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**How the Pandemic is
Changing the Rules of
Talent Management**

This is the moment to get
your organization on the
right side of that equation.

Lee Hecht Harrison

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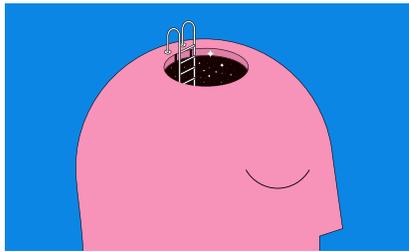
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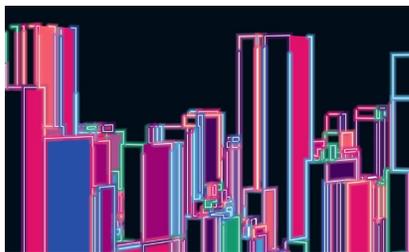
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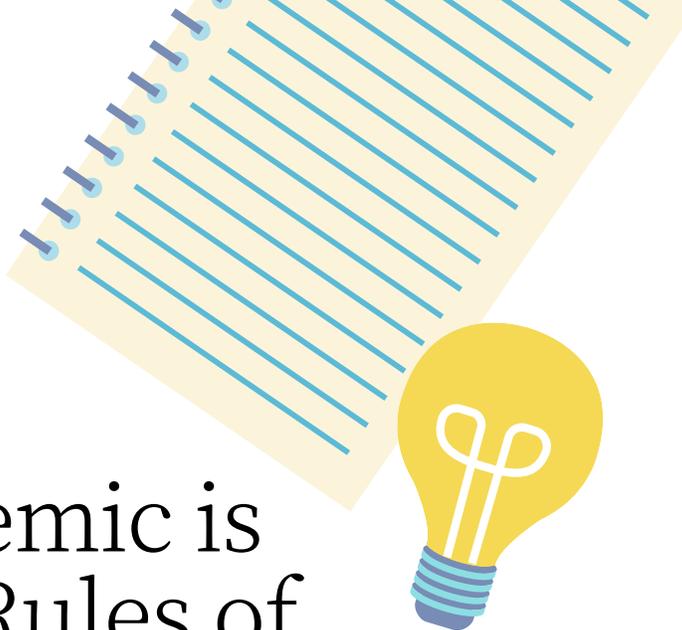
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How the Pandemic is Changing the Rules of Talent Management

Greg Simpson, SVP Product & Solutions, LHH



What does CVS Health Corp., one of the world's biggest health care companies, have in common with Gap Inc., the ubiquitous casual clothing empire, Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc., the iconic hospitality chain, and Delta Airlines, one of the world's largest air carriers?

At first blush, not much really. The four companies represent four distinct sectors of the global economy. But, dig a bit deeper and you'll find that they share a common goal: to find jobs for people displaced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

CVS, which has seen a surge since the pandemic struck, is desperately trying to hire 50,000 temporary workers to work in warehouses and stock shelves in their stores. To meet its needs, CVS partnered with the Gap, Hilton and Delta to fill those jobs using some of the hundreds of thousands of employees who were laid off or furloughed.

The unique partnership started when Jeff Lackey, chief recruiter at CVS, reached out to human resource contacts at companies he knew were being battered by the pandemic-related economic shutdown. "I'm grateful for the spirit of the partnerships," Mr. Lackey told *The Wall Street Journal*. "I tell people, we only have one enemy right now, and it's the coronavirus."

The ad hoc agreement between CVS and the other companies was very popular with displaced employees. In some respects, maybe too popular. After creating online portals to apply for the open jobs, CVS was inundated with 900,000 resumé to fill those 50,000 positions.

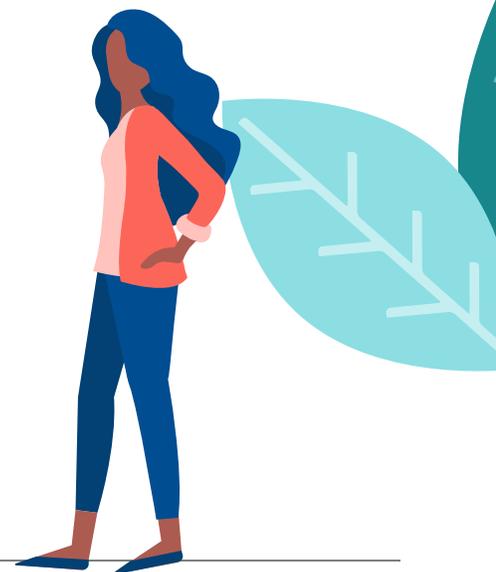
The intent of the CVS partnership was noble and forward-thinking, but it was also somewhat impractical. CVS was responding rapidly to meet its own needs and help furloughed employees but the way in which they've done it isn't sustainable.

Although the other companies are only "lending" furloughed employees to CVS, the thinking behind this partnership reflects a new emphasis on talent as a renewable resource that will allow organizations to thrive in the post-pandemic economy.

"We have to acknowledge that as we come out of the pandemic, and people start to go back to work, they won't all be going back to the same jobs or doing the same things as they were before," said Alan Wild, the former Head of Employee Relations and Engagement at IBM. "The challenge for employers is, 'can we use this moment to figure out how to retrain and re-skill our people to get them into different jobs?'"

"Like so many organizations, we had a lot of muscle-memory built up around firing and hiring and needed to learn new muscle memory around re-using, retraining and redeploying."

Alan Wild



Prior to the pandemic, far too many organizations were struggling to find the people they needed to grow and achieve strategic transformation objectives, Wild said. The global skills shortage left many of the world's biggest companies hamstrung and concerned about meeting future talent needs. This dearth of talent had already prompted many of these companies to reframe their human capital strategies to avoid the wasteful fire-and-hire approaches of the past.

Wild had a front-row seat for this now-outdated mode of talent management. During the early part of the 2010s, Wild said IBM was rapidly trying to transform its business to keep up with advances in AI and machine learning. To do that, it started on an aggressive campaign to shed hundreds of thousands of employees with outdated skills and acquire a nearly equal number of new employees with more contemporary skills.

“At that time, we were so focused on restructuring and hiring new people, my budget for firing people was six times my

budget for retraining people,” said Wild, currently global affairs director for the Washington-based HR Policy Association. “On what planet did that make sense?”

Fortunately, Wild said IBM quickly realized that there were not enough external candidates to meet their needs. And that many of the people they were firing could meet current and future skill needs with some retraining. As the decade evolved, so too did IBM's talent strategy.

By the end of the decade, IBM's approach shifted profoundly, and the company became a global leader in retraining and reskilling. “Like so many organizations, we had a lot of muscle-memory built up around firing and hiring and needed to learn new muscle memory around re-using, retraining and redeploying,” said Wild. “And that's what we did. I got my people invested in performance management and training. Eventually, we made the whole thing mainstream.”

Now, as more organizations are planning ahead for a post-pandemic recovery, there

is a growing interest in renewable talent management strategies. Ironically, Wild said the pandemic created an opportunity for organizations to excise the fire-and-hire mentality once and for all and replace it with mechanisms to match current employees with future job needs.

The organizations that lead in adopting a renewable talent strategy will not only solve skill shortages more effectively, they will also build a superior employer brand. However, those organizations that lag behind will find the task of finding people with future skills is even more difficult than it was before the pandemic.

“When we come out of the pandemic, we're going to have certain organizations that are leaders in the way they focused on creating opportunities for the future,” Wild said. “And we'll have other organizations that will continue to emphasize layoffs and other wasteful practices. This is the moment to get your organization on the right side of that equation.”



“Organizations that suffer collateral damage to their brand are typically those that try to transform their leadership ranks in an ad hoc fashion.”

Leadership Shake-ups On the Horizon: How Prepared is Your Organization?

William (Bill) Brown, SVP, Global Managing Director, Retired, International Center for Executive Options, LHH

C OVID-19, the accompanying global economic meltdown, the anti-racism protest movement, misconduct, M&As, personal health and wellbeing and good old-fashioned succession planning. Whatever the reason, the C-Suite in many iconic companies saw seismic change in the first half of 2020.

The list of high-profile CEOs and other senior executives who have departed, announced their intention to step down or been derailed by any one reason is pretty long. And it's only going to get longer.

Some of the change was well-planned and widely anticipated. In February, Disney Co. CEO Robert Iger stepped down after years of searching for a successor. The same could be said for Mastercard CEO Ajay Singh Banga, who announced



the same month he would step down in early 2021 after 10 years at the helm and assume the role of executive chairman.

Other departures were much more unplanned and, thus, a bit more surprising.

Mandy Ginsberg, CEO of Match Group—the company that operates the Tinder and Match dating apps—announced in January she was stepping down to attend to personal health and family challenges.

Greg Glassman, CEO of the popular CrossFit gym franchise, resigned after posting a Tweet that referred to the outrage over the killing of George Floyd as “Floyd-19” in a botched attempt to protest government quarantine measures. Later, in a call with his gym owners, he stated that he wouldn’t mourn Floyd just because it was the “white thing to do.”

And James Bennet, opinion editor for the venerable *New York Times*, was forced to resign in early June after publishing content that the paper’s journalists believed unfairly undermined the Black Lives Matter movement.

The trend is clear: an increasing number of organizations are taking stock to

determine whether their senior executives, and the plans they had for an orderly departure, are fit for current purpose. And as the pace of change picks up, it appears more and more likely that the pre-pandemic leaders these organizations relied upon may not necessarily be the people who will lead them into the future.

That should be a top concern for organizations of all kinds given that most are not very well prepared to deal with a sudden or unplanned executive transition. In reality, most organizations are not even prepared to deal with planned transitions.

The Harvard Business Review has been tracking and conducting its own research on succession preparedness of global corporations. Despite the increasing need to plan ahead, that data shows that only 53% of corporate boards of publicly traded companies have a contingency plan for CEO succession, 41% do not regularly discuss CEO succession and 54% have not established a formal CEO succession plan. The situation was even more dire for private companies, where nearly two-thirds did not have a CEO succession plan.

These are troubling trends at a time of crisis when, history has shown us, executive transitions typically occur with much greater frequency. The collision of multiple global crises and a lack of preparedness is going to create chaos in many companies.

Why have we been so reluctant to plan ahead when it comes to predicted or surprise executive departures? The simple answer is that many organizations don't face these scenarios often enough to drive interest in developing a contingency plan.

For others, transition can be an awkward topic to broach with senior executives. Some organizations fear that planning ahead will be interpreted as a lack of faith in current leaders. This is particularly true with CEOs; involving the chief executive in planning for their sudden departure is an inherently awkward and difficult conversation.

There are also concerns around governance. Who is ultimately responsible for

designing a contingency plan for executive departures? Who triggers the implementation? These are the questions most organizations never get around to answering.

However, in the forthcoming post-pandemic leadership shake-up, organizations that have procrastinated or ignored the need for a planful approach will be hit the hardest. At some point, we all need to acknowledge that ignoring this problem won't make it go away.

The lack of attention is all more concerning when you consider the impact of a botched executive transition.

Many of your customers will be scrutinizing the decisions you make about senior leadership following the easing of pandemic restrictions. Given the economic stresses that accompanied the pandemic were not the consequence of any specific incompetence or malfeasance, it will be important to showcase your organization as a fair and respectful employer who

knows how to treat people who are leaving through no fault of their own.

Organizations that suffer collateral damage to their brand are typically those that try to transform their leadership ranks in an ad hoc fashion. Executive departures can be emotional, messy and complex challenges, particularly so in the context of a global public health crisis.

For those organizations that want to put a plan in place, the options are limited.

The gross majority of career transition services are not really tailored to meet the unique needs of senior business leaders. An effective executive transition plan must be viewed less as a form of crisis management, and more as an essential component of talent management. It's just as important as, say, recruitment and retention, and possibly more so in certain situations given the damage that can accrue to an organization's brand from an awkward termination.

What Does a Planful Approach Look Like?

The best executive transition plan will probably look a little bit different depending on the size and nature of the organization. However, the key best practices—transparency, collaboration and support—will remain a constant.

1 Establish your transition team. Regardless of whether it's a planned or unplanned executive departure, you must assemble a team of key personnel where each member has clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The team will involve members of the board, senior executives not directly impacted by the transition in question, the CEO (if they are not the subject of the transition) and the CHRO.

2 Carefully plan support for the executive in transition. Organizations must, wherever possible, ensure that an executive in transition is supported in ways that avoid drama, negative headlines and other challenging disruptors. Although business executives are often looked upon as the most capable employees in any organization, they are also people who are defined by their jobs. A support plan must be cognizant of the emotional impact of these departures.

3 Set out a deliberate, defined process. Your transition team must have a playbook. They must gather all the relevant facts, establish a first point of contact for the executive involved to facilitate negotiations, and develop a comprehensive communications plan that serves the need of both the individual and the organization.

Organizations must engage with the executives in transition in an open and honest context. They must display a willingness to work together to come up with a transition plan that is fair to both the individual and the organization.

In the absence of crises, it's easy to ignore things like succession planning and executive departure strategies. In our current environment, which is defined by volatility and uncertainty, no organization has an excuse for not planning ahead.



The Good, the Bad and the Awkward: Tips for Making Video Calls Better

Sharon Patterson, EVP and CHRO, LHH

Pre-pandemic, working from home was still fraught with misconceptions and doubt. It often meant that you ran the risk of being not only out of sight, but perhaps out of mind, of your managers and co-workers. With video conferencing, working from home now means you're available "in person" anywhere.

In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, organizations have had a sudden need to keep large numbers of people from gathering in workplaces, forcing many companies, who clung fiercely to physical office space, to quickly implement a fully remote working model—overnight. Pre-pandemic, just 3.6% of the US workforce worked remotely half of the time or more. Now, 58% of knowledge workers are working remotely, forcing companies to test all prior thinking on WFH practices.

Those who can work from home have had to learn an entirely new lexicon, new technology and new video communication skills. Terms like Zoom, Skype, Teams and Meet have become part of our daily business conversations as both nouns and verbs.

A recent report from *The Brookings Institute* noted that this is not the first time employers have been forced to adopt a remote work model to keep business operations running. The report touched on events like the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and how many organizations experimented with wide scale telework until it was clear the threat had been alleviated. Even if it was not a permanent shift, many organizations realized that they needed to have work-from-home protocols in place as part of business continuity plans.

The history of telecommuting, in fact, extends back decades. In the early 1970s, a focus on clean air, coupled with the oil embargo and commuter gridlock, pushed telecommuting into the spotlight. But adoption sputtered.

Now, with more sophisticated technology, the ability to work from home has evolved dramatically. Video conferencing has emerged as a critical tool that has allowed organizations to smoothly transition to fully remote workplaces—avoiding lost productivity and protecting employee health, while helping employees maintain and build relationships.

“Now, with more sophisticated technology, the ability to work from home has evolved dramatically.”

With the fallout of the pandemic to linger for months, even years, there is even greater emphasis on building permanent remote work infrastructure that may involve the abandoning of expensive corporate real estate holdings. If working from home is the future of work for many people, then we should start casting a critical eye toward the connectivity and productivity tools like video conferencing that will increasingly become a part of our working lives. Especially now, as many organizations are wondering if they will be able to get their employees to return to the office.

The video conference revolution presents great opportunities but also some important challenges. Let's look at the good, the bad and the awkward:

The Good

Video conferencing can help alleviate the feeling that we're isolated from, or cut off from, our organizations while we're working at home. For those who thrive in the structured environment of an office setting and derive energy and are recharged by face-to-face social interactions, there was an understandable feeling of loss. Video conferencing provides needed contact with co-workers.

Increasingly, we see that video conferencing can be as productive, or even more productive, than in-person meetings. No more searching for the erasable markers or flip chart papers, no more wasting time setting up projectors or monitors, no double booking of conference

rooms. Even with its well-documented bugs and glitches, video conferencing allows seamless document or computer desktop sharing, and lets members work collaboratively on a project in real-time.

Many individuals who work from home report fewer office distractions and increased productivity. In fact, a survey conducted by Flexjobs found that only 7% of workers say they are most productive in an office. The key is to find a dedicated space to work that is quiet and free of interruptions.

Now, managers are shifting the way they measure employee productivity, looking at "output" or what is being produced versus how much time is spent in an office.

The Bad

We should be concerned that—as a shiny, new technology toy—the video meeting may be overused for conversations or interactions that may not require a full-blown video interaction. If too many of these meetings are scheduled, or too many people who don't need to be online are drawn into a video conference, it has the potential to slow down or even erode productivity.

Video calls also require people who were used to telephone conference calls to adopt new habits. In the old conference call days, it was not unusual for most of us to continue typing emails, watch videos on our computers or even eat a meal. With a video connection, many of those things can become significant distractions and a source of frustration.

The Awkward

As we can see by the number of comedic spoofs of the video conference revolution, we're all still learning the proper etiquette for video calls. Tales of people picking their noses, taking their laptops into the bathroom, shoddy personal grooming or appearing in less-than-optimal attire are everywhere.

In some instances, the problem stems from appearing in inappropriate locations within the home. Messy spaces

do not necessarily convey the appropriate message to managers or co-workers. Heaps of unfolded laundry, last night's take-out dinner boxes or your Xbox controller should not become the backdrop for a business-oriented video call.

Clearly, we're still getting used to the idea that a video call can, in many ways, reveal our true selves. At least, the true selves that we are at home.

There are a few simple things that we can all do to ensure we have productive video calls:

Tips for Employees

- Turn your video camera on. Let people see you during the meeting. This helps to keep everyone engaged and focused.
- Find a quiet place to connect and close tabs and apps that might be distracting. It's important to reduce distractions.
- Try not to be too informal. For example, avoid eating while you're on camera. A cup of coffee or water is acceptable, but eating a sandwich can be a needless distraction.
- Run a full test of the video conferencing solution so that you can properly sign into a meeting on time, and trouble shoot your computer's camera (including the angle) and microphone.
- Consider using noise-cancelling headphones with a built-in microphone. They'll cut down on collateral noise from your home office and create a better experience for everyone in the meeting.

Tips for Managers

- The first tip for managers is the same as it is for individual participants: make sure everyone on your team has their camera on. Vanity aside, there is much to be gained by being able to see your team during a meeting. You'll be able to pick up on non-verbal, visual cues, like facial expressions, that convey important information.
- Make sure you are fully in control of the agenda and purpose of the meeting. If you don't have focus and clarity around why you've called everyone together, you may find people drifting towards other work or non-work activities. Remember, they are staring into a computer screen that could have multiple windows open.
- Take a bit of time to let people connect and interact on a personal basis. A business meeting is not a cocktail party, so you need to control the amount of socializing. But remember as well that for many of your people, this could be the only major source of contact with the outside world.
- Consider scheduled one-on-one video calls with individual team members to strengthen relationships. In the pre-pandemic days, one-on-one meetings are often scheduled and then cancelled as other events overtake them. Keep your appointments to connect directly to each member of your team and use it as an opportunity for coaching or mentoring.

The pandemic has changed the world of work in many profound ways. And some of these changes may be permanent. Until we know when we're all returning to an office setting, it benefits us to embrace the new environment and become experts in the fine art of video communication.

How to Promote a Culture of Caring and Compassionate Leadership

Alex Vincent, Ph.D., SVP, Global Teams Solutions, LHH

Your employees have been working at home for months, wrestling with wonky VPNs and navigating crowded home offices and bored children. While some have thrived in the new world of virtual work, others have struggled. With the pandemic still crippling the global economy and social justice protests shaking the foundation of our society, uncertainty is the order of the day.

In an environment like that, it's not unusual for leaders to feel somewhat confounded about how to treat the people they lead. How do you keep your people motivated, engaged and focus on the business strategy while also acknowledging that many of them will be suffering under the strain of these current challenges?

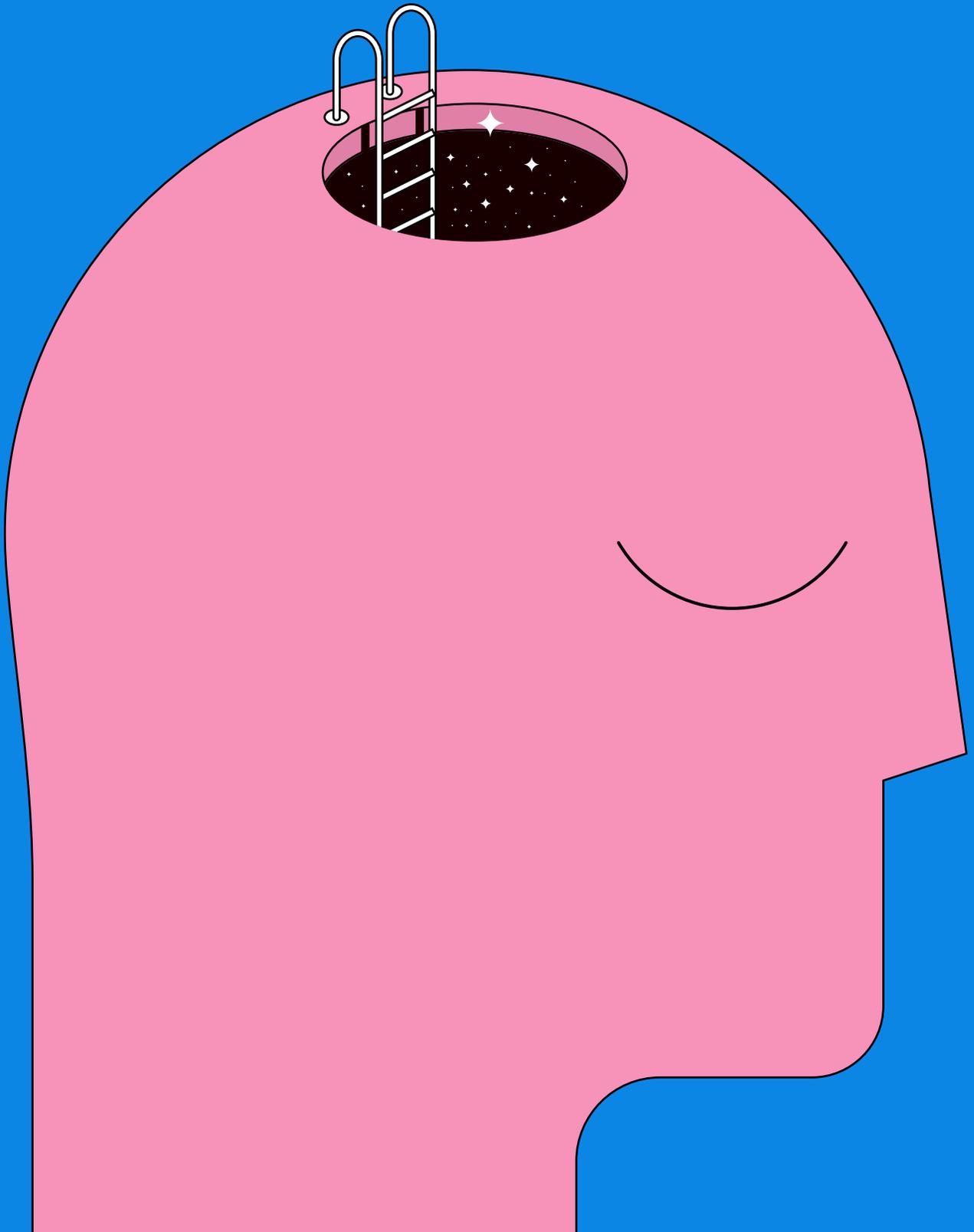
Increasingly, those involved in forging the next generation of leadership development believe that skills like empathy and compassion are the keys to connecting to, and motivating, employees in troubled times.

Empathy and compassion are generally considered founding principles within the whole area of Emotional Intelligence and

Psychological Safety, which are redefining the approach to leadership that de-emphasizes technical skills and amplifies the so-called "soft skills." It expands the role of leader to act more like a coach and sounding board. Although those are simple concepts, they represent daunting new demands on leaders.

That expansion of the role and responsibilities of leaders is more important now than ever because of the impact of multiple disruptors in work along with the threat from COVID-19 global pandemic, the accompanying economic lockdown and the powerful nature of the Black Lives Matter movement. All the changes and disruption is starting to take an enormous toll on everyone's resilience and even mental health.

Data is emerging from jurisdictions around the world on declining mental health. In the United States, the non-partisan Kaiser Family Foundation has been tracking the mental health of Americans throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The most recent data shows that more than 45 percent of Americans report that their mental health has suffered during



the pandemic. The situation is more severe for those who were forced to shelter in place.

In Europe, public health officials have been sounding the alarm for months about a building mental health and substance abuse crisis that is accompanying the pandemic. Dr. Hans Kluge, director of the European branch of the World Health Organization, reported first in March his concerns about pandemic-related mental health challenges.

“Physical distancing and isolation measures, the closure of schools and workplaces are particularly challenging [for] us,” Dr. Kluge said. “It is absolutely natural for each of us to feel stress, anxiety, fear and loneliness during this time.”

It’s all related to what mental health professionals are now referring to as “deaths of despair,” fatalities caused by stressful economic or social conditions that drive higher incidences of drug and alcohol abuse, which may lead to suicide and overdose. “We may be in for a perfect storm of factors driving substance abuse rates higher than we have seen before,” Dr. Lloyd Sederer, former chief medical officer for New York State Office of Mental Health, wrote recently in *Medscape Magazine*. “The triple trouble of a pandemic, unemployment, and diminished personal and community supports.”

In this context, leaders need to be aware that every time they pick up the phone or assemble everyone for a team meeting on a video conferencing platform, they are tapping into growing reservoirs of stress and anxiety that at some level, must be acknowledged with empathy and compassion.

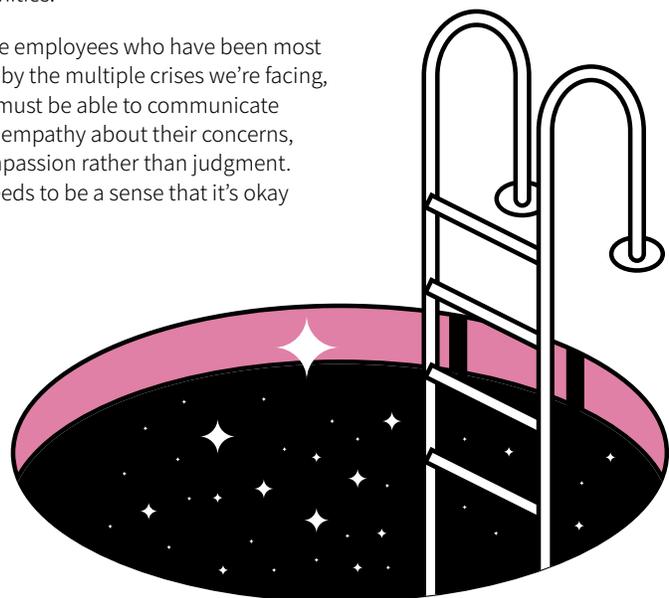
Some schools of leadership development thought—particularly those built on philosophies such as “positive psychology”—believe leaders need to avoid dwelling on the negatives and amplify the positives. And while that can be effective for motivating some employees—particularly those who are more resilient and less impacted by all of the disruptions—many of your team members may need an approach that will require empathy and compassion. This is really to develop a safe space for individuals to discuss what they are dealing with, professionally and personally, and how they are feeling about their situation. This will require deep listening combined with the ability to suspend judgment and refraining from providing advice.

Before emphasizing the positive aspects of our current situation, leaders need to demonstrate that they understand what stressed or worried employees are going through, and that it’s not unusual that they feel that way.

It’s important to remember that mental health is still a deeply stigmatized topic in most workplaces. Prior to the pandemic, it was hard for most employees to admit that they were facing a mental health challenge. Research in this area has re-enforced the fear that even acknowledging depression or anxiety will undermine their career brand and limit their future opportunities.

For those employees who have been most affected by the multiple crises we’re facing, leaders must be able to communicate genuine empathy about their concerns, and compassion rather than judgment. There needs to be a sense that it’s okay

“Leaders need to be aware that every time they pick up the phone or assemble everyone for a team meeting on a video conferencing platform, they are tapping into growing reservoirs of stress and anxiety that at some level, must be acknowledged with empathy and compassion.”



to talk openly about fears and anxieties, while also acknowledging that others are going through the same situation.

Lamentably, empathy and compassion are skills that evade many leaders today. Most leaders have risen through the ranks of their organizations by demonstrating a grasp of technical knowledge. Rarely, if ever, are they assessed on whether they can relate to their employees on an emotional level. That is why so many leadership development experts are promoting the principles of Emotional Intelligence as the new standard for successful leaders.

Skills like empathy and compassion can be developed in most leaders but they can present as much larger challenges to leaders who have traditionally been satisfied to be judged on deliverables or meeting financial targets.

Enhancing a leader's capacity to cultivate empathy and compassion is an iterative process that must be approached over time. The following steps are essential in cultivating these important emotional skills:

1 Taking stock. All leaders must be carefully assessed to determine current levels and potential for empathy and compassion. Every organization will have naturally empathetic and compassionate leaders. But there will also be leaders for whom these skills do not come naturally. Identify the size of your E&C gap.

2 Study up. Most progressive business leaders know that they must be constantly learning and improving themselves. Reading books on emotional intelligence, resilience and empathy-based leadership approaches can provide an essential base of knowledge on how to integrate E&C into daily leadership practices.

3 Don't go it alone. One of the most effective ways at building soft leadership skills is working with a coach who has experience in these areas. Coaching will not only help leaders confront their own shortcomings, but it can accelerate and help sustain the cultivation of empathy and compassion.

Leadership is still a role that requires toughness and resilience. Leaders must set high expectations for the people they lead and be willing to call out underperformance when necessary. But they must also know when someone needs understanding, care and support.

It may seem like a simple solution, but sometimes people need to know that it's OK to feel whatever they're feeling right now before they can start to feel good about the future.

Culture: The Catalyst for Transformation

Dr. Mary-Clare Race, Chief Innovation and Product Officer, LHH

What is on the minds of CHROs as they face the realities of a post-pandemic world of work?

Recently, LHH hosted a virtual roundtable with a dozen top HR executives from some of our largest strategic clients. The meeting was designed to identify pressing concerns around workforce renewal and transformation in these perilous times. A lot of obvious topics were covered: the impact of virtual work; pressures to downsize; uncertainty around the timing of the resumption of business, and how to keep people engaged.

However, the common theme cutting across all these topics was culture.

Before the pandemic hit, a group of CHROs like this would have focused

the discussion on areas such as talent management, leadership development and the global skills shortage. Although those will always be top concerns for the highest-level HR executives, there is increased awareness about culture, and in particular, the key role it plays in defining what an organization does and how it goes about doing it.

The questions that arose from our virtual meeting were revealing. How can I get my leaders on board with seismic change necessary to respond to pandemic pressures? How can I develop an organizational mindset that sees the workforce as a renewable resource that must change to meet future opportunities? How can I ensure that the changes I introduce now are sustainable well into the future?

“Even the best HR executives can find themselves struggling to find answers when culture needs a tune up.”



Some organizations are well on the way to confronting and answering those questions, even with the added stress of the pandemic. However, too often in the past, many senior business leaders have missed the critical link between culture and success. We introduced initiatives to build better leaders, develop careers and provide opportunities to learn but often neglected the organizational culture needed to ensure these efforts became more lasting and meaningful.

This disconnect was clearly enunciated in a 2018 research survey conducted by LHH in partnership with HR.com that provides powerful insight into how organizations approach workforce transformation.

Our survey—which captured the insights of more than 1,200 HR professionals across 20 countries and a wide swath of industries—established that while technology is often viewed as the catalyst for transformation, culture is the factor that determines whether it is successful.

For example, nearly six in 10 respondents identified “advances in digital technologies” as the driving force behind the need to transform workforces. That is not surprising in and of itself; with the rapid growth of solutions based on AI and machine learning, we’re all trying to harness the power of new technologies. In competitive industries, no one wants to get left behind in applying the best new tools available.

However, 54% of respondents identified culture as the biggest barrier to workforce transformation. That makes sense on many levels. Although it can be complex, acquiring and deploying new technology is actually easier than designing and instilling a new organizational culture. In the context of any workforce transformation, culture and technology are completely intertwined. No matter how powerful the technology, the mindset of your workforce needs to sync with organizational goals. When there is a disconnect, you have a workforce that can be resistant to the technology that’s being introduced.

Other barriers cited in the survey support this notion that culture ultimately

determines the success of a workforce transformation. After general concerns about culture, the next two most-cited obstacles were a lack of discipline in the organization’s approach to change and mediocre leaders who are not held accountable. These are both intimately connected to issues of culture.

The connection between culture and workforce transformation seems clear, although the solutions for an organization that suffers from a weak or poorly defined culture are not. As was demonstrated in the LHH CHRO roundtable, even the best HR executives can find themselves struggling to find answers when culture needs a tune up.

There are some best practices—overarching principles of potent and focused cultures culled from successful organizations—that are worth examining.

Make Your Organization Antifragile

In his seminal 2012 book, scholar and author Nassim Nicholas Taleb coined the term “antifragility” to describe a phenomenon where a system, organism or organization thrives in the face of shocks, volatility, profound mistakes or attacks. Fundamentally different from resilience and robustness, Taleb theorized that organizations demonstrate anti-fragility when they can learn fast from current conditions and adapt in a way that allows them to take advantage of volatility. In many ways, this perspective has become more relevant than ever as organizations chart a future course in a pandemic world.

Learning and failing fast, adapting to conditions, finding the hidden opportunities in adversity: there are many examples where businesses on the brink of disaster came back, bigger and better than before. Like Toyota. In 2009, the Japanese automaker was rocked by the biggest recall in automotive manufacturing history and supply chain problems that shook the company’s very foundations. By 2013, however, Toyota was bigger and more profitable than it was before the recalls. Company officials credited a culture where employees throughout the organization

were indoctrinated in rapid problem solving. Manufacturing and supply chains were fixed, sales and marketing rebranded the company, and the future was once again bright.

Bake Accountability Into Your Culture

In August of 2008, Maple Leaf Foods—a century-old Canadian meat and value-added food company—discovered an outbreak of a deadly bacteria in a huge Toronto-based processing plant. Before all the tainted products could be recalled, 57 became seriously ill, 22 of whom later died. It was a nightmarish scenario for the venerable company, one that could have led to its destruction.

Enter Maple Leaf Foods President Michael McCain. In the hours after the food recall was initiated, McCain took a lead role in not only admitting the mistakes his family's company had made in managing the Toronto plant, but in wholeheartedly and unreservedly apologizing for the deaths and illnesses that followed. In a series of emails sent out to every employee in the company that were later widely published in news media, McCain refused to blame government regulations or food inspectors, and assumed the mantle of liability on behalf of the company. In one note, he actually tells employees that he refused to meet with the company's lawyers before speaking publicly because "they counsel people not to take responsibility."

McCain's personal sense of accountability is now credited as a leading reason why his family's company survived the tainted food crisis and continued to grow and thrive. Even today, McCain and other executives from his company are asked to go to business schools all over the world to talk to students about the essence of personal and organizational accountability.

Make Sure Elvis Is In The Building

Bono, the iconic lead singer of U2, has had success as a philanthropist largely

because of his ability to win an audience with the world's greatest and most powerful leaders, and then convince them to support a range of worthy causes. And Bono isn't just trading on his celebrity; over a lifetime of asking and being turned down for things, he has developed his own theory of power structures and how they can be convinced to change.

In the 2005 book "Bono," Bono tells author journalist Michka Assayas that before he meets with any new organization, he asks two questions. The first was "who can stop this from happening? I wanted to meet the people who could roadblock us." The second question was, "who's the Elvis here? In whatever area I was, I wanted to know who's the boss, who's the capo di tutticapi (the change agents) here?"

To generate change and cultivate support within a particular organization, Bono said it is essential to defuse your opponents, while empowering the agents of change.

Conclusion

Many organizations steer clear of addressing cultural shortfalls because it's an enormous issue with many moving parts and no clear and easy solution. In some instances, culture goes unaddressed because it is inconvenient for organizations and their leaders. In both instances, the failure to examine organizational culture and confront weaknesses only sustains the behaviors and attitudes—immaturity and ignorance—that are preventing an individual company from being better.

A company cannot just be defined by a series of processes. It is also a living, breathing thing with beliefs, emotions and—sometimes—blind spots that its people demonstrate. Rebuilding or rejuvenating culture can be the first step to a better performing organization. And despite our current travails, if we learn as much as possible from past examples and apply the lessons to future challenges, a crisis can be an excellent opportunity to build a culture that is built for the long term.

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Now is the Time to Start Prospecting for Great Talent

Helene Cavalli, VP Thought Leadership, LHH

Can you imagine a time when job seekers do not actually meet a new employer until after they are hired? Josh Brenner can.

Brenner, the CEO of online recruiting marketplace Vetterly, said digital tools had already profoundly influenced job-seeking and hiring practices before COVID-19 hit. Job postings, initial interviews and assessments were standard online practices even if the hiring process culminated in a face-to-face interview.

However, with the continuing need to social distance and the growing adoption of a permanent work-at-home model,

Brenner said there are clear signs that recruiting and hiring may never go back to the old high-contact, face-to-face practices of the past.

“Conventional inbound hiring, with its in-person team efforts and face-to-face meetings that require travel, simply don’t work in today’s environment,” said Brenner. “The pandemic may have a long-lasting effect on how we interact.”

The evolution of digital recruiting and hiring practices will take on increasing importance as more cities resume operations amid the decline of COVID-19 cases.

“With more and better information, we’ve seen days-to-new-hire reduced by more than half. Employers can get to the right candidates faster and make decisions more quickly.”

Josh Brenner, CEO, Vetterly

Job loss, to this point in the pandemic, has been staggering. The International Labour Organization, an agency of the United Nations, believes 195 million jobs will be lost in the second quarter of 2020 alone. But, while some industries are hard hit—travel, entertainment, oil and gas, hospitality, mining and manufacturing—some sectors including retail grocery, pharmacy and online retail are in desperate need of new workers.

In an environment where some businesses are dying and some are hiring, there will be a new emphasis on actively prospecting for skilled candidates. This will require agile and smart recruiting and hiring practices that go deeper into available candidate data and connect employers to the best people, faster. Those practices will almost inevitably require digital platforms.

The future will require a lot more than just an expansion of online job boards, though. Increasingly, organizations that need to hire—and in some cases hire huge numbers of people—are going to need tools to dig much deeper into the available pool of talent and, relying on hundreds of data points customized for an employer's needs, quickly and accurately identify the right people for the right jobs.

Inbound methods of recruiting typically fail to generate relevant candidates—with 80% to 90% not qualified for the advertised role. If employers are using LinkedIn to source talent, a lot of time is spent combing through profiles and contacting people who may not be interested. "Getting to the right candidate can take as long as 45 days. This lack of efficiency wastes time and money," Brenner said.

This virtual future will be difficult for many companies that have held on to traditional methods of recruiting and in doing so, failed to become more data driven. The shift could be difficult, but the payoff could be huge. "Recruiters want to make the best use of the ubiquitous availability of data," Brenner said. "With more and better information, we've seen days-to-new-hire

reduced by more than half. Employers can get to the right candidates faster and make decisions more quickly."

People Analytics

Key to this approach will be the utilization of a digital talent broker to help organizations make the best hiring decisions, faster. Brenner said the hiring marketplaces of the future will be managed by digital recruiters who act as an extension of a company's recruiting team by focusing on people analytics.

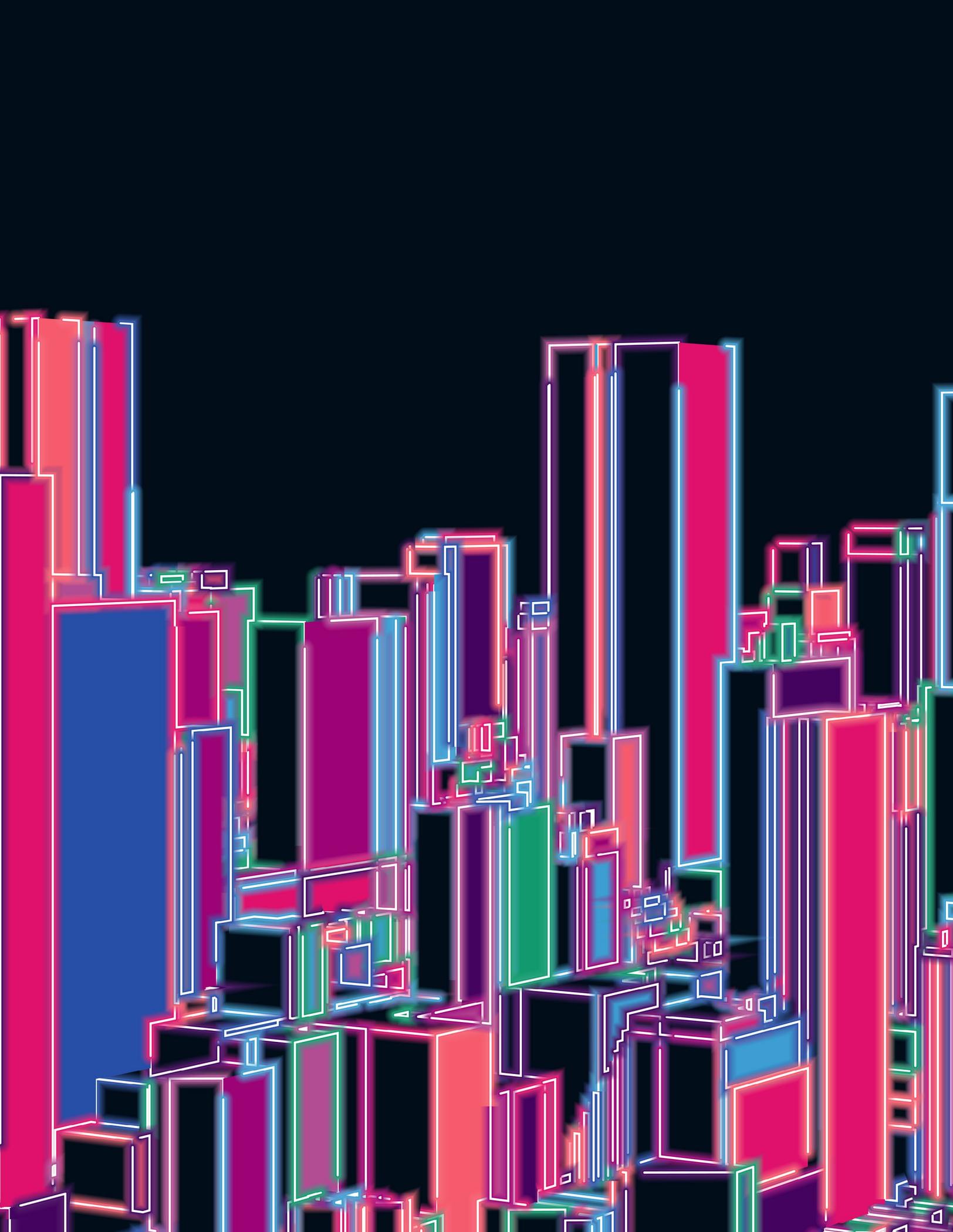
"These digital recruiters will be using hundreds of data points to create talent pools of candidates who are highly relevant and match the specific needs of the company and the role," he said. "Human interaction is required at critical touchpoints to provide candidates with expert advice that technology can't deliver."

Post-pandemic

Organizations focused on the future should consider looking beyond present challenges and prepare now for what's ahead. There are, right now, more efficient and accurate ways of sourcing candidates that allow recruiting teams to continue to fill roles quickly—in any environment.

All those companies that lose talent through economic or other necessities will find themselves needing to recruit and hire not just to accommodate their normal growth trajectory but simply to return to their pre-crisis status quo. The pace of hiring and the competition for talent are bound to be fierce. Data-driven recruiting can dramatically improve results and make any company a recruiting powerhouse.

"In an environment where some businesses are dying and some are hiring, there will be a new emphasis on actively prospecting for skilled candidates."



What Lies Ahead: Three Fundamental Changes to How We'll Work Post-Pandemic

Dan Lett, Transformation Insights, LHH

As the number of new infections from the coronavirus slows and economies around the world ease restrictions and begin to plan for recovery, uncertainty remains and there is increasing talk about what the world will look like post-pandemic.

What is certain, however, in all the uncertainty, is that workforce playbooks will require a comprehensive overhaul post-pandemic. The world of work before the crisis will never look the same again after.

According to Ricardo Vargas, executive director of the Brightline Initiative and an experienced project management specialist, individuals and organizations alike are suffering from the pandemic, not only because of the continuing risk posed by the virus, but also because of the uncertainty around how we will operate in the future.

“The worst part [of the pandemic] for companies and individuals is uncertainty,” Vargas said in a wide-ranging interview with Michelle Anthony, LHH executive vice president and chief marketing officer. “What is causing all the disruptions is that we don’t know if next week will be much better, or it will be much worse.”

If the world has changed forever, what can we do as organizations and individuals to prepare for an entirely new sense of normal? Vargas said that our mindset going into this is critical and the apprehensive easing of full lockdowns to staggered re-openings will require all of us to change the way we view work, our relationships with our employees and employers, and our careers.

“With extensive experience in the ethics and compliance industry, I would strenuously argue that the key leadership success factor is decency.”

There are three main areas that Vargas believes will change fundamentally when we start to ease the restrictions that have been prompted by the pandemic:



On the Leadership Front

Leaders must have empathy for people coming back to work, Vargas noted. This kind of leadership was perhaps best embodied by New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who has used social media to keep in touch with her citizens during the pandemic. Her willingness to share details about her family, and her casual attire, have won praise at home and around the world. She is a successful leader because she truly empathizes with the people she is leading.



On the Operational Front

As economies start to reopen, there will be a temptation to rush back to full operation. Organizations of all kinds are well advised to take it slow and resist the temptation to stampede. In particular, don't force everyone to come back to the office at the same time, right away. You need to establish procedures to ensure that your offices do not aid in the transmission of the disease. If you try to bring everyone back at once, you will create more problems and a greater likelihood of infection. You need to let people ease back into the idea of working in a group setting and prepare yourself for the fact that some will want to continue working from home. Keep an open mind and don't dismiss any scenario out of hand.



On the Strategic Front

Rather than dwelling on impacts of self-isolation and forced virtual work, move quickly to identify the low-hanging fruit: new markets and business opportunities that come from a dramatically changed world. You'll need to be agile and creative, and don't be shackled by a need to do exactly what you did before the pandemic and in the way you were doing it. Be bold but be very careful with layoffs and downsizing. Slashing human resources will not leave you in any position to seize the new opportunities that will arise. Focus on creating a productive working environment and encourage your people to find new processes, products and solutions.

Leadership—Pandemic Style

Steve Harrison, Chairman, LHH

Noted American educator and sociologist Morris Massey may not have delivered a keynote address or taught a class since 1995, when he effectively retired, but his ideas are more relevant than ever as we struggle through the age of COVID-19.

In his exhaustive examination of human values and their intersection with marketing and business management, Massey established the concept of a Significant Emotional Event (SEE). In his own words, he defines an SEE as “an experience that is so mentally arresting that it becomes a catalyst for you to consider, examine, and possibly change your initial values or value system.”

It would be an understatement to propose that we are experiencing one of those right now. After decades of relative peace and some of the most prolonged periods of economic growth in history, we have seen the global economy brought to a near standstill as countries imposed severe restrictions to slow the spread of the virus. Massey may not have been able to foresee a challenge like this, but it is clear COVID-19 meets all the conditions to be considered the most significant SEE in generations.

If COVID-19 is a good example of the “mentally arresting” event that Massey described, then what kind of change will it prompt? How will our values—and value systems—be altered as we head off into a period of great uncertainty?

So much of our life has changed and so many of the most profound impacts have been felt in the workplace. Millions of people around the world have lost their jobs. Those who have been able to

continue working have been forced to work virtually from home and in the process, change the way we interact with our co-workers and customers. We can no longer take for granted our ability to earn a living or find fulfillment in our careers.

That stream of change is going to put enormous pressure on business leaders. These are unique times in uncharted territory. Leaders will need to consider all options as they attempt to make up lost ground or—in more extreme situations—stave off the death of a company or industry.

The world’s foremost thinkers on leadership culture are sounding the alarm about this watershed moment.

“In moments like these, when the choices we make are so impactful, people desperately want to believe that their leaders know what they are doing. But they quickly learn that in times like these, leaders either grow or swell—they either grow out of their weaknesses and rise to the level of the challenge or all of their worst weaknesses swell to new levels,” Pulitzer-prize winning *New York Times* columnist Tom Friedman wrote.

Truth and trust are essential elements if we are to have any hope of answering Friedman’s central question: what makes a good leader, particularly now when

“With extensive experience in the ethics and compliance industry, I would strenuously argue that the key leadership success factor is decency.”



leadership is under so much pressure? After many years of involvement in the ethics and compliance industry, I would strenuously argue that the key leadership success factor is decency.

Throughout the history of commerce, we have tried to define and enforce basic decency in all aspects of the way we do business: from the promises we make to customers, to the way we treat our employees, basic decency has always been a goal, albeit an often-elusive goal. Even as Compliance and Ethics became distinct functions within large business organizations, and lawmakers attempted to legislate a higher degree of decency, we often fell short of our worthy goals.

I have spent much of my professional life trying to answer one simple question: can decency be institutionalized in a company so that it is an everyday occurrence, built into the culture and modelled daily by leaders? If we were able to do that, we would need far fewer dedicated resources in the area of ethics and compliance or sweeping laws to enforce decency.

Before we can bake decency into our organizations, it would help if we could fully define exactly what we mean. This is where the debate becomes particularly muddy given that there are so many people using so many words to define positive, productive leadership culture.

Taken together, the ever-growing roster of leadership gurus emphasizes success factors ranging from adaptability to self-control, innovation, creativity and agility. However, most of those concepts are largely applicable to issues like productivity and bottom-line success. What about skills that speak directly to our capacity for basic, human dignity?

Again, you can find a whole range of skills and characteristics that might describe the truly decent leader, but I will focus on seven core ideas: accountability; civility, compassion, empathy, honesty, humility and principle. Applied in concert, these are the skills that will help an organization develop and maintain a civil culture that values truly ethical behavior and integrity even more than profitability.

Civility is a priority that far too few organizations embrace. The stories of sexual harassment, frat-boy cultures that tolerated rampant bullying, organizations that have failed to fight systemic racism and homophobia are all products of cultures that do not stress civility.

Some of the other skills on my decency code checklist—empathy and compassion in particular—fall into the category of Emotional Intelligence, a topic of growing importance in leadership development circles. Together with honesty and an adherence to a principled approach to business, you have what I would consider the proper foundation for an organizational culture that prioritizes decency.

Just as important as knowing the right skills is to understand how those skills need to manifest in the day-to-day operation of your organization. I have identified many different examples of truly decent leadership to help describe the kind of culture that embodies my seven core skills.

Some involve iconic figures like Ruben Mark, the former CEO of Colgate Palmolive, who famously and regularly took the time to visit with workers on the overnight production shift in some of his factories for informal chats.

There are other examples, like Nabisco, a global company that instilled a talent recruitment model that involved following up with all unsuccessful job applicants to explain why they did not get hired. Ingrained in the company's culture is the idea that everyone that meets Nabisco deserved to be treated decently. "Everyone eats cookies," has become a core motivator in this belief.

The late Herb Kelleher, the colorful and innovative founder of Southwest Airlines, was one of the world's foremost role models in the area of corporate decency, opining on everything from employee engagement and experience, to sharing anecdotes about arrogant and verbose leadership. He famously warned leaders to avoid puffing out their chests too much. "Think small and act small, and we'll

“All of us who are navigating through these uncharted waters will be grappling with the realities of Morris Massey’s aforementioned ‘Significant Emotional Event.’”



get bigger. Think big and act big, and we'll get smaller."

These are all examples of how decency is essentially timeless; it is something that will help you lead through good times and bad times alike. However, it would not be a stretch to say that manifesting decency in your leadership practices and cultures is never more important than it is in a time of crisis, like the one we find ourselves battling through now.

What does decency look like in today's pandemic-impacted environment?

It would involve leaders who avoid the "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" trap with employees who are working virtually. It means finding new ways to continue development activities and committing to recognizing employees who may be electronically tethered to the organization. For those leaders who embrace the concept of Emotional Intelligence, it will mean acknowledging your employees' fears and anxieties, and sharing your own with them.

Noted British author Charles Handy characterized moments of significant organizational change like the pandemic as "a work world of seemingly endless whitewater"—challenges that require special leadership competency that can

help replace confusion with order and hopelessness with confidence.

As we're starting to notice, successful whitewater navigators have even modulated their predominant leadership styles: collaborators become more decisive; authoritarians become more collaborative; quiet and humble leaders step up and communicate as never before; cerebral or process-oriented leaders are forced to anticipate and become more intuitive. All of us who are navigating through these uncharted waters will be grappling with the realities of Morris Massey's aforementioned "Significant Emotional Event."

As leaders, our job is to create hope where it may be lacking and transfer our strength and wisdom to those people who may be feeling weak or depleted.

Our willingness to creatively go above-and-beyond our job descriptions will go a long way toward making a difference in the lives of the people we lead. This is an idea that many great thinkers have embraced, but the late poet Maya Angelou may have put it best when she said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

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