Explore a strategy for sustained employee and organizational Performance

Human-powered enterprises are intentionally designed to enable employees to deliver their best work. There are about six pillars that differentiate "human enterprises" from other organizations:

1. **Employee Value Proposition (EVP):** Base your employee value proposition on feelings rather than features. Organizations have prioritized attracting and retaining talent through recent shifts in the labor market, yet few organizations have been able to differentiate their employee value proposition (EVP). Most organizations define their EVP as a set of features designed to meet employee needs and deliver an exceptional employee experience. However, employees are not just employees—they are humans. An EVP focused only on employees falls short because it does not address the human emotions that fuel engagement and performance or connect to the many life experiences that people value outside of work. Organizations aspiring to become human enterprises develop their EVP around their employees' feelings rather than just features. This is what we call a "human deal." Organizations that offer a human deal outperform their peers on business goals like revenue, profit, and customer satisfaction.

2. **Workforce well-being:** embed wellness into work; employees struggle with their well-being—only about one-third of employees surveyed over the past several years have rated their well-being favorably. HR leaders are not blind to this but are diagnosing the problem incorrectly and implementing the wrong solutions. Most organizations "bolt on" well-being programs and offerings to mitigate the negative impact work can have on employee wellness. In contrast, some organizations have begun to realize that there are diminishing returns to adding more well-being programs. Additionally, their diagnosis places the root of employee ill health within the organization itself. Rather than aiding in recovery, these human enterprises embed wellness into work itself to improve employee well-being and increase the number of employees who are performing at their best in a sustainable way.

3. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI):** treat DEI as how the organization operates; organizational leaders today by and large agree that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives are good for their employees, making the workplace more innovative, inclusive, and engaging. But most organizations struggle to make a sustainable, ongoing commitment to DEI, resulting in variable "additive" initiatives that don't lead to the impact organizations need. At human enterprises, leaders recognize that DEI is central to organizational health. Furthermore, they know that an additive approach is insufficient and instead embed DEI throughout their organization to achieve scalable and sustainable results. When employees feel like their organization is both diverse and promotes belonging, they are far more likely to be engaged and high performers.

4. **Leadership:** remove emotional barriers to leadership; shifts in today's business environment are pushing leaders to evolve their approach to core leadership responsibilities. Employees want to relate to their leaders as humans with emotions and vulnerabilities. In response, human leaders demonstrate three core qualities:

authenticity, empathy, and adaptivity. However, human emotions often get in the way of human leadership. To develop human leadership, HR must help leaders overcome their struggles with commitment to human leadership, help them build confidence and courage to demonstrate vulnerability and take decisive actions, and create more capacity for human leadership to manage feelings of burnout. When they do, organizations take a step closer to becoming human enterprises and ultimately improve retention, engagement, and employee well-being.

5. **Workplace:** equate the workplace with where people work at their best; employees today have new expectations for their workplace. Initiated by the pandemic, many employees are looking for a more flexible approach to where they work, yet many organizations are hoping to return to the prepandemic norms of working in the office. Human enterprises realize that the physical location of the workplace must provide employees with the conditions they need to work at their best—whether that's in an office or at home. HR can help their organization build a more human-centric workplace by providing employees with autonomy, capability, and connection at their places of work, allowing employees to work more productively, efficiently and yielding greater levels of employee engagement at work.

6. **Technology:** build AI-human partnerships; employees expect their roles to change—and change again and again—through the introduction of AI. They embrace AI when they get to decide how to use it in support of their work. They are less enthusiastic when they feel AI is being used to analyze their behavior. AI and other emerging technologies will continue to reshape work over the years to come. Leaders in a human enterprise show empathy to employees navigating these changes. They focus more on the work to be done, rather than the jobs that are likely to disappear. They help employees get creative in using AI and other technologies to improve their own performance and impact. HR can help their organization invest in technology in ways that support human endeavor by looking for opportunities for people to use technology to create, innovate, and build tomorrow's business.