

In today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) post-pandemic world the pressures on leaders to navigate a way to success for their organizations are enormous. This involves paying attention to people, inspiring and motivating them online and in person, and using leadership behaviors that recognize that new ways of working and an increasingly diverse workforce may necessitate a subtle or radical shift from the established "way we do things around here." This will require great communication, strategic conversations, and the creation of cross-organizational networks united by a shared purpose.

Perhaps the ultimate test of a leader is growing the next generation of leaders, creating a common language and set of leadership concepts that everyone understands and can relate to. Or as Steve Radcliffe puts it, "In every organization, you've got processes, you've got strategy, you've got structures, you've got people...As Polman relates: "Often people ask me what my job is and I say honestly it is to make others successful, and the more you do that the more you will see that you create prosperity." 2.

Good Leaders Focus on Employee Engagement and Well-Being Right now, in the aftermath of Covid-19, many leaders are grappling with the new ways of working, such as hybrid, and preparing for the longer-term future of work. The global pandemic and a divisive political environment have left many people feeling isolated and insecure. Within organizations, concerns about employee mental health, safety, and well-being and desires for a diverse and inclusive workplace have risen to the fore. Good leaders recognize that employees are integral to their success and strive to build connections and community. Looking after your people makes them feel more engaged with your organization and more committed to your service goals. Qualtrics 2021 Employee Experience Trends Report found that, during the pandemic, having a sense of belonging to an organization emerged as the most important driver of engagement. Therefore, implementing a policy around hybrid requires building a culture of connection and engagement, with good communication, collaboration, and the sharing of knowledge. Good leaders deliberately learn from the short-term solutions and experiments introduced during lockdowns to develop a more sustainable way to enhance the employee experience. They keep mental health on the agenda and use internal forums and channels to stimulate a culture of open, non-judgmental conversations. This

relationship focus requires social leadership and emotional intelligence, the ability to improve interpersonal dealings within a group, and acknowledging and working through historically dysfunctional relationships to create a more collaborative, whole-system approach for the future. 3. **Good Leaders Actively Support Employees** The role of leaders and managers should be to enthuse and encourage employees so that they can create a different shared value: enhancing employees first and customers second. The most effective leaders are both task- and relationship-oriented. It's about creating energy around mission and vision and making it possible for people to do their jobs. Good leaders design jobs that are meaningful, make empowerment real, and insist on greater autonomy and decision-making at the right level. Engaging line managers set clear objectives so that people know what is required but allow staff to work out how to deliver them. They ensure employees have the skills, authority, and resources they need to deliver results that matter. They de-clutter jobs of unnecessary bureaucracy so that people have a clear line of sight through their day job to the purpose, mission, and goals of the organization. They watch for signs of 'burnout' and aid people in managing workloads by being clear about what can be stopped as well as started. They recognize great efforts and judge performance

based on outputs and outcomes rather than hours spent in the office. Measuring and celebrating these achievements helps everyone appreciate their contribution and fully embed the new ways of working. They champion employee interests and coach and encourage their teams. They create scope for people to develop and look for opportunities to upskill and reskill individuals and teams, deliberately encouraging people to change roles/re-energize themselves by moving between domestic and international divisions or from one country or department to another. This allows them to gain new experiences and helps develop different parts of the business and is also a great motivator. After all, when people feel valued and have opportunities to grow, they are likely to perform well. If jobs are at risk, they look for redeployment opportunities wherever possible.

4. Good Leaders Emphasize Voice

During the pandemic, many leaders communicated directly and brilliantly with the workforce using online platforms such as Zoom to keep people aware of what was happening and check in with people on how they were doing. In the hybrid work model, communication is needed just as much, as two-way and human-to-human as possible, with leaders prepared to listen and give individual employees a louder voice through conversations, feedback sessions, and surveys. To be fair to all, leaders should continue to use digital collaboration platforms and ensure that all meetings take place online even when some of the team are in the office together. A well-designed and managed two-way internal communications process is essential. In one organization, it was recognized that moving into hybrid working, a combination of travel restrictions and turnover across the organization meant that colleagues felt detached from senior leaders and the discussions happening at the senior management team and supervisor levels, leading to a sense of disconnect. To counter this and reconnect senior leaders with colleagues across the organization, directors deliberately started a series of visits and communication forums (both in-person and virtual over MS Teams), to raise visibility and transparency about their roles, the work, and the decisions that were being made, as well as creating spaces and opportunities for them to engage in listening exercises with teams both within and across their departments/divisions. The impact of these activities can already be seen in the high level of engagement (both in numbers and in qualitative contributions) in organizational town halls and in various Yammer communications. The focus on building and maintaining relationships across departments and teams will be monitored within future staff engagement surveys.

5. Good Leaders Inspire Trust

To respond to the engagement challenge in this new era, the importance of values-based leadership cannot be overstated. Getting back to why the organization exists--its key purpose--is central to unlocking employee motivation. In an era of employee activism, staff want employers to stand for certain values and will agitate when necessary, with many younger employees (and investors) pressing employers to embrace ESG principles and valuing purpose above pay. Similarly, the UK's Great Places to Work awards (2022) suggested that there had been "dramatic shifts" among UK companies in awareness of inclusion and diversity issues, and the environment over the previous year. The top team must show visible leadership, model the way forward with respect to values, show courage and humility, identify and address political issues that impede collaboration, be open and transparent in sharing relevant information, and avoid promoting "sharks" who achieve business results at the expense of others. Rather than quelling conflict, you need to draw out issues and let people feel the sting of reality. With respect to defining and rewarding success, the how

should matter as well as the what. Leaders need to understand and shift this behavior, allowing them to express concerns and personal vulnerabilities safely. Vineet Nayyar emphasizes that if you want employees to believe what you are saying and follow you, you must create an environment of trust by making purpose real in company practice. In HCL, all the enabling functions such as HR, finance, and the office of the CEO are as accountable to the employees as the employees are accountable to them. This commitment is made real in tangible ways. For instance, HCL created an electronic trouble ticketing system where an employee can open a trouble ticket on any of these functions, who must then resolve these issues within a certain period of time. The ticket is only closed by the employees. Similarly, management and managers are as accountable to the employees as the employees are to them. This accountability is evident since the CEO's 360-degree is done by 80,000 employees across the world, and the results are published on the web for all to see. This culture unlocks a huge amount of energy in the corporation.

6. Good Leaders Are Active Learners To inspire others and help their organizations to thrive in the new environment, leaders must use themselves as instruments of change. This may require mindset shifts for people at all levels but especially for top teams who may need to rewire their own mental models for adaptability and complexity. For instance, embracing shared leadership in hybrid environments can be hard since whole generations of senior leaders have reached executive roles based on their technical and business prowess in a culture where office working is the norm. Good leaders model the way forward by actively learning new approaches themselves, opening their minds to new approaches to leadership, trying out new techniques, receiving fresh knowledge from outside their system, and stepping out of their comfort zone. They strive to role-model the values and use and act on 360-degree and other feedback to show commitment. As we have discussed, today's leaders have a wide skills agenda. They need to lead in complexity, make evidence-based decisions, and be a relationship/network builder, culture developer, change manager, talent developer, and enabler of shared leadership. Given the importance of relationships, good leaders are emotionally intelligent and have effective negotiating, influencing, and conflict-resolution skills. They appreciate others, show empathy, and can engage in purposeful conversations demonstrating questioning and reflectiveness. What sets outstanding leaders apart, according to the Work Foundation, is that they think systemically and act long-term; bring meaning to life; apply the spirit not the letter of the law; grow people through performance; are self-aware and authentic, putting leadership first, their own needs second; understand that talk is work; give time and space to others; and put "we" before "me." In developing leadership communities, the main task for senior leaders is to focus on culture-building, creating the conditions that produce and reinforce collaboration, shared leadership, ownership, and accountability at all levels. Gratton and Edelman's research found that, as teams became more virtual, they typically became larger and cooperation declined unless the company had taken steps to establish a collaborative culture. This approach brings many benefits. 1