

The Employee of the Future

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Guest speaker at the Jersey Business Productivity Conference, 'Boost Productivity: See your business thrive', Michelle Howard, shares her thoughts on the Employee of the Future.

As the world of work is changing rapidly around us, technology is transforming the way that we think, live and work and members of society want different things from life. With this comes changes in employee attitude, perspective, their skills and their knowledge. This often brings employers a challenge, but this is a challenge that businesses must address if they wish to attract and retain the workforce of the future.

So what does the employee of the future look like? Here we identify seven key trends:

Globally educated

The employee of the future has been exposed to the way that others work through greater global interaction brought about by new technology. People have learnt about different cultures and work styles, are only a touch away from learning new things and now have a depth of knowledge which would, at one time have been enviable to any business. Through this exposure to a multicultural and global society employees of the future recognise the voices of many people, display greater adaptability and a commitment to listening to

the ideas of others; all traits which are positive for businesses in the future. If harnessed appropriately, this will enable businesses to enter new global markets and will bring businesses closer to the needs of the future client experience.

Society and environmental consciousness.

It seems that every day we hear stories of the environment, charities, volunteering or simply making a difference. This narrative epitomises all that the employee of the future believes in. They want to do work that is meaningful to them. They want to feel like they are making a difference in the world, and they want to work for companies that share their own personal values. They want you, their employer to show that you care about society, and with this authenticity, a buzz word of the day is crucial. Greenwashing, rainbow washing, and blue washing will not be accepted under any circumstances and that is a full stop! Recognising this will bring value for both the business and society is the key.

Keen to learn.

The employee of the future is eager to learn and grow both professionally and personally. They want employers to give them opportunities to develop their skills and advance their careers. In a changing world economy, where skills are changing at a pace far beyond that of technological advancement, development opportunities are a must for both employer and employee. However, it is not enough to give access just to learning opportunities, the chance to progress through to promotion is a given expectation.

Requiring flexibility of work.

The employee of the future values flexibility in their work arrangements. Largely derived from the working practices of the pandemic when technology gave people more time back in their working day through missing the morning commute, or time spent on travelling to meetings; employees have changed their expectation of work. They want to be able to work from home, have flexible hours, and take time off when they need it. This is not just a benefit for the employee. Remote and flexible work offers benefits for employers. This includes an increase in productivity, reduced premises costs and provides flexibility in your client offer, bringing benefit on many levels.

Work culture matters.

The employee of the future wants to work in a positive and supportive work

environment. They want to be surrounded by people who are kind, respectful, and collaborative. Diversity, inclusivity and equity not only matter but are prerequisites for how we work. People expect to be paid a fair wage which is equitable and respectful regardless of gender. As employees are increasingly facing challenges from the complex world in which we live, including stress, anxiety and burnout more people are recognising that mental health and wellbeing needs to be given the attention that they deserve. Employees must take steps to support the wellbeing of their employees if they want to recruit and retain. Whether through offering flexible work arrangements or providing mental and physical health resources, all whilst creating a positive work culture; employees who can meet the expectations of their workforce will be well-positioned to attract and retain top talent.

An ageing employee of the future.

As the composition of the Jersey population has grown significantly older over the past century and is set to accelerate in the future (Government of Jersey), the employee of the future may be older, perhaps seeking semi-retirement but could be convinced to take a part-time or more flexible role. Experience is the one thing that we felt we lost during the pandemic when many of the older generation decided to leave their roles for a more flexible lifestyle, hence attracting and retaining the older employee can only be a benefit as they act as mentors for the younger and less experienced generation.

Digitally prepared.

Whilst the new generation of employees are comfortable in using technology for business (less so, some of the more experienced of our workforce), the skills needed for the future have not yet fully been discovered. People are preparing to embrace (or fear) the technology that is shaping our lives. Some employees feel a sense of fear that the rise of AI and technological advancements will take away their job roles, but this fear needs to be and can be mobilised into motivation to learn. The pace of technological change is making it more important than ever for employees to upskill and reskill and for employers to provide their staff with the resources they need to develop in these areas. Technical training programmes are no longer an optional extra – they are a necessity.

Finally, whilst we are in such a changing and pivotal world and the needs of our employees are changing, as businesses we must expect change and be prepared to be agile. Employers who recognise this and are able to adapt to the needs of their future employee will be well-positioned to succeed in the

future.

Michelle presented at the Jersey Business productivity conference,
Boost Productivity: See your business thrive on Tuesday 27th June
2023.



Jersey Business

Boost Productivity: See your business thrive

Productivity Conference 2023

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The graphic features a man, Jamil Qureshi, pointing at a flipchart with a QR code. In the top right corner, there is a grid of 12 circular headshots of conference speakers. The background is orange.