



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CEOs AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

These recommendations are a compilation of statistical data from company and employee surveys of the Best and Brightest Companies to Work For<sup>®</sup>. In addition, these recommendations come from hundreds of Executive Leadership and Human Resource executives from discussions, roundtables and survey data.



*Igniting Greatness in Companies and Their People*

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## Define What Collaboration Means for Your Team

Many Best and Brightest companies have struggled to figure out hybrid work, and many Best and Brightest CEOs would like to have employees back in the office for productivity, culture and collaboration reasons.

The National Association for Business Resources (NABR) challenges winners to think about collaboration, sweat details of what is expected with collaboration both in person and digitally within your teams.

Develop a policy for collaboration and be open to modifying practices as you figure it out. Some companies may require collaboration days in person, others may also include software that enhances digital collaboration and teamwork.

The biggest mistake is that companies and leadership think things will sort themselves out on their own. Engage team members in possible solutions such as a Collaboration (Culture) Committee.

## Do Not Cut Your Budget or Team Focused on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Employees are continuing to monitor their employers' commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. One key sign of commitment is: During times of financial stress, have these endeavors received budget cuts? This impacts morale and integrity of the DEI efforts and can set back a program by years. According to data, DEI practices are an important measurement of employee retention, a key reason an employee chooses to leave their place of employment. Here are a few suggested practices:

- Publish action plans and status updates related to DEI efforts.
- Include communications from the CEO on DEI efforts, actions, and results in their ongoing and increased communications.
- Include DEI in facets of strategic planning and facilitate auditing by a DEI committee or consultants.
- Increase activities with nonprofit organizations focused on DEI, ethnic business chambers, civil rights organizations, and consultants.

## Onboarding and Training Need an Overhaul

The biggest challenge of 2023 was the need to create different processes for onboarding employees and provide training, most specifically for hybrid work environments. There are two key elements:

1. Do new hires have what they need to be successful in their digital/hybrid and in-person roles? Do they have enough time with a digital supervisor, especially if they are entry level employees?
2. Does your training provide tools such as video recordings and written processes and procedures to ensure digestion of materials, especially when a manager is busy and/or at off peak hours?

## **Do Not Ignore Burnout at All Levels** *(HR Teams and Executives as well)*

According to the World Health Organization, burnout has increased by 7% from 2022 to 2023 with an average of 51% of the workforce feeling tired and burned out. The Best and Brightest has seen similar data to reflect burnout.

Each organization needs to figure out what is best for them related to profitability and efficiency to address this concern. If your business has done nothing to address burnout, data confirms it will not improve and could result in turnover of key star team members.

Some practices of the Best and Brightest Community include reduced hours on Fridays or every other Friday off, required vacations without access to company servers, tenured sabbaticals, mental health onsite resources, team fun retreats, hiring of life coaches, wellness partnerships, and life/family financial solutions resources.

Many employers are now hiring “gig” talent for assisting key team members with projects and relieving the workload pressures. Others are investigating Artificial Intelligence and how it may be helpful to reduce workload pressures.

Executives should ensure your HR team has what they need. In addition to all of the pandemic needs and talent shortages, there are a plethora of government regulations to implement. HR teams should check on your C-suite executives, as well. While they may not show it, survey data shows that they are stretched thin.

## **Leadership Needs to Continue to Put more Effort into Communication and Transparency**

The data has been very clear, from the survey process of the Best and Brightest Companies to Work For, that leaders believe they are aggressively and effectively communicating with their team. However, data scores show that employees don't think that leaders are clear and transparent in their communications, negatively impacting trust and transparency scores.

Employees of the Best and Brightest community think more negatively of C-Suite leadership communication than C-Suite leadership believes to be true. This area was a focus of the Best and Brightest program prior to the pandemic and these scores have continued to decline.

If in a hybrid environment, the C-Suite needs to increase individual discussions and check-ins. There are many tools to track digital and in-person communications and ensure a cadence of conversations.