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BUSINESS WORLD

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About the authors

Mark Reynolds *Douglas, Isle of Man*

Mark is the Chief Operating Officer at Suntera Global, Russell Bedford's Isle of Man member. He has worked in the corporate services and digital industries in the Isle of Man for the last fifteen years. An Associated Member of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries and Administrators, Mark has held a number of senior business development positions throughout his career.

As Managing Director of Suntera's Isle of Man office, Mark oversees the overall operation and performance of the office and its services. In 2021, he was promoted to Chief Operating Officer and is responsible for the global office network and expanding the multi-jurisdictional team.

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Robert Morley *London, UK*

Robert is the Chief Operating Officer at Lubbock Fine, Russell Bedford's London member. He is a transformational COO with eighteen years' board level operational experience of driving step-change performance in a variety of professional organisations from start-ups through to billion-dollar US multinationals.

He joined Lubbock Fine in 2019 and is currently working with the partners on a business change programme encompassing agile organisation design, new technology enabled business processes and cultural development.

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CSR, ESG and DEI – are they worth the investment?



In the March 2022 issue of Business World we published part one of a two-part interview. We asked some representatives of member firms to describe how corporate social responsibility (CSR) plays a part in their businesses and how easy or difficult it is to incorporate environmental, social and governance (ESG) and diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) into daily business life. In the second part of this interview, we ask some more directors and managers about their experiences.

Can you tell us about the environmental, social or governance matters that mean most to your business and why?

Mark Reynolds, Suntera Global

We empower everyone in our team to play a part in cultivating a work environment with ESG principles at its heart. We focus on areas such as carbon and energy, people and communities, and water and biodiversity. This has led us to work with environmentally focused organisations like Beach Buddies and PlasticBusters. We've embedded ESG into our culture and regularly review our activity.

Robert Morley, Lubbock Fine

Socially we have a long history of supporting charities that help children in need, and those that promote diversity. We also actively encourage our people to

volunteer. This year we embraced the RISE programme that focuses on social mobility and its aim to equip hard-to-reach young people with the skills they need to succeed.

Environmentally we strive to minimise waste and recycle wherever possible. Environmental policy is also a factor when we're deciding on suppliers and other potential business partners. This year we're looking at ways to reduce our carbon footprint and aim to reach carbon neutrality in the near future.

From a business perspective, why do you engage in these activities? Is it to attract new clients or employees, or is it just to tick a box?

Jamie Burak, WBL

Our DEI initiative aims to raise awareness and educate our people on the different cultures both in our firm and among our clients.

We aim to maintain an inclusive, safe, and supportive environment where we treat one another with respect. We aim to understand one another and to embrace a variety of opinions, approaches, and perspectives. Embracing DEI is also important when attracting and retaining employees and clients.

Hayley Plimley, DJH Mitten Clarke

We work hard to achieve great things, and it makes sense for us to do this in business and in our local communities. As a team we've made a real difference over the years.

Giving back is one of our core values; not only is it fun, we've also met some great people and charities along the way. Our main focus is our people, so tackling the issues that mean a lot to them helps to create a happy and engaged team and the perfect environment to deliver our business goals.

What is your firm doing to support diversity and inclusion in the workplace? Are there areas where you're trying to improve?

Jamie Burak

Our DEI committee of associates represents different backgrounds and cultures and surveys everyone periodically to gather input on DEI initiatives. Our weekly e-newsletter contains a DEI section highlighting cultural events, holidays, and observances and we recently held a DEI lunch-n-learn to raise awareness of the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We plan to incorporate community service activities for associates into our DEI initiative this year, as well as integrating DEI into our recruitment.

Robert Morley

As an equal opportunity employer, we strive to break down barriers to eliminate discrimination, and ensure we give our people the tools and opportunities they need to reach their full potential. Irrelevant or discriminatory criteria never feature in employment decisions because we know that a diverse mix of backgrounds, skills and experiences drives new ideas and maximises our ability to

achieve our goals. All our people receive training in how to uphold our commitment to diversity and equal opportunity, a commitment that ensures individual merit is our only consideration when making employment and promotion decisions.

What advice can you give to businesses yet to build CSR, ESG, and DEI into their business plans?

Mark Reynolds

It's vital that businesses build these initiatives into their plans and place them at the heart of what they stand for. I believe the best approach is to start small; for example, champion a paperless approach, and encourage people to bring their own drinks bottles rather than single use plastic bottles. Initiatives like these can act as a stepping stone to bigger projects. Engage your team in generating ideas so that the journey is a shared one.

Hayley Plimley

Keep it simple. Taking small steps with a clear focus will allow you to deliver with greater impact. Gather input from your team to drive a creative and diverse approach.

Some businesses may feel they are too small or lack the resource to implement CSR, ESG, and DEI. How would you convince them otherwise?

Mark Reynolds

Ignoring the issue is unacceptable and makes no business sense. Employees and clients are both demanding more on ESG, and it is having an increasing impact in all stages of supply chains. Any business wishing to futureproof must act.

Small steps can have a big impact. Donate old computers to charity, recycle office supplies, and introduce policies such as turning off computers when not in use. Form an ESG committee to explore ideas and opportunities; this is an excellent way to begin your sustainability journey.

Jamie Burak

No business is too small to create and maintain an inclusive, safe, and supportive workplace, and to raise awareness of different cultures and backgrounds.



About the authors

Jamie Burak
Atlanta, USA

Jamie is the HR manager and chief culture officer at WBL, Russell Bedford's Atlanta, US member firm. She devises and implements recruiting strategy to attract and develop top talent, oversees the firm's training and continuing professional education programs, helps create the compensation and benefits structure, coaches staff, creates policy and helps enhance careers.

Jamie has more than 20 years of professional HR experience, previously working in the hospitality and rapidly growing software industries. At WBL, she focuses a majority of her efforts on the firm's staff and culture, but also shares her expertise with the firm's clients on occasion to help them identify and evaluate candidates for accounting-related positions within their organizations.

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Hayley Plimley
Stoke-on-Trent, UK

Hayley is Head of Marketing at DJH Mitten Clarke, Russell Bedford's Stoke-on-Trent, UK. As a brand guardian at DJH Mitten Clarke, Hayley fully immerses herself the firm's brand and culture in a bid to understand the firm inside and out. She is responsible for setting the marketing strategy and writing relevant and engaging content. Hayley's hands-on approach has delivered significant results, not only for DJH Mitten Clarke, but also the other fantastic brands within the group.

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