

THE RESOURCE

VOL. IX, ISSUE I

HR INSIGHTS

Magazine

from the eyes of industry leaders

TRENDING IN 2020

ACCESSIBILITY,
BALANCE,
AND
ADAPTABILITY

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Induction, Orientation, and
Onboarding: What's the Difference?

Competitive Hiring Doesn't Rest on
Technology Alone

How to Build an Effective Employee
Welcome Package

Excerpted from a feature article on *The Resource*, from the local publication, *'Forsyth Woman'*. Story by Martie Emory.

Empowering people to find their place!

"Celebrating 40 years in business at the end of this past August, *The Resource* has a proud history and an inspired story. It is truly a time-tested, innovative company that has navigated a variety of obstacles to achieve this impressive 40th anniversary milestone.

Their message to business clients is a simple one: "Are you operating as your best self?"

That theory is clearly at the heart of the company's success through the years, as they have expanded their services to meet the ever-changing needs of their clients and their employees, while keeping one step ahead in the business world through innovation, creativity, and personal insight.

For CEO Kathy Hartung, it has been both a personal and professional journey of learning, adapting, and making the most of every opportunity. From early beginnings in 1979 under the name of Executive Resources, to a new focus – and the new name Temporary Resources – with Kathy coming on board in 1983, she has guided a respected business through recession, changing workplace dynamics, and the challenges of new technology, for 36 of its 40 years in existence.

The early '90s brought changes in the business recruiting industry, with the introduction of background checks, followed by a turn to technology, with the mid-'90s bringing computers and an official "database" of applicants into the workplace. Housed in a single location in Winston-Salem in the 90s, the company then expanded to Greensboro, Mocksville and Lexington. The rollercoaster of the recession of 2008 brought still more change, and eventual rebranding and name change in 2014 to *The Resource*, to better reflect the company's mission. In 2017, the expansion continued to markets in Salisbury and Yadkinville.

"There were always plenty of challenges and obstacles to overcome," says Kathy.

Believing every employee has their very own set of unique abilities, *The Resource* team also aids companies in optimizing their current workforce as well. With every change or adjustment in staff, they assure clients they are already solving issues for the future. How empowering!

At the heart of their success, Kathy and her staff consider change to be a positive factor, and one they embrace at every stage of development.

"What's interesting is that the same challenges repeat over and over during the years, with just a different face or disguise," she says, with confidence that a positive solution will always be within reach!"

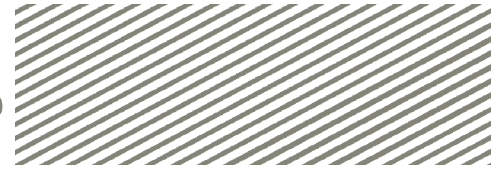
THE RESOURCE

“ At *The Resource* we are passionate about our story, and the stories of evolution our clients and employees have to tell. Here's to the next 40 years of fulfillment! ”



Best Regards,

Kathy Hartung, CEO



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HR INSIGHTS

from the eyes of industry leaders

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At the start of each new year, many business leaders and managers reflect on the experiences and circumstances that made the greatest impression on them during the preceding year. They think about how those forces shaped their work lives and those of their customers and, most importantly, about what the coming year will hold for people and organizations across the globe. They also explore the major trends that affect industries and disciplines other than HR and relate those trends to the world of work.

ENDING IN 2020

ACCESSIBILITY,
BALANCE,
AND
ADAPTABILITY

BY CECILE ALPER-LEROUX

Today major socioeconomic, geopolitical, and demographic forces are at play that will radically affect workforces and workplaces and require immediate and intentional action, even if their effects are not yet obvious. In 2019 companies realized the importance of holistically addressing their overloaded employees' well-being while simultaneously understanding and planning for the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In the coming year organizations must extend their view further into the future—while grappling with a long-term labor shortage and a massive crisis in public trust—if they hope to ensure their survival.

The majority of business leaders are focused on growth, yet countries and organizations around the world are facing unprecedented numbers of unfilled jobs. What workforce will fuel the growth for which those business leaders are striving? Smart technology, artificial intelligence, and robots will play roles in the future workforce, with some sectors of the economy benefiting from their contributions more than other areas. But those solutions alone won't be enough. In order to survive and thrive in the coming years, companies will need to tap into new and underutilized workforce segments and empower them in uniquely humanistic ways.

FOCUS ON ACCESSIBILITY

Even as much of the world struggles with record-high labor shortages, “an estimated 386 million of the world’s working-age people have some kind of disability” and their rate of unemployment “is as high as 80 percent in some countries.”¹ As the world’s population continues to get older, many members of that workforce will age into disability, which will add another factor to an already complex labor scene.

To meet their labor needs, organizations should explore how to incorporate the largely untapped potential of working-age people with disabilities. In short, they will have to make work truly accessible. As the number of organizations investing in design and implementation initiatives increases globally, it’s time to expand these programs to explicitly include nontraditional labor segments, such as gig workers, returning retirees, people with visible and invisible disabilities, and the neurodivergent.

Companies can no longer ignore or shut out a large portion of the workforce if they are to meet the needs of their businesses and customers. Organizations will need to invest in technologies that can augment and complement the capabilities of diverse groups of people while making their workplaces (and transportation to these workplaces) fully accessible. Central to this effort is broadening

the scope of “accessibility” to include access to new opportunities, which makes inclusion—not just accommodation—critical.

In order to meet the requirements of more potential employees (including generalists, specialists, gig workers, retirees, and remote and virtual workers), organizations will want to redefine work to be more fluid and flexible. This could entail introducing cyclical or intermittent work (which is not the same as seasonal work) or life-cycle-based assignments and compensation. If they want to attract diverse and disabled employees based on actual job requirements, organizations must provide significantly better accommodations so that all employees can contribute to their full potential.

BALANCE TRANSPARENCY AND DATA PRIVACY

Investments in accessibility are more challenging—and more critical—to achieve amid today’s rising global uncertainty and decreasing trust in institutions such as the media and government. People continue to place their trust in their employers, though: 58 percent of respondents to one survey say they see their employers as “trustworthy source[s] of information about social issues and other important topics on which there is not general agreement.”²

In this situation, organizations risk losing talent if they cannot strike the right balance between the transparency, candor, and open communication that foster the trust their employees want and expect from them, and the general mounting pressure to be less open in order to protect their workers’ data and privacy. In the face of the growing movement to consider employees’ control and ownership over their data as a human right, organizations are often ill-equipped to successfully and legally balance the needs of all parties (as evidenced by the growing number of complaints, fines, and lawsuits in these areas).

HR’s charge is to lead organizations as they navigate these murky waters. (This holds true in Europe as well: even though data privacy is better defined there, plenty of ambiguity remains for how to meet legal requirements.) Policies and programs must be updated continuously as regulations proliferate and their complexity and scope increase. At the same time, communication needs to be clear and consistent, and information and systems must be both secure and accessible to all.

BUILD AN ADAPTIVE WORKFORCE

HR circles have been talking a lot lately about the need to adapt. But this discussion has largely focused on transforming the organization—and paid little attention to transforming the workforce. This oversight can only hinder companies’ efforts to become environments of trust and belonging. For organizations to become more accessible and fluid places in which all people can thrive and be productive, the workforce needs new adaptive skills and capabilities.

Organizations must build adaptability into the workforce by identifying and developing the skills needed to flourish in the ever-changing modern workplace. The business world pays lip service to new critical professional skills such as self-awareness, empathy, and resilience, but has taken little action to establish them as the primary gauges of a person’s contribution to and impact on an organization.

Too many business leaders and recruiters prioritize technical skills even though new entrants to the workforce have so much more to offer. People want to be recognized for their contributions and want to learn the adaptive skills they need to have positive impacts on their organizations and communities. But unfortunately the business world lacks tools for quantifying those impacts.

These are some of the main trends that HR will have to grapple with in 2020. A great deal is at stake financially and socially, and organizations will not survive—much less evolve—without taking note of these trends and responding to them. This is the time for the business world to step up by protecting employees’ privacy while being more open with them; by making work more technologically, cognitively, and physically accessible; and by putting people first in every way by developing and valuing their adaptability.

Cecile Alper-Leroux is Ultimate Software’s vice president of HCM innovation. With more than 20 years’ experience in both national and global markets, she is an internationally sought-out speaker, thought leader, and visionary on human capital management trends, hot topics, and global strategies. She can be reached at cecile_leroux@ultimatesoftware.com.

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Induction, *Orientation*, and Onboarding

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

BY STIJN DE GROEF

The period that starts when a new hire signs a contract and ends after the first few months on the job can set the tone for his or her success (or failure) within an organization. But though many companies have great new-recruit processes, too often they conflate induction and orientation with onboarding. By engaging mostly in activities that fall into the first two categories while assuming (incorrectly) that they've therefore covered the third, those organizations are missing opportunities to engage and delight their ambassadors of tomorrow.

Induction is the process of welcoming a new team member into the organization and its culture. It might involve a slideshow presentation on team culture, for example, a meet-and-greet or tour with relevant coworkers, gifts such as a welcome book or company swag bag, or a matchup with a veteran “buddy” to ease the new hire’s first-day jitters. Induction is a short-term event, usually completed on a new employee’s first day.

Orientation is the process to familiarize new hires with company policy and guidelines. It’s all about compliance and getting new hires up to speed on processes, paperwork, and the company’s general administrative structure. It might include an introduction to payroll and expense processes (including setup of a travel card), an overview of the organization’s branding and style guides, completion and processing of company policy documentation (e.g., health and safety forms, privacy policy, emergency contacts), and setup of a computer and phone and review of company guidelines for their use. Orientation is a short-term activity, often completed by the end of a new recruit’s first week.

Induction and orientation are necessary stages of any new hire’s journey. But they’re both short-term experiences and represent only the first few steps of that journey. And that’s why onboarding is necessary.

Onboarding is an umbrella term for the process that spans the full new-hire journey. It starts when the contract is signed, includes the very beginning of day 1 (preboarding), continues through a new hire’s first days and weeks on the job (induction and orientation), and lasts until the new employee is fully settled in the new role (integration), regardless of whether that takes three weeks, three months, or even a complete year.

This long-term strategy recognizes that a staggering 20% of new hires leave for a new opportunity within the first 45 days on the job.¹ Activities in this period typically fall into the following categories:

- Organizational (administration, policy, documentation)
- Functional (training, goal setting, performance reviews)
- Social (connection building, welcome drinks, “buddy” mentoring)
- Cultural (expectation setting, company purpose and vision, stakeholder engagement)

In short, onboarding is a comprehensive, two-way process for sharing knowledge, communicating values, building connections, and managing compliance. Its ultimate goal is to transform new hires into confident, empowered team members and insiders.

Induction and orientation are important elements of the new-job experience. But because many companies don’t go any farther, they are missing out on great results: “organizations with a strong onboarding process improve new hire retention by 82 percent and productivity by over 70 percent.”² By building an all-encompassing onboarding process, organizations can create a culture in which their new hires will thrive.

A passionate HR professional, entrepreneur, and cyclist, Stijn De Groef is the CEO of Talmundo (www.talmundo.com), an HR technology company. Before founding Talmundo in 2012, he worked in senior talent management roles at EMEA and at the global level at Swarovski and Goodyear. De Groef now travels the world to spread the word about Talmundo’s employee onboarding software and the strategic importance for businesses to get onboarding right.

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How Robotic Process Automation

BY MICHAEL HABERMAN

Artificial intelligence and *machine learning* are words that feature heavily in today's technology-focused publications. Most HR professionals are already familiar with those two concepts. There's a third one—robotic process automation—with which they still need to become well-acquainted.

Robotic process automation (RPA) is the deployment of robotic technology by companies to automate various repetitive tasks. These aren't the typical metal robots or androids seen in science fiction movies. Rather, the more accurate way to envision RPA is as a digital workforce that can complete many of the monotonous duties that can bog down HR efficiency.

THE NEED FOR AUTOMATION

Today's workforce is more demanding than ever. Job seekers expect quick answers to questions and rapid responses to their application submissions. If a company is too slow to deliver them, it risks having its competitors steal away top talent from right under its nose. At the same time, the list of what is required from HR departments continues to grow and now includes managing the needs of the current workforce, onboarding new employees, mitigating disputes, upholding company culture, and many other responsibilities. In order to survive and compete in its niche, an organization should make an effort to identify tasks it can leave to automated tools.

- **Talent acquisition.** Sorting through mountains of applicant data (resumes, cover letters, social media channels, etc.) can be incredibly time consuming. With help from RPA technology, HR professionals can expedite this process by scanning and filtering applicant data for specified criteria that the company deems necessary for a role. The resulting list of candidates should be similar to one that an HR professional would have produced had the process been performed manually.

Can Transform the HR Department



- **Onboarding new hires.** Each new hire possesses unique skills and experiences, but the process of onboarding new employees is mostly the same. Many steps of that process (such as enrollment in the company's payroll and benefits systems) can be performed by RPA bots, which "are particularly good at performing 'swivel chair' tasks requiring the ability to access multiple applications to get work done," such as retrieving data from one HR system and uploading it into another, scanning documents for completeness, and compiling reports from various data sources.¹
- **Payroll administration.** Of the many duties that HR professionals perform, payroll is perhaps the most repetitive because it typically involves large amounts of data entry. The repetitive and monotonous nature of this work increases its susceptibility to errors. By deploying RPA technology to automate payroll procedures, HR professionals can reduce the inaccuracy rate to near zero percent, correct mistakes introduced during manual insertion, and significantly reduce the amount of time needed to complete the payroll process correctly. Automating payroll procedures can also help ensure that employees are paid on time, thus improving employee satisfaction.

IS RPA THE ANSWER TO EVERYTHING?

Although RPA can help an HR department make great strides toward efficiency, it's important to acknowledge that human involvement is still essential for successful HR execution. RPA bots can indeed perform many of the duties with which they are tasked; however, in order to run most effectively, RPA bots need to be instructed on how to go about performing these tasks. Additionally, a qualified individual should be assigned to oversee that each process is being done correctly and make any necessary modifications to the bot's process. That said, combining the effectiveness of RPA technology with the guidance of qualified HR professionals can completely transform an organization's HR department.

Michael Haberman is cofounder and senior HR consultant of Omega HR Solutions Inc. His company offers HR solutions that include compliance reviews, wage and hour guidance, supervisory and managerial training, strategic guidance, executive advisement, and more. He also contributes articles to the *Workology* website. He can be reached at mhaberman@omegahrsolutions.com.

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Competitive Hiring Doesn't Rest on Technology Alone

BY CHARLES COY

Brands are built neither in boardrooms nor in vacuums, according to Susan LaMotte, the founder and CEO of the employer brand consulting firm exaqueo. A company doesn't become a candidate's "dream place to work" overnight, she says, but only after deep introspection and bold transformative efforts. Before a company can start building (or rebuilding) an employer brand that appeals to top talent, it must first collect—and understand—raw data about existing processes.

Based in Charleston, South Carolina, exaqueo has an international client list that includes Fortune 500 firms and companies in the entertainment, telecommunications, pharmaceutical, and hospitality industries. In a recent interview, LaMotte discusses several recent trends she has noticed while helping some of those companies build their brands with the goal of attracting top job candidates.

THE CANDIDATE SHOULD BE AT THE CENTER

Historically, HR departments have taken action in response to their own needs, says LaMotte, with the hiring process typically designed to benefit the organization. An applicant tracking system, for example, may make things easier for the company because it provides better insight into the hiring process internally. But because it's not an externally transparent system it doesn't necessarily help the candidate. LaMotte believes that it's now time for organizations "to put the candidate at the center, truly understand how they feel, and how they think, and start making our decisions on how we elevate HR's function, based on how to better the experience of the employee or the candidate."

Through exaqueo, LaMotte has helped launch an experience tracking model that emphasizes the candidate's view of the journey to employment. Rather than tell the story from the perspective of an HR representative (put out a job application, review interested applicants, call candidates in for interviews, etc.), this new model takes the candidate's point of view: find out that a company exists, become interested in that company as an employer, etc. HR teams that adopt this model become more empathetic as they gain a better understanding of the candidate's mindset.

PREFERENCES MATTER

"In HR, we traditionally think in terms of process," LaMotte says, rather than in terms of "how somebody feels." But the latter is a factor that exaqueo does not ignore. If a client asks exaqueo for help attracting female job candidates to a technology company, for instance, the solution is not to advertise on women-oriented job boards or to feature more women in advertisements. Instead, exaqueo works with each client first to understand which steps in its hiring journey have the most impact on a group of applicants and then to strengthen the process based on those findings. For example, to a certain kind of candidate, the application step may not feel as important as the interview process. With that information in mind, exaqueo urges companies to place more weight on the areas applicants excel at or prefer.

PUT RESEARCH AND STRATEGY BEFORE TECHNOLOGY

LaMotte has noticed that companies are investing heavily in data in order to better understand whether certain technologies are good investments for them or whether they should instead focus on other business aspects (such as strategy). As an example, she describes the use of video and virtual reality to show job candidates what a workplace looks like on the inside. An effort like this is effective and productive only if the kind of candidate a company wants to attract cares about what the workplace looks like and feels that seeing it is a must; or if this tool is a part of company strategy to show the varied workplaces within the organization. "We're so focused in HR right now on technology and on technology tools that we've lost interest in research and strategy," she says. "Technology should not be a means to an end but should be the tool that helps you articulate

or activate your strategy. Technology has absolutely changed the way that people job search, but technology is a reinforcer—it's not a driver."

STEREOTYPING IS (STILL) DANGEROUS

According to LaMotte, companies that rely on generational stereotypes when making hiring decision are doing themselves a disservice. "Too often, we're stuck in this sort of rut of generalizing and stereotyping: 'All Millennials want this,' 'All Gen Z want that,'" she says. "Some might, but that might not be the case for your organization—or the kind of Millennials or young people who are going to perform in your organization." Instead, she suggests, look at what phase of life potential candidates are in and find out about their preferences and interests and how and where they could fit in the organization.

DON'T IGNORE RELATIONSHIPS

Thanks to today's overwhelming emphasis on technology, many people underestimate the influence of relationships on job searches. LaMotte argues that employers who ignore relationships do so "to [their] detriment when it comes to employer brand and marketing," because "no one takes a job offer without talking to someone first, even if it's casual conversation." Exaqueo's "whole self model" considers the many outside-of-work factors—such as personal relationships, home habits, significant others and information consumption habits—that influence a candidate's decision to take and keep a job. Companies that seek to leverage relationships to help build their employer brands must identify internal brand ambassadors that can speak to the culture of the organization and explain what makes it a great place to work. Learning about candidates, their interests, and their relationships can help organizations improve their ability to make successful hires.

Charles Coy is the senior director of analyst and community relations at Cornerstone. Responsible for evangelizing about Cornerstone's innovation in talent management technology solutions, he is interested in the ways that technology can affect how organizations evaluate, motivate, and value their employees. He can be reached via Twitter at @oleskoo.

HOW TO BUILD AN EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE



PACKAGE

BY DANIELLE FREEDLAND

Up to 20 percent of employee turnover occurs within the first 45 days an employee joins a new company.¹ The \$3,000 to \$43,000 price tag for each such departure makes onboarding an essential aspect of HR service and a significant influence on employee engagement and retention.² Creating a welcome package for new hires is one way to reduce turnover by helping new hires feel excited about joining the company and calming their nerves by providing clear expectations, outcomes, and goals for their first day. A well-thought-out welcome package can leave a lasting impression and empower new employees in their roles.

TIP: Create a welcome package template that can be tailored for the needs of each new employee. A consistent approach will help to prevent knowledge gaps during the onboarding experience.

1. SEND A WELCOME E-MAIL

Engage new employees from the moment they join the organization by sending them a welcome message. MasterCard's HR department excels at this strategy:

[I]mmediately after a new employee is hired, they receive a welcoming e-mail [that] includes links to company videos and access to a website where they can "update their employment information, upload a photo for their badge, read about learning opportunities, and complete paperwork for benefits enrollment, taxes, and direct deposit."³

In addition to information that can help a new employee settle in quickly, this message could include a short video from the CEO. Here's the basic structure of an effective welcome e-mail:

```
Welcome to [company name],
[employee's name]!
[CEO welcome video (optional)]
We're so excited to have
you join us as our [position
title].
Just a reminder, your first day
will start on [date] at [time].
Please ask for [onboarding
facilitator name] when you
arrive, and he'll/she'll meet
you in the lobby. Our dress
code is [dress code], so [an
item you'd wear at work] are
fine with us!
Again, congratulations. We
look forward to having you on
our team!
[company name]
[logo]
[address]
[Google Map link for
directions]
```

When it's well-crafted and customized for each new hire, a welcome message can help increase an organization's onboarding engagement rate and strengthen the HR function.

2. PROVIDE AN EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Every organization should give new hires a handbook that clearly outlines the company's policies and

rules as well as its expectations of its employees. The handbook can also provide information about the company's history, mission, vision, and values (for example, by describing its impact on the world and its clients). By highlighting company culture and development options, a handbook can also promote lifelong learning.

3. MAKE A FIRST-DAY AGENDA

Help new employees hit the ground running (and not get lost!) by providing a clear outline of the activities and projects on their first day. For example:

```
9-10: Team introduction and
office tour
10-11: Software review and
setup
11-12: Meet with Human
Resources
12-1: LUNCH (Our treat!)
1-2: [Department] training
2-3: "Why [company name]? Our
vision, mission, and values."
3-4: [Department] training
4-5: [Department] training
```

Be sure to include locations (building, wing, floor, and room information) so new hires know where to go. And even though a particular event is officially slotted for an hour, be sure to leave a few minutes at the end of each segment for water and bathroom breaks and for employees to get to their next destinations.

4. SHOW OFF THE LOCAL AMENITIES

Help new employees feel more positive about being at the office (where they'll be spending a lot of their time) by making them aware of amenities in the area. Where are the best nearby parking spots? What grocery stores are convenient? Which neighborhood cafes and restaurants have the best food? Provide information about nearby gyms, dry cleaners, and day care facilities as well.

TIP: Create a map that shows both the office and nearby top amenities.

Helping new employees learn about useful and interesting features of their new "work neighborhood" can ease their transition to their new location.

5. PROVIDE ONBOARDING INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR HUMAN RESOURCE INFORMATION SYSTEM (HRIS)

By automating many of HR's data-oriented functions, an HRIS can save a company both time and money (and free up HR to focus more on the actual people).

HRIS applications vary from company to company, so welcome packages should include information about the specific HRIS new hires will be working with. In addition to the login information they'll need to get set up with the software, this information should also include a detailed list of the items they're required to complete.

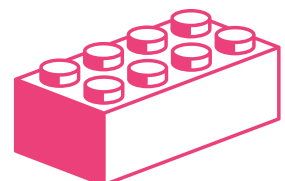
6. GIVE OUT SOME SWAG!

Company swag is an optional component of the welcome package that won't make or break a new hire's onboarding experience. But this relatively inexpensive gesture can make a new employee's first day feel special. Consider handing out a few gifts that are practical for work-related tasks (USB drives, notebooks, pens, etc.), as well as some with broader applications (t-shirts, backpacks, umbrellas, coffee mugs, hats, etc.). Company swag not only helps promote the organization's brand (both inside and outside the office), but it helps develop a new employee's sense of belonging with the company.

No one signs a contract for a new job and shows up the first day already knowing everything about his or her new position and feeling like a full member of the company. With a welcome package that lays out clear expectations, outcomes, and goals, an organization can set the tone for the rest of the new employee's time there. Making new hires feel welcome and informed is the first step toward helping them succeed in their new roles!

Danielle Freedland is a content marketing specialist at Humi (www.humi.ca), Canada's HR, payroll, and benefits solution for growing teams. She originally wrote this piece for JazzHR (www.jazzhr.com), where they're on a mission to make recruiting and hiring easy, effective, and scalable no matter what growth looks like at your company. The Jazz Performer Platform doesn't just help your company grow, it can help your recruiting process grow up, putting you on the path to hiring "Performers Only."

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The Secret to
Improving
CROSS-FUNCTIONAL COLLABORATION

BY PAMELA DELOATCH

Even people who aren't Elton John fans have heard many of his songs, and many of them probably find it impossible not to sing the chorus of "Bennie and the Jets" whenever they hear it on the radio. But most people are amazed to learn that Elton John didn't write those famous lyrics (and that Daniel isn't actually his brother). For more than half a century, the legendary singer has relied on poet and lyricist Bernie Taupin to write the words that John then sets to music—a great example of cross-functional collaboration.

When most people think of cross-functional collaboration they envision a similar ease of process in a business environment, with each team member doing their part. But the truth is that collaboration isn't always that easy. It can be challenging to create a culture in which team members raise a variety of ideas and concepts, are encouraged to sincerely and passionately debate those ideas, and eventually land on the best solution. Despite the difficulties of managing true collaboration, however, the research demonstrates that teams that collaborate get stronger results and better business outcomes.

CAUTION: COLLABORATION IS NOT GROUPTHINK

When everyone in a group thinks the same way or is hesitant to express a different opinion, fruitful ideas don't always get discussed, and unworkable ideas don't always get dismissed. A look back to the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion or the Space Shuttle *Challenger* explosion shows the dangers of having a roomful of "yes men" and "yes women." In both cases, the pressure for group members to agree overrode individual concerns. Had those concerns been fully recognized, the U.S. government and NASA may have avoided catastrophes. More recently, tone-deaf ads from established brands (such as Pepsi and Dove) illustrate the ongoing problem of what happens when too

many like-minded contributors sit around the conference table and none expresses a differing opinion.

COLLABORATION REQUIRES DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

To avoid groupthink and to get the best business results, organizations are learning that they must have diverse and inclusive teams working collaboratively and cross-functionally. Diverse teams bring greater creativity and innovation, make better and faster decisions, are more engaged, and have better retention.¹ For example:

- Inclusive companies are “1.7 times more likely to be innovation leaders in their market.”²
- The more diverse, the better: teams that are diverse based on gender, age, and geography made better decisions than all-male teams.³
- Because diversity increases innovation, “Companies that have more diverse management teams have 19 percent higher revenue.”⁴
- Diverse and inclusive environments provide stronger business outcomes and can increase employees’ ability to innovate by 83 percent.⁵

What makes diverse teams so effective? When people from different backgrounds bring a variety of perspectives and more ideas to the table, that makes it easier for the team to focus on the most innovative or actionable ones. Additionally, when a team knows that multiple perspectives will be presented in a meeting, members show up more prepared to discuss and debate ideas.

But inviting people of diverse backgrounds to the table isn’t enough. That’s just diversity without inclusion. It’s essential to include them in the process as well. They have to participate in the conversation confident that their ideas will be heard and, if worthy, implemented.

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE THROUGH HORIZONTAL COLLABORATION

Diversity applies to a variety of characteristics, including (but not limited to) gender, ethnicity, age, or ability status. But talking about diversity is just the start to creating a team that brings together different experiences and perspectives. Even as an organization strives to create a diverse and inclusive population, it can increase these characteristics within teams through cross-functional collaboration.

Teams often operate in silos. Maybe the marketing department wants to enhance the company’s brand with new content but doesn’t consult with the sales or customer service departments to find out what pain points customers want to address most (and consequently, the message fails to resonate with the audience). Or maybe HR wants to implement new technology to streamline processes but during the planning doesn’t include stakeholders from other departments.

Knowing how critical it is to develop diverse and inclusive teams, one might think it would be natural for leaders to make sure cross-functional collaboration occurs regularly. The benefits of such collaboration are certainly clear. One recent study found that relationships between silos are more likely to yield better customer solutions, “bring people together and help build mutual understanding and lasting relationships,” empower people to ask questions, provides opportunities for employees “to move into roles that expose them to multiple parts of the company,” and bring many other benefits.⁶ Similarly, another study found that companies with more cross-boundary collaboration “earn higher margins, inspire greater client loyalty, and gain a competitive edge.”⁷

ENCOURAGING HEALTHY INTERACTIONS

Why don’t organizations invest in cross-functional collaboration more often? For one thing, forming a team for a project can take time away from the employee’s original job. Also, a cross-functional team can be territorial or have difficulty communicating.

Having teams with different perspectives creates the groundwork for collaboration, but the environment also has to allow that quality interaction. Set the expectation for original thinking and honest opinions. Establish group rules on how to disagree respectfully. And make sure that everyone has a chance to be heard. For example, employees who call in from remote locations don’t always get noticed during meetings. Also, some employees like to think on their feet, whereas others prefer to let their ideas marinate before sharing. These conditions and discursive styles can affect which ideas get airtime and which get lost in the abyss.

EMBEDDING CROSS-SILO EXPERIENCES IN COMPANY CULTURE

Getting people from different departments to work together doesn’t usually happen by

accident. This collaboration has to be structured, generally around a critical need (such as a 24-hour hackathon or a multi-month project). Support from senior leaders is crucial so that team members feel empowered to participate.

Make cross-functional experiences part of performance expectations. If a team member is on a cross-functional team, include that work in the employee’s performance management goals and discussions. Likewise, if employees from other areas are working on a project through your department, provide feedback and recognition (and encourage other members of the team to do the same.)

Not all cross-functional collaborations can be as successful as Bernie Taupin and Elton John’s five-decade-long partnership. (After all, few cooperative efforts will yield 255 million record sales worldwide!) But when cross-silo teams come together thoughtfully and consistently, they won’t necessarily write Top 40 hits, but they *can* achieve tremendous results.

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Inclusion Doesn't Just Happen— It Takes Work

BY BRITTANY J. HARRIS

“We want our employees to bring their ‘whole selves’ to work.”

Statements such as this abound within the many organizations that espouse a culture of inclusion. Similarly, there is no shortage of think pieces, self-help articles, or “best practices” policies that encourage individuals to lead happier, healthier lives by modeling authenticity and “showing up” daily as their best selves. Such statements and policies are usually rooted in good intentions and even substantiated by studies that suggest organizations benefit when employees feel valued for what makes them unique. Although a carefully crafted vision or values statement that affirms inclusion looks good on paper, truly realizing and activating a culture in which all employees can show up and be their best, authentic, and “whole selves” takes work.

In her extensive research on inclusion, management scholar Lynn Shore has developed a model that can help organizations improve their work toward inclusion.¹ This model puts inclusion at the intersection of belongingness (the extent to which one feels that they are part of the group or culture—that is, an “insider”) and being valued for uniqueness (the extent to which one feels that what makes them unique or different from the group will be valued and appreciated). According to this model, inclusion exists only where there is both high belongingness and high value for uniqueness.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EITHER BELONGINGNESS OR VALUE FOR UNIQUENESS IS LOW?

Where there is both low belongingness and low value for uniqueness, people experience the opposite of inclusion: exclusion. Fortunately, very few organizations are in that situation. Rather, in their work toward inclusion, most organizations exhibit high belongingness but place a low value on uniqueness. This perpetuates a culture of assimilation in which individuals are treated as part of the culture (or considered “insiders”) only when they conform to the dominant norms of the culture and minimize what makes them different.

A culture of assimilation may compel people to downplay aspects of their identity that are different (also known as “covering”). It may also affect the extent to which people with invisible differences feel safe to disclose things about themselves. All of those situations can be exhausting to experience—a response that counters organizational strides toward inclusion. A culture of assimilation makes it near impossible for individuals to show up as their “whole selves,” yet many organizations find themselves here despite language that espouses inclusion.

Alternatively, when a high value for uniqueness goes hand in hand with low belongingness, a culture of differentiation exists. In these circumstances, one’s differences or capabilities (say, to reach a particular market or meet a business need) are valued, but the individual is not seen as part of the larger culture. In that case, the presence of that individual in the workplace might manifest as tokenism. For example, an organization may strive to meet the needs of its diverse clientele by increasing the representation of Latinx individuals among its employees and may even place a high value on bilingualism in those new hires. But if the organization does not also foster a culture in which Latinx employees truly feel that they belong, those employees won’t exhibit the expected productivity, retention, and performance.

Inclusion happens when a high value is placed on what makes someone different *and* that person is treated as an insider and part of the broader culture. Think about the difference between being forced to assimilate into a culture and being a stakeholder who helps create it. The latter is the goal and is where many of the benefits associated with inclusion are located: high performance, engagement, retention. Although many organizations *intend* to foster inclusion, they often fall short because they are unable to create a culture of belongingness and place a high value on differences and uniqueness.

WHAT CAN ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS DO?

- **Educate.** Diversity and inclusion (D&I) training gets a bad rap these days, but when it’s done well it has the capacity to shift perspectives, build skills, and empower action. D&I education should involve a developmental approach that meets people where they are in their journeys and in the organization. Each individual’s D&I learning curriculum should reflect the reality of their unique role and sphere of influence within an organization. Education and learning should focus on building skills and fostering greater self-understanding by addressing topics such as culture, identity, cross-cultural communication styles, cultural patterns in the workplace, power, and the difference between equality and equity.
- **Inquire.** Find out how different groups’ experiences of the organization vary. Although many organizations conduct employee engagement surveys, very few segment results according to various demographic criteria or include specific questions that elicit perspectives and experiences related to inclusion. Survey tools and analysis that do not include relevant demographic data (e.g., ethnicity, gender, generation, ability) can perpetuate an assumption of sameness in both experiences and identity.
- **Interrogate.** What are the organization’s espoused values vis-à-vis its enacted values? The website and policy handbook may say one thing, but what are the employees actually experiencing? What underlying messages are leaders communicating in unspoken norms, behaviors, and systems (such as how they conduct meetings; reward accomplishments; identify, hire, and develop talent; or speak up on issues that occur beyond the workplace)? Encourage leaders to take an honest and critical approach to identifying where the organization aspires to be and where it truly is now.
- **Expect.** Develop systems that enforce accountability and an ongoing commitment to inclusion. For example, if delivering on sales targets is important to a role, an organization usually requires candidates to demonstrate their capacity to meet that goal before they are hired and current employees to do so in their current positions. Similarly, if inclusion is an espoused value, it will exist only if leaders and employees alike are expected to demonstrate it in their roles. Organizations should leverage tools, culturally competent interview prompts, and role competencies that connect back to skills associated with fostering a culture of inclusion.

Systems and cultures of inequity or assimilation don’t just appear out of thin air. Cultures and systems are created and perpetuated by people who all have biases, identities, and, most importantly, power. Those who have power should use it to promote cultures in which individuals can truly be their whole and best selves. It’s simply a matter of being committed to doing the work.

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This article was originally published on the Workhuman blog at www.workhuman.com/resources/globoforce-blog

In today's tight labor market, employers need to get creative if they hope to find and attract candidates. One option is to deepen their understanding of one of the key drivers of recruitment, retention, and turnover: labor mobility, which is defined as "the ease with which laborers are able to move around within an economy and between different economies."¹ Employers deal with labor mobility whenever they consider site selection, relocation hires, and flight risk.

Labor mobility has played a role in shaping many recent work-place-related trends. For instance, it has affected the generational shift of younger workers to urban areas and framed discussions about how that shift might change the pattern of young families moving to the suburbs.² The rich cultural experiences in high-profile large cities such as New York and San Francisco are major attractions, but they come with high housing costs. Moreover, life events (such as a family member's illness or a partner taking a new job) also influence whether a worker will decide to move locations or switch careers.

BY JOSH WRIGHT

THE COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOBS AND LOCATIONS

It's widely recognized that switching jobs and changing locations both present many challenges, but how the two intersect receives little attention. Out-of-town applicants have a significantly harder time finding jobs, especially in some of the most prominent and dynamic metropolitan areas in the country, such as Boston, New York City, Atlanta, and Washington D.C.³ Those cities share several features that may make it difficult for workers to find employment, but two that stand out are their size and a significant student population. Large cities tend to have a higher cost of living and thus higher relocation costs than other parts of the country. And because these cities are so populous—and often host several strong universities—they already have rich local talent pools.

Indeed, the impact of local schools is substantial, because the largest volume of open jobs and job applicants are typically entry-level. For example, in New York City, which is home to numerous universities and colleges, students from those schools have four years to network and build relationships with local businesses through internships, apprenticeships, and coop work. All of those opportunities gives them a leg up on out-of-town candidates.

The cities that are most promising for out-of-town applicants (that is, those with the lowest ratio of applicants to available jobs) are generally low-profile locations that feature lower costs of living and less diversified talent pools, such as New Haven, Portland (Maine), and Springfield (Massachusetts).⁴ A few of the other cities that welcome out-of-towners are effectively satellite cities that exchange applicants with larger metropolises nearby. These include Provo (near Salt Lake City) and Allentown (near Philadelphia). In Ohio both Youngstown (near Cleveland) and Dayton (near Columbus) find themselves exchanging applicants with nearby larger cities.



LABOR MOBILITY AND

In contrast, several cities are at great risk for losing workers; this list includes Provo and Ogden in Utah, San Jose in California, and Providence in Rhode Island.⁵ Most of them have large student populations looking for jobs, but smaller and less diversified industrial bases than those found in New York or Los Angeles. Durham and Raleigh in North Carolina, for example, have a famously large bilateral exchange of workers that has led to mutually beneficial economic spillovers. Because the two cities are separated by only a 30-minute commute, neither faces much risk of seeing its tax base erode from workers moving to work in the other location. On the other hand, the employers in these cities may face poaching risk more similar to employers in large cities than in medium-sized cities.

The cities with the lowest level of outbound applications compared to local job seekers tend to be farther away from the coasts.⁶ Many of the cities on this list, such as Louisville, Memphis, Jackson, and Albuquerque, hew to major rivers. Other outliers are scattered across the West and Midwest and include Las Vegas, Fresno, Boise City, Wichita, Oklahoma City, and Indianapolis.

HOW TO ATTRACT OUT-OF-TOWN APPLICANTS

In a competitive job market, employers need to take talent where they can find it, yet the evidence suggests that many employers are still reluctant to hire out-of-town applicants. Because it is harder for employers to find and evaluate those candidates because their networks don't overlap as much as those of local applicants, organizations are very likely overlooking some not-so-well-connected people who would actually be star performers.

Hiring out-of-town candidates is certainly a challenge, but companies looking to do so have a few tools at their disposal. In the long term, they can support affordable housing policies that make it easier for out-of-towners to visit or relocate. In the short term, organizations need to find or create reliable gatekeepers who can help them filter

through all those unfamiliar candidates. In short, they need to build talent pipelines specifically for out-of-towners. Reaching out to community colleges, universities, and other skill-building institutions with well-matched programs is a good place to start, but employers don't need to settle for the existing offerings. They could also invest in sponsoring new linkage programs to funnel promising students directly to employers.

Although the depiction of the job-hopping Millennial is an inaccurate stereotype, one widely discussed trait of this generation does hold true: Millennials are carrying significant student debt loads. Therefore companies that offer programs that promise debt relief increase their odds of attracting workers from across the country. Networking-and-filtering events (such as hackathons, for example) are great opportunities to reach out to and connect with possible out-of-town candidates.

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TODAY'S JOB MARKET

the Importance of Workplace Language

BY SHARLYN LAUBY

In a recent Society for Human Resource Management seminar I facilitated called “Leading Workplace Investigations,” the participants discussed a case study about an employee who felt uncomfortable when her manager came up behind her at the copier and said “Boo.” Half of the room understood “boo” in terms of Halloween and scaring someone, whereas the other half thought of its more recent meaning of as a term someone uses to describe a person they care about.

Confusion about language abounds in workplaces. Managers and employees can sometimes feel like they’re Inigo Montoya from *The Princess Bride* saying, “You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.” Just as they have their own cultures, organizations have their own unique workplace languages—and it’s important that employees understand it.

DEVELOP A COMPANY GLOSSARY AND SHARE IT DURING ORIENTATION.

Many industries have their own jargon. (Consider the transportation industry, for example, with its airport codes, airline abbreviations, and unique metrics.) It’s hard for employees to do their jobs if they can’t decode the messages they receive.

LEARN NEW BUSINESS TERMINOLOGY.

A great place to look is at words that have been recently added to the *Merriam-Webster Unabridged Dictionary* and thereby recognized as having finally reached the status of established vocabulary.¹ In September 2019, for example, *vacay* and *solopreneur* were two of those additions. In the business and finance category, *pain point* (“a persistent or recurring problem—as with a product or service—that frequently inconveniences or annoys customers”) was added and *haircut* received a new meaning (“a reduction in the value of an asset”). Because

language evolves constantly (not that long ago, *retweet* and *freemium* were new terms), organizations that want to stay current with business trends must recognize the importance of understanding new terms and usages as part of workplace language.

MAKE IT SAFE TO BOTCH A WORD OR PHRASE.

People can develop some of the best and most creative ideas when they aren’t afraid that minor linguistic missteps will trip them. For example, the writers of *The Daily Show* laugh at themselves when they write or say the wrong word during the development process. The head writer explains how those mistakes can lead to positive moments:

Regardless, every mistake you make in a comedy writers’ room usually becomes a bit, and I think that only helps foster the creativity about the place. Like if we’ll take the bad things you said and we’ll make fun of them, that makes everyone a bit more lighthearted about speaking up.²

This isn’t to say that it’s acceptable to have sloppy work full of typos and grammatical mistakes. But typos happen, grammar gets messed up, and words are pronounced or used incorrectly. Rather than dwell on those mistakes, organizations should seize the opportunities to learn and grow from them.

Companies have the ability to give their employees a tool that is crucial to their success: an understanding of workplace language. With workplace-specific glossaries and encouragement to pay attention to evolving business terminology, organizations can help their employees in both their development and their ability to do their jobs better.

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What do we need to know before terminating an employee?

BY HANNAH WOOLSEY

Unless an organization is bound by a collective bargaining agreement (union contract) or has entered into some other employment agreement with its employees, they are employed at will (except in Montana, where employers must establish cause for termination). This means that employees can quit or the organization can terminate them for any legal reason or for no reason at all.

Unfortunately, that seemingly simple explanation is actually a bit more complicated beneath the surface. Employers don't generally wake up one morning and suddenly decide to terminate their employees. So unless an organization can support a termination with a legitimate business reason and sufficient documentation, it may find it difficult, time consuming, and costly to dispute an employee's claim that he or she was terminated for unlawful reasons. Although there is no way to fully eliminate legal exposure to employees' claims, employers can take the following steps to significantly reduce their exposure to claims for unlawful termination.

Provide a positive experience from the beginning. Remember, each employee's perception is each employee's reality. This means that each and every exposure and experience work together to develop employees' fluid perceptions of their workplace. If employees believe that management is sneaky rather than transparent or deceptive rather than honest, they will assume that management is exhibiting those same traits when it comes to their termination. When evaluating employee experience, take stock of the organization's onboarding procedures,

the company's communication efforts, and retention statistics. Consider using exit interviews or employee engagement surveys to determine how employees think the organization is doing and to identify areas for improvement.

Deal with it immediately. Whether the problem is performance, attendance, or something else, address it and deal with it right away. This gives employees the best opportunity to improve their behavior and ensures that they understand the organization's expectations. Dealing with issues immediately also manages the employee's expectations and puts the company in a better position to be proactive in the future.

Be consistent. It's important that a company's policies and procedures are legally compliant and align with its culture and goals so that management can act consistently in accordance with those practices. Consistency is important for avoiding claims of discrimination but is also critical for maintaining positive employee relations. If employees believe that they are being treated less favorably than other employees, they will be much less successful, and there is a

higher risk that they will claim disparate treatment for an unlawful reason.

Document, document, document.

Documentation of workplace events is key to disputing an employee's claim of a law violation. For example, if an employee claims that she was terminated because of her gender but her company has written documentation of its clear expectations, its coaching efforts, and her continued poor performance, it will be much easier for the company to convince a third party that the employee's termination had nothing to do with gender and everything to do with performance.

Fire fast. Once an organization has made the decision to terminate an employee, it should do so immediately. Waiting can allow the employee to engage in protected activity (e.g., request an accommodation) or otherwise raise an issue that could increase the company's legal exposure. If immediate termination isn't possible, create a record of this decision (by writing and sending an e-mail about it, for example) so the organization can clearly show when the decision was made, even if it wasn't communicated to the employee until after he or she engaged in some protected activity.

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KEEP YOUR COMPANY CULTURE STRONG

BY MIKE MCKERNS

COMPANY CULTURE IS ONE OF THOSE EVERGREEN TOPICS that keeps popping up in meetings, blog posts, magazine articles, keynote addresses, newspaper pages—in short, everywhere—and for good reason: it can play a pivotal role in a company’s rise (or fall).

When growing a business, senior leadership most often focuses on the actions that are typically involved with, well, growing a business, such as expanding product lines, improving profitability, and hiring the best talent the market has to offer. But the leaders of today are increasingly realizing the importance of also creating a company culture in which employees are more than just individual workers. Once employees feel that they are a part of the company and play a role in its growth and prosperity, and genuinely look forward to starting each new day of advancing a common mission, a business has reached a truly powerful milestone in its growth.

That doesn’t mean it’s time to call it a day and coast. Company culture is constantly evolving, and what likely took years to build can be lost in a matter of months if the team no longer feels like a team. Adhering to the following culture-building principles can help ensure that your company culture stays intact as the business grows, shrinks, or changes in other ways.

Share a purpose. Trite though it may be, the saying “There’s no *I* in *team*” does encapsulate what building a strong culture and camaraderie entails. But sharing a purpose is much bigger and more powerful than just working together as a team. Making sure that employees understand why the company exists and whom it serves can help them find the purpose that will inspire and motivate them.

Communicate openly and with integrity. Have you ever worked for a company in which management was expected to simply execute—but never question—orders that came down to them from the top? It can be very frustrating to be told to carry out someone else’s agenda without fully understanding the logic behind all of the decisions. An environment of open, honest, two-way communication is absolutely essential when building a strong company culture.

Hire for fit but train for skills. Hiring based on experience and a defined set of credentials that can be found on a resume is easy (in fact, recruitment software can automatically handle a large portion of the screening). Hiring for cultural fit is more challenging, but it’s an approach that can help you increase retention and work quality, and build a team with shared values. ■

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BRUSSELS SPROUT SALAD

Feeling both remorseful about the excesses of the just-ended holiday season and motivated by New Year’s resolutions, many people kick off healthy (or at least *healthier*) eating plans in January. A fresh salad works well for these situations, especially when it’s substantial enough to be a complete meal. Don’t be turned off by the presence of Brussels sprouts in this dish, though: here they are crisp and delicious and bear absolutely no resemblance to the mushy and overcooked spheres that grace far too many winter tables!

YIELD: 4 servings
TIME: about 15 minutes

WHAT YOU’LL NEED:
1 cup slivered almonds
1 ½ pounds fresh Brussels sprouts, sliced as thin as possible
1 medium-sized apple, cored and diced
4 Tb extra-virgin olive oil
2 Tb lemon juice
½ tsp salt
1 cup fresh Parmesan cheese, coarsely shredded

- DIRECTIONS**
1. In a toaster oven or a dry skillet, gently toast the almonds until they just start to brown and smell fragrant; set aside to cool.
 2. Combine the Brussels sprouts and apples in a large serving bowl.
 3. Combine the olive oil, lemon juice, and salt in a lidded jar. Shake well, then pour over the Brussels sprouts and apples.
 4. Add the almonds and Parmesan cheese and mix everything together.

NOTE: You can substitute other nuts (hazelnuts and walnuts work well) or other cheeses (Asiago and feta are both superb replacements), but don’t try this with presliced, bagged Brussels sprouts. If you want this salad to shine, the sprouts need to be as fresh as possible! ■

Nutrition Facts

Amount per Serving	
Calories:	538 cal
Fat:	36.9g
Dietary fiber:	10.9g
Sugars:	11.3g
Protein:	23.4g





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