

# WANT A CULTURE *of* INNOVATION?

*5 practices every CEO should adopt to help their business thrive*

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## 1. DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT CULTURE VS DESIRED CULTURE

This is not a group effort, rather an understanding which helps define what it is you wish to create. As a CEO, first and foremost, you must recognize and acknowledge the current culture:

- **Why is it the way it is and how you have 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 for it to change?**

Next, you need to be able to describe what kind of culture you want, and how does this connect 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 organization's vision statement, dust it off, and ask yourself: What is the conscious culture I wish to create that will drive the vision of the organization? What is the culture I wish to create with reference to my values and what do I perceive to be the most expansive for my organisation?

### 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? There are many instances where leadership does not hold staff to account for performance outcomes, and standards are variable due to lack of individual accountability.

### 3. INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS:

Ask yourself what culture around internal relationships you wish to create? Is it about silos? Team work? Perhaps you

want staff to treat each other 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 realize they may be able to innovate from their current duties and responsibilities, or do they have a fixed mindset?

## 2. LEAD WITH QUESTIONS

A tool for you to begin to create your culture with awareness is to live in the question. Conscious leaders 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. When you learn to live in the question rather than being besieged by the problems or become vested in finding answers and solutions, you are able to create your culture more consciously.

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 behaviors build a climate of innovation, a culture of accountability and a truly conscious organisation.

## 3. LEAD THE WAY THROUGH YOUR MINDSET, BEHAVIOR, SYMBOLS AND PROCESSES

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

Your behavior and your decisions send a message to your staff about how people are expected to behave, which in turns set 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 behavior, to create an environment that promotes this culture?**
- **What would it take for me to create symbols that support this culture?**
- **What would it take for us to develop processes to support this culture?**

## 4. PROMOTE A COMMON VISION

Conscious leaders 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. Conscious leaders 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 in order to promote a common vision:

- **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 organization 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.

Conscious leaders actively involve others and empower staff and stakeholders to embrace infinite possibilities and function in a state of creative expansion that lets them exceed their limits every day. Fostering collaboration and building spirited teams can be promoted 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.**

A truly conscious organisation is one where the CEO chooses to operate consciously across all business concerns – from strategic planning, recruitment, operations and processes to developing the vision which guides the organisation.

**For tools to become a more effective CEO visit:**  
[www.strategicawarenessessentials.com](http://www.strategicawarenessessentials.com)