

# People Want More From Work, So How Can Companies Step Up?

Kacha Recruitment  
Gender-Conscious Recruitment

With the Great Resignation now having become such a well-known phenomenon, companies are putting a lot more attention into how to make themselves more attractive to potential new employees. This "Employer Branding" concept is like the flip side to Market Branding, where companies focus on building customer attraction and loyalty. That's an idea we are all familiar with and understand to be crucial to company success (if not survival).

So, what can companies do to better brand themselves to potential new employees and ensure existing employees don't leave? This article offers some ideas and insights into forming a company that genuinely is 'a great place to work'. Many of these ideas simultaneously provide the added benefit of also building business performance and profitability.

## People come first.

The leaders of people-centric companies understand that people make their companies successful. These companies realise that when people feel valued and cared for, they do their work with stronger intrinsic motivation, a more profound sense of meaning, and greater engagement<sup>[1]</sup>. To me, this makes absolute sense as it's kind of a mirror image of how successful companies relate to their customers. The only difference is the nature of the value exchange; where customers get the right product or service, staff get value through their experience in being part of the company. This is particularly relevant when considering that financial remuneration plays a relatively limited role in an employee's sense of feeling rewarded. Employee motivation comes from a much broader array of elements than just money.

In basic terms, it can be argued that an organisation effectively sits between its employees and its customers, working to ensure both groups remain engaged and loyal.

## Employees must be given a sense of purpose.

A study completed by McKinsey and Company<sup>[2]</sup> reveals how employees can be rejuvenated and fulfilled by helping them identify their 'calling' in the context of work, thereby increasing productivity and helping people feel happy, even lucky to be at work.

Employees would like to see their jobs bring a sense of purpose to their lives. Employers not prepared to meet this need run the risk of losing talent to companies that will.

The following outline some essential steps that can be taken to build this sense of meaning.

Make sure your company has a clear and meaningful purpose. Even companies that provide simple, day-to-day products can find connection with purpose understood to be significant and relevant to the wellbeing of society.

Ensure your leaders reflect and regularly connect with staff. Leaders willing to share their experiences around purpose with staff, offering a safe environment to share ideas and experiences can go a long way to having them feel that they are part of something greater than just themselves.

Help people live their purpose at work; Companies can offer programs for external, community-based activities that can satisfy employee need for purpose, but it is even more effective if purpose is fulfilled through the work itself, rather than some external alternative. When the work is aligned with the company's purpose, the heightened employee fulfilment ultimately also benefits the company.

## Humans thrive on connection and conversation

Creating a personal connection is a sub-theme to almost everything that good employer branding stands on. As human beings, we are hardwired to crave human moments that matter [\[3\]](#). Authentic, human connections create a sense of belonging, and there is no reason why this cannot be achieved in a work setting.

Gallup's research has confirmed strong links between close working relationships and high organisational performance. Employees who feel a deep sense of affiliation with others on their team are driven to take positive actions that benefit the business – steps they may not otherwise consider. A more positive employee experience strongly correlates with extra discretionary effort on the job, and more broadly, the company experience lower staff turnover.

## Motivate people to take responsibility for their work.

The Harvard Business Review reports that various successful companies throughout America repeatedly told them they want their employees to think and act like owners [\[4\]](#). Key to accomplishing this is allowing them to control important aspects of their work. Employees who have the leeway to *rearrange*, *modify* and *improve* their assignments feel possession over them, and once this happens, their mindsets begin to change. Instead of focusing on what cannot be

done, they become preoccupied with what can. As a result, they can grow, innovate, and push their companies forward more quickly.

### Encourage people to try new things and be open to taking risks.

Research says that feeling comfortable and empowered to take more risks and speak out more, leads to better problem solving[\[5\]](#), and it's up to leadership to set the tone to foster these conditions.

It is not unusual to find company cultures where employees need to stay in a state of almost constant analysis and navigation to determine what they can and can't say or do. Examples include concerns around being disliked, personality mismatch, what is deemed as being friendly versus being a nuisance.

Achieving a role's requirements requires decision making, navigating uncertainty, handling ambiguity, and complexity. This is already a risk-taking endeavour. Adding the uncertainty of what you can/can't say or do or feeling that acting as your natural, authentic self adds more risk, effectively puts a handbrake on progress. Much emotional and intellectual energy is wasted through this worry, which could otherwise be channelled into productive and engaging outcomes.

Leaders can celebrate difference, openness and fresh, even challenging perspectives expressed by employees. They can also ensure team meetings are conducted with the protection of personal safety, to allow ideas and personality to be freely expressed.

*Kacha's mission is to see men and women leading, influencing, and shaping the world in equal measure. Follow us to read more articles about diversity, inclusion, equality and gender-conscious recruitment.*

[\[1\]](#) Rasmus, Hougaard, *The Power of Putting People First* Forbes (2019)

[\[2\]](#) McKinsey and Company, *Help your employees find purpose—or watch them leave* (2021)

[\[3\]](#) Mosley, Eric, *How Managers Can Foster More Meaningful Relationships at Work*, Forbes (2020)

[\[4\]](#) O'Malley, Michael, *What the “Best Companies to Work For” Do Differently* Harvard Business Review (2019)

[\[5\]](#) Peñarredonda, José Luis, *Yes, you should really 'be yourself' at work* BBC Worklife (2018)