

Is bringing humanity to the workplace the key to building stronger teams?



If you're in the market for any sort of team development solution, you've likely already found that there are countless articles, books, and how-to videos about boosting team performance, streamlining operations, and maximizing efficiency. They'll typically run through a list of tips or suggestions which—while they mean well—might not work for your team. (At least long-term, anyway.)

There's a reason for that. Just as each team possesses its own distinct characteristics, challenges, and objectives, the same holds true for every team member. It's crucial to recognize that, before anything else, the individuals that make up your team are people.

This might seem like a simple concept, but it's one that we forget so easily—especially in the face of deadlines and quotas. So before implementing a new procedure at work and then wondering why the new processes aren't sticking, take a step back and remember that your teammates are people.

Let's talk about how and why bringing humanity to the workplace helps you build stronger teams.

Seeing people as people

“Seeing people as people,” means recognizing that each person we interact with has their own aspirations, challenges, emotions, and experiences that shape their perspective and actions. By embracing this mindset, we shift away from a self-centered approach, and become more attuned to the needs, desires, and feelings of others. Ultimately, it underscores the importance of acknowledging the humanity in everyone we encounter.

When we choose to see people as people, it encourages us to cultivate empathy and genuine understanding in our interactions. Instead of merely pushing our own agendas, we take the time to listen and connect with the people around us. This perspective fosters:

- More meaningful relationships
- Effective communication
- A greater capacity for collaboration and cooperation

On top of that, it serves as a reminder that by acknowledging the humanity in others, we not only deepen our connections, but also contribute to a more compassionate world.

Bringing humanity to work helps us build stronger teams

Recognizing the humanity in others and adopting the mindset of seeing people as people can significantly enhance team dynamics at work. Why? Because when colleagues and leaders acknowledge that their coworkers have their own goals, challenges, and feelings, it becomes easier to relate to one another on a human level.

This empathy leads to better workplace relationships, reduced

conflicts, and a more supportive atmosphere where individuals genuinely care about each other's well-being.

Some ways bringing humanity to the workplace helps build stronger teams include:

Improved team synergy

An [EY study](#) revealed that when there's mutual empathy between company leaders and teammates, it leads to increased efficiency (88%), creativity (87%), job satisfaction (87%), idea sharing (86%), innovation (85%) and even company revenue (83%).

All of these factors not only lead to better team synergy, but also better business success. Colleagues who perceive each other as individuals with unique emotions and needs are much more likely to form genuine connections and bonds of trust. By acknowledging the humanity in others, workplaces can foster an environment where employees genuinely care about each other's well-being, ultimately leading to stronger, more supportive, and more meaningful professional relationships.

Arbinger's [Meet to Give tool](#) is a great way to get team members thinking about their impact on others. Rather than entering a meeting with a list of requests, it flips the script and empowers employees to see what *they* can do for their colleagues to be more helpful.

Meet to Give

The Meet to Give tool encourages cooperative thinking and mutual support within teams

It's a proactive way of identifying others' goals and understanding exactly how you can help them. It can be used for regular check-ins between teams, new working relationships, or providing targeted aid in a particular area or situation.



[Download it here.](#)

Boost employee engagement

Employee engagement is a critical aspect of a thriving workplace, and recognizing the humanity in colleagues plays a pivotal role in enhancing it. According to Gallup's State of the Global Workplace report, [only 15%](#) of employees worldwide are engaged in their jobs, leading to decreased productivity and increased turnover.

When individuals feel seen and valued as unique human beings in the workplace, their engagement levels rise significantly. Employees with highly empathic senior leaders report [76% higher levels](#) of engagement at work. This heightened engagement stems from a sense of purpose, as employees are more likely to be invested in their work when they feel that their contributions are acknowledged and their well-being is

genuinely cared about.

When employees feel valued and have a strong understanding of how they fit within the organization, they're much more likely to be engaged. Arbinger's [Job Map tool](#) helps with this.

Arbinger
Institute

Job Map

Contextualize your work in terms of the people you affect in the areas of responsibility that make up your job

Starting a new role can be overwhelming—and becoming a leader means you're adding a new set of people into the mix whose jobs you're directly impacting. Considering that only about 50% of the workforce strongly feel they understand work expectations, having an understanding of who one's job impacts helps provide clarity regarding one's roles and responsibilities within the organization. Being able to identify key stakeholders and their needs ensures that each employee is fulfilling their job requirements to meet those needs.

Arbinger's Job Map tool orients people to their work in a way that promotes an outward-mindset approach. You can use this tool with new hires, new members of your team, and current members of your team in order to help them rethink their work and prepare to engage with an outward mindset.



[Download it here.](#)

Improve communication

Businesses with effective internal communication processes are found to be [50% more likely](#) to have lower employee turnover. That said, [psychological safety](#) plays a huge role in how willing employees are to share their thoughts and ideas with one another. One of the keys to creating an environment where employees feel safe to be themselves is by bringing your own humanity to work. In a leadership role especially, make time and space to share about yourself—and make sure to ask your

teammates about themselves too. It'll be a lot easier for employees to bring up contentious issues or challenges when they remember that you're only human, just like them.

Arbinger's [Meet to Learn tool](#) is designed to break down barriers between teammates and shed light on who they are, at work and outside of it. These conversations can be tricky to facilitate if you're not used to them, so this tool provides a framework to make them happen smoothly.



Meet to Learn

A meeting template to
uncover the objectives, needs,
and challenges of others

Taking the time to meet with and learn about your coworkers can help you establish stronger working relationships, build trust, and improve communication within your team—all things that are especially valuable as a leader. This can result in a more positive and productive work environment, and ultimately lead to better outcomes for your team and organization.

Arbinger's Meet to Learn tool is designed to help uncover the objectives, needs, and challenges of others. It's a tool for increasing your curiosity that then positions you to be more helpful to those around you. You can use it individually to get to know collaborators, customers, your direct reports, or with groups that your team interacts with regularly.



[Download it here.](#)

Better collaboration

Bringing humanity to work can have a massive positive impact on collaboration. When individuals genuinely care about the well-being of their coworkers, they are more likely to offer assistance, support, and cooperation when needed. This is

especially true when kicking off a new initiative or project. A new way of doing things can oftentimes feel stressful, daunting, or even unnecessary if you don't understand the motives behind the change. But by recognizing your teammates have goals and objectives to achieve (just as you do), it makes it easier to step back and see the full picture.

Using something like Arbinger's [Start in the Right Way tool](#) helps you begin on the right foot. It's a *lot* easier to point out how difficult something will be, rather than learning about how it can be beneficial. This tool operationalizes that process.



Start in the Right Way

Use this tool to identify inward mindset behaviors before they start impacting a project or initiative

Whether you're kicking off a challenging project, addressing a difficult coworker, or facing a contentious situation, it can be tempting to turn inward and operate from a place of blame, resistance, or disregard. That's why it can be helpful to have a tool on hand to identify and stop any negative patterns before they start.

This tool allows managers to evaluate how they'd approach a situation from an inward mindset, and how things would change if they were outward. By clearly comparing the two, managers can catch themselves if they turn inward, and instead strive for accountable, collaborative, and engaged behaviors.



[Download it here.](#)

By recognizing each other's humanity, team members are more likely to respect their teammates, and leverage the unique skills and experiences that each person brings to the table.

Humanity at work in action

The following story from [Outfit7](#) is a great example of the transformative power of embracing humanity in the workplace.

As Outfit7 expanded rapidly, founders Samo and Iza were concerned about maintaining their unique [company culture](#). In an attempt to hold onto their unique culture amidst so much change, they initiated a transformative journey with Arbinger.

Through [Arbinger-facilitated training](#), the leadership team recognized the importance of shifting to an [outward mindset](#) focused on others, rather than just themselves. This immediately prompted shifts in the ways employees communicated with one another, resolved disagreements, and laid the foundation for collaboration.

Arbinger's ongoing training—and the development of internal facilitators—continued to spread this positive ripple effect throughout the company. The results were remarkable: leaders reported an increased capacity to listen to one another more objectively, allowing them to reevaluate their perceptions, see issues differently, overcome their differences, and focus on results. Employees became more attentive to helping colleagues, and the culture shifted towards heightened collaboration and [accountability](#).

This cultural transformation translated into exceptional business outcomes, including billions of app downloads, millions of active users, and billions of YouTube views.

Recognizing the humanity in coworkers can lead to lasting positive change and remarkable success. Watch Outfit7's story [here](#):

How Arbinger brings humanity to the workplace

Infusing humanity into your workplace yields impressive outcomes. When our clients embrace the transformation of mindset—and thinking of others rather than just their own goals, they experience a profound shift in their [workplace culture](#), resulting in heightened collaboration, innovation, and productivity.

We've seen results like...

- A 400% increase in sales performance at a multinational retailer
- 65% more products shipped by a large medical supplier during 6 months after implementing Arbinger's solutions (with no increase in staffing)
- A 92% decrease of misconduct-related incidents during 16 months post-Arbinger implementation in a 6000+ employee organization

Through the application of proven training and coaching methodologies to shape this shift in mindset, our clients have witnessed remarkable improvements.

Watch [this video](#) to learn about the remarkable ripple effect humanity in the workplace has.