Building Your Business Culture

What is a business culture? Let's see what Google says, 'Business culture refers to the set of behavioural and procedural norms that can be observed within a company — which includes its policies, procedures, ethics, values, employee behaviours and attitudes, goals and code of conduct.'

That's all well and good. However, in a creative workplace environment, I suggest the tactile nature of our industry demands a specific approach that compliments the natural attitudes and advantages our workforce flourishes in.

In these tips, you will more than likely love some and totally disregard others. That's very normal. As the truism says, one person's passion is another's poison. Consequently, the critical element to optimising the internal working of most businesses - whether they employ a couple of people or many - is recognising how to develop and foster a motivated, enthusiastic and knowledgeable team whose goals and values are at some level of synchronicity with the ideas of the business.

The reality is the culture you may have had in 2019 or 2020 is likely threatened, or perhaps extinct. Whether it was good, bad or ugly, the chances it will still be there in 2023 are remote. That may not be a bad thing as cultures are organic and pliable. Have you ever noticed the

after Christmas change? – Well, here is your chance. Start 2023 as a clean slate, and consult with appriate stakeholders to decide what culture you are going to develop in the future for 'your company'.

With the pandemic, work, and staffing changes now needs to be the time for the evolution a new business culture. For better or worse, what existed in 2020 will not be in the norm in 2023 and beyond. Take advantage of this opportunity to restart.

Let's start with a few directions...

It is your vision... establish it and own it.

There are endless insights into corporate culture online, you may find something that appeal to you. However, keep in mind that most of the information you will find online is biased towards larger businesses. That's not so say it is not suitable for you, it is more a suggestion that a variant relative to your size, type and profile will serve you better. So, don't be afraid to use a model you can redefine.

Leadership.

The great quote from Richard Branson goes something like, "hire the right people, pay them an appropriate reward, then let them do their job." You can build on that, while supporting them with systems and process to achieve it, or, let them build it. Either way, the message is clear – follow your job descriptions and ensure people are empowered by their own roles and work instructions. Lead your people, build their skills and knowledge, give them the facilities and tools to adequately manufacture and manage. If they fail, teach and coach – don't criticise. Better to praise in public while offering constructive criticism in private.

The cornerstones ... work with your people but allow them to perform the tasks. Don't micro-manage.

Trust – to many, it is a mystery.

Most fully understand that a mistrustful workplace offers few benefits but limitless disadvantages. Consequently, one must ponder why does the industry

spend so little time building and promoting trust? Trust is a two-way street. It's perpetual. If you don't trust people, it's unlikely they will trust you.

A building block is consistency – a common management failure is to randomly switch from one style of management to another - whether that's Democratic - 'Let's all do it this way', Autocratic - 'you do it my way', or Lassaiz-faire - do it any way you want. This sporadic switching destroys trust.

Build Responsibility and Accountability

standards more than lack of responsibility, or the choice of an individual of a team to accept accountability. Who sets the standard that the company accepts? Importantly, are responsibilities clearly defined? First, you must understand the importance of defining, in a uniform manner, what accountability is. The ongoing mission is to build, train and nurture your people to preserve the level accepted.

One of the trickiest parts is keeping enjoyment, harmony, and satisfaction in the workplace. The biggest challenge to quality is that it is required while in parallel having to meet timeframes and budgets.

Every work environment – and the collective that influences people and customers – will have impact. It's somewhat of a balancing act. Most of all it requires mutual respect, tolerance, and moderation.

The sense of purpose.

To accurately define "purpose", we can look at the dictionary definition, '1. The reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists. Or 2. a person's sense of resolve or determination.' As a somewhat intangible it can be slippery to define.

Unless people and the culture embrace and reinforce 'the sense of purpose" and all your people are connected to it, the challenge may be daunting. I will state that once people feel connected and the core values are integrated into a positive business culture, then and then alone will you witness people celebrating change, inspiring eachother, developing different processes and taking risks to contribute to the business aims.

Work like you love it.

Celebrate your working life with birthdays, fun lunches, company events and other practices to build an enjoyable, happy, and trust-filled workplace. The challenge is to find the balance between hard work and focused effort, and a sense of fun based on sharing respectful mutual values.

Often stress and tight timeframes can challenge the fun workplace. Yet, once established and nurtured carefully what will win through is trust and relationships. A lesson I learnt early – everyone can do it – is to start, and finish every day by a friendly salutation like "g'day" or good afternoon, even "see-ya". You will soon spot the stand outs.

Rewards and incentives.

The words to highlight here are praise and appropriate. The minefield of inappropriate gifts, incentives or even misguided kind words can derail your culture express! Stay clear of trying to influence behaviours by reward; remember, it's a reward. Incentives are suitable to reinforce well-deserved recognition. You don't have to go overboard. Often, a genuine 'thank you' or a Bunnings Gift Card is appropriate. We did develop a yearly trip to an overseas exhibition and ran it for years – the key is appropriate! If you would like a copy of an incentive, email "Staff Evaluation Program" to my email below.

Some common styles of work environment.

Most business are a collaboration of these styles and a touch of the owners and employee's life lessons. The common vision is generally results-focused, achieved by blending the ideas of your people and other stakeholders.

- **Family** –being warm and collaborative, with a focus on relationships and trust.
- **Fun** - expressed via fun and excitement that is shared with customers.
- **Results** – driven by directed performance, achievement with a focus on winning.
- **Order** – built on respect, structure, shared and accepted norms and traditions
- **Innovative** – emphasis is creativity, open-mindedness, new ideas, with support for exploration and failure
- **Focus** – Purpose is driven by shared ideals and contributing to a greater cause.
- **Authoritarian** – characterised by strength, action, decisiveness and boldness.
- **Planned** – cautious, well prepared, predictable, conscious thought , safety and risk-conscious

Develop your own style... at about 1400 words, this article has more to give if you would like the extra 450 words and extra sections email me with "Extra Sign Culture tips" for the free bonus tips.

Building Your Business Culture should suit most creatives and stimulate your mind with opportunities in your business. If you would like to share some of your experiences or have a chat about areas of improvement you would like to see in your business– please call me on 0418 161 600 send an email to john@controlzone.com.au, adding "Business Culture" in the subject line. I'd be most interested to a chat and compare notes.