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Fostering positive workplace culture

The Sun (Malaysia) · 22 Feb 2024 · 11 · By Melissa Norman The writer is the founder and managing director of Aisling Group, an integrated talent solutions company. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

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POSITIVE workplace culture prioritises the well-being of employees, offers support at all levels within the organisation and encourages respect, trust, empathy and collaboration.

Research has shown that a positive work culture leads to reduced turnover, increased loyalty, better job performance and reduced employee stress.

Strategies to create a positive workplace environment include fostering collaboration, establishing clear values, creating an inclusive environment and investing in employee well-being. How can organisations and leaders foster this positive workplace culture?

Establishing shared values and vision

Leadership plays a crucial role in setting and communicating a clear mission, vision, core values and purpose that resonate with employees.

Engaging the entire workforce in developing these elements encourages a sense of ownership and commitment.

Leaders should lead by example and clearly share how each employee can contribute to the overall mission and vision, emphasising how their work aligns with the organisation's values. This connection will enhance employees' sense of purpose, motivation and engagement as they understand their place within the organisation and the impact they have on its success.

Encouraging open communication

To foster open communication in the workplace, leaders should prioritise honesty and respect in all aspects. It is crucial that all feedback is respectfully submitted and received, creating an environment where employees feel empowered to share their thoughts.

Understanding and prioritising employees' goals, implementing regular check-ins and asking for anonymous suggestions are also important steps.

Acting on feedback and measuring the success of the open communication plan are also vital for maintaining a transparent and communicative work environment.

Celebrating differences by embracing diversity and inclusion

Organisations that prioritise diversity and inclusion tend to foster a more vibrant and efficient workplace environment. To encourage diversity and inclusion, organisations can implement

various strategies, such as holding diversity training programmes, to educate employees on the importance of inclusivity and provide tools to recognise and combat biases.

They can also create affinity groups or employee resource groups, which can offer platforms for underrepresented individuals to connect, share experiences and advocate for inclusive policies. Implementing diverse hiring practices and ensuring representation at all levels of the organisation will demonstrate a commitment to fostering an inclusive environment.

Encouraging mentorship and sponsorship programmes can also help marginalised employees advance in their careers by providing guidance and support.

Physical workspaces

The enduring value of physical office spaces is being re-evaluated in today's evolving work landscape.

In the post-pandemic world, where more and more employees are returning to the workplace, the physical office plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging, providing a secure environment and promoting collaboration, social connections and satisfaction. It serves as a nurturing space where employees feel a strong sense of identity and psychological safety.

Additionally, physical offices act as vibrant hubs for collaboration, fostering productive teamwork and cultivating camaraderie and trust among team members.

Face-to-face interactions in these spaces also promote non-verbal communication. Suffice to say, providing comfortable and well-designed workspaces makes sense as it will significantly impact employee well-being and satisfaction.

Offering work-life balance

Now, more than ever, maintaining a balance between personal and professional life is a priority for many employees. The Ford Trends 2024 survey found that about half of the global workforce would accept a 20% pay cut in favour of a lifestyle that prioritises their quality of life, while 77% of employees would prioritise a balanced personal life over advancement at work.

Hence, organisations that cultivate a work environment enabling employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance will have a workforce that is more productive and highly engaged, which in turn will result in lower turnover.

In conclusion, fostering a positive workplace culture involves a multifaceted approach that encompasses various elements, including establishing shared values and vision, encouraging open communication, embracing diversity and inclusion, optimising physical workspaces and promoting work-life balance.

By addressing these key areas, organisations can cultivate a positive workplace culture that inspires their team and drives long-term success.