



What Role Does Culture Play in Your Enterprise?

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Is this person the right fit for the job? Workplace culture and organizational culture are often topics of discussion when we are looking for new employees, or dealing with dismissing employees. Culture is an ambiguous word which characterizes the makings of the work environment and what's it's like to work here. When employers interview a prospective employee, the key questions and assessments which explore whether the candidate is a good fit can help to articulate the culture. In spite of the difficulty in describing culture, it's not difficult to know when you have found an employee who appears to fit your culture—he/ she just feels right.

The single most important performance issue for organizations is its culture. Asking a person to describe his or her workplace culture is like asking a fish to describe water. The fish isn't even aware of his environment because he is swimming in it and is completely oblivious to its presence or its importance for that matter. Culture, the environment that surrounds you at work all of the time, is a powerful element that shapes your work enjoyment, your work relationships, and your work routines.

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Tip of the Month

Stress Management Techniques

Adapted from Santa Clara University, 2009. www.scu.edu/wellness

1. Organize yourself.

Take better control of the way you're spending your time and energy so you can handle stress more effectively.

2. Control your environment by controlling who and what is surrounding you.

In this way, you can either get rid of stress or get support for yourself.

3. Appreciate yourself by giving yourself positive feedback.

Remember, you are a unique individual who is doing the best you can.

4. Reward yourself by planning leisure activities into your life.

It really helps to have something to look forward to.

5. Exercise your body since your health and productivity depend upon your body's ability to bring oxygen and food to its cells.

Therefore, exercise your heart and lungs regularly, a minimum of three days per week for 15-30 minutes.

6. Relax yourself by taking your mind off your stress and concentrating on breathing and positive thoughts.

Dreaming counts, along with meditation, progressive relaxation, exercise, listening to relaxing music, communicating with friends and loved ones, etc.

7. Rest yourself as regularly as possible.

Sleep 7-8 hours a night. Take study breaks. There is only so much your mind can absorb at one time. It needs

time to process and integrate information.

8. Be aware of yourself.

Be aware of distress signals such as insomnia, headaches, anxiety, upset stomach, lack of concentration, colds/flu, excessive tiredness, etc.

9. Feed yourself well

Eat a balanced diet. Avoid high calorie foods that are high in fats and sugar. Don't depend on drugs and/or alcohol. Remember, a twenty minute walk has been proven to be a better tranquilizer than some prescription drugs.

10. Enjoy Yourself.

It has been shown that happier people tend to live longer, have less physical problems, and are more productive. Look for the humor in life when things don't make sense. Remember, you are very special and deserve only the best treatment from yourself.



Culture is something that you cannot actually see, except through ways it manifests itself in the workplace. Objects displayed in employees' work spaces, your bulletin board content, the company newsletter, the interaction of employees in meetings, the way people collaborate, what is celebrated or not celebrated at work, who speaks to who, all speak volumes about your organizational culture.

In many ways, culture is the personality of the organization. An individual's personality is made up of the values, beliefs, underlying assumptions, interests, experiences, upbringing, and habits that create his/her behavior. Culture in an organization is the **values, beliefs, underlying assumptions, attitudes, and behaviors shared by a group of people**. Culture is the behavior that results when a group arrives at a set of - generally unspoken and unwritten - rules for how we get along around here.

Culture can be observed in a group's:

- **Language**—spoken or written symbols used for communication, governed by grammar
- **Decision making**—how, who and when decisions are made
- **Symbols**—anything that represents something else: physical objects, gestures, words, images, sounds
- **Ceremonies**—what is recognized and celebrated
- **Stories and legends**—memorable events
- **Work routines**—how employees engage in workplace processes
- **Norms**—shared rules of conduct that tell people how to act in specific situations
- **Technology**—resources/tools used to increase efficiency

Many manager's attempt to delegate the management of culture to human resources. Building and nourishing the organizational culture is a fundamental and essential duty of management. To build a better culture, leadership must define the "ideal culture" or what the organization strives to become and compare it to the "actual" culture that exists. In addition, smart managers need to understand that there are **formal components of culture, or the way we say we get things done**: such as our goal statements, policies and procedures, structure and technology. And there's **the way we really get things done or the informal aspects of culture** which includes: beliefs and assumptions, perceptions and attitudes about the formal system, the values and informal interactions between the employees.

An organization's culture is made up of all of the life experiences each employee brings to the organization. Culture is especially influenced by the organization's founder, executives, and other managerial staff because of their role in decision making and strategic direction.

Companies sink or swim based on their internal culture. Culture drives whatever you are trying to do in your organization. Culture creates results and outcomes, it drives innovation and economic performance. Culture



ensures that employees are engaged. There is debate about whether culture or strategy are more important, both are essential for a successful enterprise.

Organizations with outstanding cultures consistently produce outstanding results; they attract, motivate and retain top talent and successfully adapt to changing conditions. When a company has a strong, healthy culture, people want to be a part of it.

John Colman, identified “Six components of a great corporate culture” in his May 6, 2013, Harvard Business Review Blog.

Vision: A simple phrase which guides a company’s values and provides it with purpose.

Values: A set of guidelines on behaviors and mindsets needed to achieve the mission.

Practices: The Company practices what it says it values.

People: In sync with the company’s vision, values and practices.

Narrative: The Company’s unique story which shares its history.

Place: The environment or space designed for work to take place.

Joe Tye, the author of the *Florence Prescription* and *All Hands on Deck: 8 Essential Lessons for Building a Culture of Ownership*, suggests that a key leadership imperative today is fostering a culture of ownership in our organizations. He offers: Commitment, Engagement, Passion, Initiative, Stewardship, Belonging, Fellowship, and Pride as the eight essential characteristics of a culture of ownership.

Researchers Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones, studied organizations around the world for three years to identify six common imperatives of what creates an “organization of your dreams.” Below are my observations from their May 2013, Harvard Business Review article, “*Creating the Best Workplace on Earth.*”

1. Let people be themselves. More than the traditional diversity categories of gender, race, age, ethnicity and the like which are laudable. The traits which enable people to be themselves are more subtle: differences in perspectives, habits of mind and core assumptions.
2. Unleash the flow of information. Do not deceive, stonewall, distort or spin information.
3. Magnify people’s strengths. Make your best employees even better and the least of them better than they ever thought they could be.
4. Stand for more than shareholder value. Shared meaning is about more than fulfilling your mission statement. It’s about forging and maintaining powerful connections between personal and organizational values.
5. Show how the daily work makes sense.
6. Have rules people can believe in.

Culture is operating within every enterprise. To build the business of your dreams, thoughtfully develop and articulate its culture.



“If you have been trying to make changes in how your organization works, you need to find out how the existing culture aids or hinders you.”

***--Edgar Schein, professor
MIT Sloan School of Management.***