

Hey! What's New? 2024-106

Ditch “Best Practices” in Favour of “Next Practices”

Best practices no longer go far enough, say Kelsey Raymond and Kendra Okposo in a recent article in *Chief Executive*. “Next practices do. Based on our research into organizational health and future-readiness and our work with large-scale enterprises across industries, we recommend you adopt six new ways of thinking, doing and excelling to remain future relevant.”

1. From setting direction to adapting direction. “Your job as a leader may include setting and approving plans, but great leaders never view any plan as final. Great leaders recognize that while every good plan has a clear vision and goals, it must also have built-in flexibility to take advantage of emerging opportunities and sidestep potential risks. This is the act of planning itself, the ability to be adaptive and iterative and recognize and mitigate potential risks, which is a greater predictor of success than the plan you have written down. To ensure your plans are adaptable without losing a clear sense of direction, keep your vision in mind. Having a guiding North Star assures that your plans stay agile but don’t deviate from your overall purpose.”

2. From leading others to leading with others. To be future relevant is to create conditions for employees to do their best work unfettered by conventional hierarchies. According to the authors, “this shift doesn’t necessarily require moving to a completely flat organization. It does mean that, as a leader, it’s your job to create the conditions so that employees at all levels – not just your directs – are empowered to contribute ideas based on their views, thus seeing themselves as leaders regardless of title or role.”

3. From pushing down decisions to building shared commitments. Does every team member understand their decision-making authority, or do decisions tend to flow from the top down? The authors advise “democratizing decision making – with the right information and guardrails – allows your company to move fast and do the right things for the business. Future relevant organizations lean into the power of data and insights to empower decision making while creating accountability.”

4. From teaming to collaborating in the ecosystem. Forrester found that 79% of teams are siloed. “If your workforce falls into this group, you’ll have trouble functioning efficiently or becoming future-relevant. Think of your organization as a body of loosely connected networks. For the organization to be healthy, all systems must be able to work in tandem. In other words, you must tear down barriers to communication between people and departments, internally and externally, while building the conditions for trust. As trust grows across your ecosystem, you should begin to see partnerships form in uncommon places. These relationships will help your workforce shift to a larger network rather than as small team units.”

5. From developing talent to accelerating talent. Professional development is now table stakes for competitive employers, particularly since 70% of professionals admit they’re unprepared for the future of work. The authors advise that, “beyond routinely upskilling and reskilling your employees, you must consider other ways to prioritize their personal goals and humanity. This means providing fair talent processes, flexible career maps and the assertion that employees don’t need to sacrifice their well-being to be successful. In exchange, you’ll see lower turnover

intentions and higher job satisfaction, motivation and engagement. Employees know they are valued for their diverse perspectives and backgrounds instead of having to 'fit in' or assimilate into a career path or culture.”

Such practices, they say, “also lead to significant organizational outcomes, including high motivation and engagement among team members, which naturally enhance efficiency and productivity. Moreover, by promoting a culture that values each individual’s contributions and well-being, organizations are likely to experience lower attrition rates and a heightened sense of psychological safety, fostering a more resilient and adaptive workforce.”

6. From integrating systems to simplifying systems. Business is complex enough. Why muddy the waters with complicated processes? Remember that simple isn’t synonymous with simplistic. Raymond and Okposo point out that “simplifying systems involves a continuous cycle of evaluating, investing, sunseting and reevaluating the systems and technologies you use. Like every forward-leaning approach, it’s never really finished.”

For more, go to [Ditch 'Best Practices' In Favor Of 'Next Practices' \(chiefexecutive.net\)](https://chiefexecutive.net),