



Human.
Resources.
Consulting.

May Newsletter



May 3, 2021

Well hey, May!

Here's a stunning statistic: A recent Paychex [survey](#) found that 33% of its respondents said they are considering quitting due to a lack of empathy from their employer.

Another trend we're watching is the YOLO (you only live once) economy, documented in this [New York Times article](#). Rather than devote themselves to stable, career-building jobs, many burned-out millennials (and others) are ditching the security of corporate America to pursue passion projects, or are simply rethinking the way they want to live and work.

The pandemic has exacerbated and accelerated these trends, and leaders tasked with hiring, managing and retaining a motivated and productive workforce will need to respond with empathy. But how do we define that in the context of work?

Empathy is a form of active listening and facilitation. It requires leaders to put ego aside and understand what the employee is really trying to say. Whether it's a personal crisis, an excuse for poor performance, or wonderful and exciting news, there is inevitably an opportunity that will come out of the discussion. The opportunity could be a way to hold the employee accountable, a brainstorming session on how to fix a problem, or it could simply be a listening session in which an employee needs to be heard and understood.

Keep in mind that having empathy does *not* mean you have to take on the role of therapist, or that professional boundaries don't exist.

Empathetic leaders create a culture of caring for each employee as a whole person and not just as a worker generating output. An empathetic culture fosters employee development, allows fresh ideas to surface and ultimately achieves better employee retention rates. But don't worry if none of this comes naturally to you; empathy can be

acquired and nurtured with practice.

Here are some behaviors, submitted by the KMA team, that can improve the employee experience and enhance your workplace culture:

- Be a curious and active listener. This [Ted Talk](#) is a great place to start.
- Take time to observe the people in your orbit and notice changes in attitude, demeanor or behavior.
- Schedule regular check-ins with team members and start by asking: How are you doing? What do you need from me?
- When safe to do so, pursue more face-to-face interactions to enhance the quality of your communications.
- Be genuine and show your employees that they are valued and that you care about their wellbeing.
- Put yourself in others' shoes and consider how you would want to be treated in a similar situation.
- Be supportive of those managing difficult personal challenges, while also maintaining boundaries for your own wellbeing.
- Acknowledge that it's the people behind the work that matters; it is not only about being the most productive team, but having a group of people who feel good about themselves and the work they are doing.
- Be flexible whenever possible and not rigidly rule-oriented.
- Be open-minded in your thinking and decision-making.

Brené Brown says it best: "Empathy is simply listening, holding space, withholding judgment, emotionally connecting, and communicating that incredibly healing message of *you're not alone*."

And since you're here, you're a friend of KMA and that means *you're definitely not alone*. Please reach out if we can help with any HR issues you may be grappling with.

Thanks for reading!

Kim Anania
President and CEO
KMA Human Resources

Here's what else is going on at KMA

Webinar: Why You Really Do Need a Compensation Strategy

Wednesday, May 19th, 12:00-1:00

In this conversation-style webinar, Rhoda McVeigh will discuss compensation strategies with Kari Meillat, focusing on the importance of market data insights, performance and merit process design, variable pay/incentive programs, and why internal transparency relating to compensation changes is imperative in today's employee-centric landscape. Rhoda will pose the questions, but you'll have the chance to ask some, too!

[Register here](#)

She's Brilliant! Contributors

[Shima Kabirigi, Program Officer at Maine Initiatives](#)

[Mandy Levine, Owner, Mandy Levine Consulting LLC](#)

From the KMA HR Blog

[HR Checklist for Hiring Your First Employee](#)

[How to Create Effective Diversity Training](#)

Podcast

Portland Maine Business Podcast with Shelby Turcotte: Kim recently sat down with Shelby Turcotte to discuss the journey that is KMA Human Resources. [Listen here.](#)

Maine HR Convention 2021

KMA is sponsoring the [Maine HR Convention](#) again this year (May 10, 12, 14). As always, there's so much rich HR content to explore and connections to make. If you're attending, please do stop by our virtual booth to say hello, and enter to win one of our three great prizes. See you there!

Visit our website

Follow us on LinkedIn