

## Corporate Culture

Corporate culture is a topic gaining significant attention in the business arena. Every level of business, regardless of organizational size, is subject to the latest corporate fads and trends, much like the international worlds of fashion and music. In the mid to late nineties, the business buzz was about paradigms and paradigm shifts, spurred primarily by the technological impacts on business. The topic of the new millennium is culture; and although I would not classify it as a fad, it is, in fact, the captivating topic of many business discussions nowadays. What's most captivating is the degree of curiosity surrounding what corporate culture is really about and its importance to the workplace.

We can demystify culture, by defining the term within its three fundamental categories: Societal, Corporate and Individual. In the societal realm, culture is multidimensional, as it expresses the totality of a particular period, class, community or population. It is also multifaceted, as it comprises all the social behaviors, arts, beliefs, institutions and all other products of human work and thought. Corporate culture, also referenced as corporate integrity, reflects the sum total of all facets found in the collective intellect, works and artistic activity produced by an organization. It is one-dimensional, as it is the embodiment of the collective actions, behaviors and predominating attitudes of an organization's membership. Individual culture is commonly referred to as personal integrity, which is two-dimensional, as it comprises the expression of one's core values and personal values—the bundled 'package' of principles that reflect an individual's beliefs and dictate an individual's conduct.

Whether from a personal, corporate or societal perspective, culture always exists at some level, as it is the very thing for which you become known. Businesses across the nation and around the world employ people from every walk of life, and each individual brings to the workplace their own personal integrity; therefore, there will always exist a level of quasi-corporate integrity within an organization, as what an organization becomes known for is the overriding culture formulated through its collective individuals. Fundamentally, it's a matter of whether an organization's culture is by default, or by design.

Simply put, a corporate culture "by design" is achieved when an organization's roster comprises individuals whose personal integrity is in-line with the organization's philosophical approach to conduct. It is a systematic process of ensuring everybody within the organization is singing from the same songbook, which clearly results in a happier and more productive workplace and in turn, enhances shareholder Return On Investment (ROI).

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