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How to create a strong company culture

Changing your company culture is challenging. In most cases, you'll have to modify the way employees interact by shifting long-established habits, which can take a significant amount of time and effort.

However, the faster you identify the changes you need to make and begin building a better culture, the sooner you can spread better habits. Over time, positive behaviors will become more permanent, and the negative patterns that once threatened your culture will begin to disappear.

Here are five ways you can strengthen your culture:

1. Ask employees for feedback

Start by asking employees about their impression of your organizational culture. It's best to do this through anonymous surveys because people are more likely to be honest when they're confident their thoughts and opinions won't reflect poorly on them. Consider gathering feedback quarterly to determine whether the corrective actions you're taking are driving results.

Here is a small sample employee culture survey:

Rank the following statements from 1 to 5 with one being "I strongly agree" and five being "I strongly disagree."

1. We have a positive culture.
2. This company is accepting and inclusive.
3. I agree with organizational values.
4. This organization supports all employees to do their best.
5. I would describe this as a happy workplace.
6. Employees always treat each other with decency and respect.
7. The workspaces are clean, comfortable and inviting.
8. Employees maintain positive attitudes.
9. Employees are motivated to do their best work.
10. Employees are recognized and appreciated for their work.

2. Correct negative behaviors quickly

If you observe an employee displaying a poor attitude or acting disrespectfully towards a peer, manager or customer, be sure to address the situation immediately. Often,



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employees develop new habits by observing others, and by stopping negative actions as soon as they happen, you can prevent them from spreading throughout the organization.

3. Recognize and reward positive behaviors

If you observe an employee who consistently maintains a positive attitude, always offers top quality service, treats others with kindness and respect or displays other habits you want to establish as the norm within the company, take time to recognize them publicly. By rewarding the right behaviors, you can ensure employees continue these habits and, over time, others will adopt these behaviors, too.

4. Ensure managers lead by example

Leaders have a tremendous impact on organizational culture. When hiring and promoting people for leadership positions, make sure their leadership style aligns with your culture. For example, if you have an open, creative and collaborative culture, it's best to select leaders who are more democratic than autocratic. Additionally, ensure all managers understand the areas of opportunity and your plans for making improvements. Because leaders often set the tone within their teams, they're in the best position to effect change.

5. Create more functional and inviting workspaces

When arranging new workspaces, focus on creating areas that are bright, comfortable and outfitted with all the technology and equipment your workforce needs. While overhauling workspaces alone isn't always enough to change behaviors within your company, it's essential the work environment accurately reflects the culture. When people feel better about the space they're occupying and have all the tools necessary to do their job well, then they'll be more likely to uphold the positive behaviors you're seeking to advance.

To provide the best possible organizational culture, make an effort to regularly reassess patterns and behaviors and look for areas of opportunity. By consistently striving to improve the working environment, as well as the habits and emotional responses of your workforce, you can reduce turnover, boost employee engagement and increase overall performance.

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