

People. Passion. Performance. Purpose.

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As I sit down to write this, I have missed the deadline for this piece twice already.

What started out as an idea to celebrate workers at the beginning of May is rapidly becoming a survival exercise in just keeping up! The end of April and the beginning of May create a cluster of fabulous long weekends and potential extended holiday breaks, and the challenge I've found is that none of the work tasks seems to be enjoying the same time off!



Things have changed

It's good to be legitimately busy again. The workplace curve of Covid was complex as we grappled with rapid changes in team dynamics, remote working and redefining purpose in our organisations.

Webinars became the go-to default to ensure people in the workplace were kept busy whilst the frequency of meetings increased to keep teams connected and to decipher the new working world. I think we can agree that the working world is a changed place, and that the last two years has forced us to consider the

people in our businesses. The converse is also true with employees also opting out of their jobs seeking better opportunities, more fulfilment, or different environments. An article in Newsweek caught my attention as I believe it is a reflection for many people working within organisations feeling disgruntled at the back of a very long and complex time in the workplace post-Covid.

Balance

The relationship between the business and the people who make it successful is a fine balance. I was recently reminded that as part of the turnaround strategy at the SABC, the corporation has placed a moratorium on salary increases for a period of four years and that several employees had taken pay-cuts to retain their jobs. There is no doubt that this kind of organisational positioning must create a challenging workplace dynamic. On the one hand, the corporation is trying to create long-term sustainability and employment for more than 3,000 people, with mandated deliverables and a mountain of historical debt. On the other hand, there are staff who are genuinely concerned about their household budgets because of salary freezes.

Symbiotic relationships

If anything, the above scenario highlights the intrinsic symbiotic relationship that exists between employee and employer. Having worked in several environments and running a small business for a period in my career, it is important to acknowledge both parties as vital elements to success. I'd like to encourage anyone who is employed to treat the relationship you have with your employer like a small business, particularly when it comes to your own behaviour. Ask yourself on any given day, if this were my business, would I have been happy to pay someone for the inputs I delivered today? If it were your business and budgets, would your performance be any different? If the answer is yes, you might be in a position where you need to be thinking about your purpose within your company.

At the same time, employers must create a value proposition that shows the purpose of the collective efforts of their people, describes the performance required from every individual, and offer fair value for those efforts. Too often we forget that it is an employment relationship, and that any successful relationship requires open and regular communication, from both

parties.

Value

In a recent LinkedIn post I was struck by the simplicity of the words, "when your team feels valued, they will add value". As employers, we also have a role to play in enabling our people, who in turn, enable our businesses. We often look to people who are passionate about what we do and that guides our decision to bring them on board or not. We seek comparative professional energy but, at the same time, we should ask: does the opportunity we are offering align with what the person wants to achieve in their career, and do we align with their skills, interests, and values? When employer and employee have alignment on the collective passion, this drives value for the customer which in turn adds to our professional purpose. An article in the *Hard Business Review* reminded me of the importance of ensuring that our people are professionally fulfilled and remain key in our ability to add value.

Realignment

Rapidly changing inputs and outputs in an already changing work landscape require realignment. I believe it is fair to accept that there are rigours in any job and from time to time, it is essential to re-examine the required performance against the backdrop of the inputs received, the skills needed and the overall business strategy. I recently wrote about taking the opportunity to reflect on the first quarter of the year, I think this is essential for both employer and employee. In our context, the celebration of Workers Day is an opportunity to realign our needs and professional aspirations in a modern working environment and take stock of the path so far and the route ahead.

At MediaHeads 360, we are looking forward to reviewing our performance and value proposition to clients in the next month. We are a team of passionate and dedicated individuals who thrive on collective purpose. Professional growth is only possible with personal input, and I am grateful to work with a team who approach our business like it is their business. Collectively we look forward to doing business with you.

Good luck with the second quarter of 2022, I hope it is filled with passionate people and performance fuelled by purpose.

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