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THE STATE OF MINING

Modern Workforce in 2023 and Beyond

Effectively Managing, Communicating and Engaging
with Mining Industry Employees



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The Current State of Mining

What a Foundational Industry Needs to Do to Adapt to Modernisation and Rapidly Changing Workforce Demands.

Mining has always played a crucial role in global economies and shaping modern civilisation. Historically, it has been instrumental in the development of the machinery and technology that have propelled us into today's technologically advanced society.

While the industry has flourished, riding the ebbs and flows of history, it is arguably facing one of its toughest challenges as it adapts to rapidly changing workforce demands, sustainability concerns and economic uncertainty amid geopolitical tensions.

The unprecedented push towards a digital workforce since the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the need for digital transformation and the adoption of new operational solutions to stay ahead. Some experts predict that the increasing use of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and automation will significantly improve operational efficiency and safety.

This digital mining revolution coincides with calls for a stronger focus on environmental, social and governance (ESG) targets and the green transition. It has become imperative for mining leaders to evolve their operating models and processes to cope with shifts in workplace expectations, address skill gaps and improve ESG performance across the organisation. As a result, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) will need to be prioritised along with finding new ways to reduce the industry's carbon footprint.

Although the targets are clear and efforts have been made to enhance mining processes with digitalisation, sustainability and ESG in mind, mining leaders face an uphill climb when it comes to "rebranding" the sector from an environmentally taxing monoculture to an inclusive and climate-focused industry.

Still, mining remains a pivotal industry that drives societal development and growth globally. Industry leaders must identify how they can meet the needs of its workforce and facilitate the transformation of the sector so that it embraces technology, sustainability and equity. This requires the optimisation of workforce management and engagement to drive sustainable change moving forward.

To gain insights into the requirements of the modern mining workforce and the measures that are being taken to accelerate industry progress, we spoke with several experts and thought leaders within the mining and resources sector. Their experiences and perspectives shed light on the actions that have been taken so far and the future steps needed for mining to thrive in an increasingly progressive world.



Industry leaders must identify how they can meet the needs of its workforce and facilitate the transformation of the sector.

Key Insights

The Challenges the Mining Industry Faces in their Pursuit of Process Optimisation, Sustainable Operations and Effective Workforce Management.

We uncovered the challenges and opportunities mining leaders face today and identified the steps needed to cultivate a better working environment to drive improved performance. Here are five key insights gleaned from our leader interviews:

✓ **Modern work is flexible**

The normalisation of remote and hybrid work has made flexible work arrangements a top priority for many workers, especially the “deskless” worker—those who perform their primary responsibilities on the ground and away from a conventional work desk. As such, new technologies must be adopted to accommodate modern working arrangements, especially in mining, where distances between worksites can be vast. This necessitates building the right facilities, structures and policies to make this flexibility possible for everyone.

✓ **Elevate talent management**

Learning management systems and platforms must be implemented to address the skills gap alongside talent-targeting programs for all workers, from deskless to office employees. This requires that organisations provide sufficient mentoring, training, upskilling and networking opportunities while also enabling flexible learning to maximise worker development.

✓ **Develop the right change mindset**

Communication is vital for the facilitation of effective change management, as mining is not just about processes but also about people. While new technologies and processes can be adopted, full efficacy will not be achieved without proper change management policies in place to ensure that workers are on the same page. Leadership must understand the value of having the right change management to maintain sustainable progress.

✓ **ESG cannot be an afterthought**

As the mining industry transforms and grows, investors, communities and governments must work together and change their perspectives. Industry leaders need to take notice and find a way to prevent or address some of the root causes of ESG issues. This extends beyond the environment. Good governance and progressive company policies must be in place to ensure that workers are aligned and engaged, able and ready to help drive ESG agendas.

✓ **Diversity must be embraced**

Diversity, equity and inclusion are critical factors today. It is important to ensure workers are treated fairly and given a fair opportunity. This means addressing issues like sexual harassment, implementing more inclusive policies for workers of different backgrounds and adopting gender-neutral processes. Leaders must develop the right sensitivities to effectively manage a culturally and geographically diverse workforce.

Modern Work Calls for Increased Flexibility

Just a few years ago, the effective implementation of remote and hybrid working arrangements was unthinkable in many industries and job roles, let alone mining and deskless workers. However, the sudden arrival of a global pandemic in 2020 led to a shift in mindsets. Flexible working arrangements became a necessity rather than a choice, and many organisations found that remote working not only could be possible even for hourly and deskless employees, but surprisingly could lead to increased productivity.

With changing attitudes towards workplace environments and arrangements, mining leaders need to quickly identify and create the optimal settings to meet the needs of a changing workforce. While it is necessary for certain roles and workers to be on-site, like shift workers, embracing digital transformation and adopting new technologies to accommodate a diverse workforce is no longer an exception.

The good news is mining leaders recognise this shift and have taken steps to empower all workers to perform their best, whether they're deskless or desk-bound. One industry survey found that around 68% of mining companies believe that flexible working arrangements are essential for the workforce to thrive¹.





Exclusive Interview

We spoke with **Tania Constable**, Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) Chief Executive Officer, about the importance of employee training and development, how digitalisation is improving workforce productivity and engagement and the new advanced smart technologies that will drive the future of mining.

WHAT INDUSTRY CHANGES HAVE OCCURRED THAT CHANGED HOW YOU ENGAGE WITH EMPLOYEES?

First, across industries, sectors and geographies, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed a great deal about the way we do business. However, for mining in Australia, travel between states and countries has traditionally been commonplace. During COVID-19 this led to many workers being isolated from their families for unexpectedly long periods. This took a toll on the mental health of the workforce and has affected how we manage our employees.

Second, on top of the pandemic, one of the biggest issues in the mining sector is lack of labour and skills. Every part of our industry is seeing a skills shortage, and being unable to bring necessary talent into Australia due to COVID-19 restrictions only compounded the issue. Previously, we would have been able to access temporary workforces from other states or countries to address the need for fundamental skills.

Third, ESG has also been a focus area for investors, communities, governments and other stakeholders, given changing expectations of mining. Having to address ESG issues head-on has fundamentally changed the industry and the way we manage our employees.

Fourth, technological transformation is sweeping the globe—and mining is no exception. The race is on to get that transformation occurring in communities. But the technology deficit is a hurdle that must be overcome. Part of the challenge is actually moving through the supply chains and getting manufacturing started on electric vehicles and hybrid vehicles—particularly trucks, which we will need for the transformation. That is already starting to occur.

Fifth, sexual harassment has called attention to diversity, equity and inclusion in our workforce. It has put the spotlight on how we engage with our workforce—setting expectations of zero tolerance for sexual harassment as an industry. The MCA board took responsibility for that, and there is a requirement in our membership for zero tolerance, as defined by new guidance material which we created.

WHAT TECHNOLOGIES HAVE HELPED YOU ADDRESS TODAY'S DIVERSE WORKFORCE CHALLENGES?

With regard to all the new technologies, we'll see key developments across the mine life cycle. Demands of the job will change, and employees will have much more opportunity to learn new things. But there may be a skills deficit as new technologies are introduced or existing technologies advance,



Technological transformation is sweeping the globe—and mining is no exception. The race is on to get that transformation occurring in communities.

- Tania Constable,
Chief Executive Officer,
Minerals Council of Australia
(MCA)

Exclusive Interview *continued*

so businesses will need to assess, upskill and reskill. On our part, we've partnered with universities to make sure that we had short courses developed: micro credential courses for upskilling and reskilling.

I think the digitalisation exercise—moving from manual skills to automation to digitisation and digitalisation—has brought about a major change in the way that we do work, and there are many new and emerging technologies. It's not just about electrification, which we mentioned earlier in terms of electric and hybrid vehicles. There's a whole range of technology changes that relate to every aspect of our work. We need to make sure that we're considering connectivity in the way that we do our work—which is why the internet of things (IoT) is so critical to the workforce that we have—and utilising that appropriately.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOUR FUTURE TECHNOLOGY SPEND IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS?

When I think about the mine site of the future, every part of that mine site needs to change to keep pace. With a focus on cost reduction, looking for greater efficiency and productivity in the way that we work, I think electrification and automation of activities are areas of focus and have already started to occur across different mine sites, across assets. Electrification will bring about a huge change in the way that we do business, and I think that's really an exciting opportunity.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR OTHER LEADERS ON WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT?

Make sure you have a diverse and inclusive workforce. Improving the opportunity for women and attracting and retaining

women—building a diverse workforce—is critical in terms of productivity and success.

This may require you to reshape your workplace culture; respect at work is a huge issue, and you must implement a respectful workforce culture that flows through to policies. Additionally, along with policy changes, recruitment and talent management may have to change to address diverse needs, including re-evaluating selection criteria and interview questions. These adjustments help ensure industry representation is more diverse. With more women and indigenous people in senior roles, the organisation has a diversity of different cultures in the mix that then flows through to leadership levels and even the board level.



Change Starts by Truly Listening and Understanding

Mining is a firmly established industry and can be resistant to change. But in a rapidly progressing world, even the most unyielding systems and processes must bow to current demands and be prepared to adapt with the changing times.

Change management is therefore an increasingly important aspect of mining performance and resource management. However, creating the right environment to facilitate large-scale change is not easy.

It is critical that mining leaders understand that mining is fundamentally reliant on its people and that culture plays an important role in helping office and deskless workers gain a sense of autonomy while also acting as a guide rail along this organisational journey.

This means enabling two-way communication and engagement instead of the traditional top-down management approach that may be less effective when communicating with deskless and hourly workers. With the right employee experience solutions, leaders can improve the experience and engagement of workers, whether they're deskless or not.



Mining is a people business, and knowing how you get people to do things differently and how you can leverage that across your organisation is something that we need to improve on.

- Michelle Ash,
Technology Executive,
OZ Minerals





Exclusive Interview

We spoke with **Michelle Ash**, OZ Minerals Technology Executive, about her approach to workforce management and engagement, how technology will continue playing a key role in influencing the way the industry works, and how best to engage with and meet the needs of today's diverse workforce.

WHAT INDUSTRY CHANGES HAVE OCCURRED THAT IMPACTED HOW YOU ENGAGE WITH EMPLOYEES?

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, work flexibility has become a top priority for many workers. We're using a lot of different technologies to engage with people, have meetings, and connect with each other globally. While I have run worldwide teams many times, I usually still had a core who were based in the same physical space or geography. Now, this is much more rare, with more people working remotely and across different regions.

When it comes to engaging our staff, the standard CEO broadcast and one-way communication isn't as effective as before. People prefer more interactive or iterative tools today that enable two-way communication. Something as simple as Yammer resonates with workers as they can post things that they're interested in and create organic communities. They can also use it as a source of information: it enables them to easily interact with others with their questions and comments.

WHAT TECHNOLOGIES ARE USED TO ADDRESS TODAY'S CHALLENGES AND CHANGING EMPLOYEE NEEDS?

Today, our workforce consists of a variety of different backgrounds, age groups and geographies. As such, we've got to think about the range of people we have and the fragmentation of roles across our work sites and devise an effective style of communication and work scheduling that resonates with our workers. There are some great tools out there that allow for more flexible scheduling based on the task and skill level required, and as we start to see those sorts of tools become not only better but more ubiquitous, our workforce will become more flexible and diverse, opening the mining industry to a much larger talent pool.

As the geographic workforce shrinks and we create a more virtual, flexible working environment with fewer borders, we must also be aware of new challenges and what these mean for cultural coordination of people, leadership, creating a sense of belonging, and more. This puts even more emphasis on using the right communication styles and the value of effective leadership to ensure that people feel they belong—even when they're geographically dispersed and may not interact physically with each other.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOUR FUTURE TECHNOLOGY SPEND IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS?

Digitalisation has become a need in many different industries, and mining is no exception. There will be a greater focus on digitally transforming and enhancing our systems, especially for equipment that lacks modern technological capabilities for an optimised operational experience.

In the short term, money will be spent on augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) to develop new training solutions to enhance the employee upskilling we currently have.

Beyond that, there will be more spent on augmenting our physical capabilities. More can be done to digitalise processes that are currently not digitalised and enhance people's capability to remotely work.

Exclusive Interview *continued*

I believe that there will be a focus on augmenting people's mental capabilities by leveraging advanced technologies like AI and decision-making tools. These will not only help people be more productive but also improve their business decision-making abilities and potentially reduce the industry's training burden to get people up to speed.

We've also seen the importance of effective workforce communication in recent years, so another area in which I would certainly be spending money is enterprise-level systems that enhance our ability to communicate and connect with people. These systems would be invaluable for elevating the way we create stronger connections with our workers.

HOW IMPORTANT HAS CHANGE MANAGEMENT BEEN IN GETTING PEOPLE TO ACCEPT NEW CHANGES?

I think cultural change and the ability to recognise an area that needs improvement—whether it's technology, a process or a way of doing things—is highly important. Mining is a people business, and knowing how you get people to do things differently and how you can leverage that across your organisation is something that we need to improve on.

We can learn more by thinking about how we bring people along for the journey, how we get them to buy in, and how we give some decision-making options in the process. With more employee interaction,

we'll be able to create some of those options and pathways going forward. I think that's a part of cultural change where we can do better and add value.

WHAT STRATEGIES THAT HAVE WORKED FOR MINING SHOULD OTHER SECTORS CONSIDER?

The mining industry is among the few that have led the way in terms of remote operating centres and having people working more virtually. Additionally, at executive and more senior levels in the organisation, the concept of managing culturally and geographically diverse teams requires a different set of leadership capabilities to affect cultural change and identify areas that need improvement. I feel that mining companies have a competitive advantage here.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR OTHER LEADERS ON WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT?

I'm always much more effective as a leader when I actively engage with people. For many, when you're trying to get a message across or implement a change, there is that temptation of just talking at people. But being able to actively listen allows you to understand the concerns of your people and more effectively engage with them.



I believe that there will be a focus on augmenting people's mental capabilities by leveraging advanced technologies like AI and decision-making tools.

- Michelle Ash,
Technology Executive,
OZ Minerals

An Emphasis on the Environment, Social Issues and Good Governance

The importance of ESG in the modern mining landscape cannot be overstated, with growing pressure from investors and shareholders to ramp up decarbonisation efforts to address the environmental aspects of ESG. In fact, more than six in 10 mining and metals investors have indicated their aversion to investing in mining companies that either fail to meet their decarbonisation targets or lack effort in pursuing sufficient decarbonisation activities.

This has resulted in greater cognisance within the mining industry and its leaders regarding requirements for improving sustainability initiatives, including the establishment

of sustainability committees and more comprehensive reporting. Yet, the industry still has a stigma attached to it despite its best efforts in improving its climate strategy while facilitating the green transition through the provision of relevant raw materials.

Thus, communication is key to ensuring that the right messaging is shared, so that workers—and all other stakeholders—understand that climate issues are being addressed. On top of this, social and governance factors must also be addressed by prioritising people's health and safety, along with the implementation of the right corporate policies, to ensure that workers' needs are met and safeguarded. Only by cultivating an effective ESG strategy with workers can the overall ESG agenda of the industry be furthered successfully.



Mining is a key facilitator of the green economy, particularly green energy, because many of those technologies require nickel, cobalt and rare earth metals. People don't seem to have made that connection yet, and I'm not sure if this is something that we're communicating enough as an industry: that we are critical to the transition of economies to a greener state.

- John Hill,
Vice President Talent
Management and Human
Resources Systems,
Torex Gold Resources





Exclusive Interview

We spoke with **John Hill**, Vice President Talent Management and Human Resources Systems, Torex Gold Resources, about how the right messaging, strong connectivity and a focus on health and safety play important roles in longevity and productivity across the business, from the office to the mine.

WHAT INDUSTRY CHANGES HAVE IMPACTED HOW YOU ENGAGE WITH EMPLOYEES?

Across the spectrum of our workforce—from front-line workers to technical staff—competition for skilled staff has increased dramatically. More and more projects are coming online, and many existing operations are expanding, leading to several companies looking for top-notch talent for their sites. So, we're facing much more competition than before.

Another trend we've observed is that, at least in North America, fewer people are going into mining, engineering and geology. Over the last 20 to 30 years, there's been a huge explosion in technology, and many people chose to go into computer science, computer engineering, or even into health- and science-related fields such as pharmacy and biotechnology. This has drawn candidates away from mining schools, some of which have struggled to stay afloat.

However, mining is a key facilitator of the green economy, particularly green energy, because many of those technologies require nickel, cobalt and rare earth metals. People don't seem to have made that connection yet, and I'm not sure if this is something that we're communicating enough as an industry: that we are critical to the transition of economies to a greener state.

All of these trends have impacted our strategies when it comes to managing our workers, as well as how we engage and communicate with employees and the broader market.

WHAT TECHNOLOGIES HAVE YOU USED ADDRESS TODAY'S CHALLENGES AND CHANGING EMPLOYEE NEEDS?

Our focus is on enabling work-life balance in our local workforce and global workforce, whether that's from places up to 1,000 kilometres away or even international expats on rotation. We do our best to strike the best balance between shift efficiency at the mine and meeting most people's needs.

Employees also desire to continually develop. They want to have the opportunities to become more proficient in their current role and increase their skill and knowledge. That's something else that we've been addressing—we've been trying to provide opportunity for people.

Underlying all this is the need to communicate well across the organisation. The CEO is very focused on communicating well to ensure everybody is aligned with our strategy and objectives. We also communicate to celebrate our wins and give credit where credit is due. To enable better communication, we've continuously invested in technology platforms and constantly look for ways to get our message out, to try to be wherever our audience is.

We also ensure our mines are connected, both within our sites and externally. Mines need reliable internet connectivity so our people on the ground can work effectively and stay in touch with their families. Many of the tools we use today for production, management and communication require connectivity, so ongoing maintenance and enhancement is a critical aspect of our business.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOUR FUTURE TECHNOLOGY SPEND IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS?

The industry is becoming more automated and automation is likely to continue, not just in autonomous machinery but also for improved and increased data gathering and processing, performance analysis and more.

From a human resources (HR) perspective, we're currently implementing a new HR information system and are going online with functions like payroll and timesheets. We're also working to enable greater transparency and visibility by putting more information and data in the hands of employees, from management right through to technical staff and the front line. This allows for a deeper understanding of the workforce to better meet our employees' needs while paving the way for improved engagement.

Exclusive Interview *continued*

In addition, we've brought in a new state-of-the-art learning management system for online learning so our people can learn in smaller increments whenever they want to. This covers specific training for different positions but also broader general development modules that can help give them new skills for roles they may be interested in. Building out our learning opportunities will be one of our areas of focus going forward.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR OTHER LEADERS ON WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT?

When it comes to engaging employees, communicating and managing are all equally important. You can't just focus on one or the other.

Find ways to listen to them by using all the channels that you can to understand your workforce. Workforces in different sites and countries are also going to have different voices, so you must listen to each to understand what they're saying to you locally.

Right now, there are multiple generations in the workforce, probably more than we've had in the last 50 years—and that means we must use a variety of different tools to get the message out to people.

In my opinion, the secret to managing the workforce and being able to be very productive lies in being very clear about expectations and the needs of the company.



Employees desire to continually develop. They want to have the opportunities to become more proficient in their current role and increase their skill and knowledge.

- John Hill,
Vice President Talent
Management and Human
Resources Systems,
Torex Gold Resources



Build a Truly Diverse Workforce for Equitable Outcomes

For a long time, mining was viewed as a man's world, making it difficult for women to break into the industry due to significant obstacles such as sexual harassment, incompatible working cultures and more. But things are changing over time thanks to a strong emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

Today, DEI has become critical within mining to ensure that workers, regardless of sex, ethnicity and background, are treated fairly and given a fair opportunity. Additionally, it is already clear that workforce diversity helps with performance and innovation.

Research has found that companies are able to gain even more innovation-related revenue with a workforce that has above-average diversity—45% compared to 26%—which directly translates to improved financial outcomes².

Effective workforce management today also means enforcing policies and implementing processes that meet the needs of everyone—by developing agnostic management approaches, workers from all walks of life in different locales can work together more effectively and deliver even better results.



Technology really has improved the employee value proposition for the mining sector as it has given us much greater work flexibility and greater diversity in who can participate in the workforce.

- Danielle Martin,
Director, Social Performance,
International Council on Mining
and Metals (ICMM)





Exclusive Interview

We spoke with **Danielle Martin**, Director, Social Performance at the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), about how AI has revolutionised the hiring landscape, the impact technology has on meeting employee needs, and how mining companies should enhance their employee value proposition (EVP) and DEI strategies.

IN YOUR OPINION, HOW HAS THE MINING INDUSTRY ADAPTED TO IMPROVE ITS EVP?

Let's address the elephant in the room—the mining industry does have a bit of a reputational issue. The Juukan Gorge incident affected stakeholder and employee trust in the mining sector and laid bare the many big issues surrounding legislation, as well as the mining industry's responsibility towards the environment and cultural sites.

This reputational issue has far-reaching implications, negatively impacting the mining industry's ability to attract and retain talent. We are also plagued by incidences of workplace bullying, harassment and assault, resulting in a skills shortage in mining over the last few years.

An example would be the option to work remotely. Not so long ago, a job in mining meant moving to a rural and remote part of the world to be closer to the asset. With digital transformation and the seismic shift towards remote working that was accelerated by the pandemic, technology has played a huge role in allowing some of our employees to be elsewhere instead of at the mining site. This has opened opportunities and empowered talent

who are unable to travel. In this aspect, technology really has improved the EVP for the mining sector as it has given us much greater work flexibility and greater diversity in who can participate in the workforce.

HOW HAS THE MINING INDUSTRY CHANGED ITS HR PRACTICES FOR IMPROVED DEI?

A recent palpable change in the mining sector relates to the value that companies have placed in their employees. Mining companies have enhanced the ways they engage with their workers, be it through communications or management, and meeting the needs of employees. Combined with technology that has granted much-needed flexibility, we have been able to improve DEI in the mining sector.

I don't pretend for a moment that the mining industry is at the stage where it is meeting all its DEI targets yet, but I think there has been a real elevation of effort amongst mining companies and the industry to understand issues around DEI and to take action to be more inclusive. There is still room for improvement, and we will strive to continue with our efforts to strengthen the mining sector's EVP.

CAN YOU SHARE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF HOW TECHNOLOGY HAS POSITIVELY IMPACTED MINING?

Increasingly, we have seen a rise in the use of AI for talent acquisition and the use of virtual reality for training.

Also, the technology we have been using to communicate with each other has improved over the years. For instance, a CEO of a company could engage with their employees via instant messaging or even video platforms, enabling more efficient communications than before.

These communication platforms may empower companies to use data analytics to check the pulse of an organisation and get real-time feedback on what is and isn't working and understand the demographic of the workforce better.

Such communication platforms have also been used on a global scale with external parties. Previously, the ICMM team was based centrally in London and did everything in-person. Now, half of the team is based all around the world, and communication platforms have allowed us to network with our own teams, members and other external stakeholders.

Exclusive Interview *continued*

WITH THESE NEW TECHNOLOGIES, WHAT SKILLS WILL MINING WORKERS OF THE NEXT GENERATION REQUIRE?

The digital shift requires workers who are fluent with digital and technical skills. Often, the source of workers with such skills are young people graduating from universities and vocational training or from upskilling and reskilling the existing workforce.

That much is a given and was not too surprising given the demands of the industry. However, an interesting phenomenon has surfaced too—there is an equal-sized gap in terms of the more cognitive or human-centric skills that we need. Skills such as leadership, problem solving, and innovation have become more important as we head into uncharted territory brought about by the energy transition.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR OTHER LEADERS ON WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT?

The shift to remote isn't slowing down despite the declared end of the pandemic. The more salient question is not how to go back to pre-pandemic practices, but how to engage and communicate more effectively with a remote workforce.

Regular communications with and amongst the team is critically important. With technology as an enabler, quick phone calls can and should be regularly organised to build stronger teams. And if you do have the opportunity to bring a team together face to face, you should really optimise those opportunities, even if these opportunities are few and far between.



I don't pretend for a moment that the mining industry is at the stage where it is meeting all its DEI targets yet, but I think there has been a real elevation of effort amongst mining companies and the industry to understand issues around DEI and to take action to be more inclusive.

- Danielle Martin,
Director, Social Performance,
International Council on Mining
and Metals (ICMM)

Plugging the Skills and Talent Gap

While mining has improved its attractiveness as both a career option and a socially conscious industry, the hard truth is that there is still work to be done. Despite the frenetic growth of technical talent in recent years, there is still a severe talent shortage that must be urgently focused on.

For example, in Australia there has been a 63% decline in tertiary education enrolment in mining engineering since 2014³, and an increased demand for new workers in mining operations and projects—around 24,400—is expected by 2026. Time is of the essence when addressing the labour shortage faced by the sector.

Industry leaders must therefore identify the right ways to attract the best talent and reskill and upskill their existing workforce. This is especially important for hourly and deskless

workers who may be lacking these growth opportunities. Hence, learning management systems and solutions must be implemented to address the skills gap alongside talent-targeting programs for deskless workers and more. This means providing sufficient mentoring, training, upskilling and networking opportunities while also enabling flexible learning to maximise worker development.

By providing the opportunities for constant learning and development for workers, mining companies and leaders can look forward to improved organisational growth and strategic positioning, putting mining on the right track to remain an industry that continues to be central to societal development while also becoming progressive and worker-focused.



Skills such as leadership, problem solving, and innovation have become more important as we head into uncharted territory brought about by the energy transition.

- Danielle Martin,
Director, Social Performance,
International Council on Mining
and Metals (ICMM)





Exclusive Interview

We spoke with **Manson Kan**, Senior Manager Human Resource Systems and Planning at Woodside Energy, about how technology has grown to accommodate the vastly different workforce composition and needs in the oil and gas sector, and about the renewed focus on EVP to attract more talent.

WHAT INDUSTRY CHANGES HAVE OCCURRED THAT CHANGED HOW YOU ENGAGE WITH EMPLOYEES?

It is impossible to talk about the many radical changes that happened in the past few years without mentioning the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, no one would have thought of flexible work arrangements in the oil and gas industry pre-pandemic—it was just unheard of—and fly-in, fly-out work arrangements reigned supreme.

Yet, this all changed when remote work became a necessity during the pandemic. COVID-19 has proven in many cases that employees can work from home, and there is no turning back from this evolution of work. It is now more important than ever for employers to define ways for employees to work flexibly and balance remote work with preserving collaboration and productivity.

In my opinion, this balancing act will shape the way employees work in the future. However, the tussle between employees and employers regarding flexible work arrangements does not end here—there may also be other stakeholders involved. Particularly in the US, employers have had to stay ahead of jurisdictional compliance with employees wanting to work in states outside of their home office. Administrative issues like payroll and taxes may become a factor when recruiting talent from other states.

HOW HAVE THE NEEDS OF YOUR EMPLOYEES, ESPECIALLY FIELD WORKERS, CHANGED?

As mentioned earlier, flexibility and work-life balance have become a focus for employees. In fact, they are now at the forefront when it comes to culture and EVP.

Another area of focus for employees—and hence for us as employers—is diversity, equity and inclusion. While things have improved in recent years, oil and gas still holds the dubious honour of being one of the least gender-diverse sectors, with only 22% of its global workforce being female⁴.

In addition, there is a significant pay gap between women in oil and gas and their male counterparts. In general, workers are also lagging in terms of paid parental care leave as compared to other sectors, leaving women especially disempowered.

Furthermore, sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace have been a cause for concern for women in oil and gas. Often, perpetrators may be supervisors or managers, so creating an environment where employees feel safe to speak up and enact real change is important. On top of that, more must be done to build trust between employees and the business to clamp down on workplace harassment and bullying. The oil and gas sector—and more broadly, mining and resources—can only improve its EVP and DEI practices when employees are safe and feel safe.

HOW IS THE MINING AND RESOURCES INDUSTRY EVOLVING IN TERMS OF ITS DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS?

During the pandemic, we relied heavily on Microsoft Teams and WebEx to reach out to our employees, and we've continued to use these channels post-COVID. We've found that despite the diverse employee demographics in oil and gas, we can engage both the older generation of workers termed as Gen X and digital natives from Gen Y.

Video conferencing is key with flexible working, as it allows us to build rapport with each other despite being in different locations. It also helps us put a face to the name, so we know who we are talking to.

As the majority of communications are happening via digital means, reporting and analytics will soon play a key role in providing data to the organisation. In this manner, predictive analytics on digital communications platforms will help position leadership to stay ahead of organisational needs and issues. Such analysis will enable leaders to pinpoint and understand the issues employees may be facing and nip problems in the bud.

Exclusive Interview *continued*

WHAT STRATEGIES THAT HAVE WORKED FOR MINING SHOULD OTHER SECTORS CONSIDER?

There is a huge focus on new energy and defining the organisational capabilities required to effectively deliver energy transition. This requires leveraging existing skill sets in the ageing workforce and developing depth in the younger workforce to continue in this transition.

Besides ensuring that employee skill sets are kept up to date through upskilling and reskilling, industry leaders should also consider flexible work practices as part of workforce management strategies. Such practices include job sharing, employing part-timers, and sabbaticals for improved employee well-being and retention.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR OTHER LEADERS ON WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT?

My advice is to ensure that your employees are aligned with the overall purpose of the organisation. The analogy is that employees need to know how their work contributes to the value chain of the corporate 'golden thread'. Without this understanding, employees may not know or understand the purpose behind their work, leading to lower morale and decreased productivity.

By weaving the golden thread to link the value of an employee's work to actual business outcomes, we can establish a shared purpose and continue to drive even greater performance.



It is now more important than ever for employers to define ways for employees to work flexibly and balance remote work with preserving collaboration and productivity.

- Manson Kan,
Senior Manager Human
Resource Systems and
Planning,
Woodside Energy



Optimising the Future of Workforce Management

It has become clear that the modern workforce requires vastly different management approaches compared to the past. For an effective workforce today, companies must use smart communications which leverage real-time data, advanced analytics and automation to create personalised workflow experiences and enhanced adaptability.

Moreover, it is evident that mining is not just about systems and processes, but also about its people. All workers—from deskless to office staff—must have the same shift flexibility, attendance accuracy, learning opportunities and workflow process optimisation for mining businesses to see the results they hope to achieve.

The good news is that mining and resource leaders understand that a shift has occurred within the industry and have identified the steps needed to adjust their thinking for more effective and progressive workforce engagement and management.

We have seen concerted efforts to enable greater flexibility in the deskless workforce, with modern tools and communications solutions empowering all types of workers across geographies and communities to perform their best. We have also seen greater diversity and inclusivity than before, and industry leaders are cultivating environments where ESG is being prioritised and their workers feel sufficiently supported and challenged.

Understandably, transformation and growth take time, and the mining and resources industry still has some way to go to change how it is perceived to obtain optimal outcomes. Nevertheless, if leaders ensure that they stay focused on improving their workplace culture through appropriate change management strategies, pay attention to ESG and DEI, and develop and attract the right talent, they will be able to bring mining to the next phase of its business evolution and realise the full potential of its workforce.



Our Methodology

WorkForce Software's "The State of Mining: Modern Workforce in 2023 and Beyond" report was created in collaboration with SAP SuccessFactors, through consultation with Australian and international mining and resources leaders, to assess the mining industry's preparedness and capability in managing and engaging today's workforce.

This inaugural report draws on virtual interviews that took place between 20 March and 19 April 2023.

Our research is based on qualitative methods via one-on-one virtual interviews with a range of leading mining and resources executives at several companies across the sector. The interviews were conducted over virtual video chat so that we could gain a personal view and detect underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings on a range of areas and subjects.

WE ASKED THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

- ✓ What are the significant changes and trends you have seen in the mining and resources industry that have changed the way you engage, communicate with, and manage your employees?
- ✓ What do you think are the key drivers that will shape the way your employees work in the future?
- ✓ In your opinion, how has the mining industry adapted to improve its employee value proposition?

- ✓ How have the needs of your employees, especially field workers, changed over the last few years (e.g. work-life balance, visibility, communication)?
- ✓ How has the mining industry improved its HR practices for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)?
- ✓ What technologies have you used to address these challenges and meet the changing needs of today's diverse employee demographics (e.g. Gen X, Gen Y)?
- ✓ Where do you see your future technology spend being focused over the next few years?
- ✓ Much has been discussed about technology and its positive impact on the mining industry. Can you share more specific examples?
- ✓ With these new technologies, what skills will mining workers of the next generation require?
- ✓ How is the mining and resources industry evolving in terms of improving its digital communications?
- ✓ How much progress has the mining industry made in aligning its ESG goals with its workforce management and engagement strategies?
- ✓ What new workforce management strategies have you observed in the mining and resources industry that other industry leaders should consider adopting?
- ✓ As a leader within mining and resources, what is your best advice for other industry leaders when it comes to engaging, communicating with, and managing your employees and deskless workers?



MANNING & CO.

Manning & Co. is a strategic marketing firm dedicated to assisting businesses in their growth journey. With a global reach from two main strategic hubs—Sydney and Singapore—we are the trusted strategic partner for B2B and service businesses of all sizes. M&C provides services across the marketing spectrum, including marketing strategy and research, thought leadership, content marketing, design and development, digital marketing, videography and social media.

As the recipient of numerous awards, including Top 10 Marketing Consultancies in Asia 2023 by Asia Business Outlook, we are proud of the quality of work and service we have provided for the past 15 years.

Our Partner

SAP SuccessFactors

SAP SUCCESSFACTORS

WorkForce Software has been SAP's global Solution Extension partner since 2015. Together, we have more than 280 customers who are leveraging WorkForce Software with SAP HR and payroll solutions to manage and optimise the performance of their global employee teams. We have co-developed rapidly deployable integrated solutions of SAP and the WorkForce Suite, currently in use by 2.1 million users globally. With extensive experience, SAP and its implementation partners around the world have a deep understanding of best practices for implementing and operating these combined solutions within local, regional, and global organisations.

To find out how our modern workforce management solution can help you improve operational performance and deliver a breakthrough employee experience, request a demonstration today.

workforcesoftware.com/demonstration/



