The Hidden Number: How the Best Workplaces Turn Trust into Performance

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Rebecca Moulynox: Hello everybody. So we have been having some slight technical difficulties unfortunately this morning. Zoom has decided to kick us out quite a few times, so hopefully this is the last time we get kicked out and we're all here. I can see that there's lots of participants logging on right now, so we're going to kick off. If at all Zoom decides to kick us all out again, we might have to redo this webinar, but for now we are here and we are going, so let's see how we go. So thank you everyone for joining us today. We're all a little bit flustered because we've been kicked out of this webinar a few times, but we will endeavour to kick it off and do a really good session for everyone. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to get the panel to actually to introduce themselves, give us a brief overview of who you are, where you're from, and what your role is, and then we're going to kick off into the good stuff. So, Anand, we'll start with you.

Anand Bakshi: Thanks, Bec. Can you hear me okay? Just want to check Zoom is working for us.

Rebecca Moulynox: Yeah.

Anand Bakshi: All right. Hello everybody. I'm Anand. I'm the principal for value and strategy for Cornerstone. Fancy title, but essentially what I get to do is I get to talk to, our prospects and customers across Asia, Pacific and Japan, and essentially connect their organizational strategy to their people priorities and determine what really are the value outcomes that, we can deliver for the organization. So essentially I'm in the room, which is essentially, trying to convince a conversation which is in happening in three different dialects between CFO, CHRO, and the HR, functional leaders. And essentially what I culminate is a business case for the, for the technology transformation for the organization. So, and I was, really privileged to be part of this research and, happy to share some insights that came out of that

Rebecca Moulynox: Thank you, Anand. And sorry, I'm just going to ask, we just had someone in the comments say that it's reverberating a little bit, so the team, when you're not talking will get you guys to put yourselves on, mute for a little bit. Hopefully that should fix it up. But Fiona, we'll hand over to you, please.

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Fiona Pereira: Hi, good morning everybody. My name's Fiona Pereira, and I'm Director of Talent Acquisition and Talent Management for Marriott for Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific, so basically take care of all things talent. I'm based in Sydney, and in one month's time it will be my 33rd year with Marriott

Rebecca Moulynox: That's amazing. Thank you, Fiona. And Rikki

Riki Tanaka: Hi, everyone. My name is Rikki. I am from Hilton corporate office. I am in the HR space and have been so for, the last four to five years, with a background in front office, so, live and breathe hospitality, and, really happy to be here on, the call with everyone today.

Rebecca Moulynox: Amazing. Thank you so much. Okay. So I'm still impressed. 33 years, that's amazing. That's so good. Okay, so little bit of housekeeping, but as we go, if you have any questions, please drop them into the Q&A chat. I'll try and keep an eye on it during the conversation, but we'll also have time at the end, so any questions you put in there, we'll make sure we ask. But to start it off, so for those of you who know Great Place to Work, that, Great Place to Work went and did a bunch of research about 30 years ago into what people find are the best workplaces. They looked at, structure and hierarchies and employee ownership and all sorts of things, and what they actually found was that in every industry, in every company, in every country, in every size organization, that the one thing that came through really clearly was trust. And today we're going to show you what that's actually worth in dollars because, Cornerstone has done a, a survey and done a report to look at what does actually, what does culture mean for an organization? What can it actually bring to the organization? For those of you in HR, we know we talk about it all the time, and it's seen as this fluffy thing, but actually, we know, if you work in this space, we know categorically that culture makes a huge difference to an organization and makes a bottom-line difference. And there's a big gap, actually. So when you look at the data in the Cornerstone report, HR leaders are rating their own culture and capability at about 80, out of 100, and then the employees are scoring it down much lower, about 15 points lower. And that's a real concern when the employees are seeing something different to what HR leaders are seeing as well. So my first question's actually for Anant. So Cornerstone has worked out through this report that there's about 1.64 million of economic value per 1,000 employees for 10-point increase in culture and capability. It's a pretty significant value being left on the table. So can you give us a view of, why Cornerstone look, did this study and why it's relevant for the listeners and what is the methodology behind the study and what makes it credible?

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Anand Bakshi: Yeah. I think, I think the objective really was we've experienced it, right? When we talk about culture, we're talking about, it's a vibe at the office, how you feel on a Monday. But we wanted to go beyond that and put really a dollar figure behind that. And we wanted to connect, the capability drivers to workforce outcomes and really tie it to the economic, impact for those organizations as well. Because we really want to help HR leaders, have a significant business case that they can take to their executives saying that, "Hey, this is beyond subjective. There's material economic impact that is being felt, that is being, left, this is falling through the gap as well." So essentially we wanted to, have a framework which was sophisticated framework to measure workforce readiness, and we wanted to go beyond culture and engagement because, in most of the organizations when we talk about employee engagement, they say, "Yes, we track that with our employee engagement scores." But we wanted to go beyond that, and that's why we devised a framework which was-- which is, comprises of six pillars. So we had, starting with skills visibility, learning activation, mobility, learning, leadership change management, and AI and workforce readiness, right? So going much more beyond culture and engagement. And as part of the study, we had, a study conducted across ANZ with our independent researcher, YouGov. And we asked a set of questions for both HR leaders and employees. And we wanted to measure, hey, what is the difference in experience on these six pillars that has been experienced between HR leaders and employees? And we measured that, we benchmarked that, and we also tied it to the economic impact, based on each country as well. So we have an Australia specific study, we have a New Zealand specific study, which connects that, capability drivers to workforce outcomes and the economic impact that is being felt, for the organizations. So the whole point of this is that we want to give a, a sophisticated framework that our HR leaders can take to their executives and measure what is the reality that is being anticipated by HR leaders and what is being experienced by the employees, and what is it costing the organization in terms of the real economic impact of having gaps in those six pillars as well. So I think that was the objective. The objective is also to provide the HR leaders a service tool as well as part of this study. So, you can read the report, understand the theory behind it, but put it to action as well by putting in your own conditions of your, of your organization and get an economic impact that you can take to your executives So happy to, some great insights came through that, but happy to talk through that. But that's the, that was the whole objective and methodology of the study.

Rebecca Moulynox: I love that because having worked in HR for many years, we all know how hard it is to put a business case forward to say, "We'd really love some money for this, and we really want to do this thing, and this is why it'd be good." But it's so hard to actually point the

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ROI of what people, some people consider fluffy type things. And so if you look at that overall, from the data that you see, is engagement a lagging indicator?

Anand Bakshi: Yeah, I think definitely engagement is a, for me, is a lagging indicator because it's a, it's a culmination of all the activities that have happened before that, right?. So you're measuring the response of the employees towards all the activities that you have done for career mobility, for learning activation, for the culture in the organization. So essentially when we are trying to measure, engagement, I would say it's a lagging indicator because we need to work towards all the leading indicators. Are employees feeling, a place where they can trust, they, where they can grow, like where they're learning, and that culminates into an engagement score as well. So for me, definitely a lagging indicator.

Rebecca Moulynox: Yeah. Great. And so again, from data that a great place to work has seen, what we see as well is that some of the best workplaces in Australia, the scores are really high compared to a typical workplace. So, a great place where we also did a normative study where we actually went out into the public and asked people who didn't work at great workplaces. Basically, we asked them our survey questions and got data, and we know from our data that, if we look at a, one of the best workplaces, if we look at, say, innovation is genuinely encouraged, we see best workplaces at 93% and typical Australian workplaces at 57. If we ask about giving extra effort as an employee, the best workplaces are at 94% and typical workplaces at 56. So we're seeing a really big difference in what someone at a typical workplace experiences versus someone in one of the best workplaces. And so I want to ask my first question to Ricky at Hilton. So Hilton has been number one best workplace in multiple countries and also named as the world's best workplace a couple of times, which is amazing. So those numbers describe what your workplace is like now, but can you take us back before certification? What was the honest state of trust in Hilton and what was the first thing leadership did differently, not said they would do differently, but actually did when they wanted to create that great workplace?

Riki Tanaka: Sure. Great introduction, great for Hilton, but I think that, for all of us, we can always strive to achieve to be a greater workplace for all. And to be honest, I don't think the certification changed exactly who we were. It gave us that validation, helped us understand what we were doing really well, and also, places that we could actually improve. But I actually think the foundations were kind of already laid out there I also think that with Hilton's extensive research, we've invested in people's growth. That's a major thing that, we're doing currently today. We've made that conscious decision to invest in our people, not just through your annual training. We didn't just talk about careers. We've created those opportunities for

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our team members for further development, whether that's career conversations or, going to another property and having an immersion week. Having those mentorships and also, of course, those internal progressions. So when people actually see that you're genuinely invested in your team members' futures, I think that's where the trust kind of instinctively follows, and that's probably the single biggest thing that we've done differently and continue to prioritize today as well.

Rebecca Moulynox: Amazing. Thank you. And Fiona, so 33 years at Marriott, and Marriott, again, also been named best workplace in multiple countries around the world and one of the world's best workplaces. So can you tell us about a moment that you had to choose between short-term commercial pressure and protecting trust in the organization? So maybe it's something like a restructure, a bad quarter, but what did Marriott decide to do, and what did it cost or pay off?

Fiona Pereira: Sure. Yes, I think, look, commercial pressure never goes away at all. It's there, and as everybody would know in the hospitality industry, we have our low seasons, and more so for some of our hotels, 'cause obviously geographically Australia being very diverse climate-wise. So in those low seasons, what often that meant is that hotels start to cost cut. And then one of the things, watching wages, minimizing hours, and things like that. And because that never goes away, what we did a couple of years ago was actually a commercial strategy. So we had a winter strategy. So not so much focusing on, okay, let's focus on the people, but let's, let's kind of try and fix the problem that's creating the people problem. And our winter strategy in Australia was really successful. And what's that, what that's done is it's really helped to stabilize and improve our retention rates, which obviously then has also a money effect, so it kind of keeps everybody happy. And it's actually been kind of lauded now within Marriott and other company, other countries are copying kind of what we did in Australia with that winter strategy.

Rebecca Moulynox: I love that. Thank you. It's nice when you hear stories about how organizations are going out and creating a strategy to protect people, but also being honest about it and telling their staff how, what it looks like and how it will work so they know what to expect, which is great. So question for both of you then. We know that high trust without the effort becomes a bit of a comfort culture, so people are happy, but maybe productivity and innovation stall a little bit. How do you keep trust while demanding that kind of high standards at the same time? Because it can be a bit of a pitfall where people think, "Well, if I'm going to

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be a leader that people trust, I have to be nice to them all the time," or, "I have to, say yes to everything," but that's not really the case, is it? Fiona, let's start with you.

Fiona Pereira: Thanks. No, it's definitely not the case. I think, look, we're coming up to 100 years next year for Marriott, which is super exciting. And, probably quite famously, Mr. Marriott's slogan back then was, "Take care of the associates so they'll take care of the guests and it'll take care of the business." Which kind of can almost lead into that comfort thing, and you kind of think, "Okay, 100-old company, what about innovation?" Well, Mr. Marriott, even a few years ago, one of my favourite videos that came through was Mr. Marriott saying, "More. I want more. We need more." So that innovation and that drive to be better, do more, be better was definitely there. And I think what we've done is, when it comes to taking care of the associates, we've never said, "Give the associates whatever they want." It is about being fair. It is about acting with integrity, and that's where, one of our core values is putting people first. And what Marriott's done is really probably It was about last year, we started looking at the leadership, and we've changed our methodology a bit, and we've now got what we call the leadership essentials, and we're actually assessing managers and leaders on three things: on being curious, on being courageous, and on being connected. And what that's doing is that's not just measuring them on engagement. That's not measuring them just on a leadership index, but it's actually individually looking at them and seeing what they are doing. And then that kind of is a layer for what else is going on, which is all about great development and learning programs and, looking at associate's career. So it's really, kind of focusing on they can't be comfortable because if somebody is sitting there with comfort, then they're not being courageous. They're not being curious. So we've got leadership programs around this and helping leaders develop those skills, but it's been quite an exciting thing for us in the company to kind of look at leadership from different angles.

Rebecca Moulynox: Amazing. Thank you. And Ricky, how about you?

Riki Tanaka: So at Hilton, I think, yeah, we talk about trust all the time and the development. It's really important for our team members. And it's just more than just, talking about your career. So I think that high trust actually gives you the permission to have the high standards. And similar to what Fiona was saying, we have, at Hilton, a saying of, "You're your own chief learning officer." so we have the tools and resources, over 3,000 different programs, whether they're global or localized, and we give that, autonomy to our team members to then become their own chief learning officer, to have the autonomy. And I think when we back up our team members, and again, when I mentioned before about genuinely caring for them and wanting

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them to succeed, I think that's when there's, that trust being built. And that's where you can have that, openness to feedback, being able to challenge and also further develop and grow, and that's where I think Hilton really supports. You're not just staying here for the career. You're here, for the stay or whether that's, looking at whether you, want to be in a corporate office or working in a hotel and being the next general manager. So I think the one thing I love is, yeah, we're not just focusing on, performance for today. It's about the growth and what's next.

Rebecca Moulynox: Fantastic. Thank you. I love that, and it's a beautiful segue from both of you into what I was going to say next. So thank you. It's like we set it up. But, we look at, our research in Great Place to Work and we talk about leadership all the time. We say that leadership really is the core of a great place to work because leaders can create an experience or a belief about the organization that people have. And that experience then creates a culture, and your culture drives your performance. We distil it down into nine leadership behaviours, so listening, speaking, thanking, developing, caring, sharing, celebrating, inspiring, hiring, and welcoming. There's a lot there, but they're not personality traits. They're relatable practices and things that leaders can do and we can teach leaders. So I'm interested to know from both of you, which of those nine behaviours move the needle most in your organization? And can you give us an example of something you've asked your leaders to do that's really helped change the culture or shift things in a way that you wanted to shift them, in your organization? And Ricky, I'll start with you.

Riki Tanaka: Perfect. Thanks. I think it's really hard to just choose one when I was thinking about those things. But, right now if we think about what a typical Tuesday looks I'd say it's developing people, and I think it's pretty known that, from what I've been saying before. But, there's probably a front office manager that's now, taking an aspiring, duty manager to their first leadership, morning briefing, for example, that they've never attended before, or potentially a team supervisor that's supporting a lead project. So that's kind of what a, what it would look like on a typical day. And so again, it's going through that process of, it's more deeper than just talking about your career. It's the mini pulse checks that you might have that are more casual and not formalized. Career conversations that we're having currently now with our year. Identifying development opportunities. Introducing them to a suitable mentor. So, currently now we're, in and amongst hosting our women in leadership program, and a key part of that is matching them with a suitable mentor. And also just giving them exposure to something outside of their day role, and giving them aspirations to something that's beyond what they thought they could achieve, and I think that's what's really important. That ‘And

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again, I think those, little small investments that happen every day and over time create that culture. So I think, being able to talk to your leaders directly about, how could I achieve more, and sharing, in a vulnerable way, in an open and honest way of, "This is what I'm looking for in my career, and how I'd like to progress and how that can be supported."

Rebecca Moulynox: Yeah. Fantastic. I love that. The developing piece is so key. How about you, Fiona? What's one of the nine behaviours, that your organization used to change something or shift something?

Fiona Pereira: Yes, like Ricky, it's so, it's really hard because we're obviously looking across all nine. But I think for me right now, it would be listening. I think, we, with our leadership training, we do focus quite a bit on psychological safety, so that people are comfortable to raise issues and they feel safe to do so. And we talk a lot about active listening, and I think we've always done, because we do our internal surveys, we've always done wrap sessions. So after every survey, as soon as we get results, we would do a wrap session, where we ask HR, no leaders there, HR ask the associates, "What do you want to see more of? What do you want to see less of? What do you love? What would you\... Suggestions to improve?" And I think that's good. That's listening. But what we really need to do is to close the loop so that associates know that they're not just telling us things, but they're telling us things that there's an action to. And so what it kind of looks like in reality is leaders being out there. We have rep sessions after the Great Place to Work survey and then after our three post surveys, but also it's leaders being on the floor, it's general managers being present so that people do feel, that they can talk to somebody. And then we do a sort of a big thing on sharing what is then done. So we have, for example, posters where we say we've heard you. So we'll have a notice board, we'll ask each department at the wrap sessions, what are the three thing- what are the three actions you've done now straight away? And we will share those. But also going back, associates know that we can't do everything they ask, but it's explaining, "Okay, we're not doing this, but we're doing this, or we're doing this now and we'll do this later." So I think the listening, but also the closing the loop, the loop is really important.

Rebecca Moulynox: I love that. And actually you just answered my next question around what do you do with the survey results when they come through, so that's fantastic. But I love that listening part as well. I think it's one of the ones that, we say to leaders all the time, "Listening is not waiting to speak." you've actually got to listen to people and that's a such a good way to build trust as well with your organization. We do have a question that's just popped up, and I might actually ask it while we're here, but it's how can you develop and change the behaviour

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of leaders who are well embedded in a company, so say 20-plus years of tenure, to allow them to become inspirational leaders and create great work experience for the workforce? So I'd hazard a guess that both of you have leaders who have been in your organizations for very long times. How do you go about trying to shift the way they're doing things or, if you have a change that you want to make in your organization, they're pretty set in their ways. What are some of the things that you do to shift them?

Riki Tanaka: I think, if we have got a lot of people, long tenures with us, I think it's getting them involved, and not expecting that's what they think. We don't want to ever assume as leaders, and I think that's when we need to bring them in, to those working groups and really value, their experience. They've gone through a great place to work every year. Your team member surveys, the different engagement activities that you've done, they've probably seen all of those business cases too, through and through, whether they've succeeded or failed. So I think it's really important to, bring them onto the working groups to be able to then, whether it's a challenge or a growth, experience, I think that would then create a little bit more value and trust as well. And then if you're leading by example and seeing that those long tenure team members are involved as well, those new team members can see that, hey, this is what the culture bring- looks like at Hilton, for example. So yeah, I think bringing them into working groups I think is really important.

Rebecca Moulynox: Fantastic. And Fiona?

Fiona Pereira: Well, I guess I'm one of those people, right? Those people who've actually been in the organization for a long time. So I should, I should speak about myself. No, I think, really similar to what Ricky was saying, I think it is about, involving, definitely. I think also story, like for us, storytelling's a big part of our culture at Marriott. So I think, talking about what different people have done, talking about what the opportunities are, giving those opportunities. And we have, everybody has a development plan, but making sure it's actually something that they want to do, making \... It's something that they can be passionate about. And I think there are lots of opportunities to be in hotels, there are lots of opportunities to be involved in those different projects like Ricky's talking about. So kind of finding what people's passion is and really drilling down into that. We've got people that have worked 35, 36 years with Marriott as a room attendant, and they love it and they're happy doing it. And then we've got people who've maybe worked six months as a room attendant, they want more, they want to keep going, they want to keep going. So I think it's about tailoring and not just assuming that somebody who's in that role or has been there for that long wants or needs a certain thing or

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doesn't want it. So yeah, having that connection, listening to stories, and providing the opportunities is really important.

Rebecca Moulynox: Amazing. Thank you. And that actually, I love that piece around everyone's different because that's a great segue into my next question for Anam. So sometimes we see organizations take these best practices and they have a tendency to apply it uniformly across every cohort in the organization and go, "This is the best thing ever. Everyone do this, it'll be great." And then they get a bit disheartened when things don't actually go the way they want. So are there any peculiar insights or demographic insights that came from the research that Cornerstone did around those demographics and what they're looking for?

Anand Bakshi: Yeah, I think that was the really insightful bit, right? Because we got the responses not only from the HR leaders, but from the employees as well, right? So we could break the expectations and where the biggest gaps are for employees as well. And if when we looked at the pattern analysis, the regression analysis, actually it was surprisingly it was not the Gen Z this time around. It was the Gen X which was actually being underserved. So in our, in our, in our survey, I talked about the six pillars that we surveyed the employees on. And actually Gen X were, underrepresented in all six pillars. So they were the weakest, link in the chain and especially they felt the pain in two major areas, right? So first was, in, they are in that stage of their career, right? So career mobility was a big issue. They were not sure, hey, where to go next. And that's important for anybody in the organization that, gives them the inspiration to learn and go forward. But also there was a big challenge for them in the AI workforce readiness, to your last question about how do you change and unlearn and learn, right? Are they ready for the AI wave coming in? So essentially, the Gen X in my opinion are, essentially stuck because they don't have a visibility on career mobility and they are unprepared for what's coming next, right? So being stuck and being unprepared is not a great place to be, right? So I really feel that's, that's the cohort that we have to have a specific focus towards because essentially if you look at Gen X, they think about, our middle managers, our senior individual contributors even, who really are the custodians of our corporate strategy, right? They are the ones who are translating that corporate strategy into initiatives, leading those special programs in the organization and driving that into real world results, right? And they are the ones who really Gen Z really look up to as mentors, right? We want the new, wave of Gen Zs coming in. They have the right, mentors who can guide them into the people process and technology in the organization as well, right? So we, that, that cohort, being stuck and being unprepared is really something that needs to be supported. And so, my advice to the HR leaders would be that let's, let's go beyond the functional silos, right? That functional execution of enablement.

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But let's look at a cohort level analysis as well and have special programs run for Gen X as well and getting involved and, hearing fro-- more detail, details about what they have in terms of their expectations as well, right? So I think Gen X in my opinion

Rebecca Moulynox: Thank you. I was going to say that's my cohort, so I'm quite happy- \... That you're going to focus on that. That's great. But, so I was getting a theme, right? So I've heard Hilton and Mary both talking about, development and giving people opportunities, and you were talking then about, getting stuck and then all this AI coming through. And so there's a lot around capability build that's coming in here. And I'm my next question for Anand, so the report, in the report, roughly 85% of the economic value from culture and capability comes from retention and absenteeism.. And so we know that also anyone who's ever done an exit survey in HR, people all the time go, "Well, there's, there's no further place for me to go here. I need development. I want to climb the ladder. I want to do more, so I'm leaving to go and find that." So can you walk us through the CFO's version of this argument? How are we talking to\... If we're in HR and we want to get some money, and we go, "this is actually a big deal, and it's costing us money," how are we talking to the CFO around what's the savings from creating these capabilities or helping this capability build and culture build in an organization

Anand Bakshi: Yeah, I think, I think that's, that's a big, a big area for a lot of HR leaders, right? How do CFOs really interpret the economic impact of all the, amazing learning and talent activities that the HR leaders are doing to drive engagement, to drive retention? A really peculiar, analysis that came through in our study was that almost 64% of the entire economic impact of increasing your culture and capability in your organization, is can be, linked to just attrition, right? But the problem is that when HR leaders think attrition, they're mostly focusing on the hiring costs, right? So and that's what the CFO sees. But what we have to do as HR leaders to educate the CFOs that, hey, it's more beyond just the hiring cost, right? Because we know that when any high potential, employee, goes out of the organization, it's about the hiring fees, it's about the training, it's about the time to competency, and we know from all the studies from SHRM that any time a top, high potential employee leaves the organization, it's almost an economic impact of one and a half years of their annual salary that is included in the hiring cost, in the training cost, in the time to competency, and leave out outside all the cultural impact that it has in terms of the team morale, right? We are talking about hard numbers here. So if you look at this, the entire pie of economic impact, 64% of the economic impact is just from attrition, from people leaving the organization voluntarily. 21% from absenteeism. So if you look at, especially in the service industry, in frontline industry hospitality in Marriott and Hilton, absenteeism, I'm pretty sure would be a big challenge for the organization, right?

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Almost 21% of the entire economic impact was coming from absenteeism, right? So you're talking about lost productivity, you're talking about reduced capacity to operate in your organization. So just attrition and absenteeism, 64% and 21%, 85% of that is essentially a keeping problem. And for the CFO, what they see on the P&L is more about, driving more hiring efficiency, right? But that is only 13% of the entire economic pie. So I think we have to shift that focus from when we are having a conversation with the CFO that it is not a hiring problem, it's a keeping problem, and there's a significant economic impact of keeping people engaged, keeping people growing so that we can retain them. So that's how I would suggest to have that conversation with the CFO.

Rebecca Moulynox: Nice. Okay. So then this is a question for all of you. So we're having that conversation with the CFO In your experiences that you've all had, if we've got a sceptical CEO, which I dare say everyone on this call has probably had that and even all of our, guests have probably had to have a conversation with the CEO around why is this particular HR initiative a good idea? What's it going to do? How is it going to save money? All of the things. Please give me some money so I can put this in place or people or whatever it might be. What, for you in your experience, what has been, who, what has been the thing that's tipped it over the edge and gotten you the money, gotten you the green light to go ahead with your project? So whether it's who's in the room, what the argument is, how to start the conversation, what are some tips and tricks you can give those that are on the call listening about how they can go into these conversations with their senior leaders? And I'll start with Anand and then we'll go to Fiona and Ricky

Anand Bakshi: Yeah, I think it's, it's always about knowing your audience, right? So you need to understand what their pain points are, you need to understand what they really care about, you need to know about what they measure in terms of their success, criteria in their own functions as well, right? So essentially if I have to give an advice, I think you need to be the translator, right? So translate your activities and all the initiatives that you want to, address in the organization to your executives', language, their pain points. So, spend a bit more time understanding your CEO's main points, their hot buttons, their language, their lingo, what they care about, and translate that into their business case, right? How does that impact? So I know in HR there's always a second and third degree connections between HR activities and economic impact. But I'm here to tell you with this study, with this research, that it's worth, connecting those dots, those second and third degree connections to get that seat at the table, and get that budget that is required, for the people transformation.

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Rebecca Moulynox: Fantastic. Thank you. Fiona, how about in your 33 years at Marriott, what's one thing that you think tips senior leaders over the edge when you're trying to get a HR initiative through?

Fiona Pereira: It's actually quite a hard question. I think because, I think because of our core values and the putting people first, most of our, let's say CEOs or let's say general managers probably fits in with the hotel kind of model, most of them it's almost like they've drunk the Aid? They're kind of on board with this putting people first. So it's kind of quite a hard question. Our current, regional vice president, he's not sceptical about it at all and he came in a couple of years ago and actually has made it part of the three-year vision for the area. So that helps, right? When you've got it coming from the top and it's on\... It's sitting there on an equal footing with revenue, owner satisfaction, growth. So it's not, it's not being seen as an HR thing, which- \... Which is a big help. And I think, and Angie used the word custodian earlier, and yeah, we always think like HR's the custodian of culture, right? It's not, it's not the owner of it. And so I think it's got to be seen as a, not as a nice to have, but as essential, and that it makes business sense. So probably where the scepticism may sit is maybe with finance people, right? So the CEO kind of has to look at everything, but the finance people are the ones who are answering to owners. So I think if you have it as part of your strategy, and if you have it as part of something that is the whole hotel coming together- Knowing their hot buttons, as Anand said, that's really critical. And just putting it in really, almost really simple terms. So what's the cost going to be? What do you expect the result to be? Because if you're talking actual results with finance people, then they kind of, you're talking their language But if it's on your vision, if you get it on your vision, then you don't have to be having those really regular conversations trying to get things across the line. Yeah, so I think that's probably, I don't know if that answers the question, Rebecca.

Rebecca Moulynox: No, it's good. I, I mean, and it's something that I think at Great Place to Work we talk about all the time, is that to create these great workplaces, you really have to have the senior leadership on board. They have to see, trust and organizational culture as key to company success. It can't just be this thing on the side that happens and, "Oh, let's do a survey and check everyone's happy or they're not happy," or, "We won't do the survey because we don't want to know if they're happy or not." it's about actually as an organization we fundamentally believe that this is what will help our organization perform, is having this standard of how we treat people. And so that's what we see time and time again with organizations on, particularly on our best workplaces list, is that's the culture they're coming in with, that people are core to their business success. And that creating a trusting environment

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where people want to be and they want to work is core to that business success. So it's, it's not a and type of thing. It's, "No, that's, that's just one of the core pillars of our organization."

Fiona Pereira: Yeah, I think so, and we have our, kind of our strategy house it's called, and people is the foundation of it. In that house- \... You've got all these other initiatives that go on globally as well as in Australia, but the foundation is people. And yes, by trying to, the example I gave earlier, by looking at commercial strategy so you don't have to erode away that trust that's building with the people, is really important.

Rebecca Moulynox: Yeah.

Anand Bakshi: Fantastic. And No, mate. I'm sorry. Go \... Bec, I think it's also important that, when we are have working with our executives, that we have these external benchmarks, even, this study giving a external benchmark of what is the potential impact on organizations. But I would also encourage, the HR leaders when we are running specific HR initiatives, let's say a learning intervention for our sales team, right? Let's have the end goal in mind while we're building that program. So you can have your baseline being measured before the program intervention and post, so you can actually prove that return on investment that, hey, investing with those pilots as well. So it's real that those pilots work. Here's, here's where we move the needle from X to Y with this intervention, and then you can extrapolate that, at an organizational-wide transformation as well.

Fiona Pereira: I think so. I think that's really, critical. We've, we've got a relatively new template for any initiative or any new thing we want to do. It lays that, exactly what you're saying, Anand, it lays it out really clearly, and it, and it stops things being seen as, Rebecca, to take your word earlier, fluffy. Yeah. It stops things being seen as fluffy, and it's got a strategic-background to it. It's, it's very sure that we're doing this for this reason. And by laying it out at the start, it actually keeps things on track as well

Rebecca Moulynox: Yeah. Love that. Thank you. Ricky, how about you? Have you got any tips and tricks for people when trying to find that budget for the next HR.

Riki Tanaka: Initiative? Yeah, definitely. And I love that Fiona, at Marriott, you've got that structure set in place, and I think for Hilton, when we talk about it, we talk about culture and budget, and that's really important, right? You're going to show the data and back that up, and highlight, the outcomes to, for our team members. But I think it's also about curiosity and just what might our people be experiencing that we're not seeing. I think curiosity leads to that, and building that culture and the budget. And I think what, the leaders experience and team

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member experience can be very different. And like we've said before, we can't assume what our team members want. So again, backing up that data helps. But I think, initially if you're in that kind of situation, is to keep it small.? Have that conversation with your CEO, whether it's your general managers, or that HR leader, directly influencing that team member experience. And then, I like to say it's, we all strive for perfection, but it's not about perfection. The team members just want to be heard, and then know that their leaders are actually prepared to act on that feedback. And I think, if you start with one or two, priorities first, you could probably go from there and build that trust and, ultimately, I wouldn't say, go straight off the bat asking for the investment. Be curious. Again, we're all about the people culture, so I think that's a really key, messaging to put forth. Also creating that visibility for yourself, and I think once the leaders can see that gap, it's an easier case for your initiative or program or engagement piece to be actually pulled through the line, I think.

Rebecca Moulynox: Yeah. I love that. I love around the keeping it small and testing it. We like to talk a lot about test and learn. Give it an opportunity to have a go in a small space so you can test it, see if it'll work, and then you're not asking for a giant investment to start with. Particularly when you think about, the things that you've been talking about, right? Capability build and leadership build and things. Those are not small things, and they're not something you can immediately go in and ask for. So being able to test it at a small scale, set your baseline, see what the outcome is, and then go in with the data is a really great way of doing it. So this is a chance for anyone who has any questions. Please pop them in the Q&A chat. I'm going to ask the panellists all one extra question, and then if there's any chat, quick Q&As that come through, we'll, we'll do those. So please, if you've got any questions, please drop them in now. But for each of the panellists, so we've spoken about the nine behaviours, and we've spoken about some of your own experiences. What's one habit anyone watching this right now should start this week, or one thing that they maybe should stop?

Anand Bakshi: Yeah. I think, I think for me definitely, we are truly in the age of AI, and, we have to have learning, and even more importantly, unlearn what we've, kept up those habits as well, right? So learning really for me is the foundation because whatever challenges that you might have in the future, whether it's macroeconomic or your organizational strategy shifting, your own interest that you need to pursue, it's all grounded in you learning something and growing from it, right? So for me, and in our research as well, right? Learning really has the great-greatest economic impact in terms of the lowest hanging fruit where, all employees feel valued and they feel the growth when they are, they're, they're learning, they invest in their learning. So for me, learning for sure.

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Rebecca Moulynox: Great. Thank you. Ricky

Riki Tanaka: There you go. I think if it's one habit, it would be, encouraging leaders to have more meaningful career conversations and not waiting for your annual reviews. I think that's really important. Again, it's, asking team members where they want to be, whether it's, in a year, two, or three years' time, how you can best support them as well. Sometimes it's encouraging for leaders to open up that question rather than waiting for your team members to be proactive. And I would also, suggest, or challenge you to go for a in career conversation and change up the environment. I think that some of the best conversations sometimes happens away from your desk or a particular meeting room, and I feel personally, when we've had those before, I feel like a less formal setting can be, more appropriate to open up for those kind of, conversations, right? And when I think about one habit I encourage leaders to stop is, assuming people know that they're valued. We get really busy, hotel operations. We move from one priority to the next, another project, check-in, check-out, and all these sort of things with events. And I think, sometimes we assume that people know that we appreciate them because a project has ended or we've completed a successful, wedding venue, for example. But at Hilton, I think what is really great is we have a recognition platform that we've created, and it actually, allows our team members to select how they would like to be recognized.. 'Cause not everyone is the same, right? Some people love the recognition where they're on town hall. They, they get that speech, they get the recognition and the, glass of champagne to cheers. But there are some people that are a little bit more introverted and would prefer a one, and it's more meaningful for, their direct manager to appreciate them and, showcase what are the reasons why that they were successful and how they are valued in the organization. So I think, if we're investing so much, time and money, into hiring people, let's make sure that we keep them that way as well, to retain them.

Rebecca Moulynox: Yes. Yeah, absolutely. I and I love that you just don't assume that everyone knows their value as well. Yeah. Someone's actually just put in a comment into the Q&A. So it's not a question in response to Ricky. Totally agree. Weetings win more. I love that. Weetings. Yeah. So having walking meetings and now weetings. So, but and Fiona, what about you? What's one thing that, one habit that every leader watching should either start or one thing they should stop doing?

Fiona Pereira: I might give you one start and one stop. So I would say stop assuming silence means everything's fine.

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Fiona Pereira: I think that silence is what really erodes trust, if we're talking about trust. So stop assuming, "Oh, they're fine," because you're not hearing anything. And I think, culture's really got to be that kind of daily leadership interaction. It's not all about, "Oh, we do this annual survey. Let's make everybody happy for that survey." It's, it's daily. It's, it's constant. And then probably the start goes along with that, and along with what I said earlier about listening. It's closing the loop. You might be listening to people, you might be hearing people, but if you're not taking action or at least closing the loop with them, then it's\... That can be even more frustrating for people than not being heard in the first place, and I think that is what\... Potentially then you're going to have great people leave. You're not going to be able to retain them if they're "Well, I told somebody. They listened to me. I was in a forum, but nothing happened." So yeah. Yeah. They would be my two.

Rebecca Moulynox: Yeah, totally. We have that conversation with people all the time. If you're going to do the survey and then not do anything with the results after you've done the survey, just don't do the survey. Yeah. It's actually, it's, it's going to have a worse impact because people are "I'm telling you something and you're not doing anything with it." Even if you can only do one or two things with the outcome, being able to say to people, "Hey, this is the one thing we're doing off the back of our survey with you. We can't fix everything all at once, but we're going to focus on this one thing," that one thing usually has a flow on effect as well. So absolutely, I couldn't agree more that you, being able to close that loop and have those conversations with people. And again, that just builds trust as well, being open and honest with people and saying, "Hey, this is what we can do and this is what we can't." I like to tell, like say to people quite often, "Employees have an amazing BS meter." If you're not telling them the truth and you're making up a story, they are going to know and they're going to figure it out. So be honest with them. That helps build trust as well. And then you'll see the outcome of that later on. So we don't have any more questions, so I just want to say thank you very much to our panellists for joining us today. I think it's been really insightful hearing what some of the world's best organizations are doing to keep people in, building capability, and using leaders to help, create trust and, really show how HR's not a fluffy thing, but it really is something that can create a lot of performance and saving in an organization. For those of you watching, we will be sending you an email after this that will give you a link to the Cornerstone report so you can see the numbers that are in the Cornerstone report. And then you can use some of that. They also have a calculator that you can use, so you can go in and work out how much this is costing your organization and use that to build into your business case as well. So go and check out the Culture and Capability Index calculator. And if there are any further questions after this, please

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feel free to send them through. We'll do a follow-up email as well. So I'm really happy to have everybody on this call. Thank you very much to our panellists, and thank you for everyone for joining us, and have a great day. Thank

Riki Tanaka: You so much. Thanks. Take care.

Rebecca Moulynox: Bye.

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