

Pathways to Growth

Fostering a happy and engaged work family

It can sometimes feel like we spend more time at work, than we do with our families and friends. Away from the office, we all make a determined effort to ensure that our time is spent in a way that strengthens our personal relationships. So why should we treat our “work family” any differently?

Keeping your work family happy and engaged is integral to your business achieving its growth goals. Research by Grant Thornton Australia into the differences between faster-growing and slower-growing mid-size businesses indicates that one of the key characteristics of the faster-growers is their dynamic, agile and flexible approach to managing their business. This, of course, defines how these faster-growers engage and reward their employees, managers, leaders: their work families.

We recommend taking a look at six areas that can help you keep your work family happy and engaged for the long haul:



Celebrate the successes

From when we are very young, our families and friends celebrate our achievements. We are rewarded and encouraged to continue this effort to be even more successful next time. So why stop this proven formula at work?

Your greatest resource within your work family is your team. Ensuring your employees and leaders feel appreciated and letting them know their efforts have been noticed will encourage them to even greater productivity.

The most successful recognition and reward programs are those that have been developed through engagement with your people – asking them what is important to them and how they would like to celebrate.

According to a McKinsey study, praise and commendation from managers was rated the top motivator for performance, beating out other noncash and financial incentives, by a majority of workers (67%).



It's not always about gifts and perks

Keep the learning happening

As you reflect on your early youth, you will recall learning life skills through playing and getting involved in sports activities, interactions with members of your family and friends, and through formal education like school.

As organisations grow, questions may start being asked about the opportunities for growth and what next career steps look like.

The 70:20:10 learning and development model should be considered for learning at work. The model outlines that individuals obtain 70% of their knowledge from on-the-job experiences,

20% from interactions with others, and 10% from formal learning programs. Encouraging a culture of continuous development at work will support an engaging culture and contribute to improving retention as employees continuously grow and develop new skills.

70%

On the job experience

20%

Interaction with others

10%

Formal learning

Manage the bad behaviour

We have all seen the effect of bad behaviour outside of work – the consequences of a badly behaved netball team member leading to the team performing poorly or a loud birthday party guest ruining the night for everyone. The same behaviour in a mid-size business can have disastrous results if not managed early and effectively.

If left unattended, the ongoing distractions of bad behaviour can become costly. Conversation taking place today can prevent the need for a complicated series of difficult discussions tomorrow.


We have seen bad behaviour in mid-sized business that could have been addressed immediately get out of hand by hoping the behaviour takes care of itself. We know that managers are increasingly reluctant to manage performance issues for fear of being accused of bullying. The effect of not addressing bad behaviour is that it grows across the team, infiltrates the culture, and is viewed as acceptable behaviour. It should come as no surprise that bad behaviour affects job performance, and at a leadership level it affects the organisations culture, significantly impacting its performance.

Consider a recent situation where a business had a member of their team behaving poorly and displaying a negative attitude towards their work and the organisation prior to going on annual leave. The business leaders had hoped that the break would be good for the employee, however, when the team member returned, the bad behaviour continued.

While none of the business' leaders wanted to approach this employee to discuss their behaviour and outline expectations of what was appropriate, with support they were able to take the steps to have the difficult conversation, manage the performance, and demonstrate their commitment to the desired behaviours.

The Fair Work Commission has clearly stated that management actions do not need to be perfect to be considered 'reasonable'. However, it is important that a clear performance improvement framework is in place to ensure clarity regarding the performance improvement process and give managers the confidence to address bad behaviour.

Whether the conversation results in a change of behaviour by the employee, or the employee leaving, the end result strengthens work relationships across the organisation and fosters a unified and respectful work family. The fundamental goal of performance management is to promote and improve employee effectiveness, which in turn will drive organisation performance.



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Be courageous and encourage the conversation

Mid-size businesses are just like families – and very often they are family owned. There will be times when different viewpoints will be raised. Diversity is not just about race and gender. It is also about what we believe and feel, how we think and process information, how we work, and what we do. No one person has all the answers or solutions.

Building a culture where everyone in the work family feels they have a voice and can contribute to the conversation will have significant positive effects on the workplace.

Businesses that act on innovation have a competitive advantage when facing adversity under fluctuating business and economic conditions.

By being courageous, encouraging diversity of thought, and challenging employees to contribute their opinions, companies will be rewarded with new ideas, new services, new products and out-of-the-box thinking.



Diverse workforce



Innovation



46%

More likely to meet targets

Focus on the people

As a business grows, one thing remains the same: the challenge of dealing with people issues.

Most small businesses grow organically without people processes and systems in place, and most people setting up a business are not trained in the nuances of managing people challenges. If people issues in a small team are not addressed promptly, they can become serious and costly problems as the business grows.

Growing organisations need to invest in people planning initiatives to support their leaders and ensure a strong focus on their greatest asset – their people.

Organisations must not underestimate the impact of anticipating employees' needs and wants, and understanding the culture required to drive and motivate the team. The value that expertise in people management can deliver in minimising risk by ensuring hiring practices are in line with employment legislation, and also providing guidance on compliance will see a return on investment.

Growing organisations need to invest in people

Introduce the right people to the family

As growing companies recruit and retain new and existing talent, what may have worked in the startup phase may not work in the growth phase.

As a startup, recruitment may have been based on “skill” and “will”, while what is important in recruiting new team members in the growth phase will also be “fit”.

Developing a recruitment framework which considers capability, experience, and cultural fit, will be critical to the development of the culture and growth of the organisation. Hiring smart by understanding how to attract the right people, with the right skills, at the right time, will be necessary for the business to grow and succeed.

This situation arose recently with a business that needed support in recruiting new members of their team as they transitioned from the startup to growth phase of their business. As a startup, one of the senior leaders had been responsible for all the recruitment, and had undertaken recruitment via an informal and unstructured process.

As a result, there was limited diligence in the appointment of new starters, with a recent recruit let go during their probationary period as they were the wrong “fit”. The senior leaders were heavily invested in ensuring the right people were appointed to the team to ensure no further turnover. With support, the business was able to implement a robust and structured recruitment framework tailored to their needs. The focus on the experience and skills required for the roles, as well as the competencies and behaviours needed to make new team members successful resulted in the appointment of productive and valued members of the team.



Poor culture fit



High turnover



\$ cost >

50%
of salary

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47,000+

People globally



130+

Countries



\$4.8BN

Worldwide revenue 2016 (USD)



1,160+

People nationally

Our services to dynamic businesses

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Private wealth

Family office services

Superannuation

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National Specialist Tax

Indirect tax

Transfer pricing

Remuneration taxes

Public Sector Advisory

Industry specialisation

Automotive Dealerships

Energy & Resources

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Life Sciences

Manufacturing

Not-for-Profit

Professional Services

Public Sector

Real Estate & Construction

Consumer Products & Retail

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