

TRAINING & CAREERS



- Employer branding
- Influential leadership
- Succession and retention planning
- Revitalising HR - FHRD conference

FHRD

all about people

HR

The importance of employer branding

It has become instrumental for the HR function to embark on a serious employer branding strategy if they are to be successful in talent retention and talent attractiveness, says **Matthew Naudi**, FHRD president.

Month after month, surveys have shown that the pandemic and other socio-economic factors have been a catalyst for a global talent shortage of epic proportions.

On a global level, studies show that three out of four organisations are finding it difficult to recruit employees with the adequate set of skills and character strengths needed for the job.

Employers in Europe are struggling to fill over 1.2 million job vacancies, and studies show that there will be an estimated shortage of some 85 million workers around the world by 2030.

Locally, the picture is not much different. According to the latest Malta HR Pulse Survey carried out jointly between PwC and FHRD, which will be presented at the up-and-coming FHRD national conference being held at the Hilton on Friday, October 21, 2022, many local companies look at recruitment and selection as their top priority while 75 per cent of the survey participants listed the difficulty in attracting the right talent as their main people-related concern. Over and above this, there's an apparent total skills mismatch in Malta, with the NSO saying that more than half of workers are in the wrong job for their skill sets. Employee retention also seems to be a serious concern among local employers.

These figures, plus other unique challenges specific to Malta, such as very low unemployment rates, salaries, immigration, aging population, and other factors, clearly show that shortage of talent and adequate skills across all industries is the biggest challenge HR professionals face today.

This shrinking talent pool is hindering the growth of many organisations and obstructing them from achieving their long-term goals and objectives.

This all points to a dramatic shift in the labour market from a market driven by employers, to one driven by candidates who are becoming highly selective when it comes to making career moves and will easily jump ship

when the next best opportunity arises. And not just for higher salaries.

Job seekers today will look at employee reviews which are usually at the heart of an employer brand strategy. In fact, on average a potential job seeker today would read up to six reviews before actually applying for a job and many will even refuse a job with a company which has an adverse reputation.

In all this labour market chaos, it has become instrumental for the HR function to embark on a serious employer branding strategy if they are to be successful in talent retention and talent attractiveness.



A concerted effort into designing an employer branding strategy that would shape the company's image into something the company is proud of

HR leaders need to have their ears to the ground and be aware of how both current and former employees view the company. HR leaders should partner with other company leaders, such as in marketing, to help improve and promote the perception on the employer brand by its unique cultural characteristics.

They should use employer branding as a fulcrum that helps leverage the HR recruitment and retention strategy.

So, what is employer branding really?

In my mind it is the way a company showcases its uniqueness and its reputation as an employer of choice.



HR leaders should partner with other company leaders, such as in marketing, to help improve and promote the perception on the employer brand.
PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

An employer brand is built on and around the company's Employee Value Proposition (EVP), so that's a good place to start from. The EVP is basically a clear vision how people should be treated and empowered; a promise the company makes to employees in return for their commitment and performance. The Employer Brand builds on that EVP, on the company culture, on employee opinions, on candidate opinions, on career paths, on diversity and on the overall corporate brand to influence the company's reputation as an employer among job seekers and employees.

Every organisation, large or small, from any industry, has a perceived employer brand because the reputation of the company exists in people's minds. Employees will talk about the company internally and perceptions are formed by the people external to the company, whether we like it or not; whether we promote it or not.

Even worse, the competition might be putting stories out there about what it's like to work at your company, and without any proof to the contrary, their story can stick.

It's not a matter of biting the bullet but more of taking the bull by the horns to put a concerted effort into designing an employer branding strategy that would shape the company's image into something the company is proud of.

HR professionals must be in control of what is being said about their organisation on all digital platforms through exciting storytelling with photos, videos, blog posts and uplifting employee testimonials.

The storytelling should be a true reflection of what the company stands



for, a true reflection of the company culture, its vision, mission and values, and not used as a lure based on false pretences and promises that cannot be kept. Employer branding should not become a reflection of what the audience wants to hear but what it actually is. No fake news will work. It should be based on the truth that makes an organisation unique... or not. It should be authentic, well-defined, credible and meaningful.

Simon Barrow, who is said to be the creator of employer brand as a concept, refers to an employer brand that needs to be distinctive (unique) which sets you aside from the competition, compelling but above all "rooted in reality".



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TALENT

Talent – nature, nurture or a combination of both?

Is talent a natural skill or is it a nurtured quality, asks **Mark Bugeja**, Head of HR at Nectar and FHRD board member.

The debate of 'nature' and 'nurture' as distinct or joint forces that drive human development has induced and continues to induce strong opinions.

TALENT AS A NATURAL SKILL

The dictionary defines talent as a natural aptitude or a skill and is defined to mean 'mental endowment; natural ability' (Collins, n.d.). Several academics are of the opinion that talent is inborn to some degree, and that it is a rare gift bestowed to the very few. They were born with something which many others weren't born with. Psychologist Howard Gardner, in his writings *Nature of Talent* echoes that anyone who has the opportunity to observe a prodigy, be it Mozart in music or Tiger Woods in golf, recognises that attainment is not just hard work, but they were born with something we weren't born with: they are gifted.



Ultimately it is education, training, and exposure to new experiences that help us to make the most of our talents

TALENT IS NURTURED

To the contrary, modern-day research as demonstrated by Swedish psychologist K. Anders Ericsson discredits this myth and his findings paved the way for the 10,000-Hour-Rule which shows that talent as mastery is the product of



Businesses are paying more attention to how personality traits – nature – blend in with workplace culture – nurture. PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

consistent, concentrated effort, applied in the direction of one's natural inclination. In his book *Outliers: The Story of Success*, Malcolm Gladwell examines how it helped the Beatles to become superstars by acting 1,200 performances as a group in Germany between 1960 and 1964. Gladwell maintains that the key to achieve true expertise in any skill is simply a matter of practising, albeit in the correct way, for at least 10,000 hours.

NATURE VERSUS NURTURE

If you ask a teacher to identify their most talented student, they might reject the question and in return say their students are all equally talented. But we all know that this is not the case. There are students who can catch on quickly, some almost instantly to new skills, while others must go through the same drill time and time again to see improvement. In his book, MIT linguist Steven Pinker, renews the nature versus nurture argument

and he argues that the role of nurture is overestimated because critics sought to base political ideas of equal rights and equal opportunities on a false biological demise because according to him not all humans are equal and genetically shaped hence, they have different abilities and behaviours.

Sometimes this debate of 'nurture' vs 'nature' becomes contentious and provokes so much passion because it can act as a representation of how we as humans see our realm. One might say that in truth there are three different thoughts, all of which might have some sort of correctness. These are the: 'Nurturers' who will say that talent is largely the product of the development and continuous and arduous training is a must; 'Naturists' who will argue that talent is innate, and they are the product of inherited genetics; and 'Middle Persons' (sort of say) who in return will claim that talent is a combination of both.

Personally, I see myself more of the middle person. Being an avid football fan, I doubt how many can become a Ronaldo or

a Messi irrespective of how hard they work. Very, very few can become a G.O.A.T. since only the very few have the innate quality that have made these two formidable players who they are albeit it is also a known fact that they put a lot of hard work on the training grounds to remain at the top of their game.

NATURE AND NURTURE AT THE WORKPLACE

As an HR professional, I believe that every single person has their own special traits which could become an asset for an organisation once these 'natural' traits have been identified and most importantly developed or better so nurtured.

At my workplace we believe in raw people – someone with no experience in the job for instance in sales – but displays positive attitude during the interview specifically towards learning and development and exhibits eagerness to success, proved time and time again that whenever we created de-



velopment opportunities, the majority succeeded. Besides that, businesses are paying more attention to how personality traits – nature – blend in with workplace culture – nurture. At Nectar, being a fast-paced, innovative, and agile organisation, we will require people with a strong set of soft-skills including empathy, attention to detail and courage.

It's not the first time that your instinct will lead you to believe that the person in front of you even at interview stage, has what it takes to succeed. That said, we also believe that by creating development opportunities in which people purposefully practise, led by seasoned sales representatives or sales managers (mentoring) the bigger the probability to maximise your return on investment.

This proves why I believe in the 'middle person' thought whenever the debate about 'nature' versus 'nurture' pops up. As a matter of fact, HR professionals tend to talk about competencies that is the complex between innate qualities and acquired abilities that will make a member of our workforce valuable to the organisation.

Many of us are born with certain attributes or aptitudes (nature) but ultimately it is education, training, and exposure to new experiences (nurture) that help us to make the most of our talents. Put together this will lead us as to why we, HR professionals believe talent management is very crucial, today more than ever considering the huge imbalance between demand and supply in terms of human capital.



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LEADERSHIP

How to be a more influential leader

As a leader, being able to attract support for your ideas and recommendations is key, says **Michelle Fenech Seguna**, Director of HR at The Westin Dragonara Resort, Director of Speak to Move and FHRD vice-president.

When working with other leaders, both in my role as an HR leader as well as that of a communications coach, the subject of how to be more influential often comes up. While leaders might have strong technical competences, when it comes to swaying others to follow their lead through persuasion and influence, an alternate set of skills come into play.



It is crucial to present an exciting vision

As a leader, being able to attract support for your ideas and recommendations is key. Here are some suggestions to enable you to grow your influence as a leader.

LEARN, GROW AND THRIVE

Seek to continuously grow your knowledge and business acumen as this will enable you to be perceived as a well-informed and credible thought partner who can confidently advise on strategic decisions. To stay at the

forefront, as leaders we should continuously seek learning. Warren Buffet spends up to six hours per day reading newspapers and corporate reports. The best business minds are always striving to acquire a deeper understanding.

It is vital to be always prepared. This can be accomplished by staying informed through continual market research, analysis and trend spotting, as well as by attending events and conferences and networking with colleagues and other influential leaders. When we seek to be influential leaders by continually investing in ourselves, the greater our competence and the better we are equipped to support and influence others.

DISPLAY COURAGE AND CONFIDENCE

Influential leaders show confidence and courage in situations that others may question. Employees may fear a decision's outcome but willingly support it when they witness confidence in their leader's verbal and non-verbal messages. When you demonstrate the right level of confidence in yourself and your decisions, it en-



Influential leaders show confidence and courage in situations that others may question. PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

courages your team members to do the same. When leaders are confident enough to take the helm, employees become encouraged to follow.

CONCENTRATE ON RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Prior to seeking to entice our team members, peers or superiors to embrace our ideas, our first endeavour needs to be focused on cultivating meaningful and trusting relationships. The first step is to show genuine interest in them - get to know them both personally and professionally. When we dedicate our time to truly listen to others, we can connect on a deeper level. Practise empathy, advocate for them and listen to them. True leadership involves leveraging your influence for your team members' benefit. They will love you for it and once you earn their trust, you are in a better position to motivate them in the direction you aim to direct them to.

CHAMPION OTHERS

Dedicate time to mentor, guide and continually provide feedback to your employees. By making ourselves available to our team members, they recognise that we

are there for them, which in return earns us their respect. Champion those you believe are ready to seek promotional opportunities and recognise their efforts. When we show interest in the professional development of our talented people we are more likely to see them flourish and determined to prove to their strengths.

It is also vital to prioritise praise and recognition. When we show appreciation of others' efforts and make it a point to thank colleagues, we demonstrate our recognition of their dedication. You'll be amazed at how much showing appreciation for their good work goes towards them producing more of the same. By giving people credit for their contributions, we become known as the leader who is an advocate for others. In return, this enables our own influence to grow.

INSPIRE OTHERS

To rally together your team members, your peers and your boss to embrace your ideas, it is crucial to present an exciting vision. Begin by asking yourself what the pain points are and what steps are needed to get to the new destination. Have a clear understanding of what it is important and beneficial for them. Stay upbeat, positive and share a well thought-out plan.



Influence is a subtle yet incredibly powerful tool. Influential leadership is all about making a positive difference in organisations. It's about generating the right company culture which incorporates everyone and allows you to move towards a better, collective destination. Leading by influence involves impacting the opinions, attitudes, choices and behaviours of others by persuading them in a positive way. It is about focusing on empowering, developing and serving the people who work for us. Influential leaders are successful because they inspire, persuade and encourage. Enabling employees to achieve their goals and bringing out the best in them are hallmarks of an influential leader.

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"I like working for the FIAU because of the proactive workplace environment which promotes and supports the learning and professional development of each employee who wishes to do so. I feel that such a workplace environment spurs employees to boost their individual potential while encouraging everyone to come together as a whole when teamwork is required. What makes my work within the Supervision Section interesting is the variety of cases we are exposed to during the supervisory process, which is an invaluable source of knowledge and experience."

Martina Blandi
Senior Associate – Supervision



"I joined the FIAU in 2019 as an Intelligence Analyst. Although I can simply say that I love my job because of its analytical and investigative nature, what I truly appreciate is the work-life balance that I enjoy and the ongoing guidance and trust that I receive from the management. During this time, I feel that I have grown and learnt so much, because I have worked on various projects and attended numerous training courses supported by the FIAU. My appreciation goes to the management who have respected and believed in me from day one."

Luke Baldacchino
Senior Intelligence Analyst



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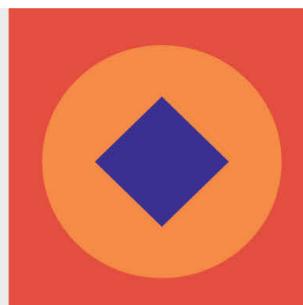


EVENT



Revitalising HR

Leveraging Employer Branding



Conference Agenda

08.15 hrs	Registration and Coffee
09.15 hrs	Welcome Speech Opening address and conference launch Matthew Naudi, President FHRD
09.25 hrs	KEYNOTE 1: The employer branding experience! Your wake-up call! Johan Driessens, CEO (Chief Enthusiasm Officer) and Serial HR Entrepreneur - tHRibe World
09.45 hrs	KEYNOTE 2: Transforming the Culture to stay relevant in attracting and retaining Talents – Sharing Learnings from Microsoft’s cultural transformation journey and how hybrid work is defining the company’s management capabilities Reinhard Nissl, Director HR Talent & Development - Microsoft
10.30 hrs	WORKSHOPS W/S 1: – Employer branding and selection with Emotional Intelligence Maria-Caterina Capurro, Executive & Team Coach, Trainer, Training Designer, and Author – PeopleSmart W/S 2: The Influential HR Leader: Beyond a Seat at the Table Michelle Fenech Seguna, Executive Communications Coach – SpeaktoMove
11.10 hrs	Coffee Break
11.45 hrs	PANEL DISCUSSION: Innovative HR in Action Panellists: Matthew Naudi, President FHRD Claudine Attard, Director Management Consulting – PwC Yasmin de Giorgio, CEO - Shireburn Software Limited Sarah Mifsud, Chief People Officer - GO plc Eleanor Busuttil, SVP Human Resources - Finaro
12.30 hrs	HR Quality Mark: Presentation of Certificates and Mementos
12.45 hrs	Lunch

13.45 hrs	Conference Energizer
14.05 hrs	<p>KEYNOTE 3: How Coca-Cola HBC's Senior Leaders became Employer Branding Advocates</p> <p>Maria Dinu, Group Employer Branding Manager - Coca Cola</p>
14.50 hrs	<p>KEYNOTE 4: Focus on employee engagement to strengthen Sandoz's employer brand in times of uncertainty and change due to a strategic realignment</p> <p>Frank Kellenberg, Global Head of Organization Development & Inclusion – Sandoz</p>
15.35 hrs	Coffee Break
16.10 hrs	<p>MASTERCLASS: HR Employer Branding Issues – The local scenario</p> <p>Moderator: Pamela Mamo, Senior Manager - PwC Academy (Strategy and Innovation)</p> <p>Participants: Nicholas Schembri, Chief HR Officer - Calamatta Cuschieri Investment Services Ltd. Annika Galea, Director of Human Resources - Hilton Malta Kevin Paris, CEO & Director - FTIAS Ltd. Nicki Spiteri Paris, CEO - BigBon Group</p> <p>WORKSHOPS:</p> <p>W/S 3: How can Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Impact an Employer Brand? Lutfur Ali, Senior Policy Advisor – CIPD</p> <p>W/S 4: Challenges encountered to revamp an Organisation's Employer Branding Peter Grech, Founder & CEO - BRND WGN</p> <p>W/S 5: Starting With Business Leaders – how the Executive team sets the example of the company about Employer Branding, Talent, and Performance Luke Todd, Co-Founder & CEO – MadeYou</p> <p>W/S 6: Authentic Employer Branding - It starts with engaged employees Stefania Curmi, Head of HR (South) – Leo Vegas Gaming plc</p>
17.30 hrs	Conference end

Partners



PLANNING/FHRD

Effective succession and ret

Victoria Meli, VP Global HR Operations & Compensation at Finaro (previously Credorax) and FHRD board member, outlines a key component of workforce planning.

Succession planning is the process of identifying and developing potential future leaders, as well as individuals to fill business-critical roles. Succession planning sits inside a much wider set of resourcing and development processes in which people professionals play a key role. In particular, it's a key component of workforce planning, a process to ensure the right number of people with the right skills are employed in the right place at the right time to deliver on the organisation's objectives.

The overall general aim is to be able to fill key roles effectively if a current post holder leaves the organisation to ensure business continuity and limit disturbance to business operations as much as possible.

Links with business planning

Those responsible for succession planning need to be highly knowledgeable about how the business is likely to evolve. It's important that they avoid talent 'tunnel vision' where the focus is purely on current skills needs. They must have a good understanding of future strategy and the likely capabilities needed in business-critical positions. They should understand how change might affect the numbers involved in succession planning and the skills individuals will need in future. This requires a close relationship between people professionals and the leaders responsible for shaping the organisation's future.

Which posts are covered by succession planning?

The first step is to identify business-critical roles for which potential successors are needed. Succession planning can focus on individual key positions or take a more generic approach by targeting a 'pool' of positions for which similar skills are needed or essential in emergencies. All organisations need to be able to identify and find people with the right skills to fill key positions.

Succession planning usually covers the most senior or critical duties in the organisation, identifying individuals with the potential to step into these posts as short-term or longer-term successors. Proactive development through job rotation or secondments around the business can



Those responsible for succession planning need to be highly knowledgeable about how the business is likely to evolve.
PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



provide a ready source of future leaders. A focus on the most senior posts means that only a small proportion of the workforce would be part of the pro-

cess. This makes it more manageable.

Approaches to succession planning

Explaining the FHRD HR Quality

The aim of the HR Quality Mark is to recognise organisations that place HR at the centre of their business, says **Karen Muscat Baldacchino**, CEO, FHRD.

The Foundation for Human Resources Development (FHRD) was set up in 1990 to spearhead the evolution of people management and development practices as well as the human resources profession in Malta. FHRD works in partnership with its corporate members, the professional conglomerate of HR practitioners and service providers, leaders of the industry, and other key local players in the field of human resources management and development.

In 2019, FHRD introduced the HR Quality Mark. This is a standard, developed by the FHRD, that recognises organisations for their effective HR practices in terms of HR competence and professionalism. There is an increasingly greater need for measuring, monitoring, tracking, and understanding how well people are being managed and developed.

As of now, there are a total of 36 local companies which have obtained this national certification in human resources.

The HR Quality Mark will give organisations the following ben-

efits: internal recognition; external recognition; enhance employer brand; more attractive to new talent; HR content areas evaluation; HR Quality Mark event to promote the certified organisations; sense of achievement for the internal HR team; motivates the HR team to strive for excellence, and; a report identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

The aim of the HR Quality Mark is to recognise organisations that place HR at the centre of their business through the implementation of various policies and strategies which include: HR policies and practices; recruitment, selection, and talent management; compensation, benefits, and total rewards; employment and industrial relations; performance management; HR information systems; and people training and development.

The Quality Mark is not a competition between organisations but encourages all organisations, irrelevant of size and sector, to assess their HR practices.

This means that there are no restrictions or rankings on how many organisations can achieve this award, as long as the HR criteria set by FHRD are reached. The Quality Mark serves as a process to guide organisations on how to improve their HR practices.

The HR Quality Mark process consists of five steps as detailed below.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to apply for the HR Quality Mark, organisations must have at least 10 full-time employees registered with Jobsplus. Applicants must be fully compliant with all statutory obligations. The organisation and its people must show they follow ethical standards in their line of business.

APPLICATION

To apply for the HR Quality Mark, interested organisations are to complete an online application form, as well as pay the

HRQM application fee and the respective FHRD membership fee for the current year.

VETTING OF APPLICATION

FHRD will acknowledge applications received and then verify each application for eligibility.

REVIEW PROCESS

FHRD will appoint two evaluators for each application. These evaluators will visit the organisation and subsequently compile a technical report and submit it to FHRD. The report will include recommendations for improvement.

SUCCESS

Successful organisations will be awarded the HR Quality Mark Certification based on a marking system tied to a set of questions relating to the seven content areas, with a pass mark of 75 per cent in each content area. An HR

Quality Mark award ceremony will take place after every intake to celebrate those successful organisations deserving of this award. A memento for the HR Quality Mark will be given to each successful organisation during the award ceremony.

During this year's annual HR Conference and Expo, entitled Revitalising HR – Leveraging Employer Branding, FHRD will be organising the presentation of the HR Quality Mark certificates and mementos for the 15 successful organisations.

These 15 organisations obtained the FHRD Quality Mark during the fourth application intake. These organisations are Air X Charter Limited, Alberta Fire & Security Equipment Ltd, AMSM, Arkadia Marketing Limited, Fenech & Fenech Advocates, Fenlex Corporate Services Limited, Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools (FTS), GasanZammit Motors Limited, Institute for Education, MAPFRE Middlesea, MAPFRE MSV Life, Malta Digital Innovation Authority,

Succession planning



engage, retain and deploy talented individuals – with a focus on attracting external talent as well as nurturing internal talent.

There are valid reasons to recruit externally, especially at senior levels, to bring new ideas and approaches. However, many organisations seem to rely either too much on outsiders or too much on insiders, suggesting that it's difficult to find the right balance.

While many employers want to attract highly-talented individuals from outside the organisation for key or senior positions, there's also the desire to promote widely from the in-house talent pool. This is particularly so where there's a high degree of organisation-specific knowledge in business-critical roles.

A popular belief is that leaders developed from within tend to be more successful than those brought in. They have relevant operational experience, understand cultural nuances, and have benefited from in-house leadership programmes.

The effects of succession
Succession planning can also help retain talented individuals as

they are made aware of internal opportunities to advance their careers. Having a well thought out succession plan significantly improves employees job satisfaction, which in turn has a positive effect on employee retention.

The reason for this relationship is that organisations who plan for succession proactively indicate their willingness to invest in their employees. Creating and communicating a succession plan also advertises internal opportunities for advancement. Therefore, when employees perceive the potential for a promotion, pay raise, competitive benefits, developing skills or gaining experience inside an organization, they will be far less likely to look for and accept alternatives elsewhere.

QUICK TIPS TO MAXIMISE EMPLOYEE RETENTION DURING THE SUCCESSION PLANNING PROCESS

Be transparent with your internal stakeholders. Communicate the succession plan and succession planning process to key members of the company

Starting from the top: The process should be initiated, driven and supported across all levels of management

Succession candidates should be consulted on their suitability and contribution in line with the company's succession plans so that there is alignment between the organisation's needs and the individual's future career development aspirations

Invest in development. In addition to explicit succession plans, take time to establish a culture of ongoing coaching and development

Succession and retention plans are live programmes, that change depending on the needs of the business. HR leadership team should frequently consult and check-in with their people managers and ask them whether they are satisfied with their job and work environment. People managers should in turn check-in with their subordinates too

Taking time to talk to your employees like this is perhaps the simplest way to ensure they feel valued and see potential for their career with the company going forward and ensure alignment with the needs of the business

Succession planning should be part of a wider 'talent management programme', which would cover a wide range of activities designed to attract, recruit, identify, develop, en-

Mark

the centre of

Mekanika Limited, RS2 Software plc, and Teva.

The Quality Mark is awarded following a meticulous evaluation carried out by competent evaluators who assess applicant organisations on their HR practices in the seven content areas mentioned above. The onsite evaluations started at the beginning of the second quarter of 2022 and were concluded before the end of the second Quarter of 2022. Each application was assigned two evaluators who carried out a rigorous onsite audit and presented a final report, which was the basis on which the Quality Mark was awarded or not. In every case a post-evaluation report was prepared and sent to the respective applicants with the outcome of the assessment, highlighting their strengths and the areas for improvement.

Organisations that achieved the HR Quality Mark during previous intakes are Credorax Bank Ltd (formerly Finaro), Ecopure Ltd, Farsons Beverage Import Company plc, Go plc, Hero Gaming Ltd, ICT Solutions, Malta Business



Registry, Melita Ltd, Quintano Foods Ltd, Shireburn, Simonds Farsons Cisk, The Inspire Foundation, Malta Archdiocese, Baxter, Calamatta Cuschieri, De La Rue Security & Print Services Ltd, Jobsplus, Hilton Malta, St John's Co-Cathedral, Probe Investments, and EUPA.

Successful organisations can use the HR Quality Mark Logo for a period of three years on all outgoing correspondence, recruitment advertising, press releases, social media channels, and corporate website.

All successful organisations are listed on the FHRD website. For more information, e-mail qm@fhrd.org or visit <https://fhrd.org/hr-quality-mark/>.

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SKILLS

The skills shortage challenge

Finding great people to join your team is a constant challenge, says **Claudine Attard**, Director, Management Consulting, PwC Malta and FHRD board member.

In today's environment, business leaders are facing numerous disruptions, including inflation, a post-pandemic environment, and a number of fast-moving geopolitical and social crises. Organisations, irrespective of the sector they operate in, need their people to have the right skills to be able to recover from the aftermath of the pandemic and remain resilient in the face of changes to the world of work or the economic environment. Therefore in order to succeed in this environment, organisations must do their utmost to have a workforce that is equipped to meet these challenges.

The topic of having the right talent on-board is a major concern among local business leaders as it impacts their potential for growth or in the worst case their operational sustainability, their customer outcomes and productivity, amongst other factors. Several studies cite a local skill mismatch, both on a vertical level, whereby employees are over or under qualified for the job or on a horizontal level, which describes a situation where the level or type of skills available does not meet the employment market needs.

THE LOCAL CONTEXT: ORGANISATIONS NEED THE RIGHT SKILLS TO DRIVE GROWTH

This year's HR Pulse Survey, which is a joint annual exercise carried out by PwC Malta and the Foundation for Human Resources Development (FHRD), confirms the struggles local employers are facing with regards to finding and retaining the right talent.

When asked about their top five people-related concerns at the moment, the majority of employers (75 per cent, overall) recognised that 'attracting the right talent' is one of their top people-related concerns. Moreover, respondents believe the availability of skills is, or can, impede the growth of their organisation. Employers from various industries cited the availability of skills to drive growth amongst their top concerns. This concern was highest amongst respondents in wholesale and retail (75 per cent), iGaming (65 per cent), insurance (63 per cent), accommodation and food services activities (50 per cent), and financial services (50 per cent) sectors. The full report will be published at the FHRD conference on October 21.

The vertical skills mismatch in Malta was recently studied in further detail by the National Statistics Office in the Labour Force Survey. A vertical skills mismatch was experienced by 54.3 per cent of the employed population in Malta. More than one third (35.1 per cent) of these employees were overqualified while 19.3 per cent were under-qualified for their role. This shows the skills mismatch between what employers need, and what skills are available on the market. The study found that the mismatch is higher in certain industries such as in the wholesale and retail trade, transportation and storage; accommodation and food services activities; and information and communication.

Interestingly, some of these industries were also the ones which cited the availability of skills to drive growth as one of their major people-related concerns in the HR Pulse Survey, 2022.



Skills gaps and skills mismatches may be overcome through recruitment and selection efforts

On the other hand, the local horizontal mismatch was also identified by the National Statistics Office in the 2021 Labour Force Survey. This is the case within certain sectors, more than others, such as the food service activities, wholesale and retail trade, transportation and storage, and accommodation sectors (51.2 per cent), information and communication (50.5 per cent) and the other services sector (63.5 per cent). This denotes a situation where the large proportion of the workforce in these sectors are not working in the field of their studies. Inversely, employees within the construction (66.9 per cent) and financial and insurance activities (61.7 per cent) were found to be working in the same area of their study.

CASE FOR UPSKILLING

Skills gaps and skills mismatches may be overcome through recruitment and selection efforts, however noting the diffi-

culties encountered in the current labour market, upskilling may be a more effective way to fulfil the skills required by the organisation. Considering these realities within the labour market in Malta, these mismatches may be something that we need to adapt to, at least in the short term, and find solutions for. We are in fact already seeing a shift in hiring based on skills rather than educational qualifications alone, including not only the skills candidates have but also their learning mindset and future potential. This way forward, is however requiring businesses to have programmes to develop these people so they can perform and grow.

Short-term upskilling is needed to meet the current business needs however long-term, proactive, upskilling can increase businesses' resilience. Therefore, in addition to upskilling in technical skills required for the job, there are key transversal skills which have become essential to enable employees to be more adaptable in an increasingly dynamic and digitalised world, including: self-learning capacities (ongoing education, adaptability, agility, and flexibility) will be necessary to cope with disruptive business models and digital innovations; digital fluency; cognitive skills (such as problem-solving, creativity, analytical thinking and creativity); and socio-emotional skills (such as communication and collaboration).

In fact, the need for upskilling is underscored by the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Future of Jobs Report 2020, which identified that half of all employees around the world will need reskilling by 2025. The WEF's report identifies the following top five skills for 2025: Analytical thinking and innovation; active learning and learning strategies; complex problem solving; critical thinking and analysis; and creative, originality and initiative.

Developing the required pool with the skills needed – with the ability to adapt quickly in a world of constant change – does not happen organically or by accident. Significant investment is required for upskilling, in any given sector, however it outweighs the costs of not upskilling. On a national scale, such ramifications may include decreased competitiveness, limitations to growth, and decreased investment interest in the local economy. Eventually it can also lead to an increase in unemployment rate,



Upskilling may be a more effective way to fulfil the skills required by the organisation.
PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

which will lead to a negative impact on consumer spending, GDP and economic growth.

However upskilling should not solely be the priority on a national or business level, PwC's study into the Hopes and Fears of today's workforce (Global Workforce Hopes and Fears Report, 2022) found that workers in possession of specialised skills (upskilled employees) are more empowered thus making the case for individuals to lead their own upskilling journey. Employees with specialised skill sets were more likely, than their counterparts whose job does not require specialised training, to feel listened to by their managers (31 per cent more), feel satisfied with their job (24 per cent more) and have money left over after they pay their bills (16 per cent more).

Finding great people to join your team is a constant challenge. And it's not getting easier any time soon, given the tight labour market, shifting employee expectations and a shortage of people with in-demand skills. You'll win top talent by competing on more than salary. Your corporate culture and the experience you provide people, even during recruitment, is your differentiated asset. Keeping hold of workers with key skills and helping them build, apply and leverage those skills will be key – but it is only one element of the employee experience. What may be missing is a plan to make the best use of employees who have been upskilled so they can see the value of their new learning and are incentivised to put it to good use to support your organisation deliver its strategy.

These are business issues that demand vision and leadership from the top. HR has a critical role to play here and therefore one needs to ensure it has the resources, capabilities, and support required to address these challenges.



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ORGANISATIONS

Organisational transformation – and how to achieve employee buy-in

Organisational transformation goes beyond just transforming business processes or implementing new technology, says **Peter Gatt**, Employer Branding Manager at APS and FHRD Board Member.

Organisational transformation is today more important than ever before – this applies to any type and size of organisation, whether providing a service or manufacturing a product. Organisational transformation must form an integral part of an organisation's strategic and business planning cycle. This is crucial to remain relevant and successful in a rapidly changing world.

The aim of transforming an organisation is to move it from where it is currently today, to a decided future state. This is no easy task! It first starts with recognising the need for change, the need to transform – perhaps the most challenging step – particularly when an organisation is performing well. Continually challenging the status quo, planning for change, implementing change, communicating the change, reviewing change, measuring achievements are all important steps.

Organisational transformation goes beyond just transforming business processes or implementing new technology. It's a holistic approach to maintain a competitive advantage, develop a strong brand and market position. It may also very well be focused on digital transformation, that is repositioning an organisation in the digital economy.

ACHIEVING EMPLOYEE BUY-IN

Moreover, organisational transformation is about leading people, building a people-centric organisation with the aim of successfully developing and delivering the organisation's transformation plan. Achieving and maintaining high levels of employee engagement and buy-in throughout any transformation process is key, and in turn increases the probability of success.

Achieving employee buy-in is more and more challenging today. Organisations are increasingly facing a phenomenon that would have



The aim of transforming an organisation is to move it from where it is currently today, to a decided future state. PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

seemed unthinkable some years ago. In what has been dubbed the 'Great Attrition', hiring the right talent has become harder than ever before. Organisations are facing a constant struggle to come up with the right strategies to find and retain talent.

HAVING A CLEAR PURPOSE

One of the main challenges in organisational transformation is to recognise and understand the need to change. The questions to be answered are: Why transform? What does the organisation want to achieve? How does this translate into concrete plans and goals? How will an organisation implement its plans? How are plans expected to impact the organisation's outcomes? What resources will be required? How will success be measured? These are all questions to be answered. Again, no easy task with no magic formula, but with people involvement.

The chances of organisational transformation being successful increases when an organisation has a clearly defined purpose. Formulating

and communicating a comprehensible purpose – having a clear Mission, Vision and Values makes it easier to embrace change and have employees support the transformation. That is achieving and maintaining employee buy-in!

PLANNING AND LEADING THE CHANGE

Transformation doesn't happen in a silo. It is an ongoing process, needs to be planned, lead and managed and as mentioned needs to address all areas of a business. This means understanding the impact of change on all areas. How will the change impact an organisational structure? How will the change impact the technology being used? How will the change impact its employees and its customers? How will the change impact an organisation's service delivery, its product portfolio? Will there be any potential talent gaps and how will they be addressed? What are the risks and how will they be managed?

A good approach is to plan the tasks required to transform an

organisation, starting with the end-results in mind, and working back through all areas of the organisation. A plan with clear goals, timelines and performance indicators, makes the transformation process more tangible. It is impossible to change everything at once and prioritising the matters that need to be tackled first is essential.



Transformation doesn't happen in a silo

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

Engaging all stakeholders in organisational transformation is essential. Identify who the stakeholders are must be done at the very beginning of the process. Reiterating why the transformation is taking place and what the role of each stakeholder also needs to form part of the planning process and cycle.

Furthermore, ongoing communication is a must as is the



ongoing review of the plans which most likely will result in the transformation plans being re-evaluated, modified and goals reprioritised.

COMMUNICATING THE BENEFITS

Communicating the benefits, will make it easier to overcome any resistance to change. A communication plan should be drawn up. Communication is two-way and therefore needs to provide employees with opportunities to ask questions and share their concerns. Team meetings, townhall meetings and 1-on-1 meetings are all ways of communicating transformation plans, progress and achievements.

MEASURING PROGRESS

Finally measuring progress contributes to understanding what has been achieved and what is still to be achieved. Data plays a key role in measuring progress also employee feedback is just as important. This is achieved by measuring employee engagement, employee experience, performance and productivity.

Each step in a transforming an organisation requires people input and therefore employee buy-in. Most of all it requires strong leadership to see the change through. Above all, without employee buy-in the chances of a successful transformation are slim.

NEWS

EURES MALTA: A portal to the European workforce

EURES is the European agency committed to facilitating mobility across the EU.

Since its foundation in 1994, EURES (European Employment Services) has helped thousands of EU citizens find employment in other EU member states, as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland, and assisted employers in accessing the European talent pool. The EURES Malta service is provided by the national public employment service, Jobsplus, in collaboration with the European Commission, the European Labour Authority, and other parties concerned with employment.

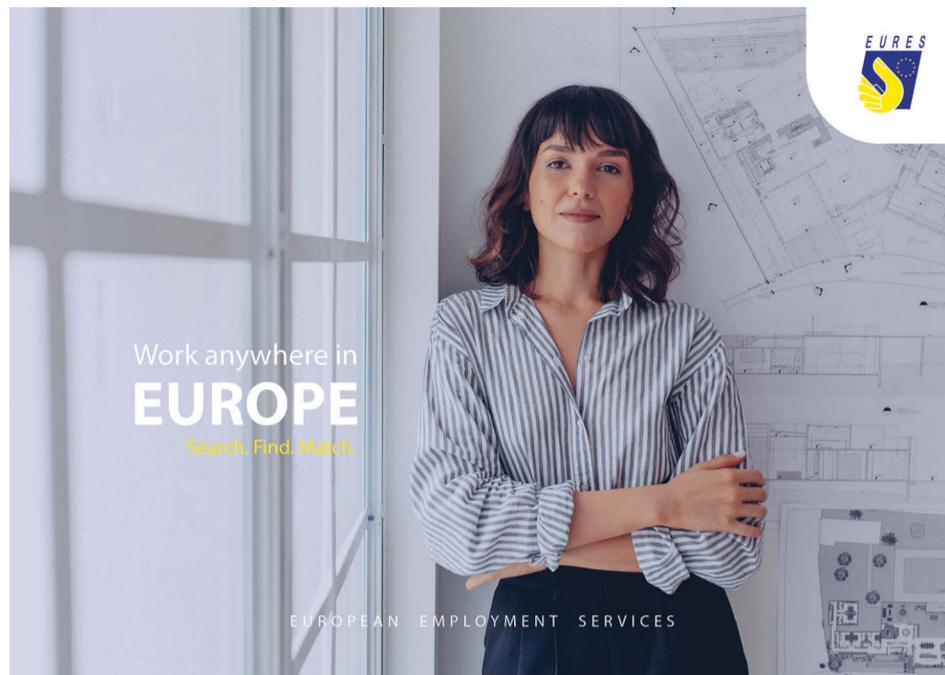
EURES aims to facilitate EU employment by equipping jobseekers with the relevant information they need about work and living conditions in each participating country. Simultaneously, EURES also assists employers with local vacancies by the matching of candidates and promo-

tion abroad in European recruitment events.

Employers based in Malta can advertise vacancies to a wider EU audience at no cost. Moreover, EURES Malta can help employers shortlist potential candidates and provide tailor-made recruitment solutions. Through online recruitment events, employers can connect with active jobseekers across the EU through the virtual EURES platform.

To ensure that all jobseekers stand a fair chance at employment, EURES runs the Targeted Mobility Scheme to provide financial support where needed. Apart from the integration funding for employers, this includes funding to attend job interviews, language courses, country and family relocation as well as the recognition of diplomas and qualifications for jobseekers.

After the recruitment process is complete, EURES Malta continues to



provide support to employers and their EU workers by organising 'Integration Sessions'. These sessions are designed to help EU national employees in Malta acclimatise themselves to their new work and living environment by sharing information about topics such as residency, social security, tax, healthcare and training opportunities.

For matters concerning European mobility and recruiting EU nationals, EURES Malta is a one-stop shop for employers, employees and jobseekers. You can get in touch at eures.jobsplus@gov.mt and 2220 1662/3, or access the online chat through the EURES portal (every Friday) via www.eures.europa.eu. For more information, visit www.jobsplus.gov.mt and www.eures.com.mt.

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NEWS

Performance management – the key to achieving organisational goals

DAVID CATANIA

Modern-day HR management has evolved to an extent whereby planning, recruitment, onboarding and management of people are increasingly aligned with the implementation of key organisational goals and objectives. The role of HR in the modern organisation is therefore focused on improving employee performance, developing high-performance leaders and motivating employees. This is achieved by building a conducive work environment and by channelling staff roles and individual attributes towards providing strategic input into organisational planning and decision-making processes. In short, the role of HR has evolved from simply being an appraiser to that of an enabler and facilitator.

From a performance management perspective, HR's new enabling role is manifested by activities such as joint goal-setting, continuous progress review and constant communication, feedback and coaching, thus resulting in the level of performance necessary to achieve the organisation's goals.

Home truths about traditional performance appraisal techniques

It has traditionally been held that performance appraisal is an ideal tool for providing feedback/criticism and for recording and measuring individual goals, targets, development needs and other 'two-way feedback'. Additionally, performance appraisal has frequently constituted the ideal documentation mechanism to justify salary increments and bonuses. Yet despite such processes, it often turns out that performance levels can still remain disappointingly low.

Meyer, Kay and French, in their ground-breaking research entitled, "Split Roles in Performance Appraisal" bring to light several eye-opening facts relating to the appraiser/appraisee dynamic and the

performance appraisal mechanism per se, namely: Criticism tends to have a negative effect on achievement of goals; Praise has little effect one way or another; Performance improves most when specific goals are established; Defensiveness resulting from critical appraisal produces inferior performance; Coaching should be a day-to-day, not a once-a-year, activity; Mutual goal-setting, not criticism, improves performance; Interviews designed primarily to improve an individual's performance should not at the same time weigh salary or promotion considerations in the balance; and real participation by the employee in the organisation's goal setting processes helps provide mutually favourable results.

Even more strikingly the same research points out that it is actually foolish to have a manager serving in the self-conflicting role as a counsellor (helping an employee to improve their performance) when, at the same time

that same manager is presiding as a judge over the employee's salary or promotion action case.

The role of technology in managing employee performance

The right performance appraisal software solution can go a long way into helping you implement an effective performance management mechanism in your organisation. A key aspect to implementing the right solution is for the software to enable you to conduct multiple appraisals for different purposes and to give you the flexibility you need to allow your performance management tools to evolve in sync with your organisational strategy and to fulfil the true vocation of performance management in your organisation as a facilitator and enabler.

The Dakar Performance Appraisal module adapts to fit your organisation's performance management model with the possibility of having as many ap-

praisal reviews throughout the year as required. It allows you to use customised appraisal templates to structure your appraisal process as per your business requirements. SMART development plans can be set to empower and motivate employees as well as discover talent for future growth and development within your organisation. Any conflicts between an employee and the appraiser can also be avoided by including a confirming appraiser who acts as a mediator during the evaluation of the respective employee's performance. Furthermore, with the possibility to set automatic notifications and reminders, your organisation's performance appraisal workflows can be truly streamlined and digitised completely.

David Catania is Chief Operations Officer at Dakar Software Systems, a specialist provider of integrated corporate HR solutions.



The S.A.F.E. programme

Since 1996, Agenzija Sedqa's strategy at the place of work focused on raising awareness on addictions and self care at the workplace through its programme called S.A.F.E. – Skills for Addiction Free Employees.

By engaging in this training and investing in the S.A.F.E programme, the company will also benefit from job retention, increase in employees values, increase employees well being, and reduce job turnover.

This programme offers informative sessions to managers/supervisors and

employees on addictions and self-care. Topics include: alcohol and its effects; drugs and their effects; gambling; wise use of technology; stress management; bullying at the workplace; skills for the parent employee/work-life balance; and approaching the employee with addiction difficulties.

The S.A.F.E. programme focuses on the introduction or review of the company's Substance Abuse and Gambling Policy. It also provides a functional referral system to Agenzija Sedqa's Care services

for employees who might be experiencing problems related to addictions that may be having an impact on the place of work.

The Foundation for Social Welfare Services is a corporate partner with the Malta Employers Association and it is also a member of the E.N.W.H.P. (European Network for Workplace Health Promotion).

For more information contact Agenzija Sedqa on 2388 5110, Facebook: Sedqa Malta and LinkedIn profile: Agenzija Sedqa S.A.F.E.

NEWS

Technology and creativity

With the advancements in technology, the urge to balance innovation and quality is in great demand. Studioseven is a 360-degree, creative-tech hub offering clients enhanced services with integrated AV solutions, video production, exhibition stands, system integration and conferences and events.

Having been in the industry for over four decades, Studioseven has always kept an eye for innovation and technology to deliver outstanding results with maximum efficiency. Studioseven's in-house team appreciates a great mix of creative minds and tech wizards aimed at delivering the projects on time in line with the client's specifications.

Studioseven has become a trusted leader and supplier in conference and events, supporting their clients by offering unique solutions to their audio-visual needs. The team's determination, focus and hard work has led Studioseven in the successful path of supporting many local and international firms ensuring customer satisfaction.

Studioseven proudly say that they are adaptive with the challenging situations and a concerned one was the pandemic

where we supported the events virtually without compromising on the quality and with zero technical issues. Whether it's an annual general meeting or presentation session, Studioseven are capable of hosting them in their studio or onsite in a complete way with full technical support including script prompters, professional camera work, timers, audio and much more.

Studioseven have also reached another set of milestones with their media production team who are experts when it comes to creative productions being one step ahead in analysing and creating the content to impress the clientele.

With their technical expertise and professional relations with world-renowned brands, Studioseven have expanded our services into distribution and providing system designs to fit the client's needs. Studioseven never miss the opportunity to ensure the client is supplied with the right brand and the right functionality.

Studioseven's one-stop-shop has grown widely to service all the technical needs a client could need together with all the branding facilities required, including exhibition stands.



Empower employees to take healthcare into their own hands.



Promote wellbeing in the workplace with HSF health plan.



Throughout this post, when "HSF health plan (Malta)" is used, it should be understood as a shortened form of our legal name, "HSF health plan (Malta) Limited". This product is targeted at employers resident in the Maltese Islands. HSF health plan (Malta) Limited is authorised under the Insurance Business Act (Chapter 403 of the Laws of Malta) and regulated by the Malta Financial Services Authority to carry on business of insurance in Malta.

NEWS

Preventing criminals from enjoying the fruit of their criminal acts

Protecting society from the effects of dirty money.



The Financial Intelligence Analysis Unit (FIAU) is Malta's financial intelligence unit and the anti-money laundering and counter-funding of terrorism (AML/CFT) supervisory authority. Our purpose is ultimately to protect society from the terrible effects of the crimes which lead to dirty money flowing into the economy and to prevent criminals from enjoying the fruit of their criminal acts.

To achieve this, the FIAU has various sections that work towards a common goal: fighting crime. The FIAU comprises of the following sections: Directors Office, Intelligence Analysis, Supervision, Enforcement, Legal Affairs, Data Management & Analytics, Cash Restriction, Corporate Services and People, Performance and Culture, and Technology & Information Security.

FIAU's primary responsibility is gathering intelligence about persons and/or companies that are suspects of illegal activity. With sufficient proof, such cases go to the Police force for further investigation. We also supervise subject persons such as, Bankers, Insurance Agencies, Gaming Companies, Real Estate Agents, Notaries, and Lawyers, to ascertain that they comply with specific rules and regulations such as the Imple-

menting Procedures; consequently, enforcement comes in when a person and/or company breaches the law.

To attain all the above, FIAU engages motivated people who have a particular interest in this area and are willing to go the extra mile and persevere to get the correct information. An inquisitive mind perseveres in finding new ways of doing things and learning methods which could enhance the Unit's internal processes and procedures. Given the job's nature, having an excellent moral compass is of utmost importance. With regards to the academics, the FIAU has a diverse workforce - with team members who have graduated from criminology, business, accounting, marketing, psychology, law, IT and various others.

FIAU's work is not a regular job and is so vast that one cannot limit themselves to one field of knowledge or set their eyes on just one area. The FIAU's work touches on so many aspects and offers varied opportunities to learn and develop, both through experience and classical learning. If you think you have what it takes to join the FIAU and want to make a difference, FIAU encourages you to look at their careers website and apply.

Take workplace well-being to the next level with HSF health plans

Offering high-value benefits not only retains employees, it attracts new ones in a job market that is only growing more competitive. Employee well-being is top of mind for companies across the globe - and it pays to offer high value health benefits.

How does it work?

HSF cash plans empower employees to claim back 100 per cent of their health costs - from private consultations and treatments to dental checkups, and optical appointments to physiotherapy - they receive a wide range of benefits for as little as €1.50 a month.

Your team can say goodbye to wait times and referrals, because the ability to claim back costs makes specialist healthcare accessible when they need it.

That means less absences at work for you and a healthier, happier team.

Get started in three simple steps:

Find the right health plan for your company needs and budget.

If you have a well-being budget for your employees, fund a level of health cover for some or all of them. Alternatively, pick a voluntary employee benefit, meaning employees will pay for their health cash plans via payroll deduction.

Once the team is set up, they will be able to take control of their healthcare and start claiming without a worry.

Benefits for you, your employees, and the community

All profits from HSF health plan are channeled back into its charity, The Hospital Saturday Fund, who give grants to



medical charities in Ireland, Malta, and the UK.

Empower employees to take healthcare into their own hands.

Promote well-being in the workplace with HSF health plan.

To learn more about cash plans available, click here: <https://hsfhealthplan.com.mt/hsf-health-plan-malta/>

NEWS

GBSB Global's top talent at the click of a button

GBSB Global is a new international business school in Malta. It is a State-recognised institution providing advanced higher education, focused on reshaping the way modern business is taught.

With multiple campuses in Birkirkara, Spain and online, GBSB Global is State-accredited by MFHEA and several international certification bodies, including ASIC, ECBE, ACBSP. We are a Five Stars Business School for Inclusiveness, Academic Development, Online Learning and Teaching & Employability.

Are you looking to attract top talent?

At GBSB Global, students learn to work in diverse local and international teams, honing soft skills that are necessary to foster change and lead by example on a global scale. These are the leaders of tomorrow, equipped with innovation, creativity and business smarts that can translate to any industry. Some of our

popular courses include digital marketing, digital business, entrepreneurship, finance and fin-tech, fashion, sports and other management specialisations at Bachelor and Master levels.

What sets us apart?

Our students graduate with up-to-date theoretical knowledge and real-world practical experience that serves as a stepping stone to a successful career. GBSB Global graduates have the marketability and know-how to stand out from the competition. The outcome: students are equipped with essential tools and technologies to be effective in the highly transformative world of tomorrow.

Are you looking to scale up with Executive Training?

Offering executive and customised training for established professionals, GBSB Global is the best institution to as-



sist companies, local HR firms and business professionals in accelerating a future-first mentality.

Looking for new and innovative ideas to tackle business challenges?

G-Accelerator's Open Innovation Challenges is a new initiative on behalf of GBSB Global's Entrepreneurship Centre, allowing students and external entrepreneurial minds to participate in open experimental projects. These are administered and led by large corporations calling for creative, innovative solu-

tions to modern problems, in alignment with G-Accelerator's main goals.

How can we help?

Our Careers, Alumni and Entrepreneurship Centre (CAEC) will help you identify talent, support your processes, coordinate job postings, invite you to various career events and help you embrace innovation through our open innovation processes.

Let's talk global education. Contact us at career.services@global-business-school.org.



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