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# Culture as a Talent Strategy

Building a Winning Talent Strategy  
Through Irresistible Culture

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**Talent is scarce right now. Maybe as scarce as it's ever been.**

Compensation and benefits might seem like the most important tools in the war for talent – but they'll only serve to get people in the door. More money won't engage and motivate teams in a sustainable way.

The culture you create will impact every part of the employee experience and determine your ability to attract, engage, and retain top talent. This eBook provides actionable insights on how to create the kind of culture that fosters exceptional performance and retains your best people.





## A Generational Challenge

The Great Resignation, the Great Realignment, the Great Rethinking, call it what you like — we're facing historic labor shortages and unprecedented turnover.

In December 2021, [2.9% of the U.S. workforce](#) voluntarily left their jobs and, according to [Gallup](#), 48% of American workers were actively searching for new jobs in that same year.

Though COVID-19 and many other factors are amplifying these challenges, the underlying causes of this talent drought run much deeper, and their effects will last for decades on the economy. Birth rates are in decline across [the world](#), and the global population is expected to start declining after the year 2064.

Even though most of you aren't thinking that far ahead, it is important to know that our supply of people is going down in the long term. And those who are in the labor force are more adept and willing to "job hop" than previous generations. According to [Pew Research Center](#), Millennials became the largest generation in the U.S. labor force back in 2016.

For employers and HR leaders, attracting and retaining talent in this environment is already incredibly challenging. If our current demographic trends continue, this problem will only get worse. When organizations are perpetually understaffed, growth and innovation don't happen.

Talent is a strategic priority for your organization and, in the near future, it may become THE strategic priority and your greatest source of competitive advantage.



## Your Culture Is The Answer

**In a highly competitive talent market, wages are bound to rise (and have risen already). While increasing your compensation and benefits package can help fill roles in the short term, competing on money alone isn't sustainable.**

First of all, there's always someone out there with deeper pockets ready to outbid you. And, **if your employees are only here for the money, they'll probably leave just as easily for more money elsewhere.** Your organization needs a way to attract and retain top talent that goes beyond the size of a paycheck and speaks to their deeper needs.

People need to feel respected, valued, and aligned with the direction of your company. Creating an attractive, healthy culture is an investment in the long-term viability

of your organization. Working on your culture today may help you make inroads with younger generations who care more about the values of their employers. For example, [60% of Millennials](#) report that flexible schedules are very important, and, more than previous generations, they value paid time off to volunteer, mentoring programs, free lunches and snacks, and other perks.

But no matter who you're trying to attract, engage, and retain, you have to give your people more than a paycheck to keep them showing up and giving their best. Organizations that plan to seriously address long-term labor shortages are **investing in creating authentic cultures that drive engagement and performance.**



## Build an Irresistible Culture

To build a healthy, high-performance culture, you have to take a realistic look at your culture as it is today and see what is working and what is not working.

**Do your current values align with your vision for the future?** How do your employees treat your customers? How do they treat each other? Leverage survey data and other people analytics tools to give you an accurate read on your current culture. As you begin to answer these questions, the real work of turning your culture into a competitive advantage will begin.

Work with leaders at all levels to define the values and supporting behaviors that align with your business strategy. Ask the question: **Which cultural values, qualities, and behaviors will create the conditions for engagement and excellence in your organization?**

Once you've identified your cultural values, you can use them as a lens to evaluate existing processes, technologies, and policies. You might be surprised to find that many of your talent management and HR processes conflict with your newly minted cultural vision. Turn this challenge into an opportunity and identify new technologies and methodologies that can reinforce and evangelize your values within your organization (e.g., recognition software,

candidate-centric recruiting practices, training managers in coaching skills).

**Create an environment where your people become culture champions** who can't wait to tell their friends and family about how great it is to work at your organization. This transformation may take time and effort, but there's no reason it should break the bank. This very minute, some of the most toxic, dysfunctional organizations are well-ranked on the Fortune 500, while the best place to work on Earth might be a bustling coffee shop with less than 20 employees. **Great culture happens when values, behaviors, talent, and strategy come together.**

We all know what it's like to work in an unhealthy culture. Unfortunately, it's a pretty common problem - but once your people have had a taste of a really great culture, they'll never willingly go to a company with a bad one.

**Culture is the *only* thing your competitors for talent cannot replicate, and that's why it's the only sustainable competitive advantage when it comes to attracting and retaining talent.**

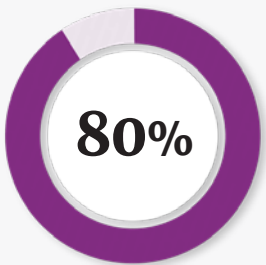




## It's About More Than Money



9 out of 10 employees are willing to trade a percentage of wages earned in exchange for more meaning at work\*



80% of employees would rather have a boss that cares about them than a 20% Pay Increase\*

More than money, people want to work somewhere that creates opportunities to grow and thrive.

People want to be a part of healthy communities that support and recognize performance, fairness, and other values. Weaving your culture into your employment branding efforts shows potential candidates that you can speak to these deeper needs.

\*Data from Harvard Business Review



## Employer Branding 101

Chances are, your organization has a branding strategy to manage how customers or clients perceive its products and services. Employer branding is how organizations manage the way potential candidates perceive them as employers. The ultimate goal of employer branding is to convince desirable candidates (i.e., candidates with the right skills, aligned values, etc.) to apply for jobs with your organization. Employer branding often incorporates a mixture of techniques borrowed from marketing and user experience design to create a favorable, engaging, authentic experience for top talent.

## Your Culture Is Your Employer Brand

Why use culture to market your employer brand? Because the conversation is already happening on platforms like Glassdoor - the only question is whether you will have a voice in that conversation.

**Your employer branding strategy should showcase your culture in an authentic way, not because it will attract candidates, but because it will attract the RIGHT candidates.**

Consider these examples of how to integrate your culture into your employer branding and recruitment processes:

- Leverage internal cultural champions to share their personal stories on your career page or social media.
- Train hiring managers and recruiters to talk effectively about your culture, your values, and share their personal experiences.
- Tell the story of your culture, talk about the rituals and values that make it unique on your careers page and on social media.
- Be transparent about the internal processes and tools you use to get work done; it tells candidates what your organization values.

Infuse the hiring process with your culture. It gives people a sense of what they're getting into, and it increases your chances of hiring someone who will love working in your unique culture.

## Show, Don't Tell: Your Tools and Processes Speak for Themselves

The tools you use, and the way you use them, are an integral part of your organizational culture. Does your organization care about culture and engagement? Instead of just saying, "We care about culture and engagement," on your company's social media feeds, talk about the tools and processes you're using to build a high-performing culture. For example, if you want candidates to know you care about their development, talk about your mentorship and coaching programs for new employees, and share the story of an employee who has benefited from them.

## Final Thoughts

The talent challenges we face today aren't going away. In fact, they're probably going to get more prevalent for businesses and more demanding for HR professionals. Investing in your culture is the best, most sustainable way to address the problems of talent attraction and retention we all face.

A strategic, values-driven approach to culture increases engagement, performance, and retention. But the benefits don't end there. A top-notch culture is quite possibly the best way to recruit top-notch talent. As you build a better internal culture, those internal values and behaviors will naturally affect how your people interact with external stakeholders (i.e., strategic partners, customers, and candidates).

When you invest in culture, you're actually investing in your entire talent strategy.

**Learn more about how Kudos  
can help build your culture.**

Get in touch →





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