

progress

/ˈprɒɡres/

- 1 forward or onward movement towards a destination
- 2 development towards an improved or more advanced condition

your organisation

discovering the meaning of Brexit
meeting complexity with Smart Simplicity

your role

talent management: a critical process in disrepair
the digital worker 1.0

your career

good and effective leadership
are we cobbler's children?

Issue 4: July 2016



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CORPORATE RESEARCH FORUM

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Published by
Corporate Research
Forum, PARC and
Strategic Dimensions

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Welcome to the latest edition of *Progress* which is a compilation of articles reflecting our views of the current challenges for organisations and leaders.

We live in uncertain and unpredictable times! Since the Brexit vote, many of us have gone through the stages of shock, dismay, disbelief, and uncertainty. But now it is time to regroup, make progress and improve. In difficult times, we need to focus on innovating, communicating, collaborating, looking outwards, striving to be the best, and delivering results.

It is clear we need political stability, strong leadership and clear direction. Gideon Rachman's article sets out the key issues to be resolved in the Brexit negotiations, and the consequences of failing to conclude a deal quickly. In the absence of clarity, organisations will be left to themselves to survive and prosper and work it out for themselves.

Large global organisations have become increasingly difficult to manage. Multi-dimensional matrix structures, global

operations and divergent stakeholders have brought high levels of complexity to running businesses. Yves Morieux considers how we can counter complexity with 'smart simplicity'.

For many organisations, people are a significant asset, cost, and potential source of competitive advantage. Yet, recent CRF research on *Rethinking Talent Management*, has found that the outcomes of talent processes are failing to live up to expectations. Jay Conger looks at what has gone wrong, and how practice can be improved.

The smartphone has become ubiquitous and has transformed how and where we work today. Carsten Sørensen introduces "The Digital Worker 1.0" and discusses the challenges of digitisation for workers' lives.

Finally, Andy Newall and Nick Holley share some observations on the positive influence that leaders and the HR function can have in volatile times.

CRF's research activities for the coming year will continue to build on our interest in the practical applications of our work to help organisations "navigate a safe course through stormy waters". Upcoming projects will focus on improving innovation, enhancing performance, developing learning agility and ensuring effective collaboration.

Enjoy the summer.

Warmest regards,

Gillian Pillians
Research Director

Richard Hargreaves
Commercial Director




discovering the meaning of Brexit

Britain has voted to leave the European Union. Now we are about to discover what “Leave” means.

The fact that the meaning of Leave remains entirely ambiguous stems from a deliberate decision by the forces campaigning for Brexit. The Leave campaign was a coalition. Some were driven largely by a desire to control immigration; others were intoxicated by a vision of a Britain, unencumbered by EU laws, but trading freely with the whole world. The free-traders usually intended to remain part of the EU’s internal market – which guarantees tariff free access for British goods to the EU and full rights for financial firms based in the City to sell services inside the EU.

In reality the ambitions of the free-traders and the anti-immigration lobby were always likely to prove incompatible. The difficulty is

that guaranteeing full access to the internal market – involves accepting the EU’s four freedoms, including free movement of people. That, in turn, would mean that Britain could not restrict immigration from the EU, in the way that many Leave voters now hope and expect.

Aware of this difficulty, the official Leave group deliberately fudged the trade-off between immigration and the internal market, during the course of the referendum campaign. Now that Leave is official government policy, however, the hard choices can no longer be avoided. In their negotiations with the EU, any new prime minister will have to decide whether to

In reality the ambitions of the free-traders and the anti-immigration lobby were always likely to prove incompatible.

prioritise controls on immigration or access to the internal market.

The U.K. Government’s first instinct will probably be to stress the internal market. The Tories, in particular, are traditionally close to the City – and many in the City are terrified of losing their cherished “passporting” rights, which allow unhindered access to the financial services market of the EU. The Tories will know that billions of tax revenue, millions in campaign donations to their party and thousands of jobs, depend on a prosperous City.

But, on the other hand the Leave campaign know that immigration was probably the issue that delivered them victory. Their voters will demand and expect controls on the free movement of people from Europe. It is significant that support for Boris Johnson began to crumble within the Tory Party, when he appeared to be going wobbly on immigration.

So my expectation is that a new British government will ultimately feel compelled to prioritise restrictions on free movement of people – and then to salvage what it can from the internal market. It is likely, I think, that the EU will ultimately grant the UK tariff-free access for manufactured goods – since Germany, in particular, enjoys a substantial trade-surplus with the UK in this area. However, it seems to me much less likely that the UK will be granted its current level of access for service industries. That is potentially a big problem – since services contribute far more to the economy

in terms of employment and revenues – than manufacturing. The City, in particular, will be vulnerable to efforts by rival financial centres in Europe to filch parts of British business. And if the big banks and financial services firms reduce their headcount in London – there will be knock-on effects for the many industries that profit their presence, in particular the law, accountancy, PR and hospitality industries.

Finally, there is the question of how swiftly a deal can be concluded. The British may hope to play for time because they worry that as soon as they trigger Article 50 – setting in train the two year process of leaving the EU – the clock will be ticking, handing bargaining leverage to Brussels.

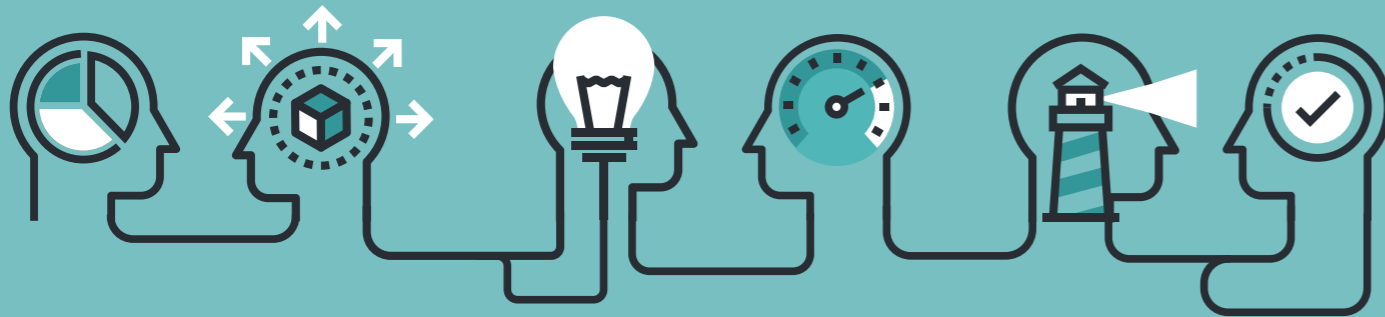
If the big banks and financial services firms reduce their headcount in London – there will be knock-on effects for the many industries that profit their presence.

But if the process is stretched out long into the future, the uncertainty for business will continue – and that may have a chilling effect on business and investment. So it is likely that the divorce proceedings will start within months.

Gideon Rachman, Chief Foreign Affairs Commentator, Financial Times | @gideonrachman



Join 400+ European HR & business leaders at the 8th CRF International Conference – *An Uncertain World: Planning for 2025 and Beyond* – in Prague (12-14 October 2016). [Click here to register.](#)



meeting complexity with Smart Simplicity

Business is more complex today than ever. We have more stakeholders with more demands, more customers with more choices, more markets at home and abroad, and more varied expectations. Given the speed of change and increased diversity, it is hardly surprising that organisations have become more complicated. With so many interests to be served, the obvious solution is to devise structures, procedures, and rules to tend to every issue.

Unfortunately, countering complexity with management “best practices” exacerbates the problem. Adding too many layers, structures, committees, procedures, and additional KPIs in response to external complexity creates internal complicatedness. Such complicatedness hinders productivity and innovation, while simultaneously demotivating workers and making them work harder and longer on less valuable activities. Companies cannot reduce or control complexity. They have to face it – without getting complicated.

Managers must abandon traditional solutions and instead embrace “Smart Simplicity” principles designed to make people more autonomous, cooperative, and efficient, and which better use people’s intelligence to make organisations more agile, competitive, and responsive.

The six principles of Smart Simplicity fall into two categories: improving people’s autonomy so that they better apply their intelligence at work, and making sure that this autonomy serves the group through cooperation.

SOURCES

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Putting Smart Simplicity into action involves three basic steps.

- 1. Find out what people actually do.**
Behaviours are performance in the making. Most performance problems can be traced to people’s actions. Are they cooperating, finding resources, and solving problems, or are they protecting their turf? Look at these issues before you adopt standard management “fixes.”
- 2. Remember they have reasons for doing what they do.**
People are rational actors—they will act to further their interests and achieve their goals. Whatever your people are doing is a rational solution in their context—a response to conditions that management has created, but typically fails to understand.
- 3. Give them reasons for fulfilling the behaviours required to improve performance.**
If the things they’re doing harm performance, then you must create a new context within which the required behaviours become winning solutions (“rational strategies”). Changes might involve taking away resources so that people are impelled to cooperate, giving people more power to make decisions, or rewarding people who help solve a problem, instead of handing out punishment because the problem happened.

The six main tenets of Smart Simplicity are the focus of *Six Simple Rules: How to Manage Complexity Without Getting Complicated*.

- 1. Understand what your people do.**
Once you understand what people do and why they do it you can use the other simple rules to intervene.
- 2. Reinforce integrators.** Give people power and reason to foster cooperation; integrators, when reinforced, allow us to benefit from the cooperation of others.
- 3. Increase the total quantity of power.**
Create new power bases, don’t just shift existing power – so the organisation can mobilise people to satisfy the multiple performance requirements of complexity.
- 4. Increase reciprocity.** Create the conditions for effective autonomy, removing resources if necessary in order to avoid dysfunctional self-sufficiency – ensure that people have mutual interest in cooperation and they depend on each other for success.
- 5. Extend the shadow of the future.**
Create direct feedback loops that impel people to do their work in a way that satisfies performance requirements that will matter in the future.
- 6. Reward those who cooperate.**
Make transparency, innovation, and ambitious aspirations the best choice for individuals and teams.

These six rules are designed to be practical. Once you understand why people do what they do – their resources and constraints – it is possible to change the context, removing barriers to cooperation and fostering people’s autonomy, intelligence, and creativity at work.

This allows your organisation to become more responsive and competitive, and thus, more profitable.

Yves Morieux, Senior Partner and Managing Director, Boston Consulting Group | LinkedIn



TED Talk:
[How too many rules at work keep you from getting things done](#)

TED Talk:
[As work gets more complex, 6 rules to simplify](#)

Harvard Big Think video:
[Rethinking the workplace](#)

talent management: a critical management process in disrepair

The Corporate Research Forum (CRF) has made a disturbing discovery.

The field of talent management – the processes that nurture in thoughtful and clever ways the talent of your organisation – is in serious disrepair. Only 20% of the senior HR leaders they surveyed rate their organisations – some of the world’s biggest and finest – as satisfied with the outcomes of their firm’s talent management efforts. More surprisingly, only 17% felt their organisations were effective at predicting future talent needs.

At first glance, these gaps make no sense. Talent management has been around for some seventy years. In the 1950s, pioneering General Electric began to manage the careers of its employees. Most of today’s talent best practices were laid in place at that time – rotational assignments, training when transitioning to new roles, regular talent reviews at all levels, succession plans, coaching, and leadership development programmes. The unprecedented stability following World War II allowed for this kind of planning – all part of the employment package for a lifetime career at one employer.

But then several powerful forces started to undermine these practices. The oil shocks of the 1970s, a steep recession in the 1980s, the rapid rise of global competitors from Asia, and a boom in acquisitions and mergers led to massive downsizing across many industries. Suddenly, the lifetime employment guarantee was no more. Talent management took a back seat. As investments shrank, limited

resources became narrowly focused on the top five to ten percent of leadership talent called high potentials. The new thinking became: talent gaps at all levels could be filled by hiring from outside.

You might even be wondering if talent management has outlived its usefulness. After all, I can start a job search on my phone at this very moment. And from your employer’s viewpoint, there are advantages to the flexibility of simply hiring individuals at the moment you need them. But research says otherwise – and quite strongly. The Boston Consulting Group interviewed senior executives from over 1,200 companies globally and discovered a strong correlation between talent management and financial performance. Companies that scored well on talent management and leadership increased their revenues 2.2 times faster and profits 1.5 times faster than those rating themselves weakest. In other words, talent management practices come with a competitive advantage. Organisations should actually be investing more.

Instead we find ourselves in a double bind. Watching their parents being laid off, today’s workplace generations know they cannot count on the loyalty of their employer. They feel that it is up to them – and not their employer – to own the management of their careers. If they don’t like the company or their job, they have plenty of tools to find new opportunities. With networking portals like LinkedIn, and job posting sites like Monster.com, they can search from their office desk or mobile phone whenever they feel restless.



Yet for this very reason, talent management needs to be reinvented, not neglected. What attracts younger generations to a firm today are opportunities for self-development offered by the world’s best companies. Top of the list for the Millennial generation are bosses who are great coaches along with a career full of diverse and challenging jobs.

So what needs to be done? Start with the climate of your organisation. Make coaching and development of subordinates a top priority for your leaders...and recognise and reward them for this activity. Help managers out by keeping talent processes simple and free of bureaucracy. Next, start identifying the pivotal roles in your organisation – the ones that have the biggest impact on your firm’s competitive advantage. Then check whether your best people sit in those roles and how deep is the bench of talent behind them.

Start translating your business strategy into talent strategies. If you are growing the digital side of your business or cyber-security is a pressing concern, turn those demands

into practical talent tactics for acquiring, developing and retaining this talent. Make investments in development experiences like special projects, overseas assignments, job rotations, and training programmes. To gain real momentum, get your executives and the board to commit to talent management in highly visible ways. Make it part of their jobs rather than an activity delegated to Human Resources. Empower your HR talent team. Help them to cultivate greater strategic thinking capacity, deeper expertise in the science behind talent management, and the courage to speak up and influence the talent strategy.

It is time to reinvigorate talent management.

Jay Conger, Henry Kravis Chaired Professor of Leadership Studies, Claremont McKenna College in California and Senior Research Scientist, Center for Effective Organizations (CEO) at the University of Southern California



Download an introduction to CRF’s recent research report ‘Rethinking Talent Management’ [here](#).

Hear Jay Conger’s thoughts on the current landscape of talent management, and where today’s organisation’s fail when it comes to implementing effective TM programmes.

the digital worker 1.0



The smartphone, a novelty a decade ago, is now in everyone's pocket or handbag. Since 2009, Apple and Google have each procured millions of smartphone and tablet apps downloaded billions of times.

The smartphone is now increasingly also a hub for personal networks connected to health monitors strapped to our arms, otherwise stuck to our bodies, or lurking in our environment ready to measure us. As digital technologies are moving closer and closer to our bodies, we are increasingly rendering our bodies and activities digital. This data can be analysed, shared, and aggregated to increase our insight in ourselves. This "quantified self" movement extends beyond the private sphere to the working self – the digitised worker. This supports both individuals understanding of their own choices, and others understanding them. For example, over the past five years, I have tracked all my computer activities on RescueTime.com, measuring my balance of productivity and procrastination (see figure).

Being a digitised worker is a natural extension of the increasing individualisation of work.

Being a digitised worker is a natural extension of the increasing individualisation of work. Digital technology makes it possible to coordinate and trace minute contributions from individuals who can be itinerant workers linked together by allocated commitments. Those still in traditional long-



term employment with one organisation, are also subjected to increased pressure to perform and to immediate availability and accountability through electronic means. Managing interaction and pressure, and focusing on delivering step-change decisions is no longer an executive prerogative alone. It has been democratised to all levels within the organisation in order to collectively meet the challenge of exploiting current technologies and markets, while at the same time exploring future ones through innovation.

For organisations and individuals alike, the challenge is captured well by [Drucker's famous quote](#): "What gets measured gets managed." However, the quote has an often-forgotten second part: "– even when it's pointless to measure and manage it, and even if it harms the purpose of the organization to do so."

We are still learning how to understand our own roles, behaviour and responses as digital workers, and may end up "knowing the price of everything and the value of nothing" as the quote goes. How much of our time should we spend reacting timely to requests from others? How do we balance planned and emerging decisions? How important is it really to keep checking email during holidays? What is the impact on our health of constantly reacting to immediate external pressure? We are each of us our own small organisation with little to protect us against the onslaught of interaction, requests, and demands.

The future of the digital worker will be shaped by three significant challenges forming a perfect digital storm:

1) DIGITALISATION

The wholesale digitisation of individual characteristics and behaviour visualised, aggregated, and shared.

2) AUTOMATION

The continued exponential growth of digital capabilities leading to new symbiotic human-machine relationships where the machines will engage in tasks previously considered uniquely human, and allowing for services unthinkable just a few years ago.

3) DISTRIBUTION

Emerging highly unpredictable aggregated effects from highly distributed individual actions by networked digital workers.

While each of the forces of digitalisation, automation, and distribution in their own right present challenges and opportunities, the combined effects leaves us with one hugely exciting and challenging unknown. We will need to rethink privacy, work, and identity in the context of organisational innovation and strategy. The possibilities will be endless and the challenges likewise.

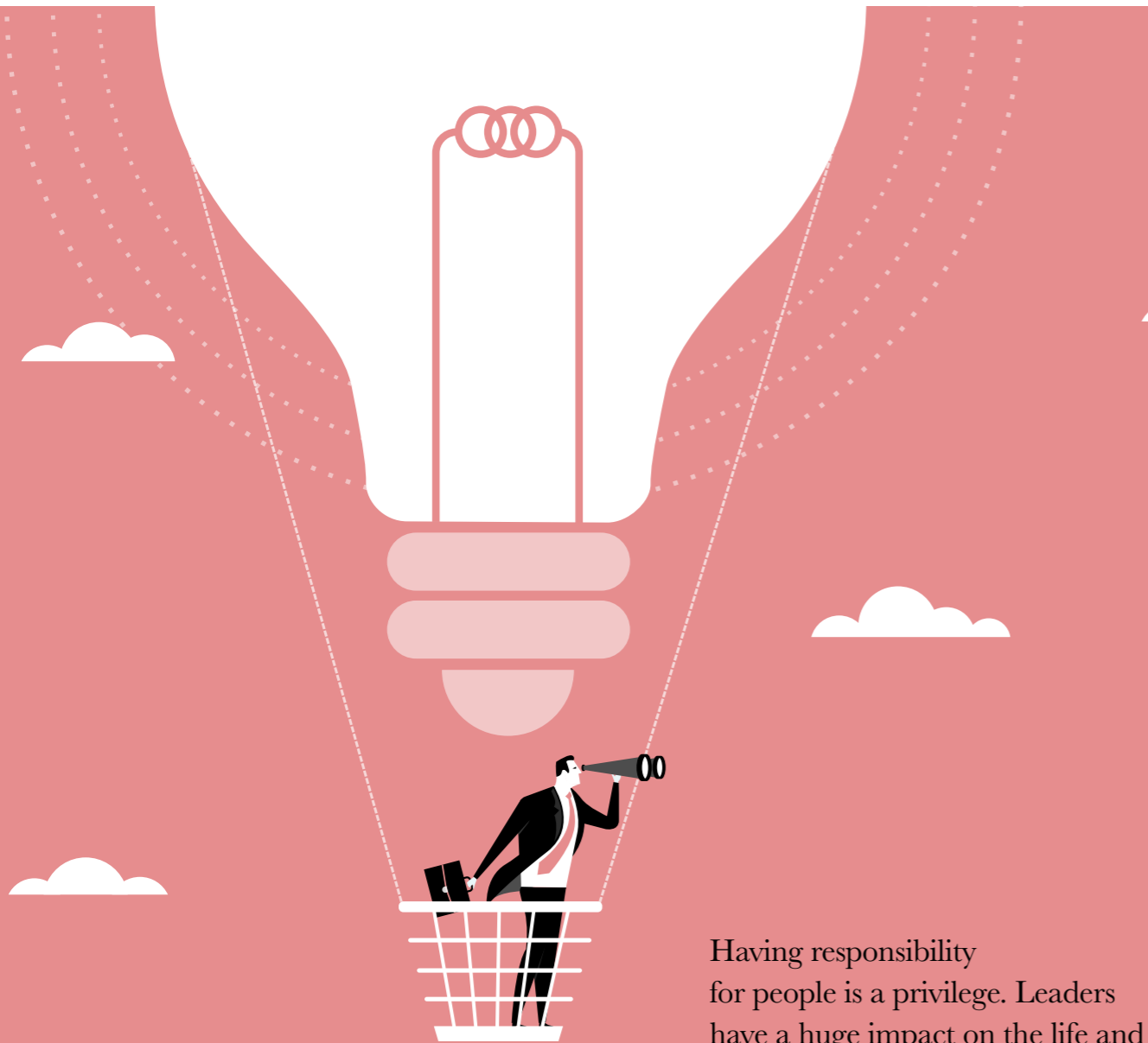
One thing is clear to me – the digital worker will be as different from today's office worker as he or she is from a hunter-gatherer.

Dr Carsten Sørensen, Reader (Associate Professor) in Digital Innovation within Department of Management, The London School of Economics and Political Science | carstensorensen.com | digitalinfrastructures.org



Carsten Sørensen is a keynote speaker at the 2016 CRF International Conference in Prague (12 – 14 October). [Click here for details.](#)

[View the highlights from CRF's 2015 International Conference in Vienna here.](#)



good and effective leadership

Having responsibility for people is a privilege. Leaders have a huge impact on the life and career of their people. Often we fail to fully appreciate this. Our interactions can be life changing and the impact long lasting despite the fact that our time managing that person could, in the scheme of things, be quite fleeting.

Here are some thoughts on effective leadership which I would recommend.

1.

developing leadership skills

Set a bold vision and be meticulous in your planning. Dare to try something new and unseen. This will stretch your team and excite. Stay close to the detail. Never let yourself be surprised by the unexpected.

2.

hire an outstanding team

Hire those with expertise you lack and with skills that complement the whole team. This will ensure your team are at the cutting edge.

3.

create a spirit of camaraderie

Take time to learn and understand before you act. This will gain their respect. Make fun a compulsory part of the team dynamic. It will help get the team through the tough times and keep spirits high.

4.

get the best from each individual

Know each team player well, understand what motivates them and push them to deliver their best. Always look after their wellbeing.

5.

leading efficiently in a crisis

Provide confidence and direction. Seek input from a variety of sources, collaborate but ultimately make the call. Do not procrastinate.

6.

overcoming obstacles

Your people will surprise you particularly if they believe they are on a quest. Let them inspire you to greatness. Never lower standards. The final product represents the best of the entire group.

7.

playing out of position

Move the team players to where the need is greatest. Develop a broad set of skills that enable you to move the team member to where the need is. Encourage a mindset that enables flexibility. Authorise team leaders to pick their own players and empower them to get on with the task.

8.

clean talking

Encourage openness of thought and intent. Stamp on any political agendas. Decisions should be based upon fact not belief or feelings.

9.

stamina and energy

As a leader recognise others look to you all the time. Regardless of how you may feel you need to keep going, never lose spirit in public and when faced with setbacks quickly bounce back. You are always visible when leading.

10.

mindset

No matter what turns up, be ready to alter plans and seek alternative routes to achieving the task. There is always more than one way.

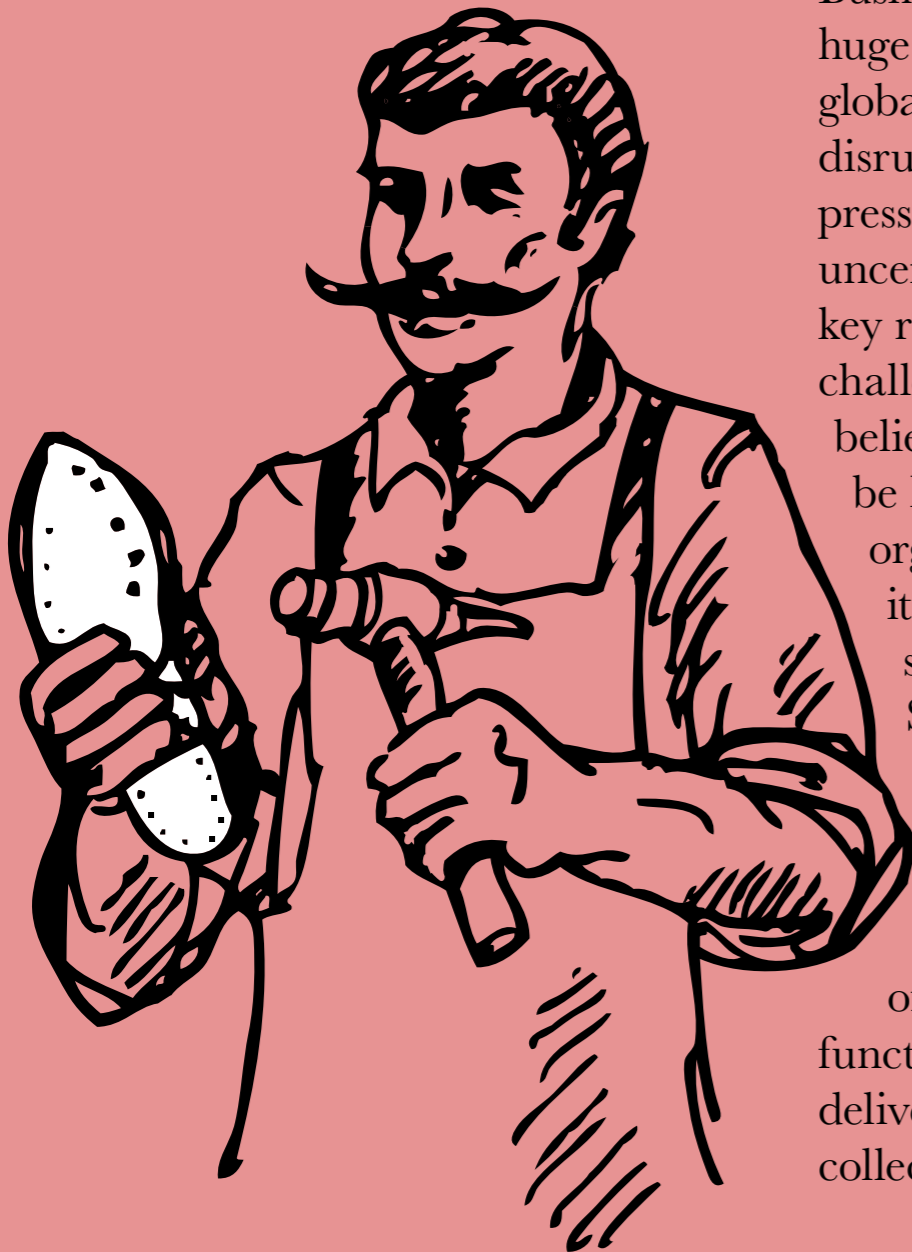


[Click here to read the meeting notes from our recent HR Leaders Peer Exchange European Masterclass.](#)

Andy Newall, Group HR Director, Imperial Brands

are we cobbler's children?

Businesses in 2016 face huge challenges from globalisation, technology disruption, demographic pressures and political uncertainty. HR has a key role in meeting these challenges and I strongly believe that HR would be letting down the organisation, of which it is part, if it doesn't step up to the plate. Stepping up to the challenge depends on many things but above all it depends on the capability of people in the function at every level to deliver individually and collectively.



The challenge is finding the time and resources to develop the function while being under increasing pressure to deliver, often within a smaller budget. This is perhaps the biggest challenge of all because if you don't find the time and resources the danger is you won't meet the challenge. At best the function will underperform. At worst the business will find someone else to meet their needs.

Recently I carried out some interviews to look at how organisations are building this capability within their HR functions. One, not unique, Head of Talent told me that her biggest frustration was that *"The hardest function to get buy-in from is HR. They don't like doing it to themselves...they don't always practice what they preach"*. They talked the right words about development but could never find the time or budget to systematically and rigorously manage talent across the function or more worryingly even invest time in their own personal development. As someone rather quaintly put it *"In terms of our development...we're like a hairdresser with a rubbish haircut"*. So, are we rubbish hairdressers or cobbler's children?

Whilst I did observe some functions underinvesting, I am fundamentally optimistic as I observed an increasing number of organisations that are grasping this challenge. In each case I observed a small, but key, set of things these organisations are doing that sets them apart.

They have a long-term commitment to developing the capability of the HR function and the people within it.

They have a talent/capability process applied within HR that is:

- developmental in its ethos
- a partnership between the organisation and the individual
- a balance between buy and build
- owned by the HR Leadership Team
- applied consistently over time
- rigorously followed through.

They have a clear model of what will be required to be successful in the HR function, in their organisation, in the future, that is:

- applied rigorously using proven predictive tools in all assessments (internal and external, senior and junior)
- the basis of a menu of development opportunities including:
 - development programmes, both generic and HR (something CRF Learning will be working to create over the coming months)
 - career moves including into line roles
 - project-based learning
 - mentoring and involvement of senior HR leaders
- communicated clearly so people understand what they need to learn and do to succeed.

In my research I found that the critical success factor that differentiates the successful HR functions, in terms of developing their capability and individual career offer, is their long-term ethos and focus on sustaining their investment until it really bears fruit. This ethos is one of investing in the development of the function rather than simply leaving it up to market forces or individual initiative.

Where there is a commitment to developing the capability of the function that is sustained across the economic cycle and linked strongly to a future vision of what the organisation requires from HR, I see much stronger evidence that they are building sustained and effective HR capabilities.

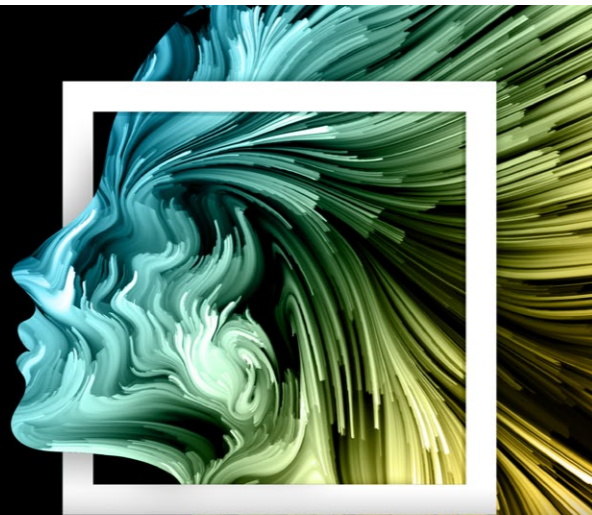
Nick Holley, Director of CRF Learning, Corporate Research Forum (CRF) | @Nick_Holley



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CRF's goal is to be valued for excellence, rigour, relationship building and providing an independent view which, together, lead to measurable improvement in members' people and organisation performance.

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For more information please contact Dan Caro, Director, on 020 7470 7106 or at dan.caro@strategic-dimensions.co.uk.
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