

Welcome

from the CIPD

An inflection point of opportunity



Peter Cheese
Chief executive



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This year's live awards event allowed the people profession to get together and celebrate the achievements of the past year

From the beginning of the pandemic and through the rapid changes every business had to make, I consistently heard and saw how our profession was at the forefront of the response. People really were being put at the top of the business agenda, and HR teams everywhere were being challenged to step up and innovate. They kept people safe, adapted to a rapid shift to home working, and supported those who had to be in workplaces, as well as those put on furlough.

As time has moved on, many businesses have been restructuring, and now the agenda is focused on new patterns of working and what we take forward from what we have learned. There is also more strategic planning, as organisations everywhere look ahead and recognise that labour markets are changing; people's expectations of work and a new deal are emerging, customer demand is shifting; and even supply chains appear more fragile. Technology investment is ticking up as part of the response, as is the need to create more organisational agility and resilience in facing up to a more uncertain future.

Crises always represent both danger and opportunity. They accelerate change and adaptation. And these times are perhaps a once-in-a-generation point of inflection and very far from a short-term 'aberration', as some have described it. The climate crisis also is demanding more of businesses to change, and the drivers for more responsible businesses that understand and look after all their stakeholders have never been clearer. The growing push on ESG measures and transparency are strong indicators of what is being expected more by regulators, investors, and the public and society at large.

The last 18 months and all that we see ahead of us is putting our profession at the heart of business and business strategy more than ever before. So many of the issues are clearly related to people, to organisational culture and structures, to skills and job demand. We are seeing inclusion and wellbeing truly becoming central issues in support of talent

acquisition, retention, innovation and productivity. Hybrid and flexible working support this and have to become part of people strategy.

This is an exciting time for what we do. We have seen our profession step up and it was wonderful to see so many great

examples being celebrated at our recent CIPD People Management Awards held at Grosvenor House hotel in London. The event was also an opportunity to recognise our new Chartered Companions as our highest level of professional award – a great group of role models and influencers across the profession.

So now is also the time for us to keep investing in our own skills and capabilities, to professionalise further, and to engage across business in a shared agenda for action and change. Being principles-led, evidence-based and outcomes-driven. And ensuring we drive positive change through people managers and leaders at all levels, all of whom are going to be under more pressure to manage and support more diverse teams and organisations with higher expectations, as well as working in more diverse ways.

At the CIPD, we want to do all we can to support all of you and to help shape the future. We profoundly believe in this opportunity to change the world of work for the better and to fulfil our collective mission of championing better work and working lives.

Peter Cheese

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