

**Embracing
Disruption from
the Inside-Out:
Talent strategies
are vital.**

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**Use ‘the power
of their brand’
as a beacon
for the talent
to effectively
communicate
and inspire
teams.**

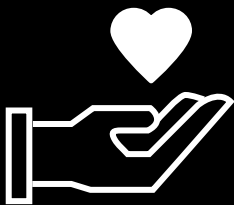
The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic is causing disruption in nearly every facet of our lives. There is uncertainty that lays ahead, but one thing is for certain. Life and business as we know it is altered, and this change is not just for the short-term. Companies must begin to embrace that this is a fast forced evolution; and more so that there are steadfast components of this change that will stick around long after the pandemic is written into history. Not only are we seeing outside factors influence customer behavior, but we are also seeing workforce behavior across industries transformed forever. Just like its human victims, COVID-19 does not discriminate when it comes to commerce. It has impacted every industry vertical on the planet. It is proven that sustainable, successful organizations are built from the inside-out. They embody a strong culture and articulate a cohesive, clear vision for the teams who do the work. People are the heart and soul of businesses. During these volatile times, regardless of whether an organization is experiencing reduction or growth opportunities, keeping talent retention and acquisition strategies at the forefront is mission critical.

How can companies cultivate the people currently onboard, while also growing, engaging and educating new talent at rapid scale? Or, after a staff reduction, how can they sustain “curb-appeal” for when it is time to hire again?

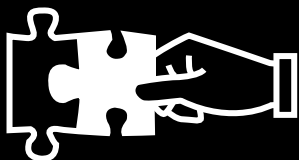
Three pillars allow the power of brand to navigate the disruption.



Make progress permanent



Affect from within



Experience the experience

In this new reality, leaders must plan employee sustain and development strategies not just to get them through the next three months, but rather look far into the future. The best way is use 'the power of their brand' as a beacon for talent to effectively communicate and inspire teams. There is no going back, as this is a strategic pivot for future, long-term success.

Focus on people and plan for the future. We have identified three actionable strategic pillars for companies to adopt to create positive, impactful progress for employees for the long-term:

1. Make progress permanent

COVID-19 forced a fast adoption of digital behavior from how we get food, to how we work or even how we spend a Friday night with friends. There is not necessarily a total and perpetual loss of jobs, across the board, in today's market. But rather, this can be viewed as an evolution, and with that comes a redistribution of the workforce to support new consumer behaviors. Where there are certain and significant layoffs in many arenas, there is a home for talent in verticals augmenting business models and experiencing growth.

While everyone is rightfully worried about what is going to happen tomorrow, this is an opportunity for leaders to stand out and reframe for the long road ahead for employees. Plan for progress and make it an enduring constant for the future. Communicating that business is committed to a growth vision in the face of a downturn is attractive to existing and perspective, future talent. When times are disruptive, people notice organizations that can provide a vision, even if it is forward-thinking, beyond the current circumstances. It shows acknowledgement and processing with a plan to initiate desired outcomes.

If these new digital consumer behaviors are here to stay, employees need to know that they are too. Demonstrate this by investing in the long-game. Implement brand education and training to further foster understanding of company value in market. Employees are now dealing with more expansive customer base. For example, large volumes of production, increased supply chain stress or even customer support for an older demographic who has never ordered groceries online. Providing education and training on how the enterprise navigates these instances not only creates a dedicated workforce for the long haul, it also nurtures job skills and learning which is appealing to people.

Brands embracing change at pivotal times

1930 - The Great Depression

FORTUNE |  MOTOROLA

1974 - Recession

People |  | CHRYSLER

2001 - Recession

 | P&G |  TARGET

2003 - SARS

 | JD  .COM

2008 - The Great Recession

amazon | The Economist | SAMSUNG

2. Affect from within

Values influence behaviors that produce outcomes.

In present times, if leadership and staff are questioning what the brand stands for in-market or have varying opinions, it can be a challenge to stand out. The company may not have a clear and inspirational promise to its employees that provides direction on how they contribute to the bigger picture. It is hard to cultivate talent and recruit new employees, without showcasing the value the brand brings to its people. Now is the time businesses to make a strong promise, backed by values that are meaningful, resulting in attainable outcomes.

On the other side of the coin, there are many companies that have core values that they hold near and dear.

The difference here, over the previous scenario, is that the organization knows its brand tenets, it knows what it stands for and employees know why they come to work every day. However, in times of crisis, leaders may question how employees perceive those values and if they need to change to inspire new behaviors. The short answer is no. The brand is still the brand. Stay true to what makes it unique and different, and to the aspects that motivate and inspire teams since inception. If teams are tried and true to those principles, now is not the time to evolve. Instead, likely what needs to change is how the organization activates values and makes them come to life. The next pillar is an assessment of a strategic framework and approach for creating value-drive experiences that engage and educate in a new landscape.

3. Experience the experience.

Drive employee engagement through innovation. Don't just tell your employees what the brand means, show them and more importantly, involve them. Now is the moment to develop branded touchpoints for teams to see, hear and emotionally connect. The science of organizational and human behavior tells us people simply want to work for a company that is fair, cares about its people and provides a sense of stability and job safety. Showcasing these crucial ideals is key in keeping talent, as well as being seen as attractive to potential hires now or down the road. Create experiences that demonstrate those aspects while mapping to company values in a real and tangible manner.

Embracing systems' innovations to custom build or tap into online assets and platforms that enable effective communication is a scalable and long-term solution.

As this forced, fast adoption of digital behavior occurs around COVID-19, embracing systems' innovations to custom build or tap into online assets and platforms that enable effective communication throughout the organization is a scalable and long-term solution. A robust employee experience is about connecting people with the business. It not only makes individuals feel as if they are part of something bigger, but it also:

- **Measures feedback in terms of brand values and how they are resonating with employees**
- **Acts as a powerful communication tool to drive key brand messaging**
- **Becomes a platform for employee engagement, involving teams in interactive exercise and educational driven programming**
- **Provides education and motivation through gamified challenges and reward systems geared toward empowerment.**

These three pillars allow the power of brand to navigate the disruption and channel it into talent-driven strategies that map to continued success far into the future. As we mentioned, behavioral science tells us people want to work in a place that is considered fair in its treatment, as well as provides a sense of stability. Through science, we further know that while on the job, people want to feel as if they are contributing and also receiving recognition. Taking these principles into consideration and driving them toward values, then activating these values in a manner that is engaging for employees, will allow organizations to intelligently prepare for scalable team growth and be well-positioned for years to come.

