

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,
Varsey 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

COLLABORATING FOR SUCCESS

Many business leaders like to describe their workplace culture as highly collaborative and innovative. In reality, collaboration is happening, but it may not truly be informing the culture. So, what does that mean? In order to foster a culture of collaboration, your efforts need to be intentional and sustainable. Pop-up brainstorming sessions and cross-training departments are great ways to work together. However, those efforts are not enough to influence how employees feel about the work, the company, or the leadership. A healthy collaborative culture conveys: “We are in this together and we are better together!”.

To work together productively, your team needs to have a level of trust in what you and the company stand for. Today’s employee is seeking transparency and vulnerability from both leaders and the business itself. When things go wrong, your workforce wants to know why and how a mistake can be avoided in the future. All too often, leaders miss the opportunity to openly discuss how the team can learn and do better “next time”.

Here are a few keys to being a leader who fosters collaborative culture:

- Honor people’s time. If you have a meeting scheduled with an associate, ensure that you are fully present. Resist the temptation to reschedule because a better offer came along.
- Don’t try to go it alone. As leaders, we often want to appear as though we have all the answers, and admitting that we don’t can be a sign of weakness. Ask for help from your team! Seeking advice and opinions from your staff can open up diverse perspectives and generate ideas.
- Empower employees to collaborate. That means stepping back from micromanaging and letting team members have more leeway. It means building collaboration into team processes – for example, giving room in timelines for others to review projects. And it means equipping employees with the skills they need to collaborate, through everyday coaching and even special training.

Building healthy company culture takes time and is an investment made by leadership and their teams. Take the steps to build a culture that is welcoming, inclusive, and people-focused, and your business will become an employer of choice for job seekers and incumbent workers.

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“Candidates are going to your website. They want to read testimonials from real people and get a sense of the good and the not so good. They want to know what your company did when something didn’t go well. How did you make it right? Be vulnerable and expose who you are and what you stand for.”

Varsey Laurelle,
Varsesy Laurelle LLC

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