

## COMMENTARY



# What it takes to CREATE a USA Today Top 5 Workplace

Building a workplace that earns recognition as one of USA Today's Top 5 Workplaces, an accomplishment Mountain America Credit Union just achieved, is an endeavor that demands more than just meeting the basic needs of an organization and its employees. It requires a holistic approach that touches every aspect of the organization, from its physical spaces to its core values and practices. Here is an expanded perspective on what it takes to create (CREATE, acronym style)— such an esteemed workplace:

### **C: Culture that inspires**

At the heart of any exceptional workplace lies a vibrant and supportive culture that fosters both individual growth and collective success. Culture starts with a maniacal focus on the members we serve, a mission that drives our employees to help members achieve their financial dreams. Culture is about shared beliefs, values, and behaviors. It is more than simply having a statement on the wall; it is about actively engaging team members every day in a meaningful mission with values they are accountable to live by. Values that are

brought to life starting at the hiring process, goal setting, performance assessments, promotions and permeate every aspect of what our organization does. Why are values so important? They are the connective tissue that brings our mission to life for our members and each other. Our mission and values are brought to life in a way that drives inclusivity and builds pride in what we do.

### **R: Relationships and Connections**

Strong relationships and connections within a company are crucial for fostering collaboration, enhancing communication, and building a positive work culture. These bonds encourage trust and respect among employees, leading to increased job satisfaction and productivity. Effective teamwork and a sense of belonging can drive innovation and problem-solving, as individuals feel more comfortable sharing ideas and feedback. A connected and cohesive workforce contributes to the overall success and resilience of the company, enabling it to navigate challenges and seize opportunities more effectively.



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## **E: Engaged and empowered team members**

A key ingredient in the recipe for workplace excellence is a workforce that is not only engaged but also empowered to contribute meaningfully to the organization’s mission. Engaged team members are not merely clocking in and out; they are invested in the success of the company and willing to go beyond job descriptions to achieve shared goals. By fostering a culture of communication, collaboration, and empowerment, organizations can leverage the collective talents and passions of their teams, leading to greater efficiency, creativity, and overall performance.

## **A: Autonomy and accountability**

Team members thrive when they understand what is expected of them and have the autonomy to make decisions and take ownership of their work. Challenging and clear expectations along with defined responsibilities are essential components of a high-performance culture. By establishing stretch opportunities and a culture of accountability, organizations can ensure that everyone is aligned and working towards common objectives, even in the face of challenges and uncertainties.

## **T: Trust and confidence**

Trust is the bedrock upon which successful organizations are built. Team members who not only trust their leaders but feel trusted in return, believe in the organization’s mission and are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and committed to achieving

excellence. By fostering open communication, transparency, and integrity, leaders can build trust and confidence among their teams, creating an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their best.

## **E: Education and professional development**

Continuous learning and development are essential for both individual and organizational growth. By providing team members with regular opportunities for training and professional development, organizations can ensure that their workforce remains innovative, adaptable, and equipped to meet the challenges of a rapidly evolving landscape. Moreover, investing in team member development not only enhances skills and competencies but also fosters a culture of lifelong learning and personal growth, driving engagement, retention, and overall satisfaction. Finally, it creates an agile organization that can flex to meet the changing needs of its members.

In conclusion, creating a workplace that ranks among the top in the nation requires a multifaceted approach that prioritizes a culture that inspires, relationships and connections, team member engagement, autonomy and accountability, trust and confidence, and educational opportunities both personal and professional. By focusing on these key areas and investing in the well-being and development of their team members, organizations can create environments where talent thrives, innovation flourishes, and success becomes not just a goal, but a reality.