

Top 4 Questions You Should Ask about Your Company's Culture

What do Google, LinkedIn, Costco, and Starbucks have in common? Like most industry-leading firms, these successful, market-dominating companies all have fantastic company cultures. Every company, no matter its size or industry, has a unique culture that can have a significant effect on its performance. Companies with healthy cultures can attract and retain top talent, build strong brand images, and execute tasks more efficiently with higher quality outcomes.

As a business owner or key decision-maker, you probably wonder how your company's culture stacks up and what you can do to improve it. Here are the four questions you should ask about company culture.

1. Is management effectively communicating and engaging with employees regularly?

Management communication and openness is the easiest way to build trust and loyalty with a workforce. Communicating honestly, openly, and frequently with your workforce will build rapport, improve employee satisfaction and retention, and increase the odds of success for new initiatives. When employees understand management's actions and decisions, it's much easier for them to support these changes and help make them successful. This communication and openness will also give management a chance to receive feedback from employees on initiatives they are considering as well as stay in closer touch with the company's core operations. Thus, it will ensure that decisions align more closely with the frontline workforce's concerns and realities, enhancing the success of these initiatives.

Ask yourself if you are effectively communicating with your direct reports and frontline workforce regularly. Brief conversations can create trust between you and your employees. Positive interactions build your reputation as a decent person, making it easier for your people when you have to implement difficult decisions or changes.

2. Is your workplace pleasant and inclusive?

If you can craft a positive environment it will breed positive people and positive outcomes, boosting your business' performance and its bottom line. Take a walk around your office or workspace and try to discern your staff's mood and energy. Is it positive and upbeat? Determining whether your team has a positive attitude is an excellent barometer for judging how effectively





they are working. A high-energy, engaged team will often seem happy and put out top-notch work. A sluggish, distracted team will often come across as negative or disengaged, and their work will reflect this demeanor.

If your team is not as positive as you'd like, there are a few steps you can take to improve it. The first, as mentioned above, is communication, through which you might learn why a few of your key employees are in a slump. These insights can help you give extra support to these individuals and get your team back on track. Other aspects to assess and adjust are inclusivity and diversity. A diverse workforce in terms of ethnicity, gender, religion, political viewpoints, hometown/region, and interests will promote greater creativity, innovation, and engagement. Employing people with a wide range of backgrounds often means that not only will your employees have more to talk about at lunch and work events, but also your firm will have access to a wide range of perspectives when solving challenging problems.

3. Does your workplace foster teamwork and collaboration, or encourage silos and isolation?

Teamwork and collaboration are critical components of any business. Humans are social creatures, and this natural phenomenon doesn't cease when we walk into the office in the morning. Your team members, in most cases, are all human and will function best when they get to interact with other humans. Evaluate how your teams are structured and how much opportunity there is for collaboration. Do team members meet regularly and build strong working relationships? Do different teams meet to discuss collaboration opportunities? Are you and other managers aware of how your teams operate?

Try to encourage collaboration and team involvement by scheduling weekly team meetings and having everyone share what they've been working on. Doing so will allow room for collaboration as team members realize where they can assist others with challenges. Additionally, have team leaders meet weekly with their peers to see how different groups can use their unique experience and expertise to benefit each other. This strategy will ensure you are capitalizing on the full talent





of your workforce while also allowing employees to feel like they have a thorough understanding of what's going on in the company on a broader scale. Working across functions and seeing the overall workload of the firm will help bolster employees to the firm's mission and purpose.

4. Are your employees proud of your company and the work that they do?

The easiest way to tell if you are doing all of the above correctly is to determine if your employees are proud of your company and their work. Companies that have strong management, open communication, high engagement, positive environments, and encourage teamwork often are home to proud and satisfied employees. Conversely, companies with distant management, lack of communication, low engagement, and generally a less-than-positive vibe often have dissatisfied employees.

Ask your employees what makes them proud of their jobs and working for your business. Use these responses to help you and your management team focus on the right things when it comes to crafting a culture and environment. Not only will this help you to understand your workers better, but also it will continue to build a positive environment that encourages communication and creates a sense of team values. Your employees will appreciate that you are asking them for feedback and will be motivated by the small changes that you make to the work environment in response.

Asking yourself these four key questions and making some small changes will yield significant results for your business. A strong workplace culture will make work more enjoyable for you and all of your employees. Also, it will boost productivity and profitability. Clients and business partners will recognize the positivity of your organization and be more eager to work with you. All of this also means that when it comes time to sell your business, culture can make a big difference attracting buyers and potentially raising the business' value.

