

Culture: It's About Behaviors

Every business has a culture, "you can feel it".

Think of the businesses you like to visit. Chances are, you like to visit them based on how you feel when you are there. You feel good about the business because of the behaviors you see. Maybe it's that the employees know you by name, they ask you how they can help or anticipate your needs before you ask.

Now think of the businesses you may not like to visit. You have a feeling, but it's not the feeling of wanting to go, it's the feeling of dread. Your feelings are based on the behaviors you see, the words you hear...you are experiencing their culture.

Your business has a culture. What is it? Stop and look around, really notice the behaviors of your employees. What do you see? What do you hear? Do you say you have a culture built on teamwork, but team members make statements like "that's not my job"? Or do we say we have a culture that is innovative and yet when changes are recommended, team members are saying "but we've always done it this way" or "that's not the way I was taught".

In this exercise of breaking the value down to specific stories and examples, we want you to start seeing the behaviors that come to life - these behaviors are what will serve as the north star for all of your other HR processes and practices within your business.

These behaviors are the glue.

Value	Description	This DOES look like:	This DOES NOT look like:
Integrity	Doing the right thing, every time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correcting a mistake with a customer to preserve our relationship with them. • Giving clear, honest feedback to team members rather than trying to just be "nice". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving critical feedback to one another without the intent to help them grow and develop. • Taking shortcuts in our safety protocols, just to meet customer or business needs.
Customer Service	We know our customers, and they trust us to help them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeting customers by name, genuinely asking about them and caring to help them. • Being honest with our recommendations to them, helping customers understand why we may suggest something for them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making suggestions to customers for the sole benefit of our business, if it doesn't truly help our customers. • Not coming out from behind the counter to greet customers. • Giving more of our attention to our phones and employee conversations than to our customers.

It's Your Turn

1. Set a timer for 5 minutes. Think about what you value in your own business, whether they are already defined or not. What are they?
2. Set your timer for 15 minutes. Go back through each of these values, and for each one, jot down 3-4 examples of stories or situations that have come up in the business where these values have been tested (positively / negatively). What were the behaviors? Get specific.
3. **Reflect:** How did these examples support your values (or not)? How do your team members show these in their work? What do you WANT these to look like in your daily work life? What are the behaviors that really irk you, or drive you crazy? Chances are, if a behavior is driving you crazy, it is likely violating something that is important to you.

Value	Description	Behaviors: This DOES Look Like	Behaviors: This Does NOT Look Like

A word of caution. Many business owners and leaders use common words for their values, like teamwork, integrity, innovation, customer service. They look like the values you see in every other business you visit. If you use common words, people will apply their own meaning and their own behaviors to those values, rather than the behaviors you identified. Having something unique makes it more memorable and creates curiosity for employees to understand what you mean by the value and the identified behaviors. It's important that the values SOUND like you. Make them personal. Make them your own.

Leadership Expectations

To ensure your managers and supervisors are clear on the expectations and the role they play in creating this culture, it's important to identify your leadership expectations. Leadership expectations are built on your values and behaviors – just taking it to the next level. Once you have defined your culture and identified the behaviors that must be demonstrated to support the culture, think about what your leaders need to do to create that culture. Here are a few common examples.

Values	Behaviors	Leadership Expectations
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living the values of the business. • Treating peers and customers equitably. • Being honest and having the right intent. • Doing what you say you are going to do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role modeling the values of the business. • Giving honest feedback to employees. • Taking ownership of the performance of your team. • Building trust with your team.
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sure we have a safe working environment for ourselves and our team. • Helping our team to achieve common goals. • Sharing knowledge and information with the team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing effective feedback. • Recognizing employees for good work. • Coaching employees who are not meeting performance expectations.
Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking for opportunities to serve our customers by being innovative. • Being resourceful. • Understanding the business, structure, goals and strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging your team to share ideas. • Providing opportunities for your employees to grow and develop. • Anticipating and identifying opportunities to change. • Leading and facilitating change.
Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going above and beyond to serve customers. • Anticipating customer needs. • Listening to customer concerns. • Providing solutions to customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling employees to do the best by providing tools, advice and resources. • Listening to your employees.

It's Your Turn.

1. Review the values / behaviors you identified above.
2. Brainstorm the behaviors YOUR LEADERS need to demonstrate to create the culture.

Reminder: This includes ensuring that the leaders themselves are role modeling the behaviors to both external and internal customers (teams and employees). It ALSO includes holding team members and employees accountable for the behaviors that demonstrate the values.

Values	Behaviors	Leadership Expectations