Why Technology Is Key To Building A Destination Workplace.

Every organization wants to be known as an employer of choice — the kind of company where talented employees wish to work. But in reality, building a destination workplace is incredibly difficult and nuanced. It involves nearly every aspect of HR, from pay and benefits to training, diversity, transparent communication from leadership and so much more. It includes everything that makes up the employment relationship. It’s not so much a tangible thing as it is a particular type of psychological environment.

But there are some tangible factors incorporated into designing a destination workplace, and one increasingly critical factor is technology.

My organization’s new survey on the future of work makes it crystal clear a company’s reputation as a digital leader has a huge bearing on its ability to attract and retain talent. Forty percent of survey respondents said they’ve left a job where they didn't have access to the latest digital tools, and 58% said they would need to find a new job to level up their digital skills.

Today’s employees want to work in a digitally-savvy organization — meaning, employers must implement technologies for a more connected, efficient and modern workplace, as well as investing in strategies for training or re-skilling workers to be digitally competent.
**Making Digital Part Of The Experience**

Consider technology the new ping pong table. For years, having the latest digital tools was indicative of a great office environment, and it still is. Technology is a new means to create a framework to engage employees and is experiential, and employers need to tap into it.

We did just that in our newest branch opening, where we mixed human-centered design and technology. A virtual assistant greets and connects guests with the person they’re meeting or information they’re seeking. Interactive kiosks use artificial intelligence (AI) and gamification software to help job seekers uncover well-matched career opportunities. The branch also features hoteling options with communal and individual workspaces.

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This kind of flexible IT infrastructure and layout is becoming more fundamental to the work experience, as agile and remote working grow. In Capital One’s 2017 Work Environment Survey, 85% of professional office workers called a flexible workplace "important," and 82% said their best ideas come while working in flexible spaces.

While most companies today use digital tools for work in the simplest terms — virtual meetings, chatting, collaboration — they need to think bigger. Popular technologies like wearables for wellness are easy and fun to implement. And many of the most modern employers are already bringing AI, virtual reality and augmented reality (AR) into their workflow. One example is Boeing’s use of Google Glass to build planes faster, which has the potential to attract talent, as it’s an opportunity
that professionals might not otherwise have to use innovative technology.

While not every company needs to simulate a process or environment with AR, actively looking for ways to integrate immersive technology is a huge, untapped opportunity to turn day-to-day work processes into employee experiences. Since the Capital One survey found 63% don’t feel innovation is present enough in their current workplace design, this is an opportunity not to be missed.

**Getting People Comfortable With A Tech-Enabled Workplace**

Interactive technologies will be central to engaging people at work and enhancing their creativity and productivity. AI will improve the level of work people do by automating more mundane, administrative tasks. But none of this works without providing the training for employees to acquire new digital skills.

Our study also revealed that 58% of workers do have access to the latest digital tools, but their employers may be lacking in training efforts. AI and automation can be a scary thing for employees if they feel threatened rather than empowered by it. Even office technology upgrades that are more entertainment-based or physical — like a virtual assistant — can go unused if not properly introduced.

As you bring new digital tools into your office environment and experience, setting aside appropriate training resources so people can use them to their fullest is key. They don’t all have to be top-down training sessions. Tap into current employees' existing technology skills
to lead lunch-and-learn sessions or demos during all-staff meetings on how to use your latest and greatest technology.

Destination workplaces aren’t just where people go to earn a paycheck. What makes them a destination is the fact that they deliver an intangible experience. Technology — and the appropriate training for it — should be part of the many components making up the experience, and early adopters will have an upper hand in achieving the sought-after “employer of choice” title.