PRIDESTAFF®

Optimizing culture
FOR A CHANGED WORKING WORLD

2020: A CATALYST FOR *change*

The pandemic changed a lot of things about the way we work, and one of the most significant impacts was cultural transformations in the workplace.

Nearly overnight, companies had to throw caution to the wind, flattening hierarchies, increasing trust and becoming much more agile in decision making.

As we look to the future, companies will have to evolve culturally once again. This evolution can be more methodical, but in order to flourish in a changed working world, companies will need to find ways to sustain a positive workplace culture.

In this guide, we will look at ways to optimize your culture moving forward. Let's get started!

IN THIS EBOOK, WE WILL COVER:

THE IMPORTANCE OF
optimizing your culture

When employees are a good cultural fit, they can work together with their colleagues, live the values of the organization, and have higher job satisfaction and engagement. According to Forbes, highly engaged teams generate 21% greater profitability across the entire company.

Cultural alignment has always been important for hiring and retention, but it has received renewed focus in the recently uncertain climate.

As your company continues to adjust to change, it will be necessary to clearly define your culture in a changed work world so employees will feel connected to their work and to your organization.

CONSIDER YOUR WORKPLACE MODEL

As you think about your culture, you must consider the types of work arrangements you offer your employees:

- Onsite only;
- Remote-only; or
- A hybrid arrangement.

Some leaders may prefer remote work because it controls operational overhead and may even allow the company to downsize its space. However, other leaders may want people onsite because not all jobs are suited for remote work, and not all employees thrive remotely or even want to be in a remote situation. Whichever model you offer, work with key leaders and internal stakeholders to identify culture changes you may need to make – so that employees are happy, engaged and working at their peak, while still accomplishing your company's strategic goals.

Also ask employees for their input in how your new workplace model may impact culture. This is important so that employees feel valued and heard, and it can provide valuable insight into what team members actually want.

RETURNING ONSITE – *carrot or stick?*

Many people found they liked working from home. And concerns about working in close quarters with others are likely to continue for months – if not years.

So, if you are conducting business onsite, should you take a hard stance or a softer approach?

This choice will set the tone for your culture moving forward.

That's why it is important to craft a solid value proposition centered around in-person work and communicate that proposition to employees. For example, is onsite work essential so that employees have access to critical tools, tech and information? Is it necessary to promote greater collaboration?

Focus on the benefits for employees so that they understand what's in it for them, and so they understand why in-person work is important for success. Making those connections re-engages employees and creates a culture that feels more welcoming and supportive rather than dictatorial.

FOCUS ON WORK-LIFE *balance*

2020 showed people that workplace flexibility is possible, and as a result, employees want their employers to value and promote work-life balance.

As you think about your new approach to culture, don't ignore work-life balance. Employers can help their teams achieve strong work-life balance through:

- Offering a hybrid model where employees work in the office a percentage of the time and at home a percentage of the time. Even one day a week at home can improve balance.

- Ensure all employees understand remote work expectations and, if operating on a hybrid model, their schedule for being in-house.

- Promote flexible start-stop times for in-office employees. For example, allow them to start any time between 7:00 AM and 9:00 AM, as long as they work their full eight hours.

- Encourage breaks and time off to break up long working periods.

- Allow PTO for therapy sessions or other mental health services.

Making even small accommodations can help employees balance their professional and personal lives. Additionally, having such offerings makes employers more attractive to those with busy lifestyles, such as parents and caregivers.

RETHINK AND REWORK *your space*

Once you've communicated the value proposition for your workplace model, take a look around your building and determine whether the space aligns with that value proposition and the culture you want to cultivate.

For example, if you want employees onsite so they can collaborate more, a building full of walled cubicles that lacks common areas doesn't really say, "collaboration."

If you want people onsite so that they have access to the proper tools and tech, make sure everything works and works well – from logins to equipment and everything in between.

When their environment clearly aligns with the value proposition and culture, employees will be more engaged in their work.

REITERATE CORE VALUES

Your core values are the heartbeat of your company culture.

But reinforcing what your company believes in and stands for will only matter if it is backed up by the actions and attitudes of its leadership.

Continually reiterate your organization's core values to employees and make sure that strategic team members are leading by example.

When leadership and management live the organization's values, employees are more likely to mirror those behaviors and attitudes.

Health and wellness MATTER MORE THAN EVER

Health and well-being are critically important parts of a positive workplace culture, and that means employees want their employers to support health and wellness efforts. Supporting employees' physical and mental health can go a long way in building trust and engagement.

WAYS TO SUPPORT PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- **Enact a short activity break policy:** Short breaks result in short- and long-term health improvements and allow employees to return to their workstations with renewed focus.

- **Enact flex time:** Stagger shift starts or allow employees to work any eight hours they choose between 7 AM and 7 PM (or whatever hours you choose). Encourage them to use found time to exercise. Flex time can eliminate the "not enough time to work out" barrier that so many employees face.

- **Lean on your healthy employees:** If any of your employees are certified personal trainers, yoga teachers or exercise instructors, have them lead 15, 20 or 30-minute video classes throughout the day or in the evenings.

- **Hold a fitness challenge:** Challenges can be individual or team-based. Tie rewards to the number of hours logged engaging in physical activity, rather than things like weight loss. The key is to encourage employees to prioritize regular physical activity.

WAYS TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- **Create a stress management resource center:** Work with HR to provide resources on stress management, self-care and mental health.

- **Provide weekly tips:** Send out a weekly email with tips on self-care, overcoming feelings of isolation, etc.

- **Highlight benefits:** Have your benefits team put together a resource list for employees that showcases mental health benefits and even benefits like telemedicine that can make life a little easier in stressful times.

- **Minimize burnout:** Everyone needs a break, even employees working from home. Encourage your team members to take PTO. If your team is working lots of overtime, consider bringing in skilled temps to give them a break.

- **Post hotline information:** Extreme stress or depression can have dire consequences. Post information like the national SAMHSA Treatment Referral Helpline at 1-877-SAMHSA7 (1-877-726-4727) and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO *believe in*

For many years, employees have wanted to work for companies with values that align with their own. However, in a changed world, this desire will only intensify.

As a result of dramatic shifts in our economy and the workplace, many people began to question just how important, valuable or necessary their jobs were and whether those jobs were worth doing at all.

Employers will need to work hard to help their people find value and meaning in their work. That means connecting every employee's role to the overarching goals of the organization.

People have an inherent need to understand how their work fits into a bigger picture. Tying a job to an overall vision provides purpose and motivation to succeed. Making that connection and understanding why something is being done a certain way also helps unlock creativity and problem-solving and promotes engagement.

SET YOUR CULTURE IN CLAY, NOT STONE

Don't make the mistake of being set in your ways. While it is important to commit to and cultivate the culture you want, it's also important to remember that things can change on a dime.

In short, your culture should be evolutionary.

Gather feedback from employees regularly with ideas on how to improve culture. A company that is always evolving and that keeps pace with changing needs and values will develop a workforce that feels valued and more connected.

CULTURE WILL IMPACT YOUR ABILITY TO RECRUIT AND HIRE.

Are you prepared?

Company culture has always had an impact on your ability to attract and retain talent, but in a changed world, it will matter even more.

Remote and hybrid work will allow you to access a more diverse talent pool, but your success in attracting, engaging and retaining strong and diverse talent will hinge on the culture you cultivate.

If you are ready to build an effective team that will thrive in your post-pandemic culture, talk to the staffing experts at PrideStaff. We can help you:

• Recruit and hire people who are well-aligned with your organizational culture.

• Augment your team with skilled temporary workers to boost flexibility.

• Reduce overhead.

• Quickly scale operations up or down as needed.

• Provide coverage for planned and unplanned absences.

• Help you develop long-term staffing and talent acquisition plans.

PrideStaff helps employers of all sizes achieve their strategic goals by connecting them with talented people. Discover the difference an expert staffing and recruiting partner can make for your business.

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Consistently provide client experiences
focused on what they value most.

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