

BEYOND BETTER BUSINESS

ISSUE 11

REPAIR YOUR CULTURE

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Taking You Beyond Business As Usual

When confronted with Covid, many began to fundamentally rethink how they approach their work – and their lives.

When forced to slow down, spend more time at home, and confront even briefly the spectre of our mortality, working for a company without guiding values or a sense of meaningful work was a psychic confrontation that many weren't expecting, and it motivated some meaningful changes.

This sweeping reevaluation has fed into the phenomenon dubbed 'The Great Resignation' – a wave of quitting across the USA and UK in 2021. It was (and continues to be) driven by a broad spread of factors: the failure of some employers to remunerate staff to a living standard; the treatment of workers as 'dispensable'; burn-out; challenges to our collective resilience; and better employment and self-employment opportunities elsewhere, especially as more aligned to people's values.

While New Zealand only saw a minor echo of this Great Resignation, we've still seen dissatisfaction filter through at both the macro and micro level. Disappointment at a lack of a guiding vision, adequate development opportunities, or a way to make a meaningful contribution has caused many to rethink who they choose to work with and give their brief, precious time for. Others have decided that the work itself is worthy, but the 9-5 office life – with the grind of a commute, and time away from home and family – needs to be redressed.

The feedback we're hearing from the market – from leaders across industries and at all levels – is that the idea of re-establishing a workplace culture is taking high precedence. While some have maintained relatively strong contact across the 24 months of the pandemic, even the most hands-on workplaces are struggling to restore a sense of connectedness and coherence. Many of those who have been working from home are now confronted with the idea of getting back into the office and reconnecting with old colleagues and newcomers; of returning to the environment they left without falling into the same well-worn but uninspired paths.

Our conversations have circled around the need to restore and re-vamp those workplace cultures that have suffered as a result of digital-led engagement over the last two years. Reinvigorating your workplace culture after two years is no mean feat. It's not achieved with band-aids; a morning tea shout or round of drinks on a Friday night, or buying a pool table and bean bags for the break room. We are social animals, and there are large distances that have to be covered to bring everyone together again.

Repairing a workplace culture that's suffered from absence is not nearly as difficult as turning around a toxic one, though the process is similar. We've developed a method that regenerates a workplace culture in 90 days through carefully designed activities and workshops, and a planned series of actions that continue to keep the fires lit after. What separates 'team building' from 'culture re-ignition' is deliberate, intentional collaborations across your team – both as workers, and as people. It's in sharing experiences and having safe, meaningful conversations about where each of us wants to be going. It's in starting and fostering bigger conversations about how life is

right now and the journeys your people are on. This is the only way to repair it.

Restoring a culture also means re-thinking how we work and we're seeing the urgent question of what benefit offices bring to an organisation's ability to deliver on its offerings and values. Organisations that have invested considerably in expensive infrastructure, offices, meeting rooms and real estate will understandably want to take advantage of the spaces they've cultivated.

Some are enthusiastic about returning to shared workspaces and fired up by in-person collaboration, as well as the prospect of getting some space from the squeeze of multiple work-from-home situations. Others are comfortable and more productive working from the comfort of their home or remote offices, and have more time in the day returned to them; they're happier as a result.

The only clear path forward is one that answers the question of what solutions will best enable your team and your values. We must then return to the heart of strategy.

The need to adapt and evolve is pressing, and different approaches are necessary. But this isn't new information. Leaders must put aside their assumptions about what makes a great working environment, and confront the reality that the best option for their people and their organisation's success can and should contain elements of hybrid work. The structure and grounding of in-person meetings can reinforce value, and culture does suffer with absence. But the '9-5 at the desk' norm is gone.

It's estimated that the pandemic has accelerated digital working environments by about a decade. The technology is unquestionably there; enterprises have been powered by remote workers for decades and it's enabled their scale and success. When your team is on the same journey as you – living its values, fighting for its vision of better – then everyone understands the importance of their part, no matter where they are. If you've cultivated and led your team effectively, you won't need to look over their shoulders. Learn to relinquish control and embrace your team – wherever they are.

Only when we have a living, thriving workplace culture powered by engaging core values do our organisations – and our people – really come into their finest forms. Open communication and Ownership are the foundation of repairing, enhancing and reinforcing your culture. This is especially true in times of uncertainty, when we need guiding principles for our behaviours, goals and boundaries.

ONE VITAL STAT...90%

According to Harvard Business Review, nine out of every 10 employers surveyed said they were planning on adopting a hybrid working model for their knowledge workers in 2022.

Catalysed by enforced work-from-home practices and the uptake of digital workspaces, the need for a physical workplace has lost its urgency in some roles and industries and may not have as important a place in the future of work.

In-person workspaces foster collaboration and ideation, and help fulfil important social needs. Getting the hybrid balance right will take some work – but when it's done well, and according to your organisation's values and goals, it can accelerate your returns.

READ

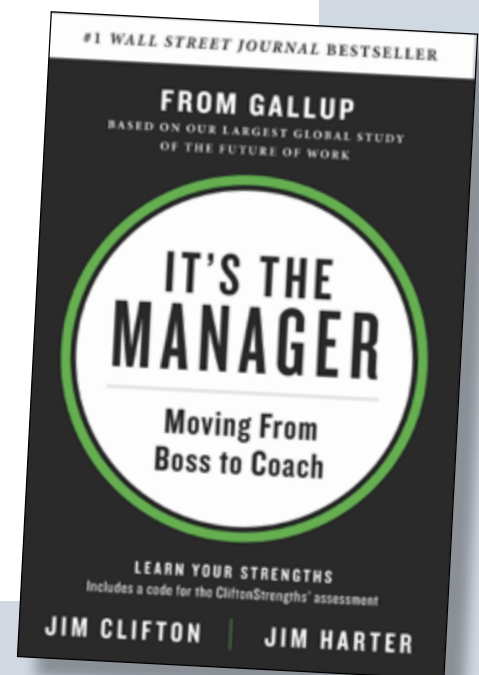
It's the Manager: Moving From Boss to Coach by Jim Clifton and Jim Harter

*“People don't leave their employers;
they leave their bosses.”*

Gallup concluded that, despite all the world's incredible advancements in the science of management over the last thirty years, management practices were still very much stuck in the past. The need to adapt and transform how and why we work according to the realities of the 21st century has never been more urgent and necessary.

Responding to this idea, Jim Clifton and Jim Harter released their work to re-shape management and address the changing needs of work.

With some 70% of the variance in team engagement determined solely by the manager, their book shows leaders how to engage the potential of every team member and drive an organisation's purpose-led growth.



ONE VITAL TOOL

— CULTURE TURNAROUND PLAN

By utilising the simple red light/green light system, we've designed this tool to make it clear how on track you are towards understanding your purpose, your direction, and your workplace's cultural score. Only by knowing your current state can you understand what needs to happen to repair your workplace culture.

Make your way down this spreadsheet, and shade the cells red if you're off track, and green if you're on track. There is no room for middle ground on this one; you've either got it nailed, or you don't.

We've started with E-DISC, Meeting cadences/Agendas, Core Values and Purpose, etc. – these form the foundation of a strong leadership-helmed culture.

It is important that you define cultural projects or actions that are unique to your organisation and the challenges or opportunities you face. A broad brush is not the approach. Foundations need to be in place, sure, but a culture is unique to your business and the projects designed to over time rebuild your connectedness and collaboration need to be designed unique to you too.

How do you decide these? Consult your teams. Many of the answers are waiting to be communicated to you if you are willing to listen. Survey your teams, get the data, discuss the feedback and communicate your decisions (two ways).



INTENTIONALISED CULTURE PLAN

Give the categories a red or green rating based on how your business is performing in these areas. Schedule the items against a planned timeline with a 12 month deadline.

CORE CULTURE ITEMS	Green	Red
E-DISC		
MEETING CADENCES/AGENDAS		
CORE VALUES		
CORE PURPOSE		
COMMUNICATION		
PEOPLE & CULTURE STRATEGY CHARTER		
WHAT MATTERS MOST TO EMPLOYEES		
EMPLOYEE VALUE PROPOSITION		

RECURRING EVENTS	Green	Red
90 DAY REVIEWS (QUARTERLY)		
ANNUAL REVIEWS		
MONTHLY COACHING		
WEEKLY "CHECK IN"		

INTERNAL NPS RESPONSE PROJECTS	Green	Red

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT RESPONSE PROJECTS	Green	Red

SPECIAL FOCUS ITEMS	Green	Red
LEADERSHIP TRAINING		
RECRUITMENT		
TEAM STRUCTURE/STRATEGIC HR		
INDIVIDUAL METRICS AND PERFORMANCE		

CULTURAL SCORES	Green	Red
NPS		
ENGAGEMENT		
OTHER (UNIQUE INDICATOR)		



ABOUT ADVISORY.WORKS

Imagine if every Kiwi business cared deeply about its people, its impact and our country. What if our businesses could lead the world while improving it?

We exist to build better businesses for a better New Zealand. Our businesses can be and do better – moving beyond what was previously thought possible and setting new standards when it comes to championing people and the planet alongside profit.

We're more than advisors, we're alchemists – combining our thinking, chemistry, and experience to drive the unrivalled performance and focused execution that brings extraordinary outcomes. Our clients work damn hard, but you do so with us beside you. We lift you up, but we don't carry you. Working with us enables the unlocking of that 'something special' in your business, which brings an energy and momentum that has to be truly discovered, as opposed to manufactured.

Our people are our power and we pick the best of breed – experienced entrepreneurs who have not only built, scaled, and exited multiple businesses successfully, but who still live, breathe, and love business today. This enables us to move far beyond a framework – thinking on our feet, challenging complacency, asking "why the hell not?" and seeing opportunity where others can't.

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