



# HR books



## Attributes that help you at work

In our series of personal development careers and coaching experts for HR directors on getting ahead in the 21st century



### A Dozen Brilliant Reasons to Employ Disabled People

Author: **Jane Hatton**  
 Publisher: **Elite**

**Publishing Academy**

Price: £14.99

With the consumer spending power of disabled people adding around £249 billion to the economy each year, can businesses really afford to ignore them? In this book Hatton outlines how making your workforce inclusive to people with disabilities can drive business success. She uses evidence from a wide range of research, case studies and personal experience.

by 'digital natives'. Conley argues that experience is still what counts most in the workplace. At 52 Conley joined Airbnb as head of global hospitality and strategy. *Wisdom at Work* is his manifesto for redefining age.



### Culture Your Culture: Innovating Experiences @Work

Author: **Karen**

**Jaw-Madson**

Publisher: **Emerald Publishing**

Price: £24.99

In *Culture Your Culture* Jaw-Madson shows organisations how they can systematically build culture through positive experiences at work. It's intended to be a resource for people and organisations to apply 'design thinking' to company culture, in order to create meaningful experiences. Jaw-Madson hopes that through introducing the notion and with her guidance anyone can become an expert in creating their own culture.

HR leaders require many traits to lead the people agenda of an organisation. Consider one much-admired attribute variously described as 'staying power', 'resilience' or 'grit'. Grit is defined as self-control; the ability to push through setbacks and difficulties. For some it is seen as the most important predictor of leadership success.

But is grit really essential in business? An entrepreneur who has put his or her home, family and welfare on the line might display grit in the face of financial ruin, and still be willing to start again. But in established companies grit is much rarer, many believe. Naomi Shragai, a psychotherapist and business consultant, believes large companies are "a haven for insecure or emotionally-fragile individuals who need the assurance they receive from managers to compensate for their lack of self-belief".

This assessment may seem a bit unfair. There are plenty of cases where grit is required in an organisation. When two companies merge, for example, HR leaders have a thankless task trying to fuse working cultures and roles. There are also plenty of scandals, harassment claims and whistleblowing incidents that require toughness from HR.

But grit is far less important than other attributes. It alone won't ensure you succeed at the top. Instead, at the *Financial Times* | IE Business School Corporate Learning Alliance we have identified seven other attributes that might.

**Enthusiasm:** If, as Churchill once said, "success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm" then there's no shortage of opportunities to develop this skill in a corporate world littered with pointless innovations and jettisoned investments. Don't take setbacks personally. Instead embrace the next challenge with undiminished spirit.

**Luck:** Luck manifests in many ways. You might be lucky to have benefitted from family contacts, an expensive education or you might enter the workforce at the start of an economic boom, gaining valuable experience and assets early on. For some so-called luck increases in relation to hard work. Perhaps luckiest of all are those able to pursue a passion.

**Passion:** Genuine passion is not grinding through each day until the mortgage is paid off. It is about showing that rare quality of total absorption in your job. Chasing



### Racism at Work: The Danger of Indifference

Author: **Binna Kandola**  
 Publisher: **Pearn**

**Kandola Publishing**

Price: £14.99

Generally speaking society has become more tolerant towards minorities over the past 60 years. However, the outcomes for minorities have changed little. This is because, Kandola says, like a virus prejudice has mutated. This book looks at how race affects the workplace: from recruitment to perceptions of leaders. It contains thorough research, direct observations, and decades of professional practice.



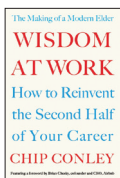
### Not Doing

Authors: **Steven D'Souza and Diana Renner**

Publisher: **LID Publishing**

Price: £12.99

From the authors of *Not Knowing*, D'Souza and Renner's follow-up book explores how we can be effective once we stop struggling. The authors explain that we are often engaged in a kind of 'doing' that is more about effort and struggle, rather than a place of awareness, openness and presence. This ultimately ends in burnout. *Not Doing* looks at what is driving excessive activity, and explores a 'doing' that is more about wellbeing, harmony and creativity.



### Wisdom at Work

Author: **Chip Conley**  
 Publisher: **Portfolio Penguin**

Price: £14.99

In a world that venerates the young, mid-career employees can often feel undervalued and threatened



# that will the top

At the top of each column, we ask our readers for their advice for the year 2018 and beyond



the dream isn't always straightforward. When British-Asian comedian Sanjeev Bhaskar told his mother he wanted to become an actor she responded: "Son, we pronounce that doctor".

**Family:** It's a commonplace view, but much career success is rooted in strong family bonds. Families don't have to be conventional, but a supportive partner and emotionally-stable family life from an early age anchors long-term ambition and creates resilience against failure. Too much 'grit' is wasted on divorce and familial bitterness.

**Tolerance for the mundane:** As an HR director you'd like to think you've been hired because the company wants 'the best brains'. It doesn't. Companies do want leaders with above-average intelligence, common sense, reliability, competence, and so on. But much of your work will still be dull and repetitive. It will, however, help you gain what's known as 'experience'.

**Physical fitness:** It's not unusual to discover your CEO once enjoyed success on the sports field. Even for those less fleet of foot, the gym has become an essential feature of working life. There's a reason for this. Flying around the world to manage remote offices requires an athlete's stamina. It also helps prevent illnesses that can undermine the most determined high flier.

**An ethical perspective:** It sometimes seems only psychopaths make it to the top. But the absence of ethics often presages a far more dramatic fall. When no-one can call the leader to account, and the company's conduct is ambiguous, everything depends on the leader's own sense of right and wrong. As an HR leader you need to represent the moral dimension of the organisation.

**Paul Lewis is editorial director of the Financial Times | IE Business School Corporate Learning Alliance**

## HR future leader of the *month*

HR magazine speaks to the future leaders of the industry to discover the long-term trends they are planning to tackle in the years ahead

### What are your main concerns in HR today?

Productivity. We are one of the least productive countries in the EU. Creating stimulating experiences at work, and finding innovative ways to engage employees, is a continuous challenge for people teams today.

I think in the longer term one of the ways employers will seek to answer this problem will be to open up more opportunities for flexible working. This is still considered against the norm in many organisations. We have a long way to go in getting this right, and making sure it does improve productivity, but I am hopeful we will see a positive shift in the coming years.

### What will become more important for HR over the next five years?

Technology will continue to drive significant change for HR and employment practices. Whether that is in terms of software to support recruitment, employee engagement or workforce planning, or in the increasingly diverse channels of virtual communication, it is important we keep abreast of developments. We need to support companies in embracing new digital cultures. The most important part of this will be making sure we understand and maximise the potential benefits new technologies can bring – not only in growing our skills as individuals but in the evolution of the profession as a whole.



**Name:** Lucy Woodward  
**Job title:** Employee wellbeing and retention manager  
**Organisation:** United Learning

### What subjects will HR still be tackling when you retire?

I would hope that everyone with management responsibility receives sufficient training. But, though we know the impact of poor line management, in many cases companies still fail to invest in proper training.

Management is also not something that comes naturally to everyone and shouldn't be the only way for employees

to progress. Until companies feel brave enough to remove traditional hierarchical structures I worry that we will continue to see unsuitable people in positions of significant responsibility.

### What do you plan to do to change HR for the better?

I like to think if you work hard, take risks, and continuously look to improve you always have the power to make a difference. The best part of my job is supporting school leaders to create positive working environments where staff feel valued and supported. This is proof to the rest of the workforce that HR is a department that genuinely cares.

I want to continue promoting employee wellbeing as a key priority, address the barriers to flexible working, and support the creation of stronger more diverse workforces. I am always ambitious for the future of HR because I know we can make a huge difference to any company. **HR**