



HAPPY
CULTURE.
HUMAN
CAPITAL

5

THINGS BUSINESSES SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT IN 2026

YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND ROADMAP

MULTI-GEN WORKPLACE

FOSTER A WORKPLACE CULTURE BUILT ON OPENNESS AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING

By 2030, G7 workforces will span more generations than ever, from over-55s to a rapidly growing Gen Z. Despite their differences, one expectation is universal: flexibility. Today, work-life balance matters more than pay for the majority of workers worldwide.



TRANSFORMATION

EQUIP MANAGERS AND DISTRIBUTE TRANSFORMATION OWNERSHIP ACROSS TEAMS

Build adaptive, trust-based cultures that share transformation ownership across teams ensuring collective responsibility. Managers must become coaches - empathetic, communicative and skilled at enabling change.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

USE AI AND REAL-TIME INTELLIGENCE TO ADAPT PLANS QUICKLY

AI plus real-time intelligence turns strategy from a fixed document into a living system. Humans focus on judgement, creativity, ethics, and vision — while AI handles pattern detection, alerts, and optimisation.



WELLBEING

PRIORITIZE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT, FLEXIBLE WORKING AND RAPID DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As workforces become more diverse in age, energy and ambition, flexibility and wellbeing are no longer perks – they're performance drivers. The organisations that win will be those that humanise productivity, designing work around how people actually live, work and define success.



STORYTELLING

GO BEYOND THE METRICS

By 2026, organisations will move beyond treating eNPS as the definitive measure of employee experience and instead use it as a starting point for deeper insight. Workplace complexity is accelerating: Five generations, AI disruption and evolving work patterns demand more nuance. eNPS alone is outdated – the future insight lies in context, stories and the behaviours behind the score.



STORYTELLING AS STRATEGY

Internal storytelling is critical for clarity, connection and purpose - leaders who turn plans into narratives will thrive in 2026. Here's how to tell your business story to enhance engagement



◆ Storytelling isn't just for customers

As work becomes more complex and employees seek meaning, the organisations that thrive will be those that turn strategy into story – creating clarity, connection and belief from the inside out.

◆ Internal storytelling is essential

Organisations are now applying storytelling techniques internally – branding strategies, initiatives, and transformations the way they once did marketing campaigns.

STORYTELLING



◆ Complexity at work drives the need for a narrative

With rapid change in technology, structures, and strategies, employees need stories to understand what's happening and why it matters.

◆ Employees are searching for meaning

Since the pandemic, over half of workers have re-evaluated the purpose of their work. Storytelling helps link daily activity to a broader sense of purpose.



◆ Storytelling fills clarity gaps

If employees struggle to answer:

Why we exist

What we're trying to achieve

How we'll get there

...there's likely a storytelling gap that needs addressing.

◆ Internal communications are underperforming

Only about half of employees find internal comms clear or helpful, presenting a major opportunity to improve engagement through better storytelling.



◆ Marketing principles should be used internally

Applying external storytelling principles – clarity, emotion, relevance, creativity – can significantly strengthen internal communications and alignment.

◆ Storytelling will be a core leadership skill

By 2026, leaders who can turn strategy into story will outperform others, helping employees not just understand plans, but believe in them.

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a bright pink sleeveless dress, is walking from left to right in the foreground. The background is a wall covered in various posters and photos. One prominent poster features the word "TRUST" in white capital letters on a black background. Another poster has the text "I WANT" and "the feels". There are also several black and white photographs of people's faces and other abstract images pinned to the wall.

**STRATEGY
CREATES
DIRECTION.**

**STORY
CREATES
BELIEF.**

FINAL WORD

**“BUILD.
OWN.
SCALE.
STAY HUMAN.”**

— Happy Culture 2026