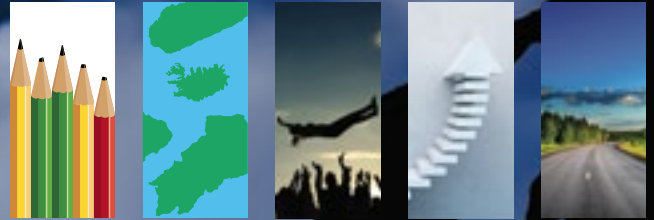


Lēad™

Issue 16



Canada's Best Workplaces: What Makes Them So Special? ■ Insights into Global Workplace Trends ■ The Impact of High-Trust Cultures on Key Performance Indicators ■ Leveraging Legislation, Employee Concerns, and Knowledge Gaps to Become a Better Workplace ■ The Road to Workplace Success

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Why the Best Workplaces Work Best

Special Great Place to Work® Edition



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Lēad

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and Per Scott

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“...becoming the best workplace you can be will always be an ongoing effort. Each year presents new challenges – but also new opportunities.”



Sandra Hokansson
President and Country Manager
Adecco Employment Services Limited

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE, successful organization takes a few key ingredients, two of which are a thriving positive culture and the ability to retain top talent. A positive work culture is like a magnet for new talent, attracting them to your organization and compelling them to stay put. In fact, retaining top talent is very important in maintaining organizational stability, developing sustainable client relationships over longer periods of time, increasing customer satisfaction, and improving return on investment. It's also important to note the high cost of colleague turnover, which is perhaps the single most costly issue for any organization, reportedly equal to up to three times each departing colleague's annual compensation.

Examining the key ingredients for success, and looking at the various benefits they bring, Adecco set out to improve our colleague retention on a global scale by creating an engaged culture in each of our branches and communities around the world. To improve, we needed reliable colleague feedback. Eventually, after working with several surveying organizations, the clear choice to implement our worldwide plan of action proved to be the Great Place to Work® Institute, which is dedicated to recognizing best-in-class workplaces, sharing best practices, and challenging organizations to raise the bar in creating great work environments. They were clearly the perfect fit for what we wanted to accomplish.

Adecco Canada has been participating in the Great Place to Work® Trust Index® Survey for four years, and the experience has been quite a journey of organizational self-discovery. We have learned that our colleagues not only ask the right questions, but also possess the right answers. Each year we commit to holding national focus groups in order to deep dive into areas for development. We keep asking – and we keep learning. Ultimately, we had the honour of joining 49 of Canada's greatest large organizations on the 2014 Great Place to Work® 50 *Best Workplaces in Canada* list.

Of course, our journey doesn't end there. In fact, becoming the best workplace you can be will always be an ongoing effort. Each year presents new challenges – but also new opportunities. From now on, we at Adecco can build on a solid foundation of trust that was laid by listening to our people, engaging them in the improvement process, and taking action to ensure they not only felt real change, but knew they affected it.

Featuring contributions from the Great Place to Work® Institute itself, other Canadian Best Workplaces, and more, this edition of *Lēad* offers philosophical and empirical insights into why striving to become a great workplace is crucial to the success of organizations across industries and around the world. Please enjoy. ■

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CORY BOYD, Associate, Rubin Thomlinson LLP

Cory began his career at the Ontario Human Rights Commission, and later worked at the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and at Toronto Community Housing as an investigator and human rights consultant. At Rubin Thomlinson LLP, he continues to conduct workplace investigations for employer clients. In addition, Cory assists employers in developing compliance systems and effective workplace policies relating to their legal and ethical obligations. He also delivers training to staff at all levels and works with clients following internal complaints to create plans to restore their workplaces and allow employees to move forward.



STACI CARREIRO, Manager, Human Resources, VW Credit Canada, Inc.

Staci Carreiro has worked in the HR field for the past 14 years, having begun her career with Dectron Internationale, a Canadian manufacturer of commercial HVAC equipment. Being a car enthusiast and an avid Volkswagen fan, she enthusiastically joined VW Credit Canada, Inc. in 2006 to establish the company's HR function. Staci holds a B.Sc. in Psychology from McGill University and a B.Comm. in Human Resources Management from Concordia University.



OSCAR CECEÑA, Project Coordinator, Great Place to Work® Canada

Oscar joined Great Place to Work® as Project Coordinator in 2013 after relocating to Canada from Mexico. Holding a Project Management Professional (PMP) certification and having worked internationally in the US, Europe, and Mexico for organizations such as GE and Verizon, Oscar combines his global insights and his extensive knowledge of software development, organizational effectiveness, and human resources to offer unique business perspectives, particularly within the retail and financial services industries.



CHINA GORMAN, CEO, Great Place to Work®

With 30 years' experience in strategic business leadership roles within HR professional services organizations, China has firmly established herself as a sought-after HR thought leader. Having served as COO and interim CEO of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), as President of DBM North America, and as President of Lee Hecht Harrison, Adecco's global consulting division, China most recently served as CEO for CMG Group. A former Chair for the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and former board member of Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), China has also served on the strategic advisory councils of RiseSmart and CVCertify.



RON GREY, Senior Vice President, Great Place to Work® Canada

As Senior Vice President of Great Place to Work® in Canada and an organizational psychologist, Ron leads consulting and advanced research services to help Great Place to Work® clients get the most out of their workplace assessment and transformation engagements. Prior to joining Great Place to Work®, Ron led global and national practices in strategy and organization, employee research, leadership development, and talent management for multinational consulting and survey research firms. He has extensive experience working with clients across a broad spectrum of industries and sectors, assessing and building organizational cultures and great workplaces that achieve superior business results.



PER SCOTT, Vice President, Human Resources, RBC

Per is responsible for a range of Human Resources areas that enable and support the engagement and performance of the RBC workforce, including diversity, employee relations, employee engagement, the RBC employee opinion survey, performance and career management, strategic workforce management, and employment brand communications. Prior to joining Human Resources in 1999, Per began his tenure at RBC in 1982 in retail banking, holding client services and branch management roles before moving into processing and operations centre management as well as business process reengineering.



ESTELA VAZQUEZ PEREZ, Director, Employment Brand, RBC

As Director of Employment Brand, a Centre of Excellence at RBC, Estela's objective is to increase RBC® brand equity in the talent market, strengthening the connection between brand and company purpose, designing employment value propositions, and engineering experiences under a balanced strategy that includes people, brand, and culture. A firm believer in how brands build futures, Estela unifies brand management, marketing, analytics, and emerging technologies to improve client and employee experiences as well as their positioning in the market. She brings global experience and the latest thought leadership in Brand Management to attract and retain the best people.



JEN WETHEROW, Director, Great Place to Work® Canada

Jen has been with the Great Place to Work® Institute since its inception in 2005. Prior to that, she worked as a policy analyst for the federal government and boasts management experience with a major charitable organization. Having worked in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors, Jen possesses a deep understanding of organizational culture. She is also a frequent guest speaker and workshop leader at conferences across the country, where participants regularly rave about her enthusiastic and engaging presentation style as well as the abundance of best-practice knowledge she shares.

Canada's Best Workplaces

What Makes Them So Special?

By China Gorman and Jen Wetherow



Feature

THE BEST WORKPLACES ARE DIFFERENT – and measurably so. Each April, The Globe & Mail publishes a list of the 100 Best Workplaces in Canada, representing great diversity in terms of sector, industry, size, and location. Each has pioneered a unique path to greatness, but there is one thing they all have in common – trust.

Employees who trust their managers give their best work freely, and their extra effort goes right to the company's bottom line. Managers who trust their employees allow innovative ideas to bubble up from all levels of the company. Employees who trust each other report a sense of camaraderie and even being part of a family. Together, they deliver far more than the sum of their individual efforts.

While trust may seem like too abstract a concept to measure, it really comes down to three basic relationships: those between employees and managers, those between employees and their own jobs, and those between employees.

First, we can measure the level of trust between an employee and management. Great Place to Work® does so by assessing the credibility of management, the degree to which employees feel respected, and the general perceptions of fairness in the workplace.

In the Best Workplaces, the relationship between employees and managers is rock solid. In fact, that relationship is the heart of every great company. But the other two relationships contribute to corporate culture in very important ways as well. The quality of one's relationship with their own job is tied to the level of pride they feel having that job. That level of pride is correlated with their understanding of how they are contributing to the higher purpose of the organization. The third relationship, between employees, is tied to the sense of camaraderie that exists in the workplace.

What's the ROI? Convincing Your Number Crunchers

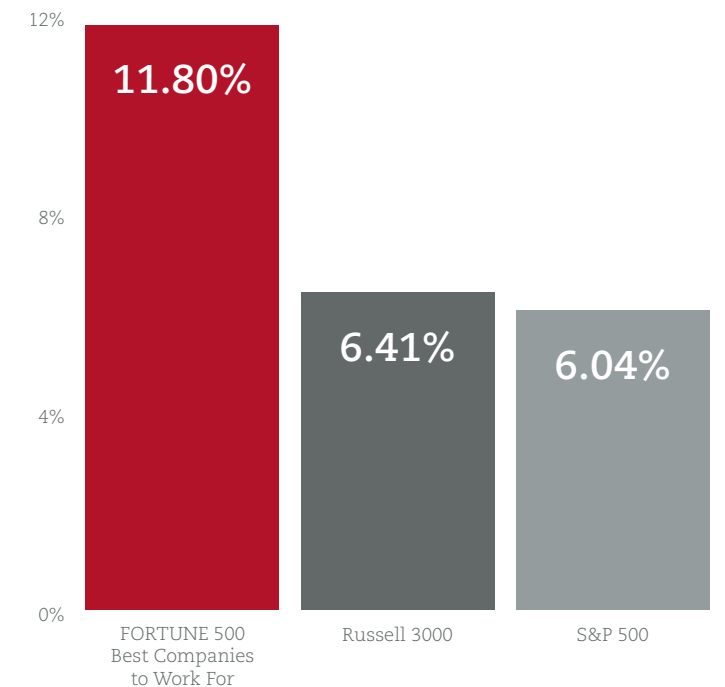
At Canada's Best Workplaces, a strong corporate culture is considered crucial to business success.

Trust is the best investment an organization can make. It leads to better recruitment, lower turnover, greater innovation, higher productivity, more loyal customers, and higher profits. It is the right thing to do. But for most, the pursuit of trust doesn't start with some grand notion of altruism. Typically, the movement begins with leaders who want to improve the financial performance and quality of their enterprises.

Independent research by the Russell Investment Group documents the superior performance of publicly traded companies appearing on *Fortune's* list of the '100 Best Companies to Work For' in comparison to standard stock market indices (Fig. 1). The primary determinant for inclusion on this list is performance on the Trust

Index® employee survey, developed and administered annually by Great Place to Work®.

Comparative Annualized Stock Market Returns (1997 – 2013)



Source: Russell Investment Group
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Figure 1: Best Companies perform nearly 2x better than the general market

Over time, we see that even the Best Workplaces are not immune to external market forces. For instance, in 2008, all organizations were impacted by the global financial crisis, but we also see that those with a deep reservoir of trust were able to bounce back faster and accelerate their performance more significantly than their peers (Fig. 2).

A Strong Culture Helps Companies Attract and Retain Employees

When employees decide to leave a company, the organization faces expensive losses. Not only does knowledge leave the company, but the costs of selecting and hiring new employees, transition costs, disruption to the talent pipeline, and more are estimated to be one to three times a given employee's original salary, depending on his or her level and skill. Among the companies recognized by Great Place to Work® in *Fortune* in 2014, voluntary turnover is quite low – as much as 65% less than industry peers (Fig. 3).

Comparative Cumulative Stock Market Returns

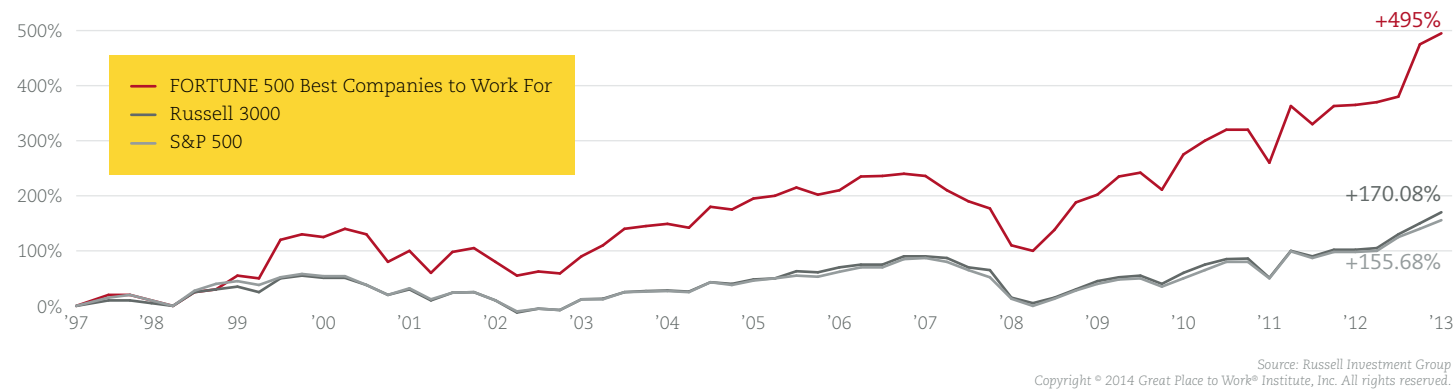


Figure 2: Great Workplaces provide more than 2x the return

Where Do You Start Building a Better Culture?

By tracking leaders in Best Workplaces around the world, Great Place to Work® has created a model for building performance based on trust, which may seem intangible, but the management practices required to nurture trust are actually quite straightforward to learn and embed into your culture.

The key is helping your people managers, at all levels of the organization, to understand the pivotal role they play in creating a great workplace. It requires a shift in perspective where routine tasks, often seen as obligations, become opportunities to build trust between managers and employees.

Typically, this process isn't about drastic change; it's about infusing what you already do with a renewed sense of generosity, individual intention, and inclusion. Below, are nine key management practices that offer a concrete starting point. They represent the poignant moments in the lifecycle of an employee, and present managers with valuable opportunities to make small but meaningful changes in the everyday reality of their employees.

This is what sets the Best Workplaces apart from others. It's not about sweeping change. It's about the cumulative impact of all the little things, the day-to-day interactions between individuals, that nurture trust and support a great workplace culture. ■

100 Best Companies Voluntary Turnover by Industry

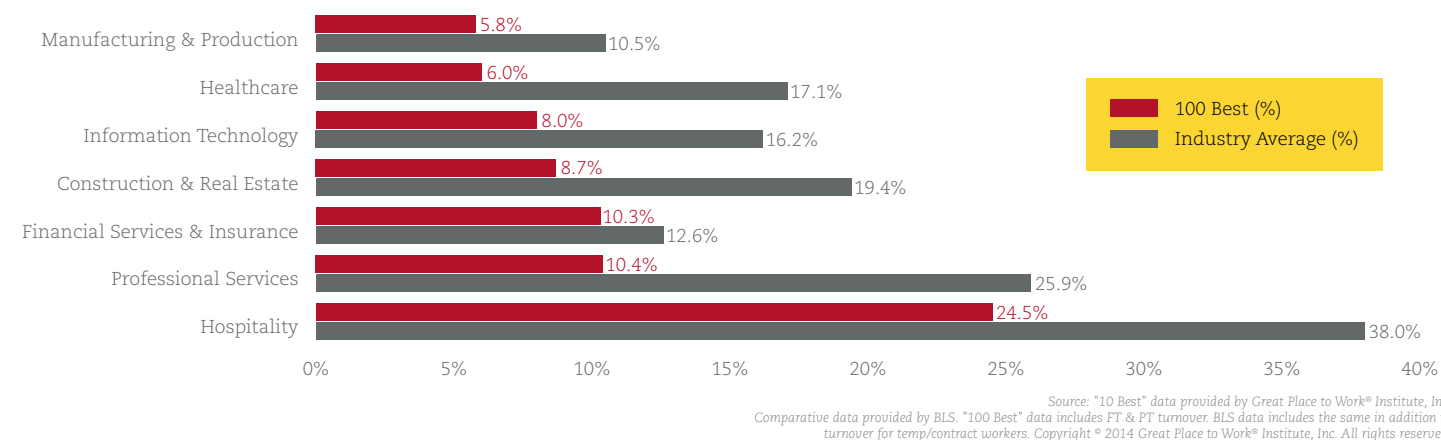


Figure 3: Best Companies experience as much as 65% less turnover

9 KEY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Increase Productivity

1. Inspiring. Employees learn and understand how their job has meaning for the organization and for society, beyond earning a salary and making a profit for the business.
2. Speaking. Management goes to great lengths to be open and transparent, offering access to information across the board, enabling and encouraging employees to contribute beyond the scope of a narrowly defined job.
3. Listening. Clear and open systems for incorporating people's ideas, for including people in decision making, and for airing concerns and grievances are prevalent.

Increase Innovation

4. Thanking. Management recognizes and rewards good work and extra levels of effort, and strives to create a climate of approval.
5. Developing. Focus is on nurturing individuals' gifts to foster personal growth and development as well as offering job-specific training.
6. Caring. A multiplicity of systems and programs are in place for creating a caring environment for the individual and his or her family.

Increase Collaboration

7. Hiring. Focus on hiring based on the potential and character of the person rather than primarily on skill set. New employees are welcomed and assimilated into the team with orientation programs, personal sponsorships, and the like.
8. Celebrating. Celebrations of both personal milestones and company success are built into the way people work together.
9. Sharing. Employees share in the fruits of their labour in a variety of ways and rewards are egalitarian in nature.

Insights into Global Workplace Trends

Findings from the World's Largest Annual Workplace Survey

By Ron Grey, Estela Vazquez Perez, and Per Scott

WITH OPERATIONS IN 42 COUNTRIES, RBC (Royal Bank of Canada) is not only Canada's largest financial institution, but it was also ranked number 50 on the Forbes Global 2000 list in 2013. When RBC approached Great Place to Work[®] to conduct research to provide insights into sustaining high levels of trust among employees, the scope of the project was well beyond Canada's borders.

An RBC[®] employment brand objective is to strengthen the relationship between employees and the brand. RBC has the deep insights into local markets that are necessary for a brand to be locally relevant. Yet the diversified business portfolio and geographic coverage of RBC could result in independent interpretation of market data. The challenge is that different research methodologies among local teams might potentially lead to inconsistent interpretations, competing recommendations, and globally inconsistent marketing communications, all of which would dilute the power of the RBC brand. RBC partnered with the Great Place to Work Institute to collect insights from employment markets globally and provide counsel that would harmonize the workplace improvement efforts of RBC, thereby helping realize the company's best-workplace ambitions beyond Canada.

RBC approached this goal across three broad areas:

- **Becoming a global employer of choice**, which requires a trusted methodology for meeting benchmarks and attaining awards, aligns efforts of top-market business priorities, identifies standards of global-award and benchmark selection, provides insights on culture and brand health in targeted markets, and simplifies decision making in associating the brand with the right partnerships.
- **Driving integration and collaboration** both internally and externally. Internally by aligning key partner teams, including Brand, Communications, HR, and Business segments, to enable sustainable brand management with greater global consistency; externally by leveraging a trustworthy methodology, coherent narrative, consistent branding, and global recognition.
- **Managing to Enterprise performance measures**, which track the performance of RBC relative to peers across a balanced set of criteria and against medium-term financial objectives that are reported to RBC shareholders in the company's annual report.

With a goal of building better workplaces worldwide, here is a preview of the RBC Global Talent Insights Research provided by the Great Place to Work Institute.

To read the full report, visit: www.rbc.com/bestworkplace

RBC adopted the Great Place to Work benchmarks in Canada more than 6 years ago. Today, RBC is happy to report that 92% of their Canadian employees are proud of being part of RBC.

Building High-Trust Cultures and Resilient Organizations

Great Place to Work understands that today's increasingly complex and demanding marketplace and accelerating pace of change are compelling organizations to continuously adapt and innovate. Organizational flexibility and resilience are required to not only survive but thrive in these challenging times.

Workforces that are engaged, innovative, and adaptable – and workplace cultures that foster these qualities – are integral to organizational resilience. Great Place to Work conducts the world's largest workplace study, annually surveying over 7,200 organizations representing more than 11 million employees in 52 countries.

Understanding how employees perceive their workplace and key relationships, with management, coworkers, and their jobs, is central to building high-trust cultures that enable organizational resilience and superior business outcomes.

Global Research on High-Trust Cultures and Great Workplaces

While trust is core to building great workplaces, we see significant differences in how trust is manifest across diverse geographies and industries around the world.

Systematically identifying and sharing unique cross-cultural insights on employee perceptions of the best workplaces and corporate cultures in the world is what the Great Place to Work Institute's research is all about.

This global study provides a snapshot of the most current 2014 Great Place to Work Trust Index employee survey data from over 600 of the Best Workplaces in North America, Europe, Central America/Caribbean, and Asia.

Overall Trust Index[®] Cross-Cultural Differences

The overall Trust Index (TI) score is based on the average of employee ratings for all 58 standard statements comprising the TI. This Index provides a broad picture of the levels of trust and quality of relationships between management and employees, employees and their jobs, and employees and their coworkers.

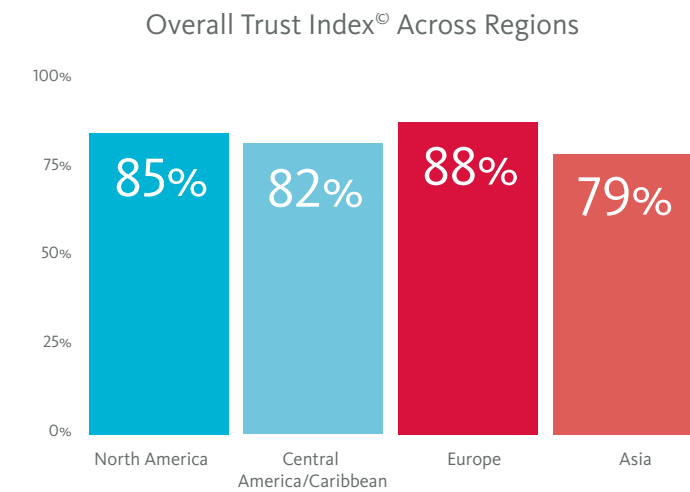


Figure 1: 2014 Trust Index[®] results are strongest in Europe, followed by North America. TI scores are noticeably lower in the Central America/Caribbean region and Asia.

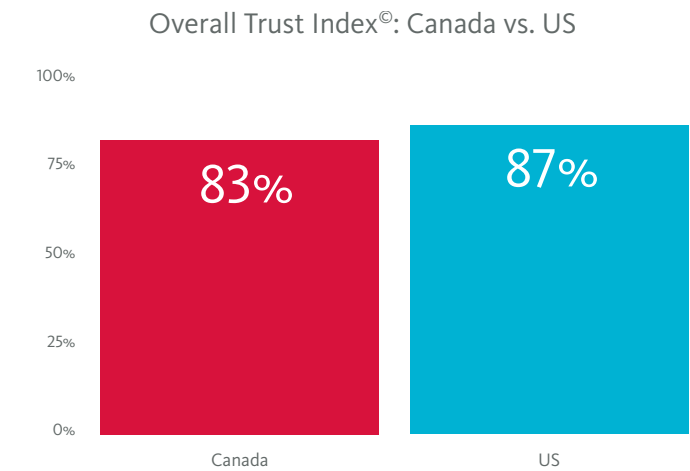


Figure 2: Within North America, 2014 Trust Index[®] results are noticeably stronger in the United States than Canada.

In order to gain deeper insights into cross-cultural differences in trust at Best Workplaces, Great Place to Work dug deeper into the global TI data by first analyzing the five core dimensions of



Figure 3

trust and then the specific statements or questions that comprise each dimension.

Trust Index Dimensions

The Trust Index (Fig. 3) is comprised of five core dimensions, each containing sub-dimensions derived from the standard 58 statements measured by the TI employee survey. The first three dimensions – Credibility, Respect and Fairness – focus most directly on relationships between management and employees and have been found to be most strongly related to trust in the workplace.

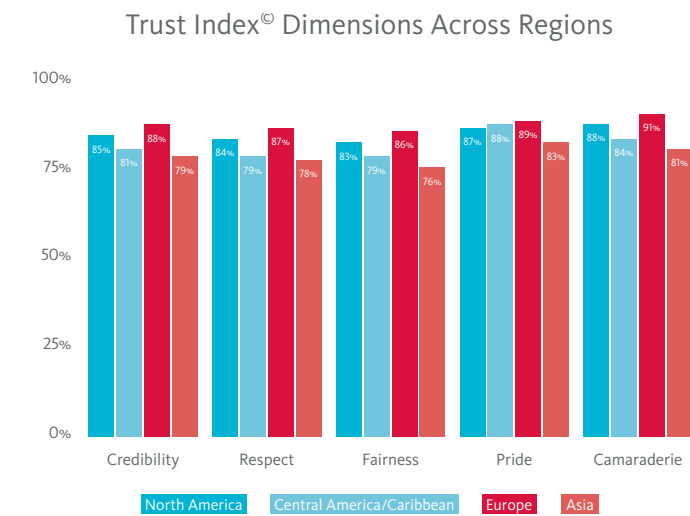


Figure 4: Overall Trust Index[®] regional patterns are highly consistent for the underlying dimensions of trust, i.e., strongest in Europe, followed by North America, Central America/Caribbean, and Asia. One exception is on the Pride dimension where Central American/Caribbean companies score slightly higher than North American ones.

Employees in Europe and North America see their organizations as having higher trust cultures characterized by strong management credibility, respect for employees, fairness in their management practices and treatment of employees, pride at all levels, and camaraderie or feelings of team and cooperation. Only on Pride is the Central America/Caribbean region more on par with companies based in Europe and North America. Clearly, companies based in Asia are lagging the other regions on trust.

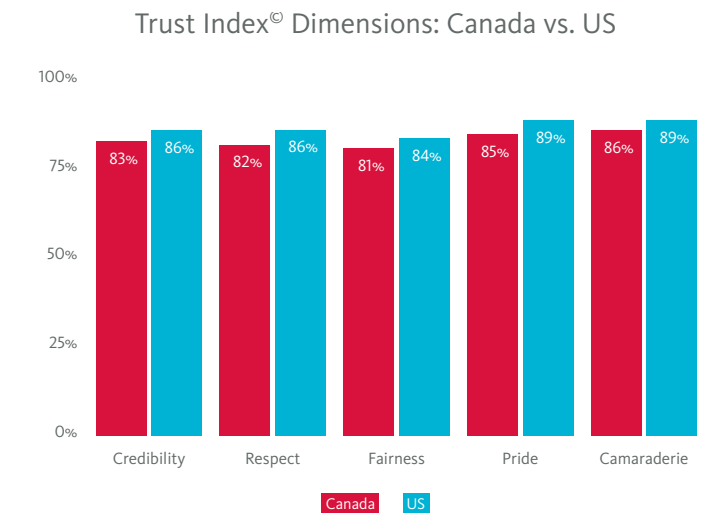


Figure 5: TI dimension scores for Canada and the United States are also consistent with their overall Trust Index[®] results. The US Best Workplaces score three to four percentage points higher than the Canadian on all five dimensions.

For each of the geographies listed, the following charts display:

% Positive, i.e., the percentage of employees who rated a TI statement using the two favourable points of a five-point response scale

Δ Global, i.e., percentage-point difference between the global benchmark and geography % Positive

- Above global benchmark by ≥ 5%
- Above global benchmark by < 5%
- Below global benchmark by < 5%
- Below global benchmark by ≥ 5%

Table 1: Top 10 Highest Scoring Statements Globally	Global Benchmark	% Difference from Global Benchmarks			
		North America	Central America/ Caribbean	Europe	Asia
This is a physically safe place to work.	94	3.3	-3.7	3.0	-2.7
When you join the company, you are made to feel welcome.	92	1.6	-2.1	3.9	-3.4
I'm proud to tell others I work here.	91	1.5	-0.1	1.8	-3.1
When I look at what we accomplish, I feel a sense of pride.	90	-0.4	3.5	0.8	-3.9
This is a friendly place to work.	90	3.2	-3.3	4.6	-4.6
Management is honest and ethical in its business practices.	89	1.7	-0.9	3.4	-4.2
Taking Everything into account, I would say this is a great place to work.	88	0.6	-1.8	3.8	-2.6
I feel good about the ways we contribute to the community.	88	1.7	1.5	0.5	-3.7
People here are given a lot of responsibility.	88	2.5	0.7	4.2	-7.4
Management is competent at running the business.	88	1.4	-0.7	2.7	-3.4

Table 2: 10 Lowest Scoring Statements Globally	Global Benchmark	% Difference from Global Benchmarks			
		North America	Central America/ Caribbean	Europe	Asia
I feel I receive a fair share of the profits made by this organization.	68	1.3	-2.5	5.9	-4.7
Managers avoid playing favourites.	71	2.6	-5.9	7.2	-3.8
People here are paid fairly for the work they do.	72	2.6	-2.1	3.1	-3.6
Promotions go to those who best deserve them.	72	2.5	-4.5	4.8	-2.8
Management involves people in decisions that affect their jobs or work environment.	74	1.5	-7.1	7.3	-1.8
People avoid politicking and backstabbing as ways to get things done.	77	1.9	-4.8	8.0	-5.1
Management does a good job of assigning and coordinating people.	77	1.8	0.7	3.8	-6.3
Everyone has an opportunity to get special recognition.	78	2.4	-4.3	5.7	-3.7
People are encouraged to balance their work life and their personal life.	79	1.8	-2.2	4.7	-4.3
Management delivers on its promises.	79	1.9	-4.4	6.3	-3.8

Trust Index Statements

Drilling even deeper, our analysis of the highest- and lowest-scoring TI statements provide additional in-depth insights into regional and national differences in corporate culture and management practices.

The top 10 scoring TI statements (Table 1) globally reflect truly great workplaces that are safe, welcoming, and friendly. People are proud of their accomplishments, where they work, and their employers' corporate social responsibilities. Employees further see their management as honest, ethical, and competent in running the business.

Regionally, companies based in Europe score highest on all but two of these top 10 TI statements: physically safe workplace and corporate contributions to the community. Next in favourability is the North American region, which scores below global benchmarks on only one of the items: pride in accomplishments.

Central American/Caribbean companies score below global benchmarks on most of these statements except for pride in accomplishments, corporate social responsibility, and delegating responsibility. Asian companies score lowest of all regions, particularly on delegation.

The 10 lowest-rated TI statements (Table 2) globally include employee concerns about fairness of rewards and recognition, i.e., fair pay and share of profits, fair promotions, and equal opportunity to receive recognition. Indeed, fewer than three-fourths of employees globally feel managers avoid playing favourites. These perceptions likely contribute to political and other divisive behaviours as well as concerns about work-life balance. Finally, ratings of management effectiveness in involving, assigning, and coordinating people, as well as delivering on commitments, are among the 10 lowest-rated items globally.

Regionally, companies based in North America, and especially in Europe, score above global benchmarks on these 10 TI statements.

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¹ Trust Index is a methodology developed by Great Place to Work.

Indeed, European companies score over five percentage points higher than the global benchmarks on six of these statements.

Central American/Caribbean and Asian companies score below global benchmarks on all of these statements. Asian companies score particularly low on TI statements regarding management assignment and coordination of people as well as regarding people playing politics and backstabbing.

Key "Take Away" Messages

Great Place to Work's global research highlights significant cross-cultural differences in trust and best workplaces around the world. Clearly, companies based in Europe and North America are further along in their development of high-trust cultures and great workplaces. Key differentiators for these organizations include:

- Providing safe, welcoming, and friendly environments;
- Promoting deep feelings of employee pride in accomplishments and about their employers' corporate social responsibilities; and
- Instilling employee confidence in the integrity and competence of their leaders.

Even on the lowest-rated statements globally, companies based in North America, and particularly in Europe, outperform their regional counterparts on fairness of rewards and recognition, employee involvement, and management credibility in delivering on commitments – all of which support less political and more cohesive day-to-day behaviours.

At the same time the Great Place to Work global research provides rich insights and a high-level roadmap for Central American/Caribbean, and Asian companies striving to accelerate and sustain their progress in advancing their development of high-trust cultures and great workplaces. ■



The Impact of High-Trust Cultures on Key Performance Indicators

By Ron Grey and Oscar Ceceña

Case Study

“How employees perceive and experience their workplaces and cultures clearly influences business performance.”

Executive Summary: The Business Case for High-Trust Cultures

The business proposition is clear: create and sustain high-trust cultures and great workplaces – and reap the benefits of stronger and more sustained performance results. While trust is core to building great workplaces, we see significant differences in how trust impacts key performance indicators (KPIs), such as sales, customer satisfaction, profitability, stock returns, employee turnover, absenteeism, illness in the workplace, and the like.

The Great Place to Work® Institute’s study of a large Canadian retailer clearly demonstrates how trust in the workplace influences KPIs as well as what specific culture-management practices are most important in driving different aspects of business performance. Using advanced statistical analyses, such as correlations, key drivers, and multiple regression, our study empirically demonstrates the tangible business importance of trust in the workplace. More specifically, it shows that:

- **Highly significant relationships (ranging from .26 to .50) were found between workplace trust and KPIs.** For example, the top 25% of retail stores on the Great Place to Work® Trust Index® (TI) achieve greater sales performance than those at the bottom quartile of the TI by seven percentage points. That means that with a \$100 million budget, the stores with the most trust achieve \$7 million more in sales than those with the lowest trust.
- **Various aspects of high-trust cultures and specific management practices correlate more strongly with certain KPIs than others.** For example, the strongest predictors of illness in the workplace are employee ratings of work-life balance, physical safety, a fast-paced environment, and receiving straightforward, honest feedback daily. In contrast, unit sales per transaction correlates most positively with the delegation of responsibility, whereas employee turnover correlates inversely with flexible work practices (e.g., the greater the flexibility to take off work when necessary, the lower the turnover).

How employees perceive and experience their workplaces and cultures clearly influences business performance. Our research

provides empirical data and insights into which aspects of trust and underlying culture-management practices most strongly influence KPIs. In so doing, it provides a fact-based roadmap for building high-trust cultures that drive those business results of greatest importance.

Trust and Key Performance Indicators

At Great Place to Work®, trust in the workplace is defined in terms of key relationships: those between management and employees, employees and their companies and jobs, and employees and their colleagues. We measure trust through the Great Place to Work® Trust Index® (TI), a standardized employee survey administered annually in over 7,200 organizations in 52 countries, representing the voices of over 11 million employees – the largest workplace survey in the world.

The focus of this research is on how trust in the workplace influences KPIs including:

- **Sales vs. budget** (total retail store sales vs. budget);
- **Sales per hour vs. prior year** (average hourly sales per store vs. prior year);
- **Units per transaction** (average number of specific items sold to each customer);
- **Total employee turnover** (percentages of voluntary and involuntary turnover combined); and
- **Customer service** (store-level customer service performance on key criteria assessed through a monthly mystery shopper program).

Overall Trust Index® and KPIs

The overall TI score is based on the average of employee ratings for all 58 standard statements comprising the TI. The TI provides a high-level picture of trust levels and quality of relationships in the workplace. The following charts illustrate the relationship between the TI and sales performance.

Overall Trust Index® and Sales vs. Budget

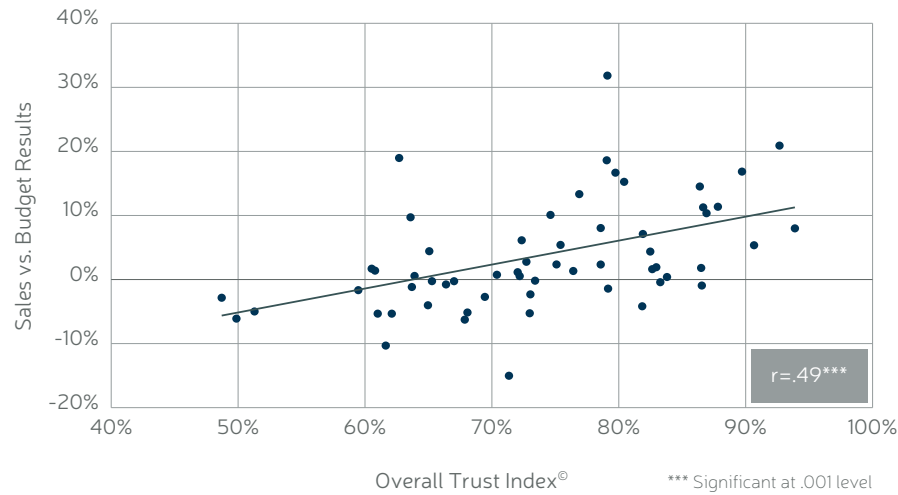


Figure 1: Each point on the chart represents a retail store's overall TI score and its corresponding KPI results.

Notwithstanding certain "outliers", the stronger the trust levels, the stronger the stores' performance on this KPI, i.e., sales vs. budget.

The .49 correlation between TI and this KPI is highly significant at the .001 level, i.e., occurring by chance only 0.1% of the time.

Overall Trust Index® and Sales per Hour vs. Last Year

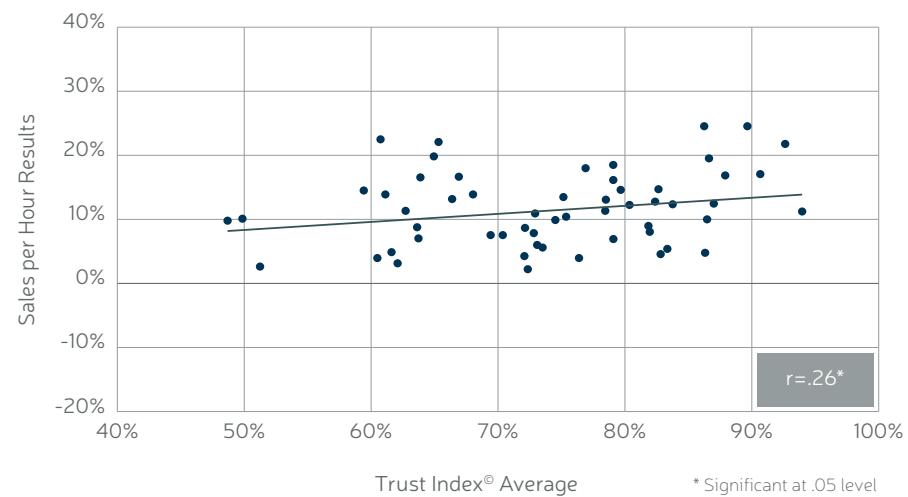


Figure 2: Although not as strongly correlated with trust as Sales vs. Budget, the relationship with sales productivity, i.e., average hourly sales per store vs. last year is also statistically significant.

The stronger the trust levels the stronger the stores' sales productivity.

The statistical strength of this .26 correlation is significant at the .05 level, i.e., occurring by chance only 5% of the time.

Overall Trust Index® and Sales KPIs

Store TI Quartile	TI Average	Sales vs. Budget	Sales per Hr. vs. Last Year
Q1	87%	7%	14%
Q2	79%	9%	12%
Q3	70%	-2%	10%
Q4	60%	0%	10%

Table 1: This table illustrates the business impact of TI/sales KPI correlations. The top TI quartile (Q1) stores achieve 7% **above** budget annual sales vs. on-budget performance for the bottom scoring TI quartile.

The top quartile stores further achieve 14% sales productivity gains over last year vs. only 10% for the bottom quartile stores.

These results translate into significant gains in sales performance as a function of higher overall trust levels in the workplace. For example, on a \$100 million annual sales budget, top quartile TI stores would contribute \$7 million more in sales than the bottom quartile stores. Growth in sales productivity would be 4% greater per hour in the top quartile TI stores.

Overall Rating as a Great Place to Work and KPIs

The final question in the Great Place to Work® TI standard employee survey assesses employee perceptions of their company as a great place to work overall. It is an important "barometer" of the general trust levels within the organization, taking everything into account.

Overall Workplace Rating and Sales vs. Budget

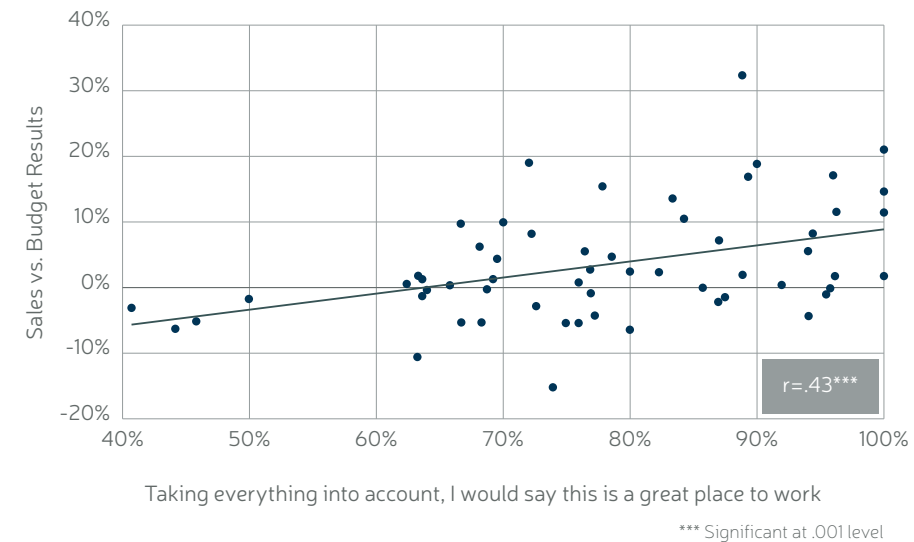


Figure 3: Here too we see a strong statistical relationship between employees' overall ratings of their companies as great workplaces and store sales vs. budget. The .43 correlation is significant at the .001 level.

Stores where employees feel strongest about their company as a great place to work generally tend to achieve stronger sales results.

Overall Workplace Rating and Sales per Hour vs. Last Year

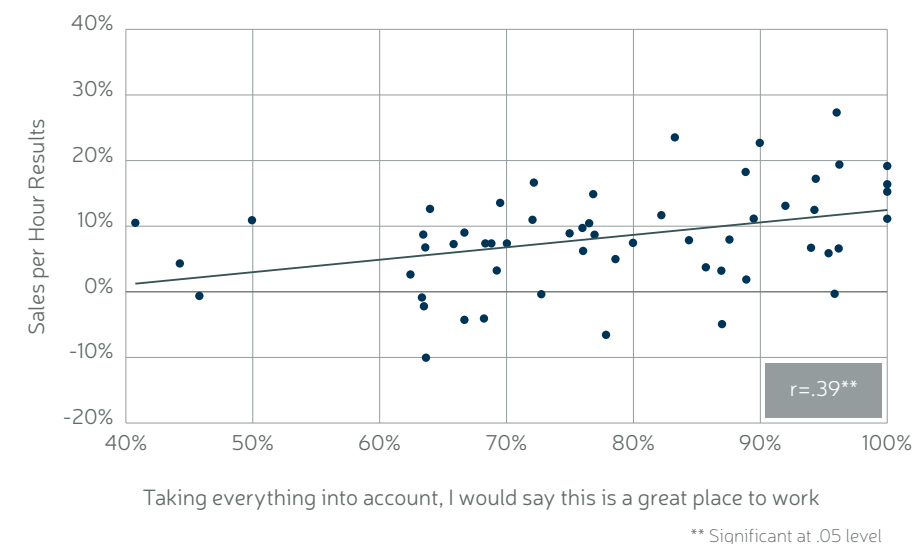


Figure 4: Stores where employees feel strongest about their company as a great place to work overall also tend to achieve stronger sales per hour vs. prior year.

This .39 correlation has only a 5% probability of occurring by chance.

Rating as a Great Place to Work and Sales KPIs

Store TI Quartile	TI Average	Sales vs. Budget	Sales per Hr. vs. Last Year
Q1	96%	8%	14%
Q2	84%	9%	7%
Q3	72%	1%	8%
Q4	59%	-1%	4%

Table 2: Here we can see that employees' perceptions of their company as a great place to work have a particularly powerful impact on sales KPIs.

The top quartile stores on this statement achieve greater sales productivity than the bottom quartile stores by 10 percentage points, and greater sales vs. budget by 9 percentage points.

These results translate into significant gains in sales performance as a function of stronger employee perceptions of their company as a great workplace.

Significant Relationships between Trust and KPIs

Our research identified over a third of TI statements that correlate with sales vs. budget at the .001 level of significance and many

others that are statistically significant at lower levels. Similar patterns were identified for sales per hour, although they were not quite as strong as they were for sales vs. budget.

Our research further identifies statistically significant correlations between various dimensions and elements of trust on the one hand and additional KPIs on the other. These correlations are summarized in the following table:

Rating as a Great Place to Work and Sales KPIs

Trust Index®	KPI	Correlation	Significance
CREDIBILITY	Sales vs. Budget	.50	.001
	Sales per Hour	.27	.05
Management is honest and ethical	Customer Service	.34	.01
Management delivers on commitments	Customer Service	.26	.05
People given lots of responsibility	Units per Transaction	.29	.01
RESPECT	Sales vs. Budget	.49	.001
	Sales per Hour	.30	.05
Physically safe workplace	Customer Service	.33	.01
Physically safe workplace	Illness	-.50	.05
Work/life balance encouraged	Illness	-.50	.05
Fast pace is our nature	Illness	.51	.05
Straight and honest feedback provided daily	Illness	-.50	.05
Flexibility to take off work when necessary	Employee Turnover	-.33	.01
FAIRNESS	Sales vs. Budget	.47	.001
	People treated fairly regardless of gender	Customer Service	.32
Receive fair share of profits	Customer Service	.25	.05
PRIDE	Sales vs. Budget	.47	.001
CAMARADERIE	Sales vs. Budget	.38	.001

Key Drivers Analysis and Workplace Transformation

The correlation analyses highlight those aspects of trust in the workplace and underlying management practices that are most important in influencing key business results. However, developing a strategic roadmap for workplace transformation requires much more. For one, organizations striving to become best workplaces need to systematically assess their key internal strengths and opportunities for development.

By analyzing employee perceptions of key culture-management practices and their correlations with KPIs, Great Place to Work® conducts Key Drivers Analysis (KDA) for guiding workplace transformation. Specifically, KDAs quantitatively identify:

- **Key workplace strengths** – Those aspects of the workplace that not only score highest on the TI relative to Best Workplaces benchmarks, but that also have the strongest impact on business results, i.e., KPIs, as determined by the correlation analysis; and,
- **Key workplace opportunities** – Those aspects of the workplace that score lowest vs. Best Workplaces benchmarks while also having the strongest impact on business results.

Culture Management Practices

From a management perspective, TI results can be analysed to guide organizations in achieving organizational objectives, motivating employees to give their personal best, and working together

as a family/team. These strategic aims are driven by the following nine management practice areas.

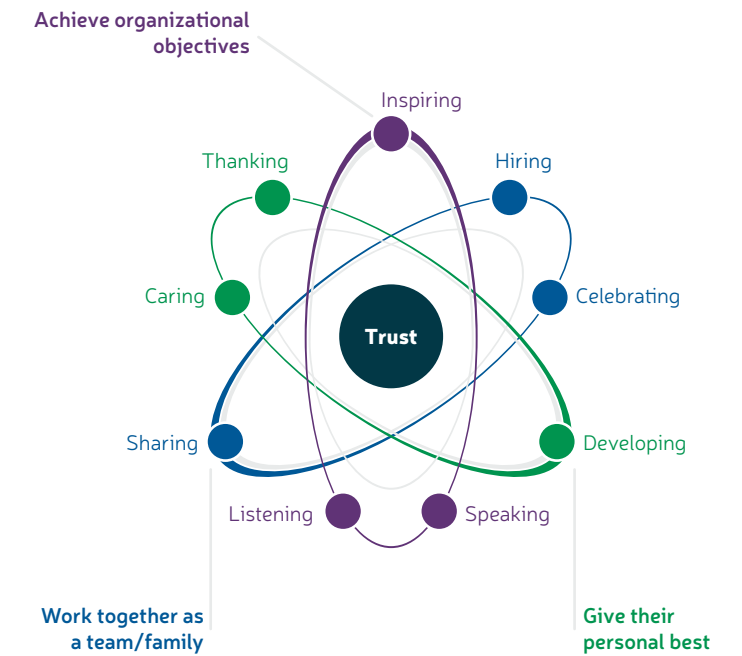


Figure 5

Applying this framework, the following two KDA charts present the TI results from a culture-management perspective.

Overall Rating and Culture-Management Practices

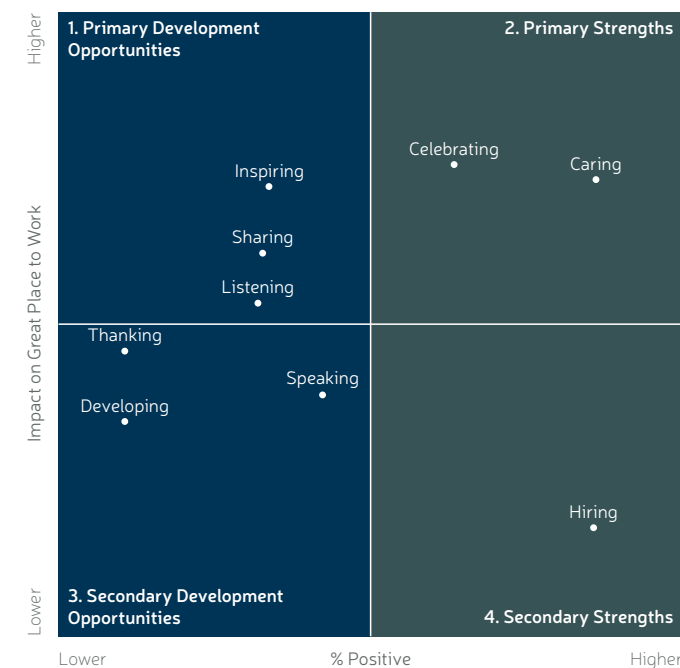


Figure 6: This KDA chart provides a high-level roadmap for strengthening employee perceptions of the Canadian retailer as a great place to work. For one, the company should maintain and build upon its primary strengths of celebrating and caring.

In parallel, it should focus on implementing actions needed to address its priority development opportunities, especially the primary ones of inspiring, sharing, and listening.

Sales vs. Budget and Culture-Management Practices

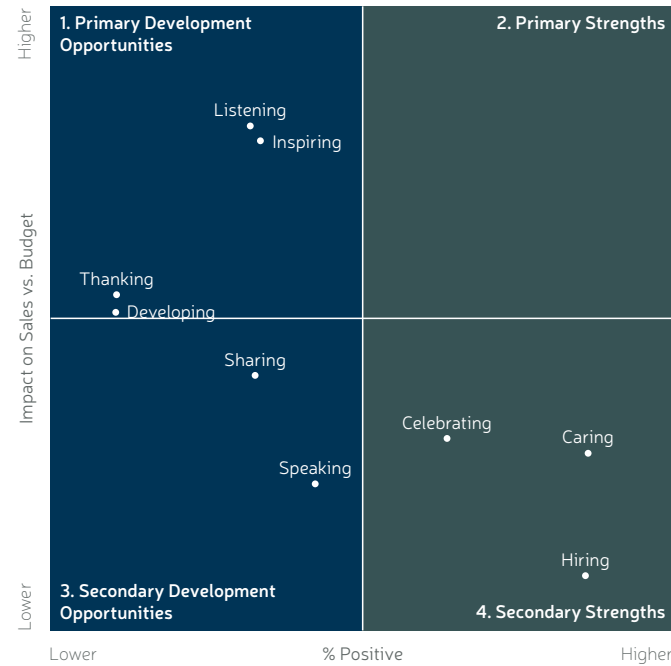


Figure 7: When it comes to sales vs. budget, no high-impact culture-management practices were identified as current strengths.

Indeed, those management practices having the greatest impact on sales growth score weakly on the TI and, hence, should be the primary focal points for development.

In essence, this organization's workplace transformation strategy should focus on shifting its primary development opportunities into primary strengths. Making this happen will require systematically strengthening its practices for listening, inspiring, thanking, and developing employees.

Drilling more deeply into the specific TI statements that comprise these culture-management practice areas, provides even greater insights into organizational priorities for building a great workplace and enhancing specific business results.

Key Takeaways

Our research emphatically underscores the business case for high-trust cultures by empirically linking trust in the workplace to key business results. It provides strategic insights into those specific aspects of trust and culture-management practices that are most significant in driving enhanced performance for different KPIs, including retail sales vs. budget, sales productivity, customer

service, units per transaction, illness in the workplace, and employee turnover.

However, what's most important for influencing one KPI is not necessarily the same for influencing another. Hence, a more sophisticated, "differential" approach vs. a "one-size-fits-all" approach is called for in driving various measures of business performance.

Our research further illustrates the power of KDA for change management. Specifically, KDA helps organizations to transform culture in those management-practice areas that are needed most in building a great workplace and in enhancing specific KPIs that are most significant to success. ■

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LEVERAGING LEGISLATION, EMPLOYEE CONCERNS, AND KNOWLEDGE GAPS TO BECOME A BETTER WORKPLACE

BY CORY BOYD

Legal

AS A LAWYER WHO SPECIALIZES in workplace investigations, I am often contacted by organizations when they have an issue in the workplace and are seeking to have the concern addressed so that they can “return to normal”. While such a response is often enough to meet legal and policy requirements, it can be a missed opportunity as well. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to work with and observe organizations that use challenges as opportunities for learning, allowing them to improve the workplace for their employees in a variety of ways.

FIND WAYS TO TURN OBLIGATIONS INTO OPPORTUNITIES

Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service) came into force on January 1, 2008 and became the first standard contained in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), S.O. 2005 to become a regulation. It created an obligation for organizations operating in Ontario to establish a policy designed to ensure that persons with disabilities were able to access goods and services in a manner that takes into account their disabilities. It also established a training requirement for employers relating to the regulation. While many organizations saw the regulation as a burden and sought to perform the minimum necessary to achieve compliance, others took the opportunity to provide their employees with a meaningful learning opportunity that would assist them in their interactions with customers.

One large organization with which I worked engaged their customers with disabilities in focus groups and other consultations in order to directly ask them how they could be better served. This information was then reflected in the organization’s policies and training programs, ensuring that their employees were optimally equipped to not only meet the expectations of the regulation, but also the specific needs of their customers. Another organization, a mom-and-pop shop with only a few employees and limited interactions with customers with disabilities, decided that, despite those limitations, they would have all of their employees receive detailed, in-person training to broaden their understanding of disability issues.

As new training deadlines approach under the second regulation flowing from AODA, employers should consider the associated requirements as genuine learning opportunities as well as opportunities to demonstrate their commitment to employee development and to better recruit and retain candidates with disabilities who, despite their talents, may feel excluded by other organizations.

TAKE CONCERNS SERIOUSLY, REGARDLESS OF THE SOURCE

Most organizations are well aware that when employees raise complaints under their policies, such as complaints of discrimination or harassment, they are expected to conduct an investigation to determine whether the allegations can be substantiated. However, not all issues are raised through the traditional means of a written complaint. When organizations are open to being made aware of concerns through non-traditional means, such as anonymous or whistleblower complaints, and they take action based on those concerns, the outcomes can be extremely positive.

Responding to anonymous complaints can be a challenge because it is often difficult to know where to start or how to design your process. With that said, there are assessment tools, such as employee surveys, focus groups, or interviews with random employee samples, that can help an organization determine whether there is any validity to the claims. I have used such tools with organizations that have received anonymous complaints about management behaviour or corporate processes, and these assessments sometimes uncovered a wealth of information that supported strong organizational and personnel changes, aligning the organization with its goals and values. Even when the process did not uncover specific evidence to support a complaint, a strong message was sent to employees that the organization takes employee concerns seriously and recognizes that there are reasons why employees might be wary of a more formal complaint process.

TAP INTO THE EXPERTISE THAT EXISTS WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION

When a good employer identifies a knowledge or skills gap within their organization, they will seek an outside expert to come in and provide the necessary training to their employees. However, a *great* employer will seek to integrate the existing knowledge of their employees into the training so as to ensure that the knowledge gap is filled with expertise that is relevant and realistic within the context of the organization.

One way of ensuring such training is effective is to take a proactive role in its development. An external trainer will often know a lot about their area of expertise, but have less knowledge about the organization’s resources, business practices, or sector-specific obligations. By working with the trainer in advance of the training session, an organization can ensure that the message is tailored to meet the specific needs of the employees, which will also ensure the employees are engaged by the session. I have facilitated training sessions where participants identified as subject matter

FOLLOWING AN INCIDENT OR AN INVESTIGATION, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THERE WERE FINDINGS OF A POLICY VIOLATION, IT CAN BE A MISTAKE TO ASSUME THAT THINGS WILL RETURN TO NORMAL..."

experts were called upon to deliver small sections of the material – an approach that was appreciated by the other participants and which helped them relate to the material. Seeking trainers who utilize a variety of pedagogical methods in their interactive sessions will also ensure employees get the most out their training.

A WORKPLACE WILL RARELY RESTORE ITSELF

Following an incident or an investigation, regardless of whether there were findings of a policy violation, it can be a mistake to assume that things will return to normal and that relationships will improve. Investigations, while often necessary, can be disruptive and lead to hard feelings or even factions within work teams. These feelings do not just go away once the investigation is complete. Organizations that actively manage a workplace restoration process can address such strife, clarify behavioural expectations, and improve the morale of the impacted team.

Following a complaint that was substantiated by an investigation, it is typical for the respondent to the complaint to face some form of discipline. Respondents are often required to review relevant policies before returning to work as well. While these actions can be useful, I have observed great successes where organizations have gone one step further, providing the respondent with one-on-one coaching to develop real strategies for preventing future incidents. While delivering these sessions, I have often noticed a pronounced difference in an employee's approach to returning to work because we developed specific steps for them to take should they find themselves in similar circumstances again. In some instances, coaching can also be offered to the complainant on a voluntary basis if it appears that they could use assistance in asserting their rights or navigating challenging situations.

Furthermore, organizations that wish to restore their workplaces may choose to bring the involved parties together for a facilitated discussion before asking them to work together again. Such meetings, typically voluntary for the complainants, can involve apologies, work planning, or strategies to diffuse future tension.

CONCLUSION

No workplace is ever free of problems, but the hallmark of a high-functioning organization is its willingness to take on challenges – whether they arise out of legislation, employee concerns, or knowledge gaps – and to turn those challenges into opportunities to develop their employees' skills and knowledge with the goal of improving the workplace experience. ■

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Step 3

Culture Audit. As part of this process, you will be required to complete a detailed questionnaire about your organization's people policies and practices.

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The Road to Workplace Success

HOW VW CREDIT CANADA CONTINUES TO MAKE THE GREAT PLACE TO WORK® LIST

With Staci Carreiro

Interview

Although offering customers affordable solutions to finance or lease their Volkswagen or Audi purchases is the core of VW Credit Canada, Inc.'s business, they are the first to admit it is not the only component of their success as a company. Thrice honoured by the Great Place to Work® Institute, VW Credit Canada, Inc. has shown they understand the importance of gaining and leveraging

employee trust for improved business results, and as a client of Adecco's, they were happy to share their insights with us. We spoke with Staci Carreiro, Manager, Human Resources and Training at VW Credit Canada, Inc., to learn how they achieved – and maintain – their status as one of Canada's Best Workplaces.

A high level of employee trust is the common denominator among all Great Place to Work® winners. Trust is comprised of credibility of management, the level on which employees feel they are respected, and employees' perceptions of fairness in the workplace. Which of these elements was the most challenging to optimize and why? Furthermore, what actions did you take to improve it?

The element of fairness is the most challenging. Whether something is deemed fair or not is determined by the individual; it is not something that can be easily measured or observed. However, having good communication between employees and managers is critical. By communicating in an open and transparent manner, and allowing for employees to ask questions, you get an exchange of ideas and an opportunity to address any misperceptions or misunderstandings.

Early on in our Great Place to Work® journey, we conducted employee focus groups. We wanted to gain a better understanding of the results and what the employees were perceiving. We noticed that a lot of the issues brought forward related to communication. We discovered how misunderstandings can easily turn into situations that are perceived as unfair.

In response to these findings, we have implemented quarterly town hall meetings that allow employees a question-and-answer period to address any concerns or queries that they may have. Additionally, for those that do not wish to ask their question in front of their peers, we have created an anonymous survey link where

employees can post their questions prior to the meeting. Finally, we have established an Employee Advisory Committee, whose members include a team of employees from all areas of the business to meet on a regular basis to discuss any issues in the workplace. Employees can also take part in our Quarterly Employee Roundtable, where they discuss issues related to the workplace directly with the President and CEO.

Although you've achieved success with all three elements of trust, which one do you feel stands out the most for your organization and why?

The key is communication, but management must also be seen as credible and able to lead the organization. Employees must feel that their managers have confidence in them to do a good job rather than feel they have to look over their shoulders. They must also feel that their management team is competent in leading the business. We have an aggressive strategy to be the number one automotive finance company in Canada. To achieve this goal, a detailed strategy has been communicated to all employees and key activities have been cascaded down and linked to their yearly objectives.

Management must also be approachable and be ready to listen should employees have concerns they wish to voice. One of the first things I discovered when I joined this organization is that titles and position do not interfere with openness and approachability. That means everyone is approachable, all the way up to senior management.

“We have a clear strategy for the future to be number one, not only from a business perspective, but also from an employee perspective.”

What key best practice do you feel sets your organization apart when it comes to nurturing employee trust?

Employee feedback is critical to us and helps shape initiatives and policies that affect our employees' workplaces. Employee surveys are reviewed and action plans are created. We ask for their feedback and want them to know that we want to act upon it wherever we can. Having employees take part in these conversations and come up with ideas to improve their workplaces demonstrates that we are all in this together; that we're in a partnership. We want to reinforce that their opinions matter.

We have created an Employee Advisory Committee that looks at the Great Place to Work® Trust Index® results in depth. The committee has recently made some recommendations based on their analysis of the data and have presented them to our Senior Leadership Team. We are working with this team on reviewing and updating our current employee recognition program, addressing some of the concerns raised with regard to the award and the selection process.

How does your management team foster feelings of respect and collaboration among the teams and individuals they manage?

Having an open-door policy allows for open dialogue, irrespective of a manager's title or position within the organization. Town hall meetings, along with the Quarterly Employee Roundtable discussions, also encourage open communication. Within our Ajax location, group lunches have been organized for the entire office, which allows for everyone to come together as a team. It also acts as an informal platform for leaders to get to know their

teams as well as other employees. By allowing for opportunities to communicate and exchange ideas, we feel the level of collaboration increases and that employees are provided with a sense that what they say matters to the organization.

Please provide us with an example of an action or initiative taken by just one employee that was eventually championed by your organization, adopted into your policy, and/or became part of your organization's standard practice.

In our performance reviews, half of the overall result is based on the attainment of business objectives, and the other half is based on what we call “strategic behaviours”. Not only do we evaluate what you accomplish, but also the *way* you accomplished your objectives. One employee came to see me one day and shared with me that he felt the strategic behaviours could not be evaluated objectively and that, therefore, it was not clear how the evaluation process could be seen as fair. My sense was that this individual's opinion was not isolated, so we created team action meetings around how to evaluate these strategic behaviours. First, we asked the managers from both of our locations to meet and discuss what these behaviours meant to them. Once we had a common understanding of this process, we created an example of how employees in their areas could demonstrate this behaviour in their everyday work. We then met up with each team and went through the same exercise. The manager then became the subject matter expert and evaluated each of the examples provided by the teams. This exercise generated some great discussion and helped to clarify and manage expectations. At the end of each team session, each group received a summary of the examples provided and that document could be used for end-of-year discussion as a tool to calibrate their performance reviews. We received positive feedback and, anec-

dotally, we heard from some managers about how this process has facilitated the performance review discussions.

How has building trust in your organization impacted your business results?

The organization participates annually in the J. D. Power Dealer Satisfaction Survey, which measures the satisfaction of our dealer partners. This year, for the first time in its history, VW Credit Canada placed number one in the floorplan financing category and number two in the retail financing and leasing categories. These results can be directly attributed to the efforts of our employees. Having an engaged team working towards a common goal and trusting in one another to get the job done has allowed us to achieve these unprecedented accomplishments.

What changes have you noticed in your workforce since making the improvements that helped land you on the Great Place to Work® list?

There is an increased sense of pride and passion. It was there before, but I feel that it is more palpable now. We have a clear strategy for the future to be number one, not only from a business perspective, but also from an employee perspective. Great Places to Work® has allowed us to focus efforts on improving our workplace by providing some direct and honest feedback from the employees. In the past three years, we have been fortunate enough to be a part of the *50 Best Workplaces in Canada*. Employees want to contribute to this effort and strive to be the best. It has become part of our corporate DNA.

When another organization also makes the Great Place to Work® list, how does that influence your perception of them and your desire to do business with/cooperate with them?

VW Credit Canada wants to partner with other organizations that make the list. It is important because Great Place to Work® is the benchmark when it comes to employee engagement and satisfaction. Those that make the list are truly committed to creating a great workplace, and that translates into the way they manage their employees. Great workplaces create an engaged workforce and that is who we want to partner with in business. Adecco is a great example of one such long-standing partner. ■

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