

How to Change Your Workplace Culture

For Businesses, Non-Profits, and Other Organizations

By Jeremiah Gruenberg

A workplace culture can only be changed with vision and intentionality.

- ◆ **Vision** provides description and direction. What do you want the culture to look like? Without knowing that answer, you cannot expect any change.
- ◆ **Intentionality** is the self-aware determination to pursue change. It also includes the planning and execution of the path of change.

Without vision and intentionality, a culture defaults to the “lowest common denominator” dynamic based on the dominant personalities involved. When this occurs, the organization's values are not being reflected in the culture. Rather, the employees' priorities, expectations, and flaws now form the basis of workplace dynamics.

The only way to cause a cultural transformation in this context is to **identify, communicate, inspire, and hold the culture accountable to the values of the organization.**

The values of the organization are the foundational, guiding principles that define its personality. These values not only provide a necessary vision for the ideal culture, but also describe *how* relationships should function in the culture.

Steps to Change Your Workplace Culture:

1. Define the organization's values.
2. Communicate these values to the employees. Explain each value. Give examples of application for each one. Review these values monthly in various ways.
3. Most importantly, **leaders must model these values to the employees.** Change in any culture occurs from the top down. When the values are adopted and implemented by the leaders, a cultural change is assured.
4. When particular problems resist the process of cultural change, do the following:
 - ◆ Identify the entrenched behavior which must change.
 - ◆ Describe it to employees, with examples.
 - ◆ Provide a clear replacement behavior that expresses the values at stake.
5. Establish systems for accountability. When values are not being expressed, what should a leader do about it? What should an employee do about it?

Need consulting, coaching, or speaking on this topic?

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