

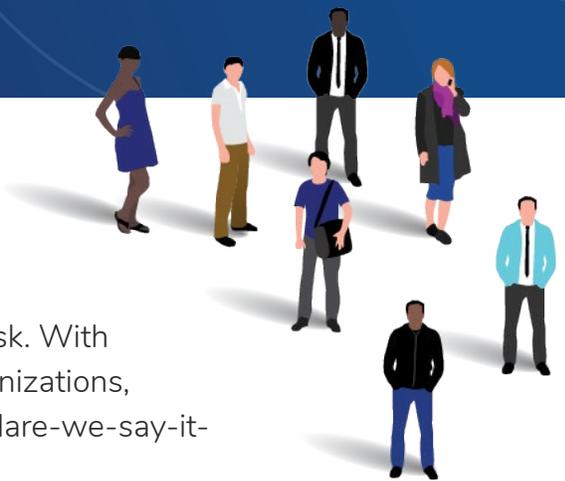


THE MINDSET OF WORKPLACE RECOVERY

How does our thinking need to shift as we consider the **re-entry**?



MINDSET MATTERS



Establishing the new normal of the workplace is a complex task. With needs and desires that range widely at every level of our organizations, employers find themselves unsure of how to navigate these, dare-we-say-it-again, “unprecedented” times.

Many office lights are slowly coming back on as work-life finds its new rhythm, while others still much prefer the safety and practicalities of Zoom-from-home. But with many compelling reasons to consider a hybrid or full return to the office, **it's time to shape our workplace recovery plans**. And on the way there, the mindset we choose matters.

How we think about the return-to-work, it can be argued, is actually more important than the plan itself. As with any massive change effort, it is critical that we orient ourselves and our teams towards a shared renewed vision of our workplace. Yes, a plan is needed to map it out, but the success or failure resides in our ability cultivate mindsets of optimism, hope, joy and forward momentum.

VARIED RETURN PREFERENCES

44%

want to work remotely because they prefer working from home

39%

want to work from the office as much as they did pre-pandemic

17%

want to work remotely because of the ongoing COVID-19 risks

– Gallup, January 2021

As we plan for what's next, there's a need to come to terms with how people have changed over this time. Many employees, from the C-suite to the front office, have been thinking critically about all aspects of their lives. Not only have they adapted to new ways of working remotely, like learning new communication tools, managing team engagement, and wrestling oodles of distractions along the way (enter pandemic puppy), but they've challenged traditional workplace assumptions. Do teams need to be co-located to be effective? Maybe not. Can people actually work on different schedules that match more with their personal peak productivity periods? Probably. Does a green light on Skype or Slack necessarily mean they're getting their best work done? Definitely not. Of course, it's not just people who have changed, most workplaces now look so very different too.

As we cast our minds forward now, and prepare ourselves and teams for another season of change, the question is, **what mindshifts are required?** Especially considering the varied preferences that exist among our diverse teams.



MINDSET SHIFT #1

LOOK AT THIS TIME AS A *GIFT*.



It is an overwhelming time – with a mountain of decisions yet to be made. Many employees are already nervous at the mention of the “new normal” and the workplace recovery equation can feel impossible to balance.

But what a unique time to be living in! The opportunity to shape tomorrow is at the fingertips of every organization right now, in a way it hasn't been in eons.

The secret to forward motion lies with organizations being able to – crucially – reframe their point of view.

It's important to recognize that almost every global team and organization are at the same crossroads, trying to make sense of new data and feedback. It's truly a level playing field where players in your industry are equally disadvantaged but also equally advantaged. If ever there was a time to make a bold change, this is it. **Viewing this time as a gift will in fact help make it so.**



MINDSET SHIFT #2

TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO *SHIFT*.

“Pivot” has been one of the most overused words of the pandemic. But it conjures up hope-filled visions of turning in a totally new direction.

While that may be necessary in some specific cases, for the most part we’re simply needing more of a “readjustment”. **It’s time to shift in one direction or another.** And these shifts can happen in so many areas of our day-to-day work.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SHIFT?

- RECRUITING
- ONBOARDING
- TRAINING
- CELEBRATING

GIVE YOUR ORGANIZATION A LIFT.

Change is difficult at the best of times. In these times though, fatigue is rife. Leaders are going to need to dig deep and communicate in fresh ways, so that everyone is re-inspired about their overall direction. In fact, if there was ever a time to overcommunicate, this is it. **Without a high-touch brand of leadership, people will be left behind, feeling unknown, unheard and ultimately lost.**

Part of this picture will include the re-lifting up of the collective visions and values, reminding people why they do what they do. It's about reigniting their sense of purpose and belonging. And of course, leaders need to embody these values, walking the talk at every turn.

Leaders need to consider...

- How to communicate in fresh, new ways
- How to communicate more frequently
- How to visibly demonstrate they are “there”
- How to re-lift up their organization's vision
- How to embody the values that matter most

PROTECT TEAMS AGAINST *DRIFT*.



Without missional clarity, we can easily drift from our organization's true north. What anchors need to be put in place to keep planned changes moving in the right direction?

As we start making plans with new messages in the mix, the temptation will always be to reinvent ourselves beyond our core purpose, mission and vision. So here's where we need discipline. Are the ways we're "shifting" helping us better achieve our ultimate goals? Or will our plans actually mean we "drift"?

Mission drift happens when we make a series of seemingly small changes that add up to organizations heading in totally new, off-the-chart, directions. (Caveat: Some organizations need new navigational plans altogether, and we're all for that, but most are not in that boat... to carry on the metaphor).

Looking ahead to the next three, six, twelve months, a total commitment to mission clarity is needed.

Consider the anchors that need to be put in place to keep planned changes moving in the right direction. Without missional clarity, we easily drift from our organization's true north.

Great navigation and leadership will keep everyone on course, with shifts only happening to speed up our time to get us where we know we want to be.

AND THEN SIMPLY BE SWIFT.

Yet another strong temptation is to keep fine-tuning plans. And on the surface, it may seem best to wait and wait for new data points before “committing”. As a result, many set a date for announcing changes off in the distance – when greater clarity is assumed. But organizations need to take their foot off the brakes. It’s time for action and time to make decisions – even if those decisions prove slightly imperfect in the end.

Analysis paralysis is a problem because it signals increased uncertainty for our teams. There is enough uncertainty in the world without leaders adding to the confusion. Rather, with authenticity, leaders should boldly step forward and make whatever is known, known to their teams. Even small bits of information, perhaps highlighting the process, will be useful in alleviating fears among teams.

Try this: at the start of your next team email or meeting, point to one of your key values. Something like this... “Our team at XYZ Widgets is known for the way we collaborate with each other. As we rethink our next steps, we will be relying on your input...” While employees in competitive organizations feel adrift from a lack of communication and action, the teams that are led swiftly through the changing tides will hold an advantage to those at sea. There’s really no better time than now to move forward.



Organizations need to take their foot off the brakes. It’s time for action.



At **Vision Wheel** we've been listening carefully to leaders and employees as they've been wrestling with workplace recovery. While many are focused on the planning, those that consider the bigger question "how to think about this time" are the ones most prepared for the changes ahead.

As we help to steer the movement in organizations across financial, telecom, government, education, consulting and philanthropic sectors, we're thrilled to see people moving in the right direction. It's a **mindset shift** that's needed for workplaces to recover.

How might a **mindset shift** be the most important next step in your organization?

START YOUR JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY TODAY.





VISIONWHEEL

Vision Wheel is an internal communications agency specialized in one-of-a-kind employee experiences, result-defining employee education and long-lasting employee engagement.

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