



FOCUSED FEATURES

TUNING UP YOUR COMPANY CULTURE

Company culture is one of the most difficult aspects of business for leaders to get their arms around. Regardless of the size of an organization or where it is located in the global marketplace, some leaders view company culture as a “non-tangible” element, irrelevant to running a profitable business. At the same time, opposing views from other company leaders around the globe, acknowledge culture as the most “tangible” element that can make or break an organization by driving or diminishing performance at every level of the organization. Good examples of both perspectives are demonstrated during the popular reality shows focusing on business.

A company’s culture starts out as an extension of its leader’s personal background and experience, and it’s as real as human DNA. If your leadership style is based on a “my way or the highway” attitude, your company’s culture may be viewed by your employees as “I hired you, be glad you have a job, get to work, don’t talk with your co-workers, and don’t bother me.” You may find your employees adopting your culture, returning their own version of your attitude, and lining up to purchase EZ Pass transponders.

On the other hand, if your leadership style encourages and celebrates employee engagement and empowerment, your “team” will want to come to work, share their ideas, do the best job they can, and celebrate the company’s successes together with you. Which company would you prefer to work with? Which company would be more likely to have happier customers, healthier employees, stronger, more consistent bottom line performance, and a better quality of life?

Think of your business as a symphony orchestra, and you, as the maestro leading the members through a piece of music your audience is sure to enjoy.



But, what do you do when the personal backgrounds and experiences of family members and employees working in the company, start to create a “melting pot” effect on the culture? As the maestro, you can welcome the diversity and lead the different tones and sounds to blend in with the overall performance. Or, you can reject other cultural views and risk hearing sounds that resemble a free-for-all jamming session when your goal was a rendition of Beethoven’s 5th Symphony.

Leading a company in today’s world is tough. What makes it seem easy for some business leaders and not others? You guessed it – the company culture! If the culture is one of complacency, it makes it difficult for the musicians to take the maestro’s lead seriously and may result in patrons making an early exit from the theatre. If the culture is one where the maestro sees the most valuable asset to the music as “our people,” the music will most probably receive rave reviews from the audience and critics alike.

Many organizations fall into the category of being successful “in spite of themselves.” When we get too busy running our companies, it’s too easy to get run over by our companies. Be deliberate about your company’s success! Move into the New Year with a rock solid company culture.



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Here are some key points for the Maestro and their first chairs to consider using as they tune up. Tuning up your organization's culture is best enjoyed as a group activity.

1. Study and memorize the music! Your business is part of who you are. You know it better than anyone else, but don't forget to share the story with your team. It's important for them to know why you are in business, what it means to you, your goals and expectations, and how they can bring value to the organization's success.
2. Hire the most talented! Don't settle for mediocrity. It will sap the positive energy, and weaken your organization.
3. Rehearse, rehearse, and rehearse! Train, train, train. As Jack Daly would say "Training is not an event." The more your team learns, the better equipped they will be to help the company grow and continue to be successful.
4. Performance Recital! Everyone performing to the best of their ability. Right people, right seats, best results.
5. And, the encore! Repeat process as often as humanly possible. Celebrate the successes! And, don't get too comfortable.

