

## It's All About Culture

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## So what exactly is culture?

Within a business organization I define culture to be a set of **beliefs**, **values**, and **norms** that characterize behavior within an organization. Culture is present in every organization and if you don't foster it from the top and pay attention to it then it will develop on its own. Letting culture develop on its own in your organization is dangerous because culture shapes "how" the employees work within an organization.

If your employees enjoy the environment they are in and feel like they are a useful part of the organization they will work harder to obtain their goals.

And, if the employee's goals are aligned with the organization's goals then **everyone wins**. If you create a culture within your organization where employees are respected and empowered to be successful then they, and you as a leader, will succeed. Not only does good culture promote success from within it also attracts good talent into the organization as word gets out that this is the place where you want to be.



I have seen senior leaders ignore the culture within their organizations and the damaging effects that can have. Those organizations frequently had a disconnect between the employees and leaders which usually turned into an "us" versus "them" mentality. Furthermore, organizations that ignored culture also suffer from employees who use gossip as the main way of communicating and take on a clock puncher mentality.



Cultivate a successful culture by **communicating effectively** and walking the talk. Create values that the organization will use across the board and then live by them. Make sure that everything that you do, how you act and how you lead support the organization's values. Empowered cultures tend to also include employees in the decision making process. This doesn't mean that everyone gets a vote, but it does mean that there are times when you need to listen and then act.

**Let me know what your experiences are with culture in your past or present organizations. What sort of cultural conflicts have you been involved in? How did you handle them? Are you presently having difficulties with culture at your organization? What are you doing about it? I would love to hear your thoughts!**

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