

Editorial

Javier Bajer

“Going to work” is not going to work

With nearly 80% of digital natives wanting to stay working from home, despite all efforts being made to re-attract talent, we are quickly getting into a new type of trouble.

Evidence shows that virtual remote might be working too well for people, despite the tangible erosion of our capacity to collaborate, to innovate and to feel we belong somewhere when we are not in the same physical space.

The tricks to carrot people back into an office are not doing much. Those who we need the most have loads of options now, so offering them cool furniture and gourmet cafeterias will not compete with their self-designed even cooler home workspaces and organic Java beans ethically sourced from a farm they want to visit some day and roasted locally by friends who have just quit full-time work.

You cannot even begin to offer the sense of calm, safety, sea views and pet stroking feeling at home that most people have gotten used to in the last 18 months.

So what is the answer? Well, perhaps this is the time to rethink work altogether. Work is not about “going” but about “being”. Being connected, regardless of the time or the space.

Connected with a common purpose, with knowing you are an integral part in the creation of something transcendental. Something that does not actually feel similar to work, but answers the “what’s the point?” question that businesses struggled to answer for too long. Avoiding this question and instead distracting people with bonuses and careers is not going to work this time around (punt unintended).

What will? Aligning your organisation in a way that everybody sees how they are contributors in the creation of value, not just for shareholders (or even for themselves), but for the lives of clients.

Relying on motivational slogans or promising brighter futures has stopped working (another punt). So not worth trying, because you will be wasting your time and resources.

As Hertzberg said ages ago: True motivation has little to do with money. Now, it also has nothing to do with “going to work”.

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