

# Power to the employees

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Employees have greater power than ever before.  
Jonathan Sharp says companies must reinvent  
themselves, adapt and empower their employees

**T**he global pandemic has caused a paradigm shift in employees having more power with employers than ever before. After working at home for the last eighteen months they have experienced more freedom and more of a work/life balance and now want choices on how, when and where they work. Companies must invest in their employees by putting them first and understanding their journey within the company. It is time to re-invent the now and the future for success in retaining and attracting talent.

### **What do employees expect?**

It looks like remote working is here to stay and research from Insights and Analytics Data confirmed that 69% would prefer to continue working remotely. However, Microsoft revealed that 67% of people desired more time in person with their teams.

The answer is hybrid working so employees and companies can benefit from people working remotely and, in the office, resulting in the best of both worlds. Going forward it won't be about working from home and in the office but working from anywhere.

Companies need to recognise that the days of 9-5, rigid scheduling of lunch breaks and coffee breaks are over. This workplace regime has been set since the 1800s, so it is a refreshing and well overdue change that employers need to embrace.

However, it is not just about retaining existing employees and providing them with a work/life balance and different working options but also about attracting talent.

### **Talent revolution**

The pandemic has resulted in a talent revolution and in 2020 according to Microsoft 40% of people are planning to

leave their current employer and remote job postings increased more than five times on LinkedIn. This seismic shift has occurred due to several reasons and one of them being the new demands of employees for remote working.

The talent revolution is a huge challenge that companies will need to face. Workers are now presented with more opportunities with more companies offering remote working and 29% of employees stated they are more likely to leave their job if their employer wants them in the office full time (McKinsey). Therefore, companies need to offer employees hybrid working as an option to attract talent.

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Companies will need to overhaul their strategy and focus on how they attract, retain, engage, and develop people and this will be achieved by creating a dynamic culture, fostering team relationships and trustworthy leaders.

Social capital has been threatened during COVID and must be addressed to re-build connections with people, so they feel a sense of belonging to their teams and company. This can be achieved by re-designing the office to create collaboration spaces for employees to work together.

### **Putting people first**

Companies need to re-invent themselves for now and the future. Accenture revealed that 78% of CEOs said business reinvention is required and businesses need to put people first and foremost, followed by processes and technology. The pandemic has humanised the workplace and accelerated changes that are revolutionary forcing companies to respond and listen to their employees' needs.

As well as hybrid working and creating more of a work/life balance they want valuable training and development, flexibility, job satisfaction and clear expectations set out. The talent revolution should drive companies to create an organisation where people want to work and aren't tempted to leave. This often results in a complete overhaul of your vision, mission, and strategy; the world has changed and so should you.

During the pandemic a lot of employees have not only been physically isolated but isolated in terms of belonging, and not feeling one of the team. Companies now need to re-create the trust and sense of belonging to the organisation and to also re-build social capital.

Your people are your best currency, so approach them with the same diligence of understanding that you do with customers by segmenting them into groups so you can deliver a more personalised approach with them to meet

their expectations and discover what support they require. By taking care of your people, you can boost growth by up to 20% (Accenture).

Ask and listen to what your employees need and understand their role and journey within the company. Discover where they like to work and how they feel it is beneficial to them, what processes they think need re-vamping or introducing that will empower them and what technology they require to facilitate their job.

### **Empowering with technology**

During the pandemic companies have accelerated digital transformation at great speed from deploying remote working solutions and automation solutions. Now eighteen months from the start of the pandemic and with the fact that remote working is here to stay companies need to review how to optimise their remote workforce with conferencing and collaboration solutions.

Digital parity is important to ensure that everyone has access to the technology they require, and all employees have the same. It is vital to ensure that everyone who is remote or adopting hybrid working has access to a reliable broadband connection and now is the time to consider the benefits of cloud technology.

IDC revealed in its 2020 survey that more than 35% of organisations would move to the cloud because it is cost-effective, augments business continuity and provides flexibility to add on technology and applications when required.

Questions we should be asking are – how do we connect people to technology and build new skills? It is the people that bring the creativity and innovation around how we can use technology to make decisions and transform business.

Companies should work closely with employees to also evaluate what processes work and what don't. How can they be improved with the use of automation technology that will relieve contact centre agents from the mundane daily tasks that could be dealt with by an automation solution so they can focus on higher value tasks?

The objective should be to create leaner and more agile processes to improve effectiveness, communications, productivity, and customer service.

### **Power to the people**

By empowering your employees and putting them first, creating an inclusive and diverse culture, leading with technology, and developing skills you will create an environment where everyone feels valued and as a result your business will flourish.

The time is now for companies to re-invent themselves, adapt the new workplace and ways of working, discover new offerings and opportunities. The pandemic has provided a fresh start for you to change the narrative. ■

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