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- Do your employees enjoy coming to work? Coming to work should not be a forced act or bring a feeling of dread.
- Is there a level of accountability and responsibility? Taking ownership makes employees feel connected and at home.
- Are your employees engaged? When employees believe that what they do is important, it brings in a sense of commitment in them.
- Is there a sense of camaraderie and respect? Employees like to be involved and know that they are trustworthy.
- How do you invest in your employees? Recognition and rewards (monetary
 or otherwise) fora job well done, goes a long way to show that you value their
 work

The importance of a strong foundation:

It starts with finding your mission, vision and values. At the core, of your company culture are the values and what you stand for. The top management needs to devote time and energy to determine these cornerstones. If this is not done, soon things will go beyond your control or competition will take over.

- Mission statement: This tells the world, why you're in business.
- Vision statement: This describes what your company aspires to be down the road. It should have emotion and it should motivate.
- Values: This is the foundation of your company culture; a blueprint for all, including yourself, of how one must behave at work.

It is these values and principles that will guide your daily actions and decisions. Discuss with top management and zero down on few things that all of you are passionate and emotional about. These are the values and this is where your company culture lives.

The importance of employee engagement:

Without employee engagement you cannot talk of company culture. Disengaged employees create lows — morale, money and productivity. A culture survey could be a good way to start. Employees willl et you know where the company is lagging in the field of culture.

Some key questions could be:

- Is your (the employee's) opinion valued?
- How many times have you been recognized for a job well done?
- Do you have the resources and tools to do your job?
- How often do you talk to your superior?
- Are you satisfied with your rewards?
- Are you satisfied in your job?

The number of employees participating in the survey can be telling. If they are disenchanted, the participation rate is going to be pretty low. That's serious. A red flag indeed!

The importance of trust:

Trust is key in creating company culture — if your people don't trust you, they're not going to follow you. Take this as an opportunity to build that trust. Use an external survey and make it anonymous.

If a culture survey is conducted, do it with a result. Your employees will be driven by the outcome. It will underscore any reason they may have for being disengaged.

A culture survey will shed light on the total environment of the company, what employees think, and their feedback on workplace, co-workers and managers. Use this information to see how your new found company culture and values align with the current climate.

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Conduct a focus group study with employees from different departments, experience levels and job titles and no supervisors or management level people.

Just the employees. Have them review the mission, vision and values and give their input.

Employee feedback can be a real eye-opener. What you thought as a marginal issue may rank higher for your employees; and what they find compelling may not have registered on your chart at all. In the end, it's all yours — the vision, mission and the values. But if you've hired people you trust, then it's worth hearing what they have to say.

It's worthwhile to review the feedback and make tweaks as you see fit. Once the final version is ready, all of you must commit to live these values every day at work — all of you must walk the talk.

Things to consider as you move forward:

- Do the leadership team model your values?
- Does your company attract the like minded talented people?
- Do your values challenge the team to be the best?
- What opportunities are there to be involved with your employees?

You and your management teams' actions will be the litmus test for employees. And it starts with their supervisors. If the leadership has done a good job in hiring talent, your company's culture will be transparent.

The importance of how culture building is rolled out:

It's more than putting it on a poster that hangs in the corridor walls.

Your company culture is an organic element. All aspects of the company is affected, from the way how you reward and recognize people to the game of nurturing talent. It will reflect on how you hire, onboard and who you fire. Your rewards and compensation practices will be in-line with your values.

If you want a strategic, competitive advantage, this is how you do it!! With the right culture and engaged employees, attrition levels will be minimized. It's not enough to get them, you have to keep them. It's a hell of a lot of work!!!

About Author

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Disclaimer: The writing, comments and opinions in the article belong solely to the author.

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