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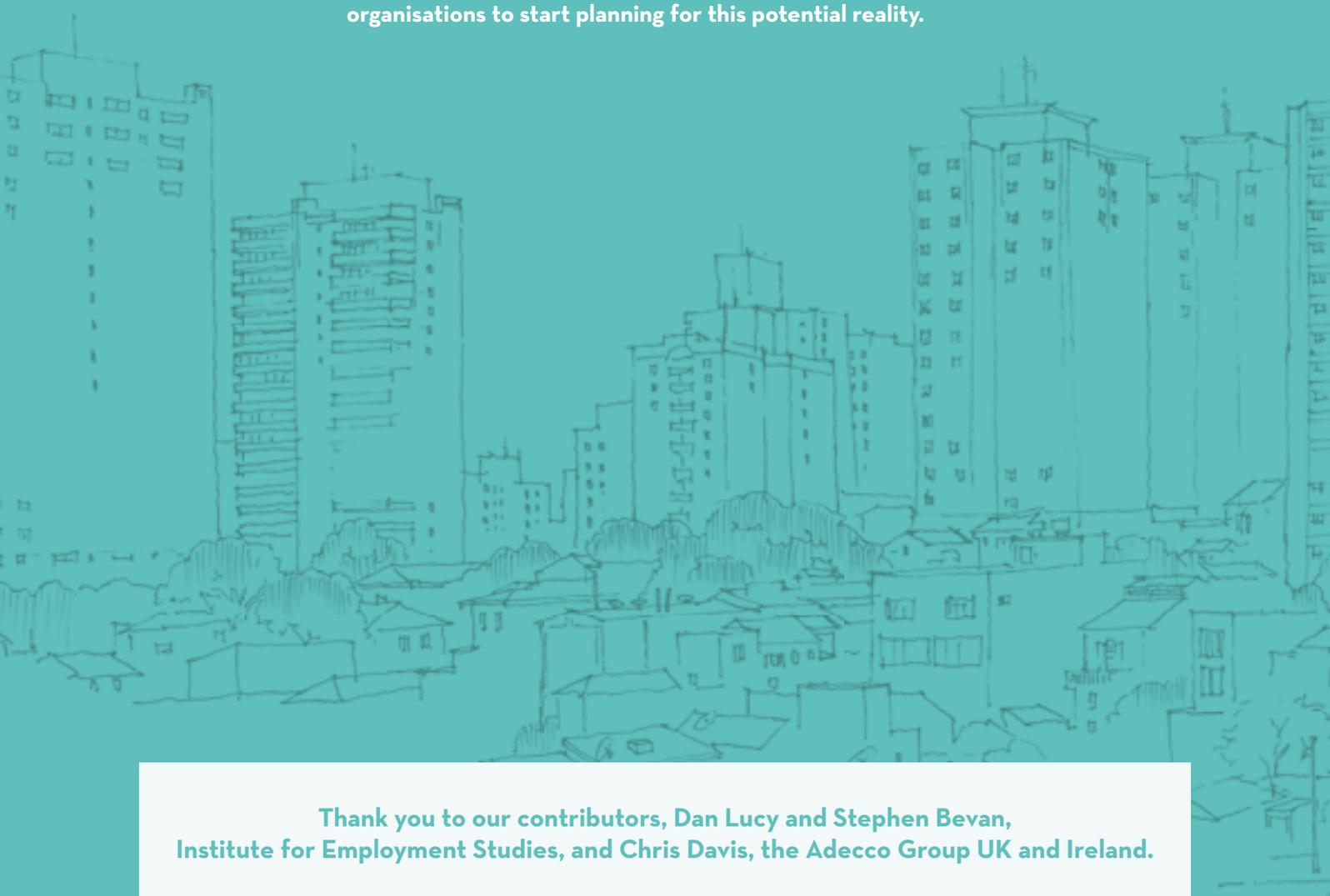
THE ADECCO GROUP

# Brexit: retaining talent through change

On 23 June 2016, the UK decided by referendum to leave the European Union. Brexit, as this decision is now known, has led to many questions and a lot of uncertainty. The media landscape reflects the anxiety and frustration that businesses are feeling; it's hard for organisations to know where to start in preparing for this change.

The Adecco Group message is clear and simple: take stock of your current situation and be prepared to act as soon as more information comes to hand. According to our Brexit tracker, fewer than three in ten (29%) UK organisations believe they have enough information to start making decisions about their post-Brexit recruitment strategy – but that doesn't mean they don't need to start planning for some sort of decision. In this report, we explore a variety of talent strategies, the role of technology in bridging talent gaps, and what other countries that have gone through talent upheavals have done to move forward.

With 71% of UK managers thinking that Brexit will make skills harder to acquire for organisations operating in Britain,<sup>1</sup> it's time for UK organisations to start planning for this potential reality.



Thank you to our contributors, Dan Lucy and Stephen Bevan, Institute for Employment Studies, and Chris Davis, the Adecco Group UK and Ireland.

# Brexit may lead to future talent shortages



Many employers are reporting that skills shortages are negatively impacting prospects for future growth. The potential for skills shortages to worsen may depend on the shape that any Brexit deal (or no deal) finally takes.

The CIPD/The Adecco Group Labour Market Outlook (LMO) shows that labour skills shortages have already started to impact sectors within the UK that employ a high number of EU nationals<sup>2</sup>. With the possibility of an end to free movement as a result of Brexit, and uncertainty about whether or not the UK Government will alter its net migration target, shortages of labour may become increasingly acute.

The Adecco Group surveyed 1,000 managers in UK firms in October 2018, and found that more than seven in ten (71%) think that Brexit will make it harder to acquire the skills they need. Many businesses seem to be ill-prepared to adjust to this new reality. In the Adecco Group's 'Closing the Skills Gap'<sup>3</sup> report, we found that more than one-quarter of employers didn't know how many non-UK EU nationals were employed in their business. More recently, the Adecco Group's Brexit tracker<sup>4</sup> shows the percentage of employers that have reviewed their recruitment and talent management strategies has flatlined, staying stubbornly low over time at just over one in ten.

<sup>1</sup> The Adecco Group survey, October 2018

<sup>2</sup> CIPD and the Adecco Group (2016-2017), 'CIPD/The Adecco Group Labour Market Outlook: Winter 2016-2017'

<sup>3</sup> The Adecco Group (2017), 'Closing the Skills Gap: Will Apprenticeships Deliver the Workforce of Tomorrow?'

<sup>4</sup> The Adecco Group (2018), 'Brexit Tracker: Summer 2018'

# How have other countries responded to labour shortage challenges?



Whilst Brexit is a unique challenge in many ways, other countries around the world are facing skills shortages, often in response to changing migration patterns or policy.

## Spotlight on Singapore

Singapore is facing talent shortages, not only as a result of an impressive growth rate, ageing population and reluctance of native workers to undertake certain roles, but also as a consequence of its own policy of reducing dependency on foreign labour - which makes Singapore a great case study to look to in light of Brexit. Criteria for an Employment Pass (EP) were tightened in 2016 with the Singaporean Government saying it would look at whether companies have tried to recruit Singaporeans for open positions and the proportion of foreign talent already within an organisation.

In response, the Singaporean Government is taking action to extend the working lives of older workers through its re-employment policy and job re-design grants. Rather than increase the retirement age, the Government's re-employment policy aims to create the opportunity for employers and employees to think about how work may be re-designed to enable older workers to continue working, supported by a job re-design grant of up to 80% of the project costs or S\$20,000, whichever is the lower, with an employer able to make multiple submissions.

Many leading organisations are also taking steps to attract and recruit women returning to the workforce after a period of raising children or looking after elderly relatives. Standard Chartered launched the Moms Matter programme whilst Mastercard launched its Springboard programme. Companies specialising in connecting would-be returners with leading companies have sprung up, as traditional recruitment methods tend to pursue 'current and relevant' jobseekers, making it more challenging for companies to reach this pool via the usual recruitment channels.

The National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) in Singapore has also been taking steps to widen the support to would-be returners beyond women to so-called PMETs (professionals, managers, executives and technicians). The programme is designed to help skilled workers who have been out of the workforce for two years or more to care for family members or focus on a personal health issue. Employers must train the worker, supported by a subsidy from the Singaporean Government. Employers also receive a retention bonus if the worker is retained for at least three months after a trial period of six months comes to an end.

## Spotlight on Hong Kong

In his recent budget speech, Hong Kong's Financial Secretary spoke about the development of an enhanced talent admission arrangement in the hope of tackling widespread people-resource and talent shortages. An ageing population, high cost of living, declining quality of life and a desire to safeguard the employment prospects of local workers have all contributed to a talent crunch in Hong Kong. Talent shortages are widespread, affecting health and social care, construction, and financial services, amongst others. Emigration numbers hit a five-year high last year (2017), with medical professionals comprising a significant number of people leaving the city for pastures new.

Hong Kong is also suffering from a shortage of technology professionals, impacting in

particular on its highly-important financial services sector. In response, the Hong Kong Government has launched the TechTAS scheme (Technology Talent Admission Scheme) to help address the issue. The pilot scheme is targeting STEM (science, technology, engineering, or mathematics) graduates from top-ranking universities, with or without work experience, to work in technology-specific roles. The scheme intends to streamline recruitment procedures for companies who want to employ IT experts from overseas and mainland China. The scheme also aims to not only fill immediate talent gaps but to build the talent of the local workforce by stipulating that for every three non-local persons admitted, participating employers will need to employ one new full-time local employee and two local interns in technology-related work.



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# Addressing the talent challenge posed by Brexit

To prepare for Brexit, employers need to start thinking now about how to address current and potential future talent challenges. Happily, there are things UK employers can do to start reaching potentially untapped sources of talent, and to make better use of their existing workforce to mitigate labour shortages. Taking action in both these areas can boost employer reputation, further supporting recruitment and retention efforts.

## Talent strategy



### Being clear about who you are

- Review your Employee Value Proposition (EVP)
- Build your employer brand and reputation



### Widening the net

- Recruit from disadvantaged groups
- Offer 'returnships'
- Target potential professional career-changers
- Widen recruitment criteria



### Reshaping the work

- Redefine roles to address staff shortages
- Automate tasks to enable workers to focus on more human value-added activities
- Redeploy resources from areas of surplus to areas of shortage
- Upskill existing staff



### Growing your own

- Develop career pathways
- Improve job rotation and mobility
- Invest in training
- Introduce apprenticeships/graduate schemes
- Collaborate with industry partners to develop an industry talent pipeline



### Holding on to your talent

- Understand and address reasons for turnover
- Enhance employee experience from start to end of employee lifecycle



# Being clear about who you are



With potential talent shortages post-Brexit, the candidates who will be left in the market are likely to be highly discerning about who they work for. Why would a potential candidate choose your organisation? How effectively do you communicate your organisation's purpose and story? How does the experience of work your organisation offers meet the aspirations, values and needs of the people you wish to attract? And how effectively can you deliver on what you promise in terms of employee experience? In an age of employee review sites and social media,

the rhetoric-reality gap can be very harmful to your prospects of attracting and recruiting talent.

Reviewing your employee value proposition (EVP) to ensure that you are effectively communicating what it means to work in your organisation can help you succeed in increasingly tight talent markets. Our survey showed that more than one in five UK managers (22%) say their employer does not have an EVP, while an even higher one in three (37%) don't know one way or the other.



## Widening the net

If Brexit reduces the overall pool of UK talent, employers should think about whether certain qualifications, such as a degree, are really essential for a role and whether they are unnecessarily restricting their applicant pool. Doing this can also help avoid the trap of skills mismatches. Recent CIPD research<sup>5</sup> highlighted that nearly half of workers reported a skills mismatch in their role, with 37% saying they had higher level skills than were needed to do the job. Over-skilled workers are less satisfied and twice as likely to want to quit – a situation employers will want to avoid in a tight post-Brexit market. We're some way off resolving this problem, with our survey finding that only 14% of UK managers have considered relaxing job role requirements to tackle skills shortages.



Recent CIPD research<sup>5</sup> highlighted that nearly half of workers reported a skills mismatch in their role...



Rather than look for like-for-like experience, employers can also widen the pool by thinking about potential employees from other sectors with transferable skills critical to the job. This can also lead to hiring people who are better able to adapt to the changing skills requirements of the organisation. For entry-level roles, recruiting for values and cultural fit can be more important than skills which can be developed – this might be crucial if the UK is short of skilled workers post-Brexit. Our survey found that eight out of ten UK managers thought that industry experience was important when considering a candidate for a role within their organisation, but less than three in ten junior managers (managers earning less than £30,000 per annum) thought it was very important.

<sup>5</sup> CIPD (2018), 'Over-skilled and underused: Investigating the untapped potential of UK skills'



Employers are increasingly supported in being able to widen their talent pool by the emergence of recruitment algorithms. Adia<sup>6</sup>, for example, has created an app which matches jobseekers with employers in their local area. The consultancy firm, Deloitte, has recently started using a new algorithm to take into account not only academic results, but also obstacles candidates have faced such as growing up in a deprived area, helping the organisation tap into a more diverse talent pool.

Algorithms can widen the talent pool by eliminating bias, giving weight to qualifications and experience rather than age, gender or background. That said, handled in the wrong way, such technology can narrow talent pools and accentuate bias if the algorithm is driven by past hiring decisions.

Seeking to attract and recruit relatively untapped sources of labour is another way that employers can widen their recruitment net. More and more employers are offering 'returnships' to support professionals, in

particular women, to return to the labour market after an extended period out of work caring for children or elderly relatives. Recent research<sup>7</sup> has highlighted that one-fifth of large organisations are targeting women returners.

Employers can also take steps to recruit marginalised groups such as older workers, those with chronic health conditions, the unemployed and ex-offenders. Our survey showed that barely one in five (22%) UK managers has considered changing the roles and process in their business to enable older workers to flourish. Adjusting the way work is done, supported by technology, can help employers design work for some of these groups so that there is no 'productivity penalty' for certain types of work.

The global Adecco Group Foundation<sup>8</sup> programmes, research and social innovation projects are working to unlock hidden talent across many of these untapped groups.

<sup>6</sup> [www.adia.com/uk](http://www.adia.com/uk)

<sup>7</sup> CIPD and the Adecco Group (2017), 'CIPD/The Adecco Group Labour Market Outlook: Spring 2017'

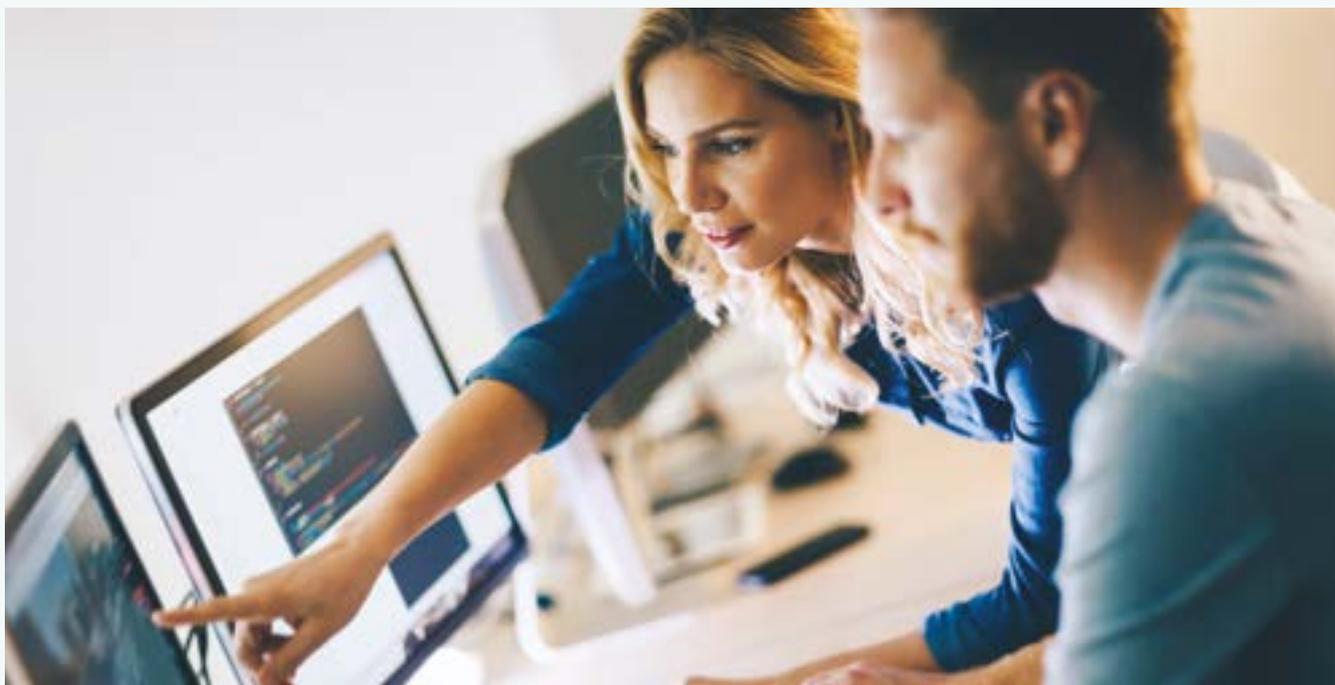
<sup>8</sup> [www.adeccogroupfoundation.org](http://www.adeccogroupfoundation.org)

## Ford Fiesta Production Line – Retaining Older Workers<sup>9</sup>

For some years, German employers have recognised that the ageing workforce will require them to look at alternative approaches to recruiting and retaining talent. One such example is the Ford Fiesta Plant in Cologne, Germany. To facilitate the development of a new production process, the plant had to be restructured including the closure of an in-house manufacturing department affecting 5,000 employees, including 500, mainly older workers, with acquired disabilities. For health reasons, these employees could only carry out simple assembly jobs within the in-house manufacturing department rather than join the main production process.

The factory put in place a series of measures to adapt the physical and physiological demands of the work on the production line to the needs of older production workers whose health meant that their work needed to be adapted. An interdisciplinary integration team allied with an innovative, computer-aided method was used to place workers, with their consent, in jobs that precisely matched their abilities.

Overall up to 300 workers with disabilities or health impairments were reintegrated into the production process, generating huge economic advantages including annual recruitment cost savings of \$9 million. In addition, the factory also witnessed a drop in absenteeism for the former in-house manufacturing department employees as a result of improved motivation and job satisfaction. Due to the project's success, the practices are now being used in other Ford plants in Spain.



<sup>9</sup> [www.eurofound.europa.eu/fr/observatories/eurwork/case-studies/ageing-workforce/ford-werke-germany-redeployment-health-and-well-being](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/fr/observatories/eurwork/case-studies/ageing-workforce/ford-werke-germany-redeployment-health-and-well-being)

Post-Brexit employers can also think laterally by targeting potential groups of career changers. Identifying what professional groups would be of interest in terms of the transferable skills they bring, and what may encourage them to switch career, is another way forward in a tight talent pool. Offering flexible working and improved work-life balance can often be a major attraction for highly-skilled professionals looking to switch career.

Widening talent pools may be a particularly valuable strategy post-Brexit. Latest research showcases potentially negative employment impacts from trade barriers on different sectors, groups of workers and regions in the UK<sup>10</sup>. So, one industry's loss may be another's gain with the right approach and support.

Leading consulting organisations are taking steps to further develop their networks of future talent. For example, EY is incorporating more in-depth and

personalised feedback in their graduate recruitment processes, to build closer relationships with a wide body of talent (more than they can take on at any one time).

Taking steps to widen the talent pool to include greater diversity can have a multitude of business benefits, in addition to filling talent gaps. Greater workplace diversity has been linked with improved engagement, decision-making, innovation and the ability to better reach and meet the needs of a diverse customer base. Work by McKinsey demonstrated that more diverse top teams were also top financial performers, enjoying significantly higher earnings and returns on equity<sup>11</sup>. Despite this, our survey showed that fewer than one in five UK managers would consider candidates from more diverse backgrounds as a strategy to tackle skills shortages created as a result of the decision for Britain to leave the EU.



Taking steps to widen the talent pool to include greater diversity can have a multitude of business benefits, in addition to filling talent gaps.



<sup>10</sup> Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) (2018), 'Green Budget', IFS in association with Citi and ICAEW and funded by the Nuffield Foundation

<sup>11</sup> Hunt V, Layton D, Prince S (2015), 'Diversity Matters', Mckinsey&Company



# Reshaping the work



Employers can respond to potential post-Brexit labour shortages by redesigning the way work is done, reallocating resources from areas of low to high demand, and upskilling their workforce to be able to flexibly move across different tasks - CIPD research highlighted this as the most common activity undertaken by employers to improve their future talent pipeline<sup>12</sup>. As an example of restructuring work, one NHS Trust is introducing 'nurse consultants' and 'physician associates' as a means of using less expensive and more available staff to reduce the numbers of doctors and nurses needed<sup>13</sup>.

Employers can also start to think about automating tasks where possible to mitigate the impact of post-Brexit labour shortages and, if implemented well, to liberate employees to work on more interesting and challenging tasks. This is something that nearly half

(46%) of UK managers have not even considered as a reaction to Brexit-related skills shortages, according to our recent survey. The Associated Press (AP), for example, used software to automate corporate earnings reports and, as a result, saw productivity rise, increasing the number of these reports from 300 to 4,700 per quarter<sup>14</sup>. In introducing the change, The AP has learnt that most journalists disliked highly-structured assignments, such as corporate earnings reports, and preferred to cover stories that required creativity and which they felt enabled them to add most value. The change then not only led to higher productivity and quality (there were fewer errors as a result of the change), but also allowed humans to work on tasks in ways that better suited their preferences, potentially boosting employee satisfaction and ultimately future pull for the employer in the talent market.

<sup>12</sup> CIPD and the Adecco Group (2017), 'CIPD/The Adecco Group Labour Market Outlook: Spring 2017'

<sup>13</sup> CIPD (2018), 'Preparing for Brexit through Workforce Planning'

<sup>14</sup> Lacity M.C., Wilcocks L.P. (2016), 'A new approach to automating services', MIT Sloan Management Review



## Growing your own

Future-proofing your organisation's talent supply by growing your own is an obvious solution to reduce reliance on the external market. Employers can take steps to facilitate internal job moves and rotations, helping ensure that existing employees develop awareness and understanding of different parts of the business, develop new skills and are enabled to progress within the organisation. Upskilling existing staff is already the most likely strategy to address hard-to-fill vacancies but still less than half of UK organisations (47%) are doing it.<sup>15</sup>

Employers can also map out different potential career pathways, communicating to employees that there are opportunities to build a career within the organisation, and that these efforts will be supported.

### The British Council – Developing a Career Pathways Framework<sup>16</sup>

The British Council has developed a Career Pathways framework that sets out three broad types of work (advisory, policy and expertise; business, partnership and programme development; and business delivery) at different levels, from professional up to enterprise leadership. The framework also shows the degree of stretch that would be required in changing work type and level, and the different skills and behaviours that will be needed. With a huge geographical spread and many specialised jobs, staff need a broad explanation of how their careers could develop.



Upskilling existing staff is already the most likely strategy to address hard-to-fill vacancies...



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<sup>15</sup> CIPD and the Adecco Group (2018), 'CIPD/The Adecco Group Labour Market Outlook: Summer 2018'

<sup>16</sup> Hirsh W, Tyler E (2017), 'Talent Management: Learning Across Sectors', Leadership Foundation for Higher Education



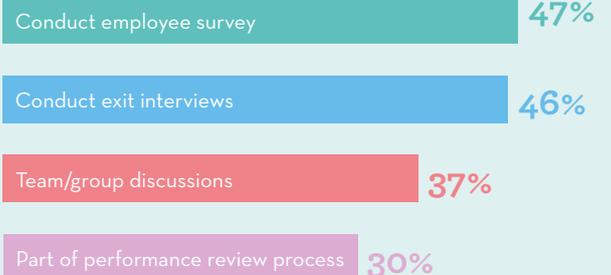
# Holding on to your talent

Whilst all of the activities outlined so far can support holding on to talent post-Brexit, it's important that employers also understand the reasons for turnover (Brexit related or not), and systematically address those as far as possible. Nearly half of UK managers are already concerned about their staff retention levels even before Brexit, according to our survey. Enhancing the whole employee experience, from the initial job advert or approach, through recruitment, induction, experience of work and opportunities for development, is critical to retention. Whilst most managers tend to think that loss of staff is a pay issue, research with employees almost always identifies other factors, such as the way in which work is managed, organisational culture and line management. Below highlights what we know from a half-century of research on the issue.

Many employers have successfully addressed poor retention rates. For example, a major IT company, whilst able to attract and recruit sufficient graduates, had become concerned that its subsequent ability to retain them was poor. Given the considerable cost involved in recruiting and training the graduates, and the competitive cost of losing these graduates to rival firms, the IT company undertook a piece of internal research to understand manager and employee perspectives. Contrary to the beliefs of line managers, dissatisfaction with pay and benefits did not feature strongly as a major reason for leaving. The key differences between

leavers and stayers related to job content and design, job satisfaction and skill use/development. Following up on these insights, the IT company reviewed and changed its practices with regard to recruitment and induction (making recruitment literature more realistic and introducing a buddy system), job design and skill use, career and line management. As a consequence of these changes, early losses of IT graduates halved, improving retention and helping ensure a longer-term contribution from this important population.

## Steps taken to understand reasons for poor staffing retention levels:



Source: The Adecco Group survey, October 2018

## Employee Retention: Key insights

Here's what decades of research tells us about retention.

Employee resignation is:

- A decision influenced by 'push' and 'pull' factors – in a buoyant labour market (the pull), even satisfied employees might leave. Employers should focus on minimising the risk that low engagement and satisfaction (the push) drive out talent prematurely.
- Rarely linked to pay satisfaction.
- Often linked to intrinsic work factors (control, autonomy, progression, learning opportunities).
- Linked to organisation culture and climate.
- Strongly influenced by leadership style – people join an organisation but leave a manager.
- An individual decision requiring tailored solutions.
- A outcome of an employee's values not fitting with the purpose and alignment of the organisation.
- Often a symptom of deeper organisational problems – workload, bullying, onerous performance targets and perceived unfairness can all contribute.



Whilst a lot of managers tend to think that loss of staff is a pay issue, most employees identify other factors such as the way work is managed, organisational culture and line management capability.



**Stephen Bevan**  
**Institute for Employment Studies**



# Using technology to mitigate labour shortages



One option open to UK employers to mitigate post-Brexit labour shortages is to invest more in technology. Much of the media dialogue around new technology in the workplace paints a dystopian image of robot workers usurping humans and a possibly bleak and jobless future. Not all predictions are so unsettling, with other scenarios highlighting how robots may work alongside people, increasing productivity and enabling humans to focus on more value-adding activities that are quintessentially 'human'.

Recent research has shown that augmented workplaces score 33% higher on factors deemed to make a workplace more - not less - human, such as prioritising continuous learning and fostering professional development. Such a future is becoming a reality in a number of firms, where roles have been re-designed to enable humans to focus on more complex and engaging activities, leaving automation to carry out the more routine tasks. Augmented organisations also achieved 28% higher overall performance, did 31% better financially, and were 24% more likely to innovate.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> [www.automationanywhere.com/company/press-room/6202-automation-is-making-work-more-human-global-research-reveals](http://www.automationanywhere.com/company/press-room/6202-automation-is-making-work-more-human-global-research-reveals)

The Adecco Group's recent report on robotics and AI<sup>18</sup> painted just such a future, with nearly six in ten people surveyed believing that robots will take up the 'boring' more mundane roles, leaving the more fun ones for humans. Introducing more automation, AI or robotics, does not have to be the bogeyman of the British worker, but can aid productivity and enable a higher quality of work - if implemented in the right way.

Whether or not employers in the UK are geared-up and agile enough to adapt to Brexit by introducing more automation, AI and robotics is a moot point. UK capital investment is low by international standards. The UK also appears to be a laggard when it comes to the use of robots in the workplace. In 2015, the UK had 10

robots for every million hours worked compared with 131 in the US, 167 in Japan and 133 in Germany.<sup>19</sup> The sales of industrial robots to the UK actually decreased between 2014 and 2015.<sup>20</sup> There is also evidence to suggest that many of the industries that could benefit from increased automation invest less in technology.

That said, recent survey research by the Resolution Foundation reported that one-third of UK firms who said a fall in EU migration would lead them to change the way their business is run, said they would invest more in technology.<sup>21</sup> Considerable thought needs to be given to how this technology is chosen and implemented, to avoid the risk of changes alienating employees.



One option open to UK employers to mitigate post-Brexit labour shortages is to invest more in technology.



<sup>18</sup> Adecco UK (2017), 'Humans vs Robots'

<sup>19</sup> CEBR and Redwood software (2017), 'Will post-Brexit Britain hinder a robot revolution?'

<sup>20</sup> International Federation of Robotics (2016), 'Executive Summary World Robotics 2016 Industrial Robots', IFR

<sup>21</sup> Clarke S (2018), 'Work in Brexit Britain: Reshaping the Nation's Labour Market', Resolution Foundation

More technology can mean higher engagement and employee-led productivity improvements - 'liberation technology' - or it can mean increased monitoring and a sense of trust being undermined - 'digital taylorism'. A world of work characterised by 'liberation technology' is likely not only to help address immediate talent shortages, but also widen talent pools and enhance employer brand.

Relatively few employers seem, however, to have prepared to have a workforce with people, AI and robots working side by side (15% of global executives report being prepared<sup>22</sup>). There is an opportunity, then, for employers to get ahead of the curve, and improve employee engagement and productivity if they take steps now.

There is no doubt that technology is advancing at a fast pace, and that there is great interest in using it to improve productivity and efficiency. But why do so many predictions about the transformative nature of technology on work seem to fall so short of the truth?

Perhaps part of the answer lies in the fact that the prevailing culture of most modern workplaces is still not ready to trust people to work remotely and out of sight. Maybe we still value 'inputs' (how much time we spend working) more than 'outputs' (how much we produce and of what quality), or that many managers can't cope well with the idea of managing people they don't see every day, or that remote working is regarded as no more than an indulgence for those 'knowledge workers' (unlike their support-worker colleagues) whose work is not location dependent.

## Digital Taylorism



High levels of standardisation in jobs;



Tasks are performed in the most mechanistic and efficient manner with maximum pace and in an order determined by a centralised authority;



Most tasks are routine and are allocated by management;



Tasks are performed by the least expensive competent operator (machine, algorithm or worker);



The man:machine interface builds in a human factor only when needed and then to support maximum efficiency, reduce errors or to resolve problems using highly proceduralised protocols;



Waste is systematically 'squeezed' out of procedures and tasks using the principles of Six Sigma or Business Process Reengineering, minimising worker choice or discretion;



Workers as 'time slaves', no discretion or sovereignty over working time, over how work is conducted, paced, when it is done, what quality standards to apply and when.

22 Deloitte (2017), 'Global Human Capital Trends', Deloitte



Employers have a choice over whether they want to build a work environment that makes workers ‘time lords’ rather than ‘time slaves’.



**Dan Lucy**  
**Institute for Employment Studies**

## ‘Liberation’ Technology



Machines, technology or AI are designed to automate routine and repetitive tasks in job design to maximise the value-adding competences of workers (eg cognitive flexibility, discretion, decision-making, real-time problem-solving, spotting & learning from exceptions, priority-setting, empathy, preventing errors & conflict, spotting ‘weak signals’ in complex data or situations);



Humans co-produce good productivity and quality of work outputs which deliver high levels of customer service, personalisation and continuous improvement, innovation & adaptation;



The design and implementation of AI/ automation balances the need for operational efficiency with the need among workers for job quality, engagement, job purpose & meaning and for growth, development & skill utilisation. Also allows workers to exercise ‘ethical stewardship’ over work practices and promote organisational values;



AI/automation supports inclusive employment policies and practices opening up meaningful work for older workers, those with disabilities/ chronic illness (e.g. neurodiversity);



Workers as ‘time lords’ – optimal control and sovereignty over working time, work-life balance, work pace and the order in which tasks are performed.



In what may be a sign of the times, in 2013 the CEO of technology company Yahoo!, Marissa Mayer, made headlines by discouraging homeworking in her workforce to improve collaboration and because ‘speed and quality are often sacrificed when we work from home’. Perhaps the answer to extracting the most from technology is less to do with hardware and more to do with organisational culture?

The diffusion of technology across an economy can be relatively slow, taking on average between eight and twenty-eight years<sup>23</sup>. Multiple barriers exist, from cost and fears of technology becoming quickly out-of-date, to more cultural issues around consumer preferences and workforce readiness. Employers can take steps to influence whether workers see technology as something to be feared or as a means to better quality jobs by the way in which it is implemented.

## Steps employers should take when adopting automation<sup>24</sup>

- Co-create automation strategies with the workforce.
- Engage staff in how technology should be used and articulate the benefits.
- Involve the C-suite from start to end in championing and implementation efforts.
- Help workers retrain and transition into new roles where needed.
- Think carefully about which machines to purchase - there are several that do similar things but with very different impacts on the workforce and the nature of work.

<sup>23</sup> Mckinsey Global Institute (2017), ‘A Future that Works’

<sup>24</sup> Lacity M.C., Wilcocks L.P. (2016), ‘A new approach to automating services’, MIT Sloan Management Review

# Key takeaways

The possible end of free movement, as a result of Brexit, may lead to shortages of both high and low-skilled workers across multiple sectors. Employers need to start reviewing their recruitment and talent approaches now to mitigate against negative impacts. Doing so can also effectively enhance employer brand and boost productivity. Multiple options are open to employers, including:

- Widening recruitment criteria - looking beyond qualifications and like-for-like experience to valuable transferable skills, and alignment between individual and organisational values.
- Restructuring or re-designing work - restructuring or reallocating work to alleviate 'crunch' areas, and upskill employees improving the experience of work and all importantly, employer reputation, in a tight post-Brexit talent market.
- Use technology to automate routine tasks where possible, freeing-up employees to focus on more

engaging work, again enhancing employer brand. When implemented in the right way, augmentation can lead to increases in both productivity and employee satisfaction.

- Technology can also be used to re-design jobs to support older employees and those with chronic ill-health conditions to undertake certain roles without a 'productivity penalty'.
- Widen talent pools by introducing 'returnships', recruiting retired workers and targeting potential career changers with relevant transferable skills.
- Map-out career pathways, communicating to employees that your organisation cares about them and supports their development.

The actions to mitigate Brexit-related talent challenges will also build a long-term sustainable talent pipeline through enhancing your reputation as an employer.



Employers need to start reviewing their recruitment and talent approaches... Doing so can effectively enhance employer brand.





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## THE ADECCO GROUP

If you're looking at your workforce, and wondering how you can plan for Brexit in the face of uncertainty, the Adecco Group is ready to help you.

We've been advising on talent management and recruitment strategies for years, we're embracing future technology through our brands like Adia, and we can draw on the global experience of our offices all around the world for unique solutions.

Contact us at:  
[engage.adecgroup.co.uk/Brexit\\_Contact\\_Us](https://engage.adecgroup.co.uk/Brexit_Contact_Us)

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