

Diverse workplace  
Recognising and  
valuing difference

Talent management  
Engagement, retention  
and development

Growth through training  
Rewarding performance,  
building commitment

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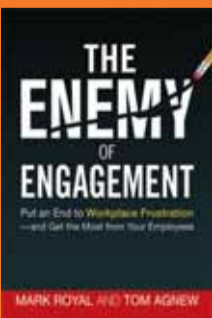
No. 1 / Dec. '11

# COMPLETE HR

## GET THE BEST OUT OF YOUR WORKFORCE

**Bringing it together:** Robert Potter, Chair of the City HR Association, on linking the organisation and the individual

PHOTO: PROVIDED BY CITY HR ASSOCIATION



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## CHALLENGES

As we enter 2012 the HR profession is the lynchpin that will ensure employees are fully trained, well engaged and less stressed than the year before, says Andrea Eccles, Managing Director of the City HR Association.

# Managing talent tops the human resource agenda

The past year has seen considerable reliance on the Human Resource profession, as organisations seek to address their legal and regulatory duties whilst enhancing employee engagement. Pitched against the backdrop of a faltering economy, this has created a climate of uncertainty for employers and employees alike. Never before has there been such a need for steady stewardship at the top of the HR function.

There is no doubt that uncertainty creates stress, so many organisations have implemented wellbeing programmes. Whilst the larger firms have Occupational Health Departments, smaller companies are reliant on their Employee Assistance Programmes or corporate medical practice for employee support.

Additionally, there is the need for positive employee relations. Creating a fair working environment is not just good practice, but a matter of employment law. Extensive legislation exists to protect individuals' employment rights and HR is regularly required to provide advice, counsel and mediation from contractual entitlements to workplace disputes, supported by

employment lawyers.

## Diversity advances

**1** The City HR Association is proud to have 'made a difference' in the area of gender diversity. By way of background, the City HR Association represents the HR departments of almost 200 financial and professional service firms on matters from lobbying and consultation to HR benchmarking and training.

The Association has worked hard with its members to create best practice guides, provide case studies and to consult with the EHRC regarding the issues in the Financial Services Inquiry: sex discrimination and the gender pay gap.

Charlotte Sweeney, Head of Diversity and Inclusion at Nomura says: "Diversity and Inclusion is likely to take a greater prominence during 2012, particularly when examining the impact of the Lord Davies review and the outputs of the first FSA Diversity Survey. Companies will need to consider how these issues remain on the business agenda in a meaningful way during challenging economic times".

Part of this supplement looks at diversity and a joint seminar is being planned between City HR and the EHRC for Women's Day on 8th March 2012.



Andrea Eccles, Managing Director of the City HR Association



Robert Potter, Chair of the City HR Association

## HR central role

**2** There is no doubt that HR leaders are facing major challenges. This includes the people

management aspects which may arise from a faltering economy or any potential fall-out from the Euro. City CEOs and HR leaders also need to pay heed to the public and media's perception of pay and ethics.

According to Robert Potter, City HR Chair, "HR initiatives can contribute towards trust and integrity because HR acts as the vital link between organisations and individuals".

But there have also been some major positive developments from which to take heart.

Talent Management is still prevalent, particularly employee engagement, retention and development. A recent City HR survey showed that even in difficult times, member organisations were investing in training, mostly geared towards leadership and professional/regulatory qualifications. There was also an increase in employee coaching. Finally, there is planning around the HR implications arising from the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and London 2012 Olympics.

This Mediaplanet supplement showcases some of the innovative practices going on within the HR function, both now and in the future.

For more details please visit [www.cityhr.co.uk](http://www.cityhr.co.uk)



## WE RECOMMEND



Dianah Worman  
Advisor to the CIPD  
on diversity

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'Most companies are looking to grow, and if they don't think differently, how are they going to do that?'

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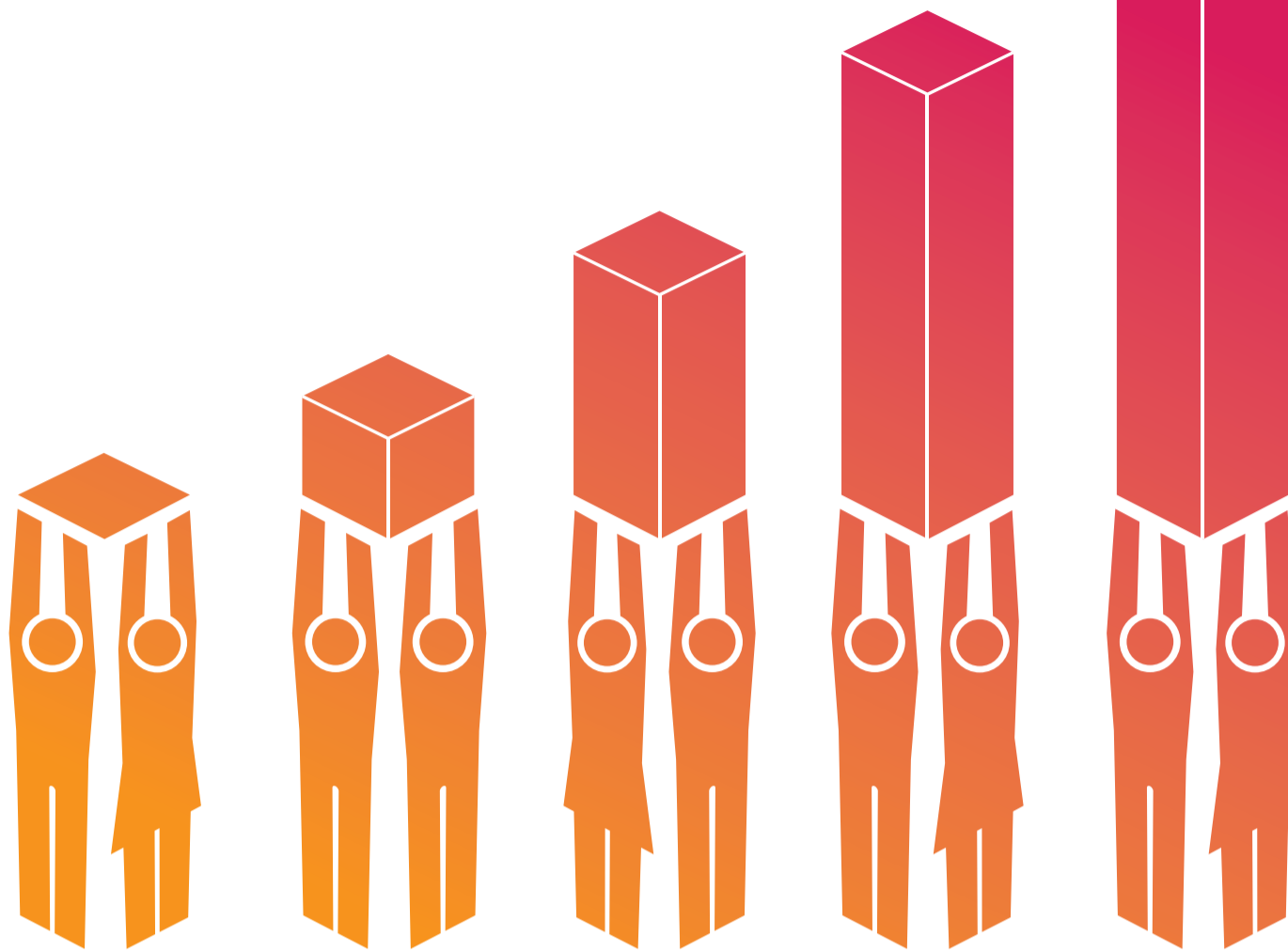


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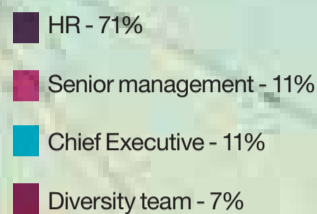
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## INSPIRATION

Diversity ownership and equal opportunity policies from the City HR Benchmarking Survey 2010



This graph comes from the City HR Association Policies Benchmarking Survey and shows who owns the diversity policy within organisations. There were 56 participants, all from different major financial institutions involved in banking, asset management and insurance.

## Total rewards bring flexibility



**Stuart Hyland**  
Head of Reward Consulting at Hay Group

**Rewards management used to be a fairly narrow field limited to company-wide perks, such as low cost gym memberships and crèche vouchers. However, according to the Head of Reward Consulting at Hay Group, Stuart Hyland, forward thinking companies are now working on total reward programmes. This encapsulates flexibility in pay and conditions as well as how employees feel about their employer.**

“Rewards used to be fairly inflexible and so crèche vouchers were of no use to a single person and a gym was useless to someone who doesn’t work out,” he says.

“Today, companies are being a lot more flexible through offering access to a pot of money which can be used for a wide variety of rewards. It’s basically extending the option to have a company car or extra salary to other rewards. There are also interesting schemes that, for example, allow people to buy extra days off work.

“Crucially, total rewards programmes need to look at the type of company employees want to work for and ensure the company lives up to it. Working for a really well respected brand which has strong values that it lives up to is reward itself for most people.”

**Encouraging loyalty**

Nick Hurley, Partner for Charles Russel LLP discusses the importance of valuing your staff. He said: “Training staff and treating them well is good because not only is it likely to promote loyalty and productivity, but it will limit any legal risks associated with allegations that any unfavourable treatment or failure to offer training is motivated by discrimination based on one of the protected characteristics (e.g. sex, race, disability, religious belief, age etc.). It will also avoid claims that the implied term of trust and confidence is engaged, which might allow an employee to bring a claim in constructive dismissal.”

SEAN HARGRAVE  
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## Diversity offers new opportunities

**Question:** Diversity and equality rules are sometimes seen as a burden on employers, is this the case?

**Answer:** Not at all. According to Dianah Worman, Advisor to the CIPD on diversity, new rules could actually boost the bottom line.

## CHANGE

In a time of austerity it is perhaps understandable that some employers will not welcome new rules on how to ensure all groups within a company are treated fairly. However, the Equality Act of 2010 could actually help companies grow market share as well as build a happier workplace, explains Worman.

“Diversity rules can sometimes be seen as very technical and a little cumbersome but there is a lot of guidance available to ensure that companies not only stay the right side of the law but actually use the law to flourish,” she says.

“Diversity and equality in the workplace are simply about recognising and valuing difference. This isn’t just within the workplace, but also with how you treat clients and customers. Companies have to realise that with a global workplace people are becoming increasingly diverse. That not only means your staff, but also your end customers and the companies you work with.

“So the question is; can companies afford not to actively encourage diversity and equality in the workplace? It’s a huge opportunity to reach out to new customers and new areas of society whose skills and custom a business might not otherwise fully tap in to.”

**New thinking**

A point Worman is very keen to make is that if a company does not engage with all of its employees and offer everyone an equal opportunity to progress their careers, how are they going to know the opportunities they are missing out on? By acting on diversity recommendations, companies should not be thinking solely about staying the right side of the law. Treating all people within a company the same - regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability

or sexual orientation — not only avoids friction, it allows fresh ideas to percolate to the top.

“Most companies are looking to grow and if they don’t think differently, how are they going to do that?” asks Worman.

“Diversity laws account for everyone but, in particular, the groups that they primarily seek to protect represent huge markets which companies could be helped to target if they encourage diversity throughout the business.”

Diversity is a little like a shopping loyalty card, Worman believes. When a supermarket starts to glean knowledge about its customers, it finds it can sell more produce and get ideas for new lines. Similarly, by engaging all staff within a business, innovative ideas flourish and access to new markets begin to open up.

## PROPOSED EMPLOYMENT LAW CHANGES

**Protected conversations** – this proposed change is intended to allow employers to raise workplace issues such as performance or conduct with employees ‘in an open way, free from the worry it will be used as evidence in...tribunal’.

**The government** will increase the unfair dismissal qualifying period to two years from April 2012, apparently ‘to give greater

confidence to employers in recruiting new employees, without undermining workers’ sense of job security’.

**Compromise agreements** – the government will consult on whether and how to enable compromise agreements to cover all existing and future claims without the need for a full list of causes of action.

SOURCE: PHILIP DAVIES, OF EVERSHEDS LLP



**Dianah Worman**  
Advisor to the CIPD on diversity

**Thought needed**

Although some companies may be put off encouraging diversity by a fear of getting to grips with new regulations, Worman maintains there are good sources of impartial advice.

In addition to studying these recommendations, diversity training is advisable for those ‘light bulb’ moments when staff realise they may unwittingly treat some of their co-workers or clients differently.

Encouraging positive employee relations is a duty most managers take very seriously because it ensures all staff feel comfortable and valued at work, and able to perform to the best of their abilities. Conflicts and misunderstandings between members of staff can escalate and impact productivity and work quality if there is not a culture of supporting all employees and ensuring the working environment is free from friction.

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## NEWS

# Training focus shifts to performance management

■ **Question:** In difficult times, surely training is an avoidable expense?

■ **Answer:** Far from it. Companies are beginning to focus on growth through training managers and staff to reward performance and build commitment.

Any company is only as good as its people and so, even in a time of austerity, those that are focussed on future growth are ensuring employees are well trained.

In particular, companies are increasingly eager to move towards performance management where, rather than dealing with employees as a single block, individuals are rewarded according to their performance. According to Andrew Pullman, Managing Director of People Risk Solutions, for the transition to go smoothly, training is needed to ensure managers can gauge performance and employees can make assessments a two way process.

"Companies are starting to realise that if they are to become performance-driven they need managers to become a lot better at giving appraisals," he says.

"The main point is they need to be only forty per cent about the past and sixty per cent about the future so you have a sense of moving forwards. Too often these appraisals just sum up the year that's been and never move on.

"The really advanced companies are also seeking training for employees so they can perform better



'All employees secretly ask themselves not just if they're getting paid enough, but also if they are doing something worthwhile'

Andrew Pullman  
Managing Director, People Risk Solutions

in these annual or quarterly conversations. They need training in how to bring matters to their employer's attention as well as explain how they feel they contributed to the company and how they see that contribution developing."

## Showing commitment

The major point the move to performance-based HR underlines, is

## TIPS

### Think ahead

1 To get best value from training, plan it as part of your business Training and Development Plan. Have a clear vision of how your team and individual staff will develop over the next year.

### Use your imagination

2 These plans can be fun to write. Include wider learning

that what Pullman considers 'the good old days' are long gone and today employers and employees must engage better.

"Employers used to all want loyalty, but those days are long gone," he says.

"If you want loyalty, get a dog. What modern companies realise they need is commitment and that goes two ways. It means you can't

activities such as web research, visits, team presentations.

### Mix it up

3 Remember that your staff will learn best if taught in their favourite learning style. Some need to understand the theories behind things (theoretical learners) while others learn by doing. (Action Learners)

SOURCE: CAROL DRIVER, DIRECTOR, RUBICON CONSULTING

just keep the troops in the dark, you need to engage with them and explain what is going on inside the company and where it's headed.

"All employees secretly ask themselves not just if they're getting paid enough, but also if they are doing something worthwhile and if they have a manager they can learn from to help with their career development. So, employers are investing in the necessary training to engage and communicate with staff to encourage this commitment and ensure staff keep focus".

As with so many HR issues, although initiatives such as performance based reviews may be initiated to promote excellence in employees, it can place a focus on managers to improve their own performance and seek training. If a company is underperforming it can always be linked to poor leadership, Pullman believes.

If managers need an example, they should consider the way the McLaren F1 team holds a meeting with all staff after every race to explain what went well and where improvements are needed. It means that all employees feel part of the bigger picture. It is this kind of leadership that makes people feel they belong and commit to a company even though there may be the chance of better pay elsewhere.

SEAN HARGRAVE

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## HR training essential

**The current economic climate is not what most in HR would wish for. Cut backs can mean morale is low and that can apply to the HR team itself just as much as the rest of the business.**

This makes it more important than ever to ensure skills are not lost forever within the team if numbers are depleted. So, in addition to facilitating training for departments across a business, HR executives should themselves consider extra training to ensure their team has no skills gaps.

According to Penny De Valk, Chief Executive at leadership development consultancy, Fairplace Cedar, in addition to keeping skills up to date, HR teams should invest in training to help the team develop a coaching culture throughout the business.

"The HR department is a crucial link between employees and management and so it's got a huge role to play in communicating what is going on," she says.

"It's really important for HR executives to develop as business people and a critical part of this is to become coaches to colleagues throughout the business to help them through a difficult time. This can be to help them have those awful conversations where somebody has to be made redundant but it can also be about being positive. Once difficult decisions have been made, coaching and mentoring can move on to being more upbeat and communicating how the company is planning to grow so the people left are less anxious about the future."

## Managing in difficult and changing times? Investing in training can provide valuable solutions

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Coping during difficult times is as much about taking stock as it is about taking action. Acas has been advising all types of organisations on employment relations and HR best practice for over thirty years. We've seen that when times are tough, businesses often need to up-skill their managers to ensure they have the right skills and knowledge to push the business forward and implement change, while ensuring legal requirements are met. At the same time a well trained manager is able to take their staff along with them by maintaining employee engagement and having the confidence to tackle difficult workplace situations before they get out of hand.

The past 18 months has also seen significant changes in employment law which all managers and HR staff need to feel confident with. From the introduction of 'Fit Notes', to the Equality Act 2010, through to the removal of the Default Retirement Age and

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