

The importance of sustainable leadership towards employee engagement and wellbeing

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ABSTRACT

Running a sustainable workforce implies a combination of various factors including social responsibility, economic responsibility, transparency, innovation, and commitment. Key factors in a sustainable business should be considered a strong leadership and employee engagement. A main assumption is that a sustainable leadership significantly influences employee engagement and wellbeing, a strong leadership being critical for the success and sustainability of a business., A strong leadership can create a culture where collaboration and innovation are well values, fostering teamwork among employees while motivating their employees to work together towards a common goal.

Adding data from the most recent surveys conducted by the biggest consulting firms about the workforce reimagined leads to a workplace where authentic and pertinent leadership styles are prone to spur engagement and wellbeing and, as recent studies show, the present and the future urge leadership to rethink the human resources approach, the employee experience, by focusing on people, collaboration, and close communication.

Today, the chronic uncertainty dominating business organizations generates emergent ways of thinking and probabilistic models for creating solutions (Murgatroyd, 2015; Brătianu and Bejinaru, 2021), which determine even authentic leaders to adhere to different leadership styles. This is mainly because they have to redefine the company`s critical dynamic capabilities based on new knowledge structures and knowledge competences (Brătianu, Hadad, & Bejinaru, 2020). To support this idea, Deloitte has shown in one of its studies from July 2020, “Leadership styles of the future, How COVID-19 is shaping

leadership beyond the crisis”, that the social and economic crisis caused by the current pandemic is an extreme but relevant example of the types of challenges leaders face today. Mastering crisis management requires a leadership style that would be perceived as an overly directive, actionist one-leader show during business as usual. In times of uncertainty, quick decisions are essential; these exceptional circumstances call for a more human-centric and radically driven leadership style.

In order to create a sustainable innovation or a sustainable leadership style, leaders must become innovation managers that have developed substantial leadership competence that focuses on the long-term survival of the organisation (McCann and Holt, 2010). The research revealed that a manager’s charismatic, instrumental, strategic, or interactive leadership style contributed in a substantial way to the sustainable innovation processes that organisational leaders must support to create the sustainable organisation (Bossink, 2007).

Since challenges continue through the pandemic, sustainably improving mental health and generating wellbeing in the organisations have never been more important. Leaders need to think about wellbeing and mental health outcomes across a variety of domains as recent research shows. It should start with designing the workplaces to minimise harm, building both organisational and individual resilience. Taking action in this area can significantly bolster employee mental health and job satisfaction. There is no doubt that the wellbeing of the employees is one of the key factors that indicates high return value for both the individual as well as the organizational growth and productivity (Vătămănescu et al., 2018).

Leaders that pay close attention to their employees` intrinsic value preferences are likely to satisfy basic psychological needs and foster high engagement. To add on this idea, another research talking about the evolution of employee engagement demonstrates that high employee engagement sustains job satisfaction and performance among staff and indicates the fact that employee engagement could be a fundamental ingredient in shifting towards a human centered approach through which balancing individuals` wellbeing and performance.

Keywords: *sustainable leadership, employee engagement, wellbeing, organizational culture, mental health.*

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