

Quality info

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Ten Mistakes Great Leaders Avoid in Building Work Culture

It doesn't matter how great your plans to introduce a new product to the market are if your culture weakens execution. Culture is how things get done around a company. Great leaders focus on the work culture their leadership helps create as much as they focus on business strategy.

What mistakes should you avoid if you want a work culture that achieves the results you need? Below is a list of the 10 most common ones.

1. Focusing on resisters

The biggest trap I see leaders make when building culture is focusing on those who are resisting it. The logic goes something like this: "If I can get the resisters to support the culture, then everyone will support it." Unfortunately, this only alienates those who want to help you build a high-performing culture.

2. Undervaluing purpose

It's human nature to want to be part of something bigger than ourselves. Purpose helps us aspire to our goals and call on our best selves to do our best work. Cultures that undervalue purpose dismiss human nature and build weaker cultures.

3. Spending time in meetings

Your presence as a leader has the greatest influence on how people experience the work environment. If you're unavailable to be present most of the time because you're in meetings, you're missing a major opportunity to shape the culture and climate with intention. Culture will evolve regardless of what you do. Just make sure it's one that you envision.

4. Under-communicating

We need to hear a message seven times before grasping its meaning. When you communicate expectations, one-and-done won't cut it. Make sure your team members know what's expected of them. Clarity is the key to a positive culture.

5. Thinking in silos

When you make changes in one area of your business, anticipate the effects on other areas of the company. Thinking in silos reduces people's effectiveness, limits ideas, and weakens organizational performance. Your company is a system. When you build culture, anticipate its effects throughout the company.

6. Spreading negativity

You are not going to like every decision made or approach your company takes. As a leader you set the tone. Be mindful of your mood and what you're spreading. Spreading negativity,

even if unintentionally, creates an unhealthy oppositional culture that severely hampers results.

7. Thinking in the short term

It is a business trap to focus solely on profit. Although it is an important business metric, it is short term in nature. Short-term thinking routinizes our goal-setting behaviors to focus on the near horizon and not on the long-term benefits or potential hazards of a strategy or decision. Great leaders balance short-term thinking with long-term planning and thinking.

8. Promoting rugged individualism

No one person is more important than the team. When you single out your favorites and let them act on their own, you weaken your chances of benefiting from the wisdom of the crowd. We are stronger together than when we are alone. Build a culture that promotes teamwork, not rugged individualism.

9. Downplaying relationships

Our brains are wired to think about relationships. It is a mistake not to tap into building relationships within a team and across the business. Doing so satisfies a basic human desire to connect with others. Great leaders avoid promoting the rugged individual. Instead, they connect people together to help facilitate results and create a culture of connection.

10. Overlooking social needs

Mistakes Nos. 8 and 9 tap into our biology—our need to work alongside people on important, meaningful, and purposeful activities. It is also a mistake to build a culture that downplays our need for socializing at work. Great leaders encourage friendships at work. They help build a culture of affiliation. This is a culture that advocates relationships and personal growth. Employees don't want to just show up and leave. They want a meaningful work experience. Our biology positions us to be social. Great leaders leverage our biology to build great cultures.

Culture will emerge regardless of your actions. Do you want a culture by default, or one built purposefully? Most leaders want a great place to work. Avoiding these 10 mistakes helps build a culture with intent and helps position you to achieve great results.

“No company, small or large, can win over the long run without energized employees who believe in the mission and understand how to achieve it. ” Jack Welch

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