

6 things top performers want in a post-pandemic company culture

By [Kea Hammond](#)

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Just as businesses throughout South Africa were preparing to lockdown in 2020, +OneX was gearing up for growth. Starting up a business at that time was difficult and daunting - yet it also birthed a company culture uniquely positioned for a time of digital acceleration and disruption. Whereas most businesses formed before the pandemic had to adapt, we built our business for the new era from the outset.



Kea Hammond, Chief People Officer at +OneX

That has given us an advantage, given how Covid-19 has changed people's expectations of work and their ways of working. It has also put the spotlight on just how important great people are in driving a company's success. Technology might have helped us navigate the challenges of the past two and half years, but it's human resilience, adaptability and ingenuity that enabled leading companies to emerge stronger from the pandemic.

It stands to reason that companies that do the best job of attracting and retaining staff in the post-pandemic era will be the ones that thrive. Yet the recipe for success has changed. People's priorities and values have evolved, and top talent expects more from an employer than a job or even a career.



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Here are some aspects of company culture that we believe top professionals are looking for from their employers:

1. Human connection

Our company was born in the age of remote work and has largely followed a hybrid model even after people could

return to the office. It was clear to us from the outset that people need human connection — even when they're working from home. We could thus start with a blank sheet of paper and design ways of communicating and collaborating for a world where people might not come to the office often or even at all.

Some of the tools and tactics we adopted with great success include online company connect sessions, regular team meetings, a mentoring programme, and a buddy programme that pairs new joiners with someone who knows the ropes. Our leadership team also has regular meet-ups with newer team members to touch base.

2. Leadership without titles

In a world that moves as fast as the post-pandemic landscape, organisations that are encumbered by bureaucracy and hierarchy may struggle to keep up with the rate of change. Flatter organisational structures allow for more speed and agility in responding to risks and opportunities. 'Leading without titles' means that people can step up and lead at the opportune moment. Leading isn't about command-and-control — it's about inspiring others to grow, perform at their best and be part of a bigger story.

3. A founders' mentality

Top-performing people don't simply want a job — they want an opportunity to make a difference. We have a founders' mentality that encourages each person to treat the business as their own. This ensures accountability in a culture of leading without titles. It also helps to drive innovation and spark passion — each person has some skin in the game and knows that they can take calculated risks, be transparent and be creative.



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4. A relatable story

Many people today are looking to their workplace to offer a sense of purpose that goes beyond making money. They want to be part of an organisation that has a legacy of leaving every situation in a better state than they found it. Relatable stories about the leaders and people in the business help to bring this to life. We've attracted many people to join through the stories we've shared about our leaders and their passion for the business, or the stories our team and clients tell about their experiences with us.

5. Collaboration across functional boundaries

Along with a flat structure, successful organisations need to drive collaboration across different business functions and departments. One approach we find to work well is assembling cross-functional teams on a project-by-project basis and giving them ownership of an initiative. We also hold focus groups with our teams to get input and feedback about changes and programmes that may affect them. This approach means we get diverse perspectives to inform the decision-making process and each decision is made for our people by our people.

6. Recognition beyond remuneration

Competitive remuneration is essential. But beyond financial benefits and rewards, people want to feel that they and their contributions are valued. A good way to achieve this is to offer access to opportunities for growth and learning. For example, we introduced a monthly "Breakfast with the CEO", since many people value the opportunity to sit down with the CEO, learn from his experience and share their ideas in recognition of exceptional performance.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kea Hammond is the Chief People Officer at +OneX.

Kea played a key role in conceptualising +OneX, a new-age solutions and systems integrator that helps enterprises to excel in a dual-speed technology world. As Client People Officer, Kea seeks to attract and retain the best IT talent available. She helps to foster a culture of leading without titles, trust, and continuous learning as well as help to craft employee experiences that attract the best talent to work at +OneX. Kea is also responsible for developing talent and investing in their growth, all towards the end of ensuring +OneX is the most innovative, collaborative, and exciting place to work in the local IT industry. With 17 years of experience in the ICT industry, Kea brings an obsession to delivering exceptional client and talent experiences to her role. Over the years, she has held a range of roles with leading IT companies, with her achievements including the Channel Brand Ambassador of the Year accolade from HP in 2016.

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