# HR future leader of the year
## Winner
# Grace Rogers,
### head of HR (resourcing, corporate functions), Network Rail

In her short time in HR, Rogers has excelled, demonstrating innovation, customer focus, collaboration and drive for continuous improvement. In the words of managing director, system operator Jo Kaye: "Grace's diligence and enthusiasm shines through. She is proficient at influencing relationships with managers at every level and has led her team to deliver a challenging resource plan with energy and at pace."

Delivery-focused and excelling in stakeholder management, Rogers has challenged and provided innovative solutions in the areas of resourcing and attraction at all levels of Network Rail. Her innovative approach with colleagues, coupled with her ambition and optimism, make her a role model for self-development, a sought-after partner by senior stakeholders and a brilliant candidate for this award.

Her leadership approach is widely appreciated by her teams, one member of which said: "Her enthusiasm is highly infectious. Her colleagues noted that she has the knack of making even the most mundane tasks seem more interesting, and values the opinions of others – but always seeks to bring fresh perspectives to make us think outside of the box."

Her views and opinions are valued. She is often sought out by more senior colleagues for her recommendations on resourcing matters. The chief financial officer has even been heard to say: "It's OK, Grace will sort it!"

Rogers regularly pushes herself outside of her comfort zone to develop her skills and knowledge. Utilising her wide network of peers, including senior HR people across the rail industry and further afield, she shows empathy and uses her strong influencing skills and established client relationships to achieve business outcomes.

Faced with unexpected increases in high-volume vacancies of circa 100 multifunctional and specialist roles, Rogers has taken accountability for resolving challenges within the resourcing process to better meet business needs.

She recognised that Network Rail's usual methods of assessing candidates provided limited opportunity to assess cognitive or technical skills. So she introduced improvements to the process, which increased the number of candidates who were successfully recruited into the high-volume roles and ensured the right skills were selected.

Such high-volume vacancies have been managed effectively and within targeted cycle hire times to support the management of business risk. And the quality and speed of hires has been exceptional. Feedback from business leaders recognises Rogers' ability to understand the organisation's priorities and to meet Network Rail's strategic business needs.

Her achievements so far have included introducing an online psychometric test to assess skillsets; increasing the weighting of a role-based exercise above softer skill assessments; moving the role-based exercise to a pre-assessment managed by the resourcing team; removing the initial CV sift and inviting all applicants to take the role-based test alongside a presentation from current employees; and improved and increased online advertising.

The far-reaching effects of Rogers' commitment, dedication, innovative- and customer-focused approach have been felt by all levels of Network Rail's resourcing and HR community. The team said she "demonstrated the customer focus, drive and hunger of a future leader to make a quantitative and cultural difference to the organisation she works within. We are proud to ask for her consideration for the future leader award."

As for our judges, they commented that Rogers has demonstrated innovative thinking, a strong business focus, and a strong impact in tough circumstances.

"A smart, sharp person and a definite future director," one judge said. And so we are delighted to present Rogers with this award; we look forward to following her future successes.

## Shortlisted

**Craig Morgans, The AA**

**Alice Williams, Landsec**