

People empowered business transformation success kit

A blueprint for achieving a consistent, data-driven and engaging people strategy that transforms the health of your organisation.

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Introduction

Why Strategic HR matters

Employee engagement is one of the hottest topics as business leaders recognise the need to nurture the emotional commitment employees have with their organisation to help combat record levels of post pandemic attrition and to ensure everyone is working towards the same goals. The key to engagement is enabling managers to have more personal and authentic relationships.

It's a well documented fact that people-first organisations deliver significantly higher performance than those that don't prioritise people and culture. The "[State of the global workplace](#)" report from Gallup, a global analytics and advice company, compared organisations with high employee engagement levels against those without and found that organisations with engaged employees:

- ▲ Increase productivity by 17%
- ▲ Increase customer ratings by 10%
- ▲ Increase sales by 20%
- ▲ Increase profitability by 21%
- ▲ Reduce absenteeism by 41%

Couple this with the suggestion from Karlyn Borysenko in the Forbes article, "[How much are your disengaged employees costing you?](#)", that a disengaged employee costs companies 34% of their salary and it's easy to see how vital it is to prioritise an employee engagement strategy how vital it is to prioritise an employee engagement strategy.



**EMPLOYEES
WORKING IN
HIGH FAIRNESS
ENVIRONMENTS
PERFORM AT A LEVEL**

26%
**HIGHER THAN
THOSE THAT DON'T***



So, why have so few implemented a people-first strategy?

Given these stats, it's surprising to find that

"75% of organizations have no engagement plan or strategy, even though 90% say engagement impacts business success."

Dale Carnegie, "Building a culture of engagement" whitepaper.

Although responsibility for employee relations and managing wellbeing falls to every line manager within an organisation, HR is ultimately responsible for the company's Employee Value Proposition and the policies that support a people-first culture. But the traditional HR model is outdated and needs to evolve to enable this to be done well.

Question: So, how do we enable HR teams to prioritise employee engagement and embed strategies that meet the needs of their people while aligning with the strategic objectives of the organisation?

Answer: People empowered business transformation. This guide is intended to give you the tools to implement an employee engagement strategy that emotionally connects your employees to the goals of your business, empowers managers to manage more employee relationship tasks and frees the time of HR leaders to focus on key strategic objectives.

HR is at the heart of transformation

The rapid transformations almost every business had to undertake in response to the pandemic resulted in a seismic shift in the job of managing people and redefined the role HR plays in business transformation. HR teams have been central in:

- facilitating flexible working policies
- accelerating digital transformation initiatives
- recruiting, onboarding and offboarding employees remotely
- managing employee wellbeing across a dispersed and disconnected workforce
- communicating the latest healthcare and inclusivity guidelines
- managing new pay policies
- and so much more!

Having largely been perceived as a functional department in the past, the impact of the pandemic has shone a spotlight on how HR is the linchpin of facilitating change. And organisational health and survival has – and will continue to – come down to how agile the organisation is in responding to change.



The adage holds true: The only constant is change

Although the memory of the critical change management of the early days of the pandemic may be fading with time, the complexity it brought with it remains constant. HR teams face more pressure than ever to support the most important assets of every business – its people.

Many tasks that consume valuable HR resources are still highly manual, non-strategic employee relationship tasks that could and should be managed by line managers directly, without HR involvement. **But facilitating this requires a significant change in traditional HR operating models.**

As we navigate the new future of work, the focus for business and HR leaders is to enable their HR teams to refocus on the strategic, high priority areas of their role that impact the running and health of the business. Creating the time to do this requires transformation of the operating model to a manager-empowered model that has employee engagement at the core.

The right HR transformation strategy will deliver business-wide transformation by removing siloed processes, creating a more connected and collaborative workforce, and automating repeatable tasks. This requires a combination of technology, people and analytics to deliver transformation that has empowering people at its heart.

Done pragmatically and with the right governance, HR transformation builds the foundations for healthier organisations with more engaged, productive and ultimately happier employees.



Creating a healthy organisation

With wellbeing awareness so high on agendas, when we talk about a healthy organisation, you'd be forgiven for assuming we're referring to how businesses support the health and wellbeing of their people. But physical and mental wellbeing are a consequence of the environments we live and work in, not the driving force of a healthy organisation. A healthy organisation is one that has the right employee engagement strategies in place to support physical and mental wellness, and has the agility and efficiency to adapt quickly in periods of change.

HR plays a fundamental role in creating and supporting agile mindsets and operating models by removing barriers to engaging with employees, supporting the recruitment of a resilient and adaptable workforce, and by using analytics to understand performance and development needs across the organisation.

The consequence of not prioritising the development of people-strategies which build healthy organisations will be employee disengagement that leads to decreased productivity, increased absenteeism and a higher rate of employee attrition.

Embedding a culture of employee engagement

With HR playing such a vital role, HR leaders need to be at the boardroom table, so this is one of the first priorities to address if you don't already have an HR Board Director. Although this may not be as straightforward as it sounds within some organisations, the shift in the perceptions of the HR function since the pandemic should make this an easier sell to business leaders than ever before.

By the nature of the role, HR are people orientated and so having the voice of the people in strategic decisions is key to building a healthy and successful organisation.

Now is the time for HR leaders to be proactive in driving the employee engagement agenda. This requires insights from across the organisation to identify performance trends, challenges and vulnerabilities, and opportunities to increase engagement. With the right people analytics, organisations can make data-driven decisions to improve the health of the organisation, such as identifying the root cause and source of high absenteeism, high churn, spikes in grievances or patterns of declining mental health.

This data should then be combined with insights from managers and employees about how well equipped they feel to do their best work, and what barriers may be preventing them from being empowered in their role. This insight will enable HR leaders to prioritise the opportunities for change that will deliver the highest returns, by reducing risk, improving engagement, simplifying work and enabling managers to deal with more employee relationship tasks without needed to escalate them to HR.

Critically, a recent [Gartner report](#) identified that **“45% of Managers lack confidence to help employees develop the skills they need today”**

This highlights that many organisations still have a long way to go in empowering their managers.

So, let's look at the steps required to implement a successful people empowered transformation strategy.



A 10-step guide to people empowered business transformation

Now we've established how critical it is to prioritise people empowered business transformation, here's a guide to getting your strategy right and avoiding costly mistakes.

Step 1 Understand where your business is on the HR transformation curve

Before you embark on any transformation, start by defining where you are today and where you want to get to. Engage department heads and people managers across the business to identify the pain-points that are a barrier to achieving your goals, and the appetite for change. Highlight the areas and issues that would be the most inflexible if you were faced with a significant opportunity or threat so that you can prioritise steps in your transformation based on the potential risk and value. For example, if siloed processes or legacy systems are holding you back, what steps need to be taken to address these?

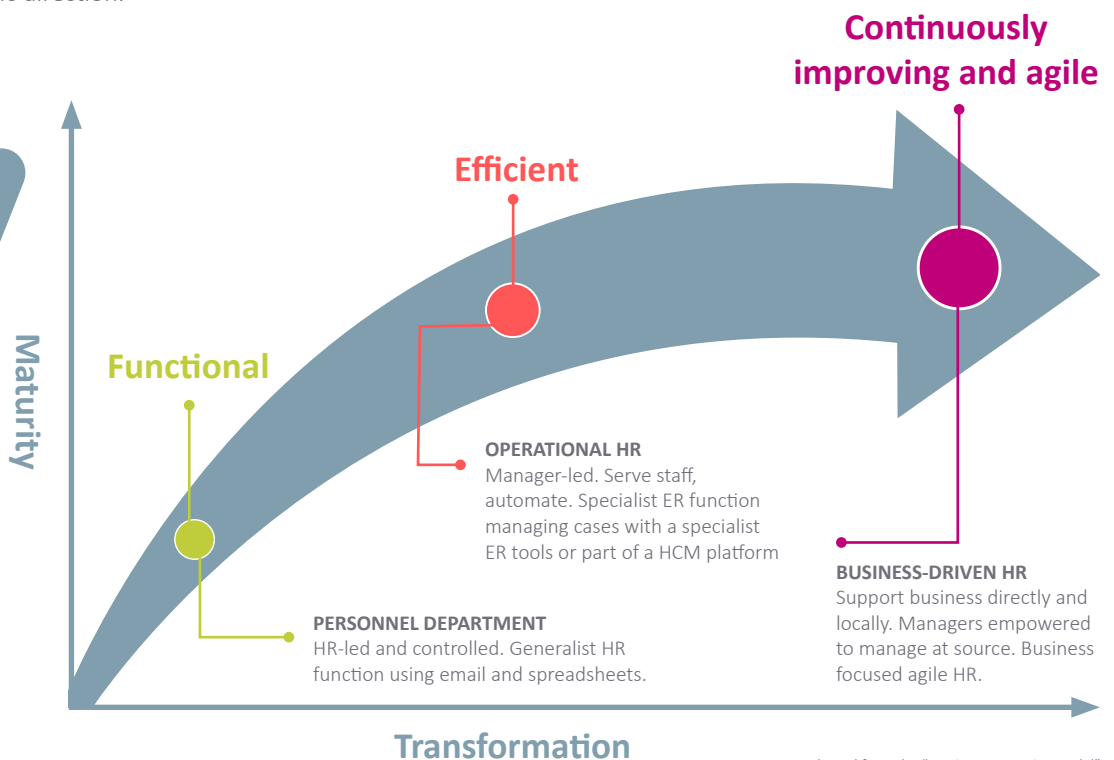
Even the largest and most established organisations can be at very different stages of transformation depending on their current operating model, technology and culture. Mapping where you are today will help you to determine the right route you need to take to successfully transform in line with your strategic direction.

Gartner.

To help you get started in assessing the maturity of your HR function, this [Gartner HR Score](#) report is a valuable resource:



With more than two decades of experience, AdviserPlus is the perfect partner to assist you in determining how your HR function needs to evolve to meet your strategic goals.



Adapted from the "Bersin HR Maturity Model"

Step 2

Identify pain-points that need addressing as a priority

Think about the problem statements that you need to address most urgently to reach your goals. Here are some examples of common problem statements we've addressed with our customers:



Cost-saving

"I want to reduce the cost of delivering HR, whilst uplifting service quality"



Ownership

"I want line managers to take greater ownership of people matters, but they lack the tools / capability / confidence to do so"



Metrics

"I have poor people metrics, so lack visibility of what's happening across the organisation"



Strategy

"I have an HR team failing to deliver my HR strategy because they keep getting dragged into the tactical delivery"



Consistency

"I have processes applied in different ways in different parts of the business and this inconsistency introduces risk"



Sickness

"I have a sickness absence rate that is too high and my managers lack the tools and understanding to address it at the front line"

Identify processes that will have the biggest impact on employee engagement and will also free up time for the HR team to focus on high-value, strategic tasks. Don't try to boil the ocean at this stage! Prioritising the lowest hanging fruit to prove the value will help to reduce friction and accelerate adoption of new ways of working.

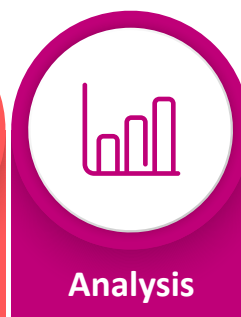
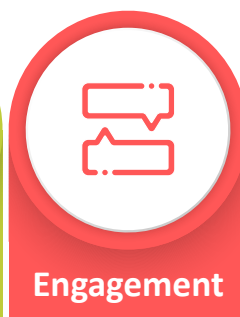
Step 3

Identify areas for improvement using the five pillars of employee relationship transformation

Using the following pillars as a guide, create a working group with the wider HR team to review and identify your strengths and weaknesses. Then look for the areas that will deliver the biggest impact and the fastest returns to help inform the strategy. Check out this [AdviserPlus](#) guide to reviewing your strengths and weaknesses.



The five pillars of effective HR transformation





Simplicity

Reducing complexity in HR processes that can stifle engagement and increase the risk of issue escalations. By simplifying processes and automating workflows, HR teams have more time to focus on the higher-value, strategic aspects of their role and can facilitate innovation.



Efficiency

Improving processes and automating common, repeatable tasks means that simple employee issues can be resolved more easily, consistently, and efficiently, and managers are empowered to own more of the employee relationship.



Engagement

As we've discussed in depth, employee engagement is key to developing a healthy organisation. If your employees won't be better engaged following your transformation, you're wasting your time! Make sure your transformation strategy aligns with your people strategy.



Analysis

As discussed, understanding trends in big data will drive better decision making. Below is an example of how AdviserPlus was able to measure the business-changing impact of the HR transformations we delivered for our customer, **United Utilities**:

59% reduction in long-term sickness, worth £2.15m per year

64% reduction in average performance case duration

30% reduction in time taken to resolve disciplinary cases

Read the full [Case Study here](#).



Assurance

Assurance is a key element that is underpinned by how you treat people. When it comes to transforming employee relationship management, the benefits of assurance are two-fold:

1. Giving employees confidence that their issues will be dealt with fairly and consistently gives assurance that they are valued. Clearly communicating processes will enable better engagement with HR and demonstrates a commitment to open and honest relationships.
2. Giving managers assurance that they are taking the right steps in how they approach employee relationship management is key to truly empowering them. Clear and easy to follow process workflows give managers the confidence to take ownership of people matters and build a more collaborative relationship with their team members.

Step 4

Define your goals

Once you've identified the pain points you need to address and have an understanding of where you are, where you'd like to get to, and how quickly, you can then define the goals of your transformation. These need to align with the overarching goals of the organisation and you need to clearly define the role HR plays in achieving them. Here are five examples of transformation goals to consider:

A

Getting the best out of your people

Klaus Schwab, the author of *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*, calls on leaders and citizens to "together shape a future that works for all by putting people first, empowering them and constantly reminding ourselves that all of these new technologies are first and foremost tools made by people for people."

When defining your goals, remain focused on this people-first vision. How will your transformation strategy ensure you have the right infrastructure, people and processes to ensure your employees feel engaged, recognised, included and rewarded?

B Improving employee and customer experiences

As mentioned, engaged employees will be more productive and deliver better experiences for the customer. They are also more likely to be retained if they feel valued, and with the pressure created by “The Great Resignation”, successful retention strategies are more important than ever!

Experience is everything and so defining how you will measure the impact of the transformation on employee and customer experience is key to success.

Delivering the best experiences requires an experience mindset across the business. To embed this in your culture, start by identifying what a great experience means to your organisation. Next, define how best to ensure this is well communicated and understood by everyone within the organisation. This is achieved by efficient people engagement, inspired leadership and effective communication.

C Reducing risk

With ever increasing complexity comes ever increasing risk – and any change process has an element of risk. Identify how you can simplify the complexity in people management to better protect your people and the business and also evaluate the risk of doing nothing, so you can quickly see the benefit.

Risk may be in any form, such as security risks from poor systems and poorly managed access permissions, a lack of training, or the risk to employee wellbeing or inclusion from inconsistent management.

Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses and use whatever data you have available to identify what you need to prioritise to avoid the most critical risk factors. For example, if sickness and absenteeism is impacting the health of your business, prioritise understanding the cause so that you can identify ways in which you can address it.

There will be some short-term risk of embedding new ways of working, so engaging with HR transformation experts at this point will help to ensure you can mitigate against significant risk in your change process.

D Breaking down silos

Siloed working practises and a disconnected workforce are huge barriers to agility and can increase employee dissatisfaction. Identify where there are opportunities to improve collaboration and share best practise across teams.

Data silos are also a huge barrier to successful transformation because decision makers lack a single source of truth. Even large corporate organisations are often still reliant on outdated practises, working from spreadsheets to manage business critical insights. Identify the biggest opportunities to improve visibility of key data insights by connecting systems, standardising processes and centralising information.

Although these issues may not be ones which an HR leader has direct control over, they need to be elevated and addressed as part of a people empowered transformation strategy, so engage key stakeholders, such as IT leaders, and consider consulting experts in employee relations process design and technology, like **AdviserPlus**.

E Enabling data-driven decision making

Define what people insight data you need to make more informed, data-driven decisions. For example, today you may be able to access data on sickness or churn rates, but do you know if there is a particular department or team that bucks the trend and what can you learn from this?

Big data offers huge opportunities, but only if we define what we want to get out of it and can harness the right insights from it.

Step 5 Review your current HR technology stack



We have a strategic partnership with LACE Partners, specialists in assessing your full HR technology stack.

They are the UK's leading independent, boutique consultancies focused entirely on HR services. Get in touch to find out more.



Reviewing your technology stack to identify whether it is fit for the future and where there are gaps is not something HR leaders can do in isolation. Engaging IT leaders and engaging platform agnostic technology consultants will help to ensure you avoid costly investment in the wrong technology. The review should consider the most complex processes that consume resources in your team and how technology might help to simplify them.

Unlike the other gap analysis steps mentioned earlier, the technology review should come after defining your goals so that it is focused on the outcomes that need to be achieved, without the bias of how things work today.

In the immortal words of Bill Gates,

“The first rule of any technology used in business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency. The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency.”

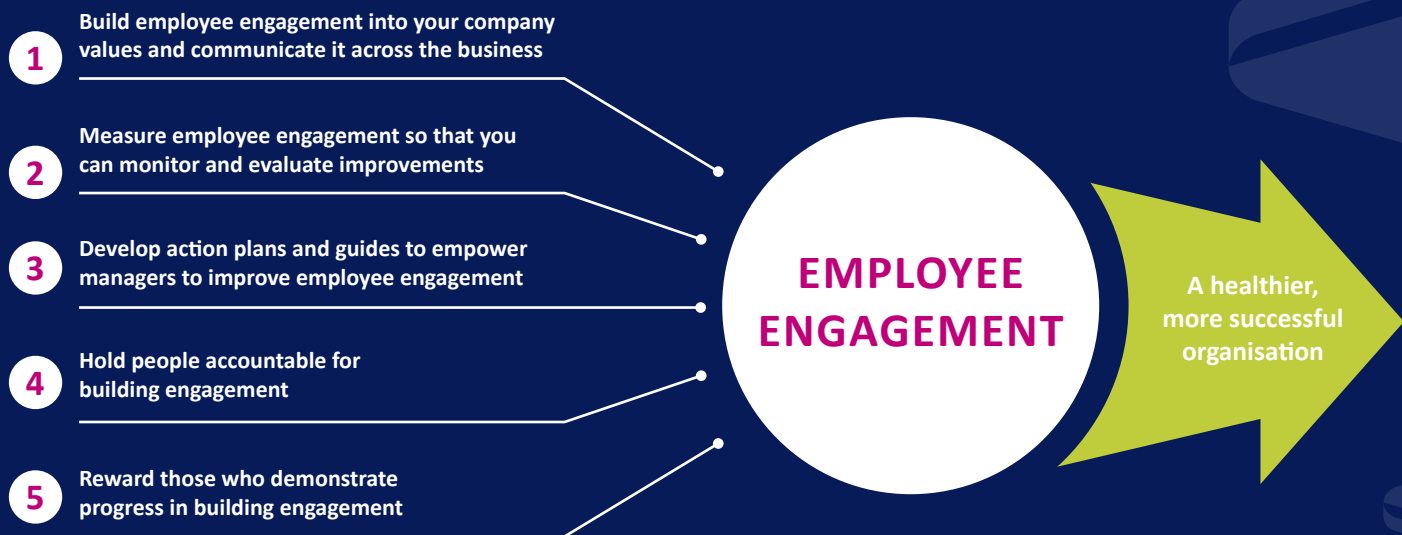
Technology is only as good as the processes you put into it, so you need to identify the process inefficiencies that could be addressed with the right technology and automation. Think about what your organisation needs and what managers and employees need from you. Define how you want a process to work in the new world and remember that technology won't fix a broken process, so you need to focus on what good looks like.

You may have an HR case management system in place, but is it fit for purpose and was it designed for managing employee relations? Choosing the right technology is vital as the wrong solution is likely to increase the complexity in the process. Engaging employee relationship process and technology experts, like [AdviserPlus](#), will ensure you can apply best-practice and get this right first time.

According to [Gartner](#), by 2024, **“60% of employee-related HCM technology transactions will be accomplished via preconfigured, employee-initiated workflows.”**

Step 6

Create an action plan for embedding people engagement in your culture



Step 7

Identify what you need to empower line managers to confidently manage employee relationships



AdviserPlus is part of the Empowering People Group, which brings together three innovators in employee relations who share a deep understanding of today's complex HR landscape.

For more inspiration on embedding a culture of people engagement, check out the group's [Human Value Series](#) webinar.



Explore the role line managers play in achieving HR transformation. Empowering managers is essential to transformation success. One of the biggest challenges we come across time and again is a fear of doing the wrong thing when it comes to managers responding to employee relationship issues. By embedding consistent processes and providing knowledge hubs, HR teams can reduce this risk factor.

Consider how managers can do more to deal directly with employee relationship tasks and map the governance parameters you need in place to protect the employee, manager and the business. The [AdviserPlus empower®](#) solution provides simple guided journeys for line managers to ensure they have all the information they need to manage people matters consistently, safely and confidently.

Empowering managers to take the lead in employee relations issues will strengthen the relationship between the employee and manager while also reducing the work of the HR team so that they can focus on more strategic priorities.

Manager empowerment will only be as successful as the managers you have in place, so this feeds back to the earlier point about ensuring company values and soft skill requirements are clearly communicated in the recruitment process to attract candidates with the right attitude that will build a people-first culture. These are the skills and behaviours that you can't teach, but which are innate in a good leader and a strong manager.

Step 8

Agree OKRs and KPIs so that you can measure success

Align your OKRs and KPIs with your goals and ensure these can be benchmarked against any data insights you have today. Measuring the health of the organisation in general should be routinely undertaken to identify quickly whether you need to do more to achieve success. Here are a few examples of metrics you may want to benchmark:

-  Employee engagement scores
-  The cost of absenteeism
-  The volume and time taken on common ER cases that consume valuable HR resources
-  Churn by department and team to help identify changes or trends
-  Managers' confidence levels in dealing with employee relationship issues
-  Percentage of employee relations cases resolved before they become formal
-  Average time to hire - have you got people wanting to join the organisation?

Step 9

Identify training and learning needs

Define the core competencies you require from your line managers and identify any gaps in people skills and learning and development. Then identify a learning and development partner who can support you in the delivery of tailored training that has your people and business goals at the heart. Investing in training demonstrates to your people that you are committed to them.

As new technology continues to emerge and ways of working and engaging with each other evolve, it's important to adopt a culture that encourages and facilitates continuous learning to keep pace with the impact of change. Ensure the right training is available to manage complex people matters, such as mental health awareness, inclusivity and diversity, and grievances.

Any change process requires new ways of working so ensure that you have a robust training plan in place when you embark on your transformation journey. The Learning and Development services of **AdviserPlus** are rated as world-class by our customers because we have over 20 years' experience in delivering people-first training solutions. We take pride in understanding the needs of each unique business so that we can tailor training to meet these needs.

Step 10

Engage hearts and minds

Any transformation project will only be as good as the people delivering it, so a robust change management strategy should form part of your overarching transformation strategy. Excellent communication is vital for reducing friction and ensuring the smooth transition to new ways of working.

You can't empower people without understanding how they need to be empowered, so make sure feedback is part of the people transformation planning stage. Address concerns from those impacted by the transformation so that everyone feels engaged and valued in the process.

Identify "Change Champions" to act as a personal communication channel within your teams and engage them in every stage of the change process. Ensure there is a good representation of people from departments across the organisation to ensure individual teams' priorities are considered. This will help to ensure everyone is well informed and brought along on the transformation journey.

Conclusion

Transformation is a continuous journey involving your culture, your people and your strategic partners.

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' when it comes to successful transformation. It must be tailored to your business and your people and it has to be constantly evolving. To optimise the success of your transformation investments, it's essential to choose the right transformation partners who can support you in delivering the agility required to evolve and scale at pace. Done well, people-empowered business transformation will:

- Make HR more strategic.
- Improve consistency and compliance.
- Deliver operational excellence.
- Improve employee and customer experience.
- Reduce the HR cost to serve.
- Drive the business strategy.
- Create a healthy organisation.

At **AdviserPlus**, we have a proven track record in delivering excellence in people empowered transformations.

A customer in the logistics sector saw £1.75m in cost savings and 98% of managers felt confident that their knowledge and skills improved using the AdviserPlus service.

Our *empower*[®] solution is unique in the market, with a combination of people, technology and analytics aligned in the common goals of simplifying the complexity in HR and transforming the management of employee relations.

“At the heart of any successful business transformation is people. We're passionate about creating environments where people are recognised as individuals, highly engaged and can thrive in their roles.

This starts with evolving the role of HR so that line managers are empowered to support their teams to do their best work and HR have more time to focus on building human value propositions that drive business success.

Business leaders that don't recognise the need for a people-first engagement strategy will quickly be left behind, both in terms of business performance and in attracting and retaining talent.”

Yvonne Wilcock, Managing Director at AdviserPlus and CEO of the Empowering People Group.

People-empowered transformation



Virgin AA Case Study

Read how *empower*[®] from **AdviserPlus** increased managers' confidence in handling people matters from 6.8 to 8.8 out of 10, and how managers now self-serve over 50% of employee relations matters without the need for HR to be involved.

“The technology is so helpful and makes it easier for managers to manage their teams.” Virgin Atlantic



[Click here to read more or scan the QR code.](#)

Post Office Case Study

Hear how **AdviserPlus** worked with Post Office to deliver a new service that transformed absence management and mental health awareness, saving over £500,000 in productivity savings.

“It’s now very clear that when we proactively manage absences, and intervene early, there is a significant reduction in absence rates – and the benefit to our business cannot be understated!” Post Office

[Click here to read more or scan the QR code.](#)



About us



By combining cloud technology, data insight and expert guidance, we help empower your leaders, engage your people and drive business-changing efficiency.

- ✓ Optimised HR operating model and reduced cost to serve
- ✓ Uplift in manager capacity and ownership of people matters
- ✓ Enhanced user experience and employee engagement
- ✓ Consistent, transparent and fair application of people processes
- ✓ Visibility, oversight and actionable insight



Taking the complexity out of HR



Our technology, which digitally simplifies your people processes, lies at the heart of empower®.

Scan the QR code to watch the video

All your employee relationship needs under one roof

AdviserPlus is part of the **Empowering People Group**, a leading UK provider of specialist technology and innovative HR, learning and development, change, and employment law solutions that drive business performance through people performance.

Our experts share a deep understanding of today's complex HR landscape, delivering advice, insights, analytics and interventions that make a real impact.



Find out more [here](#).



A leading provider of specialist HR services and technology



Flexible, straight-talking, pragmatic employment law specialists



Powerful career transition, coaching and learning solutions



A leading digital-learning and Learning Management Software provider

