

How Company Culture Influences AI

ANCHORING AI INITIATIVES TO ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE



workhuman*



An estimated 70% of organizational digital transformations fail.

And it isn't the new technology's fault. It's widespread inertia from people's deeply rooted behaviors, according to a BCG study.

Turns out, when it comes to launching new technology, a thorough understanding of your employees is fundamental to effective change management. Success in AI adoption is not just about investing in the right technology – it requires a cultural shift that embraces innovation, adaptability, and purpose-driven decision-making.

Assessing your organization's readiness for AI transformation can be helped by the right technology (wink, wink). As the #1 leader in employee recognition and the founders of Human Intelligence™ – insights created by the combination of AI and the authentic human data residing within Social Recognition® – Workhuman® has some wisdom to share on the subject.

Let's unpack how culture can make or break new AI initiatives, how AI can contribute to building a stronger culture, and how Human Intelligence can anchor AI to strategic business pillars, improving overall adoption.



Understanding the AI-culture crossroads

The integration of AI is not just a technical upgrade. It requires a shift in organizational mindset. The key word is “shift,” not “change.”

A Salesforce study revealed that while 65% of generative AI users are millennials or Gen Z, 68% of nonusers are Gen X or baby boomers.

When it comes to mindsets about AI, cultural and generational attributes are a huge influence. To help break down what’s holding adoption back, Head of AI Products and Innovation at Moderna Brice Challamel advocates for a “why” mindset over a “how” mindset. Individuals who focus primarily on “how” things are done may see AI as a threat to their established processes. Those who operate with a “why” mindset may view AI as

an opportunity to improve outcomes and efficiency.

Organizations must foster a culture that emphasizes purpose-driven innovation rather than fear of change. Leaders who focus on inspiring and modeling desired behaviors can encourage a new way of thinking.

Ultimately, mindsets shape culture, and changing entrenched attitudes takes intentional effort. Doing this takes a powerful force.

When it comes to driving the direction and power of culture, using employee recognition to positively reinforce the behaviors that feed into an organization’s culture is a proven scientific method of influencing culture.

“Knowing where your culture is, where you want to go, understanding your leadership's mindset – for rapid culture change, I honestly can't think of a better tool than recognition programs.”



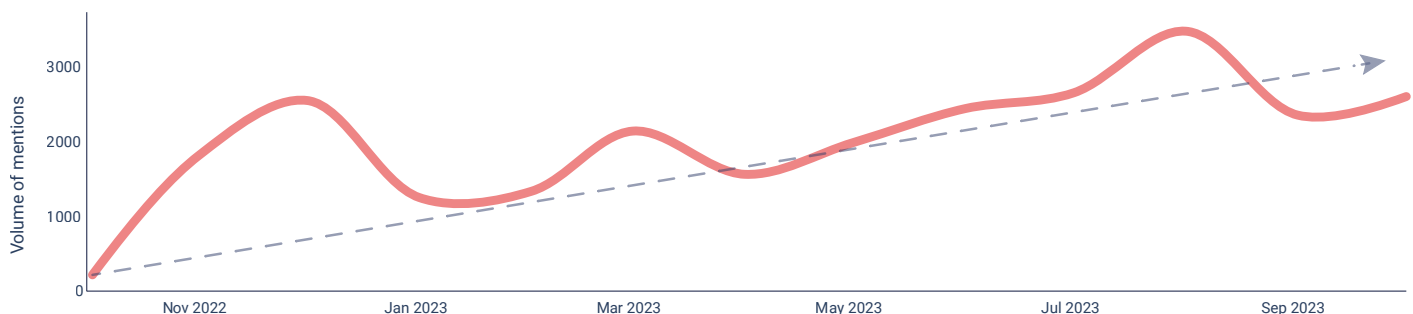
Tom McMullen
Senior Client Partner & Total Rewards Expertise Leader
Korn Ferry

Source: The ROI of Strategic Employee Recognition: By the Numbers,
Workhuman and Korn Ferry, webinar, 2023

In the context of attitudes toward AI, Workhuman customers are using it to recognize values that embrace safe, innovative, and effective use of technology. In fact, when our natural language processing (NLP) team analyzed the words in 9 million award messages sent by customers over a 12-month period, we found that recognition messages about AI had increased significantly.

How might that play out in the real world? Think of it like this: If an employee demonstrates a curiosity and ambition to use a new AI tool safely and effectively by signing up for extra training, a recognition award can mark that moment. By priming people to be agile and “why”-driven in their everyday workplace life, the entrance of a new AI tool is less daunting. It can be seen as an opportunity to do good rather than be threatened.

Recognition messages about AI



Source: Recognition Playback: Findings From a Year of Gratitude, Workhuman, 2024



Affecting culture with AI

Most people can recall a time at work when a change was managed and cascaded poorly, and it affected their perception of their job and workplace. If AI is imposed without transparency and communication, it can spawn distrust and disengagement.

One of the best ways to avoid this is by leaning on the preexisting cultural and business-critical pillars. Mapping out the specific ways AI feeds into values and strategic initiatives buffs out gaps in understanding and bridges old to new thinking.

When AI initiatives are aligned with organizational values and anchored to a clear purpose – such as improving customer experience, enhancing productivity, or driving sustainability – they are more likely to be embraced by employees. Employees are given an opportunity to understand the ultimate mission that has been there all along. Purpose-driven AI adoption ensures

that technology serves the organization's broader mission rather than becoming an isolated or disconnected tool.

One example of how tools can help power culture is Workhuman's signature industry-first AI tool, Inclusion Advisor. When we looked back on 12 months of recognition activity across all customers, we found that Inclusion Advisor was used more than 2 million times and 77% of recognition messages were edited when bias was flagged.

Teamwork Makes The Dream Work

Thanks for a great session today everyone and thank you to Amy and Mark for sharing their work on Personas. Seven researchers chatting about personas for an hour? Research Christmas has come early! Legends!

 Add Media

Potential Bias found.

This message only acknowledges Amy and Marks's contributions to the session and may exclude the other researchers who participated in the discussion.



Introducing mission AI possible

Organizational awareness is crucial to ensuring cultural readiness. Leaders must assess whether their employees understand the broader goals and values that AI initiatives support before undertaking any new initiative.

By fostering awareness and alignment, companies can create an environment in which using AI is seen as an extension of the company's mission rather than an external force imposing change.

The Workhuman Human Intelligence release inherently supports this through the following features:

Recognition Advisor. Coaches employees on delivering meaningful and value-aligned recognition, ensuring every recognition moment is authentic and connected to company values.

Culture Hub. A dynamic showcase of recognition moments that align employees with company values and goals, fostering a culture of recognition.

Workhuman® iQ Snapshots. Provide bite-sized, contextual insights embedded into recognition moments, helping employees understand the impact of their actions.



Don't settle for just checking a box on recognition.
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