

The below scenarios are ideal for an interactive workshop. We would suggest the following time slots:

- Industry brief instructions (ask students to get into 3 groups) (5 mins)
- Groups work on creating a solution to their brief (30 mins)
- Each group presents their findings back for 5 minutes, including one or two questions from the audience (15 minutes)

Scenario 1

You're an HR Director in a company within the Oil and Gas industry. The majority of your workers are approaching retirement age. In 5 years, there will be a 38% shortage of skilled engineers working on oil rigs. New technologies are also creating new jobs within the company that require different skill sets. However, the image of the oil industry means that attracting new people with these skills can be difficult. It's possible to tap into a wider pool of people by recruiting workers from overseas, but the cultural barriers can occasionally mean that challenges arise between different groups of workers.

You have been asked to think through these issues and develop a proposal for the CEO to approve, so you've asked your HR team to help you find solutions. Their suggestions are listed below:

- You can upskill existing staff to fill vacancies, or develop apprenticeship schemes so there are more routes into the company.
- You can create an exciting set of benefits of 'perks' to attract new graduates to your company
- You can develop a recruitment campaign and push more job adverts to the right people
- You can develop team building activities that will help everyone get along better

Task

Choose which two solutions you think are the best, and think about how you might accomplish them. Feel free to do some research online if it helps you. The following questions might also help:

- What would make you more likely to apply to a job (other than the pay)?
- Are there any benefits to working on an offshore oil rig that you could highlight?
- What could you do to make sure a diverse group of people get along better?
- How can you help people who have just joined the company, to integrate quickly and make friends?
- What kind of advert would you create to attract people to your company?
- What kind of channels could you use to advertise jobs to new graduates?

Scenario 2

You're an HR director for an NHS trust. Within your trust, there's an effort to find cost savings, so you have been asked to find ways to save money. Currently, the biggest cost is caused by a high turnover of staff. This means that people don't work at the trust for long before quitting. For example, recruiting a new nurse can cost between £2,000 and £12,000, but one in 10 of all nurses now quit every year. You can recruit temporary staff to cover gaps, but this tends to cost more than employing people permanently. It also costs a lot to keep training new people, for them to leave soon after. Plus, the staff who are left are often overstretched and stressed, which can either lead to them also leaving, or it can take a toll on their health, which leads to more sick days, which can also cost quite a bit.

You have been asked to think through these issues and develop a proposal for the CEO to approve, so you've asked your HR team to help you find solutions. Their suggestions are listed below:

- We need to address the root cause of employees wanting to leave and develop ways to make sure people are happy at work.

- We need to make sure we prioritise the health of our employees, and reduce their stress levels as much as possible.
- We have lots of data on when people tend to leave, and when it's easier to recruit new people i.e. when students graduate. Let's use this to develop predictive models for future recruitment needs. This means we can focus less on short term solutions like employing temporary staff.
- As the cost of training people is so high, we should focus on developing quick ways to train people online for a fraction of the cost.

Task

Choose which two solutions you think are the best, and think about how you might accomplish them. Feel free to do some research online if it helps you. The following questions might also help:

- What might make someone want to leave a company? Are there any ways to prevent these things from occurring?
- What makes people happy at work?
- When you're feeling stressed, what helps you to feel better?
- Why might training people online be more cost effective than training people in person?
- What kind of things could you train nurses and doctors to do online?

Scenario 3:

You're an HR director that has been brought in to help turn around a failing company within the Retail industry. Research has shown happier employees lead to greater customer satisfaction. However, harmful management practices such as timed toilet breaks are leading to unhappy employees, and some are threatening to sue the company for violating their rights. A new CEO has also been brought in and is planning on making a lot of changes which could result in job losses.

You have been asked to think through these issues and develop a proposal for the CEO to approve, so you've asked your HR team to help you find solutions. Their suggestions are listed below:

- People tend to feel quite unsettled when changes are happening, and perceived unfairness will lower employee morale, so we need to make sure we manage the changes properly and avoid redundancies where possible.
- It's clear that current line managers aren't trained up to be effective, so they should be provided with support to develop better ways of managing their staff.
- It's clear that the company isn't aware of the rights of its employees, we need to look into how the company is run to make sure we stay on the right side of the law and avoid costly Tribunals.

Task

Choose which two solutions you think are the best, and think about how you might accomplish them. Feel free to do some research online if it helps you. The following questions might also help:

- Why do people feel threatened by change?
- Have you ever been in a situation where changes around you have made you feel unsettled? If so, what might have helped you feel better in those situations?
- When the structure of jobs within a company changes, some people find that their role is no longer needed. Is there anything we can do with these people other than asking them to leave the company?
- What skills do you think people need to manage other people effectively?
- Can you think of any benefit, other than saving money, of making sure a company stays within the law?