

Raise the bar on performance

Culture

The sum of everything people do on your team and in your company is your culture.

► **Culture is a Scoreboard**

Culture is an integrated blend of what gets measured, what gets rewarded, and the systems and processes that people use to interact. If you want a different culture, don't beat on the scoreboard to change the score. Instead, take stock of what's going on today and then make strategic changes in a new direction.

High performance cultures happen as a product of alignment when accountable people focus their attention on specific outcomes.

In all high-performance environments you will find people walking their talk, asking first from themselves what they expect from others. You'll see and hear people saying what needs to get said and, especially when things are tough to say, people will continue to find ways of being open with each other and engaging in straight talk.

People give their best performance when the focus is on excellence and resolution versus perfection and blame. In a blaming environment, all people want to do is find cover. In an environment of resolution and learning, it's safe to ask for help and problems get solved as soon as they're noticed, when they are small and easier to fix. It's easy to blow out a match, very tough to put out a forest fire.

The combination of practicing these transparent behaviors leads to people experiencing vitality and enthusiasm from their work and on their teams. You'll find that when times are tough, people pull together to regain confidence and restore momentum, and in this environment, exceptional progress is made and celebrated.

► **Changing Culture**

Culture change is a big deal and success requires thoughtful investment of your people and financial resources.

Begin with strategic planning sessions that incorporate your changing business needs with your strategy. Measure twice and cut once by examining and exploring what factors are critical in order that new metrics and outcomes can be achieved. How does success look at the end of the culture change?

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Measure and quantify the changes and outcomes. You'll develop and use new metrics & key performance indicators to make sure you're on track and heading toward success.

Making your commitment and sponsorship visible is critical to making it happen. Develop a communication plan and create deliberate opportunities for people to contribute their own best ideas and get their questions answered. In this way, you'll gain the support of the people who are actually implementing the changes.

Sustain communications to reinforce and reward new business practices. When it's said that 75% of all culture change efforts fail, it's often because of a weak strategy where people tried to change too many things at the same time. New behaviors, processes, systems and practices take time to learn, integrate and improve. Focus on the main things first and keep people motivated and engaged by encouraging learning and feedback.

It may be counter-intuitive when deploying new systems, but it's best if the old system is eliminated as quickly as possible. Systems and process changes initially require a duplication of effort which is exhausting to continue for a long time.

Celebrate all improvements, continue to tighten-up strategy and tactics as you move forward, and create strong learning loops among teams and divisions. When culture change is done well, it's worth all the effort, cost and focus that it takes.

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