

UKG

# People Operations: Solving the 'Targets' vs 'Employee Experience' Challenge

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# Introduction

## Risk is everywhere

The business world is experiencing seismic change. As senior leaders strive to achieve their strategic objectives against a highly uncertain background, there are three major obstacles that put their efforts in doubt.

**1. Global threats.** Regional conflicts and global politics are fuelling ongoing uncertainty around trading conditions globally. These difficulties are threatening recession, driving inflationary pressure, and continuing to disrupt supply chains, all of which are impacting organisations globally.

**2. Talent scarcity.** Responding to these pressures is made harder due to historically low unemployment rates. To retain top talent, organisations are needing to go beyond employee engagement. The best employees now need to feel deeply immersed in shaping the design of their work, if they are to stay with the business.

**3. Changing expectations.** Workers now have different expectations of their employers – including greater flexibility, a higher sense of purpose and the need for more trust and transparency. Employers now must think very differently about their workforce and the individual life-work journey needs of their people.

**In short, risk is everywhere. What can employers practically do to mitigate these risks?**



# The Challenge

To meet these challenges, businesses must first tackle a major internal issue: the ongoing tension between how to drive operational performance whilst at the same time delivering a positive employee experience.

## Operations + Efficiencies ... or People + Positive experience?

It shouldn't be an "either/or" question, but it is. These two critical initiatives can often work against each other.

**1. Operations + Efficiencies.** To drive cost control and productivity, companies will put operational systems in place to optimise activity such as demand forecasting, labour scheduling, timekeeping and absence management. But if technology is deployed without consideration of employee needs, experience can suffer, and staff turnover will increase.

**2. People + Positive Experience.** To recruit and manage talent, companies will implement new HR transformation initiatives. But if these don't account for the higher admin burden on operations managers, productivity can falter and cynicism towards HR can set in.

This gap between people and operations is generating tension within many businesses.

Can any company really risk ...

### 1. Frustrating people over life-work choices?

When key moments in people's life and work become difficult to accommodate it can leave to employees becoming frustrated, causing them to question their loyalty to the business. Employees increasingly need to feel empowered through positive life-work journey experiences, simple processes and rapid answers to questions.

**2. Overburdening managers with costly decisions?** People managers can be overburdened by HR and admin tasks, causing them to lose focus on what matters, including meeting targets and supporting employees.

**3. Losing the emotional connection with the workforce?** A major risk is people leaving or "quiet quitting" – i.e., not going above and beyond basic work requirements. And, according to a survey by Gallup – only 14% of European workers are engaged at work.

There has to be a better way forward. And there is ...

Only **14%**  
of Europeans are engaged  
at work

Source: State of the Global Workplace: Gallup Report 2022

## A better way forward

It is possible to embrace getting the best from people and business performance at the same time. This can be done by ...

**1. Adapting now to the workplace of the future.** Enabling businesses to quickly and easily flex their operating models and processes to meet the challenges in front of them, be these crises, disruptions or compliance issues.

**2. Aligning business objectives, customer demands and employee needs.** When these are “in sync” with one another, it becomes easier to deliver a positive employee experience and meet both top- and bottom-line financial goals.

**3. Fostering a culture of trust, inclusion, and transparency.** This goes a long way to making a business an employer of choice, with the benefits of attracting new talent and receiving loyalty and commitment from existing employees.

When an organisation positions itself in these ways, they embrace operations AND people - gaining predictability and control over operations and making deeper human connection.

This sounds good, but how can it be achieved in the face of real-world business challenges? In the next section we look at three of the biggest in more detail... and how to tackle them.



# Three challenges all businesses must overcome

## CHALLENGE ONE: The future of business is in a state of chaos

The external challenges facing organisations today are unprecedented and unpredictable – not only the external environment but also the internal upheaval caused by M&A, reorganisations, and right-sizing. And these challenges have to be met without missing a beat on people issues - keeping good employees, hiring new ones, all while making sure compliance standards are met.

In this state of chaos, for companies to thrive they can't keep doing what they've done previously. So, what can they do?

**Adapt now to the workplace of the future** by providing technology that improves business agility, provides one entry point to essential systems that humanise the people journey, and enables auditable compliance by design.

### 1. Technology that works best for the business.

The agility to easily meet new challenges is one thing senior leaders wish they possessed, especially when updating people-related processes and operating models. According to the Workforce Institute at UKG, more than one-third of employees surveyed worldwide (35%) feel their job is harder than it should be because of outdated processes and legacy technology.

However, with the right technology businesses can take ownership and easily adapt processes to meet evolving business strategies. By being able to configure and re-configure systems and processes to stay compliant with the latest rules, regulation, policies, and procedures, with fewer manual touchpoints, you gain the agility to stay competitive.

The key is having technology you can own, allowing you to adapt easily to new requirements with minimal requirement for technical support from your IT department or external provider. The best systems enable your team to re-configure rules and parameters, modify HR workflows as required and are globally deployable, making them adaptable to wherever you do business.

90%

faster changes AND lower cost

Source: UKG internal customer data



## 2. One entry point to humanise the people journey.

According to a survey, companies are confronting their employees with an average of over 16 different HR related systems. This multiplicity creates inefficient processes, wastes time, and frustrates employees.

Access to information is a recurring complaint – both for employees looking for it, and the managers and HR needing to respond to it. By delivering one entry point to the people tools used daily, a business can cultivate a better-informed worker who can make decisions that benefit the business, customers – and themselves.

Smart organisations can deliver access to information and task automation to humanises the life-work journey. This is crucial, because giving your people easy access to the information that directly impacts their work via one application means a better-informed workers who can make decisions that benefit all stakeholders.

## 3. Auditable compliance by design.

With more and more regulation comes risk. Compliance presents an enormous threat to every business, with the risks growing rapidly with every new rule, regulation and collective agreement. One GDPR breach can cost up to 2% of a business's entire global turnover. And HR and health and safety non-compliance risk fines, prosecution, brand reputation, and even prison.

But it is possible to ensure compliance conformance without an administrative burden. With system that embed compliance checks and reporting, businesses can create transparency in workplace practices both internally and externally. Organisations can increase the trustworthiness of your team's decision-making while also reducing the costs and headaches associated with audit reporting and penalties of non-compliance.

The best systems combine workforce, document, and process management that have in-built and configurable compliance rules that deliver proactive notifications and flexible compliance dashboard. This way, rules are followed, and patterns of poor compliance practice or fraudulent behaviour can be easily identified and addressed.

>16

the average number of HR systems in a business

Source: Sapient Insights Group, as reported on hrexecutive.com

10 minutes

the time it now takes UKG client Atos to audit their workforce documents

Source: UKG HR Document Management

## CHALLENGE TWO: a disconnect between operational challenges and people needs

The pandemic posed many challenges for employers and employees, and it's been hard to consolidate the learnings so we're prepared for future business, customer and employee needs.

Managers on the plant or shop floor are focused on driving efficiencies and operational excellence, while HR is tasked with finding and training the right people to replace departing workers and cultivating a better overall experience.

The historical approaches taken to meet these two focus areas are often disconnected and conflicting. Various software applications can be used to govern critical operational activities, while other applications handle recruitment, onboarding, training, HR, and payroll. And even more are used for document handling and case management.

These siloed systems often result in HR, people managers, and your people needing to be the glue between systems, manually connecting activities – and leading to inefficiency and frustrations. An operations manager on the shop floor does not want to be shouldering additional HR admin tasks when struggling to meet customer and production demand. Likewise, employees who are scheduled to work different shifts or roles, without the consideration of their personal needs and preferences, can be left disillusioned and disengaged.

The remedy here is to align customer demands, business objectives and employee needs by...



## 1. Offloading managerial headaches

With the pressure to do more (and more quickly) with less, people managers don't have the bandwidth or knowledge to respond to the benefits, scheduling, policy, and procedure questions they face daily.

However, they can offload the hassles and headaches of questions they can't answer. This means fewer manual tasks, paperwork, and administration for front-line people managers, giving relief from unproductive tasks and more positive outcomes.

The best solutions bring together and automate strategic aspects of operations and people management. They streamline processes and provides one self-service entry point for answers and information. This removes administrative burdens from managers and empowers people to take greater control.

## 2. Reconciling personal requests with workplace effectiveness

Most employees want to "be there" for their organisation, but are technologies helping to support the employee needs too?

It is possible to coordinate people's personal requests with operational effectiveness. When a business can combine employees' personal preferences with work demands, it'll be people ready, with the right people in the right place at the right time.

The answer is to give employees on-demand anytime self-service access to tools that empowered them to take greater life-work control. Sharing availability and work preferences with managers. Requesting and swapping shifts to meet personal needs. Viewing accrued balances and booking holidays. Accessing HR documents and policies to answer questions.

By giving greater control you have happier employees, suffer fewer absences, receive greater productivity and improve safety.

**By implementing employee self-service, the number of questions made to managers can be reduced by more than half.**

*Source: Nucleus Research, WFM Satisfaction Survey 2022*

**26%**

**of Gen Z workers who would work harder and stay longer at a company with flexible schedules.**

*Source: Meet Gen Z" report by the Workforce Institute at UKG*





### 3. Better problem-solving with hardest-to-reach employees

No line manager nor HR has a crystal ball to show when there's personnel - or a personal - problems with your workers. There are though, better ways to problem-solve with those hardest-to-reach employees, the people on the shop or factory floor.

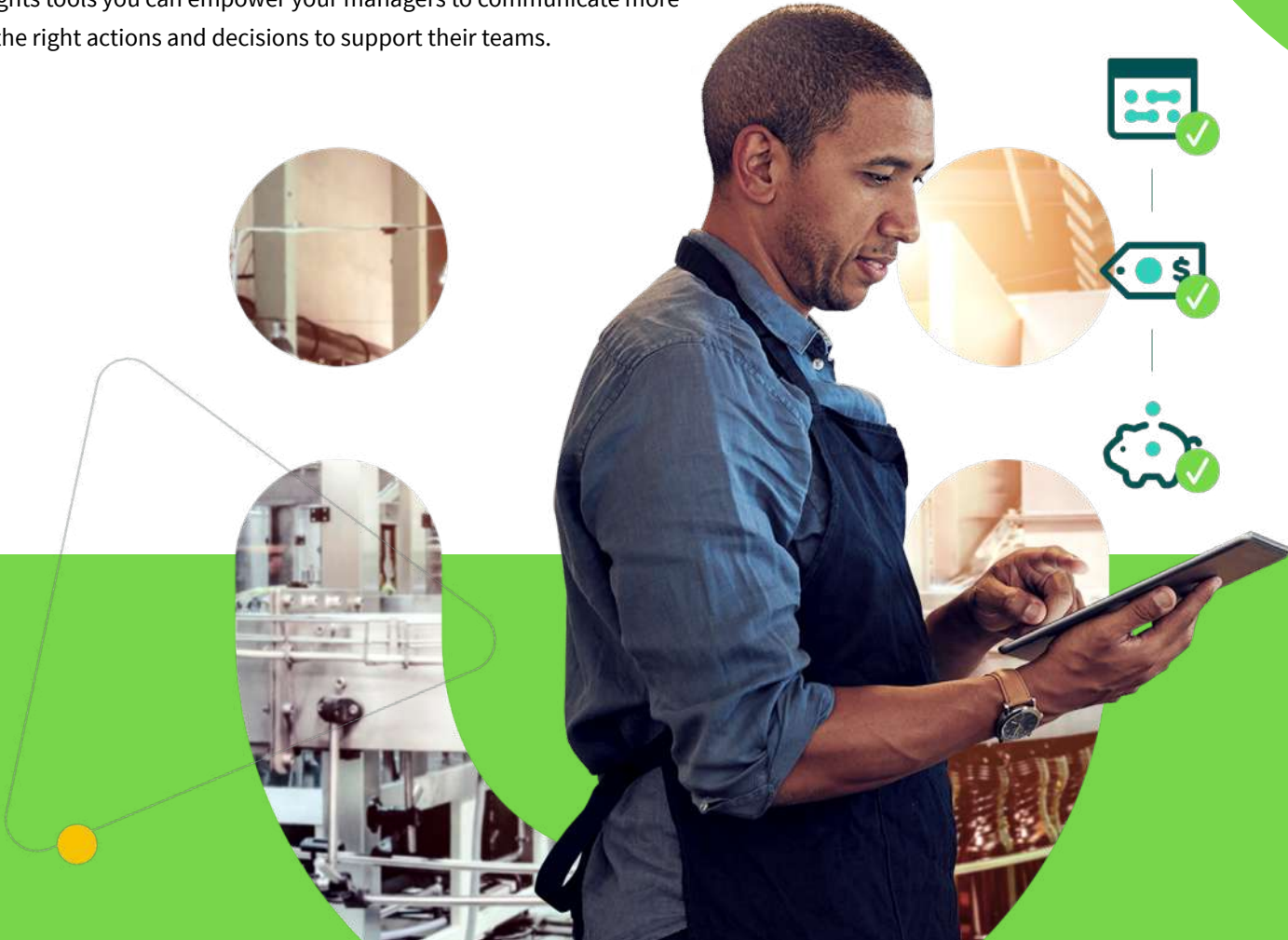
Systems that deliver both performance and people related data insights, across both operational and people-related activities, can surface potential problems early, allowing you to head them off before they balloon into more serious and costly challenges.

With automated insights tools you can empower your managers to communicate more effectively and take the right actions and decisions to support their teams.

# 79%

of employee requests are typically solved using the UKG employee self-service knowledge portal

*Source: UKG EMEA customer database*



## CHALLENGE THREE: the battle to be an employer of choice is getting more intense

Every day the “War for Talent” battle is getting harder, as employee expectations change. Seventy-six percent (76%) of global workers have higher expectations for a prospective employer than they did three years ago. They’re looking for alternative employment models like blending full-time, part-time, or resource-sharing. And they have a desire for meaning and transparency.

Your company culture is much more than just how you’re perceived internally. In today’s social media-driven world, it’s tantamount to your external brand and reputation. Two-thirds of senior executives believe culture is more important to performance than the organisation’s strategy or operating model. And employees who ‘work for a company they believe’ in are 22% more likely to recommend your organisation to others, 17% more inclined to stay with you, and 20% more likely to do more than what’s expected to help you succeed.

So, the remedy here is to foster a culture of transparency, inclusion and trust by ...

### 1. Listening, analysing and action on your people’s interests

Employees are demanding something more from your organisation than just a job. And it is possible to listen, analyse, and act on their interests more effectively

For example, instead of just doing a satisfaction survey that goes nowhere, you could deliver new ways of empowering your employees. Life happens at work, and work happens in life. The best life-work technology aligns people’s needs in their life with customer demands for your business.

It is technology that helps people be more productive, but that also makes it possible for productivity to be a positive experience.



# 88%

of businesses more likely to perform well financially when employees feel heard, engaged and included

Source: *The Heard and the Heard-Nots* report by The Workforce Institute at UKG EMEA customer database

## 2. Strengthening a sense of belonging

One of the main reasons people leave an organisation is because they feel undervalued or don't feel like they belong. It doesn't have to be this way – it is possible to strengthen that sense of belonging from before Day 1 and through an entire employee lifecycle.

The prize is worth winning. Building that sense of inclusivity across the employee life cycle means more engaged employees who stay longer with your organisation. With technology that supports engagement from the start of your people's relationship with your organisation you can foster greater inclusion from the beginning.

By making every interaction during the hiring process simple and giving yet-to-start employees access to useful information, you can make people feel valued from the start.

## 3. Knowing the right questions and answers to effect change

Business needs to really listen to employees. This means knowing the right questions and answers to ask that will impact change most quickly. Getting this right means any business could create a better workplace for their people and their business.

UKG's culture development playbook and Great Place to Work global data insight provide a proven roadmap for enriching business culture. Drawing on several decades of people solution development and delivery, a global footprint, culture benchmarks across industries, and local expertise, you have a trusted partner to help you meet your culture, ESG (Environment, Social, and Governance) and DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging) goals and objectives.

**Avis Budget Group only require 15 minutes to sign a new employee since the implementation of UKG**

*Source: UKG customer case study*

**The vast majority (83%) of UK employees feel people at their organisation are not heard fairly or equally – and nearly half (46%) say that underrepresented voices remain undervalued by employers.**

*Source: The Heard and the Heard-Notes™ report by The Workforce Institute at UKG*

# Conclusion & next steps

It is possible to embrace your people AND performance at the same time. And we know that a strong culture pays dividends. According to Great Place to Work, their Best Workplace™ clients on average outperform the market by 2%-3% a year, benefit from 40% more applications and have higher levels of employee engagement.

UKG People Operations provides a single point of access to the solutions used daily to drive cost control, productivity, compliance and employee experience.

By giving your people on-demand access to workforce management, HR service delivery and HR tools your managers can more easily meet targets and your employees are empowered to take greater life-work control.

Using UKG People Operations, you too can bridge the historical people and operations team divide, enabling your organisation to:

- 1. Adapt now to the workplace of the future** by having the ability to flex quickly and easily to meet whatever future challenges you may face.
- 2. Align customer demands, business objectives and people needs** to easily meet your top- and bottom-line goals.
- 3. Foster a culture of trust, inclusion, and transparency** that makes you an employer of choice.

Customers that head down this better path, can achieve their strategic business objectives with agility and confidence. They will gain predictability and control over your operations. And they'll build a deeper connection with their people and boost their sense of value and commitment to their organisation.

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Learn more by visiting  
[ukg.co.uk/ukg-people-operations](https://ukg.co.uk/ukg-people-operations)





## About UKG

At UKG, our purpose is people. We strongly believe that culture and belonging are the secret to success. By championing great workplaces and building lifelong partnerships with our customers, together we demonstrate what's possible when organisations invest in their people. Our Life-work Technology approach to HR, payroll, and workforce management solutions is enabling more than 75,000 organisations across every industry around the globe to anticipate and adapt to their employees' needs beyond just work.

To learn more about one of the world's leading HCM cloud companies, visit [www.ukg.co.uk](http://www.ukg.co.uk).



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