

Rocking Talent

Brian Solis

Dare to fail,
dare to innovate

Tips to
Help Your
Employees

Tina Hallis

Connecting
with the
talent
through AI

Matt Alder

Inspiring
in the battle
for talent

Steve Cadigan



COMPETENCIES

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PEOPLE
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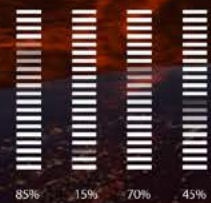
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BEAT EDITION

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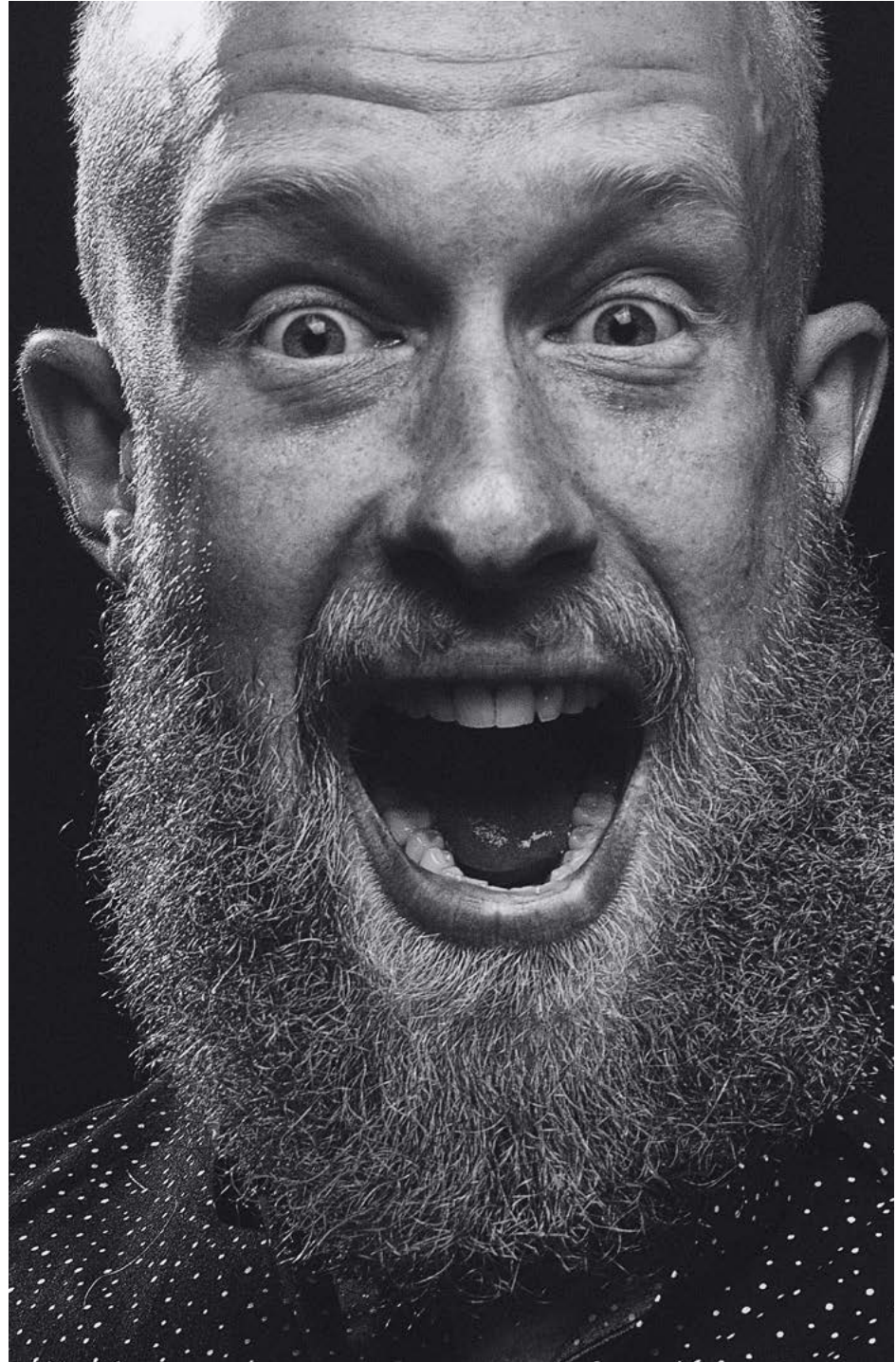
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Unicorns Do Exist

JULIETA CUMBO | **in** CMO at PDA INTERNATIONAL

"Unicorns don't exist, but I have seen many." This was the phrase used by our CEO Jaime Díaz to open his end-of-the-year speech.

At that moment, the first thing I did was turn around to look at my colleagues' faces and see how their inner flame sparked again. I was moved. So were they. I could notice it in their eyes.

Without a doubt, 2020 was a year full of challenges, let's be honest. It also brought mistakes, frustrations, and disappointments, but it was definitely a year in which **we learned to learn**. Last year we decided to break the mould, step out of our comfort zone, and chose what risks to take.

We became a more conscious company, a living organisation, driven by passions, emotions, and dreams. We became a more human company and, at the same time, we accelerated change. We took charge of it, so we stop guiding ourselves only by plans, and we embraced constant reorganisation scenarios. We became the makers of our own reality.

That's how **Rocking Talent** was born, an endless search for riotous disruption, with the aim of taking the rhythm to all conversations, make some noise, and generate enough discomfort to create the change necessary to face 2021 differently.

In this edition, we want to transmit that flame that sparked again in us, so we want you to know and become part of our dreams, because we certainly cannot fulfil any of them on our own. **Growth is always achieved together.**

Today, we want to celebrate the passion, disruption, and desire to change the world. We want to acknowledge the leaders who reinvented themselves, created new identities, and chose to become the protagonists of the future. We want to contribute to our community with the richest experiences. Finally, we want to challenge you to live a life without limitations, where passion rules over thoughts and behaviours, and where we realise that nothing is impossible for a believer.

Let's keep beating the rhythm in our lives!

Beat *Edition!*



Culture must
change over
time

Inspiring in the battle for talent

By ADMIN RAMÍREZ

Steve Cadigan is a highly sought-after talent advisor to leaders and organizations across the globe. He speaks regularly to conferences and major Universities around the world and is regularly retained by Silicon Valley's top VC's for his talent expertise. Steve is frequently asked to appear on TV and is a regular guest on Bloomberg West and CNBC. Prior to launching his own firm, Steve worked as an HR executive for over 25 years at a wide range of top-tier companies including: ESPRIT, Allianz, Cisco Systems, Electronic Arts and capped by serving as the first CHRO for LinkedIn from 2009 through 2012. His culture work at LinkedIn led Stanford to build a case study for their business school. Today Steve serves on the Board of Directors to three companies and sits on the Advisory Board of several others. He holds a BA in History from Wesleyan and an MA in HROD from the University of San Francisco.





We are at a time when talent is what really differentiates companies from each other's. Steve defines himself as a Talent Hacker and talks about how a healthy organizational culture is the "sweet" to attract the best talent. The attraction and retention of

talent has become a strategic priority for organizations, we are in a battle for talent and to win it, companies must have a solid culture in the organization and develop a Value Proposition for employees where they feel inspired.



We are at a time when talent is what really differentiates companies from each other's. Steve defines himself as a Talent Hacker and talks about how a healthy organizational culture is the "sweet" to attract the best talent. The attraction and retention of talent has become a strategic priority for organizations, we are in a battle for talent and to win it, companies must have a solid culture in the organization and develop a **Value Proposition for employees** where they feel inspired.



Nowadays, candidates can review information about any company such as its employee branding and employee experience in portals like Glassdoor or LinkedIn; these opinions of collaborators and former employees highlight the way of doing things within an organization and can motivate or demotivate them to take a certain job. Employees don't want to be told about the culture; they want to participate in creating it. Steve recommends some questions when interviewing candidates:

-  **How do you want to be recognized for your achievements?**
-  **How do you want to be rewarded?**
-  **What kind of culture do you like to work in?**
-  **Do you want to help us create that ideal culture?**

Culture is the personality of a company, and as such, it is not static. Culture must change over time and for this it is important that each person in the organization feel inspired to participate in that transformation. Leaders in companies must aim to foster a culture that allows each employee to express their uniqueness and from there, identifying what creates greater value.

One of the indicators to know if there is a healthy and open culture in an organization is when employees feel free to ask difficult questions to the management, says Steve. For that to happen there must be a lot of communication and transparency from the leadership team. There is nothing worse for a worker than not knowing what is going to happen to their future in the coming weeks or months. It is not only a question of loss of focus, which is also a major problem, but it is a question of morale.



STEVE CADIGAN | Board Member, Keynote Speaker, Talent Hacker & Advisor  

...Employees don't want to be told about the culture; they want to participate in creating it



Why should someone make an effort in their work if they are not clear about what their objective will be? Why should someone make an effort without the certainty that that effort will be useful for something? It is at this point where leaders must be there for their people and help them visualize and work for their professional and personal future, giving them the certainty that as a leader will be there to help them be better than yesterday and inspire them to grow in their current company or any other company.

The search for well-being must be constant. Working from home has made it more difficult to find work-life balance, because it has become more difficult to take breaks to disconnect from work. Inspiring talent requires understanding the reasons that lead candidates to invest their talent in a company and want to actively promote the values, culture and opportunities that a certain company offers.

Jeanne Achille:

“How you did it during 2020?”

By LEILA OVANDO

Tell us a little bit about yourself...we know that you are a referent in the HR Tech world, what made you getting involved in PR and Marketing topics?

While never planned precisely for this outcome, my work in HR technology PR and marketing has been the perfect confluence of skills and interests. With the exception of an earlier stint as a recruiter in the public sector, most of my career has been in the tech industry as a sales rep, product manager and, eventually, marketing executive. I started Devon in 1994 because I was so frustrated by how PR wasn't being properly used as a discipline and sought to change that - mostly through the use of technology. Coupling category expertise with PR and marketing skills has resulted in the ideal career - and certainly one where it's not possible to ever get bored!

Slowly we are entering an age where AI is in the spotlight of HR. What do you think is the biggest challenge that people is going to have? Will it be a competition between computers and talent or more like a complement relationship?

First, true AI in HR hasn't really emerged yet. There are a lot of vendors bantering about the term, however, what they really have is powered by machine learning. That said, the allure of AI and robotics is on the horizon and the pandemic has certainly increased our

reliance on technologies that automate work. I don't think computers will replace humans though - like most technological advancements, we'll experience how removing the transactional, repetitive tasks that most humans don't want to do will lead to greater opportunities for innovation. AI won't innovate; humans will still own that function.

will you be proud of what you did and how you did it during 2020?"



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| the Devon Group |

As a crisis communicator I imagine that you've faced many situations that were difficult and different from each other. The pandemic was a global issue that united us no matter in which country we were. How was this experience of facing a crisis that all of strategists were struggling with? Did you see some sort of collaborative and partnership attitude with your colleagues?

Crisis takes many forms. The pandemic has been unique because it's a short-term situation that will have long-term ramifications, including the fear of reoccurrence. I'd categorize it more as issues management because we've all experienced it so differently depending on our location, our employers, and our personal set of circumstances. Reflecting on "where were you in 2020?" will become as familiar as other moments in history. In the HR tech category, vendors and practitioners have done an exemplary job of banding together and collaborating to help each other. Then again, that's what HR and those who serve the HR function do – we worry about the people first.

What do you believe is going to be and is already being the most teachable lesson leaders had through the unique 2020 we lived worldwide?

There are so many teachable lessons from the travails of 2020. The first is one of readiness and underscores why a digital workplace is crucial. The second is to remember that not everyone is equipped to thrive during times of uncertainty and adversity. Employers need to give employees the tools they need to alleviate stress and find pathways forward. Third, and although we're not on the other side of this yet, remember this too will pass. Even storms run out of rain and the pandemic will abate. I challenge leaders to ask themselves: will you be proud of what you did and how you did it during 2020?

An IBM's report states that women occupy only 18% of senior leadership positions among 2,300 organizations surveyed worldwide. Why aren't more women promoted into leadership positions?

Without dating myself too much, suffice to say I entered the workforce when women in leadership roles – especially in tech – was the exception. It pains me that we've not made the strides we should have by now – and the reasons are multi-faceted. Overall, I think women tend to be very hard on themselves. Organizationally speaking, we don't always have the power of a strong network – specifically, someone to sponsor us within our company. And, what frustrates me the most: while we're enormously qualified, we wait for others to notice that instead of promoting ourselves every step of the way. Lastly, **we need to lift each other up**. Madeline Albright, the former U.S. Secretary of State, is attributed with saying "there is a special place in hell for women who don't help other women." We need to lift each other up.

What advice would you give to women that are struggling with "earning" their places?

The concept of earning your place makes me bristle a bit. Why should women have to "earn" their place when others never have to jump those hurdles? So, my advice is straightforward:



Know your strengths;





Always speak your mind; and



Move on if you aren't treated with the same respect you afford others. Life is too short to waste it where your value isn't properly acknowledged. And, if an organization doesn't place importance on diversity, equity and inclusion, they're not the right employer for anyone.

JEANNE ACHILLE |  Founder & CEO, The Devon Group and Chair, HR Tech Conference & Women in HR Tech

The Devon Group 
HR Tech Conference 

Tips to Help Your Employees

Sharpen Their Positive Edge

By TINA HALLIS

In every industry and every sector, I hear people complaining that they are overwhelmed because of staff and resource shortages. Everyone is being asked to do more with less. The result is increased burnout, turnover, and lower productivity. Even employees who are motivated, innovative, and collaborative can get trapped in survival mode. They may be hard to recognize because their energy and creativity have been drained.

Now more than ever, companies need to help their people manage their stress, build their resilience, and keep a positive edge. Finding easy and simple practices you can incorporate into a busy workplace can mean the difference between losing your best people and creating a positive performance culture.

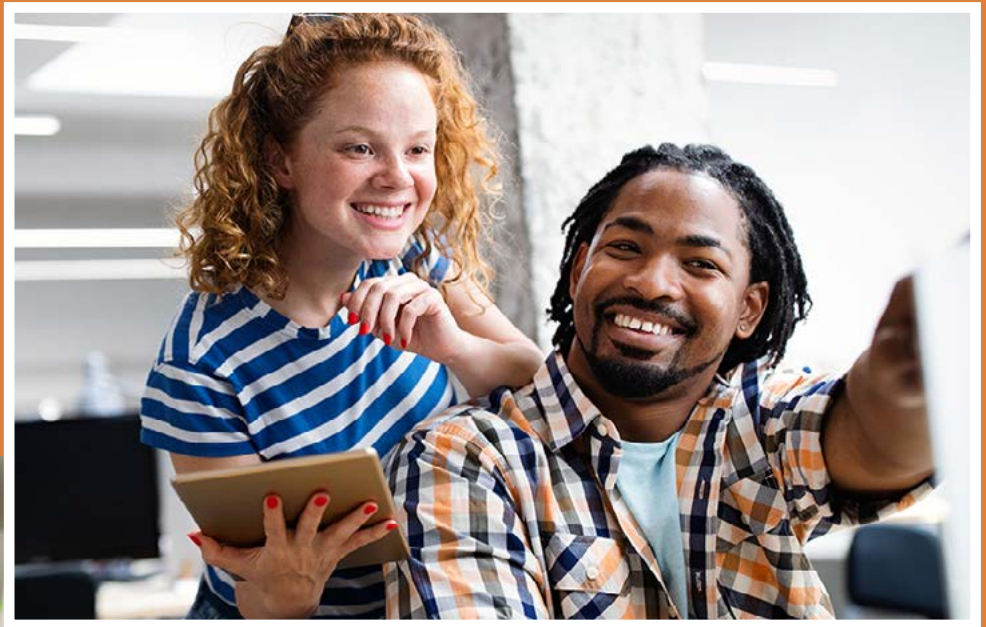
Although there is no one-size-fits-all formula that works in every company or industry, here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Start meetings by asking people to **share something positive**. If the meeting is small, have everyone participate with some nugget about what is going well in their group or project, or something they appreciate about their work or colleagues. Just a few people can speak if the meeting is large. Research shows that this simple step can greatly increase the effectiveness of the meeting and the group.
- Help people **identify their strengths**. There are great tools out there like Strengths Finder from Gallup or Character Strengths from the VIA Institute. Also, ask people what parts of their job they enjoy the most. Then be sure to actually discuss and use the information to adjust roles and responsibilities so people can put their best talents to work.



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“Everyone is being asked to do more with less”



- Let people know that their ideas and input are valued. Create situations where staff members feel comfortable sharing their ideas with management. You could organize small group lunches involving staff members and one or two management leaders, or you could create open office hours and encourage employees to drop in to chat. It also helps to have leaders walk through the company at least one or two times per week and ask several people about their work.
- Create opportunities for employees to have fun together and get to know each other. Make sure there are fun spaces for employee breaks and lunches. Coordinate networking lunches with small groups from different departments. Support after-work activities that are chosen by employees. Feeling a sense of belonging and connection at work helps people to recharge and feel supported.

Every organization is unique, so it's important to find what works for yours. It's critical that leaders not just talk but actually take action and show people that they care.

*Want more ideas to help your organization?

Contact me for a free one-on-one strategy call specific to your needs. Email me at Tina@ThePositiveEdge.net to set up a time.

TINA HALLIS |   Ph.D., is a positivity speaker, trainer, author, and founder of The Positive Edge

“Every organization is unique”





Dare to fail, dare to innovate

By ADMIN RAMÍREZ

Brian has dedicated his career to understanding digital disruption, predicting trends and helping leaders shape the future they want to see. As a world-renowned keynote speaker, Brian also has a unique gift of humanizing digital trends to make transformation and innovation meaningful and even inspiring. He's a true storyteller at heart. Even the Disney Institute has quoted his work!

Recently named a "Top Futurist Speaker" by ReadWrite and called "one of the greatest digital analysts of our time," Brian Solis is an engaging and inspiring speaker who makes our digital future approachable and meaningful.

DRIVING THE INNOVATIVE HEART OF A COMPANY MEANS THAT EMPLOYEES HAVE GREAT IDEAS AND FOLLOW THEM.



In today's global and constantly changing market, companies are forced to innovate as quickly as possible due to the shorter life cycle of products and technologies. The development of new technologies has made access to knowledge faster and global, causing companies' decision-making to be faster when it comes to innovating.

Brian is Global Innovation Evangelist at Salesforce which is regarded as one of the most innovative companies of the moment. Being innovative is embedded in their culture from the way they speak and think to how they relate to clients, partners and collaborators. Driving the innovative heart of a company means that employees have great ideas and follow them. This requires not only committed employees, but also a culture and framework conditions that employees can and should be able to develop.



Innovating requires that we embrace failure







According to Brian, failure should always be allowed when the intention is to add value. He says: "When we think about innovation we tend to think of characters like Elon Musk or Steve Jobs, but not all innovations will be this great. **Innovation is also in every little victory that we have on a daily basis that teaches us something new.** We can innovate even from the way we see the world. Leaders in organizations must foster a culture that supports and rewards people who take chances".

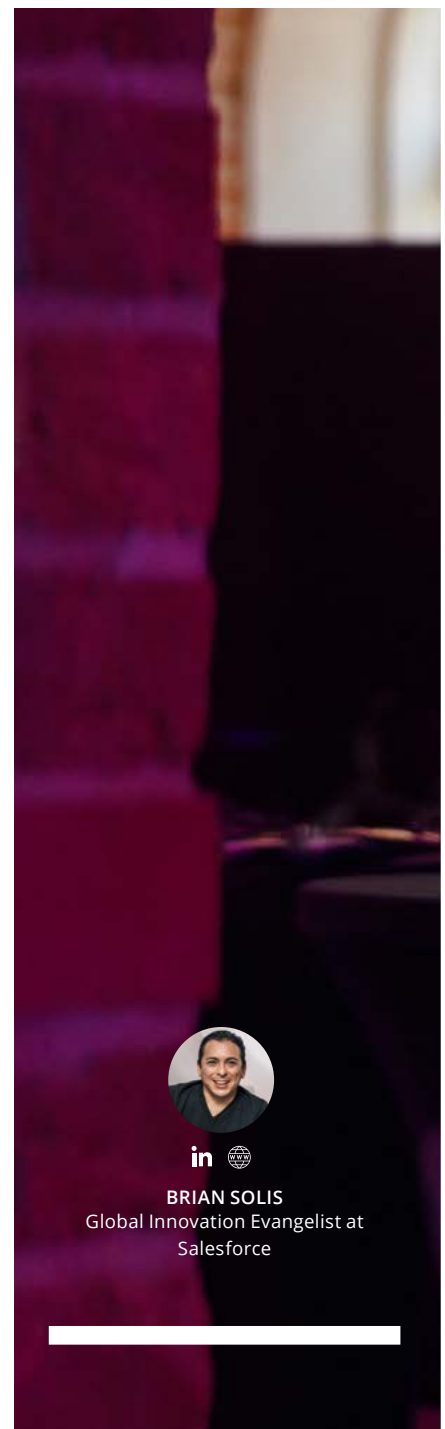


The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our lives, to a point where it is clear that we must not only react to a crisis with the intention of surviving, but also anticipate exploring opportunities for learning and innovating.

A company that wants to innovate must transmit this value from all aspects of the organization, fostering a culture that celebrates and rewards pillars of innovation such as experimentation, empathy, creativity, continuous learning, and analytical thinking, among others.

When we asked Brian about the keys to staying innovative he gave us the following tips:

-  - Constant understanding that there is no destination
-  - Exploration of the art of possible
-  - Remaining curious
-  - Always looking for new and different ways of learning
-  - Unlearn
-  - Celebrate soft enablers such as breaking through fear or having the confidence to try something new



An organization that includes the search and promotion of innovation as a day-to-day practice will always be more agile to identify and respond to changes in the environment. It understands productivity linked to innovation in a company as an opportunity to generate new forms of work and new spaces on the labor ecosystem from a perspective that focuses on people, their skills and talents which brings very relevant advantages both in the short and long term.

A man in a grey suit and light blue shirt is speaking into a microphone. He is standing in front of a brick wall illuminated with purple and blue lights. Another man in a dark suit is partially visible in the foreground, facing the speaker.

“Leaders in organizations must foster a culture that supports and rewards people who take chances”



“
Technology has transformed the job market and the work environment as we know it



Engagement vs. Satisfaction

Angela R. Howard is an organizational psychologist working to build & transform human-centric workplaces alongside growth-minded leaders. With 15+ years of applied and demonstrated leadership in transformational change management, diversity & culture, talent management and employee experience, she’s leveraged her experience working with businesses and teams to help them grow and become more profitable by investing in their people.

Her mission is to re-invent the role of “HR” and create more human-centric workplaces that enrich the lives of a diverse workforce and inspire them to do good for the world.

Por ADMIN RAMÍREZ

Technology has transformed the job market and the work environment as we know it. Now more than ever it is necessary to put people first and encourage a Human-centric workplace where people can have positive relationships and a healthy work environment that helps employees to be happy at work.

A human-centric workplace ensures that its workers are engaged in their work and not just satisfied. While “engaged employees” are satisfied with their job, “satisfied employees” are not necessarily committed to it, says Angela, it is important to understand the differences between the two terms.

**ENGAGED
EMPLOYEES
≠ SATISFIED
EMPLOYEES**

The Engagement or Commitment of the Employee is something that happens when the workers commit and imply in helping the company for which they work, to achieve all its objectives.

ANGELA R. HOWARD



Engaged employees are motivated to show up for work every day and do everything in their power to help their businesses succeed.

Employee Satisfaction is the state of a worker who enjoys their job but is not necessarily committed to it. Imagine an employee arriving early for work and leaving late but not contributing much or breaking a sweat.






While satisfied employees can handle their job responsibilities decently, they will never go beyond expectations. This is the key difference between engaged employees and satisfied employees.

When employees are engaged, not only they are happy to have their jobs, but they are always thinking about how their company can be better. This could involve ideas on streamlining business processes, new product or service ideas, or not hesitating to go the extra mile to help a co-worker or client, when needed.


For those reasons, while companies should be interested in making sure their employees are satisfied with the work they do, they should be more concerned with measuring and improving employee engagement.



By changing the way an organization works and thinking of it as a human-centered workplace, you could increase the chances that your workers will be engaged and thus strengthen the foundation of the company, which translates into a happier, healthier workforce, and in the long term a more profitable and sustainable company. With that in mind, here are five simple tips you can use:

-  - Listen and receive feedback from your employees.
-  - Recognize Acknowledge the work of your employees.
-  - Invest in your workforce 's professional development.
-  - Let employees pursue alternative projects of their choice.
-  - Supports remote work and flexible hours.

What having a human-centric workplace means is providing a human experience to them. Employers must redefine meaning back into work: guaranteeing a human experience in the workplace, focusing on making work more collaborative, showing employees how their team tasks transform the world. Make them feel like they are doing purposeful work!

ANGELA HOWARD 
Founder & Organizational Culture
Strategist at Angela R. Howard
Consulting

Connecting with the talent through AI

By ADMIN RAMÍREZ

“
People are
the soul of a
company”

Ever since he first worked with the web back in 1997, Matt Alder has been fascinated by the emerging technologies that change the way companies go about recruiting people. He is recognised as a highly influential recruitment futurist and industry leading digital, social and mobile strategist.

Matt's ethos is simple - in order to shape your future as an employer, you need to better connect with the talent you need. Using his unrivalled experience of leading digital migration within large companies and unique insight into the opportunities emerging technologies can offer, he helps businesses get the very best out of their recruiting activities by looking at every aspect of their digital recruitment strategy. As well as delivering pragmatic business solutions that connect the forward thinking organisations with the elusive talent they seek. Matt is also a respected commentator on the emerging world of social recruiting, a regular blogger, published author and accomplished public speaker. What's more, he has also been acknowledged as being amongst the world's top HR & Recruitment Influencers. Above all, 16 years on from his initial fascination with the online world, Matt remains passionately curious about the ever-changing shape of the digital recruitment landscape.

MATT ALDER | [in](#) 

The Recruiting Future Podcast, HR
Technologist, Recruitment Marketing
Expert, International Speaker & Author



2020 has been a year where we were all forced to do things differently and it presents a gigantic opportunity for the recruiting industry. Matt says it is time to think about what they can optimize, how they can experiment more and make data-driven decisions.

People are the soul of a company, hence the importance of good recruitment and selection process. Generally, when a company offers a job, there are a large number of candidates. Therefore, it is important to have the right strategies to attract and choose correctly, guaranteeing a good experience for the candidate, otherwise the organization will have reputational problems

The use of Artificial Intelligence in recruitment and selection will generate the automation of repetitive and transactional processes. The AI through chatbots will be the ones that will perform the database review activities, the development of profiles, identify and evaluate skills, the

preselection of candidates, the analysis and segmentation of talent in the market as well as the interaction with potentials candidates 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

AI is enhancing the recruitment and selection process: for example, chatbots are already interacting with candidates, answering frequently asked questions about the position, providing support in the review of resumes, workflow and data analysis, as well as scheduling interviews, via email, text messages, and social media.

However, Matt tells us: "chatbots are not designed to replace humans". Instead, a key contribution of chatbots is the ability to process multiple data sources to find and assess candidate qualifications, make recommendations, and provide a short list of potential candidates who are best suited for the position. This is a great advantage since it allows you to **accelerate activities, create consistency and effectiveness in the talent acquisition process.**

«it is time to think about what they can optimize, how they can experiment more and make data-driven decisions.»

While AI can be an excellent benefit for the recruitment area, it is people who understand situations related to ethics, morals and integrity from the human point of view. Recruiters recognize what type of people are sociable and care about affective relationships even within the workplace, this situation is a human trait that artificial intelligence cannot fully deduce or understand, in this way the benefits of AI with the experience of recruiters can be combined so that hiring decisions are guaranteed and the best benefits are obtained.

It is important to maintain an ethical mindset that supports value-based decision making, focusing on doing not only what is good for the business, but

what is good for the employees and customers of an organization and the communities in which they live and they work.

There are a few challenges that AI brings to Recruitment teams, to name a few: new structure, assessment and skills development, and change management. This new experience for recruitment will involve evaluating current capabilities and creating a plan to find the balance between what AI will bring to organizations and the interaction and value proposition that people will bring into the processes and practices to enable the HR strategy and recruitment deliver faster solutions using technology to create sustainable value and aligning with the business strategy.



Recruiting Future **with Matt Alder**

“The future of work is now”

By LEILA OVANDO

Challenging would be an accurate word to describe the season the young and not so young generations are living. On this interview with Rocking Talent, Janella Albright, HR Business Partner in Berkshire Hathaway, talked about how important the personal branding is, shared a few advices to stand out and referred to the learning the 2020 has left her.

Do you believe that the 2020 was a year that made us more human or not? Why?

I believe that 2020 was a year that challenged all of us as humans. The experience is different for everyone on whether it made us more human or not. In my personal experience, it made me more human. It was a year that made me more present in the moment and with purpose. It made me realize what is more important in my life and how connecting with other humans is a necessary component that many of us took for granted.

What was your greatest outcome and learning of the 2020?

2020 is a year that will be memorable personally and professionally. My greatest outcome and learning in the year 2020 are learning how to be adaptable, creative, resilient and persistent. 2020 was a year to learn how to overcome those challenges. We certainly never thought or prepared for our world to deal with a pandemic, and there was no playbook on how to handle such a crisis.

Professionally, my team dealt with a shortage in our HR staff for most of 2020, which meant extra responsibilities and preparing our company on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These challenges enabled our team to come together and assist one another where needed. I can glance back and realize that I can rise to any challenge presented my way. Also, have empathy towards our employees as each one of them faced their own different struggles and learn how we can better support our employees to provide resources needed for them to be successful in their role.





“Make your experience in 2020 relevant to your personal brand and tie it in with your career goals”

If we have to refer to the future of work, are we referring to a future that we are already experiencing or one that is actually in the future?

The future of work is now. What we learned in 2020 has shaped our way of how we currently work. Organizations are still learning what changes are needed to adapt to current and future needs.

Many companies faced challenges during the pandemic that forced many employees to work from home. The challenges forced our environment to be current in technology to be able to operate differently. As technology advances, the future of work will always evolve in how businesses are operated in many industries.

How important is personal branding and what would you recommend to the youngest generations that have to face a work environment as changing as the current one?

Personal branding is important to establish to set yourself apart from others. Branding is a resource strategy the youngest generations can use to market their authentic selves and what skills they can bring to an organization. My recommendation to the youngest generations is **do not be afraid to put yourself out there and network** with as many individuals as you can, even ask if internships are available to get a foot in the door. Use your experience in 2020 on how you were able to adapt to the changing school schedules, even learning remotely. Make your experience in 2020 relevant to your personal brand and tie it in with your career goals.

Your LinkedIn description states: “I deliver HR solutions that enable people to perform at their very best”. What is the first advice people have to take into account in order to be their best version? What would be the call to action?

Individuals need to consider self-reflection and to be able to adapt to learning from others to be their best version of themselves. I provide solutions and recommendations that enable employees to reflect on the overall situation to make the proper decisions in providing the best outcome for the organization, which will enhance their performance.

What we learned in 2020 has shaped our way of how we currently work. Organizations are still learning what changes are needed to adapt to current and future needs.



JANELLA ALBRIGHT | **in** HR
Business Partner in Fechheimer
Brothers Company, Berkshire
Hathaway

Emi Labs, recruitment today using artificial intelligence

The idea of applying for a job solely by scanning a QR code, where there is no *curriculum vitae* involved and you chat with a bot who guides you through the experience as a candidate, is a reality that is occurring in mass recruitment processes. We discussed this with Mateo Cavasotto, CEO of Emi Labs.

By PAOLA ALBORNOZ

How did Emi Labs begin?

Emi Labs began in 2017 with Mateo Cavasotto and Andrés Arslanian, who after collaborating with an NGO dedicated to helping vulnerable populations, noticed that many people were being marginalised in the working world because they didn't know how to put together a curriculum vitae. That's how Emi came to be; they developed a bot that, by way of an interview over chat, would create a curriculum vitae (CV) for them.

But the partners identified that companies also demonstrated a need to make their selection processes more efficient, particularly those that handle mass recruitment. That was when Emi changed course and merged these two needs. Instead of building CVs for candidates it became a much more complex conversational platform; **a recruitment platform using artificial intelligence.**

Emi Labs seeks to democratise employment access and give companies the opportunity to hire the ideal candidates for their job openings quickly and efficiently, with the help of technology. Helping organisations shorten their hiring cycles as well as provide a better experience for candidates, strengthening their employer branding. Decreasing recruitment time frames and costs, especially in mass searches. Recruiters can focus on strategic tasks, no longer performing operative tasks

such as reviewing profiles, calling candidates or coordinating interviews.

In addition to analysing 100% of applications and responding to all candidates, assessing everyone equally helps remove biases in selection processes. It not only provides candidates with friendly and empathetic communication, but also simplifies the application process, allowing people to apply for a job at any time, from anywhere, via chat.





In any artificial intelligence process, **technology assists but does not replace humans**, in this case the recruiter and the candidate.

What does a recruitment process using Artificial Intelligence entail?

Emi automates the operative and repetitive tasks of the recruitment process and is the point of contact between the company and the candidate throughout the entire recruitment process.

The bot chats with all candidates interested in a position through a chat interface such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger. It explains the position to them, responds to frequently asked questions, completes and verifies basic information and takes a closer look at their profile (experience, interests, education, etc.), using NLP (natural language processing) technology. Furthermore, it coordinates interviews, sends tests to candidates to verify specific

aptitudes or gathers documents from candidates, depending on how each selection process is defined.

In an article on Emi's blog, you discuss how "the human factor in human resources is irreplaceable and the role of technology is to enhance it". How do you debunk the myth that technology will replace people?

Technology cannot replace characteristics such as empathy, creativity, or the sense of belonging to the culture of a specific company. In this case, technology performs recruiters' operative tasks so that they can focus on higher value tasks, such as accompanying candidates throughout the entirety of the recruitment process.

Which skills are most sought after in today's job market?

The skill that seems to be most sought after is the ability to learn at all levels, given the pace at which technology, tools and the current situation are changing. Adapting by way of learning is becoming essential to all teams





What is your vision regarding the development of technology companies in Latin America?

It's clear that they are growing in terms of the amount of capital that investors are pouring into Latin America. This is clear based on the sheer number of Latin American companies that went through incubators in recent years. It's now a trend. Many companies have paved the way and shattered certain fears investors and entrepreneurs had, and as they grow they mentor others, and I think that is the secret of markets with a higher likelihood of succeeding and creating more unicorns.



SUCCESS CASE

Burger King worked with Emi to redesign the recruitment process for its restaurants, focusing on the candidate experience and its employer branding, achieving the following results, among others:

-  +200% ROI cost-effectiveness.
-  4x volume of applications, reaching 10,000 new candidates/month.
-  +90% interview attendance.
-  5-10% savings of HR team's time.



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“Adapting by way of learning is becoming essential to all teams”



MATEO CAVASOTTO | [in](#)
CEO EMI LABS

Organisational Culture - **BROADENING OUR VIEW**

By PDA Consulting LAB



At PDA International and Consulting LAB, we see organisational culture as something people create through the messages they receive on how they are expected to behave (C. Taylor). Identity, that DNA which makes each organisation unique, is built collaboratively and, at the same time, affects and shapes each person's behaviour. This is obviously an exciting subject, since it can help accelerate or restrain the organisational strategy and the people who are part of it.

On this occasion, and to address this from a comprehensive perspective, we decided to zoom in and propose new complementary views that can enrich this topic with new questions and observations.

To this end, we interviewed Xavier Marcet, President of the Barcelona Peter Drucker Society, writer, consultant and university professor, who will share his view on organisational culture from his human approach on management. After that, we will focus on cultural diversity

and the arts with André Faleiros, who is an eclectic musician and the former Head of Talent Scouting at Cirque du Soleil. Finally, we will analyse the specific experience in cultural management and transformation in the private and public sectors, two very different realities which nevertheless have something in common: their focus is on people. Together with Paola Ini, Organisational Happiness Manager at DHL Express South and Central America, we will learn how culture is built in one of the world's leading logistics companies, ranked second in the Great Place to Work ranking and in Fortune's Best Companies to Work For ranking. Finally, Patricio Quiróz, former HR Manager at Trenes Argentinos Cargas, will share his experience in driving cultural transformation at a state agency belonging to the Ministry of Transport of Argentina.

We hope you enjoy the tour and that it brings about new questions that lead to action.

Let's get started!

Humanising *Management*

"Culture is what people do spontaneously when no one is looking..." By JOHANNA VELLA | [in](#)

After reposting many of his articles from *La Vanguardia*, getting immersed in his last book and rethinking his transformative questions once and again, I arrived to our meeting. Xavier Marcet sees management as humanistic, he is a startupper who is almost in his sixties, he has a curious mind, liquid talent, and advocates for authenticity. His experience as President of the Barcelona Peter Drucker Society and Founder of the Lead to Change consulting company and 8Wires, a technological innovation space which combines big data and management, is not the only inspiring thing about him. Talking with him is also inspiring due to the power of facts: his simplicity, the clarity of his ideas, and the respect and closeness of our conversation are true reflections of the things he tells us about.

To go a little deeper into his world, we chose to start the interview by asking him about his "fine print", that which defines him and not many of us know about. Who is Xavier Marcet? What drives you?

I would like to be seen as someone who strives to humanise management. Without any unnecessary fuss. Trying not to reinvent common sense. Learning a lot from people who do instead of talk; reading from people who think and make others think. **That moves me, putting people at the centre of organisations.** Too many people believe that technology is the script, but that is not true, technology is only a sophisticated tool. We live in a world that is as interesting as it is challenging. At first, I was fascinated by the study of the Italian Renaissance, which was a way of putting the person in the centre of

the universe, and I would like to finish by trying to make a summary with the lessons I learned from the Renaissance and those I learned in companies afterwards. I'll give it a try. But I don't know if I'll succeed. I wouldn't like to be embarrassed by juggling out of the blue.

It is fascinating how skilful you are in describing complex universes in simple ways. What is complexity for you? How would you suggest addressing it?

Thinking about complexity implies unlearning and undertaking. Complexity is something that goes beyond complication. We surely experience it due to the addition of phenomena such as digitalisation and globalisation. We observe reality with so much detail and data about interactions that it is not possible to

reduce it to problems. For this reason, we are often presented with complexity in the form of dilemma. And dilemmas cannot be tackled like problems, which may have a perfect solution. Dilemmas do not have one. The best way to deal with complexity is by trying to not let it grow. Learning to deal with dilemmas beyond problems will be one of humankind's tasks.

In your book *Esquivar la mediocridad* ["Avoiding Mediocrity"], you talk about authenticity as key to leaving mediocrity behind. What obstacles does authenticity pose? How can we overcome them to become more authentic organisations?

Authenticity has to do with the level of coherence with which we experience something. Authentic organisations do not superficially implement

management trends, they focus on important things, on the fact that people within the organisation have self-respect and respect for those they want to provide services to. Authenticity is what makes us avoid mediocrity, understood as the thing that makes us ordinary, does not let us grow and affects our honesty. "In a VUCA world such as ours, running away from mediocrity does not mean escaping from complexity, but promptly trying new combinations that will enable us to explore without stopping".

In an ever changing world where looking for answers is instinctive, you encourage us to pause and ask questions. What are questions to you? How much time do we spend asking questions within organisations? How can we train ourselves to ask questions?

Questions arise from canned questions answers. They are an attempt to go beyond the obvious. Asking questions is not easy. Learning how to ask questions can take a lifetime. There are no questions without reflection, without connecting reasons with true honesty. Robots with artificial intelligence can be automated to give answers, but not to ask questions. The only way to train ourselves on how to ask questions is to train ourselves on how to think. And to write. "Asking doesn't mean pleasing or hurting; asking means honestly trying to learn".

You say innovation is not found technology but in our view. Could you explain this concept a bit more?

Innovation is creating new value for our customers through new solutions. The important things are our customers' needs, problems and aspirations, which we are able to solve through innovation. And for that, we need radical empathy. Innovation lies in the view, in the ability to adopt a different perspective, and technology comes after. Innovation works better if we go from observing the customer to technology and not the other way around. To innovate, we must know how to observe, propose our value and keep up to date with technology.

If we talk about organisational culture, we are talking about...

We are talking about what people learn within the organisation without actually being taught. We are talking about what people do when no one is looking. We are talking about automated behaviours that become tacit rules; how things that have to be done and things that do not have to be done take place in an organisation. **Culture can be a big lever or a big obstacle for many organisations to be consistent in their paths.** Consistency is an organisation's ability to evolve together with those it wants to provide services to. Changing the culture and being successful is one of management's most serious challenges. The only way of changing a company's culture is by generating personal change agendas, from high management to the lower positions in the organisation. Changes that have to do with individual experiences, with the logic of learning and unlearning. If change is not individual, there cannot be a real transformation.

What are the main challenges for organisational culture nowadays? What kind of leadership do you think will adapt better?

Most probably the need to be ambidextrous, to know how to exploit and explore at the same time. Our agendas are subject to the dictatorship of our daily lives. But, in order to be efficient, obtain results and also innovate, we need time for today and for tomorrow. Everything at the same time. That is why we need agility to solve, without hurrying, several things simultaneously. What is difficult is synchronising our current abilities with our future opportunities. Transitions are difficult in life, in companies, in everything. The hardest thing is not imagining how things will be in a few years, but making decisions to focus wisely on our transitions. The wise thing to do is to take risks.



What role does strategy play in this new context? What about planning?

Our challenge is to have more strategies and less planning. The 20th century brought about a pairing that seemed unbreakable: strategy and planning. And in the 21st century we have realised that strategy, which means making our purpose operational, requires something other than a plan which is inherently ephemeral. The world is changing faster than the plans we dream of. We keep making plans to get closer to our vision, our desired future, but we can no longer do that without improving our ability to learn and innovate.

We used to support our strategy only with planning, but now we need three legs: planning for the next two or three years, innovation and our ability to learn and defend our objective and its strategies in a world that is changing faster than ever.



Management nowadays: Start- Stop-Continue: What should we continue doing, what should we stop doing and what should we incorporate?

The future is not an extension of the past. Management means dealing with a legacy that is not a heritage, but an ability to learn and unlearn. Success always belongs to the past and a bit to the present, but the future depends on our potential to adapt in order to keep obtaining good results. Creating paths is the exciting thing about management, for a big, well-established company as well as for a startup. What the big company and the startup company have in common is the need to build a future without the ability to take uncertainty out of the equation. And we find it difficult to accept that this is not easy. Some people believe they have magical solutions for everything: they are known as management populists and there are a lot of them. Keeping a company afloat is a daily challenge. There is no truce. I admire the people who are in charge of companies for decades and keep the illusion and ambition of growing, and the humility to learn and respect everyone intact. These consistent paths express the best of management.

The management of the future requires consistent leaderships and cultures. Leaders who are consistent in what they say and do. Cultures where natural habits are connected with the organisational purpose. Organisations based on appearance will be less competitive.

Learn more about Xavier Marcet [in](#)

Xavier Marcet is the President of the Barcelona Peter Drucker Society, professor at the

Barcelona School of Management of the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, and the President of Lead to Change and the startup company 8Wires; he specializes in big data and management. Xavier has engaged in international consulting activities in more than 20 countries and his latest published books are *Cosas que aprendemos después* ["Things We Learn Later On"] (Plataforma publishing house, 2010), *Innovación pública* ["Public Innovation"] (RIL publishing house, 2013) and *Esquivar la mediocridad* ["Avoiding Mediocrity"] (Plataforma publishing house, 2018). He usually collaborates with *La Vanguardia* newspaper (Spain) on management topics.



diversity



Composing diversity

By JOHANNA VELLA | [in](#)

With the increasing relevance of the complexity paradigm and the changing, ambiguous, hyperconnected, multicultural and glocalised universes, cultural diversity ceases to be just another topic in organisations' agendas to become a priority that we must nowadays learn to manage. The idea of distance itself becomes ambiguous, and so more and more organisations start participating in distant markets not only to do business but also to build teams. In the face of this scenario, the differences and barriers when connecting with people from various origins, nationalities, races and religions are not only linguistic; customs, culture, values, beliefs, norms and even self-perception change.

Managing diversity creates competitive advantages: identification of new business opportunities, greater organisational flexibility, talent attraction, reduction of conflict, improvements in client satisfaction, and complementary work teams where creativity and innovation increase, among others. However, managing it appropriately is not easy. To reflect more deeply on this topic, we talked with **André Faleiros**; eclectic artist, music director and former Head of Talent Scouting at Cirque du Soleil. From his interesting experience, André

suggests addressing cultural diversity from the arts and from management, two manifestations of human creativity that appear to be different, but which are closely related.

Diversity from a sociological perspective

According to Zigmunt Bauman, in order to build national unity, modern states rely on strategies such as encouraging and reinforcing cultural, linguistic and religious homogeneity by promoting shared attitudes, a shared mission, a shared fortune and a shared destiny. Modernity is characterised by intolerance towards ambivalence because modernisation tends to eliminate the annoying and upsetting ambiguity, to create order, but this does not adapt to the complexity of the human reality. That is how the intention of building unity generates more and more differences. There appear "them" in contrast to "us" and "foreigners" as opposed to "countrymen".

Even our own way of perceiving the world and "others" is not a coincidence but an interpretation, a worldview. In the face of the plurality of perceptions available, each society defines a possible filter, a selection that guides the way in which we exist in the world

and communicate with those around us. As proposed by Le Breton, “a worldview, carried by a culture and fragmented in each of its members, does not cease to build a border separating the visible from the invisible, the scented from the odourless, the tasty from the tasteless, the audible from the inaudible and the

tangible from the intangible. Disagreements about perception are not only interpretation conflicts: they also express disagreements about the world”. These codes of perception are cultural and learned from an early age, and they are the result of customs of our life in society. Obviously, each of us has the possibility to dispose of those perceptive routines in order to learn new things. But, in order to do so, people throughout history have needed to train their view, or as Le Breton puts it: “it is necessary to learn to see and not just open our eyes”.

Labels Devour Identity

If we believe it is possible to change our perceptions in order to learn new things and sharpen our view, we will be able to adopt a more emphatic management of cultural diversity for the first time.

André tells us that when selecting the best talents from the most remote places in the world for Cirque Du Soleil, turning them from athletes to artists and into a high-performance team, the density of the recruitment process is not very important because it is not possible to learn everything about a person. For him, the recruitment process does not finish when the person enters the company; it is present in the whole cycle shared between the person and the project. During that time, André suggests that: “It is necessary to learn as much as possible about the person, what he or she does well and the things he or she is able to do. We need to consider the technical aspect, soft skills, the emotional aspect and, above all, the ability and willingness of the person to learn new things”.

André thinks that, as a headhunter, it is essential to keep a curious spirit. It is likely that the person can do more than we think at the beginning and it is our responsibility to learn about him or her. “We tend to defend our territory and stick to labels: I am from marketing and that person is from accounting. But there is certainly more than that”. When categorising a person or group of people, labels tend to take over their entire identity, and this usually leads to discrimination or limitations based on certain characteristics that, in the long run, block the person as a whole.

André tells us that, when working in international recruitment, it is key to create mechanisms for people to learn about each other’s cultures. Not just learning and telling others about the culture of the person you are hiring, but also learning and telling others about the person. Information helps reduce potential prejudice. “Listening is key. As organisations, we must create a culture of listening, information and transparency. The more people know each other, the less conflict there is. Within organisations, we have to promote learning about who we are, not just what we do, but who we are as individuals”.

Thinking About Diversity from the Art of Composition

Composition, which comes from the Latin term *compositio*, is the action and effect of composing (combining several elements and putting them in order to create a new one, something different, without losing the distinctive features of each of the parts). What makes a musical composition rich is finding the correct tones and textures. Each instrument has a history, an origin, a material, and its power lies in these peculiarities, in these differences.

When we think about cultural diversity it is interesting to place ourselves in the plane of composition: we must not try to fuse people into a homogeneous mass with indistinguishable components and only one direction, on the contrary, we must identify ourselves as a community made

up of peculiarities and heterogeneity in a game of interrelationships among the special and the ordinary, the team’s power and the richness of each authentic contribution. A community that allows us to recognise ourselves without losing our identity, that integrates its members, focuses on their socialisation and aligns them to reach common goals without excluding their own is a community much greater than the sum of its parts. This is precisely where we can find one of the most important responsibilities of every leader: achieving harmony among all peculiarities, combining them through their disruption or complementarity. And this is not so different from the challenge a musician faces when standing in front of an orchestra and a staff.



ANDRÉ FALEIROS | [in](#)

If there is something that defines Happiness is that it is completely subjective; it is related to a feeling of well-being and fulfilment that every person experiments according to their own wishes and purposes.

connecting



Connecting people, improving lives

Interview with Paola Ini, organisational happiness manager at DHL Express South and Central America.

By JOHANNA VELLA | [in](#)

When Adrian Dalsey, Larry Hillblom and Robert Lynn founded DHL in 1969, they did not know they were revolutionising the world of logistics. Nowadays, DHL is the world's leading logistics company and has been distinguished as the second best company to work for in the world by Great Place to Work® and FORTUNE.

How is it possible to achieve this? Where should the focus be? What type of culture makes your strategy shine? What place do people occupy? What should we learn and unlearn in such a disruptive year like this one? How is it possible to manage culture in a company with 380,000 employees in more than 220 countries?

To go deeper into the DHL Express universe and learn more about its culture, we talked with Paola Ini, Organisational Happiness Manager in South and Central America.

The first thing we are curious about is the responsibility of managing the "happiness" of each person in a company as big as DHL Express. What are we talking about when we talk about happiness?

If there is something that defines Happiness is that it is completely subjective; it is related to a feeling of well-

being and fulfilment that every person experiments according to their own wishes and purposes. That is why I do not feel responsible for the happiness of so many people. I see myself as part of a team that encourages people to find these instances of happiness and well-being. Our objective is to be an organisation committed to having an active role to create this possibility. DHL's mission is "connecting people, improving lives", starting with our employees and, through them, their families, our customers and the overall community.

I am sure that Happiness is built day by day with specific daily activities related to relationships and, as a result, with a strong and clear Organisational Culture. This way, when entering an organisation with a strong DNA, everyone starts to be a link and contributes to generating the day-by-day culture with constant effort, commitment, perseverance and shared values. For this, we need to build and maintain authentic connections, and take care of people inside and outside of the workplace.

We have a guiding principle that refers to looking for Results without compromising Respect. In the end, these two "Rs" are the ones that determine how we behave and the purpose behind all the things we do.



What a transcending mission! “Connecting people, improving lives”. In this sense, DHL Express was ranked second in the list of best places to work at in 2020. How is it possible to achieve this?

By having a clear strategy that starts with motivating people. In an international company, it is essential to know this message very well, to help leaders understand it and also to provide them with tools to implement it. Our cultural transformation programme is based on 3 key and equally important pillars:

Context: To start with, there must be an excellent scenario. Apart from the basic needs, what is appealing about joining DHL? What makes us different and what characterises us? The advice, since there are so many best practices in the market, is to “listen” and “understand” your population and build this context together (not making assumptions – keeping it simple – being creative).

Leadership: Once there is an appropriate environment, it is very important to be surrounded, on a daily basis, by people who you can trust, who inspire you, challenge you, make you better, are there for you and support you. As part of our programme, which is based on the same



leadership culture that we pursue and value, we offer training, award certificates and give recognition to leaders in more than 220 countries. During the entire first year, they work very hard on knowing themselves and on the gaps with this DHL Leader model. The following years, they work on getting to know their people, their customers and their numbers, ensuring a results-oriented performance, whilst not compromising Respect. That is the equation. To make this work, the key is that they really believe in the message, that they make it their own in order to communicate it to the rest of the organisation.

Individual: Finally, we have personal commitment. Taking into consideration that there is diversity of gender, age, taste, etc. within the organisation, the proposal is to “respect” these individualities and to let everyone be free to choose from the different existing programmes. The only condition to constantly renew the passport with the company is to respect our values and show commitment to achieve goals. This way, personal goals coincide with the organisation’s goals.

This programme is materialised by giving a passport to each employee when they start their journey with us and they use it

to register the most meaningful moments of their experience.

In this sense, one of the most important programmes we have is called CIS (Certified International Specialists): a culture standardisation programme aimed at motivating people, first, and then training them. In other words, we create a direct connection between motivation and training to reach a high-quality service. For this, participants must first go through a series of trainings that allow them to understand their role, technical knowledge and global aspects of each country. Simultaneously, they undergo training on leadership and other culture-related values.

Within this programme, leaders attend intensive modules to be **Successful Leaders of DHL Express**, they work on communication styles, on how to inspire teams, give feedback, coach and even advocate for the holistic well-being of the person (physical, emotional, mental and personal energy). What we want to show is that it does not matter which leader you have. If you move within the organisation or even go to another country, **you will have the same leadership profile regarding your behaviours and the tools you use.**

Digging deeper into that point, what is a DHL leader like? What is their role? What behaviours are highly valued in the DHL culture?

Leaders are as different as the rest of the team, which is why it is essential for them to be aligned with the culture and to put it into practice by being genuine and with their own style, without losing what which makes them unique.

At DHL we value leading from the back and putting the team first, we value leaders who see feedback as a benefit, who do not say what they think the other person expects to hear, and who communicate honest and constructive messages. We value open and accessible leaders who adapt their style and approach to get the best out of others, who admit they have made a mistake when that happens, who

always fulfil their commitments to others and value everyone in a similar way; leaders who allow talking about emotions at work, who are models of the DHL culture and, above all, who want people to have “the best day each day”. To sum up, a culture of constant appreciation and inclusion.

And Now What? Next Challenges

We are now working on what we call “the future of work”. After an intense stage of adaptation to the pandemic, we are now focusing on how to keep that culture alive in the face of new challenges, contexts and ways of working. At DHL, we say we are like a big yellow machine, with all the power and benefits of being a machine, but also with the challenge of making it work. We are trying to maintain that culture by being together and by combining it

with everything that is about to come, and we know that communication and digitalisation will have a central place. We are certain that digitalisation is key to speeding up processes and that people have to be in the exact place where the truly human aspect provides sense.

When Paola talks about common behaviours valued in leaders, she reinforces, once and again, the importance of having tools that give objectivity to these processes (Psychometric Tests, Feedback 360°, Learning, etc.). It becomes a must to learn which behaviours are valued in an organisation, how to measure them, define the required profile and create a correspondence between people and challenges so that everyone can show their best version. In Paola's words: look for results without compromising respect.

It Is Time to Learn and Unlearn | Paola Ini

LEARN... to work and function more cooperatively. It is not about competing but about contributing. There is nothing better than sharing happiness and well-being practices to improve the market for everyone; a new base for a better society.

UNLEARN... that more is better, especially regarding the amount of working hours. I think we need to give more value to quality, to what we do in a conscious and focused way. On the other hand, we must unlearn that there is one recipe for everything and everyone. Reality shows that we are all very different; when I make assumptions I separate myself from the rest, it excludes me and comes in the way of empathy.



CULTURE ON THE TRACKS

By ASTRID WERNLI | 

Talking about cultural transformation in the Argentine State is as wide as it is complex, not only due to the magnitude of the State itself, but also to the multiplicity of dimensions involved. There is generally a stigma, especially in this country, about a state-owned company, which on some occasions is difficult to break but which is not always real. The richness (and the challenge) of this kind of organisations lies in the diversity of people who are part of it. Broadly speaking, we can find two types of population: those

with a surname that has been known for several generations, having provided their services for decades; and those who have just arrived, brought by the wave of the political management “on call”. This combination implies a series of regular changes to “the way things are done” which, similarly to what happens in the country, is like the tide: it moves back and forth with the same force and conviction. The implications of these changes of course every four years have a significant impact on people, who, on the one hand,

do not believe in the new administration because it will be ephemeral (“we have already seen many of you come and go, and then everything starts from scratch), but, on the other hand, wish to take advantage of their added value. Building trust is as necessary as it is challenging in these contexts.

Immersed in this cultural schizophrenia, the newcomer makes a diagnosis and starts the engine. The clock is started and added time begins. This is a big challenge

for the HR team of a state-owned company, in all its social configurations.

On many occasions, being part of this kind of companies is like time travelling... to the past: there is a limited availability of technological resources and their implementation tends to be poor (frequently due to demographic factors), the budget is never enough to provide the organisation with the management practices required in the market, and decision-making is strictly top-down, typical of a bureaucratic hierarchy that is reflected on an organisation chart with infinite organisational levels. Everything seems to arrive later than it does in other types of companies. In fact, while some companies have started talking about leaving traditional performance tests behind and pursuing continuous feedback models and more structured schemes, here we are just starting to implement the SMART concept as a trigger to agree on the objectives.

This is only one side of the coin. Being a part of a state-owned company is an honour. This is what people feel, a deep passion for their profession, and they have developed (administration after administration) a high level of resilience. Everyone who has worked in this kind of companies (myself included, considering my modest experience in the railway sector at *Trenes Argentinos Operaciones*, a company with more than 23,000 employees) knows that feeling of joint work and sacrifice, of accomplishing milestones which have a tangible impact on the daily lives of the society and which are the result of perseverance, determination and, due to the lack of resources, lots and lots of creativity. Lack of spare parts in workshops, shortage of supplies in offices, training activities drinking mate and eating biscuits brought from home. Scenes of the daily life of the railway world that build with dedication the sense of belonging and unity of a special, magnetic and charming culture, which shines in

its own way, with austerity and with that peculiarity of its DNA that even today, with more perspective and a certain nostalgia, I cannot define with other words. To sum up, you do what you can with what you have, and this forces you to adopt an innovative and disruptive approach to deal with different problems. Solutions are found within the organisation. Step back, consultants! "We have no budget".

The special feature of state-owned companies that provide public services lies, among other factors, in the power of having an impact in society's quality of life. Getting on a train that leaves and arrives on time; having a higher frequency of service and following the train route through an app; walking along clean, safe and illuminated stations; and receiving a friendly service in the ticket offices improve people's lives. The work behind the scenes, necessary to make this a reality, requires commitment, unity and a great dedication to service. These are cornerstones for employees to go the extra mile. As with everything else, it would not be convenient to make a general description out of this, given the diversity of the state sector. But this is a reality in many companies of this kind.

To complement my perspective in the matter, we got in touch with Patricio Quiroz, former HR Manager at *Trenes Argentinos Cargas* for the 2016-2020 period, who faced the challenge of improving a complex context in terms of people management. Together with *Trenes Argentinos Operaciones*, *Trenes Argentinos Cargas* (also belonging to the Ministry of Transport) was the spearhead of a multidimensional transformation that was seen as a success case, and it was a model for other state-owned companies inside and outside of the transport sector. With more than 3,000 employees located in different parts of the country, the company penetrated the subcultures of each region and travelled long distances to establish the "new model".



Learn more about these companies by clicking here





You have worked in the private and public sector. In general terms, what is the difference between a state-owned company and a private company in terms of people management?

The main differences lie in “how” to do things and achieve the expected impact. The public sector requires a wider view of the impact decisions have and better skills to agree with the parts involved and the main stakeholders, such as unions. Working together with the Ministry of Transport and unions is a key characteristic of this kind of companies. Having said this, the state sector does not ignore the transformations, new opportunities and demands that the labour market requires. It shares many of the challenges and objectives regarding people management that any other private company has.

What was the situation you encountered and which rooted cultural characteristics did you have to improve in order to meet the company’s strategic objectives?

We had the clear organisational objective of reducing costs for the State and increasing our contribution to society. We found a context characterised by a lack of processes and vision. Human Resources lead the redefinition of the new organisational purpose and carried out an extensive assessment of the structure to make it more efficient and flexible. The company needed to achieve results during the first year of the administration in order to prove, inside and outside the organisation, that the company’s situation could be reversed and that the team was capable of doing that. We found a culture with areas of opportunity regarding the communication and interaction among the different areas of the organisation. We worked hard to integrate areas and people from different administrations. We also had to focus on modernising the way of working: reducing bureaucracy and unnecessary meetings, introducing process digitalisation, increasing transparency of management, adopting a gender perspective, etc. We had to bring the company to the 21st century.

As regards people management, which were the pillars for working and your achievements?

We established four pillars for transformation: track infrastructure, technology and security measures for the cargo and for people, rolling stock (locomotives), and a management model. At human resources, our focal point was to give professional status to employees, accomplishing a coherence between individual needs and those of the organisation with regard to the acquisition of higher levels of knowledge and the development of skills and experience in order to achieve the established objectives. This reskilling proved to be essential for cultural evolution. Some of our initiatives included:

- **Leadership School** (together with *Trenes Argentinos Operaciones*): this face-to-face and mobile training programme was created for the first line of mid-level management with the purpose of promoting the development of the competency models and providing specific tools for the management of work teams. This population is characterised by being competent for a career in the railway sector and by being service-oriented, but it lacks training in areas related to team leadership and development.
- **Performance management programme:** (together with *Trenes Argentinos Operaciones*): it was necessary to organise priorities in the daily management of executives and mid-level managers by creating a common language for aligning teams, measuring progress and celebrating achievements. We relied on the competency model and on an online platform designed internally by our IT team, which kept up with the technological solutions available in the market.
- **Mentoring programme:** the high average age and the proximity to retirement of some employees with technical knowledge, especially in railway workshops, urged us to materialise the transfer of know-how to younger employees. This initiative was naturally combined with the programme for young professionals, aimed at promoting career opportunities in engineering.
- **Onboarding programme:** the history of the railway, the impact of the freight train on the country’s economy, the projects and the values we wanted to share had to be told by their protagonists and to be internalised since day one. This was complemented with follow-up, a reference guide and a brand kit.

How is it possible to work as a team with a union as strong as the railway workers' union? What did you learn from this?

Our mission since day one was to become an employer that attracted talent. It was clear for us that this was not an easy task and that we had to work in a bottom-up fashion within the organisation, with consensus and a clear communication of our actions. Without reaching consensus with unions, any programme would have failed. The key lies in getting them involved at the genesis of projects, making them feel as a part of them and working as a team. This is the first thing I learned and one lesson that I took with me for my career.

Being a part of a cultural transformation in a state-owned company gives you a double satisfaction, in spite of the daily obstacles and frustrations. You help improving the well-being of those who work in the organisation and you play a part in helping society. If a person is moved by and expresses happiness for receiving leadership training for the first time in decades, a technician has the technology required to work or a train seems to hang in the air before entering a raised station, we have won. When there is genuine commitment and effort to move forward, results become tangible.

State-owned companies share one reality: they are marked by political management. As in any other organisation, the culture is maintained by means of the messages sent and received on which behaviours are expected. These messages express that which is valued. There are no guarantees of a complete cultural sustainability in these terms, especially when politicians from different administrations have such opposing views. The culture evolves while being pulled from one side and the other. And, in spite of everything, the pride of railway workers, their dedication to service, the smell of barbecue in the workshops and the camaraderie among co-workers are signs common to all administrations.

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IMPACT OF THE PDA ASSESSMENT



“We managed to change the focus from a purely technical to a more holistic view of what it means to manage a company, with employees as protagonists. To accomplish this, getting each person to increase their self-knowledge was an excellent starting point. In our case, we worked with the PDA Assessment in several team integration workshops, promoting self-knowledge and knowledge about others. We managed to overcome communication barriers, eradicate historical prejudices, and channel energy towards what is important, always taking each person’s individual strengths as the starting point.” Patricio Quiroz, former HR Manager at *Trenes Argentinos Cargas*.

Patricio explained to us that: “Working with people and showing a genuine interest in their well-being allowed us to take the quality leap that we were searching for since the beginning. However, this did not imply neglecting technical training. The adoption of new technologies, especially the purchase of 107 new locomotives with a technology completely different from the one we were used to seeing, was of great benefit for engine drivers and their assistants. This instance, as all others, required a joint effort with the union these workers belong to.

Assessment

LAST WORDS

If we ask ourselves which is the ideal corporate culture to successfully deal with this ever changing world, full of emerging disruptions, the only thing certain is that there is no recipe for that. The key in terms of culture is to figure out our own organisational equation in order to integrate those personal characteristics that we want to maintain and keep in mind with those elements that will allow us to be and excel in increasingly changing environments. We must find traces of leadership, behaviours, ways of innovating, of improvising and of managing complexity which are based on the respect and authenticity that make us proud. An invitation to create that intangible DNA based on the example of many people, and beginning with ourselves in our own space.

If you want to share your comments on these topics, continue to reflect, have new experiences or ask questions, get in touch with PDA Consulting Lab.  

References

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Bauman, Z. (2005), *Modernidad y ambivalencia*. Barcelona, Anthropos.

A large, blue-tinted background image showing a close-up profile of a person's face, looking downwards. The image is slightly blurred and has a strong blue color cast.

**“Being a part
of a cultural
transformation
in a state-owned
company gives
you a double
satisfaction”**



The
first steps for
IMPLEMENTING
Data Science
in **HR!**