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Using Organizational Culture to Your Advantage

Workplace culture can be difficult to define and even more difficult to communicate. It may be easy to skip the definition process in favor of other “more important” tasks; however workplace culture manifests itself in crucial ways. It reflects the work style of an organization as well as how employees relate to one another. The culture outlines acceptable behaviors and expresses unspoken values and attitudes held by the organization. By attracting the type of employees that are suited to your particular work environment, you are paving the way for higher productivity and job satisfaction. The end result? An engaged, productive workforce, a stronger organization, and increased employee retention.

Taking the first step toward utilizing this largely untapped resource requires you to define your culture. It is important to represent your organization accurately and outline expectations from the start. Employees who are a good fit for your culture will be better equipped to perform their duties and further the goals of the organization. Providing employees with the tools to carry out expectations positively impacts the company as a whole as well as the individual. It’s as simple as giving potential employees an accurate description of how your organization operates.

Engaging current employees is equally important as drawing the correct individuals. It is necessary for employees to be committed to the organization, and an effective way to achieve this is to encourage regular feedback and open communication. Employees will experience higher satisfaction if they feel they have a voice in the company. In utilizing regular feedback, you can also address performance issues right away and reward employees for a job well done. In this type of environment, employees are able to envision the long-term benefits of staying with the organization.

What is important to remember is that a strong culture and, by extension, a strong organization, depends on shared goals. There must be a balance in which everyone’s needs are being met while employees are working together toward a common goal. Here are a few things to keep in mind when using workplace culture to your advantage:

Keep your employees “new”. Maintain the enthusiasm new employees experience when they start a position. Engage their passions and outline expectations so they are comfortable and confident in their roles. By creating an environment in which employees feel valued and rewarded for their contributions, you can decrease turnover and retain satisfied, productive employees.

Embrace differences. Though a strong culture depends on shared goals and values, it also relies on the individual strengths employees bring to the organization. Employees have varied personalities and work experience, and engaging these differences can greatly benefit your company. Attract the employees that will fit within your organization, and use their unique strengths and interests to align their personal goals with the goals of the company.

Be honest when evaluating your culture. Ensure the culture you project to potential employees actually reflects what you offer. It is counterproductive to advertise your department as relaxed and easygoing when in reality employees are constantly under strict deadlines. You may be casting your company in a positive light to attract employees; however they are not the employees that will ultimately enhance your organization.

No matter what type of culture exists within your company, it is important to hire individuals who can work within that culture to excel in their positions. Your employees will be happier, and you will retain a stronger workforce.