Mastering Workplace Culture

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Hi and welcome to the August issue of our newsletter.

A word from Gloria …

Welcome to our newsletter on Workplace Culture, and how to either establish or grow yours! In this edition, we will be looking at some simple techniques to establish, and build on the culture in your place of work. For some of you, this has already been done – my challenge to you though is to think about the following; How effective is your company culture? Are you ticking all the boxes when it comes to having top culture in your company? How do you know this?

In order to establish where your Company sits, it may be useful to read the article I have written on Fostering Good Workplace Culture.

This may lead you into some areas for improvement, as well as being able to establish where you currently are. Remember, we can only improve on what we do, and those among us that think they have it perfected may miss out on the possibility for increased performance from staff, and ultimately profit margins in their places of work.

Enjoy the months ahead, as the next time we meet spring will be in the air! Yes it's true!!

Gloria

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Latest Article

This focuses on Good Workplace Culture. The culture of a workplace is something that is obvious from the moment you walk in the door. It leaps out at you, whether it is good, bad or indifferent! Every member of staff (including you) emanates how they are feeling whether consciously or unconsciously. This usually means that for most of us, we are largely unaware of what our body language, tone of voice and even words convey. If your workplace is a happy and productive one, the culture will reflect that. However, we need to consider that the opposite is also true. Think about that next time you walk into your office building!

New Workshop

The Culture of the Company Workshop involves an assessment of how the Company sits right now within its framework. Focus is given to leadership issues that may affect the Culture with strategies taught to develop these to greater effect. **T**his is a highly experiential workshop with impetus given to the four key factors that underpin workplace culture**.** Through a variety of practical and skill based exercises participants learn an appreciation for the differences, personalities, styles and strengths that their own /leadership team display. They are also able to utilise a full self-assessment on what/how they contribute to the culture as individuals. This results in, an integrated cohesive plan to enhance workplace culture.

Competition

Count the number of times the word Culture is used in my article and email your answer; by placing it in the subject line to info@mastersofcommunication.co.nz. The lucky winner will receive a free assessment of their workplace culture. We will contact the winner on 31 August.

Next Issue

Communication – The absolute importance of this skill!

HOW CAN GOOD WORKPLACE CULTURE BE FOSTERED?

Quite simply good workplace culture can be fostered by many things. But there are some that need to be top of mind when you are looking to either improve or establish yours. Naturally any sort of implementation of this, must begin at the top with the Management and Board. Of extreme importance is transparency and honesty. If you lead with both, you have a pretty effective beginning right there. What is also significant is how you (as the leadership team) emanate diligence around what the Company portrays, as the team will naturally reflect that in the marketplace. Another useful tool for fostering good workplace culture is by being committed through your actions as opposed to your words.

A useful strategy for you to employ now, is to begin by recruiting like minded or similar people who share the same vision you have for the company. By bringing people on board that are as passionate about what they do as you are, you ensure the creation of a strong culture right from the beginning of their employment. Ultimately, good workplace culture manifests in the people within feeling valued, because their working conditions are equitable with their output. In other words, the contract works. Conversely in a negative or dysfunctional workplace the atmosphere that emanates is disappointment, unhappiness and festering resentment.

What is currently happening in your workplace and how can you improve on what exists?

If there is a need for improvement, know this - You need to place extreme importance on the culture of the company. Without it, your attrition rate will rise, the 'wrong' people will leave, and you will end up losing experience which cannot be easily replaced. The key components of Workplace Culture are reflected in 4 key areas and denote what the staff members think - about their place of work.

Respect
Equality
Informality
Flexibility

Respect

All too often, decisions are made in Companies, without anyone involving team members in making the decisions or at least getting some of their input. This approach might be efficient in the short term, and it surely fits the old paradigm that effective leadership is all about being swift and decisive. It might even be required in emergencies, when the downside of delay clearly outweighs the benefits of involving others in the decision. Excluding these emergency situations, what's your approach on this? Do you tend to go forward single-handedly, and do things to people or in conjunction with them?

Nothing conveys respect more than the vote of confidence that you trust others to make a good (or better) decision.

Equality

In a meaningful workplace, there's no class system driving wedges between people. Everyone is a first class citizen. On paper, the organisation has structure with clearly delineated tasks / Managers - but operationally speaking, everyone is on the same level. It's not 'us 'and 'them' within the same workplace. It's just 'us. One way that culture can be enhanced with middle management and employees is to adopt a project mindset. Let specific initiatives become what pulls people together. Rather than having a traditional boss we have a facilitator and project sponsor.

Informality

Dialogue in an excessively formal workplace can mean that staff members are inhibited in speaking openly. Discussions can become more of a one-way flow with tradition and protocol deciding who gets all the airtime. Result: Many problems are left to simmer beneath the surface, either because people feel they can't bring them up or because they're not thoroughly addressed once they're uncovered. Also missed are opportunities to build relationships, seize opportunities, show appreciation or develop a shared vision. Communication is a top-down proposition. People have to go through 'channels' to get things done. All this can have a serious effect on experiencing optimal culture in the work place.

Flexibility

In a meaningful workplace, the workplace mission and people come first and the rules are there only to the degree that they help. They're few in number, and they bend easily. This has nothing to do with having a 'loose 'environment where people eagerly abuse the 'lack' of rules. It has everything to do with creating a workplace built on trust, support and freedom. This is essential when building a better culture within, and when change is about to be implemented, as change by its nature necessitates support to take hold and flourish.

What is the Culture in your place of Work?

The Bottom Line

- Involve staff by joining with rather than doing to e.g., have periodic get togethers with colleagues to review progress and look ahead.
- Convey feedback regularly and appropriately by sharing information
- Communication – Having an informal time regularly where people can offload/discuss what is and isn't working
- Incentives – create an inter-office memo to ascertain what types of reward systems would be appreciated at your place of work.
- Value staff by - articulating a clear message that creativity is not just permitted but absolutely vital to the health of the organisation.
- In newsletter and intranets include a section that profiles new developments.
- Redefine failure: As you and others pursue improvement and innovation – expect failure, when it comes – don't punish it, encourage more innovation.

Please contact us if you would like the workshop outline on this topic.

By Gloria Masters

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Building Culture of the Company Workshop

Course Overview

The Culture of the Company Workshop involves an assessment of how the Company sits right now within its framework. Focus is given to leadership issues that may negatively affect the Culture with strategies taught to counteract this. This is a highly experiential workshop with impetus given to the factors displayed in a culture that is slipping. Through a variety of practical and skill based exercises participants learn an appreciation for the differences, personalities, styles and strengths that contribute to the culture within. They are also able to utilise a full self-assessment on what/how they contribute to the culture as individuals. These results are then woven into an individualised action plan for each person to take away and begin the necessary changes on.

Course Topics

- The Top 5 Techniques for establishing Workplace Culture
- Identifying the gaps within the Company's Culture
- 10 most common mistakes when changing the Culture
- 3 steps to Evaluating your own Company's Culture
- Critical Success Factors in working with your Company's Culture
- Creating the 4 Keys for effective Workplace Culture
- Assessing yourself/Management Team to effect change needed
- Planning for Change
- Implementing the Change
- Pitfalls to Change
- 7 Strategies to overcome Resistance within
- Effective Relational Tools for effective Workplace Culture
- Personal Accountability – tips for recognising yours
- Tools for successful integration

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