Corporate Culture

According to Ellen Wallach, "Organization culture is like pornography; it is hard to define, but you know it when you see it". Organizational culture is made up of the approaches, values, beliefs and behaviors of its workers. It reflects the demonstrated values and principles of the workplace, permeating everything an organization does. Essentially, it can make or break the organization. Culture is a system of values, norms, and ideas, shared by a group of people, that when taken together provide a design for thinking, living and potential acting. Netta Iivari wrote that organizational culture is a popular but also a very complex concept. It has been identified as an influential factor affecting the successes and failures of organizational change efforts.

Through my work as a human resources manager, I realized that corporate culture is very important factor to the success of the business. It influences the organization’s actions and approaches to conducting business. It begins from the process of hiring. The human resources departments of companies are the match makers in this situation. The most important asset of any organization is its people, and nothing affects the day to day lives of people more than the culture in which they work. A strong, unique, and appropriate corporate culture has the ability to reduce uncertainty by creating a common way to interpret events and issues, create a sense of order in that members know what is expected, create a sense of continuity, provide a common identity and a unity of commitment, and provide a vision of the future around which the company can rally. Organizational culture is now understood as an asset that should be managed and that can be leveraged in support of company goals. A good corporate culture makes trust, openness, a sense of community, and pride in work. Julia Sloan wrote in her book, learning to Think Strategically, “Culture plays a significant role in shaping our frames of reference, because
culture teaches us what to pay attention to, it carefully outlines the patterns we must recognize, and it rewords us for learning these. The specific patterns teach us what to be afraid of or skeptical of, what we can and cannot trust, where to attach values, and what values to assign to certain patterns and frames". (182)

The distinctive characteristic of an unhealthy corporate culture is the presence of counterproductive cultural traits that adversely impact the work climate and company performance. Unhealthy culture can produce low morale, unrealistic goals, little support or understanding from administration, poor relationships with colleagues, and pupils, a sense that you cannot talk about your worries, uncertainty, feeling the school is stuck in the past Prejudices or lack of diversity of individuals and Sense of staleness. John Gamble and Arthur Thompson wrote in their book, Essentials of Strategic Management, there are four traits of unhealthy culture. First of all, a highly politicized internal environment in which many issues get resolved and decisions are made on the basis of which individuals or groups have the most political clout. Political infighting consumers a great deal of organization energy and often results in the company’s strategic agenda taking a backseat to political maneuvering. Second, hostility to change and a general wariness of people who champion new ways of doing things is element of unhealthy culture. Change-resistant cultures encourage a number of undesirable or unhealthy behaviors- avoiding risks, hesitation in pursuing emerging opportunities, and widespread aversion to continuous improvement in performing value chain activities. Next, an insular mindset that makes company personnel averse to looking outside the company for best practices, new managerial approaches, and innovative ideas. Sometimes a company reigns as an industry leader or enjoys great market success for so long that its personnel start to believe they have all the answers or can develop them on their own. There is a strong tendency to neglect what
customers are saying and how their needs and expectations are changing. Finally, a disregard for high ethical standards and an overzealous pursuit of wealth and status on the part of key executives is factor of unhealthy culture. Companies that have little regard for ethical standards of that are run by executives driven by greed and ego- gratification are scandals waiting to happen. (123)

Changing corporate culture is the toughest task you will ever take on. Your organizational culture was formed over years of interaction between the participants in the organization. Changing the accepted organizational culture can feel like rolling rocks uphill. When people in an organization realize and recognize that their current organizational culture needs to transform to support the organization's success and progress, change can occur. But change is not pretty and change is not easy. Organizational culture change is possible. Culture change requires understanding, commitment, and tools.

There are five steps to change a problem culture. The first step in fixing a problem culture is for top management to identify those facets of the present culture that pose obstacles to executing new strategic initiatives. Before an organization can change its culture, it must understand the current culture, or the way things are now. Second, managers have to clearly define the desired new behaviors and features of the culture they want to create. Organization must decide what the organizational culture should look like to support success. What vision does the organization have for its future and how must the culture change to support the accomplishment of that vision? Third, mangers have to convince company personnel why the present culture poses problems and why and how new behaviors and operating approaches will improve company performance. Next, the individuals in the organization must decide to change their behavior to create the desired organizational culture. This is the hardest step in culture
change. Changing a company culture that impedes proficient strategy execution is among the toughest management tasks. A successful culture change efforts from failed attempts is competent leadership at the top. However, while top management must be out front leading the culture change effort, instilling new cultural behaviors is a job for the whole management team. Middle manager and frontline supervisors play a key role in implementing the new work practices and operating approaches. Finally, all the talk about remodeling the present culture has to be followed swiftly by visible, forceful actions on the part of management to promote the desired new behaviors and work practices.

In conclusion, corporate culture is created naturally and automatically. Every time people come together with a shared purpose, culture is created. This group of people could be a family, neighborhood, project team, or company. Culture is automatically created out of the combined thoughts, energies, and attitudes of the people in the group. Understanding the organizational culture can help you to understand why change does not take place, or why a project fails. It will also help you to determine where to strive to make changes to the culture. Unhealthy culture can produce low spirits, unrealistic goals, little support or understanding from administration, poor relationships with colleagues, and pupils, a sense that you cannot talk about your worries, uncertainty, feeling the school is stuck in the past Prejudices or lack of diversity of individuals and Sense of staleness. There are many important phases to change a culture such as analysis and understand the current culture, decide what the organizational culture should look like to support success, the individuals in the organization must decide to change their behavior, and decide change employees behavior to create the desired organizational culture.
Bibliography


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