

## Building culture out of discontent

Culture is a shared ethos of an organisation; it is the glue that holds a business together. It is the intangible 'thing' that attracts prospective employees and clients to a company.

 By [wayne bischoff](#) 15 Sep 2021



Wayne Bischoff, CEO at Mediamark

Ideally, all business leaders want to cultivate a company culture that supports employees and motivates them to be productive and find happiness and fulfilment in their careers. But thanks to the pandemic and ensuing economic strain, that is proving harder than before. Staff have been put under pressure with a new way of working, there are fewer employees working more hours with bigger workloads and revenue targets are looming. It is no wonder that many employees feel overworked and underappreciated. It is the perfect storm.

When your workforce is feeling burnt out and stretched beyond capacity it is more important than ever before to focus on the company culture. A whole new approach is required to breed a positive culture out of discontent.

### **Act authentically**

How do you show you care when you can't even have a physical get together at the office? It feels to many like the fun and empathy is missing.

Building culture in 2021 really calls on us to blend authenticity and empathy. To show staff that you care, you need to meet their needs beyond just skills training. In cultivating culture, we can empower staff through campaigns such as an internal vaccine education drives or through mental wellness workshops.

Mediamark has not been immune to the mental health challenges that we've all faced due to these uncertain times, so we decided to stage trauma workshops for staff and clients. As part of a broader mental wellness campaign, we set up sessions with a professional counsellor who helped to equip employees with practical tools and tips to deal with stress and trauma.

## **Intentional connections**

When working remotely you need to be deliberate and intentional about fostering connections. We can no longer rely on our team members picking up ideas through touchpoints in the office. To help individuals working in their own space feel part of something bigger, we need to meet them where they are at, and on multiple platforms; from virtual meetings, to mailers and personal WhatsApp voice notes.

Within our organisation we've launched 'Virtual Hyper Teams' where teams have been formed across divisions and they meet virtually at least once a week. To break down silos staff share their department's strategic focus and see where the priority areas overlap. The feedback from staff has been extremely positive. One staff member explained it best when saying that at first she felt it was merely another box-ticking exercise, but as time went by she realised that it benefitted the teams' level of collaboration and understanding and she now feels it has been a remarkable success.

## **Two-way communication**

Listening to staff and meeting them half way is key to fostering happiness among employees and boosting team morale. For example, we at Mediamark, will never go back to a full-time physical workspace. We've found that working remotely has really inspired and worked well for our staff. So, we are investigating several hybrid models, with the Office being the "centre of gravity".

Another way in which you can listen to staff is being brave enough to do staff surveys and to confront the hard truths that may emerge, so that employees reap the benefits of their honesty. Something as small as profiling your team members on your social media platforms can also make them feel their voices and opinions are heard.

## **Company that cares**

Building a positive work culture starts internally, first. Fully engaged employees are dedicated to an organisation's purpose and excited about where the company is headed. But more than that, once authentic a company's culture is evident to outsiders and people want to do business with people that care about its people.

## **ABOUT WAYNE BISCHOFF**

Wayne Bischoff recently rejoined Mediamark as CEO, having previously held the position of sales and marketing director at what was then Radmark and Digitalmark.  
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