

workhuman*

4 Ways to Build a Connected Culture





As work is evolving and taking shape in various ways, trends are painting a picture of where employees are (both physically and mentally) and what they need. One of the clearest is that, across all ways of working, people feel more connected to colleagues than company culture.

But instead of viewing culture and people as two separate things that need connecting, let's reframe it. As author Adam Grant puts it: "People are not the most valuable asset in your company. People are your company."

A strong company culture develops only when you have strong employee connection. It's not the office space or amenities that define your culture. It's the people.

In his analysis of key HR trends for 2023, Workhuman's CEO Eric Mosley points out that the perennial concern of turnover and all-in cost of replacing an employee can surpass 150% of an employee's salary and decimate hiring budgets, making a strong company culture more important than ever.



Ask for feedback. Then act on it.

With a workforce more dispersed than ever, the only way you'll know how employees are feeling is by asking for feedback on a regular basis.

Consider sending a pulse survey to gauge how connected on-site, hybrid, and remote employees feel to your mission and culture. Ask what's working, what isn't, and what they think could help. Your best chance at meaningfully connecting with employees is by enacting changes they want to see.

Soliciting feedback is often a great first step toward building more direct and honest conversations between managers and employees. Frequent check-ins provide a constructive environment for managers and employees to connect, problem-solve, and help one another grow. Such relationships deepen the connection to the organization, making it more likely the employees will stay.



Workers who check in with their manager at least weekly as opposed to never are:

More than **2x** as likely to trust their manager

Nearly **2x** as likely to respect their manager

5x less likely to be disengaged

Nearly **2x** as likely to believe they can grow in the organization



Communicate what you value.

When employees see their values reflected in the mission and policies of the company, they feel more connected to the work they're doing. In a recent Workhuman® iQ survey, workers were asked: "How important is diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) for you in terms of staying at your current organization?" Seventy-two percent said it's somewhat or very important. That number is even higher for Gen Z workers (86%) and Black workers (87%).

DE&I action will define the next generation of work. Employees of color and younger workers consider it an imperative for companies.

No matter where your company is on the DE&I journey, it's important that everyone knows what your values are, where you're at in turning those values into action, and the road map ahead. And that goes for other company values and initiatives too.



72%

of workers said that DE&I is “somewhat” or “very important” in their decision to stay with their current organization.



Celebrate and acknowledge life's moments.

No one does their best work if they don't feel their colleagues and company value them as people.

Acknowledge life's moments – big and small – with your team. Weddings, babies, anniversaries, and new pets and homes bring people together outside of work, and they can do the same in some form within the organization, whether you are in person or not.

And while you always hope the good outweighs the bad, life is bound to present grief and difficulties to the people you work with too. Give people space and time to take care of their personal and family life so they're less likely to feel burned out and can be more present. Providing support for the highs *and* lows will be what creates a mutual, lasting connection.



When an employer recognizes life events and work milestones, employees are:

3x as likely to strongly agree they feel connected to culture

3x as likely to strongly agree their organization cares about their wellbeing

More than 30% more likely to say they plan to be at their organization in five years



Appreciate with intention.

Expressing appreciation makes people feel respected and confident. It improves morale and engagement, and it's what will help motivate employees to take on whatever challenge they or your organization face.

A culture of appreciation is your armor to buffer against stress and burnout and solidify the connections you need for the future of work. It's also a powerful tool to put in the hands of all employees. Rather than a top-down dispersing of rewards and recognition, you get a more connected, weblike effect.

When managers recognize their employees, it not only strengthens the connection, but it also becomes a positive coaching and development tactic. And if that appreciation is made public, you create a compounding impact.

Social psychologists have found that witnessing gratitude has cascading positive effects. Similarly, our recent survey found just witnessing colleagues being thanked publicly is associated with people feeling more grateful.

Employees who witness colleagues get recognized are more likely to feel:

- **Appreciated** for the work they do
- **Connected** to their colleagues
- **Connected** to company culture
- **Psychologically safe** to share ideas and opinions
- **Respected at work**
- Willing to **grade their manager favorably**

A connected culture is collaborative, resilient, and fueled by appreciation. It's more productive, engaged, and motivated. And it's built by connected people. For leaders, it's important to remember that connection doesn't happen by accident. It's the return on meaningfully investing in humanity and putting people first.



Create a connected culture in your organization with help from the Workhuman Cloud[®]. Get started today.

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