**World Innovation and Change Management Institute**

**PEOPLE COMMITTEE**

**MANAGERIAL RECOMMENDATIONS 2022**

**By**

**Nikolaos Dimitriadis** (Head of People Committee)

**Patrick De Pauw, Robyn de Villiers, Steve Lambert, Monika Lapanja, Vojo Lazarevic, Yuliya Melnyk, Alexandros Psychogios** (Members of People Committee)

**THE CHALLENGE**

During the last two years the world has seen unprecedented changes due to the pandemic and its effects (lockdowns, supply chain collapse, hybrid working etc.). In such a volatile environment, people in companies are facing huge challenges, with their mental and emotional health reportedly worsening. The future is still uncertain and both leaders and employees are starving for solutions, support and stability. Our managerial recommendations aspire to provide actionable points that will help organizations directly alleviate the stress and negativity of our times, leading to personal and company growth through people-centric leadership.

**Pillar 1. Develop Wellbeing Programs.**

The World Health Organization has recognized burnout, anxiety and depression as serious health conditions in companies the world over. The situation became more alarming during the current pandemic, with phenomena like the so-called Zoom Fatigue. The Great Resignation, where people in the US, Europe and elsewhere are resigning from their jobs because of general dissatisfaction, is no surprise. In such challenging times, your company*must design and deploy honest and targeted wellbeing programs* that will meaningfully help everyone become the best version of themselves. In order to do this, we suggest that you implement the following:

1A. Make an honest, long-lasting, and demonstrable commitment towards wellbeing in your organization.

1B. Educate your leadership and management teams on wellbeing issues.

1C. Identify a Wellbeing Leader and a cross-functional Wellbeing Team.

1D. Engage external expertise if/when needed, especially in the beginning.

1E. Diagnose the current situation through a multi-data source approach.

1F. Empower employees to participate actively in the conception, planning and deployment of wellbeing initiatives.

1G. Monitor and measure impact during deployment and not just periodically.

1H. Create a culture of wellbeing by gradually adjusting processes, roles and rules.

**Pillar 2. Develop Leaders That Are Sustainable.**

In many organizations leadership burnout has been an expected part of life. In the UK, there are specific roles within local government where the expected postholder will only last for about 4-6 years before burnout. This burnout results in individuals not wanting to move into leadership roles, resulting in a leadership deficit. This is not a new issue but has not been adequately addressed systematically. To develop leaders that are sustainable, the following needs to be implemented:

2A. Develop personal resilience in leadership. Resilience can moderate workplace stress thus reducing burnout and increasing organizational resilience.

2B. Improve empathy in leaders to help individuals manage the challenges of their work, particularly task- vs people-orientated activities.

2C. Build organizational capacity from the moment an individual enters an organization, view them at the next CEO. Nurture them and develop them in a systematic, meaningful and empathetic way.

2D. Sustainable leaders are also those who understand not only what inclusivity means but also how being an inclusive leader manifests, in the workplace.  To get this right, leaders need to understand the individual cultures of their people so that they can both model and encourage truly inclusive behavior.

2E. Leadership development should focus on helping new leaders to be ready and to feel empowered to implement changes, act fast when needed, and always with a clear vision of long-term sustainability. By doing these, they become a positive and sustainable change themselves.

**Pillar 3. Enhance Virtual Communication by Activating Leadership Triggers.**

Virtual communication and meetings have become the rule rather than the exception the last couple of years, mainly due to the Pandemic. Although virtual technologies helped us to continue working on a productive pace, at the same time they increased work stress, anxiety and damaged employees’ wellbeing. In this respect, the suggestions for leaders is to activate four specific leadership triggers that can help them manage virtual teams. In particular, people-centric leaders need to:

 3A. Minimize virtual meetings by focusing only to meaningful, target-oriented ones. This habit help people understand meeting’s importance.

3B. Use video calls (not only audio) – facial expressions can motivate people since they transmit emotions.

3C. Encourage interaction during the meetings. Interaction can also enhance participation and constructive decision making during a virtual meeting.

3D. Emphasize knowledge and information sharing that can help your virtual team to increase creativity.

**Pillar 4. Increase Engagement Through Sharing Your Corporate Values.**

People management faces more challenges than ever. The cost of unengaged employees is huge and there are more burnout/bore-outs than even. One out of three employees is actively looking for another job. And employee engagement is very globally, at around a mere 20% of the workforce. A very effective and efficient way to deal with these important issues is to actively share your values through integrated and targeted channels. You can do this by adopting the following solutions:

4A. Your internal and external communication should be 100% aligned. In fact, it should be part of the same “department”. Who you are, what you say, what you do should be 100% aligned and identical inside the company as outside. Since social media is everywhere, when there’s a discrepancy, people will talk about it. Alignment is essential to attract and keep talent, and authenticity is key to create impact.

4B. Sharing your values and stories is more crucial than ever. Co-workers stay on board when there’s an active employer branding program and the authentic voice of a company attracts more valuable people. Job candidates look at profiles and read about a company before applying. Thus, it is crucial to communicate CSR as part of your core values. Also, with remote working, sharing company’s values is more important than even.

4C. HR should be the center of your organization.Before it was often Sales and HR that was is the control seat. Now it’s HR, your human capital is key to your future. Make HR central to your whole business strategy approach.