

5 INDISPUTABLE WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR COMPANY CULTURE

- Paul Berkovic

Is your corporate culture positive? Is it cut-throat?



Company culture is one of those things that just evolves organically... right? Not if you want to get ahead. It's every bit as important and malleable as your business strategy or your core product. If you want a workforce that's upwardly mobile and "comfortably in control" you need to view your culture as key business driver.

A recent Harvard Business Review article "Proof That Positive Work Cultures Are More Productive" outlines a strong case for cultivating a positive work culture to increase productivity, but, how can you make your culture more positive?

1. Encourage your team to socially connect at work

Positive social connections at work result in less mental and physical illness, faster learning, and better performance on the job. Some basic approaches to improving the social dynamics in your workplace include:

- volunteering to help others,
- hosting end-of-week drinks,
- regularly eating lunch as a team,
- celebrating milestones.

2. Communicate regularly; lead by example

Secrecy and rumors may work for Apple, but for

the rest of the business world it creates dysfunction and distrust. It can be illuminating and highly motivating for employees to know what's going on in all areas of the business. Leaders need to set the standard by sharing what's on their mind on a regular basis - a company "town hall" or end-of-month update will do the trick. Team leaders should be encouraged to facilitate discussion about the company in smaller groups.

3. Be clear about the company vision

Ask your colleagues if they can explain the company vision. Many leaders are surprised by how many employees can't articulate it clearly. Take the time to communicate the vision clearly in a forum that encourages questions and conversation.

People frequently cite the 'why' behind their work as a key driver of motivation, commonly rating it as more important than money. Employees that believe in what they do will be more satisfied, and more productive.

4. Be human

Expressing empathy can go a long way toward gaining employee loyalty. It feels good to work with people who we care about, and who care about us. Lead by example; spend time asking your employees about non-work interests and

actually listen to their answers. If someone has a sick family member or other issue on their mind, don't brush it aside or avoid the topic, pull them aside and ask if there is anything you can do to help.

5. Hire the right mix of personalities

All companies need talented employees. However, many hiring managers dismiss the benefits of likeability in pursuit of skill. In some cases you'll have no choice but to overlook awkward personality traits because of the allure of pure intellectual horsepower, however, there shouldn't be a need to do this too often.

Don't let rude people through the door without justification, because arrogance is not a proxy for intelligence. Likeable employees will do wonders for morale and can underpin a positive working environment.

