



Company Culture Is A Game Of Follow The Leader

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Company culture is driven from the top-down. While not often designed and constructed deliberately, company culture is truly a game of follow the leader. If leadership lacks integrity, the culture will run fast and loose when it comes to the facts. If leadership distrusts its staff, the culture will lack trust. It's really that simple.



Many times, leaders don't realize the havoc that they wreak on their organizations through their own behavior. Here are some examples:

- **Selfishness:** The leader takes undue credit for all of the success of the business. There's not a lot of motivation to do your best, when you know that your boss is going to take all the glory for a job that you've done well. This kind of selfishness translates into a culture where there is little "*esprit de corps*" or teamwork. Learning how to share credit and celebrate the success of the team goes a long way to shift the culture.
- **Culpability:** The leader shifts accountability to others when things go wrong. It's never a good idea to throw a colleague under the bus. But, when the leader consistently avoids accountability, the culture becomes one where no one is accountable – there's always an excuse for sub-par results. A leader that takes responsibility for failure demonstrates the kind of behavior needed to create a culture of integrity.
- **Trust:** The leader second guesses every decision made by others. When this happens on a

regular basis, a culture of mistrust takes root and is very difficult to eradicate. No one feels empowered or believes that their decisions will be respected and upheld by the boss. A leader that prepares their team and empowers them to make decisions (and helps them to learn from their mistakes) establishes a culture of trust – one where the individual feels safe to do their best.

- **Transparency:** The leader manipulates all communication and controls access to people and information. This kind of behavior stymies open and honest dialogue and contributes to mistrust. A culture built this way will fold under pressure because staff lacks the information needed to believe in the company or its leadership. On the other hand, when information is shared in an unfiltered and open way, staff builds confidence in leadership and a culture that inspires honesty results.
- **Inconsistency:** The leader doesn't follow the rules that he makes others follow. This kind of conduct breeds contempt in a company's culture. If policies don't apply to the boss, staff members seek to bend the rules, too. Once this happens, chaos results. A leader that demonstrates consistency brings about a culture that demands discipline and rigor in all that it does.

To close, if your culture lacks trust and integrity, draw a circle around yourself and understand how your behavior dictates the actions of others around you and recognize that it only trickles down from there. Reach out to me if you need some help in crafting and instituting a culture transformation program. Developing a **Culture By Design** can be the first steps towards transforming a business into one that you can be proud to lead.