

How to Create a Healthier Corporate Culture

By E. Jake Gamble, President & Founder, Leadership Support Services, LLC, and Instructor for the IPFW Customer Service Professional Certificate

In an ideal world, your organization would run smoothly, like a well-oiled machine. The vision would be clear, the values would resonate, and your people would embrace their interdependence. Unfortunately, that doesn't always appear to be the case.

Organizations are a complex environment. The challenges of a troubled economy, global competition, a fickle customer base, the diversity of people, personally and professionally, and the demands of visceral stakeholders/stockholders, can place enormous pressure on the strongest of structures.

Therein lies the rub—how do we succeed if we can't get our people to work together? How do we meet the demands of a competitive environment if our people are fighting, withholding information, or neglecting the essentials? How do we survive, and thrive, if there's no commitment to a greater purpose, no commitment to each other, and no trust? How do we establish, and maintain, a corporate culture that reflects the best of who we are and to what we have to answer?

Establishing a healthy culture isn't easy, but like the troubled relationship that overcomes its potential demise, and heals, the struggle is worth it.

Please consider the following thoughts as you move forward. They will help you establish a corporate culture that promotes unity, effectiveness, and trust:

THE SUPERVISOR

- Focus on your TEAM. You should work WITH them and IN SUPPORT of them.
- You'll create the culture that you want, or accept the one that you get.
- You WILL influence others. Will you use your position, or your power?
- The kind of supervisor you are is the kind of employee you'll see.
- Fear isn't used as a motivator.



GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Workers are valued for who they are as individuals and what they offer as employees.
- People “actively” listen to each other.
- Diversity is valued and celebrated.
- Power and leadership are shared.
- People choose collaboration over competition.
- Authenticity is encouraged.
- People are open and accountable to each other – honesty is the NORM!
- This is an organization of choice—it attracts the “best of the best” and retains them.
- This is a learning organization—tradition and emotion are second to continuous improvement.
- Positive change is embraced.

Change never comes easy, nor does it come without pain, sacrifice, and commitment. A healthy culture is the result of constant effort, an effort that doesn't compromise, won't wither, and never quits.

Still, it can be accomplished.

As you move forward, please remember this, which will serve you well as you attempt to maintain focus: ***Culture trumps organizational process EVERY time!***

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

E. Jake Gamble has been an adult educator for 14 years and has taught more than 20 course titles at the university level. Prior to teaching, he had a long history as a social worker, primarily in the mental health system. His work has been with a diverse population, including Indiana Prison inmates, 21st Century Scholars, and Junior Achievement. Jake is the president and founder of Leadership Support Services, LLC. He is also the instructor for the four-part IPFW Customer Service Professional Certificate program being offered this fall by the [IPFW Division of Continuing Studies](#), and an adjunct faculty member for the Indiana Tech School of Business. The independent business consultant, executive coach and speaker has a Master of Science in management.

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