

Leadership guru rules out office hours

The pandemic moved us out of the office and into our homes. But the kitchen chair will not shape the future of the work force, according to Linda Hammarstrand, lecturer, and leadership inspirer and here she shares with us the three things that will: “time, place and value”.

“The employers that offer their employees a hybrid workplace will be the winners. Working everyday between 8 and 5 in the office is a thing of the past” says Linda Hammarstrand, lecturer, author and an inspirer in leadership and company culture.

At the same time, she believes it is impossible to develop in the same pace as the rest of the world from your kitchen chair.

“You need people to grow”.

Linda Hammarstrand, a Gothenburg resident, and owner of Culture Academy, a company offering lectures and education in how to develop a passionate and high performing company culture. Something she has a lot of experience in, her last title being Director of passion at Clarion Hotel, owned by Peter Stordalen.

“My promise to them was to make Clarion the most attractive workplace in the Nordic. Something I humbly admit we achieved.”

But it was during her 20 years working for Stena, that sparked her interest in company culture and where it grew strong. One of her missions there was to communicate the owner Dan Sten Olssons business philosophy to the 22 000 employers around the world.

But if the kitchen chair won't shape the future of the work force, then what will? Linda Hammarstrand points out three areas that we need to focus on to stay attractive: time, place, and value.

Time is about balance and meaning.

“Work will be more like a task to be solved, rather than something we do between 8 and 5 and self-leadership will be fundamental. Work life balance and time for our own well-being will be essential. We are a lot more sensitive for things that steal our time but doesn't bring meaning”, she says and brings up statistic showing that half of the people who had the opportunity to work from home during the pandemic, don't want to go back to the office.

“A lot of people got used to working in their tracksuit bottoms and they don't want to go back to the office as it lacks meaning. That's bad”.

The workplace should be likened to a charging station, says Linda Hammarstrand, a place where you go to charge energy and share newfound knowledge.

“We have to work hard to convince our employees that it will always be worth their time going into the office, you can’t afford to have bad and boring leaders anymore. The office will be a place where creativity is born. We talk a lot about networking today, it has become as important as breathing. But what we really should devote our time to is more compassionate networks, where people meet up with no real intention. To listen and be curious teaches us to be empathetic. And if you have those qualities, you will trump the future.

She looks back at the late -80s.

“We measured intelligence and thought that was the answer to the challenges of the future. The more university credits we employed, the better the company would do. But time showed us that credits wasn’t enough. What would we do with all the credits if people didn’t know how to cooperate and share their knowledge?”

IQ has been replaced by EQ and soon Linda Hammarstrand will go to the USA to study CQ, curiosity quotient.

“I will learn how to create a curious organisation that breeds both engagement and innovation”.

The third focus that will shape the future of the work force is value.

“We must ask ourselves what our organisation is the answer to, and what value we must create to be successful. It’s no longer only about being the best in the world, but the best *for* the world. And it’s no longer about being the best in the team, but the best *for* the team. About completing each other and work together – not just working at the same time”.

Leadership used to be about knowledge and power. But leadership today is about endurance, says Linda Hammarstrand.

“Changing a company culture is not done by lectures, it is done by leading emotionally. To have that tough conversation, to be visible in the workplace, to inspire, to care how we are and not how we are performing. To understand that soft values create hard values. In the end, It is the company culture that shows at the bottom line.