Can companies change working culture to accommodate remote working?

Whilst every day we are venturing into the unknown with COVID-19, this isn't humanity's first global pandemic. One area that is different to how we deal with this pandemic is the use of technology, enabling the ability to work from home. George Evripidou asks will remote working be the new normal?

Temps de lecture : minute

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A significant number of countries are considering flexible working to be the new normal instead of short-term approach and we expect this to change further in the coming months to see a greater concentration of countries that consider flexible working to be the new normal. Regardless of whether flexible working is a temporary measure or the new norm, it requires changes in culture and the changes need to begin happening right now.

How can companies change their working culture?

Changing the culture to suit greater working from home isn't something that can happen instantly, it can be a fragile topic and one that needs to be addressed with care. Organisations need to regularly ask themselves the following questions:

1. Can employees easily switch off from work when the workday finishes?
2. Are there enough human interactions taking place?

3. Are there enough opportunities to recognise achievements and feel accomplishments?
4. Do employees still have the ability to fulfil their potential and develop their careers?

Recommendations to facilitate a change

Organisation culture needs to be reviewed and revamped and thankfully there are a large number of approaches that can be followed to ensure the needs of the workforce are met. At <u>Wavestone</u> we recommend the following:

Transparency. <u>Regular communications are imperative</u>, however, there needs to be a healthy balance. Too much communication will overwhelm employees and may even disengage them, whereas too few can lead to people feeling anxious about what's not being said. Ask people's preferences by issuing a poll to see how they feel about communication. With questions in the following areas: The frequency of communications, preferred communication channels, topics for discussion.

One size does not fit all. Different people prefer different approaches, some would like to steer away from the limelight and would like an email once a week to reflect, whereas others would like to be involved in regular virtual social meetings. Create persona and empathy maps to help understand your employees and target each social circle with its own individual communications plan.

Regular virtual meetings. It's important to have check-in points for employees and have a regular flow of meetings, even if they are just sociable. Here are some examples that can be organised easily: virtual coffee/lunch breaks, virtual after-work drinks, weekly company updates.

Provide additional support. It's very easy for someone to slip through the

net if they choose to avoid any virtual social meetings and company updates, so it's important to have additional measures in place. Support ambassadors or assign working from home to encourage interactions.

Flexibility. Many people have gone from boardrooms to spare rooms. Depending on their home working arrangements, people can struggle to get work done with children to look after, flatmates and partners nearby and new colleagues they have never met in real life. It's important therefore to be mindful of the position of your colleagues. Be mindful of everyone's situations and schedule meetings at times of the day that will work better for them. Ensure you don't forget the meeting minutes to ensure that nothing is missed. Some communications may be better shared through emails where colleagues can read them in their own time.

Celebrate. Although many businesses are experiencing extremely difficult times, it's important to celebrate the successes that come around, no matter how big or small. Set employees goals and make sure they are achievable. Hold monthly awards ceremonies with different types of award for different achievements. Avoid the same individuals winning the achievements by ensuring awards capture a vast array of fields.

Review and refine. Working from home efficiently and effectively shouldn't be your endpoint, it's not a destination a company should reach. It's something that should be regularly reviewed and refined as the company faces different challenges. Set up metrics for all aspects of the business making it easy to identify areas of underperformance. Hold lessons learned sessions every 2 weeks to recap on what went well and what could be improved. Set up a service improvement taskforce that is dedicated to monitoring and driving changes.

As the CEO of Xerox Anne Mulcahy once said, "Satisfied employees mean satisfied customers, which leads to profitability." There are a large number of things we can do to adjust our cultures and bring some

positivity to these otherwise testing times.

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