

YOUR WORKPLACE



Inspired People. Outstanding Results.



Work Culture

The Competitive Advantage of the Modern Economy

When culture “works” results are high and employees thrive.
But when it is wrong, problems abound.

Leveraging Performance

Work culture is far too valuable and important to be left to chance

Finding Cultural Fit

Tips to assess the culture of a company to ensure you'll soar

The World is Awash in Scandal

It takes more than rules to create a moral and safe culture

New!

Metrics to measure work culture

Organizations do have cultures

Corporate culture is a concept that has been around for many decades, although it has only become mainstream in the last 10 years. Highly effective leaders understand that an effective and resilient culture is one in which people work well together. Leaders not only support the principle of culture, but it is the biggest legacy they can leave behind. In this issue Dr. Craig Dowden shares a survey of leaders who define the five complementary features of a resilient culture in “Building a Resilient Culture”.

Organizational culture has many aspects but mostly it is all about values, and these values need to be authentic and transparent in order to work. If your organization upholds the value of honesty, then all employees must embrace this value or the foundation upon which they build is faulty. Leadership must “walk the talk” with values laid out for the organization. Dr. Jack Muskat addresses the belief that it takes more than rules to create a moral and safe culture in his article, “The World is Awash in Scandal”.

A few years ago the word culture was only used in relation to the morals and values of a particular society or people. Times have changed. Organizations do have cultures. How employees feel and their relation to, and understanding of, the values in their organization is crucial to their productivity and retention, as well as to the company’s competitive edge and success. So, as with every other aspect of your strategic advantage, your culture needs to be properly articulated, demonstrated and measured in order to accurately maintain and improve it for increased productivity and better outcomes. Writer Akay Hendricks talks about this in her article, “The Measure of Culture”. She concludes that when you effectively incorporate organizational culture into your company, you will have everyone working together in a productive, caring way.

In this issue two new writers *Your Workplace*, Gary Gzik and Renée Eaton from BizXcel, contribute the YW Profile. The interview two organizations, Niagara Region and Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario (STEO), and report on how they each demonstrate the many ways that organizations are addressing workplace culture in order to build healthier, more engaging environments.

We also have stories about funky socks, sand houses, apples in barrels, and even a tribute to lemonade! And there is much, much more. Enjoy this issue of *Your Workplace* and, as always, please contact us at editorial@yourworkplace.ca with your thoughts, opinions, cheers or jeers. **YW**

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Cheering us? Or jeering us? Here's what you had to say:



As a senior HR professional a lot of "stuff" passes by my desk. Mostly I give a cursory look, maybe five seconds, to each item then quickly dispense of it. There is not a lot of new or fresh information to cause me to actually read in detail. I have to tell you that I really enjoy getting *Your Workplace*. The magazine is fresh, interesting and informative. Just this past issue I read four articles from start to finish and I found the information valuable. Thank you for this small, yet mighty magazine that I believe will help change, for the better, the world of work.

L.M. TAILLEFER,
TORONTO, ON



Positive feedback is good to share. I

particularly enjoyed two articles in this issue [Love Your Job, volume 17, no. 4]. Hats off for "Top 5 Reasons Employees Love Their Jobs" and "10 Quirky Benefits". Keep up the good work Team YW!

A.H. MANN,
VICTORIA, BC



I often feel overworked, [yet] I love my work

in human resources. I find HR literature is made overly complicated, and when you feel stressed and strained already it is hard to get into the content. I am pleased to say that the article by Neil Crawford on EVP [*Employee Value Proposition: Your Relationship with Employees*] was "spot-on" for me. It was well-written, succinct and totally made sense in a comprehensive, yet easy-to-follow manner. The bonus is that when our organization is ready to do the heavy lifting to make the changes we need to make, I know who to call. Thanks for that.

L. ROWLANDS,
WINNIPEG, MB



Get in Touch

Got something to say? We'd love to hear from you. Send your letters to *Your Workplace*, 23 Queen Street, Kingston, ON, K7K 1A1, or email letters to editor@yourworkplace.ca. Please include your name, address, and telephone number.

Letters and email may be edited for length, grammar and clarity.

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Planning FOR THE Unexpected

The role of culture
and resilience

» BY DR. CATHERINE HAJNAL

Recently, there were three unexpected deaths of a senior executive: Canaccord Genuity CEO, Paul Reynolds, Survey Monkey CEO, David Sandberg and American Express President, Ed Gilligan. Each of these organizations is now faced with considerable change, first and foremost with loss and grieving.

Generally, when we speak about change management and organizational development the context is planned change initiatives. Many conversations and decisions will have been made about endings and beginnings — reengineered processes, new products, and new structures. And then life happens and an organization can find itself thrown into change through potentially very tragic circumstances. What to do when there is no plan?

The effects of these deaths will be far reaching from potential financial market impacts to the individual impact for members of the firm. The individual losses can include a confused sense of confidence about the direction and future of the organization (the rudderless ship) and, roles aside, these three individuals were also friends to many in their organizations. For those who have lost a friend, the grief can be consuming.

So what can an organization do in these circumstances? On one hand it sounds gruesome to plan for the death of your CEO. Yet it is

only macabre if you choose to see it that way. We can draw a parallel to end-of-life conversations in our personal lives, including expressions of advanced care directives, identifying powers of attorney, wills, etc. The purpose of many of these conversations is to bring the possibility of comfort and ease to those who remain by pre-planning. It is making decisions in advance of when they are needed so that when the loss has occurred and many are experiencing depleted energy and capabilities because they are grieving, there are guideposts in place for moving forward. It is not about wishing the end, rather it is about fostering resilience and appreciating the transformative potential of grief.

One can never fully plan for these types of experiences. That said, a willingness to step into potentially difficult and awkward conversations today can make a big difference for tomorrow. In organizations, the invitation is to have business continuity conversations that include consideration of tragic events such as the death of one or more senior executives. It is necessary to be proactive about knowledge management before permanently losing the organizational brain trust. Succession planning will ensure that the organization does not go rudderless for long.

What is the culture of your organization when it comes to

loss — by death or otherwise? Recognizing that many planned change initiatives do bring endings and therefore losses, what is your organization's approach to grieving? Is it grounded in acknowledging loss, inviting empathetic conversation and remembering, or is it about avoiding, "getting over", and a focus on tomorrow at the expense of what people are experiencing today? For the three organizations now processing the loss of their top leadership, the starting point is to grieve and find meaning in what has happened. Grief has the capacity to give us focus on what matters. It can be transformative if we are open to framing it that way.

Grieving is a healthy human response in those circumstances when someone or something that matters to us is lost. So while organizations cannot plan for all eventualities in which loss is present, they can develop skills and capabilities that support healthy grieving and that foster a culture in which empathy is a cornerstone. This includes a willingness to step into difficult and awkward conversations.

Resilience is what you tap into when things are not going according to plan, and, with help, you can develop those capabilities that will support you in times of need. ^{www}

Dr. Catherine Hajnal is a Grief Educator, www.catherinehajnal.com.