



Karen Mangia

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The Great Resignation & The Future Of Work: Sam Zietz Of GRUBBRR On How Employers and Employees Are Reworking Work Together

An Interview with Karen Mangia



My greatest source of optimism is entrepreneurs' ability to pivot and create a new class of businesses that thrive in spite of the labor headwinds.

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When it comes to designing the future of work, one size fits none. Discovering success isn't about a hybrid model or offering remote work options. Individuals and organizations are looking for more freedom. The freedom to choose the work model that makes the most sense. The freedom to choose their own values. And the freedom to pursue what matters most. We reached out to successful leaders and thought leaders across all industries to glean their insights and predictions about how to create a future that works.

As a part of our interview series called "How Employers and Employees are Reworking Work Together," we had the pleasure to interview Sam Zietz.

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Sam Zietz is a lifetime entrepreneur and the CEO of GRUBBRR®, a self-ordering technologies company focused on automating commerce with its award-winning line of hardware and software solutions. Sam is also the CEO and founder of TouchSuite, a payment processing company that is revolutionizing the way commerce is transacted.

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Thank you for making time to visit with us about the topic of our time. Our readers would like to get to know you a bit better. Let's zoom out. What do you predict will be the same about work, the workforce and the workplace 10–15 years from now? What do you predict will be different?

The pandemic accelerated existing trends in remote work, e-commerce, and automation. It also empowered employees to take more control of their work experience. In 10–15 years, we expect the following changes:

- Many, but not all jobs will be done in a hybrid model. The pandemic made clear the benefits of remote work: more flexibility for employees, elevated productivity levels, decreased travel spending, and less required office space. In the future, I expect that some jobs will operate on a hybrid model, wherein employees can come into the office a few days a week and work remotely other days.
- The demand for digital experiences is growing exponentially. Companies like Amazon, that curate personalized customer experiences, are faring best in the retail industry. Moving forward, I expect there to be a continued focus on creating digital experiences. The brick-and-mortar store will always be around, but the majority of shopping will be done on e-commerce sites online.
- Unskilled labor positions will be replaced by automation in the coming years. My core belief is that the cashier is obsolete. By automating routine tasks, companies can reallocate employees to more useful functions of the business, and save on their bottom line.

The above were the initial wave of impacts from how the workplace changed as a result of Covid. We believe that the next wave may counteract some of the initial responses.

- Employers will recognize that they will need to normalize wages for remote and hybrid employees based on where the employee chooses to live. For example, an employee of a New York City company who lives in Iowa will likely see their income adjusted to reflect a rate consistent with work in the state of Iowa.
- Companies will see an opportunity to elevate their cultures by taking an opposing perspective of requiring as many employees as possible to work in the same office. Culture is a function of what you see and a collective group of employees in the same office will theoretically acquire the same cultural traits consistent with the organization. In summary, culture works better in person, and some companies will take advantage of this variant perspective.

What advice would you offer to employers who want to future-proof their organizations?

Invest in your employees. Now, more than ever, employees want to be recognized as individuals, rather than assets within a company. In the words of Alison Omens, Chief Strategy Officer of JUST Capital, “the early days of the pandemic reminded us that people are not machines.”

People want to know that you care about them. It has to be sincere and cannot just be a memo or a tagline. In practice, this means recognizing that employees have lives outside of the workplace and providing flexibility so that employees can live their lives to the fullest. Providing flexibility, such as hybrid work models, unlimited PTO, and mental health benefits are just a few simple ways employers can invest in their employees, show them that they are

simple ways employers can invest in their employees, show them that they are valued, and future-proof their organization. After all, The Great Resignation proved that for a company to survive, employees must want to work there.

What do you predict will be the biggest gaps between what employers are willing to offer and what employees expect as we move forward? And what strategies would you offer about how to reconcile those gaps?

The biggest gap between employers and employees is pay. Nothing matters more to people than pay. We are currently in an inflationary period, meaning more and more of people's income is going to rent, groceries and living costs. As a result, nothing is more important than higher income. Even the greatest employees with the most loyal commitment to a company will jump on an opportunity to make more money. The only way to make this happen is for a company to increase its respective margins and earnings in an effort to pay higher wages. Employers that blame external factors for turnover — whether it be government leadership, the pandemic, unemployment benefits or other reasons — and refuse to offer commensurate wages will be the losers who struggle in the wake of the Great Resignation.

We simultaneously joined a global experiment together last year called “Working From Home.” How will this experience influence the future of work?

Remote work and virtual meetings are likely to continue, albeit less intensely than at the pandemic's peak. According to research from McKinsey, 20–25% of the workforces in advanced economies could work from home between three to five days a week. However, they found that some work that can be done remotely is best done in person, such as negotiations, critical business decisions, brainstorming sessions and providing sensitive feedback.

Nevertheless, flexible work arrangements have become non-negotiable for job-seekers and employees alike — so much so that people now value such flexibility as much as a 10% pay raise, according to new research from the WFH Research Project. As mentioned previously, I believe that moving forward, most work will be done in a hybrid model, wherein employees have the choice of when they want to work in the office and when they want to work remotely. Again, this is all about honoring employees as individuals and promoting a healthy work-life balance.

We've all read the headlines about how the pandemic reshaped the workforce. What societal changes do you foresee as necessary to support a future of work that works for everyone?

Our demographics are such that we are heading to be the next Japan and Italy due to our minimal birth rates, so there won't be enough employees. Concurrently, you have an automation trend that will reduce the requirement of employees but the ultimate outcome is likely one of universal basic income (UBI) to perpetuate consumer spending.

What is your greatest source of optimism about the future of work?

My greatest source of optimism is entrepreneurs' ability to pivot and create a new class of businesses that thrive in spite of the labor headwinds.

Our collective mental health and wellbeing are now considered collateral as we consider the future of work. What innovative strategies do you see employers offering to help improve and optimize their employee's mental health and wellbeing?

The reality of corporate mental health is grim. Each year, one in five adults in the U.S. will experience mental illness, yet only one in three who need help will get it. As a result, many people will either miss work or will get less done on the job. Caring for employee mental health is not only the human thing to

do, but is also good business. Research from the World Health Organization shows that for every \$1 spent on treating common mental health concerns, there is a return of \$4 in improved health and productivity.

Offering mental health benefits is the bare minimum. Most of all, employers need to be clear about the mental health resources offered to their employees and how to access them.

Ensure that health plans offered to all employees include adequate mental health coverage, discuss mental health issues in the workplace, and regularly measure employee mental health and stress levels. Below are some strategies/benefits that employers should consider when looking to address employee mental health:

1. Increase Benefits
2. Managerial Training
3. Free Mental Health/Meditation Apps (such as Headspace, Calm)
4. Employee Assistance Program
5. Health Savings Account
6. 24/7 Helpline
7. Mental Health Days
8. Free/subsidizes online therapy sessions
9. Employee Surveys, such as the Work Limitations Questionnaire and the Brief Job Stress Questionnaire

It seems like there's a new headline every day. 'The Great Resignation'. 'The Great Reconfiguration'. And now the 'Great Reevaluation'. What are the most important messages leaders need to hear from these headlines? How do company cultures need to evolve?

The Great Resignation has inspired other terms to describe the work revolution we're witnessing, including "The Great Reimagination," "The Great Reset" and "The Great Realization." These narratives explain how employees are re-examining the role of work in their lives, but miss the broader consequences of this quitting wave, and what it means for the individual worker. Leaders need to realize that, as aforementioned, employees must be valued as individuals. In practice, this means implementing a culture wherein the work-life balance is practiced and respected.

What GRUBBRR can do is identify a core skill set and core passion of an employee and to promote an employee finding that within the organization. For example, if someone starts in finance and thinks they would be more productive in a creative, logistics or some other role, GRUBBRR promotes a culture whereby that individual can feel comfortable requesting to try a different role. In the long run, if an employee is happy with what they are doing, they will be more productive and maintain a longer tenure at the company.

I keep quotes on my desk and on scraps of paper to stay inspired. What's your favorite "Life Lesson Quote"? And how has this quote shaped your perspective?

"A good plan violently executed now is better than a perfect plan executed next week" — George S. Patton.

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