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Retention, Upskilling and Engagement: Strengthening Procurement Teams in HE

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Retention, Upskilling and Engagement

Strengthening
Procurement Teams
in Higher Education

Michael Page



Who are we?



Hannah Quinn-Hill,
National Procurement
Director, Michael Page



Laura Marshall, Higher
Education National
Account Lead, Michael
Page



**Why
Procurement
Talent
resilience
matters**

£300bn+ UK public
procurement spend

£10bn+ within Higher
Education

Increasing demands: ESG,
digital, regulation

Teams under pressure to
deliver more with less

Higher Education & NfP – overview of candidate status



82%
of employees are open to new opportunities



56%
are active job seekers



26%
are open but on the fence

Job Seeking Status

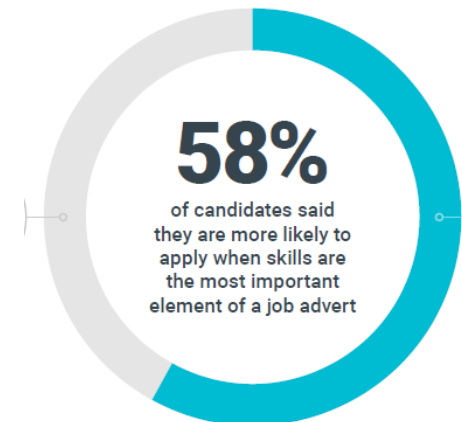


- Currently looking for a new job
- Planning on looking for a new job within the next 6 months
- Would change roles for the right job
- Not currently looking for a role but not ruling it out
- Waiting to see what happens with the economy before deciding
- Not open to new roles
- Don't know/unsure/prefer not to say

Skills Based Hiring: The keys to the door

Skills based hiring is in essence, hiring people for what they can do, or what they can learn, rather than where they studied, how linear their career looks or which industry they came from.

In a world where AI can perfect a CV in minutes, what can we do to assess applied capabilities, and human qualities – such as judgement, resilience, and communication.



Flexibility in recruitment and retention is key

To attract and retain talent, treat wellbeing and flexibility as a core element of the role, not an add-on.

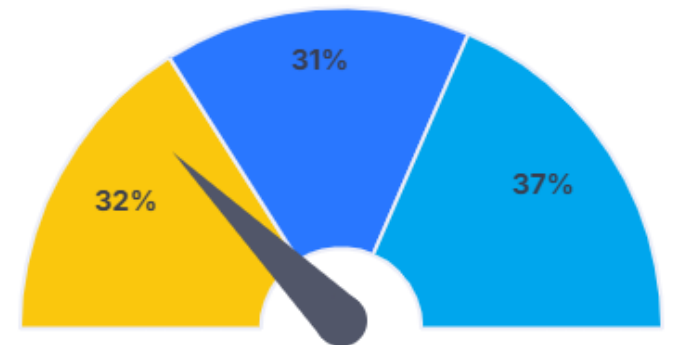
In practice, that means offering clarity on flexibility (work rhythm, collaboration windows, hybrid patterns, autonomy) so candidates can picture daily life – not just a job title – long before they decide.

HOW HAVE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS CHANGED OVER THE PAST YEAR?



- I am working in the office more days a week than 12 months ago
- I am working remote more days a week than 12 months ago
- I am working at remote/in the office the same amount as 12 months ago

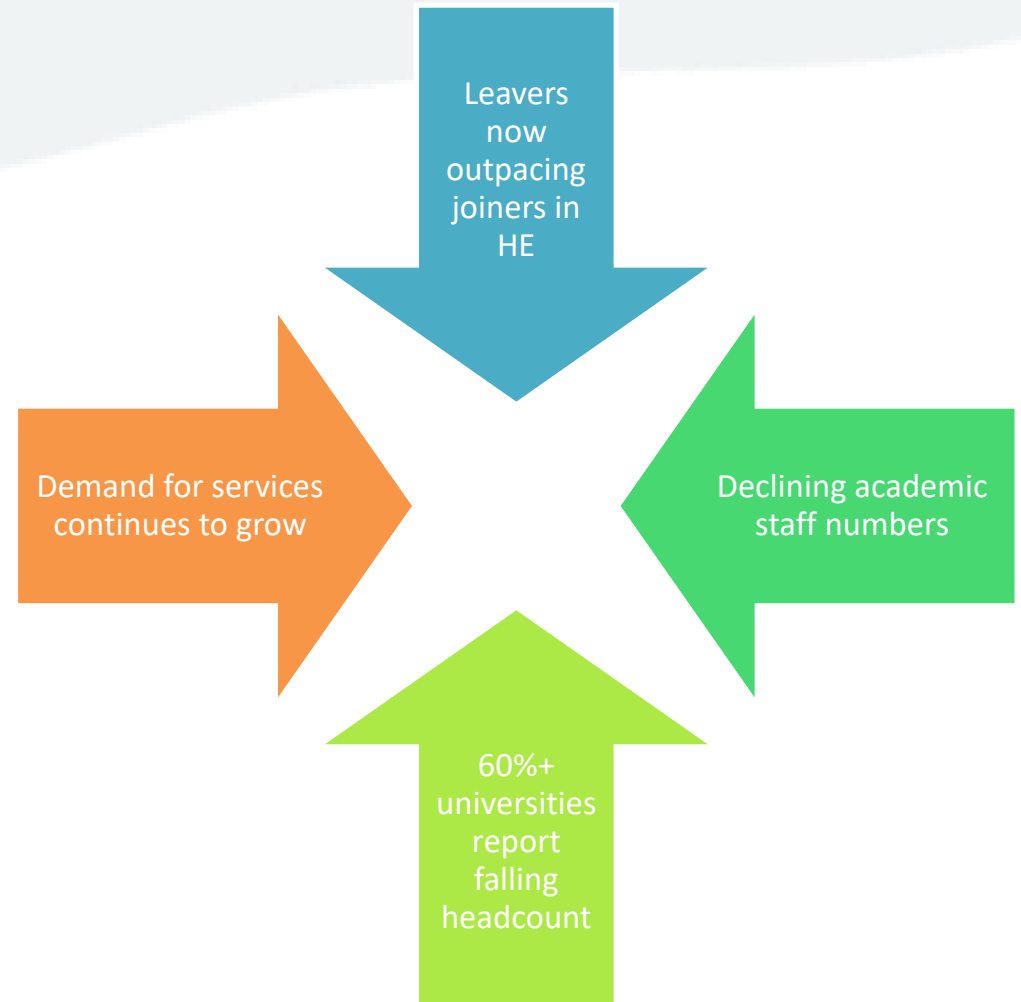
HOW LIKELY WOULD WORKERS BE TO LOOK FOR A NEW JOB IF THEIR CURRENT EMPLOYER ASKED THEM TO COME INTO THE OFFICE MORE OFTEN?



- No difference
- Somewhat more likely
- Much more likely

With 68% of people more likely to look for a new job if the days in the office increased, it is fair to assume that is of key importance to people

HE Workforce Pressure



Procurement Talent Challenge

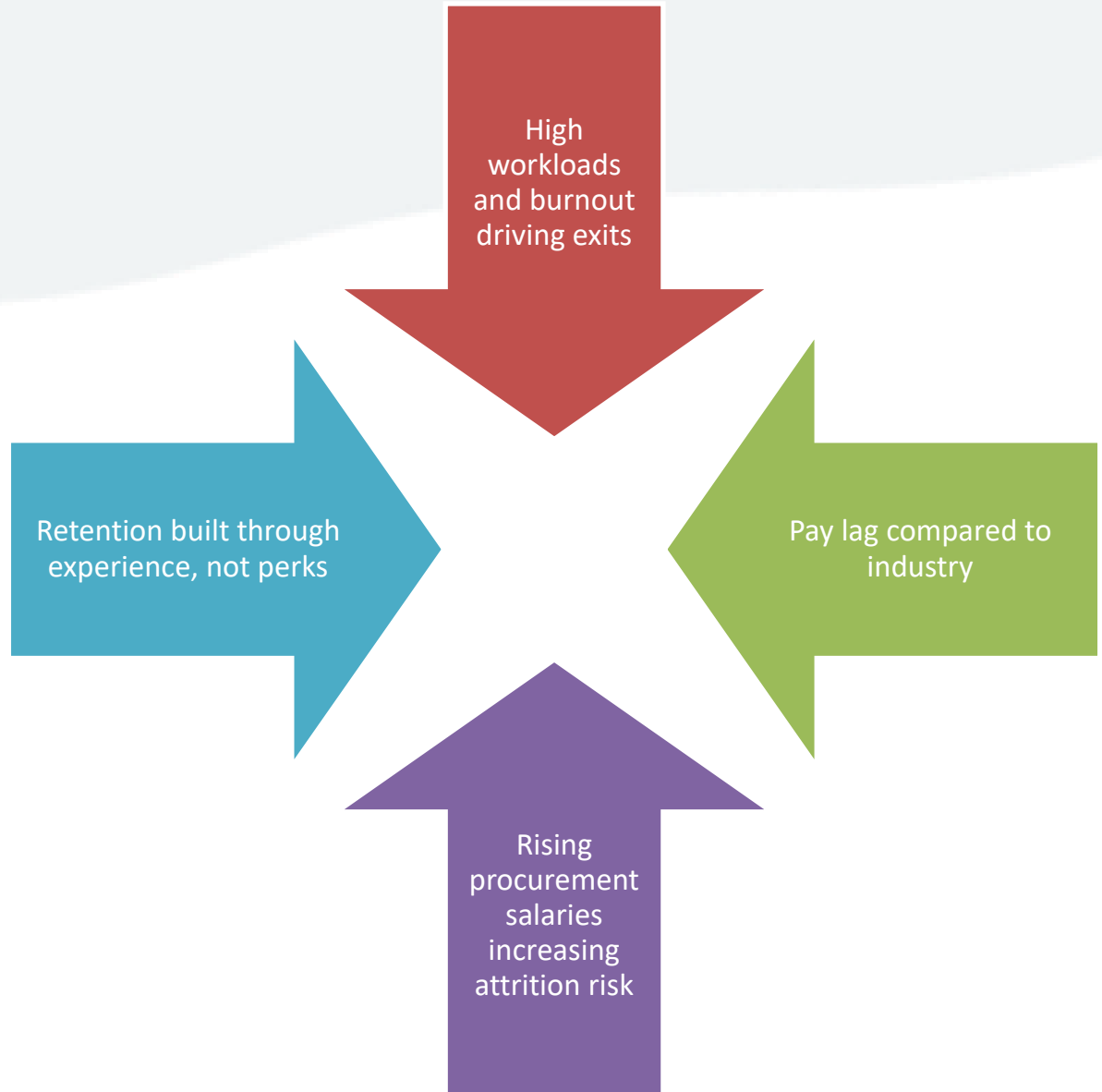
58% struggle to recruit procurement talent

70%+ leaders report hiring difficulties

Skills shortages doubled across UK labour market

Competition from NHS, local gov, private sector

Retention Reality



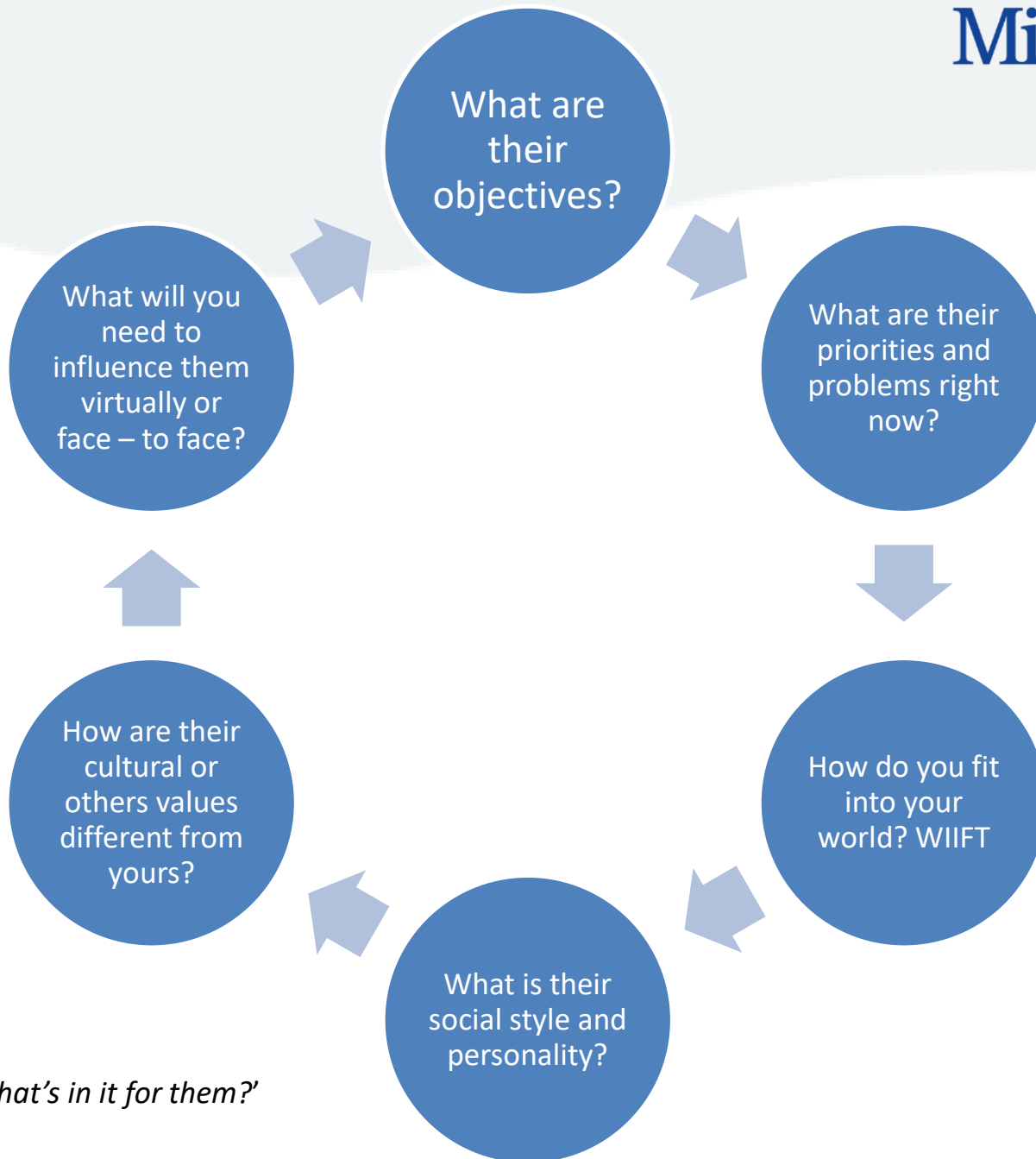
Upskilling Gap

Need for digital, commercial and influencing skills

Mismatch between required skills and existing capability

Strategic expectations increasing

Development must be intentional



***WIIFT** – *‘what’s in it for them?’*

Engagement Opportunity



Procurement gaining strategic visibility



Greater early involvement in projects



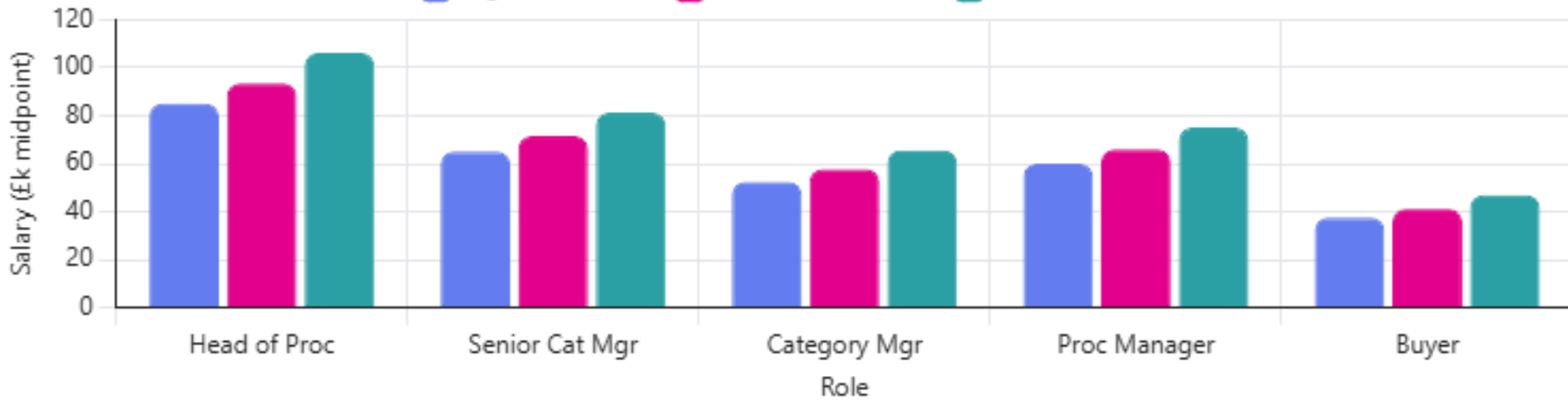
Opportunity to influence wider organisation



Engaged teams drive external impact

Procurement Salary Benchmarking (UK Indicative)

Higher Education Wider Public Sector Private Sector



What Builds Strong Teams

Michael Page



Clear career pathways



Ongoing skills
development



Strong leadership and
culture



Visibility and
stakeholder
engagement

Key Takeaways

Michael Page



Retention, upskilling
and engagement are
interconnected



Focus on environment,
not just hiring



Build capability for the
future



Create teams people
want to stay in

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