

Employee engagement and future HR trends

Employee engagement and future HR trends Q&A webinar discussion

29th July 2020

https://youtu.be/6yEL4nlW_oY

This week we hosted a HR forum on “*employee engagement and future HR trends*”. It would have been interesting in ordinary times, but given the changes that Covid is forcing upon the workplace, and the fact that the forum was conducted remotely, it felt positively exciting!

We were fortunate enough to be joined by three great guest panellists:

Lisa Rowlinson-Brown - People Director, Symingtons Chartered Fellow of the CIPD

Lisa is responsible for all HR strategy at the food manufacturer, Symingtons - based over 4 sites within the UK, employing over 1,000 colleagues. Brands include: Naked Noodle, Mug Shot, Chicken Tonight, Twisted and Ragu. Prior to this Lisa spent over 10 years as UK and Ireland's Head of HR & Development for Tereos, the world's second largest producer of sugar, turning over in excess of 5 billion euros and employing over 24,000 colleagues in 18 countries.

Steve Joyce - HR Director, Airedale International Air Conditioning

Steve is responsible for the workforce at Airedale with over 700 people spread over 3 sites with people having various roles including manufacturing, field based and commercial, in this high tech engineering business. Steve also ensures that UK strategy fits in with the wider global strategy of the Modine Group (with circa 12,000 employees in China, Brazil, US and Europe). Prior to this, Steve worked in food and pharma sectors.

Catherine de la Poer - Leadership Developer, Halcyon Coaching

Catherine is an expert in coaching and developing leaders and their teams. From scale-ups to corporations, she is passionate about emotional intelligence and building agile, resilient organisations. Given that we are in a period of rapid change, the role of leaders to drive engagement (and high performance) has never been more important.

It would be impossible to capture the full discussion and debate from the session but some of the key themes were:

Most businesses were experiencing change before Covid; Covid has to an extent just accelerated things.

Whilst agile and flexible working won't be possible for every role, where it has been shown to work, it's already being seen as a key requirement of a job from people moving into new roles (and indeed those continuing in roles). It seems that an element of home working is here to stay and this will have a knock-on effect for traditional workplaces.

Businesses reported that there was a greater push for business to be “purposeful” - pushing businesses to have a longer term view in their planning. One example of this is businesses looking to re-assess the robustness of their supply chains.

Whilst technology is obviously being used to a greater extent (as evidenced by the way we ran this forum), there were strong arguments to make sure that any digital transformation was undertaken “through the lens of humans” - we don't want to adopt technology for the sake of it.

Covid has had a “humanising” effect on workplaces – to an extent due to everyone being shown to have the same needs and vulnerabilities. This, amongst other things, has led to a fundamental shift in the style and mode of communications – increased use of video messaging and such like was likely to stay.

Given the pressures many businesses are feeling, there is a desire and need to reappraise how to incentivise the workforce. There needs to be better alignment with how (good) behaviours are rewarded.

Other issues unrelated to Covid are still important to businesses:

1. Recruitment in a post-Brexit world
2. Employee status (whatever happens to IR35)
3. The equality agenda (Black Lives Matter sitting alongside #MeToo)

The above clearly deserves further consideration, discussion and debate and we will continue that via our briefings, postings and future sessions. The latest can be found at www.walkermorris.co.uk



Andrew Rayment, Partner
Employment
+44 (0)113 283 2642
+44 (0)752 519 8956
andrew.rayment@walkermorris.co.uk



Charlotte Smith, Senior Associate
Employment
+44 (0)113 399 1891
+44 (0)778 776 7975
charlotte.smith@walkermorris.co.uk