



NEW WAYS OF WORKING:

Resilience by Design

CONTENTS

1

Impactful HR:

Gaining momentum

2

New Ways of Working:

The most critical workforce trends in 2021 and beyond

3

HR as the Driver of Future Success:

Designing future ways of working

4

Conclusion:

Towards resilience

SUMMARY

Resilience in your HR function is a byproduct of knowing your workforce. Following widespread upheaval throughout 2020, leading global market analysts and thought leaders are looking ahead to establish the critical workforce trends of 2021 and beyond.

While their suggestions vary to a degree, there are 5 emerging themes that unanimously appear across most research publications. It is only by understanding these key developments that organisations can build a resilient approach to strategy and workforce management.

In 'New Ways of Working: Resilience by Design', StaffCircle has investigated the critical trends that HR leaders should be mindful of as we move into 2021 and offer specific measures that, when implemented, can pave the way towards a more resilient future.



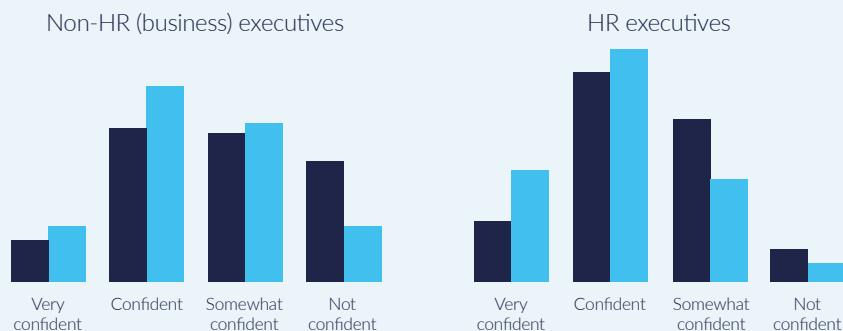
1. IMPACTFUL HR

HR is an underutilised asset in many organisations, limited to standardising and enforcing policies and procedures. But the HR function has hidden creative potential, equipping organisations with the tools needed to build agile ways of working that solve workforce and business problems.

Having the ability to design new and more flexible workplace strategies can lead to increased productivity and greater innovation. However, the challenge for many HR professionals and leaders is making a shift from this traditional approach to a more strategic one.

As HR ended up being a key player in handling organisational challenges brought on by COVID-19, businesses became more confident in their ability to deal with change.

Based upon HR's role and impact during the COVID-19 pandemic, what is your level of confidence in HR's ability to navigate the changes required in the next 3-5 years?



Source: The 2021 Deloitte Human Capital Trends Survey

In order to maintain and capitalise on this positive momentum HR leaders need to go beyond just finding their way through unforeseen disruptions. In other words, organisations of the future need to shift from 'surviving' to 'thriving'.



A survival mindset views disruptions as point in time crises to be addressed with the expectation that the organization will revert to "business as usual" once the crises are over. Organizations with a survival mindset aim to deal with the reality that the world imposes; it's about doing what's necessary to succeed today.

It is important to distinguish between these two approaches, as moving away from surviving towards thriving fosters resilience. Even if your business is in 'survival' mode, the pandemic has most likely shed light on where you have resilience and where you have a 'chink in your operational armour'. There are a number of changes HR could make to create differentiated value, enhancing resilience and driving new ways of working. But first we need to consider the most critical workforce trends that have emerged following the unforeseen events of 2020.



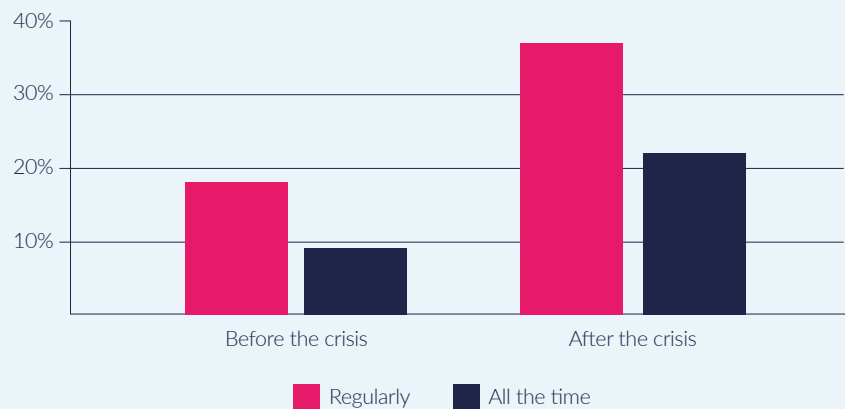
A thrive mindset recognizes that disruption is continuous rather than episodic and embraces disruption as a catalyst to drive the organization forward.

2. NEW WAYS OF WORKING

Will 2021 and beyond be about stability and returning to the way we were? Unlikely. There are a number of major trends that have been either created or accelerated

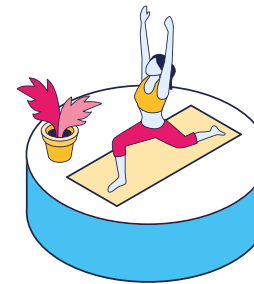
by the pandemic, such as the increase in remote working. The forces driving these trends will still be at work and are going to carry on shaping the way we operate.

Homeworking set for big increase post-crisis (%)



*Regular is at least one day a week. All figures average employer responses. Source: [CIPD](#)

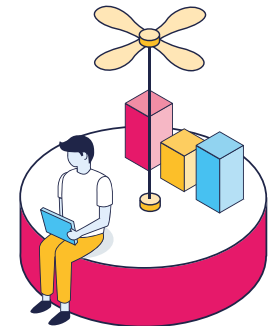
Recent research by the most prominent global thought leaders and market analysts have identified a number of key trends, of which five are unanimous:



1. Shifting from managing the employee experience to managing their life experience:

While employee experiences will remain one of the most important design strategies businesses could embrace, going forward, this will expand into managing employees' life experience as well. This means supporting your workforce with their personal lives, including mental and financial health.

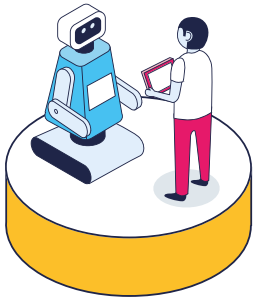
Gartner's research revealed a 23% increase in the number of employees reporting better mental health and a 17% uplift in how they felt about their physical health. On the other hand, employers saw a 21% increase in high performance. Statistics show that remote work is beneficial to wellbeing, however this positive impact can only be sustainable if there are robust measures implemented to support working at different locations.



2. Working to unleash employee potential:

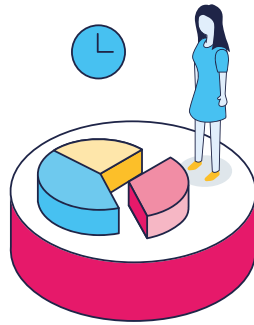
2020 demanded many roles to be expanded and transformed and employees to do their jobs according to critical needs as opposed to their job descriptions. Strategies no longer work on a static path so organisations need to move when the environment moves.

Building workforce capability and employees' ability to adapt, re-skill and assume new roles will be pre-requisites to successfully dealing with disruptions. Allowing workers to tackle problems and on the basis of their interests and abilities results in increased agility and resilience.



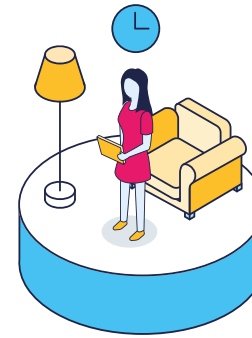
3. Partnering People with Technology = Superteams:

One of the most important actions identified by organisations when it comes to transforming their approach to their ways of working is the implementation of new technologies. Human-AI collaboration is a type of organisational strategy that is on the rise as this approach essentially multiplies the value of teams. Leveraging technology to enhance and complement (but not replace) human capability and ability results in not only cheaper and faster ways of working, but can make work better for humans and create a more human-centred experience, ultimately transforming the nature of work.



4. Creating agile strategies based on real-time data:

The rapid economic changes brought on by the pandemic forced employers to make difficult decisions regarding staffing levels and redeployment. Making these decisions were challenging for businesses as generally most have to deal with a huge information gap between employers and their workforce (Deloitte, 2019) Retrospective data is useful for evaluating past performance. However, it is real-time data that will give visibility of important workforce issues and truly enable organisations evaluate actions and responses on the go and effectively deal with multiple possible futures.



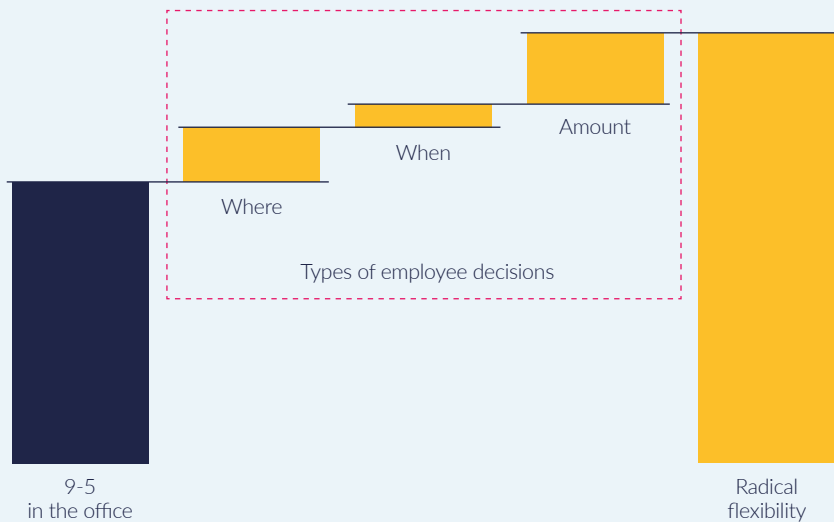
5. Shifting flexibility from location to time

Remote work is now commonly accepted. The next wave of flexibility will be around when employees are expected to work. How flexible an organization is regarding its talent, its offices, and its operations will be a key factor in determining success.



Flexibility fuels employee performance

Percentage of high performers



Source: Gartner ReimagineHR Key Takeaways

3. HR AS THE DRIVER OF FUTURE SUCCESS

The Human Capital Trends report by Deloitte identifies the top 3 areas where HR made the biggest difference during the 2020 pandemic as the following:

- Protecting workforce health & safety
- Increasing workforce communications
- Promoting worker wellbeing

Successfully managing these initiatives earned HR trust from both leaders and executives. However, only by shifting away from traditional approaches and basing future actions on the earlier mentioned trends can HR truly catapult businesses into the realm of resilience.

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So what are some specific measures that HR leaders can take to pave the way towards the future of work?

1. Managing employee life experience

Directly embed wellbeing into how work gets done. Consider policies and mandates on 3 levels: individual, team and organisational.



ORGANISATIONAL:

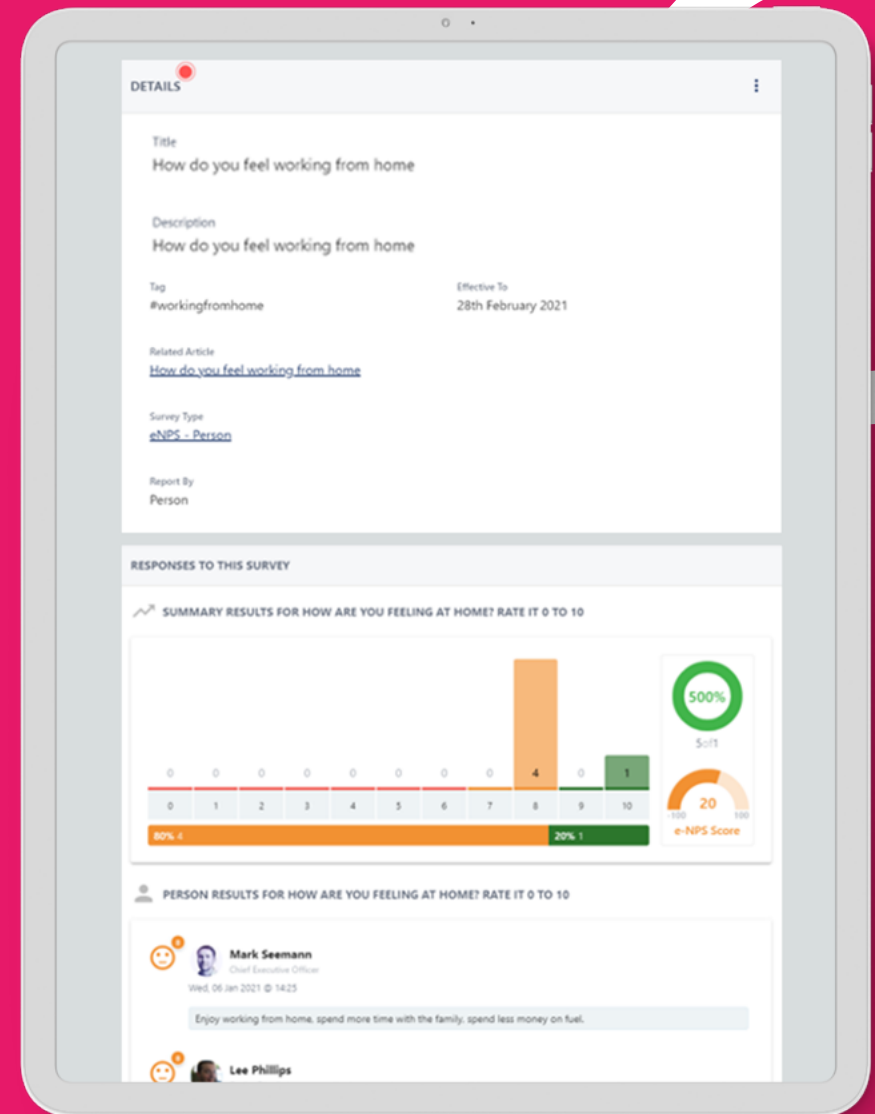
Incorporating wellbeing initiatives into organisational policies and job descriptions is a good starting point. However, **embedding wellbeing into the fabric and the culture of a business truly happens when it becomes part of working in the flow**, social behaviours and norms. Some proven methods include eNPS type surveys and One2One Check-ins. For these, consider the infrastructure that's in place. Establish new scheduling and meeting norms.

**TEAM:**

It is widely discussed that teams will drive the organisations of the future. **Fostering well-being relationships amongst colleagues** is important as well as encouraging supportive behaviours, celebrate and record achievements and acknowledge and reward cultural alignment.

**INDIVIDUAL:**

In the heart of both an 'employee life experiences' or even just the 'employee experiences' approach is the employee. As such everything surrounding these initiatives needs to be two-way between the organisation and its workforce. So, organisational plans around wellbeing should allow workers to take the initiative in setting their own boundaries and **making their well-being needs understood**.



StaffCircle helps to embed wellbeing into the fabric of organisational culture

A real-life example: Manufacturer expands its wellbeing initiatives towards life experiences



During the first national lockdown, one of our clients, Pitacs Limited, a global manufacturer and distributor of heating products and electrical cables, wanted to find a way to engage its distributed workforce. They also wanted to ensure that their newly implemented wellbeing initiatives and resources were communicated and accessible to everyone (even to those on furlough). This led them to

choose a HR software that ultimately became the supporting mechanism for everything wellbeing-related. Wellbeing resources became a regular feature on the NewsFeed whilst scheduled automated One2One Check-ins enabled Managers to get a feel for how their team members were dealing with the changes brought on by the pandemic. Read the full case study [here](#)

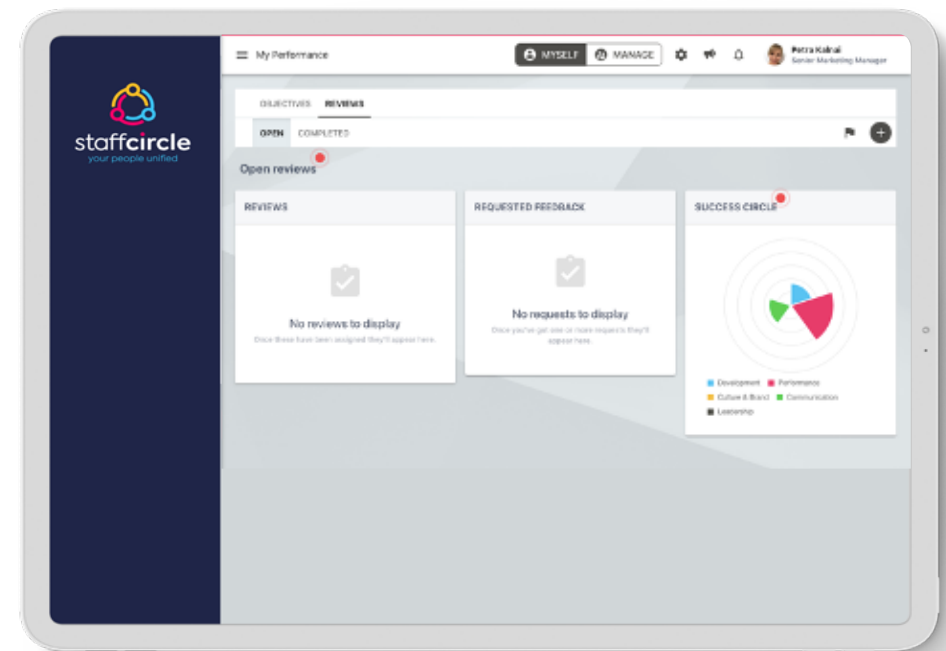
2. Unleashing employee potential – How?

Traditional workforce planning models take a more 'top-down' approach and rely on static competency frameworks and job descriptions that in the best case scenario get reviewed every couple of years. If the pandemic taught businesses anything, is that giving the freedom to employees to tackle critical business problems, result in creative solutions, high value outputs and new ways of working.

If enterprises ditch the traditional restrictive workforce planning models and instead choose empowerment - not prescribing what skills employees need to contribute but rather re-evaluate the relationships between skills, positions, teams and industries - upskilling and re-skilling will happen more organically while traditional linear career paths turn into mobility. This way employee development is based on an individual's potential to synthesise and solve problems.

Tackle this by approaching skills gap analysis in a different way on an ongoing basis. Rather than identifying employee profiles from the top-down and matching them with training needs, capturing worker behaviours can help to highlight evolving patterns of talent and passion. Adopting a data driven approach can help better understanding employees' unique attributes, needs and dimensions - matching these with organisational goals & objectives.

Technology can support in identifying skills gaps from the bottom up by analysing data from a variety of sources such as job descriptions, digital conversations, learning management systems performance management and One2Ones. This results in better more precise understanding of employee skills.



StaffCircle's Success Circles analyses data from a variety of sources. [Find out more](#)

3. Partnering People with Technology – Superteams – How?

Some recent debates were sparked around the question whether technology will replace human effort. Instead of taking an either-or viewpoint let's look at how businesses could get the most out of artificial intelligence.

To make this happen organisations need to stop viewing technology and AI simply as a tool or an enabler to their operations and instead, consider it as a member of the workforce (without the holiday

entitlement). Joking aside, AI can enhance human capability allowing employees to focus on problem solving, critical thinking and strategy rather than on repetitive, mundane mechanical tasks. With more focus on creativity teams can evolve, learn and create knowledge in new ways.

Technology does not only enhance human performance but can also help with increased collaboration and breaking down barriers. Allowing for training in the flow (for example when someone is working in Microsoft Teams) will create a more personalised work experience.

A real-life example: Medical Center utilises Technology to problem solve



Perhaps no one had felt the impact of the pandemic as acutely as those working within the NHS. Part of this fantastic organisation, Beccles Medical Center decided to use technology to free up time its staff spends on repetitive, mundane and time-consuming tasks. The implementation of Staffcircle's technology allowed the Beccles team to shift its focus on solving problems in relation to the logistics of the

COVID-19 vaccine roll-out. Instead of just inputting data, the Center Administrator can now provide strategic support for doctors, clinic staff and patients. Whilst managers no longer having to chase information on their staff but rather concentrate their efforts on making the clinic one of the most efficient surgeries administering the vaccines. Read the full case study [here](#)



4. Creating agile strategies – How?

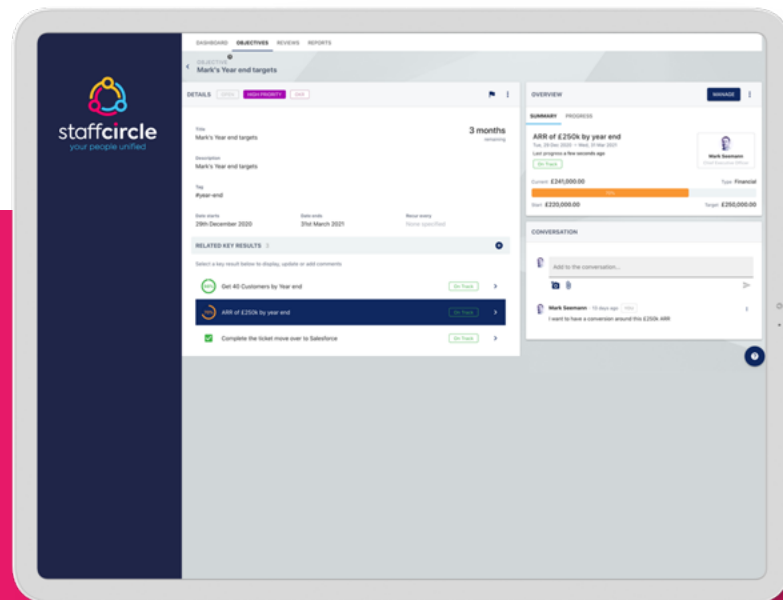
The secret to creating agile strategies is twofold and interdependent. First, we need to look at data collection methods. Second, strategy. Is the organisational strategy incremental only planning for likely events?

Even the most traditional organisations would collect some type of data like sickness absence, hours worked etc. The big difference is the depth of information, the speed at which data is collected and one's ability to process it.

Often, by the time data is collected and processed several days or weeks had passed. This means that the information gathered focuses on past events and

behaviours. When strategy is based on this type of data it will always focus on improving past patterns as opposed to setting new directions. **Organisational capability to quickly pivot and move in sync with environmental changes will largely depend on the ability to access and act on real-time workforce insights.**

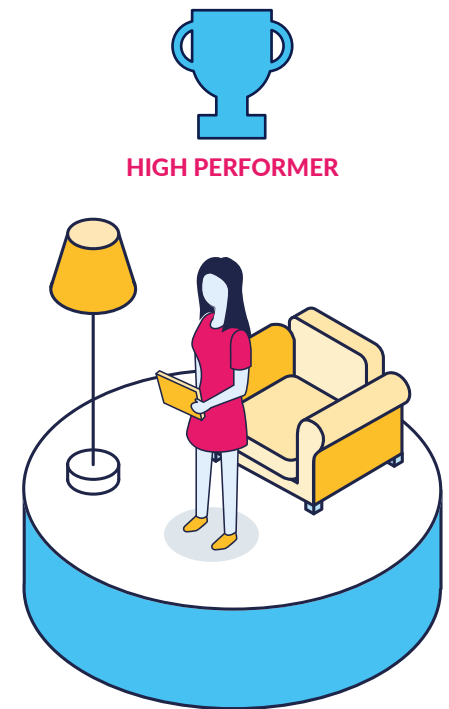
Real-time data can drive critical decisions on health and safety (knowing immediate concerns and preferences) and help with capturing and highlighting the earlier mentioned employee potential and sources of capability irrespective of location, ultimately plugging in operational gaps. Additional benefits include the ability to tie employee data to both economic and organisational values and accurately determine when to flex workforce up or down.



5. Shifting focus from location to time – How?

With remote work, businesses have access to a much larger talent pool. However, there could be even greater benefits when it comes to productivity. The answer is **shifting focus from processes to outcomes** by going beyond just allowing locational flexibility and offering flexibility of hours worked. Organisations that offer employees flexibility over when, where and how much they work, see **55% of their workforce as high performers** (Harvard Business Review).

Designing jobs based on outcomes rather than outputs gives employees a choice in determining how work gets done. This approach will help with unleashing employee potential (as mentioned earlier) and result in high performance that creates agility and resilience.

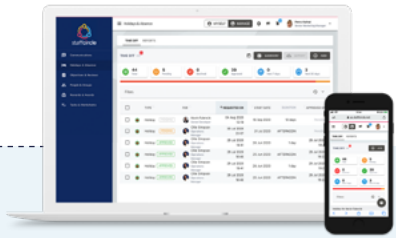




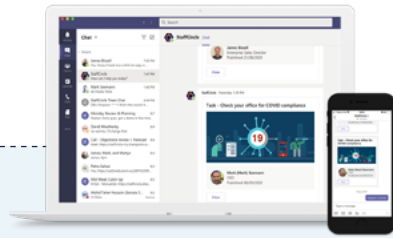
4. CONCLUSION

Organisations need to move from just surviving to thriving and in order to be able to do this successfully, they need to change their mindset to view disruptions as constant rather than periodic. By adopting this approach disruptions can propel organisations forward allowing them to outperform competitors.

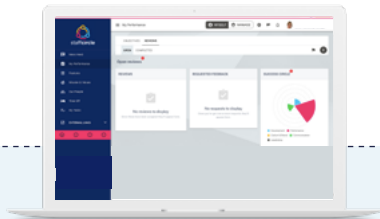
The key to succeeding in a world disrupted is tapping into and leveraging workforce potential and capitalising on the human element. Businesses that understand and activate employee potential will be the ones capable of rapid decision-making and use disruptions as a catalyst for reinvention.



Holidays and Absence



Microsoft Teams Integration



Success Circles Competency Framework



Objectives Heat Map



Talk to us about how you could future proof your performance management, employee engagement and communications, even from within Microsoft Teams without having to suddenly change your existing system.

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