

Do you know
the biggest reasons
to abandon pre-pandemic
workforce strategies?

HOW
— TO —
SPOT
THE IDEAL,
POST-PANDEMIC
EMPLOYEE
OF THE FUTURE...

...AND MORE!

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INTRODUCTION

A statement about embracing change

It would be an understatement to suggest that we're all a little rusty at... well, everything since we started to open back up with the rise in COVID-19 vaccinations. Between forgetting how to get the timing right on public transit to get to multiple destination points (yes, even though it tells me on the app), to having trouble making eye contact while speaking with someone I know well in person, to feeling exposed in public sans face mask, and then equally restricted when the mask went back on, "re-entry" hasn't been easy.

The world as we know it has transformed, and although I can (fortunately) redevelop my social and navigation skills, there are inevitably ways of doing business (and life!) that are changed more permanently; it's not every day that humans have a collective, international experience like a global pandemic, and a company's competitive advantage of the future lies in its ability to harness this shared experience for future stability and sustainability.

Do companies have a lot working against them to make this transformation? Heck yes.

Years ago, Kotter proclaimed that 70% of companies would fail in their transformation efforts, and more recent research warns us of an even worse fate.

There's an official name for how significantly companies are experiencing an uptick in attrition ('The Great Resignation').

Productivity is down, and this thing called "languishing" keeps getting the blame.

Many of us have repeatedly checked the dictionary to remind ourselves what languishing is before trying to identify strategies to combat it; by the time this occurs, though, languishing has set in for us too, and we namely just remind ourselves what to name the lack of motivation we're feeling to do more than go to Dictionary.com and type in, "languishing." (It's Languishing.)

Are y'all still with me??!

One thing I know for sure – most human traditions are based in storytelling, and narratives define and mobilize action. The 'New Normal' narrative I described above sounds a little bleak, and maybe the future is.

Those who instead view this as the biggest opportunity of our current time to transcend the former ways of doing business (...of building communities, of keeping ourselves and families safe and healthy...), will also drive the narratives of our future stories, including those regarding the resiliency of our companies in the years to come.



EMPIRE STATES OF MIND

The two current, prominent CEO/executive states of mind

Based on our own observations and research, we've identified two major types of CEOs / executives trending currently, and they are not mutually exclusive from one another. The two types are The Striver and The Survivor, and what every company needs right now instead is The Thriver.

All three types are described in more detail below and on the next few pages.

The Striver

The Striver is laser-focused on goals linked to the bottomline; they evaluate projects and people based solely on the business case, and they brush off purpose. They are so dead set on reaching certain growth, sales, profit goals for the company, their blinders are on when it comes to awareness around how this is being received and executed by the workforce.

Their focus on results also makes them quick to invest in things (digital software, consulting, FTEs) they think will accelerate their journey there. So far, this seems to have the reverse effect than desired – spending a lot with little ROI.

The Survivor

The Survivor knows what's going on in the work environment and in the world – maybe a little too much. If the Striver is narrow-minded in their approach to work at present, The Survivor is too broadly focused; the Survivor knows the facts in the industry and in the world. The Survivor is in the weeds with its senior leadership, hyper-focused on the amount of and extent to which the company – and world – are experiencing problems.

The Great Resignation? The Survivor has stats ready to share with you along with historical data including the company's attrition rates, and many ideas on how to tackle employee retention, engagement, happiness, development, loyalty, etc.

The Thriver

The Thriver understands the bigger picture like The Survivor and knows to chip away at some of these extremely important pain points, such as attrition, right away, as people-centered strategies create the foundation a company needs to sustain throughout transformation(s).

The Thriver knows the pressures and importance of driving revenue growth after a year+ of losses due to the pandemic like the Striver, and ramps up leadership development training, mental health and wellness opportunities and programming for employees with a focus on teams held accountable to profit & loss results (e.g., sales) to ensure goal setting doesn't become unrealistic nor do managers miss opportunities to re-engage their team members throughout the quarter or year.



BUSINESS STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING AND SUSTAINING YOUR WORKFORCE

Familiarize yourself with your people - really get to know who works for you and why

Investing in the employees who stay

Ask them what's keeping them at the company; seek to understand what they think you should keep doing, stop doing, start doing, so you get a well-rounded view of how to continue to retain these employees.

Consider proven tools and methodologies for employee and team development to best pair personnel, not just the behaviors and skills needed to perform in their roles, but also the type(s) of work that engages them most.

Just because an employee is good at something doesn't mean they love doing it; in fact, it might drain them. So, implementing strategies around best harnessing employees' intrinsic motivations is just as important as extrinsic (e.g., pay raises or bonuses).

Use this as an opportunity to develop the best workforce of people managers anyone's ever seen. People quit their managers. Develop leadership skills in your managers and then hold them accountable to top performance in this area, and you will see a change in productivity, engagement, retention.

Creating the ideal, post-pandemic employee of the future profile

Generally, it is recommended that a company develop job profiles detailing out what high performance looks like in a given role. This only builds upon that idea - to be intentional by envisioning what you want your workforce to look like in the future:

- What impact will your personnel have?
- What will success look like at each level, across job positions?
- What are your employees' values?
- What motivates your employees at work?

Familiarize yourself with your customers and stakeholders - they also drive your strategy

Ask

When was the last time you asked your customers and stakeholders what they wanted, point blank?

Given your stakeholders and customers really drive your revenue and growth strategies, and also how much and how often things are changing in business today, ask them. Early and often.



STRATEGIES FOR PEOPLE MANAGERS TO HARNESS THE STATE OF LANGUISHING

Do we really need to talk more about languishing?

Yes, we do.

If nothing else, it's a starting point for an imperative conversation all business owners and executives should be having – one about the company's talent strategy. For those of you lucky enough to have HR Departments, you cannot simply get to offload this problem on them. Talent strategy, especially now, requires a more holistic, problem-solving approach.

Why? Because it deals with permanent and growing hybrid workforces, mental health implications from collective and anticipatory grief and how these show up at work, benefits and work environments & cultures employees value after enduring almost 2 years of a global pandemic and... Zoom Fatigue.

OK, so what do we do?

Centralize Talent Strategy

Given how many employees are jumping ship across industries, increasing attrition significantly (a commonly known big financial hit to a company), it would be foolish not to reconsider what your company talent strategy is, unless it's an anomaly not experiencing an increase in attrition.

It is also important not to limit your talent strategy to be reactive. Yes, The Great Resignation has shined light back on the fact that the majority of workforces are highly and/or actively disengaged, but focusing solely on retention goals & strategies would be a big mistake.

A company should be looking at the way it hires, develops and retains employees. It should also wake up to the fact that the majority of people quit their managers, and many companies fail to conduct exit interviews, a key place where learnings might be obtained in order to weed out poor people managers you don't yet know are causing major problems in your company.

Educate Your Workforce

Adam Grant, renowned Organizational Behavior Psychologist, during the height of the pandemic, accidentally put himself and his family through the ultimate social experiment on languishing. Like so many of us, Grant was stuffed into his home with many family members only to experience an increasing sense of "blah."

Until Mario Kart, that is. Organically, he and his kids started playing every night. It was something they all looked forward to more and more, and being the behavioral psychologist he is, he analyzed why.



Spoiler alert: it's also why you got jazzed about one of the following pandemic activities –

- Baking sourdough bread
- Making Dalgona coffee
- Becoming epically good at complex puzzles
- Tie dying shtuff
- Fostering or adopting dogs
- Playing Animal Crossing
- TikTok challenges
- Retrofitting a van / RV / something with wheels to drive around the country and live in

What Grant discovers is that mastery isn't required for a sense of accomplishment – dedicated, uninterrupted time to focus on something + the 'something' mattering (holding purpose and meaning) are required.

What is the point in sharing what you can watch yourself in his TED Talk?

Grant's discovery really just exemplifies on an approach to performance management ages old, and one your company likely leverages already. Giving employees and teams a shared vision + goals that are tied to both,

- 1) Realistic, short-term results the team can realize itself, and
- 2) Results that create long-term business impact that furthers the mission of the company.

Start here.

It will solidify the foundation for movement forward that your leadership and subsequent teams desperately need right now, just like Grant's family needed Mario Kart, just like all of society needed active yeast all at the exact same time.



SUMMARY

Remember, most human traditions are based in storytelling, and narratives define and mobilize action. The 'New Normal' narrative I described above sounds a little bleak, and maybe the future is.

Those who view the "New Normal" as the biggest opportunity of our current time to transcend the former ways of doing business, will also drive the narratives of our future stories, including those regarding the resiliency of our companies in the years to come.

So, try not to get sucked into doomsday land along with everyone else. Then, focus on your people. Re-engaging your current workforce is a fraction of cost of replacing it, and many companies had engagement issues prior to the pandemic starting. The pandemic has surfaced a lot of these issues in companies, and we might consider grounding ourselves in the fact that many of the issues – and thus, subsequent solutions – are not new.

The environment that surrounds these issues has changed significantly, but the reasons employees are disengaged hasn't nearly as much. Do we have a lot of added stressors and issues now? Definitely. And, we also know how to approach avoiding the worst of the Great Resignation already, since the solutions are ones most companies simply ignored... until they couldn't... until now.

You don't need to do it alone – that's one thing we've learned at Organizational Rebel throughout the pandemic – we need our communities to thrive, and collaborating and working collectively holds new meaning in 2021 and moving forward.

We've made some of the mess-ups already so you won't have to, and you'll have an entire team of support at your disposal.

Go to www.RebelResultsMethod to schedule a free Calibration Call with our team and learn how you can make small changes that will give you big results.