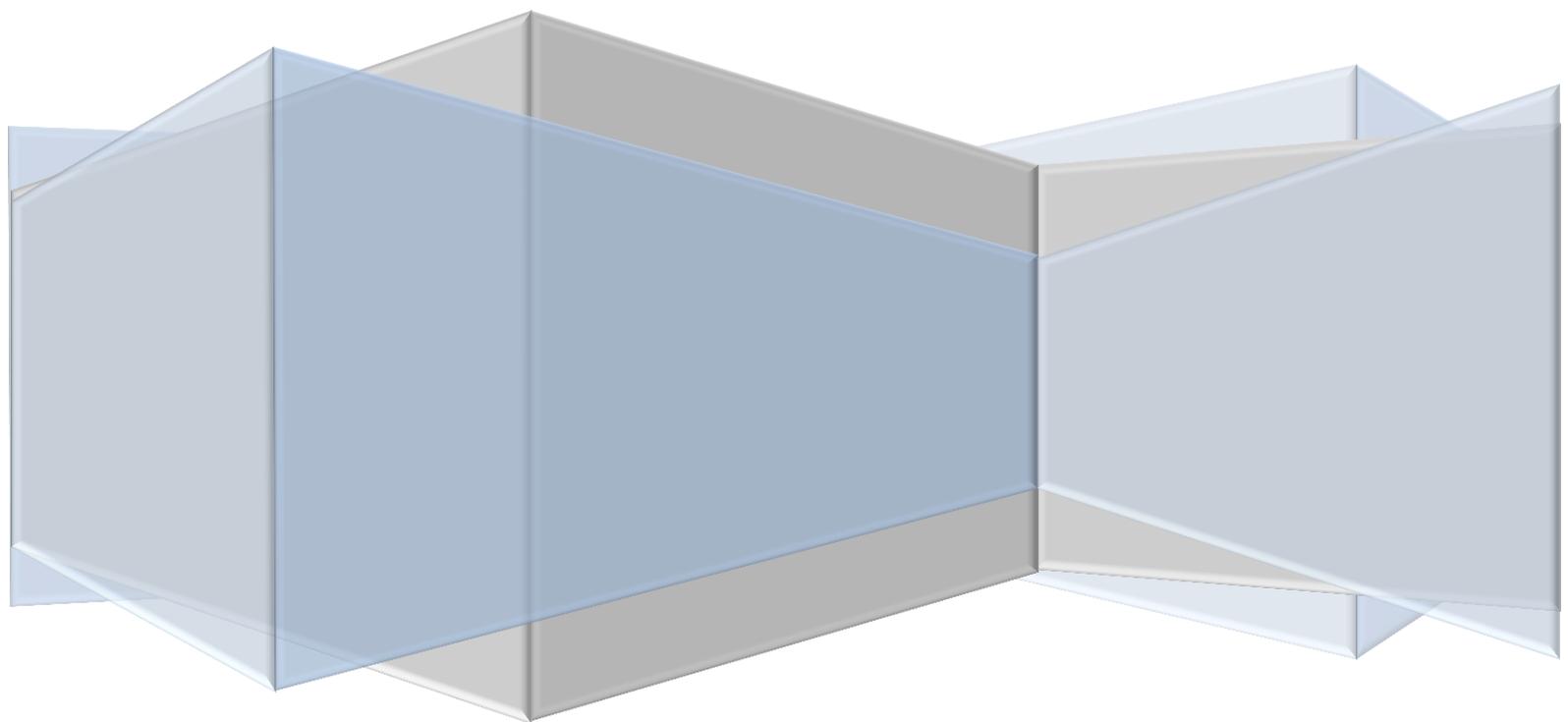


Managing Organisational Change, Turbulence and Transition in the Economic Crisis

Proceedings of the Rustat Conference,
Jesus College,
Cambridge,
Tuesday 4 December 2012

Rapporteur: Nathan Charles Brooker





Jesus College
Cambridge

Rustat Conferences

Managing Organisational Change, Transition and Turbulence in the Economic Crisis

Jesus College, Cambridge

Tuesday, 4 December 2012

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Rustat Conferences

Managing Organisational Change, Transition and Turbulence in the Economic Crisis

Jesus College, Cambridge

Tuesday, 4 December 2012

Conference Agenda

08.30–09.20: Registration and Refreshments – Prioress's Room, Cloister Court

09.30–09.40: Welcome and Introduction, Upper Hall, Jesus College

Conference Chair: Professor Ian White *Master, Jesus College and Van Eck Professor of Engineering*
Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz *Vice-Chancellor, University of Cambridge*

Western economies have seen exceptional changes over the past five years, working through both the credit crunch and banking crisis. These changes present new challenges for leaders worldwide. This Rustat Conference will take the opportunity to bring together leaders from business, government and academia with HR professionals to address the key organisational and people challenges facing the public and private sectors against the background of the global financial crisis, ageing populations, and growing youth unemployment.

09.40–09.45: Overview and Objectives

Indi Seehra *HR Director, University of Cambridge*

09.45–10.45: Employment and Low Pay - The Challenges

Chair: Indi Seehra *HR Director, University of Cambridge*

Professor Willie Brown *Montague Burton Professor of Industrial Relations, University of Cambridge*
Richard Donkin *author History of Work and The Future of Work, FT columnist*

There are an estimated 1 million unemployed 'young people' (between the ages of 16-25), in part because employers are not prepared to pay for inexperienced labour. Should the National Minimum Wage be cut/suspended/frozen so that employers are incentivised to give young workers experience? What can we learn from other countries and their experience of this challenging area? How do immigration and migration affect employment and low pay?

10.45–11.10: Break

11.10–12.10: Reward & Engagement - Future Directions

Chair: Alasdair McKenzie *Director, KeyShift*

Albert Ellis *CEO, Harvey Nash*

Duncan Brown *Principal, Reward & Engagement, Aon Hewitt*

Many European HR professionals believe that maintaining and improving employee engagement is a key driver of the rewards agenda. Employees are found to be significantly more satisfied with reward programme design now than a few years ago but concerns are still evident over tactical implementation and delivery. What are the future directions and how should issues of fairness and executive pay be approached and communicated against the background of unemployment and recession?

12.15–13.20: Lunch

Lunch is the Master's Lodge – enter via the Prioress's Room where registration took place

13.20–14.20: Talent Management - Finders Keepers

Chair: Paul Gray, *Chair, Praesta, and former Executive Chairman, HMRC*

Lesley Uren *Lead Adviser, Talent Management, PA Consulting Group*

Karen Moran *Director, Resourcing, Talent & Leadership, BBC*

How can businesses ensure people are available to resource future roles – can centrally-controlled talent management do this? With the recession acting as a strong lever in getting HR noticed, will the skills and capabilities of human capital be the driving force behind economic, political and social developments or will talent gaps restrain any progression? How does the UK compare with Europe, the BRICs, and the United States?

14.20–14.45: Break

14.45–15.45: Workforce Planning - Managing an Older Workforce and Retirement

Chair: Professor Simon Deakin *Centre for Business Research, University of Cambridge*

Ashley Norman *Partner, Cobbetts*

Gary Browning *CEO, Penna*

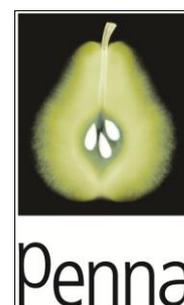
The abolition of the Default Retirement Age is a trigger for organisations to review practices and processes for managing their employees. With an ageing population, challenges in managing an older workforce and resourcing constraints will be evident.

15.45–16.00: Summary Remarks and Observations

Chair: Professor Jeremy Sanders *Pro-Vice Chancellor Institutional Affairs, University of Cambridge*

16.00: Closing Comments

Conference Chair: Professor Ian White *Master, Jesus College and Van Eck Professor of Engineering*



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Rustat Conferences

Managing Organisational Change, Transition And Turbulence in the Economic Crisis

Jesus College, Cambridge Tuesday, 4 December, 2012



Jesus College
Cambridge

<i>Dr Tess Adkins</i>	<i>King's College, Cambridge</i>	<i>Former Vice-Provost and Senior Tutor</i>
<i>Mark Beatson</i>	<i>CIPD</i>	<i>Chief Economist</i>
<i>Melanie Best</i>	<i>Employment Lawyer</i>	<i>Employment Lawyer</i>
<i>Prof Stephen Bevan</i>	<i>The Work Foundation</i>	<i>Director, Centre for Workforce Effectiveness</i>
<i>Prof Sir Leszek Borysiewicz</i>	<i>University of Cambridge</i>	<i>Vice Chancellor</i>
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<i>Duncan Brown</i>	<i>Aon Hewitt</i>	<i>Principal of Reward and Engagement</i>
<i>John Cornwell</i>	<i>Jesus College, Cambridge</i>	<i>Director Rustat Conferences</i>
<i>Prof Simon Deakin</i>	<i>Rustat Conferences</i>	<i>Jesus College, Cambridge</i>
<i>Richard Donkin</i>	<i>Author, History of Work and Future of Work</i>	<i>Author, former FT correspondent</i>
<i>Hugh Eaton</i>	<i>Cisco Systems</i>	<i>Head of Defence and Intelligence</i>
<i>Ron Elder</i>	<i>Lyceum Capital</i>	<i>Lyceum Capital</i>
<i>Albert Ellis</i>	<i>Harvey Nash</i>	<i>CEO</i>
<i>Cheryl Few</i>	<i>Jesus College, Cambridge</i>	<i>Head of HR</i>
<i>David Frost</i>	<i>Produce World</i>	<i>Head of HR</i>
<i>Martin Gaskell</i>	<i>CfA Recruitment</i>	<i>Senior Consultant</i>
<i>Paul Gray</i>	<i>HMRC</i>	<i>Chair</i>
<i>David Green</i>	<i>Charles Russell</i>	<i>Partner</i>
<i>Hywel Griffiths</i>	<i>Ashton KCJ</i>	<i>Partner</i>
<i>Sir Ewan Harper</i>	<i>The Education Fellowship</i>	<i>Chief Executive</i>
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<i>Karen Moran</i>	<i>BBC</i>	<i>Director Resourcing, Talent & Leadership</i>
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<i>David Thew</i>	<i>TFPL</i>	<i>Director, Publisher & Content Provider Recruitment</i>
<i>Lesley Uren</i>	<i>PA Consulting</i>	<i>Parter</i>
<i>Helen Vincent</i>	<i>Corpus Christi College, Cambridge</i>	<i>HR Manager</i>
<i>Dr Michael Waibel</i>	<i>University of Cambridge</i>	<i>Lecturer in Faculty of Law</i>
<i>Ken Warwick</i>	<i>Regulatory Policy Committee</i>	<i>Economist</i>
<i>Prof Ian White</i>	<i>Jesus College, Cambridge</i>	<i>Master, Jesus College, Chair Rustat Conferences</i>
<i>Dr Tim Wilkinson</i>	<i>University of Cambridge</i>	<i>Reader in Photonic Engineering</i>

Managing Organisational Change, Transition and Turbulence in the Economic Crisis - Introduction

Conference Chair: Professor Ian White FEng, *Van Eck Professor of Engineering and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Cambridge, and Master, Jesus College, Cambridge.*

Speaker: Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz *Vice-Chancellor, University of Cambridge*

The Vice-Chancellor described the turbulence the last five years have had on first the western, and then the eastern economies. It is a global slowdown, he said, and the way organisations manage themselves through this period is a very central concern.

In a meeting the Vice-Chancellor had attended in New Delhi, Manmohan Singh, the Indian Prime Minister, told him that India requires 5.5 per cent growth per annum in order to break even with its current spending plans. At present, India is reaching only 4 per cent growth. There is great political significance in India reaching its target growth, as to fail to do so would result in the world's largest democracy – as it is seen from the west – failing in the eyes of its neighbours in the east. China too, despite having a growth rate of 7.5 per cent, is not growing fast enough for its future needs. How do countries such as China and India choose to safeguard, improve and invest that growth? The answer to that question will be of paramount interest to the HR sector because there is a growing disparity between the richest and the poorest in those societies.

The Vice-Chancellor said that chief among the issues that the conference should address was the impact HR could have on unemployment. Though institutions such as Cambridge will consistently offer high-end employment opportunities to its graduates, at the other end of the spectrum (and away from London and the south east) employment opportunities are not nearly as strong. In some parts of Europe of course they are much worse.

Another issue the conference should address is the balance of rights regarding the employer-justified retirement age. The University voted 6:1 to retain the academic retirement age at 67 – this was because 85 per cent of new job creation at the University comes only to younger people upon the retirement of older members of staff.

The main theme for DAVOS this year – as agreed upon at the World Economic Forum meeting in Dubai – was youth unemployment. In the face of mass youth unemployment in Spain and Greece, such a conclusion is unsurprising.

The role universities must play in improving youth unemployment across the world is in training and preparing graduates for the jobs market. The Wilson Report has stressed recently the necessity for universities to provide vocational courses and sandwich courses, readying graduates for the workplace. Cambridge will not be implementing these recommendations because it does not have to – it has a 96 per cent success rate in having its recent graduates in either employment or further education – but it shows the level of the problem.

Unemployment is one of the major scourges of our society today, and it is a health concern too, not just a fiscal one. Studies on the effect of recession on human health produce complicated and contrary data sets. It can appear that recessions are good for one's health – perhaps because people smoke less and drink less – however, what is unequivocal is that the level of suicide goes up and this is linked directly to job loss.

Managing Organisational Change, Transition and Turbulence in the Economic Crisis - Overview

Chair: Indi Seehra, *HR Director, University of Cambridge*

Today's agenda has been formulated by HR professionals to best reflect the main challenges facing the sector. This has not been an easy task because the world of HR is a world of contradiction: there are 2.5 million people unemployed in the UK, but we are told by politicians this is a positive figure; over a million of these are graduates, and we are told by graduates that this is a negative figure; there are 26 million people unemployed across Europe, yet we are told by HR practitioners that they are finding it harder and harder to find exceptional candidates to fill high-powered roles.

The number of people in employment is perhaps only half the story. Another factor to discuss is job engagement. Traditionally it has been thought that a low-level of staff turnover has meant a good level of engagement. However, in the current climate it could be that members of a workforce are staying with a particular employer not because they are satisfied, but because they are not confident finding employment elsewhere.

One final question is to try to ascertain which generation has the right to take from society and when. Echoing the 'balance of rights' that the Vice-Chancellor alluded to in his opening address, Mr Seehra questioned whether older members of the workforce should step aside to promote youth employment.

The final thought that Mr Seehra left the plenary with was the rising appetite among recent graduates to look overseas for jobs. Mr Seehra said that, as a British Asian whose family moved to the UK in the 1960s, he thought it inconceivable that second or third generation British Asians would even think about looking for employment in their family's country of origin. This is increasingly the case, though. And what is more, in the most recent student report, it was revealed that 2/3 of recent graduates would consider looking for jobs overseas, which is the highest level to do so since the survey was created.

Session One: Employment and Low Pay - The Challenges

Chair: Indi Seehra, *HR Director, University of Cambridge*

Speaker: Professor Willie Brown, *Montague Burton Professor of Industrial Relations, University of Cambridge*

Speaker: Richard Donkin, *author History of Work and The Future of Work; FT columnist*

Professor Willie Brown said that unemployment in the UK was, to some extent, defying gravity. He said: 'I don't know if we are in a double dip or a treble dip recession, but it is the worst recession since the war and it is scarring a generation.'

At first glance the unemployment figures do not appear to be all that bad. With unemployment in the UK currently at 8.5 per cent, this recession seems to be outperforming previous economic downturns. The last recession, for example, in the 1990s, had an unemployment level of 11 per cent; the one previous had a level of 12 per cent. However, jobs have generally got worse for a large section of the population, and this is in part because of the steady growth in both temporary and part-time jobs.

Over the last two to three years there has been a rise in both low skilled and, to a lesser extent, high skilled jobs, creating what the Financial Times called an 'hourglass economy', with a huge squeeze on intermediate skilled jobs and administrative jobs.

Professor Brown spoke of the death of the traditional working contract. He said: the rise in the number of out-sourced jobs – facilitated in part by improved IT – has meant many workers are increasingly powerless when trying to negotiate pay or conditions with their employers.

Though increasing numbers of out-sourced jobs may not always be a bad thing, it is usually a bad thing. Out-sourced workers typically have when compared to in-house labour:

- Lower job satisfaction
- More insecurity
- Worse training provision
- Lower health and safety
- Reduced career progression
- Less likelihood of Trade Union representation

This final factor is significant in the wider context of job satisfaction. Between 1980 and 2010 the proportion of the workforce in the private sector in trade unions fell from 50 per cent to 15 per cent. Similarly, over the same period, the coverage of collective agreements fell from 60 per cent to 16 per cent.

It is true to say that work is far more flexible these days. But where pay might be flexible in an upwards direction, it is also flexible in a downwards direction. Since 1986, the top percentile of income distribution to the bottom percentile of income distribution has shifted from 8:1 to 10:1; and if you take the top 10 per cent and the bottom 10 per cent: the top 10 per cent have seen a real wage increase of 81 per cent, where the bottom 10 per cent have seen a real wage increase of just 47 per cent.

Professor Brown spoke about his involvement in the implementation of the National Minimum Wage in 1999, and though this has been a success, the NMW should be seen only as a safety net.

The key thing that the implementation of a minimum wage in any society does is help 'the good employer'. When the NMW was being formulated in the 1990s, good employers would back its implementation on the condition that it must be rigorously enforced so as to stop more ruthless employers from undercutting them.

The development from the NMW to the National Living Wage is a positive one. However, it would benefit only a small percentage of the people that were in need of it.

Professor Brown's closing remarks focused on China, and its latest plans for employment regulation. In the report to the 18th national congress of the Communist Party of China, where Xi Jinping was announced as leader, was a 10-year plan to double GDP growth. Despite being geared towards growth, the manifesto had a renewed emphasis on fairness in the workplace. The three strategies that were outlined were:

- To deepen reform of wage and salary system in enterprise and government organisations
- Promote collective bargaining of wages in business
- Protect income earned through work

With China prepared to encourage at least some form of trade unionism among its workforce, then it is possible for the UK to do the same.

Richard Donkin said there was no point in rehearsing the political arguments for or against minimum pay because, primarily, it is not on the agenda for either Labour or Conservatives. Instead he said he would focus on the structure of work, and the language and culture that surrounds it.

The future predicted by Charles Handy, where everyone is essentially working on a freelance basis, has not happened. The structure of the labour force has changed, but it is still very much in place.

There is a hierarchy where the graduates leaving Cambridge or one of the other Russell Group universities with a 2:1 or higher will fill certain high-level jobs, and there are layers beneath that for other graduates down to low or unskilled work.

There has been a commoditisation of employment. For example, to become a pharmacist these days requires a degree and a pre-reg year before one is qualified. However, while there are students in university now becoming qualified pharmacists, the way pharmacy is delivered is changing. The increased involvement of Boots, Sainsbury's and other supermarkets in the sector has forced prices down. As a result, pharmacy is no longer as attractive a career as it might have been when these new graduates decided to enrol in their courses.

Mr Donkin then spoke about the 'informal' sector, where people find employment without formally applying for a job. The example he gave was when one of his sons gave another one of his sons a job in computer games development, which neither had been trained for. A lot of their business is in the US, but what they sell can hardly be termed an 'export', because it is largely intangible.

The danger with the minimum wage is that, once it is introduced, it can become the going rate. It was Mr Donkin's suggestion that the minimum rate is rather a red herring, because things like call centres – which, it is often described, were forced overseas since its implementation – would have gone overseas anyway.

The job market is certainly far more complex than the previous configuration of either private or public sector. These days new emerging economic forces – like the aforementioned 'informal' sector – need to be encouraged. One thing that is stifling growth in these emerging markets is current HR practice. For example, HR sifting – which has been implemented in performance management to an extraordinary degree – should be relaxed.¹ This is because, in its present form there can often exist a bureaucratic barrier that prevents a manager making a hiring decision because some centrally agreed upon, pedantic criterion has not been met, even though the manager might be confident the candidate is the best for the job.

Discussion

¹ 'Sifting' is where the job requirements of a certain post are over-zealously adhered to. So, if a job application show a 2:1 from a Russell Group university then it will progress, where if it one does not – regardless of how well suited the candidate may be otherwise – the application is sifted out of the process very early on.

Delegates discussed the flexibility of the UK workforce, and one wanted to know the panel's thoughts on the new government initiative to offer a trade-off between cutting workers' rights in exchange for company shares.

Professor Brown thought such an implementation would ruin the employer-employee relationship. He said that he thought it was a 'non-starter'.

Mr Donkin thought that perhaps there would be some rights that workers would be prepared to surrender for shares, especially if that right made them a less attractive employment prospect.

Mr Seehra said he thought there was 'something' in the idea. As was hinted at by Mr Donkin, Mr Seehra said that the employment contract can be a barrier to people finding work so, perhaps in the right sector, workers would be prepared to make themselves more employable at the risk of losing some of their rights.

Another topic of discussion was Germany, and the relationship that German companies have with apprenticeships and training colleges. The panel were asked how the UK model could get closer to the German model.

Professor Brown said that one of the factors preventing the UK from taken up the German model is the lack of employer solidarity. The UK has a pathological aversion to employer solidarity, he said. In Germany, as in Holland and other European countries, if an employer tries to freeload and 'pinch' workers from other companies there are pretty severe sanctions. As a result, companies feel an obligation to train their workers. This is non-existent in the UK.

To be fair, Professor Brown added, the UK has had a problem with this for over 100 years. One reason put forward for the discrepancy is that in the UK the Trade Union movement was founded on Methodism and not Marxism², but that is only one theory among many.

The Vice-Chancellor thought the discrepancy between the German and UK models is down to short-termism versus long-termism. Because of the changing nature of many jobs, training is incredibly difficult, and it is the UK inability – or at least reluctance – to retrain workers that is at the root of the problem.

² Due to the fact that Britain was largely exempt from the class threat experienced in continental countries during the 19th century.

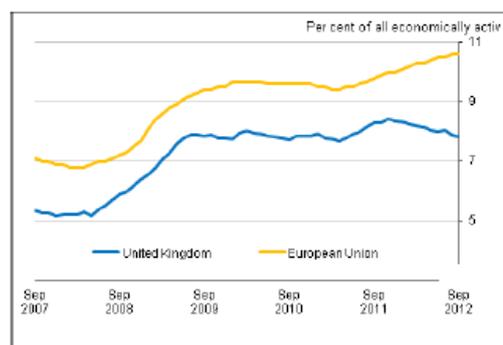
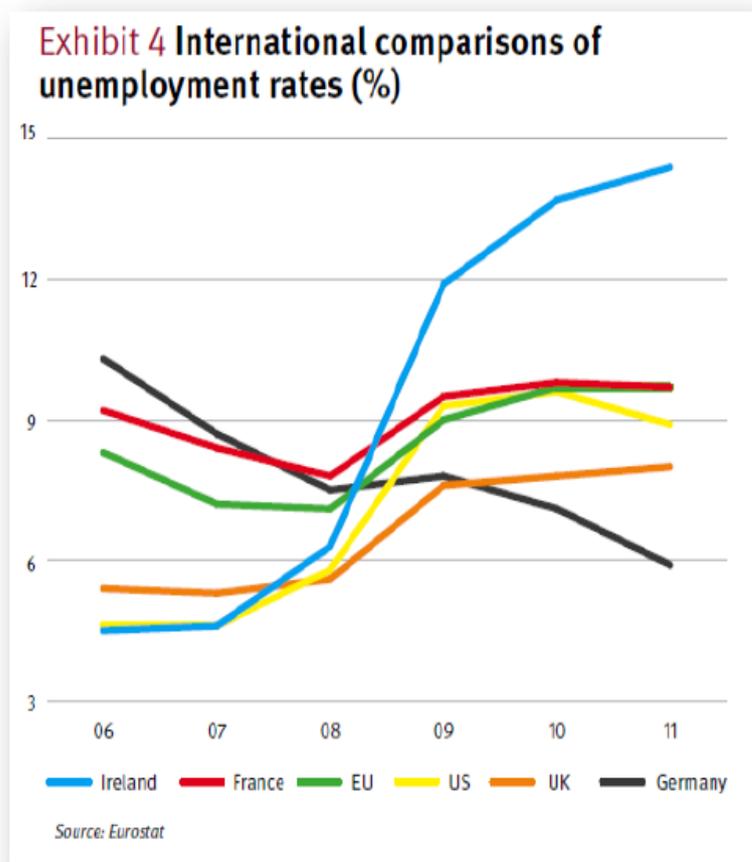
Session Two: Reward & Engagement - Future Directions

Chair: Alasdair McKenzie, *Director, KeyShift*

Speaker: Albert Ellis, *CEO, Harvey Nash*

Speaker: Duncan Brown, *Principal, Reward & Engagement, Aon Hewitt*

Albert Ellis provided the plenary with a series of slides to illustrate some of the challenges affecting Reward and engagement. The first of which related to the true picture of UK unemployment:



UK employment snapshot November 2012

71.2% of potential workforce
29.6m total in "work"
+0.5m on 2011

Unemployment 7.8 %
2.51m unemployed
-110,000 on 2011

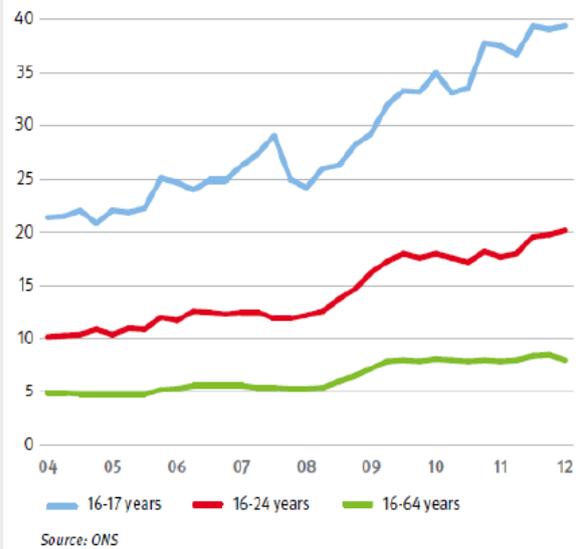
Exhibit four shows how the UK has a record number of people in work – this is not highlighted much in the mainstream media. The UK, and many other European and western nations, have a potential workforce of around 70 per cent. In countries like Saudi Arabia, where women are largely excluded from the workforce, that figure is much lower – this skews a lot of statistics because where a country might exhibit an ostensibly low level of unemployment, that might not take into account the smaller size of their total workforce. Essentially, great swathes of people can be discounted from an unemployment count thanks to gender imbalance, for example, or low provision of childcare. Those people would be considered within the potential workforce in the UK, and so the UK's unemployment figure is misleadingly high. Ultimately, the UK comes from a strong position with regards to employment.

Mr Ellis then presented the next slide:

Exhibit 1 Change in the make-up of the workforce (Jan 2008=100)



Exhibit 7 UK unemployment by age cohort (%)



As others have mentioned, most growth in the UK jobs market has come from temporary and part-time work. However, according to Mr Ellis, speakers so far had neglected to mention how some short-term, contract jobs can be very well-paid and incredibly fulfilling. There is a vast gulf, Mr Ellis said, between a well-paid, good contract job; and a poorly-paid permanent job. "I am all in favour of good, high-paid jobs that have got value. I am less worried about whether they are contract, permanent or whatever."

The age-sensitive demographic displaying the biggest concern for unemployment is the NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training) however, this figure is still only at 50 per cent, meaning that one in two 16-17-year-olds not in education are in employment. The core workforce in the UK, 16-64 years, has remained largely unchanged over the last eight years, moving from 5 to 7 per cent only because youth unemployment has increased, dragging the overall unemployment figure upwards.

Mr Ellis spoke next about employee engagement. Every year Harvey Nash conducts a survey with CBI on job sentiment. In the immediate aftermath of the crash of Lehman Brothers, the 2008-9 survey showed how HR directors and CEOs were reporting a high level of willingness among their workers to take short-term pain for long-term gain.

So companies – and this includes Harvey Nash – stopped paying into pension funds, and offered staff payment holidays. An informal agreement was reached: employers would tighten their belts, bonuses and commissions would be cut, but ultimately jobs would be maintained.

A lot of people hold Germany as the employment gold standard, but this is not really Harvey Nash's experience. Workers tend to be more inflexible there than they were further north, in the Nordics. Germany looks good from the outside, but the Euro currency is the single biggest factor driving German growth. Mr Ellis described the Euro as 'a false currency'. He said: if they just had the German market it would be 30-50 per cent more expensive and then they would be in the same situation as everybody else. There is currently 15 per cent unemployment in Ireland, 25 per cent unemployment in Greece and six per cent unemployment in Germany: that is not a coincidence, it is just a transfer of activity, it is not a miracle. Germany, essentially, has been in the right place at the right time. However, inroads have been made recently, with some of the Trade Unions stepping back from inflation-busting demands to not cripple the economy.

It is pragmatic to improve engagement levels too. Businesses need to retain their staff, certainly, but there is a more cynical reason: right now there is a perception of unfairness in society. Companies have an enormous challenge to engage with their staff. Take, for example, the press coverage of Fred Goodwin's £20m pension.

Without engagement, RBS might have been allowed to go bankrupt, the pension fund would have been less solvent and Mr Goodwin would never have got his money.

People at all levels of a company do understand this economics, and the perception of unfairness then comes back into the workforce the next morning.

In the next five to 10 years there will be further equality drives. Of course, already we have seen this with regard to race and gender inequality, but religion will be a concern in the future, and there will need to be representation from and consideration of different world religions in the workplace. It was Mr Ellis's belief that HR should constantly remind itself to answer the questions of the future, rather than redress the challenges of the past.

Duncan Brown spoke about the contrary state of UK employment and pay. 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,' he said, and went on to quote Dickens' famous opening to *A Tale of Two Cities*.

Mr Brown also spoke about the perception of unfairness. The day after the conference the Chancellor would announce the Autumn Spending Review. Above all, Mr Brown said, it must be *seen* to be fair.

However, despite the perceived inequities of the present situation in the UK, with rapidly-increased pay differentials, this must be placed in an international context. Though Cambridge has ruffled some feathers with its introduction of the mandatory academic retirement age at 67, in Russia, male life expectancy is still only 60 and workers can be reluctant to pay into pension funds because the corporate failure level is so high.

Some responses by the current government to the critical problems of unemployment and low pay are positive. So too is the changing attitude business leaders have to improving matters. Aon Hewitt conduct a survey every year with the HR directors of Europe, and now 2/3 of HR leaders think employers have a responsibility to help eradicate the scourge of youth unemployment.

The example set by Jaguar Land Rover is commendable. When the recession hit, popularity of Jaguars fell off – people could not afford to buy them, nor did they want to be seen in them. So when sales figures plummeted, the company struck a deal with their workers and the trade unions, meaning they could cut their labour costs by 1/3. Now, coming through the other side of the recession, the company has repaid staff all the cut wages and benefits and is implementing a 10 per cent two-year pay deal as production expands again.

But there are disheartening things too. Mr Brown described the government's commitment to equality throughout the recession as 'disgraceful', with the gender pay gap still around 15 per cent, and the economic crisis being used as an excuse to force through short-term cost cutting which is detrimental to recovery in the longer-term. Similarly, the Aon Hewitt engagement database shows employee engagement is down through the period of the economic crisis, with people less motivated and with less trust in their leaders.

There are positive actions that companies can take to boost employee engagement, which has fallen by around 10% during the recession, even in the current tough conditions. And this is in their own interest, the correlation between engagement and productivity being proven many times over the years. According to Mr Brown a move from pay restraint to higher pay and fairer pay is one required direction of travel. Executive pay is generally not totally driven by markets but is socially agreed upon by remuneration committees. To emphasise this, Mr Brown split the plenary into groups of two, As and Bs: As had won £1m on a lottery, but Bs had assisted them in some way. As had the opportunity to share their winnings with Bs, but if both could not agree on the size of the split then neither would get anything. Mr Brown said that, according to rational economic theory, Bs should accept £1, because it is better than getting nothing. However, what often goes unrealised is that, in this situation, Bs have just as much power to determine their amount as As, since both have to agree before either gets anything. No B's accept £1 because it's not a fair distribution.

Improved transparency in pay and pay setting would also improve people's perception of pay fairness, as currently only 31% of UK employees think that their pay is fair.

With the regard to the minimum wage against the living wage, Mr Brown cited the 18 states in the US that have chosen to pay above the minimum wage. The decision, he said, has added \$360m to the economy and 3,000 jobs.

Bringing executives back into the wider staff pay structures and job evaluation systems of companies would also help improve the practice and perception of fair pay.

And finally, involving and including all staff within incentive arrangements- not just executives – would realise major gains in engagement and performance.

A good example of the above is the John Lewis model. Mr Brown said that he thought the system worked very well for them and so would like to see similar employee participation and reward models rolled out across various other companies.

Discussion

Delegates questioned the quality of company management in the UK. One participant put forward his observation that though one often reads: 'Our people are our greatest asset', he had seen precious little evidence of that motto being truly adhered to.

Albert Ellis said he felt UK management was equal to or better than the quality of management elsewhere. The worst nation, in his experience, was France, and the best nations typically were the US and the UK. 'A lot of forward thinking comes out of the US,' he said, 'and because they have historically invested in London and the south east, the UK gets these initiatives first.'

'It depends on what you're comparing the UK to,' Mr Ellis added. 'If you are in the 1970s, comparing British Leyland to BMW you might get one set of conclusions; but if you are in the 21st century, comparing the way IBM in the UK is run to the way the Apple Manufacturing plant in China is run then we are light years ahead.'

Another delegate said that, though there had been much talk of flexibility in the workforce, perhaps what was really required was trust, and without the workers trusting that pay and conditions would be repaired to them, it was difficult to ask them to be flexible.

Albert Ellis said that trust was the most important ingredient but that it was difficult to inspire, and impossible to manufacture. He said that only through time and proving itself could a company really inspire trust. In his own experience, Mr Ellis put forward the Harvey Nash method of not awarding bonuses to executives if they had not turned a profit, regardless of whether they were outperforming the sector. This strict adherence to fairness, he said, was witnessed by staff and helped boost their trust factor.

Mr Brown agreed with the sentiments of Mr Ellis, saying that one of the most effective means to improve engagement was the quality of internal communication.

Another delegate asked how the thoughts and practices of the panel, who had given examples from major multinationals, could be translated to SMEs.

Albert Ellis said that he had dealings with a lot of tech SMEs that have formed a cluster around Palo Alto in California. It was his observation that a lot of the talent there, coming out of Stanford, did not want to work for big companies, but would prefer to fit into smaller companies. 'It's a generation-wide thing, where young people are saying "we don't want to work for General Electric anymore, we want to start up our own companies."' The future, he said, was with SMEs. However, there are unique challenges facing such tech SMEs, largely related to the structure and the make-up of the board. 'These companies are often run by a single, lone eccentric, not trained in business, who is prepared to break all the HR rules when the company gets into difficulty.' Mr Ellis's advice was that the very same rules for large companies need to be applied to SMEs, there is simply no other way around it.

Mr Brown agreed, saying that SMEs tend not to complain about employment regulation. The largest challenge facing SMEs and start-ups was from banks failing to release capital and lack of demand from underpaid employees suffering real wage cuts.

The final question was whether the panel thought it time to put employees on remuneration committees.

Both Mr Brown and Mr Ellis said this was a bad idea. Mr Brown said that it was important to engage the workforces in decision making processes, but just to place one isolated employee on a remuneration committee was not the way to do it effectively – it shows a complete lack of understanding on what remuneration committees do. Much more widespread worker involvement was required.

Mr Ellis said that, in his experience, any employees that were co-opted to sit on the remuneration committee made the meetings completely unhelpful. Their mandate would always be to get the most money for the people on the shop floor, he said, which puts them in an impossible position because either they disagree with the rest of the board on every pay decision and nothing gets sorted out, or they are talked through the budgetary challenges facing the board, decide to empathise with the board and end up feeling they have betrayed their co-workers.

Session Three: Talent Management - Finders Keepers

Chair: Paul Gray, Chair, Praesta, and former Executive Chairman, HMRC

Lesley Uren Lead Adviser, Talent Management, PA Consulting Group

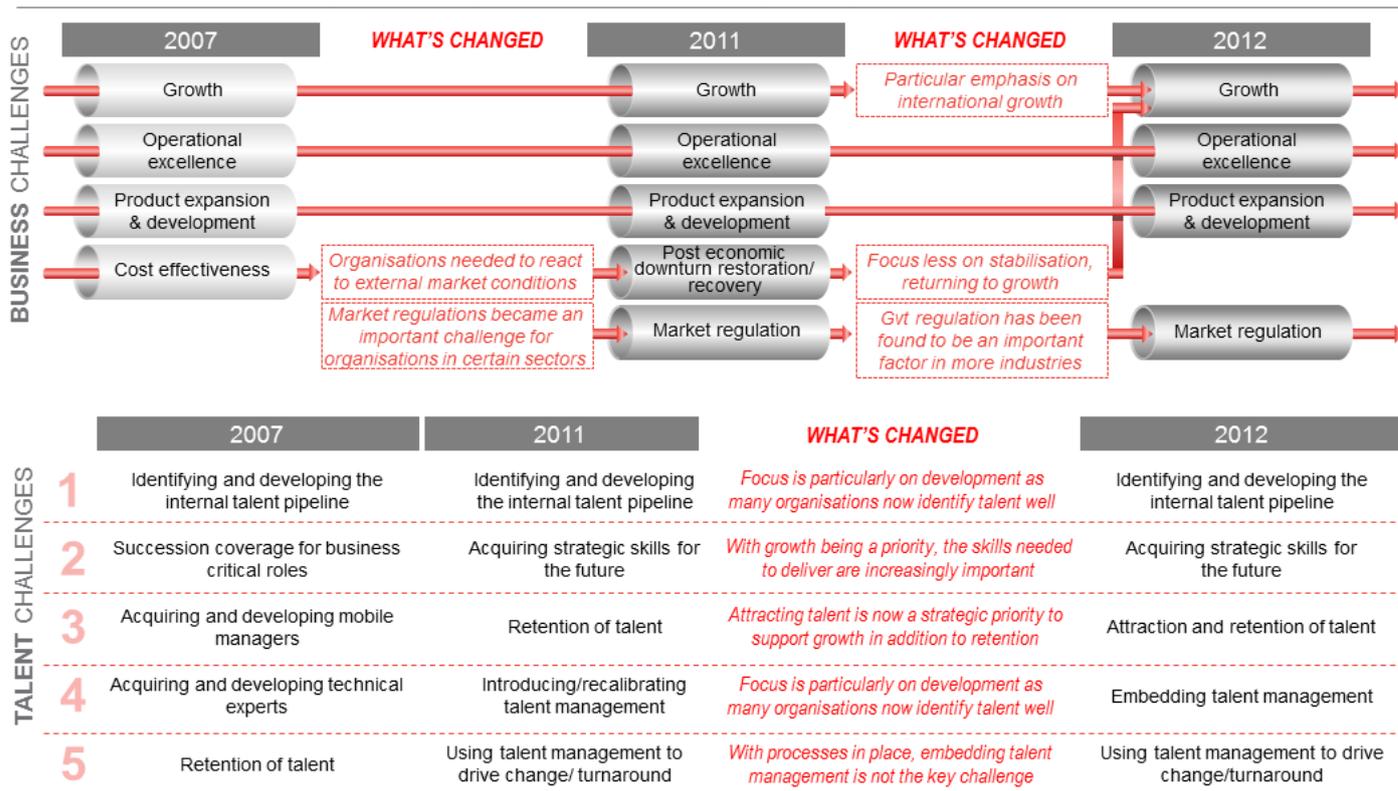
Karen Moran Director, Resourcing, Talent & Leadership, BBC

Lesley Uren said the term ‘Talent Management’ had been hijacked in recent years and could these days refer to anything from the methods used to attract talent to an organisation, to the strategies implemented to retain that talent.

However, personally, she said the term should be defined as: “a set of integrated measures undertaken by organisations to ensure that they really focus on those people who create the source of that organisation’s greatest competitive differentiation.”

Ms Uren then showed the plenary a series of slides to illustrate her presentation. The first showed the influences on talent management since 2007:

The more things change, the more they stay the same



The slide above shows the challenges that organisations have faced both generally and with regard to talent management from 2007 – when PA first started conducting research in this area – to the present. Ms Uren asked the plenary to note that although many of the economic conditions have changed dramatically between 2007 and 2012, what has not changed are ‘those things which we know make talent management work’. These persistent qualities, Ms Uren defined as:

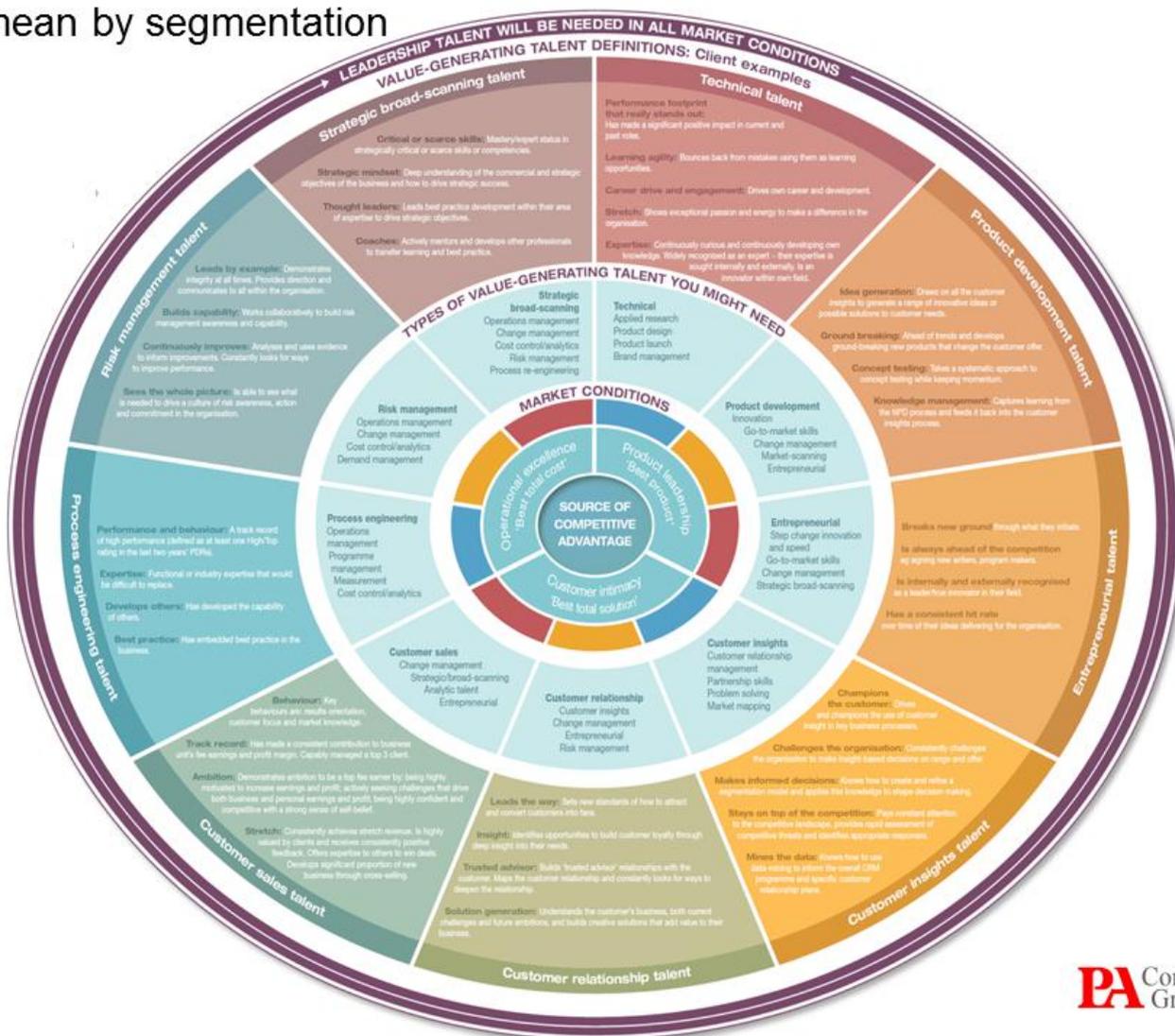
- The ability to locate who an organisation's key people
- The decision to focus on the medium-to-long term
- The ability to grow and promote from within

With regards to the first recommendation, Ms Uren said that these 'key people' were usually defined as those people with the potential to become future leaders. Against this criterion is how many HR departments locate and rate talent, she said. However, it is perhaps not the most useful approach.

Instead of focusing on an organisation's 'future leaders' it is best to promote those people who are at the heart of that organisation's competitive advantage. So, if an organisation is a high tech firm, perhaps one really driven by innovation, then those people who are the innovators within the organisation should rightly be labelled its talent. It is possible that those people will never rise to become the leaders of that business, but they are the people that create the greatest source of competitive advantage.

Ms Uren then spoke about segmentation as a process that helps organisations define those areas that might add value to their business. She provided the plenary with the following graphic:

What we mean by segmentation



Talent segments: *examples*



Ms Uren concluded that the crux of her presentation was to promote differentiation within talent management. Organisations should try to squeeze every last percentage point out of their competitive advantage as possible. So, she ended with some questions:

1. Why have a talent strategy that looks like everybody else's?
2. Why define high potential the same way everybody else does?
3. Why look for the same kind of people that everybody else does?

Karen Moran outlined the various crises currently affecting the BBC that grew out of the Jimmy Savile scandal and the two problematic episodes of Newsnight that followed – one aired that should not have been, and one not aired that should. These programmes exhibited such a fall from the BBC's high standard of journalistic rigour that the recently appointed DG, George Entwistle, was forced to resign after just 54 days in the post.

Ms Moran said that people are so proud to work for the BBC that these events have understandably had a big impact on morale. However, since the appointment of Tim Davies as interim DG and the decision that Lord Hall will take over the role long term in April 2013, morale has definitely improved.

All of these events have affected talent at the BBC. And though much has been written on talent management, and the previous speaker spoke well about practical implementations, the BBC has some unique challenges.

Ms Moran said that the corporation employs over 21,000 people and has a low turnover and so talent management is really important. The BBC 'public sector' ethos and unionised environment make things especially difficult since its competitors are all private sector corporations.

The BBC has had years of bureaucracy, which has resulted in over 5000 job titles; 18 different pay grades and 37 special allowances³.

The BBC is trying to move away from the concept of 'job for life' but encouraging people to move around a bit more whether that be internally or externally, with the view to return. When people are selected for senior roles, there is a conversation held to the understanding that the role may only last around five years. Therefore, staff should have a consideration of who their successor might be and what they might want to do next with their career.

Performance related pay is another problem for the BBC. There are no bonuses within the corporation, so the BBC is left to find new ways to reward talent that has outperformed. Ms Moran said that typically, reward is given through great career opportunities, and although in the past this has often led for the brightest and best to push themselves towards leadership, we know that not everyone is right for a leadership role and the career paths of experts or creative is valued as equally important.

Leadership quality is a problem for the BBC – as it is with every other organisation – but it is working on finding ways to develop and measure good leadership. Recently the BBC has developed a set of behaviours with its people that realise the corporation's values. These behaviours are embedded in all the BBC processes from job specifications to what Ms Moran called '360 feedback'.

With regards to training, the BBC practice a 70, 20, 10 method, where 70 per cent of time is learning on the job; 20 per cent coaching and mentoring; and 10 per cent is classroom training. Ms Moran said the corporation believed the best way to have its employees develop is to encourage them to learn by doing, and to supplement that by encouraging its leaders to get involved in other projects, mentoring, coaching, and online learning.

Discussion

The first delegate wanted to know the panel's views on who should be referred to as 'talent'. He had heard the term being variously applied to an entire workforce, and how talent can be extracted and emphasised along the line; and conversely to 'the pipeline', those people that stand out and should be earmarked very early on. Is there a view from the panel as to what works and what doesn't?

Ms Uren said that it should not be 'either- or' but 'both'. Talent Management is about differentiation, so no uniform approach will truly get the most potential out of a workforce.

Ms Moran spoke about the nine-box assessment method, where managers rate their talent on a grid of nine boxes ranging from incredibly valuable to 'up or out'. Ms Moran said that they had employed this measure as a largely perfunctory exercise, until they realised it could provide a very useful at provoking frank discussion.

Paul Gray spoke about research Praesta had conducted between so-called 'young' CEOs (those under 35) and more usual-age CEOs. He said that the young CEOs were far less likely to adopt a 'heroic leader' role and were far keener to represent the different thoughts and attitudes of their workforce. What this points to is exactly the 'it takes both' idea put forward by Ms Uren.

The next delegate asked the panel, with regards to talent management, which should take precedence: culture or strategy.

Ms Moran said she felt culture was the more important aspect.

³ One of these allowances is titled 'Special Allowance "A"', and though three employees have been granted this annually for years, no one – not even the employees – knows exactly what it is for.

Ms Uren said that the strategy guides the priorities. So, an organisation that was trying to grow in an emerging market would prioritise leadership talent that would potentially be able to open up that market. However, the culture shapes the philosophy behind everything. So, if an organisation has a very strong diversity and inclusion agenda, for example, then that is how any talent management initiatives are realised.

The next participant asked Ms Moran about the design and implementation of competency frameworks at the BBC, considering its diverse structure and myriad job titles.

Ms Moran said that there is currently a new structure being worked out, with the plan to get to six 'job families' (ranging from entry level to executive level), and then the competencies will fall within those. This will help people move around within the corporation and will clarify how individuals might progress in-house.

The next delegate questioned the demotion of BBC's Lucy Adams, with regards to the relegation of the HR director from an executive role to a non-executive role. He asked whether it was coincidence that, since that decision was made 18 months ago, the BBC has gone through the biggest HR disaster in its history.

Ms Moran agreed that Ms Adams was an inspirational HR director and also had one of the 'finest business brains' that she had encountered.

The delegate continued, saying his surprise was compounded by Lord Patten's subsequent decision, rather than going again through the lengthy process of choosing the right candidate, to cherry pick someone from the Royal Opera House 'rather like from an old boys' club'. 'Everything the government is trying to get companies to do: widen the talent field to include women; get good diversity; do proper searches; don't rush; get an interim involved – even if it takes six months. All of that was short-circuited because there was this sense of panic.'

Ms Moran reminded the plenary that the decision to hire the DG is made by the BBC Trust and so is not down to any HR directives.

The next delegate asked Ms Moran about the short-term contracts that the BBC often offers its contributors, the innuendo in the press being that is that this is a tax avoidance scheme. He said, 'if the BBC is planning to reduce job expiration dates at four and five years, isn't she worried this would look like another example of the BBC dealing with tax in an underhand way?'

Ms Moran said that in no way was the prevalence of freelance and contract work at the BBC intended to find a tax loophole, it is just the nature of working with, for example, TV personalities. Because these people tend to work for themselves rather than be signed on to a broadcaster, the BBC hires them and pays them accordingly. However, the practice has got out of control, and new guidelines are being brought in to reduce this.

Another delegate commented on the bias within the discussion towards matters surrounding the BBC, saying he thought this natural because, to some extent, everyone in the room had invested in the corporation. He said that, a history in the press, he could sympathise with the reluctance journalists at the BBC have for working an HR department because the two job cultures are completely different.

Session Four: Workforce Planning - Managing Older Workforces and Retirement

Chair: Professor Simon Deakin, *Centre for Business Research, University of Cambridge*

Speaker: Ashley Norman, *Partner, Cobbetts*

Speaker: Gary Browning, *CEO, Penna*

Professor Simon Deakin began the session by giving a brief overview of the history of the mandatory national retirement age (NRA), and how this measure was brought in by the government to prevent organisations being liable to unfair dismissal claims made by older workers. The compromise the government made was to present the retirement age as an 'opt out of' regulation, where employees could apply to work past that age, and employers could accept if they thought it beneficial.

Ashley Norman spoke about the practicalities of NRA, and how the landscape had shifted since 2006. He said that, pre 2006:

- NRA at 65 was so common that it was assumed in the majority of cases
- There was no age discrimination legislation
- There was no access to unfair dismissal protection for employees
- There was little incentive for employers to retain staff post NRA.

In 2006 the then Labour government brought in The Employment Equality Regulations to better align UK employment law with the EU's Equal Treatment Framework Directive of 2000. The EER did the following:

- Introduced concept of age discrimination
- Forced retirement became unlawful for all non-employees and for employees aged less than 65 years – unless that retirement could be objectively justified

However, the EER was not quite as robust as it appeared, there being what Mr Norman called a 'bulletproof' way for employers to continue to dismiss workers at 65. All they had to do was give them six months' notice and offer the employee the right to request to remain working after their 65th birthday, regardless of outcome. Always considered a temporary measure, the coalition government abolished the EER in 2010, and age discrimination provisions were incorporated into a new Equality Act.

Today, the ramifications of the reclassification are as follows:

- No longer a legally "safe" way to retire someone
- Heightened risk of age discrimination
- Retirement dismissals no longer deemed fair - subject to normal rigours of UK law
- Compulsory retirement likely to be characterised as Some Other Substantial Reason (SOSR); need for procedure/right of appeal.

The only way an employer can lawfully dismiss a worker on the basis of enforcing a mandatory retirement age is if the employer can justify its decision. To do this it must satisfy two criteria, namely: it must be able to prove a legitimate aim in so doing; and the means to achieve this must be proportionate. For example, an employer might cite the maintenance of a high level of service as a legitimate aim, and prove proportionality by demonstrating that the person's age is prohibitive to that aim – it should be noted, Mr Norman said, that a legitimate aim cannot be simply be for the convenience for the employer.

Since this ruling came into place in 2010 it has been harder for firms to force employees into retirement, but it is not impossible. Determining whether to have mandatory retirement age and when to impose it is for each employer to decide, taking into consideration what best suits their workforce needs. However, it was Mr Norman's advice that employers should not simply default to having no fixed retirement age because it is difficult to enforce – each firm should make an informed choice.

Gary Browning spoke about operational talent management issues of an ageing workforce and retirement or perhaps, as he put it, non-retirement.

Though much has been said – and rightly so – on the unnerving prevalence of youth unemployment, surprisingly little attention has been paid to employees at the other end of the demographic spectrum, the so called Grey Talent.

The state pension's burden on the economy has increased by an unsustainable amount. When the NHS was introduced in 1946, the early state pension scheme was intended to fund the final two years of a person's life post retirement. Today, it is not uncommon for people to be drawing on state pensions for in excess of 20 years.

This dilemma has filtered down into the workforce. Citing an online survey conducted the week before the conference, Mr Browning said that 2/3 of people over 50 said they expected to work beyond 65. This equates to 6.5 million people and constitutes a 44 per cent increase since the last time the survey was carried out two years previously.

Interestingly, the proportion is higher in women than men; with 78 per cent of women saying they expected to work beyond 65, against 52 per cent of men.

Though the aging workforce is in many ways problematic, there are some positives:

- Older workers can fill major skills shortages across the UK, particularly in technical areas such as IT, engineering, management and leadership.
- Older workers can mentor, coach and teach younger generations within the workforce.
- Older workers, rather than being intransigent, are often more flexible than younger ones. A higher percentage are prepared to go part time, and are more likely to work flexi-hours or come in at short notice.
- Older workers may be less demanding because their needs are different. They may not be constantly looking to the next promotion and pay increase.

Unfortunately, still too many companies view the persistence of older workers as a threat. There are even examples of companies trying to utilise performance management to force out older workers who have not left at 65.

One case study Mr Browning shared with the plenary involved the positive strategy exhibited by the professional services firm KPMG.

KPMG understand that when a partner retires from the firm, it is not necessarily the end of a career but a transition from a long-term, highly immersive role to something more fluid.

KPMG want their employees – currently partners – to leave as advocates of the firm, and so with the help of Penna have recently launched “Life after KPMG”.

The programme starts pre-retirement with seminars helping partners start to prepare for life after KPMG. As retirement approaches, one-to-one coaching, interactive workshops and online support is provided.

Many retiring partners at KPMG are interested in part-time work and portfolio work, with a mix of roles – including unpaid. Increasingly, Mr Browning said, these retirees are thinking about setting up social enterprises.

Increasingly, Mr Browning concluded, companies are acknowledging that they have a responsibility for supporting retiring employees, and helping them adjust to what in most cases is a new phase of life rather than the preparation for the end of life.

Discussion

The first delegate wanted to question how the benefits of an older workforce could be demonstrated in GDP growth. It was his belief, he said, that this would pacify many of the concerns among the younger workforce as they would be able to discern older workers' contribution in real terms.

The panel said they were unsure how to prove the effect of an older workforce on GDP, but said that this was not the only way to prove value to the younger generation. Mr Browning gave the example of McDonald's – "who have some very progressive policies in HR" – who promote mixed-age workforces to help staff mentoring and engagement.

Another topic of discussion focused on how chronic health problems fitted into the discussion of mandatory retirement. One delegate said: "by the year 2030, 21.6 million people of working age will be suffering from at least one long-term health complaint." If nothing is done about this, there will be severe productivity problems, as well as social exclusion issues.

The discussion moved on to the effect of retirement on health, and how there are contradictory studies that show it having variously a positive and a negative effect on health.

Another delegate mentioned the initiative that BP is experimenting with designing work around employees that might be experiencing the early signs of dementia.

Summary Remarks and Observations

Indi Seehra, *HR Director, University of Cambridge*

Mr Seehra made the following observations In lieu of Professor Jeremy Sanders, who was due to speak but had been called away for a family emergency

The structure of the conference addressed several of the key challenges facing, not just HR, but business in general.

The earlier two sessions, for example, addressed the issue UK plc has with regards to people management. Much has been said and written about in this area – mostly negative – and though the UK is experiencing some very difficult times it was good to have some fresh perspectives on the matter.

There are some positives, too, for instance: we learnt this morning that there are avenues for UK plc to get some knowledge into the economy. One of these might be the rise of what is termed the ‘informal’ sector, with some delegates here suggesting it could even be a leader in the fight against youth unemployment.

The second point to come out of the morning sessions was with regard to employee engagement. Since the demise of much of the trade unions, a voice for worker solidarity has been missing from debates on HR and employment law. The discussion in this room about the employee engagement led, I think, to some worthwhile conclusions:

- Organisations should devise what their employment-specific values are
- Employer-employee trust is absolutely paramount to improving engagement

The first afternoon session on talent management perhaps unseated some firmly held HR beliefs. Sometimes considered supplementary to a workforce’s HR directives, talent management has in the past been seen as being expendable in an era of economic downturn. However, we have seen today how the ability for an organisation to select, locate and maintain talent across a broad spectrum of skill sets – not just potential leaders, but individuals who provide a company’s competitive advantage – is perhaps more useful now than ever before.

The final session dealt with the challenges organisations have with dealing with employees approaching retirement age. With the economy in such crisis, however, perhaps in a decade when things have settled the dilemma companies have as to providing for either a young or an older workforce could dissipate. That is not to diminish the importance of these questions today, though, as all of us in this room are aware we must go through this turbulent time.

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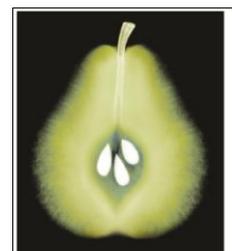
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