



NAVIGATING CULTURE

**THE FIRST
100 DAYS**

The High Cost of Ignoring Workplace Culture: Risks and Consequences for New Leaders

Starting a new leadership role can be daunting, especially if you're taking over a team or organization with an existing workplace culture. It's like trying to fit in at a new school, but instead of learning math and science, you're learning the ins and outs of office politics and company values.

According to a study by the Harvard Business Review, approximately 50% of new leaders fail within their first 18 months on the job. One of the key reasons cited for this high failure rate is a lack of cultural fit or an inability to navigate the existing workplace culture.

One of the biggest risks of not addressing workplace culture as a new leader during your first 100 days is that you'll become the office joke. Picture this: You come in on day one, all fired up and ready to make some changes. But instead of taking the time to understand the existing culture and values, you start making sweeping changes without any consideration for how they'll affect the people you work with.

Before you know it, you're the boss who's constantly making ridiculous demands, like insisting that everyone wear matching tracksuits to work on Fridays or putting a ban on all office banter. You become the subject of water cooler gossip, and your team starts taking bets on how long you'll last.

But all joking aside, not addressing workplace culture as a new leader can have serious consequences.

Here are a few risks to consider:



1

Disengaged Employees:

One of the biggest risks of ignoring workplace culture is that it can lead to disengaged employees. If you're not taking the time to understand and address the existing culture, you're likely to make changes that don't resonate with your team. This can lead to a lack of motivation, decreased productivity, and high turnover rates. Do you know your current Employee Engagement scores, Cultural Entropy scores, turnover rates?



2

Poor Collaboration:

Workplace culture plays a big role in how well teams collaborate and communicate. If you're not addressing culture, you could be setting your team up for failure. Poor communication and collaboration can lead to missed deadlines, poor quality work, and low morale. How well does your organization execute? What do your customer satisfaction metrics say?



3

Legal Risks:

Ignoring workplace culture can also put your company at risk of legal issues. For example, if you're not addressing issues related to harassment or discrimination, you could be opening yourself up to legal action. Can your organization survive a reputational hit? How does your company rate on recruiting boards such as Glassdoor?



4

Aspirational Values:

Your organization may have done the work to define values. However, in many cases, these are aspirational. They are what you feel needs to be in place to be successful. But it's not actually what you have. A study by Deloitte found that 82% of executives and HR leaders believe that culture is a potential competitive advantage, but only 28% believe that they understand their own culture well. If you're unclear about the current culture and the gaps, you're leaving lots of opportunities on the table.

What golden nuggets or quick wins could you identify by digging into your current culture?

Conclusion

In addition to the risks, there is also a significant cost associated with a poor culture. Studies have shown that companies with a strong culture outperform their competitors in terms of profitability and employee engagement. On the other hand, a poor culture can lead to decreased productivity, lower employee satisfaction, and increased absenteeism, all of which can impact the bottom line.

Meet my client, Steve – the new Police Chief who had big plans for his team. He wanted to clarify roles and responsibilities, update policies, and increase effectiveness. And away he went. All great priorities, right?

But then, Steve decided to test the workplace culture, and it was a bit of a shocker. Bureaucracy, confusion, information hoarding, and blame all ranked in the top 10 values of the current culture.

Yikes!

As it turns out, Steve's team wasn't quite ready for the rate of change he was pushing. His leadership team had differing commitments to the changes and were rolling them out in their own unique ways. This caused so much confusion, it was like a bunch of chickens running around with their heads cut off. And Steve realized, maybe he should have focused on addressing these barriers to success before making all these changes.

What is the moral of the story? If you're a new leader, don't underestimate the power of workplace culture.

To avoid these risks and reap the benefits of a strong culture, it's essential to address workplace culture during your first 100 days. This means taking the time to understand the existing culture, identifying areas for improvement, and developing a plan to create a culture that supports your vision for the organization.

Don't let workplace culture hold you back from achieving your goals. **Contact us** today to learn more about how we can help you create a culture that will establish a strong foundation for your leadership and set your organization up for success in the long term.



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