

Humanity is at the heart of 2023 workplace trends - new report reveals top priorities for business

The rise of #QuitTok, 'quiet quitting' and the 'great resignation' is a firm indication of the changing global workplace trends: people culture cannot be ignored and employees require a healthy work-life balance above anything else. Business leaders need to focus on creating a super-personalised employee experience, listen to the 'heartbeat' of the teams working for them and deliver a lasting positive impact within and beyond their organisational boundaries to remain competitive.



Karen Muller, global client service advisor at Top Employers Institute

This is according to Karen Muller, global client service advisor at Top Employers Institute, who says that these were the top three trends revealed in the company's recently released *World of Work Trends Report 2023*, based on interviews conducted among 2,053 certified Top Employers around the globe. "The aim of our report is to provide business leaders with the latest trends in people strategies and practices emerging from leading organisations worldwide."

"With this in mind, our research shows that the key priorities for businesses in 2023 should be creating a high-performance culture, developing new leadership capabilities and aligning purpose, vision, and values," she says.

To assist organisations in keeping their fingers on the pulse and retaining their best asset – top talent – Muller unpacks these trends and how they can be implemented:

From people-centric to person-centric: Employees are looking for an unprecedented level of personalisation in their everyday experience. This year, employers will need to offer next-level personalisation when it comes to how they approach flexible, remote and hybrid working; well-being and benefits; as well as learning and career development.

Now that hybrid work is increasingly being formalised, businesses must reinforce a culture of trust and accountability. This can be done through empowering employees to manage their working hours and location.



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Personalising well-being and benefits can be addressed through regular conversations between managers and employees. As a result, active listening by these managers will be a key skill for identifying and solving well-being challenges before they become bigger problems. Employees should also be allowed to choose their benefits such as flexible work-life balance and health benefit offerings, that best suit their current needs.

Lastly, learning and career development can be enhanced by offering platforms that allow employees to evaluate themselves and discover their growth opportunities. However, it is also important to strike a balance between online and physical training. Therefore, resources such as mentors, coaching or career counsellors are essential so that all employees receive personalised advice on their next career steps. By providing this to every employee, the most enlightened organisations are showing that they don't waste any chance to help empower and develop talent, with 62% of companies shifting towards a coaching-culture.

Actively listen: The development of new strategic skills is vital, particularly that of 'listening to the heartbeat' of the organisation. Leaders are effectively having to 'double screen' their working world by simultaneously thinking about long-term horizons while acting decisively in the short term to not only survive but thrive. They, and the next generation of leaders they nurture, will need to place a more committed listening strategy front and centre to win the emotional commitment of their teams when dealing with disruptive challenges.

Positive impact is the new North Star: Positive impact among organisations can be defined and achieved in three ways: a lived purpose, diversity and inclusion (D&I), and sustainability.

A lived purpose, at its best, is shown in the hundreds of decisions that all employees make every day. So, employees want to make sure that the culture - the 'how' - and the purpose of their organisation - the 'why' it exists - are aligned with their own goals, priorities and values. These are key elements that the world's best employers capture in their employee value propositions (EVPs), with 88% including their organisational purpose, and 70% making it explicit in their social and environmental objectives, while also demonstrating their equal and inclusive culture.



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D&I are imperative in business, with the best organisations acting decisively to achieve both on a day-to-day basis. In 2023, we see a significant growth in initiatives to ensure diverse representation at all levels of the organisation for three-quarters of respondents, and a similar increase in dedicated empowerment programmes for leadership development among women.

The above two points form a virtuous circle with the third, sustainability, culminating in the importance for businesses to show real commitment to deliver a lasting positive impact in everything the company does. Sustainability is clearly at the heart of organisations that want to have a positive impact on the world. Those that do are increasingly including social and environmental performance indicators in their internal management reporting. They track real-time data to ensure that the social and environmental measures taken are effective and efficient, and to act quickly when a risk is identified.

They also roll out employee rewards/incentives to support environmental goals by combining a performance-oriented culture with social responsibility in day-to-day management. As an example, a significantly higher number of leading organisations have implemented employee volunteering programmes, linked to social and environmental goals. Investing business resources, including time and support, to contribute to what promotes sustainability undoubtedly sends a very strong message of organisational commitment.

“Overall, it is important for businesses across the globe to recognise that there has been no respite from uncertainty for organisations and their people and neither will there be in 2023,” points out Muller.

“It is therefore no surprise that, at the core, businesses need to place a larger focus on humanity, which is at the heart of these three trends. If they do so, they will prosper now and into the future, creating a better world of work for all,” she concludes.

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