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IMPACTFUL NEWS YOU CAN USE

FROM THE EDITOR

If someone approached you at a networking function, and asked you this question, how would you answer it? ***What 10 words would you use to describe the company you work for?*** We all need to be able to differentiate ourselves. If we are not able to significantly do that with our products or our price, what leverage do we have? Our culture.

What is Culture?

Defining corporate culture can be a tricky business because the spoken and unspoken culture can vary widely. For example, a company may brag about its associates are being "empowered," and yet these same "powerful" employees may not be able to get a box of paper clips without filling out a form.

At its most basic level, culture is described as:

- The unique personality or character of an organization
- Simply stated, it is "how things are done around here."
- It guides how associates think, act, and feel.
- Corporate culture is a broad term which includes such elements as core values and beliefs, corporate ethics, and rules of behavior.
- Corporate culture can be expressed in the company's mission statement and other communications, in the architectural style or interior decor of offices, by what people wear to work, by how people address each other, and in the titles given to various associates.
- Organizational culture includes everything that makes up the corporation and gives it its unique identity, distinguishing it from other businesses even if they create the same, or similar, products and services.

IDEA IN BRIEF

We spend 40 ... or 45 ... or 50 ... or more hours at work each week. Many of us spend more time with those we work with than we do our families. For us to be content and fulfilled people, that time at work must be viewed as valuable to us. We want to be engaged in our work. We yearn for work that is enjoyable, meaningful and engaging. When we are engaged, we are more productive and more willing and able to delight customers.

It is for these basic reasons that organizational culture matters. It is the right thing for an organization to do – to think about the work environment, working relationships and “how we do things here.” Focusing on building and sustaining an organizational culture is one way of showing that people are the organization’s most valuable asset.

There are of course many other **bottom line business reasons** to focus on and build organizational culture. Here are seven of those reasons.

- 1. A strong culture is a talent-attractor.** Our organizational culture is part of the package that prospective associates look at when assessing our organization. Gone are the days of selecting the person you want from a large eager pool, especially with highly technical/experienced positions. The talent market is tighter and those looking for a new organization are more selective than ever. The best people want more than a salary and good benefits. They want an environment they can enjoy and succeed in.
- 2. A strong culture is a talent-retainer.** How likely are people to stay if they have other options and don’t love where they are? One’s organizational culture is a key component of a person’s desire to stay.
- 3. A strong culture engages people.** People want to be engaged in their work. According to a Gallup survey, at least 22 million American workers are extremely negative or “actively disengaged” – this loss of productivity is estimated to be worth between \$250 to \$300 billion annually. Our culture engages people. Engagement creates greater productivity, which can impact profitability. Need I say more?
- 4. A strong culture creates energy and momentum.** Build a culture that is vibrant and allows people to be valued and express them self and you will create a very real energy. That positive energy will permeate the organization and create a new momentum for success. Energy is contagious and will build on itself, reinforcing the culture and the attractiveness of your company.
- 5. A strong culture changes the view of “work”.** Most people have a negative connotation of the word “work”. Work equals drudgery, 9 to 5, “the salt mine”. When we create a culture that is attractive, people’s view of “going to work” will change. Would you rather see work as drudgery or a joy? Which do you think your associates would prefer? Which will lead to the best results?
- 6. A strong culture creates greater synergy.** A strong culture brings people together. When people have the opportunity to (and are expected to) communicate and get to know each other better, they will find new connections. These connections will lead to new ideas and greater productivity – in other words, you will be creating synergy. Literally, 1 + 1 + right culture = more than 10. How is that for leverage?

- 7. A strong culture makes everyone more successful.** Any one of the other six reasons should be reason enough to focus on organizational culture. But the bottom line is that an investment of time, talent and focus on organizational culture will help give us all of these benefits. Not only is sustaining a great culture a good thing to do for the human capital, it makes good business sense too.

CONVERSATION & EVENTS

- My next keynote presentation is scheduled for Tuesday, August 10 at Cambria Suites in Appleton, WI, from 8:30-10:00 a.m. I am speaking on “**The Power of Personal Choice™**” for the Northeastern WI Chapter of the American Society of Training & Development. I am really looking forward to sharing my message with this wonderful audience! To register, go to <http://personalchoice.eventbrite.com/>
- I recently started a blog, filled with ready-to-use information! Check it out at: <http://tracybutz.blog.com/> or by simply clicking on the “Butz’s Blog” tab of my website. I plan to blog weekly, to provide value-added information to my readers.
- I recently opened my online store so clients and interested individuals can purchase inspirational items for either themselves and/or their teams. *Lift someone’s heart today with a small token of appreciation.* It doesn’t take a lot, but means so much. You can find these products under the “products for purchase” tab or by simply going to: store.thinkimpactsolutions.com
- LinkedIn: It’s an excellent tool to stay in contact with colleagues, friends and new professionals through various groups, who continue to share tremendous knowledge and resources. Feel free to connect with me if you are interested. Simply go to my “Let’s Connect” page on my website at: <http://www.thinkimpactsolutions.com/letsconnect.html>.