UBA HRElements®

IDEAS AND INFORMATION FOR HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS

WORK TRENDS

The Future of the Office

Earlier this spring, the quarterly Randstad Workmonitor survey revealed that while 82% of United States workers say the option to work remotely does help them maintain a healthy work-life balance, 62% of these same workers prefer to work in the office anyway. Perhaps most surprisingly, this preference is *higher* among millennial and Gen Z workers, despite the common perception that these groups prefer digital interactions over real-time ones.

What might be the reasoning behind these preferences? Some employees say their employers don't support the technology needed to work remotely effectively. Other employees say they prefer face-to-face interaction for directness and efficiency, especially in offices that utilize open work plans and rotating seats. These options are widely understood to support dynamic, productive office cultures.

On the flip side, many employees can and do choose to work remotely, and feel that it increases their productivity, creativity, and job satisfaction. As a result, many employers are growing to embrace these preferences, and find that doing so has dramatically widened their talent pool. Remote work options allow employers not only to partner with the growing professional freelance workforce around the world, but to provide new opportunities for engagement and retention with local employees who benefit from open office flexibility.

While the option to work remotely doesn't always increase employee productivity and satisfaction, when it does the payoff is substantial. One way to fine-tune remote connection is through increasingly effective learning and development programs, or L&D. In a recent article, *HR Technologist* investigated new and advanced solution-driven programs for increased connection and productivity. Techniques include microlearning, interactive training formats, and innovative delivery.

Read more:
"Given the choice, most workers prefer working at the office. But they still want a choice."
"The importance of real-time visibility in HR"

LEADERSHIP

Leadership, Now with More Humility

More and more, we are learning that scientists, marketers, programmers, and other kinds of knowledge workers lead office lives very similar to famous innovators like Watson, Crick, and Franklin, who discovered the structure of DNA. How so? All of these people live work lives structured around progress in meaningful work. And when this progress occurs, it boosts emotions, perceptions, and productivity.

This could be an important key to supporting your employees at their desks, wherever those may be. While recognition, tangible incentives, and goals are important, leading managers must also consider nourishing progress through attention to inner work life, minor milestones, and appropriate modeling.

When progress is effectively monitored and encouraged, it can lead to a self-sustaining progress loop, which often results in increased success and productivity, especially toward larger, group-based goals. In other words, when managers support inner work life and recognize minor progress, it leads to major accomplishments.

Seeing employees as growing, positive individuals with a drive to experiment and learn, as opposed to mere means to an end goal, can make all the difference in an office, and over the years. One way to do this effectively is to incorporate humility into your leadership style. This doesn't imply that you have low self-confidence or are yourself servile. Rather, it says you prioritize the autonomy of your office and support your employees to think responsibly for themselves. Ask them what their daily work lives are like, and how you can help them maximize effectiveness. Create low-risk opportunities for growth, and most importantly: follow through.

Read More:
"Leading through emotions"
"Leading with emotional intelligence"

TECH

Let Data Deliver for You

Using HR data can be legally and ethically complicated, but if analyzed with care, it can also be a team's greatest asset. Because of these very real concerns, in the past information often went unused, but today, wise companies are turning facts into insight. When processed ethically, data can inform an office when employees will leave, where to recruit solid candidates, and most importantly, how to keep these candidates happy once they become employees. And this isn't merely a suggestion: according to the Economist Intelligence Unit, 82% of surveyed organizations plan to either begin or increase their use of big data in HR before the end of 2018. The crucial point here isn't simplicity but effectiveness: when HR data is braided effectively with a company's strategic aims, wellbeing increases across the board.

Even better, it can increase wellbeing over time. Key details include supply, demand, gap analysis, and solutions. Currently, many companies are using workforce analytics to more immediately connect postsecondary education options to available business opportunities, resulting in increased individual happiness and a shrinking national skills gap. This benefits companies as well as graduates. As Anthony P. Carnevale of Georgetown University says, "Learners and workers need a modern guidance system with clear and comprehensive consumer information that will help them make good college and career decisions." Without a doubt, this increases managerial satisfaction and overall productivity too.

Read More:
"Mastering multigenerational communication in the workplace"
"Why many top performers quit"

IN BRIEF

Can You Handle the Truth?

Are the questions you're asking potential employees truly helping you identify the best candidate? Increasingly, employers are learning that questions don't need to be interesting, just effective. Instead of asking a candidate about their favorite superhero, which is essentially another way of asking them what their super power would be, ask them what they like to do for fun. Ask about the good they care about in the world.

Do you really need to know the one historical figure your candidate would like to join for dinner, or is the real question about how well they would get along with the current team? Ask about sports, films, or other passions, as these will likely reveal many more valuable details than a random historical question. Plus, questions that build (as opposed to ones that come at random) will keep the interview flowing smoothly and coherently, resulting in a more organic conversation with your candidate. You can even encourage storytelling by asking questions like "Tell me about a time…" or "Describe a situation where…" Try it next time, and see what happens.

Read:
"Why Your Job Candidate Doesn't Need to Have a Favorite Superhero (and Other Interview Questions to Avoid)"