

CREATING HEALTHY WORKPLACE CULTURE

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It is abundantly clear that our workplaces look significantly different in 2022 than in prior decades. The days of “nine to five Monday through Friday spent at a desk” have given way to remote and hybrid work, providing options for both the employee and the employer.

Offered more flexibility in when and how the job gets done, workers are able to enjoy a healthier work/home life balance. For employers, depending on the role and industry, many are able to widen their search and reach for employees beyond geographic boundaries.

As the modern workplace evolves, it is key to understand the importance of workplace culture. A healthy and supportive culture can aid a business’s recruiting and retention efforts, resulting in engaged, productive, and satisfied work teams.

At a recent Experience Series event, we sat down with three subject matter experts: Rose Lawyer, Ankit Shah, Varsey Laurelle, to hear their views on creating and fostering great company culture!

Let’s start at the beginning with their perspectives. When asked “how do you define a healthy workplace culture?”, the three found the common threads of intentionality, people-focused and collaboration.

INSTALLMENT 1

Checking in with Your Team

INSTALLMENT 2

Being People-Focused

INSTALLMENT 3

Collaborating for Success

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“Your culture is confirmed by how people in your community feel. It is something that you must be intentional about setting up; and also intentional about checking in with your employees. It is truly about the people.”

Varsey Laurelle,
Varsely Laurelle LLC

“Think about how your employees feel. Be employee-centric. Ask yourself: “what do they need?”; “what do they like?”; “what are they good at?”; “what does the business need?”. Find where those intersect. It is both a belief and a set of behaviors.”

Rose Lawyer,
NiSource Inc.

“Are employees encouraged to share their voice, ideas and perspectives at work? Having a seat at the table allows you to co-create and lets them know you care about them as people. Emotions are back in the workplace”

Ankit Shah,
Columbus State Community College

BEING PEOPLE-FOCUSED

In today's competitive workforce environment, companies are trying too hard to find and keep people. With a focus on recruitment and retention, many talent and acquisition professionals find themselves struggling to land new hires to fill critical roles.

How does workplace culture impact those efforts? Candidates are researching your company in advance. Before they even apply, 77% of job applicants consider what they have learned about your organization through online reviews, word of mouth, and visiting your website. A whopping 80% of applicants identify corporate culture to be more important than salary.

The recruitment process and the supporting materials should showcase the company's success stories and integrity. Job seekers will overlook you if they cannot see themselves joining and fitting in with your team.

"Have a clear message and create the path forward for people. Identify and share your reward system, behaviors and rituals that matter to the company. All components of the business must align with desired outcomes. Every facet should be evaluated through the employee experience. You'll know when this is working when your peers become the guard rails."

**-Rose Lawyer,
NiSource Inc.**

Once a job seeker applies and becomes a viable candidate, it is crucial that communication between your hiring team reflects the values of the organization. From accessibility of information to onboarding, you should view the experience through the lens of the candidate/new employee. There are opportunities throughout the process to reinforce your culture.

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BEING PEOPLE-FOCUSED

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"Diverse representation matters. People need to see themselves in your workplace. This applies to all areas and levels of the organization. Mid-level managers need training and support to create psychologically safe workplaces. They are setting the tone"

**Ankit Shah,
Columbus State Community College**

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Remember the 5 C's of being a people-centric employer:

- Commitment from the entire team. From C Suite to new hires, your team should embrace the company values. Building culture doesn't happen overnight. It takes time and participation from everyone!
- Communication that is honest, consistent, and reliable. Keep your workforce informed and aware of what is going on with the company and the industry.
- Care for your workforce. We don't hire workers. We hire people, who have lives, responsibilities, and challenges outside their place of employment. Set a policy that ensures everyone is welcome.
- Celebrate your team's successes and milestones. Awards and public recognition are important to your staff. Go the extra mile with employee care packages to include your remote and hybrid workers.
- Community involvement is critical. Companies with healthy corporate cultures are involved with life outside the workplace. Encourage volunteerism and team outings that support organizations that your employees feel passionate about.

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