

HR PEOPLE + STRATEGY

STRATEGIC HR FORUM

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Leading Through Disruption Begins and Ends with People

Bristol Myers Squibb went through a stormy time in the 2000s, which became a catalyst for BMS to reinvent its culture, people, and workplace.

During this time of turnover the board had the goal of creating a leading HR function through the recruitment of a strong HR leader, someone who knew HR deeply and had a passion for making a difference to BMS's people and patients. As a result Ann Powell Judge joined as CHRO in 2013.

Next BMS created a people strategy: **Engage, Empower, and Enrich**. The CEO stressed that this is a people strategy, not just an HR strategy. Each person on the leadership team would have to support and live this new strategy.

With the new strategy in place, BMS also established a purpose: **Working together for patients**. This purpose was supported with behaviors:

passion, speed, innovation, and accountability. Then BMS invested in building a culture of inclusion where **"Possibility Lives."**

The inclusive culture of BMS focuses on creating three habits: **encourage** every voice, **explore** new ideas, and **eliminate** barriers. Breaking the ideas down further into tactical actions such as recognize someone every week, be clear on the purpose for each meeting, and get to know someone new helped to reinforce the culture. This culture is brought to life through the people and business resource groups with over 12,000 employees being members.

Next was to reimagine performance. BMS needed to have a performance strategy that fit the organization and BMS included setting objectives, having a development plan, and making coaching real-time. BMS invested in managers to be a big part

of the organization and build strong leadership.

Crafting a supportive work environment was also important. BMS has an open workspace, even executives. Other benefits such as childcare, a flexible work environment, on-site fitness facilities, and small touches, such as fresh fruit Wednesdays and freshly ground coffee, all contribute to the positive environment.

As a result, engagement scores are top-notch and the company wins workplace awards. BMS went through a hard process of building a new culture but the results are worth it. The true measure is if BMS is making a difference for patients and employees.

As it continues on its journey, BMS keeps three things as its true north: **Purpose, Culture, and Leadership**.