

THE
FOUR
PILLARS

OF A WORLD-CLASS CULTURE

Attract Top Talent & Retain
an Engaged Workforce



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Turning Ideas Into I-Dids

"Only 13 percent of employees are genuinely satisfied with their day-to-day working life.¹"

There's a statistic every manager, CEO or people leader should be aware of: Only 13 percent of employees are *genuinely* satisfied with their day-to-day working life.¹

Now, once upon a time, this might not have mattered to the same extent it does today. Employees didn't have the freedom of choice; unemployment rates were higher and those who secured jobs were inclined to stay there, regardless of their satisfaction levels.

The landscape we see in more modern times is vastly different. Millennials have been named the "job-hopper generation" for their tendency to switch jobs on a frequent basis.² Companies are scrabbling for the best talent. Recruiters are working overtime.

What does it all mean? This is a positive change that needed to happen for mental health and work satisfaction levels to rise – but it does pose a new challenge.

Your company needs to create a more attractive, more fulfilling and more enjoyable workplace for the people you hire.

It all starts with your company culture: the values you stand for, the environment you create, the standards you set and the behaviors you uphold. We wrote this book to help you – a leader – build a company culture that retains talent.

Here, we explore the essential elements of building strong working relationships, fostering engagement and nurturing fulfillment to drive employee retention and build a resilient, committed workforce. We'll break down the four "pillars" of a world-class culture.

As you read this book, think about your organization, department or team and begin to assess – where are we, really? What are the tailwinds pushing us forward and the headwinds hindering our progress? What shifts can we make to drive an even better culture for future success?

People drive results; results don't drive people. If you grow and nurture your people, you'll get the results you have been working toward without spinning your wheels.

Let's unpack this together: the four pillars of building a world-class, retention-abundant culture.

Chapter 1

*Retaining and Attracting
Top Talent in Today's
Working Environment*



The value of retaining talent is known to most, if not all, leaders. Replacing an employee can cost in the tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars – around 1.5 times the employee’s salary.³ Monetary costs aren’t the only concern, either; constant turnover makes it incredibly difficult to build a culture with strong roots.

In other words, it is paramount for you to retain your talent. Employees are looking for good pay, of course, but they are equally driven by their quality of life within the workplace. Is the atmosphere friendly? Are managers and supervisors supportive? Is it okay to make mistakes and try new things? Are efforts rewarded? Are wins acknowledged?

Employees are more in-tune with their work satisfaction than ever before, and they’ll go the distance to feel fulfilled – even if that means leaving your organization. Let’s explore the factors to consider if you want those employees to stay.

Building Strong Working Relationships

At the heart of employee retention lies the quality of relationships within the workplace. Humans are communicators. We are wired to be in the company of others and to build relationships in their many forms. If our relationships are strong, so are we; if they are strained or unfulfilled, so are we.

Workplace relationships feature prominently in our lives since we spend most of our time working. Therefore, employees are highly unlikely to enjoy working for you if the relationships they

experience are unfulfilling – or worse, problematic.

Picture a situation from your past where you felt truly connected with your team at work. Chances are, you experienced some or all of the following:

- You were able to collaborate seamlessly on projects and solve problems as a team.
- You were not afraid to make mistakes because failure did not receive social scrutiny.
- Conversation flowed between your team and fluctuated from work topics to other areas of shared interest.
- When conflict arose, you were able to navigate it and come out the other side with your relationships intact.
- You felt truly supported.

Cultivating strong working relationships builds a sense of community and belonging like the one described above. When compared to a dull, unsupportive and uninspired team, employees are infinitely more likely to stick around for a fulfilling team.

Creating this kind of environment has to start from the top. It starts with you, the leader, and how you choose to interact with your team – which we will explore in more depth further along.

Fostering Engagement Through Meaningful Work

Engagement is the linchpin of employee

retention. It has been studied and demonstrated that bored workers are less productive, more prone to error and dissatisfied with their employment.⁴ Who could blame them? We humans need to feel as though we're contributing to something meaningful; our jobs need to feel in some way purposeful.

The goal here is to create a work environment where the attitude is, "I *get* to do this job," versus "I *have* to do this job." This is opportunity versus obligation – two very different mindsets. Opportunity-minded employees are far more likely to remain engaged in what they're doing.

So, what contributes to meaningful work? There are a few elements:

- The work aligns with the employee's values and plays to their strengths.
- There is a clear link between the job being completed and the overarching mission of your company – so their role doesn't exist in a silo.
- The job involves collaborating with others to achieve meaningful outcomes.

These are not the only factors, but jobs that lack these elements are significantly less likely to engage employees. It's particularly important that employees know exactly how their role contributes to the greater goals of the organization.

Leaders play a crucial part in connecting the dots between individual roles and the organization's mission. Providing challenging tasks, recognizing accomplishments and offering opportunities

for professional growth contribute to a work environment where engagement flourishes, leading to higher retention rates.

Empowering Fulfillment Through Recognition

Fulfillment is the emotional payoff that comes from knowing one's contributions drive impact and are truly valued. Employees can easily see through performative recognition schemes; they want to be acknowledged in a genuine way for the contributions they make.

An unfortunate reality is that low-performing employees typically stand out more than high-performing ones. When an employee is ticking all of their boxes, hitting all deadlines and allowing things to run smoothly, you have less reason to make note of their behavior or performance. That's why recognition needs to be a solidified and systematic process in which outstanding employees do not slip under the radar.

Acknowledging achievements – whether big or small – creates a positive feedback loop that reinforces a sense of purpose. Leaders who actively communicate appreciation and provide regular feedback contribute to an environment where team members feel seen, heard and fulfilled in their roles.

Investing in Professional Development

An investment in professional development is an investment in employee retention. The reason for this is simple: Professional development allows employees to feel that they are actively progressing in their role.

It is almost impossible to feel fulfilled and happy in a role where you are treading water – or worse, going backward. By nature, people need to see that they are progressing in whatever they do. Staying stagnant feels both stressful and dissatisfying. Professional development is an excellent way to nurture the skills of your team while building on their strengths and addressing any potential weaknesses.

Another benefit to consider here is that professional development initiatives demonstrate your care and investment. You are willing to spend money and resources to provide this training, so you must value that employee's contribution. They will see this as an encouraging reassurance of their value within the organization.

When choosing which programs to offer, strike a balance between something that both interests the employee and gives them the skills to perform better within their role. Professional development can be a mutually beneficial investment that boosts both performance and retention.

Balancing Work and Well-Being

Many of us have experienced poor boundaries in our careers; it's a natural part of learning what our needs and limits are. There are, however, ways that workplaces can directly contribute to a harmful working environment – and these factors should be closely monitored.

A workplace that does not maintain boundaries around work hours, for instance, can promote unhealthy behaviors. Employees might work excessive overtime hours just to keep up

with their tasks; they may experience burnout from constantly being in communication with their team after hours and on weekends.

We are beginning to see monumental change in terms of work flexibility, which means there are new ways to help your employees strike a healthy relationship between their work and home lives. Consider offering options like hybrid working, nine-day fortnights, mental health leave and even birthday leave. Even just one of these more flexible options makes it clearer to employees that you value their well-being.

Creating a Culture of Open Communication

We often underestimate what it takes to have truly open communication. It is less about inundating your teams with emails and instant messages and more about ensuring everyone has access to open, transparent and relevant information.

Open communication also centers around feedback. Have you created an environment where two-way feedback is both accepted and expected? Do you ask for feedback as much as you administer it? Asking employees for their opinions signals that you value their input – and more importantly, that they are safe to communicate their thoughts or concerns.

Your goal here should be to create a shared experience in which all voices are heard and valued. Do not allow employees to feel that they are being left out of the loop. The disconnect this creates is immensely damaging to both the employee's satisfaction and the workplace culture as a

whole.

Tailoring Recognition and Rewards

It is high time we moved away from the 'one-size-fits-all' approach to employee rewards. Everyone is different, which means we are all driven by unique motivators and will respond to certain rewards more than others. A far better alternative to giving out the same rewards is to tailor your incentives for each employee.

Below are a few examples of what this might look like:

- Invest in a short course or masterclass that aligns with an employee's particular area of interest (not necessarily related to their role).
- Let award recipients choose between a few options – a monetary bonus, time off or an enjoyable experience.
- Regularly ask for feedback on the rewards you give out and ask employees what actually motivates them.
- If you recognize an employee by making a group announcement to the whole team or company, avoid stock-standard messages at all costs. Share very specific points about what the employee did well and how it directly helped the company.

The most successful recognition and rewards are not all-purpose, but are adaptable and versatile to the person or people on the receiving end. Leaders who understand the unique preferences and

motivations of their team are far better equipped to motivate employees and therefore retain them.

To summarize what we've covered in this chapter, the seven factors that drive employee retention are: facilitating strong working relationships, fostering engagement, empowering fulfillment, investing in professional development, promoting healthy boundaries, communicating openly and tailoring your rewards.

Leaders who can optimize their culture in these areas are well on the way to greater employee retention – and in the chapters to come, you'll learn exactly how to do this with the four-pillar approach.

Chapter 2

*Building a World-Class Culture
Using CAP-C*



We've established the integral role that company culture plays in keeping talent on board. Now it is time to dive into the process of building such a culture.

Company culture is, unfortunately, an overused term that leaves many leaders confused and overwhelmed. It's easy enough to invoke the term but much harder to define what it entails – and many people have different ideas about what constitutes a “good” or “healthy” company culture.

To make things simpler, we use the acronym CAP-C: Clarity, Alignment, Purpose and Communication. Addressing each of these pillars holistically is your recipe for a thriving company culture – and we've had decades of success implementing this strategy.

Let's give each pillar a thorough rundown before delving into the specifics.

Clarity

By clarity, we are talking about how well employees understand their roles within the company. Do they know exactly what their roles entail and which departments they are supporting? Do they know the specific reason for their existence within the organization? These questions may seem obvious, but you may be surprised to learn how many companies have ambiguous roles.

Clarity is absolutely crucial to master if you want a thriving culture. Research has shown many times over that employees with role clarity are more efficient, more driven and more engaged – all leading to much better business outcomes.⁵

Alignment

The meaning of alignment is quite similar to clarity in that it requires employees to know exactly where they stand. Instead of focusing on role clarity, however, alignment extends to the bigger picture. Does every single role within your organization contribute to your organization's mission?

For alignment to happen, leaders need to consistently realign. By this, we mean regularly auditing your roles to ensure every cog is turning the way it should. Encourage collaboration and cross-functional communication to ensure information flows smoothly between departments.

An aimless or misdirected company can't help but see this reflected in their company culture – employees lose motivation, productivity drops and results go downhill. Your goal is to instead create a series of roles, teams and departments that work in harmony to fulfill your overarching goals.

Purpose

A company culture that prioritizes personal value recognizes that employees are not just assets but individuals with unique skills, talents and aspirations. This ensures that employees feel acknowledged for their strengths, contributions and individuality.

Investing in employee development, providing opportunities for learning and growth, and acknowledging achievements are crucial aspects of fostering a sense of personal value.

In essence, you want to show employees what you can do for them – not just what their role does for your organization.

Acknowledge their purpose outside of their role and contribute to helping them grow. The ripple effect this has on a culture can be transformative.

Communication

CAP-C requires all four pillars to be intact to work, and this is especially true for communication. Clarity, alignment and purpose are largely brought about through proper communication.

For instance, clarity depends on how well you communicate with employees as they are onboarded (e.g., how thoroughly you describe their role; how well you set up lines of communication between the employee and other team members; how clearly you link their tasks with the goals of the company).

Alignment demands that you foster strong interdepartmental communication so that all teams are contributing effectively to shared outcomes. Purpose requires you to communicate with each employee to identify their strengths, goals, personal values and aspirations.

Solid communication makes the pillar model possible – but communication alone can't maintain a strong culture. Read on as we explore each of these pillars and discuss some actionable methods for applying the CAP-C model.

Chapter 3

*Creating Clarity for Stronger
Working Relationships and
Even Better Results*



In the complex landscape of organizational dynamics, clarity stands out as a beacon, guiding individuals and teams toward a common purpose. The importance of creating clarity within an organization cannot be overstated; it forms the bedrock upon which stronger working relationships are built and superior results are achieved.

In this chapter, we underscore the transformative impact of clarity and explore how it serves as a catalyst for synergy and success.

Establishing A Foundation of Understanding

At the heart of strong working relationships lies a foundation of understanding. This simply means no one is left 'out of the loop' when it comes to your mission, vision, values and overarching goals.

Think of a role or project in the past where you haven't been privy to all the details. Perhaps the people leading your project failed to explain what the end goal was or clarify your contribution to said end goal. Likely, you found it difficult to be motivated and engaged in the project – because there were no stakes in it for you.

It's a similar feeling to playing a new board game and listening as someone explains the rules. If they spend an hour talking you through the mechanics of the game but never tell you the objective, it's almost impossible to get on board with enthusiasm. That's why many instruction leaflets for board games will list the objective or explain how to win the game before launching into the other rules; you need a sense of direction right from the get-go.

In the same way, your employees need that foundation of understanding before they begin in their roles. Well-informed employees are better equipped to align their individual efforts with your broader objectives.

Connecting Purpose to Performance

For employees to find fulfillment in their roles, they need more than just a job description; they need a sense of purpose. There was a time when employee purpose would not have been given a second thought in the workplace – but now, it's an intensely studied area of interest. Gartner and other research sources have found clear connections between purpose and performance.⁸

That sense of purpose largely comes about through clarity. If you give an employee a list of their responsibilities, set them up with a list of tasks and assign a bunch of deadlines, you have not given them a purpose – you've given them a meaningless to-do list. They need to know the why and how of the tasks you set for them. Why are they necessary? How do they contribute to the success of the department and company at large?

For example, say you are onboarding a customer experience assistant who will answer client queries over the phone. The role requirements are straightforward enough: answer the phone, use this particular phrasing, have a kind and helpful demeanor. If you want to give that employee purpose, however, dig deeper.

Explain that customer experience is perhaps one of the most crucial

determinants of your company's reputation. It can make or break customer retention; it can lose new clients in an instant or create lifelong loyalty. Give real, tangible success stories and introduce the employee to others in the department who are passionate about what they're doing. This all contributes to that employee's sense of purpose.

Aligning for Collective Success

Clarity acts as a compass to direct individuals and teams toward alignment. As we established earlier, giving employees clarity around their roles and your expectations helps to avoid misunderstandings down the line. You cannot expect to achieve collective success if there are employees and departments that feel ambiguous about their roles.

When everyone is on the same page, the synergy that emerges creates a collaborative culture where each person's contributions complement those of others.

If you work in marketing, for instance, there are many different roles that all feed into each other – like copywriters, photographers, social media managers, SEO analysts, media buyers and others. True clarity means that everyone under the marketing umbrella understands exactly how their roles intersect.

The photographer understands that the quality of their work directly impacts the company's social media presence; the SEO experts know that the web developer's hard work only pays off if they can draw traffic to the site; the copywriters understand that their writing embodies the company's entire marketed persona. There

should not be any isolation of roles or echo chambers of information.

Inspiring Confidence and Trust

A lack of clarity breeds uncertainty, and uncertainty erodes trust. Research has shown that workplaces lacking in trust perform poorly compared to high-trust environments. Writing for the Harvard Business Review, Paul J. Zak said, "Employees in high-trust organizations are more productive, have more energy at work, collaborate better with their colleagues and stay with their employers longer than people working at low-trust companies."⁶

A clear and transparent environment inspires confidence. When employees have a clear understanding of the company's direction and strategy, they are more likely to trust leadership decisions and embrace change with a positive mindset, because you extended trust to them first by sharing information transparently.

It might seem like a no-brainer – but many businesses do not take trust-building seriously enough, or they fail to consider it as a priority in the first place. Those who do prioritize trust-building are the benefactors of greater relationships, improved efficiency and an elevated culture.

Driving Accountability and Ownership

Clarity goes hand in hand with accountability. After all, how can an employee be expected to take responsibility for their output if their role is unclear?

If you want employees to take full ownership and agency over their work, the best thing you can possibly do is clarify their mission. Role clarity is a key part of this process – but you'll also want to set clear expectations, goals and even performance metrics that employees are required to meet.

The results here are two-fold. One, you make your expectations clear so that the employee knows exactly what their responsibilities are. Two, you give the employee a sense of autonomy over what they are doing. This is the power of clarity.

Adapting to Change with Resilience

Anyone in business knows that change is not optional. It's just something that happens, regardless of how prepared you are – but there are certainly ways to navigate the changing seas with grace. Creating clarity can prepare you to handle change as it arrives.

When employees understand the reasons behind changes and see transparent communication of the organization's vision, they are more likely to adapt with resilience. Clarity facilitates a smoother transition, minimizing resistance and maximizing the potential for innovation and growth.

A prime example of clarity and change management in business is the case of Google disseminating into a series of companies under the 'Alphabet' umbrella. When Google was experiencing rapid change and became quite difficult to manage, Larry Page's solution was to break the company down into more specific and

dedicated companies within Alphabet – which (among other things) meant greater clarity around the specific mission of each company.

The transition was highly successful, and it set the company up to handle change more easily in the years to come.

Boosting Engagement Through Purpose

How many employees are genuinely switched on when it comes to their roles? In the modern workplace it has been found that only 15 percent of workers are engaged in what they're doing – and as leaders, this should be an area of serious concern.⁷

Many leaders see this statistic and think, "What can I do to boost engagement? Is it time to organize a few more company events or get employees interacting with one another a bit more?"

Often, however, engagement is less about the 'excitement' of a job and more about the purpose employees feel in their roles (or lack thereof). If you can give employees a deeper understanding of their role and purpose, you are far more likely to see a boost in engagement.

Identifying Communication as the Catalyst

Clarity and communication are inseparable allies. We say this because, while you can try to achieve one without the other, you will find your task near impossible. Communication directly leads to greater clarity, and clarity fosters a culture where communication is allowed to thrive.

When communication channels are clear, information flows freely and team members are more likely to share ideas, provide feedback and actively participate in decision-making processes. Most importantly – the open communication gives employees permission to ask clarifying questions about their role and purpose.

Fostering a Culture of Recognition

We've spoken in depth about clarity when it comes to role descriptions and responsibilities within the company; however, clarity extends beyond tasks and goals to encompass the acknowledgment of individual and collective achievements.

When you recognize or reward an employee's performance, what is your approach? Do you send out a templated message that is used each time an employee is congratulated? As we mentioned in our earlier section about recognition and rewards, it's significantly better to personalize your recognition methods depending on the employee being recognized – and this has a lot to do with clarity.

If you are going to build recognition into your culture (which we highly recommend), give employees total clarity around what they are being recognized for. What did they specifically do that you appreciated?

Moreover, what did their contribution mean for your organization? Connect the dots between the employee's efforts and the impact on your mission.

Supporting Professional Growth and Development

Continuing on from our earlier conversation about learning and development, clarity plays a vital role here, too. Why? Because in the process of giving employees further training and professional development, you help to clarify and solidify their career path moving forward.

Investing in a leadership program for an entry-level employee, for instance, demonstrates that you see their potential as a leader and perhaps want to see them move up through the company into a managerial position.

Have intentional conversations with your employees to understand exactly what their goals are and where they want to go. You can then tailor their professional trajectory to suit both their goals and the needs of your company.

Creating Clarity as a Pillar of Your Organizational Culture

We now understand that clarity is a crucial pillar responsible for greater productivity, communication, team collaboration and even change management – so what steps can you put into place to establish that clarity?

We recommend that you:

- **Default to total transparency wherever possible.** Information is not a privilege to be earned; it is something all employees should be granted access to from the beginning of their role placement. Be as open and honest about the business as possible so that employees feel they are on the same

page and working toward your common goals.

- **Avoid information silos.** Set up communication systems where different roles and departments are exchanging information seamlessly. Departments are infinitely more valuable and effective when in collaboration with the other teams around them.

- **Lead by example.** Always be willing to answer questions and create more clarity for your employees. Be forthcoming with information; an excess of context is far better than a shortage.

- **Intentionally design your onboarding programs to give new employees the best possible chance.** Programs should begin with a thorough overview of the employee's role and place within the company – and ideally, they will interact with several different department heads and other related roles.

Establish clarity as a pillar of your organizational culture, and you will notice many other factors falling into place – such as the level of engagement your employees exhibit.

Chapter 4

*Aligning Your Workforce
for Collective Success*



Alignment is the second of four pillars – and since the pillars are inextricably linked, you will have already read the word ‘alignment’ many times in previous sections. In terms of organizational success, alignment is like the conductor of an orchestra, ensuring everyone works together for a collective achievement. To align simply means to ‘arrange into correct relative positions.’ More specifically to the workplace, this looks like:

- All roles and departments aligning with your mission, vision and values.
- All employees contributing to the objectives of their teams and the organization’s objectives.
- No wasted human resources, as every role is intentionally designed according to the needs and goals of your company.
- Every employee is on board with the values and ethos of your company culture.

Read on as we explore the profound impact of creating strong alignment on fostering robust teamwork and yielding superior results.

Navigating the Levels of Collaboration

In the order of importance, it’s safe to say that collaboration is high on the list for organizations. You simply cannot function without collaboration. However, there are different levels of collaboration quality:

- Bare minimum collaboration, in which employees communicate with

one another just enough to get tasks completed. The tasks may turn out disjointed, incomplete or less than satisfactory due to a lack of cohesion between contributors. There is little to no interdepartmental collaboration.

- Functional collaboration, in which employees have communication channels in place that facilitate working together (e.g., regular status updates, group chats for projects, shared document software). Some employees go the extra mile to make the most of these channels, while others still miscommunicate or neglect to collaborate on important tasks.
- Seamless collaboration, in which you have created a culture of total alignment. Each team member understands their role in the larger narrative, and their efforts complement those of their colleagues. This collaborative spirit forms the bedrock of effective teamwork, creating a seamless flow of ideas, skills and resources toward a unified purpose.

With a culture of alignment, employees don’t have to go out of their way to collaborate – it’s a built-in part of the way your organization runs.

Sharing the Vision, Sharing the Success

When individual and team goals are aligned with the broader organizational vision, success becomes a shared journey.

We don’t say this in a sentimental, ‘we’re all in this together’ kind of way (although this is not unwelcome in a

healthy company culture). It's more about ensuring that every single employee has an awareness of the objectives on all levels – individually, as a team, as a department and as an organization.

If teams are tunnel-visioned on their short-term objectives with no thought for overarching goals, you'll notice that those short-term projects and milestones may not be fully in alignment with what you're trying to achieve.

A shared vision fosters a sense of unity and collective responsibility, with each team member understanding that their achievements contribute directly to the success of the entire team – and, by extension, the organization.

Creating Efficiency Through Alignment

One of the biggest obstacles to achieving alignment is the 'information silo.' You may be familiar with these. Silos form when departments or teams have information that is relevant to other departments – or could be of significant use to other departments – but it remains isolated. We call this an insular management system, and it uses vertical communication. Forrester found that 77 percent of marketers identified information silos as being a huge obstacle to organizational alignment.⁹ Silos are certainly a model of the past and should be avoided in favor of efficiency.

Building cross-functional teams is a far better alternative. This involves regular collaboration between teams as well as systems that allow for seamless

information sharing across departments.

Celebrating Collective Wins

Aligned teams celebrate victories together. When goals are achieved, it's not just an individual triumph but a collective success. The reason for this is simple: Aligned teams are all working toward the same objectives, so a win for one feels like a win for all.

The neuroscience behind celebratory wins is favorable, too. Acknowledging a success or achievement sets off reward chemicals in the brain – and when this is done collectively, it reinforces the team's sense of camaraderie and builds a positive feedback loop.¹⁰

Any team can celebrate a win – it's a fairly common practice used to boost morale and incentivize good work. However, aligned teams are always going to get more out of celebratory wins because everyone shares the same goals and objectives and can therefore fully appreciate the significance of each 'win.'

Creating Alignment as a Pillar of Your Organizational Culture

If you want to foster alignment – the second of the four pillars – there are plenty of strategies you can put into place. We recommend starting with these:

- **Make your mission and values obvious.** If your employees hear these once during the onboarding process and never again, they'll unlikely remember or act on them. Make your core values and objectives so integral to your culture that any employee can relay them when

asked.

- **Give employees a sense of ownership.** One of the best ways to solidify your mission is to get employees involved. Ask for their feedback and get their suggestions for how best to align with it. Allow every single person to feel as though the mission is not just yours, but theirs – and ours.

- **Demonstrate your commitment.** Are you doing everything in your power to align with your organizational goals? Can your team see the effort you are making to achieve your shared objectives? Model what you want to see in your employees.

- **Tweak your systems.** Like the information silos mentioned earlier, there are many common roadblocks to be found in outdated or misaligned systems. It's time to remove any systems or processes that isolate one department from the rest. Build a system of total cohesion and cross-communication so that all roles and departments can collaborate.

Alignment, as we've established, goes hand in hand with clarity. Clarified and aligned teams can function as a cohesive unit to make great things happen for your organization. These pillars can't stand alone, however. And the third pillar is purpose, which we'll unpack in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

*Connecting Value and Purpose
for Increased Fulfillment*



In achieving organizational success, value and purpose are intertwined to enrich the professional lives of team members while driving exceptional outcomes.

Humans are meaning-driven creatures. We attach importance to our responsibilities because having said responsibilities makes us feel needed, important and as though we are contributing to something greater.

Those responsibilities won't always be related to work. Your sense of purpose could come from parenthood, friendships, hobbies or something entirely different. However, science shows that 70 percent of workers do attach their sense of purpose to work specifically.¹¹ If work isn't fulfilling, achieving a sense of purpose becomes incredibly difficult – and morale quickly drops.

This chapter explores the symbiotic relationship between creating value and purpose for team members, illustrating how it becomes a powerful force that propels individual fulfillment and, in turn, contributes to stronger collective outcomes.

Recognizing the Intrinsic Value of Contributions

At the heart of a fulfilling role lies the intrinsic value that team members perceive in their contributions. Value doesn't come from the task itself; it encompasses the meaningful impact that each individual has on the organization's success.

Why are we talking about value? Because in order to bring about a sense of purpose, employees need to know with confidence

that they are providing some kind of value.

The assumption is that most employees do provide value of some kind, or they wouldn't have a role in the first place – but even the most integral employees can go unrecognized, left wondering whether they are making a difference at all. Value needs to be acknowledged by those in leadership and reaffirmed to the employee for them to feel a sense of purpose.

When team members feel the significance of their work and how it aligns with the broader goals and mission of the company, they find a sense of purpose that goes beyond the day-to-day routine.

Aligning Personal Values with Organizational Mission

Creating value and purpose is a two-way street; it involves aligning personal values with the mission and values of the organization. Your team members need to feel a resonance between their individual beliefs and the principles upheld by the company – and when they do, it creates a powerful synergy.

Consider the recruitment process for a charity or B Corp. These organizations typically are based strongly on their values, and they often look for candidates who have a passion for their cause. Anyone else would be incompatible with the culture they are trying to build and the change they are attempting to make.

All organizations should be taking this approach to recruitment, regardless of whether you are solving a social issue or selling used cars. Clarify what your values

are. Decide what qualities you want to see in the people who join your team. Then, seek out employees who align with what you are trying to achieve.

This approach is beneficial for you, of course – but it also means employees can feel a real sense of purpose by joining an organization they are compatible with.

Measuring Success Beyond Metrics

While metrics and key performance indicators are helpful and necessary in many ways, true success should be measured by the fulfillment and satisfaction of team members – because everything else flows from that.

Leaders must recognize that creating value and purpose goes beyond numerical achievements. It involves nurturing a work environment where individuals feel valued, heard and fulfilled. Team members who find purpose in their roles are more likely to bring passion, creativity and commitment to their work, ultimately driving stronger and more sustainable results.

Creating Purpose as a Pillar of Your Organizational Culture

Building the pillar of purpose within your organization is largely about showing your employees the specific value they bring to the table. Here are some tangible strategies to get started:

- Recognize employees when they contribute value. Be specific about how the work they are doing has supported your overarching mission and goals.

- Be intentional about the people you recruit. Ensure you onboard employees who align with your values from the get-go; they are far more likely to feel a sense of purpose and may find it easier to get behind your objectives.

- Include employee satisfaction levels as one of your success metrics. Sales targets are important, but you'll learn far more by surveying your employees to see just how fulfilled they really feel in their roles.

A sense of purpose propels teams toward higher levels of engagement, innovation and achievement, creating a workplace where each member finds meaning and purpose in their professional journey.

Chapter 6

***Communicating Effectively to
Promote Employee Engagement
and Innovation***



We've made it to the final pillar – let's talk about communication.

Communication is the lifeblood that courses through the veins of an organization, connecting every department, team and individual. The quality of your communication can make or break every other pillar we've discussed, and it can determine the success or failure of your mission.

You may be wondering, is poor communication still an issue in the modern workplace? Really? If you're thinking this way, you are in the minority of employees who are not negatively affected by poor communication. Over 50 percent of employees feel their productivity is ruined by ineffective communication – which ultimately points to an issue in company culture.¹²

With the right communication approach, however, your organization's culture can truly thrive and retain talent. Read on for a breakdown of the communication pillar in its various facets.

Ensuring Organizational Agility

In a rapidly changing business landscape, organizational agility is a competitive advantage. Aaron De Smet, organization design leader at McKinsey, describes this agility as "...the ability of an organization to renew itself, adapt, change quickly and succeed in a rapidly changing, ambiguous, turbulent environment."¹³

The only way this agility can be achieved is through clear and consistent communication. Time and time again,

companies fall flat due to communication issues that have gone unresolved for too long – and when disaster strikes or changes need to be made, they are too inflexible to overcome the obstacles.

A healthy and resilient company culture requires impeccable communication for this reason. Clear and timely communication is essential for ensuring teams adapt quickly to new information, market shifts and emerging opportunities. Organizations that prioritize communication create an agile infrastructure that can pivot in response to external factors, remaining competitive and resilient in the face of change.

Facilitating Innovation

Innovation is something we are all capable of, but we don't all feel able to take part in. It's daunting to present new ideas or risk trying something different. Innovation is crucial to business success, however; it prepares you to navigate inevitable changes and keeps you on the forefront of your industry. So, how can you encourage it?

We mention innovation as part of this pillar because communication – when leveraged well – can foster a culture of innovation. You can use communication to propagate a consistent stream of new ideas and innovative feedback.

What does this look like? First and foremost, it means regularly asking your employees for their input on aspects of your company. Ask for opinions about your systems and how they could be improved. Make it clear that you are totally open to new ideas. Often, employees

are just waiting for 'permission' to make suggestions and put forward their ideas.

A culture of communication that encourages the exchange of diverse perspectives creates an environment where innovation can thrive, propelling the organization forward in an ever-evolving landscape.

Enhancing Employee Engagement and Satisfaction

Have you ever been part of a team where communication is almost completely dead? There is a collection of communication channels (such as Slack, Teams and Asana) that never get used, and you rarely (if ever) hear from bosses or managers. Messages you send can go for days without a reply.

In these situations, it's easy to feel demotivated and completely check out. If leadership doesn't care enough to communicate, after all, why should you?

Herein lies the power of proper communication: The way you communicate as a leader can set the tone of your whole culture, and by extension, influence how engaged and satisfied your employees are.

This is not a matter of inundating your employees with messages. Everyone is busy, and no one likes to be bombarded. It is more about your consistency and reliability. Can someone get a response from you within a 24-hour period if they message you with a question? Do you hold semi-regular meetings to discuss team progress and keep employees in the loop with one another? Do you actively

ask for feedback from your employees? Regular communication from leadership about company updates, successes and challenges makes employees feel informed and connected as opposed to alone and disjointed.

Resolving Conflicts and Building Stronger Relationships

Conflicts are an inevitable part of any business endeavor, and over 35 percent of employees deal with workplace conflict of some kind – but effective communication serves as a powerful tool for resolution.¹⁴ Open dialogue, active listening and the ability to communicate expectations help prevent misunderstandings and conflicts from escalating.

When conflicts do arise, a culture of clear communication allows for swift and constructive resolution, preserving relationships and maintaining a positive work environment. No business is expected to avoid conflict altogether; this simply isn't realistic. It's about using your communication channels to handle these issues as they arise and building a culture where open communication is the expected norm.

Creating Communication as a Pillar of Your Organizational Culture

From fostering trust and collaboration to driving innovation and agility, effective communication is woven through every aspect of organizational success. So, how can you create a culture of communication?

- Lead by example, always. Communication is a pillar that needs to

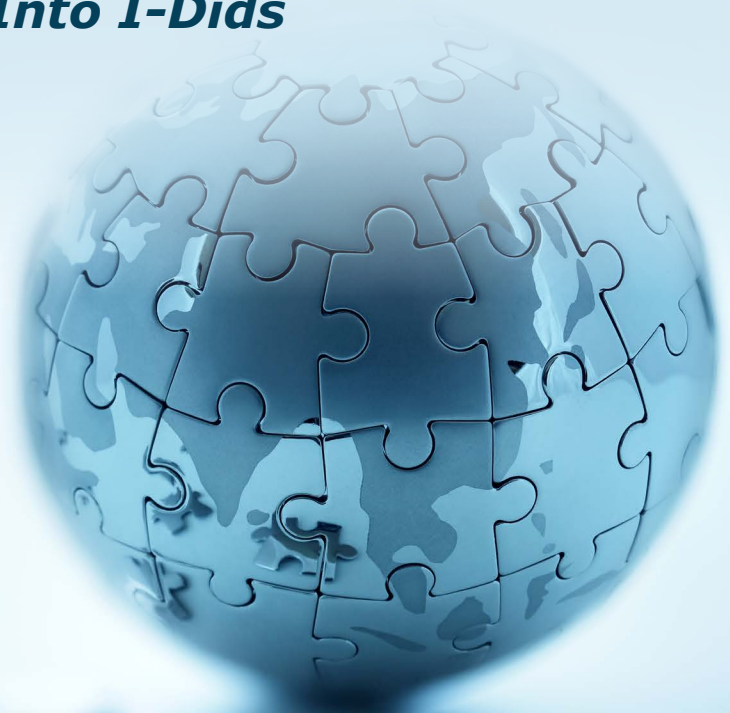
be taught by example. Your employees will follow your lead when it comes to how consistently they communicate, how transparent they are, and how comfortable they feel to be forthcoming with ideas and feedback. Set the precedent by displaying consistent, open and honest communication.

- Put solid systems in place. It's hard to believe that some organizations are still communicating via email alone or mixed platforms, but there are some truly archaic systems in place that desperately need updating. Refine your infrastructure so that communication can be easy and instant.
- Use the right language. If you want employees to exhibit open communication and be forthcoming with innovative ideas, be aware that the language you use can greatly impact this. Avoid 'no' phrases or any language that shuts down ideas without considering them first. Meet open communication and feedback with enthusiasm so that employees are positively reinforced.

Leaders who recognize the transformative power of communication and invest in creating a culture of openness and transparency are laying the foundation for sustained success.

Chapter 7

Turning Ideas Into I-Dids



Employee retention has become a more serious challenge in recent years. How can you retain top talent when the competition is so fierce? With other companies flashing higher salaries and better benefits, what can you do to stand out and keep your people from leaving? We've seen from years of experience in the field that a strong, healthy company culture can make or break employee retention – and we use the CAP-C approach to help organizations build said culture.

Over the course of this book, we've explored the four pillars that make up a successful, thriving company culture: Clarity, Alignment, Purpose and Communication. Observe that as we unpacked each pillar there was a lot of crossover. For instance, alignment and purpose both rely heavily on clearly communicating your company's vision and mission to employees. The reason for such crossover is that no pillar is supposed to stand on its own – they are a set of four, and one cannot stand successfully without the others. In your journey to creating a successful culture, you will build on each pillar simultaneously, not one at a time.

As a take-home summary, here is a brief overview of each of the pillars we covered:

- **Clarity.** One of the fundamental elements of a successful company culture, clarity involves clearly defining the company's mission, vision and values. When employees have a clear understanding of the organization's purpose, they are more likely to feel a sense of direction and ownership in their work. Clear communication of

expectations and goals helps in aligning individual efforts with the broader objectives of the company. Leaders should consistently reinforce the company's core values, ensuring that they are not just words on a wall but integral principles that guide decision-making at all levels.

- **Alignment.** Alignment is about ensuring that every team member understands their role in contributing to the company's overall goals. In doing so, you create a unified and focused workforce. Regularly revisiting and realigning goals helps in adapting to changing market conditions and maintaining relevance. Encouraging collaboration and cross-functional communication further strengthens alignment, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose among employees.

- **Purpose.** A company culture that prioritizes personal value recognizes that employees are not just assets but individuals with unique skills, talents and aspirations. Investing in employee development, providing opportunities for learning and growth, and acknowledging achievements are crucial aspects of fostering a sense of personal value. Employees who feel valued are more likely to be engaged, motivated and committed to contributing their best to the organization. This, in turn, creates a positive feedback loop where a culture of appreciation becomes ingrained in the company's DNA.

- **Communication.** Effective communication is the backbone of a

healthy company culture. Transparent and open communication channels build trust among team members and between employees and leadership. Regularly sharing updates on company performance, strategic initiatives and changes in direction helps in keeping everyone informed and engaged. Encouraging feedback and actively listening to employee concerns not only demonstrates a commitment to a two-way communication flow but also allows for continuous improvement. In the digital age, leveraging technology for seamless communication – especially in remote or distributed teams – is essential for maintaining a connected and informed workforce.

These pillars work synergistically to create an environment where employees thrive, feel valued and contribute meaningfully to the organization's success.

We have seen time and time again that by prioritizing these foundational principles, companies not only attract top talent but also retain and empower their existing workforce. The right culture can drive sustained growth and innovation in the ever-evolving business landscape.

After reading through this guide, it's time to turn these ideas into I-dids. How do you feel your company culture is currently performing? Use the following questions to run a quick self-audit.

- What are our tailwinds when it comes to culture?
- What are our headwinds when it comes

to culture?

- What are 1-3 shifts we can make that will drive an even better culture for our people and set us up for future success?

Making changes to your company culture can be daunting and even overwhelming, but the benefits you reap will be well worth the time and effort. Keep in mind that you do not need to tackle it all solo; organizations such as ours, The Carden Group, exist to help leaders like you create a thriving company culture. Good luck, and keep making awesome stuff happen.

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Chad Carden, Founder of The Carden Group, has been studying and working with companies to improve their number one asset — their people — for over 20 years. His life mission is to improve the way employers and employees interact to create greater engagement and better results. By challenging them to reach outside their comfort zone, Chad's clients achieve heights never before seen.

Named a Top Coach Making a Difference by USA Today and featured as a Top Entrepreneur Changing the World by Entrepreneur Magazine, Chad has traveled the globe to help organizations discover where they want to be, to help create a plan to get there, and to issue a challenge to achieve real results.

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