

SUCCESS IN TRANSITION: EDUCATION TO THE WORLD OF WORK

11TH MARCH 2022
DUBAI

Corporate Research Forum, Strategic Dimensions and **Markha Consulting** were delighted to convene the inaugural HR community discussion on the 11th March in Dubai. The purpose of the event was to explore the challenges relating to talent attraction, careers and the linkages between Government policy, industry and the education sector to support the UAE's vision of attracting, developing and retaining the best talent.

With research-based presentations setting the context, a lively and stimulating discussion took place with senior HR representatives from a range of industry sectors. Whilst the discussion was wide ranging, below is a summary of some of the salient points that were expressed.

These have been collated under three headings:

CONTEXT AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

- Understanding of the changing and complex external environment is critical in ensuring alignment between organisational strategy and therefore an organisations People strategy. Organisations need to be expert in scanning the emerging trends and translating them into their own context.
- Change is a constant now, both for good and bad. The ability for individuals to "unlearn", be curious and most importantly be agile will be the foundations for future success.
- Successful leaders need to have 'leadership spirit', 'future outlook' and excel in 'achievement and impact. Their leadership needs to be authentic and values-based. Role modelling behaviours for the rest of the organisation is vital.
- Organisations must build diverse workforces to avoid echo chambers and group think. Diversity needs to take holistic approach too, focussing on cultural and neuro diversity as well as gender and ethnicity.
- Power has shifted from employers to employees at a speed and level not seen for many years. Organisations must demonstrate a strong employer brand, clear purpose, flexible working patterns and commit to talent development to attract the best talent.

LINKAGE BETWEEN INDUSTRY AND EDUCATION

- Whilst industry is going through rapid change and disruption, the education system has barely changed in decades. Children are taught a curriculum that hasn't evolved in a style that hasn't embraced the opportunities technology can offer. As we know in organisations, one size does not fit all.
- The system has been overly focussing on academic skills rather than 'skills for life' resulting in *85% of the respondents to the online survey at the event thinking that the future generation are not ready for the new future.*
- There were a number of excellent examples of organisation partnering with schools and universities in co-creating programmes aligned to the skills they require in the future. However, trying to influence the entire education system through a cluster of one is difficult. Organisations are better to coordinate and collaborate in industry groups to influence policy. Similarly, targeting individuals schools maybe less impactful than engaging with the regulators and policy makers.

HR'S ROLE

- Clarity of expectation is important in career management. What is expected of middle management and are they being given the tools and knowledge to deliver? Who owns career development in your organisation – the individual, line managers, HR or all three?
- Context is everything. Giving employees contextual relevant learning and experience is far more impactful than 'sheep dipping' groups through standard off the shelf programmes.
- Talent remains high on CEO's agenda and yet whilst HR has been tackling this issue for many years, progress and improvements have been slow and minimal.
- Career development must focus on providing experiences to enable progression rather than linear career progression against a set of competencies that are overly complex and under used.
- Too often we see silo thinking in HR whereas a holistic approach to talent development including workforce planning, succession planning, earning and development, reward etc. is far more likely to shift the performance needle of the business and offer meaningful careers to employees.
- As organisations becomes more tech savvy so must HR. Digital talent market places such as Gloat, Fuel 50 and Flex are examples. HR needs to be curious and well informed in order to make a business led decision. Traditional policies need to be challenged in favour of transparent open approaches that support mobility of talent and career building.

Further reading from the CRF research library

CRF Research: [Building a Future Fit Workforce – Reskilling and Rethinking Work](#)

CRF Research: [HR's Agenda in the Organisation of The Future](#)

CRF Research: [Strategic Workforce Planning – Unlocking Future Capabilities](#)

CRF upcoming webinar 15th March: [Persuasive Analytics: Influencing with Data](#)