

# Culture is Everything

## How The Best Work Differently

Leaders are facing unique and daily challenges in today's fast-paced world. Technology, and the speed at which we exchanged information, has changed the dynamics of how we do business. How do you create an experience for your customers, patients, clients, and along with your employees? Where do you find and hire the best talent for your organization success today and tomorrow? How do you plan for today and the future, without missing a beat in trust and leadership? How do you create a culture of excellence?

Do you want to join the ranks of such companies like Starbucks, Google, and the Ritz-Carlton in their quest for excellence? Here are four characteristics that I've observed and seen put into practice, that you'll want to duplicate in your organization.

**Real Community:** Each company has control over the community they are creating within their own organization. Problem is, most never even give it a thought. Typically, leaders inherit the group from the previous leadership team and considered it the status quo. Remarkable organizations create a community or an environment of cohesiveness that is supportive for growth. This type of setting brings forth new ideas along with a backdrop that encourages positive interaction. From the top leadership team to the entry-level employee, every level of the organization needs

to take on an attitude of leadership for outstanding results and work together as a single team versus individual players.

Encouraging a leadership mindset is what separates the best companies from the mediocre companies. I believe when everyone is thinking like a leader, they look for new market ideas, share in being lean, raise their own bar, think differently, and show up fully prepared to give their best efforts. They become little ambassadors of the company on and off the clock.

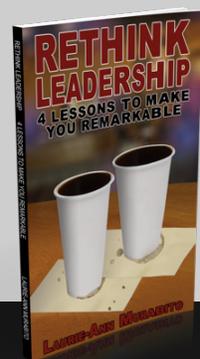
### **Smart Succession Planning:**

Seventy percent of companies participate in succession planning; however, 62% report not having the right candidate to choose from, according to a 2014 survey by the Human Capital Media Advisory Group. Waiting to develop and implement a succession plan is not



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by Laurie-Ann Murabito

only foolish but can make your organization vulnerable. Without a plan, organizations may find themselves in urgent need for new leadership for a variety of reason, such as an emergency or illness, or their leader may move on to a new career opportunity. Developing your own pool of talent to choose from puts your organization in a stronger position while having more control over their future course, which ties in nicely to the next characteristic.

## Investing To Get The Best:

Great organizations invest in their greatest asset: their people. That was the most common answer given by executives from 146 high performing companies, as reported in the Build Network, Build Editors & The Principal Financial Group in 2013. As a matter of fact, employees who are able to use their strengths perform better, are less likely to leave, and are far more engaged. (Sorenson, 2014).

Without investment in your team, the facts on employee engagement look like this:

- 30% believe they'll be working for someone new within one year.
- 25% are actively looking for work elsewhere.
- 20% believe their personal aspirations are quite different from what the organization has planned for them.
- 33% high-potential employees admit to not putting all their effort into the job.
- 70% of today's high performers lack critical skills essential to their success and future rolls. (Martin and Schmidt, 2010).

In my experience, managers or leaders have the most influence on their teams' engagement by helping and encouraging the growth of their skills and strengths directly. This was also a finding from a Gallop Survey, as featured in the article "How Employees Strengths Make Your Company Stronger" (Sorenson, 2014). Give your leaders, on all levels, the needed skills to positively lead their groups via an in-house leadership development program, where groups of leaders learn and grow together in a supportive environment.

This one investment will save you in the long run, including the benefit of savings on recruitment, downtime, and training new hires. One of the global healthcare companies I work with recently reported a savings of \$25 million over the past 10 years.

Developing your rising stars also will attract more similar type people to your organization. Over the years, I have observed that top talent hangs out with other top talent. Your employees begin to attract and recruit their talented friends and neighbors, whom they respect and believe will fit in perfectly to the culture they work in—making your responsibility and worry of growth and filling positions obsolete.

## Diversity of Generations and Genders:

Great organizations have a common thread of belief, and a passion for what they do or produce while embracing the various nationalities, genders, and generations that work together. Embracing and learning from these different perspectives breeds new and innovative ideas and solutions. Men and women bring different

viewpoints and market insight to the table, which aids in solving problems and generating new ideas, which results in profitability. Not to mention, gender diverse businesses financially outperform those dominated by a single gender. (Bharadwaj, 2014).

As a great leader, you know instinctively where your organization stands relative to these critical areas. It's not enough for top management to embrace these concepts. You need to bring these ideas to the ranks, and ensure they make their way through your middle management and front-line supervisors—involving training and reinforcement, that most organizations have not yet implemented. How is YOUR organization supporting these goals system-wide?

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