

Low budget. High inflation.

MOTIVATE YOUR PEOPLE IN A VOLATILE ECONOMY



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Introduction

The state of the world we find ourselves in post-pandemic starkly contrasts the world we left behind. Digital transformation, changing market dynamics, new safety protocols—the list goes on and on.

This seismic shift has brought about both good things and bad.

The good news? People are tired of change. This has meant that more and more people are now searching for stability more than anything, especially professionally and financially.

At work, HR's major investment in people retention programs during **the Great Resignation** has started to pay off big time. The tide is now turning, paving the way for the rise of **the Big Stay** and **returnships**.

The bad news? People are just plain burnt out.

Employee morale and engagement are plummeting, with engagement declining **faster than it has in 75 years** as what some are calling the Great Gloom sets in. And with people feeling stuck in their jobs being coined "**grumpy stayers**," it's not hard to understand where this new trend is coming from.

We've all been through a lot over the last few years, and being in a constant state of change is always stressful. COVID and long COVID, high inflation, the threat of a global recession, geopolitical turmoil and intensifying global conflicts, mass layoffs (and survivor's guilt), and extreme budget cuts all add fuel to the fire of gloom.

But we're not here to gripe, we're here to improve. So what can we, as HR leaders, do to lighten the load, make our people happy, and inspire engagement in these tumultuous times?

Let's take a look at how to boost employee morale and motivation.

Give your people a mission to believe in

Encouraging your people to truly embrace your organizational goals is more effective when you champion a mission that resonates deeply with them. It helps them concentrate on the path before them and provides a genuine sense of purpose.

Make your mission more than just words on a page. Root it in your **core values** and aspirations as a living, breathing ethos.

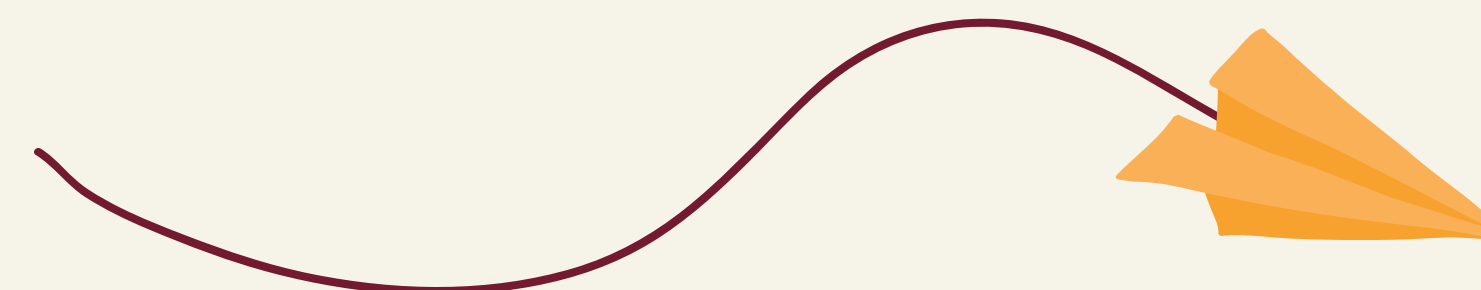
To achieve this, it's important to start with a clear and compelling vision. This vision will help you paint a clear picture of where your organization is headed and what you want to achieve. It can act as a detailed roadmap for your strategic planning, as well as a source of inspiration and motivation for your people.

But this vision isn't just about team goals. It's about individuals' goals, too, and making it clear that you value the pivotal roles each and every one of your team members plays in your grand design. Communication and clarity are key here.

When people have a clear understanding of which role they play and how their individual efforts affect the overall picture, they can start to see and appreciate the value and impact of their achievements.

This way, their day-to-day becomes more than just taking on and accomplishing individual tasks. It becomes part of a larger, more meaningful journey towards a shared goal—giving them something they can truly believe in.

It isn't just about addressing cultural challenges, either—when people are aligned with a meaningful mission, they're more productive and less likely to seek out new opportunities elsewhere. This can significantly cut down on turnover costs and the need for time-consuming and expensive recruitment drives.



Invest in upward mobility

Investing in upward mobility is the perfect way to acknowledge the aspirations and potential of your people while reinforcing your organization's commitment to their professional growth and success.

By offering a wide range of growth opportunities and professional development programs such as leadership training, technical skill workshops, or mentorship programs, you can foster a **culture** that embraces learning, development, and acknowledging and rewarding high performance.

When you show that you value your people's contributions, you're not just affirming their role in your organization's success, you're also strategically investing in your collective future.

This approach works particularly well for organizations navigating a budget crunch, as investing in upward mobility offers a significant value-add. Because when people feel valued and see a climbable ladder in front of them, they are more engaged, loyal, and driven—which can be a game-changer in challenging financial times.



Give your people autonomy

One of the lessons we learned from the pandemic is that companies thrive when they trust and empower their people to get things done in their own way.

When organizations trust their people's expertise, provide them with the freedom to make their own decisions, and give them a voice in how they manage and complete their work, it boosts their creativity, overall happiness, and sense of responsibility.

This freedom can extend to things like flexible working schedules and remote work, which can make a huge difference for those with diverse personal needs and lifestyles. Trust and schedule flexibility can boost job satisfaction, increase productivity, and support a better work-life balance.

But it's important to remember that autonomy and **accountability** go hand-in-hand.

Setting realistic expectations and holding people accountable for their responsibilities and actions creates a balanced environment. In this setup, freedom is given within the framework of mutual trust and respect.

Mutual respect between companies and their employees is the crux of successful autonomy. Giving people flexibility in their work arrangements shows them respect and incentivizes them to deliver high-quality work.

Autonomy also has the positive impact of reducing the need for supervisory roles. With less time allocated to checking in and making sure people are working efficiently, managers have more time to enhance strategy and boost business outcomes.

Double down on benefits

Offering **competitive benefit packages** can be a cost-effective way to significantly and positively impact your people and improve engagement.

One of the key ways to boost your benefit packages is to learn what perks your team genuinely uses and values, and then double down on them. Consider free gym memberships, childcare or meal stipends, extra wellness days, physical and mental health support, or any other traditional or non-traditional benefits you can supply.

For example, if a team member values their work from home days and still produces excellent results, give them another one. If another team member shows interest in furthering their education in a certain field, offer tuition reimbursement or access to online courses. Or maybe someone is struggling with childcare. Offering on-site daycare services or subsidies can help reduce stress, lighten the load, and increase performance.

Competitive benefits can significantly ease the burden on a diverse range of needs and don't have to come at great expense to the company. Realistically, any budget allocated for employee satisfaction programs is bound to be worth the investment, as it cultivates a more committed, productive, and resilient team.

Additionally, tailoring your benefits to the wants and needs of your people can help cut down on the outgoing costs of investing in benefits that people aren't utilizing. This means you can focus your budgeting on the benefits that are being used and ones that improve job satisfaction.



Communicate frequently and honestly

Clear, regular, and honest communication is the key to any organization.

It helps to build trust, ensures your people feel heard and valued, and keeps everyone informed about key events, changes, and plans throughout the company.

Here are some of the best practices for frequent and honest communication:

- **Set an open-door policy.** Putting an open-door policy in place helps to facilitate open communication and feedback. For best results, this policy should be put in place by everyone in your organization, including HR, line managers, and company leaders. Open-door policies showcase people's approachability—no matter their role—and willingness to listen to concerns, suggestions, and ideas.
- **Provide high-quality feedback.** Constructive feedback is a fantastic tool that can boost morale, aid professional development, and improve the quality of work. Hold regular **performance reviews** to share specific, actionable, and supportive **high-quality feedback**. This can help your people understand their strengths and identify areas in which they need to improve.
- **Listen actively.** For HR, management, and team leaders, taking the time to truly listen to your people is invaluable. Encourage your people to practice active listening, which involves absorbing what people are saying, understanding it, responding effectively, and ultimately remembering and taking action on the various insights.

- **Foster trust.** Building a culture of trust requires everyone across your organization to be proactively open, honest, and vulnerable. As the saying goes, trust is hard to build and easy to lose. It's developed through honesty, integrity, and fairness in everything you do. But the highest risks deliver the greatest rewards. Putting trust in your people is key to nurturing a healthy and positive work environment that empowers people to innovate freely, ultimately boosting morale, engagement, and productivity.
- **Improve engagement.** You can **boost your people's engagement** levels in several ways. From recognizing achievements to providing growth opportunities, focusing on ways to improve engagement leads to people who are more productive, have higher job satisfaction, and can contribute positively to your culture.
- **Cut down on costly errors.** Clear and consistent communication cuts down on misunderstandings and inefficiencies. This helps you to save time and resources by cutting down on potentially costly errors.



Schedule social activities

In workplaces where remote and **hybrid models** are increasingly common, scheduling regular, in-person, and online social activities is a great opportunity to build a solid team dynamic that connects people and fosters a cohesive, transnational culture.

Beyond this, it helps people feel a stronger sense of belonging. Remote working can be an isolating experience, especially if the majority of an organization's people are office-based. Holding virtual meetings gives team members who aren't around in person a way to build relationships and take part in a more relaxed, informal environment.

These social events also help with **engagement**. Helping people feel connected to their team community is a great way to reduce the likelihood of conflicts, and boost motivation and productivity—which ultimately leads to less team member turnover and decreased recruitment costs.

Embracing the power of social activities enables you to weave a fabric of support and belonging in the workplace that increases people's day-to-day enjoyment, ultimately leading to a more productive, positive, and vibrant culture.



Prioritize mental health and wellbeing

The pandemic broke the taboo against speaking openly about mental health and brought the importance of **mental wellbeing** to the forefront, including at work.

Modern professionals expect employers to prioritize health and wellbeing. HR leaders are tasked with driving wellness programs, including mental health coverage as a staple of the healthcare benefits package and as a core tenet of a healthy and psychologically safe company culture.

Exceptional health plans guarantee access to mental health professionals and wellness programs and cover treatments and therapy.

Promoting a psychologically safe workplace is also a fantastic way to improve mental health and wellbeing. You can start by making smaller changes like embracing flexibility in work arrangements to fit people's needs.

You can drive more significant change by integrating regular empathy training sessions into your people programs to improve everyone's understanding of the diverse experiences and challenges faced by multi-cultural teams.

This focus on the mental wellbeing of your people also helps to reduce absenteeism—leading to a more engaged and productive environment and cuts down on any costs associated with lost productivity.

By nurturing an inclusive culture where diversity is celebrated and people's voices are heard and valued, you can ensure your work environment gives people a sense of belonging and champions mutual respect.

Creating safe spaces enhances the wellbeing and satisfaction of your people while contributing to a more productive, innovative, and happy organization.

Consistency is key in an era of change

Putting these employee motivation strategies and initiatives into action is a surefire way to boost the motivation and engagement of your people—as well as improve your organization’s bottom line—in tumultuous times. But the real key that ties everything together is consistency.

Consistency throughout your organization demonstrates the stability and honesty that makes people feel secure in their jobs, their financial standing, and themselves—and it can inspire higher levels of satisfaction and engagement. This increased engagement not only improves your cultural environment but also has a positive impact on your organization’s financial health.

When your people feel safe, secure, and consistently engaged, they’re more likely to be productive and innovative, have higher-quality outputs, and are less likely to search for opportunities elsewhere—all of which can significantly boost revenue and profit margins.

After all, if—despite what’s going on in the world—you can keep a high level of consistency, then your people can rest safely knowing that they have finally found that post-pandemic stability they’ve been searching for, and you can rest easy knowing both your people and your bottom line are thriving.



Meet Bob

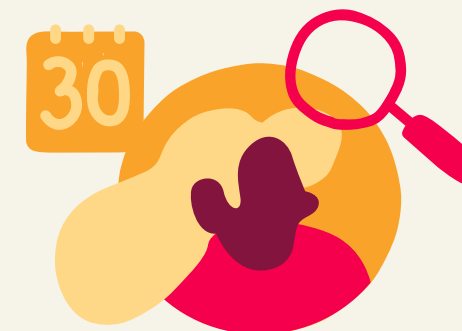
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