

4 essential things business owners can't overlook in 2022

The last two years of the pandemic have felt like we've been in a kind of freeze state - but in 2022, the signs are there that things are slowly returning to some sense of normality. If you've started a new business over these last couple of years - or if you've managed to keep your business going over this time - you're probably feeling a sense of renewal that comes with a new year.



Source: www.pexels.com

Given all we've been through, here are four essential things you as a small business owner shouldn't overlook in 2022:

1. Hybrid working is our new reality

When lockdowns first happened in early 2020, many small and medium-sized businesses were left unprepared for their employees to all work remotely from home. While some businesses already catered for a remote working system, most had to scramble to level up their technology and systems so that teams could continue to do what they were doing (while not being in the same physical space together).

Fast forward two years and businesses have adapted remarkably well to this new way of working. Employees have also found many surprising benefits to this arrangement, such as less commuting time, more time with their families, and fewer distractions during the workday. The result is that many employees actually don't want to return to the office full time now

that things are opening up.

A July 2021 survey by McKinsey of 5,000 global employees found that nearly three-quarters of employees would like to work from home for two or more days per week. With this hybrid working arrangement set to become a major trend, look at how this would work in your own small business's context (for example your building capacity and what different roles require) and how you can help meet this new emerging need in order to retain your employees.

2. The wellbeing of your employees is paramount

Our health has never been as much in focus as it is now. As with anything health-related, prevention is better than cure and business owners need to step up and take responsibility to lead their employees in this way of thinking. So, how will you prioritise the well-being of your employees this year?

In her top HR trends for the workplace in 2022, Jeanne Meister [writes](#) that the number one future work trend is employee wellbeing, and companies like Hewlett Packard are taking this on board by providing things like health and wellbeing apps, educational resources for working parents on managing homeschooling, an employee resource group for working parents, and job sharing for certain roles.

For your own small business, this could be done on a simpler scale, such as mandating your employees to take leave they've accumulated (but haven't taken since they've been working from home) or adjusting working hours so that they cultivate a better work-life balance. You could also help your employees pool together resources and ideas that help improve their lives – from handy scheduling apps to their top book recommendations – because sharing is caring, after all.

3. The need for the right health cover

If the last two years have taught us anything, it's that the future is unpredictable – and while this can be a stressful thought as a small business owner, all you can do is be as prepared as you can now. A good place to start is getting the right kind of medical aid cover for your employees if you don't already have it in place.

To make this process easier for businesses, Wellworx is a specialised healthcare insurance brokerage that helps businesses get the right medical aid cover for their employees. Getting your employees covered from a medical perspective can make your business a more attractive place to work, and it also means healthier, more productive employees who in turn will positively affect your bottom line.

4. Allowing your business to evolve with the times

In 2022, you may find that your target audience has evolved from previous years – they may want to buy your offering online rather than in person, or their needs may have changed due to all the introspection we've been forced into throughout the pandemic.

As a small or medium-sized business, you may need to do some more research (think surveys, focus groups or asking for feedback on social media) into what your target market needs now, as opposed to just two years ago. Based on the results of this, you may well have to adapt your offering in order to thrive in the years to come.

As we move into 2022, businesses need to be as agile as ever: the world is increasingly uncertain, and if the last two years have taught us anything, it's that we can't predict the future. By focusing on the things you can control now – like looking after your employees and possibly reinventing your offering for your target market – you're more likely to survive as a small business over the long haul.

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