

BUILDING A HUMAN CULTURE THROUGH TIMES OF CHANGE

“How are you?”

“Busy!” “Hectic!”

Sound familiar? And if we weren't busy and multi-tasking would we think something was wrong?

Probably.... Thanks to technology such as voice activation we can now do even more things at the same time, if only Alexa could make us a cup of tea...

We live in an exciting, competitive, complex and disruptive world where, as consumers, we are more demanding – we want more for less. So how do workplaces satisfy our ever changing and sophisticated needs?

It's all about creating the right environment and developing a human culture that allows us to be ourselves, support us in doing our best work that nurtures new ideas that support growth. So here are my five top recommendations to building a human culture that delivers growth:

Be clear on your purpose and why we are doing it? – As humans we question everything. As employees we want to understand a number of questions such as: “Why should I support what this organisation is trying to do?” “Do I personally want to invest in its growth?” “Is it going to help me with my personal growth and development?” “Will I be rewarded equally?” Ensure leaders have time to debate and challenge ‘the why’ so they own it and feel personally committed. Leaders who exude success when talking in their own words inspire teams – employees want to work for authentic leaders.

Be authentic and real – Make time to have a cup of coffee with employees, find out what is really going on in the organisation – how are people really feeling and what are they thinking? It's all about creating the right space to enable the issues and honest talk to come to the surface. Without this there is no room to develop a culture of trust and understanding. Listening to your employees and leaders not only builds trust but it gives you great information and insight to make the best decisions. And let's face it, we all feel valued if we are asked our view and opinion, but we are only fully engaged if we feel this view is valued and acted on. Being real = building trust.

Communicate, communicate, communicate – In every possible way. We all have different ways and preferences for communicating and we all like to have the ability to respond back in different ways – written, verbal, informally, formally. Some conversations are worth waiting to have over coffee rather than a formal email. The channel of communication that we chose can completely change the way a message is received or understood and it's so important to recognise how best to communicate with different individuals. At the heart of all communication should be the ‘Why’ are we doing this? It's only when people truly understand and feel that their concerns have been heard and recognised that you know a message

has landed in an organisation. When it has, remind people again why it's so important, update them with the progress that is being made, and what's going to be happening next. Let them know how they have contributed to making a difference and most importantly ask for their feedback.

Recognition= richer two way communication.

Keep it simple – We constantly hear that there is too much complexity in the world – therefore don't make it more complicated or communications get lost. Keep messages simple and don't reinvent a new process to create change. If you do so, chances are you will miss the opportunity to make change happen naturally across the organisation. Ask yourself, do you really need a process for this because of a problem or can it be solved through a conversation?

Simplicity = More space for ideas.

Proof – Change takes time so remind yourself and the organisation when a milestone has been met. Celebrate every success and don't get stuck looking for problems or areas to fix. When you review revenue and profit targets, review your change stories at the same time – I guarantee there will be correlation!

Understanding patterns of success = future repeatability.