

What's stopping you from reaching your desired organizational culture?

Organizational culture refers to the expectations, experiences, philosophy, and values that bind a company together. A successful organization must have a culture that is founded on a set of deeply held and broadly shared ideas that are backed up by strategy and structure. When an organization assesses its culture effectively, it can develop policies, programs, and strategies that support and strengthen its core purpose and values. The same core characteristics or beliefs motivate and unite everyone in aligned organizations, cascading down from the C-suite to individual contributors.

There are those who ignore the existence of a culture in their organization or simply do not understand the importance of this concept, seeing it as abstract and irrelevant. Leaders must understand that every great feat in history was driven by the leadership of an effective culture that managed to turn a small idea into a predominant empire. A healthy culture is capable of surviving the worst crises even beyond the tenure of the initial visionary.

Smaller organizations commonly have a dominant culture shared through a similar set of values, because they are working closely together, they are closer to the central embodiment of the company's mission and vision. However, the larger the organization, the higher the chance of subcultures forming in addition to the dominant culture. Subcultures exist among groups of individuals that have their own rituals and traditions. Organizational subcultures can either strengthen organization's values or cause serious harm.

Dimensions

The first thing to understand; ignoring or undermining the culture in a professional environment is a major issue; this belief limits the uninterrupted development of any activity. If leaders are unaware of the type of culture they are promoting among their partners, employees and customers, they are unfortunately wasting a key element in the management of the best available resources. By not using culture as an ally tool to make things easier, it will become a silent enemy that will destroy organizational assets.

A highly valued skill in management is the ability to balance essential elements within a critical approach that is detrimental to the organization. Stability is desired in every process, but we have seen how managers mistakenly try to lead with unwavering rigor, which can lead to the outright stifling of creative flexibility.

At the other extreme, leaders who are so flexible with their subordinates that discretion is decentralized, allowing information to escape into the hands of competitors. It is important that the internal focus remains focused on objectives until it is integrated with an organizational stability capable of generating an attractive differentiation in the eyes of customers.

Common obstacles

Leadership Type

Leadership is key in shaping organizational culture. Employees look up to their leaders in terms of behaviour, practices, and actions. Ineffective leadership styles can harm the organizational culture and create tensions between leaders and other members of the organization.

Management of Employees:

Management's anticipated behaviour and interaction with subordinates is one of the main components of shaping an organizational culture. Unhealthy management can have a negative impact on employee satisfaction and motivation with built up stress that will create a toxic culture.

Organizational structure, policies and procedures:

Structure, policies, and procedures impact managers and subordinate's behaviours, through formal limitations that set divisions among approach, authority distribution, grouping of units and overall coordination among team members. Rigid structures, policies and procedures can be cultural symbols that mirror key assumptions and values dominant in an organization.

Communication:

Communication among all members of the organization is a prominent aspect of a healthy culture. Effective communication must take into account diversity and cultural differences and respect every member within the organization.

Institutional Glue:

Institutional glue is the uniting component where all efforts in the organization are aligned towards the wider aims. It is an invisible glue that holds the organization together and plays a vital role in an organization's success. If this institutional glue is not highlighted among team members, individuals would have no common aim to strive towards and no glue that holds them to the organization.

Strategic Focus:

Strategic focus must be instilled within every role among all the employees. Lack of emphasis on the focal points of the organization's strategy will act as a barrier to the desired culture.

Workplace Dynamic:

Workplace dynamics impact how individuals within the organization interact with each other. Workplace dynamics have a major, lasting impact on employees' well-being and career trajectory. Deficient workplace dynamics cause disruption and poor employee morale.

Development Concentration:

Development concentration refers to areas of development that the organization focuses on for continuous enhancement. If an organization's development is concentrated on developing external components, there will be no room for internal development thereby creating a barrier to building the suitable culture.

To overcome the barriers and create an effective plan to reach the desired culture, organizations must need to define the desired culture and conduct an internal assessment thereby filling the gaps found to reach where they seek to be. With the aid of well-defined metrics and milestones, senior management commitment to change, employee engagement, regular communication, and ownership and accountability among all members, organizations can work to overcome the obstacles they face to reach their desired culture.