

Coursera: Thriving through a pandemic

For organizations large and small, rapid growth presents all involved with a punch list of challenges to be managed and overcome. Add a global pandemic into the mix, and the potential for disruption can thwart even the best-laid plans—all while exacting a toll on employees' emotional and social wellbeing.

For Coursera, COVID-chaos showed up in multiple forms. First, the pandemic drove most learning online, intensifying the growing global demand for Coursera's platform and services. At the same time, Coursera's already distributed workforce had to remain highly productive despite all the added challenges of working from home.

Coursera quickly realized the need to bolster employee wellbeing with the kinds of individualized support that could effectively counter these challenges. For Jeff Maggioncalda, Coursera's CEO, this meant going beyond traditional approaches to employee "wellness" to something more profound: purpose.

A Rapidly Growing Technology Company

Key Challenges:

Reconnecting employees with purpose, building resilience, and reducing burnout

Solution:

A CEO and leadership-inspired initiative to reconnect the growing global workforce with Coursera's purpose while enhancing employee resilience.

OVER
50% Program participation

54% Improvement in
resilience anxiety
reduction
(book of business)

60% Engagement in life for
those at risk of burnout
(book of business)

1 Thriving through a pandemic

As luck would have it, Kumanu CEO Vic Strecher -- in his role as a Professor at the University of Michigan -- had just launched an online course about living with purpose...on Coursera. In Vic and Kumanu, Jeff recognized a partner who could get at the deeper emotional needs that, independent of circumstances, can motivate enhanced individual wellbeing and organizational performance. Kumanu manages this through its customizable software platform and via a consultative process that partners with customers to uncover new and creative ways to throttle up employee engagement and success.

It all started with a global town hall led by Jeff and Vic. C-Suite involvement from the get-go can play a crucial role in driving organizational buy-in for any new initiative. Recognizing this, the two CEOs opened up by discussing the role purpose has played in each of their lives, as well as the broader promise purposeful living holds for all who embrace it.

Over the ensuing months, this collaboration led to the rollout of several shared initiatives, including:

- Introduction of Kumanu's Purposeful Experience across the enterprise including offices in multiple countries
- Each member of senior leadership modeling purpose and empowering

people to cultivate and find their purpose in their work, through personal stories shared over Coursera's own Rhyme platform - a cutting edge collaborative learning technology

- Leaders and teams crafting and sharing work purposes using an interactive platform
- Integration of the Purposeful Experience into new employee onboarding and mid-year reviews
- Rollout of a toolkit to help managers jumpstart team conversations
- Launch of a portal for sharing purpose-related resources and activities
- Creation of an internal campaign promoting the program company-wide
- Daily delivery of Purposeful tips sent to all employees

With Executive leadership support and Kumanu's comprehensive communications strategies, leadership was delighted with incredibly high interest and uptake with over 50% of the global employee population signing up for Purposeful within the first month.

In March 2021, Coursera expanded its relationship with Kumanu to continue to meet the needs of its growing workforce.

2 Positive Proof

Given the powerful global town-hall launch and learning how employees work directly contributed to the immediate success of Vic's Purpose in Life MOOC (created for University of Michigan,) helped re-establish a sense of meaningful work for many employees and drove interest in using Purposeful. Employee use also helped contribute to Kumanu's book of business results of 54% improvement in resilience and 60% of those at risk for burnout increased their engagement with life.

3 What's Missing in your Wellbeing Lineup?

In a survey of 494 employers with 6.44 million workers, Willis Towers Watson found that less than one-third believe their wellness programs have been effective in supporting employees during the pandemic. Clearly, something is missing across the standard mix of wellness programs.

Strong indicators point to purpose as being that missing element. Research and analysis conducted by The Harris

Poll and Kumanu has surfaced a new model of wellbeing where purpose serves as a catalyst for greater emotional self-regulation, which in turn, builds enhanced levels of resilience. In particular, this new statistical model positively predicts improved emotional wellbeing, stronger engagement, and increased connection and commitment while being strongly associated with diminished levels of anxiety, depression, and sleeplessness.

4 About Kumanu

Kumanu is a new kind of wellbeing technology company. We help customers address employees' essential needs, cultivate a stronger sense of purpose and more profound connection each day. Organizations looking to deliver on what's missing in their wellbeing strategy rely on our customizable platform and consultative process to deliver a better experience, engagement, and results.

To learn more about building a purpose-driven culture and improving employee wellbeing, contact:
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