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SPECIAL REPORTS
EMBRACING UNKNOWING IS NOT THE SAME AS CELEBRATING IGNORANCE. PLUS, CHANGEMAKERS CAN LEARN FROM THE IMAGINAL CELLS OF CATERPILLARS

HELEN WEBB, CHIEF PEOPLE & SERVICES OFFICER - THE CO-OP

{ THE ESSENTIALS }

"WE HAVE AN UNBREAKABLE THREAD BETWEEN OUR CORE FOUNDATIONS AND FUTURE VISION"

ALSO FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

DEVELOPING TRANSFERABLE SKILLS Reskilling is critical now skills have just a two year shelf-life, impacting 50 percent of employees by 2025

SUCCESSION PLANNING The new model, emphasises leaders at all levels, not the heroic individual senior or the slick central initiative

HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT We still need a mix of exceptional "people people" and laser-sharp analytical thinkers, to track tangible insights

HR & DATA SCIENCE The C-suite now demands, data through a relevant lens rather than blithely following data-lite assumptions

ONE FLEW OVER THE PIGEONHOLE

Skills are bigger than the job that needs to be done right now and impact on wide ranging decisions from; global footprint to real-estate space, organisation design and entering new markets. A block to opening up sources of skills is that traditional methodologies, like job analysis and evaluation, are tactics used to build a role for a person to do.

ARTICLE BY ALISON ETTRIDGE, MANAGING DIRECTOR - TALENT INTUITION

Today, conventional and formulaic thinking will disadvantage organisations that need to tap into new, emerging and rapidly changing skills to maintain competitiveness. In the new ecosystem of work, it is unrealistic to rely on outdated models to define work, but in some forms, they persist. Since the 1950s, organisations have used job analysis, job evaluation and job families to define roles. Legacy frameworks are entrenched into major organisations and are manifest in 'copy and paste' job descriptions and 'person specifications', in adverts for open roles. Tapping into skills where and when needed, requires a decoupling of an individual from a job, but that is easier said than done. The answer might not be the simple recruitment of a person, so the questions that invariably follow are, 'is it a skill that you already have elsewhere in-house, or an opportunity for internal mobility or a cross-functional project? Is it a skill best accessed remotely or physically, or a skill best carried out by a permanent employee or procured from a contractor? The final question that is perhaps the most pertinent now is, in what other companies and industries does this skill exist? Building up from a foundation on skills will enable better work design, role design and ultimately organisation design. This change in mindset, to thinking skills-first, is the key to vast untapped pools of talent. It not only enables the breaking down of traditional roles, it unearths an array of transferable skills that simply would not be recognised through the tunnel vision of person specifications.

One of the first challenges to adopting the skills-first mindset is the vast array of information available. The appetite for breaking out of CV-led or job description-led thinking is often tempered, when presented with the enormity of skills data that needs to be sorted through. Data about skills is noisy and it's described differently by individuals and companies all over the world, which makes it difficult to gain a really clear picture of skills and

> **DATA ABOUT SKILLS IS NOISY AND IT'S DESCRIBED DIFFERENTLY BY INDIVIDUALS AND COMPANIES ALL OVER THE WORLD, WHICH MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO GAIN A REALLY CLEAR PICTURE OF SKILLS AND THE POTENTIAL OF SKILLS TRANSFERABILITY**

the potential of skills transferability. Technology has a role to play in sorting through and making sense of this data and can expand the horizons beyond traditional job-title thinking, by rationalising and visualising the fast-moving and disruptive nature of skills supply and demand. For organisations that are ready to make the change in mindset, there are practical steps that can be taken to evidence a new way of thinking. They include; building an understanding of where skills are coming from and focusing on opening up the talent pool via these sources. Understanding the industries which hold similar skills and targeting these for future skills and finally, bringing diversity data into workforce planning, with an understanding of early years talent and analysing predictions of where talent will flow to.

Old, rigid frameworks risk posing an obstacle to the future. For generations, developing skills and knowledge was narrowly focused on specific job competency, supported by workforce frameworks, which kept people in their fields of expertise, often pigeon-holing them for life. Now, we are striving for businesses to be more agile, more flexible and more resilient. Skills-first thinking is the foundation for this and, as people have become more empowered, new networks have developed and barriers broken down due to the pandemic. Individuals too are looking for more agility and flexibility and many do not want to be corralled into a traditional job role. In a future in which skills will be decoupled from the person doing a job, it's essential that we understand the work that needs to be done and the skills required to carry it out - without bundling it up into a traditional job profile. Movement towards hybrid working is bringing the two streams of people empowerment and corporate strategy into confluence. Skills are global and a 'work-from-anywhere' charter is revolutionising where people and organisations meet, both physically and psychologically, to achieve mutual gains. ●

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