Corporate Culture and Business Success

So what's all the fuss about corporate culture? What does it really mean? How does it affect your business success? What can you do about it?

Did you know that culture impacts your brand? Your ability to retain and recruit top quality individuals? Your company valuation?

What is Culture?

- It is *not* a listing of values or behavior expectations.
- It is the *personality* of the organization. It's how we do things around here. It's what we determine is important and who and what gets rewarded.
- The actual values, beliefs and norms displayed and expressed in words, actions and deeds in the workplace.
- Difficult to express distinctly, but everyone knows it when they sense it.
- Organizational change efforts are rumored to fail the vast majority of the time usually to lack of understanding about the strong role of culture and the role it plays in organizations.
  (Carter McNamara, MBA, PhD, Copyright 1999)
- Culture drives the organization and its actions. Consider it to be "the operating system" of the organization. It guides how employees think, act and feel. It is dynamic and fluid, and it is never static. A culture may be effective at one time, under a set of circumstances and ineffective at another time. There is no generically good culture.

Why assess our Culture?

- If a company wants to achieve its strategic vision, goals and objectives, it must assess the culture to determine if it will support and drive the actions necessary to achieve the company's goals.

- By developing a picture of the ideal culture and then reflecting on the current culture, the company can develop plans and strategies to close the gap and bring specific cultural elements in line.

- On the flip side, it is important to know what cultural elements will enable the company to be successful and to preserve and nurture those aspects.

How does Culture tie into our strategic and tactical efforts?

- Marketing, HR and other tactical strategies must support the developing and ideal culture and align back to the strategy and vision of the firm. Ex: it is critical that new hires fit within the current or expected culture for a good fit for the employee and the company.

- The behavior of members of the senior team, reactions to crises and what they talk about, all sets the tone of the culture.

- In Built to Last, by Jim Collins and Jerry Porris, identified that enduring great companies are usually built on both a solid foundation of timeless core values, and their adaptability. "*The secret to a company that will last is its ability to simultaneously manage both continuity and change.*"

Remember, the one thing that can definitely derail or set sail to your company are its people!

Which will you choose?

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