



CRF DIGITAL COMMUNITY LAUNCH TALENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

At a Zoom Interactive Event on 3rd March, CRF launched its Talent, Leadership, and Learning Community. At the session, Mercer's Kate Bravery shared highlights from their 2021 Talent Trends research. Community members then discussed challenges they are currently facing in their organisations, and priorities for the community and its ongoing agenda. This summary shares some of the key insights from the discussion.



2021 TALENT TRENDS

Mercer identifies the following key global talent trends for 2021.

1. Things that were 'paused' during the pandemic have now accelerated because of the pandemic's impact on jobs and careers, but also because leaders have pressed the button on digitising.
2. The 'future of work' agenda has changed in interesting ways. Talent, Reward, and other HR practices are increasingly merging, organisations are looking much more holistically at people, and there is generally a greater focus on wellbeing. Some organisations are looking at how to put ESG goals into Executive plans, while others are focusing on how to bring purpose to life in their Reward strategies.
3. Everyone is exhausted. There is an enormous sense of change fatigue and that too many things are going on. This is turning attention to questions such as 'how do we deal with distraction?' and 'how do we recreate the employee experience?'. The fatigue challenge isn't just about long work hours or long hours in front of screens – it's more to do with purpose and job security.

COMMUNITY CHARTER

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PURPOSE

Complements the CRF programme by providing opportunities for practitioners to exchange views and experiences among themselves, explore relevant topics in-depth and learn from each other.

PARTICIPATION

The community is intended for experienced talent, learning and leadership professionals with responsibility for the attraction, development and retention of talent in the organisation, who are keen to share, discuss and compare their own challenges and successes with other participants.

PRINCIPLES

- Agenda determined by the community, in response to topical issues and members' business priorities
- Attendees come with a mindset of sharing, constructive challenge, support and co-creation
- Focus on confidential peer discussion with some expert input
- Not searching for best practice or universal answers but establishing sound principles which have practical application in supporting positive business results
- Dialogue extends beyond meetings through networking and information sharing
- Success measured by whether participants gain knowledge or techniques which can lead to more effective workplace outcomes.



Join the Community WhatsApp Group

Join our Community WhatsApp Group, the purpose of which is to ask questions, seek advice, and exchange views and experiences with your peers. Please [email](#) your mobile number to sign up.



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Kate and CRF's Research Director Gillian Pillans, in discussion, made these additional points about talent trends in 2021.

- HR, in both the UK and Europe, is focusing on defining future workforce needs and how to reinvent flexibility. In the UK, there is an increasing focus on D&I metrics.
- The race to reskill is a major challenge for organisations. The challenge occurs at multiple levels: understanding what skills the organisation has, what it needs for the future, and how to close the gap.
- What employees want out of work has changed – the opportunity to stay relevant in terms of skills is part of what people are looking for in an Employee Value Proposition.
- There is a lot of interest in how to make progress on skills-based approaches to talent. No one is getting this right (yet); the dialogue has changed from up- and re-skilling to 'how do we make this the new way of working?'
- Talent marketplace platforms (for example, Gloat) are a real breakthrough. Moving from 'jobs' to 'skills' is a huge transition; talent marketplace technology is key to doing this effectively. However, these platforms are not just a piece of technology that can be switched on; rather, they are an element in a larger transformation journey.
- There is a great deal of thinking going on around leadership models and the new demands of leaders. Some points to consider:
 - Leaders need to think first of their own wellbeing before they are able to take care of their organisations and people;
 - Human-centred leadership is on the rise – how we've seen people step up during the pandemic will shape our future expectations of leadership. Leaders will need to be more visible, more human, and more honest about their own stresses and strains in the new world of work;
 - 'Servant leadership' might not serve as well in times of disruption.



WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES FOR YOUR ORGANISATION AROUND TALENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING OVER THE NEXT 18 MONTHS?

- At many organisations, leadership teams and strategies have been refreshed. This is leading to a focus on identifying future capabilities – what do we need? What do we have already? How will we get from what we have to what we need?
- There is a focus on building certain capabilities (such as project management or digital capability) across the entire organisation, no matter where you sit. What are those consistent skills that need to be built in the business, no matter the role or geography, and how do we develop and advance them?
- Inclusivity and transparency are key strategic shifts at many organisations. This, in turn, is impacting talent, leadership, and learning. How do we create a culture where everyone can belong? How do we develop inclusive leadership behaviours? Who and how do we hire? How do we develop? How do we achieve diversity at every level? How do we build a culture of learning around D&I – ensuring everyone understands and is responsible for their own understanding of what's happening and how things are changing? What training, processes, and tools will support being inclusive and transparent?
- With respect to the shift toward transparency, there is concern about giving people a voice and the changing role of leadership. How do we create opportunities for people to have a voice in the organisation? How do we move from a policy-led to a listening approach? What are the requirements for leaders to act differently?
- With respect to leadership, there is a focus on getting leaders to move from 'being heroes' to 'being humans' by sharing their own vulnerability and authenticity. Some organisations are also looking at what legacy current leadership will leave to the next generation of leaders. Still others are focusing on equipping leaders to lead change.
- With respect to learning, there is an understanding that future skills have both a technical and a 'soft' side. For example, how do we story tell with data? How do we interact effectively with clients when we are meeting virtually rather than face-to-face?
- Some organisations are focusing on equipping leaders and learners to take responsibility for their own learning, and thus on improving the deployment of digital learning tools to enable this.



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- There is a great deal of focus on how to manage the shift from jobs to skills (particularly digital) and what this means for the organisation culturally. What does it mean in practical terms to take a skills-focused view of talent?
- The ESG and talent and leadership agendas are increasingly coming together at some organisations.



WHICH PRIORITY TOPICS WOULD YOU LIKE THE COMMUNITY TO FOCUS ON?

- Performance culture – how to establish one? How to drive it? What are the good practices? What factors do we need to look at in terms of creating a performance culture?
- Leadership at every level – ‘leadership with a small L’ – how do we drive that?
- Skills-based approaches to talent
- Workforce planning – how do we identify what we have? How do we get people ready?
- Building ‘bilingual roles’ – identifying critical skills needed in the future and building leadership skills. For example, digital skills are critically important. How do we identify that talent early and then develop those people to be better leaders?
- How do we engage the Exco in talent management? How do we get them interested? How do we help them understand it’s their responsibility too, not just HR’s job?

FURTHER READING

CRF. 2020. Research Report: **Talent – Careers, Development and Succession in a Changing Landscape**. <https://www.crforum.co.uk/research-and-resources/talent-careers-development-and-succession-in-a-changing-landscape>

Mercer. 2021. **Win with Empathy: 2021 Global Talent Trends Study**. <https://www.mercer.com/our-thinking/career/global-talent-hr-trends.html>

McNulty, Eric. 2017. **Leadership Development’s Epic Fail**. MIT Sloan Management Review. <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/leadership-developments-epic-fail>

Ramachandran, Vignesh. 2021. **Stanford Researchers Identify Four Causes for ‘Zoom Fatigue’ and Their Simple Fixes**. Stanford News. <https://news.stanford.edu/2021/02/23/four-causes-zoom-fatigue-solutions>

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The next session of the Talent, Leadership and Learning Community:

Wednesday 5 May at 12.00 GMT