

People Biz, Inc.

What is Culture?

Organizational culture is the personality of the organization. Culture is comprised of the assumptions, values, norms and tangible signs (artifacts) of organization members and their behaviors. Members of an organization quickly come to sense the particular culture of an organization. Culture is one of those terms that are difficult to express distinctly, but everyone knows it when they experience it.

For example, the culture of a large, for-profit corporation is quite different from that of a hospital, which is quite different from that of a university or small business. You can tell the culture of an organization by noticing what they say, looking at the arrangement of furniture, what they brag about, what members wear, etc. - similar to what you can use to get a feeling about someone's personality.

The concept of culture is particularly important when attempting to manage change or simply grow a business. Business owners are coming to realize that, despite the best-laid plans, managing change and growth must include not only changing structures and processes, but also changing the culture as well. Change and growth efforts are likely to fail the vast majority of the time. Usually, this failure is credited to lack of understanding about the strong role of culture and the role it plays in the business.

Culture is created through what the leadership and employees say and don't say, what they do and don't do, what they regard as important or valuable. If there is more than one person in the business, you have a culture. The opportunity here is for you to look at your current culture, and acknowledge the gap between where your culture is now and where you want it to be.

1. *Examine your language! Language is 50% of what creates culture. What language do we use? Especially insider language, acronyms etc. What do we say over and over?*
 - *About money?*
 - *About time?*
 - *About people?*
 - *About work?*
 - *About our customers?*
 - *About our role?*
 - *About our limitations?*
 - *About our strengths?*
 - *About our life?*

2. *What behaviors are encouraged and accepted either consciously or unconsciously?*

3. *What is not our culture? Sometimes looking at what we are not helps us with what our culture is.*

4. *What are our beliefs?*

5. *What do our vendors or customers notice about our culture?*

6. *What do we reward on purpose or by accident?*

7. *What do we collectively ignore or refuse to say?*

Ready for the next step? Please email us at coach@peoplebizinc.com for the “*How to Create Your Culture Deliberately*” worksheet.