

HAYS JOURNAL

GLOBAL INSIGHT FOR EXPERTS IN THE WORLD OF WORK



BRIDGING THE DIVIDES

Could understanding and embracing intersectionality help organisations improve the experience of all employees?



ISSUE 20
2021

EARLY START
Supporting young talent through a challenging first career step

GREEN FUTURE
Is it time organisations refocused their efforts to be more sustainable?

CULTURE OF INNOVATION
How can businesses hold on to an agile mindset after the pandemic?

HAYS JOURNAL



HELLO AND WELCOME TO THIS ISSUE of the *Hays Journal*. While the effects of the pandemic are still being felt by many of us, both in our professional and personal lives, it is a good time to reflect on what has changed and look ahead to what comes next.

In some areas, it will be important for us to refocus our efforts as a society, and take up the challenges we faced before the pandemic that still remain. Sustainability had moved up the agenda for almost every business in recent years, but Covid-19 disrupted some of these efforts. Many organisations were forced to revert to less sustainable behaviours in the name of safety, with colleagues needing single-use personal protective equipment. We explore how organisations can encourage employees to re-adopt more sustainable practices where possible, on page 9.

Elsewhere, there have been learnings that organisations will want to hold on to. Companies were forced to innovate, rolling out new products and services in order to survive a challenging business environment. Continuing with this mentality can be beneficial for them when things are more stable. On page 26, we explore how businesses can ensure innovative thinking remains part of their culture.

While different sectors and industries faced their own individual challenges, so did employees. Workplaces have largely become more inclusive over the last few years, but is the approach being taken nuanced enough to cater for employees' individual needs? We each identify in different ways, be it by our gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation, and these factors can influence our experience in the workplace. We explore how organisations can better understand how our identities intersect on page 4.

We have also focused in on the challenges faced by employees taking their first steps into the world of work during the pandemic. Many school leavers and university graduates will have been unsuccessful in finding work in their chosen fields, but even those who have found jobs will have had a very different experience to colleagues that entered the workforce in years gone by. Turn to page 14 to see how organisations can support this generation of workers effectively.

In this issue's profile interview, we have spoken with Adam Philpott, EMEA President of cybersecurity firm McAfee. While lockdowns have forced many companies to move more of their operations onto the cloud for the first time, McAfee switched to a cloud-first strategy five years ago. Adam has kindly shared his insights into what enabled the organisation to make that change, and how they are improving diversity in the business, on page 19.

Finally, we have explored the Life Sciences sector in this issue's Sector Snapshot. The talent needs in this industry have evolved quickly throughout the pandemic, with different geographies requiring changing talent solutions as things progressed. Find out how these challenges have been addressed on page 31.

ALISTAIR COX, CEO, HAYS

HAYS Recruiting experts
worldwide

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GET IN TOUCH

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DIVERSIFYING DIVERSITY

MANY ORGANISATIONS HAVE MADE GOOD PROGRESS IN IMPROVING THE DIVERSITY OF THEIR WORKFORCE IN RECENT YEARS. BUT COULD UNDERSTANDING AND EMBRACING INTERSECTIONALITY HELP THEM IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE OF ALL EMPLOYEES?

DIVERSITY IS NOT A LINEAR ISSUE.

As companies seek to be representative of the communities they operate in and that make up their workforce, many still consider their diversity efforts in distinct, singular characteristics, for example, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and disability. But the reality is that any number of these categories overlap and intersect.

In 1989, legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw wrote a paper coining the term ‘intersectionality’, as a way to explain the oppression of African-American women. The term has been used ever since and, in 2021, it still has as much relevance as it did in 1989. Crenshaw describes intersectionality as “a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It’s not

simply that there’s a race problem here, a gender problem, and a class or LGBTQ problem there”.

Adwoa Bagalini, Engagement, Diversity and Inclusion Lead at the **World Economic Forum** (WEF), explains why intersectionality is just as important now as it was in 1989. In an article for the WEF, she says that diversity and inclusion programmes that do not take intersectionality into account risk overlooking the experiences of those who are marginalised. For example, “while white women will reach gender parity with men in the States in 2059, the data shows that for Black women this date is 2130, and 2224 for Hispanic women.”

Lauren Baker, COO at **Skillsize**, a talent intelligence platform, describes intersectionality as “the overlapping of identities such as race, gender



“DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT IS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPORTANT IN ORGANISATIONS, AS IS THE ACTIVE CONSIDERATION AND ENACTMENT OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES”

LAUREN BAKER, SKILLSIZE

and sexuality and recognising the differences both between and within them, as well as the overall effect this can have on an individual's experiences”.

A 2019 report by **Culture Amp**, titled *Workplace Diversity, Inclusion, and Intersectionality*, gives an example of how intersectionality could present itself at work. “Intersectionality considers different systems of oppression, and specifically how they overlap and are compounded to shape the employee experience. For example, within gender, a 31-year-old white woman with no children will likely have a very different experience to a 42-year-old Black woman with two children. Intersectionality means we view the whole person, not their characteristics separately.”

Baker says that intersectionality is hugely important to businesses, “to not only promote diversity within their organisation but understand how different people are affected and take the necessary action to mitigate negative outcomes”.

Bagalini explains why intersectionality is a key issue for businesses to be aware of. “It’s a blind spot that’s easy for many organisations to miss, even as they strive to foster more inclusive work environments,” she says. “All stages of the employee journey may be impacted by intersectionality, from recruitment to onboarding, performance reviews and promotions to turnover rates. Who is leaving and why? Who is being referred to the organisation by friends or colleagues? If employees sense that they are not welcome and

cannot bring their full selves to work, then they will likely find it difficult to advance, will not refer the company to others in their network, and will probably leave sooner than others.”

Antonio Macías, HR Manager for the Iberia region at **Edwards Lifesciences**, a medical technology company, adds that “after a difficult 2020 and with an uncertain 2021 ahead, diversity in the workplace has become crucial”. He adds that the pandemic revealed even more clearly the different experiences individuals are facing. “We need to embrace and welcome these differences to continue building stronger businesses that can overcome the times we are living in.”

UNDERSTANDING INTERSECTIONALITY

Companies should seek to develop a better understanding of intersectionality and recognise an individual's multiple identities that may overlap. Awareness is key here, but as Bagalini explains, the willingness to acknowledge the ‘blind spot’ also needs to be addressed. “More often than not, leaders may be complacent about practices within their organisations and believe that, since they and their colleagues feel welcome at work, the same is true for everyone,” she explains. Developing empathy and being sure to check in with others who identify differently is important to get a sense of what could be done better, she adds. ▶

HELPING LEADERS TO UNDERSTAND INTERSECTIONALITY



Sandra Henke, Hays' Group Head of People and Culture

Intersectionality is important and complex, and organisations need to give consideration to how they equip their leaders with the confidence and skills to address these issues.

Each of us has a unique view of the world that has been shaped by our own unique, lived experience and our overlapping identities. Organisations should be asking themselves how to build high-trust cultures and environments in which people are given the permission and the confidence to have meaningful conversations, encouraging people to have a curiosity about others' lived experiences.

I am not suggesting that this is easy to navigate; it's challenging, delicate and confronting. I recommend engaging an external specialist to help facilitate

conversations about bias awareness. This can help to build confidence and give leaders a set of tools and a vocabulary to help them to have these conversations with each other and with their people.

Inclusive leadership is about creating a high-trust culture – proactively seeking out or inviting divergent points of view, rather than being the single point of authority with all of the answers. This can feel counter intuitive, but leaders who ask for (and really listen to) others' points of view tend to build higher-trust environments for their colleagues.

Organisations can help develop more inclusive leadership practices by clearly articulating why inclusion is important. If people think your messaging is to 'tick boxes' they will not engage with it. It is also important to support your most senior leaders in their development so that they can be role models of more inclusive leadership behaviours.

- ▶ Enabling employees to identify their diversity dimensions voluntarily is a crucial starting point, as are employee engagement surveys where data is reasonably disaggregated by several of those dimensions. Doing so can then reveal the different experiences of different groups.

For example, **McKinsey's Women in the Workplace Report 2020** found that, while 46 per cent of men had felt stressed during the pandemic, 53 per cent of women said they had felt the same way. Yet this rose to 61 per cent of women with disabilities. There were also different experiences for women of different races. The survey found that 55 per cent of white women had felt stressed compared with 47 per cent of Asian women, 49 per cent of Latina women and 47 per cent of Black women.

But while insightful, how can this sort of data be captured in the first place? "It's important for every organisation to have good, up-to-date, diversity data," says Monica Parker, Founder of **HATCH Analytics**, a data analytics company. "This is most easily collected by anonymous surveys sent out to the business. The key for this type of data is to get very high response rates, as otherwise its extrapolation may not be accurate, especially when looking at intersectionality."

She says that achieving this is dependent on employees having high levels of trust in their organisation. They must be clear that equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) is more than just a box-ticking exercise. And while anonymous data

may not identify specific intersectional segments, it can begin to give a broader picture on the nuances of the lived experiences of various team members. Organisations can then use this data to support ED&I initiatives such as affinity groups, conscious inclusion training and benchmarking. "Where you can, encourage people to tell their own stories of intersectionality and ways they have felt accepted or rejected based on their unique experience," she says.

The final part of the data journey is to respond. "This is the simplest and hardest element of any ED&I initiative," Parker says. She encourages organisations to set a goal, try to deliver on it, and make the whole process transparent. "I believe that if you collect data about ED&I, you have an obligation to do something tangible and measurable with it," she concludes.

AVOIDING LABELS

Companies need to understand the scope of intersectionality so they can address those challenges directly. But how can businesses support their employees in reaching their full potential, without labelling them?

Baker says that labelling employees can create a biased perspective, which can in turn lead to unfair treatment and injustice. "This can significantly affect the morale of employees, especially if labelled negatively and unfairly," she says. Baker explains that the key is to ensure employees feel empowered and have the full backing of the organisation. She

suggests that this could take the form of encouraging peer-led communities to grow and organising company-wide events to enable the “sharing of knowledge, bringing people together in learning and understanding others in the workplace and the range of diversities”.

Bagalini suggests consulting with the employees concerned to seek their input, and encourages companies not to necessarily shy away from labels, but use them to prompt conversations instead. “Many employees from under-represented groups do embrace labels as a way of reclaiming their identities and being empowered by them, instead of shying away. It is frequently hurtful for people of colour to hear from well-meaning colleagues that they ‘don’t see colour’, thereby effectively erasing their experiences of discrimination and absolving themselves of any responsibility to act,” she explains.

Baker says that obtaining a culture of acknowledgement and understanding helps to build and sustain an environment of openness and inclusion, giving confidence to both a company’s employees and customers that they are socially responsible and trustworthy. “With a workforce that trusts they have equal opportunities and their mental wellbeing is cared for, comes a higher level of satisfaction for individuals and an increased level of productivity and engagement for the organisation,” she says.

DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT

Having a workforce made up of people from different backgrounds with different abilities and experiences

can have a positive impact. According to McKinsey’s *Diversity Wins* report, published in May 2020, “There is ample evidence that diverse and inclusive companies are likely to make better, bolder decisions - a critical capability in the [Covid-19] crisis.”

Baker explains how diversity of thought and intersectionality relate. “Diversity of thought is the concept of our thinking being shaped by our backgrounds, culture, experiences and personalities. This relates to intersectionality by being able to take a broader approach in how we view others and appreciate the different elements of their identities, without stereotyping people or considering them as part of only one particular group.”

“INTERSECTIONALITY MEANS WE VIEW THE WHOLE PERSON, NOT THEIR CHARACTERISTICS SEPARATELY”

THE WORKPLACE DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND INTERSECTIONALITY REPORT, CULTURE AMP

“Diversity of thought is significantly important in organisations, as is the active consideration and enactment of equal opportunities,” says Baker. “It is essential that companies can fully distinguish between the need to embrace diversity and inclusion and the need to harness a range of experiences and thought processes, to accelerate its strategic objectives.” She explains that businesses can harness this by understanding their people at a deeper level, considering not only professional but personal background and also considering competencies and psychometric ability. “The knowledge of this insight across its resources, in conjunction with a lens of diversity allows organisations to breed dynamic creativity, ideas and workforce agility whilst maintaining a culture of inclusiveness.”

While Bagalini agrees that diversity of thought is important, she warns against companies overtly striving for this “as it tends to provide an excuse or a cover not to address the thornier aspects of inclusion work”. She explains that, even in the same family, it would be difficult to find two people who think exactly alike, so it can be safely assumed that an organisation will have diversity of thought present regardless. “The same principles that go into harnessing the advantages of all other kinds of



INTERSECTIONALITY IS THE OVERLAPPING OF IDENTITIES SUCH AS RACE, GENDER AND SEXUALITY



GETTY IMAGES

► diversity apply here, namely when employees feel psychologically safe and can express themselves without fear, companies will better be able to reap the benefits of having employees who think differently from each other. Therefore, I am fairly confident that in pursuing goals of inclusion and equity for everyone regardless of identity, diversity of thought will be enhanced rather than suppressed.”

IMPROVING ON INTERSECTIONALITY

To positively progress a company’s diversity and inclusion interests, a level of understanding must exist across the workforce. Macias says that diversity should not be the reserve of marketing material for organisations, and that it should be embedded within the culture of a workplace. “The culture of a company is the experiences that your employees are living on a daily basis, therefore, you have to make sure your employees are living in a diverse environment as part of their regular work,” he says. “Your employees are the best ambassadors of your company and your culture,” he notes.

This can be contributed to by introducing formal and informal education on diversity themes, Baker suggests. “A more formal approach that ensures everyone gets the necessary exposure could be in the form of a mandatory learning and development curriculum that covers important topics, such as intersectionality, creating a culture of inclusion and how to be an ally to colleagues,” she says.

In contrast, a more informal approach with a reliance on peer-to-peer networks can help to develop a consistent culture of diversity acceptance, she explains. For example, the mixing of these networks can be advanced into the social interaction between employees, such as celebrations of global cultural events such as Pride, Diwali and Black History Month.

Baker says colleagues can be allies by trying to understand, and directly acknowledging and addressing, how privilege contributes to oppressive systems. “Having this understanding can help promote further education. The responsibility for this is wider than just that of the marginalised group,” she notes.

Bagalini says that, as well as using intranets or other internal communications channels to share information on the topic of intersectionality, it is worth encouraging employee resource groups to form and share information with their peers. “Making sure that this is embedded within ongoing events and initiatives rather than seeing it as an entirely separate workstream” is also crucial.

“Within almost every topic that organisations communicate to employees about, there are opportunities to point out how these support goals of diversity and belonging – so the task is to find those opportunities and use them, and eventually make sure that this becomes second nature,” she concludes. ■



SUSTAINABILITY AT THE CENTRE

AT THE END OF 2019, ESG MOMENTUM AROUND THE WORLD WAS STRONG – ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO IMPROVING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF MANY ORGANISATIONS. BUT THEN CAME COVID-19, FORCING MANY BUSINESSES INTO SURVIVAL MODE. AS THE WORLD RECOVERS, HOW CAN BUSINESSES ENSURE THAT BEING GREENER MOVES BACK UP THE AGENDA?

OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, businesses have learned that attracting and retaining customers and employees alike goes hand-in-hand with reporting on and showing a commitment to making a positive impact on sustainability and society, otherwise known as environmental, social and governance (ESG).

Sustainability in particular has been moving up the agenda for many businesses, in an effort to attract both customers and talent. A 2020 **IBM** study found that 71 per cent of consumers surveyed indicated that traceability of products is very important to them, and that they are willing to pay a premium for brands that provide it. Meanwhile, **HSBC's** 2019 *Made for the future* report found that 24 per cent of organisations said that one of the driving forces behind their investments in sustainability is to improve their ability to recruit and retain the best people.

“WELLBEING OF TEAM MEMBERS AND CUSTOMERS MUST REMAIN THE FIRST PRIORITY, BUT THIS DOESN'T MEAN SUSTAINABILITY HAS TO BE COMPROMISED”

RYAN SWENSON, OFFICEWORKS

Organisations have been responding accordingly. Just before the pandemic hit at the end of 2019, the proportion of S&P 500 firms reporting on their ESG performance surged to 90 per cent, from 20 per cent in 2011. Meanwhile, **KPMG's** *Survey of Sustainability Reporting 2020* has revealed that 80 per cent of companies now report on sustainability, compared with just 12 per cent when the consultancy began tracking sustainability reporting in 1993. The consultancy's latest report surveyed 5,200 companies in 52 countries.

Also in 2019, the **European Commission** launched the European Green Deal, which aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent. But then Covid-19 hit. Would a pandemic pause, slow or completely halt sustainability progress?

REBUILDING SUSTAINABLY

Patxi Zabala, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility at Spanish industrial and tech company

Velatia, says that many companies' sustainability operations took a hit as a result of having to go into survival mode.

“The impact caused by the Covid-19 crisis had negative effects on businesses, which have had to make decisions that, due to the urgency of managing the impact of the virus on the life of the company and from the economic point of view, are sometimes not entirely sustainable.”

For example, many organisations have had to introduce new rules that require colleagues to wear personal protective equipment, such as masks and gloves. While essential to keep people safe, many items are disposable or single use. However, Ryan Swenson, Head of Sustainable Development at Australia's **Officeworks**, points out that sustainability reduction in some areas does not have to result in an overall reduction in sustainability performance. “The health, safety and wellbeing of team members and customers must remain the first priority, but this doesn't mean sustainability practices have to be compromised,” he says. Despite the new demands on workers, in October 2020 Officeworks was still able to launch its Positive Difference Plan 2025 – a five-year strategy for the team, community and environment – and has continued to progress towards becoming a zero-waste business and its net zero goal.

So as organisations look ahead, how can they ensure that sustainability moves back up their agenda and forms a part of their recovery? Zabala believes that it is important that businesses which have discovered more sustainable practices don't revert to old habits when they reach the other side of the pandemic. “In those cases where the crisis is having a positive impact on more sustainable management in terms of ESG, businesses should consider maintaining these changes by identifying their sustainable purpose and the profitability associated with better and greater sustainable management,” he explains, adding that increased public awareness of the need for sustainability will “make it easy, not only to return to some sustainable practices but also to develop many others.”

For example, the pandemic has also seen a significant reduction in business travel, which normally accounts for 12 per cent of global transport emissions, equating to 915 million tonnes of CO₂ in 2019. Yet during the pandemic, there has been an unprecedented reduction in overall air pollution of up to 60 per cent, which takes into account not only international travel but the daily commute, too. This has been made possible because remote working, something that wasn't available across the board before the pandemic, has been forced upon employers and employees, who are utilising programs such as Slack, Zoom and Teams to continue to work effectively.





SOME ORGANISATIONS WILL
CONTINUE TO WORK REMOTELY,
EVEN AFTER THE PANDEMIC

A global survey undertaken by **Slack** in October 2020 revealed that 72 per cent of people would prefer a mixture of office- and remote-based working, with just 12 per cent wanting to return to the office full time.

Furthermore, some businesses (including **Deloitte** and **PwC**) have already gone on record to say that sustained business travel reduction will form part of their ongoing plans to reduce emissions to net zero.

A CHANCE FOR CHANGE

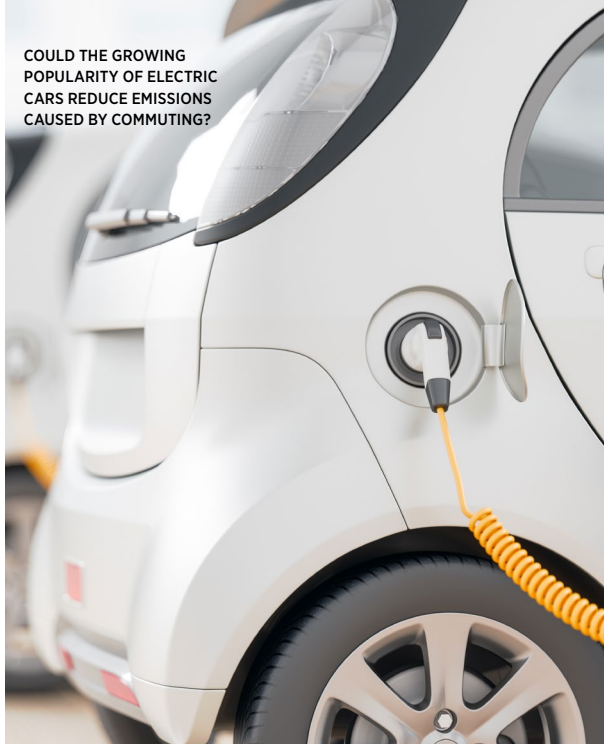
For Professor Dr Laura Marie Edinger-Schons, Chair of Sustainable Business at Germany's **University of Mannheim**, there is hope that these newfound sustainable practices will remain the norm. "Research on sustainable behaviours has repeatedly shown that it is very hard to change habitual behaviours and routines," she explains. "Thus, this unexpected disruption of our normal work-related behaviours offers a great opportunity for permanent change." She also adds that many unsustainable practices as a result of the pandemic can be once again removed from business when the pandemic is over. "During the pandemic some industries were forced to use more

unsustainable business practices, for example due to an increased delivery of products or use of plastic packaging; however, many of these will not be necessary anymore after the pandemic."

Companies can also look at ways to make commuting into work – wherever that may be in the future – more inclusive and sustainable, with nearly 25 per cent of employees having left a job because of the commute. Organisations can look to subsidise commute costs and provide alternatives to company cars – which have been shown to increase household vehicle use by 25 per cent – such as cycling schemes.

Businesses can also take the opportunity to revisit supply chains; for example, companies can indirectly become more climate resilient and fairer to society and individuals. "We can achieve more through collective action than as a single organisation, so collaboration with many of our stakeholders, including suppliers and government, is really important," says Swenson. **IKEA's** supplier code of conduct, for example, requires that suppliers meet their standards in areas including working hours, employee benefits and wages, chemicals, waste, business ethics, the environment, ▶

COULD THE GROWING
POPULARITY OF ELECTRIC
CARS REDUCE EMISSIONS
CAUSED BY COMMUTING?



“EMPLOYEES WANT THE COMPANY THEY WORK FOR TO BE PURPOSE-DRIVEN, TO BE ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND TO FEEL THEIR VALUES ALIGN WITH THOSE OF THE COMPANY”

MEGAN KASHNER, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

► child labour and discrimination before IKEA will consider working with them. Meanwhile, German sporting goods company **Vaude** has engaged with the German Government and stakeholders to co-create the ‘Grüner Knopf’ (the green button), a sustainability label for its textiles.

These sorts of initiatives are requiring companies all over the world to be more transparent, which will lead to more companies needing to identify their own supply chain risks, something **The Sustainability Consortium** (a global non-profit sustainability organisation) is helping companies – particularly those with limited supply chain knowledge – to do through its commodities mapping tool, which addresses where the risks are, what the risks are and how these issues can be addressed.

SHARING RESPONSIBILITY

Within business, however, it’s not just down to the upper echelon to encourage change. “It’s everybody’s responsibility to question the status quo and to participate in rebuilding and shaping our economy of the future. Of course top managers have greater power to change structures and processes, but employees are an equally important driver of change in organisations,” says Edinger-Schons. “And for those privileged few of us that are not facing existential threats due to the pandemic because we have secure jobs, I would say that our responsibility is even higher.”

But the responsibility to rebuild sustainability does not lie with businesses alone. Governments have a role to play here too – something that we’re already seeing in Spain. The country is set to receive around €140 billion from NextGenerationEU, the European

Union’s recovery plan, which will go towards Spain’s Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan. The plan covers green fiscal reform and includes bringing forward the country’s Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan goals from 2025 to 2023, the introduction of 250,000 electric vehicles, boosting renewables, especially floating offshore wind farms, reinforcing the grid and investing in smart grids. The business fabric of the plan has been framed in a document put together by the **Spanish Confederation of Business Organisations**. “It involves the entire value chain of companies. Through their awareness, and the implementation of a purchasing policy that incorporates ESG criteria, they must prominently emphasise the protection of human rights,” explains Zabala.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

It’s easy to see how investing in industries that support existing sustainability momentum creates more jobs, and gives us a ‘greener’ normal after the pandemic. But what about the businesses whose existence was never based around these goals? We’ve already seen that investment banks and wealth managers are creating sustainability-focused portfolios, but what about those that, on paper, have very little need for interaction with sustainability practices?

“For several years now, companies have been worried about what new talent wants,” explains Megan Kashner, Clinical Assistant Professor and Director of Social Impact at **Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University**. “Prospective employees want the company they work for to be purpose-driven, to be on the right side of sustainability and to feel their values align with the values of the company. As a result,

we're seeing an increase in jobs that are about sustainable supply chains, that are in clean energy, diversity, equity and inclusion, and that are focused on sustainable finance. We're seeing some of the biggest financial institutions shift their hiring to put talent behind these necessary initiatives, which it might have seemed they were only giving lip service to previously." She adds that although previously progress was slow in providing transparency where it wasn't required by law, "something about the pandemic has accelerated that", and companies are having to make sure people like what they find.

It's also fair to expect one of the direct outcomes of the pandemic to be that companies proactively change their hiring policies, as Zabala explains. "2020 was a year of changes, and the health crisis highlighted the need for sustainable models, the great relevance companies have in society and their fundamental role in providing rapid responses to the most critical, global and unexpected situations. In fact, in this pandemic many companies have demonstrated exemplary behaviour by making their resources available to the community, responding to productive, health, economic, material and social needs."

So whether it's an increase in jobs directly in the field of tackling climate change, or in roles in businesses that put sustainability at the forefront of a company's ethos, the experts believe more jobs are coming. Zabala concludes that intelligent organisations understand this opportunity.



IN THE UK, THE WIND FARM INDUSTRY IS EXPECTED TO CREATE 2,000 JOBS

"They are reorienting their business models, with investments of millions in some cases, and with a positive impact on their entire value chain with the creation of thousands of jobs." ■

SUSTAINABILITY AND SUBSIDIES

The pandemic has caused huge job losses. Latest figures from the UK, from October to December 2020, reveal a 5.1 per cent unemployment rate, which equates to 1.74 million people being unemployed and a 0.2 percentage point rise from the preceding three months. In the US, unemployment reached 6.7 per cent in December 2020, which equates to 10.7 million individuals. For some, however, there is good news to be found. In the worldwide bid to find employment for these individuals, many governments are looking to help industries that support sustainability.

"ESG criteria opens up a wide range of economic opportunities for companies that could be the way out of the economic crisis in which we are immersed," explains Patxi Zabala, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility at Spanish industrial and tech company Velatia. "The loss of jobs could be compensated by employment generated through the implementation of a circular economy model or by investment in the field of renewable energy." The EU is already paving the way

for such changes, for instance in its NextGenerationEU, which is using a budget of €1.8 trillion to rebuild Europe after the pandemic, 30 per cent of which will be allocated towards fighting climate change. Jumping on its success of previous years, which saw the number of green jobs rise from 3.1 million in 2000 to 4.2 million in 2017 – a rise of 35.5 per cent – the EU also announced in 2020 that it will create at least a million jobs, with workers in polluting industries helped into new roles.

Now no longer part of the EU, the UK has its own strategy: having wind farms power every UK home by 2030, which in itself will create 2,000 jobs and support an additional 60,000.

And in the US, the sustainability plans of President Joe Biden have been hailed as the most ambitious yet, including returning to the Paris climate pact and his goal to make US electricity production carbon-free by 2035. This will generate more jobs, and many green advocates are pinning their hopes on his presence at the 2021 G7 summit, taking place in the UK.

EARLY START

THE COVID-ERA COHORT OF SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY LEAVERS ARE FACING UNIQUE CHALLENGES ENTERING THE WORLD OF WORK. WHAT ROLE CAN EMPLOYERS PLAY IN HELPING THE NEXT GENERATION TAKE THE FIRST STEPS OF THEIR CAREER JOURNEY?

ONE OF THE lasting legacies of Covid-19 will be the unprecedented experience of young people who looked for, or started, their very first job during this pandemic. The ‘lockdown generation’ of school and university leavers will enter the world of work in a very different way to those that are training or supporting them.

While the roll-out of vaccines has begun in some countries, and economies begin to recover, it remains to be seen how much of the ‘new normal’ in the world of work will become permanent. The long-term effects of the pandemic to society and the economy will only become clear in time. Until then, how can organisations ensure they’re supporting the next generation of talent and ensuring they feel positive about their first step on the career ladder?

There’s no doubt the ‘lockdown generation’ is facing challenges in this area, with internship offers withdrawn and many first-time employees furloughed or made redundant. Graduate job

“EMPLOYERS NEED TO THINK ABOUT A PIPELINE OF TALENT”

STEPHEN ISHERWOOD, ISE

numbers fell in 21 countries due to Covid-19, according to the 2020 global report from the **Institute of Student Employers (ISE)**, with eight geographies, including Ireland, Hong Kong SAR and South Africa, cutting graduate jobs by 15 per cent.

And it isn’t just graduates who have been affected: the number of available apprenticeships in England in 2020 was down 46 per cent compared with the same period in 2019, says the UK Government’s **Department for Education**.

Furthermore, a global survey from the **International Labour Organization** found that one in six young people aged 18-29 (17.4 per cent) had stopped working since the beginning of the crisis. The figure climbs to 23.1 per cent when restricted to the 18-24 category alone.

NEW WORLD, NEW APPROACH

However, with organisations focused on battling the pandemic’s negative impact on business, why should they assign valuable resources to reach out to first-job recruits? “Taking on apprentices or graduates might not be high on some HR teams’ to-do lists,” says Stephen Isherwood, Chief Executive at the ISE. “But this could be something businesses live to regret. Employers need to think about how they will build a pipeline of talent coming through the organisation – talent they’ll need when the economy recovers.”

MAINTAINING TRAINING CYCLES

Many organisations, such as accountancy and financial services firms, base much of their talent strategy around the progression of entry-level employees who gain qualifications on the job. These businesses now face the additional challenge of returning to a regular training cycle. So what are they doing to secure their talent pipeline?

“Starting on a positive note, over half (54 per cent) of accountancy and finance employers in the UK tell us that they plan to hire new staff in 2021,” says Karen Young, Director at **Hays**. “This is actually a touch higher than last year (50 per cent). But while hiring remains on the agenda, there is more involved when it comes maintaining a pipeline of new talent.”

Matt Rawlins, Director of accountancy and financial services training company **Kaplan**, expands. “In the absence of maintaining a pipeline, it’s predicted that the business will suffer in five to 10 years, due to a skills gap caused by the current talent moving up within the hierarchy, with no pool of talent to replace it,” he says. “They may also fail to demonstrate the diversity candidates and clients expect in an organisation.”

Rawlins warns that, in the longer term, this may lead to organisations needing to recruit more senior staff, increasing hiring costs and negatively affecting progression. “It’s certainly worth considering filling the gap with a bumper year of recruits or trainees,” he says. “A delay of a year won’t hugely affect a business’s talent pipeline; however, if the ‘hole’ is not plugged quickly the impact will be extrapolated.”

And once these talent gaps are filled, what can organisations do to ensure that training is adequate for these entry-level employees, even if working remotely? “Simply replicating training that was once done in person online won’t be engaging for those taking part,” says Young. “Remote training has come a long way since its inception. There are now a huge variety of different models, tools and platforms that are worth exploring. Consider which is most straightforward for new hires or junior staff.

“I would also recommend incorporating a variety of learning materials. Entry-level employees will need to absorb a lot of knowledge about the role and your organisation, so cater to all learning styles and preferences by ensuring that the delivery of the training (albeit remote) is diverse and interesting.

“Finally, measure your results. Which aspects you track will depend on the goal of the training, but it will help you understand the comprehension and capabilities of your entry-level employees.”

▶ Besides that practical consideration, some business leaders feel they also have a social responsibility to invest in the next generation. Technology entrepreneur Daniel Cooper, based in Cambridge in the UK, has set up the **Lolly Foundation** to provide graduates and school leavers with free training courses. “Numerous firms already have specific pledges that go beyond profit, like commitments to reduce their carbon footprint,” he says. “It’s time to commit to a new one – hiring from the lockdown generation.”

While the most obvious way employers can help is to continue graduate and intern recruitment, apprenticeships and other training, the Covid-19 enforced working-from-home culture faced by many is a game-changer for onboarding new starters.

“BY HAVING TO COPE WITH A CHANGE OF LIFE AS THEY KNEW IT, THE NEXT GENERATION OF EMPLOYEES MAY ENTER THE WORKPLACE WITH A GREATER EMPATHY AND ADAPTABILITY”

LAUREN STILLER RIKLEEN, RIKLEEN INSTITUTE

Many employers have been proactive in adapting to lockdown and social distancing requirements by creating virtual internships, hosting online inductions for new starters and turning previously in-person graduate training schemes into fully digital ones. But Professor Christine Naschberger, of French business school **Audencia**, warns that although younger people are accustomed to online interaction, virtual onboarding still brings challenges. “It may be difficult to understand the company culture, and what the company expects from them in terms of performance and behaviour.

“Communication with their new line manager may be different because they cannot simply knock on the door if they have questions. Managers and HR professionals need to be proactive and reach out to the fresh starters to help them integrate.”

What’s more, employers will need to show compassion to the challenges this generation have faced. Being unemployed at a young age can have long-lasting “scarring effects” in terms of career paths and future earnings, according to the

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. And a **UNICEF** report published in December 2020 says that, for many young people, Covid-19 is “still making it more difficult to integrate into the labour market”.

HELPING WITH ADJUSTMENT

Lauren Stiller Rikleen, President at the **Rikleen Institute for Strategic Leadership**, is a US-based expert on developing a multi-generational workforce. “Employers should consider thoughtfully designed programmes to assist with this generation’s adjustment to the professional world,” she says. “In particular, there will need to be a greater focus on intergenerational mentoring and support.”

“Workplaces should strengthen their stress management programmes to operate at the employee, workplace and organisational levels. This could include, for example, early-career affinity groups that encourage open conversation in a supportive environment and coaching interventions to prevent minor performance challenges from having long-term implications.”

Sandy Wilkie, Co-Director at **Greenhill HR**, says HR teams and senior managers should be working hard to ensure new starters flourish. “It’s key to put more effort into regular and engaging conversations with new starters leading up to their start date. Ask them what and who they think they need to know and build this into a tailored onboarding or induction plan that blends face-to-face and online meetings.

“When they have joined, ask them how they feel on a regular basis and invite them to participate in daily check-ins so they feel supported and can highlight any problems they’re having.”

Wilkie agrees that intergenerational mentoring is important – and that it can benefit both mentor and mentee. “Reverse mentoring, or co-mentoring as I prefer to term it, can help a new graduate worker learn about behaviours, culture and organisational politics, while their more workplace experienced co-mentor can learn about new technologies, for example.”

And Rikleen adds “By having to cope with a change of life as they knew it, the next generation of employees may enter the workplace with a greater level of empathy and adaptability, qualities that are critical components of emotional intelligence and important to effective leadership. Employers can build on these skills by offering training programmes for young employees that will develop these leadership qualities from the outset of their careers.”

SPOTTING AND ATTRACTING YOUNG TALENT

If an organisation decides it will take on first-job recruits, how can it spot talent among a cohort of



young people who might have unconventional educational or employment track records due to the disruption of Covid-19?

Harjiv Singh is CEO of **BrainGain Global**, an online hub aimed at higher education students, primarily in South Asia. He says organisations can look for the alternative forms of development young candidates may have undertaken, as some may have gained transferable skills. “Organisations that are smart will look to see how individuals navigated the pandemic – despite the disruption, did they find a way to learn a new skill, make new connections or work on something pro bono in an area that they are passionate about? This shows resilience and someone who is not deterred by challenges.”

He also advises that if an organisation wants to attract young talent, it should better understand what the lockdown generation is looking for in an employer. “Young employees coming into an organisation want it to be supportive of their personal career growth and provide opportunities to learn new skills and gain experience.

“It’s also crucial to build a strong employer brand: next-generation candidates gravitate toward career opportunities that strike a strong work-life balance and offer a sense of purpose. They’re also drawn to organisations that embrace professional freedom, innovation and flexibility.”

SUPPORT AND CHALLENGES

Employers don’t have to do it all on their own – they can look to government subsidies for help recruiting ▶

TAKING A NEW VIEW

Employers will need to reconsider how they spot the best talent in this generation, but they’ll also need to think about what these candidates are looking for in an organisation. Sharon Davies, CEO of enterprise and financial education charity Young Enterprise, explains.

The pandemic may have disproportionately impacted young people, but it has also demonstrated their resilience, adaptability and resourcefulness. While the new generation of employees entering the workforce might not necessarily have the same kind of CVs as those that came before them, employers should instead look for evidence of the way young people have responded to the challenge, and the skills and enterprising mindset they have developed along the way. In practice, this can be reflected in anything from starting a business to volunteering their time, supporting their family or wider community in some way or completing an online course.

Employers need to understand that this new generation of talent are keen to make an impact and utilise the entrepreneurial and adaptability skills they have developed over the course of the pandemic. The best young employees will be looking for employers who are willing to invest in and nurture these skills and trust in them to use their talents to positively impact their business.

▶ the next generation of talent. The **Hong Kong Monetary Authority** introduced a HK\$10.8 million subsidy plan in 2020 to pay half the salaries of 300 university graduates hired by banks and other financial services firms in the region.

The French Government is spending €6.5 million to encourage companies to hire youngsters through financial incentives. And in China, the central government helped set up online recruitment platforms featuring job postings for graduates, while the regional government in Hubei province, the epicentre of the Covid-19 outbreak, created more public sector jobs for graduates and increased funding to help SMEs to hire graduates.

Meanwhile in the UK, the Government launched the Kickstart Scheme, which provides funding to employers to create job placements for 16-to-24-year-olds on Universal Credit. Looking at the impact on entry-level hiring for 2021, those industries most affected by the pandemic, including hospitality,

leisure and travel, will most probably recruit less than other industries.

But across all sectors, Wilkie believes there will inevitably be a backlog of 2020 graduates who have not found an appropriate level, or any, job. “They will swell the ranks of those 2021 graduates looking for work and I expect many vacancies to be heavily over-subscribed. The economies that have been worst hit by Covid-19 – the USA and UK for instance – face far more long-term issues than the likes of New Zealand, Australia, China and Germany.”

Whatever the availability of jobs in 2021 and beyond, he believes some of the pandemic-enforced changes in the way young people experience their introduction to the world of work will outlast the pandemic. “To some extent, Covid-19 has accelerated what was already happening. Face-to-face interaction isn’t going to disappear and will always be necessary, but many of the developments we’ve seen in virtual learning and recruitment are here to stay.” ■



A portrait of Adam Philpott, a man with short brown hair and a light beard, wearing a dark blue blazer over a light blue patterned shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a dark, textured wall.

SECURING TALENT

ADAM PHILPOTT, PRESIDENT EMEA OF
CYBERSECURITY FIRM MCAFEE, DISCUSSES
HOW THE FIRM CREATES BALANCE BETWEEN
ITS TECHNOLOGY AND TALENT STRATEGIES,
TO KEEP MOVING INTO THE FUTURE

UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE

is something many businesses have felt in recent months. While this can make many uneasy, Adam Philpott, President EMEA of cybersecurity firm **McAfee**, believes that a path can often unfold for us if we're able to step back, look at the information available to us and act upon it.

His career journey is an example of how different experiences and interests can make sense later on, even when we're unsure of what they are leading to at the time.

"Like a typical young man, I had no idea what I wanted to do," he laughs. "I wasn't even going to go to university. I was on holiday with my pals in Ibiza and just decided to do it and went to study marketing. That was the first time I really started to take an interest in studies and academics."

He says it was at this time he started creating different business plans, even though he still wasn't sure what direction he hoped to go in after he graduated.

One such plan led to him launching his own streetwear company with a friend. Although the business folded, it also showed Philpott that selling was something he enjoyed and was good at, leading him to spend the next few years in distribution until he felt ready for his next challenge in 2000. "I felt that I could offer more in a consulting-led value proposition role," he explains. "I quit my job and moved to Australia without anything lined up and then ended up working for **Cisco**."

While he had a clearer idea of what he wanted to do, he still had to prove himself within the multinational technology company. "I started there at the very bottom of the ladder," he says. "In fact, I started below the bottom of the ladder, working as a bag packer on a two-month contract."

He soon secured a permanent sales role and the company sponsored his residency in Australia before he gained citizenship. "I then moved to Singapore and then relocated back to my native UK – all with Cisco," he says.

“LIKE A TYPICAL YOUNG MAN, I HAD NO IDEA WHAT I WANTED TO DO”

ADAM PHILPOTT, PRESIDENT EMEA, MCAFEE

With the experience of leading sales in various countries under his belt, alongside 15 years of service in one company, Philpott was again ready for a new challenge and it was at this point that he found himself joining McAfee.

"I didn't want to just be seen as the guy who can do things in one company. I wanted to demonstrate that my skills are effective regardless of company and I knew the CEO of McAfee pretty well, so I came to help him drive the transformation here."



CHANGE OF DIRECTION

Philpott's change in direction coincided with McAfee's own, as the company moved from a software-focused strategy, to a cloud-first offering. With his sales background, Philpott understands better than most the risks of failing to meet customer needs, and it was exactly this that drove the change at McAfee.

"Our customers were using more and more cloud services, whether applications, storage or anything else to more dynamically run their business," he explains. "If we want to be relevant to our customers, to help them face the risks they're exposed to and assist them in accelerating their strategy securely, we have to be more cloud-centric. The money was going in that direction and our customers needed us to go in that direction to support them."

Of course, this change in direction required a change in the company's talent strategy too, and Philpott says that McAfee focused on three areas. "I like replicable models – little things I can use to remember a structure when dealing with external challenges – and the one I use in this area is the three Cs: capacity, capability and commitment.

"When you look at your talent, have you got enough capacity? Are there enough people with the knowledge necessary to go and do this thing? One particularly important area for us is to continually enhance our consulting-led skillset, both at an operational and executive engagement level, and across technical and go-to-market resources.

"In terms of capability, you might have enough people, but are they used to building or selling legacy technology rather than cloud products? If so, how do you build that capability?"

The commitment, he says, has to come from colleagues, but also from the organisation. This means rewarding people for adapting to new ways of working. "It's great if you've got enough people and they're skilled, but if you're not rewarding them for supporting change, they aren't going to do it," he says. "From a sales side for example, if they are going to make their quota selling old products, they aren't going to sell new ones. It's harder, so they'll find the easiest path to revenue that they can. But if you blend these things together, it gives a nice framework for how one takes talent through that process."

He says that once this framework is established it is vital to communicate it effectively and frequently. "The saying 'repetition is the mother of learning' is completely true. It takes time to sink in, but if you put all those things together and make people competent, you can then remove some of the safety nets until the risk of not doing it is greater than the risk of doing it."

He says that not being afraid to fail is also key in moving quickly as an organisation. "We pride ourselves that we will call out quickly where we're



ADAM PHILPOTT AT A GLANCE

Who is your hero and why?

My current hero is Jake Burton Carpenter. He invented the snowboard, but he did a huge amount of work to ensure it was safe and built a culture for snowboarding. I think it's fascinating what he did for that sport.

What's your biggest passion outside of work?

I have quite a lot actually, but one commonality is that I like doing things that are connected with nature. I don't mean gardening particularly, but things that are maybe slightly more extreme. I like trail running, snowboarding, mountain biking, things where you are undulating a little bit in nature.

What was the first bit of technology that really blew your mind?

The first Macintosh. I remember when I was at school, secondary school, I remember seeing the first one. I was amazed as it was a really cool design and almost had a personality!

What's your favourite gadget?

I DJ techno music, mainly to myself, and I have a four-deck digital mixer, which connects with an algorithm app and you can create sound loops and all sorts of stuff on there. It's very cool.

What technology would you like to see become commonplace in your lifetime?

The one that interests me the most is energy technology. Regardless of what device we have, it needs powering. It's about the source itself and how reusable it is so we're not constantly consuming and discarding electronics.



CV

ADAM PHILPOTT'S CAREER

- 2019–present President EMEA, McAfee
- 2017–2019 Vice President EMEA, McAfee
- 2017–2017 Senior Director, EMEAR Cyber Security, Cisco
- 2012–2017 Director, EMEAR Security Sales, Cisco
- 2010–2012 Director, Singapore, Cisco
- 2008–2010 Regional Manager, Cisco
- 2007–2008 Account Manager, Cisco
- 2002–2007 Commercial Sales, Cisco
- 2000–2002 Sales Manager, Ingram Micro

- ▶ failing, because we'll recognise it quicker than other people and that is actually a competitive advantage.”

DIVERSE VOICES

In order to give colleagues confidence to flag up things that are not working, Philpott says that McAfee has created feedback channels that allow concerns or ideas to be shared across the organisation.

“At a leadership level, on a weekly basis we have an extended leadership meeting of 90 minutes where marketing, HR and all manner of different leaders participate and have the opportunity to share updates on their domain.”

He also hosts quarterly meetings called Post-It Sessions to allow frontline staff to feedback to him directly. “I’ll talk for five minutes and then I’ll shut up and let people ask any question they want to. I have built some trust with them by being candid and transparent and non-judgemental, and they feel they can ask questions and get an honest answer.”

Customer voices are also added to the mix of feedback, with all leaders going out to see clients, listen to them and alter their plans as a company accordingly. “We talk about diversity a lot and I think this is a good dimension of diversity,” says Philpott. “There’s no point in listening to one type of individual otherwise you’ll get a narrow breadth of input.”

Of course, being open to hearing diverse voices is only half the battle. Like any technology business, the talent McAfee requires is scarce as it is, even before

trying to ensure the organisation has a diverse workforce. A 2020 report from **S&P Global** examined IT departments in 550 companies worldwide and found that just under half of them said women accounted for less than 25 per cent of staff, while 9.5 per cent reported no women in their company’s IT department. It’s a challenge that Philpott says they are only too aware of within McAfee, but one they are working to address.

“I’m a big fan of *facta, non verba* – deeds not words – which is an appropriate phrase for diversity,” he says. “I think it’s important to contribute to the debate, but I’m really interested in the actions that we take as well. So, our primary focus when I joined was to put in place a gender diversity programme. That’s where we felt there was the biggest gap at McAfee.”

McAfee took steps to retain their existing female tech talent, such as implementing pay parity for all employees working in the same roles at the same level and location. “We felt so strongly about this cause at McAfee that we achieved full pay parity in just one year,” he explains. “This marks McAfee as the first cybersecurity company to reach pay parity for women globally and for under-represented professionals.”

However, they also worked to improve the numbers of women interviewing to join the organisation. From altering the language used in job descriptions, to ensuring there was always a minimum of one female candidate that made it to the interview stage of roles

and putting women on each interview panel, McAfee has taken several steps, and Philpott says the numbers are going in the right direction.

“We massively increased our incoming female talent pipeline. It was around 23 per cent when I joined in 2017, and last year 39 per cent of our hires were female. That doesn’t mean that we’re at 39 per cent female talent overall, but it shows actions can drive results.”

He says that, more recently, he has begun focusing on ethnic diversity within the organisation, following the killing of George Floyd in 2020. “I’m from Bristol, a diverse UK city, I care about humanity and I wanted us to do something on ethnic diversity and inclusion as well. We’ve started working with a society college in London that has a very diverse population. We’re about to launch some of the things that we’re doing with them.”

Prioritising tasks is a big part of technology development, and Philpott says that this approach can also be helpful for organisations not sure where to start on improving diversity. “It’s not always about doing something global and massive, it’s about doing small things as well,” he adds. “Big things are made up of small differences, and that’s what we seek to do.”

CONSTANTLY EVOLVING

While McAfee has made its transformation to a cloud-first organisation over the past few years, the Covid-19 pandemic means that many other businesses have had to adopt similar approaches, some for the first time.

Philpott says that McAfee’s products were well placed to support their customers in this transition, but that they have still altered their approach slightly. “The strategy we have in place is robust because it was seeking to drive this change, and the pandemic has simply accelerated it,” he says. “That said, some things have changed, like how we prioritise different technologies working together. There’s definitely some change there that we’ve had to react to.

“Again, it comes back to early warning systems and being quick to recognise something has changed, understanding it and addressing it when we go to market. I think of it as a factory floor; the toolsets that we use to create a quality product are no different to that. We have telemetry in place that understands the quality of what we’re doing and the impact in the marketplace as well. That means we recognise where we need to improve as rapidly as possible.”

There was also a sharp spike in cyber attacks during the pandemic. Philpott says this is something McAfee was very aware of as customers faced these new threats. “In order to allow organisations to thrive, our role is to ensure we help them manage the dynamic risks to which they’re exposed,” he says.

“These grow in both volume and sophistication, whilst the manpower required to address them is insufficient on its own. Ensuring efficiency, visibility and control, augmenting human capacity with intelligence and AI has been a key dimension of how our security architecture and its components have evolved.”

More widely, Philpott is considering which of the changes brought on by the pandemic will affect McAfee’s own operations in the longer term. “For me, one of the interesting things is what it will mean for how we consume real estate services in the future,” he says. “Life is about balance. We’re not all going to be working completely virtually, but equally we’re not all going to completely go back to the office because of pollution, the lost productivity in commuting and mental health challenges that come with that. Those things don’t make sense and nor does paying for real estate which sits there idle most of the time.

“Flexible consumption models – driven by data – can understand what we are using, what we can use more of and how we can tweak our real estate investment profile to reflect what we really need. I’m really keen to see what happens in that area.”

“SOMETIMES OUR SKILLS LEAD US IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, WHETHER WE KNOW IT OR NOT”

ADAM PHILPOTT, PRESIDENT EMEA, MCAFEE

Aside from organisational goals, Philpott also has his own ambitions. But, as with taking a late decision to pursue higher education, or taking a chance on a new career in Australia, they are broad and are likely to leave him with many different options to pursue in the future.

“While most of my roles have been about go-to-market leadership, I have never, ever conducted them as that. I have always taken a general management approach to them,” he says. “Having a good comprehension of trends and insights and toolsets that one can use across functions is of huge interest to me.”

To gain this insight, he has joined one board and is in the process of joining two others. By doing so he hopes to expand both his knowledge of cyber and of other functions, and allow his path to reveal itself to him. “No one can be an expert in everything, but broad leadership really interests me as an area to grow in,” he concludes. “Sometimes our skills lead us in the right direction, whether we know it or not.” ■

REMOTELY HEALTHY?

It will come as no surprise to employers and employees alike that the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the mental health and wellbeing of many employees.

But what specific challenges are employees facing, and what opportunities are there for employers who wish to support people more effectively? Hays has gathered global and regional data to find out.

1. THE CHALLENGES

FAILING MENTAL HEALTH



32% of managers in Poland experienced deterioration in mental health as a result of the pandemic.



37% of workers globally say the pandemic has negatively affected their mental health, with **42%** saying their employer did not provide support.

LACK OF PROGRAMMES



Only **38%** of respondents in China said that an employee wellness programme was in place at their organisation.

2. THE GOOD NEWS

EMPLOYEES BOUNCING BACK



70%

In the US, employees seem to be bouncing back from the challenges of the pandemic. The percentage of employees who cited positive overall wellbeing were as follows:

84% prior to the pandemic, **66%** in the first few months of the pandemic and **70%** at this present time.

EMPLOYERS RESPONDING



7/10

In Australia and New Zealand, employers say they are responding to mental health challenges brought on by the pandemic. Nearly three-quarters said their organisation's focus on mental health and wellbeing has increased significantly or moderately during this time.

And when asked what their priorities are at this time, **51%** of organisations included supporting the mental health and wellbeing of staff. Only protecting jobs ranked higher in their list of priorities at this time, with **53%** of organisations mentioning this.

SOURCES

Online poll from Hays Poland (October 2020) | Hays survey of over 1,800 professionals ahead of World Mental Health Day (October 2020) | Uncovering the DNA of the Future Workplace in Asia (Hays, January 2021) | 2021 U.S. Salary Guide Hiring Trends & Compensation Insights: Inspiring the new age of work (Hays US, September 2020) | Hays Barometer Report: The Mental Health and ED&I Edition (Hays Australia and Hays New Zealand, October 2020)

THE TIME TO RESPOND IS NOW

“EMPLOYEE WELLBEING HAS NEVER BEEN SO BUSINESS CRITICAL. EMPLOYERS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY (AND OPPORTUNITY) TO TAKE TIME TO UNDERSTAND THE WELLBEING NEEDS OF THEIR EMPLOYEES. AS THEY LOOK BEYOND THE PANDEMIC, THEY MUST CONTINUE TO KEEP EMPLOYEE WELLBEING AT THE TOP OF THE AGENDA – STARTING WITH THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROACTIVE, INCLUSIVE, HOLISTIC WELLBEING STRATEGIES WHICH OFFERS EMPLOYEES ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE AND RELEVANT RESOURCES. ORGANISATIONS MUST ALSO ENCOURAGE AND EMPOWER THEIR PEOPLE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN IMPROVED WELLBEING.”

YVONNE SMYTH, GROUP HEAD OF EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, HAYS



EMPLOYEE OPTIMISM



It also appears that employees are more resilient to the challenges than the organisations they work for believe them to be.

28% of businesses in the US felt their employees had an increase in productivity, while **45%** of employees felt they had been more productive. And although only **20%** of organisations felt their employees had an increase in morale, **29%** of employees felt they had an increase in morale.

3. THE OPPORTUNITY

READY TO STAND OUT



There are also opportunities for employers looking to attract and retain the best talent.

In Asia, **71%** of respondents said being part of an organisation that values employee wellbeing had become more important to them following the outbreak of the pandemic. Only **34%** said their organisations currently offered this, while **75%** think their organisation should be offering this.

WORKERS KNOW WHAT THEY WANT



In Australia, a Hays report revealed exactly what employees want from their employer when it comes to mental health and wellbeing. The top three priorities were:



55%
transparent
and regular
communication



45%
listening to
voices of all
employees



35%
increased
training and
upskilling



KEEPING PACE

THE CHALLENGES OF THE PANDEMIC HAVE FORCED MANY BUSINESSES TO ADOPT AN INNOVATIVE MINDSET IN ORDER TO ADAPT TO NEW DEMANDS IN RECORD TIME. AND WHILE MANY OF US LOOK FORWARD TO THE WORLD RETURNING TO WHAT WILL BE THE NEW NORMAL, THIS WAY OF THINKING IS SOMETHING THAT MANY ORGANISATIONS WILL WANT TO HOLD ON TO

THE YEAR 2020 was one of seismic change for everyone, both at home and at work. Businesses were forced to evolve and adapt rapidly in light of the Covid-19 crisis. In the year where hybrid and home working became a new way of life for many of us and virtual meetings, social distancing and face masks became the new normal, many organisations had to completely revamp their business models and working practices.

According to a global study of 899 C-suite executives by **McKinsey**, companies have accelerated by three to four years the digitisation of their customer and supply chain interactions, and of their internal operations, following the pandemic. Furthermore, the share of digital or digitally enabled

products in their portfolios has progressed by seven years.

One of the most common changes for organisations around the world was needing to switch to a fully remote workforce. “Our shift, like other businesses, was very rapid,” says Peter Histon, Chief Technology Officer at life insurance firm **Resolution Life Australasia**. “We wanted to ensure our people could safely work at home whilst being connected to their team on a daily basis. Our people’s wellbeing is really important to us.

“We used a monthly engagement survey to ask them how they were managing, what further support they needed and if they were set up adequately with the appropriate equipment to do their job. We

delivered monitors, chairs and headsets all across Australia. Each leader was empowered to make decisions that would support their team's wellbeing and performance."

It was a similar story at **PwC UK**. Laura Hinton, Chief People Officer, says that prior to Covid-19 around 10 per cent of PwC's employees worked remotely at any one time. This switched to nearly 100 per cent almost overnight. "Of course, switching all of our 22,000 people to remote working was unexpected, but our investment in technology and embracing a culture change meant this particular adaptation was relatively smooth," she notes.

Hinton says a decade's worth of innovation and change took place in months and that some of the new practices, including flexible and remote working, will form the framework for businesses in the post-pandemic world.

Kathleen Jones, Chief People Officer (interim) at **Rathbone Brothers**, says the investment management sector has been similarly overhauled in a very short space of time. Much of this change has, Jones believes, actually been a positive thing. "Organisations like ours were worried about embracing flexible working because these businesses weren't sure how they would manage productivity, but this has made many companies see that people can remain productive and professional while working remotely," she says. "The pandemic has been a catalyst for a new way of thinking for us."

Some organisations had to do more than move to a remote working model, and completely changed their business model to ensure they survived the effects of the pandemic. Across the globe, organisations pivoted to create products to help fight the spread of Covid-19.

Fiasco, a New Zealand-based company which supplies touring equipment such as protective road cases for musicians, was forced to quickly rethink its strategy as the live music industry was forced to pause. The company considered what different products it may be able to produce with its existing supply chain, and began producing home working desks and plastic screens for retailers.

In China, **Foxconn Technology** Group repurposed its production lines to make surgical masks. Meanwhile, luxury goods conglomerate **LVMH** began producing hand sanitiser at its Dior and Givenchy perfume sites. And in South Korea, **CJ CGV**, a major cinema chain, created completely contactless theatres, with robots, automated snack bars and unmanned ticketing systems.

Michel van Hove is Partner at **Strategos**, a US strategy and innovation consultancy founded in 1995 by Gary Hamel. He says that with mounting

challenges, many businesses moved quickly to offer new or altered services or products. "There was a general sense of urgency and, in many cases, companies quickly scaled up basic infrastructure that was already in place."

He adds that in times of difficulty there are often opportunities available to those who can see them. "Generally speaking, when constraints are applied there will always be individuals who see this as an opportunity to come up with different working practices and behaviours that help them achieve better outcomes."

BUILDING AN INNOVATIVE MENTALITY

While an organisational culture that promotes change and innovation can be necessary to survive economic challenges, it can also give businesses a competitive edge when things are more stable.

Boston Consulting Group's global *Most Innovative Companies Report 2020* found that 66 per cent of the 2,500 executives surveyed see innovation as a top three management priority. Yet only 45 per cent are "committed innovators" – that is, they see innovation as a top priority and back up that commitment with significant investment.

“ORGANISATIONS LIKE OURS WERE WORRIED ABOUT EMBRACING FLEXIBLE WORKING BECAUSE THESE BUSINESSES WEREN'T SURE HOW THEY WOULD MANAGE PRODUCTIVITY”

KATHLEEN JONES, RATHBONE BROTHERS

"Sceptical innovators" (30 per cent of the total) see innovation as neither a strategic priority nor a significant target of funding. And "confused innovators" (25 per cent of the total) report a mismatch between the stated strategic importance of innovation and their level of funding for it.

The research found that committed innovators are seeing the best results. Almost 60 per cent report generating a rising proportion of sales from products and services launched in the past three years, compared with only 30 per cent of the sceptics and 47 per cent of the confused.

And in Australia, a 2020 survey of 180 firms by **Innovation and Science Australia** found that SMEs

- ▶ with high growth in technology spending increased their revenue 3.5 percentage points per year faster, and employment 5.2 percentage points faster, than those with low technology spending.

With this in mind, how can businesses ensure that the innovative mindset they gained by necessity during the Covid-19 pandemic becomes a permanent part of their culture?

One way to maintain the momentum of employees' innovation-ready mindset is to celebrate their achievements so far. Kate Cooper, Head of Research, Policy and Standards at the **Institute of Leadership and Management**, points out that while the long-term impact on productivity after switching to home working is still something of an unknown, employees' willingness to make this change is something businesses should champion.

"So many people have demonstrated capabilities to learn new technologies very quickly, to find ways of collaborating with colleagues and manage performance – all virtually," Cooper says.

This is indicative of an adaptability we will continue to need in the future, she says, not just in response to a crisis. "It could be we need to get something to market, find new suppliers or train people on a new system – whatever it is, an ability to respond quickly and effectively will deliver real competitive advantage."

In November 2020, Resolution Life switched to a new working model called 'enterprise agile' to support an innovative mindset beyond the pandemic, says Histon. "This has enabled us to fundamentally shift the way we collaborate across the organisation, to transparently generate ideas, test solutions and ultimately deliver great outcomes for our customers."

As part of this shift, the business now holds regular events called 'ceremonies' to provide feedback from different levels of the business.

"One of the ceremonies we've implemented as a part of our agile flip is the concept of a fortnightly

showcase. These are open to the entire organisation and the senior leadership team (including our CEO) have a presence at each of the showcases.

"This gives our people the opportunity to hear regularly from the senior leadership team about how important innovation is and how they are embracing 'different'."

Sheryl Fenney, Vice President, Global HR at **Fanatics**, an international sports merchandise business that works with the likes of the NFL, Manchester United and Bayern Munich, says she and her colleagues learned that building a culture of communication and strong leadership was essential when implementing quick changes to their business.

"With so much uncertainty in our lives and with our offices being across 11 countries, it was important that our global leadership team gave a strong, clear and consistent message," she notes. "Increasing our communication, both at a global and local level, was also vital."

They also learned that they needed to put employee welfare at the heart of business, says Fenney. "We did a lot of work making sure that we regularly communicated to our whole organisation and that our leaders showed humility, empathy and honesty when they spoke, many sharing personal stories of challenges they've faced," she comments.

But while the Covid-19 crisis was very much a global issue, Fanatics had found that in previous periods of significant change within the company, different countries responded in varying ways. In the UK, for example, employees sometimes struggled to adapt. "In the UK we had found, after compiling employee feedback previously, that people were more resistant to change or saw it as a negative," Fenney says.

To help combat this, Fanatics rolled out a number of 'change workshops' for UK employees, delivered by an external facilitator. "This wasn't needed as much in other countries, such as the US, where the employee base was much more used to and excited by change," Fenney notes.

PROCESS PROGRESS

Of course, for many businesses, following processes to ensure services or products are delivered to a set standard is as important as innovating regularly. Accordingly, van Hove warns that these should be developed with equal urgency.

"At Strategos we believe innovation can flourish by enabling creativity with robust processes," he explains. "These are not mutually exclusive as many like to believe. Core processes and shared purpose provide overall coherence for everyone."

"If we look at our clients, 2020 was a time when prescribed ways of working (policies and

FOUR WAYS TO RETAIN A CULTURE OF INNOVATION

1. Celebrate achievements in innovation, and the mindset that allowed them to happen.
2. Create channels that allow you to quickly communicate strategic shifts to everyone in your organisation.
3. Ensure that your processes evolve to meet new needs.
4. Be prepared to roll back changes that are not working, and ensure this is not seen as a failure.

procedures) were often 'ignored' in favour of helping colleagues and customers. Organisations need to innovate their products and services, but those same processes must apply to their working practices."

Kosta Mavroulakis, CEO and Founder of global innovation scouts **Impact Ventures**, agrees and recommends that organisations research to see if there are existing products that may support them in this endeavour, something he has witnessed organisations do throughout the pandemic. "It led them to make better use of existing off-the-shelf platforms, which better align to their existing system and processes," he notes. "In other cases, it forced them to seek out new innovation provided by tech start-ups and scale-ups, or even to invest in creating their own."

Renewable energy firm **Bulb** has taken on an additional 200 employees since the start of the Covid-19 crisis last March, and taken advantage of existing platforms to get the most from its workforce. "We use a mix of data and feedback to understand how things are working," says Tom Fraine, Chief People Officer at Bulb. "One example is Slack - we know that this platform helps us work better remotely because our teams use it every day. If it doesn't work, we change it."

SOUTH KOREA RANKED MOST INNOVATIVE COUNTRY

The *2021 Bloomberg Innovation Index* has ranked South Korea as the world's most innovative country. The Index analyses dozens of criteria using seven equally weighted metrics, including research and development spending and concentration of high-tech public companies.

1. South Korea
2. Singapore
3. Switzerland
4. Germany
5. Sweden
6. Denmark
7. Israel
8. Finland
9. Netherlands
10. Austria

If businesses want to move quickly and effectively, Fraine says, they have to look closely at how their teams are using the tools and processes they have in place and change them if necessary. "We know that in order to be effective, we have to be agile in how we operate."

Fenney, meanwhile, says that organisations can create a balance by putting equal weight on the importance of both innovation and process, even when recruiting. "Being innovative and agile is key for all roles, but it is important that we balance





- ▶ creativity with subject matter experts to ensure due diligence and compliance.”

FREEDOM TO FAIL

Another key way of nurturing an innovative mindset is to ensure that reversing changes where necessary is not seen as a step back. Not every new idea will be a success, and encouraging your people to be mindful of this is important, says van Hove.

“When innovating, learning about the idea needs to come before the commercial argument.

Assumptions-based testing is a great way to put ‘learning before earning’ and allows colleagues to roll back changes, reflect and reconsider ideas or correct the course if necessary.”

Resolution Life has a reflection process known as ‘retros’, where teams recap on recent changes in the business. “Every fortnight in our retros, our squads and self-managing teams reflect on what went well and what could be improved,” says Histon. “This session really highlights how we’re a learning organisation and recognise there’s always room for improvement.

“Part of the focus in the agile model is testing and learning, and the phrase we use is ‘it’s ok to fail, but let’s do it quickly’. We want to test new ideas, but we want to know if they are going to work. If not, we can try a different approach before launching to customers. This means we have to be very focused on what we are learning and be open to changing things accordingly.”

Mavroulakis, meanwhile, says there is value in communicating clearly to internal and external

“WE ENCOURAGE ALL OUR EMPLOYEES TO BE AGILE AND WILLING TO CHANGE. IT’S A KEY PART OF OUR MESSAGING”

SHERYL FENNEY, FANATICS

stakeholders, and that innovations within an organisation may roll back if they are found to be ineffective. “Organisations can adapt their online and offline communications to be clearer about the changes, and how they are subject to change, to enable them to reverse them in the future,” he says.

Ultimately, an organisation’s ability to sustain a culture of innovation at all times, not just during a pandemic, requires a deep knowledge of what allows its employees to break barriers. No two organisations will have followed the same route, and even colleagues within the same organisation will have had different experiences. It’s for this reason, van Hove says, that organisations must investigate thoroughly and gain a full overview of what has helped their people over the past year.

“It is not enough to send out questionnaires, as many organisations did during the pandemic,” he says. “They must identify and engage with individuals to understand at a deeper level what motivated them to innovate their work practices.” ■

INJECTION OF TALENT

ORGANISATIONS IN THE LIFE SCIENCES SECTOR HAVE FACED QUICKLY EVOLVING RECRUITMENT NEEDS THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC. HOW CAN THEY ENSURE THEY STAND OUT TO CANDIDATES IN THIS MARKET?



UNSURPRISINGLY IN THE FACE of Covid-19, the talent needs of the life sciences sector have evolved rapidly since the pandemic began.

While some roles in the sector have been highly sought after, others have remained flat or even seen demand fall. The need for rapid vaccine development saw a surge in demand in some areas, while clampdowns on non-essential services caused declines in others.

Alice Kedie, Manager, Life Sciences for Hays Australia, explains how it has impacted the talent market in the region. “We have been fortunate to largely have had much fewer restrictions than many other countries, so this has allowed things to continue to a degree as before; although because many affiliate operations in Australia are linked to headquarters in Europe and the US, the country has still been affected by things like hiring freezes. ▶

SECTOR SNAPSHOT

- ▶ “From a sales and marketing perspective, organisations that supply ventilators, personal protective equipment and over-the-counter antiviral products experienced exponential growth,” she adds. “On the opposite end of the spectrum, government and hospital capital funding was diverted away from equipment and drugs that were not Covid-19-response related and, therefore, saw a fall in sales.”

In the UK, contingent entry-level talent was in high demand to support testing efforts earlier in the pandemic. More recently however, the market has settled into business as usual, says Chris Smith, Director, Hays Life Sciences. “There are a lot of trials in vaccines and we’re seeing needs for data science roles at the back end of the trials,” he explains. “The drive is for technical disciplines such as health economists and healthcare specialists, that can use real-world evidence to support the long-term roll-out of vaccines as they compete with the others on the market.”

The requirement for analytical talent is a common thread for many regions, not just in Australia and the UK. Yannick Chentout, Team Leader – Life Sciences, Hays Belgium, says Belgium is another country experiencing a shortage of talent on this front. “For instance, testing centres are looking for laboratory technicians to analyse PCR tests, but a laboratory technician won’t remain on the labour market more than few days.”

Mariusz Popin, Senior Manager, Life Sciences, Hays Poland, says that a push to market products more effectively has driven talent demands. “One of the key tasks in Poland during the pandemic was the reorganisation of sales departments, as well as the need to develop new channels to reach doctors and patients,” he says. “We have noticed a greater demand for recruitment in the areas of digital marketing, regulatory affairs and clinical trials.”

Similar trends have also been observed in Mexico, with organisations requiring talent to facilitate clear, ambitious and aggressive sales and marketing strategies in order to increase their market share and productivity. Meanwhile in China, the country perhaps furthest into its journey through the pandemic, there has been demand for research and development, regulatory, and quality assurance talent.

“WE’RE SEEING NEEDS FOR DATA SCIENCE ROLES AT THE BACK END OF THE TRIALS”

CHRIS SMITH, DIRECTOR, HAYS LIFE SCIENCES

Elsewhere, France saw a fall in pharma manufacturing activity. Lockdowns meant some facilities shut down for a time, which in turn caused slow restart procedures to begin manufacturing safely again. Over-the-counter drug consumption also fell, with lockdowns reducing seasonal illness in the country.

The country has, however, seen a rise in the need for specific healthcare talent. Geriatric doctors have been required to support at-risk older people in the country, while emergency doctors were in demand to support a surge in demand in hospitals. Psychologists are also sought after to help understand the longer-term effects of lockdowns.

MEETING REGIONAL CHALLENGES

As well as facing different talent needs, organisations operating in the life sciences sector are also facing different local hiring challenges. In Poland, Popin says that organisations sometimes have to turn to talent outside the country when they are opening new operations in the country. “It happens when we support life sciences companies in opening regional or global support centres,” he explains. “It is necessary to recruit large teams with rare skills and from a niche specialisation (or therapeutic area) with regional or global experience. More and more often we engage foreign candidates who decide to relocate and continue their professional career in Poland.”

Meanwhile in Australia, Kedic says there is a shortage of clinical research skills, as the country has become an increasingly desirable place to conduct clinical trials. “This is not only because quality of clinical trial data is very strong here, but arguably





because hospitals are not overrun with Covid-19 patients,” she explains.

“There is also a lack of development at the entry level and limited opportunities for training and development of STEM graduates to enter into technical roles within the industry,” she says. “More university intern partnerships would help this.”

There may also be an opportunity for businesses in some regions if they were to look in other talent pools. In Mexico, for example, it has proved challenging to recruit sales and marketing professionals for organisations that are unwilling to consider candidates with experience in other industries or sectors. While

candidates with direct experience will have a shorter learning curve, the pool of talent is smaller, so looking elsewhere may be a better option.

Finally, in the UK, organisations are facing challenges relating to Brexit – like other sectors, life sciences organisations have new systems to navigate when hiring talent from abroad. By understanding these systems, Smith says organisations should be able to go further afield for talent. “Over the next 12 months, organisations are going to get used to a points-based immigration system in the UK, and work out how it can work for them,” he concludes. “Understanding that will be a key part of talent strategy going forward.” ■

› WHAT CAN LIFE SCIENCES ORGANISATIONS DO TO SET THEMSELVES APART FROM COMPETITION IN THE CURRENT RECRUITMENT MARKET?



“Flexibility and the freedom to work from home must become standard, not just a pandemic emergency response. Candidates are also looking at company products and data more; they want to have confidence that a role offers longevity at an organisation that has a strong pipeline of novel treatments that will benefit patients in need. Companies need to be able to convince candidates that their role will be involved in life changing therapy options for patients, in order to attract top talent.”

› **Alice Kedie**, Manager, Life Sciences, Hays Australia



“To get the best people, you have to have an ethos and a story. That should be layered. Every team you’re recruiting for should have their own story that fits into the overall company narrative. It’s important in life sciences because a lot of people go into it for the love of science and what it can achieve. A lot of the company narratives are very patient-centric, but it’s also important to communicate career investment, what development and growth plans are, what their next steps can be if they’re successful in your role. Give candidates a vision that they’re always going somewhere. It’s a talent-short sector so you have to get people excited.”

› **Chris Smith**, Director, Hays Life Sciences



“After a year of changes and numerous restructurings, many candidates are now looking for stability and permanent employment. The companies that are characterised by low employee turnover and will be able to offer the possibility of long-term cooperation will stand out on the market. Expectations regarding recruitment processes have changed. Since the beginning of the pandemic, recruiting has been taking place completely remotely, and candidates expect it going forward.”

› **Mariusz Popin**, Senior Manager, Life Sciences, Hays Poland



“Companies must work on their attractiveness to candidates. The market has changed and it is now up to the candidate to make a decision, not the hiring company. Candidates are looking for a better work-life balance in a meaningful and gratifying role. It is essential for pharmaceutical companies to understand that and to tailor their offer. This now goes beyond a simple salary package.”

› **Yannick Chentout**, Team Leader - Life Sciences, Hays Belgium

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