



## **5 Steps to Create Your Company Culture**

By Vicki Z. Lauter

*Leaders need to employ patience and persistence if they're going to create a beneficial, shared culture in a growing organization.*

As companies grow and expand, many are struggling to create a shared culture that reflects core values and permeates all levels of the organization. Below are several steps that leaders can take to meet this challenge with flying colors.

### **Consistency**

Companies need to ensure that their culture is represented in *all* of its offices or operations. To achieve this, the organization must apply and measure the same processes, policies and rules throughout the field. If there is a significant variance, then the culture will not be seen as important or a contributing factor to the organization's success. Everyone within an organization contributes to its culture, whether through support, neglect or subversion.

### **Fostering a Connection**

A cultural transformation is not something that can be forced on people in a short period of time. Rules and policies can be implemented or enforced, but culture is how a group of people think and respond to the surrounding actions and behaviors of managers, customers and others.

As an example, hospitals have to deal with compensation on patient satisfaction scores, strict guidelines, working with quick accreditation agencies and so much more on a daily basis. If the overriding culture isn't strong, the result is a lack of cohesiveness in policies, management and patient care.

A shared culture is a very powerful contributor to organizational performance. A culture with an emphasis and reward structure on factors such as customer service, quality, equitable promotions, meritocracy and results will have high employee morale, good attendance, frequent new idea generation and low employee turnover."

There is no simple formula for developing a culture--it needs to develop over time. I have listed some standards that contribute to a shared culture:

- A common set of demonstrated values that are important to the organization, its people and its customers.



- A shared understanding, across all levels of the organization, of how the values and culture contribute to the value proposition of the system.
- Consistent use of policies, practices and processes, particularly talent management practices that reinforce the shared values. Performance measures based on the values are incorporated with performance management criteria, which are in turn integrated with rewards, recognition and promotion criteria.
- Open and frequent communication across the organization as to how the values and culture contribute to organization, team and individual success (such as outstanding achievement award, results directly related to demonstrated values and so forth).
- Managers at all levels who “practice what is preached.”

### **A Healthy Culture**

When your goal is to create a positive, shared culture, it all comes down to thinking globally and acting locally. This process helps individual facilities maintain their own personalities and systems overall while smoothly being encompassed into the larger sector. Managers have to make sure the culture is healthy enough to be emulated; the health of a culture can be determined through customer satisfaction feedback, employee satisfaction scores and turnover rates.

The culture should also reinforce and reflect the value proposition of the organization. If it is acceptable that the value proposition be tailored in different areas or for different groups of customers, then the culture can be satisfactory, as long as the values of the organization are reflected appropriately.

It takes tremendous effort on behalf of the managers, employees and customers to create a positive shared culture. Values have to be established and practiced, all communication has to be clear and consistent, and time has to be allowed for everyone to acclimate. If these steps are taken, the overriding shared culture will ultimately emerge within the organization.

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