The Great Return

3 Must-Haves for Employees

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The Playing Field Has Changed

Employee expectations and the standard for employee experience have changed—and will continue to change. Over the past several years, the pandemic forced organizations into a "survive" mentality that focused on immediate challenges, often at the expense of forward-thinking, employee-centric strategy. One-hit-wonder tools and procedures acted as temporary band-aids for long-established (and likely to endure) problems with employee engagement and experience.

To stay successful and win with both customers and employees, organizations will have to get back to thinking ahead and preparing long-term strategies. For example, 90% of respondents to a Gartner survey[1] said they'll continue to allow employees to work remotely at least part of the time, and 44% anticipate offering additional benefits (mental health, childcare leave, etc.).

In this ebook, we'll take a look at 3 must-haves for employees during the Great Return.

1   https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/9-tips-for-managing-remote-employees/

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Essential 1

Agile HR Is the New Standard

The past few years have taught us the value of preparing for the worst and being agile. For HR, agile planning means getting proactive by anticipating and planning for the scale and speed of change instead of just reacting to it. From curbside pick-up and expanded delivery to robust ecommerce and virtual solutions, successful business owners and managers have stepped out of their comfort zone, and creatively solved core problems that could have destroyed their businesses.

Change and disruption have always been a big part of the job for HR professionals, but when major disruptions occur, those 3- and 5-year outlooks get seriously shortened. Without the right tools and plans in place, companies can only work to keep up. But with flexible, experience-enhancing tools, disruption can instead become opportunity to get ahead.

☑ Prioritize and Personalize

Prepare your organization and workforce to stay productive without missing a beat. Start with a robust digital infrastructure with effective tools to help avoid breakdowns in communication and workflow, minimize frustration, and maintain corporate credibility. Set your company and employees up for a seamless, successful transition and make it easier to implement future changes as needed.

☑ Centralize Communication

One of HR's major challenges is making sure changes are communicated effectively and efficiently. Put systems in place that give you the ability to be quick and flexible to keep your entire workforce on the same page at the same time, wherever they work, by providing a single, go-to hub of information.

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Essential 2

Continuously Recalibrate the Employee Experience

Whether your leaders and people managers are well-acquainted with remote work or were thrown into it for the first time this year, it's easy to lose touch with the needs of your workforce, especially when they're figuring that out themselves. To help employers and employees stay connected, HR professionals have had to redefine, reimagine, and recalibrate the employee experience.

☑ Innovate Engagement

Staying in tune with employee needs means staying in touch. It's critical that HR executives make a concerted effort to identify or innovate new tools and techniques to both encourage and measure employee engagement, including benchmarking against peers to provide helpful reference points. From employee surveys to training on managing remote teams, stay ahead of communication challenges and the loss of emotional connection that comes with remote working.

☑ Start Before Day 1

Research by GlassDoor shows that a good onboarding process can improve an organization's new-hire retention by 82% and productivity by more than 70%.[2] A blended workforce of remote and on-site employees is the new normal. That means developing an onboarding process that provides a consistent experience for every new hire — whether on screen or in person — is critical to preparing them to hit the ground running.

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Continuously Recalibrate the Employee Experience

☑ Delegate and Equip

When the pandemic first hit, HR focused on making sure employees were set up for remote working, but many overlooked (or never fully acknowledged) the need to equip managers and executives with the tools and training they need to manage a remote workforce. Experience has taught us managing by email and video conference takes a very different set of skills than managing a team sitting outside your office. Providing training for managers will help them effectively and confidently manage things like productivity and team morale.

☑ Measure and Pivot

Continue monitoring and tweaking your workforce analytics to identify trends, measure employee feelings, gauge their needs, and monitor which benefits they're utilizing most. Ongoing measurement with frequent opportunities to provide and receive feedback with managers using check-ins and surveys will help make sure your programs and initiatives align with both employees' needs and organizational goals.

59% of HR leaders say "building critical skills and competencies" is a top priority but 40% say they can't build development solutions fast enough to keep up.

Gartner for HR: Top 5 Priorities for HR Leaders in 2022

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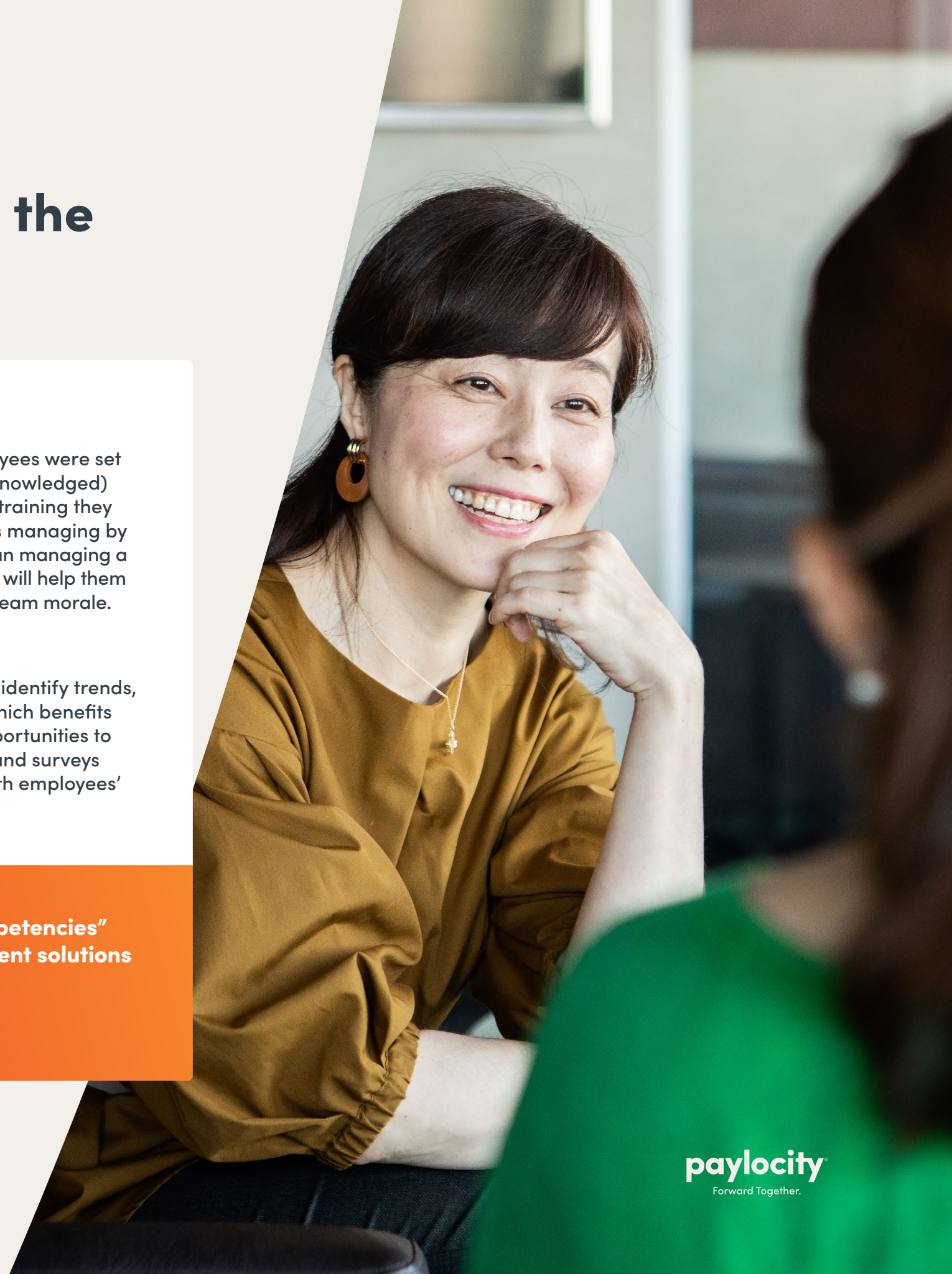
Essential 3

Make Your Strategy More About People Than Policies

HR has always been about the people. But companies are shifting from prioritizing the work people do for them to ensuring the company works for the people as well.

In today's highly competitive market, companies are facing turnover and engagement challenges like never before. In fact, a toxic corporate culture is 10.4 times more accurate as a predictor of attrition rate than compensation. Motivation and failure to recognize performance are 3x stronger predictors than compensation.[3]

The issues impacting employees personally will eventually impact them professionally. So it's increasingly important that employees know the issues that are meaningful to them are also meaningful to the company they work for.

> "We have be the ones challenging the business to say:
> Is that human? Is that the right experience for the employees?
> And I think the business is going to lean on that more and ask
> us to be thinking about the human experience."
>
> Cheryl Johnson | CHRO | Paylocity

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Make Your Strategy More About People Than Policies

☑ Prioritize Mental Health

Not a new issue, mental health awareness has been slowly gaining momentum. But the pandemic has brought the issue speeding to the top of many HR priority lists. In fact, 68% of organizations added at least one new wellness benefit to help employees early in the pandemic.[4]

The stress and pressure the pandemic put on the workforce are tremendous, and everyone is experiencing grief. But there remains a stigma associated with mental health, and HR is in a position to help change that. By including mental health in the everyday HR conversation, you can normalize talking about it — and that's the first step toward improving it.

☑ Strengthen Belonging with DEI&A

Another long-simmering topic that is now spilling over into everyday concerns is diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEI&A). Many organizations are responding to employee needs by developing robust DEI&A programs that not only improve diversity in hiring but also ensure that the corporate experience is balanced to give all employees a true sense of belonging.

Data, analytics, and AI-enhanced recruitment are some of the most powerful DEI&A tools HR professionals have at their disposal. When powered by accurate, relevant data, state-of-the-art recruitment tools can equip businesses to evaluate and improve processes that overcome the unconscious biases to level the playing field. And by establishing goals and setting up metrics around DEI&A, your organization can capture actionable data around hiring and compensation practices. Your data can also provide insight into benefit enrollment and usage patterns — making it easier to evaluate whether your offering meets the varying needs of a diverse workforce.

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Make Your Strategy More About People Than Policies

☑ Infuse Transparency

In the absence of timely information, uncertainty grows, which fuels speculation and even disinformation. One of the most impactful ways to promote well-being amongst your employees is through transparency. According to a Deloitte survey, transparency is "the most valuable organizational currency."[4] It builds deeper employee trust and respect for the organization — which goes hand-in-hand with employee well-being.

Yet, when surveyed, a surprising 60% of organizations were concerned about employee perception of transparency and another 27% believed their lack of transparency created a competitive disadvantage.[5] Building trust through transparency can start with something as simple as clearly outlining expectations and goals for your employees — openly sharing organizational goals, successes and, yes, even failures with employees goes even further. Vulnerability inspires empathy. Trust begets trust. Show them that you're in it together.

☑ Take a Stand

Navigating social issues is new for a number of businesses. When these hot topics came up in the past, organizations would ask, "Is this issue relevant to our business? Will taking a stand be too polarizing?" And in answer to those questions, our default setting was always to remain neutral. Well, we're learning that staying neutral is no longer an option.

Now we're asking, "Is this issue relevant to our people?" More often than not, the answer is yes, and it's especially true for Gen Z — the workforce of the future. For them, standing up for what's right and what they believe in isn't new. It's a core part of their identity. Social issues can be complicated to navigate, but with the right strategies and tools in place, HR leaders can help their organizations clarify their positions for the sake of both customers and employees.

5   https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/5136_HC-Trends-2019/
DI_HC-Trends-2019.pdf

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New Rules of Engagement Require Better Tools

HR is on the frontline of business transformation, and you need to deliver a flexible, employee-first experience to attract, retain, and succeed for the long haul. To do that, you need access to tools and insights that boost both connection and productivity.

As a leading provider of cloud-based HR and payroll software solutions, Paylocity can help your business make strategic decisions in the areas of core HR, payroll, benefits, talent, and workforce management. Paylocity offers an intuitive, easy-to-use product suite that helps businesses automate and streamline HR and payroll processes, attract and retain talent, and build culture and connection with their employees. Our award-winning platform coupled with our client-first service approach means we are a partner and advocate for your success.

Unleash the full power of automation and drive communication, connection, and collaboration with a platform employees love.

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