



## How do we as HR leaders engage in the new workplace environment?

### Actionable approaches to consider

Let me tell you that there is no easy fix to this issue, no one size fits all answer. Even for KangoGift, we use our solutions to help our clients address this issue and if there is one constant we're seeing is that there is no constant. A starting point is to keep managers informed so that they can make meaningful decisions on when and whom to give positive feedback and when to spend more time with an employee who may be unclear on the mission and/or could benefit from individualized guidance. Even within organizations one team's pathway to success will differ from others.

Therein is the solution however. Management is going to have to call on the managers to make the calls on how to engage with their teams and, most importantly, how to recognize their key successes and reward them properly. The devil is in the details.

#### **The key to success here is something I will call "Super Engagement."**

So that means you need to be the super manager who makes sure to engage with your team if they are in another time zone, at home, in the office, or sitting next to you. It's up to you and your organization to work extra hard to engage your employees. Look for those chances to find out how things are going and find ways to ensure that the team is fulfilled by what they are doing.

You also need to engage and look for reasons to reward your employees efforts. Call it generous if you will but I tell people that you need to open up your mindset when it comes to rewards. Maybe, in your mind, finishing a big project a certain way wasn't something you'd recognize pre-COVID, but now, with working in converted closets, with kids running around and dogs barking, it is a much bigger deal.

You need to recognize that and look for reasons to reward. Gone are the days of rewarding the exceptional. In today's world, much of the ordinary is exceptional.

#### **Choose the right communication method - people will thank you**

Phone, email, IM, a scheduled meeting. Educate employees to identify the best communication method. We encourage clients to frame it in an order of importance. Phone if it can't wait and is a nuanced situation or email if there is room to reply. Managers are going to have to continue taking those extra steps when engaging with employees.

#### **Facilitate direct managerial feedback and praise**

This is less difficult than it would seem. The current environment still requires a great deal of praise. If you don't want your employees to quit, get them to stay by letting them know they are making a positive contribution. The fact remains that feeling like a small cog in a giant machine will drive employees from the organization. Add in the stress of remote work

#### **Communicate values**

When I bring this concept up with KangoGift's clients I hear almost immediately that we clearly communicate our values to our employees. I tell them there is a difference between communicating your mission and communicating your values.

Your values are based on your people. You tell them why they matter and what they mean to you.

It is up to the managers, and the larger organizations, to let employees know what the values are of the organization and why they matter. Pretending that the events of last year didn't happen is a great way to send your employees to the door. There are a great number of tactics you can use but it is vital that you don't simply tell your employees that they matter, that would be the worst thing you could do, you should tell them HOW they match the organization's values.

#### **Employee statements**

It is essential that the higher ups in your organization have at a glance some type of record of what is going on in their teams. It's my experience that this is an area where organizations come up short.

So this is where your front line managers come into it. They need to be tasked with providing their managers with what they are hearing from their employees good, bad or otherwise. The statement needs to share what they are hearing but it also needs to tell higher ups what is going on in regards to their teams. This could be some type of life event, professional event like an anniversary or some type of personal recognition. But it's up to the senior and executive levels of HR to make sure these steps are being taken.

#### **Takeaways**

Managers need to invest in direct, person-to-person, physical facetime as much as possible.

The organization needs to clearly communicate its values and must do so to the employees. Trotting out some 5 year old mission statement won't suffice. Your employees need to know how they are a part of the organization accomplishing its values.

You need to know what your employees are thinking and saying at a glance. It is up to the senior level managers to know what's going on and it's up to front line managers to engage with employees on the product line level so those important events that engage employees are closely monitored and shared with higher ups.

When I'm meeting with senior level human resources leaders on behalf of KangoGift, the great resignation is one thing I keep hearing a lot about. Quite honestly, they don't know what to make of it because they've never seen anything like it before. There's been a lot of that the past year and a half. Follow the steps above, keep your employee engagement strong and at the forefront and know that employees who are satisfied and believe they are doing something are less likely to leave.

#### **About Us**

KangoGift is an HR technology company that provides a platform to enhance the employee experience using three modules - engagement, recognition, and insights. We help organizations foster cultures that ensure employees feel valued, appreciated, and inspired to do their best everyday. Our HR tools help organizations achieve those goals.

#### **Benefits**

Employee retention. We help employees understand the impact they are having on their career growth, the company, and colleagues. Our approach of using smart tech to enable authentic moments has helped many organizations. Working with the KangoGift team will help promote a culture that embraces thoughtful discussions.