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for Business Leaders

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# 5 Practices every CEO should adopt to help their business thrive

For innovation to thrive in an organisation, the CEO plus Board of Directors must actively promote the right culture and this may not always be simple. There are five fundamental practices the CEO must champion to ensure they are always at the cutting edge of innovation.



## DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT CULTURE VS DESIRED CULTURE

This is not a group effort, rather an understanding which helps define what culture you wish to create.

As a CEO, you must recognise and acknowledge the current culture.

- Why is it this way how have you allowed it to be that way?
- What impact is it having on your business performance?
- What drives the culture to remain the same?
- What is it going to take to change?

Next, you need to be able to describe what kind of culture is required, and how this connects to your business strategy and vision. In describing the culture you wish to create, there are five key areas that you should consider that will facilitate a deeper understanding of this culture:

### 1. Vision, values and strategy –

Take your organisation's Vision statement, dust it off, and ask yourself: What is the culture I wish to create that will drive the Vision of the organisation. What is the culture I wish to create with reference to my values?

### 2. Accountability and Transparency –

Ask yourself what messages you want to put out regarding accountability and transparency. What disclosure will you provide regarding processes, procedures and assumptions? What are you willing to commit to?

### 3. Internal Relationships –

Ask yourself what culture around internal relationships do you wish to create? Is it about silos? Teamwork? Perhaps you want staff to treat other staff as if they were customers?

**4. External Relationships –** What type of relationships do you wish to facilitate with external parties?

### 5. Creative Edge and Innovation –

How much innovation do you want

your staff to show? How important is being at the creative edge to you and the organisation? Do your staff realise they can innovate from their current duties and responsibilities, or do they have a fixed point of view that this is not for them?

## LEAD WITH QUESTIONS

Great CEOs use questions to encourage full participation and teamwork, to inspire creativity and encourage outside-the-box thinking, to empower others and to solve problems resourcefully.

CEOs, through asking questions, can cultivate a culture in which questions are welcomed, assumptions are investigated and new possibilities to solve problems are explored. Why questions?

Questions promote an inquisitive way of life in an organisation. Such inquisitive behaviours build an innovative climate, a culture of accountability and a truly conscious organisation

### 3. Lead the Way through your mindset, behaviour, symbols and processes –

As a CEO you will have to become the embodiment of the culture you would like to create. This can be done by establishing mindset, behaviour, symbols and processes with regard to the way staff, stakeholders, and customers should be treated and the way business objectives should be pursued.

Your behaviour and your decisions send a message to your staff about how people are expected to behave, which in turn sets the cultural standard for others to follow. To consciously model the way, continually ask the following questions...

- What mindset is guiding my actions as a leader? What mindset do I want my staff to adopt?
- What would it take for me,

through my behaviour, to create an environment that promotes this culture?

- What symbols are required to support this culture?
- What processes are required to support this culture?

### 4. Promote a Common Vision –

CEOs create and articulate vision and strategy, which can provide the cohesion that enables all people to, at the very least, understand why they are doing what they do. CEOs share this information freely and articulate the vision of the organisation to those who have an interest in the organisation. Continually ask the following questions...

- Do I communicate my values and vision in the things I do, how I spend time, and what I consider important?
- What would it take for me to articulate a vision of the organisation when things are unpredictable?
- What would it take for me to share power and information and still maintain accountability?

### 5. Foster collaboration and build spirited teams –

CEOs actively involve others and empower staff and stakeholders to embrace infinite possibilities and function in a state of creative expansion that lets them go over their limits everyday. This creates a hotbed of innovation. Fostering collaboration and building spirited teams can be initiated by:

- A willingness to receive all points of view by welcoming and hearing all perspectives, without resisting or reacting.
- Supporting staff to envision that there is no limit to what they could create by facilitating change constantly and encourage staff to discover more expansive and innovative ways of doing things. **BFM**