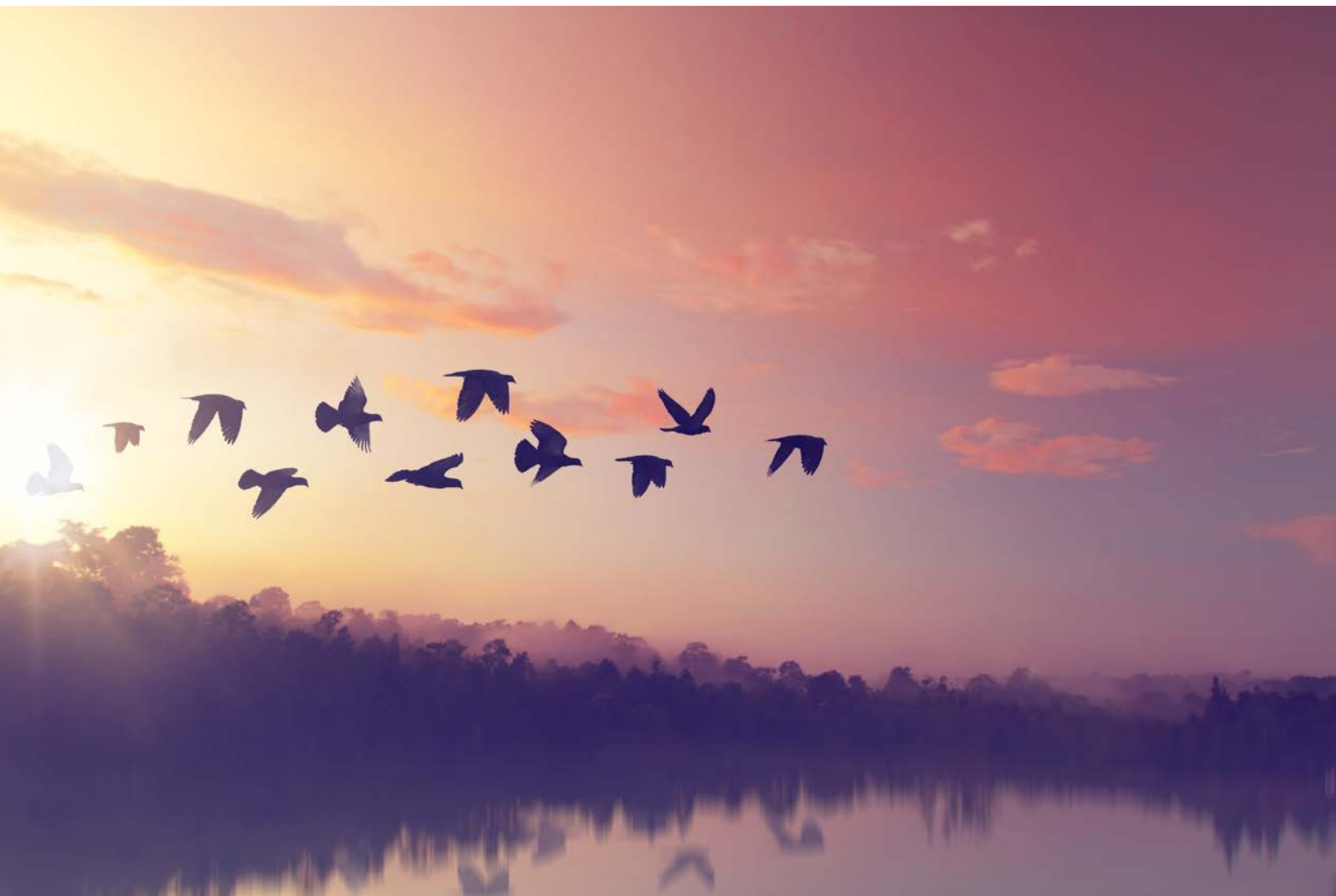


Our history has always been
about the future.



On a fine summer's day in 1916, George B. Buck opened his private consulting business in New York City – a company dedicated to creating financially sound benefit programs. With generations of credibility, trust and quality that few can match, some say we've come a long way. We think we've just begun.

All through the 1920s and 1930s – even as the business grew – Mr. Buck spent countless hours before legislative committees and employer groups, propounding fundamental principles that shaped the future of workplace pensions as we know them today: that pensions should be funded by contributions from employers and employees during active employment; that they should be invested to build up reserves sufficient to pay out the pensions at retirement; and that the funds should be held in trust for the sole purpose of paying those pensions.

Mr. Buck's insight was simple and clear. In his words, "...in establishing any benefit plan, an employer should bear in mind that business principles as well as humanitarian motives must be regarded to insure the successful operation of a plan."

This vision of the importance of employee wellbeing to business success continues to be the backbone of our consulting. It has held true all these years. And in today's business climate, it's more critical than ever.

From Pensions to People

Today, business leaders are in increasing competition for the skills and abilities they need to see real growth. They need an engaged workforce and the ability to identify and develop strong leaders for the immediate and long-term future of their business. They need HR administration to be more targeted and strategic, and their employees need better resources as they take a more active role in their career, health and wealth decisions.

Meeting these challenges means aligning the needs of employees and those of the business, so that employees will be more productive and able to achieve better outcomes for themselves and the business. This alignment is the most commonly cited characteristic of a successful business, and it falls to HR to advocate for a well-articulated talent management philosophy to deliver the maximum competitive advantage to the business.

As we carry our legacy into the future, we're guided by the need to advance HR's advocacy role through innovation, insight, and technical know-how in three major areas –designing and administering health programs that reflect business goals and employee needs; focusing on the financial success of the business while supporting the financial future of employees; and developing and implementing a people strategy that drives business success.

The Workplace in 2020

We predict that engagement and the empowered employee is the future – and we've already begun that journey.

Imagine it's the year 2020. The year of the empowered employee. The employee who embraces complete self-management of his/her future. No longer dependent on their employer, employees finally have the tools they need to be successful in truly taking control and managing all aspects of their career, health, and wealth. For the first time in history, employees not only feel prepared for their futures, but research shows they are prepared.

We see three key drivers leading to this empowerment:

- Technology driven by analytics
- A shift in employer HR strategies
- The demands of the multi-generational employee population

Technology

By 2020, advances in the effective use of analytics had helped drive more customization, not just personalization. Employees are no longer confused as to which benefits are appropriate for them, they only see what is relevant and recommended for them based on their life choices and circumstances. Technology is based on open platforms that are completely integrated with social media, meaning employees/consumers can reach out to their trusted sources for advice or help in making decisions.

HR Strategies

The global workforce of 2020 consists of highly mobile, multi-generational workers. HR knows that any stress on the employee causes lost productivity. And with the transfer of risk to employees since nearly every health care and retirement benefit program is purchased by them, employees feel more stress than ever before.

HR has thus become a strategic partner in the business, advocating for wellbeing – the wellbeing of the company and the wellbeing of the employee. By ensuring employees have the optimal programs for their career, health, and wealth, that stress has gone away. Employees can now focus more on their work. In return, they are more successful in achieving their personal and professional goals.

Employees

Are they employees or consumers? The truth is employees don't see a difference. The way they buy in their personal lives is exactly how they want to select (i.e., "buy") their benefits from their employer. They want it easy to understand and personalized to them, and they want their work-life balance to be in check. If their employers don't get it, they'll leave. And, they'll share their negative experiences on social media.

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Work and life are intertwined. The idea of “conventional” work hours now often extends into the evenings and weekend hours, with tradeoffs during the “old school” work week – and employees prefer it that way. The result has been an amazing increase in productivity and workplace happiness. Employees are rewarded for their performance, not for the hours they put in.

At the Heart of the Future

Looking back, it seems obvious now that by tapping into the innovative culture George Buck established, we would be at the heart of the workplace of the future. For human resources, that means uncovering new insights to identify unmet needs, recommending practices that work, and creating products and services that prove themselves in the market. We continue to help clients improve business results by transforming the way they support their people – so they can be more productive at work, and more successful in life.

What better way to celebrate 100 years of consulting than continuing to keep our eyes on the future?

