



# Surviving The



# Great Resignation

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# Introduction

**The future of work is now. As businesses and societies look to move beyond the era-defining effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world of work is evolving in new and imaginative ways.**

This is why Hudson RPO is creating a series of whitepapers examining and evaluating exactly how and why these changes are impacting working lives – and to what effect. Taking in expert commentary from leading academics and professional insight from HR, resourcing and talent acquisition practitioners, our whitepapers will look at the key challenges facing employers.

Our first paper looks at the impact of the Great Resignation. With job vacancies in the UK, US, Australia and parts of Asia reaching record figures in 2021 – and up to 40% of the world's entire workforce considering leaving their job – what can leaders do to attract, retain and develop talent?

It considers which groups of talent are most likely to leave during the Great Resignation and why (hint: it's not just about salary and remuneration). We also discuss strategies for retaining and engaging people during this period of flux, and end with a look at how the current talent marketplace is affecting recruitment.

Along the way, we examine how remote working and the pandemic

**“With up to 40% of the world's workforce considering leaving their job, what can leaders do to attract and retain talent?”**

have affected organisational cultural and employee motivation, take stock of the need to provide psychological safety at work and cultivate purpose, and investigate the continued impact of digital transformation on recruitment and employee value propositions.

So how do the sometimes competing needs of businesses, talent professionals and employees co-exist in such an uncertain climate? Whether you think of it as the Great Resignation, the Great Reset or the Great Renegotiation, this paper aims to help you find out.

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# Key findings



## **Talent retention – like recruitment – has gone digital**

The COVID-19 pandemic means most organisations are now up to speed with digital recruitment and onboarding. But how are you using those tools to retain, develop and redeploy existing talent?

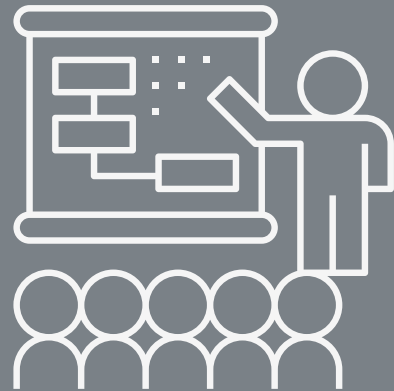
## **Beware the middle manager talent drift**

Mid-career employees and middle-level managers are the talent you're most likely to lose in the Great Resignation – leaving businesses with succession planning problems.



## **Practise 'grown-up' leadership**

Employees no longer want to be told what to do by leaders – they want to collaborate with them and have ownership of projects. Practise letting control go to empower your people.



## **Retrain and reskill**

Employees understand that the world of work is evolving and new skills are needed. Make sure you provide the right training to enable this before they find it elsewhere.

## **Develop psychological safety**

The key to empowering your people is ensuring they feel safe enough to take the lead. Create an environment without fear or blame and see innovation and creativity soar.



## **Focus on emotional value not financial rewards**

If the past few years have taught us anything, it's that the human aspect of work is the most important to employees. Focus on purpose and connection over salary and spend when engaging employees.

## **Personalise the recruitment process**

Digital recruitment isn't about offering the same experience to everyone. Consider how technology can personalise the recruitment journey to provide a better experience.



## **The Great Resignation isn't about remote working**

Your people aren't leaving because you're asking them to return to the office. This is about an organisational cultural reset – and remote working is the culmination, not the start of this.



“Flexibility is more than choosing the place where you work. It’s having freedom to decide your purpose, your people and your priorities”







# The Great Resignation or the Great Reshuffle?

**T**he world of work is a different place post-pandemic. Driven by new priorities and novel ways of working, record numbers of employees are leaving their jobs. In the US, a record 4.4 million people quit their job in September 2021 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Just two months later, this record was broken again, with 4.5 million people resigning from their roles in November 2021.

In the UK, job vacancies soared to record highs in July 2021, with available posts surpassing a million for the first time. A similar trend appears to be playing out in the Asia Pacific region; almost half of office workers surveyed in Singapore said that they are considering quitting their jobs in the next six months. Meanwhile, figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that almost 10% of the Australian workforce quit their jobs last year (1.3 million people).

In fact, according to *Microsoft's Work Trend Index*, more than 40% of the world's entire workforce considered leaving their employer in 2021. Welcome to the Great Resignation.

So what is happening?

First, it's clear that the psychological impact of COVID-19 has had an effect on how employees view their employers and the work that they do. Enforced lockdowns, dire health warnings and the ongoing stress of the pandemic mean employees are evaluating the importance – and purpose – of the work they do like never before. Change is in the air. Second, remote working has both changed how we expect to work and



made it easier to switch roles. Without having to factor in new commutes or office politics, employees can end one job on a Friday, get sent a new laptop in the post and start a new role on Monday.

Third, as economies rebound and job sectors release the pressure

of 18 months' stagnation, hiring talent is top of the agenda for many organisations; growth demands new talent. Put together, these factors have created the perfect environment for a resignation storm.

**“Resignation rates were highest in sectors such as technology and healthcare, where employees faced increased workloads and higher pressure during COVID-19”**

## Which employees are choosing to leave?

Inevitably, some industries are more affected than others. People analytics and workforce planning platform Visier surveyed 9 million employee records from 4,000 global companies, looking for trends in the employee resignation rates. Its data found two key issues: resignation rates were highest among mid-career employees, and resignation rates were highest in sectors such as technology and healthcare, where employees faced increased workloads and higher pressure during COVID-19, leading to burnout.

Traditionally, employee turnover is highest among younger workers, but due to greater financial insecurity and a lack of entry-level roles, turnover

**CASE STUDY:**
**Phil Herbert, VP HR, Sharp Electronics Europe**  
**Evolving culture in the face of hybrid working**

We found that during the pandemic, people predominantly valued job security. They might not have been in their ideal job, but security was everything. Now that economies and societies have opened up, we're seeing an increase in employee turnover. It may be a layover from employees who wanted to move during the pandemic, but people have more confidence in the economy to move now.

Turnover is higher in areas that boomed during COVID-19, such as IT services, where there is a high demand for skills, and a supply shortage. People are moving for 10-20% salary increases and for not having to relocate physically. Some of the barriers that existed previously (around longer commutes, or having to move house) have gone away.

How long the Great Resignation goes on for will be the key issue. Is this just a

6–12 month thing, or how it will always be? Will turnover levels always be this high? We'll have to keep that under review, but it's a challenge.

At Sharp, we're constantly adapting to meet this challenge. We're looking at the design of our jobs, ensuring our remuneration is competitive, reviewing development opportunities, and offering more career progression

Salary is a factor, but not the only one. We need to evolve our culture so that we're better able to communicate and engage with employees, especially in the face of hybrid-working models. We need our people to have the right tools and set-up to work both remotely and in the office. It's not just about pay; it's about culture within an organisation and how you deal with people day to day. Some employees might move for financial reasons, but not everyone will if you get the culture piece right.

We ran an employee engagement survey in June 2021 which showed a positive increase on overall engagement levels across our European organisation compared to our previous one, so we're doing some things right. We're using this data to see what we can do better and creating action plans. We're also getting more regular feedback from our employees through pulse surveys to see whether our initiatives are working. You need that regular feedback to see what is and isn't working; if you leave it a year or two, it's far too long.

The critical thing is keeping things under review and being open to change. Modify your approach. Get regular feedback and if something's not working, change it. We're in such an uncertain time. You might launch what you think is a brilliant idea, but unless you get feedback that it's working, you might have set off on the wrong course.

**“ It was those aged between 30 and 45 who opted to leave jobs ”**



among 20-25-year-olds actually decreased between 2019 and 2020 according to Visier.

Instead, it was those aged between 30 and 45 who opted to leave jobs in the pandemic, resigning at a rate more than 20% higher in 2020 than in 2019.

“It's possible that the shift to remote working has led employees to feel that hiring people with little experience would be riskier than usual, creating greater demand for mid-career employees and giving them greater leverage in securing new positions,” wrote Ian Cook, Visier's VP people analytics, in an article for *Harvard Business Review*. ▶



## The Great Resignation or the Great Reshuffle?

“It’s also possible that many of these mid-level employees may have delayed transitioning out of their roles due to the uncertainty of the pandemic, meaning the boost we’ve seen over the past few months could be the result of more than a year’s worth of pent-up resignations,” he added.

This gap in mid-level talent could create a talent crunch for businesses, with entry-level recruitment ramping up and experienced employees in senior roles – but not much in between.

Visier’s data also showed a sharp increase in resignations from manager-level employees. By December 2020, the resignation rate for managers was 11.8% higher than the previous year. Given that middle managers have borne the brunt of the pandemic’s impact, enforcing strategies from above while dealing with a depleted, stressed workforce below, this isn’t a surprise. However, it’s an area business leaders need to be aware of.

### Shifting employee expectations

It’s important to note that the pandemic hasn’t caused the Great Resignation. Rather, it has been a catalyst that has allowed employees to act on impulses that have long existed around the world of work.


As Wharton School organisational psychologist Adam Grant puts it: “The Great Resignation isn’t some mad dash away from the office. It’s the culmination of a long march towards freedom. Flexibility is more than choosing the place where you work. It’s having freedom to decide your purpose, your people and your priorities.”

This has led commentators to rename the Great Resignation the Great Reshuffle, the Great Reset or even the Great Reimagination. It’s not just about quitting one job for another – it’s about repurposing and

reordering the entire way we think about work.

Anthony Klotz, an organisational psychologist and professor at Texas A&M University, first coined the phrase ‘Great Resignation’ in May 2021. He believes that the Great Resignation represents a change in attitude towards work – and that it is a permanent one.

“It’s not just about getting another job, or leaving the workforce, it’s about taking control of your work and personal life, and making a big decision – resigning – to accomplish that. This is a moment of empowerment for workers,” he told *CNBC Make It*.

Klotz predicts that 2022 will see employers forced to make changes to retain and attract talent. He believes that flexible working will become the norm, rather than the exception, giving employees the power to manage their own schedules. This will lead to a better work-life balance and improved mental health. 

**“The Great Resignation isn’t some mad dash away from the office”**



**EXPERT COMMENTARY:**

**Dr Grace Lordan, Founding Director, Inclusion Initiative,  
and Associate Professor, London School of Economics**  
**Who is the Great Resignation affecting?**

The Great Resignation is no flash in the pan. It isn't going to last six months or a year, but is ongoing. Why? People are not leaving roles and becoming unemployed, but rather changing employers for those that offer flexible and remote working, or going self-employed. They're looking not just for a higher salary, but for a whole new way of working.

What's unusual is that people in professional work now have a choice. In previous times of change – for example, the Industrial Revolution – most people weren't skilled enough to get high-income jobs. Now, they are in such high demand that there is a skills shortage.

The problem is that businesses haven't worked out what hybrid working will look like in their organisations and are struggling to articulate what the future of work will be. This is unsettling people, who are then choosing to move to firms that are clear about what they offer.

For a while, we'll see people moving jobs to get where they want to be. Some will move to companies offering more flexibility and remote working, while those preferring office life will move to businesses offering

that, where they'll likely get compensation in the form of a higher salary.

The other thing to be aware of is the demographics of those leading the Great Resignation. With work-life balance a key motivator, parents and caregivers are more likely to quit their corporate roles. Women are disproportionately affected, as well as those in middle management. They have been the groups that have seen the benefit of not having to commute and no longer see why they have to. They're looking for more flexibility.

Conversely, younger talent in service role jobs are also affected, with the cost of living absolutely having an impact on the sort of roles people can take.

While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to success in the future of work, it's clear that where the big businesses go, others will follow. For some, this will mean enforcing a return to the office and paying a premium for talent to do so. Others will increase flexibility and offer more autonomy to employees to work when and where they want to. The key now is that employees have choice and will filter into the companies that offer them what they want.

He also argues that remote jobs will become more competitive, with remote organisations able to recruit from all over the world rather than just locally. This may open more roles to employees, but could also drive salaries down as businesses look to hire talent from countries with lower salary expectations.

### Redeveloping talent strategies

Of course, these are not new issues for employers to contend with. Digital transformation, work-life balance and wellbeing at work have long been on the agenda for business

leaders and recruiters. However, COVID-19 has acted as a catalyst, driving through meaningful change on these agendas. Retention is the new battle for business leaders – and it's being waged digitally.

Success here isn't as simple as letting employees work from home permanently. Big technology companies such as Twitter hit the headlines in the early stages of the pandemic by asserting that staff could work from home 'indefinitely', but more recently have been struggling to convince workers that hybrid working is the way forward.

Apple CEO Tim Cook faced a revolt when requiring employees to return to the office three days a week, with an internal staff survey suggesting that 68% of Apple employees would consider leaving the company if forced to return to the office.

Instead, turning attrition into attraction is about redeveloping your entire talent strategy. It takes much longer to recruit someone than it does for them to hand in their two weeks' notice, so many leaders are focusing on bolstering retention while ramping up recruitment. But how?

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**Providing effective skills training and development allows you to retain talent, reskill your workforce and introduce new capabilities**”

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# How to engage and retain employees

**T**he Great Resignation has caused panic among many businesses. In an attempt to retain talent, many employers have opted for tried-and-tested quick fixes such as salary increases or financial bonuses, rather than examining what drives employees to leave them. More often than not, this has led employees to up and leave regardless of salary.

As the pandemic has proven, employees value the human aspect of work above all else. Salary, benefits and perks matter, but purpose, connection and relationships matter more.

## **Purpose over perks**

McKinsey & Company surveyed more than 6,000 employers and employees across Australia, Canada, Singapore, the US

and the UK to examine what is driving workers to resign. It found that 40% of all employees were likely to leave their job in the next three to six months, while 64% of employers expected resignation rates to increase over the next six months.

When asked why their employees had quit, senior executives struggled to get the reasons right. Many cited salaries, work-life balance and poor physical or emotional health. These reasons did matter to employees – just not quite as much as they thought they did.

Instead, the top three reasons employees gave for quitting a job were not feeling valued by the organisation (54%), not feeling valued by their manager (52%) and not feeling a sense of belonging at work (51%). As the report says: “Employees were far more likely to prioritise relational factors, whereas employers were more likely to focus on transactional ones.”

Having a social mission and purpose that engages people inside and outside of your organisation is important, but it has to be real. People can smell a corporate ploy a mile off.

“Purpose is the buzzword these days – but it has to mean something,” explains author and entrepreneur Margaret Heffernan in a keynote speech about engaging your

**“ Salary, benefits and perks matter, but purpose, connection and relationships matter more ”**





**“The danger of purpose is that it’s like putting a huge layer of icing on a dry cake. If the work itself doesn’t have meaning, slathering a huge layer of purpose on top won’t do the job”**

people. “The danger of purpose is that it’s like putting a huge layer of icing on a dry cake. If the work itself doesn’t have meaning, slathering a huge layer of purpose on top won’t do the job.”

She goes on to compare employees at organisations as diverse as the NHS, design and engineering organisation Arup, and CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research), which are all places where people work on exceptionally challenging and difficult projects, but have motivated workforces who are proud to be there.

“Scientists beg to go and work at CERN. Why? One reason is that they know the work being done there is exceptionally challenging. They’re going to get the chance to prove things they don’t know will be true. The work has meaning and is part of something that has meaning in the world. I’ve found the same characteristics in the NHS and in the engineering firm Arup, which has constructed buildings like the Sydney Opera House and the Pompidou. The engineers who work there aren’t wildly overpaid, but they love the work – because it’s hard and risky, not because it’s easy and safe,” she says.

In an age of uncertainty and change, you need adaptable people who are motivated and empowered to look for solutions to new challenges. Providing real purpose in their work is key – as is being honest about the challenges ahead.

As Heffernan reminds us, if you tell people that something is going to be easy but it turns out to be hard, they’ll think that they’ve screwed up. Tell them the truth and they’ll keep going when difficulty hits. If they get through it, they’ll have a real sense of achievement. 📌

## How to engage and retain employees

### Future skills and internal mobility

Of course, purpose isn't the only driver needed to engage and retain your workforce. The advent of the 100-year life means that fewer and fewer employees want one job, one company and one skill set for their entire working life.


"For years, companies have been debating what to do about employee engagement and retention as if it's a sideline problem for HR to worry about," wrote business thinker Josh Bersin in a post at the end of 2021.

"Today, this is a CEO-level problem and a new breed of leaders is going to learn that taking care of employees is the number one thing executives must do."

**“Another proactive way of retaining talent is to provide room for people to develop new skills and reinvent themselves”**

Some forward-thinking organisations are proactively meeting this challenge, holding 'stay interviews'. Here, they ask employees what they want and need to remain within the business before they get to the quitting stage.

Another proactive way of retaining talent is to provide room for people to develop new skills and reinvent themselves, creating pathways for internal mobility within your organisation. This also provides an opportunity to future-proof your business with the skills you'll need going forward.

Research by Boston Consulting Group found that 68% of workers around the world are willing to retrain for a new job and learn new 



### EXPERT COMMENTARY:



**Amy Edmondson, Novartis Professor of Leadership and Management, Harvard Business School**  
How to create psychological safety in the workplace

The best way to describe psychological safety is as a permission for candour. My early research in the 1990s looked exclusively at the cost of people holding back work-relevant observations, concerns, ideas and challenges. It's easy to understand why people do that – they worry what people think about them and it's safer to hold back.

What has happened post-COVID-19 is that the domain of psychological safety has expanded – in part because of the large number of people working remotely. The boundaries between work and personal life have become blurred and we're seeing into our colleagues' childcare and health issues. These things used to be separated, but they are becoming part of the conversation as we navigate this uncertainty.

The most important thing to realise is that remote working lowers the level of psychological safety on average; or, put another way, it raises the bar on voice. It makes it harder for people to spontaneously lean in with a comment at an appropriate time. You have to unmute yourself, raise your hand – that creates a higher hurdle. This means that

managers must do more to invite the quiet voice in and do more to create an environment where all are confident that their voices are necessary.

I advise leaders to focus on humility, curiosity and empathy. Humility is about an intelligent recognition of how much we don't know and how much uncertainty lies ahead. By forcing yourself to be aware of the complexity and challenge of the work we do, you're more likely to speak openly about it. That sets the standard for other voices and unlocks some of the fear people feel.

Curiosity is a stance that needs to be constantly reinvigorated. Force yourself to be curious. Why is that person holding back at work? With curiosity, it becomes natural to ask questions. Make sure they're focused, invite careful thought and give room to respond.

Empathy – when you hear the inevitable bad news or bad question, make sure you always pause to think how you would like to be treated in that moment. Be forward-looking and caring.





## CASE STUDY:

**Beth Rowland, Head of Strategic People Partners,  
People Change and Recruitment, LV=  
Culture change during the Great Resignation**

It's fair to say that we're hiring across the organisation. This isn't with the intention of significant headcount growth; for the most part, it's backfilling or strategically focused on future skills. When I joined 18 months ago, our attrition sat at less than 10%. With the Great Resignation, it's now in excess of 20%. That's a significant difference and is unprecedented for us as a business.

Historically, we have not had a retention issue at LV= and were often seen as an employer for life. That's no longer the case as employees are less likely to look for that, and tenure is not viewed in the same way by the business. Over the past two years, LV=, like many employers, has had to adapt to the post-pandemic 'norm'.

Previously, we were a main employer in our local geographies, with a tight pool of local talent that loved the lifestyle and culture our business offered. Now, with hybrid and remote working, we're competing with organisations across the UK – and

not just competitors in our field; all businesses in adjacent markets are looking for the same key skills.

I believe the Great Resignation is going to continue for some time. People are really challenging themselves on their priorities, personally and professionally. They are looking for certainty in matters such as remote and hybrid working, or role purpose and business behaviour and values – which have been very visible (both positively and negatively) during the pandemic.

As we're establishing new ways of working, we've heard from our staff that we need to do more on communication, particularly from our leadership team. Our people were feeling a disconnect from not being physically together all the time, so we've been actively delivering more virtual leadership events, town halls and regular senior leadership team meetings where we make sure messaging cascades down consistently and effectively. We want people to feel connected to the

businesses and what we're trying to achieve with our vision, mission and purpose.

Part of this is about culture change. We want to get the right balance between being people-focused and commercially astute and competitive in our field. We have to make a profit to be sustainable and to ensure business growth. We are actively working on our employee value proposition to ensure that both our current workforce and new hires are of that delivery-and-growth mindset – and that they feel appropriately recognised and rewarded for their efforts.

While this can be challenging, I've seen a noticeable shift in team dynamics as we've begun to drive more value for the business and greater profitability. There has been pride and excitement in what we're achieving. There is a sense of certainty in the future of the business, and the momentum is building – but it's an ongoing journey and the challenge is to maintain it.



**Remote working lowers the level of psychological safety on average; or, put another way, it raises the bar on voice** ”

skills. While this willingness peaks between the ages of 21 and 40 (at 71%), all age groups up to age 60 show at least 59% of respondents being willing to retrain.

Being able to give your employees new skills is vital in the new world of work. The World Economic Forum predicts that 50% of all employees will need reskilling by 2025 as the impact of technology and automation hits. This means a focus on developing 'human skills' over technical skills is required, with active learning, creativity and flexibility prized in a world

where jobs and job roles change very quickly.

Providing effective skills training and development allows you to better retain talent, reskill your workforce and introduce new capabilities into your business – a virtuous circle at a time when organisations are simultaneously losing talent and struggling to hire the right people.

### **Prioritise culture and connection**

Enforced remote working during the pandemic has led employees



## “ Engaging your people involves rebuilding cultural ties ”

to become disconnected from their employers. Cultural ties have weakened and working relationships have become strained. Engaging your people requires rebuilding these ties.

This doesn't mean forcing everyone back into the office. Remote working has changed what employees expect and need from employers, and businesses need to be sensitive to individual concerns and desires. There is no right answer here.

However, building a sense of community and culture doesn't always mean in person and onsite. McKinsey & Company details one survey respondent that sent out themed 'staycation' events to employees, such as film nights with popcorn and spa days with face packs and snacks. Employees were then invited to post pictures of the event on a dedicated company Slack channel, sharing their experiences. Others have encouraged staff to chat one on one through remote 'coffee chats' or company drinks.

Another way of building culture is re-examining your employee perks and benefits. Free gym passes and onsite parking are unlikely to mean much to employees in the current world. Instead, childcare vouchers and counselling or wellbeing sessions are more likely to be of use.

All of these factors create an environment where employees feel that organisational culture evolves with their needs, rather than being a static, one-size-fits-all approach.

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**To successfully recruit younger employees you need to focus on providing the rewards, culture and environment they want**

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# How to attract the right talent in the new world of work

**Q**uite apart from the need to retain talent, 2022 will see huge levels of recruitment. Data from the UK Office for National Statistics showed a record high of almost 1.3m job vacancies between November 2021 and January 2022, with particular growth in accommodation and food services, transport and storage, and manufacturing.

In Australia, the turnover rate has jumped to a 10-year high of 9.5% as the national labour market continues to tighten and the unemployment rate drops to 3.9%. Industries such as retail, administration, health, and professional services appear to be those experiencing significant attrition rates.

However, with talent flooding the market in the wake of the Great Resignation, it's increasingly difficult for businesses to attract the right people into the right roles. So what can you do to make yourself an employer of choice in this candidate-driven market?

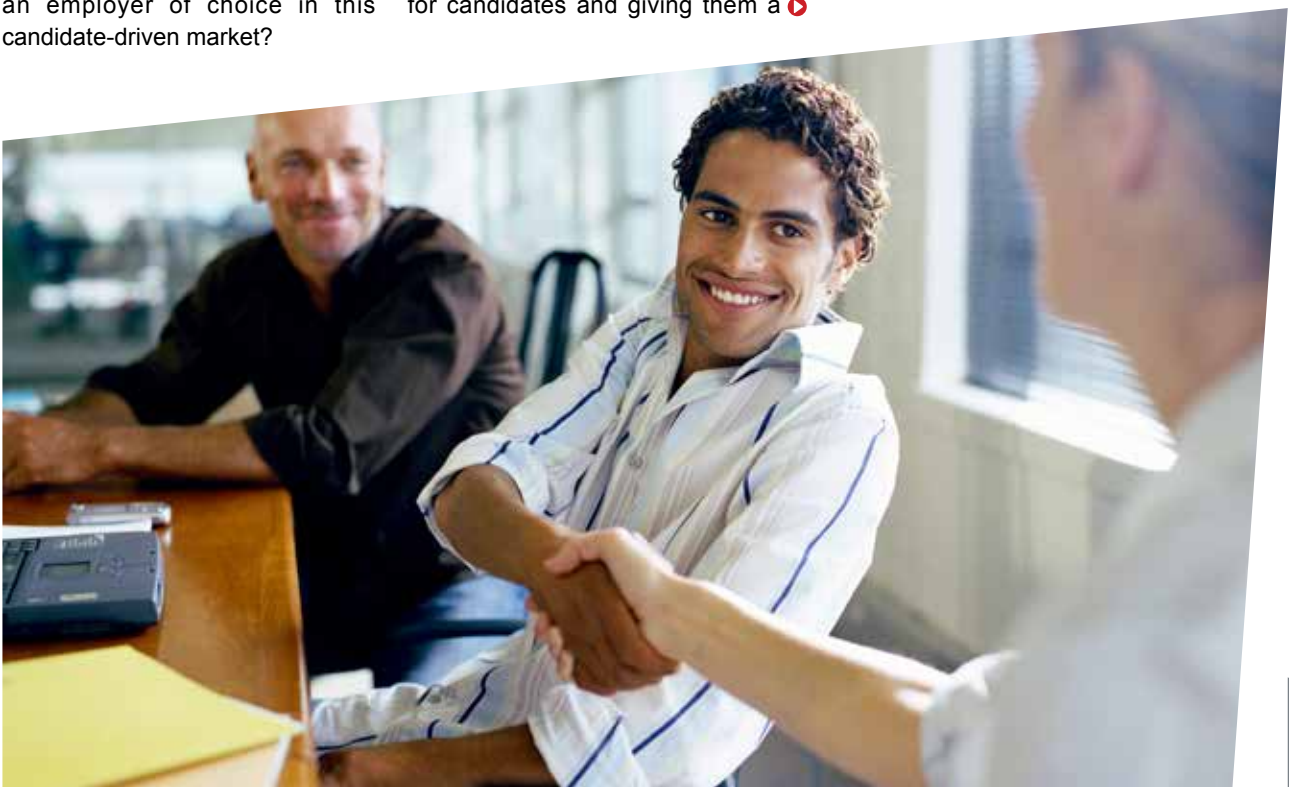
## Technology and personalisation

The first step is to streamline and personalise your recruitment process. With more options available to candidates, it's likely you'll see fewer applications, so making the process as efficient and engaging as possible is key. By now, candidates expect a seamless digital experience when applying for a job – this is a given, rather than a marker of difference.

It's also important to prioritise the human touch when it comes to recruiting. According to PwC's *Future of Recruiting* survey, 67% of candidates say that personalised initial contact is more likely to make them apply for a job, with the same percentage (67%) wanting immediate feedback after an interview.

Where technology can improve the recruitment process is through making the journey more flexible for candidates and giving them a ▶

“  
It's important  
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## How to attract the right talent in the new world of work

feel for the role and your company. PwC's survey suggests that 65% of candidates would be more likely to take a role if they had the chance to experience the job through technology, whether virtual reality or interactive, gamified interviews. Add in many employees' expectations for remote or hybrid working, and continued concerns around the pandemic, and ramping up your digital recruitment tools is vital.

Of course, much of this is not new. The French Postal Service launched workplace simulator Jeu Facteur Academy way back in 2011 to successfully reduce recruitment dropout rates from 25% to 8%, while as far back as 1942, the UK

GCHQ used a cryptic crossword in *The Telegraph* to recruit potential codebreakers. What is new is how it can help differentiate your company from other employers, as well as improving your employer brand. ▶

**“Candidates have multiple opportunities that they're entertaining at any given time”**



### CASE STUDY:



**◉ Jerod Funke, VP Global Talent Acquisition, Insulet**  
**Edward Thomas, Talent Acquisition Lead International, Insulet ◉**  
**Hyper growth through the Great Resignation**



Insulet has a high volume of recruiting to complete this year, with plans to add nearly 400 employees across all our businesses and functions. Unlike many businesses, we've been in hyper growth mode during the pandemic, building up to this year's approval of Omnipod 5, which received FDA approval in January.

Although primarily in North America and Europe, we've been expanding into Asia Pacific and the Middle East, which has brought new challenges. Take Australia, where we grew the team from one to 16 through the first two quarters of 2021. Alongside challenges around time zones, we also had to think about culture. Yes, Insulet as a company has one culture, but there is also a culture in individual countries. In Australia, it was really important that we aligned across all the different business functions and stakeholders to find

not just the best talent technically, but also talent that fits into our culture and can grow with us.

The Great Resignation has had an impact. There is a significant shift in how people think about their careers and some people are looking to do something different. This has led to an uptick in attrition in some parts of the business and an overall growth in our recruitment volume. It's a very competitive talent marketplace, particularly for certain niche roles that we recruit for in software development and IT. A lot of businesses are looking for those same skill sets. Candidates have multiple opportunities that they're entertaining at any given time.

Thankfully, we have a great value proposition and people see we're in high growth mode, have a compelling product and a mission-driven culture. Remuneration is a consideration and

we're making adjustments with certain skill sets in certain markets – both with recruitment and internally.

We're also giving candidates flexibility through what we call 'the future of work'. They can work remotely or hybrid. We're assuming that the landscape has changed forever and that a return to the office for everyone isn't viable. Of course, there are some critical roles that have to be onsite, but for roles that don't, we're encouraging hiring managers to think flexibly.

Some of this is about culture change and it has taken time for people to get used to that. How do you ensure that the innovation you get from face-to-face time is replicated online? We've progressed over the past six months and we're now tapping into a much broader, diverse talent pool by allowing people to work virtually.

## “ The higher purpose of your organisation and its stance on social issues matter to consumers, candidates and employees ”

### Employer brand and reputation

Companies used to differentiate between an external brand that attracted consumers and an internal brand for employees. Today, your customers are just as likely to be your employees and your employees to be your consumers. Managing your external reputation and building a powerful employer brand is vital to successful recruitment.

Consider a recent survey of 117 CEOs by Deloitte and *Fortune*, examining the impact of the Great Resignation. When asked what steps they had taken in the past 12 months to attract and retain talent, 50% said they had increased salaries and 35% had expanded benefits – the usual steps. However, 68% had placed a greater emphasis on corporate purpose, 68% had focused on improving diversity and inclusion and 58% had improved their company culture.

The higher purpose of your organisation and its stance on social issues matter to consumers, candidates and employees. A 2018 survey by Edelman found that 64% of consumers would reward businesses who engaged in activism. Think about how different businesses reacted to furlough schemes in the UK and the impact this had on their reputation.

Or consider how US organisations reacted to the Black Lives Matter protests after the murder of George Floyd in 2020. Sportswear brand Nike ran an advert in support of Black Lives Matter shortly after the event, which garnered both

support and boycott threats. Public recognition of the brand actually increased after the advert – as did sales, showing the positive impact aligning your brand values with your consumer base can have.

This also reflects a shift in how younger employees view the working relationship between employee and employer. The next generation expects a more equal relationship between manager and employee,

where questions over how companies operate and what they stand for are legitimate.

As author and London Business School professor Lynda Gratton writes: “There has been a subtle but perceptive shift in organisational attitudes from parent/child, where the employee looks to the organisation for direction, to adult/adult, where the employee operates with a heightened sense of personal agency.” ▶





**EXPERT COMMENTARY:**

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The impact of technology on recruitment

The world of employment and recruitment has been massively impacted by technology. From an attraction and retention perspective, the first sight candidates get of a prospective employer will be in the online world. A website is the obvious window, but candidates increasingly look to the social media profiles of an organisation to get a sense of who they are and what they stand for. The choice of social media platform also matters – with TikTok now overtaking Instagram (and well ahead of Facebook) for Gen Z, generational differences are emerging in how and where companies present themselves. Last year, the ecommerce platform Shopify even used TikTok to post job adverts.

In recruitment, automation has helped recruiters speed up candidate sifting or information scraping from CVs. And artificial intelligence (AI) techniques have been used in job adverts; McDonald's has used AI to create gender-neutral postings to reach a more diverse candidate base. While algorithms making recruitment decisions may sound scary, UK law requires human decision-making in employment issues, and in reality, it is mainly the more tedious low-level tasks such as data entry which are being partially automated. Mistakes may occur, but it's worth remembering that entirely human-led recruitment processes are prone to significant biases and errors as well.

In a bid to reduce bias in recruitment, almost all interview processes now follow 'quantification by default' when assessing candidates. Gone are the 'seems like a good egg' days – and many processes are blind to academic institutions, gender and other potential sources of bias. For candidates, it's therefore important to remember that they will be largely assessed numerically – through scoring of their performance in various interview situations. This more quantitative and analytical approach means candidates should be savvy to the 'marking criteria'. These may not be visible to them, but it's important to consider "what assessment is being made of me here, and how can I use evidence to help the interviewer give me the highest marks possible?". In a data-driven world, evidence is key, and candidates should enter a hiring process with all the data points necessary to give the best impression of themselves.

Despite these advances in digitisation, it is still the human interaction which truly matters in recruitment decisions, and in an increasingly competitive jobs market, employers must remember to use digital technologies only in the areas which are not better delivered by people. Meanwhile, candidates must aim to make it as easy as possible for their achievements and capabilities to be capturable through digitised assessments.

**Generational ties**

According to Gallup, members of Gen Z and millennials make up 46% of the US workforce. In 2018, it asked them what they wanted from an employer, with the top three responses being "the organisation cares about its employees' wellbeing", "the organisation's leadership is ethical" and "the organisation is diverse and supportive of all people".

To successfully recruit younger employees into your workforce, you need to focus on providing the rewards, culture and environment they want. For example, this might

**“Widening  
your talent  
pool requires  
developing your  
organisational  
culture”**

mean revamping your benefits and rewards programme to move away from higher salaries and bonuses towards offering flexibility over working hours and location and a greater emphasis on personal development and training. According to our earlier PwC survey, 37% of employees would take a pay cut for a chance to learn new skills and job seekers would trade 11.7% of salary for training and flexibility.

This also requires broadening the talent pools from which you normally recruit. Almost two-thirds (62%) of those surveyed by PwC said they

would be more likely to apply for a job where a company is openly committed to improving diversity and inclusion in its workforce. But what does this look like?

## “ Expect candidates to ask about the diversity of your organisation ”

### **Widening talent pools**

It isn't just about hiring more female leaders or more people from ethnic minorities; it's about creating real opportunity for progress in your organisation and fostering an inclusive environment. Expect candidates to ask about the diversity of your organisation, including transparency over diversity data, information on pathways for progression and outreach programmes.

Looking beyond your traditional recruitment methods might

mean partnering with diversity organisations, expanding university and school leaver recruitment to regions or programmes you don't traditionally recruit from, or engaging in training with people from under-represented groups such as ex-offenders to those with learning difficulties.

The advent of remote and hybrid working also means looking beyond geo-specific recruitment. It might make sense – both from a skills

perspective and a financial one – to hire talent from a specific region or country. However, remember the inclusion piece. How are you going to ensure your culture evolves to meet the needs of a more diverse workforce? And how are you going to build in development and internal mobility with remote-working employees? Widening your talent pool requires developing your organisational culture – and being more empathetic to employee needs, not less.



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**Success requires reflection on what has happened, how things have changed and what needs to be done to move forward**

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## Conclusion

**P**erhaps the Great Resignation is more about the Great Reshuffle. Tired of the working status quo, people are leaving their jobs to seek new roles with better purpose, stronger organisational culture and higher flexibility.

The businesses that will thrive during this period of flux will be those that can adapt to these changes and convince existing and new talent to join their cause. Why should someone enter or stay at your business? How will you help them develop, grow and show their best self? What is your organisation doing to contribute to society at a wider level?

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**How can you change your business culture and talent development strategies to become an employer of choice?**  
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These can be tough questions for leaders to answer. But as with any time of instability, success requires reflection on what has happened, how things have changed and what needs to be done to move forward.

So yes, talent has rarely had so many opportunities to move on. But the question is how can you change your business culture and talent development strategies to become an employer of choice? Doing so could reap huge rewards and set your business on the right path to future success.

**If your business is currently negotiating any of the issues discussed in this paper, or you'd simply like to know more, please contact us.**

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