

HUMANKIND

THE ULTIMATE  
*Good Guide*

HUMANKIND

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# Good Guides

STAY INTERVIEWS

## THE GOOD GUIDE TO: STAY INTERVIEWS

It has never been more important to look after and hold on to your awesome people.

The job market is booming and there is a talent shortage so if your brilliant people walk out the door, replacing them will take time and cost money. Therefore, retention of key talent is close to the top of your priority list. With that in mind, we wanted to share with you a cool activity - Stay Interviews.

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Stay Interviews are not necessarily a new concept, but they are definitely rising in importance considering the current working environment, and can form a critical part of your overall talent strategy. They can strengthen your retention plans, not only for key individuals, but for the organisation as a whole. For our Good Guides series, we wanted to share with you what Stay Interviews are, why you should do them, and some tips on how.

### What are Stay Interviews?

A Stay Interview is a conversation, typically with your key talent, to understand what keeps them at your organisation and what they would like to see improve or change, to reduce the likelihood of them leaving. You might think of them as Exit Interviews, but conducted before someone resigns, to seek feedback on the employee experience.

### Why do them?

It is another way to connect with your great people, to build relationships, to gain an understanding of different perspectives, with the purpose of seeking feedback and retaining talent.

The Stay Interview provides those you value with an opportunity to have their say. One to one conversations seeking the opinions of key people will provide you with rich insights into the employee experience at your organisation, and the person being interviewed will likely appreciate your proactive approach and the chance to contribute about their future.

The Stay Interview can form part of the overall feedback strategy for your organisation, alongside engagement surveys, pulse checks, exit interviews, new joiner interviews etc.

## Who should run Stay Interviews?

This will depend on your organisation, but typically it might be the people leader, or a member of the P&C / HR team, or someone with people responsibilities from the Executive team. It can also be a 'skip-level' leader, where the manager's manager of your talent will conduct the Stay interview.

The most important factor when considering who should conduct Stay Interviews, is the relationship. The person being interviewed needs to be talking to someone they trust and a person they can provide honest feedback to. This means it might not be a 'one size fits all' approach, and should be tailored depending on the person being interviewed.

## Who should be interviewed?

Again, this will depend on the organisation, but we would encourage you to think about who is critical for the organisation's strategy now, and in the future. Ask yourself who would you hate to lose, and then go and talk to them.

## What questions can I ask?

The questions you ask will need to be appropriate for your context and environment, but here are some to get you started:

- What do you love about your job?
- What parts of your job do you least enjoy?
- Tell us what part of your role you would like to change?
- What keeps you here?
- What would entice you to look for another opportunity elsewhere?
- What is one thing you would love to see us improve / change?

Questions can also be targeted so you receive feedback for the specific initiatives and activities your organisation have been implementing to enhance employee engagement. By asking these questions, you receive real-time feedback, and can use this information to adjust and change plans accordingly.

## What do I do with the information?

When considering conducting Stay Interviews, think about what you will do with the feedback. Is it confidential? How will changes be implemented as a result of feedback? Will themes that arise be shared? The most important thing to remember, is if you say that you are going to do something, then you need to do it. Also, on the flip side, do not make promises that can't be kept! Finally, let the person you are talking with know what will happen with the information they have shared.

If you run a number of Stay Interviews across your organisation, you may pick up consistent themes that highlight more complex areas that need changing. At Humankind, we strongly believe that co-creating solutions with your teams enhances engagement and makes the workplace a better place to be, so consider how you might involve your teams when wanting to make changes.

One of our clients has been running Stay Interviews for the last couple of years, and they recently told us how they have been able to mitigate retention risk early, rather than reacting to a situation where it is often too late to turn it around. They also said that the Stay Interviews have directly contributed to adjusting their people engagement plans so they are meeting their people's needs.

Ultimately, the Stay Interview is another opportunity for you to connect and have a conversation with your talent. In our virtual environment, personal connection has never been as important. So, if there is someone you would hate to lose, have a conversation with them and find out what you can do to keep them. This conversation could help you retain your top talent, and enhance the overall employee experience for where you work. Win-win!

If you haven't tried Stay Interviews, give it a go, and if you need any help or advice, please get in touch.

# Good Guides

BUILDING EMPATHY WITH YOUR PEOPLE



## BUILDING EMPATHY WITH YOUR PEOPLE

### Tools to get you started

Empathy. It's a word that has been thrown around a lot these last two years and potentially lost some of its impact. It remains for us at Humankind however an essential concept that encompasses the art of understanding and sharing the feelings of others. It is the heart and soul of employee centred design; the ability to understand the parts of your employee experience (EX) that aren't working and share the sentiment 'I hear you'. In a virtual world our ability to empathise is somewhat harder as we've all got a lot on our own plate, yet we've been forced to combat challenges like offering crucial parts of EX virtually such as onboarding.

How do you build empathy with your people in a virtual world?

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### We turn to our employee-centred design toolkit

Nothing will beat talking to your people directly, though we use two tools in the employee centred design tool kit as a starting point: assumptive personas and assumptive journey mapping.

We often find our clients come to us (especially in a virtual working world) with challenges such as 'I need to understand what it feels like to work here now' or 'I don't know how to prioritise what to work on within our EX'. They have the great intention of understanding their people, but don't know where to start.

### Assumptive personas help you see diverse needs in your people

Assumptive personas are archetypes of groups of people or a fictional representation of a group of peoples' needs. That word 'assumptive' refers to the fact that these personas are not research based, they are based on what we have heard or built-up knowledge about collectively. These are a great tool to build empathy and think about the diverse needs that lie within your organisation's people. They are also a starting point to think about who you may need to talk to build your understanding of your employee experience. See example on page 7.

## Assumptive journey maps visualise how people feel

Assumptive journey maps again are based on what we know or have heard about the EX (or particular parts of it) across your organisation. It is a visual representation of the key steps your people go through, what they might be doing, thinking, feeling as they go through these phases, and highlights their pain points and opportunity areas.

Both personas and journey maps are incredible at building empathy as they take you outside of yourself and into the shoes of your people. I'm going to expand on journey mapping and use an example of my virtual onboarding at Humankind to bring it to life.

## Virtual onboarding journey mapping example

I joined Humankind virtually in the long Auckland lock down last spring. I still have not been to our Auckland office or Wellington office and have been building relationships and working with my team and clients completely from my home. I'm sure many of you have onboarded your people virtually, and it's not an easy task to make it a great experience.

Let's use virtual onboarding to demonstrate what an assumptive journey map might look like.

See example journey map on page 8.

From this journey map we can see there are two phases where we might first focus attention to improve the EX – when the offer is accepted and getting set-up. We can also see other pain points we might address and gain points that are contributing to a positive experience that we don't want to lose.

## What to consider if doing it yourself

There are a few key things to think about when creating an employee journey map:

- What are the key phases across the journey and is this a reflection of what the employee sees/ interacts with or impacts them
- Does each element added to the map affect all our people or do different personas/groups of people experience it differently?
- What are your employees feeling at each phase? Capture the true emotion during that moment or phase
- What are their pain points? What frustrates them/ upsets them/blocks them?
- What are the 'moments that matter' or the key parts of the journey that really impact the overall experience

It's ok to have gaps or areas where you're not sure what is going on, this is part of the nature of it being an assumptive map. You can fill these gaps, as well as validate the unknowns, through research with your people.

## Nothing beats talking to your people, but these tools are a great starting point

Talking to your people and truly getting to the heart of what their experience is like will always be the best way to understand and feel what your people are feeling, though these tools are a great starting point. They give you a gauge on what parts of the experience may be bringing down the overall experience; and point to where you may need to explore further. We would encourage to begin with assumptive personas or journey maps and then proceed to validating these via discovery with your employees.

If you have any questions about using personas or journey mapping to empathise with your people and understand your EX further, give us a shout.



# amaia

Marketing Manager

## ABOUT

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- Marketing Manager with 3 direct reports
- Large broadband company
- 34 years old
- Married with 2 year old daughter
- Lives in Wellington
- Predominantly working from home

## PAIN POINTS

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- Siloed business units makes it hard to collaborate
- Ever changing business landscape/competitive market
- Time poor - high demands at work and home
- Dealing with performance issues from one team member
- Missing connection with her team/unsure how to foster this virtually in her team

## GOALS AND MOTIVATIONS

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- Wants to help the company gain market share
- Being an inspiring and competent leader for her people
- Be well connected in the business

## DELIGHTERS

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- Thrives on challenges
- When tech 'just works'
- Likes to work at pace and enjoys the company of others that keep up with her
- Working with people she can learn from
- Creating something that engages the market

VIRTUAL ONBOARDING  
**Journey map**

PHASE						
	I meet with key HK people	My offer is presented	I accept the offer	I get set up	I learn about HK	I'm ready to work
<b>Actions and needs</b> What are our people doing and needing	I share how I might contribute to HK  I ask questions about the organisation  I need to understand if this is place I want to work  I need to present myself well	I read and understand my offer  I get a trusted person to read over my offer  I need to negotiate my pay and benefits  I negotiate with my key contact/leader	I accept the offer  I need to understand my start date  I need to know what I need to start	I am provided with the tech hardware I need  I am provided with tech software and logins  I am walked through how to set up and use tools  I'm introduced to the team  I'm given an onboarding plan  I need to understand the way we work	As part of my onboarding plan I learn about different aspects of working at HK  I need to understand the culture  I need to know about what is important to the company  Learn more about how my role fits in	I know who to talk to if I need help  I need tech that works and supports me to do my job  I need access to resources
<b>Interactions</b> Who and what are they interacting with, the channel they use	Video call	Email  Video call/call with key contact	Email  Call with key contact	Video call with operations/admin support  Welcome team call  Documents/guides provided	Video calls with different members of the team	Comms channel e.g. slack  Email
<b>Feeling</b> How do they feel at this point	Anxious, Excited, Curious	Anxious, Excited, Apprehensive	Excited, Nervous	Overwhelmed, Supported	Belonging, Tired, Overwhelmed, Supported, Excited	Supported, Engaged
<b>Gain points</b> Anything positive, that delights, goes well	Meeting people in the team  Kindness shown by the team	Offer put together quickly	Information needed provided quickly	Using up to date tools that have used before  Personal touches for getting to know the team	Clear and thought out documents and team shares about HK	Understand how to use the tech
<b>Overall experience</b> A visual representation of the experience						
<b>Pain points</b> Frustrations, annoyances, things that don't go well	Not as comfortable meeting for the first time online	Showing my value in negotiation  Knowing what channel is the best for negotiating virtually	Signing documents virtually/ having to print, sign and scan	Learning to use new tools  A lot of information to absorb	A lot of information to absorb  Learning where to find resources  Learning about who's who	

# Good Guides

TALKING ABOUT PAY IN A CHALLENGING MARKET

We've all seen and felt the impacts of a contracting economy over the last few years and particularly the last couple of months. The news is full of stories about businesses and ordinary people working hard to stay afloat as domestic and international forces put pressure on our economy. On top of this, record low unemployment rates and a talent shortage mean that New Zealand employers are facing a number of challenges. The pressure on businesses to continue to pay employees in a way that motivates and retains them has never been greater. This article touches on the pressure that both business and employees are currently facing and shares some tips around how you can approach pay in your organisation and prepare for conversations with your people around this sometimes challenging topic.

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## Businesses Feeling the Pressure

Many New Zealand businesses have, and continue to, experience considerable pressure on their operations and commercial success due to the sustained COVID-19 pandemic which has included lockdowns, staff shortages, supply chain issues and other restrictions on normal operation. Closed borders have increased competition for talent and coupled with an unemployment rate of only 3.2%, employers are more challenged than ever when it comes to attracting and retaining great people. Employers are experiencing the same cost increases that the rest of New Zealand is around transport, cost of goods and labour as well as the minimum wage moving up 6% to \$21.20 in April.

## Employees Feeling the Pressure

At the same time, many employees are finding themselves needing to stretch their pay further and further each week with petrol prices recently reaching \$3 per litre in some regions and food prices increasing by almost 8%. Overall, the current inflation rate is sitting at 6.9% which is the largest quarterly increase experienced since June 1990!

With all these pressures at play, New Zealanders are finding it harder to cover their basic costs. Some will be looking to their employers to help them through these times with a pay increase.

## So How Do You Navigate Pay With Your Employees

If your business already has a regular pay review process / cycle – stick with it. Even if your business is unable to provide pay increases this year, it's important that you work through pay reviews at the same time as you have in previous years.

If your business doesn't have a regular pay review process / cycle, we would encourage you to consider what your stance is and how you might discuss the topic of pay with your people. If you don't front foot it with them, they will come asking and it's always better to be leading the conversation rather than reacting to it.

Some other considerations when approaching the conversation include:

### 1. Provide Context to Your Employees

Ideally ahead of any individual pay conversations, employees should have a good understanding of business and financial performance. Take some time to share this information with your people if you don't already do this – it will start to build awareness and set expectations about pay in your business this year. It will also enable you to refer back to this should you need to in your individual pay conversations.



### 2. Decide What Determines Your Pay Reviews

Determine the factors which are important for your business when making decisions about pay and consider how you communicate these with your people. It's critical that you are clear about how pay decisions are made – many employees believe that the processes used to make decisions about pay are unfair, opaque or flawed in some way which can lead to dissatisfaction with pay outcomes even if the actual dollar amount is fair.

Typically, the following factors can be useful when making pay decisions:

- a. Company performance
- b. Individual performance
- c. External pay relativity to market
- d. Internal pay relativity to peers
- e. Affordability
- f. Equity

More and more businesses are sharing their pay decision making factors with their people to provide comfort that their processes are robust and fair.

### 3. Work out what you can afford to pay

Consider what your business can afford to increase salaries by – look at both your cash position versus the potential consequences of any pay increases. For example, if an employee were to resign due to dissatisfaction with a pay review, what is the cost of replacing that employee in your business. Recent data from Elmo suggested that the average cost of recruiting a new hire is currently \$23,860. In a tight labour market, the tension between retaining your people and managing your costs cannot be overstated. If you are in a position where your business is unable to afford pay increases this year, start to plan how you are going to share that message with your people now.

### 4. Get creative and consider other alternatives

Remember that pay is not the only motivator for people. Review feedback received from exit and stay interviews about what keeps people in your business and consider other alternatives you could present to your people that might keep them engaged if you are not able to meet pay expectations. Examples could include additional leave, flexible working options or targeted training and development. Whilst these may also come at a cost to the business, you may be able to absorb any associated costs across the year, rather than as an ongoing, upfront cost.

## Preparing for your pay conversations

Whatever the outcome of your pay review process, whether you are able to provide generous, smaller or no pay increases, you will need to prepare to discuss the outcomes with your people.

- Explain the value the employee has and provides to your business. Thank them for their contributions.
- Let them know what the specific outcome of their pay review is and how that decision has been reached – what factors were taken into account and discuss these together.
- Prepare to talk about the other aspects of working in your business which offer employees value e.g. flexible working, strong benefits such as additional parental leave, high quality tech devices, positive culture, career growth, learning opportunities.
- Be clear and unambiguous – pay conversations cannot be murky, you owe your employees clarity around this potentially sensitive topic.
- Let them know when they will have another opportunity to discuss remuneration, so they know the door isn't shut on future conversations.

## Final Thoughts

Conversations about pay can sometimes be tricky to navigate. Every conversation will be different as people have different motivators and wants, which need to be balanced with the realities of the business. To manage these well and ensure a positive impact on the employee experience, make sure you are clear about your business's approach to pay, take time to prepare for these conversations and most importantly tailor your approach for each person in your team. In doing so you will be well set up when the time comes to talk about pay with your people in this challenging market.

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**Naomi Jones**, Associate Director Employment Relations

**May 2022**



# Good Guides

LEVERAGE YOUR EMPLOYEE VALUE PROPOSITION (EVP)



## LEVERAGING YOUR EVP IN A COMPETITIVE TALENT MARKET

To attract and retain the right talent to deliver on your organisational objectives and stand out from competitors, you need to be clear about what you offer your people and if you're consistently delivering on that promise. That's where Employee Value Proposition (EVP) comes in – EVP is an articulation of the offerings, experiences, and rewards that you provide your team in exchange for their skills, capabilities, and experience. In other words, your competitive edge.

### Why now?

It has never been more important for organisations to demonstrate what makes them stand out. The current talent market is tough – candidates and your current employees are assessing you just as much as you're assessing them, and organisations are struggling to keep up with the inflating pay scales and post-pandemic expectations of employees. Attraction and retention is now a competitive sport so businesses have to be strategic, transparent, and play the long game.

Considering this pressure on the current talent market and shifts in the future of work, it's crucial to take a look at your EVP to see how it's performing, determine if it's still fit-for-purpose, and develop a new or revised promotion plan.

### Promoting your EVP

To get started, tap into the most powerful source of knowledge and the end users of your EVP, your people. Talk to them to understand what's working well and where the gaps and opportunities are before jumping in to designing solutions. Once you have a handle on your current situation and have identified where your focus should be, move to the design phase and collaborate with stakeholders to come up with ways to effectively promote your EVP.

The solutions you design will differ for each organisation depending on what's authentic to you, and remember the promotion of your EVP doesn't stop when the attraction and recruitment process has finished.

To get the creative juices flowing, here are some practical ideas we have come up with:

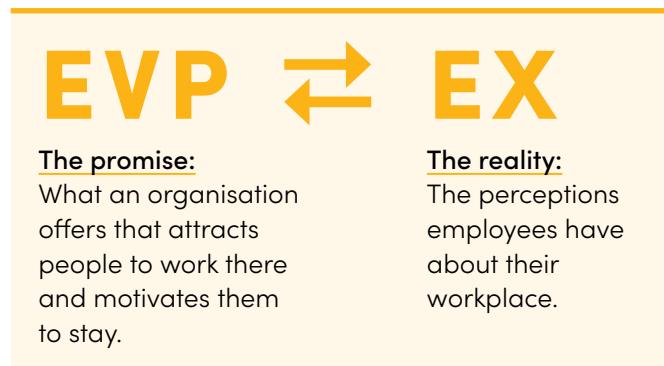
- Tell the story about what it's like to work for you; use videos or social media posts to show the culture and EVP, run a campaign with interviews of the team talking about what it's like to work for you, or include 'here's what we offer' on your LinkedIn or website careers page. [Here is an example of something we have done at Humankind.](#)
- Review your recruitment 'woo' process; identify impactful experience points from recent recruits and make sure these are included in interviews going forward, offer an experience like a shadowing day instead of a traditional interview, share the story of what it's like to work there and how the company started in interviews.
- Build capability to enable hiring managers or recruiters to effectively communicate and leverage your EVP in the recruitment and onboarding process.
- Review the language and imagery used in your external comms and advertisements. Is it aligned to who you are and the story you want to tell about your organisation?
- Regularly highlight and promote the benefits you have on offer. From employee discounts to wellbeing bonuses, don't leave it to your employees to take them up, actively encourage them to access their benefits and provide examples of how they can use them.
- Utilise recognised holidays and change of seasons to celebrate with each other and promote what you have on offer i.e., coming into winter – free flu jab, coming back from summer holidays – buy leave policy, mental health awareness week – mental health and duvet days.
- Build your team leaders capability to support growth and development for their people, empower them to; recognise and maximise on-the-job learning opportunities, support access to formal training on offer, and encourage secondments and other growth opportunities that are available.
- Your remuneration review process doesn't have to be just focussed on salary. Highlight and speak to the total package your people receive.

- Review what you need to further enable your flexible working practices. Are you clear about expectations, have you built in moments for connection into your practices, what are your ways of working for effective communication in the hybrid environment?
- Your culture comes from the values you nurture, build rituals to elevate and celebrate your core values, share stories of your employees living the values at your meetings, or hold an award ceremony to highlight outstanding achievements.

If you want a little more detail on how to best run an employee-centred design approach, then [check out our previous Good Guide on Tips for Successful Co-Design.](#)

## Don't get complacent

It's easy to get complacent and assume your EVP is alive and well, but if your EVP is the 'promise', there is a need to ensure it continuously matches the 'reality' - your employee experience (EX).



You should be constantly talking to your people, listening to what's important to them, and truly understanding their employee experience. Utilising tools such as Surveys and Stay Interviews ([check out our recent Stay Interview guide here](#)) are a couple of ways you can regularly remain connected to your employees and understand what's unique to the experience you provide.

We're happy to share our experiences in leveraging your EVP in a competitive talent market, so feel free to reach out!

# Good Guides

SUPPORTING AN EMPLOYEE WITH A LONG TERM, OR TERMINAL ILLNESS



## HOW TO SUPPORT AN EMPLOYEE WITH A LONG TERM, OR TERMINAL ILLNESS

It is hard to describe the heartbreak and fear colleagues and leaders face when an employee shares they are suffering from a long term or terminal illness. Supporting an employee who is going through this is challenging for everyone in the workplace. For leaders, it can be daunting trying to provide this support while understanding the legal obligations that apply and balancing the needs of the organisation and other employees. Unfortunately there is no tried and tested step by step process that employers can follow to tick the right boxes.

The idea for this Good Guide came from a member of our LinkedIn community, who asked us to outline how employers can still create a good experience for employees at such a tumultuous time. We felt this difficult topic is definitely worthy of a Good Guide.

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### We are in this together

It is important for workplaces to approach these situations with empathy, fairness and kindness ([see our Good Guide article on Building Empathy](#)). We use the word “workplace” and not the words “you” or “employer” purposefully; if the employee wants support from work, then our view is support on a collective level could make a real difference to the employee’s experience, and also to their engagement with their work. It is likely the employee’s colleagues and friends at work will want to be involved and offer support, and harnessing their collective energy can make a real difference for the sick employee.

We often hear “*but I don’t know how to help*”. This is to be expected, because at the end of the day, the way people want or need to be supported will be different for everyone and their particular health circumstances. We hope this Good Guide supports you to identify the best ways to support an employee facing these circumstances.

## The legal stuff

There are some fundamental obligations that all employers must comply with which should underpin your approach to supporting a sick employee. Key legal obligations:

### Good faith

You must “deal” with your employee in good faith, which requires both of you to have trust and confidence in each other, and be active, responsive and communicative with each other.

The most important step to comply with this obligation is to take the time to talk to your employee – find out what they need from the business, their leader, and their colleagues, and what their immediate concerns (if any) are. As the employee’s illness progresses, keep engaging with them to understand their changing needs.

### Health and safety

You need to provide the employee with a safe and healthy workplace. To best do this, it may be necessary to understand the employee’s diagnosis and prognosis and find out if there are any limitations that come with that and what you might need to do to support that employee.

If an employee has been off work due to illness but wants to return to work, you will need additional medical information to ensure they are well enough to come back to work, and if so what they can and can’t do, and what you can do to support them.

You may get the information you need from the employee themselves, or you may need to contact their doctor or whanau to find out more. As this is their “personal information”, you need the employee’s consent to access any medical information or before making contact with their doctor or whanau to find out more. We recommend this consent is obtained from the employee in writing.

### Their job

Just because an employee is diagnosed with an illness, even if it is terminal, that will not automatically mean the employee can no longer do their job or that the employer has the right to terminate their employment.

If you start to think the employee is no longer capable of performing their role because of their illness, and you can’t hold their role open for them, discuss this with the employee in the first instance but be aware you may need to start a formal process to terminate their employment based on medical incapacity. The process should be designed with the particular employee at the heart of it – e.g. when and where the meetings take place, what support, and be in line with your employment agreement. This is a difficult process and one you should seek advice on.

### Discrimination

Do not treat the employee unfairly or less favourable than someone else because of their illness. However, there will be times when you will be justified in treating them differently, e.g., if they can no longer do their job because of their medical issues.

### Leave

It is likely your employee will need to take leave during their illness. Any leave taken should be in accordance with the Holidays Act and their employment agreement. It is open to any employer to also offer employees additional paid or unpaid leave.

### Privacy

If an employee shares their health information with you, that is their “personal information” and there are onerous privacy obligations. However, talk to your employee about who might need to know they are unwell and what information they would be comfortable being shared with others in the organisation.



## Other support

But what about some more practical steps that people in the workplace can take?

Here are some helpful ideas to think about when considering what that support could be while the employee remains in the workplace:

### Support

**Do:** Talk to the employee to understand what support they think they need, and consider if you can provide this, and if not, what other support you might be able to provide.

Brainstorm with the employee and their colleagues about what other support could look like (such as colleagues cooking them a meal, arranging for their house to be cleaned or their gardening to be done).

Research what external support is available through other agencies and communities.

Consider other ways of showing support, such as raising awareness on a particular illness (e.g. by raising money for the relevant charity).

**Don't:** Presume that you know what support the employee needs or offer support of a personal nature without checking with them first.

### Communication

**Do:** Ask the employee who they would like to communicate with about their health issues – this could be their manager or another leader they feel more comfortable with.

Also check who they would like to be told about their illness (both in the workplace and potentially external stakeholders such as clients/customers) and how they would like this to be done. It is likely, as their illness progresses, updates will then need to be provided to the team. It is helpful to talk to the employee about this in advance so you are both on the same page about what and how this information will be shared.

If an employee is on sick leave, ask them how they would like to be communicated with – they may not want to check work emails/phones and prefer to use a personal phone. In serious cases you may need to communicate with an employee's family member and this may need to be agreed at the outset.

**Don't:** Stop communicating with the employee because they are on extended leave – it is important they still feel connected to the workplace and their colleagues.

### Flexibility

**Do:** Be flexible; the employee's situation may change quickly, and a great employer will adapt and flex with those changes where it's reasonable to do so.

**Don't:** Work with the mindset of "one size fits all", because in this situation "one size fits one".

### Normality

**Do:** Treat the employee as normal if that's appropriate. For example, if the employee is on sick leave or reduced hours, continue to include them in social events, just like any other employee. If the employee decides not to attend, then that is their choice.

**Don't:** Exclude the employee from work matters and social events because you think it might be "too hard" for them, or that they might not want to come, etc.

### Workload

**Do:** If the employee is continuing to work, regularly review their workload to ensure it's manageable, and if not, work with the employee to agree any changes such as a temporary reduction of hours or a temporary re-distribution of work, etc.

**Don't:** Presume that the employee will speak up if work is becoming too much for them.

### Benefits

**Do:** Think about whether there are any additional benefits that you could provide the employee or their family/friends. For example, additional EAP sessions for family/friends, discretionary sick leave to ease any financial burden, covering their travel costs to and from work and health appointments, etc.

**Don't:** Presume that the employee will ask for additional benefits or anything else.

We also know that an employee's illness and absence can have a real impact on an organisation, so while the actions listed in the "do" column are important, we encourage businesses to do what is reasonable for them, and what they can realistically afford in terms of time, cost, and resourcing.



## Making the tough decisions

Unfortunately, there may also be times when an employer cannot continue to hold a role open for a sick employee. If you've treated your employee with empathy and kindness, starting a conversation about the possibility of parting ways should be easier. There are several steps that need to be followed before you can end an employee's employment for medical incapacity and we recommend seeking advice as every case is different.

You'll also need to turn your mind to the support that the rest of your team may need to cope with an ill colleague while ensuring the business continues to operate smoothly and efficiently. Talk to the team regularly about the issue and allow them to share how they are feeling, providing them with support such as EAP if they need it. Check in on workloads and the resourcing in the team in case they are picking up extra work and are feeling overwhelmed. At all times, lead with empathy and kindness.

## Conclusion

There will always be a lot to consider when you are supporting and managing an employee with a long-term or terminal illness. However, placing the employee at the heart of every step and treating them with empathy will go a long way to make sure they feel supported as much as possible.



# Good Guides

LEADERSHIP IN THE HYBRID WORLD

## HYBRID IS HERE TO STAY

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced rapid changes to our environment, practices and behaviours and has forced many organisations to adopt remote or hybrid working to manage their operations. As returning to the office full time becomes an option, it is tempting to think things will go back to the way they were before. Hybrid and remote working has had a significant impact on both leaders and their people. This way of working is here to stay and here's why:

- Flexible work practices are becoming more widespread and seen as standard practice rather than an additional benefit. Employees and job seekers are looking for more control over where and when they work.
  - Collectively we are developing a wider understanding of how work and personal life intertwines. Where once you may have advised an employee to leave their personal lives at the door, we now know that being able to bring your whole self to work improves the overall wellbeing and satisfaction of our people. The last few years of online and at home working has opened a wormhole into our personal lives that we can't close back up again. The ability to flow in and out of work and life is important to many people, and hybrid working can support this.
  - Employees have consistently shown the office environment isn't the key to performance, rather a tool they use for connecting and collaborating. Just like there are benefits from working together in the office, there are many benefits from working at home that our people won't want to lose or give up.
  - The talent market is very competitive. Hybrid and remote can open new opportunities. Seeking out people in new locations expands your talent pool and demonstrates your fluency in hybrid working, which is still currently a competitive advantage.
- With hybrid and remote working here to stay, it's time to rethink how you lead and foster your people in these environments.



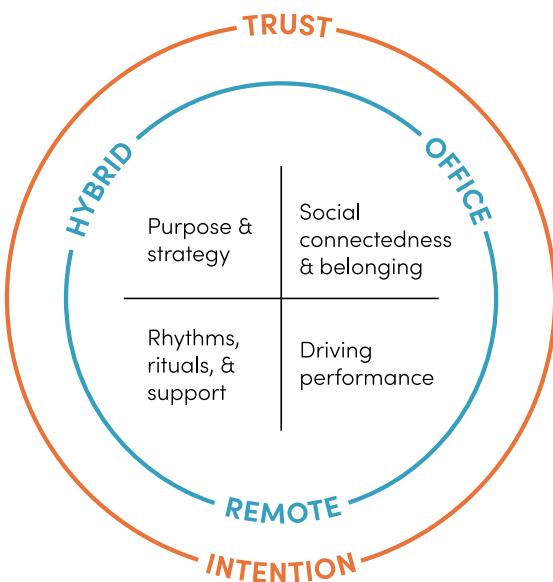
## Foundations for hybrid working; trust and intention

The foundation of strong teams and of any great relationship is trust. Trust is needed more than ever, now that we're not always physically together. Working remotely can feel like you are missing one of your senses. Not being able to see and hear what is going on for each other, or see body language and other behavioural gestures, can leave people guessing and building their own narratives. As a team leader, you need to assume positive intent with your people, and trust that your team members are delivering on what is expected of them. Inversely your team members need to feel safe in being open with you, able to come with questions, look for support and know that you will be there to help. Building trust starts with vulnerability. A key part of this is moving beyond transactional relationships to connecting human to human. It requires going beyond the surface level, being willing to share first about how you are feeling, what is having an impact on you, and how you are looking to overcome challenges. Being open about not knowing all the answers and admitting mistakes when they are made.

Where once leaders might have been able to share vision, build culture, and develop people through proximity, being in different locations requires leaders to be intentional and deliberate in their actions. With incidental connection reduced, opportunities must be deliberately created to ensure your employee are connected with your purpose, are able to build strong relationships with others, have opportunities to learn and grow from their mentors and peers, and have the ability to effectively contribute to and participate in work life, no matter where or when they do that from.

## Rethinking how you lead

With trust and intention established as your building blocks, it's important to consider your end users. Your employees. They are your greatest source of knowledge on what empowers and motivates them to contribute within a hybrid or remote working environment. Before jumping to solutions, gain their understanding of what's working well and where any gaps and opportunities lie. Then engage them in the process, designing with them rather than for. We've broken down the hybrid and remote working environment into four key areas for you to explore with your people.



What works will look different to each organisation based on your unique culture and ways of operating. To get you started, we've come up with some practical ideas of how you might foster and lead in this new world.

## Purpose and strategy

People's ability to see the role they play and how it fits into the bigger picture has a big impact on how they perform and the autonomy they can demonstrate. Connecting with purpose and strategy provides direction for decision making, whilst values provide guidance on appropriate behaviour regardless of whether people are working in the office or remotely. What ways can you regularly communicate and involve your people in your purpose, strategy, and values?

- **Strategy sessions** – all company sessions to roll out your vision and strategy, plan out activities, and allow your people to take it all on board, ask questions, and get a feel of how they contribute to the bigger picture. Look at ways to get everyone involved both online and in person.
- **Communication** – how do your leadership teams communicate with your people. Agree on what ways you will share important updates and how you will make sure everyone receives them. Try utilising the channels you already have for example, recording important notices and following up with emails or messages on 'teams' or 'slack'.
- **Regular status updates** – how do you provide updates on how the organisation is meeting its objectives. At Humankind we have Monthly Business Updates, which allow us to all be engaged with the direction and performance of the business.
- **Values and behaviours** – review your values and the behaviours that support them to ensure they are equally applicable in the virtual environment as they are in the physical.
- **Values recognition** – create rituals to promote and celebrate your values that transcend your office walls. Share examples of how your people are living your values in your regular meetings or utilise message boards or newsletter slots for people to share their own examples.

## Social connectedness and belonging

Belonging and connecting with others is fundamental to our wellbeing and the strength and quality of our relationships has a profound effect on how we contribute and collaborate within the workplace. How can you encourage your people to connect with their leaders and with each other?

- **Coffee dates** – in person or virtual, introduce individuals to someone from another team. Provide some conversation starters or a challenge to complete and watch the relationships start to form.
- **Ice breakers and speed dating** – create the chance to connect before getting down to business. Block time in meetings for ice breakers or speed dating. Breakout rooms in zoom and teams are perfect for this.
- **Cross team collaboration** – how are you sharing ideas across teams? Try blocking out time on a regular basis for teams to present on different topics. Topics could centre on recent learning experiences, examples of great work, or ideas they are exploring or finding interesting. Record these sessions for others to watch at a later time.
- **In person connection** – unless you're completely remote, invest in in-person connection. Create local hubs for people to meet up. Build rituals and create moments for connecting in person, whether it is a social event, team building event, strategy day, or value celebration.
- **1:1s and check ins** – in person feels great and should be encouraged where possible, but don't sacrifice your rhythms. Continue to frequently make time for you and your team members to connect.

## Rhythms, rituals, and support

When employees want to work remotely, it's easy to fall on the position that it's up to them to make it work. But what you do to support your people to participate fully from their locations can really empower and charge up their performance. How do you provide your people with the support needed to allow them to perform effectively?

- **Digital meeting etiquette** – co-designing simple rules with your team such as; ensuring all meetings have digital meeting links, and asking all attendees to join on separate screens, can support creating equal 'screen time' within meetings.
- **Communicate how, when, where, and why people should be contacted** – how do people know when others are available, what are the preferred channels for communication, what do you do with a general query vs an urgent query. At Humankind we developed our guidelines for how we work together to deliver awesome work which states our commitments to each other and agreed upon ways to collaborate, communicate, and provide feedback.
- **Optional vs required attendance** – be clear about what rituals are important to your organisation, and when people are expected to attend. For Humankind our daily huddles are important way for us to start the day, so we connect in digitally. Whilst our monthly strategy updates are in-person events. Both are moments of connection that we prioritise.

## Driving performance

To drive exceptional performance, your people need to understand what great performance looks like. Empowering your people to perform starts with setting clear expectations and providing open and timely feedback. How can you help your people understand what great performance looks like?

- **Regular and timely feedback** – get in the habit of jumping on a call in the moment to provide feedback, rather than storing it up until your next 1:1. Link your feedback to behaviour and impact to turn the dial.
- **Outcome focussed** – when office based, a common shortcut we used for performance was what we could see, time and perceived effort. So, if your performance measures are based on these inputs, it might be time to have a rethink. How do you talk about performance and expectations? What metrics do you use for performance? Linking performance to outcomes leaves space for your people to determine how they will deliver.
- **On the job learning** – learning on the job can feel harder to do online. What can you do to build learning into your systems and processes. Try holding a debrief time with your people after important meetings to check understanding, answers questions and provide feedback. After key delivery moments jump on a phone or video call to replay their achievement and talk about what they learnt in the process. Utilise digital tools to shadow others and collaborate together online.

Hybrid and remote working aren't going away, so as leaders it's time to rethink how we build culture, connect our people with organisational strategy, and enable and empower our people to perform, grow and flourish within these environments. Our people are the greatest source of knowledge of what is going to work best for them. Don't be afraid to talk to your people and engage them in creating this new future.

We're happy to share our experiences in leadership and employee experience in the hybrid world, feel free to connect with us to hear more.

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