



HAPPY REBELS

HOW TO ATTRACT, KEEP
AND ENGAGE THEM?



HOUSE OF HR

"TO KEEP YOUR REBELS
HAPPY, IT'S CRUCIAL TO
UNDERSTAND THAT EVERYONE
IS UNIQUE AND THUS
MAY FIND HAPPINESS IN
DIFFERENT THINGS."

Scan the QR-code below
and discover what else
Vlerick Business Schools'
Dean Marion Debruyne has to
say in her interview with
journalist Aart De Zitter.



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Colofon

Content input is provided by Marion Debruyne (dean Vlerick Business School), Ine Tryhou (risk project manager House of HR), Abdel Bencheikh (head of risk and internal audit House of HR), Charlotte Meiresonne (CHRO Accent Jobs), Seda Westerbeek (HR development manager Talent&Pro), Lies Dumarey (CHRO Gritt), Marlon Woudstra (CHRO Continu), David Engelen (learning & development manager House of HR), Astrid Kamphorst (HR Manager Covebo), Mélanie Aubert (HR director Abylsen), Jeroen Ekkel (CEO Cohedron), Ana Herbst (head Legal & Compliance TIMEPARTNER). Interviewing and copywriting: BeSpoken vof (Aart De Zitter), aart@bespoken.be
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'DO NOT LISTEN!'

Executive summary

Never before has the global talent market been more competitive than today. The 'war for talent' rages more fiercely than ever before or, as Rika Coppens says: 'The war for talent is over ... talent has won'. For organizations to grow and prosper, attracting, hiring, keeping and developing people is quintessential.

House of HR, a European leader in HR-services, has made this its daily mission. Its dream is to connect and amplify as many people's talents and dreams to successful companies, and, by doing so, changing lives and helping shape the future. To achieve these ambitious goals, House of HR introduced the notion of 'Happy Rebels': making every individual working for and in House of HR happy with a sense of rebellion as the ultimate way to attract, keep and engage people.

'We want our people to dare take initiatives. Mistakes are allowed. We are here to support them.'

In this white paper, we zoom in on the ways to realize the ambition of making Happy Rebels. Based on the insights from Marion Debruyne, dean at Vlerick Business School, this paper identifies the essential elements to attract, retain and develop the right people for your business.

When it comes to attraction, a corporate culture that is purely purpose-driven is key, as is diversity in dealing with attitude and skills. Once you have the right people onboard, retaining them will

highly depend on the way you manage to keep them engaged. This is done by both finding the right balance between personal longings and company needs, and by offering continuous learning paths and allowing to make mistakes.

Yet, the real challenge is to make your people 'Happy Rebels'. As this is the corner stone of how House of HR, and all of its PowerHouses and their Boutiques, deals with their people, this white paper zooms in on what it takes to be Happy Rebels. Key is to dare and do, seasoned by entrepreneurship/intrapreneurship, critical thinking, thirst for innovation and leadership that is practicing what it preaches.

House of HR's CEO Rika Coppens: 'to make Happy Rebels, the only rule is to make it work. We want our people, throughout our PowerHouses and their Boutiques, all over Europe, to dare take initiative, think outside the box and go for it. Do not listen to what others say. We are here to support you.'



FROM PURPOSE TO REBELLION

The expert's view

'Making your way, the (wobbly) road to success and happiness in life and work': in 2019 Marion Debruyne and Katleen De Stobbeleir published a book about dreaming big, lifelong learning and daring to jump.

In November 2021, we interviewed Marion Debruyne about the overall importance of a corporate culture nurturing people who dare to take initiative and be happy. In short, about the recipe to attract, keep and engage Happy Rebels.

Key ingredients to be happy in your life and your work are threefold, Marion Debruyne argues: live your dream, learn continuously and leap, dare to jump. Being entrepreneurial is essential to move forward in work and life. This vision goes away from the traditional view that happiness is related to narrow defined notions of success, measured in career ladders and gradually increasing status and power.

Those who dare to jump, will make impact. Get out of your comfort zone: this is where the magic happens. Impact is an important driver for happiness. In corporate circles, impact can be translated as 'purpose'. And this term – purpose – is the ultimate key element in the way organizations have to attract, keep and engage people in an ever more harsh war for talent.

Often, people talk about the so-called 'work-life balance'. Bogus, according to Debruyne! Every individual has his/her own personal style, resulting in personalized ways to find a balance. Also according to Rika Coppens, we should stop calling it 'work-life' balance: 'Change it to 'work-private' balance, since we do not stop

breathing when we start working!' This is part of the diversity organizations must deal with. Precisely this diversity is important when looking for the right mix of talents and people. Having a diversified group of people, will strengthen engagement. According to Debruyne, we must acknowledge different styles and types of people, as long as they all fit withing the corporate culture and share the same purpose. The credo is obvious: hire for attitude, and train the skills.

'Hire for attitude, and train the skills.'

The real uniqueness in the way House of HR deals with its people lies in the concept of 'Happy Rebels'. Debruyne is supporting the message: encourage your people to do something new, to be entrepreneurial, dare to be innovative, think out of the box, be critical, question the status quo. Embracing risk and take the freedom to try: this evidently needs a management style that leads by example. This leadership style must find a correct balance between compliance and freedom, and between rules and risks. House of

HR, among others, also stands for the 'House of Happy Rebels': people make the company.

Debruyne also gives her views on learning: it is a powerful tool to grow and keep engagement and satisfaction. Another element that is gaining importance in the war for talent is the way we organize work: phygital working, combining

remote, virtual and flexible ways of organizing our work. We should make sure that within this phygital working environment the human aspect remains top-of-mind, so as to keep a real team spirit, irrespective of how, where and when we work but with sufficient ways to connect and make sure people live the purpose of your company in everything they do.

Reference:

'Making your way, the (wobbly) road to success and happiness in life and work', Marion Debruyne and Katleen De Stobbeleir, Lannoo Publishers, 216 pages, 2020 (third edition).



NO ESG-WASHING

How House of HR deals with its people

As a fast growing international group of HR PowerHouses and Boutiques, House of HR has an elaborated policy dealing with environmental, social and governance issues: the ESG Charter. Making 'Happy Rebels' is a fundamental part of the social pillar of this ESG strategy. Social initiatives deal with a diverse range of topics, such as employee well-being, engagement, empowerment, decent work, diversity and inclusion, talent attraction and retention, and training and education.

'All our PowerHouses have elaborated a series of local initiatives related to the social pillar of our Group.'

Abdel Bencheikh, House of HR's head of ESG, risk management and internal audit: 'all our PowerHouses have elaborated a series of local initiatives related to the social pillar of our Group.' For House of HR, the social pillar of ESG

is of utmost importance, as all PowerHouses and Boutiques have humans as their quintessential and most valuable 'assets': not only the ones that work for House of HR but also the ones that give their very best every day for House of HR's customers. 'Mostly, when people talk about ESG, it comes down to communication and marketing', Bencheikh argues, 'without really implementing this governance. We do not want ESG-washing. For us, social governance is for real.'

As House of HR is into the people's business, all PowerHouses are developing and deploying several initiatives on this social pillar. They all help to achieve the common goals of attracting, keeping and engaging people who share the same purpose. Meanwhile, House of HR is also taking collective initiatives valid for all PowerHouses, to leverage on the individual initiatives. This, in turn, will allow the creation of a 'one truth' vision on the social pillar of a strong, Europe-wide ESG-strategy.

PURPOSE AND DIVERSITY

How to attract people

In the current and future world, there are – and will be – more vacancies than candidates. Whereas employers in the early days could choose from many candidates, these candidates now can

choose from many employers. Winning this war for talent is essential for organizations to grow and stay focused on targeting their business goals.

According to both expert Marion Debruyne and the HR-leaders from the different House of HR PowerHouses, there are many ingredients in the cocktail that can make you win this battle. The main ingredient is 'purpose'.

More than ever before, and even more so since the Covid-pandemic, people want to work for an organization they share the same purpose with. Employers must clearly define what their purpose is, and what that implies for its corporate and employer branding. If there is a fit between employer branding and purpose on the one hand, and the personal value set of the candidate, the candidate is likely to choose for you. Important is to clearly communicate your purpose, and to stick to your corporate DNA. Faking is failing. At the same time, being purpose driven is quintessential to align your people to what you are trying to achieve as a company, especially in times of hybrid and remote work.

Amongst the many other ingredients in the winning cocktail are salary, flexibility and training possibilities. Salary, evidently, must be market conform and transparently communicated. Flexibility deals with both so-called 'cafeteria plans' (where employees can cherry-pick benefits that best suit their needs) and with the partial freedom to choose how they organize their work and their career. Training is important, as candidates want to be hired for attitude, and trained to get the skills needed for the job. Training is also a social responsibility for all employers, making sure your people remain relevant for the future and keep up with all technologies and digital skills required for this future. This enables a diversified talent pool, with people from different backgrounds, with different skills and personalities: this diversity must be embraced, as long as all people share the same purpose with the organization.

Another element that turns out to be important to win the battle for talent, is a smooth and fast recruitment process. Candidates will prefer both a proactive and reactive hiring procedure. Special attention should be paid to innovative recruitment tools, such as VideoMyJob, Nowjobs, SWOP etc.

We practice what we preach

Gritt: attracting the old fashioned way

Rather than – once again – presenting itself as an attractive employer by using social media, Gritt decided to go 'the old way'. It went physically to university campuses. Although it is hard to prove this approach to be successful, it will certainly have its effects. And it shows there is no one single truth in how to profile your company as the ideal employer.

Swop: swipe yourself a job

Swop is a digital platform, where job seekers can swipe themselves a job, tailored to their needs, and based on smart AI-software, while at the same time testing themselves to understand what they want and what type of personality they have.

ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING

How to keep people

To put it sharp: the best way to find people is to keep the ones you have, and to keep them happy and engaged. The question, however, is: how do you retain them? Key element in a futureproof retention management is employee engagement. If people share your purpose (as described earlier in this white paper), they will stay onboard if you manage to keep them engaged. Efforts must be made to keep the purpose, vision, personality and values razor sharp: they are the magnet that keeps your employees stick to your organization and each other.

How do you engage your people? First, by recognizing their continuous efforts. At House of HR, a lot of emphasis is put on this recognition. Think of celebrating promotions, setting up parties, giving employees a podium. This continuous recognition efforts are setting House of HR truly apart from its competitors.

But here as well, engagement is a cocktail with many ingredients. Many of them deal with the balance between the professional and the private life. Think of setting up strategies to enable people to work from home. As Marion Debruyne already mentioned, the human side is essential in attracting and retaining people.

Another important element is the learning opportunities people are offered. More and more, training will be the new hiring. Upskilling your people is less expensive and more productive than hiring people. Or to put it different: hire the will not the skill. Training enables people to grow, but will also have an immediate impact on the overall company

performance: a win-win, obviously. Moreover, learning & development is necessary to fight the growing skills gap. For instance, blue collar workers see a shift from technical issues to informatics. Without training efforts, companies will risk losing their workers. People want to learn, people need to learn. And later, if/when they leave, they will take along lessons they learned, and might become your ambassadors. L&D is an essential element in longterm value creation. And as such, it is a powerful tool to keep your people onboard.

We practice what we preach

Talent&Pro: flexible mobility

Too often, candidates take a company car 'for granted'. At Talent&Pro, people get the choice between a lease car or a bike or a public transportation subscription. This flexibility is very practical and very much appreciated. People can even switch between different mobility solutions, depending on their actual needs. Obviously, this new mobility policy has had a positive impact on Talent&Pro as an employer. Consequently, it is said to have a positive impact on the retention policy.

Covebo: birthday presents

In 2021, Covebo was celebrating its 20th birthday. Reasons enough to put its people in the spotlight. Online movies and pictures on social media. An original way to empower and engage its people was to give birthday presents on every 20th of every month. Think of a weekend in Paris, London or New York. Or a flower subscription, 10 kilograms of peppermints, sport outfits, etc. All this was widely communicated via Covebo's media.



DARING AND DOING

How to engage people

Crucial in the social philosophy of House of HR, its PowerHouses and their Boutiques, is the notion of 'Happy Rebels'. This is the ultimate way of engaging people. In other words, the question 'how to engage people' might be rephrased to 'how to make your people Happy Rebels'.

By interviewing people from different PowerHouses, from different countries and with different types of clients, it becomes clear that there is not 'one size fits all', although the basic 'interpretation' is evident.

In essence, 'Happy Rebels' are people who are given enough freedom to experiment, take initiative, take risk, be critical, be entrepreneurial, think out of the box and try to be innovative. The marching order is: 'do what

you think will work'. In order to engage people, making them Happy Rebels is the ultimate recipe. It requests a delicate balancing between two extremes: being compliant with rules and procedures, yet providing your people with the freedom and context to become rebellious.

Sometimes, the notion is translated into a oneliner: 'it's better to ask for forgiveness than for permission'. Yet, this only holds for the intrapreneurial spirit, as every culture, every PowerHouse, every Boutique will interpret the notion in its own way. As such, this is already rebellious. Do not slide into a regulatory zeal as a group. For some companies, legislation, culture and industry (such as public authorities) dictate that freedom is interpreted differently. For other

ones, people are actively encouraged to take risks and come up with 'crazy ideas', at the same time allowing them to make mistakes.

But even the diversity between cultures, and between different corporate environments is an integral part of the rebellious attitude House of HR is strongly promoting and stimulating. Why is that? Because in the long term a risk-taking attitude will always pay off.

Rebellion is the ultimate characteristic that sets House of HR apart from its peers. There is a good reason for that. Fostering people to think outside the box, try and make mistakes, be innovative and free to think and be their own entrepreneur in essence makes them happy, as they get plenty of opportunities. The rule is that there are none. If leaders manage to create and maintain a corporate culture of rebellion, chances are high that their employees by becoming Rebels will also be and stay happy. Stimulating people to become Happy Rebels will not only have a positive impact on attracting and keeping, but also on engaging your people and instill ownership.

We practice what we preach

Abysen: stimulate your people to take initiatives

Abysen wants to practice what it preaches when it comes to empowering its people to take initiative. Abysen is a group of 'intrapreneurs'. People are encouraged to start their own accounts. Every business manager has a high degree of freedom in setting up new accounts. Even the creation of new offices is encouraged. If you strongly believe in the potential of an initiative, you are asked to work out a business plan. Or as they say in french: 'vas-y!'

House of HR's Innovation Contest

Every rebel from every PowerHouse can send in an innovative idea, a product, a new business, a service, ... The best ideas are then selected and pitched to the entire management of the Group. The winner gets a 250.000 euros investment to realize her/his project. VideoMyJob is the result of the innovation contest of 2019.





THE FUTURE OF HAPPY REBELS

Notes on phygitality and gigs

In a post-Covid era, the office is moving from a 'work location' to a 'meeting place', a well equipped location where people can physically meet. But for sure, working remotely is here to stay. People will get more freedom in choosing where they work, when they work and even how they work. In the future, companies will have to elaborate clear policies on how to deal with the merge of physical and digital – hence phygital – working forms. Trust being essential, clear rules and procedures will have to be established about these emerging hybrid working methods. Also, local legislations may be different in different countries, resulting in different concrete policies. Or instead of moving towards rules and procedures, make sure to set clear targets, install ownership and people will move in the direction that is good for the company.

Obviously, as said earlier, the office is not going to disappear. If only because physical meetings are better to stimulate creativity and cooperation. Coffee corners, afterwork drinks cannot be replaced by virtual ones. Even virtual office spaces – think of Facebooks Metaverse, will not replace the incidental encounters at the coffee corner.

As personal freedom and tailor-made solutions in the HR-world tend to be on the rise, as a need to find, hire, keep and engage employees, the gig economy is booming as well. More and more people prefer to leave a 'fixed' employment and replace it by a freelance status to work on different missions. More specifically, Gen Z is more than any other generation intrigued by the

advantages that are said to be part of working in this gig economy. They fly from one gig to another, and master their own portfolio of clients, projects, and even income. This gig economy is not contradictory to the concept of rebellion. The differences between payrollers and gig-workers are becoming irrelevant for a company. Yet, companies must work out clear policies about how and when to work with freelancers: they should be given the same advantages, yet people on the payroll should not feel disadvantaged either.

Moreover, even payroll people might fly away and leave the company: in this period of 'great resignation' nothing is a certainty anymore. There are too many gaps on the labor market not to embrace the gig economy.

We practice what we preach

GiGHOUSE: most of the PowerHouses have gig workers!

GiGHOUSE is the first ever Belgian matching platform that focuses solely on freelancers within the field of HR, Digital & Design, MarCom, IT, Administration and Finance.

GiGHOUSE stands for qualitative matching of freelancers and projects through a people powered approach and supported by digital tools (mobile app, webportal and matching based on AI) to ensure a quick and transparent matching process.



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