Better Ways To Work Together

A Playbook for Improving Organizational Culture in Workplaces

May 2022

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Within the National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC), the primary mission of the National Insider Threat Task Force (NITTF) is to develop a Government-wide insider threat program for deterring, detecting, and mitigating insider threats, including the safeguarding of classified information from exploitation.

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Suggested Citation

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For any given group or organization that has had a substantial history, culture is the pattern of basic assumptions that the group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning how to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

"

— Edgar Schein

"

Nothing grows in bad soil, no matter how good the seeds and water are. Similarly, no company purpose, regardless of how well it is defined, can materialize unless the company environment is fertile.

A fertile environment is one where employees have a spring in their steps in pursuit of a noble purpose, and where everyone can become the best, biggest, most beautiful version of themselves. It is the kind of environment that can unleash what I call "human magic" and result in inordinately great results....

"

— Hubert Joly

Part 1: Understanding the Importance of Organizational Culture

Better Ways To Work Together

Counter-insider threat and security professionals increasingly recognize that preventing and managing the risks posed by an organization's trusted insiders requires a different way of thinking. They have come to understand that insider threat incidents always occur in a broader organizational context, so it makes sense that everyone in the organization has a part to play in securing the workforce and workplace.

Building a safe and secure organizational environment means improving the well-being of organizations and their people. This playbook is part of a series, *Better Ways to Work Together*, designed to support one of the most critical tasks of the counter-insider threat mission. Each playbook addresses a topic that affects the healthy functioning of organizational relationships and shared workspaces. They are designed to help organizations build practical threat prevention initiatives that leaders at all levels can adopt to promote organizational well-being.

This playbook addresses organizational culture. Other playbooks in the series will help you understand important topics such as critical thinking, resilience, and workplace toxicity that are just as critical to building a healthy, effective organization as they are to preventing insider threat incidents. We hope these playbooks will contribute to the efforts of counter-insider threat programs and their partners in building safe, secure, and better workplaces.

This Playbook

We designed the *Better Ways to Work Together* series to support counter-insider threat programs by offering practical solutions to improve the well-being of organizations and their people. In this playbook, we focus on how to improve organizational culture. It is intended for use by government or private sector counter-insider threat programs to facilitate prevention initiatives that engage leaders throughout their organizations in efforts to build safer, more secure workplaces.

Insider threat prevention is most effective when everyone in an organization does their part. Consider using the materials in this playbook in partnership with other stakeholders in your organization, such as human resources, equal employment opportunity, security, or information technology, to promote positive culture to protect the organization and its people from the underlying causes of insider threat behavior. For example, you could use selections from this playbook in leadership training programs, security awareness campaigns, or even in team-building exercises.

With that in mind, we designed the materials to be accessible to a general audience—no previous knowledge of insider threat prevention is needed to make use of this playbook. The material can be used effectively by managers or individuals who want practical ideas for contributing to the well-being of their organization.

This playbook is organized in four parts.

Part 1 describes the learning objectives of the organizational culture playbook; breaks down the shared responsibilities of organizations and individuals to keep workplaces safe, healthy, and productive; and itemizes the best practices for organizations to promote positive organizational culture.

Part 2 provides group training exercises based on the best practices.

Part 3 presents a helpful infographic that summarizes key takeaways regarding the value of healthy organizational culture.

Part 4 contains a library of helpful and practical resources to aide in promoting positive culture in organizations and broader communities; and resources for individuals who seek to better understand their role in positive organizational culture.

When I talk about organizational culture, I mean the way in which people relate to each other, their work, and the outside world.

— Egbert Schram

Part 1: Understanding the Importance of Organizational Culture

Part 1: Understanding the Importance of Organizational Culture

Organizational Learning Objectives

Leaders at all levels have a shared responsibility for promoting positive organizational culture. Written policies promoting inclusion and respect are important, but every leader must also work hard to live up to the stated standards and values of the organization. Accountability demonstrates what the organization expects of its members and is a key aspect of organizational culture. Culture is strengthened when the actions of leaders align with stated organizational values. Fostering a positive organizational culture promotes the health of the organization and the well-being of its people.

This playbook is designed to help you improve the culture of your organization and help you:

- Understand the impact of culture on your organization's operations.

- Recognize the indicators of positive and organizational cultures.

- Understand terms and concepts related to organizational culture.

Individual Learning Objectives

People are key to successful organizations, whether they are an organization's executive-level senior leaders, mid-level managers or first-line supervisors, or staff or volunteers. Engaged employees, business partners, and the broader community can all have an effect on an organization's work. This playbook is designed to help individuals understand organizational culture and how to positively engage in their organizations. This playbook:

- Defines terms and concepts related to organizational culture.

- Advocates for standards and practices that promote healthy group relationships and outcomes.

- Identifies tools to build and sustain healthy organizations and communities.

- Promotes constructive participation as a member of a healthy organizational culture.

The Importance of Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a higher-level concept than other topics addressed in the *Better Ways To Work Together* series. Other playbook topics—toxicity, critical thinking, resilience—address critical elements of organizational culture, and improvements to these other areas will contribute to a more positive organizational culture. Understanding the larger idea of organizational culture is important because it helps us see how these other concepts contribute to the integrated health of an organization.

Culture is a notoriously vague concept. Some scholars may spend their lives studying the complexity of cultures and find it impossible to give a simple definition of the term. On

the other hand, organizational culture has become a management buzzword that can mean anything and everything. Edgar Schein (1986), a former professor at MIT, offers a good starting point for thinking about organizational culture.

> For any given group or organization that has had a substantial history, culture is the pattern of basic assumptions that the group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning how to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

In practical terms, organizational culture touches on all the characteristics that allow groups to work toward their shared goals. This includes both written and unwritten values, knowledge, tools, shared spaces, customs, social norms, rules, vocabularies, ways of integrating new members, and problem-solving strategies, among others. Groups do not just come together haphazardly or stay together without cooperation. Culture is continuously negotiated as organizations face an ever changing world and as members come and go.

The standard practices of a group, however, may not always be healthy or efficient. An organization's culture can have harmful effects, such as toxicity, bias, bullying, discrimination, waste, unsafe practices, or other attributes that create stress and dysfunction. In the worst cases, the personal and organizational stressors in a bad culture can be a contributing factor to insider threat incidents, including workplace violence (Calhoun & Weston, 2003; Shaw & Sellers, 2015; Interagency Security Committee, 2019).

Unproductive, even harmful, cultural practices and expectations can lurk even in a mostly positive organizational culture. Complex organizations may have subcultures that come into conflict with the predominant culture.. Leaders at all levels should monitor cultural conditions and have open channels for feedback from all levels of the organization. Leaders should clearly articulate and live up to organizational values and behavior expectations, ensuring mutual accountability and promoting respect and engagement.

Organizational Responsibilities

Negative organizational culture can include many factors that can lead to damaging outcomes. Organizations and individuals have the shared responsibility of making their work environment healthy and productive. A positive organizational culture that engages all of its members can help prevent the underlying behaviors and conditions that can make a workplace unsafe.

"The difference between accountability and punishment has to do with relationships. Punishment breaks a relationship; it's rooted in isolation, shame, and disconnection. Accountability, by contrast, requires communication, negotiation of needs, the opportunity to repair harm, and the chance to prove that we can change and be worthy of trust again."

-- *Building a Culture of Accountability*. Piper Anderson.

U.S. law requires private companies to provide a safe workplace. Specifically, the General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, requires employers "to provide their employees with a place of employment that is 'free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm'" (Occupational Safety and Health Administration [OSHA], n.d.). Although OSHA regulations do not directly address workplace violence or stressful conditions such as toxicity or bullying, the OSHA website advises:

> An employer that has experienced acts of workplace violence, or becomes aware of threats, intimidation, or other indicators showing that the potential for violence in the workplace exists, would be on notice of the risk of workplace violence and should implement a workplace violence prevention program combined with engineering controls, administrative controls, and training.

To respond to these risks, The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends organizations adopt the *Total Worker Health®* approach to promoting worker safety, health, and well-being (2016). Rather than simply responding to individual-level risks, organizations should emphasize organizational changes to eliminate working conditions that threaten worker safety and to promote a culture of individual and group well-being.

Figure 1
Hierarchy of Controls Applied to NIOSH Total Worker Health®
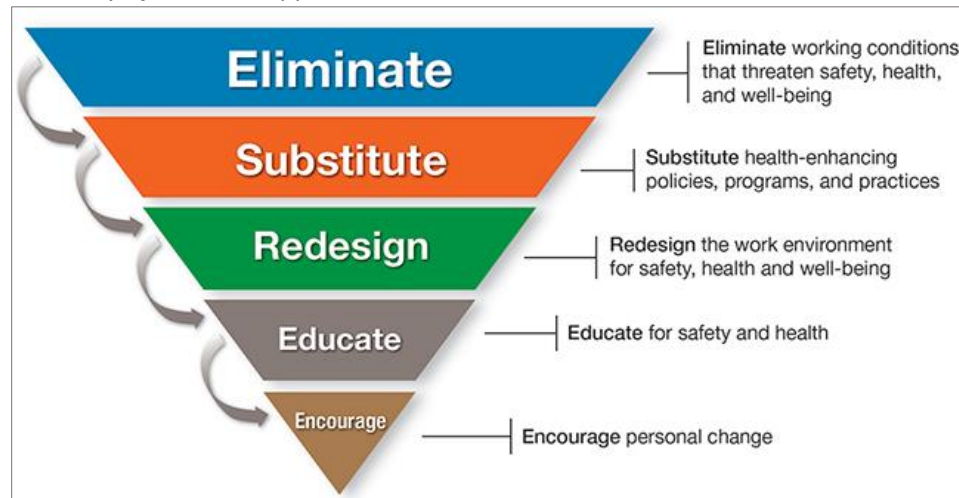
NIOSH (2016).

For Federal agencies, the Interagency Security Committee (ISC) has published guidelines for workplace violence prevention training. The goal of training is to ensure that employees know how to report incidents of violence, threats, harassment and intimidation, or other disruptive behaviors and to demonstrate that the agency is committed to taking actions for their prevention (ISC, 2019). See Table 1. Efforts to promote and improve organizational culture can be incorporated in these training

guidelines to foster employee engagement in their prevention responsibilities and help leaders at all levels create a culture of safety and security.

Table 1
Guidelines Based on ISC Workplace Violence Prevention Training

Employee Training	Supervisor Training
- Overview of the various aspects and types of bullying and violence in the workplace - Symptoms and behaviors often associated with those who commit aggressive or violent actions - Security hazards found in the agency's workplace - The Department or Agency's workplace violence prevention policies and procedures - Reporting requirements and processes - Specialized training on how to create a positive work environment and develop effective teams - Escalation of subtle behaviors that could lead to violence - Training to improve awareness of cultural differences (e.g., diversity) - Tips for protecting oneself and fellow coworkers from workplace violence - Response plans, communication, and alarm procedures - Active Shooter Response Training – Run, Hide, Fight	- Basic leadership skills, such as setting clear standards, addressing employee problems promptly, performance counseling, and disciplinary procedures - Ways to encourage employees to report incidents that made them feel threatened for any reason by anyone inside or outside the organization - Skills in behaving compassionately and supportively towards employees who report incidents - Skills in taking human resources actions and disciplinary actions - Basic skills in handling crisis situations - Basic emergency procedures - How to ensure that appropriate screening of pre-employment reference is completed - Bullying - Confidentiality procedure awareness - How to conduct a peaceful separation from service

How Leaders Can Recognize a Negative Workplace Culture

An organization with an unhealthy culture may show obvious signs in high employee turnover, disengagement, or ethical lapses. These issues may be systemic or localized to parts and subcultures within the organization (e.g., the accounting department may be toxic while the sales and information technology departments are the best places to work in the entire city). Leaders at all levels should be vigilant and proactive in protecting against toxicity and other threats to employee and organizational well-being.

Culture is an organization's most valuable asset, but a culture that is not actively managed can become a dangerous liability. A 2019 study identified and ranked the top six "cultural risk" factors for organizations (Clayton, 2019). These factors were the most likely to precipitate a cultural crisis in the organization (e.g., "a significant incident indicative of troubling workplace attitudes and behaviors"). These six factors are key indicators that your organization is heading for trouble or may already be in trouble.

1. Inadequate investment in people
2. Lack of accountability
3. Lack of diversity, equity, and inclusion
4. Poor behavior at the top
5. High pressure environments
6. Unclear ethical standards

If these problem signs and behaviors are present in your organization, contact your human resources, EO/EEO, or general counsel office for help with assessment and correction. But there are also actions that leaders at all levels can take to mitigate toxicity in their organizations. The following Best Practices section provides actionable ways to build a safe, healthy, and productive organization.

> "We define culture as a shared set of values (what we care about), beliefs (what we believe to be true), and norms of behavior (how we do things). Cultures exist to align effort, engender shared sensemaking, increase predictability, and encode organizational lessons about what does and doesn't work."
>
> -- *Why Every Executive Should be Focusing on Culture Change Now,* Hollister et. al*.*

Best Practices To Improve Organizational Culture

"I love this idea of hiring on 'cultural contribution' instead. Instead of bringing in people who fit the culture, let's bring in people who enrich the culture. Let's figure out what's missing in the culture and hire based on that."

--   *Have a Great Idea? Here's How to Make it Actually Happen,* Adam Grant

Culture influences every aspect of an organization's performance and every relationship within the organization. Improving culture means trying to influence both tangible and intangible factors. The best approaches, fortunately, start with leadership and integrity. The five best practices described here detail resources, insights, strategies and tools to promote positive organizational culture.

1. Leadership and Organizational Values Should Align to Foster a Positive Culture

Background and Justification

A positive organizational culture requires a foundation of strong values that reflect the mission and objectives of the organization, and that demonstrate the organization's commitment to helping employees and customers succeed. However, research suggests there is usually a large gap between the values an organization espouses on its website and "how well the company lives up to those values in the eyes of employees" (Sull, Turconi, and Sull, 2020). Senior leaders must strive to close that gap by modeling the organization's core values in their decisions and actions.

The support, interest, and passion that leaders demonstrate are the most important factors in changing an organization's culture (Heskett, 2021). Therefore, it is crucial that leaders authentically model and apply their organization's established values: "Leaders who show their real and genuine selves to others at work build stronger bonds of trust. This provides the fuel to power their teams to tackle thorny issues with openness and transparency." (Dion, 2022)

Best Practice Implementation

Organizations should

- Clearly communicate their distinct values and desired behaviors to everyone and link them to outcomes that leaders and employees care about (Sull, Turconi, and Sull, 2020).
- Use internal scorecards to measure leaders' commitment to organizational values and embed these metrics into their performance reviews (Dhingra et al., 2021).

  Leaders at all levels should

- Model authenticity and being real in workplace relationships to build trust with employees (Heskett, 2021).
- Create and commit to a personal code of conduct by reflecting on your values and prioritizing them (Fox, 2022).

2. Leaders Should Take Action to Make Employees Feel Respected and That They Have a Purpose

Background and Justification

A large-scale research study found that respect for employees is the most important organizational cultural component to the American workforce (Sull and Sull, 2021). A lack of respect is also one of the main reasons workers resign to find a healthier culture elsewhere (Stillman, 2022). Employees who do not feel respected at work describe their experience as being "demeaned and degraded" and "viewed as disposable cogs in a wheel or robots; or treated like children, second-class citizens" (Sull and Sull, 2021). Conversely, a strong organizational culture that values individuals enables employees to develop a stronger connection to their employer and engagement in their work (Castrillon, 2021).

Seventy percent of employees state that their work defines their sense of purpose, yet only 15 percent of front-line employees agree that their work provides that (Dhingra et al., 2021). Leaders at all levels should prioritize giving workers meaningful projects related to their strengths and passion. Transparent policies for progress and promotion should also be in place for workers to measure their performance: "Motivated and engaged employees can be created if they are treated equally and have clear goals that they can work towards. Having a transparent policy for progression and promotion offers the staff an opportunity to measure their performance" (Dhingra et al., 2021).

Best Practice Implementation

Organizations should

- Elicit continuous feedback from all members of the organization and incorporate training for managers and employees on the importance of their constructive evaluations of the organization's culture (Aijazi, 2022).

- Build a "culture of recognition," acknowledging and rewarding employees' exceptional work or behavior immediately instead of waiting for performance reviews (Baumgartner, 2020).

- Talk about the importance of purpose with work teams and give employees projects that help them fulfill their professional purpose (Dhingra et al., 2021).

- Develop programs that demonstrate commitment to employee health and well-being, such as flexible work schedules (Castrillon, 2021).

3. Leaders Should Focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Within the Organization

Background and Justification

In the spirit of respecting employees as a hallmark of positive organizational culture, leaders should implement a robust diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) program. Everyone wants to feel like they belong. In the workplace, belonging means each employee is (Kennedy and Jain-Link, 2021)

- Seen for their unique contributions.

- Connected to their coworkers.

- Supported in their daily work and development.

- Proud of their organization's values and purpose.

According to a large-scale study, white men and women feel the highest sense of belonging at work, while Black and Asian women feel the least sense of belonging. Other groups who feel most like outsiders include workers born outside the United States, those with different political views than their colleagues, and contractors (Coqual, 2020). Workers who feel they belong have a higher retention rate, engagement with their work, and loyalty to their organization, while those who feel they do not fit in often feel stalled in their career (Coqual, 2020).

Committed behavior is necessary to build a culture of inclusion in which every individual feels a part, beginning with leaders working to instill DEI values and practices into the organizational culture: "No matter how committed, you will not make progress unless the overall company culture is positive and strong. No one thrives in a broken culture" (Perkins, 2021).

Best Practice Implementation

Keys to building a strong DEI program include:

- Prioritize DEI in the budget (Cabral, 2021).

- Integrate DEI into every decision in the organization, not just as an add-on program. "An organization's ethical decision making will be elevated because it will consider whether it can do something, as well as whether it should do it" (Crawford, 2022).

- Diversify leadership, spotlighting representative role models, and creating inclusive teams with diverse perspectives (Kennedy and Jain-Link, 2021).

- Form strategic partnerships and new hires that can help the organization find pathways toward more inclusion (Cabral, 2021).

- Use employee feedback on DEI issues to continually improve organizational culture (Cabral, 2021).

- Find new ways to attract diversified talent in hiring practices (Cabral, 2021).

- Provide employees with channels to report harassment, toxic behaviors, etc.

- Implement policies to ensure equitable compensation and opportunity.

4. Leaders Should tie Actions and Performance to Organizational Values to Ensure Accountability Across the Organization

Background and Justification

If leaders want to promote DEI principles, inclusion practices, and responsible behavior as inherent components of the organizational culture, everyone in the organization should be held accountable to those values. If they are not, a toxic work culture can take root, fostered by lack of DEI, unethical practices, favoritism, microaggressions, and other forms of negative attitudes and actions, which cause significant employee attrition (Liu, 2022).

When members of an organization demonstrate a lack of accountability, their behavior should have consequences to set a precedent and help change negative behavior. For instance, managers could reject hiring and promotion candidate pools that lack diversity. "More serious violations of company values and anti-discrimination policies [might] necessitate larger penalties and raise the stakes for inaction" (Roberts and Grayson, 2021).

The concept of accountability is positive and requires building and strengthening relationships. Leaders at all levels should cultivate accountability into the organization's culture to encourage growth, trust, and respectful relationships and behavior. Real accountability also means employees trust the organization and their leaders and feel safe enough to speak up.

Best Practice Implementation

Three types of accountability are important in this endeavor:

- Self-accountability: Individuals take responsibility for their actions and consequences of those actions, rather than blame someone else for poor decisions.

- Mutual accountability: Teams develop a collective agenda to enact change and encourage one another to resist being defensive about their perceived good intentions and instead focus on the effects of their negative behavior and work to repair any harm they cause.

- Community accountability: Everyone in the organization works to eliminate discrimination and other unethical practices. Prioritize safety and support of those targeted, update organizational values, develop strategies to address negative behavior, and provide ongoing training to build a transformative culture (Anderson, 2021).

5. Organizations Should Create a Learning Culture

Background and Justification

A learning culture in an organization "supports an open mindset, an independent quest for knowledge, and shared learning directed toward the mission and goals of the organization" (Chamorro-Premuzic and Bersin, 2018). Leaders can recruit and retain talented employees by offering targeted learning opportunities as core competencies in the organizational culture. According to research, workers at all stages of their careers consider learning and development opportunities an important aspect of working for a new organization, yet only 39 percent report that their employer offers these programs (Gurchiek, 2022).

Beyond traditional learning and development offerings, the largest segment of the workforce also expects regular feedback and coaching to help them grow: "A coaching culture is how Millennials and Generation Z team members—the largest components of the workforce—expect to receive the personalized training, specific action plans, and individualized feedback they need to improve their performance and become members of a high-performing work team" (Forbes Coaches Council, 2022).

Best Practice Implementation

Organizations should

- Survey employees and managers to find out their skills gaps, training interests, and the organization's needs.
- Customize training by focusing on smaller events in shorter timeframes, such as mentoring sessions, online training, and videos, rather than expensive, multiday workshops.
- Allow employees to choose the types of training that will enhance their professional development (in alignment with management and organizational goals).
- Use training events, company communications, and team meetings to educate employees about the organization's strong culture and value of continued education.
- Focus on training and retraining managers on the importance of communicating and modeling the organization's culture.

Part 2: Training Scenarios

Training Scenarios

The following training scenarios realistically represent how problems with organizational culture interfere with healthy relationships and successful work. They are not intended to provide guidance on specific laws or regulations governing the workplace. Instead, each scenario should serve as a starting point for thinking about how culture impacts both organizational and individual health and well-being. Consider using these scenarios as part of a counter-insider threat awareness campaign, as part of leadership training, or as a team-building exercise. These scenarios can be used flexibly to meet an organization's needs or training schedule—use one scenario in a single training session or use them all in an multi-session course.

Before using these scenarios or answering the team-building questions, participants should familiarize themselves with the best practices presented in the previous section. Email or print the best practices for participants as read-ahead material. The best practices provide the concepts and tools needed to interpret the scenarios. Participants can refer to the best practices, other playbook materials, and their own experience as they consider each scenario.

For suggestions on how to facilitate group discussions on potentially sensitive topics, consider reviewing *The Leader's Conversation* by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (2021). It provides strategies for conducting discussions in a safe environment to encourage participants to hear others' perspectives. This may be especially helpful if your organization uses these scenarios as part of its response to correct toxic work conditions or behaviors.

https://www.defenseculture.mil/Human-Relations-Toolkit/Key-Topics/#leaders-conversations

Scenario Background

Southern Green Energy (SGE) is a renewable energy company in Florida that builds, acquires, manages, and owns long-term wind and solar projects across the United States. SGE employs 4,200 workers and is a subsidiary of the energy infrastructure giant, Viminy Energy, which supplies power to five million customers and employs over 14,000 workers. Viminy Energy spun off SGE eight years ago as its renewables division, and many senior executives, managers, team leads, and most of the employees came from the parent company.

From the beginning, SGE leaders have worked to build a strong organizational culture with core values centered on responsible environmental stewardship, customer commitment, respect, teamwork, recognition and reward, and accountability. SGE brands itself as a next-generation energy company building a sustainable future for the planet through renewable energy. Company leaders have made it clear that SGE has a distinctly different and progressive identity from its more conservative, long-established parent company that markets primarily in the fossil fuel industry.

Since 2020, SGE has expanded its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) program and focused on hiring and promoting more people of color and women throughout the organization. Following SGE CEO Brent Sagewood's example, other leaders and managers have done their best to model SGE's core values and build them into learning and development trainings. However, because the company has grown at an average rate of 20 percent annually, hundreds of new employees have come on board in the past year, and managers and seasoned workers are stressed over the growing pains.

Viminy Energy executives formed SGE as a spinoff company that would be seen as a wise, long-term investment for shareholders in the green energy industry. Although SGE has been profitable from the beginning, the parent company is pressuring SGE leaders to increase its expansion efforts while political winds are favorable. The strain of accelerated growth puts pressure on the SGE CEO and his leadership team. The team must focus on procuring additional facility space for new hires in the corporate office or satellite sites across the country and on investing in new solar and wind energy projects nationwide. SGE's growth is exciting and all-consuming, and SGE leaders have not spent much time recently thinking about the company's core values and organizational culture.

Scenario One: Growth Strains Work Teams

Manager of Load Forecasting and Analysis Tara Ito and her team support SGE's Financial Planning and Analysis group, developing and interpreting energy use data to plan for peak load demands on the electrical grid. In the past three months, Tara's team has grown from 15 employees to 20, and she spends most of her time taking care of onboarding tasks, coordinating workflows for new team members, and fitting them into SGE's management structure. Ideally, she ensures everyone has plenty of oversight, training, and support in their new workplace. Tara is passionate about her job and is committed to being a trustworthy, likeable manager for her team. However, for the past year, she has felt that she is always trying to catch up with all her management responsibilities, on top of trying to do her own top-notch work to forward her career.

Meanwhile, the original six members of Tara's team, who have worked for her for over a year, are feeling overworked and somewhat ignored by their manager. Tara is always stretched thin. She is busy putting out fires and managing the new employees. The group of six have become friends and occasionally go out for drinks after work on Fridays. On one such evening, the coworkers began venting about their frustrations with their manager. Mary said, "We are supposed to have flexible schedules, but there is so much data and forecasting to do with all the new project sites SGE is buying up that it never ends. I stay late most nights, even on the days I work from home. My partner gets really annoyed that I'm always working."

Devin added, "Yeah, and the company is supposed to recognize and reward us when we go above and beyond. In no way did that happen this year. Was your raise even worth the time it took to go through that tedious performance review? Mine wasn't."

Matt said, "Tara seemed completely checked out during my review meeting with her. She told me to write down performance and professional development goals I have for next year and said she hoped things would settle down soon and she would have time to give me more in-depth feedback about my contributions. I like Tara, but she is letting us fend for ourselves. At this point, I don't know what I'm working toward except more work."

The team of six continued to grumble and idly discussed having a collective sickout on Monday. Three of them did call in sick, and during the team meeting on Tuesday, morale was low. Tara could feel the negative energy of everyone except the five new hires. She knew why they were upset because she felt the same way. No one seemed to be looking out for her best interests either.

Team-Building Discussion: Working in small groups, discuss and make notes regarding your answers to the following questions. Be prepared to report your answers to the group when the facilitator calls time.

- In what ways does Tara's stress represent a problem with SGE's organizational culture? What harm is SGE's continual growth and lack of growth management doing to Tara and her team members?

- What consequences may occur on Tara's team if things do not settle down in the near future? How can Tara protect the morale of her new team members?

- How should Tara approach this situation? To whom should she reach out for help? How should Tara's leadership respond? Using the Best Practices guide in the playbook, identify which specific strategies and actions she should promote.

Scenario Two: New Team Tests Company's Core Values

CEO Brent Sagewood is worried that SGE is heading in the wrong direction. The company's expansion efforts have led it into a partnership with a multinational hydropower energy company to build a geothermal power plant on public lands in rural Nevada. Geothermal plants pump hot water from deep underground and use it to create steam, which produces clean electricity. The energy produced from the plant would help the State of Nevada reach its renewable energy goals more quickly, and the plant's footprint is geographically small compared to solar and wind farms, which take up acres of space. The problem is that the geothermal plant would be built on top of a wetlands area and hot springs adjacent to tribal lands that the local indigenous people recognize as a cultural site. Local environmental groups are concerned about the ecological impact on the wetlands.

The executive team at Brent's parent company, Viminy Energy, have strongly encouraged SGE to partner with the hydropower company and invest in this project because of potential high profit margins and the opportunity to expand SGE's portfolio beyond wind and solar. Brent has reluctantly agreed, although a court battle is ahead

with the Native American tribe and environmentalists who oppose the construction. Some members of Brent's executive team, a largely homogeneous group, have become outspoken against the hydropower project, stating that clean energy should not come at the expense of cultural heritage or the environment.

The small group of SGE engineers tasked with surveying the Nevada site for the plant's construction are similarly conflicted. They understand the significant contribution that the geothermal facility would make to clean energy for the local region and state, but the engineers and many employees back at the corporate office do not believe this partnership aligns with SGE's values. Projects like this certainly are not why most of the workforce joined the company.

Team-Building Discussion: Working in small groups, discuss and make notes regarding your answers to the following questions. Be prepared to report your answers to the group when the facilitator calls time.

- How does the controversial hydropower plant in Nevada represent a problem with SGE's organizational culture? What is the solution?

- Would SGE's shareholders agree or disagree with Brent's decision to invest in this project? What about the public? Please explain your answer.

- What should the opposing members of the executive team at SGE do about Brent's decision to build the plant? What should the engineers and other concerned employees do?

- What changes need to be made to SGE's organizational culture, if any, following Brent's decision to build the plant? Using the Best Practices guide in the playbook, identify which specific strategies and actions individuals should take.

Scenario Three: Employees Look to Management after Workplace Harassment

Because SGE has purchased several new wind and solar projects throughout the country, the company needs regional offices, managers, staff, and crew workers to build and manage these new sites. Taylor Grable is a Human Resources manager at SGE and has relocated to manage employee relations at the company's new office in Mobile, AL. To gather employee feedback on SGE's local diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training and hiring efforts, Taylor has scheduled a small focus group of SGE service technicians to discuss their experiences at the company.

When Taylor asks Reggie Baker (African American) and Kevin Diaz (Hispanic) for their feedback about the efficacy of the DEI program, the two colleagues glance at each other uncomfortably. They have both worked for SGE for several years as wind turbine service technicians on crews performing regular maintenance work, repairing damaged blades after storms, fixing mechanical problems, and painting turbines on a regular schedule.

Crew members work together daily on long-term projects in high-risk environments, often at the top of 300-foot-tall wind turbines. After a hurricane on the Gulf Coast left thousands of residents without power, SGE crews needed additional members to reconnect more than 30 wind turbines to the electrical grid along the gulf coast. Reggie and Kevin joined an existing, all white crew of maintenance technicians to help complete the large repair task.

Taylor senses Reggie and Kevin's reluctance to participate in the focus group and tells them, "We can only improve SGE's work culture by hearing what the problems are. What have been some of your experiences?"

Reggie and Kevin share another look, and then Kevin shrugs. Reggie said, "Our experience hasn't been great working on our most recent crew, but it's nothing new either." The two men began to share their story with Taylor and the other focus group members.

The first day Reggie and Kevin joined their new crew of ten service technicians, led by foreman Frank Miller. They discussed that day's repair project, and one crew member said he was surprised that his two new colleagues understood so much about the mechanics of this particular turbine model. Other racially charged comments were made that day and throughout the hurricane cleanup. Crew members openly joked about which work assignments Reggie and Kevin should get, usually for a reason that was tied to a racial stereotype or because it was the worst of the jobs to be done that day. Some technicians began mimicking Kevin's accent and making up mock Spanish words for things on the jobsite. During lunch and breaks, the original crew members gathered together, while Reggie and Kevin sat on their own.

The comments and tension on the crew continued during the two weeks all the men worked together on the turbines. Halfway through the project, Reggie and Kevin complained to Frank that the racial comments and harassment made coming to work stressful and made it hard for them to concentrate on their jobs. Frank told Reggie and Kevin not to worry about the rest of the crew and said, "Just suck it up and make the money," adding that "the jokes are part of life on this crew way out here in the boonies. It's harmless."

Reggie and Kevin had worked as turbine crew members at other companies for eight and five years, respectively, and they had experienced a hostile work environment before. However, SGE was supposed to have a better reputation for diversity and company culture, as it touts its strong organizational culture and its commitment to help every employee succeed on its website. As the two men finished telling Taylor about their experience working on this crew, they said they thought about contacting someone in their management chain, but they did not have relationships with any of their managers and based on the appearance of the people in their reporting chain, they did not see anyone that they felt might have a personal understanding of these kinds of conditions in the workplace.

Taylor sincerely thanked Reggie and Kevin for their candor and told them she would handle the situation. "This kind of behavior is never acceptable at SGE," she added.

Team-Building Discussion: Working in small groups, discuss and make notes regarding your answers to the following questions. Be prepared to report your answers to the group when the facilitator calls time.

- Does the behavior of the crew members toward Reggie and Kevin represent a problem with SGE's organizational culture?

- Why were Reggie and Kevin reluctant to share their story?

- How could Frank the foreman handled the situation differently?

- How could an effective DEI program improve working conditions for the whole team?

Part 3: Organizational Culture Infographic

The infographic presented on the following pages defines organizational culture and illustrates its importance in the workplace. Use the infographic as part of a counter-insider threat awareness campaign or leadership training or to start a discussion about organizational culture. Consider printing the infographic and posting it to an employee bulletin board or including it in training slides or your organization's newsletter. The Organizational Culture Infographic is available in digital and printable poster formats.

https://opa.mil/research-analysis/personnel-security/insider-threat/better-ways-to-work-together/

Identity & Values:
What Is Organizational Culture?

Every corporation, government department, military branch, school, social club, and group has its own culture. Organizational culture sets the tone for how groups get things done. Culture influences all aspects of an organization but may be most visible in its

- Shared purpose, norms, and values
- History and traditions
- Expectations of "right and wrong" behavior
- Accepted ways of solving problem
- Best practices and standard procedures
- Hierarchy and management style
- Measures of achievement and success
- Group subcultures

Culture is critical to an organization's success. A negative culture burdens its members and makes it hard to achieve shared goals. A positive culture helps organizations and their members thrive.

A Positive Organizational Culture Is Essential for Employees To Flourish in the Global Workforce

67% of workers believe organizational culture is more important than strategy or operations.[1]

75% of Millenials and Gen Z workers think organizational culture is more important than salary for job satisfaction.[2]

70% of job seekers want to work for a company aligned with their own personal values.[2]

69% of executives think their companies underinvest in promoting effective culture.[3]

Too many employees feel disconnected from their organization's stated purpose and values.[4]

41% strongly agree that they know what their organization stands for and what sets it apart from competitors.

23% strongly agree that they can apply their organization's values to their work every day.

40% strongly agree that the mission or purpose of their organization makes them feel their job is important.

27% strongly agree that they believe in their organization's values.

What Employees Value in Organizational Culture[5,6]

- Respect from leaders and colleagues
- Job security
- Employee assistance programs
- Flexible work
- Work/family balance
- Competitive benefits and perks

- Constructive supervision that attends to employees' needs
- Leaders who
  - Support their team members
  - Make ethical decisions
  - Build a positive work environment
  - Exemplify the organization's core values

Positive Work Incentives Can Promote Healthy Organizational Culture, Build Trust, and Create Employee Engagement[6,7]

- Advancement opportunities based on skills and abilities.
- Transparency and fairness in promotions, rewards, and recognition.
- Discretionary awards based on performance.
- Alignment of promotions, rewards, and recognition across the organization.
- Consistent management support in times of success and adversity.
- Connections between team members to promote civility and shared responsibility.
- Demonstrated concern for employee well-being, individually and collectively.

1 *Organisational culture: it's time to take action*. (2021). PwC. https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/upskilling/global-culture-survey-2021.html

2 Glassdoor. (2019). Mission and Culture Survey. https://about-content.glassdoor.com//app/uploads/sites/2/2019/07/Mission-Culture-Survey-Supplement.pdf

3 Graham, J. R., Grennan, J., Harvey, C. R., & Rajgopal, S. (2022). *Corporate culture: Evidence from the field*. 27th Annual Conference on Financial Economics and Accounting Paper, Columbia Business School Research Paper No. 16-49, Duke I&E Research Paper No. 2016-33. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2805602

4 Gallup. (2022). A Guide to Organizational Culture. https://www.gallup.com/workplace/327371/how-to-build-better-company-culture.aspx#ite-327446

5 Sull, D., & Sull, C. (2021, September 16). 10 things your corporate culture needs to get right. *MIT Sloan Management Review*. https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/10-things-your-corporate-culture-needs-to-get-right/

6 Moore, A. P., Perl, S. J., Cowley, J., Collins, M. L., Cassidy, T. M., Van Houdnos, N., ... & Monaco, E. A. (2016). *The critical role of positive incentives for reducing insider threats* (No. CMU/SEI-2016-TR-014). Software Engineering Institute, Carnegie Mellon University. https://resources.sei.cmu.edu/library/asset-view.cfm?assetId=484917

7 Doubleday, J. (2021, September 6.) *Insider threat initiative highlights "workplace culture" on program's 10-year anniversary*. Federal News Network. https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2021/09/insider-threat-initiative-highlights-workplace-culture-on-programs-10-year-anniversary/

Part 4: Resource Library

"

Culture is what motivates and retains talented employees. Every decision your organization makes strengthens or weakens your culture, and a healthy workplace culture—one that is fair, inclusive, high-functioning, and free from harassment—is a critical business asset and force multiplier.

"

— Betty Thompson

Culture in Organizations

The following resources are provided to help leaders at all levels learn about organizational culture and apply useful strategies to improve their organization. These resources support and expand on key concepts presented in previous parts of this playbook. They can be used for self study or group training, published on your organization's intranet or in employee newsletters, or highlighted in awareness campaigns. The materials are intended to be accessible to broad audiences with different levels of expertise. Text in *italics* is quoted from the resource.

Replace Top-Down Approach to Corporate Culture with Distributed Responsibility

From the article, "Company Culture is Everyone's Responsibility":
At many organizations there is a gap between the existing culture and the "desired" culture — the culture needed to support and advance the company's goals and strategies. In a new culture-building model, everyone is responsible for cultivating the desired culture.

Yohn, D. L. (2021, February 9). Company culture is everyone's responsibility. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2021/02/company-culture-is-everyones-responsibility

Culture is How Your Organization Works and What it is Known For

From the article, "How to Build a Strong Organizational Culture":
Organizational culture can be a tool for building successful organizations. Implementing cultural change includes

- Clearly define the organization's core values.
- Establish "rituals" to promote and celebrate core values.
- Identify the "heroes" who exemplify core values.
- Create symbols that communicate commitment to core values.

Schram, E. (2021, July 14). Council post: How to build a strong organizational culture. *Forbes*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2021/07/14/how-to-build-a-strong-organizational-culture/

Culture is the Biggest Factor in an Organization's Success

From the article, "Culture is a Company's Single Most Powerful Advantage":
A strong corporate culture is not something that can be built overnight. Indeed, developing corporate culture requires strong leadership and employee buy-in. Strong leadership is necessary to communicate the vision of the organization's core values and identity and inspire engagement with this vision. Effective communication implies that business leaders feel the pulse of their employees and are open to the value they bring. This type of engagement with employees to co-develop culture should be intentional, and organizations need to develop and invest in it over time. In turn, culture will define the

people and the work they do every day—fueling organizations as they grow and face new challenges.

The online article includes an eight-minute audio clip.

Laker, B. (2021, April 23). Culture is a company's single most powerful advantage. Here's why. *Forbes*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/benjaminlaker/2021/04/23/culture-is-a-companys-single-most-powerful-advantage-heres-why

Six Practical Keys to a "Magic" Corporate Culture

From the article, "The Secret Ingredient of Thriving Companies? Human Magic":
It takes several mutually reinforcing elements to create an environment that unleashes the kind of human magic necessary for a company purpose to take root and flourish. Use the following six ingredients to create your company's unique recipe for human magic.

- **Meaning:** *Encouraging every employee to reflect on and share what drives them, as well as articulating and constantly feeding the connection between that personal purpose and the company's, is therefore one of the most crucial roles of any leader.*

- **Authentic Human Connections:** *Authentic human connections start with treating and valuing everyone as an individual and making sure everyone feels they belong, which is the very heart of diversity and inclusion.*

- **Psychological Safety:** *No one will risk being themselves and being vulnerable unless they trust that they won't be penalized or ridiculed for showing their true selves, speaking up, or making mistakes.*

- **Autonomy:** *Few people enjoy being told what to do. The next ingredient that contributes to unleashing human magic is giving people the freedom and ability to shape what they do and how they do their work.*

- **Learning Environment:** *Becoming great at what we do best is fundamentally satisfying and motivates us as human beings.*

- **Growth:** *Growth creates space for promotions, improving productivity without losing jobs, taking risks, and investing.*

Joly, H. (2022, January 10). The secret ingredient of thriving companies? Human magic. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2022/01/the-secret-ingredient-of-thriving-companies-human-magic

How Do You Really Change Organizational Culture?

From the article, "10 principles of Organizational Culture":
Three dimensions of corporate culture affect its alignment: symbolic reminders (artifacts that are entirely visible), keystone behaviors (recurring acts that trigger other behaviors and that are both visible and invisible), and mind-sets (attitudes and beliefs that are widely shared but exclusively invisible). Of these, behaviors are the most powerful determinant of real change. What people actually do matters more than what they say or

believe. And so to obtain more positive influences from your cultural situation, you should start working on changing the most critical behaviors — the mind-sets will follow. Over time, altered behavior patterns and habits can produce better results.

Katzenbach, J., Oelschlegel, C., and Thomas, J. (2016, February 15). 10 principles of organizational culture. *strategy+business*. https://www.strategy-business.com/feature/10-Principles-of-Organizational-Culture

See the companion videos from the same organization.

Strategy+business. (2016, February 16). What is Corporate Culture? [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/gficoigz1xs.

Strategy+business. (2018, July 12). How Can You Make Your Company's Culture Go Viral? [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/bCBzUSm290A.

Understanding Links Between Culture and Workplace Violence

Practical advice from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
In most organizations, human resources professionals play an important role in both workplace violence prevention efforts and leading cultural change. SHRM developed a toolkit for human resources professionals to make violence prevention a critical element of an organization's culture.

https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/workplace-violence-prevention-and-response.aspx

Tips to Managing Intangible Aspects of Culture

From the article, "The Leader's Guide to Corporate Culture":
It is possible—in fact, vital—to improve organizational performance through culture change, using the simple but powerful models and methods in this article. First leaders must become aware of the culture that operates in their organization. Next they can define an aspirational target culture. Finally they can master the core change practices of articulation of the aspiration, leadership alignment, organizational conversation, and organizational design. Leading with culture may be among the few sources of sustainable competitive advantage left to companies today.

Groysberg, B., Lee, J., Price, J., & Cheng, Y.J. (2018). The leader's Guide to corporate culture. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2018/01/the-leaders-guide-to-corporate-culture

What Type of Culture Does Your Organization Have?

From the article, "8 Different Types of Corporate Culture":
There are many ways to define the primary types of corporate cultures. All organizations have a purpose, a primary method for making decisions, a means by which status is attained and a method for conflict resolution. By understanding these dynamics in detail,

a job applicant or new employee can better ascertain what they are getting into before conflicts or mismatches arise.

This article explains eight types of corporate culture.

- *Hierarchical/seniority-based culture.*

- *Mercenary culture.*

- *Egalitarian culture.*

- *Clan culture.*

- *Elite culture.*

- *Experimental culture.*

- *Cause-based culture.*

- *Innovation or creative culture.*

Gudmundsson, P. A. (2021, November 24). 8 different types of corporate culture. *US News*. https://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/articles/different-types-of-corporate-culture

"
Culture eats strategy for breakfast.
"

— **Peter Drucker, Management Consultant**

Individual Contributions to Organizational Culture

The following resources are provided to help leaders at all levels learn about organizational culture and apply useful strategies to improve their organization. These resources support and expand on key concepts presented in previous parts of this playbook. They can be used for self study or group training, published on your organization's intranet or in employee newsletters, or highlighted in awareness campaigns. The materials are intended to be accessible to broad audiences with different levels of expertise.

Explore Culture Before Joining a New Organization

From the article, "How to Tell If a Company's Culture Is Right for You":
Principles to Remember

Do:

- *Adopt a mindset that is positive but also skeptical.*

- *Reach out to your network to identify people who know the company and who can give you the unvarnished truth about it.*

- *Make a special effort to get to know your potential boss; a good relationship with your manager will be critical to your job satisfaction.*

Don't:

- *Discount the idea of doing a trial at the company to get a sense of how your prospective team works and how decisions get made.*

- *Ignore red flags. If your boss doesn't seem interested in getting to know you, consider it a bad sign.*

- *Succumb to analysis paralysis. Trust your judgment and make a decision.*

Knight, R. (2017, November 12). How to tell if a company's culture is right for you. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2017/11/how-to-tell-if-a-companys-culture-is-right-for-you

Hiring for Cultural Fit Can Be a Limiting Mindset

From the article, "What Does Being a 'Cultural Fit' Actually Mean?":
If you try to maintain your culture, at all costs, and you don't allow people to come and drive your culture forward, then you're not maximizing the potential of your business.

Epstein, S. (2021, October 20). What does being a 'cultural fit' actually mean? *BBC Worklife*. https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20211015-what-does-being-a-cultural-fit-actually-mean

Showing Vulnerability at Work Can Build Stronger Culture

From the article, "Can Awkward Conversations Make for a Stronger Corporate Culture?":
Most people try hard to avoid awkward social situations, especially at work. But opportunities to be vulnerable and open yourself to others builds trust and group cohesion. "Embracing the small moments that make us squirm… can offer surprising benefits for our companies, our communities and our personal lives."

The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. (2018, June 8). Can awkward conversations make for a stronger corporate culture? *Knowledge@Wharton*. https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/can-awkward-conversations-make-stronger-corporate-culture/

Tips for How to Engage at Work

From the article, "I Want to Be an Engaged Employee. But How Do I Get There?":
Engaged employees are more valuable to their organization, but are also more satisfied in their work lives. This article offers suggestions for how individuals can better engage in their organization's culture.

- Ask your managers what they expect of you, ask for the things you need to be successful, seek out regular feedback, and reflect on what you learn.

- Know your own strengths and the value you add to the organization.

- Bring attention to yourself in positive ways.

- Care about others, make close friends, and look for opportunities to collaborate.

- Find a mentor.

- Dig deeper and try to connect your own opinions with the organization's goals and objectives.

Daum, K. (2018, November 16). I want to be an engaged employee. But how do I get there? *Inc*. https://www.inc.com/kevin-daum/i-want-to-be-an-engaged-employee-but-how-do-i-get-there.html

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