



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.

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