that employees will choose to work there.

We’ve been given a fresh start to consider how our businesses really thrive and how our employees deliver their best. Through tailored design and employee-centricity, your workspace becomes a powerful asset, creating an inspirational environment that will enable your people to produce their best work in the most creative and efficient

manner, helping to build the best possible company.

We all contribute to a business in ways beyond mere output. Our aptitude for collaboration, presentation, focus and entertainment is inherently unique. An office fit for purpose will recognise this, playing to and utilising each employee’s abilities to deliver the best work, not the most work. Our uniqueness is what makes us valuable. What employees bring to the table goes far beyond the number of hours spent sitting at it.

Offering tailored workspaces for forward thinkers, Fora is on an exciting journey to reimagine the working day. Its unique designs invite people and businesses to feel “Wonderful at Work” through conscious design, a curated programme of events and a 360-degree wellness offering.

Since launching in Clerkenwell, London in 2017, co-founders Enrico Sanna and Katrina Larkin have grown the Fora network to 13 locations across London and Reading, with six future spaces in the pipeline.

**INDUSTRY VIEW**

<https://fortailoredoffice.com>

# The best of British business



It's been a rocky time for UK businesses. Read our special report on the ones that have come out stronger... <https://business-reporter.co.uk/the-best-of-british-business-july-2021>

# FOCUS POINT

Read the latest titles in our campaigns...

- The Future of Manufacturing
- Internet of Things
- Facilities Management
- The Future of Energy
- The Future of Supply Chain
- The Future of Retail
- The Future of Insurance
- The Future of Banking and Fintech
- Risk Management
- Smart Cities
- The Future of Work
- The Future of Payments
- The Future of Sustainable Packaging
- Digital Economy
- Fraud Prevention
- The Future of Customer Experience

[business-reporter.co.uk/digital-reports](https://business-reporter.co.uk/digital-reports)

# When it comes to branding, you simply can't fake it

Branding agency Siegel+Gale's EMEA president **Philip Davies** caught up with Rajashree R, CMO of Tata Consultancy Services, to reflect on TCS's recent rebrand

**W**HILE THE rest of the world was getting busy working from home last year, Rajashree R, chief marketing officer of Tata Consultancy Services, and her global team, got together with branding experts Siegel+Gale in London to work on a new brand interpretation for Tata Consultancy Services, the management consultancy and IT services part of the Tata Group.

Rajashree didn't just want to redesign the brand, though – she wanted to reimagine the future of the organisation for a new era in a style true to TCS – one that was imaginative, bold, colourful and progressive.

Working closely with the design team at Siegel+Gale, Rajashree steered the development of the brand to ensure it connected with colleagues, clients, customers and communities locally and globally.

## A brand that's a big deal in IT

To give you a sense of scale, TCS employs 500,000 people around the globe. With its biggest market in the United States, Europe and the UK, TCS is the largest IT services company in the world, operating in 149 locations across 46 countries. It's huge.

On 8 October 2020, TCS surpassed Accenture to become the world's most valuable IT company, with a market cap of \$144.73 billion. On 25 January 2021, TCS again surpassed Accenture briefly with a market cap of \$170 billion. The same day, TCS became India's most valuable company, surpassing Reliance Industries with a market cap of \$180 billion.

As Rajashree says, "understanding the responsibility of what we're doing is of real consequence." By the time Siegel+Gale was engaged, Rajashree had already launched a new purpose statement, "Building for Belief", which made an instant and positive impact with employees.

Such was the enthusiasm for the statement that Rajashree received numerous interpretations of what it meant to people at TCS, ranging from paintings depicting those "moments of belief" for individuals to framed, illustrated poems and even cakes.

Our earliest conversation with Rajashree provided the openness she had to the challenge of change and the insight to what would unlock



the design story. "As a client you have to be very sure of what you want," says Rajashree. "When I close my eyes and think about Tata Consultancy Services, I ask myself what images and emotions come to mind."

## The emotional factor

For a firm such as TCS, more accustomed to dealing in data and facts, the notion of emotion was refreshing and differentiating. Rajashree wanted to "develop the true character of the brand, through emotion, colour and in doing so, become more aspirational and human." She also recognised the need to build a pop culture, because "when you have 500,000 people you need a pop culture!"

It was this expression of ambition and impact that Rajashree wanted for the new TCS brand that was reflected in her love of the lyrics to Katy Perry's song Roar: "I got the eye of the tiger, a fighter. Dancing through the fire. 'Cause I am a champion, and you're gonna hear me roar"

Rajashree wanted to be "authentically bold", to make a brand roar: what a brief!

For a brand consultancy with a philosophy of simplicity and an evidence-based process, it was music to our ears. The Siegel+Gale design team built on the "building on belief" concept with the fact that beliefs define who and what we are.

For TCS, it was time to reveal the true self and bring what was inside TCS out into the world.

With that, the team journeyed inside the existing logo and pulled out the colour – a metaphor for the entire assignment – and added those colours to images of people, in the same

---

*"As a client you have to be very sure of what you want. When I close my eyes and think about Tata Consultancy Services, I ask myself what images and emotions come to mind" – Rajashree R, Tata Consultancy Services*

---

way TCS adds colour to their customers and employees' lives. This colourful and human imagery works in harmony with a structured communications system which helps TCS communicate consistently through many different channels, using pink as an accent colour.

Rajashree also sought simplicity in process, with the project handled by a small core working team accountable to the board and CEO. As Rajashree says, "if you have too many actors

involved, it just becomes too complicated." The launch of the rebrand took place early in 2021, and Rajashree's team have found it easy to implement: TCS adapts to change fast, and those changes can happen quickly when they're necessary.

## Be who you are, not what you want to be

And as with any change, it's a process of both creation and curation – something Rajashree calls "a living system" where the only question that matters is, does it feel like us? "We're certainly presenting a more human and aspirational image and this new brand is taking us on that journey", says Rajashree – and a glance at the numerous TCS LinkedIn pages and other social feeds pays testimony to that fact.

This curation works because the core idea is remarkably simple, leading to an evolution that is, says Rajashree, "extremely organic, feels like part of us, and doesn't feel alien."

When Rajashree began the process to reimagine the TCS brand, she met with more than a few agencies – and when an agency asked what she wanted TCS to become, she knew them to be the wrong partner. Because for Rajashree at TCS, and for Siegel+Gale too, the question that really matters is not who do you want to become, but who you are to begin with.

**WE WORK  
WITH LEADERS**

**250+**

Global private equity funds supported by our services

**\$7T+**

We support 550+ hedge funds and asset managers with AuM of \$7T+ collectively

**22K+**

Projects per year delivered across the top global consulting firms

# The Global Leader in Knowledge On-Demand

We provide investment and business leaders with access to industry knowledge that drives better-informed decisions and delivers superior outcomes.