Moving Toward a Productive Organizational Culture

Recognizing the culture of your organization is vital in order to understand how your employees think and act. Organizational culture is the way your company acts and conducts business. It is influenced by the treatment of workers, organizational values, leadership, vision, strategy and direction, and the type of atmosphere. Each of these affects every aspect of the business. What's your ability to make decisions? How do you manage conflict and stress? Do your employees trust you? If you're not there already, your goal should be to move your organization into one that encourages their employees to do their best.

There are five types of organizational culture. Let's look at the characteristics and dangers of each. Do any of these sound like your organization?

Ritualistic Culture
This culture focuses on rules and does everything by the book. They follow a strict chain of command. They don't try to think outside of the box and do everything according to pre-approved policy. While this culture does respect tradition and authority, there's no room for new ideas; leaving their policies and procedures outdated. Employees may not feel trusted because of the dictatorship nature of supervisors. Because change takes so long, employees with initiative are constantly looking for loop-holes in rules.

Irrational Culture
An irrational culture continuously flies by the seat of their pants. Change is made with no plan of implementation. They look for the new "flavor of the month" and try too many things at once. This leads to much activity, but very few results. Because of this, decisions often don't follow the company's strategic plan. There's no over arching vision or direction.

Suspicious Culture
This culture is in constant fear that others are after them. They feel that everyone has a hidden agenda and walls must be up at all times. Since management doesn't want to show their hand to the employees, gossip is rampant. This culture must also overcome the low employee morale that comes with lack of trust--which leads to high turnover of quality employees. This organization will lose many valuable employees just because they don't have a team atmosphere.

Self-Centered Culture
The self-centered culture feels that the job should be the life of everyone working there. They feel that

> *Two important things are to have a genuine interest in people and to be kind to them. Kindness, I've discovered, is everything in life.*
> *Isaac Bashevis Singer (1904-1991)*
> *Writer & Nobel Prize winner in literature*

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people are expendable and shouldn't have any rights or private lives. Numerous last minute demands are forced upon employees. It's a fact that people don't like to feel used and unappreciated. They resent feelings of being expendable. When this happens, employees feel violated and are unmotivated with an "our way or the highway" mindset.

Detached Culture

Keeping others at a distance is a trademark of the detached culture. There's no emotion or enthusiasm when working with this organization. Employees just go through the motion of putting in their time and doing their job without any enjoyment or satisfaction. When top management is detached, it quickly spreads down the entire chain of command until all employees keep everyone else at a distance. There is no team unity or bonding here.

Very few people would be happy in any of those organizations. Your company should strive to have an environment which focuses on delivering high quality service and good work. There needs to be a willingness to reward growth, profits, performance and success. An organization that has genuine concern for their employees and reinforces open communication will be one with a low employee turnover. Most importantly, you should encourage all employees to be the best and do the best work possible.

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