

WHO CARES

Excerpt
Chapter 8 - Managing Your
Corporate Culture

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Better Systems for Managing People

Who Cares

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Chapter 8 – Managing Your Corporate Culture

Sometime in the early '90s I was listening to a presentation by an IBM Canada executive. He was talking about the company they were working to become; in particular they wanted to become a company thriving on growing people. I was enjoying it yet puzzled because he was describing the IBM I had left some twenty-five years earlier. Later I told him so and he quickly responded "I know, we lost it, we're trying to get it back."

For weeks afterward I was haunted by the idea that they could have lost such a cherished working atmosphere. By this time I had been helping my clients improve their working environment for years, through implementing motivational management processes, and this revelation gave me two new perspectives to meld into our work. One was that I realized that what I had been trying to accomplish was to help clients cultivate a culture resembling my IBM experience in the '60s. The second was yet another epiphany about managing live beings. We were already experiencing success using Change Management processes to help people change their behavior, but I now realized that you have to use Change Management processes if you want people to stay the *same*, that is, if you have a culture fostering personal growth you need to use Change Management to maintain it.

This chapter is about how to cultivate *and maintain* a corporate culture in your organization, one that will foster personal growth, harmony, and productivity. To do this we will have to cover:

What we mean by corporate culture.

The description of a recommended culture.

Who should be accountable for managing this and how can we empower this person to accomplish such?

How to make it happen.

How to keep it alive.

Corporate Culture – Definition

Earlier we have talked about shared values for behavior; indeed not only talked about them but proclaimed them as the essence of our motivational management processes. The shared values for the expected behavior of the participants *drive* the respective processes and the processes in turn reinforce the appropriate shared values. Likewise in a macro sense the shared values for expected behavior *throughout* your organization constitute your corporate culture.

Moreover as part of our definition of corporate culture comes the warning that if you don't purposely *cultivate* and *nurture* a corporate culture, you will end up with one anyway, one

that will evolve with your people as they share their experiences and it will have a significant influence on the effectiveness of your organization. Unfortunately, allowing it to evolve, at will, exposes you to two popular problems.

Often we find that this naturally evolving culture induces *negative synergy*, where people working together are *less* effective than if they each worked separately, without any interaction with colleagues. In these cases people appear to be sharing a behavior to *avoid* doing certain things, rather than *enjoying* doing certain things or behaving in a positive, motivated manner. We believe these negative cultures evolve through people sharing their pain rather than their success.

Just as often we find that different working environments within one organization will end up with different cultures promoting “turfdoms” or “cultural rifts” inhibiting the interactivity needed for a successful organization.

Even if you do have a positive corporate culture, perhaps cultivated through leadership and fellowship of the founding members, and you don’t manage it to maintain it... you can lose it through lack of refreshing and/or reinforcing it, because people are *alive*.

Your corporate culture then we will define as one that you can and should cultivate *and* maintain such that it has a positive effect on your people, enabling them to continuously improve their productivity as well as the quality of their working lives.



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