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RECRUITMENT

WHAT HR LEADERS
SHOULD PREPARE
FOR IN 2025 &
BEYOND

TRANSFORMING STAN CHART FROM THE HR PERSPECTIVE

MR. KENNETH MBIGANYI MBAIWA

Standard Chartered Bank Botswana - Head, Human Resources Botswana

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|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Founder & CEO: | Mompoloki Makwana |
| Managing Director: | Mrs.Nikita Makwana |
| Executive Assistant: | Ms. Omogolo S. Maforaga |
| Marketing Officer: | Ms. Koketso Gaborone |
| Marketing Officer: | Miss. Jame J. Motswagole |
| Marketing Officer: | Mr. Bokamoso Makwana |

CONTRIBUTORS

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| . Mompoloki Makwana | . Poppy L. Sello |
| . Malebogo Melba Mpugwa | . Taazima Kala-Essack |
| . Boitumelo Keoagile | . Thokie Morolong |
| . Ms Katlego T. Kabotho | . Nikita Makwana |
| . Anisa Bimbo. PRM | . Sebenzile Dlamini |
| . Prof Mmamokgethi | . MS.ABA |

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www.employeeafrica.com

P O Box 616 ABF
 Plot 56712, Block10
 Gaborone, Botswana
marketing@employeeafrica.co.bw



MR. KENNETH MBIGANYI MBAIWA
Head, Human Resources
Standard Chartered Bank Botswana

**COVER STORY
FEATURE**



MBAIWA: TRANSFORMING STANDARD CHARTERED FROM THE HR PERSPECTIVE

Kenneth Mbaiwa, Head of Human Resources at Standard Chartered Bank of Botswana (SCBB) is deeply passionate about his field. He is confident that StanChart Bank being the only international bank in the country, has excelled in creating policies and initiatives focused on staff welfare, contributing to a strong performance culture at StanChart.

In this **EXCLUSIVE PROFILE**, the experienced and upbeat Mbaiwa details how the Bank stands out for its unique and best in class Human Capital Development. **WRITES STAFF WRITER.**

CAREER JOURNEY

With an impressive track record in HR, Mbaiwa is undoubtedly one of Botswana's most experienced Human Resource professionals.

His career, spanning over a decade, began with National Development Bank (NDB) in 2012, where he joined as part of the government's national internship programme and later appointed as an Organizational Development Officer until 2016.

As a graduate, he was exposed to various disciplines within the human resources department from HR Operations, people capability, performance management and policy development which all gave him a solid understanding of the overall human resource function.

Following his tenure at NDB, Mbaiwa briefly joined the government parastatal, Botswana Oil, serving as a Human Resource Generalist from March 2016 to August 2016.

He subsequently, entered the financial services sector, joining Banc ABC in September 2016 as Human Capital Manager. He was later promoted to the ABC Holdings Group, where he served as Group Human Capital Manager from February 2018 to January 2020.

He was responsible for Implementing and maintaining the infrastructure of the Human Capital function regionally



for the Group, as well as driving operational excellence throughout the organization with a focus on advancing its overall objectives.

JOINING STANCHART

Mbaiwa joined the Bank in January 2020 as an HR Business Partner and was appointed Head of Human Resources in January 2023.

"I transitioned to StanChart and found it different from everything I had experienced before. It is a complex environment, given the Bank's presence in over fifty-two (52) countries worldwide. However, this offers a great employee experience as

employees in the StanChart Botswana have access to peers across the globe who are readily available to collaborate on global best practice. An international network that only StanChart employees can enjoy," said the veteran HR expert Mbaiwa.

He emphasized that, during his tenure, significant progress was made through collaboration and partnership with other departments. The primary focus has been on reviewing the employee value proposition to ensure that it aligns Standard Chartered's aspiration of being the 'Bank of the future.'

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"I am committed to give young people an opportunity to progress and acquire different set of skills"
-Mbaiwa

core values that you live by and for me that value is integrity. We have a responsibility to bring such values to life through our behaviors and how we lead the people we work and interact with every day," he stated.

He further explained that, if a performance issue arises in, for example, the Wealth and Retail segment, all teams come together to address and resolve the issue collectively.

STRATEGIC VISION

Delving into his strategic vision for the Department, Mbaiwa emphasized that he sees HR as an enabler of business function and performance.

"We enable through advisory, guiding the business on how to maximize the potential of its employees and competitively reward its employees," he stated.

Mbaiwa further elaborated, "Most importantly, we must consider how to enable the business to evolve and align with future skill requirements. We must recognize that the world of work is changing."

He noted that Stanchart empowers and heavily invests in employees by providing Innovative learning solutions and opportunities to build skills and confidence that will stay with employees for life. Cross-border experiences and exposure to different markets and cultures across a unique geographical footprint that bridges Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas. The opportunity to lead with purpose. We believe that each of us has the potential to aspire to greatness, to inspire others into action and to execute with ambition.

>> FROM PAGE 6

"When I joined, our employee value proposition was relatively competitive albeit dated. I arrived just as we were heading into the COVID-19 period, during which staff spent much of their time working apart from each other.

I implemented the hybrid working program, allowing employees the flexibility to either work from home or come into the office, depending on the nature of their work. This gave the employees an opportunity to design how they want to work and ensure they also attend to their personal demanding schedules. The end goal in mind being to address issues of work life balance which is a key value proposition for employees. Since then, we have observed a marked

improvement in productivity," he said. This, he noted, was a cross-functional exercise, involving collaboration with teams from other markets.

PROFESSIONAL PHILOSOPHY

On his leadership approach, Mbaiwa shared that he views both HR and the Bank as continuously evolving, which inspires him to adopt a collaborative and inclusive style of leadership.

"I believe that as a Leader you play an integral role in leading the performance of any business, creating an inclusive and sustainably high performing culture, and a positive employee experience as a result. Therefore, in so doing you must have



Stanchart is a skills-based organization that has shifted away from traditional work modes, leading to the consideration of universal multi-skilled bankers, as having employees with multiple skills is essential for the Bank to remain competitive in the market.

"Given the changing nature of the banking industry, we need individuals who understand consumer needs and wants and use their unique capabilities to solution for clients. We have a skills passport as a Bank, which outlines the skills we aim to develop for the future and identifies areas where these skills are most needed to maintain our competitiveness," he added.

He mentioned that one of the key transformations made was shifting

the performance management system away from numerical-based ratings. Mbaiwa emphasized that performance ratings should significantly affect staff and impact bonuses or increments. "Performance assessment is now continuous. We have implemented a system where employees have regular conversations with their managers throughout the year to address the challenges they face. Growth is also essential and must align with the skills each individual possesses," he explained.

Mbaiwa further noted that the HR department standardized allowances and benefits by providing car and housing allowances across the bank for all employees, whereas, in the past, only executives or line managers had access to these benefits.

Regarding work-life balance, he highlighted that employees previously had different leave entitlements based on their grade, with some receiving 18 or 25 days. This has now been standardized to 30 days, as he believes that everyone needs to rest.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

At Standard Chartered, we are committed to fostering an inclusive environment where the unique perspectives and experiences of colleagues are recognised and valued. Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) at Standard Chartered are at the centre of our strategy as evidenced by our purpose, driving commerce and prosperity through our unique diversity. We aim at building a culture of inclusion that is a critical lever to our business success and that will enable us to be the best place to work, the best place to bank and contribute to creating prosperous communities. To enable this, there are three key objectives for our D&I agenda:

- To attract, engage, develop, and retain diverse talent to maximise performance.
- To deliver banking products and services that meet the needs of our diverse client base.
- To support a diverse and responsible supply chain and investment in our communities.

Our diversity and inclusion pillar, enables teams to unlock innovation, make better decisions, deliver our business strategy, live our valued behaviours, and embody our "Here for Good" brand promise.

"To further show our commitment to inclusion in the workplace, we reviewed our parental leave policy; we now offer a standardized 20-week parental leave regardless of gender. Previously, it meant that only the mother was primarily responsible for raising the child, but now male employees can take 20 weeks off to spend time with their newborn," he added.

This is progressive in ensuring that we participate in building a society that participates in early childhood development as we build for the future. This approach allows families to transition together as they welcome a new family member, fostering a more



inclusive and diverse environment.

TALENT MANAGEMENT

In general, Talent Management is a phrase that is used loosely but at Stanchart, we understand that it is a strategic pillar that assures the Bank's competitiveness. Talent management is the coordinated cycle of strategic conversations, activities and processes that enables us to identify, develop and deploy our top talent who have the skills and aspiration to make the biggest difference to our clients and communities in areas that will make the most impact for the Bank.

"We are the only international bank in Botswana, and we leverage our network to expose our employees to diverse environments and facilitate skills transfer. Currently, we have 14 Batswana holding senior positions abroad," he stated.

He explained that the Bank provides

employees with opportunities for both short-term and long-term assignments in other countries, where they take on new roles and gain valuable experience.

"We have a talent marketplace - a platform where employees and people leaders go to buy and sell their skills and projects. Through such a platform, the Bank has provided an environment where the requestor, can post a job, short-term or long-term project. The employees in the Bank would then access these opportunities based on the skills they possess or are working to build and participate accordingly. This encourages collaboration of the best minds across the globe." he added.

Additionally, Mbaiwa shared that 80% of their appointments are made internally as part of their commitment to retaining and nurturing talent. "There isn't a Bank that doesn't have

Stanchart alumnus in its leadership ranks," he said.

HR CHALLENGES

He identified the primary challenge for human resources being the misalignment between the aspirations of employees and strategic focus of the business. Employees now understand exactly what they want, how they want it and at times this can cause problems if the employer is unable to create an environment that balances the two.

However, Mbaiwa explained that the Bank is addressing this by focusing on developing its people internally, expanding their skill sets to meet the market's evolving needs by considering the aspirations of the employees and merging them into the overall strategy of the business. Additionally, Mbaiwa noted that technology plays a crucial role in shaping and transforming HR, allowing the sector to better respond to its challenges. Mbaiwa also highlighted the importance of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which allows employees to match their skills to available opportunities within the bank. Technology when used proactively enables for quality people decisions which impacts business outcomes positively.

LEGACY

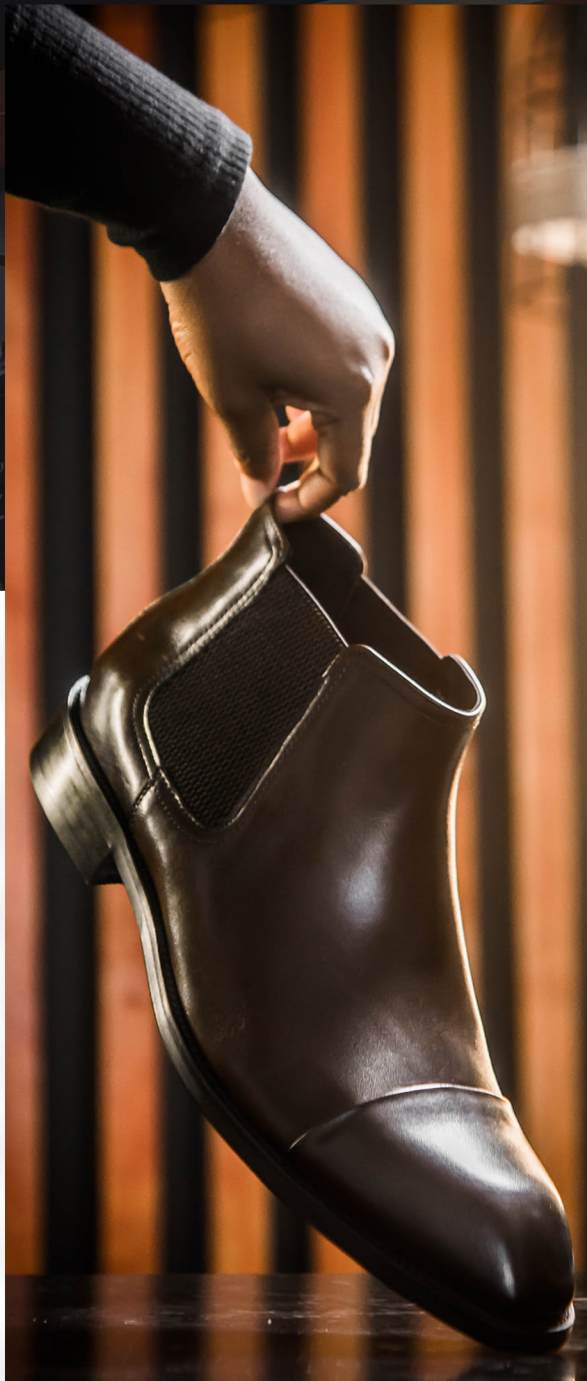
Mbaiwa expressed his desire to leave Standard Chartered as a highly productive organization with a pool of staff that is second to none.

"I want our staff to have competitive pay packages and, beyond that, to know that their mental well-being is valued. Looking ahead, I am also committed to providing young people with opportunities to progress and develop diverse skill sets. I will continue mentoring, and collaborating with young professionals who aspire to grow in the corporate world," said the optimistic Mbaiwa.

INSPIRATIONAL

Family: Mbaiwa is a dedicated family man, married with three young children.

Community Leader: He is also deeply involved in community work and has adopted a school in Kopong to support early childhood education.



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EXPERT ADVICE



AI IN RECRUITMENT

How AI is Revolutionizing Recruitment in African Businesses

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in recruitment has emerged as a transformative force in the hiring processes of businesses globally, and African enterprises are no exception. As the continent experiences rapid digital transformation, AI technologies are increasingly being adopted to enhance recruitment efficiency and address various challenges within the hiring landscape.

EFFICIENCY GAINS

Streamlined Processes: Gone are the days when recruiters spent countless hours sifting through piles of resumes. With AI-powered tools, hiring processes can be streamlined, allowing HR professionals to focus on strategic decision-making rather than administrative tasks. AI can automate repetitive elements of recruitment—

like screening resumes, scheduling interviews, and initial candidate communications—significantly reducing the time to hire.

AI can significantly reduce the time spent on recruitment by automating repetitive tasks such as resume screening, scheduling interviews, and communicating with candidates. This allows HR professionals in African businesses to focus on more strategic aspects of recruitment, such as candidate engagement and cultural fit. For many African businesses, this efficiency is crucial. The continent faces a unique set of challenges, from skill shortages to high unemployment rates. AI-driven tools can analyze vast data sets to identify potential candidates who may not be actively seeking jobs, thus broadening the talent pool. This is particularly important in regions where specific

skills are in high demand but short supply.

Enhanced Candidate Sourcing: AI-driven tools can analyze vast amounts of data from various sources (job boards, social media, etc.) to identify potential candidates who may not be actively seeking jobs. This broadens the talent pool, helping African businesses find qualified individuals, especially in regions where specific skills may be scarce.

Improved Matching Algorithms: AI can utilize machine learning algorithms to match candidates with job descriptions more accurately. This can lead to better hires, reducing turnover rates and ensuring that the right skills and cultural fit are prioritized. In the context of African businesses, this can help overcome challenges related to skill shortages



and mismatched qualifications.

Data-Driven Insights: AI doesn't just speed things up; it also improves the quality of hires. Advanced algorithms can match candidates with job descriptions more accurately, taking into account not just qualifications but also cultural fit. This is essential for African businesses operating in diverse environments, where understanding local contexts and cultural nuances can make a significant difference in team dynamics.

AI can analyze recruitment data to provide insights into trends and patterns, enabling companies to make informed decisions about their hiring strategies. This is particularly beneficial for African businesses looking to adapt to changing market demands and workforce dynamics.

NAVIGATING ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Transparency is another ethical pillar.

Candidates deserve to know how their data is being used and how decisions are made. By fostering an open dialogue about the role of AI in hiring, African businesses can build trust with their candidates, enhancing their employer brand in a competitive talent market. While the efficiency gains from AI in recruitment are evident, there are significant ethical considerations that African businesses must address:

Bias in Algorithms: One of the major concerns with AI recruitment tools is the potential for bias. If the data used to train these algorithms is biased, it can perpetuate existing inequalities, particularly in regions with diverse ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. African businesses need to ensure that their AI systems are designed and tested to minimize bias and promote inclusivity.

Transparency: Candidates may be unaware of how AI is used in the recruitment process, which can lead

to mistrust. African businesses should strive for transparency by clearly communicating how AI tools are employed, how decisions are made, and what data is collected. This builds trust and encourages a more positive candidate experience.

Job Displacement Concerns: The automation of recruitment processes may raise concerns about job displacement for HR professionals. While AI can take over repetitive tasks, it is essential for businesses to emphasize that AI should complement human capabilities rather than replace them. Upskilling and reskilling initiatives can help prepare the workforce for a more AI-integrated recruitment landscape.

Data Privacy: With the rise of AI comes the responsibility of handling candidates' personal data responsibly. African businesses must comply with local data protection regulations and international standards to safeguard candidates' information, fostering trust in the recruitment process.

CONCLUSION

The integration of AI into recruitment processes holds immense potential for African businesses. By harnessing the power of AI, companies can achieve greater efficiency and attract top talent in a competitive landscape. However, the ethical considerations that come with this technology cannot be overlooked. Striking a balance between leveraging AI for operational efficiency and upholding ethical standards will be key to ensuring that AI serves as a force for good in the recruitment landscape.

The impact of AI on recruitment processes presents both opportunities and challenges for African businesses. By leveraging AI technologies, these businesses can achieve greater efficiency and enhance their ability to attract top talent. However, it is crucial to navigate the ethical considerations associated with AI adoption thoughtfully. Striking a balance between technological advancement and ethical responsibility will be key to ensuring that AI serves as a force for good in the recruitment landscape, ultimately contributing to the growth and development of the African economy.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR MANAGERS;

The Key to Success

In the fast-paced world of business, effective communication has become more than just a skill; it's an essential tool for managers aiming to create a successful and cohesive work environment. In this article, we will explore the critical communication skills every manager should develop, the challenges they face, and strategies to enhance their communication effectiveness.

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION IN MANAGEMENT

Communication is the backbone of any organization. It facilitates the flow of information, fosters relationships, and drives decision-making. For managers, the ability to communicate effectively can lead to improved team dynamics, higher employee satisfaction, and enhanced organizational performance.

The Importance of Effective Communication

1. Clarity and Understanding:

Clear communication ensures that team members understand their roles, responsibilities, and the organization's goals. This clarity helps prevent misunderstandings and misinterpretations that can lead to conflict or confusion. When employees know what is expected of them, they are more likely to meet those expectations, leading to increased productivity and job satisfaction.

2. Building Trust and Relationships:

Effective communication fosters an environment of trust. When managers communicate openly and honestly, it encourages employees to do the same, creating stronger relationships within the team. Trust is a critical component of any successful team, and it can only be built through consistent, clear communication.



3. Facilitating Change: In today's dynamic business landscape, change is inevitable. Managers must communicate effectively to guide their teams through transitions, whether they are implementing new technologies, changing processes, or adapting to market shifts. A manager's ability to convey the reasons for change and the benefits it brings can significantly influence how well the team adapts.

4. Enhancing Engagement and Motivation: When managers communicate effectively, it boosts employee engagement. Feeling informed and involved increases motivation and productivity. Engaged

employees are more likely to go above and beyond, contributing to the organization's overall success. Moreover, when employees feel that their voices are heard, they are more likely to remain with the organization, reducing turnover rates.

5. Conflict Resolution: Effective communication is crucial in resolving conflicts. Managers must be adept at addressing issues as they arise, using communication as a tool to facilitate discussions that lead to resolutions. This not only helps in maintaining a positive work environment but also strengthens the team. By handling conflicts effectively, managers can turn potentially negative situations



into opportunities for growth and learning.

6. Promoting Collaboration: In today's workplace, collaboration is key to success. Effective communication helps break down silos within organizations, facilitating teamwork and shared goals. When team members communicate openly, they can share ideas, solve problems collaboratively, and leverage each other's strengths.

ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR MANAGERS

1. Active Listening: This skill involves not just hearing but understanding what is being said. Active listening requires managers to pay full attention to the speaker, show empathy, and reflect back what they've heard to ensure comprehension. This practice makes employees feel valued and understood, fostering a culture of open communication. Managers can demonstrate active listening by asking clarifying questions and summarizing key points during discussions.

2. Non-Verbal Communication: Body language, facial expressions,

and eye contact convey messages that can significantly impact communication. Managers should be aware of their non-verbal cues and those of their team members, as these can either reinforce or contradict spoken words. For instance, crossed arms may indicate defensiveness, while open posture can convey receptiveness. Being mindful of non-verbal signals can enhance a manager's ability to connect with their team.

3. Empathy: Understanding and acknowledging the feelings and perspectives of others is crucial. Empathetic managers can foster a supportive work environment, which encourages open communication and collaboration. By showing empathy, managers can address employee concerns more effectively, leading to a more cohesive team. Empathy also helps in building rapport, making it easier to navigate difficult conversations.

4. Clarity and Conciseness: Effective managers convey their messages in a straightforward manner, avoiding jargon and ambiguity. This clarity helps ensure that the message is understood as intended. It is important for managers to tailor their communication style to their audience, ensuring that complex

ideas are simplified without losing essential details. Being concise also respects employees' time, making it more likely they will engage with the information being presented.

5. Feedback: Providing constructive feedback is essential for employee development. Managers should learn to give feedback that is specific, actionable, and delivered in a respectful manner. Additionally, being receptive to feedback from employees is equally important. Creating a two-way feedback loop not only aids in individual growth but also enhances team dynamics. Regular feedback sessions can help maintain open lines of communication and build a culture of continuous improvement.

6. Adaptability: Different situations and individuals may require different communication approaches. Effective managers are adaptable, adjusting their communication styles based on the audience and context. This flexibility allows managers to connect with diverse team members and address varying communication needs. For instance, some employees may prefer direct communication, while others may respond better.

BRIDGING THE GAP:

Key Ways to Address Skillset Mismatch in Today's Workforce

In an era defined by rapid technological advancement and shifting economic landscapes, organizations across industries are grappling with an increasingly common issue: skillset mismatch. This phenomenon, where employees' skills do not align with the demands of their roles, can hinder productivity, innovation, and overall organizational success. As businesses strive to remain competitive, addressing skillset mismatch is not just a necessity; it's a strategic imperative. In this article, we delve into the key strategies that organizations can adopt to effectively bridge the skill gap and empower their workforce.

UNDERSTANDING SKILLSET MISMATCH

Skillset mismatch occurs when

there is a discrepancy between the skills that employees possess and the skills required to perform their jobs effectively. This issue can stem from various factors, including rapid technological advancements, changes in market demands, and evolving organizational goals. The consequences of skillset mismatch are far-reaching: decreased employee morale, lower productivity, and increased turnover rates can all follow if the mismatch is not addressed. Moreover, organizations may struggle to innovate and adapt to market changes, putting them at a competitive disadvantage.

For instance, as more companies adopt automation and artificial intelligence, the demand for employees with technical skills has surged. Many workers, however, may find their existing skill sets

inadequate for these new roles. This can lead to frustration and disengagement, particularly among employees who feel they are unable to keep pace with the changing demands of their jobs. To combat this, organizations must take proactive measures to ensure their workforce is equipped with the skills necessary to thrive in the modern work environment.

This phenomenon can be attributed to several factors, including:

1. Rapid Technological Changes:

The pace at which technology evolves can render existing skills obsolete. For instance, automation and artificial intelligence are transforming industries, necessitating new skill sets that many workers may not have. A



report by the World Economic Forum suggests that up to 85 million jobs may be displaced by automation by 2025, while 97 million new roles could emerge that require a different skill set.

2. Educational Curriculum Misalignment:

Many educational institutions often lag behind industry needs, focusing on traditional knowledge rather than equipping students with practical skills that are currently in demand. For example, a 2021 survey indicated that 65% of employers felt that graduates lacked the necessary skills for their roles.

3. Geographic Disparities:

Certain regions may lack job opportunities that match the skills of the local workforce, leading to

unemployment or underemployment for skilled workers. Rural areas, in particular, may experience a brain drain as young talent migrates to urban centers for better opportunities, exacerbating this mismatch.

4. Changing Job Roles:

As job roles evolve, the required skill sets also change. Workers may find their expertise no longer aligns with the new demands of their positions. This is particularly evident in industries like healthcare and technology, where the rapid evolution of practices and tools necessitates continual learning.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ADDRESSING SKILLSET MISMATCH

Recognizing the significance of skillset mismatch is the first step toward effective resolution. The changing landscape of work, driven by technological advancements and globalization, has rendered some skills obsolete while creating a demand for new competencies. Organizations that fail to adapt may find themselves unable to meet customer expectations or capitalize on new opportunities. Additionally, employees who feel their skills are underutilized are more likely to experience disengagement, leading to higher attrition rates. Addressing skillset mismatch not only enhances operational efficiency but also fosters a more engaged and motivated workforce.

Moreover, organizations that prioritize skill development are likely to see improved performance, innovation, and employee satisfaction. Those that effectively address skillset issues can create a more resilient workforce capable of adapting to ongoing changes in the market. This resilience not only secures the organization's competitive edge but also enhances its reputation as an employer of choice.

SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS SKILLSET MISMATCH

Addressing skillset mismatch requires a multifaceted approach involving various stakeholders, including educational institutions, businesses, and government agencies. Here are some key strategies to bridge the gap:

1. Skills Assessment: The First Step

The journey to resolving skillset mismatch begins with a comprehensive skills assessment. Organizations should conduct regular evaluations to identify the competencies of their employees and compare them to the skills required for their roles. This assessment can take various forms, such as self-assessments, peer reviews, and performance evaluations. Utilizing tools like competency frameworks and skills matrices can help in creating a clear picture of skill needs across the organization.

For example, a manufacturing



company might find that while its employees excel in traditional production techniques, they lack familiarity with emerging technologies like robotics or AI-driven systems. This insight allows the company to tailor its training programs accordingly, ensuring that employees are prepared for the future of work. Furthermore, organizations can leverage data analytics to track skills trends and predict future needs, allowing for proactive rather than reactive training measures.

Incorporating technology into the assessment process can enhance accuracy and efficiency. For instance, using software platforms that analyze employee performance data can provide deeper insights into skill gaps and help organizations make informed decisions about training priorities. Additionally, regular reassessment ensures that skill inventories remain current and that training initiatives are aligned with evolving organizational goals.

2. Training and Development: Investing in People

Once skill gaps are identified, the next step is to invest in training and development. Tailored training programs can help employees acquire the necessary skills to thrive in their roles. These programs may include workshops, online courses, and mentorship opportunities. For instance, a technology firm may offer coding boot camps for employees who need to update their programming skills, while a customer service-oriented company might provide training in communication and conflict resolution.

Investing in employee development is not only beneficial for the organization but also for employee retention. When employees see that their employer is committed to their growth, they are more likely to remain loyal to the organization.

This investment can take various forms, including formal training

programs, on-the-job learning, and access to online educational resources. By creating a culture of continuous learning, organizations can foster a workforce that is agile and adaptable.

Additionally, organizations should consider incorporating experiential learning opportunities, such as project-based assignments, where employees can apply new skills in real-world scenarios. This hands-on approach not only reinforces learning but also enhances employee confidence and job satisfaction. Furthermore, providing opportunities for employees to attend industry conferences and seminars can broaden their perspectives and keep them updated on the latest trends and innovations.

To further enhance training initiatives, organizations might want to consider implementing a learning management system (LMS) that can track employee progress, identify areas for improvement.

WHAT HR LEADERS SHOULD PREPARE FOR IN 2025 & BEYOND

As we look toward 2025 and beyond, the landscape of human resources

(HR) is undergoing significant transformations driven by technological advancements, shifting workforce dynamics, and evolving employee expectations. HR leaders must equip themselves with the foresight and strategies necessary to navigate these changes effectively. Here's an in-depth exploration of what HR leaders should prepare for in the near future.

1. THE RISE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND AUTOMATION

Embracing AI in Recruitment and Employee Engagement

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is poised to revolutionize HR practices. By 2025, we can expect AI-driven recruitment tools to become mainstream, enabling HR professionals to streamline the hiring process through predictive analytics, chatbots for initial screening, and enhanced candidate experience. AI can analyze candidate resumes and match them with job descriptions, significantly reducing the time spent on initial screenings. Furthermore, AI can help in identifying the best-fit candidates based on their skills, experiences, and cultural fit.

In employee engagement, AI-enhanced tools can provide personalized feedback and support, fostering a more responsive work environment. For example, AI-driven platforms can analyze employee engagement surveys in real time, allowing HR to respond quickly to any concerns and implement actionable strategies.

Automation of Administrative Tasks
Automation will continue to reduce the burden of administrative tasks such as payroll processing, benefits administration, and compliance reporting. Robotic Process Automation (RPA) can handle repetitive tasks, freeing HR teams to focus on more



strategic initiatives. HR leaders need to invest in tools that automate these functions while ensuring that the human touch remains in areas requiring empathy and personal interaction.

The integration of AI in performance management systems can also provide real-time feedback and facilitate continuous performance assessments, making the review process more dynamic and less cumbersome.

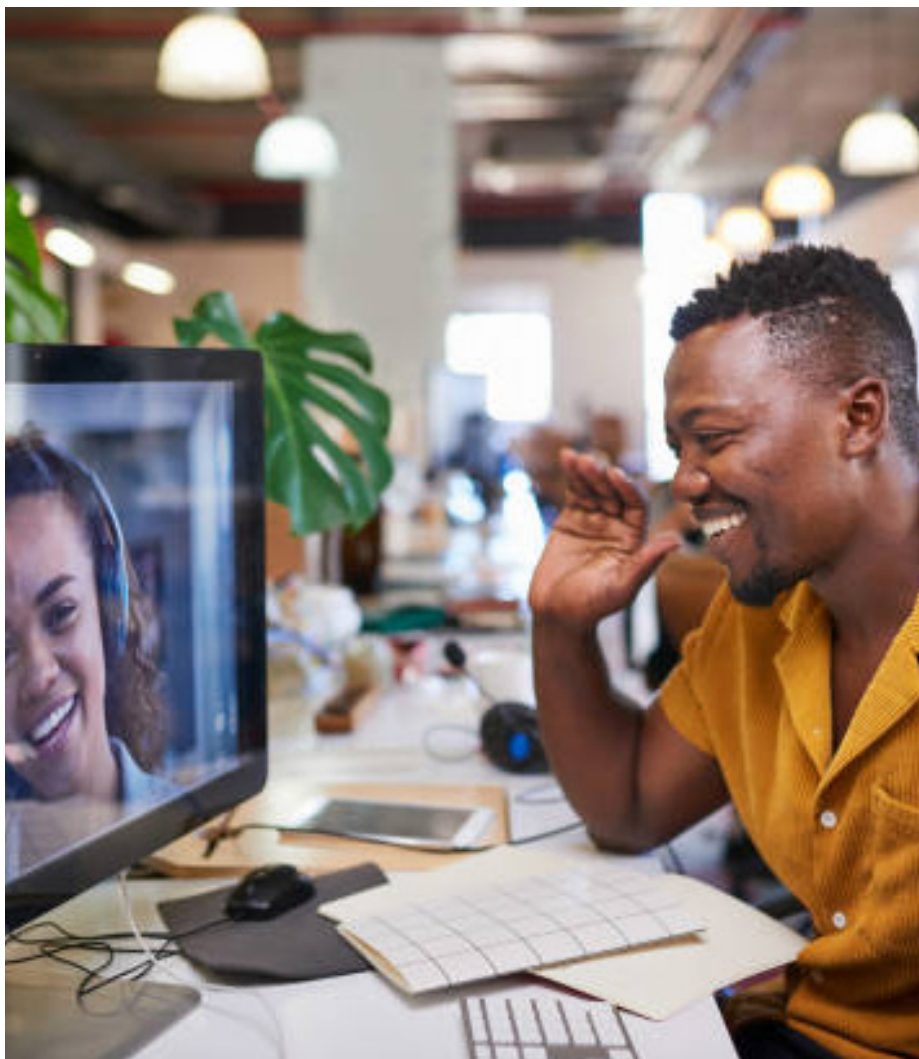
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TRANSPARENCY

As AI becomes more integrated into

HR processes, ethical considerations will come to the forefront. HR leaders must ensure that AI systems are transparent and free from bias. This involves regular audits of AI tools, training staff on ethical implications, and fostering open dialogues about the use of technology in decision-making. Developing guidelines for ethical AI use and establishing a governance framework for AI implementation will be essential.

2. REMOTE AND HYBRID WORK MODELS

Evolving Workplace Policies



The pandemic accelerated the shift to remote work, and this trend is likely to continue. By 2025, a significant portion of the workforce may operate in hybrid environments. HR leaders should prepare to develop and refine policies that accommodate flexible work arrangements, ensuring that productivity remains high while also addressing employee well-being and work-life balance. This includes establishing clear guidelines on remote work expectations, communication practices, and performance metrics.

Fostering a Remote Culture

Creating a strong organizational culture in a remote or hybrid setting presents challenges. HR leaders must implement strategies to foster inclusivity, engagement, and collaboration among distributed teams. This includes leveraging technology for virtual team-building activities, establishing regular check-ins, and creating opportunities for informal interactions among team members, such as virtual coffee breaks

or informal chat channels.

Technology Infrastructure

To support remote work, HR leaders should invest in robust technology infrastructure. This includes collaboration tools, secure communication platforms, and project management software that enable seamless interaction among team members, regardless of location. Training employees on these tools will also be crucial to maximizing their effectiveness.

Additionally, HR leaders should consider providing stipends for home office setups, ensuring employees have the necessary equipment and ergonomically sound environments to remain productive and comfortable while working remotely.

Addressing the Challenges of Remote Work

While remote work offers flexibility, it can also lead to feelings of isolation and disconnection among employees.

HR leaders should implement strategies to combat these challenges, such as offering regular mental health resources, creating channels for peer support, and encouraging team members to share their experiences and struggles openly.

3. FOCUS ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI)

Advancing DEI Initiatives

Diversity, equity, and inclusion will remain at the forefront of HR priorities. The expectation for organizations to demonstrate a genuine commitment to DEI will grow. HR leaders should prepare to implement measurable DEI strategies, including equitable hiring practices, inclusive workplace policies, and targeted training programs that promote cultural competence. This commitment will not only enhance employee satisfaction but also attract diverse talent and foster innovation.

Addressing Systemic Bias

HR leaders must also be equipped to address systemic biases within their organizations. This involves auditing existing practices, fostering transparent dialogues about race and privilege, and ensuring that all employees feel valued and respected. Implementing mentorship programs that support underrepresented groups can facilitate career advancement and contribute to a more inclusive workplace culture.

Community Engagement and Social Responsibility

Organizations are increasingly held accountable for their impact on society. HR leaders should explore ways to engage employees in community initiatives and social responsibility programs. This not only enhances the company's reputation but also fosters a sense of purpose and belonging among employees. Initiatives such as volunteer days, community service projects, or partnerships with local organizations can create a shared sense of mission and strengthen team bonds.

EFFECTIVE WAYS TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES



THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH IN AFRICAN WORKPLACES

Mental health is an often-overlooked aspect of employee well-being in Africa, where traditional views and economic pressures can complicate the conversation. However, as the continent's workforce rapidly evolves, addressing mental health is becoming increasingly crucial. This issue aims to explore effective strategies tailored to the unique challenges and cultural contexts of African workplaces, fostering environments where employees can thrive.

UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

Mental health issues in Africa are prevalent but frequently underreported due to stigma and lack

of awareness. According to the World Health Organization, mental disorders account for nearly 13% of the global burden of disease, with Africa facing unique challenges in diagnosing and treating these conditions.

KEY STATISTICS:

- 1 in 4 people will experience mental health issues in their lifetime.
- Mental health services in Africa are significantly underfunded, with less than 1% of health budgets allocated to mental health.

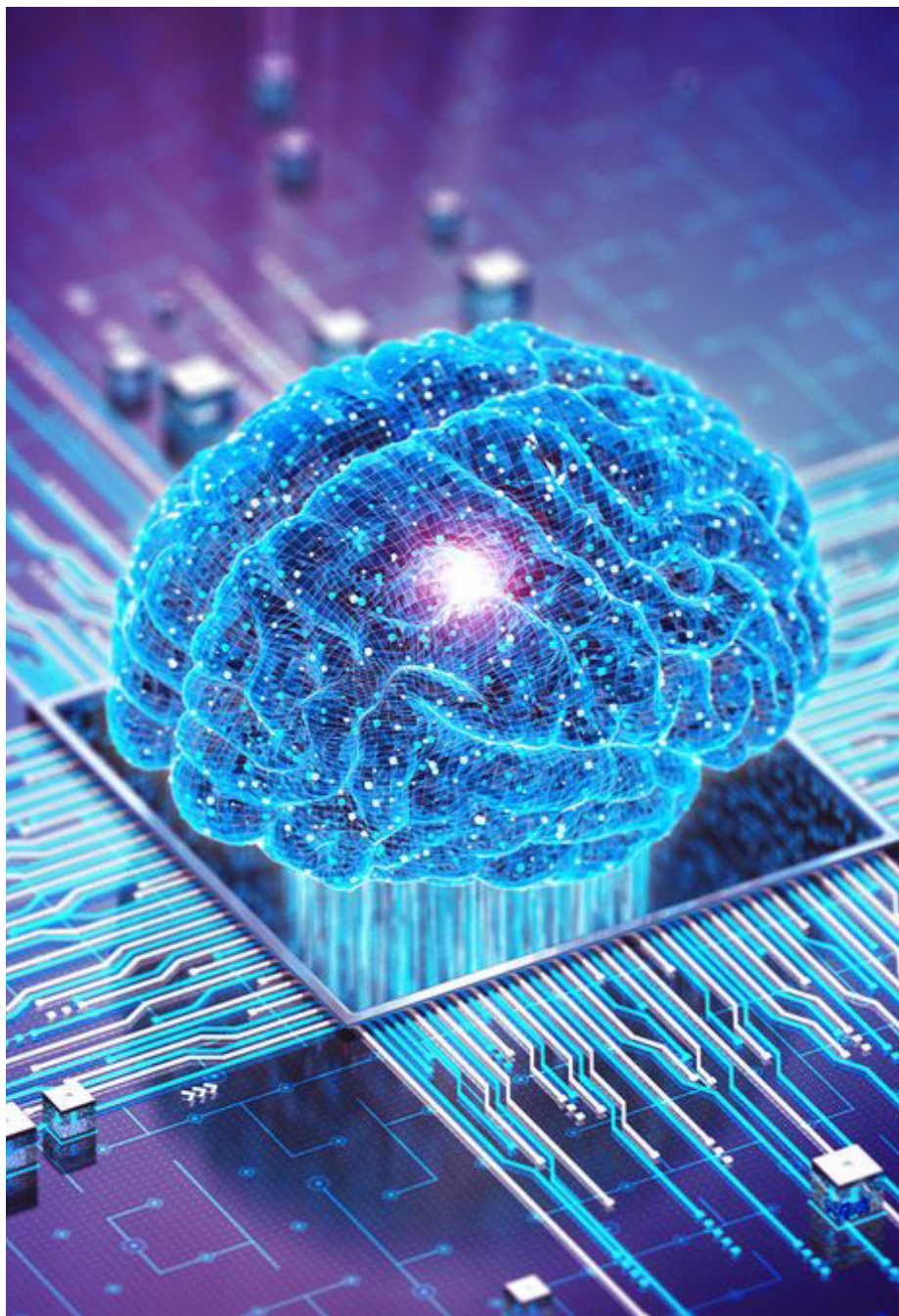
Cultural Considerations and Stigma
Cultural perspectives on mental health can vary widely across African nations. In many communities, mental illness may be viewed through spiritual or traditional lenses, leading to stigma and reluctance to seek professional

help. Understanding these cultural nuances is essential for effectively addressing mental health in the workplace.

CREATING A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT OPEN COMMUNICATION

Encouraging open dialogue about mental health in African workplaces is vital. Leadership should foster a culture where employees feel safe to discuss their struggles without fear of judgment. This may involve training sessions that raise awareness and encourage empathy among colleagues.

Flexibility and Work-Life Balance
Given the diverse family structures and responsibilities prevalent in many African communities, offering flexible



work arrangements can significantly enhance mental well-being. Options such as remote work and adaptable hours can help employees balance work and personal life more effectively.

Training and Resources for Managers
Equipping managers with the knowledge to identify and address mental health issues is crucial. Training programs should focus on cultural sensitivity, active listening, and recognizing signs of mental distress, enabling them to provide appropriate support to their teams.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)
Implementing EAPs tailored to the African context can provide employees with access to confidential counselling and support. These programs can

offer culturally relevant resources, addressing specific community challenges and promoting mental wellness.

Promoting Mental Wellness:

Strategies and Programs **Wellness Workshops**

Conducting wellness workshops that incorporate local cultural practices can help employees engage with mental health topics. Workshops may include traditional storytelling, community discussions, and practical coping strategies that resonate with local values.

Community Support Initiatives
In many African cultures, community

plays a significant role in well-being. Employers can foster mental wellness by facilitating community support groups and peer networks, allowing employees to share experiences and provide mutual assistance.

Building a Culture of Inclusivity and Support

A workplace that embraces diversity and inclusivity is more likely to support mental health. Encouraging participation from various cultural backgrounds can enrich the work environment, fostering a sense of belonging and support among employees.

Case Studies: Successful Implementations in Africa

A South African tech start-up recognized high levels of stress among employees and implemented a wellness program that included flexible work hours and mental health days. The initiative led to a 25% increase in productivity and improved employee retention.

Company B: Nigerian Retail Chain

A Nigerian retail chain launched a culturally-informed EAP that included access to traditional healers alongside professional counseling. Employee participation increased, and the initiative resulted in a 40% reduction in absenteeism.

Legal and Ethical Considerations

Employers in Africa must navigate various legal frameworks related to mental health. Understanding local laws concerning employee rights and mental health provisions is critical to ensuring compliance and fostering a supportive workplace.

Conclusion: A Call to Action

Addressing mental health in African workplaces is not just a responsibility; it is essential for the sustainability and growth of organizations.

By prioritizing mental health initiatives and fostering supportive environments, companies can enhance employee well-being, productivity, and overall morale. It is time for African businesses to lead the way in creating mentally healthy workplaces that empower their workforce.



EMPLOYEE TEAM BUILDING

OBJECTIVES

- Foster team cohesion and collaboration
- Develop leadership & communication skills
- Intergrate high-performance values into organizational culture
- Improve teamwork and emotional intelligence

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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT BEST PRACTICES FOR NURTURING FUTURE LEADERS WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS



INTRODUCTION

Leadership development is a critical aspect of organizational success, particularly in the dynamic and diverse context of Africa. This magazine issue explores best practices for nurturing future leaders within organizations, drawing on examples from various sectors across the continent.

As Africa continues to emerge as a significant player on the global stage, investing in leadership is essential for fostering sustainable growth and innovation.

UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership development encompasses a range of activities aimed at enhancing the skills, competencies, and qualities of individuals to prepare them for leadership roles. This process is vital not only for organizational success but also for addressing the unique challenges faced by African nations, such as economic instability, political strife, and social inequality.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

In the African context, effective leadership development must consider cultural, historical, and socio-economic factors. It is essential to recognize that leadership styles

DEVELOPMENT: NURTURING FUTURE LEADERS IN ORGANIZATIONS



may vary significantly across different regions and sectors. Understanding these nuances can help organizations create tailored programs that resonate with their workforce.

BEST PRACTICES FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

1. MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Mentorship is a powerful tool for leadership development. In many African organizations, seasoned leaders mentor young professionals, providing guidance, support, and valuable insights into effective leadership practices.

EXAMPLE: The African Leadership Academy (ALA)

Located in South Africa, ALA focuses on developing future leaders through mentorship programs that connect students with experienced leaders from various fields. This initiative not only fosters personal growth but also builds a network of young leaders committed to driving positive change across the continent.

2. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Regular workshops and training sessions are vital for equipping aspiring leaders with the necessary skills. These programs should be designed to address specific challenges faced by organizations and industries in Africa.

EXAMPLE: The Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI)

Launched by the U.S. government, YALI provides training for young leaders across Africa. The initiative offers online courses and in-person workshops focusing on leadership skills, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement. By fostering a sense of community among participants, YALI helps cultivate a new generation of influential leaders.

3. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Promoting diversity and inclusion within leadership development programs ensures that a variety of perspectives are represented. Organizations should strive to create an inclusive environment where individuals from different backgrounds can thrive.

EXAMPLE: Women in Leadership Network (WILN)

WILN is an initiative that aims to promote the advancement of women in leadership roles across Africa. The network provides resources, training, and networking opportunities to empower women leaders, fostering a more equitable leadership landscape.

4. REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE

Providing aspiring leaders with real-world experiences is crucial for their development. Organizations should offer internships, volunteer opportunities, and project-based assignments that allow individuals to apply their skills in practical settings.



EXAMPLE: The African Union (AU) Youth Volunteer Corps

The AU Youth Volunteer Corps offers young Africans the opportunity to engage in community service projects across the continent. This initiative not only helps participants develop leadership skills but also encourages them to contribute to their communities.

5. CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

Effective leadership development programs incorporate continuous feedback and evaluation to measure progress and make necessary adjustments. Leaders should regularly assess their development initiatives to ensure they meet the evolving needs of their workforce.

Example: The African Development Bank (AfDB)

The AfDB implements a robust evaluation framework for its leadership development programs. By gathering feedback from participants and stakeholders, the organization can refine its approach and enhance the effectiveness of its initiatives.

CHALLENGES IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

While there are many best practices for nurturing future leaders in Africa, several challenges persist.

These include:

RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS: Many organizations, especially in developing regions, may lack the financial and

human resources needed to implement comprehensive leadership development programs.

Cultural Barriers: Traditional leadership structures and cultural norms can sometimes hinder the emergence of new leadership styles and approaches.

POLITICAL INSTABILITY: In some regions, political turmoil can disrupt organizational continuity and impact leadership development efforts.

CONCLUSION

Nurturing future leaders within organizations is essential for driving sustainable development in Africa. By implementing best practices such as mentorship, training workshops, diversity initiatives, real-world experience, and continuous feedback, organizations can cultivate a new generation of leaders who are equipped to tackle the continent's challenges. As Africa continues to grow and evolve, investing in leadership development will be crucial for fostering innovation, resilience, and positive change.

CALL TO ACTION

Organizations across Africa are encouraged to prioritize leadership development as a strategic imperative. By learning from successful initiatives and adapting best practices to their unique contexts, they can effectively nurture the leaders of tomorrow. Together, we can build a brighter future for Africa, led by capable and visionary leaders.

EMBEDDING THE SPIRIT OF TEAMWORK IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

In today's fast-paced and ever-evolving business landscape, the importance of teamwork cannot be overstated. Organizations that cultivate a strong sense of collaboration and unity not only see improved productivity and innovation but also enhance employee satisfaction and retention. But how can leaders effectively embed the spirit of teamwork within their organizations? This article explores strategies, challenges, and the undeniable benefits of fostering a collaborative work environment.



THE VALUE OF TEAMWORK

Before delving into the strategies for embedding teamwork, it's essential to understand why teamwork is vital. According to a study by the Institute for Corporate Productivity, organizations with high levels of collaboration are five times more likely to be high-performing. Teamwork encourages diverse perspectives, drives creativity, and leads to better problem-solving. It also helps in building trust and rapport among team members, creating a more cohesive and supportive work culture. Moreover, teamwork enhances adaptability. In an environment where change is constant, teams that collaborate effectively can pivot more

rapidly in response to market shifts or internal challenges. This agility is particularly crucial in industries where innovation is key to staying competitive.

THE BENEFITS OF TEAMWORK

1. Enhanced Creativity and Innovation
When individuals come together to work on a project, they bring different perspectives and ideas. This diversity fosters creativity, leading to innovative solutions that may not have emerged in a more siloed environment. Companies like Google and Apple have recognized this and actively promote teamwork, resulting in ground breaking products and services.

2. SHARED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Teamwork facilitates knowledge sharing among employees. When team members collaborate, they can learn from each other's experiences, skills, and insights. This not only enhances individual capabilities but also strengthens the overall skill set of the team, making the organization more resilient and capable.

3. INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY

A strong team culture cultivates a sense of accountability. When team members are aware of their roles and how they contribute to the team's success, they are more likely to take ownership of



their tasks. This collective responsibility can lead to higher quality work and improved outcomes.

4. IMPROVED EMPLOYEE MORALE

A collaborative environment fosters camaraderie among employees, which can enhance job satisfaction. When employees feel connected to their colleagues, they are more likely to experience higher morale, leading to increased motivation and productivity. This positive atmosphere can significantly reduce burnout and stress, creating a healthier workplace.

5. BETTER CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

Organizations that prioritize teamwork often deliver better customer service. When teams collaborate effectively, they can address customer needs more comprehensively and efficiently. This holistic approach can lead to improved customer satisfaction and loyalty, directly impacting the bottom line.

STRATEGIES FOR EMBEDDING TEAMWORK

1. Define Clear Roles and Responsibilities

One of the first steps in fostering teamwork is to ensure that all team members understand their roles and responsibilities. Clarity reduces confusion, minimizes overlap, and allows individuals to contribute uniquely to the group. Leaders should work collaboratively with team members to establish these roles, ensuring everyone feels valued and accountable.

2. Set Common Goals

Shared objectives are crucial for teamwork. Establishing common goals aligns the team's efforts and creates a sense of purpose. Leaders should involve team members in goal-setting to ensure buy-in and commitment. Use SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)

criteria to define these goals and regularly review progress as a team. This not only keeps everyone aligned but also allows for adjustments and recalibrations as needed.

3. Encourage Open Communication

Effective communication is the backbone of successful teamwork. Organizations should create an environment where team members feel safe to express their ideas, concerns, and feedback. This can be facilitated through regular team meetings, open-door policies, and collaborative tools such as Slack or Microsoft Teams, which encourage dialogue and sharing. Additionally, consider implementing feedback mechanisms where team members can provide input on processes and interactions. This approach not only enhances communication but also empowers employees to take an active role in shaping the team dynamics.

4. Foster Trust and Respect

Trust is fundamental to teamwork. Leaders should model vulnerability by sharing their own challenges and successes, which encourages team members to do the same. Team-building activities, whether informal social gatherings or structured exercises, can also help build trust and respect. When team members know and respect each other, collaboration flourishes.

Moreover, establishing a culture of psychological safety is critical. Employees should feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes without fear of retribution. This openness can lead to more innovative thinking and a stronger team dynamic.

5. Leverage Diverse Skill Sets

Diversity in teams enhances creativity and innovation. Leaders should recognize and leverage the unique skills, experiences, and perspectives each team member brings to the table. This can be achieved by forming cross-functional teams or encouraging collaboration across departments. Celebrating diverse achievements fosters an inclusive environment where everyone feels empowered to contribute. Encouraging mentorship within teams can also help develop skills and foster relationships. Pairing experienced employees with



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Employee Appreciation to Drive Performance & Team Morale

In today's fast-paced corporate landscape, where the competition is fierce and the pressure is high, businesses are increasingly recognizing the intrinsic value of an engaged workforce. One of the most effective strategies to foster this engagement is through employee appreciation. By cultivating a culture of recognition, organizations can dramatically enhance performance, boost team morale, and ultimately drive success. This article delves deep into the multifaceted benefits of employee appreciation and offers actionable insights for organizations aiming to implement effective recognition programs.

The Importance of Employee Appreciation

Employee appreciation is not just a nice-to-have; it's a critical component of a thriving workplace culture. According to a Gallup study, organizations with high employee engagement rates can see 21% higher productivity.

When employees feel valued, they are more likely to be invested in their work and committed to the organization's goals.

Enhancing Performance

When employees are recognized for their hard work and contributions, it reinforces positive behavior and motivates them to maintain or improve their performance. This acknowledgment can take various forms, from simple verbal praise to more formal recognition programs, such as awards or bonuses. The key is that recognition should be timely and specific. When employees see a direct correlation between their efforts and the appreciation they receive, it encourages them to continue excelling.

Boosting Team Morale

A culture of appreciation fosters a sense of belonging and camaraderie among team members. When appreciation is woven into the fabric of the workplace, it helps to break down silos and encourages collaboration. Employees who feel valued are more likely to support their colleagues and contribute to a positive team dynamic. This collective morale boost can lead to increased creativity, improved problem-solving, and overall enhanced team performance.

The Psychological Impact of Recognition

The psychological effects of recognition cannot be overstated. When employees receive appreciation, their brain releases dopamine, the 'feel-good' hormone. This not only elevates their mood but also enhances their motivation and engagement levels. Conversely, a lack of recognition can lead to feelings of disengagement, resentment, and low morale, which can be detrimental to both individual and organizational performance.

The Role of Leadership

Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping a culture of appreciation. Leaders must model the behavior they wish to see in their teams. This means actively recognizing and celebrating achievements, both big and small. Regular check-ins, feedback sessions, and team celebrations can help reinforce the importance of appreciation in the workplace.

Strategies for Effective Employee Appreciation

Implementing a successful employee appreciation program requires thoughtful planning and execution. Here are some strategies organizations can adopt:

1. Create a Recognition Program

Establish a formal recognition program that allows peers and managers to acknowledge one another's contributions. This could involve monthly awards, shout-outs in meetings, or a dedicated platform for sharing successes.

2. Personalize Recognition

Understanding that different employees value recognition in different ways is key. Some may appreciate public acknowledgment, while others may prefer private thanks. Tailoring recognition to individual preferences can enhance its impact.

3. Encourage Peer-to-Peer Recognition

Encouraging employees to recognize their colleagues fosters a culture of appreciation that is inclusive and organic. Implementing tools that facilitate peer recognition can strengthen relationships and build a supportive community.



4. Celebrate Milestones

Recognizing employee milestones—such as work anniversaries, project completions, or personal achievements—can significantly boost morale. Celebrations, whether through small team gatherings or larger company-wide events, serve as a reminder that employees' contributions are valued.

5. Provide Opportunities for Growth

Recognition is not limited to verbal praise or awards. Providing employees with opportunities for professional development and career advancement is a powerful form of appreciation. Investing in employees' growth demonstrates that the organization values their contributions and is committed to their future.

6. Solicit Feedback

Regularly seeking feedback about the recognition program can help organizations refine their approach. Employees can provide insights into what types of recognition they find most meaningful, ensuring that the program remains relevant and effective. Measuring the Impact of Employee Appreciation

To truly understand the effectiveness of an employee appreciation program, organizations should measure its impact. This can be done through employee surveys, performance metrics, and turnover rates. By analyzing this data, companies can identify areas for improvement and adjust their recognition strategies accordingly.

Conclusion

In a world where talent is the most valuable asset, employee appreciation emerges as a vital strategy for driving performance and enhancing team morale. By fostering a culture of recognition, organizations not only improve individual and team performance but also create a more engaged and motivated workforce. As the business landscape continues to evolve, the importance of appreciating employees cannot be overstated. Investing in appreciation is investing in the future success of any organization. In the end, a simple "thank you" can go a long way, transforming the workplace into a thriving environment where employees feel valued, motivated, and eager to contribute to shared goals.

[EA]

HOLISTIC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AGE OF AI:

A New Era for the African Workforce



Introduction

The African continent stands on the precipice of a transformative era in workforce development. As artificial intelligence (AI) rapidly evolves, it presents both challenges and opportunities for industries and employees alike. Holistic workforce development—an approach that integrates education, skills training, mental health, and well-being—has never been more crucial. In this article, we will explore how African nations can harness AI to foster a resilient, skilled, and adaptable workforce that meets the demands of the 21st century.

Understanding Holistic Workforce Development

Holistic workforce development encompasses a comprehensive strategy that goes beyond traditional training and education. It integrates various facets of

employee growth, including:

Technical Skills: With AI and automation reshaping job roles, there is a pressing need for technical training in data analytics, machine learning, and digital literacy. This enables workers to engage with new technologies and leverage their capabilities to enhance productivity.

Soft Skills: Emotional intelligence, communication, and teamwork are critical in a world where human-AI collaboration is becoming the norm. Developing these skills can help employees navigate complex work environments and foster better relationships within teams.

Mental Health and Well-Being: The pressures of modern work can lead to burnout and mental health issues. Organizations must prioritize employee well-being to sustain productivity. Cultivating a workplace culture that values

mental health can lead to a more engaged and motivated workforce.

Lifelong Learning: As technology continues to evolve, fostering a culture of continuous learning is essential for maintaining relevance in the job market. Investments in professional development should be encouraged, allowing employees to adapt to new challenges as they arise.

Diversity and Inclusion: A diverse workforce brings varied perspectives and solutions, which is vital for innovation and problem-solving. Promoting inclusivity not only enhances workplace culture but also contributes to better business outcomes.

The Impact of AI on the African Workforce

AI's impact on the workforce varies across different sectors in Africa. In agriculture,



for instance, AI is being used for precision farming, which increases yields and optimizes resource use. In healthcare, AI improves diagnosis and patient care. However, these advancements also pose a risk of job displacement, particularly in entry-level positions. To mitigate this, a robust approach to workforce development must be adopted.

Opportunities for Upskilling

Governments and organizations are beginning to recognize the importance of upskilling and reskilling initiatives. Countries like Kenya, South Africa, and Nigeria are implementing programs aimed at equipping workers with the necessary skills to thrive in an AI-driven economy. For example:

The Digital Skills for Jobs Program in Kenya aims to train thousands of young people in digital skills, preparing them for future employment opportunities. By focusing on both hard and soft skills, this initiative seeks to create a well-rounded workforce.

The South African government's National Digital and Future Skills Strategy focuses on enhancing digital literacy across all sectors. This emphasizes the need for a workforce that can adapt to technological advancements, including training in coding, data analysis, and digital marketing.

Nigeria's National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy aims to position the country as a leading digital economy in Africa by 2025. By fostering an

ecosystem that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, Nigeria is working to prepare its workforce for the future of work.

Collaboration is Key

Holistic workforce development cannot be achieved in isolation. Collaboration among governments, educational institutions, and private sectors is crucial. This triad can create a feedback loop where industry needs inform educational curricula, and students are better prepared for the workforce.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are emerging as a powerful tool in this regard. By aligning the goals of educational institutions with industry requirements, PPPs can facilitate internships, apprenticeships, and mentorship programs that provide real-world experience. Initiatives like the IBM Skills Academy exemplify this collaboration, providing training in AI and cloud computing.

Community Engagement is vital. Involving local communities in the development of training programs ensures that they are tailored to the specific needs of the workforce and the local economy. Community-based training initiatives can empower individuals and create a ripple effect that benefits the entire region.

Global Partnerships: Collaboration can also extend beyond local borders. African countries can benefit from knowledge sharing with international organizations and countries that have successfully navigated workforce transitions. Programs

like the World Economic Forum's Reskilling Revolution aim to improve global workforce readiness by promoting skills development across borders.

The Role of Technology in Workforce Development

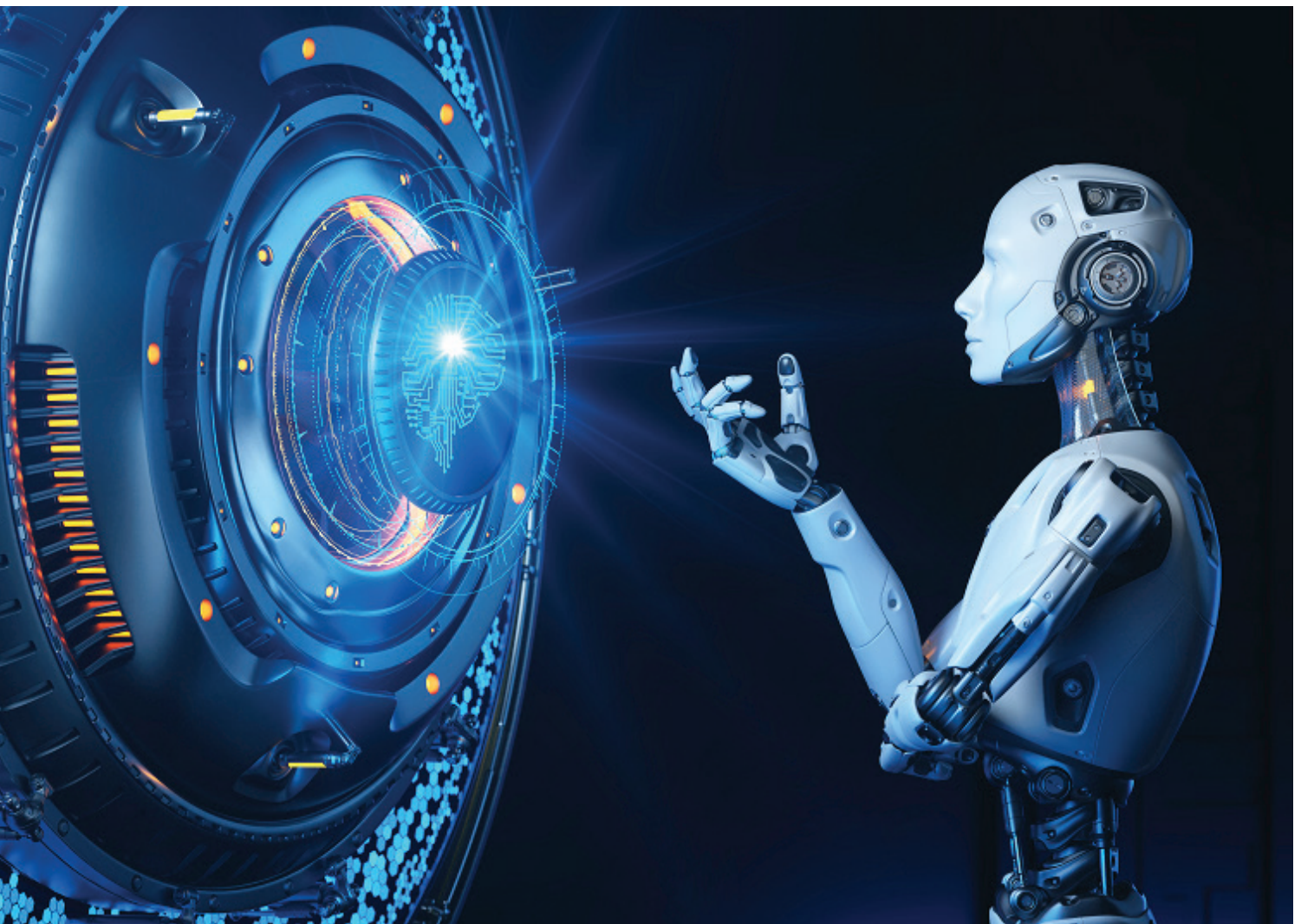
AI and other technologies can enhance workforce development initiatives. Online learning platforms, for instance, provide accessible and flexible training options for employees, allowing them to learn at their own pace.

E-Learning Platforms: Companies like Andela, which trains software developers, and Decagon, which focuses on tech professionals, are pioneering models that blend academic rigor with practical experience. E-learning platforms have revolutionized how employees acquire new skills and knowledge.

Andela, for instance, provides a unique model for training software developers by combining rigorous academic coursework with hands-on experience. This approach not only equips learners with theoretical knowledge but also prepares them for real-world challenges, thereby increasing employability.

Decagon focuses specifically on tech professionals, offering targeted training that meets the needs of the industry. Their programs are designed to bridge the skills gap by ensuring that participants gain relevant, practical skills that employers are actively seeking.

REDEFINING LEADERSHIP & TALENT MANAGEMENT FOR THE AI ERA: A New Vision for the African Workforce



INTRODUCTION

The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) has ushered in a new era of possibilities and challenges for the global workforce. In Africa, a continent rich in diversity and potential, the intersection of technology and human resources presents a unique opportunity to redefine leadership and talent management. As we navigate this transformative landscape, it is essential to understand how AI can reshape our approach to leadership and how organizations can harness the power of technology to cultivate a skilled, adaptable workforce.



The AI Landscape in Africa is undergoing a digital revolution. With increased internet penetration and mobile connectivity, the continent is witnessing a surge in technological innovation. According to a report by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), over 500 million Africans are now online, and this number is expected to grow. As businesses embrace AI and machine learning, there is a pressing need to rethink how we identify, nurture, and lead talent.

AI is not just a tool for improving efficiency; it is a catalyst for redefining the very nature of work. The World Economic Forum predicts that by 2025, AI will create 97 million new jobs globally, while simultaneously displacing many traditional roles. For Africa, this presents an opportunity to leapfrog traditional workforce development models and embrace a new paradigm that prioritizes innovation, adaptability, and inclusive leadership.

The New Leadership Paradigm

Embracing a Collaborative Mindset
In the AI era, leadership must evolve from a top-down approach to a more collaborative and inclusive model. Leaders should foster environments where diverse perspectives are valued, encouraging team members to

contribute ideas freely. This collaborative mindset is crucial as AI technologies thrive on diverse data inputs, and the best solutions often emerge from collective intelligence.

Leaders must also embrace continuous learning. The rapid pace of technological advancement requires a commitment to lifelong learning, not only for themselves but also for their teams. Providing opportunities for upskilling and reskilling will enable employees to adapt to new technologies and remain relevant in the evolving job market.

Cultivating Emotional Intelligence

As AI takes over more routine tasks, the human element of leadership becomes increasingly important. Emotional intelligence—the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions and those of others—will be a critical skill for leaders in the AI era. Leaders who cultivate emotional intelligence can navigate complex interpersonal relationships, inspire their teams, and foster a culture of trust and collaboration.

In Africa, where cultural nuances play a significant role in workplace dynamics, leaders must be attuned to the emotional landscapes of their teams. Understanding diverse cultural

backgrounds and communication styles will enhance leaders' ability to connect with their workforce and drive engagement.

Talent Management in the AI Era

Redefining Skills and Competencies

As AI transforms industries, the skills required in the workforce are shifting. Organizations must redefine their talent management strategies to align with this new reality. Instead of focusing solely on traditional qualifications, companies should prioritize skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and digital literacy.

Investing in training programs that emphasize these competencies will be essential. Collaborations between businesses, educational institutions, and government agencies can create pathways for young Africans to acquire the skills needed for the jobs of the future. Additionally, organizations should consider the potential of AI in identifying skill gaps and tailoring learning programs to address them.

Leveraging AI for Talent Acquisition

AI can streamline the talent acquisition process, enabling organizations to identify top candidates more efficiently. Automated tools can analyze resumes, assess candidates' skills through



simulations, and even conduct initial interviews. However, it is essential to balance technology with human judgment. A hybrid approach that combines AI-driven insights with human intuition will yield the best results.

Moreover, organizations should leverage data analytics to better understand their workforce demographics and identify areas for improvement. By analyzing employee performance data, companies can create targeted development programs that address specific needs, fostering a culture of growth and engagement.

Embracing Diversity and Inclusion

The AI era provides an opportunity for African organizations to champion diversity and inclusion in their talent management strategies. A diverse workforce not only enhances creativity and innovation but also reflects the rich tapestry of cultures within the continent. Leaders should actively seek to create inclusive environments where every voice is heard and valued.

Organizations can implement mentorship programs that connect underrepresented groups with

experienced leaders, fostering talent development and ensuring that diverse perspectives are integrated into decision-making processes. By championing diversity, African businesses can position themselves as leaders in the global market and drive sustainable growth.

Conclusion

As Africa stands on the brink of a technological revolution, the time has come to redefine leadership and talent management for the AI era. By embracing collaboration, emotional intelligence, and a commitment to continuous learning, leaders can inspire a new generation of talent that is adaptable, innovative, and resilient.

The path forward will require a concerted effort from businesses, educational institutions, and governments to create an ecosystem that nurtures talent and fosters inclusivity. By leveraging AI responsibly and strategically, Africa can not only meet the challenges of the future but also seize the opportunities that lie ahead,

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Nutrition in Mental Health: Foods to Boost Your Mood

Article: Best Fit
Counseling & Psychiatry
Source: LinkedIn
[Date: 21st October
2024]

When we think about mental health, our minds often jump to therapy, medication, and other psychological interventions. However, one critical aspect that's often overlooked is nutrition. The food we consume plays a significant role in our emotional well-being and mental health. Just as your body requires the right fuel to function optimally, your brain needs specific nutrients to help regulate mood, reduce anxiety, and support overall cognitive health.



The Connection Between Nutrition and Mental Health

Research has increasingly shown that nutrition can significantly affect brain chemistry. A diet lacking in essential nutrients can contribute to mental health conditions, while certain foods can boost mood and even alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety. For those navigating tough emotional challenges—whether you're working through trauma, undergoing grief counseling, or managing stress—dietary changes can offer a natural complement to therapeutic practices.

At Best Fit Counseling & Psychiatry, where we also focus on providing personalized care, many of our patients have found that when they pay attention to their nutrition, their mood improves alongside their therapy sessions. This holistic approach to treatment helps patients in Michigan and beyond live healthier, more balanced lives.

Foods That Can Boost Your Mood

1. Fatty Fish (Salmon, Mackerel, Sardines)

Rich in omega-3 fatty acids, these fish

are known to improve brain health and reduce symptoms of depression. Omega-3s are essential fats that your body can't produce, so you must get them from your diet. They help regulate neurotransmitters, like serotonin, that play a key role in mood stabilization.

2. Leafy Greens (Spinach, Kale, Swiss Chard)

Vegetables like spinach and kale are rich in folate, a B-vitamin linked to a lower risk of depression. Leafy greens also contain magnesium, a mineral known to reduce anxiety and promote relaxation.



3. Fermented Foods (Yogurt, Kimchi, Sauerkraut)

The gut-brain connection is stronger than you might think. Fermented foods rich in probiotics help maintain gut health, which has a direct impact on mental health. Studies have shown that a healthy gut microbiome can lead to lower levels of anxiety and depression.

4. Berries (Blueberries, Strawberries, Raspberries)

These antioxidant-rich fruits help combat oxidative stress, which can contribute to brain aging and depression. The high vitamin C content in berries also plays a role in reducing cortisol, a hormone associated with stress.

5. Whole Grains (Oats, Quinoa, Brown Rice)

Complex carbohydrates like those found in whole grains increase serotonin levels, leading to improved mood. Additionally, they provide a steady source of energy, which can help prevent the mood swings associated with low blood sugar.

6. Dark Chocolate

Consumed in moderation, dark chocolate can boost endorphin levels, leading to feelings of pleasure and happiness. It also contains flavonoids, which are known to improve cognitive function and mood.

7. Nuts and Seeds (Almonds,

Flaxseeds, Walnuts)

These are packed with omega-3s, magnesium, and tryptophan, which is a precursor to serotonin. Adding a handful of nuts or seeds to your daily routine can have a positive effect on your mood and cognitive function.

8. Avocados

Avocados are rich in healthy fats, vitamin B6, and folate, all of which support brain health. The healthy fats in avocados also promote optimal functioning of the neurotransmitters that regulate mood.

Why a Holistic Approach to Mental Health Matters

At Best Fit Counseling and Psychiatry, we advocate for a comprehensive approach to mental health care. Our team, specializing in counseling, believes that mental health treatment is not just about therapy or medication—it's about treating the whole person. This means addressing lifestyle factors such as diet, exercise, and sleep.

For those seeking help with depression or anxiety at Ann Arbor, or those involved in trauma and grief counseling, improving your nutrition can provide an extra layer of support. Simple changes in your diet can have a profound effect on your mental health, giving you the strength and resilience to handle life's challenges more effectively.

Start Your Wellness Journey Today

At Best Fit Counseling and Psychiatry, we integrate personalized care with practical advice to help our patients lead healthier lives. From trauma and grief counseling to treatment plans for depression and anxiety, we work closely with our patients to create holistic strategies that foster long-term wellness.

Whether you're located in Ann Arbor or seeking Michigan psychiatry and primary care services, we're here to support your mental health journey every step of the way. Start making small, impactful changes in your diet, and see how these foods can uplift your mood and improve your overall well-being.

Remember: Mental health is just as important as physical health. And with the right nutrition, therapy, and care, you can lead a balanced and fulfilling life.



WORK-LIFE BALANCE FOR EMPLOYEES

[Article: www.business.talkspace.com]

Knowing how to improve work-life balance for employees is something many organizations grapple with. Helping your people balance professional responsibilities and personal time can be overwhelming, but mastering the process separates an average employer from an exceptional one.

If you don't address how to improve work-life balance for employees in your company, you risk your team experiencing employee burnout and your business stalling.

There is good news, though. It is possible to help your workforce achieve a balance between their work and personal lives — read on to learn 11 ways to improve work-life balance for employees.



1. Establish clear expectations for work

Achieving a harmonious work-life balance starts with setting clear expectations. When people don't know or aren't sure what's expected of them, it can decrease employee engagement and productivity, increase anxiety, and result in depressed morale.

The need for clarity on job roles and responsibilities is evident. People must be able to prioritize their professional life alongside their personal commitments without feeling overwhelmed by either one.

Tips to make expectations clear:

Create and share explicit job descriptions for every role.

Ensure employees understand what's expected of them during regular working hours.

Discourage practices like answering company emails outside of work or working long hours.

2. Encourage flexible work arrangements

It's important to consider your employees' day-to-day schedule.

Offering flexibility in the workplace is excellent if you're seeking ideas on how to create work-life balance for employees. Studies reveal¹ that workers with flexible work hours feel more engaged, are less likely to experience burnout, have a higher job satisfaction rate, and have a healthy balance between work and family life.

Tips for creating flexible working arrangements:

Offer flexible hours that allow team members to choose their start and end times (although it's OK to establish certain limits).

Allow remote work as an option. This offers a viable solution for those with long commutes or who are struggling to balance home life responsibilities alongside their careers.

Consider a 4 day work week. The 4-day week is an innovative approach to flex scheduling, reducing the standard Monday - Friday week to 4 days while maintaining pay levels.

3. Promote effective time management
Poor time management can lead to increased stress and burnout, resulting in work-life imbalance. That said, companies focusing on effective time management see several positive effects, including improved employee

morale, higher employee engagement, and reduced turnover rates.

One of the best ways to improve work-life balance is by ensuring people have the right tools to efficiently and effectively use their time.

Tips to promote effective time management:

Encourage regular breaks and set deadlines.

Use time-tracking software to help people create schedules they can stick to.

Identify major time-wasting tasks and provide tools or resources so people can manage projects effectively.

Onboard a project management software to help people better plan and improve their overall productivity.

4. Encourage employees to set boundaries

A key aspect of achieving a harmonious work-life balance is learning to set boundaries, especially outside of working hours. An imbalance between personal and professional lives can lead to burnout and stress, ultimately impacting productivity. In studies,⁴ boundary setting has been linked to employee happiness and job satisfaction.

Tips for helping employees set boundaries

Tell employees not to answer company emails or calls after office hours unless urgent.

Encourage people not to bring home major tasks.

Let people know it's OK to admit they're maxed out or need help.

"There should be clear boundaries set between work and the personal lives of the employees. This includes defining working hours, overtime, and paid time off. When work-life balance is off employees will feel burnt out and unproductive. HR should encourage employees to take lunch breaks, sick days, mental health days or vacation time when needed. The overall culture should be focused on having a healthy work environment where employees can feel connected to each other as well as their leaders." - Talkspace therapist Bisma Anwar, LPC, LMHC



5. Support regular breaks and vacation time

To find work-life balance, ensure people take regular breaks and vacation time. Taking frequent breaks positively impacts employee productivity and improves employee satisfaction. It can rejuvenate the mind, reduce fatigue and stress, and boost creativity. New research shows³ remote employees are working longer hours than ever — time off is essential.

Tips for encouraging employee breaks and vacations:

Create a culture where time off is valued, not frowned upon.
Incorporate mandatory minimum leave policies.
Promote planning for vacations.
Implement company-wide closures where employees have no choice but to take some time for self-care.

6. Lead by example

Searching for the best ideas on how to create work-life balance for employees? Look no further than your leadership. Leaders in any organization play an integral role in the quest for a healthier work-life balance. Management behavior influences employee habits, so if leadership constantly sends company emails late at night or during weekends, employees may feel compelled to do so

as well. In order to avoid toxic leadership and improve your company culture, senior management must also be on board in creating a healthy work life.

Tips for leading by example:

Prioritize personal time so it's taken when needed.
Create an open-door policy, and check in with people regularly.
Follow through on meetings and reviews as scheduled.

7. Encourage regular exercise and physical activity

The importance of engaging in physical activity cannot be emphasized enough. Regular exercise has many beneficial effects on mental and physical health and can significantly improve productivity at work.

In fact, studies show⁴ that when people can work out during their work days, they can manage their time better, become more productive, and are generally more satisfied with their jobs.

Tips to promote the importance of exercise and physical activity:

Incorporate fitness programs into the workplace to support employee well-being.
Consider partnerships with local gyms or virtual workout platforms as part

of your company's work-life balance offerings.

Allow breaks during the day so people can work out during their lunch break.

8. Provide mental health support

In today's hectic work atmosphere, paying attention to mental health needs is imperative. Place a key focus on initiatives that promote positive mental health among your workforce by providing programs like mindfulness training and stress management sessions. These can help reduce tension, improve overall well-being on and off the job, and create a positive working environment.

A Talkspace poll surveyed more than 1,400 employees nationwide and found that 1-in-3 people believe their happiness has been impacted by the stress they face at work. More than half (3-in-5) say they'd stay in a job that offers more support for mental health in the workplace.

Tips for improving mental health in the workplace:

Foster open communication about the importance of mental health.

Train leadership to identify common signs of struggle and to know what to do if they suspect an employee needs help.

Consider offering Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) — confidential services designed to help people manage and deal with personal problems impacting their job performance or well-being.

Partner with Talkspace to offer therapy for employees.

"HR should take an active role in helping to maintain employee mental health. This can be done by offering mental health services through the employer or insurance plans offered by the employer. HR and other leaders should respect the boundaries of working hours and not reach out to employees on their day off or outside working hours. Managers should show empathy, compassion, and support towards any employees that are struggling with mental health issues." - Talkspace therapist Bisma Anwar, LPC, LMHC

9. Offer support for parents

Work-life balance initiatives must include support for parents. Faced with trying to manage professional and personal lives, many working parents struggle to achieve balance in their hectic lives. The support you provide



the parents in your company can be instrumental in them being able to succeed professionally and personally.

Tips to help support parents:

Create family-friendly company events to foster community spirit.
Schedule meetings during school hours when possible.
Show understanding towards unexpected emergencies related to kids.
Offer childcare benefits or subsidies to help ease the burden of childcare costs.

10. Implement technology boundaries

One of the most effective ways to improve work-life balance for employees is by implementing technology boundaries

to prioritize personal life outside the office or “normal” working hours.

Research⁵ uncovered that people who feel compelled to answer work-related emails outside their regular hours report higher stress levels and have poorer health outcomes.

The APA discovered that 81% of workers in the U.S. “constantly or often” check emails and texts outside of work hours — and stress levels are highest for those who do so.⁶

Tips to implement tech boundaries:

Establish a clear policy on answering company emails after work hours.
Create and enforce “communication

hours.”

Encourage disconnecting from technology when not at work.
Use tech tools that promote productivity without overworking your team members.
Limit the number of communication channels employees are expected to use and monitor — choose one company-wide platform or app (like Slack) and instruct everyone to use it solely.

11. Regulate employee workloads

Talkspace’s Employee Stress Check 2022 Report found that more than half (53%) of workers are burned out. Nearly as many (44%) of respondents say they work too many hours because they have heavy workloads. Substantial research⁷ shows a conclusive link between long work hour demands and major depression, reinforcing the need for organizations to monitor and regulate the workload expectations they place on their people.

Tips for regulating employee workloads:

Ensure people take personal time off without having to exhaust their sick time.
Implement mental health days into regular schedules.
Review workloads and make adjustments to expectations and demands.

Invest in employee wellness with Talkspace

Helping employees achieve work-life balance is possible when the right strategies are used. Start with simple steps, like setting clear expectations and offering flexible arrangements.

One of the best strategies for how to improve work-life balance for employees is offering mental health support. It’s central to employee well-being and should be part of every organization’s effort to prioritize balance for employees.

Talkspace is an online mental health platform that helps organizations foster work-life balance for their employees. Learn more about how Talkspace can improve mental well-being and bring about all the benefits that positive work-life balance offers.

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