

HOT TOPICS

PLUS 13 FEATURES WITH MEMBERS OF THE TOP 100 LIST, INCLUDING AIRBNB, WEWORK, BOX AND MORE.



SCIENCE EDITION

As tech, data and HR collide, HR leaders are becoming people scientists.





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Luke Geoghegan Staff Writer

Aileen Wang Community Manager Humans or indeed 'People', are the most important asset of any business. Every CEO on the planet will tell you that. It therefore stands to reason that the function which is responsible for those people should have an integral role to play in a company's success.

That, for the most part, hasn't been the case though. HR departments and their leaders have long been considered to be subservient to the rest of the company, existing as rule-setters and dealing with mundane elements of business life.

However, as highlighted by the incredible stories that run through this 'People Science' edition of Hot Topics, that is changing.

And, as is the case with many functions within businesses, the change is being led by technology, innovation and data.

The focus for this edition is on the HR Directors or 'Chief People Officers' (as they are becoming increasingly known), within some of the fastest growing tech companies globally. And how they are increasingly using data and people science to improve and optimize all aspects of their role. A role, for many of these 'People' leaders, which is being fulfilled within the most hyper of hyper-growth environments.

Everything from hiring the best talent, retaining it, creating amazing workplace experiences and ensuring increased employee engagement is being led by data-driven strategies, which combine with the human element of HR that remains so integral.

In the same way that technology has added measurement to marketing and provided many CMOs a seat at the top table, data and analytics is helping HR leaders move from the sidelines to become front and centre within their respective business.

It will be interesting to see what the business impact of that shift will be in the years to come.

Thank you to all 14 of the amazing leaders that contributed to this edition and congratulations to the Tech HR 100 (pg 7) for their inclusion on the list.

Non Sta - Didie

Tom Lytton-Dickie

Editor

The People Science Edition

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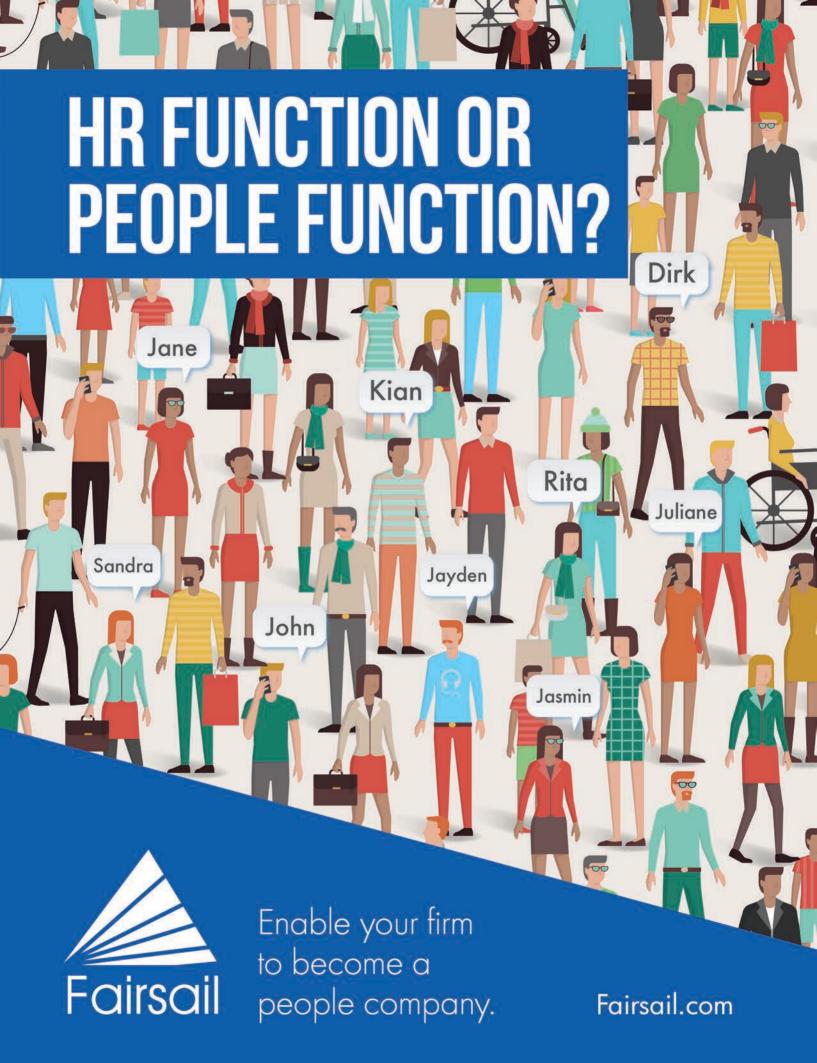
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HETECH HR100

They used to be called personnel directors. Then they became heads of human resources. Now, more and more HR professionals prefer to be known as people leaders.

The change reflects a new way of thinking about talent within an organization. Social media and new technology tools have changed the rules. Employees and potential employees have more information about companies. They also have changing priorities. They value flexibility and quality of life as much as the financial package.

This is why innovative thinkers are changing the way the tech world thinks about HR. And here are the world's top 100 HR leaders in the tech industry, as voted for by the Hot Topics community of business leaders.

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"I think HR professionals have had to become more commercial in their outlook and in the way they apply their skills"



TECH HR 100

Malcolm Kemp, VP HR, Klarna







Barbara Massa FireEye

Marissa Cardon	Adroll
Martine Buis-Klink	Adyen
Mark Levy	Airbnb
Laurie Deneschuk	Anki
Paul DuCharme	Apigee
Brandon Atkinson	AppNexus
Peter Collyer	ASOS
Clare Bye	Aveva
Lyudmila Volkova	Avito
Ryan Robinson	BazaarVoice
Sally Cairns	Betfair
Cyriella Callot	BlaBlaCar
Joy Wolken	Blue Jeans Network
Evan Wittenberg	Вох
Lenke Taylor	BuzzFeed
Wendy Merry	Civica
Britt Sellin	Cloudera
Cornelia Moller-Atam	Delivery Hero
Peter Navin	DocuSign
Arden Hoffman	Dropbox
Deborah McCowan	Equinix
Brian Christman	Etsy
Emily Couey	Eventbrite
Angela Romano Kuo	FanDuel

"Many administrative duties are performed today by online platforms, freeing us up to focus on the career development of our employees."



TECH HR 100

Peter Phelan, Chief People Officer, Shutterstock

Barbara Massa	FireEye
Marty Reaume	Fitbit
Katie Carter	Forgerock
Meghan Lapides	Foursquare
Merav Schlesinger Falik	Gett
Kelli Dragovich	GitHub
Auguste Goldman	GoDaddy
Helen Reid	Guidewire
Lori Knowlton	HomeAway
Ambrosia Vertesi	Hootsuite
Jeff Ehrenberg	HotelTonight
Jim O'Neill	HubSpot
Todd Riesterer	InsideSales
Ann-Marie Cooper	Intuit
Nathalie Berthelius	iZettle
Karen Treiger	Jumio
Lisa Hillier	Just Eat
Amy Zimmerman	Kabbage
Sharon Witzrabin	Kenshoo
Malcolm Kemp	Klarna
Jim Davies	Lookout
Ron Storn	Lyft
Matt Buckland	Lyst
Doug Folden	Malwarebytes
Joan Burke	Marketo







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Science Edition

"Today, technical skills are a given. So it's really all about the culture fit."



TECH HR 100

Ron Storn, Vice President of People, Lyft



Michael DeAngelo Pinterest

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Caoimhe Keogan Soundcloud

Sarah Bateman	Markit
Gerry James	MetaPack
Joe Freitas	Mimecast
Kirsten Rowland	MongoDB
Victoria Cleaver	Monitise
Ellie Collins	Моо
Rob Horton	MuleSoft
Tawni Cranz	Netflix
Emma Sadler	Notonthehighstreet
Dan Atkinson	onefinestay
Nicholas Walker	Paysafe
Jeff Yanagi	Pegasystems
Eimear Donaghy	PeopleDoc
Michael DeAngelo	Pinterest
Melanie Hobson	Powa
Susan Newton	Pure Storage
Dave Gilbert	Qualtrics
Jennifer Ellert Trzepacz	RocketFuel
Roddy Temperley	SDL
Charmaine Norville	Shazam
Brittany Forsyth	Shopify
Peter Phelan	Shutterstock
Ruth Chandler	Skyscanner
Anne Toth	Slack
Jen Rothfeld	SolarWinds

"Knowing your customer is critical, but we need to know our future or current employees just as much."



TECH HR 100

Peter Navin, CMO of People, DocuSign

Caoimhe Keogan	SoundCloud
Brian Bjelde	SpaceX
Sharon Marnien	Sparta Systems
Tracy Edkins	Splunk
Katarina Berg	Spotify
Aditya Roy	Square
Kristina Passet	Squarespace
Matthew Kellie	Supercell
Rebecca Cantieri	SurveyMonkey
Michael Porta	Synchronoss
Leigh Hennen	Syniverse
Susie Vaknin	Taboola
Suzie Woodhams	Telecity Group
Jo Sweet	Thunderhead
Soo Hong	Tinder
Thea Fineren	TransferWise
Isabel Wang	Twilio
Renee Atwood	Uber
Julie Dorin	Ve Interactive
Nancy Ashbrooke	Vice Media
Rachel Walter	Videology
Tara Tapper	Wonga
Frauke von Polier	Zalando
Lorraine Metcalf	Zoopla
Rene Cirulli	Zuora



Peter Phelan Shutterstock



Soo Hong Tinder



Rachel Walter Videology

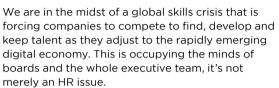
Fairsail

Adam Hale CEO

FROM HR TO PEOPLE

HR's borders stretch far beyond an organisation's four walls. This magazine is about understanding the changing HR landscape through those crafting it.

The People Science Edition



The world of work, the workforce and the workplace is changing rapidly. There's a diverse, four-generation workforce for the first time, accelerated globalization and a limited supply of skilled people with unprecedented choice of how, and for whom, they work.

Traditional ways of leadership and management have also been called into question, catalyzing the re-design of many traditional, analog HR processes. This falls squarely in line with the quest of many - a more meaningful work-life - that looks very dissimilar to the ideals of a traditional career.

The HR function has had to respond, and it has seen a fundamental shift in focus from HR to 'People' of the same magnitude as the Personnel to HR transformation of the 1980/1990s.

It is now both the obligation of, and opportunity for, HR departments to lead this next chapter, to harness new tools and pioneer a fundamental shift back to the most important asset of businesses today, their people.

The interviews that follow have honed in on the world's fastest growing tech companies faced with leading this transformation, exploring how the HR function is itself changing to become focused on not just managing, but engaging their people. The focus is now on delivering great experiences, driving productivity and enabling growth, not just of the business, but also of the people making things happen.

Many of these executives are leading the people function at some of the fastest growing and most exciting scale ups in the market today. We are grateful to them for sharing their thoughts, experiences and explaining how they are using technology, changing processes, and transforming the way they engage their people in the new world of work.

Be that Evan Wittenberg, SVP People at enterprise content management platform, Box, who laid out his 3 key problems with old HR and

Fairsail

Adam Hale CEO



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Fairsail

Adam Hale CEO "Good experiences and happiness in the workplace makes people more productive.

12 percent more in fact."

how he fixed it; or Caoimhe Keogan, VP People of Soundcloud, where she talked through her inspiring use of predictive analytics and big-data to underlie decision-making.

Each story provides fantastic insights into an industry in the midst of change.

What became apparent as the series progressed was that traditional HR applications are just not satisfactory. Rather, new, agile, more people oriented applications are now required to help leverage and develop flexible business strategies to help return tangible value in a rapidly changing world.

Malcolm Kemp, VP, Human Resources of Swedish payments unicorn Klarna believes this to be the case, suggesting that an HR department with the right tools can be "an incredible value add to an organization," especially when you consider the doors opened by a constant stream of accurate, up to date information that can "help inform sensible decision making."

In Kemp's opinion, it is "the best way to deploy resources."

To this end, HR teams need to evolve through these tools to become even more people focused if they are to become true partners of businesses, whilst providing, as Ruth Chandler, Skyscanner's Global People Director describes, the "best possible conditions for employees to succeed."

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The question then becomes, what is it exactly that is required to succeed?

Put simply, it requires a new, different approach to the HR function. Automating existing HR processes is not enough. HR leaders need to become Chief People Officers. This means thinking about and designing engaging ways for their employees to excel throughout respective employment journeys. Companies like Fairsail have led the way in introducing some of these ideas and created innovative software that improves workforce visibility and delivers great workforce experiences.

This can be through surprising and delighting current and prospective employees from the moment they engage with your brand, and doing so throughout the employment journey, using data and people analytics to enable employees to flourish. This strategy should be implemented all the way through the employee lifecycle until individuals decide to leave.

Although for some HR Directors even this is not enough. As Airbnb's Global Head of Employee Experience, Mark Levy describes. He set up an Airbnb Alumni network to stay in touch with those that have moved on to pastures new.

Each piece of the puzzle comes together to create a certain perception of a brand. Which is why when faced with the difficult question of how to make the hosts comprising Airbnb feel a part of an office they would never visit, Levy opted to model the conference rooms at its HQ, a 72,000 square foot, century-old San Francisco battery warehouse, on some of the most popular listings found on the site. Complete with photos of the hosts themselves.

It shows that in today's incredibly competitive hiring market, employee experience, brand perception and brand loyalty have become the Holy Grail of the new HR. Tick these boxes and talent will flock through your door, employees will have a great experience with your company, and they'll perform better too.

The University of Warwick, in the UK, proved this was the case, after releasing a study suggesting good experiences and happiness in the workplace makes people more productive. 12 percent more in fact. Others have found that productivity can be improved by as much as 50 percent if people are fully engaged.



"If you are providing a bad experience," says Lyft's VP, People, Ron Storn, "with the advent of social media (Facebook, Glassdoor and LinkedIn), employers and candidates," can very easily "find out when culture or candidate experience is poor." Ultimately people vote with their feet, and quickly share their experiences with their networks. A good reputation may take years to build, but can be destroyed in minutes.

If the companies highlighted here have one thing in common, it is high levels of employee engagement. These high-performing leaders are testament to experiences and engagement going hand in hand. And with an engaged workforce constantly providing feedback, coupled with the ability to analyze and act on results at scale, new things become possible. Creating a positive virtuous cycle whilst giving rise to people processes that can change quickly in support of an agile, flexible business.

So if employee experience is the key to an engaged, productive and happy workforce, what are the conditions required to satisfy this?

Firstly, the underlying technology in order to capture this information needs to be right.

And we aren't talking about a toolset just for HR professionals, but rather, a system for the business to manage and engage people. It needs to be bespoke to your organization and scaleable,

which according to Ann-Marie Cooper, former Chief People Officer at Huddle, is of paramount importance. Unless paid attention to, it can "turn an agile, fast-paced startup into a slow and corporate-style environment, where processes are created for the sake of it."

There also needs to be an ability to seamlessly interact and communicate with employees. In order to do so, your HR team will require new, different and complementary skillsets. These include internal or employee communications specialists to cut through the noise, reduce information overload and get people aligned with the business.

If Data Scientists help managers understand the business, then People Scientists are needed to understand the workforce. Both require people who are analytical, systems driven and digitally savvy. We see the 'People' function as a destination for the best graduates in a way that HR functions have not. This is not just about providing better HR reports, but about people analytics providing better workforce visibility for your diverse teams all around the world.

The 'People' function also needs marketing people that really understand branding, business psychologists, and even design oriented people who can map and reshape the employment journey.

This is an incredibly exciting time. Welcome to the age of the employee and the new focus on both managing and engaging people.

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Lyft

Ron Storn VP People

HOWLYFT WENT UP AND UP

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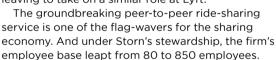
Inside 30 months, ride-sharing service Lyft scaled from 80 to 850 employees. Ron Storn, VP of People at Lyft, discusses meeting the challenge of such dizzying growth - and how data helped him do it.

PEOPLE FEATURE

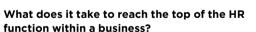
Lvft

Ron Storn VP People

Talent is the nucleus of success for any business. But in the hyper-competitive world of high growth tech firms, finding and keeping the best people is especially challenging. Ron Storn, VP People at Lyft, knows this better than most. He was a senior recruiting leader at Facebook and Google before leaving to take on a similar role at Lyft.



It's just not possible to manage such drastic change using old-school recruiting ideas. Here, Storn describes how he adjusted his approach and used data science to find the best people, and then keep them happy.



First, you simply must completely understand the company's business. This is table stakes in becoming an HR leader. You have to have the business acumen to be a true people partner to the CEO and other execs. Then, of course, there's talent acquisition, coaching, data analyzing and evangelizing. These are the other key skill sets found in new HR leaders.

It's a big shift in mind-set from the old ways. HR leaders have to be allies and partners, rather than bureaucrats. They have to see their departments as centers of creativity that facilitate, not hinder, the fast pace of company needs, employee wants and



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"What is changing is the ability to be able to take the results of an employee survey and then cross reference this with other things"

industry trends.

I think this impacts the way the company thinks too. Basically, every key decision should be analyzed from a finance and also a people perspective. The company vision or a key decision may work financially, but not without the right people equation. That means having the right people, in the right role, at the right time of the company's lifecycle is critical. It's the only way for a company to realize its vision and achieve its ultimate goals and outcomes.

Data is pervading nearly every function within business. How is it impacting HR and how are you utilizing data today?

Investing in people is probably one of the biggest costs a company has. So being able to measure the ROI on this investment is critical. Because this return calculation is so important, understanding and analyzing data has become a huge factor for succeeding in HR today.

Many companies have approached this in the past through engagement surveys. But there are much better ways to do it now. I think it comes down to HR being challenged to be more predictive with this analysis.

That's why we are trying to use more data in the recruiting process given our high growth.

The fact is, when you are growing incredibly fast, you need to find the right people very fast. For us, that means accessing the metrics for a successful candidate quickly. For example, pinpointing which places in our process cause candidates to drop out. Or maybe identifying which factors lead to the most successful long-term employees.

These factors could be where we hire from, or specific skill sets/experience or interviewers who have a high success rate in identifying top employees. We look at all of this in the data to see if

we can be more effective in our hiring practices.

What are the key differences between today's hiring processes today and those of the past?

There are a few key differences in hiring practices now. Previously we'd center on evaluating the core technical skills a candidate possesses for a function during the interview process.

Today, technical skills are a given. So it's really all about the culture fit. Employers are looking for qualities of spirit, drive, collaboration and team orientation.

Obviously, we've had to work out the right set of questions during the interview process to spot the people with the best fit.

Social media helps. With the advent of Facebook, Linkedin, Glassdoor and so on, employers and candidates can find and share information that was not readily available in the past.

In some ways, social media makes employers' jobs easier too. It gives us multiple avenues to talk about our businesses, and what we are trying to achieve. We can advertise company culture and practices, and gain feedback on what is working well.

Unfortunately, it sometimes works the other way too and you usually find out pretty quickly when culture or candidate experience is poor. This is why there is still an important human instinct to vetting and engaging with people. Culture is so important to the modern company/workforce that you can't rely completely on scientific approaches.

Has Lyft developed any new methods for sifting the data?

Actually, we are working to roll out a quality hiring metric that analyzes the data of people who have been with us for six to 12 months. We look at how they are performing, who were the interviewers, key feedback during the interviews that were good pre-

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There has been a shift in the way companies are thinking about their employees, which in turn has changed what's expected from a great people team.

indicators, and school or company commonalities that might predict success, and so on.

Our goal is to have a deeply routed data and scientific approach in assessing candidates.

Businesses dedicate a lot of time, effort and money into trying to understand their customers. Why isn't there a similar investment into understanding their own employees?

I think this is changing. There has been a shift in the way companies are thinking about their employees, which in turn has changed what's expected from a great people team.

However, measuring human nature and behavior is hard to do. For years, the commonplace approach was to create employee surveys with focus groups set up afterwards to help action the results.

What is changing is the ability to be able to take the results of an employee survey and then cross reference this with other things - social data, company performance data, benefits data to help direct some of the actions the company then takes.

What is the biggest challenge when leading the HR function of a company that is experiencing hyper-growth?

In two and a half years, Lyft has scaled from 80 employees to over 850 employees. We have grown from one central office to three key corporate offices and more than ten satellite offices.

Our main challenge is to keep our quality of hiring and culture intact. We are right in the midst of this

challenge - iterating and soliciting feedback to help scale our growth in the most efficient and effective manner. I always think the last 50 to 100 hires sets the tone of your culture.

Instilling an understanding of our four key core values (Be Yourself; Create Fearlessly; Uplift Others; and Make It Happen) is absolutely key. That goes for our interviewers too, if they are to appraise candidates consistently. New Lyfters can apply these learnings by taking an active role in assessing and on-boarding future hires.

Why is employee engagement so dismal in the US and other leading economies and what can be done about this?

Other countries place more importance on work/ life balance than some of the leading economies. As technology has advanced, being able to balance this in a healthy way is harder to do. I think this is what causes people to burnout quickly.

Allowing people the ability to focus on their jobs and lives in ways that scale for each individual is becoming essential.

With so many generations in the workplace right now, this is not an easy task. We are now seeing a paradigm shift towards a more human centric focus.

Companies are trying to build wellness, mindfulness and benefits programs to help address this. We are also starting to see this in learning and development programs designed for individuals to adapt. It's important that managers and leaders identify and support these efforts.

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Skyscanner

Ruth Chandler Global People Director

HIGH-FLYERS

If you want to get the best talent, you have to provide the conditions for them to succeed.

The number of startups in Scotland has increased 43 percent over the last five years to approximately 3,000. Of all of them, Skyscanner, the site that uses hordes of metadata to amalgamate flight prices from around the world, is one of the most remarkable. With a valuation north of \$1bn, it is the largest too.

Today, the company boasts 9 global offices with additional teams based in Barcelona, Beijing, Budapest, Glasgow, Miami, Shenzhen and Sofia.

We sat down with Ruth Chandler, its Global People Director to discuss what it was that helped it be voted the 5th best place to work in the UK.

It is well documented that the average job tenure is decreasing, especially amongst millennials who often are willing to swap pay, and even job security for an opportunity to develop. With this in mind, how have you altered your value proposition to prospective employees?

We've recently been listed as the 5th best place to work in the UK, and won a special award for 'Innovation in Engagement'. Our mission is to deliver world-class travel tech solutions, and to do that we require a world-class workforce.

As such, there's a culture of personal growth that is very deeply embedded here at Skyscanner.

We ask that employees regularly look at their goals and ambitions, both from a short-term and longer term, strategic point of view. We've a relatively flat structure, and we empower people across levels of seniority to take ownership of their role and their own responsibilities.

We also have a culture where employees are trusted to sign off their own holidays, manage their own workload and the like.

Innovation is championed, and so too is continued learning. Both are very appealing traits in a company for the kind of people we want to attract. For example, at Skyscanner there are hundreds of employee-led courses that anyone across the business can attend, as well as external courses and conferences.

Our Chief Executive Officer delivers courses for Skyscanner's emerging leaders, while our co-founder, Gareth Williams, delivers one on

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Skyscanner

Ruth Chandler Global People Director



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Skyscanner

Ruth Chandler Global People Director

'entrepreneurial thinking'.

Our latest staff survey found that 95 percent of employees felt that their job is interesting and challenging, and I believe that's indicative of an environment where staff feel like they're continually developing in an enjoyable and flexible environment. Indeed, when asked the top three best things about working at Skyscanner, employees last month highlighted work/life balance/flexibility, fellow colleagues and personal development and training.

How has automated HR, and the introduction of new HR systems helped HR professionals to better engage with people issues to create a better overall employment experience?

We have invested in a new HR system, which allows us to have 'one source of the truth.' This saves time from having multiple data sources with conflicting data. Our talent team have always been heavily engaged with our people and this continues to deliver positive results.

What does workplace experience mean to Skyscanner?

It means a working environment that supports employees in both their working and personal lives.

That could be in training and development, as we've already discussed, or ensuring both work and life fulfilment. For example, having the technology and facilities in place for people to work from home when they need to.

It's also about ensuring that people enjoy coming to work; whether that's little perks like an in-house masseuse or barista-style coffee machines, free fruit and drinks, or our much-used library.

We're looking for people who want to tackle technical challenges and who relish the thought of making an impact. That could be an impact on your team, the project you're working on, the wider business or wider industry. The workplace experience at Skyscanner is one that encourages employees to make the most of their working hours, and make their time at work as rewarding as possible.

Why do you think workforce experience has become such an important issue?

For a business like ours having passionate employees is incredibly important.

People no longer work in the same business from when they graduate to retirement, so organizations need to make the workplace experience as attractive as possible. The past seven years have seen consecutive double-digit growth for us, so we're constantly recruiting, and recruiting for the best talent out there.

The workforce experience at Skyscanner really sets us apart from the competition. Equally, we're a high-growth, fast-paced business, so from Skyscanner's perspective, we need a workplace environment that supports that – one that allows

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Skyscanner

Ruth Chandler Global People Director

for cross-country, cross-continent collaboration, remote working and much more.

The term 'culture', particularly in tech, has become an overused buzzword, which often is associated with Ping-Pong tables, slides and beanbags. What does it actually mean to create a differentiated culture that can be replicated across global offices within a hyper-growth environment?

That's a big question, but first and foremost, it's not about the Ping-Pong table (although our CEO and co-founder Gareth loves to play table tennis, so don't tell him that).

At the heart of a company is a set of core values, whether implicit or explicit.

At Skyscanner, these core values focus around a pride in our work, work-life fulfilment, collaboration and a 'master-teach-learn' philosophy of constant improvement and learning.

These values have to sit at the heart of our office layout and design as well as our people-related policies and the overall way we work as a business. They were also chosen because they reflect and support our hyper-growth environment. We have ten offices across Europe, the Americas and Asia, and there is a strong continuity in the Skyscanner culture across these locations.

Our employees really value the Skyscanner culture and as our growth accelerates we'll continue to work hard to ensure our working environment is second to none.

How are you using data and analytics to evolve and optimize your role?

As you would expect in a data-driven business, data informs everything we do!

We have multiple sources for this data and experiment when new ideas or opportunities arise. For example - the HR team are learning to code, which will enable us to automate manual processes and spend more time on anticipating and forecasting what the business will need next via our analytics.

"People no longer work in the same business from when they graduate to retirement, so organizations need to make the workplace experience as attractive as possible."

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Every time a music lover arrives at the SoundCloud web site or app, the algorithms go to work. The world's biggest 'social sound platform' lets artists upload tracks so that fans can find, enjoy and share them. But with more than 125 million tracks on the platform, the big challenge is discovery. How can music lovers find the songs most suitable for them?

This is where the data comes in. SoundCloud stands and falls on the quality of the systems that match songs and song lovers. In this context, it's logical that all departments within the company should regard information as critical. This is certainly true of the HR team.

Caoimhe Keogan, VP of People at SoundCloud says the organization is "constantly hiring or on the lookout for new people" and that the way to find the right people is through data.

"We spend a lot of time analyzing the data we have available in a hunt for nuggets of insight that could ultimately prove to be valuable in our hiring processes.

"Things like understanding the best sources of candidates are key. For example, we've been

looking at how candidates progress through our hiring processes internally and have looked at this from a variety of different perspectives. Be that the diversity angle or something else. It all helps us understand what we can do differently."

"Although it isn't just about getting the data and then reporting it, it's a matter of being analytical and deriving useful insight. It's about working out how we can use the data we gather to aid in predicting what may happen in the organization in the future."

The importance of being analytical

With this in mind, Keogan has had to develop new skills in her department. Basically, that means training the team to work with large data sets.

"The challenge for HR functions now," she says, "is really building that analytical perspective. It isn't too far removed from the core reporting skills people have now."

These skills are imperative because finding and looking after good employees has never been more important. In a fluid tech space with plentiful

"It's about working out how we can use the data we gather to aid in predicting what may happen in the organization going forward."

opportunities to switch jobs, company culture is paramount.

Take the recent furore around Amazon. An article published in the NY Times entitled "Inside Amazon: Wrestling Big Ideas in a Bruising Workplace," alleged a bleak workplace culture at the e-commerce giant. The impact was such that Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos was forced to send a memo to workers deploring the notion that Amazon was "a soulless, dystopian workplace where no fun is had and no laughter heard."

He explained: "I don't think any company adopting the approach portrayed could survive, much less thrive, in today's highly competitive tech hiring market."

Finding the nuggets in the noise

Of course, there is no shortage of data available to companies that wish to use analytics to build a nurturing workplace. According to IBM, the world creates 2.5 quintillion bytes of data everyday. And 90 per cent of the data ever created was done so in the past two years alone. Instead, the difficulty

PEOPLE FEATURE

Soundcloud

Caoimhe Keogan VP People

comes in finding the insights inside the data.

Keogan's approach to this problem was inspired by the time she spent working with Laszlo Bock, SVP People Operations at Google. "His approach can best be characterized by starting with a question that may lead you to the problem you are trying to solve.

"So instead of asking 'what does the data tell us? you begin by asking whether the problem can be quantified or illustrated with data. Then, it becomes a matter of working out what the data illustrating the problem actually indicates and then working out a solution based on that. And of course, the next stage is working out how we will go about measuring the success of the solution we plan to implement."

This differs significantly from the approach taken by many legacy HR departments today, which tend to prioritize instinct and experience over making decisions based on the numbers.

At SoundCloud the methodology begins with the underlying systems used to run HR processes. "Setting up tools and systems that allow you to capture data accurately and fluidly is imperative," explains Keogan.

Reporting capabilities are similarly important. "The ability to illustrate findings, extract useful data and analyze it, all contribute to gaining a better idea of what's going on in your key organizational processes."

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DON'T TAKE AWAY THE HUMAN

ELEMENT

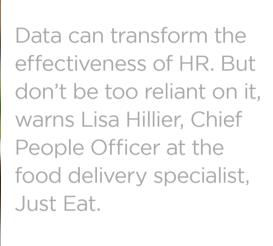
Just Eat

Lisa Hillier Chief People Officer

The People Science Edition

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JUST EAT online order takeaway online



Just Eat

Lisa Hillier Chief People Officer



From its humble beginnings in a Danish basement in 2001 to being listed on the London Stock Exchange, online takeaway service, Just Eat has become a household name. The company operates in 15 countries, and has 61,000 restaurants serving 10 million customers.

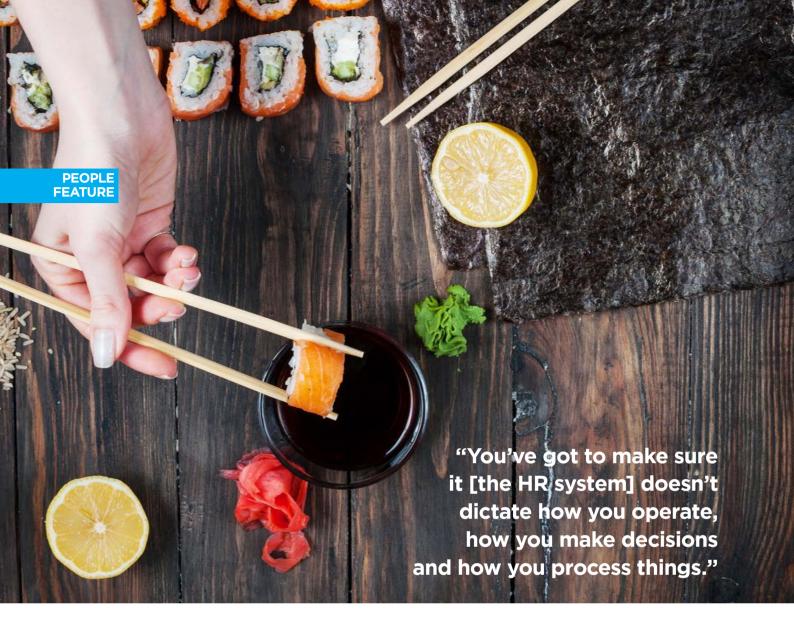
Looking after thousands of partners and millions of end-users is a substantial task. It's why Just Eat now has over 1,800 staff. These employees are precious, not least because a whole host of businesses similar to Just Eat are emerging to unseat it. The talent wars are heating up.

This is where Just Eat's Chief People Officer, Lisa Hillier comes in. Since joining in 2015 from Betfair, Hillier has led an HR shift that can be characterized by bringing human resources closer to business strategy. The all-encompassing role spans performance management, recruitment, training and development.

She described how Just Eat's HR department, once known for "picnics, parties, benefits and payroll," has instead "moved the needle massively to become a true partner to the business."

To do this, Hillier has embraced data. After all,

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analytics is revolutionizing every other aspect of business, helping departments strategically advance their capabilities. Why shouldn't human resources be the next frontier?

A future beyond enforcing company policy

Today, Just Eat's HR professionals can use data to assess performance management and to think about talent through predictive analytics with an astounding level of accuracy to determine who will be successful.

Of course, Just Eat is not alone in making this shift. It can be seen across much of the tech space, with people functions better understanding business and employee needs, and working to respond accordingly.

"I think the HR function has realized this and has wised up to the fact that it needs to be a commercial function which isn't just about setting rules," Hillier says.

She wants perceptions of the department to change too - away from being a mere enforcement arm for company policy, and towards something more useful. "We should ensure that, from a people perspective, our department mirrors the context of the company and uses data in a way that supports that."

To repeat, this is an evolutionary jump in the HR lifecycle, far removed from the days of "personnel", whose role was largely compliance-based and focused on record keeping, workplace safety, wage management and employee grievances.

More time to spend on wellbeing and growth

Such a shift can largely be attributed to technology, data and the systems behind HR departments that act as the foundation for future progress. They all help HR professionals accomplish many of the





Just Eat operates in 15 countries, and has 61,000 restaurants serving 10 million customers.



traditional "personnel" responsibilities faster and more efficiently than before. This frees up time to truly focus on employee wellbeing and growth.

It's a move described by Fast Company as moving from "transaction to interaction."

A lot of this comes down to having a robust HR system in place that can scale internationally, and grow as your company does. Hillier stressed the importance of this, particularly as a system lacking elasticity will end up holding you back.

However, she also insists that there is still a role for gut instinct and maintaining the human element of HR - a role for the type of knowledge that only comes with experience.

"I think having an evidence-based approach where I can talk about data or trends is incredibly important. But you've got to make sure it [the HR system] doesn't dictate how you operate, how you make decisions and how you process things. It becomes incredibly important to use a system to your advantage and not the other way round."

The danger of data dependency

Decisions should be informed by data and not dictated by it.

She says: "My biggest fear is using data too much in a company to the point that it ends up slowing you down. I've seen cases where businesses go into a state of paralysis when they don't have data to help them make decisions. Getting used to this way of functioning can make it easy to avoid making decisions."

Instead it becomes incredibly important to strike a balance. Hillier's role has become about making this shift responsibly and effectively by ensuring decisions are made from a people perspective.

Relying too heavily on data can have the adverse effect of turning employees into a process or product.

It becomes important to remember the source of the data. Hillier says: "It's important to use data to help make the best possible decisions, but ultimately, make them with people in mind."

Just Eat

Lisa Hillier Chief People Officer

The People Science Edition



Shazam

Ruthie Penfold Talent Director

TRUST ME, I'M A RECRUITER

Human evolution made us wary of strangers. But social media is undoing all that. This makes things very different for recruiters, says Shazam's Talent Director, Ruthie Penfold.

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In his 2015 social science book, 'No One Understands You and What You Can Do About It', psychologist Heidi Halvorson talks about something called the 'trust lens'. Essentially, it's the filter that makes us distrust strangers.

Halvorson explains that thousands of years of evolution have made humans wary when interacting with someone for the first time. "Its roots lie in the distant past," he says, "when priority number one was determining whether another creature meant you harm."

As with many primitive instincts, it has stuck. It's just slightly adapted for the modern era.

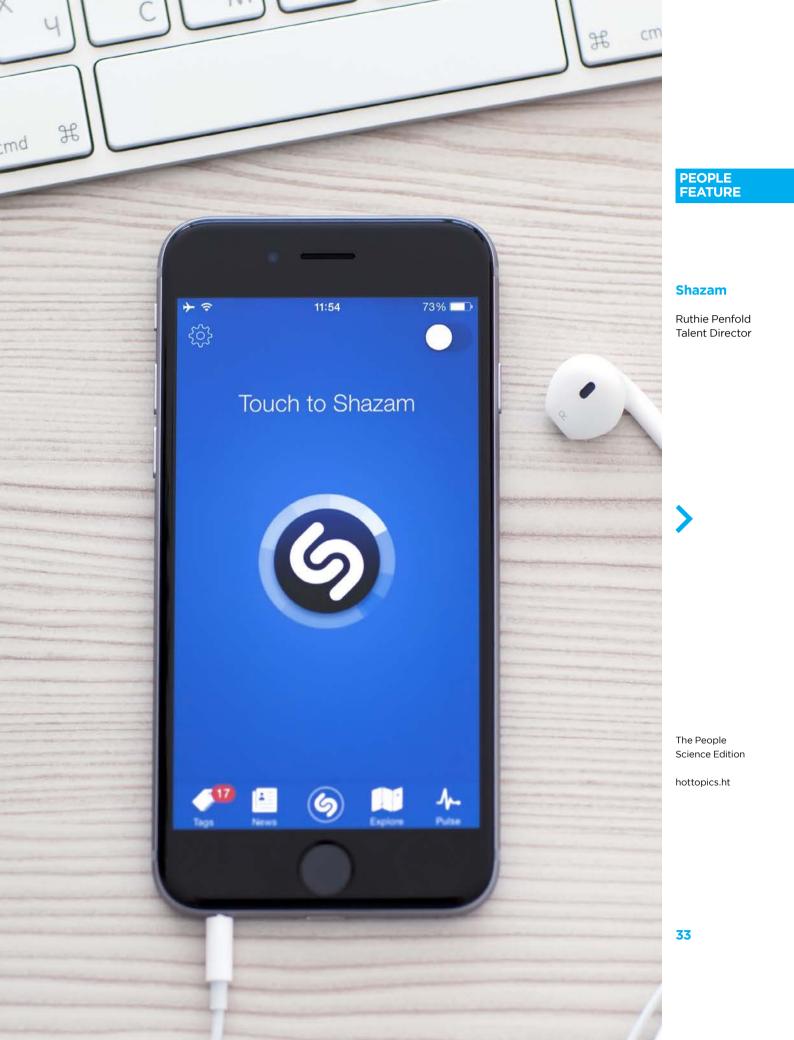
Today's version can be summarized by the question: Is this person approaching me going to

cause me harm or create trouble?

This is a barrier HR has strived to overcome ever since the practice of recruitment was invented. Ruthie Penfold, Talent Director at music and visual identification pioneer Shazam, knows this well. She's been active in recruitment since the early 2000s. But she reckons these evolutionary instincts are now being overturned. And it's all thanks to social networks.

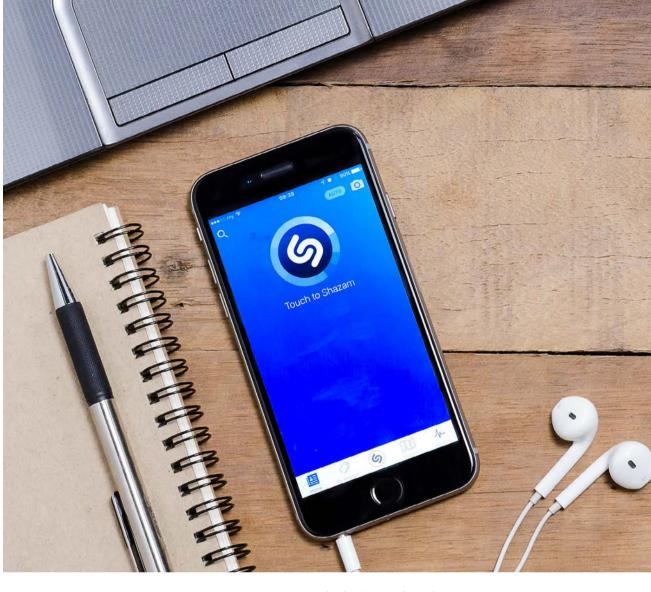
"Social media has revolutionized recruitment," she explains. "LinkedIn gives me a human face. It means people are suddenly more open to having you reach out to them as an individual."

It seems pretty obvious, but the results are powerful. Penfold believes this comes down to one



Shazam

Ruthie Penfold Talent Director



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thing: authenticity. "Through social media, recruiters and candidates can get to know one another and really share more of an essence as who we are as people."

Of course social media works in both directions. The digital exhaust left behind from social products like Google, Facebook and LinkedIn make individuals' virtual identities more discoverable than ever before. HR professionals can know so much about a candidate before they approach them. That's led to a seismic shift in the way companies of all shapes and sizes have come to source talent.

LinkedIn puts the CVs of hundreds of millions of potential candidates before the eyes of recruiters. It has the power to show information as granular as shared connections and experiences. The kind of information that Penfold, when starting her career with just a telephone and fax machine, would have fought tooth and nail to uncover.

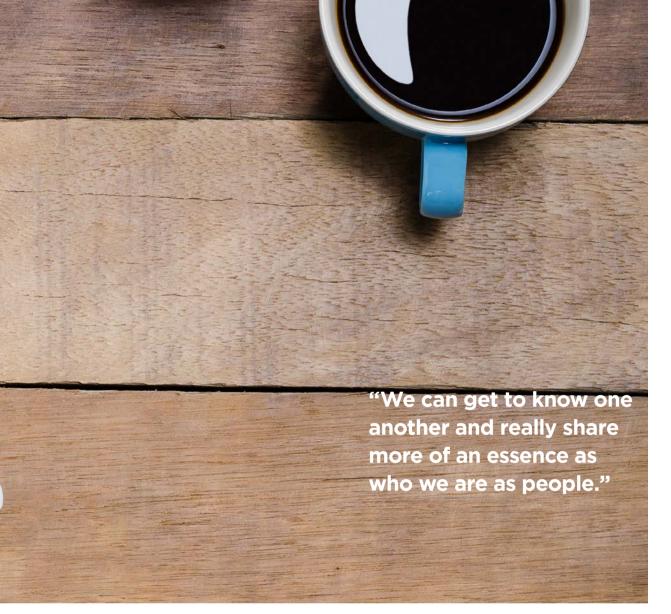
"Back then when I would go about headhunting someone for a role, I would begin by phoning a switchboard, trying to find the right person, briefly having a conversation and then hopefully working out whether it was the right person or not."

"It was incredibly time consuming and challenging, because also, given the reputation of being a recruiter, people did not always want to take your call anyway."

But the flipside is that candidates can dig around too. They can investigate their prospective employers. In this sense, recruiters and business alike are as discoverable as their prospective employees. This is thanks to websites like Glassdoor, which provides insider information to prospective employees on over eight million businesses.

So the game has truly changed. Both sides are armed with lots of information. It's no longer a dogfight to gain attention from the right individual. The candidates are all out there, known to everyone. So the needle has shifted to challenge candidate and company alike.

Penfold believes that a human-first approach is the answer - the difference between good and great recruitment. She learnt over years in small agencies that creating an authentic two-way relationship is the ultimate ticket to recruiting success. And this



Shazam

Ruthie Penfold Talent Director

was before Reid Hoffman had the idea for LinkedIn.

Needless to say, the proliferation of information can make things more complicated. LinkedIn makes any job application just a click away. This means that, according to Penfold, "you get a lot of people applying for a job without thinking about it. In fact, you get a lot of people applying, showing huge amounts of interest and then forgetting they have applied at all."

This can create extra workload, and also lead to individuals applying for roles completely unfit for their skillset. That said, social recruiting can also open up new avenues. It can, for example, help prospective employees to build up informal relationships with the companies they wish to work for. That's a new idea. On the flipside, it can also help businesses like Shazam show how much they have to offer a candidate before they've applied.

Penfold truly believes in this philosophy and the virtues of creating a strong employment brand. When joining Shazam, she rolled out a guidebook highlighting the importance of every single person associated with the company to authentically

represent Shazam's mission statement.

The challenge now? For businesses to think hard about the ways they identify, source and engage prospective employees. With social media and mobile now omnipresent, candidate behaviour will change rapidly - from the channels they engage with one another, to the methods of engagement with recruiters.

Either way, learning what works best could prove to be the difference between winning and losing the signatures of the tech talent market's hottest prospects.

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"...given the reputation of being a recruiter, people did not always want to take your call anyway"

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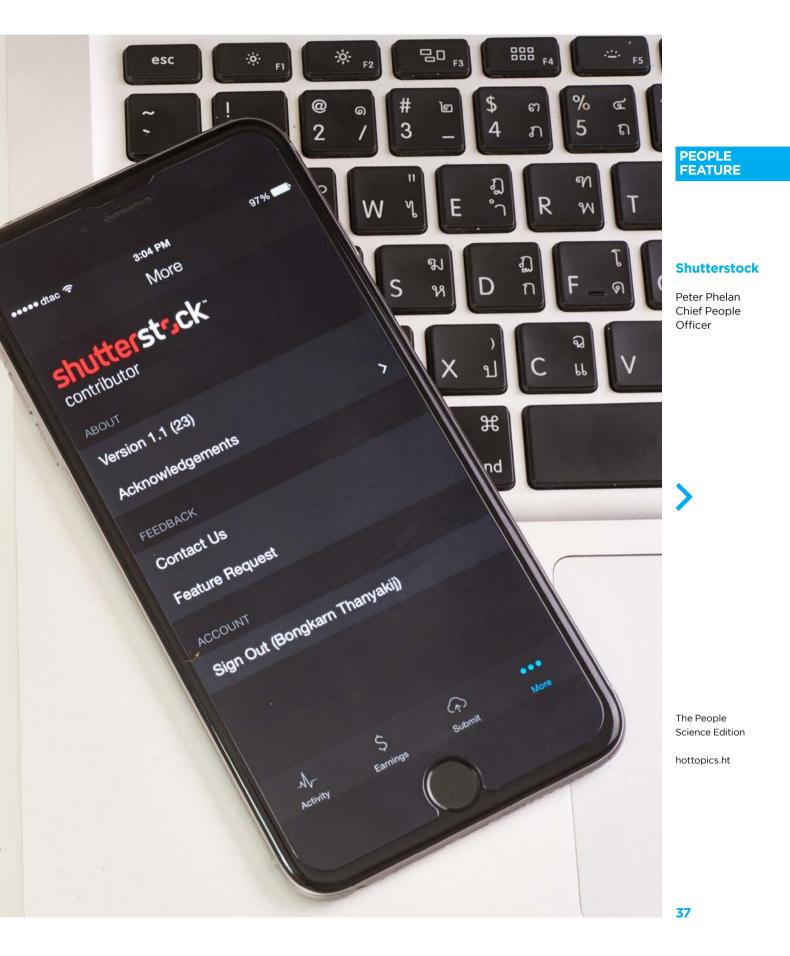
POWER TO THE PEOPLE TEAMS

Shutterstock

Peter Phelan Chief People Officer

> People are changing what they want from a career. It's not just about money any more. So shouldn't HR change too? Peter Phelan, Chief People Officer at Shutterstock, thinks so.

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Peter Phelan Chief People Officer



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According to the Millennial Branding Report, up to 45 percent of younger employees will choose workplace flexibility over pay. They are thinking about work differently from their predecessors, envisioning roles that will enable them to flourish and contribute at a high level right away. They expect transparency, feedback and insights into how they fit into the company's mission.

Companies that are quickest to accept this as a new reality will benefit as well. By giving individuals the insight they crave to do their jobs better, managers will empower individuals. They will help them take ownership of projects they might have avoided in the past. The result? A company can edge closer toward achieving its short-term and long-term goals. With a model built upon honesty and empathy, everyone can win.

Needless to say, these are nice goals. But you have to build systems that enable them to flourish. At Shutterstock, we have invested heavily in both people and processes to make the whole system work better. The structure for our teams comes first, and the infrastructure of our workflow follows.

If something comes up we are in a position to respond to it immediately.

What underlies all of this is transparency. We live in an era of unprecedented access to information that used to be guarded closely.

Take the popular perception of a business, for example. For a long time, a company's success was assessed and measured by publications such as Consumer Reports. This would be the only option for a consumer to get information and data.

But the tech era changed the equation. Today sites like TripAdvisor and Yelp offer up what ordinary people are saying about a company and its offerings. In the past, we may have received a filtered or sometimes distorted view of a brand. Now, it's a no-holds-barred look inside.

Thus, consumers have more power than ever. They drive not only awareness, but also consumption. Customer reviews are a helpful and reliable tool, and earning positive reviews and popularity is high on the minds of executives. Some companies rose to the top of their industries based on customer service alone. Social media has only



"Creating an identity for each individual would allow us to better leverage the huge value of the data they generate."

Shutterstock

Peter Phelan Chief People Officer

accelerated the pace and underscored the value of winning customers through great user experience, both online and offline.

Now, a similar trajectory is coming to the field of employment. Simply, the view of a company from the outside has changed. It follows that the same transparency must be applied to the inside.

What does this mean? Well, potential candidates for a position are arriving informed, prepared, and well-versed before they even step foot in the door for an interview. So the onus is on employers to keep up with the conversation going on out there. We must keep on top of who's saying what about us, and why?

This transparent world of employment shouldn't scare you. In fact, it's a change for the better. It's always been a part of any Human Resources department's responsibility to keep up with what's happening, and now thanks to the availability of original blog posts, updates on LinkedIn, and reviews on Glassdoor, everything you need gets shared and surfaced on its own. More information is always better than a shortage of it.

With these changes, the typical and traditional HR function has had to adapt accordingly. We've championed a rebrand ourselves. The modern move to label ourselves "people teams" instead hasn't been a coincidence. Thanks in part to the transparency happening externally around a company's prospects and pursuits, we've embraced HR transparency internally, putting employees first.

We have shed the stigma attached to old terms like "personnel" or "human resources" that painted a picture of an administrative function. We are not mere enforcers of company policy. Many of those old administrative duties are performed today by online platforms, freeing up people like me to focus our attention on real concerns and the career development of our employees.

We've done this by creating tools such as employee OKRs (objectives and key results). They went into effect at the beginning of 2016. The key component of an OKR is to allow employees to make the first suggestion as to what they should be working on in the year. Together, we tweak and fine-tune those goals and measurements of success.

Now, all employees across the company know what we are working toward as a whole, and how they fit into the scheme of things. It signals a strategic shift in the way we think about people and their lifespan at a company. And while it was a labor-intensive process to put into place, it helps us to know we're investing in the future.

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DocuSign

Peter Navin CMO of People

A BRAND NEW TOOL FOR TALENT

For decades, companies have cultivated consumer-facing brand values. They should pay as much attention to how their employees perceive them, says Peter Navin, CMO of People at DocuSign. He describes the immense power of having a great brand story inside the organization.

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Advertising legend John Hegarty wrote: "A brand is the most valuable piece of real estate in the world: a corner of someone's mind." He was talking about the extraordinary power of the brand to influence a consumer's decision-making.

Billions of dollars are spent developing this brand power across every conceivable media channel. So it's natural to ask: can brand power help HR professionals to attract and retain talent?

The answer according to Peter Navin, CMO of People at San Francisco-based DocuSign, is a resounding yes. He says: "You have to build a great brand story to get people interested in your company.

"You have to have all of the attributes that are

interesting to current and prospective employees too."

Of course, it's easy to think of branding as something that springs from a great TV ad, print campaign or even a flash mob briefly commandeering Barcelona with an army of space hoppers.

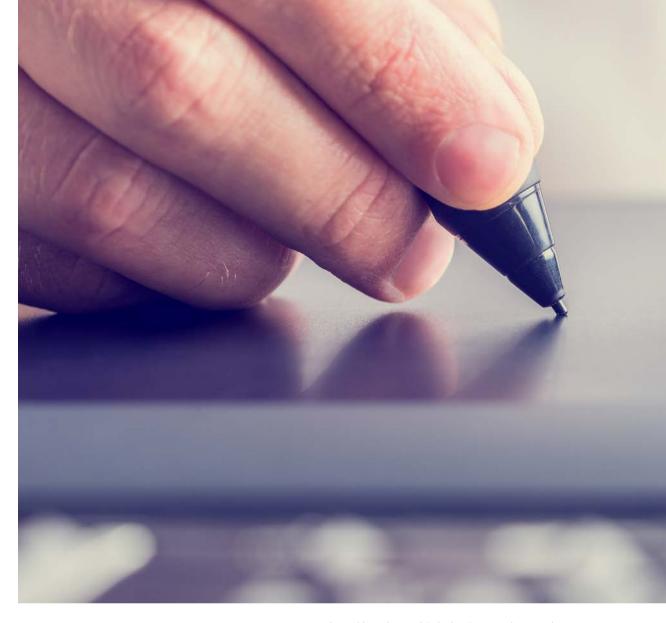
Instead, the real power comes from communicating a story or big idea to the people you are trying to influence. How you do this can be as fluid as your imagination allows.

Brand power: from first contact to when they leave In the case of HR, it starts from the very first touchpoint a candidate has with an organization, extends



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Peter Navin CMO of People



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to how an individual first found and applied for a job, and finishes with the overall experience, how they leave, and everything in between.

One of the best examples of this was NASA's drive to find its next cohort of astronauts, in a beautifully illustrated video that ran on Quartz last year. Examples like this come to show just how powerful a strong employment brand and experience can be to a organization seeking talent.

Of course, once you have established a strong brand that attracts great candidates, another challenge awaits: how to keep track of them once they are inside the organization.

To make this easier for all parties - and to better understand the attributes candidates look for in the company - Navin and DocuSign have integrated various tools into their offering.

Such tools have had the two-fold benefit of providing, "visibility around the productivity of recruiters and the overall candidate experience," to better understand how they can improve.

DocuSign looks at this data carefully, and then cross-checks it with various employer-rating sites

such as Glassdoor. This helps it to understand, with an astonishing degree of accuracy, where its employment brand sits in the marketplace.

Your employment brand - and how to improve it

So why has it taken such a long time for businesses to consider the workplace experience of their prospective and current employees - and the impact it has on the employment brand?

One obvious reason is that companies have been so focused on customers. For understandable reasons, they have evolved their products to best meet consumer needs. And when the influx of data gathering capabilities first hit, brands used the resulting insight for this purpose.

The problem with this thinking is that it leads to tunnel vision. It can leave the employee experience by the wayside.

Navin believes this is short-sighted. It's why he opted for the title 'CMO of people' to send a signal that he would combat this historic issue, wanting instead to shift the focus back to employees.

"Knowing your customer is critical," explains



DocuSign

Peter Navin CMO of People

Navin, "but we need to know our future or current employees just as much."

After all, like a brand, a company must always be thinking about the future and how it is going to recruit new users or retain current employees.

Honesty is the best people policy

This matters more now than ever. Thanks to social media, anyone can find out what it's like to work for a company. Suddenly, the ability to attract great talent hinges on what others think. So businesses need to recognize that their employment brand matters significantly more than what an employee can offer an organization.

After engaging in a significant amount of research, Navin identified the key elements employees desire in a company and in a workplace environment.

"Great leadership, solid communications, the most competitive products in the marketplace, and your ability to enable philanthropic, social responsibility type activities," he explains.

Honesty counts too. Navin says: "The other piece

"Knowing your customer is critical, but we need to know our future or current employees just as much."

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of advice I would give, is to be genuine about the phase of the company you are currently at and what kind of company you are. Lots of people want to chase the experiences of other companies that are highlighted in the media and sometimes just being genuine about who you are allows you to attract people better because they know exactly what to expect."

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WeWork

Soo J. Hong Chief Human Resources Officer

Since opening its doors in 2010, the New York based shared-office startup, WeWork, has scaled to around 50,000 members spanning 21 cities around the world. It's received \$1.4 billion in funding at a valuation of \$16 billion.

Even by tech standards, this represents astonishing growth. The sheer size, talent and energy of its global community is something never seen before from a co-working space. But WeWork has brought a new philosophy to the 'rented office' sector. Every new location aims to inspire and stimulate the informal interactions that stir innovation among its members.

Clearly, such rapid growth cannot be achieved without a great team. But hiring a huge number of people in a short timeframe is not easy. That task fell to Soo Hong, who was brought in by the two founders at the start of 2015. Inside barely more than a year, she oversaw the growth of the business from 250 to 1200 employees.

Hong shared with Hot Topics the story of her journey, as well as some ideas on creating a data driven HR function.

What makes the people function at WeWork different from other HR departments?

When your professional passion of helping people discover the best version of themselves intersects with the company you work for - whose mission it is to do that for its members - it is the perfect storm.

And in the past year, I have had the pleasure of watching WeWork grow from 250 to 1200 employees worldwide. It has been quite a ride.

We count on the people we hire to deliver against our mission, and so in creating people programs and paying very close attention to how we recruit, create experiences and deliver training, our culture is very different to what you would traditionally imagine. We concern ourselves with doing things in the right way, which we go about through constant testing, data analysis and by using research to continually improve.

How are you using data to help ensure your hiring methods are working effectively?

My background before WeWork was not just in the people business, but actually in commercial management consulting.

Running regressions and looking at data has always been a passion of mine, so when I shifted into people issues, I sought ways to apply analytics for people insights.

To give you an example, when I first joined we said that we were going to grow 2 or even 3x from the 250 employees we already had.

Now, I knew coming from an executive search background that whenever you put data into a system, what usually happens is as follows: garbage in, garbage out. If the quality of information you capture in the first circumstance isn't great, the decisions you make ultimately can't be great either.

That's why I felt we needed to implement a robust applicant tracking system. A system that was able to capture from our largely millennial population, (who frankly don't have a lot of time) the information that would determine whether or not someone would be a great cultural fit.

And so now for every interview we do, we have a very simple scorecard; thumbs up or thumbs down. We look at this data retrospectively against the hires we make, comparing it with the interviewing panel that were involved in hiring that particular person.

We then look at how the hire is doing after 90 days or even six months. This way we can start to see who the best culture testers are in our company from an interview panel standpoint.

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EDITOR'S CORRECTION

Since publishing, Soo Hong is no longer employed by WeWork. She was appointed VP People at Tinder.

"What we've seen over the course of the year was that employee referral have grown 3-4x"

We had some hypotheses initially on those who we thought were real culture carriers. It is amazing to see in the data, based on scorecards, who got hired and how these individuals performed, who is most effective at candidate assessment.

What approach do you take to understand how happy and engaged your workforce is?

I was at a conference earlier this year and there were many HROs and Chief People Officers, all of whom are extremely esteemed and for whom I have so much respect.

They were talking about employee surveys, and I suddenly remembered 15 years ago when I was part of a large-scale employee survey program, the kind of questions they were asking and the type of data that would have been produced off the back of it.

Contrasting the end result of these massive one-size-fits-all surveys with what we are trying to achieve at WeWork, and because of the nature of our culture, doing a comprehensive survey didn't seem quite right for us.

I wasn't sure that what we'd get back would be as informative as empirical behavioural data. That probably stems from my early exposure to quantitative marketing. I much prefer looking at what people actually do, not what they say that they will do.

So, one of the proxies we've been watching as a people team, is the percentage of our employees that refer friends or someone they know to come and work for WeWork.

What we've seen over the course of the year was that employee referrals have grown three to four times, meaning between 30 and 40 percent of our workforce have referred somebody to work here.

These numbers make us feel like we're doing good things, or at least trending directionally well. I mean, what kind of friend is going to refer someone to work somewhere if they are miserable at work?

There are a lot of things looked at by traditional HR leaders, but we actually think there are other ways to look at information and data to really lay the foundations of a data driven and progressive HR function that works well for WeWork and our mission.

What steps are you taking to ensure diversity in the WeWork employee population?

I am really proud of the fact that we have an incredibly diverse workforce.

Our frontline-facing team, our community department, has a very balanced ratio of gender - near 50-50 - and in 2016 so far we have seen more women promoted than men.

I think it's a really powerful statement that one of our most important departments (which really impacts our member experience and our overall business) has such diversity.

We're also very conscious of the fact that we are training young men and women to become future leaders.

With this in mind we look at data to monitor that and provide opportunities for these individuals. We do it by implementating an extremely robust global platform that allows team members to see how they're doing.

The day that we launched the platform, we wanted to find out whether or not certain teams were more engaged than others, and whether certain teams were more likely to log on through their mobile app versus online.

On the first day, we had over 50 percent of our team log on and conduct a transaction.

Initially I wasn't sure how I felt about just 50 per cent, but the external implementation partner told me that in the history of this platform, they had never seen activation numbers so high.

I believe it is all about creating a culture where you use data to get feedback about your teams, so that we can improve the overall experience and make people feel that they are really supported in doing their life's work.

WeWork

Soo J. Hong Chief Human Resources Officer

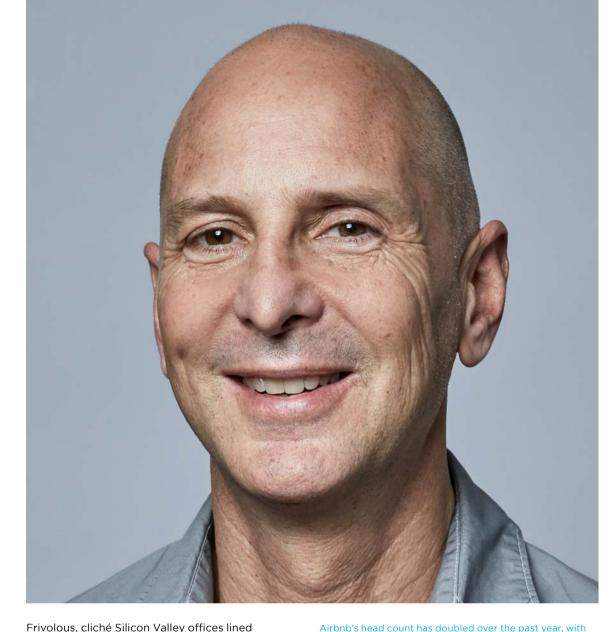
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Airbnb

Mark Levy Director of **Employee** Experience



with Ping-Pong tables and nap pods are no

Airbnb wanted to create a working environment espousing its mission statement to 'Belong Anywhere' instead.

longer enough.

It began by turning a 72,000 square foot, century-old San Francisco Battery warehouse into a workplace that acknowledges its heroes - those men and women worldwide - who have opened their doors to a cultural phenomenon that has turned the hospitality industry on its head.

Based in San Francisco's neighborhood of SoMa, you'll find replicas of famous Airbnb listings, complete with photos of the hosts themselves, living walls and a perfectly cylindrical meeting room modeled on the war room from Stanley Kubrick's Dr. Strangelove. If this wasn't enough, there's an enormous atrium offering a cross-section view of eight meeting rooms based on homes featured on the site. Oh, and the bathrooms are wilderness themed.

Every square foot of meticulously designed space

Airbnb's head count has doubled over the past year, with over 500,000 listings in 33,000 cities and 192 countries.

adds to the allure of working, or becoming a part of the \$25.5bn valued organization. Which as Mark Levy, Airbnb's Global Head of Employee Experience sees it, has become more of a movement than a company.

Its 80 million guests and 2 million listed properties show just how far it has come. Since 2008, millions of users have foregone the hotel price premium to instead spend a night - perhaps unwittingly evangelizing the very modern idea that access trumps ownership.

Levy's role, he explained, as Airbnb's head count has doubled over the past year, is to recruit passionate believers in Airbnb's values, and to ensure these values transcend the business globally.

Many businesses try and hammer home company values by brandishing aspirational mantras across walls, marketing collateral, email signatures, and

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anywhere eyeballs will see them.

Airbnb has opted for a slightly different approach. It's called the 'employee experience' department.

"You don't see the mission and values on the wall. Instead, you feel it when you walk through the door and you see it in the way that people behave with one another, and with anyone who comes into contact with us. Being a host is one of our most important values, and it is how we behave both with one another, and everyone else."

Who needs an HR department anyway?

Before Levy arrived, his employee experience team did not exist. Nor did HR in a traditional sense. Instead these functions were spread sparsely across different areas of the business.

What did exist however, was a firm personal ideal held by Levy of what employee experience should entail.

"My view on what great employee experience is, is creating an environment where employees can be their best self at work, particularly given how much time is spent there, doing something that creates meaning both in their life and work."

Such a view came from Levy's past work. Prior to Airbnb, he headed up global talent for Landor Associates, a branding and design agency.

Little did he know, learning to lead talent within a creative organization such as this would lay the foundations to work at a company founded by two RSID designers (Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia both of whom went to the Rhode Island School of Design).

In an interview with Fast Company, both spoke of how design sits at the very core of Airbnb.

Chesky, Airbnb's CEO, says "from conference rooms modeled after listings to storyboarding the user experience, design has a voice in everything—even in how a new employee starts their first day."

Chesky goes on to explain that at the Rhode Island School of Design, he was constantly challenged to question how design could be brought into the boardroom. A sentiment that has remained with him to the point that now, at Airbnb, design "runs the boardroom."

"When I started to talk to Brian [Chesky] about the role there was just a small group called 'talent', a larger team called 'recruiting' and then a third group on the other side of the company called 'ground control'," Levy says.

Ground control, or the "secret sauce" behind Airbnb's employee experience comprises of individuals placed around the world turning aspirational values into tangible reality. It uses internal communications, workspace design and employee events like the Airbnb Open, where 5,000 enthusiastic hosts (the individuals who rent out their properties) descended on Paris for three days of talks, parties and sight seeing.

Levy's point is that before he joined, the three pieces laying the fuzzy foundations of an HR department were all separate. Together however, he knew they could be incredibly powerful.

"They were all reporting into different parts of the organization. So when I joined I said to Brian, 'I think we have to look at all the pieces and parts that are responsible for employee experience and work out how to bring them together under one roof and one leader."

This was the start of the expansion of the employee experience department. What came next was a re-think of the 'talent' team where Levy added specialization, rewards, talent partners and talent programs.

"And then we added in things like food and facilities, safety and security."

Not to mention the introduction of 'citizenship', which saw employees allocated 4 hours a month to volunteer in their local area. The program, since its introduction, has ballooned into becoming a staple of Airbnb's corporate social responsibility (CSR) remit.

"It [the three areas] works very fluidly," Levy explains.

"Essentially the way we approached it was through looking at the entire employee journey from start to finish, considering how we support employees, starting with those that are interested in coming to work for Airbnb all the way through to our alumni network."

"Our mission," he explains, "is to create a workforce where you can belong anywhere, but in employee experience we're focused on how we can make people feel like they belong here."

Airbnb

Mark Levy Director of Employee Experience

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Box

Evan Wittenberg SVP People

ESCAPING OLD HR

The Human Resources function is undergoing quite some overhaul. Its replacement makes its predecessor appear rather antiquated.

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When you think of Human Resources, do good thoughts come to mind?

It is something Evan Wittenberg, SVP People at enterprise content management platform company, Box, asks whenever he speaks at conferences. And unsurprisingly, the response tends to be the same.

One person, maybe two raise their hand sheepishly, and the rest keep their arms pinned to their sides.

Your Mom was in HR wasn't she? Evan says to those with their hands up.

They always nod back nervously.

A good ice breaker maybe, but it paints a sorry state of affairs for the Human Resources profession. Its innate focus on record keeping, workplace safety and wage management proved to be invaluable last century.

And given that for some organizations little has

changed, many now question the place of Human Resources in the modern business organization altogether.

The negative connotations conjured by the term, forced Wittenberg to get rid of the dead weight, rebranding it the 'People Department' in an attempt to shed the name and negativity once and for all.

"We wanted to escape the old HR," Wittenberg explains.

"I think of myself as a business leader first, and an HR professional second."

"That may sound slightly odd, but if you think about it, should I really be willing to do anything in my function that doesn't directly help the organization succeed?"

"Take employee happiness as an example, which I get asked whether I care about a lot. Research shows very clearly that there are amazing benefits



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to businesses whose employee population is happy."

Economists at University of Warwick in the United Kingdom for example have found that happiness among employees led to a 12 percent spike in productivity. Conversely, unhappy workers surveyed were 10 percent less productive.

Performance, retention and the attraction of great talent are influenced too, says Wittenberg.

"Now, regardless of research, of course I do care very deeply whether our people are happy. It matters a lot to me, but I wouldn't spend an ounce of organizational resource on it unless I knew that it very clearly aligned with business success."

It is such an approach, Wittenberg believes, that constitutes the new HR. Business centric, value driven and atypical to the old HR.

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Old HR doesn't use data to its fullest capability

The second reason that old HR doesn't provide enough business centric value is because data and metrics aren't underlying everything they do.

"Google pioneered this side of HR and I was fortunate enough to see it first hand," explains Wittenberg, who spent 4 years at the Internet behemoth as Head of its Global Leadership Development team.

"Google broke down the barriers between academia and actual organizational life through the department's aim of bringing the same level of intellectual rigor to people decisions, as they do engineering decisions."

Interestingly, it doesn't call the HR department an HR department either. Instead, its VP and HR leader Laszlo Bock prefers People Operations.

Justifiably, he demands data-based decisions on every aspect of the people side of the business. But what's more is that Bock has shared Google's approach to hiring and managing the very best talent with others.

It is part of the reason he wrote the best-selling 'Work Rules!' So that others can borrow, tweak, and adapt what Google have already done.

There's no denying that Google's approach to data has been a real eye-opener for the rest of the field.

It does, however, only make up one part of this piece. The other side is metrics.

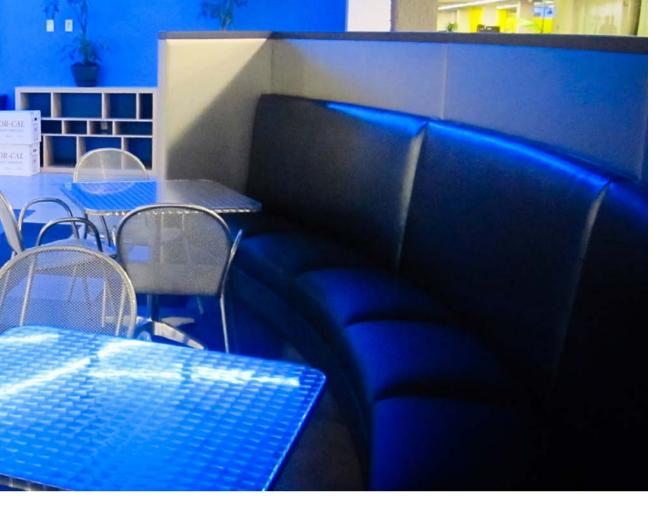
Wittenberg explains how when he started at Box, he spent a large proportion of his opening few weeks speaking to Boxers [employees] about their likes and dislikes about the workplace.

"Interestingly, the number one recurring complaint among Boxers was a concern that open jobs were being filled by people from outside of the organization rather than those internally."

"And we wanted to use metrics to help quash these concerns, deciding current employees would fill 20 percent of our open head count."

The approach satisfied that particular piece quite easily, Wittenberg recalled.

"So we figured why stop there?" Having individuals take up management roles



Box

Evan Wittenberg SVP People

from within an organization can be incredibly beneficial.

It has a positive impact on culture by ensuring the same values permeate throughout, as well as a demonstrating inward mobility.

When employees are able to see that those around them are being promoted it will spur them to work harder too.

"We decided then and there that 50 percent or more of our people manager roles would be filled by current Boxers too. And just a year ago in 2015, we decided to do the same with our executive roles."

"These metrics are all measured every 6 months and so far we have consistently been on track. It is then reported to the rest of the company."

HR has historically been known as the enforcer

The third and final reason old HR is problematic, is because the function has traditionally had a tendency to share Thomas Hobbes' view of human nature.

That means assuming that employees are inherently 'bad', misbehaved and unless watched, pre-disposed to do wrong. That view creates a necessity to build a function to enforce procedure and ensure employees didn't do the inevitable.

"It meant that HR came to be known as the function that says 'no'. And such a view on human nature," says Wittenberg, "is an awful and fundamental flaw. When you put in place measures to control the 1 percent of people who might do

wrong, unwittingly you handcuff the 99 percent that won't."

Instead, employees need empowerment, trust and autonomy if they are going to be able to reach self-actualization and do their best work.

"And handcuffs unsurprisingly aren't the way to do it."

"I think it's a fundamental shift in people functions born out of Silicon Valley companies, but not yet quite understood by traditional businesses.".

The success of new HR, inevitably will help bolster the case, and be an example of how, when properly applied and executed, HR or the 'people' function, can have a significant and measurable impact on a company.

It's important to note that success in this instance will have little to do with what is classically considered core HR work such as payroll, benefits administration, staffing, and recruiting.

"Instead," Wittenberg suggests, "the work will be strategic in nature and lay the foundations for businesses to succeed."

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"We decided current employees would fill 20 percent of our open head count."

onefinestay

Dan Atkinson Group VP People

IS THIS THE ANSWER TO THE TECH TALENT WAR?

Tackling talent acquisition is no easy task. Doing it at scale is even harder.

Dan Atkinson couldn't resist the product and growth agenda that lay ahead of onefinestay, the London based un-hotel offering that connects holiday-goers with a curated selection of some of the finest properties the world has to offer, with hotel-like comforts and services.

Having recently been acquired by French hotel group AccorHotels, the ambitious task of being in 40 cities in five years time looks increasingly likely. Its challenge now is scaling effectively to meet that goal. This means all aspects of the company, including the people agenda, which Atkinson oversees "end-to-end." His focus as Group VP People, is about integrating scalable excellence into its core HR processes.

For now this means tackling talent acquisition. And whilst looking to answer one problem, his team, by happy coincidence found the answers to another two in the process. The first is a truly scalable talent acquisition strategy. The second is a new revenue stream. Or as Atkinson calls it a "win, win."

The talent acquisition problem

In an article published by Deloitte, the author

recalls a conversation they had with the global CIO of a thriving, innovative tech company. He said, "I need a few senior architects. Note that I didn't say good senior architects. I gave up finding good ones months ago. I'd settle for a few mediocre ones – do you know any who are in the market?"

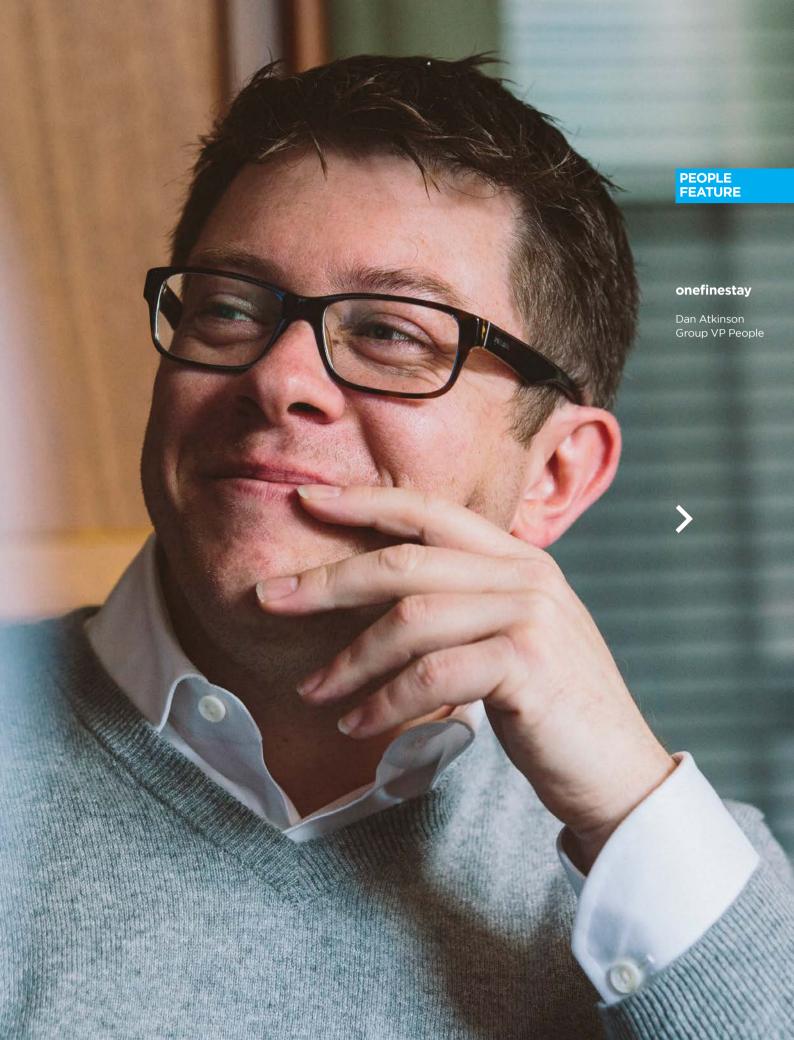
Everyone agrees that talent acquisition has gotten harder, yet it remains just as critical for success. This holds especially true for the engineering and development fields. After all, crafting the code that sits beneath today's incredibly complex products requires the talent to do so.

Now consider this problem from the perspective of onefinestay, a company based on great engineering whose differentiating factor - providing a one-to-one hotel like experience in a rental home - relies on the assurance that the systems and tools behind its platform are able to deliver on this promise.

The question is twofold. How do you ensure the talent you bring into your organization is of the highest quality. And, how is this achieved at scale?

The solution borrows the principles and practices of CRM, and alters it to make it applicable to talent

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acquisition. It has left onefinestay with an enormous candidate database of 40,000 individuals. All vetted, and all confirmed to be "A* superstars" in a variety of positions.

The idea came about when Atkinson was trying to solve this question: "How can we build an active community of onefinestay advocates that will help us drive greater efficiency in our hiring agenda?" As well as questioning how he could leverage its candidate community to further develop our network of brand advocates. His team started working through the problem, getting in touch with old candidates and re-engaging them, essentially refreshing its data, in a similar ilk to the workflow management tools found within CRM. It was at this

point that their eyes were opened to, "just how many people had been engaged over the years," across a multitude of channels.

Following up on these newfound 'leads', Atkinson recognized, as the valuable database started to take shape, that there was the huge opportunity "for innovation, creativity and lateral possibilities." Drawing inspiration from one of the company's values of being a "springboard for your career," Atkinson and his team began to think about what exactly they could do with this database of great talent.

"If they weren't necessarily right for a job with onefinestay, why not see if they could find the right career opportunity with somebody else?" He said.



onefinestay

Dan Atkinson Group VP People

And having developed the idea further, one finestay now charges others for access.

The sell to a VC backed business is clear. It immediately widens your talent pool, and cuts down a process that can take months to deliver. This holds particularly true at a management level. Screening candidates, conducting interviews, negotiating employment terms and getting a new hire up to speed is extremely time intensive. Onefinestay now hopes it can "unlock further investment to develop, scale and grow other areas of the HR agenda." It has not just solved the talent acquisition piece and opened up new revenue streams, but it has also provided a scalable solution to an area of business that historically has been really problematic. The

question is now, could this approach to talent acquisition be the answer to the tech talent wars?

"How can we build an active community of onefinestay advocates that will help us drive greater efficiency in our hiring agenda?"

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Klarna

Malcolm Kemp VP HR

1 DON'T LIKE THE TERM HR'

Malcolm Kemp is integrating HR technology into the growth plans of Swedish unicorn, Klarna. Here's why.

Klarna is a Swedish payments startup that enables online shoppers to buy items just by submitting their email.

Its popularity in its native Sweden alone saw it process an incredible 30 percent of all sales online, with as much as \$9bn flowing through its system in 2014.

Its valuation of \$2.25bn highlights just how much of a juggernaut it has become, helped by its backing from renowned Silicon Valley VC firm, Sequoia Capital. Next on the agenda is tackling US and UK markets

Ensuring an HR system is in place to stretch and grow with the company as it scales is front of mind for its VP HR, Malcolm Kemp. He walked Hot Topics through the shift in HR in recent years, why he dislikes the term HR, and how best to provide the right information to managers.

HT: How has HR changed as a profession over the course of your career?

Since starting out in HR in my early 20's, I've seen the profession become more integral to businesses.

There has been a realization, albeit delayed, that an HR department with the right tools can be an incredible value add to an organization. With technology built into the seams HR can become a true business partner, provide more access to organizational data and help make business decisions significantly easier.

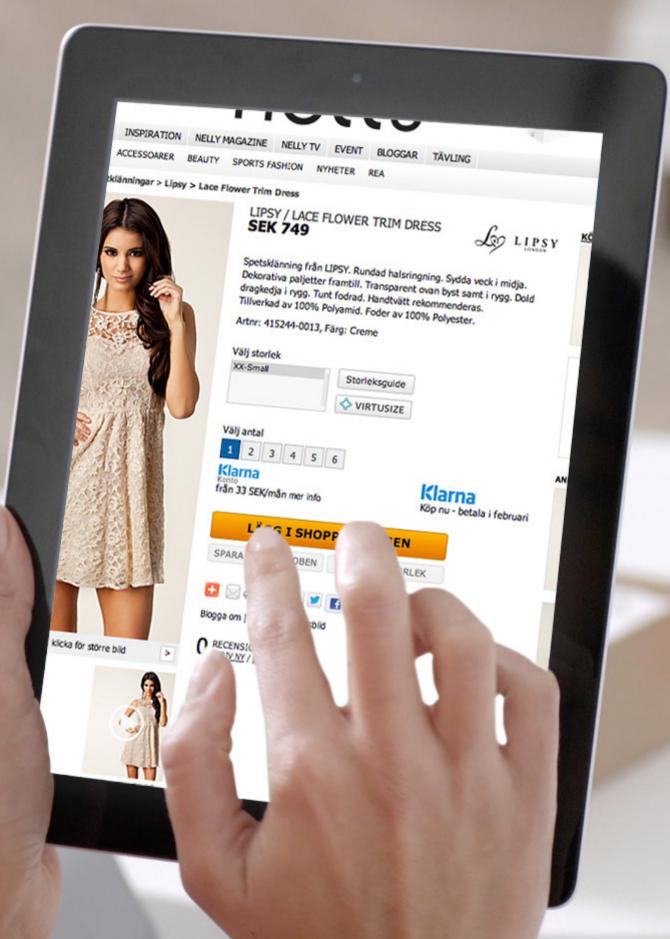
The other aspect is recruitment. And over the past 20 years, technology has had a similar impact on this area as it has the rest of HR.

HT: Why do you think it's taken such a long time for executives to realize that HR is such an important asset to businesses?

I think there have been problems with both sides. HR professionals have certainly changed over the last 20 years to become more business savvy. They've become more relevant in applying HR principles toward business related subjects.

So, rather than HR technology being purely theoretical and something seen as lacking in relevance to the business place, I think HR professionals have had to become more commercial

The People



Klarna

Malcolm Kemp VP HR

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Malcolm Kemp VP HR

> in their outlook and in the way they apply their skills. In terms of why has it taken so long? The image of HR used to be much more tired than it is today.

I now feel it is very strategic. It feels very transactional compared to the past.

HT: It seems that everyone has a problem with that term: HR. The name is being shaken and we are seeing Chief People Officers and People Scientists rise to prominence. Why do you think that is?

I have a problem with the term HR too. I've been thinking about this recently because I don't feel 'HR' really sums up what you are looking to do with your people. Instead, HR is used as a catch-all term for processes that have little business sense within organizations.

Having said that, I think it's much more important to change team behaviors rather than just changing the department's name.

It's probably incumbent on me to make sure that my team gives a different impression other than 'HR', rather than just change the name and hope that that does the job for you.

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HT: How are you using data to better help your hiring processes?

We do use data to inform this side of the business quite a lot.

I wouldn't say that we're using big data, but I think being able to analyze the various steps of your recruitment process from a data perspective is really important. Even if it is just to gauge a better understanding of the efficiency of your own processes.

Having this data also enables the analysis of this at a much greater volume than ever before, which provides a view of the effectiveness of your communication strategies to various candidate pools. "We introduced HR technology to help us leverage the benefits of our systems, putting a framework in place to allow us to continue to move in an agile way."

You can track behavior from how people interact with you at the very early stages before they even become a candidate, as well as looking at candidate behavior on your website. For example, when they're most likely to apply for a job and in turn when it is most sensible to push content out to them. All of this is incredibly interesting and powered by data.

HT: What excites you most about the future of HR and what is has to offer?

Looking at our own environment, at Klarna, and what tends to happen in high-growth companies is that HR can get left behind.

Until recently our challenge was purely keeping up with the business on a transactional basis.

This meant hiring people, getting their contracts out, making sure they get paid. And at some point during that growth period, as we recognized, you need to ensure you're making the environment one that the talent you're hiring can actually thrive in.

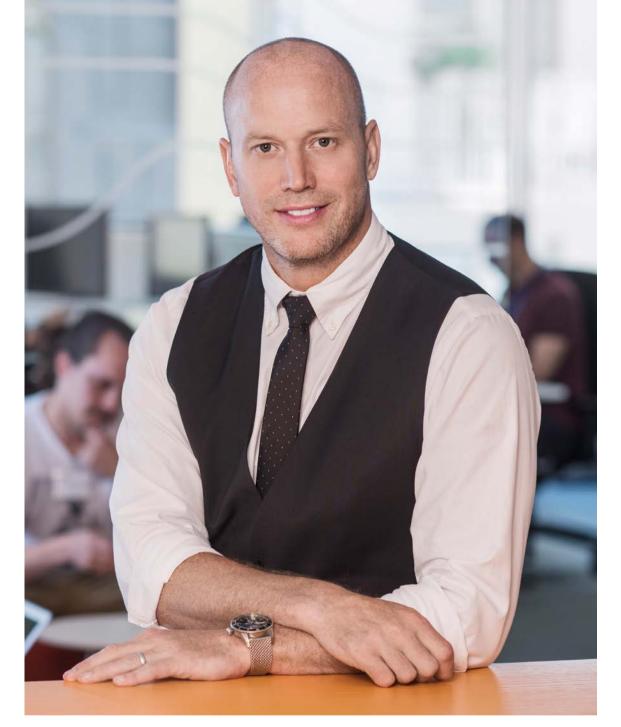
To that end we introduced HR technology to help us leverage the benefits of our systems, putting a framework in place to allow us to continue to move in an agile way.

Our main focus was around simplifying the employee environment to help people do what they need to do more easily.

Take managers as an example. To do their job to the best of their ability, they need to be able to access and see information around their talent really easily, to be able to feedback quickly and in turn, enable individual empowerment.

With that in mind, if a manager has to come directly to HR and ask for information, this just won't do. It is no longer efficient enough. Instead, the information they require needs to be instantly accessible. And this is what we are looking to do.

It sounds simple, but what we're looking to



Klarna

Malcolm Kemp VP HR

maximize this year, is the ability for managers to do things themselves, and in turn provide our talent with more knowledge and information.

Being able to make sensible decisions based on information is, in my opinion, the best way to deploy resources.

Without this information it can become difficult to know what those resources are, what they are good at, and how well they have been performing recently, making your role as a manager more difficult.

I'm excited about being able to take away some of those barriers, and remove those inefficiencies so that managers, rather than having to take that extra step and ask for information, just know it, or can easily find it themselves.

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"If a manager has to come directly to HR and ask for information, this just won't do."

63

MOVING FROM DATA TO INSIGHT

Lyst

Matt Buckland Head of Talent

Managing employees and an HR function requires a more holistic approach than exploring issues from the surface.

People use statistics as a drunk uses a lamppost for support rather than illumination. E. Houseman (1903)

Our online activity has meant a ubiquitous lens is shone on our lives where the accessibility of data leaves leaders believing every metric can be measured, compared and leveraged, contributing to a curious new world of seemingly 'crystal clarity' that was seldom thought possible.

The problem, however, arises when data collection occurs without the insight required to take contextual influences into account. This leads to deeply consequential misinterpretation and misjudgement to arise.

This ubiquitous lens, unless harnessed correctly, stands to confuse as much as it will clarify.

For me, context is the cornerstone of moving from data to insight in a human way, which will clarify, rather than confuse.

Nowhere is this more important than in the HR function, where the source of data; humans, operates in a fashion that led author Phillip Lieberman to label us as the "unpredictable species."

This is best illustrated by highlighting a data source that is predictable, like books in a bookstore.

For the bookstore, doing inventory is easy. The metrics needed are things like how many books are on the shelves and how many have been bought.

Once a book is bought, there are no external factors influencing its behavior not to be removed from that shelf.

The book doesn't decide that its commute is too long, or that its wife no longer wants it to work at its company, or that its pay packet isn't satisfactory.

Thus the likelihood of it leaving the bookstore, (unless I am seriously overlooking something) for any reason other than it being bought or stolen is highly unlikely. This is because the external factors surrounding it are predictable.

Humans on the other hand are a different story. Aristotle wrote that we are "rational animals" pursuing knowledge for its own sake. We live by art and reasoning he said.

And whilst I'm sure many HR professionals

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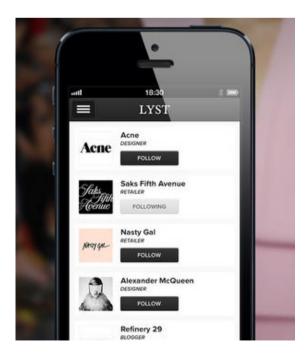
would love to see their employee population be as predictable as books on bookshelves, myself included, the multiple external factors that make humankind human are unlikely to change soon.

This makes producing blanket metrics and chasing large numbers such a dangerous game. In doing so, the individual is naturally rejected. It's like saying "we have increased our likes on Facebook which means that we are doing better as a company."

All that we get from this is a top line number. What do you actually mean by this? What does this equate to? If these questions aren't followed up, then where does the return on investment come from? Is this useless?

This problem becomes even more salient when you consider that HR systems for the most part aren't built in ways that enable contextual data to be factored in.

Nor will HR systems allow data to be exported for further analysis, leaving you stuck analyzing the top line, leaving retroactive approaches to remain.





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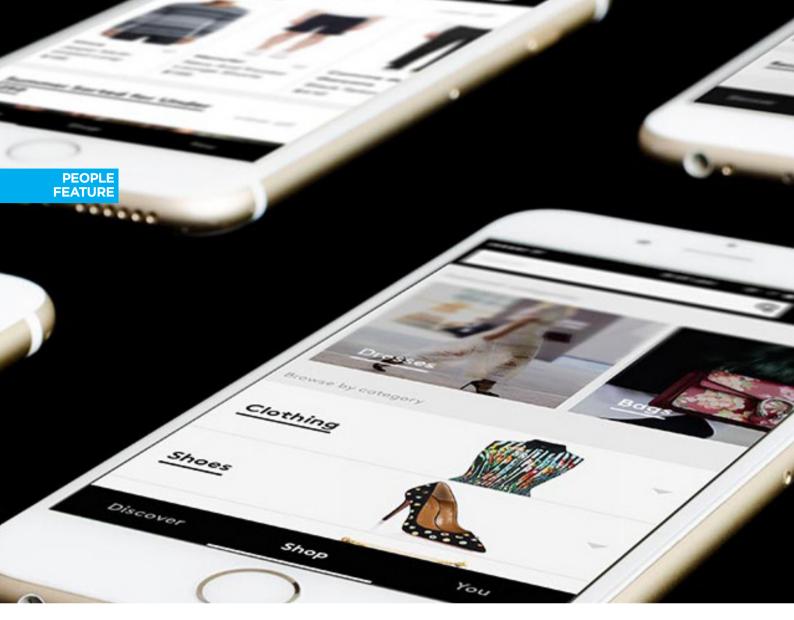
Matt Buckland Head of Talent



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"My advice to those individuals taking the data approach is simple: ensure you keep the human in human resources."



The right tools for the right job

Until contextual factors can be included within HR systems and data analysis, I personally believe HR isn't critically equipped to have a discussion around data at all.

Instead of building a data set from the ground up, specifically focussing on important questions we want answers to alongside the external factors that influence them, we tend to take a retroactive approach by attempting to find data to support new questions.

The same applies for the big data phenomenon (which by the way, unless you are Facebook or some other such platform, you are unlikely to truly have a big data set).

Gartner's definition of big data is "high-volume, high-velocity and/or high-variety information assets that demand cost-effective, innovative forms of information processing that enable enhanced insight, decision making, and process automation."

Playing with data sets of this nature without taking into account the contextual factors that directly influence decision-making processes as

they happen will ultimately lead to skewed results and misinterpretation.

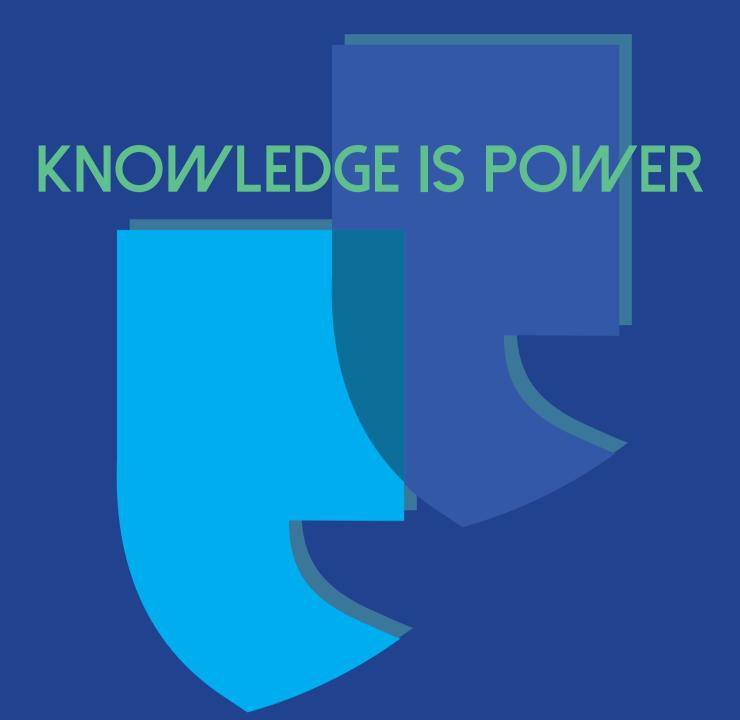
So my advice to those individuals taking the data approach is simple: ensure you keep the human in human resources.

I am not ruling out this data-driven approach, however, ensuring HR professionals take a step back is key, especially if we are to glean the results required that are free of bias.

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"I personally believe HR isn't critically equipped to have a discussion around data at all."



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