



Make or Break your Success with Company Culture

Anyone who suggests that a corporate culture doesn't matter doesn't understand the value or importance of culture to a company's overall success. Corporate culture defines and governs the way a business and its employees think about their jobs and the environment they work in.

A positive corporate culture attracts the very best candidates to work for your company. Welcoming, warm, and friendly corporate cultures that provide outstanding management, great pay, and exceptional benefits engender committed, loyal, long-term employees who love their jobs and their places of work. Negative, back-stabbing, and overly competitive cultures demoralize, demean, and negate employees, producing rapid turnover and loss of important institutional and proprietary knowledge. Of those two, which one do you think enjoys wealth and success?

Many of you have probably seen surveys like *The Best Places to Work*. It's not easy to create an atmosphere that gets your company voted in the top ten. The reality is that a positive corporate culture that supports its employees can shift and change in either direction at almost any time. The instant a new person is hired on, the culture can immediately change—and if this person happens to hold a position of power, it can turn into a make-or-break situation. Your chosen leader sets the tone for an entire work group or team. A great leader inspires and supports. A poor leader creates conflict and struggle and, ultimately, demoralized, unhappy employees who regularly scour the want ads for a new job when all they really want is a new boss.

Well-meaning leaders take note. Your greatest challenge won't be to become the best personality in the place. Your job will be to navigate the difficulties of managing an exponentially growing and fluidly changing corporate culture. But here is where the math gets challenging. Let's say the owner is gifted with an IQ of 150 and works 70 hours a week. A workforce of 10 normal people with an average IQ of 100 \times 10 = 1000 IQ, working 40 hrs/wk \times 10 = 400 hours. Internal relationships are 10 to the power of 10; that is, each person has nine individual relationships with other employees plus the owner. So there you have it: 150 versus 1000, 70 versus 400, and 100 relationships to deal with. Owners are outnumbered and mathematically challenged.

What can you do to help deal with the literally hundreds of relationship to ensure your corporate culture creates a winning environment?

Tip #1: When you write your company's mission statement, make sure it reflects your values. Your mission statement sets the tone for your organization. Make sure it's the kind of tone you want established. Don't say "we value honesty" and then lie to your customer right in front of your employees. Which segues to a personal tip...

Tip #2: Have you ever heard the expression, "Do as I say not as I do?" Want to create instant resentment among your staff? Practice that principle. In other words, don't tell your staff they can't telecommute and then telecommute. Or don't tell your staff there is a pay freeze and show up the next day in brand new luxury sedan. Instead, earn your staff's respect by creating an even playing field. Practice what you preach.