

Empathy and Humanity – A Necessity for every Company

Time and again, companies are surprised that employees – even long-term workers- leave their company, even though everything is now back to "normal". A current example would be a company that, after the Corona pandemic has subsided, wants most of its employees to work on site again. They often mention the lack of personal exchange during remote work, which is so important for the success of the company. But where does that leave the empathy and humanity for the employees?

2021s "Barometer Gute Arbeit" by Travail.Suisse states that one third of all employees are often too exhausted after work to take care of private or family matters. It is true that there is always talk of promoting childcare. At the same time, the topic of the constantly increasing number of long-term illnesses or burnouts among employees remains a strict taboo. At some point, the question inevitably arises as to whether employees are still resilient and loyal at all. Some go so far as to say that morale and the will to work "hard" are simply not the same as they used to be.

Dear companies, dear management, dear supervisors, dear HR community: have we learned nothing at all from the past two years? Was it not possible, during the various lockdown waves, to maintain a personal connection with our employees despite working remotely? Did we not have more private and personal conversations? Perhaps precisely because the cat, the partner or even the child suddenly appeared in the frame during a meeting? Did the employees really work less loyally or "hard" during this time because they had to or could fulfil certain other obligations next to their office duties?

Was it not rather the case that, despite the other commitments and "distractors," the work was done at least as efficiently and successfully as it had previously been done on-site? Weren't the challenges for the HR departments, supervisors and members of the management simply perceived as greater because more time had to be invested in exchanges about personal or private matters, since it was not possible to simply meet for a coffee?

It is precisely the human exchange, the mutual attention, the perception of the needs of colleagues, employees and superiors, the eye-to-eye exchanges, the mutual appreciation and empathy that distinguishes us from robots or artificial intelligence. This is exactly what is becoming increasingly more important and what is urgently needed in order to be successful in today's world. This is what makes employees want to stay in your company.

Much is done in the name of diversity, equality and equity - all undoubtedly very important issues. However, this effort is of no use if empathy, humanity, approaching each other, appreciation, trust and respect are ignored. In other words: if people are required to give up their individuality, their needs, wishes and values, their character at the company door and only have to function as employees. If one is not allowed to say: "I feel like shit!", "I'm completely at my limit!" or "It's all too much for me right now!" - Only when that which today is still stigmatized as weakness is seen as strength - or, even better, as basic humanity - and when it is given the necessary space, only then will the urgently overdue change have taken place!

In order to initiate this change and to tackle it, entrepreneurs, supervisors and HR departments are needed who are willing to deal with this quite difficult topic, who start the conversation with their employees and actively look for ways to put the well-being of the employees at the same level as the company's success. What have you done so far? Can we help you on this path?