

# HOW ARDCO

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## How to Engage and Manage your People in the New Work Environment



## HOW TO ENGAGE AND MANAGE YOUR PEOPLE IN THE NEW WORK ENVIRONMENT

“We’ve been living through the greatest workplace disruption in generations and the level of volatility will not slow down in 2022”. Source: [Harvard Business Review. 11 Trends that will shape work in 2022 and beyond.](#)

One thing that the last two years has taught us is that change is a certainty. Workplaces, employers, and employees have all had to overcome enormous challenges to adjust to the realities of working with Covid. This has meant many changes including a sudden shift to working from home, then returning to the workplace, dealing with COVID restrictions, volatility in business conditions, the unpredictability of supply and more recently, the increasing competition for talent.

Despite all of this, the resilience of businesses and their employees has shone through and what has emerged is a new vision for work as it relates to the new world we live in, where flexible working has become the new norm. But this has not been without some toll, with mental health and employee welfare becoming a critical area for employers to address in their duty of care to their workforce.

Underpinning all this change, has been the need to maintain an engaged and well-managed culture that remains productive and where people are looked after and kept motivated in the work they are doing regardless of where from. This new environment has posed challenges for managers and leaders alike to update preconceived management models and mindsets. There is a conscious movement away from a command, control style of management towards one that supports greater connection and collaboration. This shift will ensure organisations remain relevant and attractive to an increasingly competitive market for talent.

What we have discovered in working with businesses of all sizes across a variety of industries is there are fundamentals that need to be maintained as well as new approaches that need to be adopted. A new awareness is emerging of what needs to be embraced to engage and manage people in the new world of work. The following are our ten tips for engaging and managing your people in the new work environment.

- 1. Aligning your HR strategy with your business goals through an effective HR plan.** Planning has never been more important. You need to plan ahead so your business can respond to and anticipate hr needs. An effective HR Plan enables businesses to meet their requirements for talent and skillsets as well as build necessary hr infrastructure to support the organisation’s current and future plans for growth and change.
- 2. Managing expectations is key.** It’s a two-way street. A well-constructed Position Description should address the balance between role clarity and accountability and employee needs and wants. Regular performance reviews can then focus on any gaps between expectations and performance not just from an employer perspective but from the employee’s point of view as well e.g. “Is the job as you expected it would be?”
- 3. Building and maintaining connections has never been more important.** In the new hybrid work environment engaging in purposeful communications is key. This means meetings need to be structured whether they are in person or online and follow an agenda, while keeping in touch with your remote workers has never been more important to ensure ongoing engagement and connection.
- 4. Embracing inclusiveness and diversity while removing biases.** The new world of work has opened our eyes to new possibilities and a heightened awareness of people as an asset. Modern leaders recognise how diversity and inclusion leads to better decisions and are challenging ingrained biases. This new enlightenment is driving higher levels of engagement and attraction, which in turn drive competitive advantage.
- 5. Bringing policies and procedures into alignment.** The changes being brought about by the new working model also mean policies and procedures need to be re-evaluated for fit. New work practices call for new approaches to hr. How can hr support the changing work model and how can new work practices be enshrined in business as usual? Involving staff in the redrafting of policies and procedures will be key.

- 6. Rethinking workspaces and environments** (making the office attractive to return to). Empty office spaces, a result of the Covid restricted environment, are now witnessing a return of staff. But not everyone wants to come back, and the way people have been working has changed. The modern office needs to provide what the employee cannot achieve at home, space for innovation, collaboration, and teamwork. With flexible work practices comes the need for more flexible workspaces.
- 7. Making mental health and employee wellbeing a priority.** There is no doubt that dealing with the impact of Covid on work has been stressful and challenging for everyone. Looking after the mental health and wellbeing of employees and employers is as important as physical safety. The benefits are that the workplace becomes a great, happy place to be, which in turn is attractive to potential talent and, your best people want to stay, and staff turnover reduces.
- 8. Keeping your finger on the pulse of culture and engagement.** As workplace change becomes more frequent so has the need to monitor the health of the organisation. In the pre-Covid workplace we could monitor the mood by walking the floor or hanging out at the photocopier. But the hybrid work model, with both remote and office environments, means there is a need for more frequent insights and capturing feedback at the point of work will become increasingly important.
- 9. Consciously managing and controlling the employee experience.** In a tight employment market such as we are experiencing retention is key. And the key to retention is to ensure a positive employee experience that delivers strong engagement over the lifecycle of employment. A positive employment experience not only will attract others to your organisation it also rubs off on your customers as your people are more inspired to deliver proactive and innovative customer service.
- 10. Building succession and growth into employee development.** Employee development and growth are not only necessary for attracting and retaining the best people, but they are also essential for the sustainability of your organisation. Being proactive and transparent with development and succession plans will ensure you retain key people and have a continuous pipeline of talent for the future.

Old work models will no longer suffice in the new world of work. The impact of Covid has accelerated workplace changes that were already underway but has now brought them into sharper focus as must haves for the future. You need to adapt your approach to HR to survive and grow.

## Our Services and Resources are here to help you:

- HR Strategy and Planning
- Organisation structure and design
- Everything DiSC Programs for better communication and connection
- HR Concierge - flexible, tailored, timely HR support
- Implementing best practice HR Processes (Cloud based or stand-alone)
- HR Policies and Procedures including Employee Manuals
- Job Descriptions
- Performance Reviews
- Learning and Development Plans
- Mediation and managing difficult conversations
- Employee Assistance Programs
- STAR Workplace Program - Employee engagement survey
- Fusion Culture Program - Aligning people, culture, and strategy
- 30 Point HR Checklist

To discuss how Howardco can assist you attract and retain the best people for your business contact us on 0417 594 760 or [warren@howardco.com.au](mailto:warren@howardco.com.au) or visit our website [www.howardco.com.au](http://www.howardco.com.au).