



LEADING FOR RENEWAL:

Achieving high performance in times of turbulence and change

The turbulence of the last two years has triggered a wave of social, environmental and sectoral changes with no sign of abating. In particular, the changing needs and expectations of markets, clients, regulation and people, demand that organisations and leaders continue to renew and pivot at speed.

Leading for renewal describes the skills and behaviours that create a sustainable inclusive organisation where people thrive and contribute their best.

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Workplaces can be very unhealthy environments – if there was any time to change the way we work, now is the time to do it.

PROF. CHRISTINA MASLACH

When employees find their work to be meaningful, their performance improves by

33%

they are

75%

more committed to their organisation, and are

49%

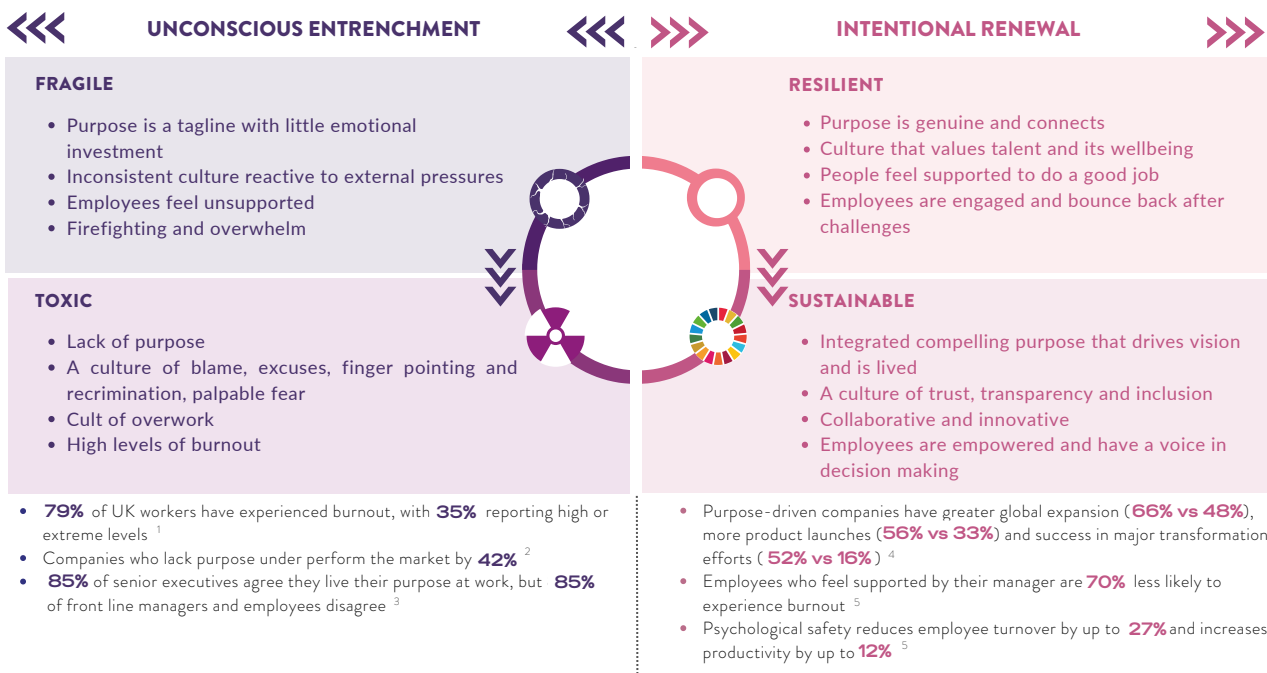
less likely to leave.

Source: McKinsey Insight; Making work meaningful from the C-suite to the frontline, 2021

The pace of change and disruption inevitably means that some individuals are living with personal stress and pressures. When combined with business uncertainty, intensified by disruptive factors such as ESG and AI, this can trigger fragility in teams. If leaders react by tightening command and control protocols and focussing on process over people, problems are amplified and show up as reduced safety and connection and increased team toxicity. The result: the capacity to innovate, adapt and respond effectively is diminished.

CHANGE LEADERSHIP TO INITIATE NEW ORGANISATIONAL LIFECYCLES

In times of uncertainty, it is unsurprising if leaders default and double down to utilise ‘what they know’. However, we encourage leaders to self assess based on the question: Is the way you are leading your team creating unconscious entrenchment or intentional renewal? Our model (below) frames the context of both.



CONSEQUENCES OF UNCONSCIOUS ENTRENCHMENT

When process continues to be prioritised over people, unconscious entrenchment exasperates the three top reasons McKinsey⁶ have identified why people leave a job without another one in hand, namely:

1. Uncaring leaders
2. Unsustainable work performance expectations
3. Lack of career development and advancement potential.

WHAT LEADERSHIP FOR RENEWAL LOOKS AND FEELS LIKE

At its heart, intentional renewal is the mindset with which leaders approach change, combined with relentless micro acts of leadership behaviours. The critical enabler of intentional renewal is the employee experience as talent drives innovation which is, in turn, the primary driver of organisational profitability and sustainability.

Employees with an overall positive experience were **8x** more likely to stay, and **4x** more committed than those with a negative experience

Source: McKinsey article; This time it's personal: Shaping the 'new possible' through employee experience, Sept 2021

OUR APPROACH TO EFFECTIVE CHANGE LEADERSHIP INTEGRATES HEAD, HEART AND GUT

What effective change leaders do is prioritise personalised human care equally with other more traditional leadership traits. The behaviours they skilfully display are a balance of head, heart and gut leadership.



HEAD: To learn, understand and create

Strengths: problem-solving, analytical and creative thought

- Co-create agile inclusive systems for effective team working
- Prioritise personal and collective learning as part of business rhythms and ways of working



HEART: To connect, care and love

Strengths: compassion, building trust, values-led

- Demonstrate openness, empathy, and strong listening skills
- Personal and engaging - rather than corporate, formal, top-down and broadcast



GUT: To be safe and strong

Strengths: courage, grounding, personal power

- Personally resilient and builds resilience in others
- Are 'power neutral' and engage in and host multi-way dialogue

Change leadership is an every day practice that strengthens psychological safety which enables people to thrive. Leaders pay close attention to all aspects of their people so they feel seen and valued. How leaders do this is in the daily micro acts of coaching, connecting, caring and inspiring their people.

Our change leadership model (below) describes the four areas that require relentless attention along with one illustration of the daily behavioural practices that effective change leaders employ.



If you would like to know more about our approach to change leadership and leading for renewal in uncertain times, contact us.

ABOUT WDI:

Our vision is to harness energy and intention in a way that sparks positive change with individuals, teams and organisations. We support leaders at key points of business transition through our behavioural insights and ability to create high trust, connected, purposeful teams. Our clients achieve sustainable high performance because they've learnt how to thrive together.

To learn more contact:

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Reference points

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- 3 McKinsey article: Help your employees find purpose - or watch them leave, April 2021
- 4 Forbes.com article: The Power of Purpose and Why It Matters Now, August 2021
- 5 Gallup.com article: Employee burnout, Part 1: The 5 Main Causes
- 6 McKinsey quarterly: Gone for now, or gone for good? How to play the new talent game and win back workers, March 2022