

THE FUTURE OF WORK: HR HOT TOPICS 2022

Welcome

Effective Performance Management in a Hybrid Working World

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Meet our panel members

Connect with our panel members on LinkedIn by scanning the relevant QR code below.



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Welcome to the webinar

- Presentation will last around one hour
- We will cover as many questions as possible at the end (if not before)
- No question is too silly – you can ask anonymously – but we want you to come away from today with the practical guidance you need
- All attendees on mute – please use the Q&A box to submit questions

The only constant is change...



Isn't hybrid working brilliant...



Isn't hybrid working awful...



Performance management is hard enough in person...

- So let's go for a good cop/bad cop approach:
- I will seek to persuade you of the positive ways in which you can foster a culture of engagement and positivity – even in a hybrid workplace
- Karen will help with some tips on dealing with the negative aspects – when underperformance raises its ugly head – and you need to tackle it in the hybrid environment
- You should then be equipped for either situation!

Everything is awesome (1)...

“Everything is awesome, everything is cool when you're part of a team, everything is awesome, when you're living out a dream” – The Lego® Movie

- Work from home research – wfhresearch.com – 78,000 responses to survey; over 50% of respondents felt their productivity and efficiency had improved since the pandemic forced them to work from home; 35% said they would leave their jobs if their employer insisted on 5 days a week in the office
- Owl Labs research for Relocate Magazine – owllabs.eu – 10,000 employees surveyed across Europe; 37% would decline a new job offer if no flexible working; 80% felt they were as, or more, productive when working on a hybrid basis; and interestingly 18% would decline a new job if the role was fully remote

Everything is awesome (2)...

- Hybrid working can sometimes help drive much more regular, informal, feedback – which is more valued by employees than the formal, delayed, yearly appraisal
- Focus on productivity/outcomes – not presenteeism
- Business does need to have robust metrics to measure performance – but data should help to deliver this
- Offer flexibility; listen to employees as to what they want; but plan days in the office/in-person events to encourage employees to maintain a connection to the employer and their colleagues

Everything is awesome (3)...

- Hybrid working can, if properly managed by both employee and employer:
 - Attract and retain a wider range of talent
 - Drive productivity
 - Save costs
 - Be good for the environment (less commuting)
 - Make employees happier – giving a healthier work/life balance

Everything is awesome (4)...

- Development of data analytics helps employers to assess employee performance – without the employee being sat at the next desk*
 - Teams meetings – if properly handled – allow all voices to be heard – not just a conversation dominated by the loudest/most confident
 - Can prolong employment of employees when life events threaten to get in the way – e.g. caring responsibilities, personal finances, dog ownership!
-
- *May be some negative impact on relationships, trust, employee morale...but this is not Karen's section yet!

Everything is awesome (5)...

- Communication, communication, communication – regular 1 to 1s; team calls; etc – think pandemic-light
- Keep a regular eye on how this is going – look at trends – is a problem gradually becoming worse?
- In most workplaces, hybrid (not 100% remote working) will be best – which still means that you need some in-person time
- Be wary of “blind spots” – e.g. will lack of presence in the office diminish career and promotion prospects for some? (Presenteeism by another name). Will this impact more on female employees as still primary carers for others? – Complaints at Apple on this point

Everything is (somewhat) awesome (6)...

- Challenge: even I would accept that there are some downsides to hybrid working:
 - how do you encourage workplace attendance when needed/make employees see the benefit of in-person attendance some of the time?
 - can you make the office a “destination”?
 - avoiding a two-tier workforce if some roles cannot be done remotely at all
 - how do you foster a coherent culture/ethos across the business if people are only together on rare occasions?
 - Over to “bad cop” Karen for some answers...

Perfection is not attainable...(1)

“Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence” - Vince Lombardi

- Downsides: what are some of the downsides of hybrid working?
 - Service provision to clients/customers may suffer
 - Sense of community/mentorship in workplace lost?
 - Employees may feel less connected to the business
 - Can you preserve the employer’s culture if people are in-person only rarely?
 - Lord Alan Sugar and Jacob Rees-Mogg both hate it! (*is that a downside?*)

Perfection is not attainable...(2)

If you want an employee to return to the office...

Step 1 – “We encourage you to come into the office three days per week”

Step 2 – “We expect you to be in the office at least three days per week”

Step 3 – “We require you to be in the office at least three days per week”

BUT - what does the employee's contract say?

Perfection is not attainable...(3)

Express vs. Implied Terms

Express terms are expressly agreed between the parties, verbally or in writing. For example, *"Your place of work is 1 Bow Churchyard, London"*

Implied terms are not expressly agreed, but are implied either by common law (e.g. the implied term of mutual trust and confidence) or statute (e.g. equal pay)

Be careful - terms can be implied by custom and practice if they are reasonable, notorious and certain

What if an employee refuses, or simply fails, to return to the office?

Perfection is not attainable...(4)

- Agree work arrangements at the outset – agree on patterns of working and expectations
- Have basis/reason for demanding presence in the workplace
- Don't delay on issues – things are generally unlikely to improve on their own and hybrid working may add to the natural tendency to avoid grasping a problem
- Focus on results – technology can (potentially) help assess an employee's productivity
- Performance management could be a legitimate reason to have an employee in the office more regularly – but avoid knee-jerk reactions/the assumption that an employee can only be managed effectively through face to face contact

Perfection is not attainable...(5)

- ACAS Guidance on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures during COVID still has some relevance for partially remote performance management:
 - Avoid unreasonable delay
 - Consider health and wellbeing of employee
 - Is overall process fair and reasonable?
 - Right to be accompanied remains
 - If very serious, e.g. possible dismissal, consider if face to face meeting is preferable?

Perfection is not attainable...(6)

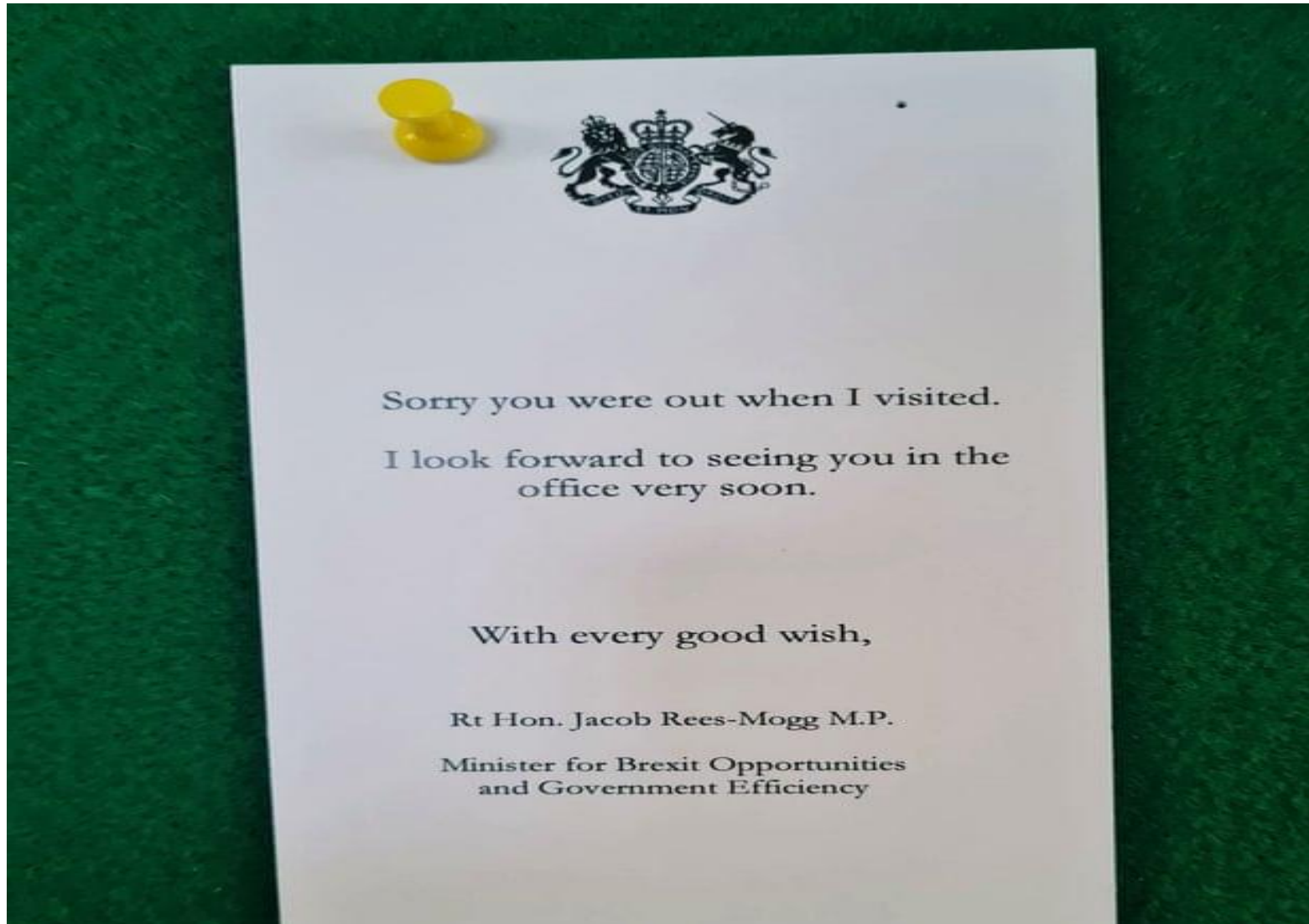
- Understand that poor performance may be linked to external factors – especially as our work and home lives have become more blended – childcare/elderly care responsibilities; financial difficulties; external stressors
- Would a supportive approach work? Employee assistance programmes; OH referral? Is this actually a medical issue?
- Or is it actually a misconduct issue – a simple refusal / failure to attend the office?
- Hybrid or remote working does not excuse poor performance by an employee – employers must still manage and tackle issues of poor performance or misconduct

Perfection is not attainable...(7)

- AI/data analysis can help identify issues – YouGov study found 1 in 5 companies in UK are actively considering or have implemented employee monitoring software
- Examples include:
 - Time Doctor (tracks working hours)
 - Email analytics (tracks email activity)
 - Workpuls – snapshot of what employees are doing during working hours
 - Facial recognition tools – log employee absence from screen
 - Sapience – monitors employees' activity and cautions them in daily updates if they are not being sufficiently active
 - Sneek – a wall of faces – photos of employees taken through laptop camera every few minutes

Summary

- Hybrid working seems to be here to stay – but equally the office is not dead and most employees do not want complete remote working
- If employers do not offer flexibility, they may struggle in the fight for talent
- In most roles, hybrid working should be possible, effective and manageable – if perhaps requiring a little more planning and effort from the line manager
- The biggest challenge might be continuing to foster a connection with all staff and maintain a cohesive culture
- You may have to accept you won't please everyone...





Questions?

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