



The Importance of Culture and Leadership in an Organization



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Defining culture Defining culture Defining culture Defining culture **Defining culture**

In today's economic climate, a company's culture is equally as important as the product it's offering. Culture drives retention, brand recognition and the overall wellbeing of your employees. To that end, establishing a positive culture is critical to the success and growth of any business. After all, it's a popular saying that culture eats strategy for breakfast.

An organization's leadership must cultivate a culture designed to support clear lines of communication, a nurturing work environment and accountability. By molding a culture with a clear purpose, you can ensure your organization has a strong foundation that is long-lasting and boosts your company's productivity.



Culture eats strategy for breakfast. 🍳

[Indeed.com defines culture as](#) “...a collection of attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that make up the regular atmosphere in a work environment.” Culture is more than what management decides it should be but rather what the company creates together. Of course, leadership models what the organization should strive for, but it is the interactions between employees and clients, management and each other that decides a company’s culture.

»»» Shared culture

A company’s culture should consist of shared values amongst every team member in the organization. That means that the purpose and goals of your organization’s culture should be appealing to existing and prospective employees.

Company culture is something that does not work if everyone is not on board with the goals and mission it supports. That’s why it is crucial to develop a culture that is appealing to new hires and permeates every level of your organization. From the CEO to a fresh recruit, shared values go a long way towards developing an all-encompassing and positive work culture.



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a collection of attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that make up the regular atmosphere in a work environment.



»»» Organization-wide culture


In line with the idea of shared values, whatever culture you develop should also encompass the entire organization. Interdepartmental values don't support the foundation of a company's organization. Your business' culture should start with leadership and end with employees in every role within your company. The values that build your culture should be recognized and modeled by every individual that makes up your workforce, regardless of their role within the organization.

»»» Long-lasting culture

An organization's culture needs to be both consistent and able to respond to change appropriately. The core of your values should be resolute but adaptable to any necessary changes that allow your organization to grow. Examples of this might be adding a previously absent structure that reflects an increase in your salesforce or addressing any

issues that are preventing your team from achieving your culture-based goals.

For your culture to last, organizations should be able to identify any changes that are needed to continue supporting their employees. This may mean accepting that old structures sometimes need an overhaul.



Culture should
start with
leadership and
end with
employees.

Laying groundwork Laying groundwork Laying groundwork Laying groundwork **Laying groundwork for culture**

Laying the groundwork for your organization's culture should be intentional. The framework behind your mission and core values must be clearly defined from the start. Choose the values that matter most to your company and have the choices you make reflect those values.

For example, if you're building a culture that supports your employees and gives them opportunities to better themselves, make sure that those values are shared amongst the company and that employees feel encouraged to seek professional growth in and outside of work.

Creating this groundwork, as a leader, means modeling the behavior you expect from your team.

»» Clearly define your mission and core values from day one.

»»» Benefits for employees (agents)

There are many ways that you can develop your culture, but a necessary focus is to support your employees. As contributors to the culture of your organization, your team should be directly impacted by the fundamentals that define it. Without providing your employees with progressive and competitive benefits, your organization could be missing out on some great contributions to its culture.


Providing opportunities for advancement, affordable health care and ample paid time off are considered basics for employee benefits. Benefits like employee equity, debt repayment initiatives and options for remote work are becoming unique to a growing workforce that values security and flexibility in their careers.

Organizations that prioritize the wellness of their employees promote positive work cultures. Helping your team achieve a healthy work-life balance is a huge step towards a great company culture.

Implementing competitive maternity and paternity leave, offering options to telecommute and providing wellness programs that give your team outlined breaks where they can focus on bettering their mental health and personal growth are all excellent ways to interweave wellness and culture.

A necessary focus: support your employees.

Organizations that prioritize the wellness of their employees promote positive work cultures.

Every choice you make as a leader should model the culture you're aiming to build. 

Leadership modeling

As the leader of an organization, the example you set for your team is critical to nurturing a positive work culture. Those in leadership roles must exhibit the behavior and values that the organization stands for. [An article by Harvard Business Review](#) explains that leadership must implement a strategy in developing a positive work environment for their employees. It is not enough to let culture go unmanaged and hope for the best. It is the responsibility of an organization's leadership to outline everything from codes of conduct to wellbeing initiatives to create the basis for a strong, positive work culture.

Every choice you make as a leader should model the culture you're aiming to build. Whether that be implementing an open-door policy with your team or knowing when you need to take a break for your mental health, the examples you set will cascade throughout your organization. It's important to keep that in mind with every interaction you have with your clients and team members.

Implementing culture Implementing culture Implementing culture Implementing culture **Implementing culture**

Once you understand what you want your organization's culture to look like, the next step is implementing the structure. This means including some tangible aspects that your team can benefit from. It's especially important to emphasize the idea of teamwork for your employees. Doing so will remove any idea of a cutthroat work environment, which has become outdated in the current corporate atmosphere.

Give your team opportunities to come together to support one another.

Developing a work structure that rewards team members collaborating will go a long way in creating an inviting culture for your organization. The important thing to keep in mind is implementing your culture's structure with intention and authenticity. Without purpose or a sense of the culture seeming genuine, you're sure to have misaligned values between leadership and team members.



Implement your culture's structure with intention and authenticity.

»»» Teamwork adding to a “caring” culture

Teamwork should be a cornerstone of any organization’s culture. Today’s workforce, largely made up of younger generations, [prefer working together](#) to achieve a common goal as opposed to competing over personal accomplishments. Group work is an excellent way to maximize strengths among your team without the pressure of comparing themselves to their co-workers. It also creates a safe place for constructive criticism amongst team members.

By emphasizing teamwork, you can establish a caring work culture where team members support one another. Through teamwork, your employees can feel better about everything from achieving goals to finding new ways to grow the business.



Teamwork should be a cornerstone
of any organization’s culture.

»»» **Build a purpose around your culture**

The culture you develop for your organization should be intentional. Having clearly defined goals and roles for your team will go a long way in providing the basic purpose for your employees. Beyond that, there are several ways you can build a purpose behind your organization's culture. By pointing to tangible examples of your work culture in practice, you can help build confidence in your team members' work environment and organizational goals.

Philanthropy is a great way to give your team some tangible ways to add to your organization's culture. Planning some company-hosted charity events accomplishes a couple of important steps in developing a positive work culture. On the one hand, you can showcase your company's values by donating to a non-profit that supports your community. This demonstrates to current and prospective employees that their hard work goes beyond the profit of your business. On the other hand, you are offering your team the satisfaction of giving back themselves. Philanthropy is critical for any business that wants to establish an inviting work culture.

Build a purpose around your culture



Philanthropy is a great way to give your team some tangible ways to add to your organization's culture.

Wellness programs for your team help illustrate accountability for leadership in developing personal growth for your team members. <<<<<



In line with philanthropy, volunteer work is an excellent way to give your team members a purpose in adding to your organization's culture. Create opportunities for your employees to become involved with volunteering for a local non-profit. Instead of expecting them to initiate these volunteer hours during their personal time, consider providing opportunities to volunteer within their normal workdays. Doing so will help establish a culture that prioritizes your team's work-life balance. It also reinforces the idea that giving back is something your organization is focused on altogether. Volunteer work is important for creating a tangible purpose around your company's positive work culture.

A third example of creating a purpose for your business' culture is wellness programs. Wellness programs for your team help illustrate accountability for leadership in developing personal growth for your team members. These wellness programs can look different for every organization. Some examples might be having a designated time for meditation or hosting a book club that covers material aimed at personal growth. Regardless of the program you create, it should be an opportunity for your team to work on themselves as leaders in their role and personal growth.



Benefits of culture

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There is a long list of benefits to developing a positive work culture for your organization. Not only does a working culture give your team an environment to thrive in, but it also helps build a brand for your organization that will appeal to your clients. There is no downside to creating a positive work culture.

Whether it's creating an appealing work environment for prospective team members or helping achieve some of your organization's goals, positive work culture has several benefits for you and your team.



There is no downside to creating a positive work culture.

»»» Recruiting and retaining talent

One of the chief benefits of creating a positive culture is the appeal it has to your employees.

[A Fortune article](#) from 2016 found that over half of millennials would take a \$7,600 annual pay cut to work in a company with a positive work culture. Since millennials make up the bulk of today's workforce, it's important to have a work culture that appeals to that generation.

By bringing intention and positivity to your work culture, you're displaying an appealing culture for your organization for current and future team members. In today's corporate atmosphere, positive work culture is a sought-after benefit that many will be drawn to.

Over half of millennials

would take a \$7,600 annual pay cut to work in a company with a positive work culture.



Source: [Fortune](#)

»»» Organizational goals

A positive work culture in your organization will propel you towards achieving your company's goals. An increase in productivity and positive work culture go hand in hand. When your team has a safe work environment where they are happy and proud of the work that they're doing, team members are bound to accomplish more.



75-90%

of visits to primary physicians are due to stress.

Source: [stress.org](https://www.stress.org)

A positive culture means a few things for your team and their achievements:

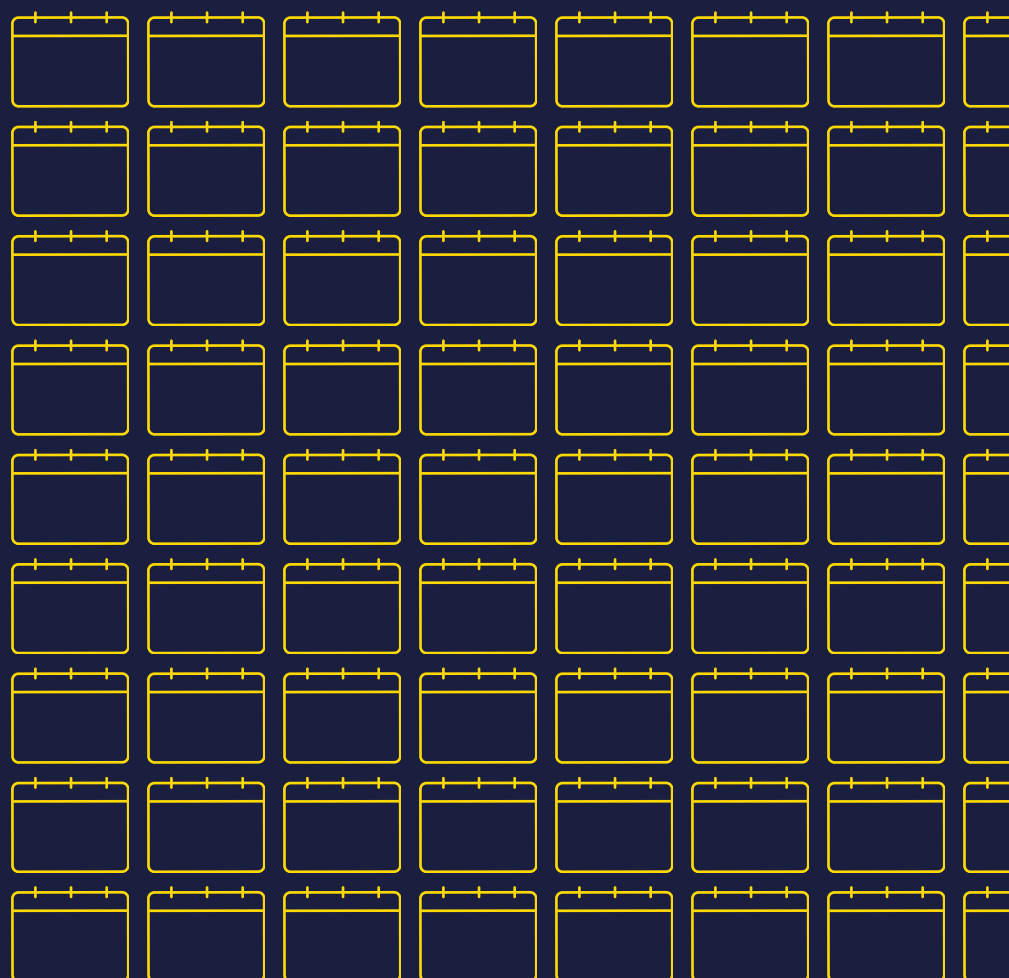
» To start, stress from work makes up the bulk of triggers for people experiencing stress-related illnesses. It is estimated that 75-90 percent of visits to primary physicians are due to stress. What's more, approximately 550 million workdays are lost in the U.S. each year because of work-related stress.

The effects of a positive work culture on productivity cannot be overstated. Achieving company goals is made easier by providing support and wellbeing for your team while establishing a purpose that your employees feel proud to work towards.

550 million workdays

are lost in the U.S. each year because of work-related stress.

Source: [apa.org](https://www.apa.org)



»» Empathy plays a large part in positive work culture. Whether it's providing your team with programs that emphasize empathy or having every company goal require teamwork, positive work culture allows empathy to thrive in any organization. As it happens, with empathy as a cornerstone of your culture, productivity increases. [A study by the University of Michigan](#) found that employers who integrate empathy and compassion into work culture allow team members to foster individual and collective resilience with difficult tasks.

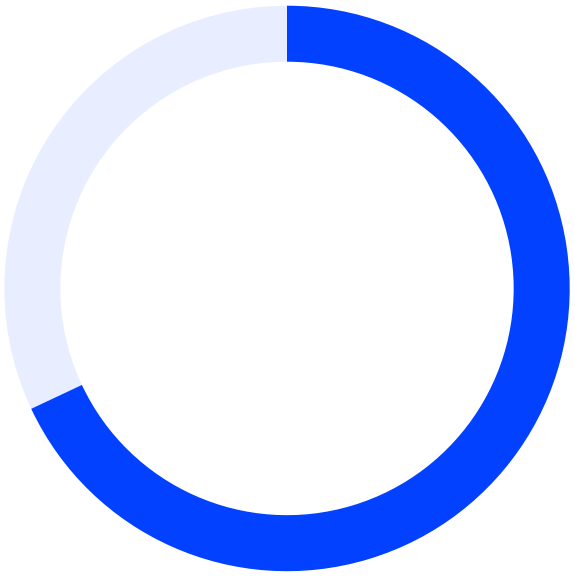
With that in mind, having a positive work culture can help your organization achieve more. Once you've cut down stress and given your employees the keys to care about their work and co-workers you can hit your goals more effectively.

Integrate empathy and compassion into your work culture. ««««««««««

»»» **Culture adds to your brand**

Today, companies are judged on their work cultures like never before. Clients and employees alike spend more time researching who they're working with when choosing a provider of any product. Millennials and other younger generations spend more time looking into what they're buying and whom they're buying it from more than any generation before them.

A positive work culture speaks volumes about your organization. Culture displays your organization's values in a way that your product never can. By constantly working on your culture and the support you give to your team, you can ensure that clients will find good things when they inevitably research your organization.



68%

of people agreed

that their organization's positive culture gave them a higher satisfaction outside of the workplace.

Source: [bluecrossmn.com](https://www.bluecrossmn.com)

»»» It's good for you and your employees

The greatest benefit of a positive work culture is that it's good for you and your team! The impact that a positive culture has on the mental health of leadership and employees is well documented.

A 2017 survey by Blue Cross Blue Shield found direct impacts to employee wellbeing based on their company's positive or negative culture. When asked how the company's culture impacted their life experience, an astounding 68 percent agreed that their organization's positive culture gave them a higher satisfaction outside of the workplace. What's more, 77 percent of participants who claimed to have a negative work environment also said they've missed work because of the culture.

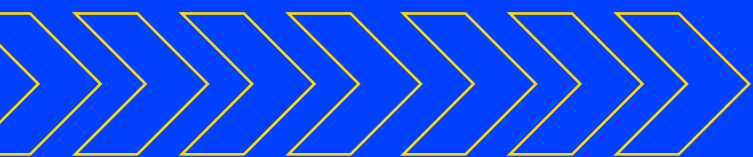
Within the survey, everything from maintaining healthy relationships to managing weight saw greater positive impacts if the participant considered their work culture to be a positive one. In today's culture, we understand that toxic work environments have huge impacts on the mental health of employees, and it's not enough to clean up these environments — they need to be replaced with a positive work culture.

An organization must develop cultures designed to support and benefit the wellbeing of its staff. Not only does it improve productivity and brand recognition, but it has huge benefits to the overall happiness of the people that work there. And when your organization's team finds happiness in their work every other aspect of your company will flourish.

Experience the Symmetry difference Symmetry difference Symmetry difference Symmetry difference

At Symmetry, we believe the importance of culture is paramount to achieving goals both personal and professional. We strive to support our agents with programs like Thrive and Connect, while addressing community outreach with initiatives like Symmetry Impact. We understand that the wellbeing of our corporate staff and agents is critical to achieving our organizational goals.

As a Symmetry agent, you will have access to high-quality life insurance, disability income insurance, critical illness insurance, and annuity products from more than 30 well-known insurance companies. This gives you the flexibility and reach you need to tailor plans to meet clients' individual coverage needs.



**To learn more about
how to begin a
fulfilling career as a
life insurance agent,
contact us today.**



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