

# Is Your Workplace Culture Missing the X Factor?

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We spend a lot of time at work, so it makes sense that business owners, leaders and HR professionals are concerned about their work environments and how employees perceive their organizations. Yet so many of these same leaders think workplace culture automatically takes care of itself.

The reality is that workplace culture needs to be a series of intentional considerations, decisions and actions to cultivate an organization where employees and the overall business thrive. Here are nine workplace culture checkpoints you should review to make sure your company culture is headed in the right direction:

## 1. Your MVP

MVP stands for mission, vision and purpose. This is your why. It's the glue that holds your organization together and guides it into the future. As a leader, your MVP truly becomes your most valuable player. Having a good MVP can help employees navigate uncertainty and inspires their commitment to the organization.

## 2. Values

Values are your guideposts when directing leaders and employees to make the best decisions for the organization. In

my first job out of college, I worked for a company that valued honesty and service. Leaders exemplified these traits, and they filtered through every level of the organization. These values were a part of the company's fabric, and were a part of meetings, the logo and corporate communications. As a result, employees were engaged and proud to be a part of something larger than themselves. When values are clearly articulated, employees have clear expectations and know how to act in the best interest of the organization.

### 3. Traditions and practices

Your company likely has a particular way of doing things: how employees communicate with others, standard operating procedures and the organizational structure are a few of the norms that are specific to a company. All of these make up your organization's traditions and practices, and cultivating these habits will make your workplace unique.

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### 4. The X Factor

There are certain companies that people regard as aspirational workplace cultures. It's fine to borrow some of the good work these organizations have done and implement it into your own culture, but you also need to define what makes you special. Why do people want to work for your company? Why do people stay once they're hired?

### 5. The recruitment process

Your success as a company is dependent on who you hire, but making a great hire actually starts before the interview process. While recruitment has a sales and marketing component, it's important to be transparent about what the job

specifically entails. Give careful consideration to the overall employee experience – some companies even include a job preview, which includes a sneak peek of a realistic day in that particular position. There's also a growing trend to include compensation information in the job posting so there's no question about pay from the beginning of the recruitment process.

You should also pay attention to the difference between “culture add” and “culture fit.” Culture add means that a person is increasing the diversity of the team through their unique experiences, their background, work history and diversity of thought. A team of cookie-cutter employees won't help you achieve your big goals.

## 6. Engagement

Employee engagement carries an array of different meanings, but I like to simply ask, “What gets our employees out of bed in the morning?” If you understand what motivates your staff, you are more likely to get them to stick around and perform effectively within their jobs. Organizations with higher levels of engagement also tend to have higher levels of retention.

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## 7. Growth and development

Growing and developing your staff starts with orientation and onboarding, but it shouldn't stop there. In order to continually improve your culture, the organization should have training opportunities that teach managers how to lead their teams and learning opportunities to prepare employees for the future. Training events should always include content that reinforces the culture, the MVP and values.

## 8. Performance and feedback

One of the best ways to ensure regular communication between managers and employees is to institute a practice of regular one-on-one meetings. Communication doesn't always happen organically, so leadership needs to ensure that managers and employees have time to devote to these important conversations.

## 9. Workplace well-being

If you don't take care of your people, they're not going to stay. You should consider how employees are rewarded and recognized, whether there is work/life balance and the organization's compensation and benefits structure. Leaders should be motivated by what they can personally do to create a great place to work.

Once your team has an opportunity to review the nine areas, you're ready to move into the action-planning and goal-setting phase. When you align your goals with cultural tenets, be proactive and regularly communicate them with staff. Cultivating workplace culture is an ongoing process that happens on a consistent basis, so don't be afraid to make course corrections and revisions along the way.

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