

# A PERSONA OF TODAY'S EMPLOYEE

Helping leaders better  
understand what employees  
want and need to be engaged  
and accelerate results

.....



THE  
**GROSSMAN**  
GROUP

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# IF WE WERE TO BETTER UNDERSTAND EMPLOYEES' WANTS TODAY, WOULD THEY BE EVEN **MORE** ENGAGED AND HELP US ACCELERATE BUSINESS RESULTS?

If so, then the question is—how well do we understand what they want in today's new workplace reality? And, what do we as leaders need to do to be even better? To be the coaches and champions and facilitators and transporters of talent to unlock everyone's potential?

To that end, we developed a persona of sorts for today's employee. It doesn't cover every employee; **there will be exceptions**...but it reflects overall employee sentiment today. So, if employees as a collective were going to talk with leadership, here's how they might articulate what they want...





**“ I’VE BEEN  
TOLD I AM AN  
IMPORTANT ASSET  
AND A CRITICAL  
PART OF OUR  
ORGANIZATION’S  
SUCCESS.**



Given that, I have some thoughts I'd like to share. I've narrowed them down to

# **FIVE**

## **MAIN ASKS THAT I HAVE OF YOU.**

All of this comes down to why I chose this organization...and what I expect from my employment experience so I can do my best work and still have time to live my life. The pandemic has taught us all a lot, and it has prompted me to reflect on what's most important to me...

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5





**“  
FIRST,  
I HAVE A  
STORY TO  
TELL.”**

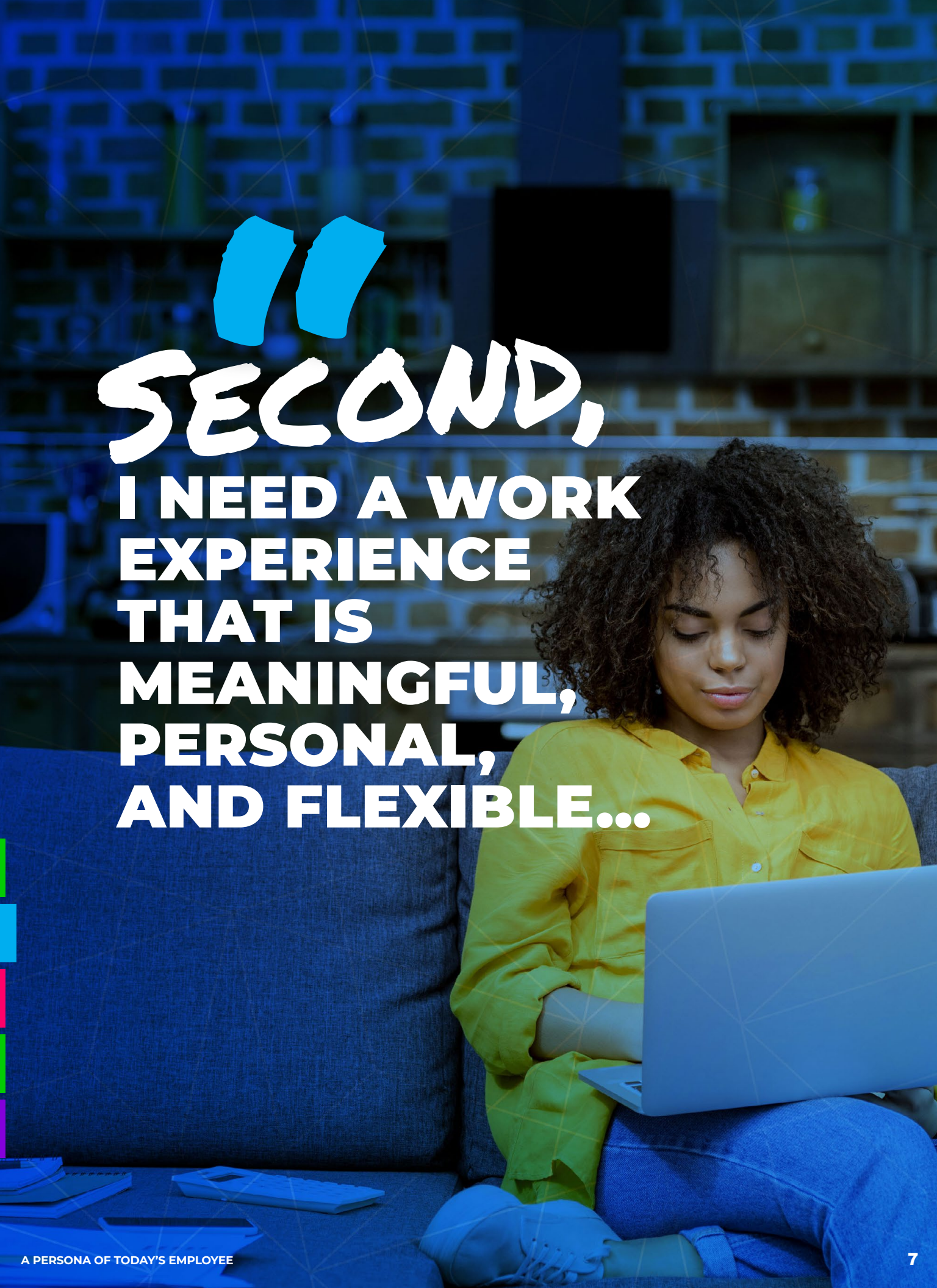


My story is about who I am, what I hope to accomplish, and what truly matters to me when it comes to work and life. My colleagues, too, have a story. Each of our stories is different because our life and work experiences are different. Our culture is different. Our heritage is different. What makes us special is different.

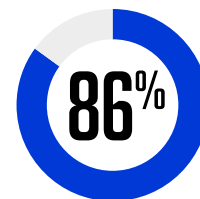
To stay engaged, I need you to fully understand and empathize with my story.

I'm looking for a leader who is committed to being an advocate for me so that I can broaden my experience and reach my career goals. I want to be assured that indeed I do matter, that my work has purpose, and that my leadership and my team care about me.





**“  
SECOND,  
I NEED A WORK  
EXPERIENCE  
THAT IS  
MEANINGFUL,  
PERSONAL,  
AND FLEXIBLE...**



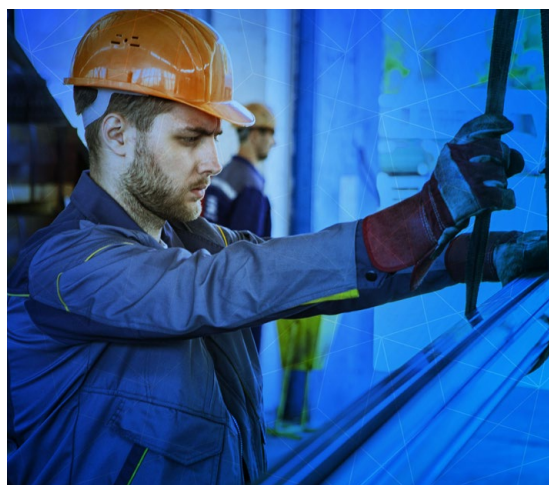
*of employees felt they were better able to navigate the demands of their work and life when their leaders were more empathetic<sup>1</sup>*



...which will help me produce great work and outcomes. One thing we all learned during the pandemic is that the traditional workplace doesn't always have to be the answer for everyone. We've also learned that our needs may change depending on our situation and life circumstances.

I need you to be flexible as my needs change. I need you to know that you can count on me to deliver the work on time and with quality. Value the work more than the number of hours I put in, or whether I'm sitting in the company chair at the company office.

Connect me to work projects that interest me. Give me incentives that matter to me as an individual. Help me see how my work—and the work of our organization—has real purpose and value. Help me grow and continue learning. Recognize my results. Give me feedback—both good and bad. I respond best when your feedback is tangible, specific, and constructive.





A smiling man with short dark hair, wearing an orange t-shirt and a dark apron, is seated at a desk. He is looking down at a laptop, with his hands on the keyboard. A large electric fan is visible in the background. The entire image has a pinkish-red tint and a faint geometric pattern of white lines. Overlaid on the right side of the image is the text "THIRD, SUPPORT BOTH MY PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING." in white, with a large red quotation mark above the word "THIRD".

**“**  
**THIRD,**  
**SUPPORT BOTH**  
**MY PHYSICAL**  
**AND EMOTIONAL**  
**WELL-BEING.**



That includes helping me manage my work-related stress before I have to ask.

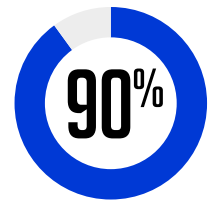
I need to know that my well-being is considered and respected at all times. I also need to always feel safe when I come to work.







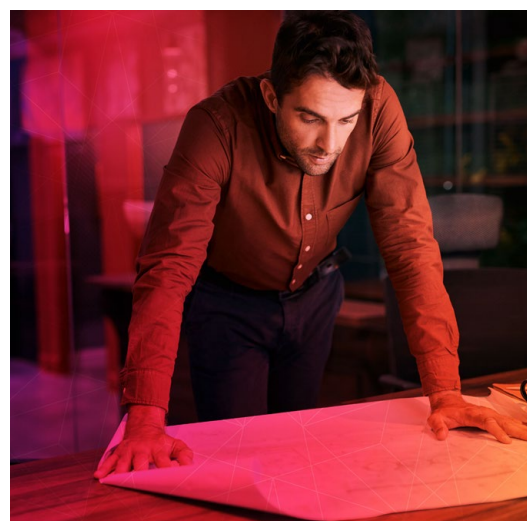
“  
**FOURTH,  
COMMUNICATE  
BETTER WITH ME.**



*of US workers believe  
empathetic leadership  
leads to higher job  
satisfaction<sup>1</sup>*

Treat me like the adult that I am, sharing information with transparency. Recognize how important it is that I hear directly from you and have an opportunity to raise questions and provide feedback. I need regular information (and appreciate some inspiration

when possible) from you, yet still need to hear from senior leaders about our strategy, culture, and results. I want to be able to tie my work to the overall company strategy, so I know how I fit in and contribute. That's how I know that what I do matters.





A woman with dark hair, smiling, wearing a yellow long-sleeved shirt and a grey apron. She is holding a tablet computer in her hands. The background is a blurred indoor setting, possibly a cafe or office.

“  
**FIFTH,**  
**LISTEN**  
**TO ME.**





I have ideas about how to make the workplace even better, but sometimes I feel like you don't want to hear them.

Foster an environment where my colleagues and I can speak up safely and where we feel heard—even if we have different backgrounds, preferences, orientations, beliefs, levels, roles, and years of experience. I will thrive when I can voice my ideas and needs without worrying about risks or repercussions.

And I hope you will trust me enough to be vulnerable—to share your life experiences and what you've learned from your failures as well as your successes. I want to think of you not only as my boss, but as my colleague, partner, and facilitator.



A smiling man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, holding a black folder. The background is a blurred office setting with blue and white tones. A large white quotation mark is positioned to the left of the text.

“

**WHAT  
WILL ALL  
THESE EFFORTS  
MEAN FOR YOU?  
THERE WILL BE  
TREMENDOUS  
BENEFITS,  
TO BE SURE.**



When I am in an environment where I can do excellent work and get what I need from you, I am ready to engage. I'm ready to go *above and beyond* when you need me to. I'm willing to be flexible in return.

But, if you ask more and more from me without acknowledging my story, listening to me, and creating an experience that's flexible and personal, that makes me frustrated and leaves me unfulfilled. I wonder whether all the effort I put forth is worth it. I start to question whether coming here was the right thing to do.

I'll finish where I started, with why I chose this organization. Choices are critical—leaders make choices on how they engage or lead every minute of every day. I make choices, too. **I choose whether I stay and crush it or whether I pack it in and call it a day.**

In the end, I ideally want to be able to say: **"I feel at home at work. I am seen. I am heard. What's important to me is valued and therefore I am valued."** That makes my choice to stay and deliver great work every day an easy one...





“  
I AM  
YOUR  
EMPLOYEE!

LEARN HOW  
TO BETTER CONNECT  
WITH ME!



# GET SUPPORT FROM EXPERTS WHO HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE.

CELEBRATING  
**20<sup>+</sup>**  
YEARS  
OF ENGAGING EMPLOYEES  
AND HELPING LEADERS  
LEAD WITH HEART

## WE WORK WITH CLIENTS TO:

- **Build** stronger leaders and communicators
- **Engage** and activate employees
- **Help** functions elevate their value
- **Transform** culture to drive performance
- **Activate** strategy to accelerate results
- **Lead** organizations successfully through change

## OUR GOAL IS TO MAKE YOU AND YOUR TEAM SHINE.

To learn more about our approach, explore what's possible for your organization or to get started, visit the below resources, or contact us today.



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THE GROSSMAN  
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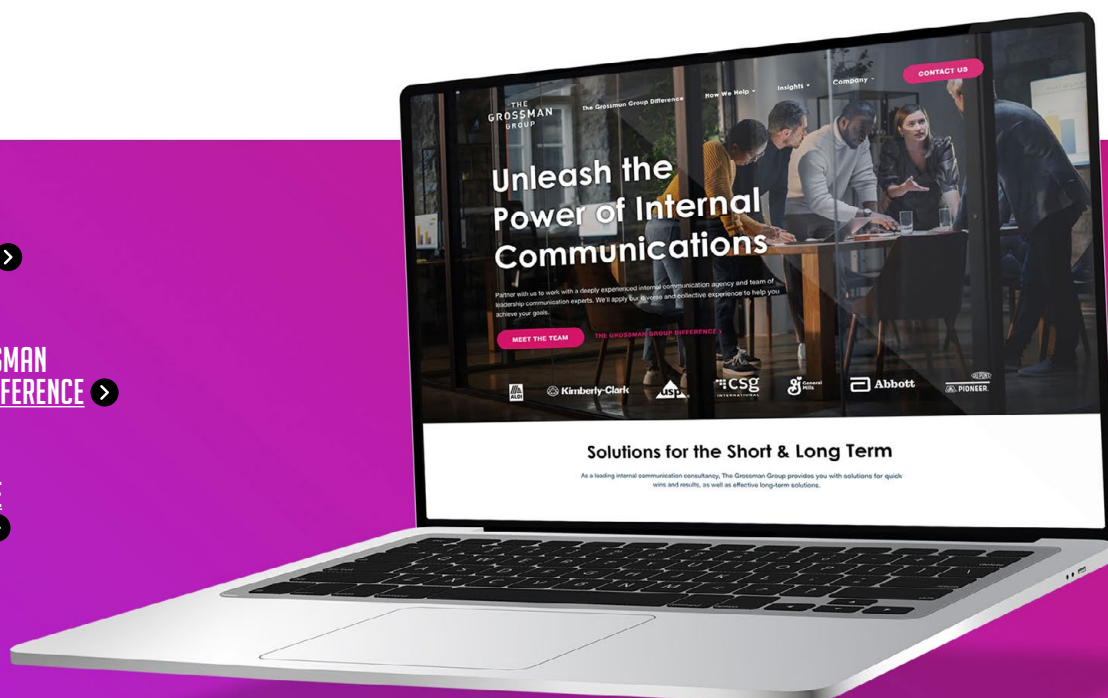
READ CASE  
STUDIES >



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HEART  
LEADERSHIP  
COMMUNICATION  
TRUST  
ENGAGEMENT

THE  
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David helps leaders drive productivity and get the results they want through authentic and courageous leadership and communication. He's a sought-after speaker and advisor to Fortune 500 leaders. A four-time author, his latest award-winning book, "Heart First: Lasting Leader Lessons from a Year that Changed Everything," features interviews with 30+ leaders inside a variety of organizations, each of whom share extraordinarily candid insights and unique leadership lessons. His **leadercommunicator™** blog is ranked the #1 blog on communication by Feedspot seven years in a row. David is Founder & CEO of The Grossman Group, an award-

winning Chicago-based strategic leadership development and internal communications consultancy. The Grossman Group's clients include DHL, Emergent BioSolutions, General Mills, Kaiser Permanente, Lockheed Martin, Molex, Stanley Black & Decker, and more. David is a member of the Arthur W. Page Society, the Forbes Communication Council, and a Trustee to the Board of the Institute for Public Relations. In addition, he is a Certified Speaking Professional (CSP), an MBTI® Certified Practitioner, a Prosci Certified Change Practitioner and taught graduate-level internal communications at Columbia University in NYC.

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David has been featured in:

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

 NIGHTLY NEWS

 TODAY

Chicago Tribune

FAST COMPANY

Los Angeles Times

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*The Grossman Group is proud to be a Certified Diverse Supplier through the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce since 2008.*