

Productivity in a Personalised Age of Employment

Is it as simple as asking your people what they want and giving it to them?



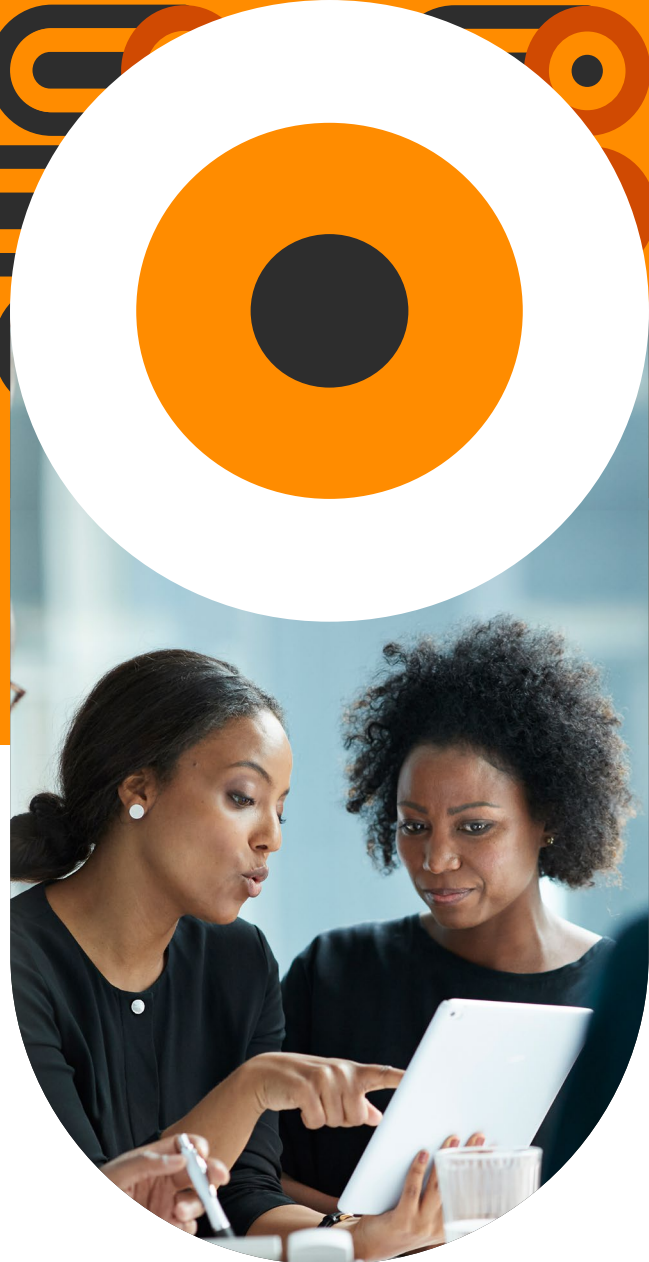
A case to add more to the change cauldron

Employers must rethink the concept of the traditional employee. Picture yourself five years from now, having the freedom to design your workday – choosing how, when, and where you tackle your tasks. Imagine a work environment that offers personalised recognition and rewards to boost your productivity, surrounded by diverse colleagues and inspiring leaders from whom you're eager to learn and with whom you're excited to collaborate. Envision a culture that challenges and fulfils you, coupled with a mission that resonates with you deeply, both professionally and personally.

Comparing this paragon against an economic backdrop of rising living costs, elevated interest rates, and weak job growth, it comes as no surprise that workers are experiencing lowered levels of job satisfaction and desire shifts in their current working conditions. At the same time, businesses are grappling with pressures to optimise costs, sustain productivity, and accelerate investment in technology and digitisation to prepare for the future and compete in the War for Talent.

Employees and employers alike are adapting to the disruptions caused by these challenges, while also bracing for the shifts that will come as Generation Z surpasses Millennials to become the largest demographic in the workforce, bringing with them workplace preferences that radically diverge from previous generations. An ageing workforce and increases in life expectancy will also affect business models and deepen the skills gap, and for all of its positive potential, Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are sprinting ahead at a pace regulation, policy and ethics are struggling to catch up with.

Africa balances unique challenges and opportunities when it becomes home to more than a quarter of the world's population under 25 by 2030, which will make up 60% of the continent's total population. Much remains uncertain, but one thing is clear: the traditional People Value Proposition falls short of attracting and retaining the skills and talent needed for organisations to succeed in the evolving world of work.



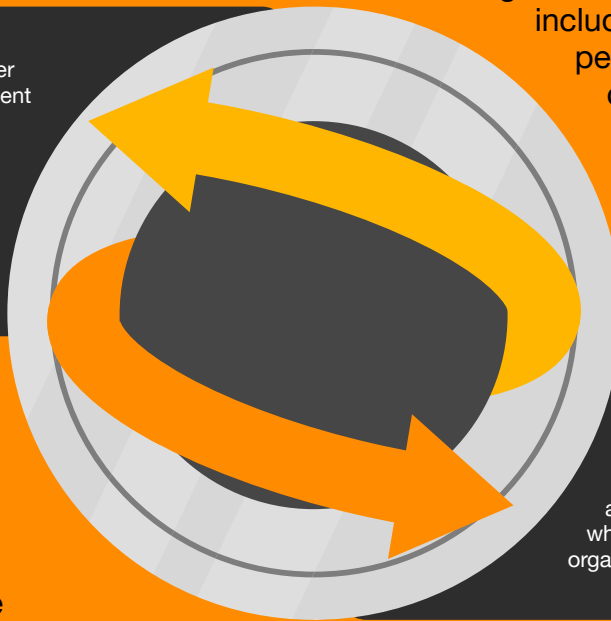
The 'Get' and 'Give' of the People Value Proposition



A People Value Proposition (PVP) is why people want to work for an organisation – what is offered to them and what is expected in return. The 'give' brings together aspects of the employment experience, from the organisational purpose and culture through to candidate value proposition, recruitment, learning and development. The 'get' encompasses what

organisations want from employees including skills, behaviours and performance. Key to this is one-size fits all approach identifying what talent looks like to your organisation.

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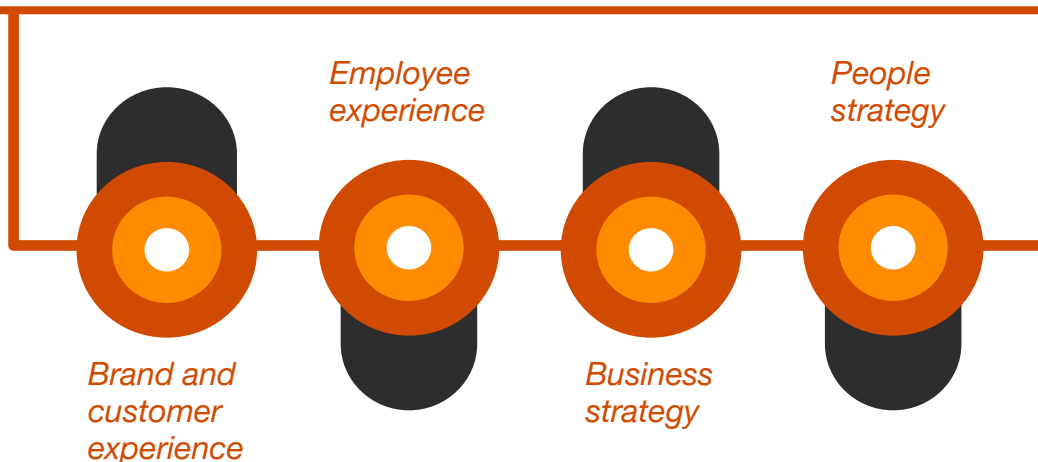


The 'get' encompasses what organisations want from employees including skills, behaviours and performance. Key to this is avoiding a one-size fits all approach and identifying what talent looks like to your organisation.

A strong PVP connects the organisation's vision, identity, and strategy with the characteristics of the desired workforce. It is defined based on the preferences of the workforce and the key behaviours necessary for the organisation to achieve its ambitions. Bringing the PVP to life is achieved through 'soft' and 'hard' factors that target different audiences in a tangible and meaningful way.

People Value Proposition

The overall PVP brings to life how the organisation will deliver on its promise to its people, encompassing all the elements below:



The 'soft' PVP comprises the communications and branding elements that make the PVP real for your workforce. It includes the articulation of the PVP as a strapline, communications tools and the overarching employer brand you create and take to the recruitment marketplace.

The 'hard' PVP is made up out of the HR policies and programmes that reflect the PVP and safeguards that the reality of being an employee at the organisation matches the narrative in the branding and other parts of the 'soft' PVP. At each stage of the employee lifecycle, the reality must match the desired message.

An organisation's workforce needs can – and will – evolve over time. An effective PVP needs to do the same. It will need to undergo continuous iteration and review so as to align these influencing factors with the latest strategic direction. This means:

- The PVP aim will vary over time to successfully enable the workforce strategy. The changes in focus will shift organisational priorities across the stages of the workforce life cycle, be it Attract, Engage, Retain and/or Transition.
- The PVP elements will vary over time to enable an effective execution of the employer promise. A PVP that is continuously responsive to the current market climate while staying true to the organisation's purpose and values will secure the right people experience and employer branding efforts.

An effective employer offer and promise must:



be **relevant** for where you want to be as a organisation.



be **authentic** based on the internal people experience of you as an employer.



be **attractive** to the target groups you want to recruit/retain.



be **unique/distinctive** and differentiating from your recruiting competitors.



Taking stock of the past, present, and future People Value Proposition

In the past, the strongest employer offerings were anchored around remuneration – competitive salaries, bonuses, shares, and generous leave balances. PwC's *What Workers Want: Winning the War for Talent 2021* report found that these offerings continue to rank amongst employees' top employer preferences. This is understandable given the challenging economic conditions employees continue to face post the COVID-19 pandemic. Material aspects of a job are also incredibly easy to implement (sometimes as simple as a signature on the dotted line, or a click on an 'approve' button) and create an immediate response of appreciation and joy from the recipient. The impact of these factors are, however, often the least enduring on employee retention and does not stop competitors from outbidding one another for talent.

The past two years have provided a period of introspection that have left many questioning whether the organisation that they work for is still a good fit. Employees continue to scrutinise how well their organisation is looking after the workforce, and doing the right thing by society at large, especially in such uncertain times. PwC's *Global Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey 2023* demonstrated that people want to work for employers that show they care. They also want the organisations they work for to live up to their purpose, values and culture. A winning People Value Proposition is, therefore, tailored to meet the dynamic needs of individuals *and* connect them to a collective desire of community, psychological safety, and purpose at work.

Employers need to strive to provide an exceptional life experience with purpose at heart of it and treat their workers as people. A new approach to the value proposition must take into account everyone that matters, be it employees, gig workers, contractors – even the employer. It needs to understand them as more than workers; it needs to see people and recognise the individuality they bring to the workplace which demands a more personalised and tailored approach for the PVP without undermining the shared culture, vision, and strategy.

This approach recognises the differing needs of the people making up the workforce and varied working relationships people have with the organisation. It encompasses any global mobility challenges, helps everyone feel valued, empowered and engaged. Balancing a sense of individuality and community is no easy task, but the organisation that gets it right stands to empower, elevate, and engage a diverse workforce capable of succeeding in the new world of work.

2000 – 2009

Wellness age

Focus on well-being and work-life balance initiatives. Beginning to accept working from home for set days.

2010 – 2019

Digital age

Focus on creativity and collaboration to drive digital innovation. Coworking and hoteling become the norm.

2020 – 2021

Virtual age

Focus on COVID return to work approaches and defining permanent future work virtual/flexible/remote model.

2021+

Personalised age

Work empowers the individual employee to satisfy their preferences to 'consume' work where and how they perform best.

2023+

Intelligent age

Work empowers individual, team and organisational performance through real-time scientific intelligent analytics.

Organisations should be focusing here now



Empowering a modern, diverse workforce by outgrowing a ‘one size fits all’ approach

Unexpected challenges can drive businesses to think creatively and fast-track transformation. Changes to your market and industry might require you to replace old methods with newer, more innovative solutions. These change factors sometimes create opportunities to develop a happier, more engaged and more productive workforce. Furthermore, responding to both internal and external change factors with structural change and actionable values might improve your organisation's culture. For example, in response to sociopolitical demand for more gender equality in the workplace, a business might choose to hire more women in leadership positions and offer extended parental leave. This could help women in the organisation feel more comfortable expressing their opinions at work and be more motivated to accept additional responsibilities in pursuit of career growth.

Today's workforce is becoming increasingly demanding and vocal about work experiences that do not live up to promised expectations, which risks breaching the psychological contract, quiet quitting, and burnout. Ongoing measurement and data collection is, therefore, essential to understand how employees experience the PVP, identify strengthened or weakened relationships, compare competitor offerings, and recognise shifts in overall preferences which may or may not be unique to your workforce. Most importantly, keeping a pulse on your people's preferences shows that you are willing to listen, empower, care, and change to create an exceptional work experience. It shows they are part of driving purpose in the organisation, not backseat passengers.

A retrospective study of PVP trends proves that organisations unwilling to reinvent their present employee offering risk losing out on the people needed to succeed in their future ambitions.

Employee preference and choice must be factored in to recruit and retain great talent, and to increase engagement driving sustainable productivity and performance. From gym memberships and ping-pong tables to flexible work models and virtual team-builders, how employers ‘give back’ to employees should evolve in tandem with employees’ dynamic wants and needs.



Looking at current and future trends, organisations need hybrid strategies to reflect the personalisation of work and how individuals and teams “consume” work using real-time tools or leverage advanced insights from human sciences. Focusing on strengthening the interaction of people and technology in the ways of work sets employees up for future success. This is especially true when organisations embed digitisation and technology-enabled solutions, such as real-time data analytics, actively into business decision-making and execution.

In terms of workplace preferences, multi-workplace working is in-demand with 72% preferring a mix of face-to-face and virtual working. Furthermore, PwC’s *Remote Work Survey (2021)* found that remote and hybrid working is preferred as 83% of employers say the shift to remote work has been successful for their company and two-fifths of 25-44 year olds are more likely to prefer a hybrid working approach, as reported in *PwC’s Chief Executives’ Forum (2021)*. Evidently, the modern employee values the benefits of in-person collaboration and better work-life-balance enabled by remote work models. The freedom to transition between face-to-face and virtual work based on employees’ preferences and fluctuating work demands is a step towards workplace personalisation and encompasses the variety of benefits supported by hybrid models.

Most economists predict that the Great Resignation has reached its tail, but what the “reshuffled” workforce wants still needs clarity. What organisations are seeing is a difference in workplace productivity style by age. PwC’s *Remote Work Survey (2021)* found that 61% of employees aged 18-24 feel the least productive when working from home compared to 72% in other age groups. As Gen Z starts to bulk up employee numbers, employers must consider strategies to foster collaboration and connectivity to meet individual preferences and expectations. Purpose remains at the heart of the modern workforce and employees want to work for organisations that inspire and commit to Environment Society Governance.



PwC research found that employee expectations for organisation support has changed:

- There is an expectation of flexibility and autonomy – 33% of workers would not accept a new role that did not offer remote working.
- Nearly 3 in 10 would consider a pay cut to work anywhere in the world.
- There is an expectation for the organisation to hold itself accountable for the creation of a fairer, more inclusive and equitable workplace.
- Employees are expecting organisations to be more agile and provide the enabling technologies to help them work when and where they want.

Perspective on location needs to change: it's not just where you're located, it's also *when* and *how* you work. There is a need to consider where the ideal locations are to find workers with the right skills. It is far from surprising that many organisations have not yet started to think through their future vision for their workplaces. For some organisations the disruption caused by successive global lockdowns has resulted in a perpetual focus on returning workers to workplaces leaving little time for the development of a longer term vision. For others, this shifting landscape creates nervousness in making decisions with any degree of resolution. What is clear is that no two organisations will be starting from the same place and that a one-size-fits-all approach is out of fashion for the foreseeable future.

1. Identify the right strategies to plan for, attract, develop and retain the future workforce

- Develop different workforce models to deploy talent more dynamically
- Define future workforce and understand the possibilities from automation and remote working
- Focus on targeted personalised upskilling journeys

2. Understand your cultural traits and identify the behaviours to evolve

- Identify the critical behaviours to sustain long-term change and culture shift
- Nurture physical vitality and mental wellbeing as a core cultural foundation

3. Co-create with employees and provide new ways to listen, enable, and iterate

- Promote a continuous focus on keeping people at the centre of design decisions
- Develop an People Value Proposition that reflects what workers want

4. Understand current leadership capabilities and ways to inspire a distributed workforce

- Inspire new ways of working and build connections and community while working remotely



What is at stake if we do not act?

Employees are making judgements on how well their organisation responded to the post-pandemic challenges and are leaving in search of organisations that prioritise exceptional employee experiences, celebrate individualism, share purpose and support preferences of a diverse workforce. With demand for talent far outstripping supply across the globe, the modern employee knows that there is no shortage of available roles in the War for Talent. Only the most person-centric and purpose-driven organisations will attract, hire, grow and retain the skills and talent needed to go from 'survive' to 'thrive' in the future of work.

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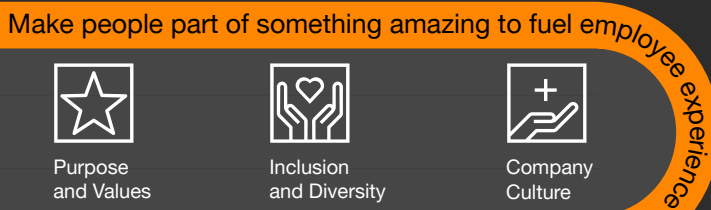
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PwC *Hopes and Fears Survey* (2021)

Productivity in the Personalised Age of Employment

In the dynamic landscape of modern workplaces, embracing personalisation not only inspires individuals but catalyses heightened productivity and drives company success. The personalised People Value Proposition sets employees up to experience factors which significantly influence sustained engagement and motivation at work: conducive learning, psychological safety, a sense of individuality, and shared community. Simply put, when employers try to meet employee needs, employees will try to meet employer needs. **10 factors** have been identified, that need to be considered when evolving, personalising and tailoring a highly **productive workforce** in the new age of productivity:

Make people part of something amazing to fuel employee experience



- Purpose and Values
- Inclusion and Diversity
- Company Culture

Recognise the strength of an individual and community



- Technology and Infrastructure
- Ways of Working
- Communication and Collaboration

Empower your workforce to sustain productivity



- Autonomy and Empowerment
- Workload and Task Allocation
- Learning and Development
- Recognition and Career Progression

1

Purpose and Values: A strong PVP articulates the purpose of the organisation, which allows the workforce to feel connected and resonate to meaningful work. When the company values align with the workforce, it creates a shared identity in resonating with the company culture.

2

Inclusion and Diversity: Perceptions of a fairer employee experience improves employee performance and employee retention by up to 26% and 27% respectively¹. Until recently, questions around fairness have expanded beyond inclusion and diversity (e.g. hiring, promotion, compensation etc.). Creating an inclusive and diverse workplace that celebrates individual differences, perspectives, and ideas, fosters innovation and productivity regardless of the work location. Organisations that equip their staff to succeed and advance in their careers as well as provide flexible support initiatives so employees understand how it benefits them and the organisation, improves the employee experience.

¹ Kropp, B., Knight, J. & Shepp, J., 2022. How Fair is your Workplace?. Harvard Business Review, 14 July.

3

Company Culture: Leadership are pivotal in building and promoting psychological safety and driving sustained motivation within their teams. An agile leadership style is imperative in this modern age. The leader's ability to influence attitudes and morale of the team is important in fostering a positive work environment, reducing stress and improving job satisfaction. In addition, organisations must support leadership from the top-down in improving employee well-being and work-life integration by offering thorough and flexible family-friendly policies and mental health initiatives. Organisations must define the right set of KPIs through holistic indicators (business KPIs that track productivity and effectiveness drive accountability within the team, but also well-being and collaboration KPIs). These KPIs can help predict productivity, or provide early warnings when people are feeling strained. 1 in every 8 people in the world live with a mental health disorder². Mental health disorders involve significant disturbances in thinking, emotional regulation or behaviour and impacts relationships, work performance, capability and promotions. Frequent, vulnerable and open staff conversations with human-centred leaders are therefore imperative for staff to explain reasons of their well-being, should they wish to allow for the option of getting the required support.

4

Technology and Infrastructure: Organisations have to rethink their digital business models and processes to become more competitive in the market. Organisations should understand their workforce's unique needs before implementing any technology. A recommended leading practice for an organisation to increase confidence that it's choosing the right technology for employees, is to involve them appropriately from the start in the selection, development and deployment process. In this way, the end-users can help co-create a solution that meets their needs, matches their ways of working and solves their problems. We foresee a massive impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) on employee roles and experiences, as generative AI starts aiding the workforce through hyper-productivity as some tasks can be completed much faster than ever before. This may result in mundane tasks being automated, freeing up capacity for the workforce to critically think on other complex tasks, which require cognitive thinking and decision making, thereby allowing more time spent on innovation.

5

Ways of working: Recognising and accommodating different work styles and preferences (i.e. office bound vs hybrid model etc.) to enhance productivity through increased flexibility and engagement. Businesses are encouraged to have Work from Home (WFH) and Work from Office (WFO) policies that ensure business performance isn't compromised for flexibility. Promoting workplace flexibility demonstrates an organisation's commitment to employee well-being. Adopting Smarter and New Ways of Working (NWoW) fosters productivity by reducing bottlenecks and promoting faster decision making. These in turn result in an agile workforce that is flexible and able to pivot in response to shifting market demands or customer needs.

6

Communication and Collaboration: Facilitating effective communication channels and use of collaboration tools fosters improved teaming, knowledge sharing, and productivity. Information bottlenecks are addressed through creating a culture of collaboration within the team and hyper-collaboration through multiple teams. Understanding of social dynamics to build positive relationships amongst team members are vital for employee engagement. Regular "huddles" help maintain a connected team and sense of community even when working remotely. The frequent team touchpoints create opportunities to discuss performance, review key metrics that matter most, well-being, priorities, and any issues at hand, as well as to celebrate successes.

² World Health Organisation, 2022. Mental Disorders. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-disorders>
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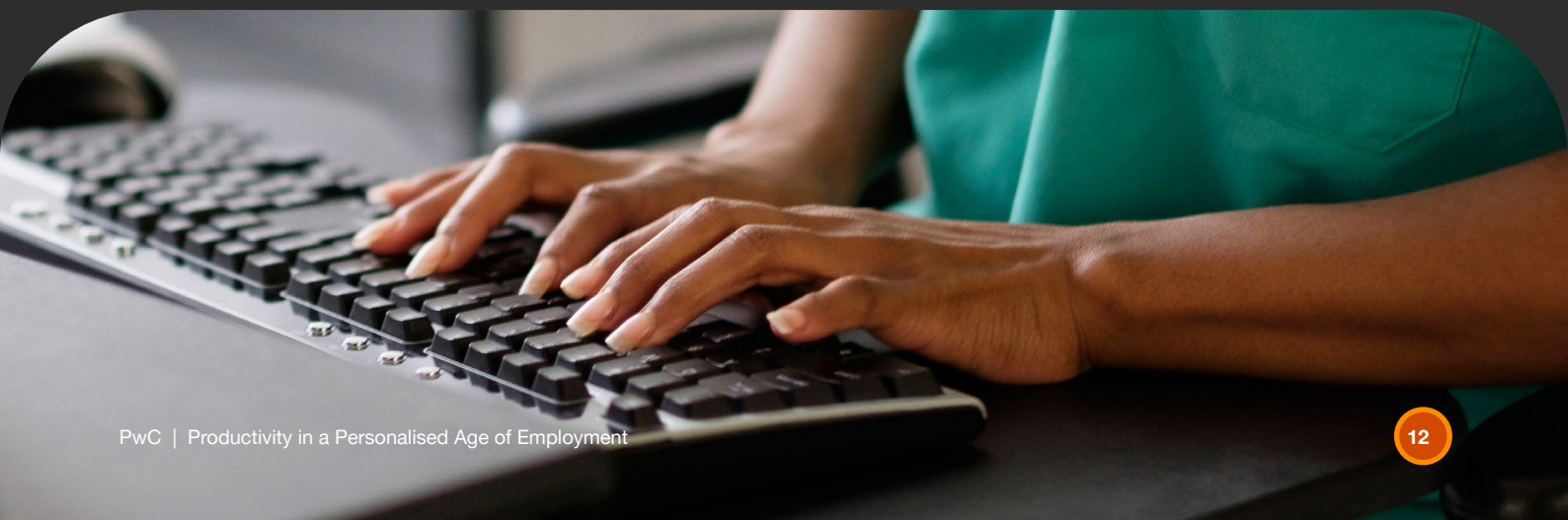
7 Autonomy and Empowerment: Enabling employees the freedom to make decisions and take ownership of their work, fosters motivation and productivity. Empowering more ‘informal’ leaders fosters productivity, increased autonomy and recognition, faster and more informed decision making and increased initiative. Leveraging the diversity of the workforce’s thought and encouraging sharing ideas enables everyone’s voices to be heard and ensures problems are being resolved by the frontline. Encouraging the workforce to be more intentional in their development through setting clear and specific goals, being proactive in identifying opportunities and challenges allows them to continuously challenge themselves and improve by setting stretch targets.

8 Workload and Task Allocation: Assigning tasks and responsibilities based on individual strengths, skills, and interests may drive productivity and job satisfaction. Organisations of the future want to instil ‘high performing’ teams. A high performing team consists of members committed to each other’s personal growth and success. In order to create high performing teams, workload needs to be as much as possible evenly distributed amongst the team. Individual and team targets also need to be fair and reasonable in order to foster a healthy, competitive environment in teams.

9 Learning and Development: Providing personalised training, upskilling, and growth opportunities tailored to individual aspirations and career paths could result in the workforce taking additional responsibilities and challenges. A culture of continuous learning and improvement may be created once staff become more proficient and willing to share their knowledge and expertise with others. Developing the role of today’s leaders requires a strong emphasis on specific leadership skills such as empathy, the ability to foster a sense of community and digital skills, and this should be recognised in leadership training and development. Leaders may require specific coaching in order to have bold and courageous conversations to successfully manage underperformers.

10 Recognition and Career Progression: Regular recognition not only helps maintain a positive working culture, but also an important driver of productivity. 44% of the workforce feel they are not recognised and empowered in a way that motivates them³. Leaders should therefore express recognition, tailored to their workforce in a meaningful and genuine way. Offering personalised career advancement opportunities and challenging work environments that aligns to individual aspirations and goals, enhances motivation and productivity. Using techniques, such as gamification through performance leaderboards or competitions with prizes, can encourage desired behaviours. Although the workforce may have differing career aspirations, organisations that clearly define career paths as well as have mentoring, coaching and learning opportunities strengthens the PVP.

3 PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2022. *Perform Plus*, s.l.: s.n.



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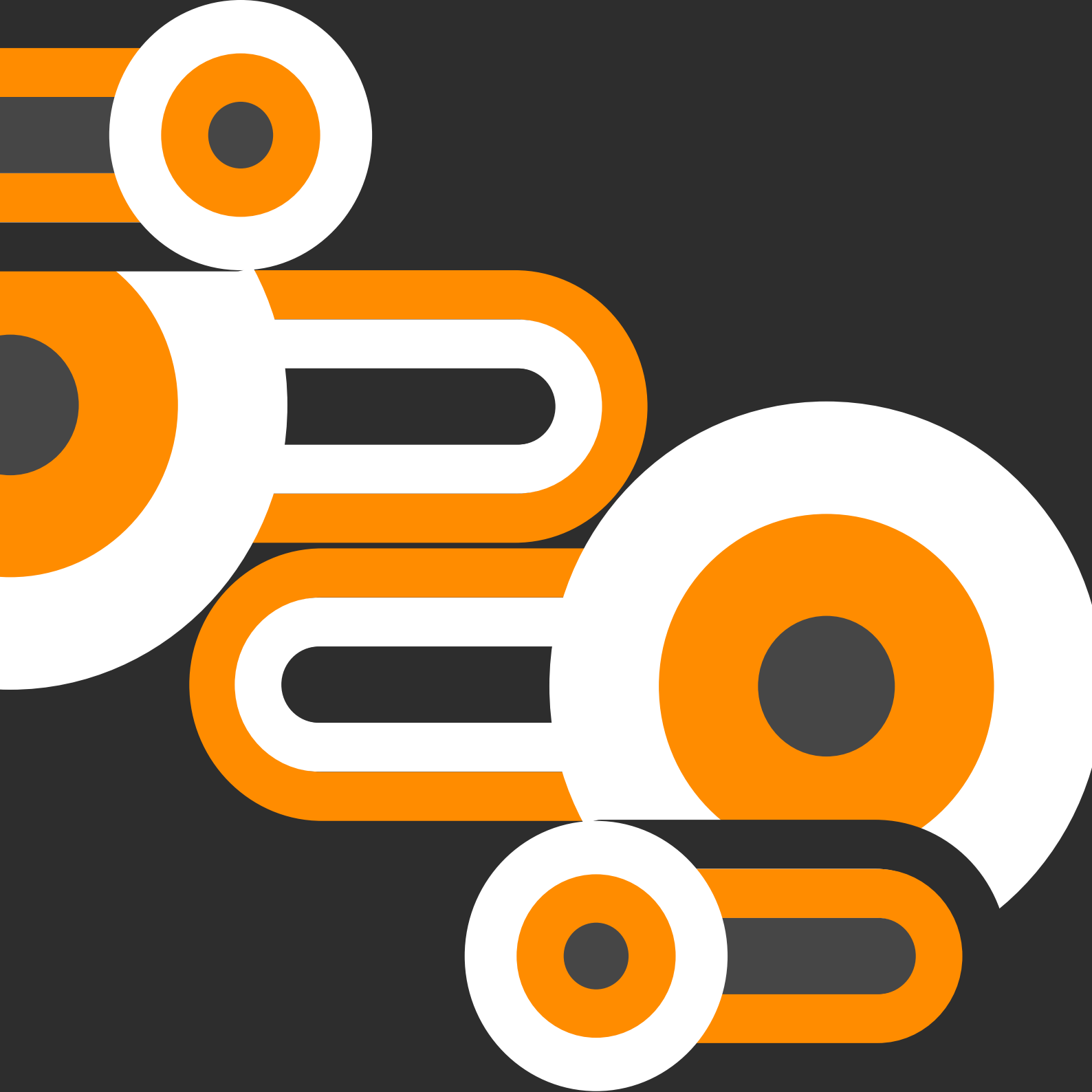
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