

W O R K P L A C E



START A
CONVERSATION

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CONVOS & COFFEE

Business strategy alone is not enough for an organization to thrive. It takes a strong organizational culture that is supported by strategy *and* structure.

Workplace Convos & Coffee challenges all stewards of workplace culture, including HR professionals, C-suite executives and People Managers, to have crucial conversations about what's working and not working in the workplace, to drive strategic cultural change.

To create better workplaces, first we must improve the cultures that fuel them, one honest conversation at a time.

Let's talk about workplace culture!

1. Find a coffee partner nearest to you
2. Follow the question prompts
3. Start a conversation
4. Consider strategic ways you can strengthen workplace culture in your office

For the first time in history, five generations are working side by side.

- Share one positive experience and one negative experience you have had with a colleague from a different generation.
- How might different generations learn and grow by interacting in the workplace?



In recent years, there has been great discussion about the skills gap—the discrepancy between the skills U.S. workers have and the skills required by U.S. businesses to remain globally competitive.

- How does the skills gap impact your organization?
- How is your organization investing in reskilling workers?



**Do you feel you have
the skills to compete
in your field? If not,
what could your
organization do to
help you skill up?**



For many hiring managers the talent shortage is very real. How do you feel about hiring an “underqualified” job candidate who shows potential?

- How do you identify promising “inexperienced” job candidates?
- How can your organization build paths to success for these types of candidates?



80% of managers feel workers with criminal records bring as much, or more, value to their organization compared to workers without records.

- Would you hire a candidate with a criminal background? Why or why not?
- Have any of your colleagues ever had a criminal record? Did it affect your relationship in anyway?

Rapid technological changes have transformed the world of work and show no signs of stopping soon.

- Talk about a time a new technology dramatically changed your workplace experience.
- Share one positive and one negative way advances in technology may affect your workplace.



**What inspires you to
succeed every day?
What is the most
meaningful part of
your job?**



**Retention/turnover
was the top workforce
management challenge
cited by **47%** of HR
professionals.**

- In the past, what has been your primary cause for switching jobs?
- What could your organization have done differently to keep you?
- How is your organization actively working to keep good people?

**Your boss wants
to hire a new team
member but mentions
being uninterested in
candidates with “too
much experience.”**

- How might this approach perpetuate ageism?
- How might you broach this subject with your boss?



20% of U.S. employees
have left a job due to
workplace culture.

- Talk about a time you felt unsatisfied with an organization's culture.
- How would you rate your current organization's culture?



56% of workers over the age of 50 report being pushed out of their jobs before they were ready to retire.

- When was a time you witnessed ageism in the workplace?
- When was a time you perpetuated ageism in the workplace?

Professional development opportunity is key to employee satisfaction, and it allows organizations to further develop employees.

- What professional development opportunities does your organization offer employees?
- What barriers hinder your organization from offering professional development opportunities to workers?



More than **1/2** of workers say employer-provided student loan repayment benefits would play a role in how they evaluate job opportunities.

- Does your organization offer loan repayment assistance to attract and retain young talent? Why or why not?
- How important is offering loan repayment to you or your workforce?

(SHRM Omnibus Survey, May 2019)



33 states and the District of Columbia have passed laws legalizing marijuana in some form, yet marijuana remains illegal under federal law.

- How have current trends in state law impacted your workplace policy on marijuana usage?
- How should workplaces go about enforcing policy on marijuana with such a conflict in state and federal law?



Managers are professional problem solvers, expected to confront and resolve complex issues affecting both their team and the larger organization.

- As a manager, what is the biggest or most common interpersonal challenge you face?
- What is the biggest workplace or organizational challenge that keeps you up at night?



**What word best
describes
your workplace?
Explain why.**



64% of U.S. workers believe supervisors and managers are most responsible for organizational culture, followed by executive leadership at **53%**, HR at **27%**, and nonmanagers at **22%**.

- Do you agree? Why or why not?
- How can HR be better brokers of workplace culture in partnership with other leaders in the workplace?

**Who do you believe
is most responsible
for workplace culture
at your organization
and why?**



**It's Election Day, and
a colleague won't stop
talking about supporting
a candidate you
vehemently oppose.**

- How would you deal with this colleague?
- How does politics or freedom of expression fit into the workplace?



Your team has a top performer with a bad attitude. And it's ruining morale.

- How would you handle this disruptive behavior?
- When was a time you had to deal with a combative colleague?
- How do you balance conflicting personalities in your workplace?



More than **1/3** of People Managers report trouble managing others' performance.

- How are you or your organization training managers to be better People Managers?
- Do you feel your organization has helped you become a better manager of people? Why?

**What's the most
important thing
about a workplace
environment to
you and why?**



38% of People Managers believe “creating the right culture” is difficult.

- What does creating the “right” culture mean to you?
- What do you believe are key aspects of a strong workplace culture?

Strong workplace cultures are based on strongly held and widely shared sets of beliefs that are supported by strategy and structure.

- At your workplace, do employees know how top management would want them to respond to any situation?
- At your workplace, do employees believe the response expected of them is the proper one?



1/3 of companies have disqualified job candidates in the past year for questionable social media activity.

- Should employers search a candidate's social media during the hiring process? Why or why not?
- How do you balance your social and professional lives?

76% of executives say their organization has a defined value system, yet just **31%** of employees agree.

- How would you explain this discrepancy?
- If you were CEO, how would you communicate your organization's values?
- Was there ever a time when you felt disconnected from your organization's mission?

(Oxford Economics, "Return on Culture: Proving the connection between culture and profit report," 2019)



How has the #MeToo movement changed your workplace?

- Has your employer adjusted its approach/policy to sexual harassment in the wake of #MeToo? How?
- As an HR professional, how can you foster a culture that promotes respect among employees?
- In your experience, what has been effective in handling claims of sexual harassment?



60% of male managers say they are uncomfortable interacting with women at work, up from **32%** in 2018, according to a recent survey about #MeToo by Lean In.

- How has the #MeToo movement affected your interactions with colleagues of the opposite sex?
- What can workplaces do to reverse this trend?



More than **1/3** of U.S. employees believe their workplace fosters sexual harassment.

- Do you think an anti-harassment policy alone is enough?
- How might sexual harassment be addressed on a cultural level?
- How does your organization create a culture of accountability?



76% of nonmanager employees who experienced sexual harassment within the last year did not report it.

- What do you think keeps individuals from coming forward?
- How can organizations create a culture where people will come forward?



Nearly **1/3** of those who have been involved in a workplace romance never disclosed it.

- Do you feel you have a good understanding of your employer's policy on workplace romance? What needs to be clarified?
- Share your thoughts on why someone might not feel comfortable coming forward.

(SHRM Omnibus Survey, 2019)



Measles have been confirmed in 26 states since the start of 2019.

- Should employers be able to require that their employees have vaccinations? Why or why not?
- Do you feel your organization has a plan to deal with public health risks and keep employees safe?



When asked what is the most important component of a work environment, respondents answered **40%** job fulfillment/satisfaction, **17%** workplace flexibility, **15%** good supervisors, and **13%** openness and transparency.

- What is the most important component of a work environment to you? Why?
- Why do you think respondents to this survey answered the way they did?

Pay inequity is increasingly becoming a reputational risk for employers in a world where employees can more easily share and compare pay levels.

- Is your workplace transparent about how it determines pay scale? Should it be?
- What does pay equity mean to you?
- How can organizations improve pay transparency?



How can organizations ensure that transgender employees are accommodated in the workplace?

- Should organizations change bathroom policies for transgender employees?
- What are the challenges an organization might face in changing its bathroom policies for transgender employees?



Nearly **1 in 8** people in the U.S. has a disability, and that number is rising annually.

- Would you consider hiring a person with a disability? Why or why not?
- How can your organization better include people with disabilities in the workplace?

(Institute on Disability "2017 Disability Statistics Annual Report")



Can you explain the difference between diversity and inclusion?

- What mistakes do organizations make with diversity and inclusion?
- Share an example of how having a diverse workforce affected your organization.



How can organizations better accommodate pregnant employees/new parents in the workplace?

- How important is this issue for you and your organization and why?
- Does your workplace differentiate between “maternity” leave and “paternity” leave? Why or why not?
- How might an even-handed approach to paid “parental” leave affect employees?



Nearly **1/2** of all workers
regularly encounter
conflicts between work
and family obligations.

- Can you talk about an instance when your work and personal obligations conflicted?
- How can teams work to accomplish their goals, while respecting employee obligations outside of the workplace?

(SHRM 2018 Employee Benefits Survey)



Your boss insists you must stay late for an urgent assignment, but you have no child care for your kids that night.

- How flexible would, or should, your employer be in letting you manage a personal situation?
- What long-term solutions might prevent this situation from repeating in the future?



27% of organizations
offer paid family leave
of some kind.

- How does your organization's leave policy affect you?
- How does your organization's paid-leave policy influence your decision to stay in your current position?



38% of employees are
very satisfied with their
current job.

- What makes your work meaningful to you?
- What's preventing you from finding more satisfaction in your position?

(SHRM "Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement: The Doors of Opportunity Are Open," 2017)



Your organization just switched from providing vacation days to an open leave system.

- Will open leave make you feel better or worse about taking vacation?
- What are the advantages or disadvantages?



1/2 of organizations have sponsored an employment-based visa for at least one worker in the past five years.

- How can global talent help meet the demands of your workplace?
- What are the top challenges and opportunities of adding foreign workers to a team?



Only **1/2** of employees claim to understand the vision and goals of their organization.

- Discuss a time you felt confused about your organization's vision and goals.
- How might leadership more clearly convey these core aspects of your organization?

(Oxford Economics, "Return on Culture: Proving the connection between culture and profit report," 2019)



32% of employees cite benefits as a reason to stay with their organization, while **29%** cite them as a reason to leave.

- Which benefits do you most value?
- How do you weigh your compensation versus the benefits you receive?
- How might benefits offered affect the diversity of your team?

Should HR professionals be required to work in the office full time?

- What are some of the advantages and disadvantages that might arise from HR professionals telecommuting?



About **2/3** of HR professionals indicate that their organizations are “very concerned” about controlling health care costs.

- What do you like about the health care plan your employer offers? What could be improved?
- Have you seen significant changes to your health care benefits in recent years?

What does the phrase “Better Workplaces, Better World” mean to you?

- To what extent do you believe workplace issues impact the wider world?
- How can workplace change make a difference in society at large?



WHAT DOES A STRONG
WORKPLACE CULTURE
LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

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BETTER WORKPLACES
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