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SPECIAL REPORTS

WHILST SKILLS NEEDED FOR TODAY REMAIN SCARCE, PEOPLE WITH YESTERDAY'S CAPABILITY FACE DISMAL JOB PROSPECTS

RAVI CHAND, HR DIRECTOR, WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT & PLANNING - HM REVENUE & CUSTOMS

{ TAXING TIMES }

“THE LEGACY WAS 1950s - WHAT WE WERE PART OF WAS TRANSFORMATION, NOT CHANGE FOR THE SAKE OF IT”

ALSO FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

PERFORMANCE & EFFICIENCY Taylor Review laudably targets the goal of 'good work for all', but UK productivity is a deep dark problem

WELLBEING Chipped workers prompted to reduce concomitant stress, is a bit like electric impulses to get a dog to back down

BUILDING RESILIENCE The more meaningful the work, the more stressful it is, because we care. A meaningful life is a stressful life

HUMANISING ORGANISATIONS Humans are naturally social with a proclivity for mimicking behaviour - more Homo Imitans than Homo Sapiens



GIG IN THE CITY

Organisations awash with systems and process still suffer a drought trying to apply them in an effective and output-driven way. Big data analysis is unable to keep pace with markets always looking for more. We predict the weather far better now than a generation ago, but since it's more extreme, and we expect more accuracy, we are still disappointed.

ARTICLE BY MIKE ROBINSON, MANAGING DIRECTOR - BERKSHIRE CONSULTANCY LTD

Struggling managers can still hide behind good data - regular data updates with accurate metrics tell them what to act on, yet they manage to find reasons not to, and they end up trying to fatten a cow by weighing it! Our knowledge economy increasingly relies on value being added via people networks as much as formal processes. The strong traditional correlation between input costs and output value has been eroded. As service deliverables - such as a market analysis report - can differ according to client and from one request to the next, productivity becomes more difficult to measure and improve. Performance monitoring systems often struggle to reward good performance while patently failing to address poor performance. Appraisals have passed their sell-by date; difficult conversations are put off (there will always be a better time) and appraisal grades are fudged (it's easier than dealing with a staff challenge).

So how have organisations tended to tackle productivity? We rush to cut costs and diminish our overall capability rather than invest in staff to innovate and flourish. Reframing how we view employment, performance management and skills acquisition might be the answer and the rise of the 'gig economy' could provide some clues. Is it time for employers to see staff as 'self-employed' within the organisation and set up a more fluid internal job market, not dependent on formal job role? Should employees now take full responsibility for their own development and marketability, by actively promoting their experience, value and skill sets? The shift towards an in-house gig economy will require staff actively promoting themselves and seizing opportunities. They will be looking out for projects and roles in high-profile, growth areas within the organisation and positioning themselves accordingly. They will need to be confident enough to seek real-time feedback on projects from peers and managers, and use this to start improving straight away rather than from a point of formal appraisal.

Millennials love of technology should help them build their own in-house LinkedIn/Facebook page of experiences,



DEVELOPING 'SELF-EMPLOYED EMPLOYEES' WHO MANAGE THEIR CVS, BUILD SKILLS AND REPUTATION, ACTIVELY NETWORK TO SEEK NEW EXPERIENCES AND SOLICIT CONTINUOUS MICRO-APPRAISAL MAY BE THE WAY TO INNOVATE OUT OF TODAY'S STALE EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENT.



capabilities and endorsements. But self-authoring of CVs and projecting of our 'best self' will need authenticity and honesty to avoid jobs going to those who can talk better than walk! Reputation building among peers will result in more selection for project roles by peers - in future will we view team selection by bosses in the same light as many view arranged marriages now? The role of line managers should continue to shift to one of mentor and sponsor, with senior leaders and HR creating a different supporting dialogue to demonstrate sponsorship of the more active job-seeking workforce. Water cooler conversations will focus on exploring what is on offer and what is being offered. Those selecting new staff into their teams as a result of active self-promotion will need to maintain objectivity. Work should be allocated on the basis of 'bosses listening hardest' rather than 'staff shouting loudest'!

Developing 'self-employed employees' who manage their CVs, build skills and reputation, actively network to seek new experiences and solicit continuous micro-appraisal may be the way to innovate out of today's stale employment arrangement. Developed properly, the gig economy could deliver a range of benefits such as: Reinforcing a networking rather than a silo mentality; increasing diversity by selecting staff for their unique or best contribution rather than for time-served skills; improving productivity at a micro level - more staff feeling good about themselves and more engaged and introducing 'disrupter' thinkers and actors into the system, driving faster innovation. Taken to its logical conclusion, staff reward schemes should also reflect the more continuous way that staff are assessed. Staff should be able to build up 'micro-credits' for good performance on 'gigs', to feed in to assessments and promotions - developed wisely, the gig economy could become to Millennials what piece-work was to the Victorians! ●

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