

FUTURE OF WORK

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How to get your people on board with your transformation



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I think that during this period, all companies had a really tough time in terms of emotions, for all their employees and I think that it was something that was also crucial in terms of crisis management. The other point, and you're right about this, is that there is no organization, no ecosystem without the people who make them up. Jean-François, I think it's a good idea to hear from you on this, since you've been in touch with quite a few new organizations, tried out several management styles, and worked with a wide range of mindsets, and I know you've also invested in those who are perhaps far from the company, to help people get back into work.

With your experience, let's talk about how we can get people on board with the company's vision and with the culture which helped build it.

JEAN-FRANÇOIS THUNET

Well, first of all good morning everyone, and thank you for joining us. There is a question we've been asked, about the level of responsibility of the company vis-à-vis their teams, how far does this extend? I think that today, there is consensus in the first instance, about what the company should contribute to doing, what it should do. Then, **the question we should ask ourselves is: what is the role of leaders, of managers? How far to they need to go to support this?**

I have two questions to ask to start the debate off. The first is "**Who is your favorite James Bond villain?**" I hesitate between Elon Musk and Bill Gates, because in the past, we had entrepreneurs who wanted to change the world, but mainly in action or spy films, not in management schools.

Whether or not we regret, in our personal lives, that so much power is concentrated into so few private individuals, it's undeniable that companies are best placed to make the world a better place. They can do it, they should do it, and also, right now, there's a kind of movement in which everyone wants them to do it.

The second question is: "**Who amongst those present is signed up to LinkedIn?**" It's a bit provocative, allow me to reformulate: Imagine you receive a physical newspaper every day in your office, and all the articles are the same.

Using the same 20 words "distribution, inspiring, data, Artificial Intelligence, digital , Future of Work, etc. This is exactly what's happening to us today, to our teams, every day. Each connection to a social network, even company social networks, more and more massive misinformation, which is difficult to believe and understand.

So, our first role as leaders and managers is to ensure that **our teams don't need to make a big effort to understand our intentions**. That's what Covid has showed us, is that we've had, several times over, to remind them of certain, very simple things. Such as, how the company is doing, who should come to the office and how, etc. So, in the end, internal communication, which is not a new thing, becomes extremely important during these periods. Sorry, Arnaud, you wanted to ask a question?

ARNAUD BUCAILLE

What you're pointing out is that in the end, the company has to appear more visible but maybe it's a good idea if you have an example to give, Guillaume, of interventions in these situations, because it's your area of expertise? It must have been a problem you've had to deal with in terms of certain clients, do you have any observations or experience to share, maybe in terms of an impact assessment on this subject?

Guillaume JUBIN, Meaning Partner at Wemean

On transformation and impact, in any case the impact on employees, these days expectations are high, and to talk about one of the leaders in real estate, Icade, we can see that, when the company purpose was stated, there were expectations from all collaborators, that they would become involved in the project, and really adopt this purpose.

I think that's really important, with what Jean François was saying, to know if, in the end, today, **there are still entrepreneurs who want to change the world, but I think that the issue is that employees want to take part in this and be a part of it. I think that nowadays, this works when the collaborators are first ones to put the purpose into place.** We also work for the Yves Rocher group, whose purpose is "to re-connect consumers with nature".

This is something which should drive their teams and ensure that, whether in the shops or in high-level roles within the company, every employee knows what they're contributing to fulfill this big promise, in a very specific and operational sense. And this applies in a very specific way, audit management and risk management become major factors in implementing the company purpose.

And the collaborators in this entity are also major players, because they have contributed to shaping it, because they gave themselves objectives to fulfill it, and so they become both the best ambassadors and the best placed stakeholders to fulfill the company purpose.

JEAN-FRANÇOIS THUNET

You're right, **the big challenge is to ensure that you go from hierarchical management and authority to management by adoption.** This doesn't mean that authority and hierarchies are not necessary in certain crisis situations, to be able to move quickly in a decisive manner. For example, during Covid-19, we don't need to argue for 10 years about whether we need to build a crisis cell and whether it's serious or not.

Nevertheless, for a lot of daily management, development, client interaction issues, collaborator interactions etc., everyone needs to get behind the purpose, and the meaning behind the purpose. That's very important. I might not be well-placed to talk about this because I come from a generation which has, at times blindly, stated their mission, and their mission was enough.

Nowadays, what our teams expect is a bit different. For a start, **they expect that the meaning is expressed with truth and sincerity.** We looked at some examples of lovely purposes from lovely companies. How does this translate internally? Is it hosted by technicians on the subject who carry this out quite mechanically to create a new management style, or is it something that, when they're getting ready in the morning, really motivates them? I don't know, so I can't answer. But I think that what our teams really expect, is that sincerity. For example, in the consulting world which we're a part of, it's very common to have taboo subjects such as what happens between contracts, what about geographical mobility, what happens when a client makes a recruitment proposition etc.

These are things which I think we are well-equipped to discuss, even early on in a consultant's career, with an extremely transparent approach. So, truth, sincerity, and transparency, for me, in terms of leadership, getting teams on board, these are really the important aspects to help us build this adoption.

Next, I think that if I have one piece of personal experience to share today, it's this: often, what holds us back from transformation is fear; the fear of change. For example, fear of losing authority, by giving teams a bit more appropriation. This fear gives us a lot of information. A lot about world view, the difference between the world views of different generations.

What most of our employees want, especially the new generation, but not only them, is experience. That we engage adoption through experience. **That means not being afraid of assigning responsibility. Not being afraid of engaging people, not to encourage them to stay, but to welcome them back.** I am 48, and in my time, we didn't use to leave companies. If we left, it was very rare to go back. We would have felt very strange to go back to a previous employer.

Nowadays, it's actually quite common. We see people who, independent of the contractual model which Julien was talking about earlier, the extended company, it's quite common to have a career path in an ecosystem at different points in your career. And this brings a lot of opportunities, value, and meaning to the role of a manager. I think the work we're doing is very interesting in this sense, in terms of guiding teams, because we're no longer only talking about the financial bottom line, but we're responsible for embodying, in a certain way, values and meaning for the company. One of the things we try to do to facilitate this is to encourage people to recruit the best, and those better than oneself. And that's something I really insist on with my teams.

I think that in the end, **our job as managers, consists in being able to recruit people who are better than ourselves, to be able to take care of certain priorities ourselves, in order to make ourselves replaceable, thus ensuring the company will be able to function, but also ensures global**

improvement and operational performance and also the perspectives we're giving to teams. Everywhere we've been able to do it, we've had great results. Wherever we haven't been able to pass on this tendency for recruiting the best, the habit of transmitting it to the teams, we've ended up totally stuck.

Professional growth happens a lot through mentoring, and happens less and less through very established career paths like in some industries where you knew that in x number of years you would be senior, then you would be head of department, and then maybe you would be a director or a business unit director and so on. It's now more complex and more open at the same time. And I think we're going through a particularly exciting period at the moment for management.

ARNAUD BUCAILLE

Yes, in terms of the examples you've given, it's true that we've gone through this a lot with Amaris Consulting. In particular, we've seen a lot of our employees whom we've supported through the move to freelance and they've still worked some of our contracts, without this becoming a source of friction. We have people who have come back, I think my record over 5-6 years, is someone who came back 3 times. Maybe someone who comes for a year or two to take part in a project, then goes to the other side of the world to travel for 1-2 years, came back, then wants to have an experience at another company, then comes back again. So, it's something which we haven't closed our doors to, and something which has been beneficial to the company, because we really needed those people, and they brought value to the company.

JEAN-FRANÇOIS THUNET

I think we agree that if everyone starts to do the same, it won't work [laughs].

ARNAUD BUCAILLE

That's right [laughs].

JEAN-FRANÇOIS THUNET

Because in some cases, it works very well, and in some cases, where the people can't necessarily access a certain number of responsibilities or see very far into the future, in fact going from job to job could bring a lot of value which can be passed through other places. We had envisaged at the OVH summit, just before Covid-19, with Octave Klaba, the founder of OVH and Olivier Brourhant, Mantu's CEO, we had envisaged creating a kind of internal work marketplace, in order to ensure that we put companies with relatively similar values together in a job ecosystem.

That means that in the end if I have someone who has to leave Mantu, I'm just as happy for them to go and get experience at OVH, because I know that at OVH, they will have the opportunity to fulfill a role that I couldn't offer them here, and so we're connecting a certain number of companies. This was more focused on the European ambit, in order to welcome employees from the two different companies, where the company ethos doesn't vary too much.

There was one last topic which i'd like to address, illustrating it with an example, with the name of a company which we'll soon see. One question was "**What is a company's role in mental well-being?**". I think it's a very good question because the level of company intervention into the personal sphere generally is a very touchy subject. On one hand, we never disconnect these days.

So, is it the company's job to ensure employees disconnect? I often ask myself the question whether I shouldn't (and for security reasons we can't close everything), but maybe I should somehow prevent employees from logging into emails at weekends, to ensure some of our people disconnect. At the

end of the day, I can't stop people... there are probably lots of WhatsApp groups going on. I could prohibit the use of email at weekends for roles which do not require weekend work.

During Covid, we set up a cell, as Noémie talked about, we got in touch with some psychologists, we had numbers people could call, we informed them they might be called by some of our people. Some of them found themselves working on projects which were quite far away, perhaps in a foreign country, far from their family and friends, and we don't have the skills, as an employer, to detect critical situations. We can detect situations which are a bit... complicated, but for critical situations, we don't have the skills.

So, to guarantee employees' mental health, is that the company's responsibility? **I would say that the company should have a framework in place to ensure this issue is taken into account, but it's above all the manager's responsibility, are we conscious of being well tuned-in to this?** A company which proposes, and this is the second point I wanted to address, which is called Mok.care, this is the main issue. The purpose of this company is to keep an eye on employees' mental health, which is a taboo subject, we hardly talk about it, but it's a broad and serious subject, which could be part of a good company purpose.