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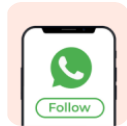
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Organization Development 4 Min Read

Creating a culture of purpose

When employees see their organisation working diligently and transparently toward fulfil its stated purpose, it allows them to reflect on their own purpose and how they add value to the bigger picture. A culture of purpose is served well when all levels of employees develop a 'leadership' mindset, when the organisation empowers its people to act as leaders, irrespective of their position.



Gopinath Govindan, · ETHRWorld Contributor

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In recent years, we have seen an industry-wide shift in business priorities, wherein a sustainable future has become the vision, well-being



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has become a mission, and agility of response has become a business value. This shift applies equally to both business leaders and employees. As Generative AI and other advanced technologies gain ground, we will see more such shifts in the business environment.

The question is: If every organisation is undergoing the same kind of transformation, what differentiates one from the other? What is the unique and powerful value proposition that an organisation can offer? The answer lies in an existential question: What purpose do we serve?



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Employees seek purpose, and their role in it.

The geopolitical, environmental, and economic volatility of recent years has made people relook at how they spend their time, money, and

energy. In a McKinsey study in 2021, almost 70% of workers said that their sense of purpose was defined by their work. This finding underlines the need for organisations to share a clear sense of purpose with their employees in order to give them a sense of fulfilment at work.

A Gartner report in 2023 revealed that having a shared purpose is one of the critical values employees seek from their jobs; they like to feel invested in an organisation that doesn't merely make powerful statements but also takes concrete action along those lines. They want to know how their work makes a difference in the real world. As many as 86% of job applicants go through company reviews and ratings in their search for an employer whose sense of purpose resonates with their own, and around 30% of new hires leave within 90 days if the company culture is not a good fit for them.

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A 'leadership' mindset strengthens a culture of purpose.

Employees and stakeholders can easily see through dysfunctional cultures and unfulfilled purposes. A 'Great Place To Work 2022' survey, which covered more than 14,000 people from 37 countries, revealed that employees consistently experienced significant gaps in purpose and connection — two areas needed to flourish at work.

Organisations need to walk their talk. Building a culture of purpose isn't

just about employer branding; it is identifying your raison d'être – your reason for being. It is about figuring out how you can contribute to a greater good. It requires sustained investments and consistent actions towards fulfilling that purpose. The purpose should be the North Star that guides all business and workplace decisions.

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A culture of purpose is served well when all levels of employees develop a 'leadership' mindset, when the organisation empowers its people to act as leaders, irrespective of their position. Leaders manage not only their teams but also the ecosystems related to their work. The ability to influence ecosystems – including partners, the supply chain, and communities – is considerably enhanced when employee actions are guided by a clear sense of purpose.

Purpose, vision, mission, and values should be woven into the very fabric

of an organisation. Leaders should help employees understand their role in fulfilling the organisation's purpose. This will keep the employees committed and encourage them to work to their fullest potential. According to Gallup's State of the Global Workplace 2023 Report, employees who are not engaged, or who are actively disengaged, cost the world \$8.8 trillion in lost productivity — roughly around 9% of global GDP.

Asking the right questions helps in aligning business with purpose.

If we look closely at successful companies that have stood the test of time, we can see a common thread: the relentless pursuit of purpose. It is much more than merely reporting on ESG or sustainability frameworks; it is about the organisation's soul, evident in every action taken. Despite the ever-evolving trends in employee engagement and retention techniques, purpose is what makes organisations stand out.

Identifying a purpose and fostering a culture of purpose requires everyone – employees, employers and stakeholders – to be on the same page. It is a difficult process, more complex than it sounds. A good way to go about it is to ask questions such as:

- Is the organisation's purpose well-articulated so that it is clearly understood by everyone?
- Are leaders cultivating a compassionate work environment that resonates with the organisation's essence?
- Are all business functions aligned with the organisation's purpose?

- How well are the business locations (plants, offices, and warehouses) aligned with the organisation's purpose, vision, mission, and values?
- Does the rewards-and-recognition programme acknowledge purpose-driven behaviours?
- How do you assess the success of the organisation?

These are important questions that are answered best through dialogue and can help business leaders and employees take the organisation along a path of purpose-led, impact-driven growth.

The author, [Gopinath Govindan](#), is Director - Human Resources at Apraava Energy.

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