

Creating an Engaging Culture in a Virtual-Centric Workplace

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In recent times, MatchCraft has been public about our virtual workforce and how we are managing it during this crisis. Continuing with that, we are sharing the framework that MatchCraft adopted to help our employees, across the globe, work-from-home successfully. Our hope is that our experiences may help other companies as they address how to create an enticing culture in a remote environment.

Why Virtual?

2019 was a year of transition for MatchCraft - we reduced our physical workspace and expanded our virtual workforce to accommodate the flexibility needs of our global talent.

MatchCraft saw the advantages of expanding our remote employee population to diversify our talent pool and in 2014, we began expanding recruiting efforts to grow our team throughout the globe. Since then, we have made incremental efforts to enhance our virtual-centric company culture, communication, and engagement.

Going virtual also helped us bridge the gap between our headquartered onsite employees and our remote employees that span seven countries and several time zones.

This focus on an inclusive culture has helped MatchCraft keep turnover at an average of 2.2% below the industry average over the past three years. [LinkedIn](#) metrics from 2018 reveal a 13.2% turnover rate in the technology sector.

How We Do It?

MatchCraft's average employee tenure is nearly six years compared to data provided by [Paysa](#), revealing that average employee tenure at large scale technology companies is less than two years. Data presented by [The Atlantic](#) states that tenure at smaller scale technology companies averages less than one year.

Although we are inspired by other companies that have great cultures, below are the key pieces of our MatchCraft framework that help us differentiate our culture - to inspire engagement, innovation and retention at MatchCraft. These best practices have also helped us transition to a virtual-centric workplace.

- **360° Participation** - All of our employees, including the leadership team, are highly encouraged to take part in team engagement activities. Our CEO and senior leadership participate in nearly every employee engagement initiative. Participation based engagement initiatives include team icebreaker (virtual)

lunches, friendly contests, holiday celebrations, global trivia, (virtual) happy hours & group content creation, like the MatchCraft cookbook.

- **Feedback is Key** - We make ongoing efforts to ensure that our company culture is aligned with our employees' expectations, through anonymous surveys and organic feedback. Actionable items from each of these surveys are addressed in our monthly all-staff meetings. Glassdoor reviews help us stay informed by providing us with insights into current and former employees' viewpoints related to our organization's culture. We make it a point to engage with the said reviews by responding to them. MatchCraft's Glassdoor rating is 4.3 compared to the average Glassdoor rating of 3.4.
- **Diversity & Inclusivity** - MatchCraft has a diverse, multi-generational, employee population that spans the globe. Our mission is to encourage a fair and impartial digital ecosystem in which employees can thrive, which starts with fostering an inclusive company culture and workforce. We embrace individuality and diversity through engagement initiatives like knowledge-share sessions, multicultural celebrations, and partnering with organizations that focus on underserved communities in technology. Recently one of our Senior Software Engineers hosted a "How to Mom and Code" webinar with TechLadies.
- **Virtual Recruiting and Onboarding** - At MatchCraft virtual interviews are commonplace. Video chat interviews are a great way to assess talent & gauge a mutual fit between a candidate and our company. And to ensure that all incoming employees feel welcome, in-office and virtually, we organize onboarding activities such as all-staff introductions, departmental 1:1s & peer mentorship programs.
- **Staying Connected** - At MatchCraft we foster an open-door culture at all levels of the organization. For employees to feel comfortable reaching out to Leadership and the People and Culture team, we've implemented ways to build rapport with team members through spontaneous virtual "check-ins". These 1:1s are informal and more personal in tone, and they are not scheduled on a calendar. Although we've focused on ramping up our virtual communication and engagement initiatives, we recognize the value of face-to-face collaboration. In 2020, we rolled out the Altitude program which will allow a few employees each year, from across the globe, a unique team building experience at our Santa Monica, CA headquarters. This initiative will take flight when the safety of our team is guaranteed.
- **Ensuring Transparency** - MatchCraft leans toward transparency whenever possible and we've found it to be helpful in mitigating ambiguity, speculation, and negative morale. A good example is our recent initiative, intended to keep our team informed during the current COVID-19 crisis. Each week our company's CEO, along with two MatchCraft employees, interview each other in an update video. In these videos, our CEO addresses team member-driven questions related to employee impacts, communication, and revenue. They are tough topics to address under normal circumstances, even more so during

this unprecedented time. Being forthcoming about difficult choices we had to make to preserve our talent and offset losses has inspired positive organic feedback across the organization.

- **Centralized Information** - As our team has become more virtual, the need for accessible information across all departments has risen. Based on employee feedback, we revamped our intranet system to provide an easy access hub for MatchCraft related information. Updated on a monthly basis, the knowledge hub houses key information, such as the formerly mentioned video update and all-staff recordings, along with wiki-style answers to common questions posed by our clients. Through the implementation of push notifications, team members can access new content from their inboxes in real-time.
- **Continued Employee Growth** - Employee development is always top of mind for us. MatchCraft's hybrid, functional & semi-flat structure promotes efficiency and work ownership. It reduces bureaucracy by eliminating unnecessary layers of management along with several other benefits. To support our employees in knowledge growth, we undertake initiatives such as company-wide discussion groups, employee growth 1:1s, peer knowledge share meetings, continued education benefits & sabbaticals.
- **Employee Recognition** - Managers and fellow team members are encouraged to recognize each other's efforts at work. And when a team member goes beyond the call of duty, they are recognized with our prestigious Golden Egg Award and a small gift. Our semi-annual reviews and annual reviews also provide opportunities for recognition in a 1:1 setting.
- **Promoting Social Responsibility** - Social responsibility is knit into the fabric of our company culture. We are proud of our [#MatchCraftGivesBack](#) engagement initiatives that have, in the past, included STEM-focused outreach such as One Laptop Per Child, Fulfillment Fund internships & career planning support to participating high school students via the Youth Business Alliance, disaster relief efforts throughout the globe, food bank drives, team soup kitchen events in several locations, and annual [#hashtaglunchbag](#) events in Los Angeles. This year we rolled out a new initiative called Pay it Forward. We are extending up to a ½ day (4 hours) of paid time off per year to employees who want to volunteer their time to causes that positively impact our communities. We encourage team members who live near each other to find a cause or initiative to participate in together. As we continue to evolve into a more virtual-centric workplace, we plan on leveraging ways to give back through the use of technology. We will soon host a virtual resume workshop for college seniors associated with the Fulfillment Fund.
- **Encouraging Self-Care** - As we have transitioned to an increasingly virtual-centric workplace, we've had to be mindful of the blurred lines between office hours and remote working environments. While productivity is top of mind, we know that taking breaks and powering down is important. We are doing our best to provide opportunities for flexible work schedules, when possible, and being cognizant of employee time zones. The goal is to foster work-life

balance and self-care within our organization. We encourage all employees to focus on improved health by offering fitness-related benefits and sharing mindfulness resources with them.

- **Embracing Evolution** - One of the most important factors in creating an engaging culture, especially one that is virtual-centric, is embracing evolution. As our team grows and changes, we are constantly aware that our engagement practices and initiatives need to evolve as well. We rely on employee feedback to ensure we're providing an employee-first approach to engagement.

The Millennial Influence

Today, organizations not only need to focus on creating an authentic culture to inspire engagement and retain talent but also need to consider subsets of their workforce when doing so - especially Millennials, as their numbers continue to grow in the workforce.

While we've covered the framework of our employee-driven culture and how to thrive in a virtual-centric environment, it's important to hone in on specific company culture and engagement topics that were influenced by the ever-expanding Millennial cohort.

In order to attract and retain top Millennial talent, an organization's culture must strive to meet generational shifts in an authentic way. For any culture to thrive, a company must practice what they preach, and the company's leadership must support that mission.

According to a Gallup poll and report, "How Millennials Want to Work and Live", Millennials thrive in environments where managers are mentors, feedback and development are ongoing conversations, total compensation is inclusive of purpose, work-life balance is fostered, and contributions are recognized.

Millennials appreciate continuous feedback, and this need helped form MatchCraft's performance review standards. We have a "no surprise" policy at MatchCraft, which ensures all team members are aware of successes and growth opportunities throughout the year. Managers are encouraged to set weekly or monthly 1:1's with each of their direct reports, most departments have weekly all-hands meetings, and the entire organization participates in semi-annual reviews in July and a more formalized annual review process each February.

MatchCraft is a mission and vision-driven organization, and Millennials are a mission-driven generation. Every MatchCraft employee understands their contributions to our Vision and Mission. Every month two employees share how they directly contributed to our mission. These opportunities allow our employees to reflect on their impact to MatchCraft.

Millennials have helped shape MatchCraft's focus on wellness-based engagement activities and work-life balance. As we transitioned into a completely remote working environment, we quickly realized the importance of supporting and communicating the necessity of work-life balance. A recent company survey brought to light the fact that "turning work off" was a significant challenge for our employees during this transition.

Part of work-life balance is creating engagement activities that allow employees to step away from their work and have a chance to decompress. We have increased our employee engagement activities to encourage this balance.

Fringe benefits that focus on health and wellness, such as MatchCraft's Wellness Reimbursement Benefit, have been very well received by our employee population. This benefit is focused on fitness and wellness; however, it is broad enough to allow our diverse team to choose from several different forms of wellness that inspire their individual needs inclusive of massages, mindfulness app subscriptions, gym memberships, and yoga.

Post-COVID Plans

We believe that technology can be leveraged to ensure collaboration, engagement, and productivity from anywhere in the world. As we have the opportunity to return to our Santa Monica headquarters, our California based employees have the flexibility of staying remote, working from our offices or a combination. This flexibility will be supported by our office space that will look much different than it did pre-COVID-19 to keep our team as healthy as possible and virtual connectivity will continue to be vital to our evolving culture and workforce.