

## **How to improve employee attraction, onboarding and retention (webinar)**

Audio transcription of a Personnel Today webinar in association with Questback.

A video of the webinar and the slides are available on demand at

<http://www.personneltoday.com/hr/improve-employee-attraction-onboarding-retention-webinar/>

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Rob Moss:

Hello and welcome to this Personnel Today webinar, brought to you in association with Questback. I'm Rob Moss, editor of Personnel Today, and today we're looking at employee attraction, onboarding and retention. Three big topics in their own right of course, but today we're focusing on how an integrated approach can help HR better understand the journey that employees take through their organisations. Attracting them in the first place, keeping them happy as they ramp up their involvement and ultimately making sure that the best people stay. I'm delighted to be joined by two people with plenty to share on this topic, Questback's Nicola Matson and Luke Talbot.

Nicola joined Questback in early 2017 and is responsible for ensuring that its business value is clearly and consistently articulated. She has nearly twenty years experience in HR software and solutions, having worked previously for companies such as IBM and Kenexa.

Luke Talbot joined Questback in 2014 and is now responsible for product marketing of its enterprise products worldwide. He focuses on connecting Questback's products with the needs of the market, and he has more than fourteen years experience in software and solutions working previously for Azzurri and CoreMedia.

Before we begin, I will briefly outline the format. Nicola and Luke will present together shortly.

They'll save most questions up for the end, unless there's anything particularly pressing. You can submit your questions at any time using the chat pane on the left hand side of your screen. We expect to finish up after about 30 or 40 minutes depending on the number of questions at the end, so slightly shorter than we advertised. An on-demand version of the webinar will be available in the next day or two along with the slides, the PowerPoint slides, and the transcript.

Okay, let's kick off. Enough from me, I'll hand over to Nicola and Luke. Welcome both.

Nicola Matson:

Thank you.

Luke Talbot:

Thank you very much, Rob. Great to be here. Okay, yeah, so let's start this off. So we're going to talk today about how to improve employee attraction, onboarding and retention, so why, as Rob said a moment ago, why you need to take an integrated approach to your employee journey. We're going to do that by looking at two things. Firstly, some of today's talent recruitment productivity and retention challenges. So what is the situation out there for businesses in 2017? And then maybe show some of the benefits of listening across the employee journey, so how might you tackle some of those challenges nowadays.

To start with, just a little bit about, I guess, the war for talent. So I think we talk a lot about...we've heard a lot of talk about the war for talent. Mostly hear about it from the perspective of employers and I think it can certainly feel that way. Anyone who has been recruiting new candidates recently will certainly have felt the difficulty in finding and attracting the right people. It can often feel like it's you against your competitors to try to attract the top talent and get them working for you and staying as long as possible so you can be productive. And that's pretty much been the status now for, or how it's been perceived, this war for

talent. We've seen a lot written about it over the last couple of decades.

Nicola Matson:

Yeah. I do think though that historically we've been a little bit too employer-centric. So I started in recruitment about nineteen years ago and, back then, we were still talking about this war for talent, competing for top talent, but we took a very much an employer view of this. So assessing whether or not we felt, as an organisation, a person would be the right fit for the culture, whether they had the right skills and experience. But that's really only one side of the picture, and I don't think we can afford to be as complacent in our competition for the talent now because we're competing in an ever decreasing talent pool.

We actually now have a talent shortage. So we need to understand how those top talents are thinking and feeling about as an organisation, not just how we're feeling about them as a potential candidate or employee.

Luke Talbot:

Yeah. It's very interesting. So what we're basically saying is, this leads us to this other statement that you may have heard a lot, which is the war for talent is over. The talent has won and whether or not that's an oversimplification, I think it comes from the fact that for new employees entering the market, and even existing employees now starting to move around a bit more, actually what we see is that experiences are very, very important. A lot of employees are building up a portfolio of experiences and skills. They don't believe in a job for life anymore or even if they'd like to, that's no longer the present situation. So that job for life no longer exists.

So actually what we're starting to see emerge is that it's more about meaningful work and a portfolio of experiences that's also maybe tied into some other concepts, such as the gig economy and people taking on many jobs actually outside of

just a single job. So they might actually, in the evenings, do something else which also earns money which, for them, is equally important as the nine-to-five that they do. So tackling that, the challenge is going to be quite important for companies.

Nicola Matson:

Yeah, and I think we can see that manifest itself in the mobility of employees these days. So people don't, as you say, stay in a job for life or even if they stay within one organisation, often they're moving between roles to make sure they continue to grow that breadth of skills and experience. But also what we're starting to see is entire job families actually disappear. So with the advent of AI and bots, particularly at the moment in industries like manufacturing and transport, but I think we'll see the impact of that in lots of different organisations.

Whole job families are disappearing and also lots of new jobs are starting to appear. So I remember a few years ago, job titles like digital marketing manager seemed quite cutting-edge and new. That's now very commonplace. I've actually spoken to a number of organisations over the last twelve to eighteen months that have started to have roles like people analytics within HR. So new jobs appearing, new skills required to fill those vacancies.

Luke Talbot:

Yeah. So it's interesting. We see there's lots of people moving around, more back-filling. I guess now as people get more experience and they get more used to moving around, actually you can't rely on people being there forever as you used to be able to. So it does paint a little bit of a picture of the employees being a lot more in control, of it being more of a buyers' market.

Nicola Matson:

Yeah, and I think actually just going back to that low barriers to switching, if you think about how people find jobs now, again, that's changed dramatically over the last five, ten years. Gone are

the days, show my age now, of going through a newspaper and highlighting jobs that you're looking for. Everybody knows the impact that social media has had on making jobs visible to us, but also just the way that we network with people.

People now change their status on LinkedIn to say they're available and people approach them directly, rather than the other way around. I've actually got a good friend at the moment who approached an organisation directly, because he saw that they were starting to move into the EMAA market, to see if they potentially had a vacancy. He's now in a recruitment cycle for a job that's never been advertised anywhere. So it is becoming much easier for us to find out about new opportunities and, therefore, to move between organisations.

Luke Talbot:

Yeah. I suppose you said you used to look in a newspaper. News what? Anyway, moving on. That's enough of me pretending I'm a millennial. Right, okay so it's probably a good idea then to shift a little bit from the employees' view, which we can see has changed dramatically over the last decade or so, and actually move back towards the employers' point of view, so the people from whose point of view it was a war for talent.

And what you can see here is a very typical sort of just a journey, this is our first year of employment, right? So we've got recruitment, onboarding and then the exit from an organisation. So we're going to imagine that people were looking at that first year. And one of the things that we know is that good candidates drop out in the recruitment process, and a little bit about what the impact of that might be.

So you have good candidates, good people, leaving and what we know is that actually people who have a bad experience during the recruitment phase actually are likely to tell their network about

that. I think it's something like 81% of people who have a bad experience are going to tell their network. In an age of things like Glassdoor and LinkedIn etc, that's actually quite a negative impact on potentially your brand and your ability to attract people again in the future.

And what we also know is about between eighteen and 42% of candidates will stop buying if they have a bad experience. So it's not just about retail. I think, Nicola, you're about to talk about a good example which has actually been in the media recently. But let's imagine you don't work in retail and you sell massive generators to construction industry. You never know who your candidates are connected to.

So yes, they might not be in the market to buy a huge generator, so them leaving the candidate experience after a negative experience might not be too bad, but actually they are connected to other people and their network can see and get a negative impression of your company. And that might actually impact your sales channels as well.

Nicola Matson:

Absolutely. I know you talked a little bit about the retail sector, which I think is an easy one to understand the impact of this communication between candidates who have a bad experience and their network. I was reading only this morning actually about Costa Coffee, who had set up a new store in Nottingham. They had eight vacancies for that new shop. They had 1700 applicants.

Now, they may very well have dealt with all of those applicants in a perfect way. But if they're like most organisations, we've seen statistics that say around one third of candidates say that they've had a bad recruitment experience, that's over 500 people. And if you think particularly in retail where people apply from, it's people who live in the near vicinity of that particular shop. So that's potentially

500 people that are going to Starbucks or Nero or somewhere else for their coffee.

But, as you were saying, the B2C might seem the obvious one but even B2B, we're so interconnected these days, there's such a ripple effect of all of our interactions with people, we have no idea who that might have a knock-on impact with. So not only in terms of lost products and services sold but, as you say, somebody giving bad feedback about an employer means that somebody else may choose not to apply to your organisation. And when that talent pool is getting so small, you can't afford to alienate even one person within that talent pool.

Luke Talbot:

Yeah, absolutely. So actually the experience that people have during the recruitment phase, even if they're not going to eventually work for you, there are lots of things that can actually influence a candidate's decision to drop out from the process. It might be something that's happening during the process or it might simply be them fact checking your organisation, going to Glassdoor, going to LinkedIn, finding out a little bit more, seeing what people say or just checking with their friends.

I mean the example of Costa Coffee is a brilliant one actually. It's not just an impact on people buying coffee from you, which is huge as well, but it's on people actually finding out if they want to work for you when you next decide to recruit people. So that then...now let's imagine you do hire people. Fantastic, you've got them working for your organisation.

One of the downsides as well is that if they do have a bad start, so if any of the experience during onboarding or even carrying through from recruitment is poor, then you're actually going to get less discretionary effort from your new hires if they have a bad start. So what we do know is that if you look at a typical white collar job, you'll

probably get about 50% productive after about six months. You might get 75 to 100% productive after maybe nine months to a year.

So anything that you're doing to elongate that or to get less productivity from people during that time has a direct impact on your bottom line.

Nicola Matson:

And I found this whole time to productivity and discretionary effort really interesting. And if people are listening and thinking that that 50% productive after six months seems wrong for your industry or your vertical, I don't even really think we need to get too hung up on the statistics. But it's about the impact that we can make by addressing that.

So I mean I joked with Luke when I saw the statistics, I've been in my job five months so apparently I'm still less than 50% productive at the moment. But if you can think about the cost to a business while you ramp somebody up and if you can shave off even just a couple of days, so let's say you make 500 hires a year. Maybe you have them fully productive at three months and 50% at six weeks. If you can get them fully productive, let's say, one week earlier, there's a very tangible cost implication to the organisation.

And I think that discretionary effort is key because lots of businesses will have an amazing recruitment experience. But quite often, not always, but quite often that then hands over into an onboarding experience that maybe isn't quite as hand holding and as intimate a process.

Luke Talbot:

Yeah, absolutely. And I think actually it is this onboarding phase, it's once you're actually in the company, that things can often start to unravel in many companies. And so you can have a great recruitment experience, for instance, maybe we're selling the company and selling the company's values and brand and what we do and everything perfectly well and so we're getting all of these top people joining. And then when they actually get



there, the reality when they hit the ground is somewhat different.

And I think that can have a massive impact on the kind of discretionary effort they're willing to provide, or even just their willingness to stay which we're going to get onto in a moment. But this really is...the onboarding experience really does have to match what we've sold during the recruitment phase.

Nicola Matson:

And it is amazing, I mean my background's in talent acquisition so I've spent many years working with organisations on their recruitment and onboarding processes. And there's often quite a disparity around the amount of money and investment that organisations spend to attract top talent into the organisation, versus what they do with that person once they've accepted the job. And I think particularly if you think about notice periods, so we often talked about people falling off a cliff.

So you have this intimate contact with a recruiter. They respond to you, they're calling you daily, you sign on the dotted line. You've got a three month notice period and unfortunately what sometimes happens is then there's no contact for that one to three months. And you've gone from having a highly engaged, enthusiastic individual, who will give you that discretionary asset, to maybe having someone coming in on day one and feeling quite disgruntled and less enamoured with their new employer.

Luke Talbot:

Yeah, absolutely. I think we've all seen it and we've all had conversations with people over our careers where they're sort of wandering around in the first couple of weeks, wondering what happened to the company they thought they were joining. Anyway, so unfortunately what then happens though, as people start to lack a little bit more battery power as they go through

onboarding, is the next thing is that these experiences do unfortunately make people leave.

And what we do know is that one in four new hires leave within a year. The cost of replacing them for you is about a year's salary. So actually there's another statistic which I haven't got on the slide here, but there are also some recent research from CEB which suggests that one in five hires are regretted. So actually you've made a hiring mistake on one in five new people. And I don't have the stats here to back this up, but I'd love to see some research that compares the one in four leaving within a year to the one in five hiring decisions you made which was a mistake.

Let's face it, if you go back to the previous slide and think about these employees who have great experiences and a lot of ability and low barriers to switching, it's probably the really good employees who have options. And when they see that when they joined the company isn't quite what they expected, they're probably the ones who are most likely to keep their contacts in their back pocket, go back out there, find something else and get a new job quickly.

So in the Venn diagram of your one in four leaving within a year and one in five being a mistake, I don't know. I'm willing to put a little bit of money on there not being too much of an overlap, and you're actually left with the one in five that you made a hiring decision mistake on. So actually this could have a huge impact on your organisation.

People didn't even get productive, so you recruited people. It took a lot of effort just keeping the good candidates in there and getting them to join. They joined, then they weren't even productive. So let's face it, you're not productive in the first three months of a job typically and then they left. So a huge impact on the bottom line.

Okay, so actually, Rob, I think we're going to go to a poll now.

Rob Moss:

We are indeed. Thank you Luke. Okay, so the question is on the screen. It's an easy one. What is your year one attrition rate? So if you click on the radio buttons to the left of each option, 'nought to 15%', 'sixteen to 30%', '31 to 50', 'over 50' or 'I don't know'. But if you don't know, then maybe have a guess. Okay, I can see that everyone's starting to vote now so that's very useful.

Nicola Matson:

While people are voting, sometimes this is a challenging one because I think often businesses know their overall attrition rate.

Rob Moss:

Yeah.

Nicola Matson:

They don't necessarily record the year one stats separately.

Rob Moss:

Yeah.

Luke Talbot:

Yeah, yes. I mean what would be great here is if it falls somewhere in the one in four, right?

Nicola Matson:

Mmm-hm.

Luke Talbot:

So if we get anywhere near 25%, I'm not going to pretend I can see the results as they come in, but yeah. If it falls anywhere between there, but I would suspect we're going to get quite a high number of don't knows, right?

Rob Moss:

There's about 20% don't knows. Okay, if you haven't voted yet, please do so and I'll close the poll. And there we are, hopefully everyone can see that. So in the first bracket, we've got about more than half of people saying it's somewhere between nought and 30%. So it does tally up and we've got about 30% saying they don't know. Is that what you expected?

Nicola Matson:

I think the fifteen, roughly, 15% over 30% is quite interesting. I mean for those particular organisations, obviously we don't know what

verticals those are in, but that's a huge cost to the business to lose potentially half the people that you hire within the first year of their employment.

Luke Talbot:

Exactly. And I think maybe let's not forget that some people, you're going to want to lose during that first year. Not everybody is a hiring ace. So sometimes you do make those mistakes and that's why people have probation periods during their first year, right? So some of this will be a mistake but I'd be astounded if all 50%, for those people who have over 50%, if all 50% are hiring mistakes.

Nicola Matson:

I actually heard an interesting example last week about a bank that had a graduate employment programme. And they lost 80% of their graduate intake within the first six months and didn't know why that was.

Luke Talbot:

Yeah.

Nicola Matson:

Because they weren't asking those questions.

Luke Talbot:

Interesting. Yeah, and that'll follow onto I think another poll which we'll do later on actually.

Nicola Matson:

Yeah.

Luke Talbot:

Okay, so let's move onto the rest of it. So actually so what we see, so how you're going to tackle this, what we actually see is that organisations are starting to focus on a journey-based approach so not just specific touchpoints. And there are some very strong reasons for this, which we're going to go into in a moment. But basically the world of just tracking individual touchpoints tend to be, I think, one of the most common is just the exit interview and stuff like that.

That is starting to disappear and we're starting to see this journey-based approach to asking employees what's going on and candidates as well. And I think companies do actually face challenges in delivering this full end-to-end

experience. So it seems like pretty basic stuff but actually it's not that simple.

Nicola Matson:

Yeah, I think there are quite a few reasons. There are process, people and technology barriers to being able to track that full end-to-end experience. The first one that you can see on the slide here is that often that experiential data, even if it is captured, is very much captured in silos. And often the people reason for that is that different people own those parts of the processes. So you'll meet someone who is in charge or responsible for talent acquisition. You might have someone else who is responsible for onboarding or L&D. So if those individuals aren't aligned within the organisation, that creates a challenge.

But also, at least historically, we've seen technology hurdles to overcome particularly in the larger enterprises. And up until relatively recently actually, lots of businesses took a best of breed approach to their technology. So not only were there different process owners, but they might have one solution for applicant tracking, one for onboarding, one for core HR management software. So being able to aggregate all of that data across the different systems to actually track that full journey and get the benefits of all the trend analysis has proven quite difficult in the past.

Luke Talbot:

But if we think about actually...so one of the reasons why you should start looking at it like a journey and why these challenges are worth overcoming, so it can seem like okay, this is...does it really matter that we're collecting all this data separately and different people own the different KPIs and all this sort of thing.

Well actually it really does because if you think about the world of consumer experiences, where a lot of this journey-based thinking comes from, we'll come onto that in a moment, actually perceptions and decisions aren't just made up of one single

thing that happens to you. And it's unlikely that you'll switch provider because of one bad coffee or one bad flight or, in the world of jobs, it's unlikely you'll just have one bad meeting or bad experience and decide to pack it all in and leave. That is certainly on the extreme side of things.

But you tend to find that things are built up out of multiple events that then lead to a single moment of truth, which is basically the straw that breaks the donkey's back or whatever the expression is. And, so yeah, so you get these experience build up over time.

Nicola Matson:

I think that's probably the most important point on this slide, or maybe even in the whole presentation, for the people listening to think about. Because there may very well be people on the call thinking, I don't know, that, 'I'm responsible for onboarding and we have a great systematic onboarding programme. We take feedback at the end of that onboarding so we know whether we're delivering a good process or not.'

But, as you say, those perceptions don't just start at the beginning of onboarding. And what you don't have visibility is are there any other experiences or interactions that are happening to that person before they come into your onboarding process that are impacting your scores? So maybe you're getting a bad score because of something that happened within recruitment. And you never get that visibility unless you track that full end-to-end journey. So I think that's really the crucial point as to why it's important to do end-to-end journey tracking and not just individual touchpoints.

Luke Talbot:

Exactly. And if we look at basically the world of a contact centre for instance, as an example, because they've been using journey experience tracking for many, many years now. It would be completely insane to say, 'Customers who leave us, let's focus on that last call they made to the

contact centre or the last letter that we sent them.' Of course, they wouldn't do that. They would look at the entire experience and work out exactly what went wrong.

And what...so this research is from McKinsey, they found that actually journeys are 30% more strongly correlated to business outcomes than just measuring specific touchpoints. So actually having a view of the entire end-to-end experience from a customer, or in this case, an employee's point of view is very important, which leads us to this final point, I guess, which is you do need to start treating your employees much more like your consumers.

And that might sound like something that's very, very obvious or that people often say that, 'Oh yeah. You need to start treating your employees like your customers.' But this is a very real, very tangible example of why you need to actually start doing that.

Nicola Matson:

It's interesting that you say that it's quite obvious because actually I maybe had a slightly different experience. I think this one's quite an emotive topic and having spoken to colleagues and to different organisations, there are inherent challenges to transposing whole sales, how we measure consumer experiences into how do we measure employees, because there are some fundamental differences.

There's a contractual relationship between an employee and an employer, and there's a certain level of dependence or reliance. No matter how skilled that I am and how marketable my skills are, I'm reliant on that employer to pay me and to pay my mortgage. However, the reality is that there are enough parallels that we can learn a lot from what's already happening in the consumer workplace around end-to-end journey tracking, and actually bring that into the employee experience.

Luke Talbot:

Exactly. And I think you'd have to be...it's a really good point. The relationship is kind of the other way around from a consumer and an employee point of view, so you'd have a particularly emotive employee to just pack it all in after one meeting. However, let's go back to the very first slide, right?

The experience for many employees is starting to change. Progress of meaningful work is becoming one of the top line things, rather than oh yeah, you give me enough money every month to pay my mortgage. And because the market's changing, people are becoming much more mobile, actually the chances are that you might lose some of your key employees because of some bad experiences along this journey and you won't even see it coming.

Right. Oh that sounds a bit depressing so let's move onto the next part. So yeah, so what we're going to show here is basically how to fix it. So the first thing is that you need to provide best practice across the entire journey. So which are the critical phases that you can actually impact in the first year? Because that's where we see the biggest problem. It's not so much people leaving after five years or people leaving after seven years, the reasons for that can be a lot more complex and in-depth. Let's look at this first year attrition that we can really think about tackling.

Nicola Matson:

Yeah, and people might be looking at this and thinking, 'If we really are talking about the full end-to-end journey, then there are other things that happen to me as an employee or other processes that I go through. There's mergers and acquisitions, there's promotions, new managers, all of these will have an impact on how I perceive and feel about my employer.'

For want of a better expression, if you want the biggest bang for your buck, what we're showing here are these are the more critical points within



particularly that year one journey, where we can really make a difference around that individual's perceptions and feelings about us so that they are more likely to stay. They're more likely to be productive in their job.

Luke Talbot:

Exactly. And the first thing that you need to do once you've identified what the key stages are in that first year, and I think this is very high level what they might be, we've extracted some of the top line ones, we'll go a bit more in detail in a moment, is actually starting to measure something consistently across all of these spaces.

So very often what you'll find is that people might...in fact, the most common that I've seen, in terms of asking employees or former employees or candidates what they think, is the exit interview seem to be pretty prevalent. Most people provide exit interview. But in what way can you relate the exit interviews to what you ask during interview or during the entry into [unclear – 0:27:14] during onboarding? Actually it's very unlikely, from my experience, that you will already be measuring that and we'll come onto that in a moment.

So providing a consistent and meaningful way of measuring across this entire journey is the first step to actually getting closer to actually managing that experience.

Nicola Matson:

And I think that meaningful piece is quite important. So the consistently...we've talked about the silos and, as you say Luke, the reason that often doesn't happen today within organisations, but we also need to think very carefully about what feedback it is that we're capturing consistently across that employee journey.

Because if we really want to get any value from that insight or that feedback from our candidates or our employees, we need to make sure that we're measuring something that allows us to predict specific business outcomes that are important to

us. So the nature of those questions as well as consistently asking them across that journey, which provides us the ability to do trend analysis both over time as an organisation.

So I was speaking to a customer only yesterday about this journey tracking, and they are launching a new EVP. And what that will allow them to do is to look at the perception changes that candidates have about that organisation once they launch that new EVP, but it also allows us to trend across individual journeys for those individual candidates or employees.

Luke Talbot:

Yeah, absolutely. So what this allows us to do is provide trend analysis across the journey, but it is still important to have those process specific questions. So it's not because we're trying to measure the same things, it would be pointless to ask questions about why you're leaving the company when you've just joined the company. So there are process specific questions that you need to put in there, so that you can find out more about the individual activities during those phases.

That will help you to implement, to target an organisational improvement to those specific touchpoints, so on top of being able to measure the entire experience.

Okay. But the most important thing of all of this is that it's consistently measured. So you need, in order to do this, you need to make it process based. So this is where you start to take feedback and actually embed it into your organisation, so this isn't something that happens reactively. I've seen a lot of exit interviews happen in organisations where it's just a bit of a meeting between one guy and another guy, and they kind of have a chat about why you're leaving.

It's very informal, very unstructured. Yes, there might be some kind of survey or poll in the background, but really nothing's really happening

with it. If a lot of people are moving through your organisation, this must be systematically done. So you need to be collecting this data consistently all the time, and that will trickle the information into the process so that you can start to measure this over time. So actually it's making it process based and embedding it into your business systems is one of the critical steps to making sure that you can actually measure it properly, and then manage it and then hope to improve it.

Okay. So I guess everything we've spoken about there is talking about the journey as a whole. What we're going to do now is just move...do a bit of a deep dive on one simple step of that, which is the recruitment and entry. So we looked at the overall journey, and here we're looking at sort of a zoomed in version of that just so you can see actually how much detail there is. There are lots of opportunities here, lots of individual touchpoints that we could start measuring where you could get feedback from people.

Nicola Matson:

And the reality, again as recruitment being my background, I would have loved to have been able to do a recruitment process map on one slide. I think the closest I came was probably about sixteen slides. There are so many additional interactions that we don't even have mapped here, and the nature of recruitment and how we interact with candidates is also changing. So there's lots of video interviewing, assessment centres, gamification, so lots of different points at which we can impact how that person thinks or feels about us as a potential future employer.

Luke Talbot:

Exactly. And I think, so one of the takeaways here from this particular slide is it's great to start measuring stuff across the entire journey but if you do start zooming into the overall journey, you will find dozens and dozens and dozens of different touchpoints that you could potentially measure. And so it's very important to pick out the ones that

really matter. Otherwise, I mean I think it would be insane to measure every single one. You would definitely lead to some kind of survey fatigue. People would maybe respond to the first couple but they'll never respond to the rest or just think, 'What kind of a company am I potentially joining that they're asking me for feedback every five minutes?' So yeah.

Nicola Matson:

And it's funny that we have conversations quite a lot obviously in our industry, with what we do for a living, around survey fatigue. However, what I found quite staggering was a recent statistic from TMP that showed that only 11% of organisations capture any feedback throughout the recruitment and attraction stage of that journey.

Luke Talbot:

Yeah, which is a actually beautiful segue way, as if we planned it, into the next poll question.

Rob Moss:

Thanks Luke. Okay, so does your organisation capture feedback from candidates during the recruitment process? Let's see what numbers we get on this one.

Luke Talbot:

I think, I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that it's going to be fairly one-sided. Nicola?

Nicola Matson:

As I say, I found this painful when I read the statistic because every single company that I deployed a recruitment system with, we captured feedback.

Luke Talbot:

Yeah.

Nicola Matson:

But maybe that isn't the norm so we'll see.

Luke Talbot:

Well it's very interesting actually when you work in the world of feedback, as we do, that you kind of do become quite blinkered into thinking, 'Oh it's completely normal to collect feedback at this stage.' And the reasons why, as we've just gone through, I mean if you're not measuring it, how can you possibly manage it? So yeah.

- Rob Moss: Okay. It looks like everybody has voted who is going to vote. So thank you for your feedback. Here are the results.
- Luke Talbot: Yeah, okay. Well that's...
- Nicola Matson: 24% but still pretty low. And I think there's lots of obvious reasons why you should be capturing feedback from candidates. But one real goldmine of information comes from people who elect to withdraw from that recruitment process. You may think you have an amazing brand, an EVP, and actually you might find that maybe the perception in the marketplace isn't what you thought. Or you could have blockers within your organisation, terrible hiring managers who don't know how to interview or who are concerned that someone will, in twelve months time, take their job. Therefore, they don't want that individual to come into the organisation.
- Luke Talbot: Yeah, exactly. And going back to the whole if you're not measuring something, you can't possibly hope to manage it. I was asked recently if I thought we were getting better in our agenda for recycling and then I was thinking, 'Well I'm not exactly aware of what numbers or measuring we're doing for recycling. So I have no idea if we're getting better.' So how can you possibly improve something if you're not asking? So yeah, that's interesting. So I guess that takes us onto what the possible benefits of actually starting to measure this systematically could be.
- So I guess everything we've spoken about, what we need to start doing is actually turning a poor experience into a great experience, as you can see this little emoji based slide will tell you. And this is all based on having two different types of intervention and you can have interventions which fix it fast. An individual where you identify something's wrong, maybe a candidate is going through a particular journey at the moment, maybe

they're going through onboarding. You've just hired them and you identify that you can maybe intervene to redress the balance. An good example might be somebody joins the company and what they were sold, so an image of the organisation, turned out to not be what they found when they hit the ground.

And so that would be a good example of somewhere where you might do an individual intervention. But actually let's not lose sight of the organisational interventions, that's the higher level things that we're collecting process-based questions for so that you can identify opportunities to fix it for good. So how can we make sure that the recruitment process is a great experience for the people going through it? So people don't feel like it's negative, 81% of them go away, say something negative on Glassdoor and that massively impacts your ability to get more critical talent through the door the next time. Because the first thing they do when they see the job listing is they go straight to Glassdoor, they see that there's a lot of negative experiences and they don't even apply for the job. You don't even see the good talent coming to you next time.

So what we can actually see is that 50% of employees who have a good candidate experience, actually no, 50% of candidates who have a good candidate experience do tell their network about it. So you're never going to be able to completely turn around the 81% telling them about a bad experience, 50% telling them about a good experience. That's just human nature, but it's just a case that you will get more people telling about a good experience as well.

Okay, right. So indicators of low productivity, so we looked at that earlier. We said about 50% productive after maybe six months. It might be different in your organisation. That's not really the point. It's not the point isn't how long it is. The point

is what impact can you make on that 50%, right? On that three month or six month. And the point here is getting more discretionary candidates, more discretionary effort from candidates who have a good experience.

Nicola Matson:

And just think about when we can start to impact that, so we talked about that sort of dropping off a cliff when people have a long notice period. But people's willingness to give discretionary effort is never as high as when they've initially accepted a job and want to make a good impression with that future employer.

So there can be a win-win here. If you've got even a one month notice period, stay in contact with that individual, maybe search them the materials that they can be reading. They feel engaged. They feel that you still care about them, but they're also getting ramped up much quicker and shaving time of that time to productivity. So it's a win-win for both employer and employee.

Luke Talbot:

100%, yeah. And finally the last one, which is the one we really want to make a massive impact on, is these indicators of risk of churn. So actually what we know is that people who have a good experience throughout the candidate journey and then the onboarding journey, this does have to flow through from the beginning to the end, have a 38% increase in new hires' intent to stay.

So obviously that's simply impacting on asking employees who have just started whether or not they intend to stay. And I think that is a very important thing to try to improve on. You can never stop everyone from leaving, nor would you want to, but you need to try to improve people's willingness to remain.

Nicola Matson:

Yes. I think maybe this is a quick recap. I think everybody looking at this slide would love to achieve all of these things, to have people sharing great experiences about us as an employer, giving

us more discretionary effort and intending to stay. And it goes back to that idea of tracking the full journey, having consistent questions that we ask at key touchpoints that allow us to predict the behaviours that are important to us. And we've talked a lot about intent to stay, but there's things like willingness to recommend to friends, job satisfaction, job performance, time to productivity. All of these we can impact if we understand how that individual is thinking and feeling about that role, because we're not always perceptive enough to actually know that about our employees. So it's let's just ask them and find out.

Luke Talbot:

Exactly. Okay.

Rob Moss:

Okay. Thank you both, very interesting. We do have a few questions coming in. I've got four lined up, but if anyone in the audience does want to ask Luke and Nicola a question, then do so now. We've talked a bit about consistently measuring things and Margaret has a question on predicting key business outcomes. What are the things that HR should be measuring?

Nicola Matson:

So we've taken quite a specific approach to this, and that's not to say it's the only approach that would work, but we actually looked back at academia. If you think about a lot of HR processes and where trends and practices have originated, it's been in the academic world. Think about things like psychometric testing, employment branding and so on. So we actually went back to academia to see were there things that would affect someone's intent to stay? Job satisfaction and so on and we've got what we call our Questback Touchpoint Model.

And the key thing that we look at there is something called perceived fit, so understanding how somebody perceives they fit with the organisation that they work for or maybe about to work for and the individuals that they come into



regular contact with. So their supervisor, their team and also how well they perceive they fit to the role. And there's a lot of research that shows that those perceptions will predict various things like intent to stay, willingness to recommend and so on. So those are the key questions.

Alongside, we also ask some net promoter scores. It would be interesting to know whether somebody will recommend your organisation's products and services versus them as an employer. And there's some great examples of this where sometimes you can see that somebody's reason for joining an organisation are maybe not the best reason. So somebody wants to come and work for IKEA because they love their furniture. However, they didn't really realise it would involve working in a cold warehouse and driving a forklift truck. So if there's a disparity between those two net promoter scores, it can give us an indicator of whether they're really applying for the right reason.

Rob Moss:

Okay, perfect. Thank you. Julia asked a question, you talk about asking someone during the interview process how they're feeling about the company and their manager. Do you really think they would answer those questions honestly? Surely it's in their interest to say yeah, it's all great and they love the job.

Luke Talbot:

Yeah, I can definitely understand that. I think that's a very natural reaction. I think one thing that we need to be more aware of is actually that attitudes to work and organisations are actually starting to change. As we saw at the very beginning, people are looking for meaningful experiences. Along with that comes a level of trust and transparency that is seen as being more important in the sort of the hierarchy of needs as a new employee approaching an organisation. It might not be true of everybody, but certainly what we can see is that organisations are starting to, or employers, are starting to value that much more highly.

It's also in people's interests, their best interests, to be honest and I think, over time, people will start to see that as they respond to the surveys and they realise that actually the organisation has a feedback driven culture, which is really important. We're not just asking for feedback nowadays once a year or when you leave or something like that. But actually we're making a lot of business decisions based on feedback that the employees give, and that's the kind of culture we see emerging.

So I think those things together mean that people are more likely now to give more open, honest, transparent answers than they used to. Another thing that's worth pointing out is when you do ask questions, there are good ways and bad ways of asking questions. So sometimes you can frame questions in a way that will make people really think hard about what they're saying, actually how it was going to be used. And other times, you can just maybe frame it in a way which is as it's intended, it's intended to show an emotional response.

Rob Moss:

Okay, thank you. You talked about technology challenges, this is a question from Alice, you talked about technology challenges to measuring the full employee journey. We've just implemented Employee Central for all our HR processes. Presumably, we can use them to capture feedback at the different touchpoints that you recommend.

Nicola Matson:

Absolutely. So lots of HR management systems, suite providers, have the ability to capture or elicit feedback from employees or candidates and I won't speak to this one individually. What we have found however, and again a lot of my background working with these systems, is they're not designed as feedback solutions.

So sometimes, yes, they have the ability to capture data but the experience of that candidate or

employee can be quite clunky, for want of a better word. Some of them just don't have the automation capability to embed it fully into the business process. So usually there are some restrictions that mean could you potentially capture it? Yes. Often it's quite costly. It's custom work but, as I say, in terms of that end-user experience and the ability to aggregate all of that data into a meaningful way that highlights indicators of risk are quite challenging.

Rob Moss:

Okay. There's a question from Kasheda. 'What are the healthy attrition rates of an SME company?' Who is going to say, 'It depends?'

Nicola Matson:

I'll say that.

Luke Talbot:

Can we both say it depends? I think knowing which industry you operate in is very important. So if you're a contact centre, for instance, then a huge proportion of your employee base might be students, transitory workers and things like that. And so their healthy attrition rate could be 80% because you're quite happy to run at that, right?

But then it depends on the level of skill, onboarding and time you invest in those people before they're entirely productive. So I don't know. Nicola, do you have a different perspective?

Nicola Matson:

No. Although just to expand on that one, we actually worked with a bank a couple of years ago and they had, they didn't call them contact centres, they were virtual bankers but they had a very high attrition rate initially. But actually we did quite a lot of research around the different demographics of the individuals that worked for those virtual banking centres and found that actually they changed their recruitment process to attract slightly older people, who were actually more likely to see this as a career, versus the fresh out of university, I'm working for one year to get some money so I can go travelling. So even what you might consider an acceptable attrition rate, often

there are ways that you can combat that and you shouldn't have to have that kind of [unclear - 0:44:59] yeah.

Luke Talbot:

I'd like to come back just, very briefly, to this Venn diagram that I alluded to which, at some point, I'm going to have to do this research. But I think it's not so much the point of having attrition, right? Because we get a lot of customers telling us that, 'Okay. Well we have attrition, that's not our problem.' The thing is you've got one in four new hires leave you and they might be your top talent. One in five might be a hiring decision mistake. So how do you make sure that those are the same people? The people leaving you are the ones that you wanted to leave you and not the ones that you really, really want stay. And I think that's the thing. If you can start to measure, then you can hope to manage that.

Rob Moss:

Okay, thank you. I think we've got time for one more. It comes from Amy, do you think focus groups are better to gain touchpoints through the year than surveys?

Nicola Matson:

I guess one challenge of a focus groups are always valuable and you can get a lot of insight. But they are a point in time and not necessarily related to the part of the journey that individual is going through at that time. So if you can have focus groups where you bring in all of your recent hires and talk about what that entry process looked like, then great. What's nice about embedding it into the business process is it is literally just in time feedback that you're capturing just as that person's had that experience. So you're more likely to get the responses that relate just to that part of the journey, rather than that compounded impact of other things that have happened subsequent to that.

Luke Talbot:

Exactly. And just to add to that customer example, we had one customer who had very, very high

attrition. It was actually in a contact centre and the problem they faced is they did loads of feedback, but it was very much a scheduled thing. They might get people together, they might do an annual thing. And the problem is people might have started, gone through onboarding and left by the time you next run those initiatives. So the problem is the people you absolutely need to hear from are, by definition, almost excluded from the process that you're listening on. So yeah, focus groups, if you did them every week maybe. But the good thing about doing it process based is you're covering it every single day.

Rob Moss:

Perfect. Well thank you both ever so much for your expertise on this topic. Unfortunately, that is all we have time for. As you log out, please do fill in our exit survey to provide some feedback. Today's webinar will be available on-demand in the next day or so along with the transcript and the slides. So do please share that with your colleagues if you wish to. There are no more webinars on Personnel Today until the autumn now, but there is an entire free archive including a couple of others that Questback have done with us, that's at [personneltoday.com/webinars](http://personneltoday.com/webinars). If you have Netflix, it's a bit like that except there are more HR webinars and no boxsets. Okay, okay. It just leaves me to thank our guests, Luke Talbot and Nicola Matson from Questback. Thank you both.

Nicola Matson:

Thank you both.

Luke Talbot:

Thank you very much for having us.

Rob Moss:

You've been listening to a Personnel Today webinar in association with Questback. Thanks for joining us and goodbye.