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*We Help You Focus Clearly,
Organize Effectively,
And Act With Courage*

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Nine Steps for Leading Culture Change

- 1. Take off the “rose colored” glasses.**
You need to be open to what you might find about your organization, looking beyond “espoused values.” If you don’t think you can do this, hire an outside consultant to provide objectivity.
- 2. Observe patterns of behavior.** How do people behave in order to “fit in” with your organization? Which of these patterns are helpful, which limit high performance as a company? (Hint: Ask people to describe what is expected for them to succeed in your organization.)
- 3. Identify underlying assumptions and beliefs.** In the last newsletter we talked about how culture is framed by what we assume to be true about our organization and our environment. Talk to people to identify the assumptions that seem to drive the behaviors that you observe.
- 4. Determine which assumptions are no longer helpful.** Are there some assumptions about your company or your environment that are no longer true in today’s world? Are there some assumptions that limit your organization’s ability to meet new or changing demands?
- 5. Determine how those assumptions are reinforced right now.** (See main article.)
- 6. State the new assumption.** It is important to provide a *new* framework for people to interpret and react to the demands of their environment.
- 7. Pick one or two key leverage points** where you can start making concrete changes that neutralize old assumptions and reinforce new beliefs.
- 8. Use your power, position, influence, and/or authority to make those changes a reality.**
- 9. As those changes start to become embedded, look for more leverage points** to systematically reinforce the new assumptions, until they are just “part of the culture.” ■ CMP

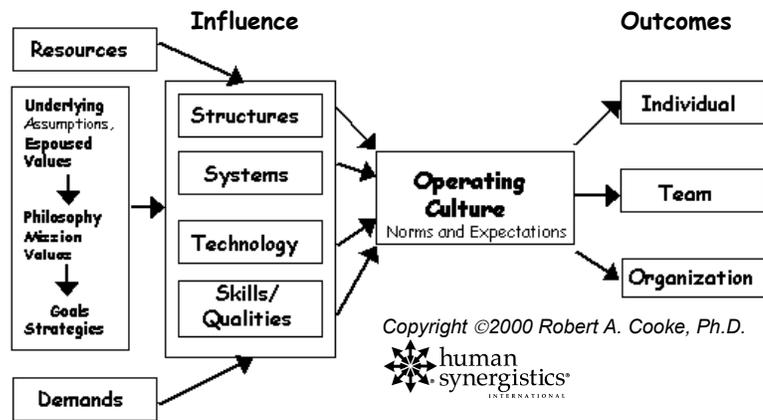
Beyond the Mission Statement:

What leaders really need to change an organization’s culture

You’ve spent all day at the executive retreat, led by a high-powered consultant, and finally the team agrees to wording for a new corporate mission statement. Now all that’s left to do is to communicate those words on the flip chart to all your employees, then sit back and watch your organization’s culture start changing for the better, right?

Wrong. Having a clear picture of who you are, where you want to go, and how to get there *is* important, because it provides a high-level picture for all to see. But there is more to the story! What *really* shapes organizational culture are the **systems, structures, technology and skills** used to actualize its mission, vision and values.

Too often I have seen culture change stop at the strategic level and quickly fall flat. In the previous newsletter, we highlighted adaptability as an indicator of corporate success. But adaptability and culture change *cannot* occur without changing the underlying systems, structures and skills to support it. Here’s a model to illustrate:



How to start changing culture? Change the influencers by looking at:

- How work is organized and decisions are made, how technology and processes support the work and what is communicated in the organization
- How managers and employees are selected, trained, appraised and rewarded
- What groups of people have power and influence, and why
- What mechanisms the organization uses to plan and to correct its plans, and how effective these are in helping it adapt to changing conditions

The hard truth –it’s not easy to do. True culture change may take years – and the larger the organization or the more entrenched the current culture, the longer change may take. Successful leaders on this journey commit to be in it for the long haul.

What is the payoff? Having an organization that can not only survive, but enjoy lasting success even in uncertain times – an organization in which everyone works to his or her highest potential, and one that adds value to the community through its success.

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