BUILDING ORGANIZATION RESILIENCE WITH EMPLOYEES' TRUST

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EDITORIAL

COVID-19 pandemic raised the stakes of failure to many organizations. Consequently business continuity strategies are reviewed and changed to cope with losses within the broad value-chain, trustfulness with external as well as internal customers, role of technology and artificial intelligence and of a highest priority top management and leadership approaches to change and organizational culture. Nevertheless, this essay is more about the internal customers of organizations, the employees, and how to engage them to build more trust under the new conditions of online work.

Based on the last months experiences collected around the globe, employees were forced to work from home, have been exposed to new physical and psychological conditions which may have hindered their performance depending mainly on two factors being how managers engaged employees and the mind set of employees themselves. McKinsey (2020) reported that people (employees) are thinking about leaving the workforce for a variety of reasons. "While many organizations are providing additional resources related to remote working and employee well-being, there is more to be done to meet employees' needs for sustainable, flexible, and empathic work environments, especially for parents and caregivers". Nevertheless, employees burn out is one potential outcome (30-40% of the workforce) and employees exhaustion (40-55% of the workforce), though, specifically, women are on the highest end of the statistics. Furthermore, Murphy (2020a) asserts that "the current pandemic and scores of employees working remotely have shown that employee engagement is not entirely dependent on having a great manager, but it is dependent on employees' personal outlooks and mindsets" (Para 1). Murphy contends that employees' mindsets (like optimism, resilience, proactivity, assertiveness, ambition, etc.) actually matter more than having a great manager. And those personal outlooks (not their managers' actions) are driving their employee engagement. The aforementioned is validated with parametric evidence where research shows that "trusting one's boss does explain about 22% of an employee's inspiration at work. So that's good. While, employees having high resilience (i.e. surviving difficult times with little trouble), explains 25% of an employee's inspiration at work. That's much better" (Para 9). Other research about the type of leadership needed was explained by Hu et al. (2020) and Science Daily (2020) reporting that "A global pandemic can lead some people to think about their own mortality, which will understandably make them more stressed and less engaged at work". In fact, Fessler (2020) reviewing Amabile's research stresses that during the hard pandemic time, everyone has to realize that people now have an additional part-time job that might be called "Citizen of the Covid-19 Pandemic". That is, the Covid-19 citizenry is all about monitoring and safeguarding one's health and safety, reviewing the flood of information about the virus, carefully managing one's finances, offering emotional support and social contact, and educating and caring for one's children while working full-time, among other responsibilities. Therefore, under such conditions, business leaders who have exhibited what is called "servant leadership", who are attentive to employees' emotional needs and unite them behind a common purpose, "made a

positive difference and helped workers stay engaged at work and contribute to their communities." Hu et al. (2020) stress the fact that servant leaders prioritize fulfillment of others' needs, attend to employees' emotional suffering, work to empower employees, and emphasize serving the community.

The aforementioned describes the managers who care. What if managers are of those who believe that employees are productive only if they are sitting front of a screen [all the time] to finish their endeavors? Here, Murphy (2020b) describes the situation as "the problem becomes especially acute when the "butt-in-seat" mentality follows suddenly-remote employees into their home workspace" (Para 3). It is a fact that top remote workers operate very differently than being in office. Experience shows that remote workers who have worked from home for years, work intensely for dedicated blocks of time without interruptions and then "get their butts out of their seats" (Para 7). In support of the aforementioned notion, MacKay (2018) found that knowledge workers check email/Slack every 6 minutes. And a third checked every 3 minutes. And 40% of knowledge workers never get more than 30 minutes straight of focused time. Consequently, according to Murphy (2020b), employees need to resort to "Time Chunking" (also known as time blocking) which is essentially "carving out pieces of the day when you can disconnect from email (or Slack or IM, etc.) and focus on performing work that requires deep thinking" (Para 8). Therefore, the advice is that if managers seek to drastically improve engagement and consequently the productivity and effectiveness of their remote team, they have to start giving the team dedicated blocks of time throughout the day when they have to be online and other times when they can disconnect and work free from interruptions. In addition, Amabile & Kramer (2011) enforce employee engagement by recommending the removal of obstacles to progress, including meaningless tasks and toxic relationships. They also assert the activation of two forces that enable progress: 1) catalysts-events that directly facilitate project work, such as clear goals and autonomy and 2) nourisher-interpersonal events that uplift workers, including encouragement and demonstrations of respect and collegiality.

Source: Murphy, 2020c.

FIGURE 1
SELF-ENGAGEMENT OUTLOOKS

Finally, Murphy (2020c) proposes 18 different outlooks that enforce engagement and which if nourished constantly leads to employee trust and builds ownership, positive forces which strengthen the leadership efforts to mitigate the pandemic negative symptoms and help to build resilience with full employee support.

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