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The Great Resignation...
giving rise to
a new era of
working and
recruiting



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Over the past 12 months, **record numbers of people have reportedly left their jobs**, in phenomenon experts are coining “The Great Resignation”¹. In Europe, a study by SD Worx suggests **resignation rates are highest in Germany at six percent**, followed by the UK at almost five percent, and the Netherlands and France close to three percent². **Another study by Microsoft revealed 41 percent of employees worldwide are considering leaving their jobs** – many seeking jobs with remote working models.³ With this global phenomenon continuing into 2022, **tech organisations need to adapt** to ensure they not only **retain their employees, but are attractive to new hires**, remaining current in the face of changing employee expectations and workspace setups. **We spoke to Angela Hughes, EMEA HR and People Leadership Director at Insight about the current trend.**

The past two years have seen a trend for mass resignations and reshuffles as people are leaving and changing jobs globally. In your opinion, what are the causes and catalysts for the Great Resignation/Reshuffle phenomenon?

The recent COVID-19 pandemic, associated lockdowns and restrictions of movement have undoubtedly given people time to reflect on their life, situation, hopes and ambitions. In many cases there has been a shift in what people value in family life and work life, reassessing their priorities and understanding what works well for their personal situation. Based on this, individuals have made the decision to downsize, upskill and laterally move jobs - causing a wave of resignations and some disruption in the workplace.

However, some of the movements of jobseekers and changers we are seeing as part of the Great Resignation is also down to pent up activity – moves that were postponed or delayed through circumstance or choice. For many their job was a constant in a time of change, so individuals hung onto their jobs when in normal, less extreme times, they may have made a move sooner. Coming out of the heavy lockdown periods from 2020/2021, many are now actioning this move as we return to a new normal.

Coming out of a time of great change, how do you feel workplace expectations are shifting? And who is driving this?

From an employee standpoint, there is definitely an increase in the expectations for hybrid working, as well as expectations of flexibility within the working day itself. Remote working during the pandemic has shown individuals that family life and personal commitments can symbiotically work with your job, to the point that some are even more productive outside the traditional “normal working hours”. As a result, employees are requesting and seeking a workplace setup that meets their needs.

While employees are influencing workplace expectations, organisations are and need to recognise that remote working, hybrid working, and flexible hours does not equate to less work being done, or employees being less productive. In many cases, the opposite is true. While hybrid working may have seemed unimaginable for some organisations a few years back, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced them to trial and implement a more flexible working model.

With globalisation and the opportunities for digital nomads⁴ to work in different geographies and time zones, companies need to be even more open about the working expectations of employees, and the new preferred ways of working. We are entering a new workplace era - and organisations and recruiters need to be ready for it. >>

1. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-10/quit-your-job-how-to-resign-after-covid-pandemic> | 2. ad footnote | 3. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index> | 4. “digital nomads” movement - people across the globe looking for remote working opportunities



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If the future working model is (or has) changed, and many employees are re-evaluating their priorities and job itself, what can organisations do to retain their workers in the face of The Great Resignation?

I believe investment in the development of your employees is key to ensuring staff are content where they are. This is also backed by statistics. A study by education services company Lorman suggests that “70 percent of employees would be somewhat likely to leave their job to work for an organisation known for investing in employee development and training”⁵. So, in order to keep your staff, companies will need to invest not just in training and development, but also in wellbeing programmes for them. At Insight, we take the role of a positive workplace culture very seriously, making our employees the number one priority and always looking for ways to offer more room for development and wellbeing services. We are confident we’re onto a winning formula, which was proven with a Great Places to Work “Best Workplaces in Europe 2021” award recently.

Another important factor in retaining employees is listening to your workforce and being flexible enough to accommodate changes. This is made much easier when you have platforms set up in your organisation to encourage conversations. A positive working culture within your company is also vital to success. At Insight, I believe this is one of our winning formulas since our employees are a reflection of the culture and truly live our company values of Hunger, Heart, and Harmony. For the employee, this makes you more invested in the organisation itself, actively partaking in its success.

How do HR teams and recruitment processes need to adapt to find and hire new talent – especially in the technology space where skill shortages are becoming more and more apparent?

In the tech sector especially, there needs to be a shift in recruitment towards more creative and open hiring processes. While the Great Resignation trend has made recruitment of new talent more competitive than ever, the Tech Skills Gap trend suggests there are less employees with the necessary tech skills available to hire.

If companies invest in personal development more, this can result in career progression for existing employees. Recruitment can therefore focus more on entry-level and concentrate on building the skill sets in future employees. Casting a wider net helps here to ensure you create a broad search network – hiring based on attitude and potential, rather than existing skills. This, combined with various initiatives can allow university leavers, career-changers, and those not familiar with the tech industry to enter this field and build knowledge and skillsets.

One such example of a programme started at Insight is the Skills Academy. This initiative is designed to give people with no prior experience in the tech sector the opportunity to kickstart their career in tech in the new workplace era. The Skills Academy allows individuals to learn new skills and grow into a role in our organisation in a 24-month programme. There are commercial roles in sales as well as technical roles, and it is a fantastic opportunity for anyone who has a genuine interest in a career in tech. The programme is inclusive and covers Business & Commercial Acumen, People & Communication Skills, Technical Skills & Knowledge, and Function-Specific Skills. The Academy teammates will get to put their learning and skills into practice as they progress through the two years, ensuring they are confident and ready to move into their Insight job at the end of the programme duration.

Another important aspect to mention here is that through technology, hiring people that are located in other countries has become a real possibility. Known as “digital nomads”, these are employees that can work from anywhere. With ever increasing connectivity and virtual meeting platforms now the norm, there are no real geographical limitations to hiring new staff. This is particularly true for tech firms – increasing the talent pool for HR teams to recruit from.

It is certainly an exciting time to be in Human Resources. In the past years, we have seen organisations facing a lot of challenges to the old ways of working. Similarly, employees have been confronted with new workspace setups. While experts predict that the Great Resignation trend will continue in 2022, it is also putting pressure on organisations to rethink their workplace. At Insight we are seeing this as an opportunity to continue to listen to our employees, remain flexible in the face of change, and develop creative recruiting and hiring opportunities to encourage new talent. We are ready for the new workplace era – are you?

5. <https://www.lorman.com/blog/post/39-statistics-that-prove-the-value-of-employee-training>