

# INSIGHTS

**ENGINEERING & SCIENCE**

2019 ISSUE 1

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## MEET THE TEAM

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*Did you know about our other specialist divisions?*



# Hello and welcome

## TO OUR FIRST EVER ISSUE OF ENGINEERING & SCIENCE INSIGHTS!

Following the success of the Bond Williams' Insights series of magazines, the team here at Oxford wanted to produce something more specific to our area and the industries our clients operate in. This inaugural issue is the result, and we are already thrilled at the response we've had from local businesses who have been willing to contribute and share their experiences and expertise. Thank you.

We not only bring you up to date local and sector-specific business news but also some stand out guest features on employee engagement, apprenticeships, cyber security and IR35; as well as an interview with Shannon Weston, HR Manager at AriensCo.

Our own editorial team shares the latest recruitment trends for Oxford, tips on selecting a recruitment agency to work with you and how we need more females working in the STEM sector and reasons why it's a great career option for any gender. In addition, we also introduce you to our Recruitment Manager in Oxford, Peter Knibbs, and include details of an up and coming event being held with Peninsula that we'd love you to join us at.

We hope you enjoy the read and find this issue insightful. If you'd like to contribute to our next issue or have any specific topics in mind you would like to see covered, please do get in touch.



**Rob**

**Robert Bond**  
Director, Bond Williams Professional Recruitment

If you would like to be involved or contribute to the next issue of Engineering & Science Insights, we'd love to hear from you.  
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# 'WORLD-CLASS' SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STRENGTHS SET TO BOOST PRODUCTIVITY AND OPPORTUNITIES THANKS TO NEW LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY



Senior business bosses from some of the most-dynamic companies in the county – alongside key academics and civic leaders – gathered in central Oxford in September as a new and ambitious economic growth strategy for Oxfordshire, with the ability to ‘be at the forefront of a future, globally-facing UK economy’, was officially launched.

The Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy sees the county directly respond to the UK Industrial Strategy, launched by Central Government in November 2017. It replies to the national blueprint, which aims to increase growth and productivity nationwide, as well as creating ‘more prosperous communities’.

The county's Local Industrial Strategy was launched by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) at its annual event, held at the Blavatnik School of Government in Oxford.

Working alongside around 300 organisations – as well as Central Government itself – OxLEP have developed a strategy that aims to position the county as one of the world's top-three ‘innovation ecosystems’ by 2040, led-by Oxfordshire's global strengths in science and technology.

Five ‘foundations of productivity’ cited in the UK Industrial Strategy – namely ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment and places – have also been reflected in the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy to help the county achieve this 2040 ambition.

**‘Long-term’ Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy is ‘backed by business community’ and will ‘prioritise local need’.**

The strategy also hopes to build-upon the county's recent economic growth performance which has seen a total of 50,000 new jobs created in Oxfordshire between 2012 and 2017. This is alongside

an average five-year business survival rate of 49.3 per cent for those born in 2011, more than 5% above the UK average, according to the Office for National Statistics.

The county is also one of just three net contributors to the UK economy, with a current GVA of £23bn per year. It's hoped that by 2040, not only will the county's GVA potentially be doubled to £46bn per year, but for every £1 invested in Oxfordshire, £4 can be returned to the UK economy.

The Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy was originally published by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in late-July and the event in September marked the first opportunity for the county's business community to learn more about the strategy in-person.

Jeremy Long, Chair of OxLEP, said: “Alongside our many key partners, we have created a highly ambitious strategy for Oxfordshire to place us at the forefront of a future, globally-facing UK economy. It is a strategy that details how we can reach our full-potential, raising productivity and boosting our unique innovation assets.

“Importantly, the strategy is built upon input from our business community, recognising and prioritising local need, feeding directly into other key Oxfordshire strategies, including Oxfordshire Plan 2050.”

OxLEP added that the strategy aims to set ‘clear pathways’ for young people to develop the skills needed to secure employment

opportunities within the county's globally-competitive science and technology companies, as well as promoting innovation in low-carbon technologies, positioning Oxfordshire as a genuine leader in clean growth.

The strategy states that it will be ‘inclusive, place-sensitive and sustainable, responding to increasing concerns around climate change’ as well as ‘enhancing the natural environment and the quality of life for everyone in Oxfordshire’.

The strategy also sets out how the implementation of new technologies can benefit people in Oxfordshire.

Nigel Tipple, Chief Executive of OxLEP, added: “Our four transformative technologies – namely connected and autonomous vehicles, space and satellites, digital health and technologies underpinning quantum computing – have the potential to add up to £180bn to the UK economy by 2030.

“These technologies are central to the evolution of the Local Industrial Strategy. As a county, we excel in them, they have global reach and they can act as a key driver for the UK economy, post-Brexit. No other part of the UK has the breadth and depth of assets, knowledge capability, skills and business capacity, which also makes Oxfordshire a leading location for investment, as well as having the genuine ability to attract the world's most talented people.”

# 7 STORIES - LATEST BUSINESS NEWS IN OXFORD

- 1

Oxford University voted No.1 in the world – According to the latest Times Higher Education (THE) rankings, Oxford University rated top in an international league table for the fourth year in a row. The rankings take into account teaching quality, volume and reputation of research, citations of research, income from industry and international links.
- 2

World renowned neuroscientist and mathematician honoured by Oxford Science Park – Two buildings within the Oxford Science Park's innovation centre have been renamed after a Nobel Prize-winning biologist and leading mathematician. Magdalen Centre South takes its new name from Professor Charles Sherrington (scientist) while Professor Henry Whitehead (mathematician) has inspired the new name for Magdalen Centre North.
- 3

Oxfordshire is the flexible working capital of Britain – A quarter of employees ‘telecommute’ in Oxfordshire compared to the UK average of only one in ten. The research commissioned by Gigaclear also revealed that half of workers in the county spend an equal amount of time between their home and the office, with over a third saying home working more than doubles their productivity.
- 4

Best city to live and work – Despite being named one of the worst cities to live in on minimum wage and among the worst places to retire to, a new report has ranked Oxford the best place to live and work. The Good Growth for Cities Index included measurements of health, environmental factors, income, skills, employment and housing affordability. Oxford consistently scored high across most variables, apart from house price to earnings.
- 5

Promoting the Oxford Living Wage – Employers who have adopted the Oxford Living Wage were recognised at a forum held by Oxford City Council earlier this month and new businesses have been urged to sign up. The Oxford Living Wage promotes liveable earnings for all workers in the city, taking into account the high cost of living. It is currently set at £10.02 per hour and set to rise to £10.21 in April 2020. Visit <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/livingwage> for more information.
- 6

John Lewis Oxford store trialling sustainability measures – In a bid to change shoppers’ behaviour and improve sustainability, John Lewis is testing eight ways they can lessen their impact on the planet. This includes no longer selling single-use plastic carrier bags, substituting bubble wrap for recyclable eco-wrap and encouraging customers to bring back clothes’ hangers.
- 7

Oxford Nanopore recognised as fast-growing technology company – Providers of DNA/RNA sequencing technology, Oxford Nanopore, has come in 8th place in the 2019 UK technology Fast 50 awards by Deloitte. It's three-year growth rate of 4,259% make it one of only two companies in the top ten based outside of London.



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The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) is responsible for championing and developing the Oxfordshire economy. Our vision for Oxfordshire is for it to be: ‘a vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, world-leading economy - driven by innovation, enterprise and research excellence.’



# EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT - THE SECRET TO SUCCESS

Ricardo is a knowledge business, packed with the highest calibre scientific, economic, engineering and data management skills. With this cadre, we know that employee engagement is key to our success and each year we undertake an organisation-wide survey to measure that engagement using the Gallup Q12.

- Our employees tell us that they value having:
- Someone who supports them and is interested in their wellbeing
  - Regular interaction with their Team Leader
  - Clarity on performance and progress
  - Understanding how objectives fit with the business strategy
  - Informal discussions about learning, development and aspirations

We understand that regular, constructive and positive interactions between our Team Leaders and employees throughout the year is key to employee engagement.

### Make it less formal and more regular

However, Performance Development Reviews (PDRs, aka appraisals) are traditionally an annual formal event, occurring at the beginning of our financial year with a mid-year review. This approach does not fit with our corporate values nor with what our employees tell us is important to them. A once-a year formal review of progress, objectives and aspirations is not what engagement is about. Nor did it give us the value we needed in assessing the performance of our individuals because the yearly “box marking” did not reflect the contribution of our people across a complex range of consultancy assignments over a long period.

So this year we have replaced the annual review with less formal, monthly check-in meetings. The review process, habitually regarded by many as an inconvenient ‘HR’ process, has evolved into a simplified vehicle to facilitate regular informal discussion without reams of forms, ratings and process. These regular check-ins enable an on-going informal review of objectives as part of a wider conversation which incorporates wellbeing, learning and development requirements and day to day work prioritisation support.

### Manage the change

When introducing this change to managers we were, in the main, pushing against an open door. But for some it required a change in behaviour – committing to regular engagement-essential quality time with their team members; also providing reassurance to those daunted by the assumption that 12 annual review style meetings would be the new norm. So we spent time talking to our Team Leaders across the business, providing guidance, clarity and support to bring them on board ahead of this change, fully supported by our Senior Leadership Team.

These regular check-in meetings include the opportunity to remove potential barriers to narrowing the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) in our traditionally male-orientated market sector – something we are committed to achieving.

They facilitate and encourage employees to share their aspirations on promotion, pay and career development – topics which can be challenging to raise and, generalising, particularly for females. They also allow a closer handle on the current priorities of individuals – in a fast-paced consultancy environment, we need our consultants to be ready to move quickly in response to rapidly evolving client requirements

To encourage open and honest discussion, a broad framework for the agenda has been created. This provides both the Team Leader and employee with certainty about what may be covered. This is not to suggest that ALL topics listed need to be discussed every month (or that they are the only topics). But using this as a check list for the Team Leader and the employee encourages a wide-ranging and valuable monthly check-in meeting.

### The agenda framework:

1	Check on wellbeing, any work pressures or challenges that we need to help overcome and resolve <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What is going well</li><li>- What is challenging / difficult</li></ul>
2	Share information - align on any business information, insight, wider challenges
3	Create / update / supersede short and longer term objectives during the year
4	Review progress against performance & development targets and update
5	Give feedback – two way – identify what is going well, what would be good to see more of, including a review of any feedback from third parties
6	Review learning and development opportunities and how they fit with objectives and aspirations (suggest quarterly)
7	Regularly review how work is allocated, based on workload, skills and experience, in order to support development and progression
8	Identify what formal and informal networking opportunities would be beneficial to access during working hours
9	Discuss salary and promotion aspirations
10	Review progress supported by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- undertaking stretching and interesting work;</li><li>- identifying and allowing time for learning and development opportunities to build experience, such as shadowing;</li><li>- obtaining, providing and discussing good quality feedback that focuses on both improving technical and other skills required</li></ul>

The results from our next annual employee engagement survey will tell us if this change really makes a difference.



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# JOBS FOR INFINITY AND BEYOND

Earlier in 2019, we celebrated 50 years since the first ever moon landing and even though man last stepped foot on the lunar surface back in 1972, giant leaps are still being made in the space sector.

### A growing share of the space market

While it’s easy to think of space exploration as a US, Russian or even Indian domain, space stations, galactic travel and missions to Mars wouldn’t happen without the UK’s involvement and our influence is set to increase. The UK currently makes up 5.1% of the global space economy (2016/17) and the UK space industry is on target to achieve the Government aim of 10% of the global space economy by 2030.

### Intergalactic investment

Space is a sector that’s not short of investment or intent. The UK Space Industry has a total income of £14.8bn and employs close to 42,000 people. Its strong performance is achieved through continued funding, with investment growth of 42% in the last 12 months alone.

In the ‘[Prosperity from Space](#)’ report, published in 2018 by UKspace (the trade association for the UK’s space industry), growth plans for the sector were set out, with aims to double the worth of space industrial activities across the UK economy from £250 billion to £500 billion.

The report even alludes to our departure from the EU, which looks more likely than ever with Boris Johnson as Prime Minister. In relation to space, the report says ‘the decision to leave the EU creates particular need to ‘raise our game and avoid complacency.’

### Outer space in Oxfordshire – employment hotspot

Oxfordshire is a real hub for the space sector, and the companies based there are enjoying great success. One of the leading space companies in Oxfordshire, Reaction

Engines, has raised over £100 million over the past four years and has secured additional investment from BAE Systems, Rolls-Royce and Boeing’s venture capital arm to further develop its revolutionary air breathing SABRE rocket engine. Elsewhere in the county, Earth-i is part of a joint venture with Marex Spectron, working to unlock insights specific to clients seeking information on the copper supply chain, using satellite technology.

Another Oxfordshire success story is Open Cosmos, who achieved \$8m in its latest round of funding. Another key player in the UK space sector is Oxford Space Systems (OSS), who recently secured a £1m contract from the UK Ministry of Defence to develop a new generation of pioneering British-deployable satellite antennas. This is the largest ever contract placed with a first-time supplier by the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA).

### Seeking a space cadet? Think apprenticeships

As you would expect, most people working in the space industry have a scientific or engineering background, with relevant degrees. There is, however, an increasing demand from motivated young people who want to study and learn through an apprenticeship, or for people from other sectors who would like to apply and adapt their skills to the specialisms of the space industry. As a result, employers are being encouraged to consider offering more apprenticeships or training schemes to help close the skills gap in the sector.

You can find out more about the health of the UK space industry by downloading the London Economics report presented to the UK Space Agency on the [Size & Health of the UK Space Industry 2018](#).





# THE IMPORTANCE OF OFFERING APPRENTICESHIPS IN BUSINESS

**It is no surprise that businesses are paying attention to the benefits of hiring apprentices with televised campaigns and National Apprenticeship Week highlighting the benefits this type of talent brings to any organisation they join.**

As of 31 August 2019, the Department for Education has recorded that 219,800 apprentices have committed to apprenticeship programmes within a business.

Of these commitments recorded so far for 2018/19, 119,500 were for apprentices aged 25 and over; 69,000 were intermediate apprenticeships, and 94,800 were advanced apprenticeships.

If a business has a payroll of over £3 million, they will be making levy payments. Once an account is active, businesses have 24 months to spend this money before losing the funds. The best advice? Use it, don't lose it!

## Find, Train, Retain, Save

Apprentices offer businesses an easier way to bring in new talent, allowing them to source and develop the best individuals with skills the business needs, irrelevant of the size of the organisation. Apprentices can work across departments and this flexibility and dynamic support frees up senior employees.

As apprenticeships are training programmes, apprentices will know the business from day one, remaining loyal due to their professional development being nurtured. This ensures that talent is not only trained but also retained.

The Department of Education reports that retention rates were 60% for Level 2 and 3 learners in 2017, meaning that apprentices stayed with the employer for a minimum of 13 - 21 months after completing their apprenticeship.

Investing in an apprentice provides you with the opportunity to develop a valued and loyal full-time employee while potentially reducing the cost of recruitment in the future.

## Specific Skills leads to Increased Productivity

Training can be flexible to support business needs, maximising output and ensuring little disruption.

It is common knowledge that apprentices are hungry to thrive, learn and develop. They bring a fresh perspective to business with energy, enthusiasm and motivation aplenty, alongside up-to-date practical and digital knowledge.

In the last Apprenticeship Evaluation 2017: Employers report by IFF Research, 86% of employers reported that the most common benefit for providing apprenticeships was the development of skills relevant to their organisation, while 78% said they improved productivity.

Thus, apprentices can support businesses to meet and surpass their objectives. This fresh perspective ensures apprentices come with excitement and inspiration, injecting enthusiasm and ideas into their projects, rejuvenating businesses.

Offering an apprenticeship can close skills gaps within industry, allowing for a broader pool of talent and enabling a focus on current staff development.

A business that trains apprentices allows them to give something back, tackling unemployment within local communities, allowing industry sectors to flourish and offering a competitive edge, all while boosting their business profile.

Apprentices ensure diversity within business. In welcoming apprentices from all walks of life to thrive under employer guidance, this ensures businesses are a step ahead of their competitors with the newest and brightest talent.



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**Fiona has worked in the apprenticeship sector for nearly 20 years and now manages Activate Apprenticeships, the largest apprenticeship provider in Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. As experts in apprenticeship reforms, the company provides advice to clients on all aspects of learning and development, recruitment, apprenticeship standards, funding compliance and securing return on training investment.**



# OXFORDSHIRE RECRUITMENT: LATEST STEM TRENDS



**Oxfordshire's STEM sector offers such exciting recruitment prospects that Bond Williams set up a dedicated office in 2018. Through our county-wide business contacts and networking skills, we can bring candidates the latest employment trends across science, technology, engineering and maths.**

Here Peter Knibbs, a Bond Williams Recruitment Manager based at Oxford Science Park, gives his insight in to the future of Oxfordshire's STEM employment scene.

## A forecast of positive growth

"It's worth setting the scene by highlighting UKCES Working Futures 2014-2024 figures that reveal the occupation types in Oxfordshire that are most likely to see growth in the next five years. There will be an increasing demand for science, engineering & technology associate professionals; professionals in science, research engineering & tech, and corporate managers & directors.

## In demand: vacancies of the future

Based on forecasted trends, we expect the following to be the top 10 jobs in the STEM sector over the coming years:-

1. Software Engineer
2. Project Engineer
3. System Engineer
4. Electrical Design Engineer
5. Maintenance Engineer
6. Production Engineer
7. E&I / C&I Engineer
8. QA / QC Officer
9. Development Scientist
10. Research Scientist

## New super-niche sectors

Even within the STEM sector, fast-growing niches that demand specialist

skills and knowledge are constantly emerging. Data analysis by Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and OxLEP Skills identified a number of new markets that will shape the future of Oxfordshire recruitment, with STEM-based roles featuring heavily. These include:-

- Low carbon – goods and services in response to climate change
- IT – cloud computing, 3D printing and big data
- Creative and digital industries – driven by continued creative innovation

Other areas in the STEM sector anticipated to recruit heavily in the coming years include the below, boosted by Oxfordshire's Strategic Economic Plan to create up to 86,000 new jobs between now and 2030.

## Space and satellite applications

The Government is accelerating Oxfordshire's involvement in space and satellite applications, and there is a target to quadruple its sector performance by 2030. With an expected turnover of £40 billion in just 11 years time, it comes as no surprise that employee numbers are expected to rise from 37,000 to 115,000 by 2030. It is estimated that 10% of the UK's space and satellite application jobs will be based in Oxfordshire, boosted by the Space Cluster at Harwell Oxford.

## Life science & medical instruments

You could say that life sciences are the life blood of Oxfordshire, with the

two universities acting as excellent feeders. The county's BioCluster and its associated industries comprise more than 330 companies, and there are over 10,000 employed in the manufacturing of pharmaceutical and medical instruments, and in associated research and development.

## Upscaling to create more opportunities

Many start-up companies in Oxfordshire are now maturing, with hundreds of businesses moving from a research to a commercial phase. In fact, it's such a prominent trend that Beauhurst - a searchable database of the UK's high-growth companies - compiled a list of its top 10 business scale-ups in Oxfordshire, with 8 of those coming from the STEM sector. These include: Virtua, Agilityworks, Yasa Motors, Oxford Nanopore, Rebellion, Gigaclear and Circassia. The recruitment byproduct will include an increased demand for staff.

## AI, automation & Oxfordshire jobs

The rise of the robot will no doubt have crossed the minds of Oxfordshire professionals, and the impact on jobs in the county has already been assessed.

Figures from Burning Glass Technologies claim many Oxfordshire jobs will be safe, with only 14% of jobs posted in 2017 deemed at risk of automation. Jobs in the digital technologies, and engineering & science fields were also classified as low risk."



# THE CASE FOR CYBER SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### PETER KNIBBS RECRUITMENT MANAGER

**Sporty with a musical flair – just two of the things we were able to find out about Peter from our Oxford office in this quick Q&A.**

We've all heard the headlines about data breaches at the likes of TalkTalk, Metro Bank, Wonga, and Yahoo. But unless you are really tech-savvy, 'cyber security' probably has quite a vague meaning to you. You might be in some doubt as to its relevance to your business; the whole area appears so baffling and complex to address that it is dumped into the box marked 'too difficult' and given a good stiff ignoring.

But that is a dangerous course of action. As the report 'The cyber threat to UK business 2017 – 2018', produced by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and the National Crime Agency (NCA), makes clear:

"Cyber-attacks have resulted in financial losses to businesses of all sizes. The costs arise from the attack itself, the remediation, and repairing reputational damage by regaining public trust. Attacks have also triggered declines in share prices and the sacking of senior and technical staff held to account for massive data breaches. The enforcement of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018 could, under certain circumstances, lead to severe fines for organisations which fail to prevent data breaches".

#### The real cost

Gulp. So, it's pretty relevant to a business of any size. And just what kind of figures are we talking?

According to a report from IBM's Ponemon Institute ('Cost of a Data Breach 2018: Global Overview'), the global average cost of a data breach was an eye-watering £3 million, including:

- actual money stolen
- cost of buying new IT equipment
- fines for breaching regulations
- lost productivity

Moller-Maersk (quoted in the NCSC/NCA above) reported an expected loss of revenue of €350m from the 2017 NotPetya attack of June 2017.

The UK Information Commissioner's Office intends to fine British Airways £183m (1.5% of their worldwide turnover in 2017) after more than half a million customers' data was stolen by hackers from its website and mobile app (according to a report in the Financial Times (8 July 2019).

#### What should you do?

Rather than panic, you need to take the bull by the horns, get informed about cyber security (which, like most things, isn't so baffling when you get to grips with it), and learn how to manage the risk of a cyber-attack. Your technical team, your bosses and your board members all need to be able to communicate about cyber risks, and the board has to be sufficiently knowledgeable to ask the right sort of challenging questions.

You don't all suddenly need to become cyber security experts, but you do need to understand enough to make your defence stronger. As Ciaran Martin, CEO of the NCSC, puts it: "...cyber risk is a business risk. And it needs to be treated like one. That means you have to understand it. People at board level need to understand the basics – and I stress, basics - of cyber-attacks, cyber risks and cyber defences. That's daunting, but it is doable. It's essential." (CBI Cyber Conference, Sept 2018).

The good news is, you're not on your own here. As in much of life and business, there are experts on hand; people with the tech know-how and the real-world experience to guide you through and ease the pain points. Our advice is to find a specialist who can work with you.

**Author: George Patterson, Director, Hexegic**

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Hexegic has developed a means of helping board members and technical teams to communicate about cyber security and identify where defences are weak. Their product, Vue Risk, is based upon an infographic methodology that is used to manage risk across hazardous industries, such as aviation and oil and gas. They can help any business or organisation to quickly get a picture of their cyber security position – and how to improve it – within a short consultation.



#### Give a potted history of your career to date.

I have always worked within recruitment and started off my career supporting clients looking for contingency labour in the industrial market based in Dorset. I then moved to Oxfordshire in 2005 and for the last 15 years I have focused in the technical and scientific sectors.

#### Why did you get into recruitment?

I registered with a recruitment agency to ask for career advice. I knew that I wanted to work with people I just was not sure what that looked like. The consultant offered me some excellent advice and then asked if I would be interested in working in recruitment and for them. The rest, as they say, is history!

#### What qualifications do you have?

BSc (Hons) degree in Sport Science and Psychology and Certificate of Recruitment Practice (CertRP). I also have a level 1 in tennis coaching.

#### What do you think makes a great recruitment consultant?

Resilience, honesty and relationship-building. You also must be observant and a good listener.

#### Your biggest achievement at Bond Williams?

Helping to set up a new office and specialist Engineering, Science and Space recruitment function in Oxford and support the new consultants to be able to achieve their goals.

#### Your biggest achievement in life?

Recruit an amazing wife and together bring up two beautiful daughters

#### Always wanted to travel to...?

The Moon

#### Always wanted to learn how to...?

Back flip

#### If I weren't a recruitment consultant, I would be...?

PE Teacher

#### People would be surprised to know this about me?

I used to be a DJ

#### Motto in life or something you strongly believe in?

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel" - Maya Angelou





# THE SCIENCE BEHIND STRESS

**There is no question that mental health in the workplace is one of the most spoken about subjects in the in the media right now and hundreds, if not thousands, of companies are creating and delivering initiatives designed to tackle it. One of the biggest causes of mental health problems in the workplace is stress and as it's National Stress Awareness Day, let's look at how stress is defined and what causes it.**

## Definition of stress

The definition of stress is a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances. We have all experienced it at some stage of our lives and some people constantly experience it because of their jobs and other pressures placed upon them. As human beings we need a certain amount of stress to develop, but too much of it can impact us in a negative way.

There are two key physiological systems that co-ordinate the body's response to stress and they are the autonomic nervous system (ANS) and the hormonal system. The ANS reacts almost immediately and the hormonal systems occurs and persists over a much longer period of time. The stomach and the kidneys also pour out hormones in response to stress and unless these hormones are checked then they can have a damaging effect on the body. Even after stress has subsided

the hormonal levels can remain very high. Because of the high-stress society we live in, the stress response is activated so many times that hormonal levels don't always have time to return back to normal, leading to many different health issues.

## How stress weighs heavily – literally

Cortisol, the primary stress hormone, increases sugars (glucose) in the bloodstream, enhances your brain's use of glucose and increases the availability of substances that repair tissues. Cortisol also curbs functions that would be nonessential or detrimental in a fight-or-flight situation. One reaction that most of us will have experienced is when cortisol levels spike, the signal tells the body to eat something with a lot of quick calories in it. "A great survival tactic if you need energy to flee a predator but not if you're fretting over how to pay bills," says nutritional biochemist Shawn Talbott, PhD, author of *The Cortisol Connection*.

Chronic stress produces high levels of cortisol over a long period of time and the body's internal mechanism resets and directs the body to maintain a higher level of cortisol. It is the day-to-day accumulation that causes the most damage because we don't feel it creeping up on us. Symptoms of elevated cortisol levels include anxiety, depression, digestive problems, headaches, heart disease, sleep problems, memory and concentration impairment and weight gain. Chronic stress can lead the body to ignore the function of insulin. Insulin resistance develops when the cells fail to respond to insulin's message to take in glucose from the blood stream. It is thought that elevated blood sugar due to stress and diet contributes to the development of insulin resistance. When insulin fails to unlock our cells, the appetite is increased while the body's ability to burn fat is decreased. This syndrome is part of the modern problem of rising rates of obesity and diabetes.

This gradual increase is the silent killer because we accommodate it and accept it as normal.

A paper in 1996 by Rosenman found that over half of the new cases of heart disease had none of the normal risk factors associated with coronary artery disease such as high blood cholesterol, diabetes, smoking or a poor diet. What was present in the lives of these new cases though was stress.

In general, the most common deaths in the UK for people aged 40 to 75 are all linked to lifestyle diseases such as heart attacks, high blood pressure, cancer, strokes and Type 2 Diabetes. Unfortunately, many of these people are caught on the hamster wheel of life and don't even know that they are working themselves into an early grave until it is too late. They tend to be overweight and be constantly stressed, feeling as though they have little time to get things done and never have the energy or will power to make a change. Just have a look at the case study of the CEO of Lloyds in 2011 when he worked himself into a nervous breakdown.

Stress doesn't only impact heart disease but it is also linked to cancer. Stress inhibits the production and activity of natural killer cells, known as NK cells, as much as 50%. NK cells are responsible for identifying and destroying cancer and virus

cells. Even more scary, chronic stress can accelerate the growth of cancer cells in the body as well as block the body's ability to fight cancer. It promotes the synthesis of new blood cells in tumours and accelerates the growth of some tumours.

## Causes of stress in the workplace

With constant connectivity, stress is a big problem in the workplace with the five main causes being: poor leadership, poor communication, poor working relationships, workload and change. It has been identified as such a big problem that the Health & Safety Executive now state that "Employers have a legal duty to protect employees from stress at work by doing a risk assessment and acting on it".

So have you got a risk assessment for stress in place and does your employee handbook have a policy on stress and mental health in the workplace? Do you have an Employee Assistance Programme as one of your controls in your risk assessments? An EAP provides you with a host of support services including counselling, wellbeing information services and health tools, allowing you to proactively invest in your employees' wellbeing.

Right now many companies have an EAP as part of their employee benefits package but it won't be long before it will become an employer must-have rather than an employee benefit.

## 5 main causes of stress in the workplace:

- **Poor leadership**
- **Poor communication**
- **Poor working relationships**
- **Workload**
- **Change**

*\*Taken from HRB (Harvard Business Review) 2017*



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**Alasdair is ex-British Army with a passion for human and business performance. He's had a varied career spanning over 30 years with one common theme – helping people to develop and improve.**





# UPDATE

## IR35: WHAT TO EXPECT POST-APRIL 2020

The engineering, science and space industries are known to be core contracting sectors, and with changes to IR35 legislation coming in April 2020, Nicola Hayman from Kingsbridge Contractor Insurance provides a reminder of what's changing and how you can prepare.

### What is IR35?

The intermediaries legislation – more commonly known as IR35 – is a piece of anti-avoidance tax legislation introduced in 2000 to combat what HMRC call “disguised employees”. It applies to contractors who supply their services through a limited company, known by HMRC as a personal service company (PSC).

The legislation requires the PSC to pay equivalent employment tax to directly engaged employees. In other words, they should pay PAYE tax and NIC if the reality of the work is akin to employment.

Since the introduction of IR35, it has been the responsibility of the PSC to determine whether they were working inside (i.e. effectively an employee) or outside (i.e. a genuine self-employed contractor in business on their account) of IR35 and to pay the appropriate taxes due.

### What is changing in April 2020?

In 2017 the IR35 legislation was reformed to introduce the ‘off-payroll working rules’ in the public sector. As of April 2020, these rules will be extended into the private sector. This means the responsibility for determining IR35 status and accounting for PAYE/NIC will move from the PSC to the engager and fee-payer.

### Who is liable?

In many cases, the engager (the end client)

will become responsible for assessing whether IR35 applies and the fee-payer will be liable for accounting for the PAYE/NIC due when deemed inside IR35.

However, where the end client also pays the contractor, they will be both the engager and the fee-payer under this legislation. Therefore, they will be liable for both the IR35 status determination and any PAYE/NIC due.

Where an intermediary is used to pay the contractor (e.g. a recruiter) they will be considered the fee-payer and bear responsibility for accounting for any PAYE/NIC due.

The actual method by which status is assessed is not changing. What is changing is the way HMRC are enforcing the legislation that leaves end clients and recruiters liable. If a contractor is legitimately working outside IR35 today, the same should apply for that assignment after April 2020. It is also important to remember that HMRC's own view is that one-third of contractors should be caught by IR35 – meaning the majority are still outside.

As recently as August 2019, it was reported that HMRC claimed 1,500 contractors working for pharmaceutical company GSK, including those in biomedical sciences, were incorrectly working outside IR35 rules.

### What's next?

Now is the time for organisations to start getting ready for the introduction of the off-

payroll working rules in the private sector. Plan ahead and start analysing your contractual relationships. Begin by completing audits to classify your contractor's status. Best practice is to start an early-stage determination to see who fits in where.

Those who are leaving it late to start these processes and begin making determinations could be in for some challenges come April 2020. Contractors can be very influential and some who have valuable skill sets will be able to insist that they only work through their PSC, therefore forcing their client's hand to either increase the rate or ceasing to pay for the contractor's services.

### Seek help if unsure

For contractors wishing to continue to work independently and offer their service through a PSC it has become more important than ever to ensure that they have proper business insurances in place as it would be unlikely for a PSC contractor who has been assessed as “outside” IR35 not to hold business insurance.

Holding this insurance with a reputable insurer is a key part of being able to demonstrate that a PSC contractor is taking responsibility for the work they do. It is also important that it is the PSC that takes out and pays for the insurance rather than to be covered on some kind of block policy held by the end user or another party.

## 5 minutes with... SHANNON WESTON, HR MANAGER, ARIENSCO

Shannon Weston has been working in HR for the past 7 years, and over half of these have been in the engineering sector. We spoke to her about her background, how she came to work in HR and what she thinks is the biggest challenge facing the sector in general, as well as specific HR challenges in engineering.

### How did you first get into HR?

I was working front of house at a criminal defence firm in Oxford and decided that I was ready to do some studying, so I researched local colleges and courses on offer and came across a CIPD course. The more I thought about it the more I realised that HR would be a good balance between my interest in law (albeit the employment rather than criminal kind) and supporting people.

### How has your career progressed?

Upon completion of my first CIPD Qualification, I joined a European precision engineering company specialising in the welding and fabrication of pressure vessels as HR Assistant. I worked with them for just over four years and at the point I left, I had progressed to HR Manager for the UK Plant. I then moved to the public sector and worked for the Local Authority providing HR Consultancy for schools and colleges within Oxfordshire. It was in this role that I cut my teeth on Employee Relations and understood the ‘tough side’ of HR. Having spent three years as a consultant, I decided that the time was right for me to move back into an in-house HR role, and the opportunity arose for a standalone role with HR responsibility for EMEAA business (Europe, Middle East, Asia and Africa), this is the role I hold today with AriensCo.

### Describe your role with Ariens

The role is standalone and supports the full employment lifecycle of a workforce of 120 employees across the EMEAA region – predominantly the UK and Scandinavia. Most recently the primary focus has been on attracting talent, retaining key skills and developing employees in conjunction with a major transformation of the UK manufacturing plant and the production of a new product line. Alongside this, implementing a suitable Performance Management and Succession Planning process, ensuring systems remain up to date and partnering with the Senior Leaders to effectively support their employees.

### What do you enjoy most about working in HR?

Being able to influence and create a culture where employees feel empowered, supported and enjoy coming to work every day (well... 99% of the time).

### What has been the highlight of your career so far?

My advice and solutions being consistently rated as excellent.



### What are the challenges being faced by the HR sector at the moment?

Shortage of relevant specialist and technical skills and the impact the current political uncertainty has on this; and as a result, successful recruitment and retention of talent.

### How do the demands and disciplines of HR differ in the engineering sector?

If I compare the engineering sector to education for example, a lot of the demands remain the same; the focus of HR is still ensuring that the right people with the right skills are performing effectively in the right role. What differs is the approach to this – how employees are trained and developed, how performance is evaluated and implementing valuable systems and structures appropriate to the needs of the organisation.

### What are the main HR challenges in the engineering sector?

Shortage of STEM skills and as a result successful recruitment and retention of talent. An increasing desire from candidates/employees for clear career pathways remains a challenge, especially within a smaller engineering company such as Ariens where the opportunity to create these pathways is limited – it does, however, allow for lots of different exposure to all aspects of the business. Gender imbalance is still an issue as engineering remains a male dominated industry.

### In your opinion, what are the key characteristics of a great HR professional?

Empathetic, strong communicator, impartial, ethical, organised and passionate.

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## WHY EXCLUSIVITY TRUMPS MULTI-AGENCY RECRUITMENT EVERY TIME

When it comes to using the services of a recruitment agency to fill your next vacancy, it can seem to make sense to cast your net wide. With multiple consultants working on your behalf, you'll find the perfect candidate for your business in no time, right? Not necessarily.

It's not so much a case of many hands make light work, but rather too many cooks can spoil the broth.

Partnering with a recruitment agency on an exclusive basis does not mean you have to award all your available jobs to just one company, though. Different roles call for different skill and industry expertise, after all.

However, there are three key advantages to having just one agency working towards finding you talented candidates for specific vacancies.

### 1. Candidate reach

There is a misconception that using a number of recruitment agencies to advertise your jobs means your job will be seen by more candidates. While some job seekers do have an affiliation with certain recruiters, multiple agencies will potentially result in your job advert being seen several times by the same people. In turn, you might receive multiple applications from the same candidate via different agencies. This is not only frustrating for you, but frustrating for the job seeker who thought they had two applications being considered, not to mention the administration!

It's highly likely that you'll still reach a suitable amount of candidates using only one recruitment agency, but that you'll also benefit from their long-standing relationships with passive contacts.

### 2. Commitment to success

You might think that a multi-agency approach to recruitment drives commitment up, but it can actually drive it down. Instead of striving to be the first agency to send you the biggest and best batch of CVs, consultants will follow their usual processes to get your job advert live and in front of job seekers, but spend little extra time actually looking for suitable candidates.

When you provide a recruitment agency with exclusivity, there is still no risk to you other than the fact that the job might not be filled (which is still the case when you use several recruitment agencies anyway!). The work to get your

job specification right, advertised to the right candidates via the right channels, including a passive approach, and CV shortlisting and screening is all front-loaded. So, the agency takes on all of the risk and still won't earn a fee until a successful placement has been made.

They will dedicate time and resources to filling your vacancy because they know that with commitment and less competition, they have a higher chance of success for both you and them.

### 3. Consultative approach

When awarded exclusive recruitment rights, consultants will likely spend more time with you initially to fully understand your business and the requirements of the role. Using their expert knowledge of the local job market, experience working with similar roles in your industry (because you should always look to work with recruiters with specialist experience) and understanding of candidate availability, they will be able to advise on the best way to position and package a job and a company.

With more time comes the ability for recruitment consultants to use their experience to go beyond basic CV skill matching within a candidate database. They will be able to spot hidden gems and talented individuals via manual searches and in-depth conversations with candidates.

### The first step to exclusive agency recruitment

If you haven't yet worked with a recruitment agency, then 'trying before you buy' is an option. Just be prepared for a lower success rate and slower time to hire. When you do have the time, however, do your research and come up with a shortlist of recruitment agencies who you think could help you with your hiring needs.

Think about what industry you operate in, the various jobs and skills that your business needs and location. It can be a good idea to put together a Preferred Supplier List of agencies with different specialisms.

At Bond Williams Professional Recruitment, we pride ourselves on providing a committed service regardless of whether you work with us on an exclusive basis or not, but this is because we are confident that we can deliver results and encourage you to work with us exclusively next time! Our exclusive clients also benefit from preferential rates.



## THE RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE FEMALE STEM SPECIALISTS

**Last year, Jodie Whittaker made history as the first female Doctor Who and could inspire a new generation of budding scientists in a traditionally male-dominated sector.**

Women currently make up [less than a quarter of the UK workforce](#) in science, technology, engineering and medicine industries, but with almost 150,000 jobs reportedly being created in these sectors in the UK in the next five years, there are many opportunities to be taken advantage of.

We look at five reasons why a career in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is worth pursuing for both men and women.

### Diversity

Many skills obtained at degree level are cross-marketable in the STEM sector. Take engineering for example. This can lead to opportunities in chemical engineering, environmental science and computer science.

Moreover, Forbes found that gender diversity is important for companies too, with 85% of large global enterprises believing that teams with a healthy mix of men and women is critical in driving innovation.

### Longevity

In the 21st century, the concept of a job for life rarely exists. In the STEM sector, however, businesses often offer long-term training and development opportunities in a bid to retain specialist staff.

Employers are also experiencing a skills [shortage](#) in the sector at the moment, with an average of 10 unfilled roles per business, meaning there is less competition for jobs.

### Earning potential

Research has found that [STEM professionals can earn nearly 20%](#) more than their peers, and that's just at graduate level. Maths, science, computer science and engineering have also made the list of top 10 degrees with the highest paying salaries.

### Job satisfaction

Higher salaries and being able to utilise specific skills that you studied to learn contribute to the high levels of job satisfaction in the STEM sector.

A survey carried out by BT in Ireland revealed that 82% and 35% of STEM workers consider their work to be 'inspiring' and 'pioneering' respectively. In addition, almost 40% believe the best thing about their job is the opportunity to progress. We're sure this is mirrored in the UK!

### Be part of the future

STEM careers really do give people the chance to make a difference and even change the world. Employees can be at the forefront of industrial robotics, technological advances, communication, medical innovation and even the discovery or preservation of life.

If you are currently looking to fill a vacancy in the STEM sector, or need help finding your next challenge, call our specialist Engineering, Science and Space consultants on 01865 546 046.



# I WANT A MENTOR... BUT YOU PROBABLY NEED A COACH



By Kathryn Jeacock, Head of HR, Satellite Applications Catapult and student at Oxford Brookes (MA in Coaching and Mentoring)

I always wanted to have a Karate Kid-style situation, where a Mr Miyagi, the wise mentor, saw something great in me and committed their time to share their wisdom and knowledge so I could achieve greatness. Instead I was given a coach... and it was the best thing that happened to me. My career accelerated and I developed as a resourceful and resilient person.

Don't get me wrong, a mentor can be a great thing; they encourage learning (Parloe 1995) and transmit their knowledge (Stewart & Kregar 1996). A mentor can be your 'career friend' who is more senior and more influential, sharing useful hints and tips, passing on their advice (Rogers 2016). This is all good stuff, but it is important to be mindful that the journey your mentor had doesn't necessarily mean your journey is going to be the same. Also, you are an individual with different values and beliefs, you have your own way of seeing the world, so what worked for your mentor might not work for you.

Another important thing to consider is how we learn as adults. We learn completely differently to how we learn as children. Transmitting knowledge like a teacher does to its pupils isn't how we learn as adults. As adults we have accumulated various experiences, from the challenges and life stages we have gone through. We are also now responsible for our own lives! To learn and, most importantly, change/do something differently as adults, there are couple of things that need to be at play - we need to know why we are learning something and be 'ready' to learn; we need to be self-directing and have a sense that we are still responsible for making our own decisions; we learn more through reflection/evaluation of our experiences; and we

need to be intrinsically motivated to learn i.e. job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life (Malcolm Knowles) (Jack Meriowz).

## The power of coaching

In coaching, you set the agenda and your coach will create an environment where you are truly listened to and you move towards your goals in your own way. Coaching enables you to close the gap between your potential and your current state (Rogers 2016). It is a way of facilitating learning, creating greater self-awareness, helping to identify choices, finding your own solutions, developing your skills and changing your attitudes and behaviours. It is not about instruction or teaching.

Coaching helps you to discover from within rather than being told or taught. A coach will work from your own experience and perceptions rather than from their own (Whitmore 2017) so you are supported in your individual journey to success, whatever that looks like for you.

Whether you decide to go for coaching or mentoring, it is up to you. You need to recognise that progressing in your career is not something that is done for you and it is not the responsibility of your organisation to manage your career. You are responsible for your career, it needs to be led by you, no-one can do it for you.

In my case, coaching worked for me and I would encourage anyone who has the opportunity to have a coach to go for it, you just need to trust the process!

# UPCOMING BOND WILLIAMS CLIENT EVENTS

WE REGULARLY RUN FREE EVENTS ACROSS OXFORD FOR BUSINESS OWNERS, DIRECTORS AND HR PROFESSIONALS.

Held in partnership with specialist guest speakers and other local businesses, these seminars cover a variety of relevant and timely topics including employment law, professional development and industry innovations.

Information of our upcoming event is detailed below.

To book, please visit [www.bondwilliams.co.uk/blog/events](http://www.bondwilliams.co.uk/blog/events)

## JANUARY 2020

### Bond Williams Employer Workshop

featuring representatives from Peninsula

2:30pm - 5:30pm

Tuesday 21st January

**The Magdalen Centre, Robert Robinson Avenue, The Oxford Science Park, Oxford, OX4 4GA**

Join our expert HR and Health & Safety speaker at this brief but invaluable event, which will enhance the way you run your business by giving you the knowledge and advice to resolve any employee challenge.

#### Important Content Update: Mental health in the workplace

Find out how to manage work-related health problems like stress, depression, and anxiety in your business. Discover why leading UK businesses have appointed mental health first aiders at work. Get practical advice on protecting your worker's mental health and learn how to reduce sick leave, boost morale and make productivity soar.

#### You will also learn how to:

- Review contracts, handbooks, and other essential employment document
- Deal with staff behaviour, performance, attendance, and attitude
- Handle health & safety, risk assessments, fire safety policies and procedures
- Understand the six fair reasons for dismissal to help avoid tribunal claims
- Manage gender-balance, employment status, and pay

During this upcoming event, you will discover the latest updates on the new "Good Work Plan" announced by the government on December 17th, which outlines details of the largest overhaul to employment rights for years and how these changes to legislation might affect your business in the near future.

## GET INVOLVED!

We're always on the lookout for new event opportunities for the Engineering, Science & Space industry as well as our other specialist divisions – HR, Accounting & Finance, IT & Software Solutions and Office & Commercial.

If you'd like to suggest topics or get involved in any way, please contact:

**Peter Knibbs on 01865 546046 or [peter.knibbs@bondwilliams.co.uk](mailto:peter.knibbs@bondwilliams.co.uk)**



# HIRING?

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