

What about the shoemaker's children?

 By [Regine le Roux](#)

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Having a purpose driven entity has been all the buzz in recent years. These days it's about making a difference and there is the added pressure of making a big impact.



Regine le Roux, MD of Reputation Matters says the creative industry needs to look inward, and foster one of its most important stakeholder groups, its employees

With this, I agree to a certain extent. Looking after the communities in which we live and work is fundamental to an organisation's success, it is one of the 10 building blocks that we measure at Reputation Matters when quantifying an organisation's reputation.

Looking inward

But sometimes it is the small consistent actions that make the biggest difference and will have a major impact in the long run. Within the creative industry be it, reputation-, communication-, public relations- or marketing management, we often

obsess about building brands for our clients, but very often forget about our own businesses and teams.

What is it that they say about the shoemaker's children? Before we are able to make any positive impact for anyone else, we have to take a look inward, and foster one of our most important stakeholder groups, our employees.

The value of values

From the insights that we garnered from the reputation research projects that we conducted last year, one of the fundamental solutions to most organisation's problems is having a set of core values in place that drive decisions and ultimately behaviour.

It's not about coming up with a set of values that sound good, it's about actually making a difference and guiding the 'way we do things around here'.

Values are fundamental to a healthy team morale and organisation's culture. Therefore, one of the biggest continued focus areas for organisations for 2023, should be on employees, and particularly on employee mental health and wellbeing.



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Employee mental health and wellbeing

Your employees are fundamental to your organisation's success. It is important to know where they stand, with their work, their managers, fellow colleagues, and career aspirations. They also spend most of their time at work, and companies should therefore take responsibility over their employees' mental health.

Before you go off looking for corporate social responsibility projects to get involved in, ask yourself whether you are looking after your own team?

How are you fostering and nurturing your teams?

This is what we should be looking at internally:

- **Mental wellness**

Results of a 2021 survey by the Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) and Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) found that 90% of Public Relations (PR) professionals had experienced poor mental health.

The three key triggers including: lack of reward or recognition for good work; long hours and not enough career growth opportunities. From all the studies that we've conducted at Reputation Matters last year, we have also seen a significant focus on the need to prioritise mental health in the workplace.



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• Quiet quitting

As a result of the lack of support for mental wellbeing, we will see even more 'quiet quitting'. The term "quiet quitting" refers to employees who put no more effort into their jobs than absolutely necessary.

A 2022 Gallup survey suggested that at least half of the US' workforce consists of quiet quitters. I read in *The Citizen* that Tshepiso Rasetlola, an associate in employment law at Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr, shared that if employees become less engaged in their role, they generally also see less room for growth and are subsequently less interested in their company.

When a workforce is lacklustre about the organisation that they are working for, it will reflect in the organisation's reputation and ultimately its bottom line.

Employee engagement and two-way communication channels are therefore even more crucial than ever before to build your team's morale, trust in leadership, and to support your teams.

• Work life balance

The pandemic put a lot of pressure on everyone and gave people a lot of time to think and to take stock of what they would like to achieve with their life. Right after the pandemic we saw a lot of movement, especially Generation Xers, between companies or starting their own businesses. People want to take control of their lives as well as where and when they want to work.

We need to start considering more flexibility in working hours, we'll definitely see more companies moving towards the four-day work week.



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All too often employees are not heard

Where to start? It's important to take stock and to get feedback directly from your team in a safe environment. We've had tremendous success with gaining insights into teams with our employee climate survey that we've developed.

Employee climate surveys create safe anonymous feedback channels where employees can share their experiences about their workplace and team. We see too often that companies work on a 'gut feeling' about the well-being of their teams.

They are more often than not quite shocked to realise that their employees may not be as happy or invested in the company as they had hoped or thought they were. Invariably, we do find in our surveys that employees are a lot harsher

with their feedback than external stakeholders, and generally score the business much lower, but this honest feedback is important as employees do want the organisations that they work for to do well.

They are also at the heart of the business and know exactly what is building or breaking down the success of the company. Sadly, all too often employees are not heard.

Times and circumstances will always change and therefore it's important to understand how this impacts a workforce. More so than ever before, it is important to be proactive in valuing your most valuable asset, your employees

ABOUT REGINE LE ROUX

Regine is a reputation specialist. She founded Reputation Matters in 2005; where they measure and manage companies' reputations using their unique Repudometer® measurement tool.

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