

HRD

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SPECIAL REPORTS

HOW A POTENT
CONCOCTION OF
DATA-DRIVEN EVIDENCE
IS PROFILING ALL OF US.
PLUS THE TOXIC
CONSEQUENCES OF
BLAME CULTURES

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{ DEUS EX MACHINA }

“LEADING THROUGH COACHING AND MENTORING IS THE FUTURE, WITH EMPATHY, COLLABORATION AND DIVERSITY”

ALSO FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

WHAT NOW FOR THE GIG ECONOMY

The contingent workforce is growing rapidly, the majority being high-end professionals in demand

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION PLANNING

Allowing the future to emerge organically, requires accomplished leaders who are not afraid to let go

TEAMWORK & COLLABORATION CULTURE

The world is fragmented, but teamwork reverses this, restores balance and wholeness

TALENT AND SKILLS PIPELINE

Skills crisis is a forgone conclusion, if we keep going down the same routes and targeting the same groups

WHAT NOW
FOR THE GIG
ECONOMY

GOLD GIGGERS

Research¹ shows 59 percent of gig workers are from professional, creative and administrative services. Whereas driving (11 percent) and delivery (nine percent) only make up a small part. So despite the focus on the likes of Uber and Deliveroo, giggers are suddenly a valuable commodity - digitally-enabled third-party contributors - who work flexibly, at their own convenience, using the 'office' as an occasional hub. So how can you attract them?



ARTICLE BY LUKE TALBOT, DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT MARKETING &
SCOTT HEYHOE, DIRECTOR SOLUTION MANAGEMENT - QUESTBACK

Research by Ernst and Young² suggests that in the last ten years, the contingent workforce in the US has grown by 66 percent. In the UK it has climbed by 28 percent. Of employers with 100,000 or more employees, a third expect to have 30 percent or more contingent workers by 2020. Many organisations are recognising that it is in their interest to tap into this growing pool of talented workers. These giggers are highly-experienced, in-demand workers who were confident enough about their own skills and capabilities to make a professional choice, based on lifestyle desires and expectations. What is becoming very clear is that the gig economy is not just a passing fad. So how do you attract them in the first place - and turn them into an engaged, integrated part of the wider work force? On top of this, when you have

found valuable giggers who fit into your organisation, how can you make sure they come back to you when you need them - and not get lured away by competitors? Cultivating a positive employer brand image is of course going to be essential. As well as looking at how your company is portrayed in the media, gig workers, just as salaried employees, will talk to each other and will increasingly look at online forums such as Glassdoor and LinkedIn. On top of this there are a growing number of vertical industry platforms and communities that specialise in supporting giggers, you need to know the online hangouts where the giggers within your industry are likely to congregate. Work to cultivate a positive presence there. The best workers are likely to be in high demand so it is vital for HR to work closely

with marketing. There is a need to communicate company values and working style, ensuring that the potential giggers you are targeting understand what your brand stands for, just as you'd create a positive brand image in order to attract consumers. Obviously, this public face must be based on reality so that the people you do attract are a good fit with the cultural values, otherwise they are likely to quickly leave while rating you poorly on social media and employer review sites.

If you bring in gig economy workers to address specific projects or at certain times of the year, it is tempting to think all they want is to be paid well. But you need to offer them more, especially if you want them to keep coming back whenever you need them. Obviously gig workers will probably negotiate

higher, but short-term compensation packages - perhaps wanting piecemeal rates for individual projects, with additional bonuses for early completion for example. But you can also look to extend some of the same benefits that you provide to traditional salaried employees. It is unlikely that they will expect pension contributions or private healthcare. But sick pay and some paid holidays might be on the table for discussion.

Training might also be viewed as a reward for joining you. The best gig workers are highly-motivated and eager to learn, meaning they will prefer companies that can help them top up their skills. Part of this might be about paying for them to attend formal training alongside salaried workers. It could also involve helping them to broaden their experience by giving them projects that stretch them and push them to learn on the job. Attending training with other team members is one of the softer rewards that can make gig workers feel valued and part of the team. There are also other softer benefits such as inviting giggers to company celebrations, away days and jollies. There is an anecdote about a company that asked its salaried employees about whether giggers should come to the Christmas party. They voted to invite them, but only if they paid their own way. This kind of attitude increases the feeling of 'them and us' between giggers and the rest of the team. In essence giggers, like everyone else, will be more likely to come back to your company if they feel a sense of camaraderie with the wider workforce. Likewise, if you have a proportion of people working autonomously and sporadically - as well as remotely - as is often the case when you have giggers on the team, it is difficult to maintain a shared culture. This can have an impact on effectiveness and productivity and especially teamwork. You therefore need to give everyone a shared experience and help them feel like they are working with like-minded people who are moving in the same direction. If the giggers are customer-facing staff, then it is even more important that they convey the company ethos and values, which can be made more challenging if they are simultaneously working for a number of other businesses.

When it comes to experience, one of the basic questions is, how much onboarding you give to giggers. According to the Ernst & Young study, 55 percent of organisations don't bother with formal onboarding for contracted workers. But while cutting back on this area might seem prudent, it could be counter-productive. It is important to give gig workers that initial time to immerse themselves into what the company stands for, as well as helping them become familiar with the minutiae of company processes and resources that will help them hit the ground running. Where gig workers are operating remotely, you need to play by the traditional rules that help bind remote teams together; video and telephone conferencing and regular face-to-face team meetings. It is important to make these meetings or calls meaningful, however, and focused on central goals



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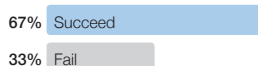
or initiatives that everyone is connected to. Everybody has attended those protracted conference calls in which most people are busily answering their emails until it's their turn to contribute. That is not adding to a shared experience. Another issue is how to replicate those water cooler conversations that happen in a shared workspace. How can you find ways of encouraging those seemingly unimportant asides that spark ideas and bring issues to light? One way of doing this when people are working remotely is to create an online community that allows individuals to share ideas, experiences and contribute solutions to work related challenges. Just as with their personal social media interactions, people can dip in and out of conversations as they go through their day.

Capturing the feedback of giggers can be especially helpful. Not only because you want to measure and learn how to keep them engaged, but also because they are likely to be exposed to what's happening in other companies and can pass on valuable insights about things you need to change. With a less permanent, more distributed and more mobile workforce it is more difficult to capture employee insights. The traditional annual employee survey will not work as the chances are many gig workers will not be working at the time it is launched. The answer is to supplement traditional calendar-driven feedback with more flexible, always-on approaches that let staff provide their views when they want, through their chosen channel or device. Additionally, companies need to let staff share their feedback in a more qualitative way, raising issues that are important to them, outside the set list of questions in the annual survey. Because they are not at your company all the time, giggers are likely to have a wide range of unjaded experiences that they can share - if it is made easy for them, using always-on feedback approaches. The gig economy is here to stay. People are increasingly embracing this kind of work style due to the flexibility and balance it provides. HR departments need to act now to transform the employee experience so they can attract and retain giggers, as well as understand and motivate them, while learning from their ideas, to create a positive shared culture that benefits everyone. ●

1. RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/rsa-blogs/2017/07/what-is-the-gig-economy
2. EY (Is the gig economy a fleeting fad, or an enduring legacy?) www.gigeconomy.ey.com/Documents/Gig_percent20Economy_percent20Report.pdf



Will the gig economy ultimately succeed or fail?



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