



Thriving in 2022 and beyond: Three things the IT Industry must do.

Welcome to The Walker Report's first edition of 2022. Through these quarterly opinion pieces, I aim to stimulate honest conversations between tech leaders on the issues we're facing.

This quarter, I'm moving my focus to people. Globally, there is a [talent war](#) happening. Covid-19, social shifts and the push for more women in STEM mean the IT industry needs to sort out its culture if it wants to retain and attract the best people and keep thriving.

I welcome all views and perspectives, so whether you're compelled to agree with me or not, let's have a discussion.

IT employers no longer have the upper hand

Since 2016, the IT industry has grown four times faster than other industries, partly due to the accelerated digital adoption during the pandemic.

And since 2005, tech sector jobs have grown 66% compared to an average growth rate of 35% across the economy¹. But Covid-19, closed borders, and [The Great Resignation](#) has seen all industries struggling to fill vacancies. We are in a position, perhaps for the first time in a long time, where we don't have the upper hand.

The question I'm asking today is, what must our industry do to adapt to this post-pandemic world and become an employer of choice?

1. Have leaders who excel at the soft stuff

As a lad from the wrong side of the tracks, you might assume that emotional intelligence isn't my cup of tea. But it's honestly one of the main reasons I've been successful. Analysing yourself and your behaviours, understanding your drivers and how you relate to others is one of the most powerful business tools.

When leaders have done the work on themselves, they:

- Can be accountable because they live by their values.
- Give credit where it's due because they believe in having each other's backs and sharing the failures and wins.
- Are open to feedback because they're wise enough to know yes-men won't get them very far, and,
- Want to create and nurture collaborative partnerships because they recognise they can't achieve everything on their own..

2. Do the right thing by staff if you want to keep them

While Australia hasn't seen the mass exodus of workers that the US has (24 million!)², it doesn't mean it's not coming. The number one reason was a toxic culture—failure to promote diversity, equity, and

inclusion, feeling disrespected and witnessing unethical behaviour. Simply put, people aren't willing to put up with that BS anymore.

If an organisation has talent it wants to retain, it'll need to stop taking staff for granted and focus on the employee experience. Some ways we do this at DEC are:

- Hyper-personalised management that includes being super-flexible about where our staff work from
- A focus on outcomes, not 'hours worked'
- Additional personalised training opportunities to help our staff grow their skills
- Championing women in STEM, DEC is 100% female shareholders.

3. Attract new talent through showcasing values

There's a new generation coming into the workforce, and they aren't only basing their decisions on pay, they care about their treatment as this tweet shows,

"Jobs be asking me for 3 references and I think I might start doing the same. Like lemme talk to three happy employees please?"

Employers must ask themselves honestly - what would our people say?

As well as providing a level of care and high ethical standards, organisations also need to show what they are doing to support the environment and sustainability. At DEC, we've gone the whole way and become a 3P business. Our DNA is focussing on our (1P) people to be able to offer fantastic opportunities in providing outstanding (2P) profitable service to our clients whilst having a positive impact on the (3P) planet.

The world is different than it was twenty years ago

Our industry must change its culture to retain existing staff and attract future talent. We can adapt by having emotionally aware leaders and true team players. We can start consistently doing the right thing by staff. We can start being values-led to show we are about more than just shareholders and profits.

We're on the precipice of something really exciting, a new way of doing business, a new way of being an employer, a new way of building a legacy. If this excites you too, and you're looking to collaborate with a partner that thinks in this way, reach out today. I can't wait to chat with you.

¹ <https://www.consultancy.com.au/news/3869/10-charts-on-australias-fast-growing-technology-sector>
² <https://grow-acorns-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/grow.acorns.com/amp/great-resignation-mit-findings-why-workers-quit/>
³ <https://funny.co/picture/jobs-be-asking-me-for-3-references-and-i-think-185dcLm49>

I want to know what you think or what you're experiencing. Let's have a discussion. Connect with me on [LinkedIn](#) or email me at

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