work • play • lead

First Quarter 2020

#evolve

DRIVING THE FUTURE OF WORK

WOMEN
—IN—
LEADERSHIP

PAGE 20

65 1955-2020 YEARS

Worldat**Work**®
Total Rewards Association

Let's navigate the future of work together.

You need to evolve your rewards programs to keep pace with the dynamic, changing world of work. Get answers to your most challenging compensation questions with the freshest data from Willis Towers Watson.

Participate in a survey today

wtwdataservices.com/workspan

#evolve

DRIVING THE FUTURE OF WORK

First Quarter 2020

Vol. 1, No. 1

WorldatWork

Global Headquarters
14040 N. Northsight Blvd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85260 USA

Canada
P.O. Box 4520, Postal Station A
Toronto, ON M5W 4M4

Contact Us
877–951–9191 (U.S. & Canada)
+1 480–951–9191 (other countries)
Fax 480–483–8352
workspan@worldatwork.org

table of
contents

Watch videos, download white papers, participate in the Online Community
www.worldatwork.org/workspan.

Departments

Quotables

> " By changing their mindset — and embracing the power of proactive, in-the-moment performance feedback — managers can turn addressing underperformance into an opportunity for growth, rather than something to be feared. "
>
> **page 38**

> " Sponsors are such an important part of the equation because you need someone who can champion you when you're not in the room. "
>
> **page 15**

Insightful. Witty. Relatable.

Work in Progress is a 30-minute podcast that takes on the day's most pressing workplace issues with a healthy mix of insight, wit and irreverence. Hosts Tom Alexander, an award-winning radio broadcaster and producer, and Charles Epstein, Workspan's NSFW humor columnist, engage guests from those in the field — practitioners, brokers, vendors — and people outside the field, including prominent writers, artists and athletes sharing relatable stories about work and life.

Listen on iTunes, Podomatic, Spotify and Stitcher. Visit worldatwork.org/podcasts for more information.

Setting an Open Course for Industry 4.0

"If it wasn't for seasickness, all the world would be sailors!"
— Charles Darwin

Welcome, mate, welcome to *#evolve*. What in the dickens is *#evolve*, you may ask, and why should I care?

Let's set sail on our maiden mission, shall we?

#evolve is a vessel for change and a catalyst for digital nomads, rambunctious associates and principled leaders. It's a celebration of corporate social responsibility, bold executive decisions and atypical organizational practices.

#evolve is a springboard for rethinking behaviors, reimagining the employee experience and reinventing the wheels of enterprise. It's a therapeutic investment in positive business outcomes through personal and professional development.

#evolve is not a magazine. It's a challenge to the traditional definition of work.

#evolve is a collection of voices representing a multigenerational workforce hungry for the deliverables of well-being, purpose and inclusion.

#evolve is a "get out of jail free" card for diligent worker bees whose appetite for innovation is suppressed by myopic managers, burdensome processes and conventional wisdom.

#evolve is a workplace revolution, an aspirational journey and an embodiment of self-discovery.

This mission statement may sound hyperbolic but we're not here for the bells and whistles. We're here to explore uncharted territories and help Industry 4.0 accelerate.

This is not the time, nor the climate, for "the same old." We're not here to provide formulas, steps and rules. (That role, in part, still rests with our sister periodicals, *Workspan* and *WorldatWork Journal*.) We're here to expand the minds and capture the hearts of cube farm voyagers, misguided crew chiefs and trailblazers at the helm.

We're here to serve and enlighten — and perhaps even delight — our fellow passengers. We're here to reskill each and every one of us (yes, us), one sail at a time.

As you dive into this inaugural issue, you'll note a leadership theme spearheaded by women. The cover story by Jane Larson is a refreshing look at four women who've overcome the odds to scale the corporate ladder and become successful executives.

###

To reiterate the sentiment of Maureen Berkner Boyt's piece on page 30, "good intentions" are not enough when it comes to diversity and inclusion. What remains frustrating is the ongoing demand for all to beat the drum — loudly — about the underrepresentation of women and minorities in leadership. This remains a serious societal and worldwide problem that we'll continue fighting with stories (and insights) that reflect the strength and courage it takes to effect change.

Thank you for reading, and most of all, for caring.

P.S. Be sure to check out the debut "Mentoring Matters" column by Katharine Voyles Mobley on page 15. It offers the sage advice of raising the bar of mentorship by sponsoring employees for opportunities and recognition within your organization. That's one way of being a true advocate and owning the outcome!

Dan Cafaro
Editor-in-Chief of publications.
He can be reached at
dan.cafaro@worldatwork.org.

The leading nonprofit professional association in Total Rewards.

As a member, you gain exclusive access to the **Total Rewards** tools & resources you need — when you need them — so you can design progressive strategies that power your organization.

Practical Resources

Access critical salary data, tools, templates, and benchmarking surveys, saving you time and money.

Thought Leadership

Stay informed through our award-winning *Workspan* Magazine, *The Journal of Total Rewards,* white papers and podcasts.

Professional Network

Leverage a passionate and committed member network, as well as our experts to help you grapple with day-to-day challenges.

Education & Training

Access exclusive member-only webinars and receive discounts on training, certifications and events, both in-person and virtual.

worldatwork.org/membership

You're a Funny Man, Charles Epstein

A dramatic interpretation of Charles Epstein's lawn surveillance.

Charles,
I have enjoyed reading your NSFW columns in *Workspan* over the last few months — even sharing them with friends who I also thought would enjoy your "perspective" on these topics.
   So, please keep writing them. Honestly, I usually just skim most of the articles, but will read yours in its entirety (mostly due to it only being a page).
   The question I have is how come you are using a picture that looks like it was taken right before you were yelling at some kids to get off your lawn?

— Kent E. Oldham, CCP
Sr. Compensation Analyst, HealthPartners

Charles was quick to respond:

Kent,
Your email was a very nice way to end the week, thanks!
   Funny you should mention that picture. I had my daughter take it and for about 10 minutes she was trying to coax a natural smile out of me: "Dad, don't you know how to smile? It's not hard!" For someone who writes these columns and laughs easily, you'd think I'd be able to manage a more inviting expression. I'd hate to think my inability to smile for the camera is chasing away potential readers! Thanks for being able to look past it.
   Again, thanks for the generous comments and I really appreciate you passing these to your friends — if anyone asks, please let them know that I'm far less protective of my front lawn than it appears.

— Charles

The Ingredients of a Modernized HR Environment

At the dawn of a new age of automation, a lot is changing in the workplace, and human resources is at the forefront. Yet the universal goal remains the same: hiring great talent and offering a great employee experience. Securing and retaining human capital that is aligned to the organization's core values remains paramount. Today, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) technologies provide significant value enhancing these priorities, as well as many others, across the HR function.

Tools and applications with intelligent analysis capabilities are already playing a big role in helping HR teams sift through large amounts of employee engagement, performance and development data. As AI and ML advance, HR will continue to use these potent tools to find new means of organizing, strategizing and scaling delivery of a more personalized and relevant employee experience. The result will be the extinction of traditional HR practices and a new norm of weaving technology into our daily operations.

What are the ingredients of this modernized environment?

Task Automation
AI can complete many repetitive and tedious tasks that would otherwise require human cognitive capabilities. This allows HR teams to focus their time, talent and energy on strategic initiatives and consultative partnerships with employees and leaders. Perhaps HR automation's greatest strength to date is the value it can add to daily operations. Using chatbots and tools with self-service and on-demand capabilities enables a much more rewarding employee experience.

Recruiting and Related Employment Branding
AI is disrupting how we connect with both active and passive candidates. Outreach efforts are more targeted and relevant for both prospect and recruiter. The marriage of technology and employment branding can be extremely valuable when adopting the right technology partner. Organizations can share their values and culture in an authentic yet relatable way, regardless of whom they need to hire and where.

New Assessment Techniques
Gamification offers new paths for candidate assessment. Using AI in digital interviews can assess verbal and nonverbal cues in facial expression and body language. Incorporating AI into résumé screening will increase selection efficiency and assess candidate fit based on *potential* rather than on *past performance*. For incumbent employee career pathing, data analysis can suggest possible career directions by assessing prior work experience, available development opportunities and employee performance trends.

Thoughtful Planning
Even with all of this helpful potential, limitations do exist. For instance, challenges may be specific and unique to each organization. Business problems must be identified and understood before AI can be considered and explored to determine how technology can be used to solve it. Some HR functions face budgetary constraints and lower organizational prioritization for investment. For national or international firms, local priorities often conflict when determining what technology investment to make; unaligned systems and processes are problematic. Therefore, any new AI-based HR solutions need to fit into an organization's current HR technology stack so data doesn't end up sitting in silos.

Perspective
Of course, the emotional impact of significant disruption is always present. AI has inevitably triggered fear of mass unemployment, but it is transforming the workplace to be *more* human, not less. We are entering an era of human-machine partnership; technology is most effective when complementing humans, not replacing them.

We must remember that AI isn't used to automate jobs but rather to automate tasks, thereby increasing productivity and performance. AI will actually give employees opportunities to become more efficient, proactive and strategic rather than reactive, as unfortunately many of us are.

HR has the role and responsibility to reaffirm for employees that the vital skills of creativity, complex problem solving and emotional intelligence will remain difficult for technology to replicate. To that end, HR will need a strategy — informed through analyzing what roles, processes and workflows will be reskilled by AI — to prepare, develop and train the workforce for structural job shifts.

Combine these ingredients and you'll have a resilient, fortified HR environment that can help lead your organization through the disruption that AI is bringing to the workplace and the workforce.

HR best supports an organization when we have insights and a plan aligned with the skills and roles needed to support growth. As HR leaders, we have to be open-minded and willing to adopt AI into our daily routines. AI will absolutely change the way we source, assess, hire, train, develop, pay and move people — for the better. Five years from now, I see HR being both digital and human, which requires a focus on optimizing the combination of the two. HR teams and leaders must develop fluency in AI while shaping HR to be more personal and intuitive.

Ultimately, resourcing remains an inherently human domain. In that regard, intuition and emotional intelligence are still essential. Relationship-building and human-centric management must be balanced with the automated scalability AI enables. As we seek that equilibrium in a time of unprecedented transformation and opportunity, now is the time for HR leaders to prepare for sweeping change. **###**

Sonia Mathai is chief human resources officer at Globality.

Sonia Mathai
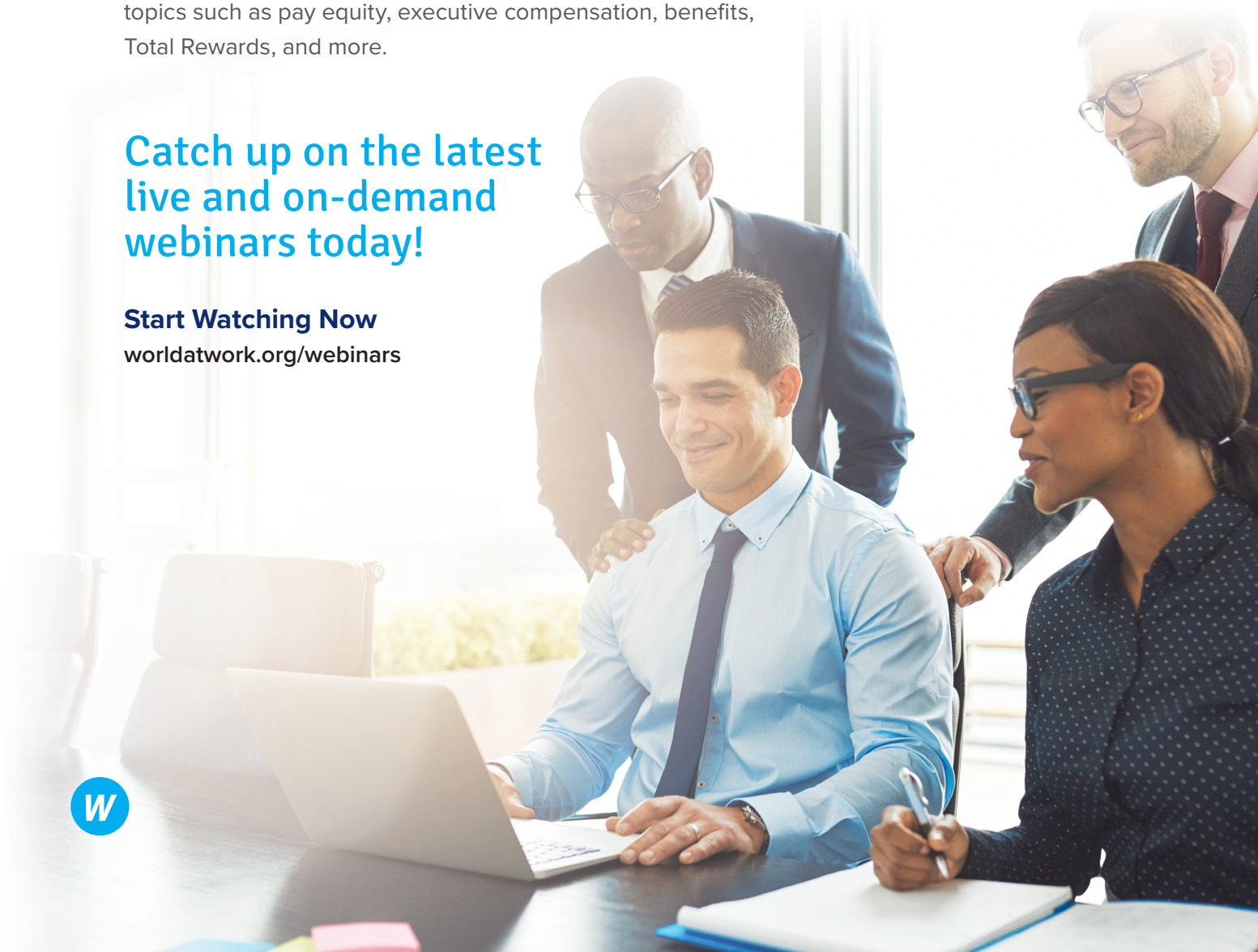
Leading the Future Workforce

77%

of organizations are currently experiencing a leadership gap.

Source: Brandon Hall Group

Informal coaching/ mentoring?

88%

of organizations have it.

Source: WorldatWork, "2019 Total Rewards Inventory & Practices Survey"

88%

of organizations have (or will have) leadership training.

Source: WorldatWork, "2019 Total Rewards Inventory & Practices Survey"

87%

of Millennials rate professional/career growth and development as an important factor when choosing a job.

Source: Gallup
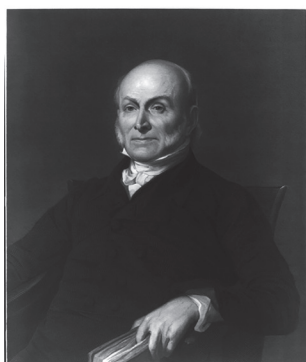
"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

— John Quincy Adams, sixth president of the United States

So, You Want to Be a Thought Leader?

In this piece for *Entreprenuer,* Tom Popomaronis, vice president of innovation at Massive Alliance, explains the line between "social influencers" and "thought leaders" — and how executives are learning to combine the two concepts. *http://bit.ly/367SvNH*

Adding Purpose = Adding Dollars

A November 2019 Korn Ferry survey found that 96% of 391 executives polled see value in making purpose-driven leadership a priority. Why? It's a matter of dollars and cents. *http://bit.ly/2NLItMK*

96%
of 391 executives polled see value to making purpose-driven leadership a priority.

Empathy and the Art of Leadership

Everyone will tell you that empathy is a key component to good leadership. But it's also important that good leaders are considered an authority figure. Marianne Harrison, the first female CEO of John Hancock, describes the delicate balance leaders must find in this interview with *FoxBusiness. https://fxn.ws/3arWtUH*

Marianne Harrison

Breaking Down the Ego Barrier

There's a lot of talk about mindfulness and meditation these days, and with good reason. Matthias Birk writes in this article for *Harvard Business Review* that meditation can help leaders push past their own ego, allowing them to become more objective and form deeper relationships with their peers and employees. *http://bit.ly/2G7cxNx*

Taking on the Tough Conversations

No one likes having the "tough conversation." But as leaders, these conversations will inevitably come up, and knowing how to best navigate them is what separates a good leader from a great leader. Lead Change's John Eades offers some tips to hone your skills in this piece for *SmartBrief. http://bit.ly/2RD98vp*

Follow First, Lead Second

Bernhard Schroeder, a *Forbes* contributor, posits that in order to be a great leader, one must first be a good follower — or a "leader-in-training," as he calls it. He lays out four rules for those looking to be the best follower of the bunch. *http://bit.ly/30Eht61*

Marching to the Beat of the Same Drum

Author Scott Mautz was inspired by LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman, who said, "Every leader has to create a drumbeat for their company." In this *Inc.* article, Mautz provides the five rhythms to which leaders should set their tempo. *http://bit.ly/37fYVLO*

Reid Hoffman

"Every leader has to create a drumbeat for their company."

The 70/20/10 Split

Bryan Collins, a *Forbes* contributor, discusses Mark Brown's book, *Outward Bound Lessons to Live a Life of Leadership: To Serve, To Strive, and Not To Yield*, in which Brown lays out the 70/20/10 model of leadership: 70% real-world experience, 20% mentoring and 10% formal training. The book leans heavily on the experiences offered by Outward Bound, for which Brown is a guide. *http://bit.ly/2trGaXr*

FOREWORD BY RICHARD LEIDER, BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *THE POWER OF PURPOSE*

OUTWARD BOUND LESSONS TO LIVE A LIFE OF LEADERSHIP

To Serve, to Strive, and Not to Yield

MARK MICHAUX BROWN
PUBLISHED IN ASSOCIATION WITH OUTWARD BOUND USA

There's No 'I' in Lead

In this *FoxBusiness* opinion piece, Dr. Kent Ingle, president of Southeastern University, notes that one of the best — and toughest — lessons that leaders ever learn is that leadership isn't about them. He lays out five ways leaders can use to serve others and therefore, lead effectively. *https://fxn.ws/2NJvIl0*

Motivate Them and They Will Follow

Shawn Doyle, president of New Light Learning and Development Inc., shares nine simple techniques leaders can use to show their employees that they are valued. Doyle, a guest writer for *Entrepreneur*, quotes Margaret Cousins in noting that "Appreciation can make a day, even change a life." *http://bit.ly/2RDpLap*

"Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary."

— Margaret Cousins

Leading in the Social Sector

Abhijit Banerjee, a 2019 Nobel Memorial Prize winner in economic sciences, found time in his busy schedule to sit down with Kim Starkey Jonker, a *Forbes* contributor, to discuss leadership in the social sector. *http://bit.ly/3avrwyG*

Learning from the Past

What really makes a leader "great"? In this *Time* article, Andrew Roberts looks back through history to determine 10 traits shared by the world's best leaders. *http://bit.ly/37c8xqR*

Moving Beyond Mentorship

Let me start by stating that I am a huge champion of mentorship. But the truth is that mentorship is only part of a successful leadership strategy — especially in today's job market where not only do you have to stand out, but someone must also be willing to stand up for you. That is why sponsorship is an integral part of any successful leadership strategy. Unlike mentors, who provide general guidance and direction, sponsors act as spotlights, highlighting oftentimes junior employees for opportunities or recognition within an organization.

Sponsors are such an important part of the equation because you need someone who can champion you when you're not in the room. According to Deloitte, sponsors model behavior and drive the sponsored individual's career vision, fully invested in their upward movement. Sponsors provide visibility, even using their platforms to increase exposure and help the sponsored individual build network connections.

Whether you're seeking an internal promotion, an external award or even a new role at an organization where you're an unknown quantity, a sponsor can speak up on your behalf and help clear your path to success. That said, here are three guidelines for people who are seeking a sponsor:

1. Don't wait.

Like mentorship relationships, sponsorships take time to grow and thrive. The best sponsorship relationships evolve over the course of months and years because people tend to support those they know. You wouldn't put your reputation on the line for someone you just met — and you shouldn't expect a potential sponsor to either. That said, there's an African proverb that states: "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now." If you don't have a sponsor now, get one. Don't feel like you need to wait until you get that next promotion or achieve that certification; your path up the success ladder will be that much easier with a sponsor to help you out.

2. Meet IRL (in real life).

This kind of relationship is best built face to face. Today's digital world has made it easier than ever to connect with industry experts through email or social media, but how strong is that relationship, really? In a sponsorship, you're really asking people to go out on a limb for you and they're not going to do that unless they know you well. The strongest relationships are based on in-person, fully transparent interactions. Even if you don't work together regularly, your sponsor should be someone you've met and are able to interact with in person at least semi-regularly.
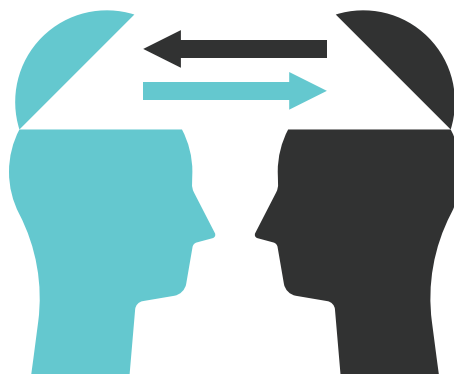
3. Don't count out mentors.

So, you're in an organization and you have a great mentor but no sponsor — don't get discouraged! Some of the best sponsorship relationships are built from mentorships. When I started in my current role, I built a close relationship with one of our executives. He recognized my skills and gave me solid advice about navigating some of the trickier aspects of our organization. Leveraging his advice, I grew very successful in that role. At that point, it wasn't a big leap for him to recommend me as someone who'd be a good fit for board positions in our community. Our initial relationship — one of guidance and respect — transitioned into one where he felt comfortable positioning me for opportunities.

So, if you are in a high-performing role, making an impact on key business initiatives and taking on big challenges, consider building rapport with executives who know your impact on the bottom line. One of them is most likely a willing sponsor for your next career move. **###**

Katharine Voyles Mobley is the chief marketing officer of First Advantage.

**Katharine
Voyles Mobley**

Redefining Talent for the Next Decade
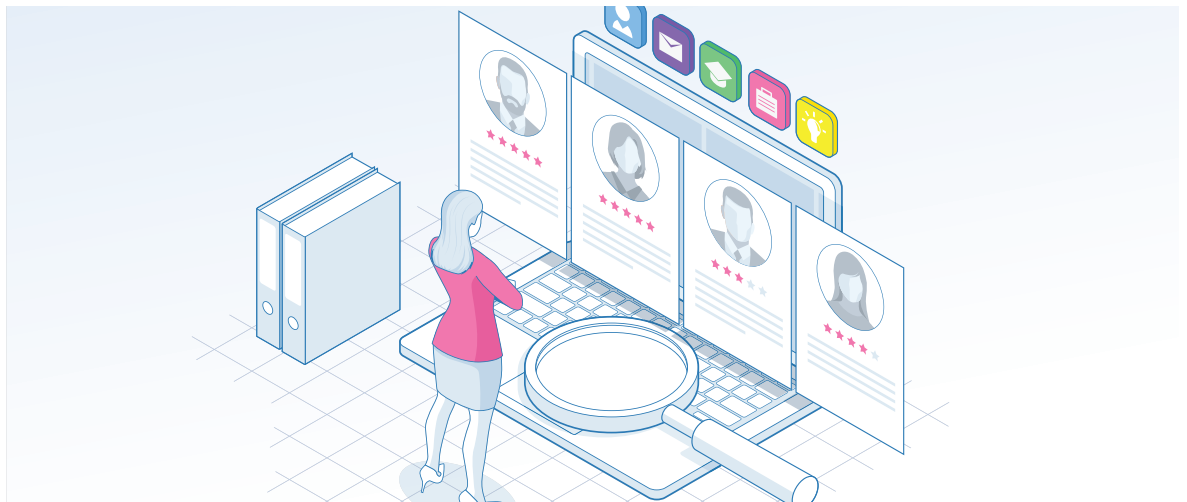
What is the biggest challenge we face in 2020? It's this: Redefining talent for the decade to come.

Back in December 2018, NASA published an intriguing, forward-thinking series of papers under the heading "The Future of Work."

One article in particular was eye-catching because of its title: "Redefining Talent."

In it, NASA made this point:

> "At the intersection of mission and people is NASA's need to redefine talent, not just talent acquisition … With no one model best suited to acquire and match talent to task, redefining talent requires organizations to both assess their ability to access new talent pools and, in parallel, ensure work is restructured to harvest the most fruitful results from employing new talent models."

Although NASA may be focused on its goal of returning to the Moon and eventually sending humans to Mars, the agency knows that to do so, it needs to start by redefining the talent they will need tomorrow — not just today.

The Center for Creative Leadership, a top-ranked, global provider of leadership development, agrees with NASA's assessment. The center posits that "Talent in the digital era is changing … (and) the workforce is being totally reshaped. Very soon, the talent landscape will look completely different, but most companies are still operating in a decades-old paradigm when it comes to talent."

The Meaning of 'Talent'

While traditional best-practice guidelines recommend offering developmental opportunities to retain and engage "talented" employees and creating internal "talent pools" for succession planning, how can you do this unless you have first decided what "talent" actually means for your organization?

A number of basic questions beg to be answered, such as:

- **What do we mean by talent?** We need to replace the decades-old concept of talent as being only those in the top right corner of the nine-box talent grid. In today's world we need to be inclusive about talent and work from the thesis that everyone has talent. "Talent for what?" becomes the more important question as we work toward an optimized talent strategy for the future of work.
- **Is "talent" a permanent and constant personality characteristic?** Is it something that a person just does or doesn't have?
- **How do we identify, measure or predict potential if it "exists in possibility?"** What if it's not yet actual?
- **Can talent actually be developed over time?** And if so, how?

And, one more thing — the term "talent" is often used inter-changeably with the term "potential." Potential implies an individual has the capability to take on future responsibilities that go beyond their current role. Yet, it is something to be realized in the future, and it is foolhardy to assume that it equates to current or past performance in a substantially different role.

Wanted: A Broader Definition

A survey of 20 major corporations published in the *Journal of Organizational and Industrial Psychology* found that 85% of organizations defined talent based on the potential for vertical movement up the organizational ladder. Similar results were also reported by the Corporate Leadership Council, with 47% of organizations defining "high potentials" based on their ability to advance two to four levels, and another 26% intending to move in this direction soon.

Surprisingly, only one in 20 organizations — a mere 5% — attempted to adjust their conception of what talent meant for their organization to align with strategic goals and upcoming business challenges.

This is incredibly short-sighted considering that the pitfalls of limiting your talent decisions to only the potential C-suite candidates are readily apparent.

By definition, only a small percentage of your workforce can be considered "high potential" talent (generally around 10%). As in many organizations, desirable development opportunities are limited to talent pool candidates, and by focusing largely on them, you risk disengaging the remaining — and largest — portion of your workforce.

When you limit your talent management efforts to those with supposed "leadership potential," you fail to retain valuable "expert" and "hi-po" performers. Despite their lack of leadership ambitions, these individuals constitute nearly two-thirds (60%) of the workforce, are less likely to leave, and have real potential to add value on a daily basis.

But most organizations are still stuck operating in old paradigms when it comes to talent.

4 Steps to Future Talent Success

It's pretty clear that organizations that succeed in the future will be the very organizations that are able to redefine talent for the new world of work. And, as the Center for Creative Leadership noted, they will prosper through constant change as they:

1. **Increase engagement and retention of *all* their talent** — including free-lancers and gig economy workers;
2. **Elevate their employer brand** and gain access to a larger talent pool;
3. **Harness a diverse and dynamic talent base** to accelerate culture change; and,
4. **Reduce their vulnerability** to the ongoing shifts in the talent market.

One more thing to remember: The most innovative career management approaches now focus on enabling individuals to navigate their own unique career paths, in accordance with their individual preferences.

By doing this, workers take ownership for their own development, working together with their managers to grow their strengths and answer the perennial question of *"Talent for what?"* in a mean-ingful and personally defined way. This self-driven talent-development strategy will assist with the re-engineered and reskilled workforce that we need to future-proof our organizations.

Transparency and inclusiveness in your talent development are imperatives for 2020 — but more on that to come. **###**

Anne Fulton is CEO and co-founder of Fuel50.

Anne Fulton

WorldatWork® | 2020
TOTAL REWARDS
CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

BRINGING GREAT WORK TO LIFE

JUNE 7-10 | MINNEAPOLIS

GET INSPIRED BY OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

DANICA PATRICK
Retired Racecar Driver, Entrepreneur & Author

ERIC HUTCHERSON
Executive Vice President, Chief Human Resources Officer, NBA

BROOKE SHIELDS
Actress, Model, Author & Advocate

With pioneering,
forward-thinking concepts and perspectives
related to the Total Rewards field,
everything you need to bring great work
to life will be right here!

EARLY BIRD PRICING
EXPIRES FEBRUARY 17

WORLDATWORK.ORG/TOTALREWARDS20

2020 is shaping up to be a blockbuster year for WorldatWork events. From Total Rewards, to sales and executive compensation, to workplace equity, we have something for everyone. **Check out our lineup and register today!**

World at Work® | 2020
EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION FORUM
JULY 12-14 | DALLAS

You won't find this kind of in-depth, meaningful engagement anywhere else. Don't miss this opportunity to truly connect with people who live and breathe exec comp, to learn the nuances and soft skills that are critical to success.

Space is limited.

World at Work® | 2020
SPOTLIGHT ON
SALES COMP
AUG 3-5 | CHICAGO

The world's largest sales compensation event designed to infuse learning, networking, thought leadership and next practices for sales compensation and operations professionals.

Early bird expires Apr. 23.

Call for Proposals Open Jan. 20-Feb. 24

World at Work® | 2020
TOTAL REWARDS CANADIAN CONFERENCE
SEP 23-25 | TORONTO

The only conference where Total Rewards and HR professionals can gather to find practical solutions to challenges that Canadian organizations face in compensation, well-being/benefits and Total Rewards.

Early bird expires May 4.

Call for Proposals Open February 3-March 9

World at Work® | 2020
WORKPLACE EQUITY FORUM
OCT 19-21 | AUSTIN

The premier event for professionals who are on a mission to shape successful workplace equity programs at their organizations.

Early bird expires June 1.

Call for Proposals Open February 24-April 6

W

Learn more and register at worldatwork.org/events

WOMEN

— IN —

LEADERSHIP

THE POWER OF SPEAKING UP AND THE REWARD OF MENTORING

BY JANE LARSON, WORLDATWORK
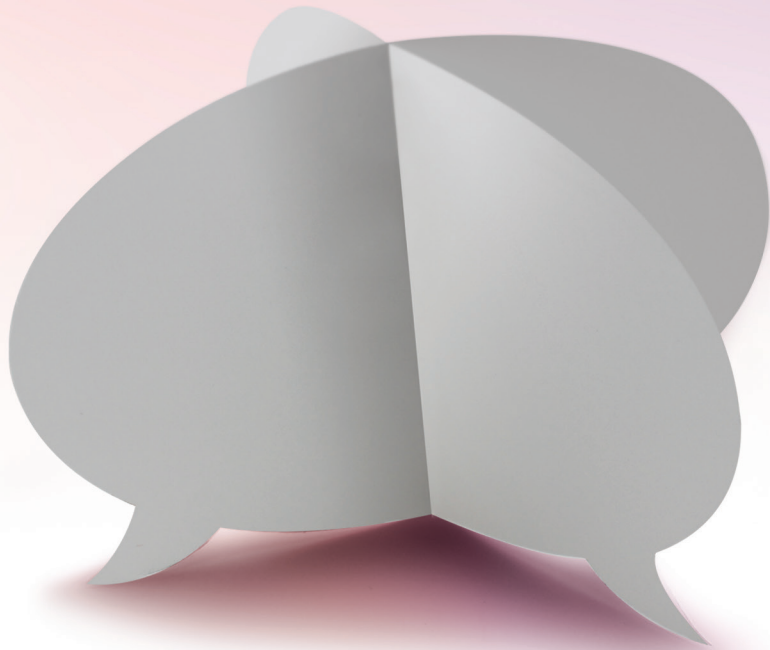
"The best advice
I was given
was to be vocal
and to not let
something stop
me from sharing
my opinion."

Whether it comes naturally or must be cultivated, one thing stands out in the lives of women who become leaders: They speak up. As in, they speak up for what they believe and what they want.

Kimberly Kean, co-owner of Gene Johnson Plumbing & Heating in Seattle, and Katharine Voyles Mobley, chief marketing officer for First Advantage in Atlanta, fall into the "comes naturally" category.

Kean said the worst leadership advice she received was to tone down her personality because it was "too much" and "too intimidating." The best advice, however, directly contrasted that, pushing Kean "to be who I am and bring my personal power of who I am to my job and to my work," she said. "I'm pretty upfront. I'm not quiet. I take up space in the conversation. I just do."

Mobley found that being the youngest person in the room added to the challenge of convincing industry veterans to pay attention to the then-new World Wide Web.

"Luckily, growing up in the car business with my dad, I learned how to stand up for myself and really fight for what I needed to do," she said. "I'm not afraid of what I call outrageous conversations. There are times when you have to, for lack of a better term, have the balls to open your mouth and say, 'This is what I stand behind and this is what I want to fight for.'"

Sharon Lontoc, chief human resources officer for Title Alliance Ltd. in the Philadelphia area, falls into the "cultivate" category, as do many of the women Kathleen Duffy meets in her volunteer efforts with 2020 Women on Boards.

Lontoc explains that she was quiet and introverted as a girl and finding her leadership voice went against that grain.

"The best advice I was given was to be vocal and to not let something stop me from sharing my opinion," she said. "It came with a tale of caution as well, which is, you have to be careful and mindful of your audience because how you deliver those messages is going to be different based on the audience you have."

Duffy, president and CEO of Duffy Group Inc., an international recruiting firm based in Phoenix, is also co-chair of 2020 Women on Boards' National Conversation on Board Diversity. 2020 Women on Boards is a non-profit education and awareness campaign that collaborates with corporations to achieve a minimum of 20% women directors on their boards by the year 2020. She said networking is essential to the success of women, who often have the diverse skills today's boards are seeking.

"Ask yourself, 'Have you ever thought about serving on a board?' And if you have, to put it out there," Duffy said. "80% of all board positions are found through networking, and so tell your network and be intentional by saying, 'I'm interested in serving on a board in the next 18 to 24 months.'"

Here's how these four women are making a difference on the leadership front:

'You Can Absolutely Do This'

Making it to the top of a family-owned business was both easier and harder for Kimberly Kean than it would have been for someone else.

"I got an opportunity that maybe someone else wouldn't have gotten," Kean acknowledged. "I happened to be the oldest in my family, so I got that opportunity" to be a second-generation co-owner of her family's business, Gene Johnson Plumbing & Heating in Seattle. "But I had to work harder to earn people's respect, otherwise it's, 'You got handed this. Your dad gave it to you.' You have to work to overcome that stigma and actually have success that is based on your own hard work."

Kean's parents started the company in 1976 and she grew up answering phones and scheduling service calls. She earned a business degree from the University of Washington and followed it with plumbing apprenticeship school, where she was the only woman in the class. Her "eight-year education," as she calls it, not only gave her a residential plumbing license, knowledge of plumbing codes and experience working in the field, it helped her in managing marketing, finance and the 34 employees of the plumbing company and a Zoom Drain franchise.

Kean and her brother-in-law bought the company from her parents just before the Great Recession hit and she counts that economic downturn as the biggest hurdle she had to overcome. People still had plumbing problems, but they tended to repair or fix things themselves rather than replace. She took on multiple roles in the business.

"We were willing to make moves," she said. "It's hard, but when we just didn't have the revenue to support the overhead as well as the number of people in the field, making decisions quickly is how we adapted. Also, figuring out how to utilize our marketing the best we could, trying new things to try to earn every bit of business we could. And cooperative relationships with our employees. We just got really close, we worked really hard and that core team all still work here."

Those moves have helped the second generation more than double the company's revenue. Next on Kean's list is to hit $12 million in annual revenue by 2023 and to attract the right people to her companies and provide the training for them to be successful.

Kean calls plumbing a great opportunity for women because of the training programs available, the female customers who are more comfortable with having a woman in their homes and the high earnings that come with being in a field critically short of trained workers.

"It's becoming more open as people understand this isn't something only men could or should do," she said. "If you are mechanically inclined, this is for you. You can absolutely do this."

'Yes, I Can, and I'm Going to Prove It'

Sharon Lontoc landed in her dream job as CHRO of a Philadelphia area title company. Even better, when she looks around, she sees a C-suite where women are the majority: chief strategy officer, chief financial officer and the general counsel and compliance officer. CEO Jim Campbell credits the women's passion and energy for fueling the title and escrow company's continuing growth.

At Title Alliance, Lontoc helps oversee nearly 300 employees in 11 states and 40 joint ventures. The organization's growth has brought growing pains, she said, but Campbell is passionate about the employees and understands how critical human resources is in reaching the company's 2022 goals. For Lontoc, that includes ensuring strong training programs, developing a "dream manager" program and making Title Alliance a Top 100 workplace in each of its markets.

Lontoc didn't even know what HR was when she was a teenager working at a small building industry company where male co-workers made insulting comments and told her that as a girl, she could never do their jobs. Older and wiser people in her college classes told her those things were not OK, and when a professor suggested she take an HR course, she discovered the career she wanted. She later thanked him, she recalled, "and he said, 'What are you going to do about it? You now have a responsibility. You have knowledge of what is OK, you have knowledge of what's not OK, and you have knowledge of how to fix it.' It really got me thinking that I have to be a change agent."

She started her career as a cooperative-education student in Norfolk Southern Railroad's labor relations department, where an encouraging boss told her she could do anything if she set her mind

"I just want girls to know they can progress to be anything they want to be and to have the confidence to do it."

"I want people to think about how they can progress," she said. "I just want girls to know they can progress to be anything they want to be and to have the confidence to do it. And to have enough confidence so that when somebody says, 'No, you can't,' that they can say, 'Yes, I can, and I'm going to prove it.'"

Measuring Your Success

The birth of the internet changed her career, opined Katharine Voyles Mobley, chief marketing officer for First Advantage, a provider of background screening technology based in Atlanta.

Her first job out of college was with an advertising agency, where she worked long hours and for less pay than her teacher friends. But, when she got the chance to manage the account for realestate.com, she began fighting for ways to generate clicks and drive traffic to websites. A stint building the brand for a tech startup taught her more about the tech space and helped her migrate into analytics and specialize as a tech marketer.

"Even though I fought for the internet back in the day, fighting for the role social media was going to play in branding, even in B2B tech companies, so few people initially thought that any of these social media channels would have any relevance in the B2B space," Mobley said. "But at the end of the day, B2B is still just human to human."

At First Advantage, Mobley works with HR to use hashtags and social media to engage their 4,300 employees around the world, show them each other's lives and introduce job candidates to the organization's culture. She calls this an exciting time for the company as it expands globally and raises internal and external awareness of the importance of First Advantage's services.

At the same time, she's helping two employees navigate their roles as new mothers while staying sane and relevant. She serves as a board member for the YWCA of Greater Atlanta and as an advisory board member for Win2ition, a non-profit that supports single caregivers.

Mobley also is writing the "Mentoring Matters" column for the new WorldatWork magazine, *#evolve*. (See page 15.) She likes to advise young women on how to get the most out of their first job so they can get their next one. She said she is keen on

to it. She moved through increasingly responsible HR positions in manufacturing and services firms, culminating in a job as senior HR business partner at Merrill Lynch. However, when the Great Recession hit and Bank of America acquired Merrill Lynch, Lontoc lost her job. It was one of the unexpected turns in her career, but "all of them, in the grand scheme, have been good," she concedes now. The next position she found, as HR director at a law firm, broadened her knowledge of different areas of HR. Armed with that, she joined Title Alliance in 2019.

Of course, there were obstacles along the way. Lontoc said her greatest challenge was dealing with people who were close-minded about change and thought of HR's functions as limited. Overcoming that challenge meant having to change those mindsets by saying, "Yes, we hire your employees, and yes, we have to let employees go, and yes, we make sure people are paid," Lontoc said. "But let me expand on that. When we hire somebody, it's critical that we hire someone that not only has the technical skills you're looking for but also is a strong cultural fit for the organization, because if we don't get that right, we're going to see a never-ending cycle of constant recruiting because turnover is going to be high. And when we let people go, are we being respectful about how we do it?"

Lontoc belongs to the local HR Executive Alliance and has developed a close community of female colleagues who talk about what they're going through, help each other and mentor other individuals in their careers. She also leads her daughters' Girl Scouts troop, happy to see the organization show girls they can do things like camping and robotics.

encouraging them to always measure what they are doing so they can demonstrate the impact their work made on a brand.

"I think women tend to think more on the soft side of skills, and I always advise that they bring in more KPIs (key performance indicators) as the measurement for career trajectories," she said. "What have you driven from a revenue perspective or usership perspective or product engagement perspective? That's a key piece that we as female leaders need to help do a better job in educating women as they enter the marketplace."

Taking Names and Making Matches

Kathleen Duffy hadn't planned on starting her own company. But when the boutique search firm she worked for moved from Phoenix to the Bay Area and made her an independent contractor, it didn't have enough work to keep her occupied.

That was a big moment of reckoning. It was Duffy's chance to develop a different business model where, instead of paying traditional retained or contingent recruiting fees, clients could unbundle the executive search process, pay only for the services they needed and do so with a fee-for-service model rather than one based on the candidate's compensation.

"People were intrigued by it," Duffy said. "And I was pretty good, so the business grew by word of mouth."

Duffy leveraged the network she had developed since her days recruiting new sorority members and top scholars at Arizona State University. As Duffy Group Inc. grew, she was one of the early pioneers building a remote workforce. Employees were looking for a company that valued work-life balance and supported mothers with children in school as well as employees needing to care for aging parents or ill spouses.

The company weathered tragic events like 9/11, "where the world stops and how do you continue to forge forward with your business," she said, and the last recession, which hit small businesses and the recruiting space especially hard. Rather than finding other businesses to enter, "I wanted to make sure we stayed true to our core business," Duffy said. "We were more focused in speaking with prospective companies about what we were doing and how it was different from traditional executive search."

Duffy also has focused on helping women reach the very top level of corporations as members of boards of directors. As the Phoenix co-chair of 2020 Women on Boards' National Conversation on Board Diversity, she helped bring CEOs, corporate directors and women leaders together for a day of networking and roundtable discussions designed to "take the mystique away" of the process of securing a corporate board seat.

Non-profit boards, she noted, are usually good steppingstones to corporate boards because they give women the opportunity to learn on a smaller scale about governance and how boards work.

"Women corporate directors are very, very much interested in mentoring women," she said. "And if there are opportunities to bring these people together and for the corporations to be aware of these fabulous people who are interested in serving on boards, we'll be able to indirectly make some matches." ###

Jane Larson is a contributing writer for *#evolve* and *Workspan* magazines. She can be reached at *workspan@worldatwork.org*.

MEETING THE MARKETPLACE WHERE IT IS

WHERE IT IS

REMOTE CULTURE REQUIRES MORE THAN A ZOOM CONNECTION

BY MARK ATHITAKIS, WORLDATWORK

When new hires join Buffer, a company that makes social-media publishing tools, they spend their first 90 days assigned to a pair of guides. One guide — deemed a "role buddy" — is there to answer questions specific to their job and department. At the same time, a "culture buddy" is there to make sure the new staffer is equipped, technologically and socially, to interact with the staff. That second line of assistance is particularly important, because Buffer operates entirely without an office, with 89 people working in 18 countries.

"We want to make sure [new hires] know how we communicate and how things are done, because it's a little different," said Buffer spokesperson Hailley Griffis. "You're not walking into an office and meeting people. You're opening Slack and meeting people."

Though completely headquarters-less offices are still rare, Buffer exemplifies the kind of landscape that the workplace seems to be moving toward. According to Gallup, 43% of United States-based workers say they work away from their colleagues at least part of the time, and the company Upwork predicts that 73% of all teams in the U.S. will have remote workers by 2028.

The virtues of remote work — also called telework or flex-time — have been well documented. Employees value the day-to-day flexibility it provides. Employers value the ability to expand their pool of potential hires beyond the area where they're located, while also saving on expensive relocation costs. But the expansion of remote work also brings new challenges: how to build cohesive teams across multiple time zones, how to address global cultural differences, and how to hire or train employees for new ways of working. The healthy distributed workforces of the future, experts agree, will require more than a Zoom connection and a Slack channel.

Time to Meet

The most immediate challenge for remote workforces is a simple one: the clock. New Yorkers easing into their workday might need to interact with colleagues in London who are hustling to make a close-of-business deadline. With workers in Asia, time differences can be even more acute. And, if only one office is making decisions about when conference calls are scheduled, a difficult power imbalance may emerge, said Dr. Mary Zellmer-Bruhn, a professor at the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management who studies remote workers.

"It may not even be intentional, but there's often a kind of headquarters-centric view where the timing of headquarters prevails," she said. "Other people in the rest of the world have to adjust and be up in the middle of the night. There can be a power and status differential that starts to happen. Who's expected to give up personal time for meetings can be an issue."

At Harvest, a company that builds time-tracking software with 56 employees in eight countries, employees are asked to participate in one all-staff conference via Zoom every other week. But otherwise, the organization stresses that colleagues are free to operate asynchronously.

"The expectation certainly isn't that you will get your team on a call immediately and everybody will be available, because we understand we're all starting at different times," said Cynthia Chand, HR generalist at Harvest.

But true team cohesion can't exist, experts note, without some amount of face time. Buffer schedules all-staff retreats twice a year, in rotating locations; Harvest hosts twice-annual retreats as well, one in New York, the other shifting to locations where an employee or group of employees live. For managers at larger companies, time in the air is essential. Ella Dillon, a former manager of global teams at DocuSign, fostered a lot of group meetings combined with in-person check-ins.

"Every quarter I made sure I was somewhere around the globe to sit in-person and make sure those teams felt heard and could have direct access to me," she said. "And they'd give me feedback and make sure I understood their business."

Cross-Cultural Cohesion

Global teams might represent the best talent available. But bringing together workers from different countries can sometimes underscore cultural differences that require attention. Workers whose native language isn't English may be more hesitant to communicate on Zoom calls with U.S.-based leaders. And, not every culture responds to critical feedback the same way.

"Even people who have quite high proficiency [in English] still will be challenged by the speed of a conversation and idiosyncratic language or idioms," said Zellmer-Bruhn. In such cases, she recommends that employees be encouraged to make use of that Slack channel or email and type out their ideas, especially when their input is critical. "There's at least a little bit of research that says maybe it's actually better sometimes to use technology if it's asynchronous."

Vicky Gunvalson, an HR consultant who has worked with organizations that distributed workers between the U.S., Europe and Asia, pointed out that small gestures of cultural sensitivity can go a long way.

"Send something in writing to help someone of a different language than English prepare for meetings," she says. "Speak slowly when you talk. Don't be an American waving your hands around. Some cultural training about managing interactions in meetings, that focus on drawing people out, can stop an aggressive person from taking over the meeting."

Explicitly asking each employee how they wish to receive feedback can also be helpful, according to Buffer's Griffis.

"In the case of people where English might be their second language, maybe they would prefer a [one-on-one] video call so that they can really get their questions answered while they're receiving feedback," she said. "Then, we make sure that the managers are on the same page, so if this person wants to receive the feedback on a video call, that's how their feedback will happen."

Ready to Go Remote

Remote workers plainly enjoy the upsides of not having a daily office commute: One of Buffer's own studies found that 94% of remote workers recommend it. But the temperament required of a remote worker — self-starting, comfortable with working in isolation — may not be for everyone. Just over a fifth of respondents to the Buffer survey (21%) say that they also contend with feelings of loneliness on the job. And, Gallup research found that employees who spend a majority (but not all) of their time working remotely are more engaged than those who work remotely all the time.

So, the interview process for remote workers must highlight the particular mindset the job requires, and employers may need to be prepared to train newer workers on the peculiarities of the remote environment. Similarly, the skillsets for managers of remote teams will be different than those for leaders used to a "management by walking around" approach.

"The biggest quality that I try and screen for when I do even a first interview with folks is self-awareness," said Harvest's Chand. "Do you know yourself well enough to understand the advantages or disadvantages that you might have in joining a distributed team? Do you understand your work style? Do you know when to reach out for help?" In some cases, Harvest has helped to cover employees' memberships at coworking spaces for those who don't want to fly entirely solo.

Similarly, the hiring process at Buffer addresses a potential hire's comfort level with remote work early.

"We don't specifically say that someone is required to have remote work experience to work at Buffer," said Griffis. "We do ask them if they have remote work experience, but more importantly, we ask: Are they good at self-management? How do they feel about working remotely? Do they have a plan? Do they know if they're going to work from home, or are they going to work from a coworking space, or are they going to work from coffee shops? We're trying to figure out what is their level of comfort with this change and how would they adapt to it."

When it comes to managers, "you need someone who is not going to be regionally focused, and who is going to be accountable and has an understanding of the big picture and how they influence the big picture," Dillon said. Part of that role requires the kind of cultural intelligence that grasps how different employees wish to communicate. But on a more subtle level, Dillon notes, global managers should understand that they are ambassadors for the company's leadership, and as such need to be able to share information that bolsters remote workers' confidence.

"When you have a global organization, they don't know all the hallway conversations," she said. "They don't know who they can go to to expedite an issue. So, giving them access to those people who know what's hidden behind all the doors is useful."

Zellmer-Bruhn believes that organizations have had to evolve their thinking about culture in recent years. Where a "global" corporate employee in past generations was more likely a U.S. expat working in a different country with fellow Americans, today's global teams are more likely to be cross-cultural, which puts increased demands on managers to possess what she calls "cultural meta-knowledge. That means, do you kind of understand what culture is and how it operates? [Those managers] become more comfortable and adept at slowing things down, not reacting to cues where you could misconstrue what they mean, and taking the time to sort of think through what's going on before you think or act or talk."

Remote Success

There's plenty of evidence that organizations reap benefits from remote workers. One Harvard Business School study found that fully remote workers are more productive than those at workplaces that occasionally permit employees to work at home. Other studies show that remote workers tend to be less stressed, take less time off, put more time in and generally find more satisfaction in their work.

Griffis said those findings are generally true among Buffer's remote workforce.

"We like to say, 'working from wherever you are happiest," she said.

And, beyond the obvious cost savings Buffer sees in not having to pay for office space, it has the advantage of meeting the marketplace where it is — which is, increasingly, everywhere.

"We have engineers and customer advocates in every time zone," she said. "There will always be someone online who can make a change — we don't need to worry about everyone being asleep when something's gone wrong on the other side of the world. We have people in every part of the world."

But success in a diversity of locations also means building a consistent workplace culture, said Harvest's Chand. The company strives to ensure that online conversations are both work-oriented and lighthearted when appropriate — a combination that makes for stronger teams.

"We ask questions that are more outside-of-work-oriented," she said. "'What are your hobbies? If I were to visit your city, where would you take me?' Those kinds of thing that clue you into the fact that we want you to bring your whole self here." **###**

Mark Athitakis is a contributing writer for #evolve and Workspan magazines. He can be reached at workspan@worldatwork.org.

BUILDING DIVERSITY *AND* INCLUSION

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

BY MAUREEN BERKNER BOYT

Have you ever gotten "that look" from someone on your team when you talk about diversity and inclusion? They've got good intentions, but they don't necessarily have the knowledge or the tools to show up in an inclusive way. Here's the deal: We want good intentions to be enough — but they're not. At the end of the day, if someone on your team has done something to make someone feel excluded, like they don't belong, simply wanting to be a good person doesn't change the way they feel.
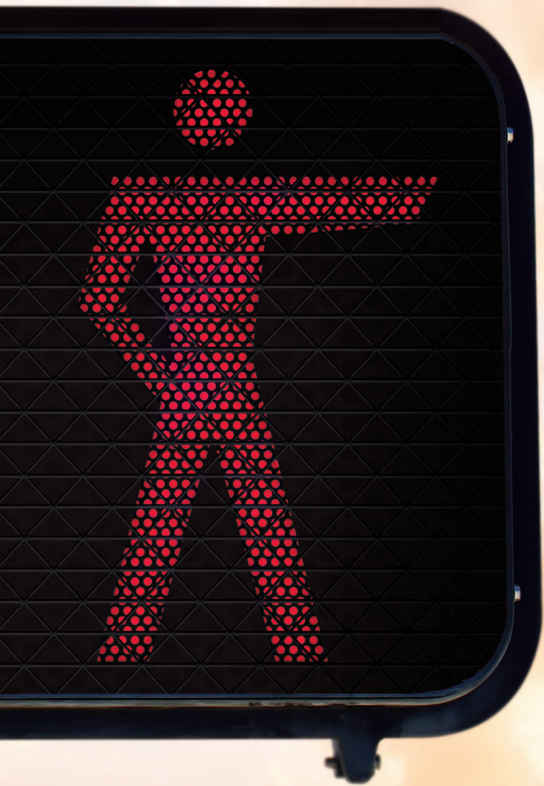
Sure, you can (and should) send people through training, but it can't stop there. How people treat each other day in and day out — what they say and do sitting next to each other in a meeting, grabbing lunch or working on a project — is what determines whether people feel like they belong. If we rely on people going through training recently enough to *actually remember how to be inclusive*, or to keep using HR as their in-house Google for all questions diversity, we're never going to achieve full inclusion and belonging — and it's asking for trouble.

As leaders, we've got to move away from thinking about diversity and inclusion as programmatic — something that we address in training — to making inclusion a daily habit. Here are four ways to accomplish that.

1 CREATE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

My daughter was born with a form of dwarfism. I'd never met, let alone interacted with, a little person prior to her birth. I was averaged-sized, and baffled. When she was nine months old, we attended our first Little People of America conference. My husband and I spent the first day being extremely polite to all the people we met. We were walking around on eggshells because we were so worried about saying or doing something wrong — a lot like your employees do when they're working with folks who are different than them: very careful, not very inclusive.

And then, an older gentleman walked over, looked up at us and said, "Welcome. It looks like you're feeling out of place. Care to join me for a chat? I can answer any questions you might have, and believe me, I've heard some doozies!" In that exchange he gave us permission *not to know*. He gave us space to make mistakes. He did the number one thing we need to do to make inclusion an everyday habit: He created psychological safety.

Most training teaches concepts about diversity, inclusion and unconscious bias, but doesn't hit on how to create the space and environment to have the messy, hard conversations. If you want people to really be inclusive every day, you need to let them get beyond being polite and walking around on eggshells. You need to give them the tools for making mistakes, for stepping in it. Brene' Brown said, "You can have courage or you can have comfort. You can't have both." If you create emotional safety, you'll move past being polite and start to build real belonging.

2 MAKE THE BENEFIT OF BEING INCLUSIVE PERSONAL

As leaders, we can rattle off all kinds of data and statistics about the business case for diversity. Guess what? Your people really don't care. The company making more money or being innovative doesn't change *their* world. They still have bills to pay. They still want to keep up with the Joneses. They want a promotion, a raise, to get ahead in their career. As a leader, you need to make the benefit of being inclusive personal.

Behavior change is hard, and like any change management effort, people won't make a change until they viscerally understand what's in it for them. Tie being inclusive to how they win in their career. Make sure they understand that people who can get along, get ahead. That if you can bring out the best in yourself and the people around you, it's a recipe for career and leadership success. Don't leave employees thinking inclusion is about being "politically correct" or is giving in to "snowflakes." Make sure they connect the dots between being inclusive and personally winning.

3 THE POWER OF QUESTIONS

There's a deaf actor by the name of Nyle DiMarco. He posted a video of a sign language interpreter at Pride Atlanta signing "Get me Bodied" by Beyoncé on his Twitter feed. The interpreter is signing and dancing and is pure fire (look it up!). Someone responded on his feed saying, "posting this without sounds is a crime." Nyle's response? "How the f@#$ am I supposed to know?" He's deaf, so how would he know there was no sound? In that one response, DiMarco opened their eyes to the perspective of being deaf. The person who posted the comment responded again, admitting that they had never thought about it from the deaf perspective and apologized.

This is a great example of the power of questions in driving everyday inclusion. Questions engage our curiosity. They powerfully and quickly allow us to consider a different experience and perspective. One of our greatest tools as leaders is teaching people in our organizations the power of questions to drive everyday inclusion. Be like a reporter and question, question, question. Here are a few of my favorites:

• How can I be more inclusive, right now?
• Who else should be involved in (this decision, meeting, project...)?
• What else could be true?

4 MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE — LITERALLY

Think about how many times you've checked your phone today. If you're typical, it's been a lot. On average, adults in the United States check their phones 52 times each day. We are addicted to technology. At Moxie, we decided to leverage that tech addiction for good and created an inclusion app to meet people in a space and activity they're already doing. Think about the daily routines and habits of your people and build inclusion into those routines. Do they enter through a certain door, have to log their hours, check a portal? Those are all opportunities to remind them of inclusion and share an inclusion tip or tools.

> **IF YOU CAN BRING OUT THE BEST IN YOURSELF AND THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU, IT'S A RECIPE FOR CAREER AND LEADERSHIP SUCCESS.**

As leaders, let's lay the groundwork by creating psychological safety and tie being inclusive to personal success. Then we can engage people's curiosity and perspective seeking through the power of questions and build inclusion tips and resources into daily habits. As a result, we can move inclusion away from being programmatic and build an everyday inclusive culture — turning "that look" into a shared understanding. **###**

Maureen Berkner Boyt is the founder of The Moxie Exchange, which provides online and digital solutions for developing talent and creating inclusive workplaces. She can be reached at *maureen@moxieexchange.com.*

TESTING, 1, 2, 3

Pilot Projects Can Invigorate Workforce Transformation

BY BILL HEATH AND AXEL MILLER, PH.D

THE FORCES

of disruption sweeping a range of industries demand change that goes beyond the usual tweaking of products and processes. Instead, employees need to transform how they work. Greater organizational and individual agility are required — including reskilling and adopting new operational models — to keep pace with new technologies, shifting ecosystems and different societal pressures such as sustainability.

Change on this scale is daunting, particularly for employees. One practical way to make transformation less intimidating and more digestible could be by adopting a pilot approach.

Small pilot projects are an effective alternative to a top-down workforce transformation. Inspired by agile technology development practices, the pilot approach uses test-and-learn cycles to develop and trial actions in a rapid, concentrated manner. When it is not at first clear what is required, pilot projects throw up solutions and show people how to execute them. They bypass the resistance to change that can come from large-scale projects, making them more likely to succeed and minimizing leadership's time investment during the early stages. And, by demonstrating in practice the success of new ways of working, they break through distrust of unproven ideas.

But pilots will only work if given the right environment. Here are three principles that will increase the likelihood of success.

1. *Set a Clear Structure and Proactive Governance Mechanism to Ensure Coherence.*
   A successful pilot project typically involves from five to 50 full-time staffers who will later be charged with elaborating and implementing the new working methods. They work in a series of sprints, lasting from one to three months. Participants in each sprint are given the constraints and a desired outcome — but not a plan. The sprints should be organized in a clear framework:
   - **Explore:** An initial sprint clarifies the goals of the transformation. It might: evaluate future workforce scenarios, such as the need for more staff with coding skills; identify tasks to be removed from customer-facing staff and pooled in an organization-wide back office; or suggest operations that could be shared with another company. The sprint then explores actions that might be taken.
   - **Codify:** A Center of Excellence (CoE) incorporates these actions into an organization-wide playbook, which it will continuously validate, review and update. This promotes a learning-by-doing culture that helps keep the organization agile and resilient. The CoE transfers learning to different parts of the organization and ensures that the various approaches to transformation complement one another.
   - **Evaluate:** The new approach developed by the sprint is evaluated through early indicators of its performance. Interviews with participants and focus-group sessions are also used. This step is essential to the iterative process: Promising new methods will remain in the playbook, while others will be abandoned and different approaches tried.
   - **Scale:** Successful pilots will be evaluated for applicability to other parts of the organization. For example, artificial-intelligence processes could be developed in human resources for tasks such as the initial screening of job candidates and then applied to other functions.

   If companies are to effectively roll out pilots, codification and the use of a single, organization-wide playbook is crucial for the development and sharing of best practices. When owned by a central CoE, it becomes an important governance tool that can help ensure coherence and facilitate firm-wide adoption of the changes being piloted.

2. *Encourage Experimentation and Don't Give Detailed Guidance.*
   Workforce transformation can be a source of anxiety, so employees should be provided with a safe environment and explicitly given permission to experiment. Failures should be treated as learning experiences intrinsic to transformation, while

progress against key targets should be celebrated and rewarded in a culture of openness, inclusivity and shared success. Employees should be shown that their work is valued and that they are part of a broader team working toward a shared vision.

One successful example we've seen is that of an oil company that faced competition from a new provider funded by the national government. They launched more than 20 "action labs" to explore operational changes in one of their markets. The company needed to collaborate upstream where the national provider was favorably awarded exploration projects, but still compete with it downstream in petrol stations and services.

One ongoing problem had always been the confusing proliferation of contact numbers for enquiries about invoicing, delivery schedules or job opportunities. But one action lab demonstrated how to link the systems in real time. Although the solution wasn't ready for immediate use, it showed a breakthrough, thus unlocking resources within the company.

Furthermore, collaboration with the national oil provider had been held up by mutual distrust, which could not be resolved purely with analysis. A pilot demonstrated how two noncritical depots could be combined into one, with tanker trucks operating under a shared brand. By showing how to save money without reducing the level of service, the pilot opened collaboration throughout the fuel distribution network.

Importantly, each pilot included a sponsor: a board member who engaged and provided instant feedback. Typically, eight people turned up on the first morning and the sponsor arrived at the end of the day to hear a plan of action for the four weeks of the action lab. The sponsor then told them what was needed to improve the plan. Such condensed planning and feedback cycles are much faster than organizations' usual channels of communication. Though the sponsors sometimes were critical, they were engaged in the development of the pilots and not simply in a reactive role.

By the end of the oil company's action labs, participants were energized and eager to implement what they'd sketched out in the pilots. This expedited the subsequent companywide roll-out and allowed the oil company to achieve the transformation more quickly and sustain it more effectively.

3. *Choose Which Battles to Fight.*
   If the first pilots are successful, the broader transformation is more likely to gain support and traction. So, it's best to start with the functions or subdivisions where the employees are most likely to value change, engage with the process and work constructively.

Take wholesale banking, for example, a sector experiencing disruption from nimble and innovative FinTechs, and where the workforce needs to rapidly upskill.

Banks would select a subdivision for a project, such as recruitment for the risk function, launching a pilot project to test different ways to boost digital skills. These might include a localized campaign to attract digital talent from nearby educational institutions. Another initiative could crowdsource for ideas, potentially leading to new collaborative relationships. A third could establish talent pools shared by a consortium of organizations requiring similar skillsets. When these tactics prove their viability and gain traction, they can then be applied to different areas of the bank.

As the strategy develops a support base, more complex tasks can be tackled in functions where employees might show greater resistance. Throughout the process, employees should be asked for feedback to understand the concerns and motivations of each segment of the workforce.

The Future of Workforce Transformation

Pilots offer an approach that lets organizations carry out experimental changes in bite-sized stages using low budgets and small groups. This requires less up-front investment and entails less risk. As seen in the oil company example, subsequent scaling is expedited where pilot participants are energized and keen to incorporate their pilot's outputs into business practice. With the right structure, governance and levels of collaboration, pilots could be a far more practical way for firms to tackle disruption head-on. ###

Bill Heath is a partner in Oliver Wyman's organizational effectiveness and energy practices. He can be reached at *bill.heath@oliverwyman.com*.

Axel Miller, Ph.D., is a Munich-based partner at Oliver Wyman, covering organizational effectiveness and financial services. He can be reached at *axel.miller@oliverwyman.com*.
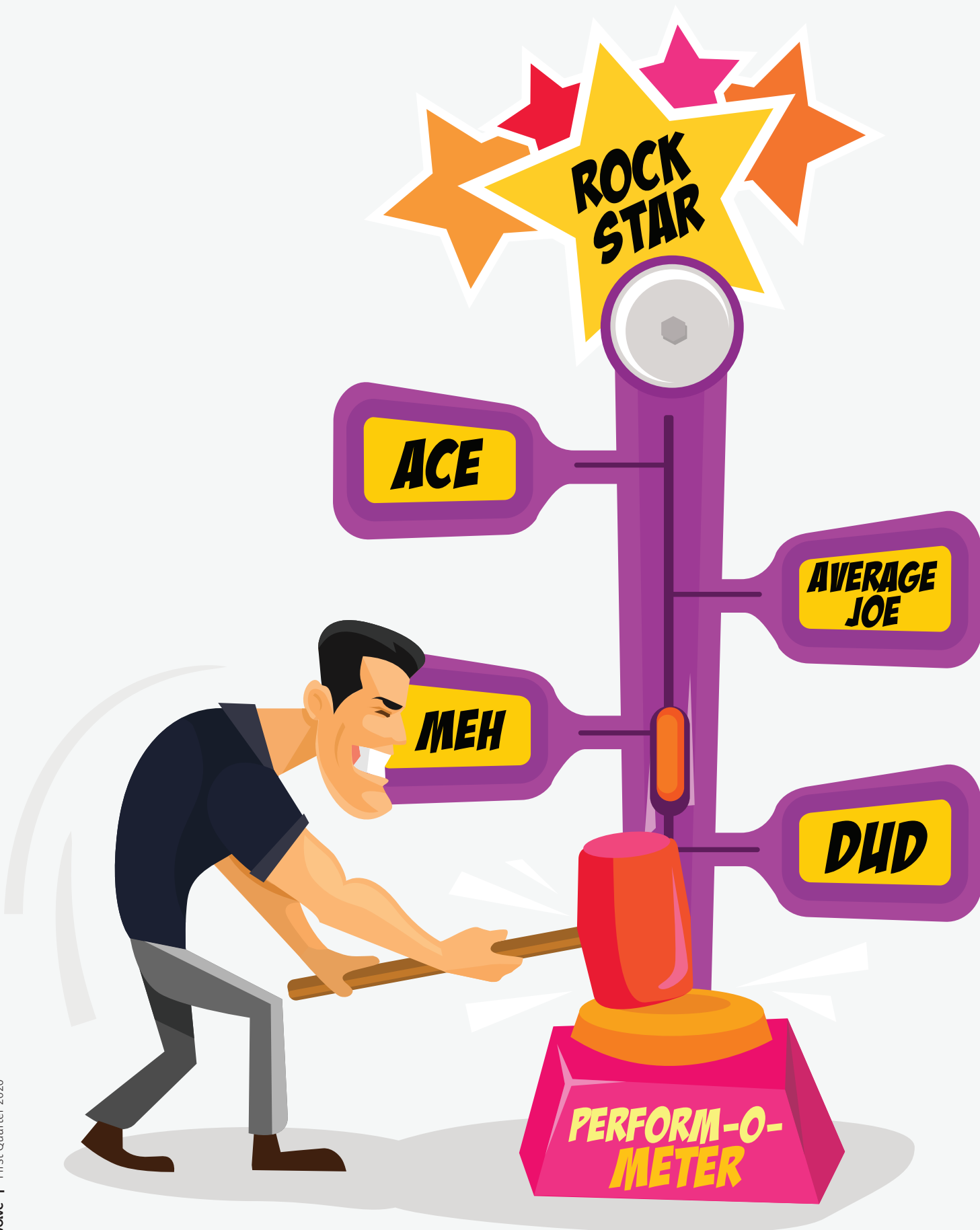
MISSING THE MARK

5 Steps to Fix Underperformance

BY ANITA BOWNESS

At some point in their career, every manager will have to deal with an underperforming employee. But how performance problems are managed can mean the difference between a highly engaged, productive employee and one that's just punching the clock.

When faced with underperformance, a manager typically either complains about or simply ignores the issue, hoping that the problem fixes itself or that the employee sees the writing on the wall and quits of their own accord. When that approach doesn't work, managers often then contact human resources to put the employee on a performance improvement plan (PIP) or begin the termination process. And, let's be honest, a PIP isn't usually created with the intention of *helping* the employee — it's typically the thinly disguised first step toward *firing* an employee.

Performance problems don't resolve themselves and employees don't generally underperform on purpose. Employees don't wake up, head to work and think, *Gosh, what can I do today to perform poorly?* But by changing their mindset — and embracing the power of proactive, in-the-moment performance feedback — managers can turn addressing underperformance into an opportunity for growth, rather than something to be feared.

A Shift in Thinking

In Saba Software's recent Unlocking High Performance series with employee engagement expert Jason Lauritsen — based on his new book of the same name — we noted that the question shouldn't be why an employee is choosing not to perform. Instead, managers and HR leaders need to ask themselves how they can help

STEP 5

STEP 4

STEP 3

STEP 2

STEP 1

PERFORM-O-METER
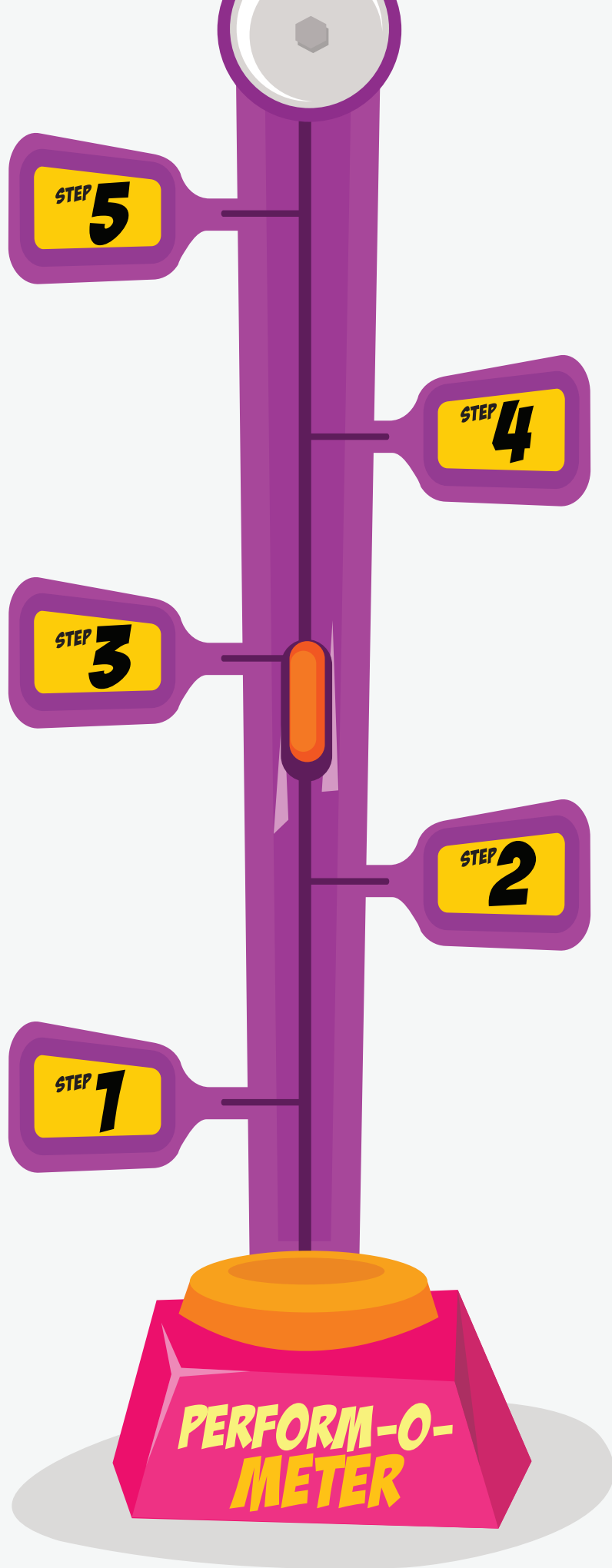
the employee perform as expected. After all, when given the chance, who would choose to fail instead of to succeed?

This is a small but profound mindset shift that allows managers to fundamentally change the nature of performance conversations and turn poor performance around. This mindset, combined with the willingness to proactively discuss performance issues, can dramatically improve the manager-employee relationship, engagement and overall performance.

Underperforming employees aren't usually choosing to underperform; they aren't meeting expectations because there's some obstacle preventing them from doing so. And, it's the manager's responsibility to initiate the conversation to make the employee aware of the issue, identify what exactly is getting in the way of success, and help remove that obstacle to facilitate better performance.

5 Steps to Fix Underperformance

No manager wants to have an awkward conversation with an underperforming employee, but the key to addressing the issue is to be proactive.

By performing a simple five-step diagnostic process Lauritsen outlines in his book, managers can determine whether an employee is underperforming because of unclear expectations, missing skills, a lack of resources or something else entirely. By identifying the root cause of performance problems, managers can then work with the employee to take the appropriate next steps to address the issue.

When faced with an underperforming employee, here are five questions Lauritsen believes every manager should ask — listed in order of what's most often the cause of performance issues to the least — to diagnose and fix underperformance:

1. *Are expectations and goals unclear?*
   Gallup reveals only about half of all workers strongly indicate they know what's expected of them at work. That's a huge problem. Even motivated, engaged employees can't deliver the results you're looking for if they're working on the wrong things.

   Ask the employee to write down how they think their performance is measured and what their most important objectives are. If they struggle with it or they don't know, that's a red flag that they don't have the clarity they need to succeed.

   Managers should regularly discuss and document goals and expectations, as well as how progress will be measured. HR and talent leaders

can help support this by implementing a talent development platform that aligns employee goals with business strategy and enables ongoing performance management.

2. *Does the employee know they aren't meeting expectations?*
One major issue that hinders employee performance is a lack of feedback. In fact, 65% of employees want more feedback.

Ask the employee how they think they are performing and what indicators they have that make them believe that. From this exercise, you'll be able to quickly determine whether the employee even knows they aren't meeting expectations.

Regularly scheduled 1:1 check-ins and continuous coaching are vital for helping the employee become self-aware of their performance. Managers also need to identify and discuss clear measures of on-track performance — articulated as goals, KPIs or skill proficiencies — that are understood and tracked throughout the year. And rather than taking a "set it and forget it" approach where these measures are only evaluated during the annual review, these success criteria should be discussed and updated throughout the year to ensure accountability for results. Besides, surprising employees with poor performance reviews out of nowhere has a huge impact: It damages the manager-employee relationship and hurts morale.

3. *Is there a lack of skills or competencies?*
If the employee makes repeated efforts to improve but just isn't meeting expectations, it might be that they simply don't know how to perform as expected. This can often happen when an employee gets put into a new role or has new responsibilities added to their existing position.

By observing the employee's performance more closely to identify gaps in ability, managers can help the employee improve by providing specific learning or coaching opportunities. A talent development platform that connects learning to performance can also help employees overcome this common cause of underperformance by tying learning tasks to performance objectives.

4. *Are there insufficient resources or is the employee in the wrong role?*
Sometimes, despite their best efforts to improve, an employee's performance continues to be unsatisfactory. Perhaps the role just isn't a fit:

It could be that they were prematurely promoted, they were hired into a position beyond their skill level, or the role just isn't a fit for their interests and aspirations.

Regardless of the reason behind it, these employees are well-intentioned and hard working. As such, managers and HR leaders owe it to these employees to help them find their next opportunity. Over a candid and sometimes difficult conversation, the manager should make it clear to the employee that change is needed and then work with the employee to help them find a role that is a better fit for them — be it inside or outside the organization.

5. *Has the employee mentally checked out?*
If none of the four common causes of underperformance above seem to be at the root of an employee's performance issues, chances are this is where you'll end up. The employee just doesn't seem to care about improving performance. It's often the result of disengagement, disconnection, entitlement or resentment. And while it's actually a very rare cause of underperformance, the best way to diagnose it is through a frank, honest conversation.

Sometimes, you have no choice but to let an employee go, so make it clear to the employee that either they improve their performance, or they won't keep their job. Have the employee write up a specific plan for how they will either get back on track in 30 days or transition to a new organization.

It's also important to note that while this conversation does have to be direct, it doesn't have to be hostile. The conversation will either be a wake-up call and the employee will start performing to expectations — or it will be the nudge they need to move on.

Turning Poor Performance Around
Managers have the power to help underperforming employees reach their full potential and drive better business outcomes by changing their own mindset and behavior. When people are clear on what's expected of them — and are given the resources and opportunities to meet those expectations — they will usually always perform their best work. By asking these five questions, managers can determine what's at the heart of an employee's underperformance so they can take the right steps to boost engagement, productivity and performance. **###**

Anita Bowness is principal product manager, customer success, at Saba Software.

BE A UNICORN

THE GOAL OF EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

BY RAVIN JESUTHASAN AND SUZANNE MCANDREW

Every day, organizations around the world face the looming threat of business disruption, whether it's from a hot startup that's popped up overnight or a known industry competitor that's released a new product or service. Add regulatory changes, economic upheaval, technological advancements and every other external factor that influences day-to-day business, and the hurdle of staying ahead can seem insurmountable.

For as long as businesses have been around, they've continually looked outside their walls for threats to their success. Today, organizations are more frequently looking internally and becoming increasingly aware of one critical force that's always been in plain sight: their people.

Regardless how fabled or factual, we all have a memorable tale about the workplace experience, whether exceptionally good or alarmingly bad. These experiences aren't a result of one big decision, policy or mandate; rather, individual employee experiences are the cumulative result of the big and small moments that occur in any given workday. And employee reactions to those big and small moments are increasingly viewed as another cause of disruption — which can be an exceptionally good or alarmingly bad thing.

IN AN EFFORT TO UNLEASH THE POWER

that talent can create — or conversely, stem the disruption that talent can cause — today's high-performing organizations are wisely putting people at the center of their business strategies. These leading organizations view and treat employees as customers, and they apply what they learn to deliver an exceptionally good experience that helps talent flourish and organizations prosper.

So, what is this elusive X-factor that sets apart these unicorns of employment? And, how can your organization become a place that merges what talent wants with what the business needs to drive high performance across both?

A Change in Thinking

It's sometimes easy to forget that there are human beings on the receiving end of our human resources and total rewards (TR) programs. Today's talent pool reflects a diverse ecosystem of people from around the world, with each person bringing their own personal expectations. People are further distinguished by how they show up and contribute on the job: full-time, part-time, contingent, vendors, early-career, mid-career, late-career, retirees, recruits … the list goes on and on.

High-performing organizations recognize that, beyond unique backgrounds and personal experiences, employees expect employers to deliver the same things they expect in life: a personalized, tech-enabled, easy-to-navigate, always-on work experience that delivers what they need, when they need it.

Given these demands, it's critical that employers take a fresh view on the employee experience (EX) — part and parcel with workplace culture — and understand that the definition of a positive experience is very much in the eye of the beholder. It also transcends a mere value proposition.

To successfully achieve this change in thinking, employers are increasingly taking a user-focused approach that puts the talent experience front and center. They accomplish this focus by gathering

data, including customer stories and user journeys. Beyond looking at the usual suspects of TR programs, forward-thinking organizations listen to what people consider important, then build and deliver a positive and effective EX that recognizes and values individuals and their unique wants and needs.

There are four dimensions of EX that represent the fundamentals of what talent looks for in all organizations, according to extensive research conducted by Willis Towers Watson. Generally, high-performing organizations set themselves apart by their ability to inspire, build trust, help people achieve their potential, and be agile and innovative in the market. (See Figure 1.)

Each aspect contributes to the organization's culture, the way things are done. In turn, an organization's culture directly affects the customer experience, shareholder value, business-partner relationships and, ultimately, business results.

Culture, which Peter Drucker famously noted "eats strategy for breakfast," is defined by an organization's:
• Leadership;
• Mission, purpose, objectives, values and strategies;
• Structure;
• Brand promise; and
• Programs, practices and policies.

Note that "programs, practices and policies" is the last item in the list. This is intentional. In high-performing organizations, the differentiators that most powerfully affect employees start with things like how they're paid or how the organization is structured. But that is the minimum. The key differentiators go far beyond the basics of rewards and tend to be more philosophically based and woven into the fabric of the organization. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 1 | Employee Experience
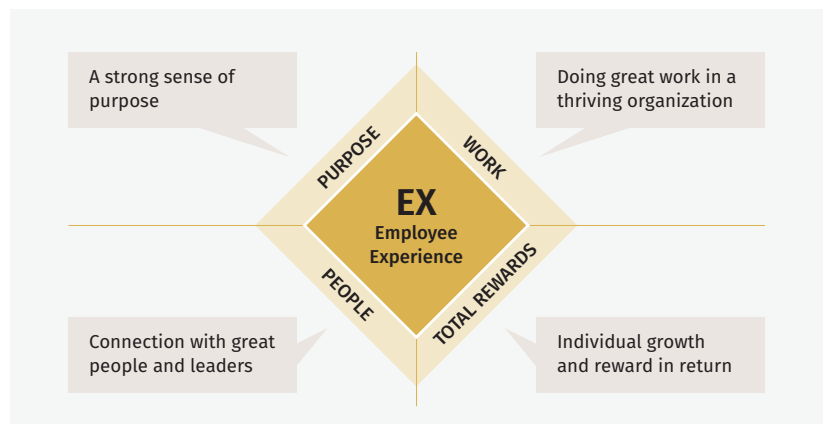
A strong sense of purpose

Doing great work in a thriving organization

PURPOSE WORK

EX Employee Experience

PEOPLE TOTAL REWARDS

Connection with great people and leaders

Individual growth and reward in return

Source: "Breakthrough Research: How High-Performance Companies Found Their X-Factor," Willis Towers Watson.

Figure 2 | EX Factors That Make the Difference
Global High Performance norm companies vs. Global average (% favorable)

% age point difference

Based on employee survey data from
• 500 companies
• Nearly 10 million employees

Factor	Value
Inspiration	13
Drive	11
Trust	10
Growth	10
Market Focus	9
Voice	7
Inclusion	6
Capability	6
Collaboration	5
Support	4
Organised Work	4
Organised Structure	2
Understanding	2
Fair Pay	2

Excellence — Areas where only a few high-performance companies excel

Emphasis — Areas where some companies begin to pull away from the global average

Essentials — Basics all companies do reasonably well and which don't especially differentiate high performance

Source: "Breakthrough Research: How High-Performance Companies Found Their X-Factor," Willis Towers Watson.

Figure 3 | Comparison vs. Sector Average

	Return on Assets	Return on Equity	1-Year Change in Gross Profit Margin	3-Year Revenue Growth	3-Year Change in Gross Profit Margin
Poor Employee Experience	-1%	-6%	-10%	-1%	-3%
Average Employee Experience	1%	1%	-5%	1%	0%
Great Employee Experience	2%	3%	3%	4%	4%

Source: "Breakthrough Research: How High-Performance Companies Found Their X-Factor," Willis Towers Watson.

Not only do high-performing organizations successfully attract the best and the brightest, they also are able to predict financial success when they put their talent first. (See Figure 3.) And our research has found that talent-centered organizations are:

• 3x as likely as other organizations to report employees are highly engaged.
• 93% more likely to report significantly outperforming their industry peers financially.
• 10% less likely to report difficulty attracting and retaining key employee segments.
• Experiencing 27% fewer regrettable new hires in the first year.
• Seeing 17% lower voluntary turnover.

Getting From Here to There
Taking a user-centered approach to EX fundamentally begins with a design-thinking mindset, according to IDEO, a global design company. A human-centered core,

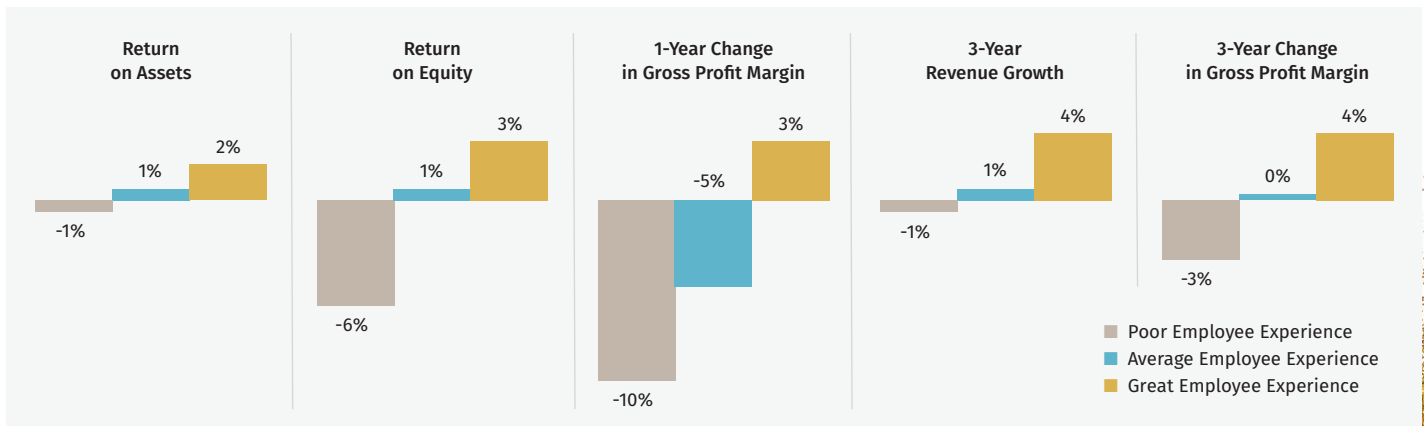design thinking encourages you to focus on the people for whom you're building. It involves first understanding employees' needs, and then builds what is technologically feasible and economically viable. Design thinking requires a shift in mindset to tackle your organization's employee experience from a new direction.

To embrace a design-thinking approach, you first must say goodbye to a few things. In the spirit of Marie Kondo, author of *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, begin by throwing out the unnecessary processes that are still in place simply because they've always been in place. At the same time, hold on to aspects that employees continue to value. This decluttering — something that is sorely needed in HR — is something that should be done continuously, always with an eye to only keeping those experiences that lend true value. From a practical standpoint, there is information readily available to help you shift your focus to a new EX that supports an employee-centered approach.

Insights

Dig into data, but don't get mired in the numbers; it's critical to understand how employees feel and behave. For example, the majority of staff may have signed up for the latest well-being initiative being offered, and perhaps that initiative was based on an employee survey that expressed strong interest in a heavier focus on health and well-being. These numbers all can inform decisions.

However, if a delivery service continues to show up at lunch time with bags from the local fast-food restaurants or the vending machines are continually out of candy bars, employee behaviors tell you something, too. Anyone can answer a survey and say they want to be healthier, but a steady diet of cheeseburgers and chocolate bars tells another story.

It's imperative to continue to listen to employees about what they want. But also take the time to watch behaviors, have casual hallway conversations and take a genuine interest in what employees are doing to gain deeper insights that will help better inform where you focus your attention.

Process

When thinking about process, refer to Figure 1 and the fundamentals of what talent looks for in all organizations. Frame your process around employees':
- **Needs:** Do employees understand what's available to them? What do they need in order to feel successful at work and supported at home? This includes an understanding of what they're doing well, what they could be doing better, understanding their role in the organization and knowing what they care most about.
- **Pains:** What keeps employees from understanding what's available to them? How strong is manager feedback? Do employees know about opportunities for advancement, either by taking on new roles or simply taking on new projects? Employees' pains reflect the things that they perceive — whether real or not — as holding them back.
- **Gains:** When employees know they have development opportunities, advocates and a career path, they are likelier to take risks and push development opportunities. They feel enriched and satisfied — and look forward to coming to work every day.

Digital Tools

Like it or not, the digital age is here, and employees aren't looking for a corkboard with job postings and health-care updates anymore. High-performing organizations rely on apps, dashboards and AI-powered interactive assistants for a variety of reasons. From delivering continuous feedback to delivering a tailored suite of virtual and augmented-reality learning experiences that will upskill and reskill existing

talent, high-performing organizations know to meet talent where they are: online.

Applying a Design-Thinking Approach

Good product designers have a natural interest in how people make decisions about what products to use and the psychology behind those decisions. The reasons for individual preference are numerous, complex and go far beyond the workplace lens. To create the most human-centric HR programs and processes, you must use human-centric design. Once you understand how employees are thinking and where their interests lie, it's time to think about the experience the organization offers and how you can take it to the next level.

Define the Problem

Defining the challenge starts with listening to your customer — in this case, the employee. Leverage data that you already have or gather new data to define patterns and gather insights that will shed light on EX. Build a case that clearly defines the challenge you are solving, why it's important, what you know from existing data and what you don't know.

Some examples of insights you might like to have:
- Are we keeping up with the business growth ambitions for a key market?
- Are we seeing attrition among our high performers?
- Are we creating the right culture of innovation to help people bring products to market?

As you identify pain points for the organization, involve the right stakeholders both in HR and in the business to build consensus around the fact that a solution is needed.

Be Human-Centered

Consider how you engage people to get to more empathy on how people feel. Things like virtual focus groups, interviews or idea jams with users to build journey maps on the moments that matter. As you have your conversations, put what you're hearing against your hard data. Does it align? Or are there misalignments between what the data tells you and what people are saying? Listen to

THE X FACTOR MATTERS BECAUSE IT BRINGS TOGETHER HIGH PERFORMANCE AND THE BEST EX.

Deliver a Competitive Advantage
As you prepare to launch your new TX — a re-tooled EX — on a large scale, create a change strategy and roadmap. Differentiate what you're doing today from what's been done in the past by focusing on your customers and highlighting what they see as wins for the entire talent pool. Ensure that all of your stakeholders are informed along the way — even as you hit bumps in your journey that force you to course-correct.

Finally, taking a new approach to the talent experience is only as good as the effect it has. Critically evaluate talent sentiment and behavior about how they feel about the organization's mission, values and sense of purpose (as articulated by leadership) after you've launched your TX. Ask employees about their level of pride in working for the organization and in the work that they're doing on the job.

Identifying Your X-Factor
Distinguishing your organization as an employer of choice requires you to look beyond the traditional compensation, benefits and work-life programs companies have long touted as differentiators, focusing instead on the X-factor.

The X factor matters because it brings together high performance and the best EX — things that the most successful organizations will require to thrive. In practice, it means that beyond competitive programs, we need to focus on how employees experience those programs and find ways to hyper-personalize them for even greater relevance and meaning. It means reinventing the complete experience using digital methods that feel more like consumer grade and applying a product design mindset to help secure the hearts and minds of employees.

Organizations that decide to take on the challenge will see the benefits of a design-thinking approach that puts employees at the center of thinking. Those that don't? They'll find that disruption comes from the most uncomfortable place: within their own walls. ###

the leadership team and hear the words they're using and the feeling behind what they're saying — all while accounting for their own unique perspectives. Go beyond the survey to understand needs at all levels of the organization.

Design with Employees' Needs in Mind
Co-create solutions that will work rather than building them in a vacuum. Hold workshops to build prototypes and engage your employees in shaping solutions like you would your customers. Act quickly to resolve pains and highlight gains. When it comes to unmet needs, have brainstorming sessions and offer new prototypes to test. And, if a process isn't delivering added value, don't be afraid to end it.

Experiment, Evaluate and Refine
Don't boil the ocean; rather, simplify your process and, when you have a new idea to test, choose a business unit, market or small group. If it fails, well, at least you tried — and you failed fast and small rather than big. Capture learnings from your employees and use that to revisit, refine and relaunch.

Ravin Jesuthasan is managing director of talent and rewards at Willis Towers Watson.

Suzanne McAndrew is the global talent business leader and global LGBT+ inclusion network leader at Willis Towers Watson.
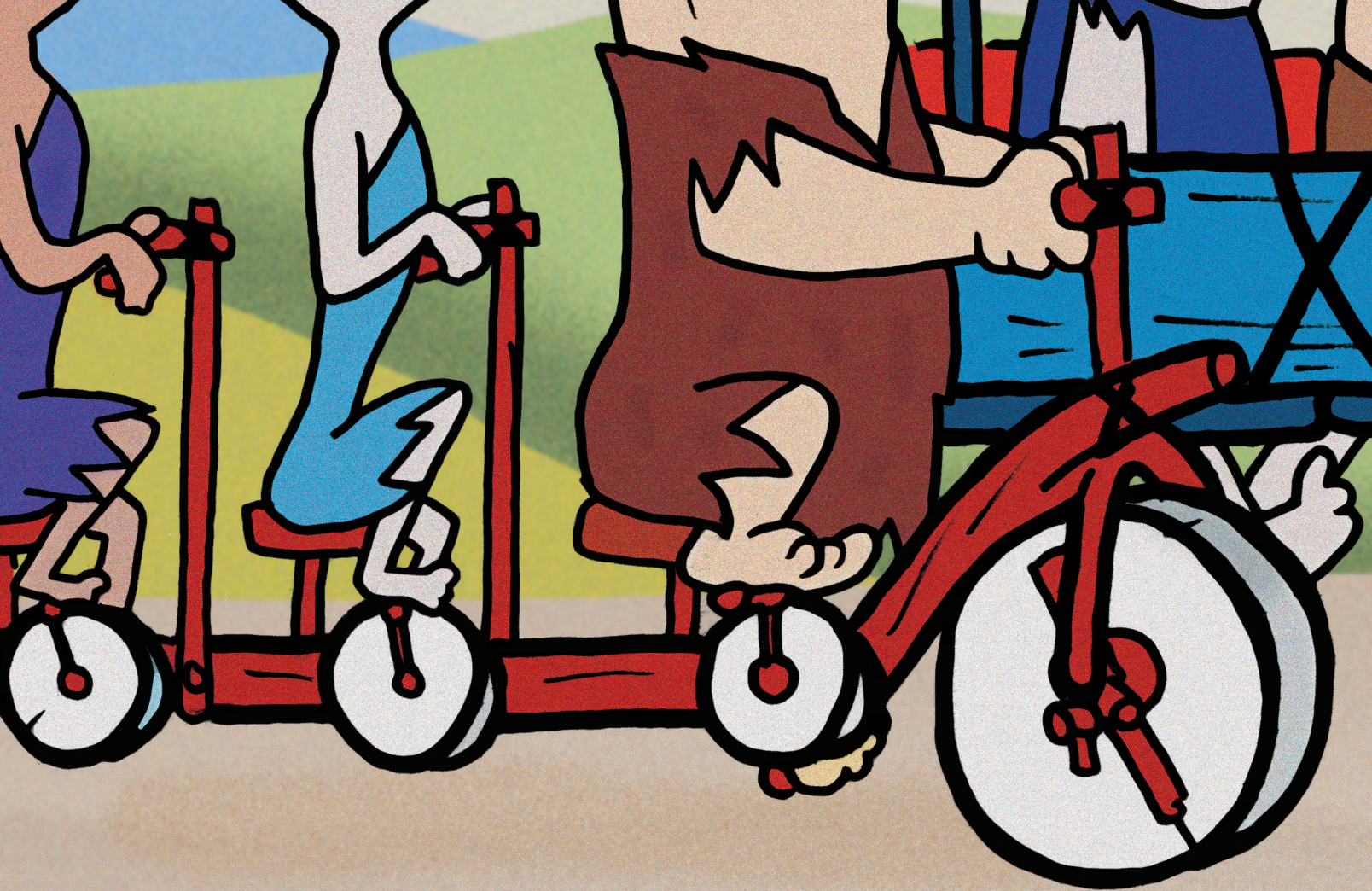
YABBA DABBA

Commuter Benefits Rock at Bedrock

BY KELLY HOSTETLER, LUUM

Across the country, a new benefits trend is sweeping through workforces. Employees are asking for more: more flexibility, more options, more technology. Human resources leaders, transportation specialists and C-suite execs all see it. What's next on employees' list? More — and better — commuter benefits.

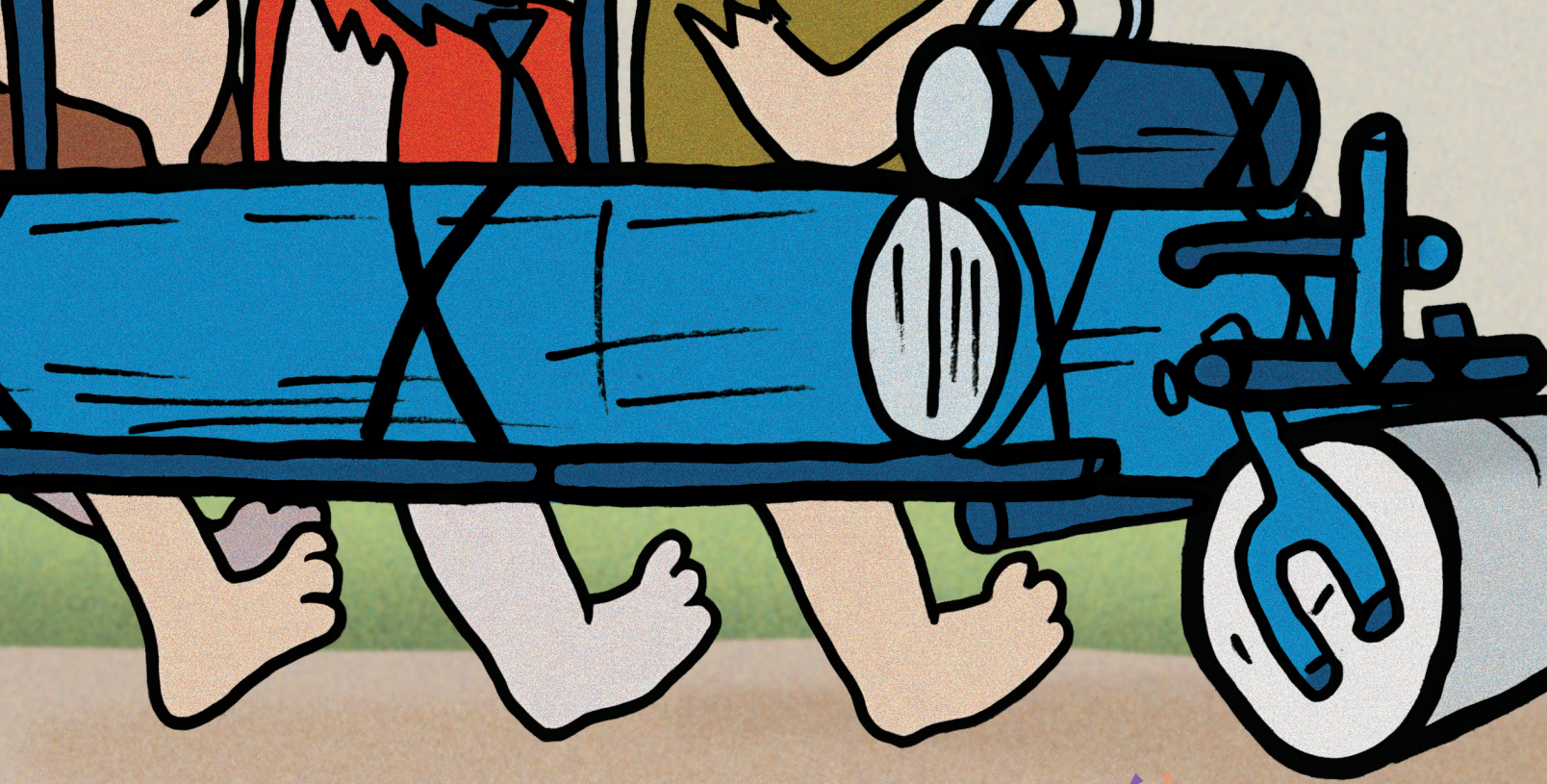While the demand is clear, does leadership — not to mention the demanding workforce — understand the policies and technology necessary to make it a reality? And do employees know what to look and ask for? Read on as we provide the case for employer-provided commuter benefits, including best practices and policies, and then close out with a case study of Bedrock's commuter benefits program in Detroit, the center of the automotive universe.

The Case for Commuter Benefits

The simple fact is this: The mobility game has changed. On the weekends, we scroll through our phones contemplating the growing list of mobility options at our fingertips. Should we take a bike share to meet friends? Or, perhaps ride the bus on the way to the restaurant and grab a Lyft Line or Uber Pool on the way home? Oh wait, there's a promotion now with the new scooters, should we give those a try? We're empowered by choice and emboldened by a sense of mobility autonomy — why shouldn't this be true for our daily commute to and from work?

When it comes to commuter benefits today, nearly every organization is playing catch-up. And that's not a dig, given the hyper-growth of the mobility as a service (MaaS) space alone. The technology surrounding commuting is simply growing faster than employers can keep up. Employees want commuting options that align with their daily mobility patterns and their favorite mobile apps. More and more, employers are including the commute as part of their benefits package, similar to the subsidized health-care plans employers began offering in the 1940s, when unemployment was low and competition for talent was fierce. (Sound familiar?) It's only natural that employers are paying attention. A recent study by Robert Half found that nearly one in four employees left a job due to their commute and more than half say their employers haven't taken action to address concerns regarding their commute. With unemployment hovering around 3.6%, it's no wonder employers are taking their commuter benefits program innovation seriously.

There is no question that commuting is inextricably tied to employee satisfaction and retention. Adding 20 minutes to your daily commute has the same negative effect on job satisfaction as receiving a 19% pay cut, according to a study conducted by Polytechnic Institute of New York University and Cornell University. But not all commutes are created equal. Researchers Antonio Pàez and Kate Whalen found that bus and train commuters enjoy their commutes more than car commuters, even if their commute is longer. While only one in six enjoy a car commute, one in two enjoy a cycling or walking commute.

That's good news for employers because the opportunity is theirs for the taking. It's important that employers strive for better commute options than their competitors because employees are more satisfied with their commutes if it is better than their friends', according to a joint study by the American University of Beirut and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Therefore, you don't have to solve every commute challenge for *every* employee, but rather, simply offer flexibility, options and a positive employee experience so that you shine above your competitors — resulting in higher rates of attraction and overall employee retention.

Best Practices

So, if you want to stand out, what *exactly* do you do? Where do you start when considering a commuter benefits program?

Pre-Tax Contributions

The key is to create a scenario where employees have a choice each morning –– and any incentives/disincentives are designed to realize the behaviors that you, as the employer, would like to encourage. For starters, employers should at least allow employees to set aside pre-tax dollars for parking, transit and rideshare services. Employees who are able to set aside $265 pre-tax dollars for both parking and transit expenses each month can save up to 40% on commuting expenses. Plus, the more employees who set aside pre-tax dollars, the more the employer saves on payroll taxes — a win-win.

Employers can further subsidize commuting costs by providing employer-paid pre-tax subsidies in combination with the employee-paid pre-tax deductions. Offering pre-tax commuter benefits is becoming more mainstream: Many cities have existing ordinances that require employers over a certain size to provide pre-tax commuter benefits to their employees. New York, San Francisco, Seattle, Washington, D.C., and the state of New Jersey are among the leading locations that understand commutes are a burden on employees.

For many employers, pre-tax benefits are not enough to attract and retain talent, especially around urban areas. Instead, employers are beginning to subsidize or reimburse commutes via MaaS apps and offer amenities such as bike cages, showers and free tune-ups. The amenities provide end-of-commute services that employees need to comfortably try alternatives, and the MaaS apps provide that daily, dynamic flexibility and safety net. Many employers recognize the comfort and flexibility MaaS apps can provide and offer subsidies to their employees so they can enjoy alternative modes of

travel — while the employer can save on parking costs. For example, if an employer offers $100/month to each employee in eligible reimbursements for MaaS apps, the employer will save money by avoiding the cost of parking one more car in their garage or parking lot — a fair consideration, as the average cost of a parking space is $200/month in large U.S. cities and upwards of $700/month in cities like New York, according to StreetsBlog USA's parking price index.
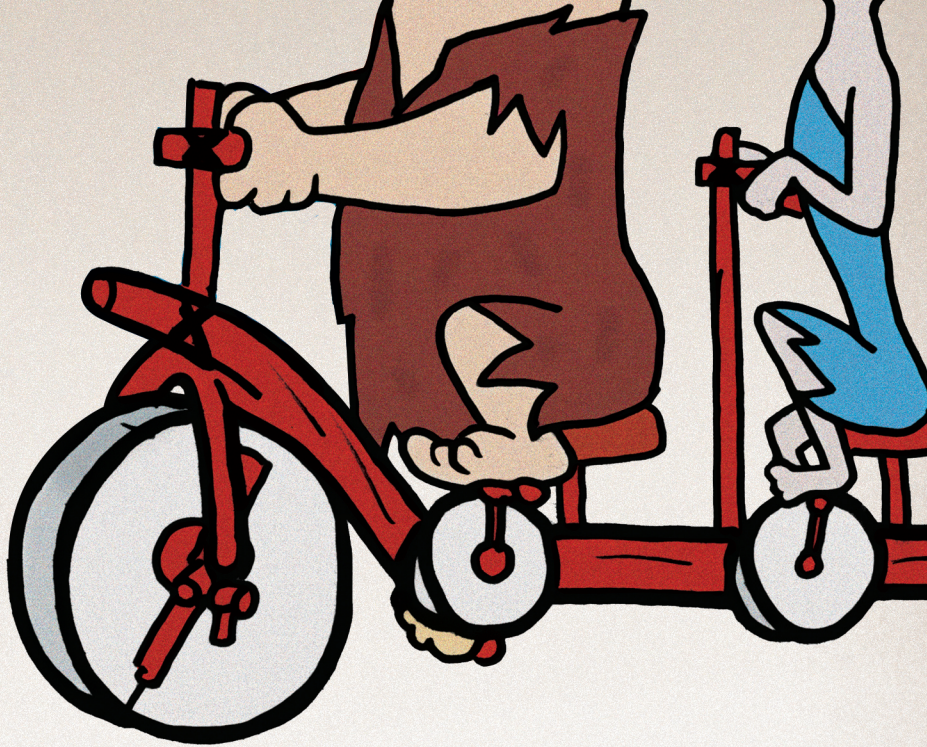
Ridesharing and Transit Passes
Next on the commuter benefits agenda: flexible and subsidized vanpooling. Vanpools are pre-arranged groups of commuters who ride together in a van or SUV, often provided by a third-party vendor. They are a great way for employees to avoid traffic by using high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, sharing the burden of driving and the cost of fuel, while also saving personal vehicles from the wear and tear of the commute. Not to mention that there are proven societal benefits of carpooling, including reductions in congestion, air pollution and CO_2 emissions. Carpooling and vanpooling are great options for non-urban commuters who may have long-haul commutes, but do not have public transportation or MaaS app penetration like in urban areas.

It's important that we also provide a safety net alongside these alternative commute options such as carpooling, vanpooling or walking and biking. To do this, employers are offering guaranteed ride home services with Lyft or Uber, so employees feel like they have the flexibility to leave their car at home and still be taken care of in case of emergency. By giving employees up to eight free rides per year, employers are opening the door for employees to try new, flexible commute choices that underscore or drive internal commute initiatives. Taking it one step further, some employers now offer car-sharing services in the office parking lot so employees can make mid-day trips with ease.

Lastly, many employers subsidize transit passes so that fewer employees are choosing to drive alone each day. Look at Seattle: The regional smart card, ORCA, has a business passport program that allows employers to purchase passes in bulk for their employees and, according to Commute Seattle, 83% of Seattle employers subsidize transit — a shockingly high figure compared to the national average of 13%. Despite rapid job growth, Seattle boasts a downtown drive-alone rate of 25%. It's no coincidence that these two statistics go hand-in-hand.

And that's what a unique, context-specific combination of commuter benefits can give your employees: options, flexibility, cost savings and the ability to drive less, if desired. In Figure 1, you can see how our clients divvy up their commuter benefits across various options.

As the data show, employers are beginning to look closely at their commuter benefit programs through the unique needs of their employees and offering benefits that employers haven't historically offered. With the right policy and programs, employers can see more than three-quarters of their employees regularly engaging with their commuter benefits. Given the community context, mobility app market share and public transportation systems, you too can craft a program that is right for your employees and that will set you apart as a forward-thinking employer in your region.

Let's take a deeper dive into a commuter benefits program that is evolving and pushing the boundaries in America's historically car-centric city of Detroit.

Placing the Bedrock
Transforming behaviors around driving, and specifically around driving solo to work every day, is extremely difficult. Now imagine the level of difficulty involved in bringing behavioral change to a metropolitan area nicknamed Motor City.

This is the reality that Bedrock, a real estate company in the heart of downtown Detroit, faced as it sought to reimagine the city's future by making bold mobility decisions.

Figure 1 | Commuter Benefits Evolution

Benefit	Percentage
Carshare Services	36%
Daily Parking Charges	41%
Alternative Commute Bonus	55%
Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH)	60%
Parking Charges (Daily or Monthly)	60%
Free or Subsidized Transit Cards	73%
Free or Subsidized Vanpools	73%
Integration with MaaS Apps	82%
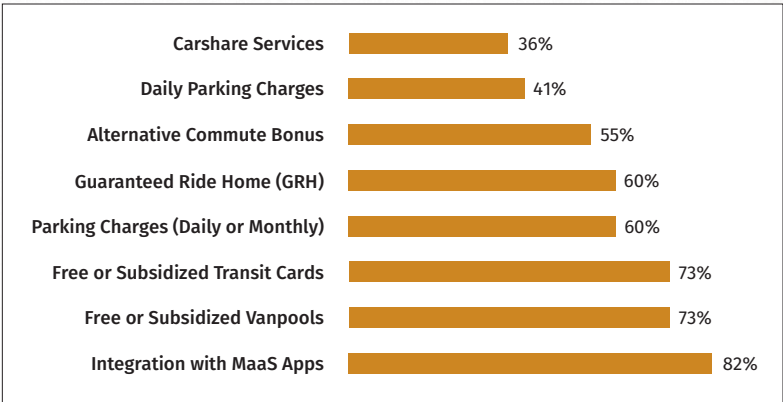
Figure 2

Commuter Benefits Policy	Description
Alternative Commute Bonus	Daily monetary bonuses for alternative commuting.
Parking Charges (Daily or Monthly)	Employers charge employees for parking via annual or monthly permits, or with daily parking charges through payroll.
Daily Parking Charges	Employers charge employees a daily parking rate through payroll integration.
Free or Subsidized Vanpools	Employers offer free or subsidized vanpools to their employees.
Free or Subsidized Transit Cards	Employers offer free or subsidized transit cards to their employees.
Integration with MaaS Apps	Integration with third-party mobility apps to facilitate dynamic carpooling and daily flexibility.
Locker Room or Showers	End-of-commute facilities such as lockers, bike cages and showers.
Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH)	Employers offer a GRH through Lyft for employees who did not drive alone to work and need to hail a rideshare home due to unplanned overtime, family emergencies or a missed carpool/vanpool.
Carshare Services	Company car-share available for employees to use for midday meetings, personal appointments or errands.

With a firm commitment to the strategic development of downtown Detroit, Bedrock launched a number of initiatives to revitalize the city's downtown core. Part of this effort meant bringing together like-minded partners who share in the vision of a more commute-friendly Detroit. By reducing demand for parking and the number of drive-alone trips, the goal was to make Detroit a more walkable city. This shift allowed Bedrock to activate spaces with new retail/development and more public spaces instead of parking structures. Less traffic congestion also resulted in quicker, more enjoyable trips to work, which increased overall employee satisfaction. Bedrock's commute program also drove broader engagement with public transportation, which can aid in the improvement of transit throughout the region by increased farebox revenue.

"Our goal is to deliver the best possible commute experience, and that starts each and every day with the trip downtown," said Kevin Bopp, vice president of parking and mobility, at Bedrock. "Innovative commute programs, combined with easy access to multiple mobility options, was the starting point, and Luum's software allows us to deliver on this mission. Additionally, Luum provides insight into mobility behavior, providing us solid metrics to make the most informed commute decisions for our audience."

"From day one, Bedrock laid out a very clear — and compelling — vision for the future of transportation in Detroit," said Sohier Hall, CEO and co-founder of Luum. "In many ways, Bedrock is a dream partner because of their incredible benefit offerings and willingness to push innovation at every commute touch point."

Luum's software allowed Bedrock to update and innovate its commuter benefits policies to offer flexible daily choices for its team members. Instead of binary options that lock Bedrock team members into one mode — parking or non-parking — team members can choose to park on the days they need to, while also enjoying transit, carpools or non-motorized modes while receiving a commute bonus on the days they don't drive alone. With this restructured benefits program, Bedrock gave its team members a financial incentive through participation, a sense of satisfaction in helping make their city more livable and peace of mind that changing up their commute routine wouldn't negatively affect their day-to-day schedule.

By subsidizing alternative commute solutions to lower drive-alone rates, Bedrock reduced its parking demand. This is measured by tracking all alternative commute modes (AMTs) as a percentage. Before launching a companywide AMT initiative, overall AMTs made up 16.9% of recorded commutes. Since launch, the AMT rate has steadily risen, growing to more than 20%. In January 2019, team members utilized more than 60% of Bedrock-owned parking spaces. As of August 2019, that number had decreased by more than 3%, which translates to hundreds of additional open spaces in Bedrock-operated garages each day.

Furthermore, as of Jan. 1, 2019, there were less than 1,500 team members who had logged at least one AMT commute. By August, that figure had grown to more than 4,000. What's more, there is already evidence of a shift in the commute culture for Bedrock team members, thanks to the daily commute bonus and added flexibility.

Pedal to the Metal

When we wake up in the morning, the first question on our mind is often "how's my commute looking today?" We commute twice daily and we all know it has a profound impact on our job satisfaction and productivity. In fact, commute is the third most common reason why an employee leaves a job, second only to low wages and hours worked, according to a Robert Half survey.

It's time for employers to catch up and align their programs, policies and technology to offer that flexible daily choice that so many desire. The first step is simple: Get to know the current commute experience through employee surveys or interviews and then confirm program goals across the various departments that are impacted by commute. You will then be able to identify gaps and build policies that achieve your program goals. Your employees, culture and bottom line will all flourish under these commuter-centric initiatives. **###**

Kelly Hostetler is the corporate affairs and marketing manager at Luum. She can be reached at *kelly@luum.com*.

Unlock the wisdom of industry experts.

The **Expert Insights Web Series** covers trending, hot-topic issues that require innovative solutions. These sessions are delivered to you online by the profession's premier experts and practitioners. Industry pros—hand-picked by WorldatWork—share their insights and different points-of-view, guide the conversation, dive into the issues facing our field right now, and open the forum for a two-way discussion. You'll sign-off with actionable tactics you can deploy right away. If it is being covered as an Expert Insight, you need to know about it.

Now offering live and recorded on-demand sessions!
Engage and drive the conversation via a live event session or watch a thought-provoking recorded session on your own schedule.

Trending topics include:

- **Where is the Line on Making Public Pay Gap Disclosures & Should You Cross It?**
- **Job Architecture for the Future of Work**
- **Establishing and Maintaining Pay Equity in a Changing Market Environment**

Learn. Share. Enlighten.

Visit worldatwork.org/expert-insights to start watching now.

Looking to Lead? Up Your Communication Game

The workforce is changing. Our organizations are more global, more employees work remotely and our co-workers span multiple distinct generations. To be the type of leader who inspires an organization to succeed, you need to push your communication boundaries to effectively communicate with the evolving workforce.

These changing dynamics create new challenges for leaders trying to remain connected to people in the business and help connect employees with the organization and each other. With a more mobile and remote workforce, leaders must utilize new tools and methods to reach their people where they are — and in a way that they are used to receiving information. Leaders can no longer rely on the traditional face-to-face Monday morning meeting, so new technologies and strategies must now be used.

Changing the Channel

Leaders today reach their people through traditional channels, including email and text messaging, but they also have newer messaging applications such as Slack and other employee communication and engagement platforms. Incorporating social media platforms into a communication strategy enables leaders to be more human, authentic and approachable with their people. Whatever the tool is, the objective is to reach your people where they are and to allow them to connect with the business and you as a leader.

Once leaders have sorted out how to find and connect with their people, they then need to decide what to communicate. Employees are interested in what their leaders are thinking and what they have to say. It may seem intuitive that people are eager to hear about decisions, but they are also interested in the related thought process. In fact, research from Reward Gateway found that organizations with high employee net promoter scores (eNPS) have a workforce where more than 80% of employees agree that their employer is transparent about how the organization plans to achieve its mission.

For important matters that require leadership discussion — such as strategic and organizational matters — personal companywide announcements on multiple communication platforms can be an effective way to maximize reach and engagement. To showcase less mission-critical events, established social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram can also be helpful. Finally, sharing photos and videos also allows employees to see the work being done (and fun being had) by their colleagues, while creating opportunities for global recognition, which can enhance culture.

Giving It the Human Touch

Leaders can also establish a regular dialogue with their people by incorporating routine blogs aimed at highlighting major events and observations, recognizing individuals or groups, announcing or promoting upcoming events and initiatives that they wish to prioritize, and occasionally sharing musings or personal reflections on the business, strategy or culture. Personal videos can also help make a connection with employees.

Blogs and other regular communications allow leaders to use their personal platforms to set the agenda for the business, focus their people on mission-critical items, strategically recognize individuals or groups — all while presenting themselves in such a way as to make them a little more accessible, human and credible. **###**

Doug Butler is CEO of Reward Gateway.

Doug Butler

Fueling a Culture of Innovative Thinking

I have always believed high trust and high performance at a workplace come only when our work environment is enriched by a more powerful organizational culture. Great workplaces not only help innovation thrive, but they bring ideas to life and also ensure that people can easily collaborate across the business and the world.

I have seen my team perform better when it comes to employee retention, customer service and agility. This is why I see a clear correlation between high-trust cultures, profit-ability and growth. All of these go hand in hand.

Practicing What We Preach

Organizational culture at Westhaven Inc. is quite effective when it comes to helping the workforce flex, pivot and react quickly to address utility issues affecting families. My team readily engages with business goals and constantly seeks innovative solutions with a strong sense of purpose, rather than just sticking to a set of predefined tasks. All of this is important in a fast-changing business landscape.

I have a vision for a bigger and better future. My motto is no one works *for* me, but everyone works *with* me. We work together and we work as a family. I emphasize respecting every team member at Westhaven.

I believe in effectively and consistently expressing appreciation to my team and valuing each one of them for what they do. We follow a small tradition of celebration before we kick-start the first meeting of the week. When they feel appreciated and valued, it affirms the commitment they've made to their work and incentivizes them to continue contributing and excelling.

These are some simple and universal elements that help me bond with my team members and this makes our

relationship much stronger. It brings good things: My team brings their best to their jobs, thinking about new and better products and processes in their spare time, and going out of their way to serve their customers well, with a smile on their face.

The Perfect Recipe

Our perfect recipe to a great organizational culture has three major ingredients:

- **Creative freedom:** To foster creativity, our team members are given complete freedom to explore out-of-the-box ideas. Failing to do this may cause them to feel like they can only contribute within the confines of their job descriptions. But boxing individuals into distinct roles diminishes the potential for creativity.
- **A willingness to change:** Our employees are the backbone of our organization and we are always willing to change internal practices to better support them. Therefore, we consistently assess our internal practices to find new ways to improve.
- **Providing purpose:** We cannot expect to progress effectively by only looking at culture as an afterthought. Therefore, we try to hire like-minded people who support the idea of wanting to make a positive impact in their society. We go out of our way to maintain employee happiness and we try to communicate to each individual the direct role they play in organizational success.

Leadership

At Westhaven, we believe that leadership cultivates the foundation of culture. It empowers the team members to achieve the organization's mission and helps realize how vital each of their contributions are to further those goals.

Each and every leader at Westhaven has a responsibility to demonstrate the beliefs of the organization and reinforce behaviors that reflect our values. We all abide by the motto "Be the change you want to see." Our behavior at work, our style of communicating with others and how we handle wins and setbacks affect the organization's culture. If we truly want to reflect values, we must demonstrate those values in our actions.

Work Environment

Work environment at Westhaven is all about our team members looking forward to coming to work, enjoying the challenges, their co-workers and the atmosphere. They have a sense of pride in what they do each and every day.

While the work may be challenging at times, the culture at Westhaven unites us as a team to help our customers become energy-efficient, which ultimately sustains employee enthusiasm.

Happy employees mean more productivity and more productivity means our business is working faster. And when it works faster, it gets a leg up on the competition. The mantra that we believe is to create a culture that is immersed in innovation and this is the only foolproof way to safeguard against irrelevance. ###

Brett Joerger is founder and CEO of Westhaven Inc.

Brett Joerger

HR Wars: A New Leadership

There are a lot of books out there these days that focus on the concept of leadership. And, as many books as there are on said topic, there are just as many angles and definitions of the term "leadership."

That being said, there does seem to be a similar theme that runs through many of the leadership books currently stacked around my desk: I will call it "Conscious Leadership." This version of leadership requires that those leading the flock are doing more than just forging the path; they're also tasked with tending to the herd's needs in a way that has likely caused some discomfort in the upper ranks.

It's no wonder, really, that leaders from the "Old Guard" may be struggling to figure out the new leadership models. A fair number of them probably cut their teeth on titles such as "The Art of the Deal" and "How to Swim with the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive." Those titles from the 1980s are in stark contrast to the titles of today, such as "The Advice Trap: Be Humble, Stay Curious & Change the Way You Lead Forever" and "The Non-Obvious Guide to Emotional Intelligence (You Can Actually Use)."

Of course, that isn't to say that the titles of old didn't — or don't — have something to offer. But perhaps we've learned what we needed to from the classics. Maybe now is the time to learn new skills.

Ask, Don't Tell

"The Advice Trap," Michael Bungay Stanier's follow-up to "The Coaching Habit," seems as good a place as any to start. While "The Coaching Habit" sought to explain how everyday people can be more "coach-like" (his term) in their interactions with peers and/or subordinates, "The Advice Trap" aims to steer those would-be coaches away from a very real obstacle: Telling people what to do instead of giving them the freedom to figure it out on their own.

Stanier notes that it's simply human nature that makes us rush in to solve whatever problem is put before us. An employee comes to you with a challenge and, instead of asking more questions and getting to the root of said challenge, we want to assert ourselves as the One with All the Answers. It's well intentioned, more often than not, as we believe we are adding value to the conversation.

This is where the skill-building comes in. Written as a sort of workbook companion to "The Coaching Habit" — though it functions just as well as a standalone — "The Advice Trap" explains why it's important to "be lazy, be curious and be often" — the core principles of the book — and then provides exercises to help the reader retrain their brain to this new style of coaching. (And before you ask, Stanier is not actually suggesting that anyone be lazy. He calls it "classic misdirection," as what he is really saying is to stop immediately jumping in to solve problems and instead allow others to find the solution — albeit with your conscious coaching. A hard task, to be sure.)

The more I read, the more I started to reflect on my own experiences, both as a coach and as the coached. I started to notice patterns that coincided with Stanier's examples. I realized that, as a coach, the best outcomes were the times when I didn't simply tell someone what to do and they followed orders. It was when I asked questions — the right questions — that ultimately led them to an "aha!" moment. As the coached, I valued and learned more from those coaches who gave me autonomy to discover solutions on my own, with only subtle prodding on their part.
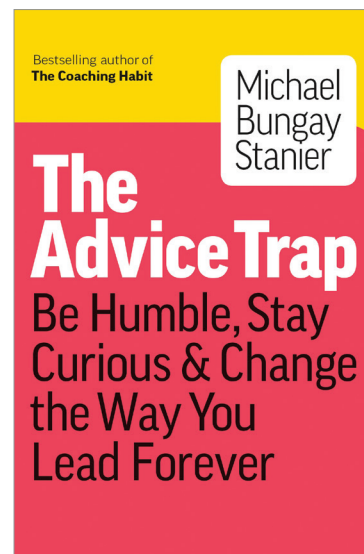
The Advice Trap
By Michael Bungay Stanier
Released February 2020
Box of Crayons Press

The irony of this book is that it is, in fact, doing the thing it's suggesting we avoid: Offering advice without asking questions. But I don't think it's Stanier's goal to be ironic. If anything, "The Advice Trap" encouraged me to focus inward, asking myself the questions that would typically come from external sources. And, in asking myself those questions, I did come to my own "aha!" moment.

And that, I believe, was his whole point. *Box of Crayons Press, released February 2020.*

Why EQ Matters

It's hard not to get pulled into a book that starts with a story about two men in Vermont who turned a small ice cream shop in a refurbished gas station into a multimillion-dollar empire. In just a few sentences, I wanted to know if these two men (who are initially unnamed) managed to turn their money-losing venture into a profitable business.

You may know these two men as Ben and Jerry, the founders of what *Time* magazine dubbed in 1981 as "the world's best ice cream." At that time, the founders were just two guys trying to run a small business, but without much financial success. It took some soul searching, shaking off some ego and really getting into why they were doing what they were doing for them to turn the corner to profitability.

The example of Ben and Jerry and how they went from nearly losing it all to having it all is just one of many set out in Kerry Goyette's "The Non-Obvious Guide to Emotional Intelligence (You Can Actually Use)." Goyette uses this example, and the others that follow, to show how — and why — using emotional intelligence (EQ) can be a game-changer, not just in your personal life, but in your professional life as well.

EQ has become a hot topic of late and it's one way modern leadership is setting itself apart from its predecessors. Goyette cites statistics — a good call, considering her intended audience — as to why it has gained in popularity: 90% of top performers have high EQ and as much as 58% of any job requires solid EQ. Going further, as much as 85% of your financial success is due to EQ.

These numbers are hard to ignore.

Of course, you may have already heard these stats and you've certainly heard the term EQ. But you may not completely understand what it is — not to mention the practical applications of it. Not only does Goyette do a good job of explaining the "why" of it — a theme throughout the book — but also provides tips, tricks and tools (including online tools) that can help you not only learn what EQ is, but also how to develop and implement it.

The book is broken up into three parts: Decision Making, Agility and Relationships. Each part explores how EQ plays a role, case studies on people/organizations that have jumped on the EQ train — and their results — and how to develop the skills needed to achieve said EQ goals. It reads well — and quick, which is a nice touch — and embraces a certain irreverence that I, for one, appreciate. That irreverence is essential to the Non-Obvious Guide Series, according to its mission statement: "The Non-Obvious Guide Series is an irreverent collection of business advice from real experts."
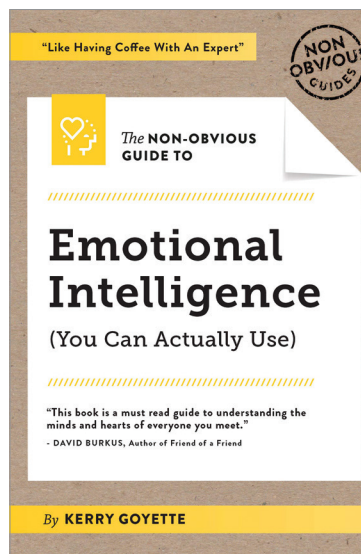
***The Non-Obvious Guide to Emotional
Intelligence (You Can Actually Use)*
By Kerry Goyette
Released July 2019
IdeaPress Publishing**

And, Goyette's expertise is clear as she navigates from "Where Does Empathy Start?" to "How to Motivate Your Team (and Yourself)." In a section titled "Get Over Yourself," she explains that one of the most important things about EQ is, well, getting over yourself. That is, the "me" of it. Or, as she puts it, "Move beyond me, through we, and into why."

While I've personally always been an advocate for EQ, this book really reinforced why I have believed it to be such an important skill.

There's that why again. Perhaps Goyette is right: It all comes down to the why. *IdeaPress Publishing, released July 2019.* **###**

Stephanie N. Rotondo is managing editor of *Workspan* and *#evolve* magazines. She can be reached at *srotondo@worldatwork.com.*

Learning Management Systems Key to Development

Historically speaking, workplace learning (formerly known as training) has gotten a bad rap. Unless it was compliance-driven (in other words, either take and pass the designated courses or your job could be in jeopardy), employees typically saw learning as a necessary evil. In addition, during tough economic times, learning and development (L&D) departments often were the first areas to feel the pain of downsizing.

With Gallup continuing to report that 65% to 70% of employees today remain disengaged at work (maybe one factor in today's unprecedented job-hopping trend), employers and learning professionals within the human resources sphere continue to struggle to develop skills within the organization.

The perception of L&D is shifting. Today's employees are more focused on career development and are showing a stronger desire to grow. With that, L&D takes on a much more attractive glow, especially in today's tight talent market. Employers need the ability to deliver wanted learning content, author courses, bring in experts, enable feedback and deploy other effective L&D-related strategies.

With so many L&D platforms on the market, it can be tough to pick the right one for your organization. Here, we look at three of the leading L&D platforms on the market today.

cornerstone

Cornerstone OnDemand (CSOD), Santa Monica, Calif.

URL: cornerstoneondemand.com
Product: Learning Suite

The Basics

Cornerstone OnDemand is a cloud-based learning and human capital management software provider. Its solution for learning supports both business-driven and employee-driven development, with the goal of enabling users to learn new skills and be more engaged. CSOD's solution combines a learning management system (LMS) and a learning experience platform (LXP) with modern content for a personalized, "Netflix-style" experience.

GUI/Usability

With today's emphasis on "consumer-like" user interfaces (Netflix, Amazon, etc.), CSOD's learning solution offers exactly that type of experience, even down to the ability to post feedback/reviews and star ratings on learning courses and experiences. Nothing here would make either the end user/employee or the L&D professional feel overwhelmed with complexity. And that's good, when the goal is to make sure people use the tools to learn all types of skills beneficial to their career development, and, by extension, boost productivity and profitability.

Key Features

One of the highlights of the platform is CSOD's recently expanded "Content Anytime" subscription offerings. Content Anytime enables employers to give employees specific content to help them drive career development. It was easy to see how subscriptions can support all learning formats, from micro-learning (shorter, easy-to-digest courses) to macro-learning (deeper dives on a subject or skill) to "spaced-learning" (courses broken into sections, with timed intervals for questioning in between).

The demo also included a look at Digital Native Advancement (DNA), part of CSOD's "Professional Skills" subscription service through Content Anytime (other related subscriptions include Digital Fluency, Leadership & Management, Modern Compliance and Sales & Customer Relationships).

Specifically, CSOD emphasized that DNA was developed and designed for the influx of so-called digital natives, primarily Millennials and Gen Z employees, who are offered mobile-first learning lessons. Those lessons are aimed at giving employees the chance to learn the interpersonal skills they need to succeed throughout their first year on the job and into the future. Part of the onboarding process, DNA can help build skillsets that employees' may not have entering the workforce for the first time. For older workers, it can offer a chance to be more professionally competitive in today's digital world.

Another feature CSOD recently added came via M&A, as it recently acquired content provider Grovo to build more innovative training content.

Finally, as is the case with all three choices here, reporting is a critical feature. The demo showed how analytics exist to control all types of reporting, whether it's for compliance, workforce planning or any other related need.
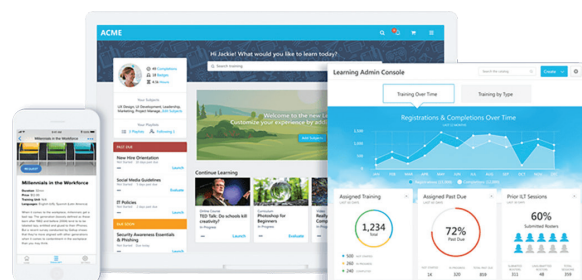
∴ BRIDGE

Instructure, Salt Lake City, Utah
URL: instructure.com
Product: Bridge

The Basics
Instructure originally launched its first learning product, Canvas, in 2011, and today it's the most popular learning platform used by schools, colleges and universities globally. Then, in 2015, Instructure followed Canvas with Bridge, which was recently redesigned as a "talent experience platform." More than a basic LMS, Bridge includes tools for performance management and goal alignment, career development, self-driven learning, engagement and feedback, employee communications and internal social networking. For our purposes, the focus is on Bridge's LMS.

GUI/Usability
Smooth and easy to use, the learning management aspect of Bridge offers both end users/employees and learning leaders toolkits for career exploration, career assessment, performance enablement and learning management. With that, the UX is clean and intuitive, something most non-techies could master with a very low training bar.

Key Features
Bridge follows a career journey theme. With that, it offers employees what it calls a talent timeline. Through these talent timeline employee journeys, Bridge helps the user to: focus on their existing strengths; explore career potential and opportunities; develop mentor relationships; check out available jobs with the workforce; and naturally explore course options and sign up for those that meet their personal or professional objectives.

A few of Bridge's main components include: learning content (including 20 developed LMS training courses with Bridge), course authoring (using intuitive authoring tools, instructional designers and subject-matter experts can curate, design, publish and share multimedia courses); and interactive video learning (Bridge Arc turns passive video-viewing into active discussion with time-stamp-specific commenting). Also, analytics provide useful insight into engagement. Skill assessments provide insight into employees' individual strengths and areas for skill development. Bridge also is equipped with goal tracking features, a way to help employees grow and stay focused on reaching their career aspirations.

From the product demo, it was clear that the course authoring experience is super simple — just what the doctor ordered when trying to create inside courses and learning experiences. It gives the employers who buy content the ability to also create content including the "special sauce" within an organization, something that can't be purchased off the shelf.

A recent module addition to Bridge called Connect enables employees to learn more about and connect with co-workers, join skill communities and identify potential mentors. With the growing importance of the role mentors play in an employee's career, Bridge helps employers increase mentor impact by giving each employee what they need to develop and grow.
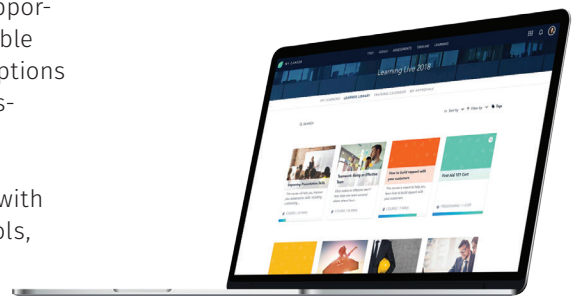
thinkingcap®

ThinkingCap, Toronto, Canada
URL: thinkingcap.com
Product: ThinkingCap LMS

The Basics
As in the case of CSOD Learning and Instructure Bridge, ThinkingCap LMS is delivered completely through the cloud, which means no need to purchase or maintain any hardware on site. This SAAS delivery includes the LMS itself, as well as training, mentorship and support to help HR and learning leaders deliver and track all types of blended learning. This particular service is ideal for customers who want to have strong control over all aspects of the learner experience, have several different types of learners (such as independent learners or larger learner communities) and have complex rules for delivering their learning. Unlike CSOD and Bridge, ThinkingCap does not directly provide content.

GUI/Usability
ThinkingCap is an LMS for customers that want to deliver complex learning material but also want to provide that learning in an easy-to-use system for both learners and administrators. From the demo, it was clear that ThinkingCap is easy to use and set up, yet robust too — just the right balance. The interface is one that can help employers meet the real-world requirements of today's learning and compliance workloads, while keeping the end-user learning curve to a minimum.

Key Features
One thing emphasized during the demo is that ThinkingCap believes branding means giving clients the power to define a learning experience (LX) with the same level of control they would have when designing the company website. ThinkingCap is then a "white label" provider, giving employers the tools and power to make their LMS look, feel and function exactly how they want. With its Bridge tool, learning pros can make simple choices about basic elements of presentation, rename pages and supply their own terminology, or even have control over the CSS and JavaScript. With that, they can define the user experience down to the smallest detail. And, these designs flow across all your devices and platforms.

ThinkingCap's learning paths are the key to keeping learners on track. They can be used to define any matrix, including curricula sets, certification requirements, department goals and job definitions. It also was interesting how learning paths can be deployed for talent and competency management. Best of all, learning professionals can build all learning paths and set up rules visually — no coding proficiency required.

On the reporting front, ThinkingCap's learning analytics engine is tuned to deliver insight into a learning program. The reporting system primarily offers training efficiency tracking, delivering metrics of its effectiveness and engagement in real time. Completion reports, system access reports and accreditation expiration reports, among others, are all easily accessed.

Tom Starner is a contributing writer for *Workspan* and *#evolve* magazines. He can be reached at *workspan@worldatwork.org.*

Having Fun Yet? No? Good.

The Evolution of Modern Leadership

In our maiden "Work in Progress" podcast, John Zissimos, Google's vice president, said that the most important advance in his evolution as a leader was realizing the importance of empathy. While I agree that it's a cornerstone trait for anyone wanting to be considered a good human being, what makes you a good person can make you a terrible boss.

Empathy means being attuned to another's pain or well-being. It's something you want in a friend, a significant other and an emergency medical technician — but in a managerial context, it can lead to a happy and adoring staff, which is not as wonderful as it sounds. I don't know about you, but I do my best work when I have an edge, I have something to prove, or I'm simply pissed off. When I sit down to write these columns, it's usually to get something off my chest. When I play tennis, I go from intensity to rage to anxiety, and occasionally to panic and self-pity when my forehand is misfiring. I'm happy when I've completed a column and feel it turned out well or beat my opponent senseless and left him wondering why he ever got out of bed that morning. Happiness is a fine goal, but it's not a very productive operating system.

I was reading an interesting book by an evolutionary psychologist who made the point that we're not wired to be happy. All it takes is an unguarded moment of bliss and you're someone's meal — not good if you're looking to procreate or keep yourself on the payroll into next month. If I'm a CEO or manager, and I want employees who are driven to excel, do I really want them happy and content?

Now, I'm not advocating the "Glengarry Glen Ross" approach: "You see this watch? You see this watch? That watch cost more than your car. I made $970,000 last year. How much you make? You see, pal, that's who I am. And you're nothing. Nice guy? I don't give a shit. Good father? F@#$ you, go home and play with your kids. You wanna work here? Close."

I'd sooner work on an assembly line performing colonoscopies all day long than work for that guy, but surely there's a middle ground between that and a blissed out environment where everyone shows up and leaves happy, with nothing much to show but the musty residue of warm feelings.

A top sales consultant I knew shared several motivational tricks he used, allegedly to great effect, with his sales team. On a coffee table in his office, he spread the latest magazines catering to luxe lifestyles rife with eye-popping, near pornographic pictures of expensive baubles and boats, lakeside mansions and seaside resorts, with an assortment of exotic accoutrements out of the James Bond playbook. The idea was to make sure their appetites always outpaced their earnings, but just by a little. They worked hard for their bonus check and were delighted when it came, but feelings of happiness fled the moment the next object of desire beckoned from those glossy pages.

Empathy is a fine and admirable thing, as the lack of it is what defines a sociopath. And unless you *are* a sociopath, few would argue that sociopathic bosses get you to do your best work. That said, there is something to Orson Welles' famous speech in the classic film *The Third Man*:

"In Italy, for 30 years under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland, they had brotherly love, they had 500 years of democracy and peace — and what did that produce? The cuckoo clock."

As Lucrezia Borgia would have said had reality TV arrived 500 years earlier, "I'm not here to make friends, I'm here to win." ###

Charles Epstein is president and founder of BackBone Inc. He can be reached at *che@backboneinc.com*. Follow him on Twitter *@BackBoneInc*.

Charles Epstein

Make 2020 *Your* year.

Immerse Yourself in Compensation Learning

Your biggest wins (and potential failures) depend on the success of your organization's most important asset—your people—and your ability to utilize the resourcefulness, analytical skills, and expertise necessary to build a successful compensation plan.

Whether you are at the start of your career or need a refresher, these comprehensive programs set the groundwork so you can return to your office ready to take on every challenge in the compensation and executive compensation arena. You'll gain both a broad understanding of how compensation aligns with the strategic goals of the organization and a nuanced understanding of the details of the practice.

Compensation Immersion Program

Mar. 2	Dallas
Apr. 20	San Francisco
Jun. 22	Nashville

worldatwork.org/cip

Executive Compensation Immersion Program

Apr. 20	San Francisco
Jun. 22	Nashville
Aug. 10	Philadelphia

worldatwork.org/cip