

HR insights podcast

Series 8 | Episode 1

PSA: This transcript has been written with assistance from AI.

UK HR trends 2025

[00:17.6]

Welcome to HR Insights, the podcast topical discussions with and for our global HR community. Hi everyone. Welcome back to HR Insights. This is a brand new season for us and we're really excited to be back in the studio and back recording again.

[00:34.0]

We've actually been away for a little while. You, you might well notice followers of the show will notice that we spent a few months now and I thought it would be good for just, just to explain a little bit about what we've been doing and why we've been so quiet, in the background. A lot of hard work has been, been going on.

[00:50.7]

Behind the scenes. We've been elevating the Elliott Scott HR platform and we really excited to be kicking off our new financial year with a new identity and extending this to our, HR Insights podcast as well. So there's a few things that we're going to change.

[01:06.1]

The main one for the podcast is that it will be twice monthly. So, it's, it's a change that we felt was needed. Mainly because we have so many wonderful guests. I don't think a lot of you get to hear all of them all of the time.

[01:21.4]

So the idea is to focus on better quality, allowing, you the time to really sort of download, listen and give your feedback back to us as well. Because it's really important that the product that we're giving out is the one that you really want to listen to. HR Insights is quite a big thing for me personally.

[01:40.4]

It's a real project that I'm very close to. HR people now have been part of my career for the last 22 years. So we are aiming to try and do more, be a little bit more insightful with what we offer you and be a little bit more detailed orientated in the work that we do.

[01:57.5]

And you'll hear that today. Our guest today is a lady called Celine Floyd. She works for Kapfinity and they have been a wonderful partner of ours now for a good few years. We partner with them on a white paper. It's the first one for a long time. It's really interesting.

[02:12.8]

It's around HR trends for 2025 and we talk about a number of different topics here. So we hope you enjoy the show, today and we also hope you enjoy the changes. If you do have any feedback though, on any of this, please do get in touch with me. Thanks for listening.

[02:34.6]

So a very warm welcome to Celine Floyd from Capfinity. Thank you. Hello. How are you? So excited to be here in this snazzy studio. Delighted, thank you. It's a very cool studio and, Celine is someone I seem to be spending a bit of time with. We were working yesterday. One week. I'll miss you next week.

[02:51.6]

I know, I know. I will email you. Don't worry about that. For our audience, do you want to give a little intro into yourself at catfinity? Absolutely. So, Celine Floyd, I'm the Chief Skills Officer at Catfinity. I'm an occupational psychologist by background in training, been in consultancy for a couple of decades.

[03:10.4]

Used to work with Catfinity years ago when we were much smaller and came back in 2018 to help lead our proposition and offering in the talent management space. Sit alongside the work we do in talent acquisition, having an absolute ball.

[03:27.1]

Catfinity founded in 2005, so C serendipitously, also 20 years old this year. Very nice. Any celebrations for that? We've got a few bits in the pipeline. Yeah. A few bits to celebrate. I think we need to market 20 years. I think there's definitely.

[03:42.9]

Yeah, yeah. And for our audience to say Nikki was one of the founders, has been on the show as well, so our audience might know them a little bit. Yeah, Two co founders, Nikki Garcia and Alex Lindley, still co founders, co CEOs of the company. Headquartered in the UK, but we've got offices in Australia and America.

[04:00.7]

Yeah. And we work across the entire people agenda from, pre skilling to acquisition to onboarding to development and mobility. And in my role as Chief Skills Officer, I'm in the privileged position of working with lots of incredible companies predominantly that are trying to become skills based.

[04:19.7]

So wholesale transformation, key drivers of that around mobility, talent retention and performance. Yeah. And a lot of your work is with, I suppose, CPOs, CHROs, heads of talent, heads of talent Acquisition. Yes. And also graduate recruitment.

[04:35.7]

Yeah, exactly, yeah. Work across all levels within an organisation. So it means that we get to touch lots of different teams and projects. Lots of work in early careers all the way up through to exec. But, yeah, my work personally, does get me connected with typically CPOs and CHRO organisations.

[04:55.7]

Yeah, globally, yeah. Very, very cool. And that's where I suppose the combination of the partnership has worked really well between Elliot Scott and yourselves as well. That's it. And I think, you know, the market is so volatile, as we know, there's so much happening I think what we love in our partnership is you've got such a good finger on the pulse of what's happening out there and the trends.

[05:17.2]

Our clients are, of course, consistently interested in what are we seeing, more globally, more broadly. So, yeah, we love the collaborations that we, that we do. And great to be here talking about the report that we did.

[05:32.2]

Yeah. And that, that's, that's a good sort of segue to that as well, because obviously we worked on, CPO HRD report at the start of this year. We had Roughly, what, about 70 people, I think it was, fill it out. In the end, which was, which was really good. And I suppose just starting with that, then more generally, was there anything when we, when we got the results, was anything that sort of stood out for you in terms of the results?

[05:53.9]

Yeah, I think, I mean, some of the pieces were as to be expected. I think we knew already that organisations were focusing on existing talents and existing workforces, but I think the strength of that result was quite surprising even to us. We know that the AI piece, I think we expected that to be really high in the report because, you know, anyone we talk to is talking about AI at the moment.

[06:19.5]

But what we saw was that that AI piece actually came more in the middle of the, of the areas of interest, which was interesting and we can come back. Come back to that. Yep. And the other piece, which I saw more as a confirmation of what we've been seeing over the last few years.

[06:35.9]

But again, the strength of it was quite interesting was the focus on productivity execution outcomes. More from a CEO perspective. Yeah. And I think that's a really important flag for anyone working in a people team around this need to be able to prove ROI impact and the results of what, you know, what we're doing.

[06:59.6]

So they were the bits that really stood out for me. I know that you were interested in the piece around change more broad. And that was really strong, wasn't it, the change piece? The change piece was. So I'll sort of run through just a couple of the. The, I suppose, initial findings almost because, we asked a little bit about the trends in HR for 2025 and essentially in this order, from sort of the top or most urgent down to, I suppose, the fourth most urgent.

[07:26.3]

We had organisational design and development, the top we have business partnering second, leadership development third and HR operations as fourth. Any surprise in that for you? No, I don't think so. I mean, I think the fact that HR ops is at the Bottom.

[07:43.1]

I think there's lots of organisations and clients. You say bottom. I should say that's the bottom of the top rung because we had the. Yeah, the least. Yeah, the least important was. Was we'll come on to actually. But yeah, that was, it was interesting. Yeah, I think there's, I think there's such a strong need for, you know, transformation has been around for many years.

[08:03.7]

But I think that's what so many organisations are aspiring to at the moment. And so, you know, I think that's requ. Very bold and brave HR team that are willing to take risks and do things that feel quite different and moving away from the kind of day to day focus on the operations.

[08:24.3]

I think that ordering is probably to be expected. Yeah, I, I wouldn't disagree with you on, on any of that actually. And I suppose you mentioned it a little bit earlier on, but when we asked for a sort of, I suppose a deeper dive into those results, the next sort of skills and trends that we are asked in terms of, I suppose looking out for, for 2025 was change management was the top.

[08:45.8]

Yes. Organisational design was next and culture, vision and values for The CHRO or CPOs. Yeah. And the culture piece came up at the event that you and I were at yesterday and you know, I think, I think, I think that is really important, you know, really being able to pin down what is the culture of your organisation.

[09:07.3]

What does the culture of your organisation need to be in a year's time, in two years time? And actually giving that some thought makes a big, you know, makes a big difference. Yeah. The culture one, I think is, is so interesting because I think a lot of organisations over the last sort of 6 to 12 months are almost having to realign that.

[09:30.6]

And a lot of that is the business sentiment that's going on in the market. I don't know if you found this, but we found a lot of companies have downsized over the last 12 to 18 months. Yes, yes. And that means your outlook and your. The energy and the culture of the firm does change.

[09:48.0]

We spoke to a lot of firms that were on this like huge growth agenda. There was clearly loads of positive sentiment. So the culture and everything they said about it was positivity. And even referencing yesterday we were talking about hiring or transparency and I think people now value the fact that clients are much more open and honest around the fact that we might not be growing as aggressively as we thought we were.

[10:11.1]

Yeah, I think the dichotomy and the challenge opportunity for people, teams is in that environment where you have that downsized workforce and things are feeling pretty tough. Ironically, that's when you want to be dialling up the most, the kind of positive spirit within your existing employees.

[10:33.1]

And you know, a lot of organisations at the moment are focusing on things like career activism, owning your career, career mobility, career pathways, being able to move around. And that works best when it comes from a place of employees feeling really invested and that the world is their oyster within that organisation.

[10:52.4]

But in a tough market, when you have been downsizing. Right. Sizing, that's tough. That's really tough. And I see that in a lot of my clients at the moment. How to balance that. Yeah, honest. But, but to engender positivity in people.

[11:10.0]

Yeah, but I do, I do think organisations have again, the ones I've spoken to and the ones we've seen again have then said, right, leadership development becomes really important for the people that we've got and we're going to focus on our, almost like our core employees. And that does seem to be something that I think everybody's acknowledged.

[11:28.0]

Yes. Yeah. And I think we talk a lot, and I talk a lot around, being an ambassador of talent and a facilitator of talent. And when you have right sized your organisation, the key thing for sustainability and performance is to have people in the right roles at the right time.

[11:47.9]

And that depends on leaders and managers being able to release talent to other parts of the organisation. So that leadership layer and the manager level layer is so critical at the moment for actually enabling that whole scale transformation within the organisation.

[12:06.8]

I mean, I had years when no one was talking about leadership development or management development and now it's what everyone is talking about because the success of the company lives or dies on the mentality and the, you know, the approach that those senior people taking.

[12:24.0]

So it's really interesting. It is what I like there. What you said as well is around, I suppose, the state of the organisation, the people. And I spoke to a CEO not that long back who kept referencing sporting analogies around the teams and the company and how rather not everybody needs to be with the organisation 20 years.

[12:44.9]

And he was really clear around, there are times where we need that emergency signing. I mean, someone coming in, we're going to parachute them in for a year or two. And he said, in business, not enough people think like that. Yeah, too many people think about the attrition and the worry about that and keeping everyone forever.

[13:02.5]

And he's like, sometimes I don't need that. All I need is someone for a year or two coming, do the job and then I need them to move on. I think it's a really, Yeah, it's a fascinating, approach to building out your company's culture. Netflix are notorious in, in that that's the culture they've created and clearly they'.

[13:21.6]

Lots of successes that have come from that. But I think that speaks to a much longer term historical heritage piece around the relationship between an organisation and an employee and moving that away from this is a family. We will never let you down.

[13:37.9]

You will never leave to exactly that analogy of this is a sports team and you'll come join us. We expect your highest performance but we know that you probably can't maintain that for the rest of your career. And so when you leave, we will celebrate the tenure that you've had here and then we will get new talent in.

[13:58.5]

Yeah. And so, you know, I think it's an exciting flag, for how organisations could function. But like everything, it won't suit every industry and it won't suit every organisation. Agreed. Agreed. But the sport knowledge is a good one because you still get people that start at the age of 16 with a football team and leave at the age of 36.

[14:16.4]

Like it's. You can maintain it. Exactly. You do, you do get both ends of that. But it's interesting that culture came after sort of organisational design and we've talked about that and organisation. Organisational design matched in terms of CPOs saying that that was going to be important. As well as CEOs.

[14:31.8]

Yeah. Clearly the structure of the organisation now is at the forefront. Yeah. And I think the skill space movement, whilst it's been around for many years, obviously it's hugely prevalent at the moment. It's really built up momentum. I think that ties really closely into organisational design and the departure from thinking about roles as being line and this is the role to more this sense of clusters of skills and clusters of responsibilities.

[14:58.1]

And this is the thing with the skills based movement is it touches pretty much every part of the organisation and the people agenda and the organisations that we're seeing do really good work in becoming skills based, are spending the right time and giving the right amount of thought to organisational design and how that has to change.

[15:18.3]

And I think the key tip is not to run before you can walk with that. You know, taking the time to get that right and thinking through all the permutations of how that's going to work is really, you know, important. Yeah. To become skills Based without the org design piece, it's probably not going to work that well.

[15:38.0]

So that I think that's why it's been scored as. As high. Yeah, well, let's continue down that. I want to come back to sort of the change management piece afterwards but let's continue on the skills piece because I find a lot of the time the skills piece is being referenced a lot by HR people but I find a lot of business people still don't potentially understand what it actually is.

[15:58.7]

Do you want to just explain exactly what it means? So the skills based approach and movement really I think at its heart is about looking at people beyond the current role that they're in, the experiences and qualifications that they have and for an internal employee and a candidate coming in, the reputation that they have.

[16:22.6]

So this sense of lifting the lid, like who really is Stuart? He's had this career, he's in this role, but what else could he do? What are the skills that he has that haven't been realised yet? How can we find out about them and how can we leverage them within our organisation so that he can help you can help us plug the skills gap that we have?

[16:44.8]

So that sense of looking beyond the COVID of the book for me I think is really what is at the heart of the skills based movement. Now that's lovely as a theory but it's, it can be incredibly hard to execute and operationalize.

[17:04.2]

And so I empathise with business leaders, you know, grappling with what does this mean and the impact of it isn't quick. Right. Like you say we were to move you into a different industry or role, you'd need about six months to a year to see that that move had been a good thing for you and the company.

[17:22.8]

So there's a slight delay. And I think there's an expectation that becoming skills based you can do that in a year. I think we're looking at more 5, 6, 7, 10 year trajectory for actually fully realising the, the concept of being skills based.

[17:39.8]

And what this is a really basic question, but what is the difference between skills then and competency? Well, it's a brilliant question and I think there are lots of synonyms for the word skills At Catfinitly. The way we think about skills is anything that somebody needs to be or to have in order to flourish at work and we think about cognitive skills, behavioural skills and technical skills and then you have motivations and preferences.

[18:09.7]

So something like a competency is you could use that interchangeably for like a technical skill or a Behavioural skill, capability would be another one. You know, I think there's lots of words flying around. What's nice about skills is it can be an umbrella term for all of those different facets within somebody.

[18:29.2]

And I think that cognitive behavioural technical taxonomy is really key and really interesting. As soon as you start talking to somebody about skills they automatically think technical skills. How well can you use this piece of software etc?

[18:45.1]

And we're working with lots of organisations where we're helping them define the skill frameworks that they need and they're saying oh Catfinity, this is great work. We're anticipating that about 80% of the skills that you uncover that we need in five years time are going to be technical.

[19:00.6]

And we're actually finding the opposite, that it's the behavioural skills that will set that organisation best up for success. Because with the rise of AI and technology the technical skills are changing all the time. So it's about changing companies mindsets towards behavioural skills, power skills, uniquely human skills, all phrases that you'll hear being bandied about at the moment.

[19:25.7]

But what is it that about a human that makes them really special and able to flourish in a world of AI and technology? And that, that makes, that makes a lot of sense. So I'll we'll then move on to the change management keys because obviously this was I suppose the, the HR skill that everyone sort of put as top change management.

[19:42.9]

And I laughed yesterday, I think I quoted to the, and I said something on the lines of it's like a doom loop of change management that HR seemed to be in this like. Yeah, this perpetual cycle of change, whether it's an HR system, whether it's something new that you're implementing.

[20:00.7]

I feel like HR is continually on this sort of loop. Is that, is that what you hear as well? Yes, absolutely. I think there is relentless change afoot and I think what's really hard about the change and the call for change is we have a HR community where in the main people are worried about their jobs, about the industry.

[20:26.7]

And I think that's creating a tension in the HR community at the moment. And the colleagues and clients that I'm seeing do the most impactful work are those who are able to suspend that fear and that fear of change and still take risks, engage with, you know, bold initiatives and new ideas and kind of have that confidence and self belief that that is the right thing to do.

[20:53.0]

But I appreciate that it's incredibly tough at the moment when you know, again years ago when we'd be doing skills frameworks, if we were doing one for, for you guys, for Elliot Scott, I would be able to ask you, what skills do you think you need, Stuart, in five years time, you'd probably be able to give me a pretty decent answer.

[21:10.8]

Yeah, it's impossible now to answer that question, you know, and the frameworks we're building have a longevity of like six months or a year and then they're changing again. Right. So I think this doom loop, this relentless change, it almost doesn't do justice to the amount of volatility there is.

[21:28.6]

Like it's change on steroids at the moment. It feels like it's changing so quickly. Yeah, agree. So it's tough, really tough, yeah, because it feels like there's no sort of definitive end or line in the sand where everyone can sort of breathe and relax for a couple of weeks before they go again.

[21:45.0]

Exactly, exactly. You know, I think there's lots in the report, I know that you reference lots of contributing factors to that and I think it's multifaceted, isn't it, in terms of what's contributing? Absolutely, it is. And then I suppose that leads us nicely on to, we.

[22:00.1]

You touched on it a little bit earlier on around AI. Yes. And obviously in the reports we, we identified that everyone recognises it, everyone understands that it's coming and we all want to know a bit more, but no one really had it down as one of their top things that they were going to do this year.

[22:17.7]

So again, is, are we preparing ourselves? Are people maybe a bit scared of what AI could bring? Is that why it's not right there? I think we're. What I see is that everyone is still in play or experimentation mode with AI, and I think it's changing quickly.

[22:36.3]

I think there were some stats shared at the event yesterday that I think it's like 67 of professionals within organisations are now using AI. Probably in a couple of months that will go up again. So I think you use it a lot. I do personally, yeah.

[22:51.6]

Not tonnes. I mean, my husband's really into AI, he's using it for coding and all sorts. So I get most of my education about AI from him. At catfinity, we have an AI strategy. We're doing cool things in, the development space and, you know, supporting and automating on the recruitment side of our business.

[23:10.4]

And I do use it for bits and pieces. I think even I. This scope for me to use it, you know, more. And I think that's where a lot of people are, you know, they're playing with it, they're seeing where it can add value. And so I don't think we're at the point yet where there's mandated whole scale rollout of AI within organisations.

[23:29.1]

And even at the event yesterday at the roundtable, people are using it in different ways, but I think everyone's still working out how to use it for the best, and what that needs to look like. And I think people probably are a bit scared. And I think in the acquisition space, this every week there's new legislation coming out globally around how you can use that technology, you know, in terms of making decisions about people.

[23:54.3]

So there's still this sense of waiting to see what happens. Yeah. I think a lot of people obviously use the phrase, like, first mover advantage and I think everyone's sort of like pausing on that a touch because everyone's like, like, is it an advantage to go first? I've been reading a few books on it and, it's the bit that seems to come through is the.

[24:14.6]

I suppose it is the unknown and it's also what AI could do, the dangers of it. So I think from an HR perspective, a lot of people raise gdpr. Yes. A lot of people raise the. I suppose the, the openness of information that suddenly can. Can be out there.

[24:30.7]

So there's definitely still that about fear. But then when I go to a conference, it seems to be all that everyone talks about. I know. And I think. I think that's symptomatic of the fact that everyone's still trying to work it out. Right. When you go to these events, people often are using them as a chance to hear what everyone else is doing and they're trying to work it out.

[24:51.0]

So I think that's. I think that's a good sign of that. I think, you know, AI, the reality is it's here, it's here to stay. It is moving an absolute rate of knots. You know, every day my husband's showing me something new that it can do.

[25:07.8]

Cool stuff to do with interior design. Funny photos that he's making with the children, like, super lovely cool stuff. But I think, you know, until we make that mainstream and that awareness mainstream and we work out how it will really help people, I think it's all still up for debate.

[25:25.4]

Weight enough for grabs. Yeah, agreed. And that came through in the report, I think a little bit in terms, again, about where it's aligned or where people are sort of positioning over this year. It'll be really interesting, I think to see this time next year where it sits. Agreed. Do you think it will go up or down?

[25:41.2]

I think it will go up and I think that there will be better products out there too. So one of the things again, I, referenced this yesterday. We've seen, we tried a few products on the recruitment side of things. I wouldn't say there's anything that's really good.

[25:58.2]

Visually looks good. When someone shows you like a PowerPoint and you're like, oh wow, that's amazing. And then when you test it. So it doesn't quite work how it should or it's not quite the refined product. Yes. And I think comes back to your point, it needs people now to really stress test it to see if it's going to work.

[26:15.9]

So I think it will definitely go up this time next year. I think it might take a little bit longer for people, but I'm with you. I. I'm using it more and more. Yeah. And even just from, from that side of things just to do research, I find it really powerful now.

[26:32.1]

Yeah, that's it. And I think where the focus will turn again at catfinity we're doing lots of work at the moment into what are the skills that make someone better able than others to actually leverage and engage with AI. And that came up quite a lot again in the roundtables yesterday.

[26:49.8]

And I think that's where in the acquisition space and in terms of internal talent management, it feels like that's where it's sensible to invest time and thinking because you can't keep track of the technology. So are we not better off thinking how can we identify candidates coming in and existing talent who have the right, critical reasoning, the right judgement, the right levels of conscientiousness.

[27:18.1]

To take for example, the research that you're referencing that it helped you with to know what to prompt the tech with to come out with the right content, then to review the content. Yeah. With enough care and diligence and interest that you arrive at the right finished result.

[27:36.3]

And I think on the acquisition side that's what's really tough at the moment because, well, there's this sense that lots of people are using AI, in selection processes, but all kind of doing the same thing. And ironically companies want people that can use AI.

[27:52.3]

So how do we work out of the 600 people that have used it, who are the 50 that used it in a really cool way, like a really clever way. And let's get them in to the company because if they can use it really well. They'll probably do really cool things inside the company. What you don't want is the copy and paste this.

[28:09.9]

Yeah, agreed. But there was an interesting speaker yesterday as well, when we were referencing who then highlighted about being upfront with candidates around what you use AI for. Yes. I think he was, he was, he was sort of implying that we're all, we're all testing our candidates and saying, well, you can't use it on a process, but how open are we about telling them what we're doing with it?

[28:31.2]

Exactly. Yeah. I think openness, I think guidance documents, you know. Absolutely. And I think another theme that we've seen recently again, is a difference across industries. And we were talking about regulating organisations. Catfinitly does a lot of work in, you know, regulated sectors.

[28:48.9]

They're facing different challenges and parameters and constraints to other sectors. And so it's also about trying to work out what's right for a sector. Yeah. What's right for a global region? You know, it might be different and we know it's different in the States to what it is here, for example.

[29:06.2]

So these big, big ticket debates are super useful, but then you need to get into the granularity of what does my organisation do? Yes. Yeah. What context are we working in and how, you know, what's, what's the guidance that we need to give?

[29:21.4]

Internally. Yeah. Externally. Yeah, that, that make. That makes sense. So I, I want to move on from AI. Could sit here and talk a little bit about it. But I, I want to move us on a little bit to, to EDI. Yes. So we're obviously talking about AI.

[29:36.5]

I feel like 10 years ago we were all talking about EDI, now we're not talking about EDI at the. And interestingly, I suppose we were recording this the day after Trump announced a crazy amount of tariffs that he's executed around the world. So obviously this has changed a lot since October last year.

[29:54.1]

Yes. And the findings were, I suppose that there was a total shift, I suppose, in terms of how companies are looking at edi. Even if you're a UK based and UK focused company, it feels like it's shifted down a couple of gears.

[30:13.7]

And we reference a couple of things in the report around economic pressures and budget constraints being one of them. Yes. Political climate, obviously that we're referencing regulatory shifts in compliance, focus shifting, just broader company priorities and then a little bit of fatigue and perceived lack of impact in terms of the initiatives that people have had.

[30:35.1]

Did any of this surprise you? I don't think so. I think Trump has Trump and everything that he's done, you know, in office has probably been a catalyst for what was already an established trend in this area, you know, heading in a certain direction already.

[30:56.1]

I think, you know, it's tough, it's complex for anyone that works at catfinitly, it's a tough read in terms of, you know, we were founded on this notion of trying to better level the playing field for, especially at that time, younger people trying to get into organisations.

[31:16.6]

So, you know, part of the Catfinity DNA is around DNI and social mobility and so, and we care deeply about that. But I think it's like any, any initiative within an organisation, it has to be clearly linked to commercial benefits and it needs to work pragmatically.

[31:38.1]

And I think that's the crisis that we're in at the moment, is I don't think anyone doesn't believe in the narrative of edni, but it's when you're faced with all of these multiple challenges, what are we prioritising and what are we investing in? And so I think it's a real call to action of this, takes us back to the top of this conversation around the need to prove the impact of what we're doing from a people perspective.

[32:02.6]

And I think there's more work to be done there. I think there's a lot more work. Like, it's interesting, the last sort of read the last line of the report, actually, in terms of this, this topic, we said the general trend suggests that EDI is no longer the strategic priority. It was a few years ago, with many organisations taking a more minimalistic or reactive approach rather than driving forward ambitious change.

[32:25.4]

I think ironic. My hope, my optimistic hope, my dream is that we will achieve more against the EDNI agenda, through another rapper or another kind of COVID For example, the skills movement.

[32:42.9]

If we can nail that in our industry, you know, in the working world over the next decade, that in itself, I dream, will help with that overall agenda because as I said, at its core, it's about lifting the lid on people beyond assumptions and biases and what you make of them.

[33:03.5]

So. But the key will be operationalizing that. And I think that's been the thing with the, you know, the EDNI agenda generally. How do you operationalize it and how do you prove return? So I hope that no one is losing the core of the messaging and the, you know, what that whole piece is about, but we might just be able to flush it out in another way.

[33:28.1]

Yep, I think that's that's a good hope, shall we say? Let me have my optimism. No, I think, I think, I think it's absolutely spot on. I think that is generally the broader hope. I think you're absolutely right. I think everyone believes in what it stands for. I think it's just now a case of companies are just reprioritizing.

[33:46.1]

I don't think it's helped by the, the political climate is one thing, but I also think the economic climate that we've been in the last couple of years, it's, it does feel like companies go back to the CEO. CEOs had productivity third on their sort of ranking. They, they want to make sure that they are profitable.

[34:02.9]

They want to make sure that they are, I suppose, making the most of the people that they've got there. And as I said, I think it's a reprioritization rather than people not believing in the. Yeah. Have you seen an impact in the States, especially in terms of the roles that are available and what people are putting in their resumes, etc?

[34:24.1]

Yeah, I definitely, people. I definitely think people are amending their, their CVs to sort of suit the role that they're going for a little bit more. I would also say that to be fair, we probably hadn't seen many EDNI roles. Okay. In the last 12 to 18 months.

[34:39.2]

Even so prior to, I suppose Trump coming in, there was, it felt like it was still an area that was probably not. The voice wasn't as big as what it was previously. And I think that Trump coming in has really sort of quietened that noise down even further.

[34:56.4]

Yeah. So we, we definitely have seen that. We've seen companies obviously move pivot, close down their EDNI functions completely. Especially in the U.S. but you're right, I don't think people not believe in it. I think it's just a case of, as I said, it's reprioritization.

[35:13.5]

Yeah, yeah, that makes sense. Yeah. In terms of. We asked around HR leadership skills as well as part of the survey and this obviously comes back to what we're talking about in terms of skills based, I suppose assessment. Yes. The top ranked HR leadership skills were strategic awareness, change agent, resolver.

[35:35.2]

Any surprise in any of that? Well, I think hallelujah. That's so cool. And I, you know, I think I've been thinking for many years and feeling that, you know, HR and the people team, it's wrapped up into this whole broader piece around having a proper seat at the table and being seen for our commercial social impact and strategic impact and moving us away from a transactional function to a transformational function.

[36:05.9]

So if I could have picked the top three myself, they would have been, you know, they would have been there. I think what we need to do now as a people profession is actually realise those skills and make them happen. And again, it goes back to this, theme at the moment of HR needing to be bold and be brave and be thinking ahead, where there's all the temptation to just get stuff done operationally.

[36:33.7]

So I think it's a lovely kind of call to action for that side of our profession. Yeah, I think it's good to see that, like that strategic awareness, definitely. They're things that I think HR leaders should be definitely utilising a lot more. Interestingly, the lowest ranked skills were things like pride, humility, passion, esteem builder.

[36:53.5]

Naturally, probably to see them on that side of the spectrum, I guess. Yeah, I think, I think again, I think it's a sign of HR and the people function moving on from this very kind of supportive, reactive service function.

[37:10.5]

Yep. To actually being a trailblazer for the change and, you know, needing to make the tough decisions and contribute to the tough commercial decisions that are happening more broadly. So, yeah, I think, I think they're to be expected.

[37:29.5]

I think we don't want to lose those completely because, you know, we're meant to be a human function where we're waving the flag for the people that work in our companies. We don't want them to do. But I think dialling up the strategic, vision, the commerciality as well.

[37:46.1]

I'd have loved for that to be in some of the top skills. Yeah, important, I, I agree. I do think it's a sign of the times a little bit. So it's, it's people being, as I said, more strategic looking at the company, I suppose more from a business lens rather than a people lens.

[38:03.7]

And I suppose having those skills as sort of the lower ranked ones means hopefully HRs been seen less of a cheerleading squad, as it were. That's it, that's it. But, but I still think there's a role there. To your point, we don't want to lose that because I think you're very similar to me.

[38:19.1]

There's the positivity and energy that sort of emanates through and if you don't have that, I'm not too sure what you have sometimes and what the differentiator is between, you know, HR and the people practise and other practises within the organisation. Yeah, I think, I think what's important for people practitioners at the moment and, and we talk about this a lot at Catfinitly is thinking like spinning three plates at the same time.

[38:46.8]

So the individual employee back to the career activism piece, helping them with their self insights, understanding the skills they have, the manager and leader population as the second plate as being your vehicle for cultural change and then the organisation overall and the data that the organisation needs, the strategy that you're trying to actualise the business, the P and L.

[39:10.3]

And I think if you look back over the last couple of decades as a people function, we've lent too much into one or the other. And I think the key, the secret to a really highly contributing and impactful people team is to think about all three of those all at the same time for acquisition and management.

[39:30.3]

Yeah, that makes sense. And I would say the big thing, there's a lot of people listening that will be senior leaders themselves anyway. But I think people that are aspiring to that, these are the things I would also take away like these three skills are really important if you want to become a cpo, if you want to become a senior hrd.

[39:47.5]

And resolve is really interesting actually we haven't really touched on that one and in our taxonomy that's around or as you would imagine resolving problems, resolving situations. And it's interesting that that's up there in the top three because I think we're all resolving all of the time now.

[40:06.9]

And back to this aspiring leader piece. I think if that's your ambition, taking ownership for resolving, you know, taking accountability for that and you being the one to push that through sets you in really good stead in terms of your longer term career.

[40:26.1]

And part. And it goes back to you know, drive and being and motivation and growth and all of that good, really good stuff that you know, is in indicators of leadership potential. Yeah, okay. It's really interesting. And then I suppose sort of wrapping this all up in, in terms of like we, we asked.

[40:42.7]

The final question we asked was what is HR excited about in 2025? And the dominant theme on that was change. Yes. So ironically, ironically after we've just said it's a doom leap and everyone, everyone's in perpetual change. Everyone's like they're excited about change. But let me, I'll highlight some of the responses then.

[40:58.3]

Some of it was like around. They're excited about continuous evolution. Some of the phrases, things like driving, impactful transformation, making change happen. They were obviously exc. Strategic influence was another one. And then I saw large scale organisational change.

[41:13.5]

So it does seem that hr, are excited about things changing. As I said, I go back earlier on, it felt like it was always changing, but it feels like this might be really genuinely meaningful change, meaningful change.

[41:30.0]

Yeah. And I think what I'm already seeing, at different, different this year to last year is that excitement around change actually being translated into projects and work. Yep. So I felt like 2024 was a year of great conversation and great musing and, you know, sponging up information.

[41:53.0]

And what we're seeing is some fab organisations now taking the plunge and doing things, to actually instigate that change. And I think long may that continue because I think that's how we learn, that's how we see what's working, what's not working. So I love that, you know, of everyone that we surveyed, people feel excited about the change.

[42:14.0]

My, plea would be to do something with that and to try things, to fail fast, to play and to, you know, so that we can all learn more broadly as an entire industry around what, what's, what's working and what isn't.

[42:30.4]

Yeah. And I think, I think that hopefully will, will happen. But I think it's really interesting that there's. We summarised it a little bit at the very end in the terms of the conclusion. There's definitely an evolution this, this year around organisational. Right. Sizing and that feels like a little bit of a theme of.

[42:48.5]

It's the reality of the world we live in right now. Rewind two years ago and it did feel like the theme was much more about, I suppose, employee upskilling. Yes. It felt like there was a sort of a very different theme. Yes. But right now we're being very realistic with what the world is looking like and we understand that organisational.

[43:08.9]

Right. Sizing is absolutely key right this minute. Yes. Yeah, I think it's, you know, it's back to this very core notion of getting the right people in the right roles at the right time. And I think there's a lot around HR and the people agenda. If you, you still it down, that's what it comes back to.

[43:25.7]

And that's any organisation that is employing people, that's what we're striving for the whole time. Right people in the right roles at the right time. And that's not easy. It's not. But it's really important that everyone understands that hr being part of that, is now really a central part of strategic change and that's absolutely so important for businesses.

[43:48.3]

Yeah. I think. Think we're at a really fascinating precipice. You know, I think. I think back to when I went to university to study psychology. I always thought I'd do French and business. My dad's French and that's what I was going to do. And I did psychology as an A level because I thought it would be fun.

[44:05.0]

Clearly fell in love with it, went to university. I remember one of my lecturers saying, like, welcome to your cause. You're going to be studying the most complex thing on our entire planet, which is a human being and how they think and how they behave. And that's always stuck with me, that I'm not in an easy job understanding the most complex thing.

[44:25.9]

And I think that's what we're all up against in organisations. You know, we're trying to make sense of these super complex things in our organisations, which is our workforce and our people. And we need to respect how complicated people are, but also how much growth everyone has within them.

[44:44.6]

And the amount of potential that everyone has is limitless. And I think if we can unlock that, if we can work out what skills we need, how we measure that potential and unleash that potential, that's where the working world could look really different.

[45:01.4]

But I think respecting the complexity at play helps, but not being afraid of it, but understanding that humans are tricky. Yeah, tricky. And on that note, I think it's a really lovely way to sort of sign off because I think that that's, that's absolutely spot on.

[45:17.4]

I think humans are difficult. It's one of the things that I've always said in recruitment, like, you're, you're not dealing with a share certificate that you can pass across the desk. You're literally dealing with someone that can change its mind. There's emotion that goes into everything. Something can happen at home that changes something completely from how they look at it.

[45:37.1]

And, and the more we understand that, the better it is and the more forgiving we are on ourselves as well. Like, it's. HR's a hard place to be when you're dealing with. With people that, that can literally change their mind at a whim. Exactly, exactly. And. And this is it. We've got the volatility externally and then we've got the volatility of human beings in an organisation.

[45:55.7]

So no wonder it's all a bit crazy and scary. But as we've said, there are some amazing people out there doing brilliant work. Yeah. That is making an impact on people at work and then the success of the organisation in.

[46:10.9]

And that's what we hope for. Exactly. Well, it's been lovely to have you on the show. Thank you so much for being with us. If anybody has questions for Celine, they can get in touch with us, at my email address, at se. At, elliotscohr.com. But, Celine, thank you so much. Thank you so much for having me.

[46:27.0]

What a pleasure. Thank you. Cheers.

[46:36.9]

Thank you so much for listening to the show. I hope you enjoyed the conversation with Celine. She is a wonderful guest and very insightful in terms of her views and thoughts. Also want to let you know about what's up and coming. We have the full UK HR Chen report that you can download on our website.

[46:55.9]

We also have a US Capfinity report that will be coming out soon. And if you've missed our recent webinar with Ben Redshaw, you can download his session via the website. And if you have any other feedback or any ideas for the show, please do get in touch. But thank you so much for listening.

[47:13.6]

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[47:28.9]

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