

# Reshaping company culture to promote sustainable work-life balance

*Reshaping corporate culture requires visionary leadership and a strong commitment to long-term success. I have led transformational change at companies including Porsche and BMW, as well as in early-stage and growing companies. It is clear to me that effective leadership begins by creating an environment that encourages challenge and autonomy while supporting personal and professional growth.*

Temps de lecture : minute

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13 November 2024

When leaders create a culture that not only enhances employee well-being but also boosts productivity, innovation, and retention they establish the foundation for a world class organisation. Crucially they also form a strong and resilient team which in turn builds a strong and effective company. I have developed my approach to this objective through the following steps.

## 1. Lead by example

Leaders must model the behaviour they want to see. I strongly believe in “walking the talk” demonstrating that the balance between work and personal life is not just encouraged but achievable. This means leaders setting boundaries on their own availability, taking vacations, and making time for family or personal passions. When leaders show that work-life balance is a priority in their own lives, employees feel empowered to do the same, removing stigma and making sustainable work habits culturally

acceptable.

## 2. Open communication channels

Creating a sustainable work-life balance requires open, transparent communication between employees and management. Leaders should foster a culture where employees feel comfortable discussing their workload and personal needs. Regular one-on-one meetings, employee surveys and open forums can provide insight into whether employees feel overwhelmed or stressed. Leaders can then take active steps to address these issues, whether by adjusting workloads, offering flexible working hours, or creating wellness programmes. Empowering employees to speak up about their needs without fear of repercussions is a key factor in ensuring long-term sustainability.

## 3. Promote flexibility and autonomy

In today's work environment, rigid 9-to-5 schedules can be counterproductive. Leaders should sensibly encourage flexible working hours, remote work options where possible and the ability to manage personal responsibilities alongside professional duties. I concentrate on empowering teams with autonomy and trust. When employees have more control over how and when they complete their tasks, they are more likely to manage their workload in a way that suits both their personal and professional lives.

## 4. Foster a results-oriented culture

I strongly believe in a results-oriented approach rather than focusing on hours spent at a desk. Leaders should emphasise outcomes and value creation. This reduces unnecessary stress around attendance time and encourages employees to manage their work in a way that suits their personal lives, as long as the results meet expectations. When employees

are evaluated based on their performance and contributions rather than their adherence to rigid schedules, it reduces pressure and helps individuals to make healthier decisions on their work-life balance.

## 5. Implement health awareness programmes

A healthy business is only possible with a healthy workforce. I believe in treating employees as people, not as resources. We have offered wellness programmes, including mental health support, fitness activities, and mindfulness training. These programmes equip team members with processes to improve health and reduce stress and show employees that their well-being is a priority for the company.

## 6. Encourage breaks and holidays

Overworking is a challenge in many organisations, especially with mobile phones, laptops and remote working fostering a harmful culture of constant availability. For teams to stay energised and innovative, they need time to recharge. Leaders must actively encourage employees to take breaks and to fully disconnect during holidays. In my businesses we set policies that limit after-hours work and discourage availability during personal time. By normalising breaks and vacations, we aim to reduce burnout and keep individuals performing at their best.

## 7. Recognise and reward achievements

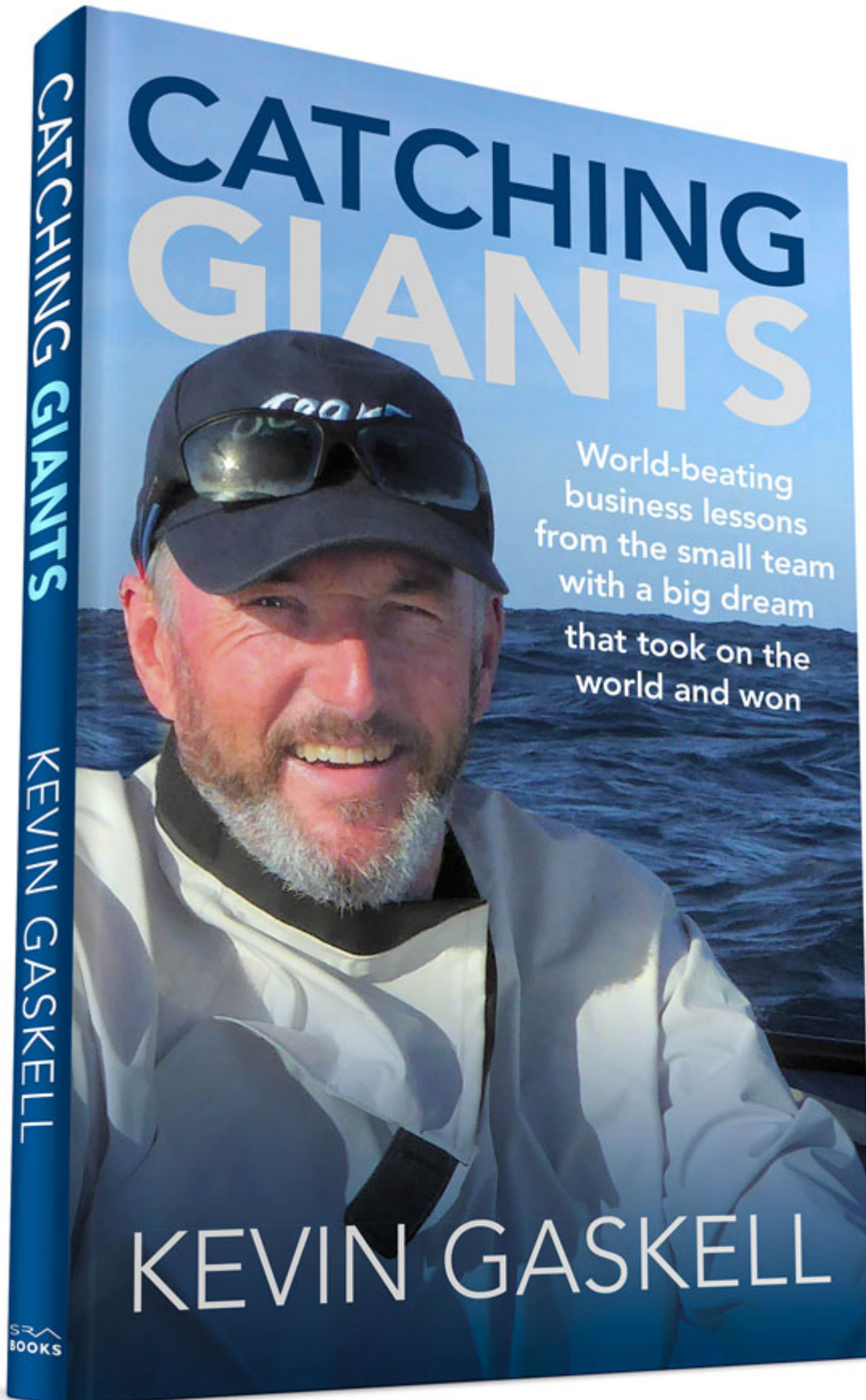
Reshaping company culture involves recognising and rewarding the right behaviours. Our approach includes celebrating team success and individual achievements. Leaders should publicly recognise employees who successfully balance high performance with a healthy personal life. This could be through awards, public recognition during company meetings or by encouraging individual and corporate team entry in community activities and sports. When balance is seen as something to

be celebrated, it encourages others to follow suit.

## Conclusion

Reshaping company culture to foster sustainable work-life balance is not a one-off initiative; it requires continuous effort and commitment from leadership. My approach focuses on leading by example, creating open lines of communication and promoting flexibility and autonomy. By implementing these strategies, we have built successful and high performing cultures where employees feel valued not only for their work but also for who they are as individuals. In my experience this leads to long-term success for both the employees and the organisation.

*Kevin Gaskell* is an Entrepreneur, Chairman and Investor recognised as 'the man who fixes businesses'. As CEO of Porsche, Lamborghini, and BMW, Kevin led hugely successful turnarounds and business growth. His most recent book, *Catching Giants*, translating the experience of his world record row into lessons for business, was shortlisted for Business Book of the Year 2023.



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