

# SALES REBEL



THE SALES CULTURE REVOLUTION

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In the new world... Organizational culture will become an increasingly important factor in retaining talented team members. The days of "needing a paycheck" have taken a fatal blow and are fading into the backdrop faster than ever before. People have learned that the world is unpredictable and that to waste their lives doing something they don't actually care about might be the biggest mistake they'll ever make.

This means the time people choose to invest working in organizations has become more personal than ever before. So if your organization is looking to retain talented individuals that contribute to the well-being of the firm, the culture you create will be very important. Base salaries, commission structures, and benefits packages will simply not be enough to keep top-tier talent.

Additionally, if you are a sales professional looking to find the right fit, you will find that it is very much worth the time and energy to understand a company's culture before committing to being a part of it. You can be assured that cultural misalignment will create conflict. Maybe not at first, but certainly over time. Just remember that when you're looking to find your new tribe, plenty of organizations have thrown the traditional culture playbook out the window and have sought to embrace the changing of the guard.

You just have to be willing to search...

But how do we control this unseen force that consumes the world? Why do we see some people thrive in certain organizations and flat-out fail in others? What is the value of culture in an organization or sales team? The answers are not always clear, but, as we forge a path through the 21st century, the importance of organizational culture will gain the spotlight more and more.

Our hope here is to inform sales leaders and sales professionals alike about the nuances of culture. We want to empower sales professionals to #ChangeTheGame and #ChooseLegendary. We want organizations to let their sales culture shine bright... Not to hide it behind "industry standards" and "the bottom line." You can talk about empathy. You can make content about service. You can even put leadership on display. But people will see who you really are through your culture. There's no hiding it...



**The time is now...  
The future is here...  
Are you ready?**



**Culture is the  
operating system of  
the subconscious mind.  
We all know it exists...**



**But we are unaware  
of the power of its  
influence...**

*-ANONYMOUS REBEL*



# COMMON *SALES* CULTURES

Culture is a product of many factors both large and small. It's the shared experiences and values that shape our beliefs and interactions. It's the tangible artifacts and symbolism that translate into specific meanings without saying a word. But it's also the language we use. Not to mention the trickle-down effect of leadership that can never be escaped. Ultimately, culture is a life force in a perpetual state of influencing and being influenced.

In the same way that we can look out into the world and see a multitude of different cultures, we can look at organizations and see the same distinct separation from one to another. Here are four of the most common and easily observable sales cultures:

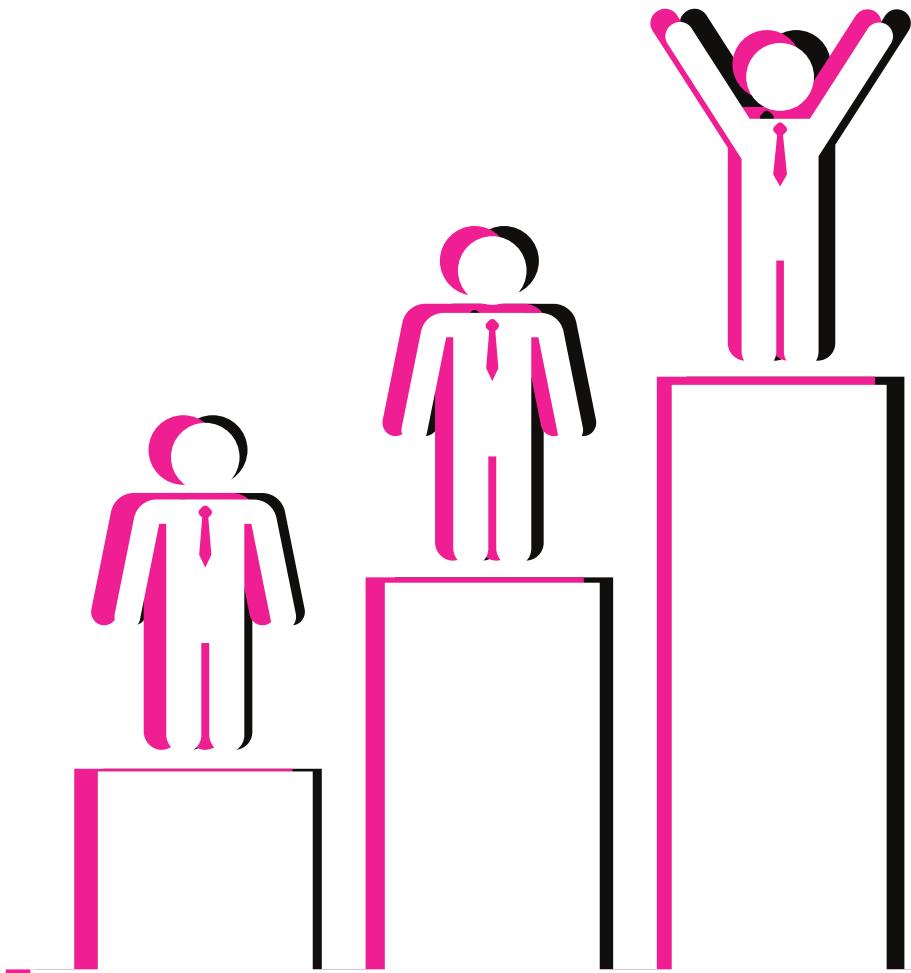
- Competitive
- Collaborative
- Stagnant
- Toxic

Now let's take a look at each one more closely...

# Competitive Cultures

A **competitive culture** is one of the most common in the sales industry. It can be an excellent type of sales culture that drives performance and results. It typically brings sweeping organizational growth and can take teams to new heights. But, competition can also teeter on the brink of toxicity if not carefully understood.

There is a right way and a wrong way to do competition. Competitive cultures must be intentionally influenced. The “health” of the competition is the most important factor and is typically cultivated by a set of specific communication patterns.



# Collaborative Cultures

A **collaborative culture** is one where team selling and peer-to-peer referrals are plentiful. It's about the team as a whole and is not focused on any one person's individual success. A collaborative culture creates comradery, a strong network of opportunities, and an ultra high-performing team. However, when not properly managed, a collaborative culture can mutate into interdependence, complacency, and minimal growth.

Some of the highest-performing teams across varying sectors use a collaborative approach. This allows individuals to operate in their specific strength and to know they have full support in the areas where they might struggle. The effects this has on culture are usually transformative for the organization.



# Stagnant Cultures

A **stagnant culture** is one of complacency. It's the status quo in action. In other words, it's about doing just enough and not a single bit more. Now, it's important to know that there's not necessarily anything wrong with that. In fact, this is how many organizations exist. But, as Sales Rebels, we are constantly seeking growth and development that will take us to the next level of success within our organizations, our communities, and ourselves.

Stagnant cultures create the middle of the road. They are average at best and have claimed the lives of many an employee. Stagnant cultures leave people wondering where their life went. Put simply, they live in the grey twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat.



# Toxic Cultures

Unfortunately, **toxic cultures** are everywhere... Some of them are low-key and take a long time to fully manifest, others are brash and in your face from the very beginning - Making sure you don't forget you're replaceable. These are cultures where 126% of quota isn't good enough. Where sticks and carrots are the default levers and leadership leans hard on leveraging potential consequences.

These can be masked as “performance-based” or “metric-driven” organizations whose bottom line is never the wellbeing of the individual, but the ability of the firm to perform according to the specific goals of people with decision making authority. Ultimately, toxic cultures use people a means of acquiring resources and then allow leadership to disproportionately consume the fruit of others labor.

If your in a toxic culture... Get out!



# SIX IMPORTANT CULTURAL INFLUENCERS

Culture is the operating system of the subconscious mind. We all know it exists. We all know that we live within them. But oftentimes, we are unaware of its direct influence and we choose to look past the indicators that are all around us.

The benefits of culture are widespread and multifaceted. For example, being “culturally aligned” is one of the most significant factors in the longevity and success of employer-employee relationships. This is why it is so important for sales leaders and sales professionals to be culturally conscious.

To understand a culture, or to have influence over one, we must first understand the elements that impact it the most.

Here are 6 of the most important cultural influencers:

- Leadership
- Policy
- Language
- Environment
- Artifacts
- Shared Values and Experiences

Now, let's check them out individually...



## Leadership

Leadership is typically the number one indicator of culture. As a leader thinketh, so an organization doeth. There's no real way around it. The extent to which culture is influenced by a single individual depends largely on leadership style, however, it is also influenced by the number of leaders at the top and the layers of decision-making authority that establish the hierarchy.

In the end, the leadership of the organization, department, or team is directly responsible for the culture they have. They are not the sole creators of the culture, but they are responsible for what it is and what it will become.



## Policy

It's no surprise that rules and norms play an enormous role in establishing and maintaining culture. Throughout history, law and policy have influenced social norms which determine the value attributed to specific behaviors. They have also heavily influenced the way we respond to those behaviors and the acceptance we show towards others in these situations.

When a company is constantly citing policy, it's an indicator of culture. When a company is consistently overriding policy, it's an indicator of culture. Remember that the policy itself is lifeless, but the people who are in charge of knowing it and enforcing it are directly subjected to its influence.

## Language

The words we use matter. Not only do they relay meaning to one another, but they connect us across a broad range of experiences and perspectives. We can look at the sales industry and see plenty of examples. From “gatekeeper” to “decision-maker,” the language we use weaves the boundaries of relationships and fortifies a shared understanding.

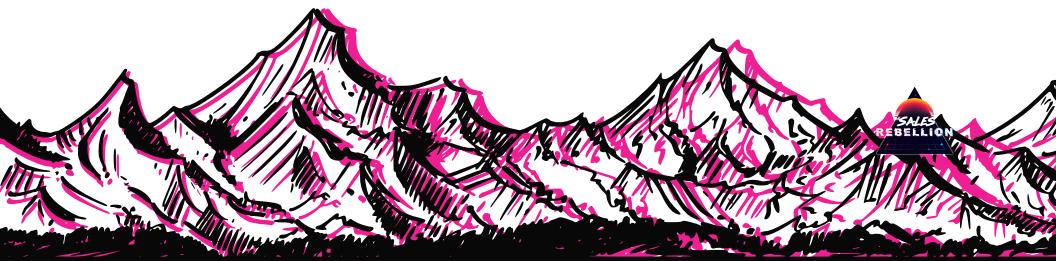
In addition to understanding each other, language allows us to quickly identify in-group and out-group individuals. Language is the signal that someone is in the know. For example, a salesperson might understand the importance of an industry-specific workflow in concept, but might not be able to articulate that concept in a set of shared language that signals to others that they are part of the cultural in-group.



## Environment

The environment is typically overlooked in the cultural equation. Take a moment to think about places like Harvard and Princeton. These institutions are incredibly beautiful and ornate. It could even be said that the architecture and overall design encourage a classical style of critical thinking. This is because the environment affects the culture.

Consider your room as a teenager. This sacred space probably said a lot about your culture. It also said a lot about what you found value in and the rules and norms that existed around you. The sales bullpen is no different. That motivational art on the wall reinforces the worldview of the organization and acts as an artifact to help instill culture and reaffirm identity.



## Artifacts

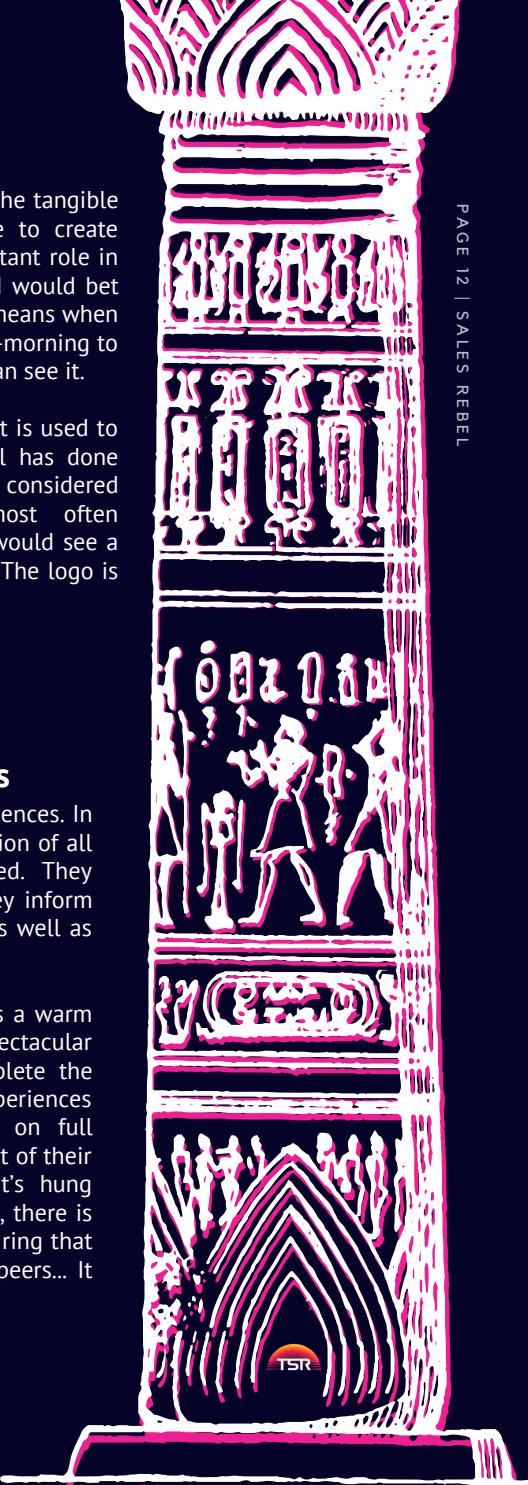
No culture would be complete without the tangible things that unify our head knowledge to create shared meaning. Artifacts play an important role in how culture is practiced. For example, I would bet that we do not need to tell you what it means when a salesperson gets out of their chair mid-morning to ring a bell that's hung where everyone can see it.

In this case, the bell is the artifact and it is used to signify to the group that an individual has done something specific. Symbols can also be considered artifacts. However, symbols are most often represented *on* artifacts, much like we would see a company logo on an article of clothing. The logo is the language and the shirt is the artifact.

## Shared Values & Experiences

What brings us together most are experiences. In fact, these experiences are the culmination of all the other influencing factors combined. They leave an imprint on our minds, and they inform us of the value we attain from others as well as the value we bring to the group.

Shared experiences can be as simple as a warm meal at the family dinner table or as spectacular as traveling across the world to complete the pilgrimage to Mecca. These shared experiences are opportunities to put our culture on full display. Like when a salesperson gets out of their chair mid-morning to ring a bell that's hung where everyone can see it... In this case, there is a certain cultural value in being able to ring that bell and be acknowledged by a set of peers... It can be a truly unifying moment.



# 3 WAYS TO IMPROVE SALES CULTURE IMMEDIATELY

Now that we know a few things about what culture is and how to identify it, we are far more equipped to make meaningful change. But there is a really important thing that needs to be said. Something that we cannot skip over...

If you are looking to make changes to your culture, you must do it slowly and with purpose. Change management experts will tell you that culture is the hardest thing to change. They will also tell you that if you attempt to change too many things at once you run the risk of overloading the organization, potentially doing irreparable damage. Changing too many things at once has sent many organizations into a tailspin. The only time this is not applicable is in a toxic culture. Toxic Cultures must be addressed swiftly.

To change a culture, you must be intentional with your effort and communicate a clear vision. On top of that, it requires time. But, if you want to start today, there are a few things you can do to immediately improve your sales culture. You can implement these without damaging the group dynamic or making structural changes...

- Decorate
- Gamified Blitz Day
- Include Friends and Family

Let's take a closer look at each one...

## Decorate

Decorations are an easy way to utilize the environment and reinforce a cultural disposition. Whether it's motivational art on the office walls or printed collateral for your brand's mission, vision, and core values, you need stuff people will see and interact with. The more people see your brand and understand the philosophies that drive it the more they will live it out.

Decorating is an opportunity to use language, artifacts, and the environment to strengthen your cultural presence. Here at the Sales Rebellion, we are huge advocates for the value of visually engaging material that is coupled with compelling and thought-provoking text. From branded zoom backgrounds to posters on the wall, brand collateral is one of the core fundamentals when it comes to putting your culture on display.

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But we are unaware of the power of its influence...

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PAGE 6 | SALES REBEL

## DON'T PUKE

YOUR PROSPECTS HATE PUKE. THEY DON'T WANT IT ON THEIR DESK. THEY DON'T WANT IT IN THEIR DRAWERS. AND THEY DEFINITELY DO NOT WANT IT IN THEIR EARS.

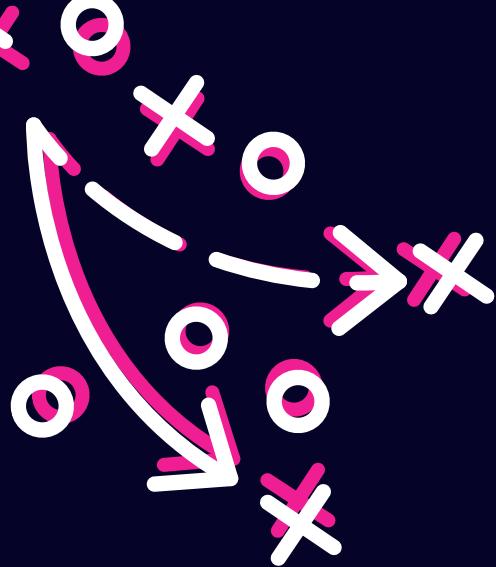
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IT'S TIME TO SHED THE SKIN OF OUR OLD PIPELINES. IT'S TIME FOR MEANINGFUL OUTCOMES WITH EVERY PERSON IN OUR COMMUNITY. AND, IT'S TIME TO STOP SACRIFICING OUR OWN PERSONAL SUCCESS TO THE UNDESERVING GODS OF BURNOUT AND CHURN.

- ANONYMOUS REBEL





## Gamified Blitz Day

If you want a fun and engaging team-building experience that also gets incredible results, then a gamified blitz day is for you. It doesn't matter if you comb the streets knocking on doors or light up the phones like an indoor sports arena, this is something any team can do.

When you structure some fun and unique rules, penalties, incentives, and rewards the dynamic of the work you're doing completely changes. Remember that this is a super versatile activity that can be experienced in many different ways. Remember that healthy competition is the driver here. Try doing a collaborative or team-style blitz at first. Then, when you do it quarterly, you'll be impacting your culture in a huge way. Have fun with it and if you need help just holler at us...



## Include Friends and Family

It's no surprise that sales professionals are a social group who typically thrive on interaction with others. Most of the time, this is a primary source of energy and value. However, on the other side of that token lies disillusionment, judgment, and boat-loads of rejection. These are a part of everyday life for sales professionals.

***That's why sales cultures are so important - They are either reinforcing the existential rejection or diminishing its effects by intentionally providing support and encouragement.***

As a way to practice this support and encouragement, regular gatherings between the team are great ways to foster connection. But to take it to the next level, you should be allowing everyone to bring a friend or family member. Too many times organizations exist with everyone at an arm's length. They never truly get to know who their counterparts are and how they live their life. You have the power to change that by bringing people together in an intentional way.



# THE MEANING OF IT ALL

The best way to understand who we are is to see ourselves from someone else's point of view. That's when we begin to realize how much culture has played a role in the person we've become. Only then can we truly realize how we are a part of it - a living, breathing, member of the larger forces that influence the world around us.

A wise man once said, "***We are paying for the sins of all the salespeople that have come before us.***" These are salespeople who have glorified power and have sought to serve the almighty dollar. They have even rejected purpose and built systems of self-glorification. And the sad truth is that we still worship some of them in mainstream sales culture.

Stop for a moment and consider the stereotype of sales. Everyone knows it. And this is how so many outsiders see sales professionals. They see liars and cheaters. They see people who will seemingly say anything to get you to buy what they're selling, even if you don't need it.

***But there is a silent community of salespeople...***

They reject the mainstream sales culture and seek to correct the perception of the masses. They choose love over everything and provide experiences instead of cheap word tricks. They believe in leaving a legacy and put servant leadership at the forefront of their actions. They choose to be genuine. They choose to be empathetic. They choose to be mindful.

***They choose to be Rebels...***

Will you join us as we #ChangeTheGame? Will you stand up, step out, and #ChooseLegendary? Will you hear the call of the Sales Rebellion?

***The time is now. The future is here. Are you ready?***

**JOIN US IN SLACK...**

