

I am pleased to bring you the results of our inaugural Humankindex survey, a research initiative very near and dear to our hearts here at Signature Consultants.

The goal of this survey was to validate or invalidate a principle we have long-believed is the right path to success for our people and our business—that leading with kindness is not only the right thing to do but serves as a catalyst for greater innovation, meaningful work, shared purpose, and better business decisions.

We've built our company on this principle since 1997, long before the emergence of a global pandemic. But as the world was upended in so many ways over the past two years, we believe the power of kind leadership has never been so necessary or relevant than it is today. Armed with credible research and data, we can now share the compelling and game-changing findings with our valued customers, consultants, and employees.

If we have learned anything over the past two years, it's that we must be open to change and look at long-established beliefs and practices through a new lens. As you review this Humankindex summary report, I invite you to reconsider how you view kindness and its place in the business world and to hear how employees feel about kind leadership. They've spoken clearly about what kindness means to them—and if it matters to them, it must matter to us.

We look forward to bringing you additional content on key topics stemming from this research, including tips on becoming a kind leader, strategies for building a culture of kindness, and powerful programs, policies, and practices that build a foundation for greater talent recruitment, retention, innovation and competitive advantage.

Warmest regards,

Mark Nussbaum
Chief Administrative Officer
Signature Consultants and DISYS

THE POWER OF KIND LEADERSHIP

In 2021, Signature Consultants worked with national research and data firm Dynata, to conduct an online survey to 1,003 full-time (30+ hours per week) workers aged 18 and older, with national representation across age, gender, geographies, and industries—to examine the impact of kind leadership and cultural values on employees’ sense of meaning in their jobs, shared purpose, desire to innovate, and the impact on competitive advantage in the marketplace. The result of the research is clear evidence in the power of kind leadership.

TRACKING KINDNESS ACROSS U.S. BUSINESSES

A key component of the Humankindex research is an index created to measure and track companies’ adoption and practice of kindness. Using a range from 1 to 100, the Humankindex calculates the degree to which U.S. companies and their leaders are adopting kindness as a core value and leadership style.

2021 HUMANKINDEX (HKI)



IN ITS FIRST ANNUAL PUBLISHING, THE HUMANKINDEX FOR ALL U.S. COMPANIES IS 58.

KINDNESS ENABLES INNOVATION

According to U.S. workers, companies are more likely to be considered innovative when elements of kindness exist in their culture and leadership, including:

78%

more likely if kindness is considered a core value of the organization

3.5x

more likely if employees feel a shared sense of purpose between their job and the organization’s leadership and goals

28%

more likely if the company’s leadership style is to “lead with kindness.”

In short, an organization is to be considered **5X more likely** to be considered innovative if a company is kind.

KIND LEADERSHIP DRIVES INNOVATION & COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

When workers were asked to identify the leadership style that best leads to a more innovative work environment, respondents ranked “Leads with Kindness” first among other leadership styles, including leading with authority, empathy, courageousness, and risk-taking.

Further, respondents who said their current company’s leadership style was one of “puts kindness before anything else,” were most likely to agree that this leadership style has led to more of a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

THE COVID-19 IMPACT

The Humankindindex research also examined the degree to which company leaders have embraced kind leadership since the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the findings, many companies have overlooked kindness as a powerful leadership quality and opted to put profits before people.

30%

of workers say their company’s leadership has embraced kindness as a value less so since the COVID-19 pandemic

76%

of workers say their company’s leadership has embraced the value of “profits before people” the same or more since the COVID-19 pandemic

Meanwhile, the research demonstrates that those companies who have adopted a leadership of kindness to a **greater degree** since the pandemic has paved the way toward more innovation.

Of the 53% of workers who agree their company’s leadership has embraced the value of kindness more since the pandemic

67%

say it has led to greater innovation among employees

PROFITS BEFORE PEOPLE VS. MEANINGFUL PROFITABILITY

Signature's research has found several positive outcomes to putting kindness first—even before profits. The findings support the premise that linking mission and margin, kindness and knowledge capital, and profit and principle, can deliver considerable and measurable benefits.

Companies who put kindness before anything else vs. profits before anything else have employees who are more likely:

84%

to feel a shared sense of purpose between their job & company's leadership/goals

120%

to feel a sense of meaning and purpose in their current job

58%

to be highly aware of how their role contributes to the company's ability to innovate

89%

to have a strong desire to think of innovative, new ideas

62%

to feel their organization encourages all employees to drive innovation

Furthermore, in a year where many workers faced greater financial challenges due to the pandemic, the importance of finding meaning in their work remains more valuable than money among most employees, particularly among IT professionals. 6 out of 10 workers and 8 out of 10 IT workers say they would rather have a management team that helped them find meaning in their work than receive a 5% pay increase.

KINDLY MOVING YOU FORWARD

If there was ever a time for businesses and their leaders to embrace or return to powerful core values as their guide in decision-making, strategy development, resilience-building, innovation, and competitive advantage—it is now.

Our research has shown there is power in kindness, strength in kind leadership, and profitability in purpose, perhaps more so than any other time in recent history. As we work to put the pandemic behind us, kind leadership will play a significant role in helping employers win the battle for talent and strive toward innovation.

To learn more about the power of kind leadership and strategies to implement a culture of kindness within your organization, visit humankindindex.com for additional resources.