

**HR**  
STRATEGY FORUM

# DISCOVERDEVELOPRETAIN

DE VERE WOKEFIELD ESTATE, BERKSHIRE  
17th & 18th MARCH 2026

Introducing  
our Chair for  
the Forum...



**Nicole Cunningham-Snell**  
**Vice President**  
**Leadership**  
**Development**  
Shell



## SPEAKERS



**Danielle Harmer**  
**Chief People Officer**  
Aviva



**Aly Fadil**  
**Chief People Officer**  
Matalan

MATALAN



**Ash Cleaverly**  
**Chief HR and Finance**  
**Officer**  
HSBC



**Oluyomi Okunowo**  
**Senior Vice President,**  
**Total Reward and**  
**People**  
**Operations**  
Wella  
Company



**Michelle Parczuk**  
**Chief People Officer**  
Avon



**Rachel Davidson**  
**Vice President of People**  
Skyscanner



**Fiona Reeks**  
**Vice President of HR**  
Unique Group



**Maria Humphries**  
**Vice President, People**  
**and Culture**  
Product Madness



**Andy Jamieson**  
**Director of External**  
**Resource Management**  
**and Strategic**  
**Partnerships**  
AstraZeneca



**Rob Etheridge**  
**Managing Director,**  
**Global Head of**  
**Workforce Strategy and**  
**Insights**  
HSBC



**Nick Speight**  
**People Director**  
Co Op



**Hayley Farrell**  
**Global Health Safety**  
**and Wellbeing Director**  
Arcadis



**Kirsty Archer**  
**Director HR Strategy**  
Smith+Nephew



**Bruno Fournet**  
**Director of HR**  
Disneyland Paris



**Simon Gibson**  
**Talent Director**  
Center Parcs



**Emma Jones**  
**People Director**  
Smiths News



**Leah Raper**  
**Strategic Programmes**  
**Director, Colleague**  
**Experience**  
Odeon



**Penny Taylor**  
**Director People**  
**Services, Reward and**  
**Benefits**  
Compare the Market



**Stephanie Lunn**  
**Global People and**  
**Culture Director**  
Guinness World  
Records



**Vicky Bawa**  
**Head of Diversity, Equity**  
**and Inclusion**  
BAE Systems



**Ciprian Arhire**  
**Global Head of People**  
**Programmes and**  
**Analytics**  
Entain



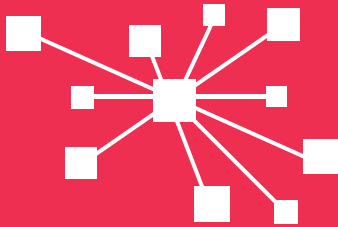
**Vicky Quek**  
**Head of Strategic Talent**  
Co Op



**Paul Collins**  
**Head of Talent**  
Whitbread



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**HR**

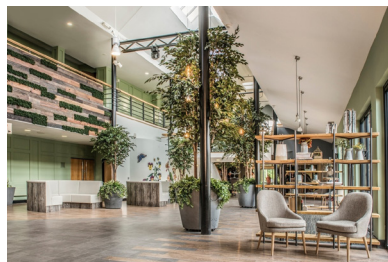
STRATEGY FORUM

**DISCOVERDEVELOPRETAIN**

DE VERE WOKEFIELD ESTATE, BERKSHIRE  
**17th & 18th MARCH 2026**

**MAIN THEMES**

- **Navigating the Skills Gap - Strategy, Solutions, and Success**
- **Designing Agile Workforce Strategies for a Global Marketplace**
- **Change Champions - Building Momentum for Digital Adoption**
- **Data-Driven People Strategy - The New Business Imperative**
- **Unlocking Virtual Training Engines to Power Continuous Development**
- **Smart Synergy - Merging AI Efficiency with Human Creativity**
- **The Power of Culture - Fueling Sustainable Business Growth**
- **Reimagining the Employee Engagement Ecosystem of the Future**

**VENUE****WOKEFIELD ESTATE**

De Vere Wokefield Estate, set in 250 acres of Berkshire parkland, blends historic charm with modern luxury. It features 376 newly refurbished rooms, an 18-hole golf course, and a state-of-the-art gym and indoor pool. The estate is an ideal destination for both leisure and business, offering over 30 flexible meeting spaces and event facilities for up to 500 guests. Located just 10 minutes from the M4 and 40 minutes from Heathrow, it's easily accessible, making it a perfect choice for conferences, and getaways.

# EVENT AGENDA STRATEGY NIGHT LIVE



17:00 - 18:00

**Registration and Networking Reception**

**ADDITIONAL PRE-EVENT EVENING  
LIMITED SEATS AVAILABLE**

18:00 - 18:15

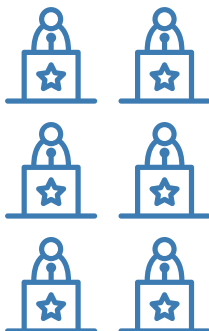
**Drinks Reception**



18:15 - 20:00

**MEET THE SPEAKERS**

**A fun and interactive way to meet the speaker faculty**



20:00 - 21:30

**Networking Dinner**



# EVENT AGENDA DAY ONE - 17th MARCH

08:00 - 08:30 **Registration and Networking Reception**

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08:30 - 08:40 **Chair's Opening Remarks**



**Nicole Cunningham-Snell**  
**Vice President**  
**Leadership Development**  
Shell



08:40 - 09:00 **Reframing AI as a Workplace Ally**



**Rachel Davidson**  
**Vice President of People**  
Skyscanner

The rapid integration of AI in the workplace can create personal challenges for employees, particularly around concerns about automation and job security. This fear can create resistance, yet when positioned thoughtfully, can be viewed as an opportunity to enhance productivity and drive strategic objectives.

This session will explore strategies for reframing AI as an enabling technology, drawing on contemporary frameworks from higher education that highlight the enduring value of critical thinking and complex problem-solving, competencies that underpin evolving role profiles and inform future workforce planning. Rachel will explore methodologies for cultivating a culture where the workforce can embrace AI as a collaborative partner, and engagement strategies for deploying this mindset.



09:00 - 09:20

## The Skill Shift - How Co op are Rewiring Retail Talent



**Nick Speight**  
People Director  
Co Op



**Vicky Quek**  
Head of Strategic  
Talent  
Co Op

Co op are evolving into a skills-based organisation, positioning themselves as a leader among retailers in leveraging technology to redefine workforce capabilities. By focusing on personal skill sets rather than traditional job descriptions, they are creating more agile, responsive teams that can better address complex business challenges in a dynamic way.

Nick and Vicky will explore how technology is being harnessed to identify, develop, and align skills strategically, driving innovation and delivering tangible business impact. This session offers an advanced perspective on building a future-ready workforce through a skills-centric approach, with practical examples that you can apply in your organisation.



09:20 - 09:40

## Solution Provider Case Study

09:40 - 10:00

## Driving Organisational Transformation with Machine Learning



**Penny Taylor**  
Director People  
Services, Reward  
and Benefits  
Compare the  
Market

Compare the Market are undergoing a significant scale-up of their data and machine learning function, doubling its capacity to embed AI as a driver of organisational performance. The work extends beyond customer-facing innovation, focusing on how to systematically weave AI into processes optimisation, enabling augmented decision-making, and preparing multiple functions to operate in an AI-enabled environment.

Penny will explore the technical and cultural requirements of building an AI-enabled workplace, from aligning data infrastructure to workforce readiness and adoption. By connecting machine learning with organisational design and future-ready operating models, this session will uncover how HR can lead the charge in embedding AI sustainably and at scale.



**compare  
themarket™**

10:05 - 10:25

## Solution Provider Case Study - Stream 1/2/3/4

10:30 - 11:00

## Business Meetings



11:00 - 11:20

## Designing a Connected HR Future - Strategy, Structure and Scale



**Kirsty Archer**  
**Director HR**  
**Strategy**  
Smith+Nephew

Smith+Nephew are reshaping how HR operates across the organisation, introducing a new function that takes full ownership of the people portfolio and establishes clear oversight of all strategic initiatives. This structural shift brings together programmes, products, and change under a single, coordinated approach that ensures alignment and visibility at scale.

A critical part of this transformation is the re-evaluation of their hire-to-retain process, addressing the employee lifecycle architecture to identify where existing processes fall short, where complexity slows delivery, and where automation or self-service can play a more effective role.

Kirsty will explore how they are moving beyond process improvement to establish a strategic and connected function that will deliver a modern people experience across a complex international landscape.

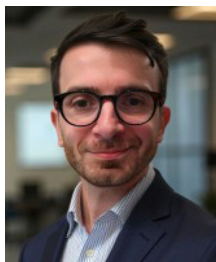
# Smith+Nephew

11:40 - 12:00

## Solution Provider Case Study

12:00 - 12:20

## Unlocking Workforce Potential Through Data



**Ciprian Arhire**  
**Global Head**  
**of People**  
**Programmes and**  
**Analytics**  
Entain

As HR transforms in response to new business realities, data is becoming the foundation for smarter workforce planning and strategy. By harnessing location strategy, role benchmarking, and evolving skill requirements, leaders can embed critical insights into job architecture and shape future-ready organisations with a uniquely competitive edge.

Ciprian will outline how, when these insights are channelled to senior leadership, they do not only inform strategic decision-making, but also elevate people analytics to a central role in driving business outcomes.

# Σntain

12:25 - 13:20

## Group 1 - P2P Connect Speed Networking



12:25 - 13:20



**Leah Raper**  
Strategic  
Programmes  
Director,  
Colleague  
Experience  
Odeon

## **Group 2 - Group Discussion** **Building an AI-Driven EVP for the Next Generation of Talent**

The rise of a tech-native Gen Z workforce in frontline roles is reshaping the world of work, driving demand for intelligent systems that streamline daily tasks, support growth, and make roles more engaging. AI offers a powerful opportunity to meet these expectations but deploying it responsibly is critical, and at Odeon, the focus has been on exploring how AI-driven experiences can inform a compelling EVP, central to attracting and retaining talent in an increasingly digital-first workforce.

This session will be set in an interactive format, whereby Leah will encourage conversations around your thoughts, challenges, questions, and examples.

Discussion points will include:

- How can AI-driven experiences be designed to align with company culture and values?
- In what ways should EVP evolve to meet the needs of an increasingly AI-integrated, digital-first workplace?
- What safeguards should be in place to prevent bias, ensure privacy, and maintain trust?



# ODEON®

13:20 - 14:20

## **Networking Lunch**



14:20 - 15:15

## **Group 2 - P2P Connect Speed Networking**



14:20 - 15:15



**Leah Raper**  
**Strategic**  
**Programmes**  
**Director,**  
**Colleague**  
**Experience**  
Odeon

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# ODEON®

15:15 - 16:00

## **Business Meetings**



16:00 - 16:20

## **Shell's Leadership Ecosystem - Connecting Strategy and Culture**



**Nicole**  
**Cunningham-**  
**Snell**  
**Vice President**  
**Leadership**  
**Development**  
Shell

Leadership development now lies at the core of organisational adaptability and success, extending beyond building individual capability to fostering the conditions where leadership and culture evolve in tandem with shifting business challenges. The function increasingly acts as both a driver and an integrator, helping leaders connect strategy, culture, and ways of working.

The function increasingly acts as both a driver and an integrator, helping leaders connect strategy, culture, and ways of working. In this session, Nicole will explore how executives and senior leaders can draw on proven culture patterns to advance both the business agenda and the wider culture change journey. She will share perspectives on how to support leaders in navigating uncertainty and complexity, alongside insights from Shell's evolving development ecosystem, exploring how it is being designed and how it is influencing the future of leadership.



16:20 - 16:40

## **Solution Provider Case Study**

16:40 - 17:00

## **Cultural Intelligence in Global HR - Navigating Diversity with Clarity**



**Fiona Reeks**  
**Vice President**  
**of HR**  
Unique Group

Managing HR operations across more than 30 countries requires a deep understanding of cultural intelligence and local sensitivity, balancing diverse languages, customs, and organisational histories without compromising clarity or cohesion.

This session will explore practical strategies for delivering a consistent, values-driven employee experience across borders while tailoring communication and engagement to reflect local context. Fiona will address the real-world challenges of shaping a unified organisational identity on a global scale and empowering employees to become authentic advocates of company values. She will explore how to balance cultural sensitivities while fostering a shared sense of belonging and purpose across diverse teams.



# Unique Group

17:00 - 17:30

## **Business Meetings**



17:35 - 17:55

## **Solution Provider Case Study - Stream 1/2/3/4**

17:55 - 18:15

## **Leveraging Apprenticeships for your Growth and Skills Agenda**



**Paul Collins**  
**Head of Talent**  
Whitbread

As a levy-paying employer, Whitbread are focused on harnessing their apprenticeship levy to drive growth and advance their skills agenda. By embedding apprenticeship programmes within their attraction, recruitment, and development strategies across both their Support Centre and wider operations, they are ensuring open access and limitless opportunity for talent at all levels.

Paul will explore the evolving apprenticeship landscape and share insights on how organisations can maximise these programmes to create meaningful pathways for young people, while also enhancing attraction, development, and retention across their teams.

# WHITBREAD

18:15 - 18:35

## Engineering Organisational Agility - HR's Role in Driving Resilience



**Danielle Harmer**  
**Chief People Officer**  
Aviva



**Aly Fadil**  
**Chief People Officer**  
Matalan

Enterprises are operating in a state of permanent volatility, with market conditions that shift overnight, technologies that outpace adoption cycles, and workforce expectations evolving faster than most systems can respond.

This panel will feature esteemed industry leaders who will discuss innovative strategies, best practices, and the latest trends when it comes to staying competitive through agile workforce design.

Discussion points will include:

- What foundational design principles enable organisations to respond and adapt at scale?
- How can HR accelerate organisational agility through smarter workforce planning and streamlined decision-making?
- Which leadership behaviours either enable or hinder a culture of adaptability?



**Ash Cleaverly**  
**Chief HR and Finance Officer**  
HSBC



**Michelle Parczuk**  
**Chief People Officer**  
Avon



MATALAN



HSBC UK



# Winedown Workshop

**Fizz and Bizz, join our relaxed fun end to the day.  
Canapés | Cocktails | Conversations**

18:35 - 19:05



**Vicky Bawa**  
**Head of Diversity,  
Equity and  
Inclusion**  
BAE Systems

## **Workshop One** **Building Inclusion - The Role of Leaders as Champions**

Inclusion is a shared responsibility that requires leaders at all levels to actively embrace accountability, not just as policy, but through everyday behaviours that shape workplace culture. In this workshop, Vicky will explore what true leadership accountability looks like, encouraging thinking around how to inspire your workforce to 'buy in' to the inclusion agenda.

Discussion points will include:

- How can we identify learning opportunities when it comes to understanding aspects of difference, such as neurodiversity?
- What barriers might employees face in embracing this agenda, and how can these be addressed?
- How can inclusion efforts be embedded into existing leadership development and performance frameworks?



**BAE SYSTEMS**

18:35 - 19:05



**Emma Jones**  
**People Director**  
Smiths News

## **Workshop Two** **Rewiring HR for Shareholder Confidence and Growth**

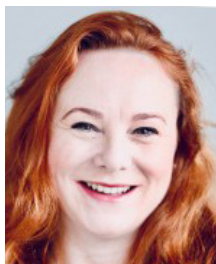
As businesses diversify and evolve, HR strategy must be firmly anchored to business strategy, delivering shareholder confidence, enabling growth, and shaping a culture fit for the future. This workshop will take a practical look at how HR leaders can transition from being service-oriented to truly commercial, modern, and data-driven.

Through interactive discussions and scenario-based exercises, participants will examine the cultural shift from paternalism to ownership, retaining individuality and values while aligning with new market demands. Emma will highlight strategies to boost retention, attract fresh skills, and showcase the best of the business.



 **smiths news** plc

18:35 - 19:05



**Stephanie Lunn**  
**Global People and Culture Director**  
Guinness World Records

### **Workshop Three** **Beyond Bias - How Digital Tools Are Shaping Innovative Recruitment**

In a world where digital expertise drives business growth, organisations must rethink how they attract and develop talent. By focusing on upskilling current employees and hiring professionals with strong e-commerce and digital capabilities, companies can build a workforce ready for the future.

At Guinness World Records, digital tools are reshaping recruitment through automated and blind screening and AI-driven selection processes that minimise bias and promote a fairer, more inclusive approach to hiring. This workshop will explore practical strategies for combining digital recruitment with targeted skills development, demonstrating how technology can drive both high performance and a culture of diversity and inclusion.



19:05 - 19:20

### **Coffee and Networking Break - Day 1 Close**



20:00 - 20:30

### **Drinks Reception**



20:30 - 22:00

### **Networking Dinner**



# EVENT AGENDA DAY TWO - 18th MARCH

08:05 - 08:20 **Coffee and Networking**



08:20 - 08:40

## **Intelligent Infrastructure for People Services - The Next Frontier in HR Tech**



**Oluyomi Okunowo**  
**Senior Vice President, Total Reward and People Operations**  
Wella Company

As HR continues to evolve, the convergence of technology and people services has become essential to designing the next generation of workforce operations. By leveraging platforms, intelligent automation, and advanced data models, organisations are fundamentally reshaping the employee service experience by enabling scalable, insight-led operations that drive continuous improvement and proactive support.

Oluyomi will explore the implementation of integrated case management systems and orchestration layers that connect HRIS and ITSM platforms into unified service delivery frameworks. He will examine how intelligent automation, powered by real-time data flows and natural language interfaces can be effectively harnessed to minimise manual effort while enhancing precision, speed, and employee satisfaction.



08:40 - 09:00

## **Forecasting the Future Workforce - Aligning Cost and Capability**



**Rob Etheridge**  
**Managing Director, Global Head of Workforce Strategy and Insights**  
HSBC

Workforce strategy has become a data challenge, requiring alignment across cost, capacity, capability, and business priorities. At HSBC, the focus is on understanding today's workforce while modelling the future, to determine which skills will be needed, at what scale, and at what investment.

This session will explore how workforce planning at scale can act as a critical lever for business strategy, examining how data scientists and people analytics teams can apply advanced insight to support decision-making, from scenario modelling to skills forecasting. By looking at the intersection of workforce planning and the broader skills agenda, Rob will highlight how organisations can build a more agile and cost-effective workforce strategy that underpins sustainable business performance.



**HSBC UK**

09:00 - 09:20

## The Role of EVPs in Large-Scale Transformation



**Michelle Parczuk**  
**Chief People Officer**  
Avon

In times of ownership change and business reinvention, organisations face a dual challenge to achieve radical cost reductions while still retaining, engaging, and inspiring key talent. Culture and communication are pivotal in shaping how employees experience this journey, and a strong EVP becomes both the anchor that keeps people connected and the tool that attracts and motivates talent through uncertainty.

In this session, Michelle will share strategies for designing and sustaining an EVP that stays authentic and attractive during transformation. She will explore how to balance cost discipline with engagement, reinforce culture as a source of strength, and use communication to ensure employees feel valued and included in the change.



09:20 - 09:40

## Solution Provider Case Study

09:40 - 10:00

## Planning for Performance and Sustainability



**Maria Humphries**  
**Vice President,**  
**People and Culture**  
Product Madness

Organisations today face increasing pressure to balance growth with sustainability, and workforce planning plays a critical role in achieving both. By taking a strategic approach to workforce planning, businesses can deliver long-term ROI that far outweighs initial investments.

Maria will share Product Madness' carefully designed scalable and sustainable approach, demonstrating how to create the space to identify and nurture emerging talent while ensuring the organisation is equipped to grow responsibly. Attendees will gain practical insights into aligning talent strategy with business objectives, optimising workforce capacity, and embedding sustainable practices into planning to drive both performance and resilience in the modern enterprise.



10:05 - 10:25

## **Solution Provider Case Study - Stream 1/2/3/4**

10:30 - 11:30

## **Business Meetings**



11:35 - 12:05

## **Efficiency Brunch**

Topic led roundtables around efficiency challenges in your organisation



12:10 - 12:30

## **Th!nk Tank - Stream One**

### **The Culture KPI - How Do we Measure What Matters?**



**Aly Fadil**  
**Chief People Officer**  
Matalan

Effective employee engagement begins with a clear vision and a set of shared values, but translating this into measurable outcomes across an organisation can be challenging. Join Aly in this Think Tank session to benchmark ideas across industries for understanding how to connect engagement strategies to tangible performance metrics.

Discussion point will include:

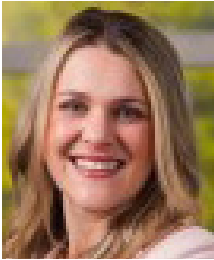
- How can we translate vision and values into measurable objectives and key results that reinforce desired behaviours?
- How can we identify the most impactful KPIs to track engagement and cultural impact?
- What tools and processes can be deployed to streamline engagement initiatives without losing personal impact?



# MATALAN

12:10 - 12:30

### **Th!nk Tank - Stream Two** **Embedding Risk Awareness Across the HR Function**



**Hayley Farrell**  
**Global Health**  
**Safety and**  
**Wellbeing**  
**Director**  
Arcadis

Risk is a critical yet often underexplored dimension of HR strategy, with many leaders not routinely addressing or fully understanding the spectrum of risks inherent in the people function, from compliance and talent gaps to cultural misalignment and emerging workforce challenges. By overlooking these, organisations miss the opportunity to adopt a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to workforce management.

Join this Think Tank to explore ways in which organisations can systematically integrate risk management into everyday HR operations. Participants will be encouraged to discuss models that identify, assess, and mitigate people-related risks at every organisational level, and discuss practical methodologies for quantifying risk by using predictive insights to anticipate workforce challenges before they escalate.



12:10 - 12:30

### **Th!nk Tank - Stream Three** **Shaping Tomorrow's Leaders - Rethinking Talent Investment**



**Simon Gibson**  
**Talent Director**  
Center Parcs UK  
and Ireland

Modern talent functions face the challenge of spotting distinctive leadership qualities earlier and creating the conditions for them to flourish. This Think Tank will explore how organisations can surface niche skills, place people in roles that maximise their strengths, and shape a more deliberate approach to leadership development.

Join the discussion to look at how to prioritise and fund investment in leadership growth, weighing short-term pressures against long-term organisational value. Simon will encourage participants to share perspectives, test ideas, and build practical strategies for strengthening their leadership pipeline.



12:30 - 12:50

## The Future of L&D in a Tech-Driven World



**Bruno Fournet**  
Director of HR  
Disneyland Paris

As the pace of technological change accelerates, traditional approaches to learning and development are no longer sufficient. Organisations must think beyond structured programmes and annual training plans to create agile, data-driven ecosystems that support continuous and personalised growth at scale.

By investing in an AI-powered microlearning platform, Disneyland Paris are redefining their learning approach, enabling employees to self-direct their development, map their individual skill sets, and surface hidden strengths and weak points. Bruno will share how the function builds intuitive pathways toward future roles, advocating for the integration of adaptive systems that anticipate workforce needs and empower individuals to take ownership of their own growth.



12:50 - 13:10

## Smart Delivery - Lean, Flexible, and Built for Change



**CLOSING  
KEYNOTE**



**Andy Jamieson**  
Director of  
External  
Resource  
Management  
and Strategic  
Partnerships  
AstraZeneca

Delivering a global talent management solution at scale demands financial discipline, operational flexibility, and strategic supplier relationships that can adapt to changing business needs. AstraZeneca are rethinking the financial and operational design of their HR function, moving towards a centralised shared service approach that allows for scalable delivery without compromising on quality or local relevance.

Andy will explore how they manage supplier partnerships as strategic levers, using variable cost models to flex capacity in response to demand, and apply targeted operational metrics to drive performance. This session offers a practical look at how to run a talent function with the same commercial discipline and agility as any high-performing business unit, offering strategies for scaling delivery, managing supplier value, and driving performance through metrics.



13:10 - 13:20

## Chair's Closing Remarks

13:20 - 14:20

## Networking Lunch

