

LABOUR NEWS

ISSUE: November 2025

Lead the Way: Culture Starts with Your Actions, Not Just Your Words

**SOUND ADVICE &
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Leadership Sets the Tone.

Let's be honest — when it comes to company culture, everyone looks up... literally. Whether we like it or not, management sets the tone. The way leaders act, react, and interact shapes the entire workplace atmosphere faster than any “values on the wall” ever could.

Think of company culture like a cup of coffee: if management brews it too strong (with micromanagement or negativity), it leaves a bitter taste. But when leadership adds just the right amount of warmth, encouragement, and authenticity — suddenly everyone's motivated, engaged, and maybe even smiling on a Monday morning.

The **Golden Rule** of Leadership: Be the Standard

You can hang all the “Teamwork Makes the Dream Work” posters you want, but if leadership doesn't live those values, the message gets lost.

Leadership isn't just about giving instructions — it's about **setting the example** that others want to follow.

If a manager expects punctuality but rolls in 15 minutes late every day with a cappuccino and no apology, the message is clear: *rules are optional*.

But when a leader consistently demonstrates respect, accountability, and commitment, those behaviours naturally trickle down. It's not about perfection — it's about authenticity and consistency.



The culture of a company is not defined by what the CEO says or what's written on the walls; it is defined by the worst behaviour the leader is willing to tolerate and the behaviour they consistently model.



The Accountability Mirror: A Leader's Self-Check

Leadership starts in the mirror. Use this quick self-check to hold yourself accountable to the standards you set for others.

DO I FRAME FAILURES AS LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES?

DO I FOLLOW THE SAME STANDARDS I EXPECT FROM MY TEAM?

DO I PRACTICE WHAT I PREACH?

WOULD I BE PROUD IF EVERYONE IN THE COMPANY BEHAVED THE WAY I DO?

★ **Remember — people rarely do what they're told. They do what they see.**



The Golden Ratio of Feedback: Praise Publicly, Correct

Privately

This one's a classic for a reason — and yet, so often overlooked.

When an employee makes a mistake, addressing it privately protects their dignity and builds trust.

When they excel, recognising them publicly boosts morale and shows the team that good work doesn't go unnoticed.

Think of it as leadership's version of the golden ratio:

👉 **1 private correction : 5 public praises.**

A leader who shames employees in front of others isn't teaching accountability — they're breeding fear.

But a leader who celebrates success loudly and corrects quietly? That's someone who earns genuine respect.

Leadership Blind Spot: Most business owners and entrepreneurs don't rely on external recognition to thrive, but it's a critical motivator for employees. Don't assume your team operates like you do. Give recognition where recognition is due!



Public praise doesn't have to be a grand gesture. A simple "Hey team, I just want to shout out Sarah for handling that client issue like a pro!" during a morning meeting can do wonders.



Consistency is Culture: Building Trust in Tiny Moments

Culture isn't built in a day — it's built in **tiny moments, repeated daily**.

The way meetings are run. How feedback is given. How wins (and losses) are handled.

Employees notice these things. They may not mention them, but they're always watching (like HR ninjas with invisible notepads).

Consistency is what turns good intentions into real culture.

When management consistently acts with integrity, transparency, and empathy, employees feel safe to do the same.

When leadership is unpredictable, the culture becomes one of uncertainty and

According to a study by Dale Carnegie & Associates, consistency in leadership is a key factor in boosting employee confidence and improving team performance. The study found that employees in high-performing teams reported that their manager consistently set a good example and communicated openly and honestly—behaviours that are the essence of consistency.



Consistent leadership leads directly to increased employee confidence and better team performance.



How to Build a Culture That Thrives

A strong company culture doesn't just "happen." It's shaped, nurtured, and protected — especially by management.

HOW TO BUILD CULTURE THAT THRIVES

COMMUNICATE CLEARLY AND OFTEN

Keep employees in the loop. Silence breeds assumptions, and assumptions breed gossip (and no one wants that).

ENCOURAGE FEEDBACK — AND LISTEN

Nothing kills engagement faster than asking for feedback and ignoring it. If you're not ready to act, at least acknowledge it.

OWN YOUR MISTAKES

When a leader admits fault, it sends a powerful message: we're all learning here. Vulnerability isn't weakness — it's leadership strength

PROTECT THE CULTURE

When negativity or gossip creeps in, address it early. A strong culture is like a garden — it thrives when you pull the weeds quickly.

Final Thought: Be the Culture You Want to See

Leadership is contagious.

The energy, attitude, and integrity of those at the top shape everything beneath them.

If management is supportive, transparent, and accountable — employees will be too.

If management is disengaged or inconsistent — well, don't be surprised when the culture follows suit.



✦ **Be the culture you want to see!**

Your actions today are shaping tomorrow's workplace.

One decision, one comment, one example at a time.

💡 *Culture isn't built in the boardroom — it's built in every hallway conversation, every email tone, and every "good morning."*



Sincerely yours!
Carmen Joubert

Do you know about our new Facebook and LinkedIn Business pages we just launched for Contact Labour. This is where we will be sharing our best tips to help with any Labour Relations problems or queries you might have. We would really appreciate it if you like our new pages and if you do, you will get our best content first.

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Join us on 7 November 2025 our last webinar of the year!

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