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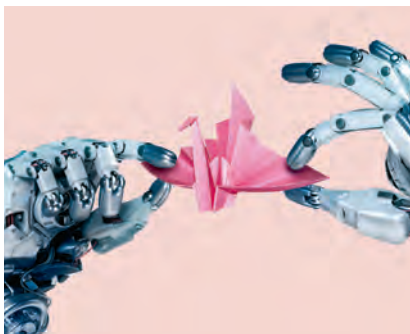
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The Guardian Masterclasses

Introduction

The modern UK workplace is changing as it matches up to constantly developing technology, artificial intelligence and raised employee expectations. In this supplement we look at how businesses are keeping their employees happy, healthy and productive, by introducing flexible working practices, improving diversity and striking a balance between “pleasure and purpose”.

As one senior policy adviser in employee relations says, HR departments have to pay attention to every factor that touches the employee experience, “including good management, dignity, inclusion, relationships and people’s health”. We hear how employers are addressing the issue of mental health. “We wouldn’t ignore a broken leg so we shouldn’t be ignoring mental wellbeing either,” says one head of HR. We also explore HR’s role in social mobility, and how employers are trying to improve progression and ensure equal pay across social divides. **Sarah Jewell**



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Learning on the job: career development opportunities are a key draw for millennials



Overview

So much more than a job

What makes our working hours a pleasure? It's all about flexibility and recognition, says **Tina Nielsen**

The modern workplace is in a state of flux. Changing demographics, longer life expectancies, shifting life priorities and global uncertainty brought on by events such as Brexit mean that employers are having to be agile to accommodate workforces with a broad range of needs.

To attract the best staff, companies need to make when, where and how we work negotiable. In today's recruitment environment, flexible working practices and healthcare are not nice-to-have benefits - they are a core part of workers' expectations. Staff aren't coming to work just to earn money - they want to be happy and thrive.

Unlimited annual leave, golden hello packages and annual travel allowances are just some of the perks introduced in recent years. One big insurance company recently announced six months' fully paid maternity leave. It's all about accommodating staff.

Sir Cary Cooper, visiting professor at Lancaster University, says the recent

changes are linked to the recession. "Out of the ashes has come a culture that says: 'You work hard for us and we'll give back to you,'" he says.

So what does a good workplace look like in 2018? "It is one where there is clarity of purpose, authentic leadership and an effective two-way dialogue," says Niall Ryan-Jones, head of employee experience at Harrods. "Employees are valued and that is shown through compensation, reward, recognition and communication."

A workplace that reflects the diversity of the markets the company serves is also important, says Chris Wilcock, Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) talent acquisition manager at Canon Europe. "A good workplace is where people know what is expected of them, understand how they can contribute to our business goals and, most importantly, know they are valued and trusted to deliver our outcomes," he explains.

Chris Bruney, EMEA talent acquisition team lead at social media management platform Hootsuite, believes the needs of staff have become more comprehensive over time, and that millennials have brought a different perspective to working life. "I'd say factors like culture and work-life balance are now

'Culture and work-life balance are now at least as important as the financial package'

at least as important as the financial package on offer," he explains. "Companies need to be aware of this and are increasingly having to incorporate flexibility into their employment offering, to appeal to a wider network of talent."

But it's not just the younger workers having an effect on the workplace - older workers also look for flexibility and a good work-life balance. "We need to develop flexible work practices and mobile technology, so that staff can essentially work anywhere," says Zofia Bajorek from the Work Foundation.

What else do employees look for in their employer? "Career development and learning opportunities are important to our teams," says Ryan-Jones at Harrods. The retailer has an extensive learning programme, with initiatives such as a school-leaver programmes and management development programmes.

"We pride ourselves on all being teachers and learners," says Bruney from Hootsuite. "We have extensive learning programmes and a global stretch program, on which people can assume new roles of their choice, part-time, to gain valuable exposure to other areas of the business and develop new skills."

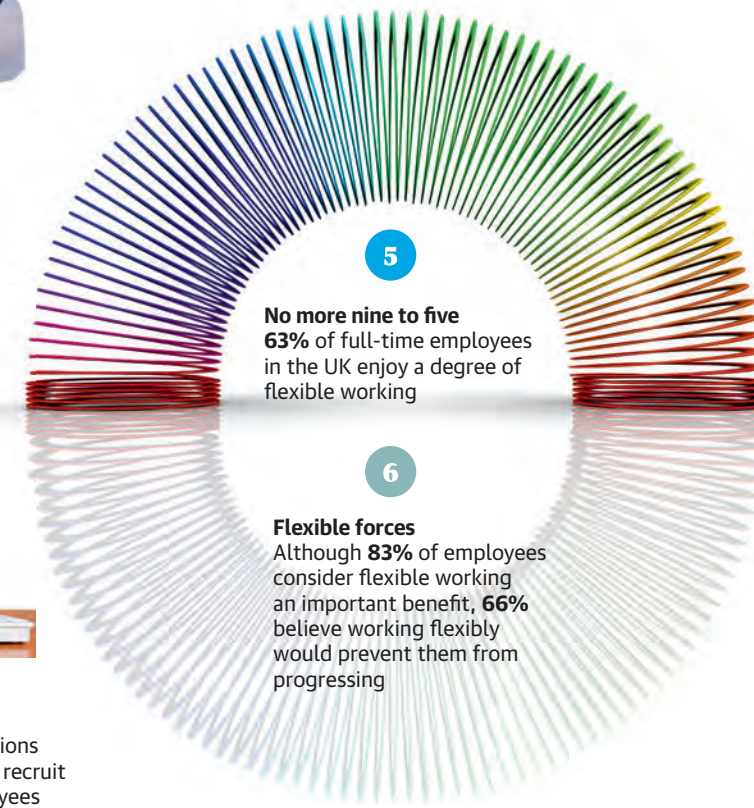
Work with me

What's on the minds of UK employees? And what are companies doing to help staff enjoy their roles? **Tina Nielsen** takes a look at the working landscape



1 A level paying field
Work-life balance is now the top priority for **48%** of employees

4 Happy and hard-working
Happy employees have been shown to be **12%** more productive than unhappy colleagues



5 No more nine to five
63% of full-time employees in the UK enjoy a degree of flexible working

6 Flexible forces
Although **83%** of employees consider flexible working an important benefit, **66%** believe working flexibly would prevent them from progressing



2 Can't get the staff
Three-fifths of organisations expect it to be harder to recruit senior and skilled employees over the next three years, as a direct result of Brexit

3 The glass is two-thirds full
A survey of 2,000 employees in the UK found that the average happiness-at-work rating was **67%**



7 Room to roam
Combining responsibility with freedom, some employers, such as Netflix, offer employees unlimited annual leave



8 My favourite month
British workers spend the equivalent of **27** working days a year travelling to and from work



9 A juggle struggle?
One in 10 millennials struggle to balance work and life, compared with **12%** of 35- to 54-year-olds and **17%** of over-55s

10 Sacrifice for the greater good
More than three in 10 employees (**31%**) would be willing to take a pay cut to secure their dream role



Sources: 1 Sodexo Engage report, Nov 2017; 2 CIPD Resourcing and talent planning survey, 2017; 3 The Secrets of the happiest companies and employees, Feb 2017; 4 Happiness and productivity: Understanding the happy-productive worker, Social Market Foundation; 5 Flexible Working, a talent imperative by Timewise; 6 Hays survey, September 2017; 8 TUC report, Nov 2017; 9 Robert Half report, Oct 2017; 10 Robert Half, Oct 2017

From ground floor to glass ceiling

43%

of people in Britain experience **upward social mobility**



15%

The number of children receiving free meals at school - an indication of poverty - that went on to **enter higher education in 2014**

There are cultural and behavioural hurdles once people have got a job'

7%

The percentage of the UK population that went to an **independent school**; fewer than **1%** went to Oxbridge

Someone with a parent in professional or managerial employment is **2.5 times more likely** than someone from a less privileged background to end up in a professional or managerial job themselves

71%

of barristers went to a private school, and **78%** went to university at either Oxford or Cambridge

29%

of people in Britain experience **downward social mobility**



Diverse workplaces are becoming the norm - but how far up the chain of command can people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds hope to ascend? By **Seb Murray**

To improve social mobility in the workplace, HR teams are trying to widen access to those from all socioeconomic backgrounds - regardless of educational attainment, financial security and social status - by removing hiring practices that discriminate against them.

Accounting firm Grant Thornton, for example, has gone to great lengths to diversify its workforce, including removing academic entry requirements for its entry-level trainee schemes.

Overall, however, the most privileged people in society continue to claim the lion's share of the best jobs, including in the legal, military, medical and journalism professions, according to the education charity Sutton Trust. For example, 82% of barristers in the UK went to Oxbridge.

Even once they manage to land a job, those in minority groups face unique barriers to progression. "Many organisations focus on how to get more people from a more diverse range of backgrounds into their profession," says

Rachael Millar, head of work and skills policy for the Social Mobility Commission, "but there are cultural and behavioural hurdles that prevent people from getting on once they get in."

The commission's research found a pay divide of nearly £7,000, on average, between people from poorer backgrounds and their privileged peers, with the gap highest in finance, at £13,713. At the BBC, for instance, 45% of the highest-paid stars went to an independent school.

The commission says those from working-class backgrounds "may be less likely to ask for pay rises", and may lack access to the networks that can help them gain promotion.

So some employers are deploying strategies to improve progression and ensure equal pay. Grant Thornton assigns the 420 trainee recruits that join the accounting firm each year a people manager, who provides guidance to help them advance.

"Resources are available, and we need to ensure that everybody uses them, not just those from fee-paying schools who know how to make the system work for

them," says Malcolm Gomersall, diversity and inclusion lead at the firm.

Collecting data to measure the impact of recruitment and retention policy is critical to improving social mobility in companies. KPMG was the first UK employer to publish detailed figures on the socioeconomic background of its staff.

"We don't stop at whether employees attended a private or state school; we look at whether they received free school meals, where their parents went to university and which professions they worked in," says Melanie Richards, vice-chair of KPMG UK; 74% of those who responded to KPMG's workforce survey come from a state school.

As more employers recognise that building a more meritocratic workplace is not only the right thing to do, but can provide numerous benefits, such as addressing skills shortages, the social mobility gap may continue to close. "There's no question: having people from a diverse range of backgrounds can produce better business results," says Richards.



Case study

Partner material



Scott Rogers, 20, is a tax associate at Grant Thornton

I joined Chelsea Academy sixth form in London in 2014 to study for A-levels in economics, maths and geography. It was at school that I first heard about Access Accountancy - an industry-wide social mobility initiative providing a week of work experience for young people from all backgrounds. My parents didn't attend university, and I received free school meals. I was interested in the accountancy profession, as I thought there was a lot in there that people my age don't know about - when I got my first pay slip, I had no idea what any of the information meant.

I took part in the Access Accountancy scheme at Grant Thornton and enjoyed it, so I applied to join the accounting firm's School Leaver Programme. But, due to extenuating circumstances at home, I had to take time out of sixth form - and, as a result, I didn't get the grades I had hoped for. I assumed I definitely wouldn't get a job. But by that point, the firm had removed the grade barrier, giving me a way in.

I joined Grant Thornton as a tax assistant, rather than through the school-leaver route, in September 2016 and spent a year doing basic tax work. I learned from a dedicated people manager who mentored me. The role prepared me to become a tax associate in August 2017.

Day-to-day, I help our clients deal with insolvency and bankruptcy tax issues. The most enjoyable part of the job is that I'm constantly learning. At Grant Thornton, you can approach any partner with a problem and they will help you. The biggest challenge is balancing work with study - the firm provides training - but having worked alongside older peers who have gone through it, I know it is doable. I aspire to reach partner in the firm, and I'm confident I will get there.

Interview by Seb Murray

Giving back: the best way forward

Far from being a nice bit of PR for well-to-do companies, corporate social responsibility is essential for luring in the best staff. By **Seb Murray**

From teaching kids in deprived areas of the world to code to creating a platform that helps people access affordable loans, companies are increasingly incorporating corporate social responsibility (CSR) into their business plans. In 2011-2013 Fortune 500 companies spent \$19.9bn (about £13bn) a year on initiatives that had a positive impact on society or the environment.

And while some worry CSR could threaten financial performance, a growing body of evidence suggests it actually provides numerous benefits.

For one, it can help you attract and retain talent. Research by marketing agency Cone Communications found that nearly two-thirds of young people won't take a job at a company with

'Companies leading the way on sustainable practices can and do perform well financially'

poor CSR practices. The survey of 1,000 people found 75% of millennials would take a pay cut to work for a responsible company, and 83% would be more loyal to a business that enables them to contribute to solving social and environmental problems.

"To attract and retain talent, you need to show you are doing all you can to give back to the communities you operate in," says Richard Donovan, head of corporate responsibility for the UK and Ireland at Experian.

The credit agency's UK employees volunteered nearly 12,500 hours in 2016/17 to support community and financial education programmes, and its social innovation programme has helped more than 9 million people globally since 2014 - by supporting

people to pay off unmanageable debts in Brazil, for example.

But CSR is not just recruitment PR; it can also have a tangible impact on a company's bottom line. Companies that integrate climate-change management into strategic planning, for example, see an 18% higher return on equity than those that don't, according to a study by CDP, a non-profit that helps companies with environmental disclosure.

"While there are many reasons why a company might achieve good results, it's clear that companies leading the way on sustainability can and do perform well financially," says Paul Simpson, chief executive.

Enterprise software company SAP's 1,800 UK employees can take part in Africa Code Weeks in 35 countries, helping youngsters develop technical skills and promote economic development. "I do not believe CSR undermines our financial results," says Tom Loeffert, HR director for the UK. "By providing the opportunity for employees to do meaningful work, we have seen higher levels of engagement and productivity. CSR can also help us win new deals and, ultimately, grow our business."



Above: fruit of the Loon - Google's internet balloons will help lift people out of poverty

Right: shoe win - for every pair sold, TOMS ships a pair of shoes to someone in need



For the greater good: six CSR drives

1 Google's Project Loon

Forming a network of floating satellites near space, Loon will provide internet access to some of the 4.1 billion people across the globe who do not have it.

2 TOMS shoes

For every pair of shoes sold by the company, a pair is donated to someone who needs them. TOMS has shipped 75m pairs, which has contributed to protecting more than 2 million children from hookworm, an intestinal parasite typically acquired by walking barefoot on contaminated soil.

3 Asda's wonky veg box

To tackle food waste, the UK supermarket group last year began selling imperfect vegetables via a "wonky veg box" priced at £3.50, 30% cheaper than standard lines. Farmers may benefit by getting money for produce such as misshapen carrots, which are often chucked away. Some £13bn worth of food was wasted in the UK in 2015 - that's approximately 7.3m tonnes, or £470 per household per year.



4 Nu Skin's Nourish the Children

Employees and customers can purchase and donate a nutrient-rich food to people suffering from malnutrition and famine. Since 2002, the company has donated more than 550m meals to malnourished children across the globe.

5 Ikea's Brighter Lives for Refugees campaign

Last year, Ikea funded a solar farm to bring renewable energy to the 20,000 Syrian refugees living in the Azraq camp in Jordan. Each family can now power a fridge, TV, fan and lights, as well as charge their mobile phones - essential for contacting family overseas. The solar farm will save \$1.5m and reduce CO₂ emissions by more than 2,000 tonnes per year.

6 Heineken's responsible consumption

Heineken wants to brew a better world. The beer maker invests 10% of its media budget in some countries on advertising to encourage responsible alcohol consumption. It also committed to invest €200m over five years on a campaign to combat drink-driving.



Left: power to the people - harnessing solar energy in Syria

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Artificial intelligence

The rise of the robo-recruiters

AI is easing the recruitment process, in the shape of Mya the robot and a job-matching tool, writes **Seb Murray**

Artificial intelligence (AI) is creeping into every aspect of daily life. Computer algorithms keep our inboxes free of email spam, suggest which TV programmes we should watch and even drive some of our cars. Now, smart machines may play a role in deciding whether or not you get your next job. An increasing number of employers are using robot recruiters that can assess CVs, screen candidates and pair them with the right roles.

The search for efficiency in the recruitment process has fuelled interest in AI. Finding employees with the correct mixture of skills, personality and motivation is difficult - even when the pool of candidates is large.

"The benefits are huge," says Eyal Grayevsky, CEO of Mya Systems, which has created an AI recruiter called Mya. "Companies have large databases of candidates they have acquired over the years, and they are receiving more CVs than ever before, now that the internet has made it easier to apply for jobs. Previously,

● The AI interviewer

When a candidate applies for a job online, Mya introduces herself and initiates a dynamic, written conversation - similar to a text message format.

● Real-time answers

The robot asks the candidate a series of interview questions, such as: "What's your pay range?", "Can you handle the physical requirements of the job?", "What is your shift availability?". Mya can also answer questions about the job in real time.

How Mya works

● Language assessment

The AI uses natural language processing to pick up on conversational details. Based on the candidate's answers, Mya assesses whether they are a good fit. The bot sends a scorecard and transcript to the employer. Cloud-based, Mya is designed to integrate into existing HR software.

● The next stage

If the candidate is a match, Mya will schedule an interview with a human hiring manager. If they are not, she will suggest other jobs that may be relevant to them.

recruiters were drowning in manual work, assessing applications. With AI, they can automate the repetitive tasks that slow them down."

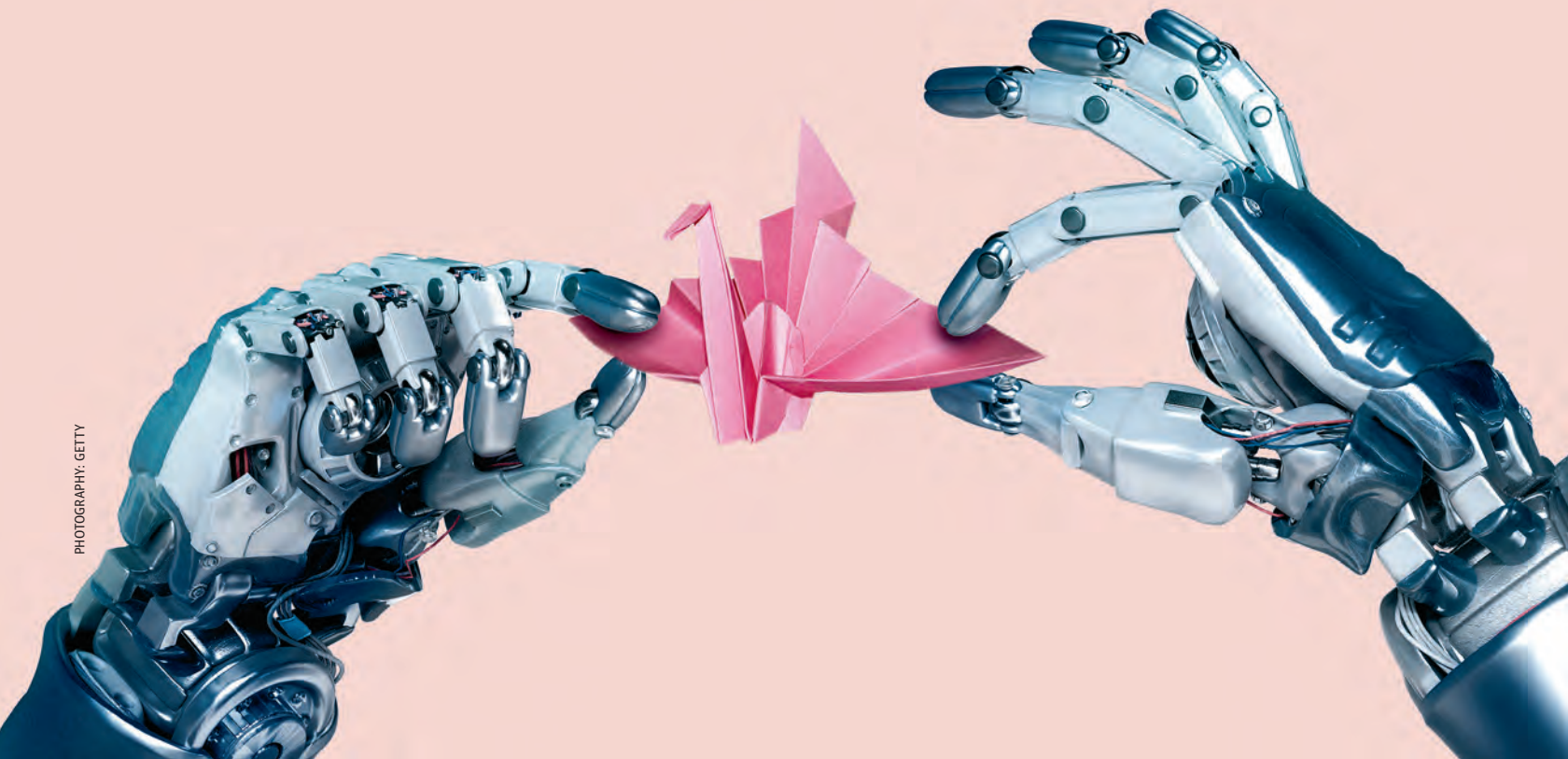
One large retailer that used Mya to hire warehouse staff reported a 79% reduction in the time it took to fill

each position, and a 144% increase in productivity per recruiter who used the technology. Job candidates, meanwhile, benefit by receiving a guaranteed response from Mya. "It's a very human-like interaction," Grayevsky says.

Frida Polli, CEO of Pymetrics, which uses AI to pair people with suitable jobs, says robo-recruiters can also help employers become more diverse by removing some of the unconscious bias in the hiring process. "It can be more objective than a human - but if untested, AI will amplify whatever bias already exists because it is trained to find patterns and replicate them."

Some worry that the rise of the robots will displace the human recruiter, but Anna Seely, principal of talent strategy at Mercer, says: "The role of HR is evolving as a result of digital disruption. Rather than replacing humans, AI gives us access to much richer data to drive better decision making."

With fears growing that automation could eliminate some low-skilled jobs, hiring managers need to think about how to prepare employees to work alongside machines in the near future. "Skills such as purchasing and managing technology, analysing data and designing new products and services will be essential. HR will be a more powerful function going forward," Seely says.





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Opening up to mental health

Helplines, apps and strong support networks have given employees under strain an outlet - but will certain company cultures always make people susceptible to poor mental health? By **Suzanne Bearne**

When Doug King experienced acute depression six years ago, his productivity took a nosedive, as did the quality of his work. "I had limited ability to multi-task and was unable to deal with any amount of stress or pressure," says King, a director of audit and assurance at Deloitte. When he visited his doctor, King was put on sick leave and given medication. Within a few days he was in touch with a counsellor organised through his employer.

"As soon as I made Deloitte aware of the problems I was experiencing, they were fantastic," he says. "A colleague quickly understood my workload and distributed it to other members of the team. A couple of our partners stayed in touch with me to see how I was - I felt like I was under no pressure to return to work and it was made clear to me that I should only come back at the time that was right for me." He says the level of support from his employer helped his recovery: "It really took the pressure off, so I could focus on getting better."

With poor mental health costing the economy up to £99bn annually - £42bn of which is borne by employers, according to the government's Thriving at Work report, published earlier this year - it's little wonder that a growing number of companies are investing more in supporting the mental wellbeing of their staff.

Virgin Trains runs a number of initiatives across the business to help raise awareness of mental health and encourage staff to discuss it. These include access to complementary therapies and a 24-hour assistance line, as well as teams dedicated to improving the mental and physical wellbeing of employees. "We want to make sure our employees are not only equipped to look after their physical wellbeing but also their mental health, and how to get support if they need it," says Megan Taylor, head of health and wellbeing for Virgin Trains on the east coast. The company has also signed the Time to Change employer pledge, which encourages workplaces to create a safe working environment for staff with mental health issues. Technology also plays a role in the company's

efforts to tackle mental health in the workplace. Staff have access to a cognitive behavioural therapy app that hands out advice on how people can manage their moods.

However, despite a strong commitment by a number of progressive companies, others are lagging behind, warns Emma Mamo, head of workplace wellbeing at Mind. "We believe every employer has a responsibility to support employees with mental health problems and promote the mental wellbeing of their entire workforce," she says. To start with, businesses should offer flexible working hours, regular catchups with managers, buddy systems, sufficient annual leave and subsidised gym membership, she says. Mamo also recommends businesses prioritise tackling the work-related causes of stress and mental health problems - such as long working hours, excessive workload, unrealistic targets, and poor relationships with managers and other colleagues. With rising levels of mental ill-health, it's an area that can't be ignored.

Putting theory into practice



The employer
Renae Jackson,
head of HR
at Search
Laboratory

Talking about both mental and physical wellbeing at work is extremely important. We wouldn't ignore a broken leg, so we shouldn't be ignoring mental wellbeing either. As well as the moral business case, there's the financial one as well. If we don't create a culture where staff can talk openly, there could be high volumes of absence and pressure on wider teams. For a few years now we've offered private face-to-face counselling sessions for staff. The

'Eventually, I went to the doctor. That's when I found out I was having a nervous breakdown'

managers at Search Laboratory have always done a great job of championing and publicising this resource, so I feel we already had a good platform to build on. We recently ran "Wellbeing Week", with optional lunchtime activities that were free for staff to attend. We organised expert speakers to talk about a range of wellbeing topics: a cognitive behavioural therapy specialist spoke about challenging negative thinking, and we also included mindfulness, emotional resilience, fitness and nutrition. Wellbeing Week was launched with posters bearing the strapline "Say Something", which appeared on all our internal communications too. During Wellbeing Week, and in the week that followed, a number of my colleagues emailed me to share their experiences of poor mental health. People were already starting to talk more openly, so I felt we'd taken an important step towards our objective.



The employee
Alex Lane,
senior manager
at Accenture

Last year I started experiencing a racing heart, feeling quite panicky and having very cloudy thoughts. I spent a lot of time covering up the symptoms but they became more intense. I confided in a couple of trusted colleagues and they suggested I call our Bupa Healthy Minds helpline at work. That was a turning point for me; the call was the beginning of a journey of trying to look after myself, mentally and physically.

I was really worried about calling the helpline, but these people deal with similar situations on a daily basis. We had a long conversation, which involved an assessment, and the counsellor recommended that I urgently speak to a doctor and take a course of therapy. Weeks later, after one particularly bad night, my wife

ended up making an emergency doctor's appointment for me. That's when I found out I was actually experiencing a nervous breakdown. I was prescribed anti-depressants and signed off work for four months. Accenture were brilliant about it. My bosses told me to not check emails or my phone, and it was up to me as to how much I wanted to communicate to

them. I had six sessions of counselling, which I was initially sceptical about but would now recommend, as I continue to benefit from them. When I returned to work, I wasn't thrown back into it; I was welcomed back, and only worked two or three days a week initially. It was up to me to how much I wanted to talk about it. It was still a tricky situation for me, but when I

'I continue to benefit from the counselling'

returned to the office, one of my aims was to champion work around mental health and wellbeing - and now, as an active member of our Mental Health Allies programme and Truly Human movement, I try to raise awareness across the business. I am proud of the proactive approach Accenture is taking to help its people be their best selves every day.



Check in, catch up and excel

Annual reviews are yesterday's news - but what should take their place? **Tina Nielsen** assesses the options

Performance appraisals have traditionally been considered the best way to evaluate an employee's performance, but increasingly organisations are finding them of little value; employees find them stressful and unhelpful. Importantly, they also take up a lot of time - when Deloitte analysed their own process, they found managers and employees spent around 2m hours a year on performance reviews.

A growing number of

companies have decided to abolish performance reviews altogether, instead introducing more regular catch-ups. Software company Adobe Systems used to hold annual reviews for staff, collecting 360-degree evaluations for each team member. In 2012, a decision was made to switch to a "check-in" process where managers meet with staff at least once a quarter and discuss expectations, feedback, and growth and development.

Adobe has since seen a 30% decrease in the number of employees quitting - and recovered the thousands of hours managers and employees had been spending on their reviews.

Sir Cary Cooper, visiting professor of organisational psychology and health at Lancaster University, says



performance appraisals are useless. "If you have socially and interpersonally skilled managers from shop floor to top floor they should give people positive and negative feedback every day, not once a year."

Chris Bruneley, talent acquisition team lead for EMEA at Hootsuite, says regular contact between employees and managers is important. "We advocate regular employee/manager one-to-one time and we check in with staff regularly throughout the year to hear their views on everything from

company leadership to how they feel about the culture of the business," he says.

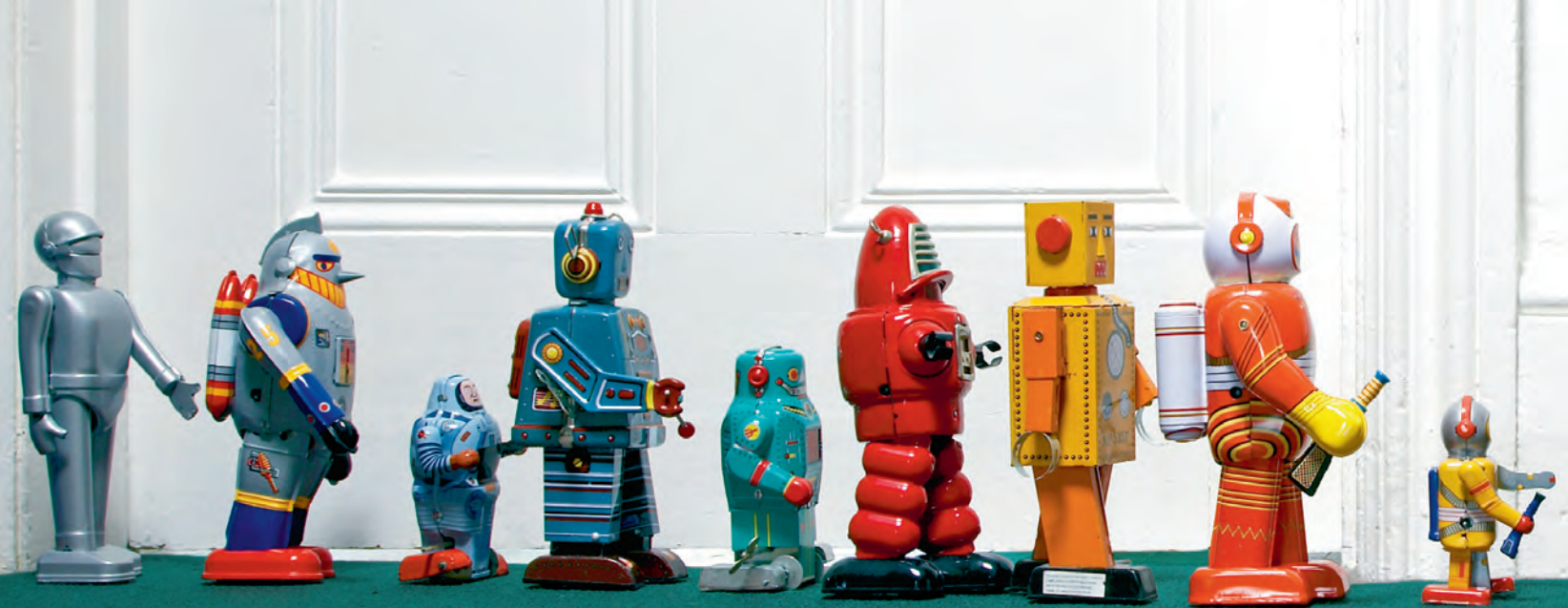
Regular feedback ensures staff can work on it, explains Cooper: "I might be a person who is quite abrasive in management meetings - rather than waiting until July the following year to tell me that, a really good manager would be straight on it, saying: 'Be a bit more open, don't put people down. I noticed you do that.' That is the way to give examples - regularly. And the same applies to praise, when people do a good job."

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How to follow your leader

It's not easy to evaluate top brass - so how do you know if yours is worth your loyalty? By **Alison Coleman**

Leaders are often defined by qualities such as empathy, inspiration, and strategic judgement. The key trait of a great leader is self-awareness; the ability to understand their own reaction to a situation, the appropriate response, and to put it into practice under pressure, even when it is not their naturally preferred behaviour.

In a recent survey by Top Employers, which polled more than 200 HR directors, leadership was ranked the number-one HR driver in terms of its importance to their business. However, measuring leadership - via the use of HR metrics and assessment tools, such as Harrison Assessment

and 360-degree feedback - trailed it by some distance, in 10th place.

Mark Whybrow, founder of leadership development consultancy Engage Technique, believes that measuring an individual leader's intellectual understanding of leadership attributes won't reveal exactly how good they are at making a difference when it matters. In his view, the most effective way of assessing leadership is to look at and measure the bench-strength of the team.

"If leadership is about altering the natural course of events and taking people with you, the best way to assess leadership capability must be to look at the team capability and assess their clarity of focus, collaborative behaviour, sense of ambition, sense of purpose, and also their own sense of leadership and accountability."

Strong leadership that delivers strong results is the goal of every organisation - and to develop the next generation of strong leaders, some

'The best way to assess leadership must be to look at the team ... their clarity and sense of purpose'

companies, such as PepsiCo, have focused on evaluating effectiveness.

"PepsiCo has partnered with some of Europe's best business schools to design learning programmes that embrace virtual technology and the latest thinking," says Jesper Petersen, vice-president, human resources, PepsiCo UK & Ireland. "Progress has also been made in improving the assessment of the leadership development programmes, using bespoke compass tools that consolidate feedback from directs, peers, line managers and stakeholders, together with self-assessment and team assessment data."

This has led to enhanced clarity on strengths and development areas, and, ultimately, a heightened level of that key leadership trait, self-awareness.

"Only through developing and maintaining an exceptional talent base will we grow our business and deliver superior long-term performance," says Petersen.

Five great business leaders



Tim Cook
Stepping into the iconic shoes of Steve Jobs was no mean feat for Apple CEO Tim Cook, but he is a leader who trusts his team and views them as

successful people with innovative and brilliant ideas.



Harriet Green
The former Thomas Cook CEO, now an IBM executive, has transferred her

leadership skills across industry sectors. Known as a turnaround specialist, she is admired for her clear communication skills and her ability to keep the message simple, both internally and externally.



Richard Branson
The Virgin founder is a keen advocate of delegation, believing that making decisions develops leadership skills and builds confidence, as well as strengthening the business.



Jack Welch
As CEO of General Electric, Welch introduced its high-performance culture.



Jacqueline Gold
The Ann Summers boss transformed the lingerie company into a hugely successful and more female-friendly business, but endured many boardroom battles to see her ideas become lucrative reality. She is also a champion of workplace equality.

He also held GE's leaders and managers formally accountable for both performance and values.

Safety first will bring rewards

Good health and safety practices don't just protect employees; they also benefit the bottom line, writes **Alison Coleman**

Figures from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) show that 137 workers died in the workplace over the last year. The number of injuries to employees reported totalled 70,116, while 31.2m working days were lost due to work-related illness and workplace injury. That's why organisations should be striving to create a positive environment in which employees don't just survive, but thrive. Health and safety and wellness should be top priority for HR personnel, as illnesses and injuries, particularly those that are work related, lead to financial burdens for both employer and employee.

The Health and Safety at Work Act provides a legal duty for the management team within a business to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions. In the modern workplace, however, safety has moved on from complicated rules to employers striving to ensure employees are safe 24/7 - encouraging them to apply the safety skills gained in the workplace to everyday life. Safety systems must be led from the top down, with managers not just talking about safety, but actively demonstrating safe working practices.

Opel/Vauxhall takes the view that



The five most common accidents at work

- 1 Handling, lifting or carrying** - caused by lack of training, lifting beyond recommended lifting capacity, or while injured, and moving items in a repetitive manner.
- 2 Slips, trips or falls** - can be the result of poor floor conditions, unmarked hazards, such as liquid spillages, ice in poor weather conditions, incorrect footwear, and protrusions from the floor.
- 3 Being struck by a moving object** - this could include being struck by objects that are being moved by hand, or with the aid of equipment, such as a forklift truck.
- 4 Contact with moving machinery** - this could be due to unguarded machinery, or machinery being used for something other than its designed purpose. Another factor is tiredness, which affects concentration.
- 5 Falls from height** - common causes include the incorrect use of ladders or scaffolding, the poor condition of working-at-height equipment, falling down unmarked holes, and a general lack of training.



Sensible checks: companies and employees should prioritise health and safety issues

The main regulations around health and safety at work

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Employers must carry out risk assessments concerning staff health and safety and provide employees with information and training on occupational health and safety; they must also have a written health and safety policy.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

These regulations require employers to provide adequate lighting, heating, ventilation and workspace, staff facilities, and safe passageways.

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992

This applies to employees who use a computer as a significant part of their normal work. Employers need to carry out risk assessment of workstations, ensure that staff take adequate breaks, and provide regular eyesight tests.

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995

Employers are required to report work-related incidents, injuries and diseases to the HSE, or to the nearest local authority environmental health department.

safety is everyone's business and everyone's responsibility. The steering wheel in its safety logo symbolises every staff member's ability to make personal decisions about safety, which is also reflected in the company's safety strapline: It's Personal, Own It. "Each of us owes it to ourselves and our co-workers to ensure we get home safe and sound at the end of the day," says a company spokesperson.

HR can play a role in health and safety compliance at work, by ensuring that every employee attends their induction prior to starting in their role, says Abigail Morakinyo, nurse and founder of Health in Check, a provider of health and wellness programmes.

'With good health and safety measures, your staff can do their work more easily'

"They also need to reinforce attendance of both mandatory and relevant training," she says. "Some workers may have personal or health-related problems that deter them from attending training courses such as manual handling, which is pertinent to preventing injuries. Therefore, HR personnel should be approachable and accessible to employees. Just as nurses are seen as a patient's advocate between their consultants, HR are the employees' advocate."

Having good health and safety working practices in place delivers many business benefits, as Paul Jackson, safety adviser at Howarths People and Safety Management, explains: "In reducing your staff

absence due to having effective control measures in place regarding illness or accidents at work, the business will benefit by saving time and costs associated with recruiting and training a new member of staff.

But the benefits to the individual are probably more pertinent for staff. "With good health and safety measures, your staff can do their work more easily and safely, which also boosts morale, increases productivity and reduces costs," says Jackson.

"Good health and safety performance will help the business to build a positive reputation with your clients and staff and their friends and associates. This can help to increase sales and generate more leads," he adds.



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Happiness

Get that mojo working

Losing employees is expensive - as is paying salaries to unhappy, unproductive workers.

Stephanie Sparrow finds out how savvy businesses are keeping their staff engaged

Work makes us happy. That's according to the authors of the United Nations World Happiness Report 2017, although the statment carries a caveat - our employment must be well-managed, and feel secure.

Employment experts agree. Rachel Suff, senior policy adviser, employment relations, at the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, says HR departments have to be "aware of their wider responsibilities and strong moral reasons for managing the subjective wellbeing of their employees".

She believes the HR department's remit is broad: "They have to pay attention to every factor that touches the employment experience, including good management, dignity, inclusion, relationships and peoples' health, as well as managing risk factors, such as stress."

And there are no short cuts to creating a happy workplace. "Attempts to encourage fun at work often backfire," says Paul Dolan, professor of psychological and behavioural science at the London School of Economics

and author of *Happiness by Design*. He recommends simple strategies, such as "giving employees timely and salient feedback", explaining that feelings of happiness come from the right balance between pleasure and purpose.

"Many of our experiences at work feel purposeful," he says, "but many feel like a waste of time. This not only affects productivity, but also our likelihood of quitting."

Employers know that workers' empathy with their job or corporate objectives keeps them loyal and more likely to give their best. According to Top Employers UK (TEUK), employees' "engagement" with the business is one of the top three drivers of business success; and it is measured regularly by 71% of accredited employers in its list (see page 14). The average cost of replacing one employee stands at £30,614, according to a report by Oxford Economics and Unum, so the business case for keeping staff happy is strong.

Engaging work in a supportive culture is now recognised as crucial to the corporate

'Companies have to be aware of their brand as an employer'

brand, says Kevin Green, chief executive of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation.

"Companies have to be aware not just of their brand profile to customers, but their brand as an employer too," he says, explaining that job candidates look at the emotional experience of a new work environment "where people feel inspired to do their best".

At Firmdale Hotels, they're encouraging employees to feel happy and valued by replacing split shifts with fixed hours. This makes it easier for staff to manage work and home commitments.

"Our employer brand is 'Love what you do'", says director of people and development Julia Murrell, "and we aim for all 1,300 employees in our eight London hotels to experience this."

Employee feedback, which is gathered online and through quarterly breakfast clubs, is positive. "About 95% say they are proud to work for Firmdale Hotels and more than 29% of staff were promoted over 2016-17," she says, "and revenue has increased by 5.25%."



A seat at the table: savvy employers are listening to what staff want from their work environment



PHOTOGRAPHY: AREA WORKPLACE SPECIALISTS

This is the job you're looking for

Some companies just have the knack of creating a vibe everyone wants to be a part of. **Suzanne Bearne** finds out how they do it

Step inside G Adventures' office in Clerkenwell, London, and you may never want to leave. A welcome sign illuminates visitors' names as they enter the office, and the décor is far from bland - Beatles- and royals-themed meeting rooms await. The travel company's staff get one complementary family trip per year, and every Friday employees from all sides of the business are encouraged to hang out and drink beers in its downstairs meeting room.

"The light airy space, bright colours and happy vibe make the office a fun and vibrant place to come to work,"

says Casey Mead, global PR lead at G Adventures. "Knowing we have the freedom to chill out with others in our communal area, or take some space in one of the London phone booths or egg chairs for a call, makes the office a great place to be."

A strong company culture can be important in helping productivity and creating a happy workforce. With a table football and ping-pong room to hang out in, Alphabet's office in Farnborough, Hampshire, has two of the staple ingredients seen in trendy millennials-employing offices the world over (about a third of Alphabet's employees are under 30). But it's not just the fun stuff that draws people in. The mobility and fleet-leasing company has recently introduced an intrapreneur lab, in which staff can turn their business ideas into a reality, with the help of company resources. Since its launch in October, it has seen 110 applications from staff and produced 74 new ideas.

"We put a lot of time and energy into meeting the personal and professional requirements of our 400-plus UK employees," says Adam Lupton, HR director at Alphabet.

"Highly engaged employees are more effective, more dedicated and more passionate - exactly the sorts of people our customers want to deal with. Our ultimate goal is to have happy, healthy and motivated employees - it's a win for the business and a win for staff."

Lydia Fairman, an HR and resourcing specialist, says today's workers are looking for opportunity, recognition and inclusivity from an employer. "Family-friendly policies are vital if employers want to have a diverse and engaged workforce, and they should

also make the most of technology to enable people to work remotely." They also want honesty, clarity and fair processes, so everyone gets opportunities and is recognised for the contribution they make. "Good, positive, open communication is a great building block for an inclusive working culture for all."

At Aisle Eight's office in east London, they've gone to great lengths to create a workplace that feels homely and fun. The owners' two dachshunds and French bulldog visit several times a week, and every Friday at 5pm a different employee of the PR agency gets to show off their bottle-juggling skills and whip up cocktails for their colleagues.

And it doesn't end in the office, either - the company splashes out on annual summer and Christmas away days, exploring cities such as Barcelona and Amsterdam. "We wanted to create a culture where our team would look forward to coming to work, and that meant working hard to build the right team who all shared the same vision and had the same work ethics," says Aisle Eight co-founder Lauren Stevenson.

57%

of workers said that having a best friend in the office made work more enjoyable*



* Source: wearewildgoose.com

Family-friendly policies are vital to a diverse and engaged workforce'

Beyond a good salary and job satisfaction, today's jobseekers look for a strong company culture, where employee happiness is just as important as increasing profits.

In practice, this means flexitime is a given, employee wellbeing - whether that's weekly yoga classes or lunchtime walks - is a focal point, and strong parental-leave policies, where new mums and dads are supported to take the necessary time off, are an essential part of the fabric of the company.

At feedback platform TruRating, management focus on creating a culture of openness and equality. "I don't think there is anyone who would be afraid to speak up if they thought something could be done better," says product manager

David Atkinson. "We all have share options too, which creates a very real sense of ownership."

Creating a strong company culture takes time and effort, but it's worth the effort. Happy staff have been found to be 12% more productive than unhappy employees, so there's incentive aplenty to create attractive working contracts and an enviable company culture - with or without the ping-pong table.

A study* has found that an office with plants makes staff happier and boosts productivity by

15%



* Source: the University of Queensland



Ten popular policies at work

- 1 Offering staff flexibility over the hours they work.
- 2 Working from home - increasingly possibility across many professions, thanks to advances in cloud computing and browser-based software ... and if it's workable, companies should be offering it.

- 3 Giving staff access to social media at work. Restricting access implies a lack of trust.



- 4 A strong anti-harassment policy - so employees feel safe and happy when they come to work.
- 5 Providing staff with a level of autonomy in their work.
- 6 Encouraging and supporting employees' development and training requirements.



- 7 Unlimited holiday, or a minimum of 28 days off per year.
- 8 Recognising work-life balance - that means discouraging everyone from emailing outside work hours.

- 9 Free gym membership or lunchtime exercise classes - to help keep staff healthy and happy.



- 10 Feeding them. Whether it's as low-key as a bowl of fresh fruit on a Monday, or as indulgent as breakfast everyday, complementary food is always a winner.



HR strategies

Your happiness is our business

It falls to HR to ensure people enjoy being at work - but how do different companies fulfil this crucial brief? Interviews by **Stephanie Sparrow**



Josie Elson
Assistant HR director
Manchester Metropolitan University

Staff surveys show that we score 5% higher than other universities for personal growth and development.

Our 3,600 employees appreciate our open and responsive approach. Our world-cafe-style feedback events have been well received, and we are considering the suggestions about reward and recognition that were raised there. We encourage managers to think creatively about flexible working and work-life balance.

We design vibrant staff development sessions: training courses are kept short and snappy; and we have coaching, mentoring and buddying-up initiatives.



Andy Rogers
HR director
Sodexo UK and Ireland

We make sure our 36,000 staff have purposeful work and the opportunity to progress their careers. Staff turnover, at 22%, is low for this sector.

We are a values-based organisation that prioritises people being their authentic selves - which is why our Spirit of Inclusion diversity training is

mandatory. The employee assistance programme extends to friends and family, and our CSR initiative, which releases staff for three days a year to work alleviating food poverty, keeps us connected with the world we're in.



Hilary Richardson
HR partner
Rider Levett Bucknall

To "invest in our people and value their contribution" is one of our company values, and it's embedded in everything we do for our 500 employees.

For example, our RLB Academy champions lifelong learning, while young leaders can join our Futures Board alongside senior mentors. Weekly communications and regular directors' forums update staff on strategy.

We promote wellbeing and work-life balance, and more than 90% of staff surveyed would recommend us as an employer.



Liz Greenfield
HR director
Pfizer

We employ about 3,000 people in the UK, across three main sites and with a significant number of national field-based employees.

Our employee offerings are continually enhanced - in 2017 we revised our learning and development programmes under the umbrella of "Leadership at Every Level" to further drive culture and performance.

We coach managers to have the skills to develop and engage our employees. Employees are encouraged to own their career, use the extensive internal resources available to them, gain valuable experience and seek and provide feedback.



Lynne Williams
Head of people development and talent management
Bentley Motors

A core company value is inspiring our colleagues to "be the best they can be" - and we help them achieve this with expertise, passion and pride.

We respond by advancing the skills of our 4,000 colleagues through coaching, sponsored programmes, project opportunities and global moves. Development plans, objectives and regular feedback ensure staff are clear on how they contribute to the business.

Communication is key - Bentley Motors' news is shared on newly formed apprentice councils and at company briefings, providing the opportunity for discussion. And we promote active lifestyles: a fitness suite, sports clubs and health clinics are part of a wellbeing programme taken up by over 2,000 colleagues.

'We encourage employees to own their career'



GroupM certified as a top employer (again)

We are pleased, once again, to have been certified as a Top Employer.

We continue to invest in our employees at GroupM to ensure they have the best possible benefits, training and working environment, something we are constantly reviewing and evolving. From onboarding, to online appraisals, health and wellbeing initiatives and career development – we work tirelessly to ensure our employees feel valued and motivated.

We want everyone across the company to thrive in their career – whether it's personal development and learning new skills through GroupM University, to enabling opportunities to move across the wider group, expand experience and encourage collaboration.

We take diversity very seriously at GroupM, and for over three years we have actively grown and driven diversity and inclusion through our employee lead initiative 'All Means All', and regular unconscious bias sessions. We run frequent events, panel discussions, lunchtime sessions and plan to evolve this activity throughout 2018.

Our benefits package ranges from the usual holiday, pension and health care, to additional holiday on your birthday and work anniversary, shopping discounts and flexible working. There is a vast range of wellbeing events and perks, including half price gym membership, in-house doctor, masseuse, beauty room, Yoga, Pilates and meditation sessions to ensure our people keep a healthy body and mind.

We recognise excellence through our peer-to-peer 'RewardMe' scheme, which

highlights great work delivered against our company values and goals.

It's not only fun and games though – we do some serious work too...

Our clients are at the heart of everything we do at GroupM – and everyone across the group keeps them top of mind to ensure we consistently deliver excellence. We also constantly explore new ideas and innovation to ensure we continue to deliver world-class market-leading results for our clients.

Offering a range of gold-standard media investment services from highly skilled experts, GroupM is the leading global media investment management company for WPP's media agencies including Mindshare, MediaCom, Wavemaker, Essence and m/SIX, and the outcomes-driven programmatic audience company, Xaxis.

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£8.1bn, approximately 43% of all UK media spend (RECMA), GroupM UK supports its agencies and clients across trading expertise, data, technology, and an array of specialty services including addressable TV, content, and sports.

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