

Tools and Tips for Developing Your Culture

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“I came to see, in my time at IBM, that culture isn’t just one aspect of the game—it is the game.”

Louis Gerstner, quoted in the book,
“How the Mighty Fall” by Jim Collins

Personal Values:

"The principles used by an individual to determine how they face the world and relate to others."

Personal Values are unaffected by:

- Who we are with at the time
- Circumstances or situations
- Positive or negative reinforcement from others

Warning Signs of Undesirable Culture:

- High Turnover
- Minimal time at work
- Low attendance at Company sponsored events
- “Us vs. them” mentality between employees and management
- Consistently poor performance
- Minimal social interaction at work between employees
- Indifference to performance
- Lack of sincere care for animal well-being
- Chronicly blaming others
- Frequent inappropriate remarks

Indicators of Positive Culture:

- Early arrival/hanging around after work
- No one is “left out”
- New people are welcomed enthusiastically
- Zero tolerance for poor performance or poor attitudes
- The animals come first!
- Consistent acceptance of responsibility
- Employees hold each other accountable
- Strong desire for personal improvement opportunities
- Conflicts handled immediately and completely resolved
- No accidents—high safety consciousness

Barriers to Positive Culture:

- Immaturity
- "Lone Rangers"
- Bigotry
- Lack of support from supervisors/upper management
- Inconsistency
- Lack of vision
- No rules for behavior
- No accountability
- Inequity

Examples of Company Values

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Family
- Growth
- Community
- Service
- Ethical Behavior
- Excellence
- Trust
- Openness
- Empowerment
- Stockmanship
- Environmental Stewardship
- Engagement
- Passion
- Open to Change
- Hard Work
- Continuous Improvement
- Urgency
- Balanced Living
- Safety

Action Steps

1. Identify Warning Signs that currently exist.
2. Identify and remove Barriers that currently exist.
3. Discuss the Values that you want in your workplace.
4. Implement activities to enhance these values.
5. Reward and recognize examples of behaviors that enhance your culture.
6. Act quickly when counter-productive behaviors and attitudes occur.
7. Track progress and make appropriate adjustments.

Suggestions for Each Step:

1. Identify Warning Signs:

- Review the list of possible warning signs and personally observe which ones seem present in your work environment. Confirm them through open-minded observation.
- Use data and other objective information to confirm your observations when available.
- Just because one person exhibits these signs, it does not mean that the culture is also defined by them.

Suggestions for Each Step:

2. Identify and remove Barriers:

- Review the list of possible barriers and personally observe which ones seem present in your work environment. Confirm them through open-minded observation.
- Identify individuals who are creating the barrier and develop a plan to work with them to correct the behavior. Implement that plan.
- Develop a plan to remove any other barriers that exist.
- Realize that you may have to remove any major barriers before attempting to implement positive culture development.

Suggestions for Each Step:

3. Discuss the Values that you want in your workplace:

- Ask for input from each person individually.
- Reinforce the positive aspects of your current culture.
- Develop a master list from their comments.
- Consider having a group meeting to discuss your findings, develop priorities and implement an action plan.

Suggestions for Each Step:

4. Implement activities to enhance these values:

- Don't try to go too fast. Let people get used to a new way of thinking, a revised set of priorities, and a greater understanding of what an enhanced culture could be.
- Reinforce what you want in your day-to-day activities. Share examples of appropriate actions.
- Get the support and "buy-in" of upper management and/or ownership.
- Get the support of key influencers in your group.
- Remember the "WIIFM" factor.

Suggestions for Each Step:

5. Reward and recognize examples of behaviors that enhance your culture:

- Tell people when they are exhibiting the appropriate behaviors.
- Encourage new ideas that will make you more successful in developing your new culture.
- Include specific recognition and rewards activities as a part of your strategy.

Suggestions for Each Step:

6. Act quickly when counter-productive behaviors and attitudes occur:

- Do not delay when clearly inappropriate behaviors occur.
- If the offense happens privately, act privately.
- If the offense happens publicly, respond at that time by clarifying what was inappropriate, by stating what is a more appropriate behavior, and then by meeting with the person privately.

Suggestions for Each Step:

7. Track progress and make appropriate adjustments:
 - Look for progress in quantifiable ways.
 - Hold people accountable for progress, not just as individuals but as a team.
 - Include your culture development goals in your regular evaluation/performance review process.
 - Include a discussion of your progress in your regular staff meetings.
 - As you speak to your staff one-on-one, ask for input and feedback about your progress and suggestions for improvement.

Additional Thoughts:

- Avoid "Post Seminar Syndrome."
- Determine if your process should be done obviously and deliberately, or more "under the radar."
- Don't make comparisons between employees.
- Utilize the personal strengths of your people, especially those with the ability to motivate and encourage others.

Additional Thoughts:

- Remember your website! Interested candidates look for positive culture, and want to see signs of it before they even apply.
- Your culture is as simple as the way the phone is answered, and includes the way that Owners talk behind closed doors during their meetings.

Thank You!

Additional Information:

Website: www.dontyler.com

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Materials available:

“The Complete Guide To Managing Agricultural Employees ©”

(200 page printed reference manual)

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