

Leading in a Post-Pandemic World: Three Challenges

By Ann N. Gatty



In the post pandemic world, we are finding ourselves navigating into a new normal. Both work and home lives have been dramatically altered. As business leaders, we must successfully handle three over-arching challenges. These changes include embracing innovation, creating a more inclusive culture, and incorporating a structured mentoring program.

The pandemic world ushered in an emotional rollercoaster ride that still leaves us uncertain about what the future will bring. However, we realize that we will never return to the way things were before COVID. Innovation will be a key component for leading through change. Leaders who integrate innovation into their company's strategic objectives will surpass those who don't. Savvy leaders will define what types of innovation should be emphasized to drive growth. And they will stop doing work that no longer provides needed results.

Embracing innovation requires that it is woven into all levels of company processes. Leaders must include innovation as a regular topic on meeting agendas. Companies find more success when there are established work teams that utilize innovation for process and product improvements. And lastly, leaders must set performance target goals that encourage and reward innovative solutions.

Innovation can be amplified by creating a more inclusive culture. Through this pandemic we realized that creating a diverse and inclusive culture is no longer an option. It is imperative. We, as business leaders, must assist in closing the divisions within our society. In this pandemic world, we witnessed racial, political, and economic unrest. Building an inclusive culture at work is one step in stabilizing our communities. We can set the standard at work and share these attitudes beyond the company walls.

Respect and trust can be restored, starting with our company culture. In the post pandemic world, it is imperative to support psychological safety in the workplace. People will only voice differing opinions if they feel safe and know their opinions are valued and useful for continuous innovation.



Therefore, an inclusive culture expands beyond diversity in hiring. It establishes a forum for open conversations among people with different backgrounds, experiences, and social norms. [Building an inclusive culture](#) becomes the underlying attitude regarding how work is done and how to utilize everyone's talents. It includes recognizing that everyone is a contributor to attaining the company vision.

As we move into the next normal, the way we do work will look quite different. Employees will need to acquire new skills to have the capacity to pursue new strategies. Leadership development will take on an expanded focus. Leaders can no longer expect that employees will develop their professional skills on their own.

Building a culture that has the skills to provide value post pandemic and into the future, requires a different type of learning. Most likely, what worked before may no longer be relevant. How can you assist your employees to transition into leadership roles as they develop higher skills? The answer is to mentor.

As we work to develop our emerging leaders, we need to be cognizant of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Now, more than ever, leaders need to walk alongside their employees and provide opportunities for growth. The talent pool is shrinking; employee retention is essential.

Promoting employee wellness and nurturing professional development can be difficult, especially during a pandemic. Many employees transitioned to a home office. Distinctions between professional and personal life became blurred. How do leaders stay connected to members of a remote workforce? One answer is through mentoring.

Professional development has changed from classroom learning and online webinars to learning in the flow of on-the-job work. Creating a structured mentoring program is a solution for businesses that want to provide a mechanism for employee personal and professional fulfillment.

In the past, mentoring was more of an informal relationship. It was often up to the mentee to ask someone to be a mentor. As a positive outgrowth from this pandemic world, we can restructure a more productive [mentoring process](#). People need to learn the art of mentoring. It is something that requires attention to (1) how people learn and (2) how they best flourish in their professional development. And mentoring is a two-way street. The relationship provides



instruction for the mentee and insights for the mentor. It is a [collaborative process](#) that requires transparency and interpersonal skill development. The results from the process improve employee performance and provide opportunities for assuming higher levels of responsibility.

Mentoring is a form of learning and development that allows senior leaders and peers to get more involved in change management, instead of merely managing the impact of change. It also provides equal opportunities for all employees to be given opportunities to develop their talents and be recognized for their contributions.

Leading in a post pandemic world will not be easy. However, leaders who embrace innovation, build an inclusive diverse culture and provide leadership development opportunities will find the new uncharted terrain easier to navigate.

About the Author

Dr. Ann Gatty is a business development strategist. She helps her clients clarify the vision for their businesses, boost their leadership capabilities and add quality talent to help the clients reach their goals. Through a collaborative mentoring process, she and her clients create workable strategic business plans and success initiatives, while improving their workplace processes. Dr. Gatty is a frequent writer and contributor www.AllBusiness.com, www.MarketingInsiders.com, and www.WomenOnBusiness.com. Her interactive speaking engagements assist participants in discovering new-found talents and skills that they can immediately apply in the workplace. Join her [Facebook Group, Strategic Thinking Summit Elites](#) for strategies you can implement to grow your business success and enjoy camaraderie with others entrepreneur members.