

# RECONFIGURING CAREERS

RUSTAT CONFERENCE  
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JESUS COLLEGE  
CAMBRIDGE

Intellectual Forum

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# INTRODUCTION

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This Rustat Conference brought together experts from many backgrounds to consider the changing nature of careers. From academia to corporate banking, the Civil Service to manufacturing industries, our experts contributed a range of perspectives exploring what these changes mean for employers, employees, and leaders, now and in the future.

The concept of a career has fundamentally changed in past decades, while great progress has been made around equality and diversity. Our experts took stock of these shifts, considering how leadership has also evolved, while noting that retaining staff is increasingly a big issue. They explored how people see themselves, what they expect of their workplaces, and their perception of employment longevity. Discussion moved to how people now build cumulative identities, sometimes with shadow or additional careers, linking back to our previous event on *Future of Work*.

Our experts also considered how changes in careers and work aren't always to the advantage of all employees. While diversity and inclusion may be widely discussed, the experts noted that for many businesses the statutory minimum is the only target and inequalities continue to reverberate across workplaces and industries. Our experts agreed that discussion needs to evolve beyond the legal requirements into nuanced conversations about different aspects of diversity and how they overlap. How might inclusion go beyond the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 into different experiences and perspectives? How could this benefit business and society alike? Our experts raised many more issues, which are detailed in the report that follows.

We thank all those who attended this event, as well as our Rustat Members for their ongoing support of the Conferences: AstraZeneca, Nick Chism, James Dodd, McLaren Technology Group, Harvey Nash, Andreas Naumann and Laing O'Rourke.



Dr Julian Huppert  
Director, Rustat Conferences



### CAREERS ARE CHANGING...

Parallel careers are increasing but require flexibility  
— more of a horizontal assault course than a career ladder



Half of UK workers are planning to change career in the next five years

58% of women have switched to part time, reduced time or flexible working to balance work and family

50%

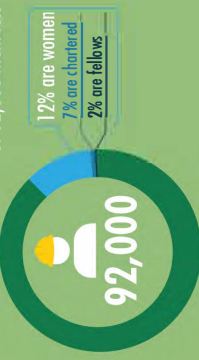
By 2020, 50% of the UK's workforce are predicted to work from home

### LEADING IN A CHANGING WORLD...

Turnover in the motor industry is double that of average turnover of other industries



INSTITUTE OF CIVIL ENGINEERS of 92,000 members



A focus on IQ has given way to emotional intelligence and gender intelligence

DIVERSE TEAMS make better decisions 80% of the time

### DRIVING GENUINE DIVERSITY...

75% of all children who are permanently excluded from school in England and Wales are disabled



41% of women work part time, compared to 11% of men, partly explaining the gender pay gap, especially amongst the over 40s

Policies and laws are often in place — but there is a huge implementation gap



DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION 4x more likely to be unemployed if disabled

98% of white employers believe that there is no discrimination in terms of career progression based on ethnicity

### QUESTIONS THAT REMAIN

How do we close the policy and law implementation gap?

How do we help companies to accept that staff will probably not be there for life?

How do we foster a shared culture while also making an organisation more diverse?

How do you bring leaders up when the bottom rungs of the ladder are disappearing with automation?

How can we transform the concept of leadership to make it more inclusive?

How can we ensure organisations find out what actually matters to staff, rather than just conducting routine surveys?

### RETAINING GOOD PEOPLE...



Three quarters of UK employees say that the option of working flexibly would make a job more attractive, and nearly a third would prefer flexible working to a pay rise



Giving people the right tools for the job — the right technology — is critical to keeping them

STAFF NEED TO BE ABLE TO SAY

- I believe
- I belong
- I matter

- #### 5 KEYS TO KEEPING STAFF
- 1 ACCOUNTABILITY
  - 2 LEADERSHIP
  - 3 METRICS
  - 4 NARRATIVE
  - 5 CULTURE

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# RUSTAT AGENDA

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9.30-9.45 **Welcome and Introduction**

*Professor Ian White, Master of Jesus College, Cambridge and Chair of the Rustat Conferences, Jesus College, Cambridge.*

*Dr Julian Huppert, Director of the Rustat Conferences and the Intellectual Forum, Jesus College, Cambridge.*

9.45-10.45 **Careers Past, Present and Future: how are they changing?**

*Chair: Dr Julian Huppert, Director of the Rustat Conferences and the Intellectual Forum, Jesus College, Cambridge.*

11.15-12.15 **Improving Equality and Diversity**

*Chair: Hans Pung, President, RAND Europe.*

13.15-14.15 **Leadership and Management in Diverse Workplaces**

*Chair: Oliver Hussick, Business Consultant, HCL.*

14.40-15.40 **Keeping People**

*Chair: Dr Richard Anthony, Bursar, Jesus College, Cambridge.*

15.40-16.00 **Closing Comments and Discussion**

*Chair: Dr Julian Huppert, Director of the Rustat Conferences and the Intellectual Forum, Jesus College, Cambridge.*

# SESSION ONE

## CAREERS: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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Across the last century, work has changed dramatically, largely due to technology, data, and automation. But norms and behaviors have changed too. The concept of the 9-to-5 job with businesses closed at weekends has fallen by the wayside as consumer demand has driven the change to a different environment in many sectors. Our experts noted that, at the same time, people's expectations about their working lives have changed. One expert pointed to how their 'nine-year-old son wants to be a YouTuber not a fireman'. When people work, how people work, where people work and for how long people work has shifted in many sectors and, as such, the concept of a career itself is evolving.

In this session, our experts noted how shifts have happened not just around the types of jobs available, but also around the length of time spent with any one organization. Individuals will now have, on average, 10 to 15 jobs across their lifetime. Working lives are lengthening, but careers are also becoming more volatile and changeable. Our experts asked: is a career now something people plan or something they look at retrospectively? Do people now have 'portfolio careers'? Once the province of retired senior leaders, our experts suggested that there are now more widespread, as some young people manage social-media and 'influencer' careers while working full or parttime in other roles that have a more stable and consistent income. People are managing uncertainty by building shadow careers.

Our experts then asked: in a world where expectations are different and workplaces ask different things of employees, what do these employees need? The experts generally observed that people want flexibility and aren't willing to accept any decrease in their employment rights. This has been seen with the demonstration by Uber and Deliveroo drivers, which happened the day before the Conference. However, while the rise of the gig economy has prompted many discussions around the uncertainty of work, our experts observed that such uncertainty has also existed across history. It was a feature of the Industrial Revolution. While the gig-economy has people checking an app to see whether they have work, in the past people queued outside the factory gates or on street corners. Our experts challenged the assumption, prevalent in contemporary discussions of the gig economy, that this provides uniquely uncertain employment, while still highlighting that it may produce inequalities and can lead to unfair working conditions.

More and more people are choosing to step away from the traditional concept of office-based employment for more flexible or home-based working. By 2020, 50% of the UK's workforce are predicted to work from home. However, consumer demands have shifted at the same time to expect 'open all hours' service in many industries, alongside a greater level of ethical responsibility from both brands and employers. Our experts asked: how can these two shifts be reconciled? How can we make sure we don't just create a 24/7 availability culture? As one expert pointed out, 'flexibility is a double-edged sword'; it can allow people to work hours that suit their lifestyle, but it also fuels an 'always on' culture which doesn't facilitate a good work-life balance.

Such a culture presents particular issues for caregivers, especially women. Our experts noted that around 80% of part-time work is done by women and 50% of women work part-time, and they suggested that this may be perpetuating the gender pay gap, as part-time work is often linked with lower career expectations and lower pay. It is certainly perceived that there are very few senior jobs that can be done part-time - although the Conference questioned whether there was any evidence for this. Flexibility could be one of the solutions, but our experts asked whether in practice it is making the problem worse.

As a result, the Conference engaged with the new concept of 'flexism'; that is, discrimination against those who work flexibly or want to work flexibly. Many were cognisant of the impact that perceptions of working patterns can have on career and workplace progression.

But our experts also asked: as flexible working increases, how will interaction and communication be fostered with colleagues? Will headquarters buildings become primarily showcases rather than places of work? As more people work until a more advanced age, how will communication and life-long learning have to shift, and are these shifts possible in a remote working world?

Notably, our experts observed that the idea of a job for life is no longer true. As such, the experience of navigating the workplace and constructing a career has changed. As one expert observed, 'it is now more of a horizontal assault course than a career ladder'.





# SESSION TWO

## IMPROVING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

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This session observed primarily that the equality and diversity conversation has become more mainstream. Our experts suggested that we now talk about discrimination in our workplaces and personal lives, and for most the discussion is moving beyond token inclusion. Consumers are engaging in how the companies they buy into behave, with brands like H&M affected when they misjudge adverts, which many used as an example of how a lack of inclusivity in their teams can lead to critical errors. One expert noted the backlash that occurred when H&M's 'Coolest Monkey in the Jungle' child's top was advertised on a black child, and how the campaign was swiftly pulled, but many questioned how those who conceived and pushed forward the campaign missed such an obviously problematic aspect to the campaign. With inclusive thinking and teams now an everyday expectation, our experts suggested that improved equality and diversity are now critical.

Our experts observed that policy approaches oscillate between carrot and stick, noting the contrast between legal controls and persuading people of the benefits of a diverse workforce. Our speakers reflected on the moral imperatives involved, the business case, the legal requirements and the reputational risk of getting this wrong. The discussion in the room focused on how the conversation now needs to move beyond the nine legally protected characteristics and to focus on intersectionality and the nuances of other kinds of equality and diversity. The needs of people and groups are not homogeneous and it was largely agreed that those companies that seek to meet only the bare legal minimum will not be regarded warmly by their employees and consumers.

Our experts discussed the origins of the UK's legal requirements. Though they felt it was generally world-class, it was noted that the provisions within it are largely reactive and that bringing legal cases is time-consuming and requires a degree of access and ability, limiting the reach of certain socio-economic groups. Does this mean that the situation envisaged in the legislation is not being delivered in reality?

Our experts talked about the implementation gap. While legal provisions exist to protect specified groups, people with disabilities remain four times more likely to be unemployed. Additionally, government annual statistics show that children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) are far more likely to be permanently excluded from school, representing over half of those who were permanently or fixed-period excluded in 2014-2015. Our experts called for a wider view to be taken of the disadvantages that many children and adults who are disabled still experience.

The consensus amongst our experts was that the conversation around inclusion and diversity is ready for a step change, and this should involve moving from the idea that one can undertake diversity training once and be done with it into a world of continuous improvement. In a world where a fifth of people have a recognised disability, our experts felt the business case for inclusion was clear but frequently equality and inclusion of people with a disability is seen as an add on, rather than the starting premise. Unconscious bias training was provided as an example. As one of our speakers outlined, research found that 98% of employers believe that there is no discrimination in terms of career progression based on ethnicity, while some 59% of employees think there is such bias.

Our experts therefore suggested that social equality relies on more than the nine protected characteristics, turning towards socio-economic and educational inclusion as critical. One of our experts observed the 'the greatest determinant of your life choices is still who your father is'. But are quotas the right approach to improving inclusion? Our experts felt that closing the implementation gap and achieving true equality and diversity involved more.



# SESSION THREE

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN DIVERSE WORKPLACES

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With expectations around workplaces and careers having substantially changed, our experts noted that changes have also occurred in what is expected of leaders. Leadership is no longer about instructing homogeneous teams and authenticity; empathy and self-awareness are now prized. Our experts drilled into the core differences between leadership and management, the nature of authentic leadership, and the breaking down of traditional 20th century models of leadership.

The session explored how leaders and organisations can balance the need for universal approaches and policies with each employee's individual identities and practices. A number of key questions were highlighted: How can we bring diverse groups together? Do we emphasise difference or treat everyone the same? What might a future model of leadership look like?

Such questions led to the Conference to consider the skills mix that those who lead now need. They noted that leadership is complex and nuanced, as employees expect authentic, empathetic, and compassionate leaders. They suggested that, as employees are increasingly asked to bring their whole selves to work, rather than putting up a false front for their workplace, leaders have new reciprocal obligations. It was noted that employees now expect their leaders to see the employee's whole self, to understand complexity, and treat humans as humans, complex and challenging as that can be.

Our experts noted that leading empathetically is hard, as it requires personal investment, commitment, and time and effort beyond financial and process decisions. The result, they observed, is increasing pressure on leaders, who can often feel lonely at the top, and who also need support. Our experts asked: how do we support our leaders, as well as the staff that work with them, to create the best wellbeing and work environments for all?

Of particular concern for our experts was how leadership will change in a world where we know that automation will inevitably overtake some kinds of jobs. They asked, what kinds of responsibility do leaders have to staff? Should they see past the length of time they stay with the company and build their lifelong skills and adaptability or should they be solely focused on their own short-term bottom line? What do leaders owe their staff ethically in terms of retention and skills development in a world where careers have changed and will probably continue to change at a rapid rate?

Organisations are now making moves to demonstrate their ethical credentials as employees and consumers seek clear ethical commitments. Companies often say, for example, that they are inclusive, but our experts agreed that we can often question how sincerely this is meant until senior leadership visibly make it a genuine priority. Our experts observed that leaders need to be *seen* to be personally standing up for commitments and to be publicly held accountable. Our experts strongly agreed that while diversity and inclusion is fashionable it needs to be *genuine* to be effective. Our experts concluded that good leadership should allow and cultivate difference and change within an organisation and how it thinks, but that it also needed to be perceived as doing so; quite a difficult task.

Our experts noted, though, that as society talks more about, and gives opportunities to, women, black and minority ethnic people, and those with other under-represented characteristics, this is often perceived as challenging to those who have typically benefited from the previous structures. It was observed that these latter individuals often feel excluded from a conversation about diversity and inclusion, or exclude themselves by viewing it as not relevant to them. Our experts agreed that there seems to be an inherent assumption that the attributes of 'white' and 'male' are 'neutral'. The challenge then arose 'how do we remind white male leaders that they're not separate from the diversity agenda?'. Authentic effective leadership stems from understanding staff, how they operate, how to interpret their thoughts and how they will see the world. In order to do that, our discussion emphasised the importance of engaging with different experiences, perspectives and backgrounds. Compassion and empathy are key leadership skills.

# SESSION FOUR

## KEEPING PEOPLE

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In the final session, our experts explored retention. They considered: how can businesses keep the staff that they want to? How can those companies create an environment where staff want to stay? One expert suggested that organisations are like people in relationships: they need to be, and stay, attractive when there are other options. What people need and want from their employer changes over time and employees ask whether their organisation will change with them and allow them to grow. As an organisation evolves, different kinds of leadership, and perhaps different leaders, are needed. One of our experts summarised the requirements for an employee to feel attachment in three clear phrases: 'I believe, I belong, I matter'. If an organisation can create the right conditions where staff would say these things, its employees are more likely to stay.

Leaders that motivate their staff, and are credible, and create this environment of belief, will be successful. Trust, accountability, and credibility frequently appeared as core demands according to our experts. Employees ask 'why should I invest my career with you?' and organisations that say one thing and do another lose trust, lose credibility, and consequently lose people.

Our experts agreed that retention and understanding staff goes far beyond annual staff surveys, suggesting that it is critical to know staff and why they are working for the organisation, understand their values and needs, and what motivates them. Asking someone once a year about their opinions isn't very effective, and the worst memories are likely to stay with them. It was also suggested that this connects to the belonging aspect of why people stay, where the values and needs that motivate them are considered. Part of this is listening to the plurality of voices in an organisation, not assuming that everyone who works there thinks in the same way, or that listening to a hand-picked few will reflect the general views. There is a cliché that Millennials seek belonging, but understanding what each different person or group needs and wants from their workplace is important for all groups.

As one of our contributors observed, it is also about ensuring that employees feel that they are valued and enabled to do good work, often in quite literal ways, such as the equipment they are given to work with.

*Technology and tooling is important to get people to do their jobs. Think about the carpentry company who insist that their carpenters use the dullest, cheapest, worst-quality chisels they can find. They can't bring their own. They then specify that you must take your chisels home so you can work on the weekend. Then they lock down these chisels so they are ineffective for anything but the sole purpose you have given them. Then you ask them to trust you to have their best interests at heart. This is what we do with technology and businesses all the time. It turns people off. But not only can you not attract the right staff in the first place, you have no hope of keeping them.*

A great deal of attachment to an organisation is about the culture and leadership; about creating an environment where people feel that they matter, they are empowered, they can contribute and challenge.

Our experts also talked about bullying, about looking at why people leave, and the genuine understanding by leaders of the issues within their organisation. Behaviours within meetings, gendered dominance, and more subtle kinds of exclusion are the areas of culture that have a considerable impact on whether people stay with organisations .

Our experts reflected on their experience across different industries, and discussed the challenges of the motor industry and commission-based jobs, and the mechanisms that some companies are using to require employees to stay. These challenges aren't new but perhaps younger people are expressing their needs and wants from employers more clearly and are less concerned with long term company loyalty than they would have been previously. Should the phrase 'if you love someone, set them free' apply to employment? Should you invest in someone and expect them to leave, but make them want to come back later with more experience and skills?

# CLOSING WORDS

The *Rustat Conference on Reconfiguring Careers* picked up from our recent conferences on *The Future of Work, Ageing and Generations*. Our experts began by acknowledging that we now live in a world where a skill set can become obsolete in just a few years. Many workers are scrambling just to stay current, while also trying to show their authentic selves through their careers. Our experts noted that this leads to a need for organisations and leaders to encourage continuous learning, to improve individual mobility, and to foster a growth mind-set in every employee, just as workplaces are becoming increasingly diverse. The results are some big demands on companies and managers alike.

Technology is evolving apace. More people are working flexibly and/or part-time. People are changing careers more often, and jobs even more frequently. LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman called a career now just a 'tour of duty' where people may only stay for a few years. While this may mean new challenges, it also opens up space to rethink work places and to improve equality and diversity. Our experts called for us to move forward to think about how we can capitalise on change for the benefit of groups who have been traditionally marginalised.

Indeed, questions of identity came up throughout the Conference. If a career represents both expertise and identity, who are we if we no longer stay in one place, in one profession or trade? If a career is something that is built over time and endures, what does it mean when it is no longer a ladder that we progress up within a workplace or sector? With increasing change, how do people capitalise on what they have learned, to carry it forward? If careers make life meaningful, giving people a purpose as well as meeting financial needs, how can organisations create the emotional connections needed to satisfy their staff and get them to stay when they are wanted? How can we celebrate inclusion but also draw on our differences? For companies that can answer these questions, our experts suggested, the pay off will be huge.

# Rustat Members

**Dr James Dodd**'s career has concentrated on the financing and management of companies in the fields of telecommunications and technology. He serves on a number of boards in these areas and is active in supporting a number of academic projects and charities.

**Harvey Nash** is an executive recruitment and outsourcing group. Listed on the London Stock Exchange, and with offices across the world, we help organisations recruit, source and manage the highly skilled talent they need to succeed in an increasingly competitive and innovation-driven world.

**AstraZeneca** is a global, science-led biopharmaceutical business, whose innovative medicines are used by millions of patients worldwide.

**Nick Chism** spent 28 years at KPMG, serving as the Global Chair of Infrastructure, Government and Healthcare. He is now the Director-General of Enterprise in BEIS, and a personal Member of the Rustat Conferences.

**Laing O'Rourke** is a privately owned, international engineering enterprise with world-class capabilities spanning the entire client value chain. We operate an integrated business model comprising the full range of engineering, construction and asset management services, delivering single-source solutions for some of the world's most prestigious public and private organisations.

**McLaren Technology Group** has a reputation for efficiency and professionalism. Working within a fast-paced environment and to the highest standards, our highly skilled workforce operates primarily in the areas of manufacturing, engineering and race team as well as logistics and support.

**Andreas Naumann** is a senior executive in the financial industry. Outside the professional sphere, he is keenly interested in subjects like urbanisation, youth unemployment, education and foreign policy. He supports the Rustat Conferences as a private individual.



# THE EXPERTS

Dr Richard Anthony	Bursar	Jesus College, Cambridge
Gary Armstrong	Director, Strategy Delivery & Performance	GSK
Nick Chism	Member Director General	Rustat Conferences BEIS
Amanda Clack	Head of Strategic Consulting	CBRE Ltd
Prof Hazel Conley	Professor of HRM	University of the West of England
Marije Davidson	Equality and Diversity Adviser	York St John University
Tanya De Grunwald	Director	Graduate Fog
Paul Deemer	Head of Diversity and Inclusion	NHS Employers
Stephanie Dillon	Managing Director	Inclusivity Partners
Dr James Dodd	Member	Rustat Conferences
Amanda Faull	Associate Director, Diversity & Inclusion	Harvey Nash



Prof Eilís Ferran	Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Institutional and International Relations	University of Cambridge
Cheryl Few	Human Resources Manager	Jesus College, Cambridge
Morgan Frodsham	Transformation Lead	Cabinet Office
Jacqui Gavin	Diversity & Inclusion	Department for International Trade
Charlotte Haines	Entrepreneur	CHC
Sarah Howard-Cofield	HR Manager Recruitment & Talent	Laing O'Rourke
Dr Julian Huppert	Director	Rustat Conferences and Intellectual Forum, Jesus College, Cambridge, Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Cambridge
Leyla Okhai	Director	Diverse Minds UK
Oliver Hussick	Business Consultant	HCL
Wendy Irwin	Equalities Lead	Royal College of Nursing
Sheila Kissane-Marshall	Founder	Bosom Buddies
Charlene Laidley	Chief Executive Officer	Futureproof Foundation
Michael Lassman	Director	Equality Edge
Dr Clare Moran	Head of Leadership Strategy	Cabinet Office, Civil Service
Dr Chandrika Nath	Executive Director	Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research
Hans Pung	President	RAND Europe

David Ruebain	Consultant	
Dr Sarah Steele	Deputy Director	Intellectual Forum, Jesus College, Cambridge. Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Cambridge
Dr Karen Sutherland	Vice President, Human Resources- IMED & Regional UK Lead	AstraZeneca
Amy Turton	Project Manager	Creative Diversity Network
Jenny Vass	Head of People and Communications for Digital	Department for Education
Caroline Waters	Deputy Chair	EHRC
Prof Ian White	Master of Jesus College and Chair of the Rustat Conferences	Jesus College, Cambridge
Prof Peter Williamson	Fellow	Jesus College, Cambridge and the Judge Business School, University of Cambridge
Gamiel Yafai	Managing Director	Diversity Marketplace

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