

Building a Champion Team – 15 Key Drivers For Excellence

In 2001 a study was undertaken by Dr Daryll Hull and Vivienne Read from the University of Sydney with the support of the Business Council of Australia to identify and visit a number of excellent workplaces in Australia and analyse the basis for their outstanding performance. They commented that good work places are reasonably common in Australia and in contrast there are only a few workplaces that are so extraordinary in their performance that they are leading workplaces, exemplars of productivity.

The good news is that excellence can be achieved by anyone who chooses to be one of those organisations. It wasn't money, it wasn't technology – "The characteristics that underpin an excellent workplace are identifiable, quantifiable and manageable".

The quality of working relationships is the central pivot around which excellent workplaces function. They found 15 key drivers but that was the central force followed by workplace leadership:

1. **The quality of working relationships** – people relating to each other as friends, colleagues and co-workers. Supporting each other and helping to get the job done.
2. **Workplace leadership** – how the immediate supervisor, team leader or manager presents themselves - their focus of leadership and energy, not management and administration.
3. **Having a say** – participating in decisions that affect the day to day business of the workplace.
4. **Clear Values** – the extent to which people could see and understand the overall purpose and individual behaviours expected in the place of work.
5. **Being safe** – high levels of personal safety, both physical and psychological. Emotional stability and a feeling of being protected by the system.
6. **The built environment** – Employers provide a high standard working environment for employees to work in, ensuring the required tools are available and the workplace is purposely designed to suit the industry they are involved in.
7. **Recruitment** – getting the right people to work in the location is important, and they need to share the same values and approach to work as the rest of the group.
8. **Pay and conditions** – A letter of offer including the details of wages is discussed and agreed upon with management and the employee at the commencement of employment and the physical working conditions are of a reasonable standard for the employee to conduct their work in.
9. **Getting feedback** – always knowing what people think of each other, their contribution to the success of the place and their individual performance over time.
10. **Autonomy and uniqueness** – the capacity of the organisation to tolerate and encourage the sense of difference that excellent workplaces develop. Their sense of being best at what they do.
11. **A sense of ownership and identity** – being seen to be different and special through pride in the place of work, knowing the business.



12. **Learning** – being able to learn on the job, acquire skills and knowledge from everywhere and develop a greater understanding of the whole workplace.
13. **Passion** – the energy and commitment to the workplace, high levels of volunteering, excitement and a sense of well being. Actually wanting to come to work.
14. **Having fun** – a psychologically secure workplace in which people can relax with each other and enjoy social interaction.
15. **Community connections** – being part of the local community, feeling as though the workplace is a valuable element of the community.

Reference: "Simply the Best Workplaces in Australia" – Working Paper 88 by Dr Daryll Hull and Vivienne Read December 2003. Graduate Programmes in Business & Technology – The University of New South Wales.