



CAREERS IN TRANSITION:

How will outplacement evolve to help companies and workers respond to upheaval?





The jobs market is in flux.

The COVID-19 shock has come at a time when the jobs market is already going through a period of transformation and upheaval. The fourth industrial revolution, characterised by increased digitisation and automation, means the skills required by the jobs of the new decade are very different to what was needed five or ten years previously. The pandemic accelerated this change.

For people and businesses, negotiating these short-term shocks and long-term trends is challenging. Unemployment is set to rise across Europe and as a result, workers will need more support to find new positions. Firms increasingly value the continued goodwill of outgoing workers, understanding the opportunity to re-hire them in a different capacity and at a later stage. As such, ensuring workers are supported throughout their careers, including transition, is vital.

With their origins in supporting veterans returning from WWII, outplacement programmes offer practical and wellbeing support to employees facing redundancy to help them transition to new roles. In a climate of economic uncertainty, and with a jobs market experiencing a period of radical transformation, outplacement is an increasingly important tool to help employees and firms adjust. The fluid pairing of workers with jobs also performs a vital role within the efficient performance of economies.

But to meet these challenges successfully, outplacement must adapt. Our report, using Right Management's own data from over 300,000 outplacements and interviews with HR leaders at some of Europe's most important companies, shows outplacement's progress. In what we've called the 'Tuning Fork' evolution, the future efficacy of outplacement will be driven by developing two types of intelligence. Firstly, the data-driven insights needed to make sense of an increasingly volatile market for jobs, and secondly, outplacement will call on greater levels of emotional intelligence to help people at what can be a vulnerable time.

As we grapple with the twin challenges of the immediate economic upheaval caused by COVID-19 and longer-term shifts within the jobs market, the progression of outplacement is looking well attuned to the changes.

Ian Symes, Global Brand Leader – Right Management



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COVID-19 affected the pace of change rather than the direction of travel. Changes to the way people work, which had been expected to take place over many years, happened almost overnight in spring 2020. COVID-19 has meant that businesses have rapidly integrated new technologies while their employees have had to develop new skills to use them.

COVID-19 will have a structural impact on the world of work. As firms adjust to the post-pandemic economy, many will look to make efficiencies and ensure they use their employees' skills most effectively. As a result, unemployment across Europe is set to rise. Outplacement will play a major role in helping firms, workers and economies transition and recalibrate. And it offers employees real opportunity. **In 2020, 79% of outplacement candidates moved to a new role with the same or higher position.**

Flexible and remote working have cracked open the jobs market. New data from Right Management shows that workers transitioning between jobs are increasingly changing the sectors they work in. **Last year, 49% of candidates who went through an outplacement programme moved to a different industry.** They are also more frequently changing the roles they perform. This trend, flexing to meet the demands of an increasingly fast changing jobs market, is one that has accelerated in the past two years and shows little sign of abating. As a culture of career mobility has emerged, workers have become increasingly agile.

Firms benefit from embracing this emerging culture of career mobility. Constantly working to upskill and develop staff means that teams can successfully meet the new opportunities within their companies, reducing the need to hire and minimising disruption, whilst increasing workers' employability. This also primes an outgoing worker for successful and quick outplacement. And with goodwill established, there is opportunity to later re-hire these employees in a different capacity and with a set of skills the company values.

While not all roles can be performed remotely, for those that can, the shift to remote working means their options are no longer limited by location. People going through outplacement programmes are increasingly finding that instead of having to relocate for a new position, the new job is coming to them.

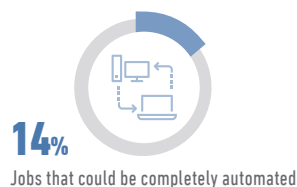
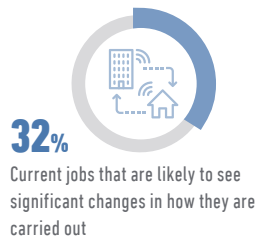
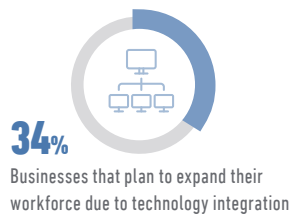
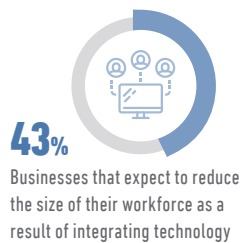
And while traditional sectors that have provided high levels of employment in the past are reducing their workforces due to the adoption of technology and slowing markets, others are on the up, responding to new demands. Firms and outplacement providers need to ensure they can measure and evaluate the changing jobs market in real-time, so that they can respond to these shifts at speed.

Data and the ability to analyse it for a fast-moving jobs market is key to both employees finding new roles and businesses ensuring their workforce is ready for new challenges. This demand requires an evolution of the skills and insights outplacement provides. In the short-term, that means giving firms greater insight based on analysis of bigger datasets and metrics. In the future, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and predictive analytics will help to make more accurate analytical decisions in real-time. The potential of these technologies is already being proved through Right Management's RightMap tool, which draws on AI to identify the roles, sectors and skills for future success and improved career mobility.

The future of outplacement will combine **data-driven insight** and **emotional intelligence** in a two-pronged 'Tuning Fork' evolution. Outplacement needs to adapt for the vital role it will play guiding individuals and organisations through the pandemic recovery, helping create a confident, agile and valuable workforce, able to face the challenges of the years ahead.



A FAST CHANGING JOBS MARKET PICKS UP PACE



In many job sectors, COVID-19 affected the pace of change. Technological advancements, which were predicted to radically alter the way people work over the long-term, have been called upon unexpectedly at short notice.

The genie is out of the bottle.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution, characterised by new technologies, automation and machine learning, promises to disrupt nearly every industry. However, as businesses have been forced to react to COVID-19, for many workers the future of work has already arrived.

The surge in digitisation and automation will be a long-term outcome of the pandemic. The adoption of new technologies will mean that some jobs will disappear, while other new roles will be created. Over the next five years, 43% of businesses expect to reduce the size of their workforce as a result of integrating technology. Yet, over the same period, 34% of businesses plan to expand their workforce due to technology integration.¹

This seismic shift means that the skills workers need are changing. Businesses' demand for skills – particularly technology and communications skills – are set to increase considerably over the next decade.² At the same time, OECD research from 2019 suggests that 32% of current jobs are likely to see significant changes in how they are carried out and a further 14% of jobs could be completely automated.³

However, business leaders and HR executives are quick to point out that these changes were already on the way. An HR leader at a leading telecommunications firm notes that the company is constantly looking at ways to change and evolve services. She says that 'over the past nine months, many changes may have been sped up due to COVID, but I think they would have happened regardless. Different skillsets are required to address the needs of an evolving business'.

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-HR Leader, Telecommunications Firm

¹ The Future of Jobs Report 2020, World Economic Forum, October 2020

² The future of work: Rethinking skills to tackle the UK's looming talent shortage, McKinsey & Company, November 2019

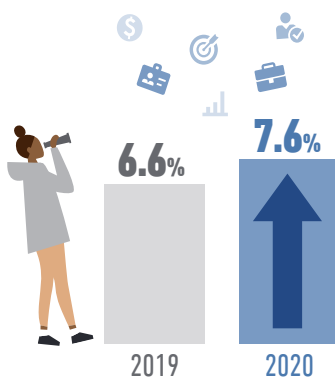
³ Skills shortages in the UK economy, Edge Foundation, June 2020



“Now outplacement support is not just part of what we do when someone is exiting, it’s ensuring that person leaves with dignity and with a focus on their mental health.”

–Lieselotte van der Meer, Principal Consultant

FROM LOCKDOWN TO TRANSFORMATION



UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

A consequence of COVID-19 is that the number of people out of work is growing, and unemployment figures could increase when government-backed business support and furlough measures are removed. **The EU unemployment rate was 7.6% in October 2020, up from 6.6% in October 2019.**⁴ Understanding how these shifts will affect the jobs market, and the skills employers need, will be key to navigating through this period of upheaval. Data and insights from outplacement services offer a unique perspective on how firms are adapting and where the skills of the future can be found.

COVID-19 will cause long-term structural changes in the world of work. As firms adjust to the post-pandemic economy, many will look to make efficiencies and ensure they use their employees’ skills most effectively.

Support will be vital for both firms and employees going through this period of transition. Outplacement has an essential role to play in this. Those facing redundancy will need practical coaching on how and where their skills can be put to best use. But they will also need wellbeing support, to help them build confidence and find their feet in an increasingly competitive and foreboding jobs market.

Kaye Owen of Lloyds Banking Group highlights the added strain on employees. She says, ‘I think the main thing that we’ve seen as a result of COVID is that colleagues who are facing redundancy seem to be in a much higher emotional state of stress than they would normally.’ And Right Management’s Lieselotte van der Meer feels this is something all organisations face: ‘Now outplacement support is not just part of what we do when someone is exiting, it’s ensuring that person leaves with dignity and with a focus on their mental health.’

Businesses know that they will be under added external and internal scrutiny as they re-evaluate their workforce needs in the wake of the pandemic. There will be particular attention on sectors that have drawn on government support during the crisis.

Organisations that value their people have a responsibility to those who are leaving. But HR leaders report that without the support of experts they can find it difficult to equip employees to take charge of their careers, and embark on the next step in their journeys. As Fiona Gadsby from John Lewis points out, ‘we want to provide our Partners with the best opportunity to find alternative work outside of the business, and outplacement provides that bridge. The depth of knowledge and information that an outplacement provider has cannot be matched in-house, so we use an expert in the field.’

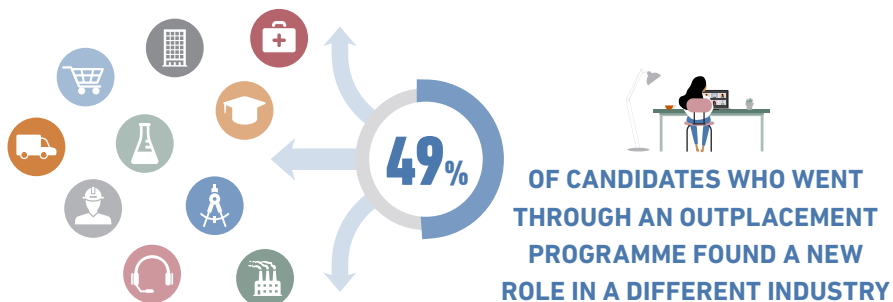
⁴ Eurostat data, December 2020

JOBS MARKET VOLATILITY INCREASING

Employees are grappling with a jobs market that has become more volatile.

In the past two to three years, workers who have gone through outplacement programmes have increasingly switched jobs across sectors and between different job roles. Right Management data reveals that globally, 49% of candidates who went through an outplacement programme found a new role in a different industry.⁵ This is the highest proportion of people changing industries in the last eight years.

Data also shows how employees need to be agile to find a new position, with nearly half (47%) of candidates changing job roles as they transitioned through outplacement in 2020.⁶ Right Management's Andreas Chittreck says this is something that is being experienced across outplacement, 'I think that people are definitely more aware of the need to be able to identify and articulate their transferable skills and be more accepting that different industries are more attractive to them than before.'



An HR leader in the telecommunications sector believes this is essential in helping candidates work out where their skills can be best placed. She points out 'If you've worked in retail all your life, is that all the skillset you have? No. Outplacement and coaches are really helping employees to understand their scope is much greater than just retail. That has changed.'

In this period of transition, outplacement can be key. As an HR leader at a leading technology firm explains, 'outplacement can provide all sorts of very helpful, evidence-based diagnostic tools to help someone to think about what is important to them in their working life and their career. And that can lead to some significant changes, and for people to have the confidence to make a change.'

"If you've worked in retail all your life, is that all the skillset you have? No. Outplacement and coaches are really helping employees to understand their scope is much greater than just retail. That has changed." —HR Leader, Telecommunications Firm

⁵Right Management candidate data, 2020

⁶Right Management candidate data, 2020



OUTPLACEMENT EXPERIENCE

Jenni found that outplacement offered her 'the expertise needed in a fast paced and fast changing world'. Having been made redundant in a challenging jobs market, outplacement provided her with the ability to recognise and reframe her transferable skills and demonstrate flexibility. Jenni believes it was these newfound attributes which not only made her stand out but gave her the confidence to seek opportunities in different sectors and prompted her to make the move from retail to design and architecture.

Although she continued to work in a similarly people-focused role, Jenni found her new job was more varied and meant she was able to develop more within the company. She believes the skills she learnt through outplacement were beneficial to her as well as her new employer.

After her experience, she said, 'outplacement gives you an opportunity to thoroughly explore yourself, enjoy all your skills, your assets and your experience, and put it into some rational order that can help you explore your next opportunity in life.'

NAVIGATING A FAST-MOVING JOBS MARKET

While there have been sizeable workforce changes across sectors it does not mean that fewer jobs will be available.

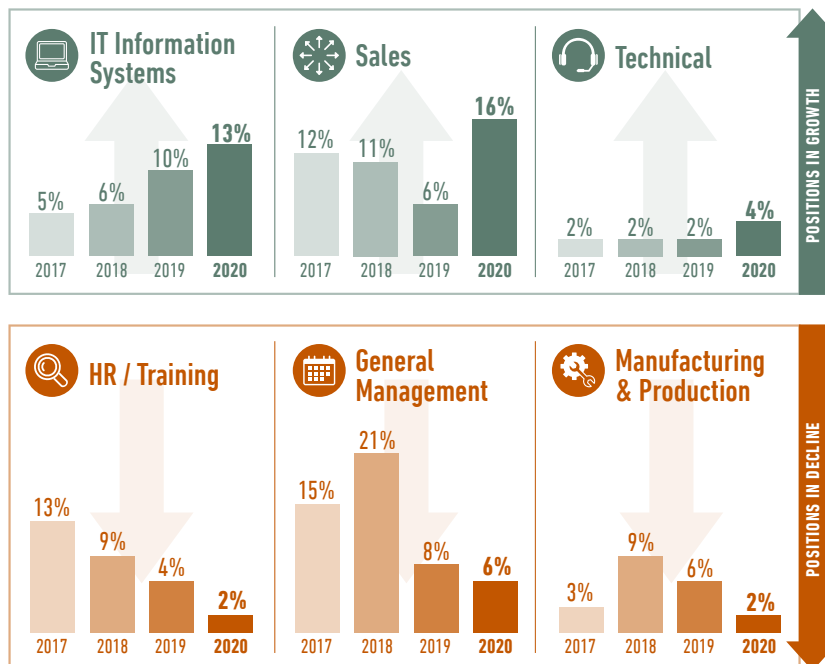
Instead, new skills are needed. For businesses and workers, understanding the skills required in the future is becoming an increasingly complex task.

This rapidly changing jobs market has been accelerated to some extent by COVID-19, but many of these trends are not new. John Lewis's Fiona Gadsby says, 'It's reflective of where we are in society and the world in general. That speed of change, nobody can predict from one end of the year to the next, what the next big thing is going to be. If you think of the speed of that change, I think the workplace is now in that kind of flux.'

Right Management's data suggests that candidates who are going through outplacement programmes need skills relevant to a new set of roles. EMEA region candidates are increasingly finding new roles in IT and Sales with these sectors on the up. Meanwhile the numbers of candidates moving to positions in General Management, HR and Manufacturing and Production are falling. These broad changes are reflective of global trends.

For HR leaders, keeping a finger on the pulse of employee and jobs market demands is key in being able to respond to these trends.

OUTPLACEMENT LANDING DATA: INDUSTRY SECTOR



Kaye Owen of Lloyds Banking Group believes firms have had to alter their approach: 'We've found over the last four or five years that it's a lot more strategic now, and there's a real acknowledgement of the importance of trying to identify the skills of the future.'

FUTURE SKILLS REQUIREMENTS ARE INCREASINGLY COMPLEX



The challenge for employers and outplacement providers alike is to keep abreast of ever quicker changes in the jobs market, a market that becomes more complex when the erosion of the office as a base creates larger markets for some roles. Data, and the ability to sift and analyse, is arguably one of the biggest evolutions in outplacement. These demands (and data) are set to grow.

A NEW AGE OF AGILE

Cross-sector mobility has become prevalent. Hiring managers are increasingly willing, and wanting, to hire people who may have a background in a different sector or job function, but who can demonstrate key skills.

There is an increasing need for an agile workforce, and for individual employees to be more flexible. **In a 2020 report the World Economic Forum lists flexibility as one of the top skills that employers see as rising in prominence in the lead up to 2025.⁷**

In order to future-proof their careers, employees need to be equipped with skills that are valuable in a changing jobs market. As Louise Brookes of Standard Chartered Bank says, 'I think employees increasingly are understanding that jobs, roles, skills, competencies, are transferable, and they'll see examples of people they've seen in their networks that have jumped industry, and that's made it feel very possible.'

There are two central benefits for employers who have a focus on future-proofing careers. Firstly, it allows existing workers to successfully meet the challenges of the business with an up-to-date set of skills. This reduces the need to hire in new skills, which can be expensive. Secondly, firms often value 'boomerang employees' – those that return at a later point and often in a different capacity. By building goodwill through providing outplacement when people leave, and maintaining skills whilst in employment, workers are more likely to return. This is a valuable pool of talent.

"I think employees increasingly are understanding that jobs, roles, skills, competencies, are transferable, and they'll see examples of people they've seen in their networks that have jumped industry, and that's made it feel very possible."

–Louise Brookes, Standard Chartered

EMPLOYERS SEE FLEXIBILITY RISING IN PROMINENCE



⁷ The Future of Jobs Report 2020, World Economic Forum, October 2020

Jimmy's OUTPLACEMENT EXPERIENCE

Following his outplacement, Jimmy has gone from working as an Area Manager in a high-street bank branch environment, to his dream job as a Sales Manager in a Call Centre where he feels he can thrive. Although he remained in the same financial sector, Jimmy made the conscious decision to move into a multi functioning office.

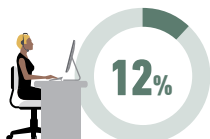
Having worked in the same role for 17 years, he emphasised how daunting it was to enter a jobs market that he felt entirely out of touch with, adding that, 'Job hunting is not just sending a CV and hoping that will work. There is a science to it.' A month after taking up the outplacement support with Right Management, he was receiving interview offers on a daily basis, and had four offers in the same week. One of which was the 'perfect job'.

For Jimmy, the most valuable element of outplacement was having a 'cheerleader' who invested in him personally and provided one-to-one support that helped him understand how to market his strengths to employers.

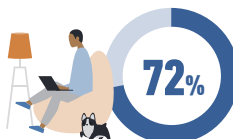
THE RISE OF THE UNTETHERED WORKER

For many people, 2020 was the year their home became their office. But looking forward, businesses will ask employees to return to offices, and many will be glad to go back. However, it's unlikely to be on the scale of what went before. **Surveys of workers suggest that only 12% of people want to return to full-time office work, and 72% would prefer a hybrid remote-office model moving forward.**⁸

PREFER FULL-TIME IN OFFICE



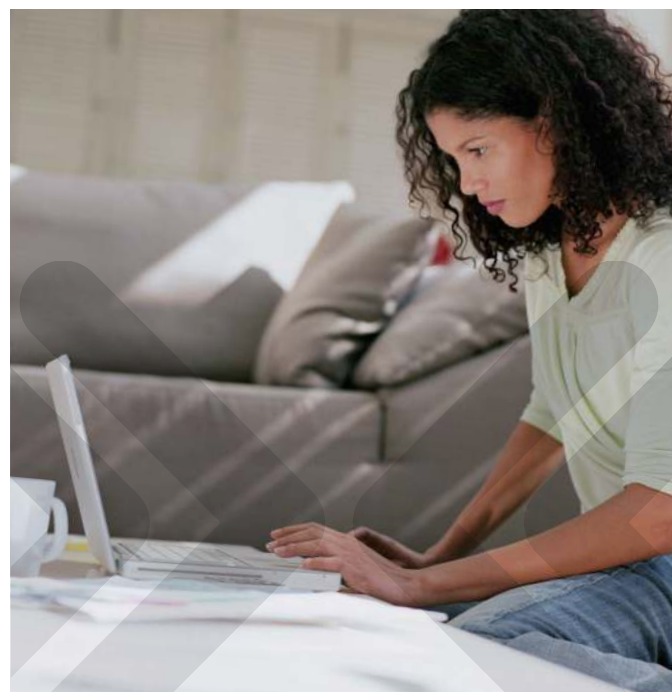
PREFER HYBRID REMOTE-OFFICE



For those seeking new roles the shift to remote working means their options are no longer limited by location. Equally, with many employers no longer stating location in their job ads, employers can expand the number of applicants they can attract, tapping new pools of talent. Louise Brookes, of Standard Chartered Bank, explains that the bank is giving employees more choice about where they work, 'We're asking all employees where they want to be based, and for most roles we're no longer dictating that they need to be in the office.'

This move to roles no longer tethered to locations is borne out by Right Management's data, with people going through outplacement programmes increasingly finding that instead of having to relocate for a new position, the new job is coming to them. **Data shows that globally only 8.4% of candidates relocated to find their new job, down from 10.5% in the previous year.**⁹

An HR leader at a leading technology firm believes workers are spending more time re-evaluating their aims. She says, 'the situation has necessitated a bit more thought, about what priorities people have. Maybe people are becoming less willing to relocate or consider long commutes, and are looking for employers able to offer a more adaptive culture including flexibility to work remotely for all or some of their time.'



⁸ Moving beyond remote: Workplace transformation in the wake of Covid-19, Slack, October 2020

⁹ Right Management candidate data, 2020



KNOW THE MARKET TO ASSIMILATE THE RIGHT SKILLS

Faced with a volatile and complex jobs market, outplacement programmes are vital to help employees and businesses navigate transition. Understandably, firms are demanding more from the outplacement services they use.

HR leaders report that over the last two to three years, successful outplacement has become more about partnership. Louise Brookes, of Standard Chartered Bank, argues that today, employees are 'looking to get a broader set of advice rather than probably ten years ago, when it was a little bit more about how can you help me land a job that looks very much like my last job'. Now employees are looking for insight about the jobs market as well as practical support and coaching so that they have confidence to take on a new role, maybe in a different sector.

Employees tangibly benefit from this approach to outplacement. Our research shows that many candidates who go through an outplacement programme actually land new roles with higher pay and more senior positions than they had at their previous employer.

In 2020, 79% of outplacement candidates moved to a new role with the same or higher position, and 57% of candidates found a position with the same or a higher salary.¹⁰



HR leaders report that those who remain in the business after an outplacement process feel that it demonstrates how an organisation values and looks after its people. Outplacement gives firms insight into the changing skills market, increasing their ability to find and recruit the staff they need.

Sue Treharne from E.ON says, 'Because it's difficult to measure, sometimes we forget how our former colleagues are continuing to boost the E.ON brand by taking their valued skills out into the marketplace.'

Ex-employees who have been through outplacement often act as advocates for the business. Hiring managers say the test of this is that they frequently rehire people who have been through outplacement programmes. An HR leader at a telecommunications firm highlights this effect, 'We do get a lot of people return to the organisation. And that's part of the return on the outplacement investment.'

"Because it's difficult to measure, sometimes we forget how our former colleagues are continuing to boost the E.ON brand by taking their valued skills out into the marketplace." –Sue Treharne, E.ON

¹⁰ Right Management candidate data, 2020

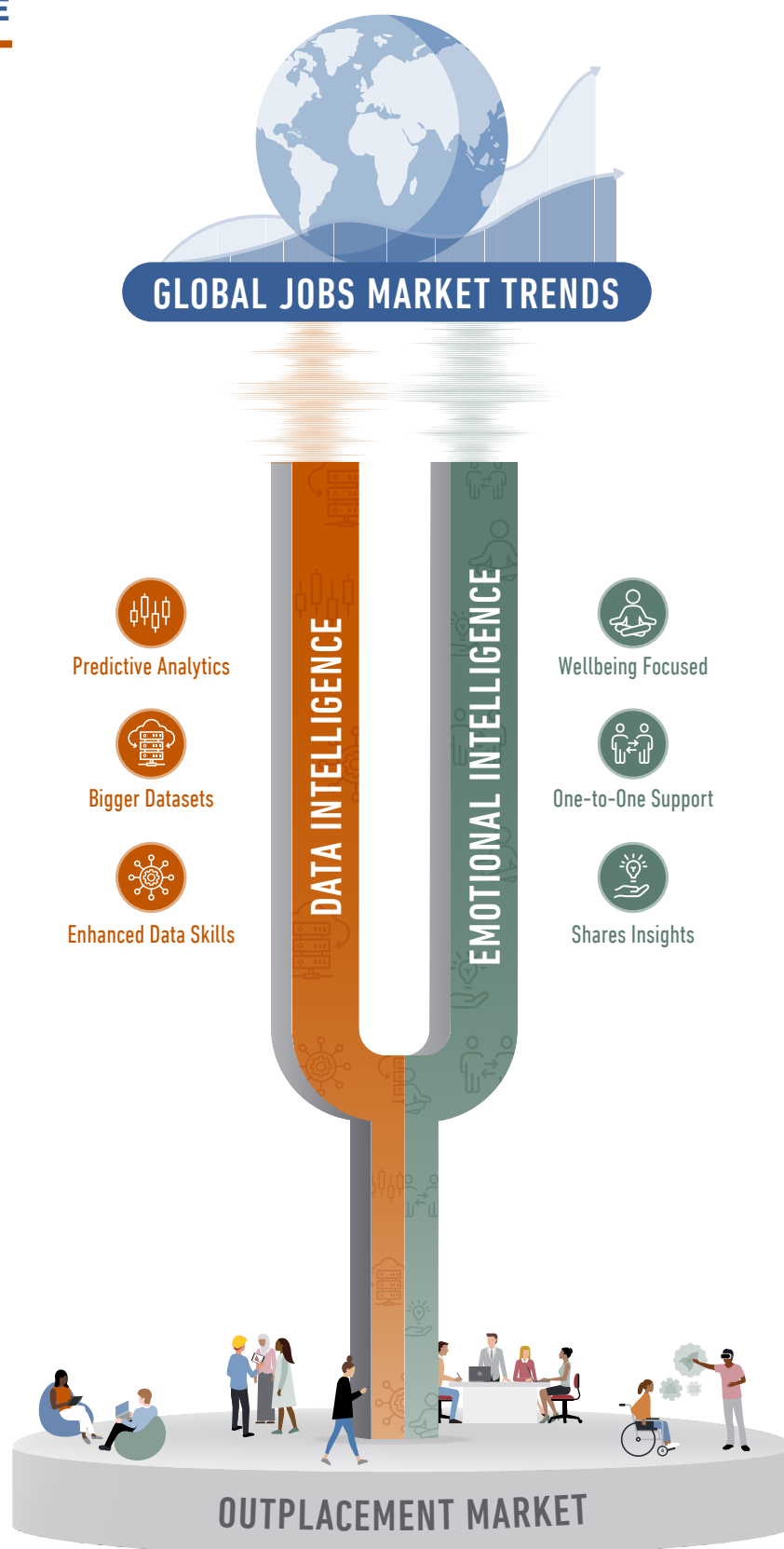
OUTPLACEMENT – WELL TUNED FOR CHANGE

The findings of this report illustrate a 'Tuning Fork' evolution in outplacement. It is evolution in which outplacement is picking up on the frequencies emitted by an increasingly demanding and volatile market for work, globally.

Two essential prongs point to the progress and future of outplacement. Perhaps counterintuitively, these prongs sit at opposite ends of the scale: data-driven intelligence and an emotional intelligence, focussed on wellbeing. They are two that, in harmony, will meet the challenges and opportunities that workers and employers can both navigate and reap.

“Break-through moments with candidates don’t come just from data. The breakthroughs come in the conversations and coaching that consultants have with individuals, helping candidates to flip their mindset and help them reach their career potential.”

-Amy Smyth, Right Management Centre of Excellence for Career Management



DATA DRIVEN INTELLIGENCE



Outplacement provides the link between a changing jobs market and organisations' business needs. A quick paced, increasingly global market necessitates more insight to make the right decisions for firms and workers alike if outplacement is to maintain its effectiveness to manage change and transition.

As such, the role and scale of data analysis is growing, and the expertise to turn statistics into insights is increasingly key.

Right Management's Barbera de Graaf reports that over the last five years, partner firms are 'looking for far more metrics, for outcomes and data that help to qualify the support they are offering to their employees.'

In the future, as the quality and quantity of data continues to grow, AI and predictive analytics will have a greater role to play and outplacement providers should ensure they are at the forefront of these advancements. **Through its RightMap software, Right Management is already showing the potential of this technology, drawing on AI to give employees and firms an increasingly accurate picture of the roles, sectors and skills that will help candidates map out their future careers.**

But, as Right Management's Amy Smyth points out, 'Break-through moments with candidates don't come just from data. The breakthroughs come in the conversations and coaching that consultants have with individuals, helping candidates to flip their mindset and help them reach their career potential.'

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



The displacement caused by the pandemic intensified a growing focus on wellbeing, as many workers, and those not working but on government support schemes, found themselves at home and potentially isolated. Experiencing redundancy at a time of uncertainty would leave many feeling vulnerable.

HR executives explain that they want to ensure their employees feel valued through their whole career with a business, meaning that leavers depart with a positive view. As an HR leader in the telecommunications sector explains, 'We truly value taking our people through their journey, and making it a positive journey, right through to exit.'

Donaldson suggests that those going through career transition programmes feel they get the most welfare support in direct one-to-one coaching. She says this gives opportunity to have 'honest conversations about where people are, that helps them to understand how they can take the next step on their career path'. **It is notable that one of most cited benefits of outplacement by HR leaders is that it builds confidence in employees. It is a valuable soft skill that consultants must continue to develop.**

With a drive towards digitally-enabled services, outplacement has become more flexible and more accessible - and the ability to access support on-demand has been welcomed by organisations and candidates alike. But technology without human intervention is not enough. **One-to-one coaching is consistently the highest driver of satisfaction with outplacement candidates, receiving global satisfaction scores of 99%.¹¹**



¹¹ Right Management candidate data, 2020



RINGING THE CHANGES – HOW EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES CAN ADAPT

1 Trust and encourage employees to **respond positively to digitisation** and automation, rather than try to protect them from it. This will help the company to more quickly integrate new technologies while also allowing employees to develop new skills and seize new opportunities.

2 Continue to be guided by the **organisation's core values** as workforce requirements are reviewed in the wake of the pandemic. This means showing the employer is taking their responsibilities to their employees seriously, including those leaving the business.

3 Embed a career mobility culture by equipping leaders within teams to **have conversations with individual employees** about their skills and their development, making them more effective team members but also future-proofing their employability and ability to find new roles elsewhere.

4 Firms should encourage employees to **engage with outplacement as early as possible** in the process so that they get added benefit, and have time to consider and assess their options.

5 Foster a culture of **career development and upskilling**, so that those who leave can continue to offer long-term value to the business. Workers who understand the values and culture of a business, but have developed skills and experience outside the company, can offer added value as gig-workers, consultants or as 'boomerang' employees.



1 Act earlier to **take ownership of their career**, taking a proactive approach to ensure they update skills, log achievements, and engage with line managers to develop their career.

2 Pay attention to **data and analysis** on the evolving jobs market, developing an understanding of in-demand skills in order to prepare for finding a new role. Be willing to be flexible in both role and sector.

3 Embrace the **opportunities offered by remote working**, and the ability to find roles not limited by location.

4 Re-evaluate their **priorities** when considering a new role to determine what model of work would meet the needs of both their work and home lives. In addition, as the role of the office diminishes employers can tap talent in locations outside the catchments of the workplace.

5 Capitalise on outplacement as an opportunity, not a tick box exercise. If candidates **engage with the process early and positively**, it will lead them to long-term changes that boost their employability and career-long success.

METHODOLOGY

We would like to thank the following businesses and HR leaders for offering insight from their own experiences that helped shape this report:

- Fiona Gadsby, Partner and Redeployment Manager, John Lewis
- Sue Treharne, Head of HR, E.ON
- An HR Leader at a leading technology services firm
- Kaye Owen, Senior Manager, Redeployment Team, Lloyds Banking Group
- A HR People Change Manager at a leading telecommunications firm
- Louise Brookes, Employee Relations Leader, Standard Chartered Bank

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- Sarah Hernon, Principal Consultant - UK
- Andreas Chittreck, Managing Director - Germany
- Lieselotte van der Meer, Principal Consultant - Netherlands
- Barbera de Graaf, Senior VP of Sales - Europe
- Amy Smyth, Right Management Centre of Excellence for Career Management - UK

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