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Creating Corporate Culture: Easy Steps to Maximize Your HR Strategy



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What do you want new employees to think and feel about your company when they walk through the door? It's important for you to have a ready answer to that question, but it's equally essential that you have an idea of what your current workforce thinks. After all, your employees' thoughts and feelings as they come into work each day reflect on you and the culture you've created as a CHRO.

How do you enliven a culture that needs reviving? It'll take some legwork, but you can start creating corporate culture by asking the following questions:

- Do your employees' jobs encompass a level of accountability and responsibility? Being able to take ownership makes people feel connected.

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you recognize and reward someone.

Once you've answered these questions, you'll be on the road to defining a culture that your entire company respects and upholds.

Build a Foundation

Creating corporate culture is not an overnight endeavor; it's a process. You start by developing your mission, finding your vision and defining your values.

HR leadership, along with the entire executive team, should nail down these corporate cornerstones:

- **Mission statement:** This brief statement tells your employees, customers and vendors why you're in business.
- **Vision statement:** This describes what your company aspires to be and tends to adopt a more emotive and motivational tone.
- **Values:** The true foundation of your culture — your values — drive how you want your workforce to behave professionally.

Begin by examining your executive team's shared values. This should be a list of terms and ideas that inspire passion and emotion — that's where corporate culture comes alive.

Test the Waters

Next, engage your employees with a culture/climate survey to help find out where culture is coming up short.

Ask questions such as:

- Do you feel your opinion is valued?
- Do you have the tools and resources needed to do your job?
- Do you feel your benefits are fair and marketable?
- Are you satisfied with your job?

Participation numbers will tell the tale of how much distrust exists.

Trust is a major key; people don't follow who they don't trust. Build up that trust by using a third party to conduct the survey, and make it anonymous. But the best way to

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values, and make any necessary changes to bring reality up to speed with your leadership's vision.

Get Buy-In

Get employee input before finalizing your values and culture. After all, they are the ones who'll be most directly affected every day. You can go further to build trust by having a third party conduct a focus group. This group should meet with no supervisors, managers or executives involved; it should consist solely of people from different departments, experience levels and titles.

Prepare for feedback; issues you thought might be small may be larger for your employees, and vice versa. Once you've reviewed the feedback, made changes and create a finalized version of your company values, the executive and management teams need to strongly commit to exemplifying those values. When employees notice that management is buying in, they'll be more likely to follow suit.

Live Your Values

Culture is more than a poster in the break room. It's integral to the company, a living set of ideas that affects every aspect of your business. The way you recognize people, the way you review them, and how you hire, onboard, terminate, compensate and reward all hearken back to that high-level thinking.

All company practices should align with your values, and this is part of how you gain a competitive, strategic edge for attracting talent. With a transparent, healthy culture and a high engagement level among your workforce, you'll become a target company that people want to work at for a long time.

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