

MANAGEMENT INSIGHT REPORT

Data & critical insights for
leaders on the past, present,
& future of management

2023



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INSTITUTE

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A LOT HAS CHANGED IN MANAGEMENT OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS - HAVE YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS CHANGED WITH IT?

Remote work, increased social consciousness, labor shortages, and more have shifted the way leaders must approach managing their teams. However, one key component remains the same: the principal role of a manager is to help their team achieve results that they simply couldn't attain without said manager. It's critical to reflect on how your leadership

style has evolved so that you can continue to reach new levels of success.

In this report, we'll explore some of the major shifts in management (the past), what's key to focus on now (the present), and where management will go from here so you can stay ahead of the curve (the future).



62%

*the amount of team members
that now work in a remote or
hybrid environment - roughly
tripled from 2019*

WHAT HAS CHANGED

MAJOR SHIFTS IN THE PAST THREE YEARS HAVE RESULTED IN A NEED FOR INTENTIONALITY IN THE WAY WE LEAD & MANAGE

Our client research shows that about 62% of team members now work in a remote or hybrid environment - a number that is roughly tripled from 2019.

Pre-pandemic, the majority of leaders were working alongside their team members in the office, and this environment made a lot of day-to-day elements of management much easier. We used informal interactions to build relationships with our teams. Accountability was more obvious, as team members worked side-by-side and could observe how others spent their day. It was also easier to recognize our team members' successes, as we could simply stop by their workspace and express our appreciation.



For leaders with hybrid and remote teams:

Learn more about if your managers are properly equipped for this unique setting with our Remote Management Checklist.

[Download here »](#)

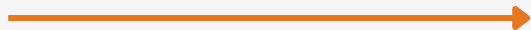
While remote/hybrid work has many benefits for organizations (lower overhead costs, increased talent pool) and for employees (less commuting time, increased flexibility), it does present distinct challenges. The casual interactions leaders often relied on to help manage team members have become much less frequent. When studying leaders post-pandemic, this is likely why we saw some of the largest drops in manager ratings on the following survey questions:

- Making team members feel like they are an important part of the team:
↓ 14 points
- Doing an excellent job of recognizing and rewarding team achievements:
↓ 7 points
- Holding other team members accountable to their job performance:
↓ 9 points
- Team members believing their manager is working as hard as they are:
↓ 8 points



The data is telling us that we must become more intentional with how we manage in order to combat some of the toll that the pandemic has taken on our teams.

Here are three recommendations to adapt to what has changed in management by being a more intentional leader:



1. Schedule your one-to-one meetings with each team member either every week or every other week to help coordinate their work and make them feel valued. Agree upon terms, in case rescheduling is needed, and stick to those terms. [Download a one-to-one meeting template here »](#)
2. Ensure accountability for team members is clear. Share progress against goals as a team so everyone knows what is being accomplished collectively.
3. Focus on giving more recognition by making a list of all your team members and tracking how often you recognize each of them. Keep in mind that your team members will have different preferred ways to be recognized.

3X

the amount of reduced turnover from managers who encourage peer support on their teams

3X

the amount of reduced turnover from managers who use open and transparent communication

4X

the amount of reduced turnover from managers who create a fun work environment

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE WORKPLACE CALLS FOR LEADERS TO FOCUS ON CREATING BETTER CULTURE

After several years of successive “unprecedented times,” leaders have been faced with a slew of distinct challenges, and there may be none greater than figuring out how to build a cohesive work culture that engages each individual team member.

So what does management need to do now to create a company culture that leads to meaningful, enjoyable and effective work?

Our 2022 research points to **three key strategies** leaders can use to build a better culture:

1. Create a more fun work environment
2. Drive more openness and transparency
3. Ensure team members support each other



STRATEGY #1: MAKE WORK MORE FUN

Whether or not a manager creates a fun work environment has a strong impact on how effective they are in their roles. Our research shows that managers who create a fun work environment are:

- **4X** more likely to have team members who are happy in their roles
- **7X** more likely to be rated as a top manager by their team members
- **4X** as likely to retain their team members

The data is clear - employees want their work environment to be fun and are more likely to stick around if it is. We also asked team members what specifically their managers can do to create a fun work environment. Here were some of their ideas:



Over 36% of team members surveyed said that their manager creates a more fun work environment through being positive, jovial, or happy around their team members



For 11% of employees, their managers create a more fun work environment when they challenge them to use, grow, and develop their skills



13% of employees said their manager creates fun by showing they care about them as person



18% of team members mentioned the importance of their manager getting to know them on a personal level

STRATEGY #2: DRIVE MORE OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

A second strategy that leaders can use to improve their team culture is driving more openness and transparency. Our research shows that when team members have open and transparent communication with their manager, they are:

- **3X** more likely to be low risk for turnover
- **12X** more likely to discuss difficult issues comfortably
- **16X** as likely to trust their leader

Leaders can encourage more openness and transparency in how team members communicate with them and each other in the following ways:

- Have a policy of always sharing as much information with their team members as their company's policies will allow
- Ask their team members where they are confused or need more clarity, and seek to fill any gaps in information
- Consistently field team member questions on a variety of topics and issues

STRATEGY #3: ENSURE TEAM MEMBERS ARE SUPPORTING THEIR PEERS

A final key strategy to create a better team culture is to help team members support each other's needs and priorities. Based on our survey data, we know that team members who feel their peers are consistently supportive of them are:

- **3X** more likely to be low risk for turnover
- **2.5X** more likely to stay with their organization
- **2.3X** as likely to be happy in their job

While leaders cannot force their team members to be supportive of their peers, they can encourage it. Here are some ways to do it:

- Praise team members who step up to help a peer meet a deadline or tackle a challenging project
- Encourage team members to ask a peer to be a sounding board when they have difficult decisions to make
- Set up formal peer coaching relationships between team members

50.3%

*the percentage of U.S. adults
55 and older as of November
2021 that left the labor force
due to retirement*

WHAT TO EXPECT

AN ANALYSIS OF OUR DATA REVEALS WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THE FUTURE OF MANAGEMENT

As we consider how the needs of the workforce will evolve in the years to come, we must look to the changes that will occur as the Baby Boomer generation moves into retirement; a Pew Research Center analysis in November 2021 found that 50.3% of U.S. adults 55 and older reported being out of the labor force due to retirement at the end of the third quarter. Millennials are becoming the largest percentage of the workforce, and Gen Zers are starting their professional careers. These generations have significantly different needs and desires,

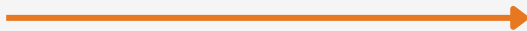
which means leadership must continue to evolve to meet them.

When looking at our research, the positive responses of team members under the age of 30 focus on areas such as finding great value in feedback, discussing career development, and growing in their job abilities. Leaders who lack strength in these areas may find they struggle to motivate their younger team members to achieve success, particularly as more seasoned Boomers are replaced by growing numbers of Millennials and Gen Zers.





So what can leaders do to ensure their management style is adapting to support new generations in the workforce?



While evolving your leadership skills to support new team members through the early stages of their career is critical, it's just as important to continue to support more tenured team members. A good way to engage these senior employees is to encourage them to reinvest their knowledge, perhaps by helping to coach and develop new generations of employees.

1. Schedule annual career development discussions with each team member, and hold the first one shortly after they are initially hired. This helps team members know that you value their personal goals and career trajectory.
2. Commit to providing written feedback to team members once a quarter. Note that "feedback" is not assumed to be critical - positive feedback is just as important to your team members' growth.
3. Allow your team members to define their own next steps as the end of one-to-one meetings, rather than identifying action items for them. This helps them take ownership of their work and shows you value their initiative.

ABOUT ECSELL INSTITUTE & OUR RESEARCH

For more than a decade, Ecsell Institute has been studying the behaviors of leaders across the realms of business, sports and education. With one of the most robust databases of leadership research in the world, we turn your leaders into high-performing coaches who foster professional growth and generate results.

Ecsell quantifies coaching effectiveness, rather than employee satisfaction or engagement, because our research shows that when coaching improves, a team's performance improves. Simply put, better coaching leads to better results. We create state-of-the-art surveys that allow organizations to measure a leader's behavior and capabilities, and then deliver invaluable insight into the perspective and mindset of your employees, athletes and students, revealing opportunities for growth for the entire team.



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