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WHITE PAPER

Rebuilding Your Company Culture

A Culture of Trust.

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After two years of significant disruption to 'business as usual', most business leaders are very aware of the negative impact the lockdowns and working remotely have had on their organization's culture.

It is time to bring culture back into focus and deliberately build a culture that will produce the levels of performance needed – a culture based on a high level of trust and personal responsibility.

Organizational culture is created by the values, beliefs, and behaviors the people in the organization operate by.

What are the values, beliefs and behaviors people in your organization are currently operating by?

A High Performance Organization

I came across the model below of how to create a high performance organization several years ago and thought it made a lot of sense. It starts with defining your strategic objectives – what you will be achieving when you have become a high performance organization. However, it is the next two steps that most leaders fail to do that prevent them from achieving their strategic objectives, that is, defining the cultural objectives and the leadership needed to create their desired culture.

To establish cultural objectives it is essential to define the values, beliefs and behaviors that everyone in the organization must operate by. The third step is to define what kind of leadership is needed, firstly in the leadership team and then at all levels, to create that culture.

A Culture of Trust

I've heard time and time again leaders say that their culture is unique to their business. Yes, there may be some aspects of an organization's culture that are unique to them or their industry, but there is one element that must be present in all great companies and that is, a high level of trust.

Trust is the essential foundation of a healthy, high performance culture. Trust Within Assessments' research shows that employees who trust their managers are far more passionate about the work they do and the organization they work for – resulting in the highest levels of performance.

And yet, it seems that many leadership teams do not know how to build trust with their employees, and now with the disruptions we've had and are having, more importantly, the need to rebuild trust.

The ideal way to start to rebuild trust is to measure the current level of trust in your organization. Most engagement surveys do a very poor job of measuring the trust employees have for management. Trust Within Assessments has been measuring trust in organizations since 2010, including the trust factors necessary for employees to feel psychologically safe.

The Leadership Needed

The research we have gathered from our Flexibility and Trust Survey clearly shows the leaders who are most effective at building trust are also the most flexible. Flexible leaders are those who have the ability to see other people's needs as at least as important as their own.

The opposite is also true – inflexible leaders are those who are least effective at building trust.

So, the key to creating a high trust culture is for leaders to focus on satisfying employees needs. But which needs?

The good news is, Trust Within Assessments' extensive research has identified five needs all employees have that when satisfied, result in a high level of trust for management.

The Five Needs that Ignite Passion

In the graphic below, The Passion Pyramid, you will see in the center, starting from the bottom, the Five Needs that Ignite Passion. On the left-hand side of the model are the Leadership Skills that need to be used to satisfy the needs, and on the right-hand side the Outcomes or pay off for the organization when the needs are satisfied.

The model was built as a pyramid because our experience shows that leaders need to start at the bottom to build up. For example, employees do not want to learn from a leader who does not respect them, nor will they feel like an insider if they are not respected.

As I have said, Trust Within Assessments' research shows that when you satisfy these five needs employees will be passionate about your organization and about delivering their best every day. They will also have a high level of trust for their leaders.

Let's look at these five needs more closely:

1. **The Need to Be Respected:** all people have a need to be treated with respect. They need to know that what they do is valued by their leaders. One of the most important ways to demonstrate respect for someone is to truly listen to them. Unfortunately, there are many ways leaders unintentionally treat employees with disrespect, and nothing diminishes trust faster.

2. **The Need to Learn and Grow:** People have a natural desire to develop their talents and do things that utilise their strengths. They want to perform at their best. To do that, they look to a leader to continue to help them learn and grow in their roles.

3. **The Need to Be an Insider:** No one likes to feel excluded. Being included in discussions, being involved in problem-solving and decision-making, especially on decisions that directly impact employees, makes it clear that employees are on the same team as their leader. There is no Us and Them.

4. **The Need for Meaning:** People need to know that what they do is meaningful, that their work is making a difference to someone else. They want to be able to answer the question "why does my job exist" – to understand how their work contributes to their organization's purpose.

5. **The Need to Be Part of a Winning Team:** the highest levels of passion come from being a part of, and contributing to, the success of a winning team. I'm sure you have experienced the elation of "team spirit" on some of the teams you have been part of in your life – whether they were sporting teams in your younger years or work teams that have achieved success.

Satisfying these Five Needs Will Transform Your Culture

We have surveyed over 8000 employees and asked them how important the Needs that Ignite Passion are to them on a ten-point scale, where 1 is unimportant and 10 is essential. The average score for importance for all five needs across all 8000 employees is 9 out of 10. In other words, these needs are very important to virtually everyone!

Since we also measure the level of trust employees have for management, we know there is a very strong correlation between the level of need satisfaction and trust. For trust to be high, need satisfaction must be high.

This strong correlation provides a valuable insight into the relationship between management behavior and organizational culture. Our research shows that as managers satisfy these needs they create a culture of trust and employees are passionate about their job and the organization they work for.

It makes sense – satisfy their needs – they trust you!

What you Measure you can Manage

Trust Within Assessments' Employee Passion Survey measures the trust employees have for management and will provide you with detailed feedback about the degree to which the Needs that Ignite Passion are currently being satisfied. It makes sense to measure first so you know where to start.

The Flexibility and Trust Survey measures your leader's flexibility and trust building ability. Combining both these assessments provides a clear path to creating a high performance culture.

Unless organizations pay particular attention to building strong workplace cultures based on trust, cultivating a fully committed workforce that is both passionate about the organization and the job may prove to be a significant challenge.

To create a high performance culture in your organization contact:

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