Cognizant's Center for the Future of Work: "Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast"

Cognizant Center for the Future of Work

Cognizant's Center for the Future of Work recently published the whitepaper, ***The Culture Cure for Digital; How to Fix What's Ailing Business***, which outlines the steps organizations must take to reshape culture in order to energize people for work in the digital age.

"Culture matters, and the most effective business leaders know when it's right," says Euan Davis, AVP, Center for the Future of Work. "The millions of dollars invested in a company's digital journey is money wasted if the workforce isn't onboard. Culture (still) eats strategy for breakfast."

For business leaders who've never paid much attention to their work culture, making it a primary focus can be a daunting task. In partnership with Cognizant Digital Strategy's Organization Change Management (OCM) group, Cognizant's Center for the Future of Work has charted the elements of culture that matter most in the digital age:

- **Realign the workforce around a digital platform.** Codify new leadership behaviors to envision the platform as the organizing principle for work in the 21st century and fuse these behaviors into the workforce.
- **Use the workspace to catalyze culture.** Invest in clever spatial design to speed the flow of ideas from people inside and outside the organization, attract the best talent and demonstrate new workforce codes of behavior.
- **Empower teams to make decisions where they matter.** Move power to where it counts by ripping down the silos and devolving decision-making to the edges of the organization, getting from insight to action faster with real-time data.
- **Ensure people embrace working alongside intelligent machines.** Emerging human-to-machine workflows demand robust people management processes to be developed in tandem so people feel invigorated by these new tools, as well as secure in their use.
- **Use data to hyper-personalize the employee experience.** Key into the reams of data surrounding employees so career goals are connected into an employee engagement strategy, boosting employees' perceptions of their relationship with the company.
- **Prepare to build a "workforce of the future."** The current workforce needs new hard (job-specific) and soft (communication) skills, and new jobs will also emerge that require a fundamental relook at how organizations develop and source talent.

Many organizations will find their culture at odds with the rapid emergence of technology and the sheer variety of work styles that now proliferate across the workforce. It's critical for leaders to tune the work culture to nurture, anticipate and propel people, and the business, forward.

"Fast or slow, leaders need to take an activist approach to shaping culture," says Joseph Navarre, VP, Cognizant Consulting, Digital Strategy. "This means leading employees through the opportunities presented by the digital age and preparing them to use the new tools that will generate value."

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