


TRANSFORMATION

Insights

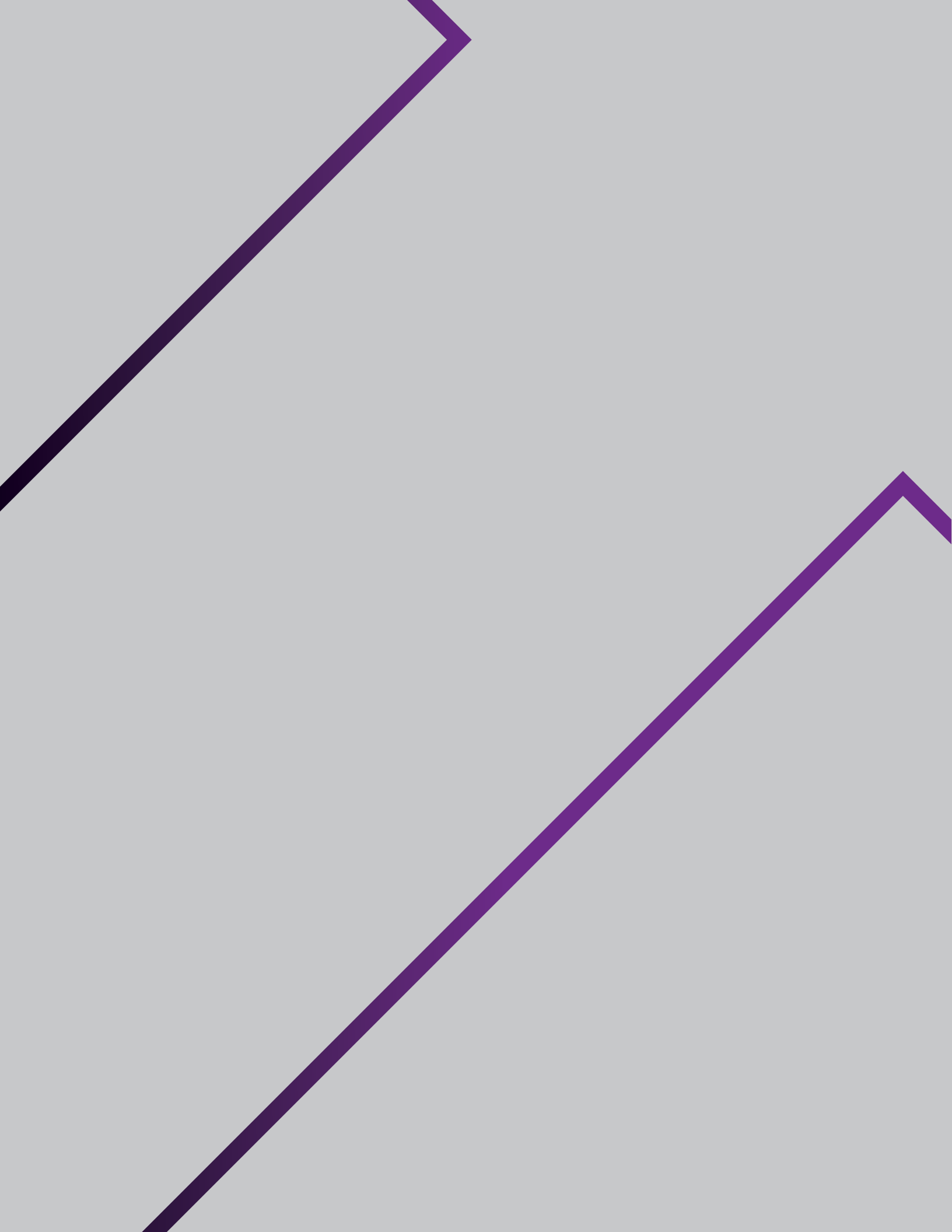
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A black and white portrait of Shanthi Flynn, a woman with short, dark, curly hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a white blazer over a dark top and a delicate necklace with a small cross pendant. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape. A thin purple line runs diagonally across the image, starting from the top left and ending near the bottom right.

Living your best life: 4 Key lessons that will advance your career

Shanthi Flynn, former Fortune 500 CHRO, keynote speaker, HR expert and leadership advisor talks about her incredible career journey and shares the best advice she's ever received.



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Employee expectations are changing: Here's where employers need to focus

Sharon Patterson, EVP & CHRO, LHH

Is the gap between employee expectations and the reality of their experience at work holding your company back?

According to Patrick Cournoyer, Chief Evangelist at Peakon, a people analytics and employee engagement firm, a lack of alignment between employee expectations on well-being and what they are experiencing may impact business success.

"There is a huge expectation gap between what employees are feeling and what organizations believe they are providing," said Cournoyer. "In the future, the organizations that close that gap are going to be more successful."

Peakon comes to its conclusions about employee expectations and well-being through [its latest Heartbeat report](#), insights from which are built on more than 90 million survey responses from employees all around the world. Cournoyer said Peakon developed the Heartbeat report to help businesses understand concerns about ever-changing employee expectations.

Based on the Peakon database, the company found that [59% of its millions of respondents were disengaged](#) from their jobs in the beginning of 2020. However, less understood is the question of why?

Traditionally, low employee engagement was thought to be a byproduct of weak or toxic leadership, a lack of transparency or accountability at the organizational level, and high employee turnover. And while those factors are all still in play, Cournoyer said employers need to dig a little deeper into their relationships with employees to understand the "why" of low engagement.

Cournoyer said engagement is primarily driven by what employees today expect to get from their jobs and—more importantly—from their employers. This is particularly important at a time when so many people have faced disruption in their working lives from health, social, economic and political issues.

Emerging expectations

According to the Employee Expectations report, employees now expect their employers to help address environmental concerns, forcing companies to make shifts in how they operate.

Expectations surged 128% for Gen Z (b. 1995-2015) employees. Millennials (b. 1981-1994), Gen X (b. 1965-1980) and Baby Boomers (b. 1945-1964) followed with increases of 62%, 56% and 59% increases, respectively. "Employees expect their employers to not only share their values

"We need immediate action. It's not enough to put in a program today and then just sit back. Well-being is about continuous support."

Patrick Cournoyer
Chief Evangelist, Peakon

but also show willingness to take action on them,” said Cournoyer.

All generations show increasing concern about diversity and inclusion in the workplace, with the Silent Generation (b. 1928-1945) experiencing the highest increase at 31%, more than double the increase seen in Gen Z (+15%), Gen X (+14%) or Boomer (+13%) and a greater increase than seen in Millennials (+22%). Cournoyer advises, “Employees expect their employers to make tangible efforts to build diverse, inclusive cultures that come from a place of honesty, rather than to tick a box or bolster the bottom line.”

Employee concerns about flexible and remote working increased 18% globally. A recent LinkedIn survey of 1,590 business professionals confirms a large majority of workers want flexibility. When asked to choose to return to the office, continue to #WFH or go to a flexible, blended model, only 5% of respondents want to return to the office full-time. A whopping 73% want a flexible, blended approach. “Businesses will need to be cognizant of the tools they need to help each employee flourish while balancing the demands of their role and their lives—and give them the autonomy to do so,” advised Cournoyer.

Well-being is a top priority

Employee expectations are most acute around [the issue of well-being](#). Overall employee concern on the issue of well-being increased by 17% across all demographics; among Gen Z respondents, the increase was 28%.

Cournoyer said the employer brand may be determined in large part by

how genuinely they care about their employees’ mental and physical health. With burnout estimated to cost the global economy up to \$323.4 billion each year, this is particularly important at a time when there are very clear and present dangers that have the potential to reduce overall well-being, he added.

Leaders are evolving

In some organizations, it will be a challenge for leaders to build an awareness around mental and physical well-being. Many leaders today are single-mindedly focused on the technical aspects of their jobs, or solely concerned with getting projects done on time and on budget, regardless of the toll it takes on the people they are leading.

Cournoyer said it is critical for organizations to look deep within their leadership ranks for people who understand the importance of supporting employee well-being. For those who do not find it is a top-of-mind concern, coaching and development may be needed to cultivate skills that support employee well-being.

“We have to take action as organizations and pivot on employee needs and expectations, especially around well-being,” said Cournoyer. “We need immediate action. It’s not enough to put in a program today and then just sit back. Well-being is about continuous support.”

The report findings also speak to the need for leaders to be patient with employees who are working from home. It emphasizes the importance of training leaders in soft skills like empathy, compassion and clarity around work expectations, he added. Cournoyer said, “Be sure you are

considering the full spectrum of well-being and external factors that may impact the employee and contribute to stress.”

Redefining what “productivity” means

In addition to their employee expectations report, Peakon subsequently released a [new report outlining how employees and organizations are responding to COVID-19](#). The analysis from this reveals that the issue of well-being has a huge impact on other areas, including the stress that is created by working away from the normal office setting.

Even before the pandemic prompted many employers to vacate their offices, there was significant interest from respondents in more flexible arrangements like working from home, he said. Now that employees are getting a measure of what they have always craved, however, other concerns have arisen.

“Employees are concerned about how their organizations view their productivity when they work from home,” Cournoyer said. “They lack some confidence and worry that they won’t be viewed as productive if they can’t provide an immediate response to an email. This is an issue of trust and it’s a major source of concern right now.”

It will be essential for leaders to redefine new metrics for both employers and employees to assess the pace of work and productivity in a virtual setting.

“Leaders need to focus more on output and less on the small and misleading signals they might be getting,” he added. “It’s a new experience for everyone and employees lack confidence about how their employers perceive productivity in a remote setting.”





5 Core practices to build an effective virtual onboarding program

Cara Danielson, SVP, Leadership Development Programs, LHH

When Numeris realized the pandemic would indefinitely put the brakes on in-person onboarding for new employees, they knew they were prepared to meet the challenge. Fortunately, well before “pandemic” and “COVID-19” became part of our lexicon in human resources, Numeris—an audience measurement whose origins go back nearly 80 years—had built the foundation for its virtual onboarding program.

All onboarding documentation had been migrated to fully digital channels, a digital toolkit was built to help new hires navigate onboarding, and a comprehensive online “100-day journey” was formulated to introduce and immerse a new employee in the company’s culture and values.

“We worked very closely with LHH, particularly on the digital toolkit, to ensure our onboarding program gives our people a complete sense of the values of our organization, our history and structure,” said Jennifer Knibbs, National Director of People and Culture at Numeris. “Everything we created and had been using prior to the pandemic has been shifted to virtual in a seamless fashion. We focused on a program that was flexible and easily adapted. That has really helped us through the crisis.”

Onboarding has always been a critical link in the talent management process at Numeris. Making sure new hires are prepared and equipped to hit the ground running in their new roles is essential to retaining top talent and keeping them engaged.

“Our onboarding program is designed to give people a complete sense of the values of our organization, our history and structure.”

Jennifer Knibbs
National Director of People
and Culture, Numeris

[Research](#) reported by the Society for Human Rights Management (SHRM) has clearly established the relationship between effective onboarding and both retention and engagement. SHRM reported results from a survey conducted by BambooHR, a workforce management software company, that showed up to one-third of respondents had quit a job in the first six months because of what they perceived to be an unfriendly environment, a lack of guidelines about responsibilities and too few training opportunities.

Conversely, [research](#) by the Wynhurst Group, a Washington D.C.-based consultancy, showed that employees who had the benefit of a structured onboarding process were nearly 60 percent more likely to be with the same company after three years. The Corporate Leadership Council weighed in with yet another study that showed properly onboarded employees were more engaged, more productive and more likely to engage in discretionary effort for their new employers.

Knibbs said Numeris has always tried to keep in mind that new hires who struggle with onboarding—which can leave recruits with too many questions and not nearly enough answers—are unlikely to become highly motivated, highly engaged employees.

A degree of virtual onboarding has always made sense for Numeris, Knibbs noted. With a head office in Toronto, and three additional offices in Montreal, Richmond (B.C.) and Moncton, New Brunswick, the Numeris workforce has always been highly dispersed.

When social distancing and working from home became standards in the response to COVID-19, it created an opportunity for Numeris to test the limits of their virtual onboarding experience.

“The nature of our business, and the structure of the company, meant that we were already changing how connections were being made between new hires and our managers,” Knibbs said. “Now that we can’t do any of the onboarding process in person, we’ve found that our program does a very good job of creating a good experience and makes our new people feel welcomed and supported, and that they have all the tools they need to succeed.”

The key element in Numeris’ virtual onboarding is the “100-day Journey” for employees and leaders. Knibbs said the program features a broad array of programs and content that covers company values, culture, history and structure. The online materials are augmented with a “Leader Stream,” where new employees can meet virtually with many of the company’s leaders and directly discuss culture and expectations.

The journey concludes with a survey which asks employees if they got all of the information they need to integrate into their new organization, she added.

Organizations that have acted proactively to embrace virtual onboarding build a foundation on a handful of core principles:

1. Onboarding is a journey; take your time. Many organizations try to compress onboarding to limit the amount of “down time” an employee spends getting acclimatized. But a rushed or incomplete onboarding process will create a myriad of problems down the road, including an increased likelihood the employee in question will leave within the first six months.

2. Embrace onboarding as a best practice.

According to [onboarding research by TalentLMS](#), only 27% of companies have a fully online onboarding process, 33% use a blended offline and online approach, while 40% have yet to move any part of their onboarding program online. But organizations that do embrace online onboarding and make full use of virtual technologies retain top talent longer and have better overall employee engagement. Map out everything a new hire needs to know in the first 30 days, 60 days and 100 days and make it a formal offering.

3. Think like a new hire. If you ask new hires what they really want, they would tell you that logging onto the company network and meeting key leaders and peers are two of their top priorities. Unfortunately, many onboarding programs get bogged down at the start with endless paperwork. Identify, simplify and digitize all forms and resources so that new hires can complete everything online without feeling overwhelmed on their first day.

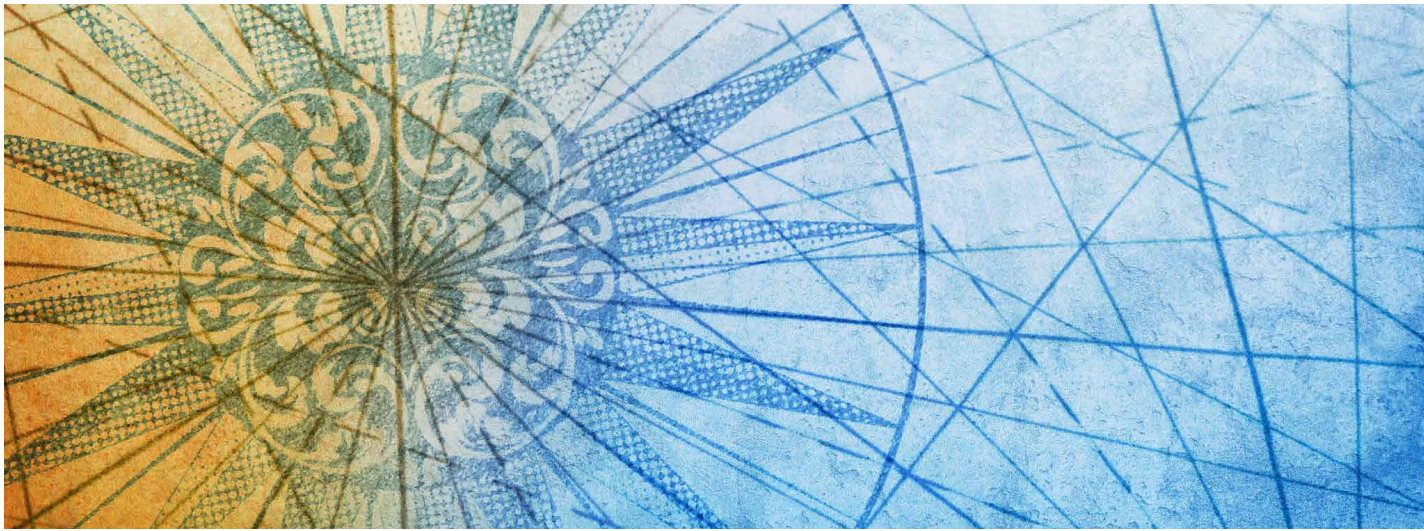
4. Reach out and make contact with managers and mentors. Take steps to recreate formerly in-person aspects of onboarding in a digital environment by making full use of video conference calls with managers and mentors. New hires need to work with their managers to make time for self-directed learning, mentoring, coaching and cross-functional knowledge sharing. Build in milestones that allow new hires to develop a goal-orientated mindset.

5. Get an early start. There are huge benefits to be reaped by starting the onboarding process before a new employee’s first day. Introducing them to the online onboarding journey and getting HR paperwork done as early as possible will allow new hires to focus on absorbing the culture and values of their new organization.

Focusing on these core elements, Numeris was able to create a virtual onboarding process that was purpose-built for the pandemic. “We were thrilled to be recognized with a Brandon Hall Award for our all virtual onboarding program. We don’t expect employees to simply figure things out for themselves. We’ve created a scalable onboarding journey that’s driving efficiencies and consistency. When lockdown hit, we were ready.”

“A lot of organizations think onboarding is something that you can do in one week,” said Knibbs. “It takes much longer to prepare a new employee. And the research shows that the first 100 days is a critical period in the process of building that new relationship. We didn’t want the pandemic to impact our onboarding process and it appears that we haven’t skipped a beat.”





Living your best life: 4 Key lessons that will advance your career

Caroline Pfeiffer Marinho, Executive Vice President, EMEA, LHH

After three years away from the corporate world, Shanthi Flynn knew she was ready to take a step forward in her career.

A former top executive at some of the world's largest and most iconic companies—including Ford Motor Co., The Boots Company and A.S. Watson Group—Flynn had taken three years off to focus on her family. It wasn't clear when or even if she would return to the corporate world.

And then one day, she uttered seven words that would ultimately serve as a turning point in the evolution of her professional career.

"My older daughter, who was three at the time, kept biting her younger sister on the face," Flynn said recently in an LHH Conversations Series live-stream event. "I found myself saying, 'Stop biting your sister on the face' repeatedly. It's not something that I ever thought I'd be saying."

The desire to return to the corporate world was getting quite strong. However, Flynn conceded that it wasn't clear she could return to a senior job with a large

corporation, something that she very much still wanted. "When I took my career break out, it tested my value proposition," she said.

"I thought, 'I've got three kids now, it's hard to step back into a separate world.' I had been used to making fast decisions and I was confident. Being out of the game for three years created doubt in my ability to return. My confidence had a dent for the first time in my career."

Unexpectedly, a headhunter contacted her about a high-level job with Walmart Asia and—within months—she was back on her career track once again. "I'm a strong believer that if you make the right choices, you're competent in what you do and can tell your story in a compelling way, then it won't matter if you take time out to do different things."

"Sometimes, people overthink things. You have to think through your career decisions carefully but there's always an element of leap, where you cannot know everything, you cannot gather all the facts."

Shanthi Flynn

Flynn would go on to work five years for Walmart before striking out on her own as a strategic leadership consultant. In early 2016, she accepted the position of chief human resource officer with the Adecco Group in Zurich. Two years ago, she went back to her own consulting practice, with a focus on keynote speaking and advising executives and boards, leveraging her deep and broad HR expertise as well as business leadership.

Through her varied, three-decade career as an HR executive and business leader, Flynn said she learned many important lessons about how to manage a career, how to thrive as a woman in what is still largely a man's world of business and, last but not least, how a well-structured network is your best lifeline at key career inflection points.



How women can thrive without giving into the temptation to ‘act more like a man’

Flynn started her career at the Ford Motor Company plant in Dagenham, a suburb of East London and a seminal monument in the history of United Kingdom labor law. It was there, in 1968, that 187 female Ford employees walked off the job for three weeks. The strike was a catalyst for the 1970 Equal Pay Act which attempted to prohibit the inequitable treatment between working men and women.

“My choice to join Ford Motor Company in the UK was probably my most foundational choice,” Flynn said. “I spent nearly 10 years there; my first three years were in a car plant where there were probably about 30 women and about 10,000 men. So, as you can imagine, it was a pretty male-dominated environment.”

Although the atmosphere was generally tough for the women working there, Ford was a “truly global company that invested heavily in its people.” Flynn was able to move very quickly through several jobs, which not only built out her resumé but “helped me build my confidence.”

The lessons acquired from being one of the few women in a male-dominated company still resonate today. “As a woman, you can be tough and decisive,” she said. “Those are not male attributes. You just have to be yourself. If you try to copy all the men in the room, you’re not bringing anything different to the table.”



If you learn anything in your career, learn to be opportunistic

Flynn said that even with all the best laid plans, no one can completely predict the course of their careers. Especially today, when so few people spend their entire working lives with one organization. The trick for those people who want to get ahead is to focus keenly on what kind of job they ultimately want to hold, and then look for those opportunities to realize that dream.

That will mean using a broad interpretation of “opportunity.” Don’t get hung up on obtaining a particular title, or on the idea that every move you make needs to be upward. Try to assess the potential in every opportunity, no matter how unlikely it may seem at the time.

“If you want to be the CEO of a Fortune 100 company, then your career path needs to be much more deliberate,” Flynn said. “You need to know all of the steps you have to take on that journey. Look for those opportunistic moments that allow you to make a different decision or take a different course.”



No matter where you go or what you do, keep building your network

When Flynn first went to Hong Kong in 2002—she followed her husband who had received a teaching position—she admitted to having a huge gap in her career network. Back in the UK, Flynn said she had developed an extensive, high-level network of contacts who both sought and offered support.

In Hong Kong, however, it was like starting over. “I had absolutely no network in Hong Kong,” she said. “So, I went to a headhunter and said, ‘I’m not looking for a job, but I would like to know who are the best networkers in Hong Kong in my space. Ultimately, the headhunter helped connect me to a network with nearly 200 people.’”

After developing a new network, Flynn said she set about applying best practices to allow her to get the most out of the people she was meeting. At the top of that list was to not rely solely on connections made through social media.

“LinkedIn is a blessing and a curse,” she said. “With social media, sometimes you can be in contact with people and not really in contact with people. You have to meet people and have a tangible conversation to develop a network connection. Go for a coffee or try to have a phone or video call, to build presence.”

After building presence, it is important to also remember to be deliberate in what you want from your network. “Before you reach out to your network, you have to have an idea of what it is you want from them in terms of advice or even sponsorship. ‘I’d like to work for the company you work for, how do I do that?’ You have to have some questions that you need answered.”



The best advice I’ve ever received

Flynn said that one of the best parts of cultivating a solid professional network is that you are exposed to some truly sage advice. Of all the things she has been told over the years, Flynn said advice on being “bold and fearless” stands out.

“Sometimes, people overthink things. You have to think through your career decisions carefully but there’s always an element of leap, where you cannot know everything, you cannot gather all the facts.”

Now having moved from an operational role into an advisory and consulting role, Flynn said she still tries to practice a bold and fearless approach to her life and career. She will never stop learning new skills or challenging herself. Her focus, as always, is to help others grow.

“I don’t think I would change anything about my career,” she said. “I very rarely ever look back. Learn from the past and always look forward.”



The employment bridge: Workforce planning designed for an age of unprecedented challenges

Arne Hellmuth, Managing Director, Transformation Solutions, LHH

It is one of the strangest and most compelling workforce planning challenges I have ever witnessed in the global labor market: millions of workers displaced by COVID-19 at the same time that millions of new and emerging jobs are being created.

Airlines have been grounded but online retailers are struggling to keep up with an unprecedented surge in orders. Hotels, restaurants and bars have been crippled, but the manufacturing of a wide array of products such as Personal Protective Equipment and hand sanitizer has soared to new heights. Jobs in tourism have largely evaporated but work in fields such as security and health care are growing at a steady pace.

The question I kept asking myself is whether the human capital industry—the firms and experts that employers turn to in times of change and crisis—is doing enough to come up with innovative solutions needed to address this unprecedented labor phenomenon. One thing is for certain: our traditional solutions may not be enough.

Options such as career transition are always going to be a critical element in the ebb and flow of workers. Even now, while countries move toward safely reopening and companies evolve their business models in response to COVID-19, career transition is set to play a vital role in how an organization can both support displaced workers and protect the employer brand.

“At LHH, we saw an intriguing opportunity to explore new ways to build a secure and orderly pathway between companies that need to temporarily shed workers and find them work with organizations that urgently need to hire.”

But today's unique labor market conditions demand that we develop more meaningful ways of helping workers and organizations through this crisis.

At LHH, we saw an intriguing opportunity to explore new ways to build a secure and orderly pathway between companies that need to temporarily shed workers and find them work with organizations that urgently need to hire. The only thing we knew for sure at the outset of our project was that initial attempts to match labor supply with demand have been met with mixed results.

In March, CVS Health Corp.—one of the world's largest health care and pharmacy companies—announced that it needed to hire 50,000 new employees to help meet a surge in business created in part by the pandemic. To source these hires, CVS reached out to companies like Gap Inc., Delta Airlines and Hilton Worldwide Holdings, all of which were forced to lay-off or furlough hundreds of thousands of employees around the world.

CVS earned significant positive publicity for its gesture, but it was not without some unexpected consequences. Partly because of the publicity, CVS received more than 900,000 resumé for its 50,000 openings. In a situation that requires an agile and expedited response, CVS created a HR challenge of enormous proportions.

What we really needed to make this happen was a way of curating the movement of employees in a way that was more deliberate and controlled. What we needed was an "Employment Bridge."

Conceptually, the Employment Bridge would be a mechanism that could take surplus workers at one company and find them temporary employment at another company, while allowing the original employer to retain the ability to recall them when and if business turns around. It's a fairly straightforward idea but the implementation had the potential to be quite complicated.

Different countries have different legal demands to reduce workforce. In some places, it's relatively easy to layoff or furlough employees; in other jurisdictions, particularly in Europe, layoffs and furloughs are complicated by multiple layers of legal protocols. To make the Employment Bridge a reality, we'd have to find a way to move workers that all parties involved—the individual, the companies, governments and unions—could support.

Part of our solution was found at Modis, a global provider of IT, engineering and life sciences personnel and solutions that operates within the Adecco Group of companies. Working together, we devised a mechanism to allow originating companies with an oversupply of workers to "lend" their people to Modis, effectively suspending but not cancelling their original employment contracts. Modis would then contract out these employees to other companies that need to expand their workforces.

It's a simple, elegant solution where all parties benefit. And it's very quickly gone from the theoretical to reality.

LHH and Modis have just completed a pilot project with two large European companies that will eventually lead to the migration of 6,000 employees across the Employment Bridge.

How has this gone so swiftly from theory to reality? A quick examination of the terms of the Employment Bridge shows that the advantages to the individuals and the originating company are numerous.

First, employers can reduce their payroll without having to cover additional severance and separation costs. When many companies have recently seen drastic and precipitous declines in operating revenue, it is critical to find the most cost-effective way of reducing headcount that protects workers and protects businesses from vulnerability.

The Employment Bridge also offers originating employers the right to recall their workers when business starts to return to normal. The retention of key talent is a huge advantage that gives companies particularly hard hit by the pandemic the best chance to ramp back up to normal operation, as quickly and as cost-effectively as possible. Individual employees can also reap multiple benefits from the Employment Bridge.

Workers ultimately get the opportunity to gain new experience and skills by working at another organization. And under the terms of the agreement with the destination company, employees are guaranteed to earn comparable wages and benefits.

The COVID-19 pandemic has, in many ways, transformed some of the assumptions we have made about workforce planning in the midst of an economic downturn. The human capital industry simply cannot only offer traditional solutions when faced with a non-traditional challenges.

The Employment Bridge is our new solution for a new and unprecedented challenge.



The future of recruiting & hiring: 5 trends to watch

Jim Mitchell, President, LHH Canada

Robert Hosking, SVP, Managing Director—Search Practices for LHH Knightsbridge

The pandemic has wrought profound change on the business world. But even with all the seismic disruption, employers are still—encouragingly—recruiting and hiring good people for important jobs.

In a recent LHH Conversations Series [webinar](#), a pulse poll showed that 75% of organizations are currently hiring and another 10% plan to hire before the end of 2020. Only eight percent of respondent organizations said they had no immediate plans to hire.

Current trends—many accelerated by pandemic forces beyond their control—have changed the rules of recruiting and hiring, requiring organizations to adapt and embrace new practices to compete and triumph in the future war for talent.

The current environment: despite pandemic companies are still hiring

One of the most profound realities of the pandemic is how differently organizations were impacted. Some, like airlines and hotel chains, saw the very foundations of their business plans disintegrate. Others, like online retailers and information technology platforms, saw huge, urgent growth well beyond anything they could have anticipated.

This has forced some organizations to restructure and cut costs, while others are expanding. That contrast has created some significant divides in talent strategies.

Some employers that have had to lay off or furlough employees still need to hire

“The pandemic has driven unexpected and radical changes, but organizations that leverage this opportunity to tap into a rich talent market will be better prepared for what is to come.”

for existing and new essential positions. But concern about the future has made these employers incredibly cautious in their hiring decisions. This has resulted in increasing levels of approval before offers are made or the indefinite deferral of hiring decisions altogether.

On the other side of the talent equation, you have organizations facing huge increases in demand for their goods and services, which is in turn triggering a need for more talent. The demands are growing so quickly, these employers are finding that recruitment and hiring processes that used to take months need to be completed in weeks.

Then, we have the organizations who fall somewhere in between: there is just enough uncertainty that full-time hires are risky, but enough positive signals and confidence to justify some hiring. These organizations are increasingly relying on contract workers to plug urgent gaps while they watch to see how pandemic conditions evolve.

Competition for top talent and the best jobs remains fierce

It's become clear that the dynamic employment market that exists has done nothing to change some of the basic rules of the talent management game. In fact, top talent and good jobs remain in high demand.

Although not unprecedented, the top candidates who are on the open talent market will likely have to sort through multiple job offers. This is going to put pressure on employers to quickly identify preferred candidates and get them offers. Employers who hesitate will find they are too late to land the best candidates.

The sheer number of people looking for work right now has put enormous pressure on employers in the form of unprecedented responses to job postings. Before the pandemic, it was not unusual to see an average of 100 resumé per posting; now, many employers are seeing 300 or even 400 applications for the same posting.

This flood of applicants, many of them unqualified, is frustrating for both employers and the best candidates. For employers, it's the burden of sorting through mountains of resumé; for candidates, it's the aggravation of having to wait longer than normal to receive an acknowledgement that the application has been received, let alone a job offer.

Re-inventing recruitment and hiring in the age of COVID-19

By now, most organizations have had to adjust to performing essential business practices in a virtual environment. And while video conferencing and cloud file sharing have been a challenge to adopt, they are not the only tests of our capacity to operate virtually. Even though the easing of restrictions in some jurisdictions is allowing for face-to-face interactions, there is a deep impact on talent acquisition as recruitment, hiring and onboarding are now largely being done in virtually.

The whole idea of recruiting, assessing, and hiring someone without meeting them in person is challenging for many hiring managers. But that's the reality in a world where offices are still largely unpopulated and business travel is still discouraged.

The companies finding success in this new virtual talent market fall into two categories: those that had very strong hiring and onboarding practices before the pandemic; and those forced to quickly adapt and enhance their pre-pandemic processes.

Recently, LHH [profiled](#) Numeris, a Canadian company that had created a mature virtual onboarding process before the pandemic hit. Moving their comprehensive and award-winning 100-day onboarding journey into a completely virtual environment was easier because the program and onboarding materials were already evolved.

Companies that relied on less-structured programs—where a stroll around the office to meet key personnel was the core of the onboarding experience—are finding that it's been a frantic struggle to develop the platform and programming needed to support onboarding in a virtual environment.

How the pandemic has exposed weak or non-existent succession planning

Just as is the case with onboarding, organizations that largely failed to do any comprehensive succession planning before COVID-19 are finding they are really at a disadvantage now, when early retirements and churn in the C-suite is at an all-time high.

The pandemic has convinced many senior leaders to rethink their careers and many are opting to stand down and expedite retirement plans. That has led to a spike in

executive recruitment while also putting pressure on organizations to put planning in place for the replacement of key leaders or run the risk of vulnerable gaps in the leadership team and a significant loss of knowledge from departing employees.

As companies look to transform their business in order to keep up with the ever-changing world, the demand for leaders who possess the capabilities to lead that transformation will be critical.

New emphasis on Diversity and Inclusion has employers scrambling

Organizations are not just facing the need for urgent, transformative change on the pandemic front. At the same time, there are increasing demands for employers to become more inclusive and diverse in their hiring and business practices.

In some ways, this is just an extension—albeit at a more rapid pace—of a trend established before the pandemic. More than half of S&P 500 companies already have a chief D&I officer in place. And 60% of those companies hired into or created these positions within the last three years.

The D&I hiring trend we see now can be divided into two streams. There are organizations that did not have a senior D&I leader in place that are scrambling to fill a new position. And then there are those that previously had a chief D&I leader in place but are now looking for a new perspective and approach to show greater progress. Either way, it's a good time for D&I specialists to be looking for new and exciting job opportunities.

The pandemic has caused a profound shake-up in how businesses operate, their workforces, the skills they need, and their approach to recruitment and hiring. And while organizations continue to evolve in response to the “new normal” and reimagine their future, recruiting and hiring remain a constant, top-of-mind concern for companies of all sizes and industries. It's imperative that their approach to recruiting and hiring evolve as well. Organizations that leverage this opportunity to tap into a rich talent market will be better prepared for what is to come.



How to find a mentor and tap into something bigger

Frank Congiu, Senior Vice President, LHH

There are few tougher moments in our working lives than having to say goodbye to a trusted leader and mentor. When the relationship is good, these are the people who help inform us, guide us, make us better than we were before we met them.

And when they move on to pursue their own opportunities, it can be tough. That was certainly how I felt when my boss and mentor, Christoph Niebel, left his role as LHH's Chief Sales Officer to take over as President at Pontoon, a sister company within the Adecco Group family.

I worked for Christoph for more than five years and during that time, he never failed to make me stronger, better and more confident. He always encouraged me to

be myself when talking with clients and encouraged me to take chances to advance our business plan. "There is nothing you can do or break that we can't fix together," he told me often. He also shared in my drive to improve. I recall my first interview with him and on his screen was a sticky note that read "Better Never Stops."

If there is any comfort in Christoph's departure, it is that I'm sure I will find another mentor to help me continue to grow and succeed in my career endeavors. I know that because I have always had mentors in my life. And it hasn't been by chance; I've intentionally sought them out.

My earliest memories of seeking mentors started as early as the 6th grade. I grew up

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in a family of very modest means in Greenwich, Conn. From a very early age, I was very aware that while there were a lot of people dealing with hardship, there was also a lot of wealth in my town. I made myself a promise very early in life that I was going to work hard and build a better life.

My parents certainly taught me the meaning of hard work. But I took every opportunity to ask successful people how they earned their success. I had multiple part-time jobs all the way from middle school through high school, and never missed an opportunity to ask my bosses for insight into how and why they did what they did.

I also asked the parents of friends who came from wealthier families for their insights. While other kids were in the pool, I was asking what I had to do so that one day, I could have a pool of my own. It seemed so obvious to me that people who had enjoyed success would be a font of valuable information on how to build my own success.

Working hard and learning as much as I could from successful people along the way, I ultimately became the first person in my family to attend and graduate from college. And throughout my business career, I have never stopped seeking out mentors to help me reach the next level of success.

That's a really important but often misunderstood aspect of the mentor-mentee dynamic: you have to be willing to ask for help from a mentor.

I have met many people who think that mentorship is something that has to be offered to you. My own experience is that if you ask someone to help guide your career, they are more than willing to help. In fact, they will be flattered that you asked.

The reality is that unless they are assigned a mentor as part of an onboarding or high-potential program, most people are afraid to ask someone to mentor them. And that means many people go without the invaluable input that a mentor can provide. Without a mentor, you are flying blind in your career, unsure of how people see your work and what you need to do to scale the ladder of success.

It should be noted, however, that a good mentor is not just a source of advice or guidance. In fact, mentorship is about a lot more than just good advice. A good mentor listens, is interested in hearing your ideas, and willing to let you struggle to find your own solutions.

Early in my career, I was assigned a mentor who was always telling me what to do and what not to do. He was very quick to tell me anytime he thought I was doing something wrong. There was no positive feedback, no opportunity for me to ask questions or bring up my own ideas. This man was like the basketball coach who, after a game, only wants to talk about the one shot you missed while ignoring all the shots you made during the game.

Christoph has moved on to bigger and better things and while that has left a hole in my working life, I am quite optimistic and confident about two things that I know will happen.

First, I will find another mentor. In fact, I already have people in my life who can provide to me the same support that I received from Christoph.

And second, as I continue in my business career, I'm ready and willing to be a mentor to some future colleague. All they have to do is ask.

Beyond Christoph, a quick thank you to some of the other mentors I've had along the way: Keith Ferrazzi, JP Kelly, Darren Reinke, Kevin Gagan and Marshall Goldsmith.



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Is your company's resilience battery on empty? Five steps to recharge

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Of all the things we have learned during the global COVID-19 pandemic, one of the toughest lessons might be that we are battling more than one pandemic. Along with the virus, the world is suffering a profound shortage of its collective resilience.

Along with infections from the novel coronavirus, the world is suffering through a pandemic of emotional and psychological exhaustion that is producing widespread physical and mental health problems, up to and including a [spike](#) in suicide. Most alarming is the fact that many of the people we believe to be the most resilient to this kind of stress are the people who are suffering the most.

Doctors and nurses in particular are struggling to endure the unrelenting stress of the pandemic. In September, a [survey](#) of thousands of healthcare professionals in 60 countries found that more than half reported substantial emotional burnout from dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings like that prompted the World Health Organization to issue a [directive](#) warning health authorities to keep a close watch on the mental health of healthcare workers, particularly as COVID-19 potentially mounts a fall surge.

On one level, it's easy to understand how and why healthcare professionals would be amongst the most affected; they

literally serve as a thin white line that is trying to hold back the spread of COVID-19. But then again, they have also undergone significant education and training, all geared towards making them resilience "superheroes."

The global pandemic of emotional burnout among healthcare workers is helping to reveal a major misconception about resilience: it is not, even in the most stalwart of people, an infinite resource.

Resilience is one of the most desired qualities in business today.

In the business world, resilience is a highly desired quality for both leaders and the people they lead. It tends to function as a catch-all label that describes workers who are resourceful and able to recover quickly from stressful events.

Resilience is considered a key quality in leadership because it is closely associated with concepts such as Emotional Intelligence and Agile Thinking. Both of these core leadership philosophies rely on individuals who are independent, decisive and able to lead by example. These are the qualities that define resilience in a business context.

However, as leadership development experts have studied resilience in a business context, they realized that it manifests in a number of other ways that are perhaps more subtle. Qualities such as candor, resourcefulness, selflessness, humility and empathy—all closely associated with EQ and Agile Thinking—are now considered foundational qualities of the resilient leader. However, in all those discussions, there is little discussion of the forces that actually erode resilience.

The Resilience Battery

Most organizations, when they consider the resilience of their leaders or workforce, tend to ask themselves the same stock questions: who has it, and how can they get more of it. Further, they want to know if they can train their people to be more resilient, or whether it's a quality that must be recruited into an organization from an external talent pool.

Few organizations, however, consider issues like culture and workplace environment in their deliberations about resilience. The often-overlooked fact is that toxic workplaces with toxic leadership can erode resilience in even the strongest and most capable people.

Resilience is like a battery; to maintain a full charge, it must be properly maintained and periodically recharged. Run the resilience battery too long in an environment that is harsh and unwelcoming, and it will eventually be drained and lose power. Resilience can be recharged through development, practice, rest and wellness practices.

A good example of this can be found in our example of healthcare workers. It would be easy to attribute the current pandemic of declining mental and physical health to COVID-19. In reality, the emotional and mental wellbeing of healthcare workers has been a concern for many, many years.

In January, [the National Physician Burnout & Suicide Report for 2020](#), an annual project by global health care information site Medscape, found that 42 percent of respondent physicians in the United States felt burned out from “long hours, an overwhelming workload and a lack of support” from their employers. The

survey, a snapshot of the American medical profession prior to COVID-19, also found out that one quarter of respondents had suicidal thoughts. The report noted that prior [research](#) has shown that between 300 and 400 American physicians commit suicide each year.

Although the resilience of healthcare professionals is particularly vulnerable to erosion from stressful working conditions, the same dynamic can be seen in just about every workplace regardless of industry, sector or profession. For organizations that would like to improve or sustain the resilience of their employees, it's essential to perform a full diagnostic and introduce remedial measures as soon as possible,

The early warning signs of eroding resilience and what to do about it

The first step is to determine whether your organization has a weak resilience battery. The good news is that most existing psychometric assessments can provide a relatively accurate snapshot of individual and organizational resilience. These assessments can be applied in a variety of seminal career moments: onboarding, promotions and leadership opportunities, expat assignments and priority project assignment.

On a more ongoing basis, however, there are a number of things organizations should look for and address on an urgent basis to recharge the resilience batteries of their employees:

1. Get feedback. Simply put, you won't know if there is a problem if you don't ask people how they are holding up. Engagement surveys can be an important early warning system for a resilience deficit. However, there are other psychometric instruments—like the [Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale](#)—which can specifically measure the individual resilience of an employee group.

2. Keep a close watch for the early warning signs of declining resilience. Psychologically unsafe workplaces are almost invariably the scene of high levels of resignations, absenteeism and sick leave. These metrics, taken together, provide unambiguous evidence that basic

working conditions are draining resilience from your people.

3. Watch for employees who are pushing themselves too hard. Are your people constantly deferring their PTO, or answering work emails during time off on evenings, weekends and statutory holidays? These are tell-tale signs of employees who will eventually drain their resilience batteries. No one, not even the hardest top performers, can ignore work-life balance and remain resilient.

4. Promote a psychologically safe and healthy workplace. Even the most naturally resilient people will eventually lose their ability to adapt, endure and recover if their workplace is characterized by poor communication, internal conflict, rampant office politics, poor leadership and an absence of work-life balance.

5. Pay particular attention to leadership. Broad engagement surveys show that the main reason why people leave organizations is to escape bad or toxic leadership. You need to apply a focused and explicit lens to the quality of leadership in your organization to ensure your leaders are not subjecting employees to neglect, unreasonable work demands, sexual harassment and emotional abuse.

It's important to note that a transfusion of new employees or leaders cannot, on its own, improve the resilience of an organization with a particularly toxic culture. Even the most confident and capable new employees and leaders eventually drain their resilience batteries when faced with an unsupportive workplace.

Organizations can take steps to help build and sustain resilience skills by taking the time to assess culture, leaders and people. Once the weak links have been identified, it will be essential to provide practical tools to build resilience in those who may need it and restore resilience to those who may have depleted their batteries in the early days of the pandemic.

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