

HOW TO ACHIEVE GREATER EMPLOYEE BUY-IN WHEN GROWING YOUR BUSINESS



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If growing your business right now, my guess is staffing issues are delivering you a world of pain. Time and our precious human resources are in scarce supply. Every organisation is deprived of talent. As for time, that is the consequence and paid handsomely for, in lieu of human capital. At first, the time bites are small, but slowly they encroach. With the extra workloads and stress, your employees are also impacted. This means, so too are your shareholders and customers.

No matter the industry nor stage, tech, mining, startups or scaleups, having the people power is a must. In 2022, Australia experienced 9.5% job mobility, with the highest rate being for professionals at 22%. New Zealand tells a tougher story, with estimates that 40% of employees were planning to quit their jobs in 2022. The toil of hiring and retention is all-consuming, an uninvited guest lodged firmly in our subconscious mind, accompanying us everywhere, meetings, the bathroom and even family dinners. Pass the salt, please.

As for an impending recession, don't be lulled. In Australia, vacancies were still 92.4% higher in March 2023 than in February 2020. Our skills shortage remains. If going through a growth phase, retention is a business imperative!

■ GROWING PAINS

Growing pains are par for the course of expansion. It is the journey and discomfort of moving forward. Nonetheless, they are experienced differently by your employees. Your view is excitement and optimism, holding the big picture vision and motivated by the enormity of the challenge. For your team, though, the outlook may be drudgery, laden and burdened with hurdle after hurdle and no end in sight. Purposeless and, if worn out, maybe even feeling hopeless. Post-pandemic and with the level of uncertainty experienced, people now desire more control over their lives. They can achieve this by being part of the big picture and

the journey to get there.

■ PURPOSE-LED LEADERSHIP

You need to give your employees something far-reaching. Purpose gives your employees a focus larger than themselves. It secures engagement, instils pride, and guides actions. It helps rise above feelings of negativity and to view from a different prism, that of optimism.

To do so requires a set of values that tell the real narrative of your business's beliefs. It sets you apart from your competitors and what your employees buy into at the job interview, choosing your organisation in the first place. Then, it's your job to keep the values resonating in every company action.

■ GET THE FIT RIGHT

Not everyone is suited to a startup environment or growth phase. Understand what your business is going through, the pain points to be felt by your employees and the period. Identify the skills, experience, attributes, attitudes and even personality styles to suit specific jobs and your current environment and recruit to that. Enterprise thinking, optimism, proactive, fluid thinkers and an ability to work with ambiguity are just some attributes specifically suited to a growth environment.

Buy-in from your employees is no different to buy-in from your customer base. Ideally, your customers love what you do, which should be the same for your employees. That level of 'connection' gives life to the promises your organisation offers, making a crucial difference for engagement all-around.

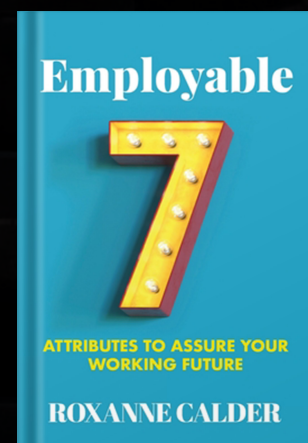
Growing pains that may impact your employees are perceived changes to culture, organisational confusion, inefficiency, and rework due to inefficient processes, a reactive and fire-fighting environment, poor communication, and blurred lines of responsibilities and authority. Consider

contractors if the requirements are a milestone, project-based or time specific. A pitstop crew for a short but effective super job might be a great alternative.

■ WELL-BEING

Hand in glove with macroeconomic concerns, many businesses are pulling back on benefits. Don't stress about the lack of perceived perks; they are never the glue that keeps employees. It's just glitter, and it wears off. However, what is often associated with perks and benefits is the link to employee well-being. When under stress, pressure and increased workloads, the feeling of being undervalued can surface and, with it, even resentment. Keep this in check by recognising and acknowledging your employees.

Post-pandemic and every employee wants a leader who cares about them. In fact, it is the number one reason people leave their jobs. The lines are blurred and blended in every aspect of work now, and this extends to the role leaders play. You must have a genuine interest and concern for your employees. It is impossible to have smooth sailing in business; however, a heightened awareness assists in managing issues well before escalation and resignation. Ultimately, it comes back to the leader. Set the goals, map the course, be aware of the pitfalls, recruit the right people and care about them.



Employable – 7 Attributes to Assuring Your Working Future' (Major Street \$29.95)