

5 Ways to Reinforce Your Company Purpose During Times of Change



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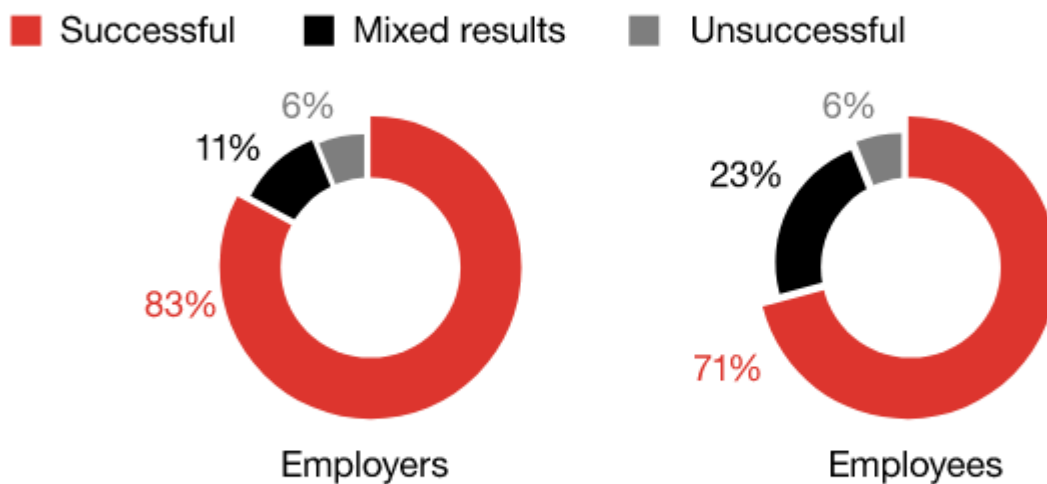
Change is inevitable. Regardless of your market, the service you provide, or the product you sell, it is impossible to bypass the agents of change. Sometimes changes come from within your organization, but often they are driven by macroeconomic, extraneous factors that you can't control—like the global shift to remote work and other responses to the pandemic.

During these rapid changes, it can be easy to let company culture, your ties to the community, and other initiatives that identify you as a company slip. However, your company can rise to these changes and others without losing sight of the bigger picture by reinforcing your purpose.

The World of Work Is Changing

In a survey of U.S. remote workers in November-December 2020, 83% of responding employers said the shift to remote work had been successful for their company—up from 73% in a similar survey conducted just months earlier in June 2020. However, only 71% of employees surveyed agreed.

Remote work has been a success



Q: How successful would you say the shift to remote work because of COVID-19 has been for your company? (Responding 'successful' and 'very successful')
Source: PwC US Remote Work Survey
January 12, 2021. Base: 133 US executives, 1200 US office workers

Image Source

The same survey found that 87% of employees believe the office is crucial for collaborating with team members and building relationships. The opinion was sharply divided when it came to work-life balance: 55% of the surveyed employees said that they would prefer to be remote at least three days a week once the effects of the pandemic recede.

Attitudes toward remote work are changing, but not everyone is on the same page. It's important to reinforce your company's purpose when planning your next steps. This will help you respond to their needs and successfully navigate these seismic

shifts in the world of work.

Let's take a look at five ways you can reinforce your company's purpose during times of change.

1. Create a Workplace That's Conducive to Mental Health

The pandemic has taken a toll on everyone. For many, this includes a severe negative impact on their mental health. Stress caused by the looming threat of illness, quarantine, hospitalization, and even death—plus the disruption of almost every area of daily life—isn't good for anyone. Dread of stigma, social exclusion, financial loss, and job insecurity has multiplied the effects of this unpredictable time.

To combat these issues and reinforce your company's purpose, create a workplace that respects the importance of your employees' mental health. And the most effective way to create such a workplace is to make sure your employees know they are valued and that their achievements mean something.

Supporting your employees is likely a significant part of your company's purpose, and this pandemic is the time to double down on those efforts, not scale back.

Management and high-level executives should encourage a culture of appreciation. Create a structure where acknowledging employees' work, successes, and contributions to the team is the norm rather than the exception.

Rewards don't always have to be tangible. Simply showing gratitude for their work can contribute to a positive workplace environment. Praise their sales skills or congratulate them for completing an important project. Make this gratitude public, and you can do this by announcing the employee's success in front of their peers on a conference call or in-person meeting, or by recognizing them in the company newsletter.

Invest in training that focuses on reclaiming employee well-being at all levels—physical, social, emotional, and financial. It is vital to prevent and eliminate racial discrimination, sexual harassment, and other behaviors that can contribute to a toxic work environment.

For example, online sexual harassment training can set ground rules and help employees identify problem behavior. An anonymous whistleblowing system gives your employees a secure channel to report toxic or unethical behavior without fear of humiliation or reprisal. This allows you to address issues before they become costly and potentially dangerous problems.

It is also important for your company to adequately invest in mental health initiatives and provide ergonomic devices to increase comfort and prevent repetitive strain injuries.

2. Establish Close Community Ties

Your company's place in the greater community is as integral to your company's purpose as your company's objectives are. However, during the pandemic, numerous companies, organizations, and brands reduced their contributions to the community, owing to budget cutbacks.

While these cutbacks might give your company some relief in its short-term financial condition, they have a negative impact in the longer run. Such impacts could manifest in reduced loyalty for your brand and adverse shifts in the purchase behavior of the community.

Reinforcing your company's purpose, therefore, includes rethinking and reaffirming your community grant and donation policies. Take a fresh look at the community initiatives around you and evaluate ways your company can contribute to them. Being compassionate, consumer-friendly, and a champion of sustainability strengthens loyalty to your brand.

Also, while you should support causes you truly believe in,

also look at the long-term marketing impact of the initiatives you choose to support.

3. Re-examine Your Values and Your 'Ideal' Workplace

The importance of taking care of your employees and your community is paramount. But the sustainability of your initiatives on these fronts depends on how you are structured from within.

Revisit the core values of your company and the notions that drive your workplace to see if there is any gap to be filled when situations are changing fast around you. Remember that the values and ideals that drive management are often not aligned with those of the employees. Management often looks to:

- Increase employee productivity.
- Provide the scope and place for meeting clients.
- Enable employees to collaborate effectively.
- Build company culture.

On the other hand, employees often look for:

- Effective collaboration.
- The ability to meet clients and colleagues effectively.
- Secure access to equipment and documents.
- Fruitful training to develop their skills and advance their careers.

It's important to meet these expectations for employees, not only for their sake but also for the sake of the company. Unhappy employees cost U.S. businesses up to \$550 billion every year, so supporting your employees' needs can't be an afterthought.

Therefore, management must spell out their purpose clearly, address employee wants as completely as possible, and stay prepared for changes, especially in the post-pandemic job market. At the same time, it is also vital to manage the

expanding set of choices with tools and training.

4. Embrace Change

It's difficult to gauge what the long-term impact will be, but there is no denying that the pandemic has introduced many changes in the workplace structure. Many companies are embracing a hybrid workplace, where teams are either split between remote workers and in-office workers, or employees rotate in and out of offices configured for shared spaces.

While this model offers flexibility to employees, it also makes your organization's work difficult. It can be complicated to organize a workweek and enforce a paradigm shift in the way your organization interacts with its employees. It can change a company's work culture and its approach to employee engagement.

Rather than resisting change, it is vital to stay open and embrace the changes. Where there is a gap between how employers and employees look at remote work, rather than ignoring the differences it is important to understand why they may exist and address them directly.

Issues including childcare, training, mental health support, mobile applications and data, and the provision of home office equipment should all be assessed based on the specific needs of your organization.

With digital transformation being a critical operational function for any organization, it is imperative that there is a process in place to help ensure a project is successful and mitigate any unforeseen eventualities. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, some digital transformation capabilities were fast-tracked. Such as: shifting to remote working, increased e-Commerce, and digitalization of core supply chain management.

This digital transformation infographic was created by WilsonHCG, the global recruitment process outsourcing (RPO)

specialists, offering enterprise solutions, talent acquisition consulting, executive search, and contingent solutions.

5. Promote Equitability

Regardless of your industry, it is crucial to ensure that each workplace segment gets equal benefits from the company's realigned strategies. A workforce can be segmented across gender, race, ethnicity, identity, and salary level. Companies should evaluate the cost of initiatives to promote well-being for each of these segments and their impact on the company and bring these cost-impact dynamics to their optimum. Only then can you be sure that your efforts to reinforce your purpose have spread equitably.



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