



Ashley Kate
HR & Finance

HR Director Boardroom Summary

March 2024

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Hosted by

EVERSHEDS
SUTHERLAND



Speakers:



Jenny Mann

Partner

Eversheds Sutherland



Vicky Docker

Director

Empowered Change Ltd

Discussing the topic:
'Managing Change Fatigue'

The insightful session, hosted by Vicky Docker, Director of Empowered Change, and chaired by Jenny Mann, a respected Partner at Eversheds Sutherland, delved into the intricate complexities of managing change fatigue in the ever-evolving landscape of today's world.

Vicky, a seasoned HR and Talent professional with an impressive portfolio spanning over three decades. Her experience, coupled with her understanding of organisational dynamics, shaped her career, contributing to the industries she has worked in.

Throughout her 30-year tenure, Vicky has navigated the complex world of finance and corporate structures, gaining invaluable insights and honing her skills. Her expertise extends beyond the conventional, as she has consistently demonstrated a keen ability to understand and influence the dynamics of organisations. This unique skill set has enabled her to bring a fresh perspective to the table, challenging the status quo and driving innovation.



Jenny handles both contentious and non-contentious matters, providing pragmatic advice on a wide range of employment issues. Her deep understanding of the workings of employment law has been honed over years of dedicated practice and study. This expertise allows her to provide a crucial legal perspective, enriching the discussion with her deep insight and understanding of the subject.

The session kicked off with an exploration of the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world. The discussion drew on the challenges posed by the rapid advancements in technology that we are witnessing today. This is



particularly relevant in the era of the fourth industrial revolution where Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming increasingly integrated into various aspects of work. It was underlined that Human Resource (HR) professionals must align themselves with these emerging technologies and focus on how they can add value to their organisations, enhancing efficiency and productivity.

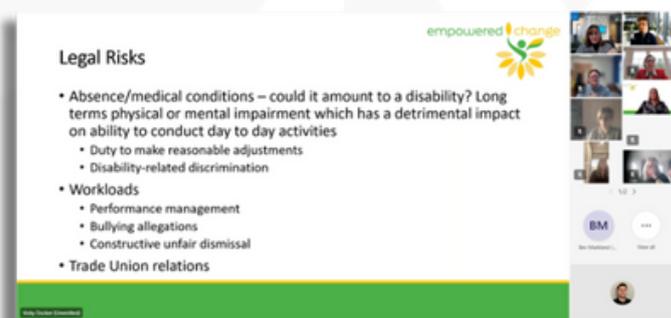
Drawing from a comprehensive Gartner report, the discussion noted that the global pandemic has significantly impaired employees' ability to cope with changes. This has led to the emergence of what we refer to as "change fatigue" – a state of resistance or passive resignation towards organisational changes. Jenny highlighted lawyers, often characterised as overachievers and people pleasers, are also susceptible to feeling overwhelmed and stretched, especially when faced with an additional workload from organisational changes.

The session discussed common changes individuals experience. These changes range from personal events like moving house or experiencing bereavement to professional transitions such as role changes or organisational restructures. It was highlighted how change fatigue can have serious implications for various aspects such as attendance, productivity, retention, and mental health. This was evidenced by statistics from Mental Health England's January report and the Gallup engagement report.

To evaluate how an organisation handles change management and mental health support, an assessment was created. The SARAH curve (shock, anger, rejection, acceptance, and help) was introduced as a framework. This framework helps understand the emotional journey people go through when faced with change, providing a roadmap for managing these emotions effectively.



Jenny approached the discussion from a legal perspective and drew attention to the legal risks associated with change fatigue. She emphasised issues such as disability discrimination (for example where a long-term condition like anxiety or depression is present), workload management leading to performance issues and/or bullying allegations and constructive unfair dismissal claims, and trade union relations which can be strained by change fatigue. She stressed the importance of proactive measures to mitigate these risks, for example, objective assessments as to a



person's workload if they have raised such issues, approaching any medical condition with a view to making reasonable adjustments ('just in case' it amounts to disability), and early discussions with trade unions/employee representatives to try to gain buy-in for change.

The session concluded with a discussion on the important skills needed to manage the impact of change. These skills include resilience, adaptability, strong leadership, effective communication, and technological proficiency. Vicky also added an additional point based on insights from Gartner, highlighting the significance of mental health and well-being as essential components of managing change effectively.



The session provided a comprehensive understanding of change fatigue challenges in today's dynamic landscape. It emphasised the importance of proactive strategies, legal awareness, and all-inclusive support mechanisms to navigate through them successfully. The session underscored the need for organisations to be agile, adaptable, and prepared to manage change effectively. This is to ensure their continued success in the face of rapid technological advancements and evolving business landscapes.





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