Positive Workplace Culture

One often hears that employees don't leave companies, they leave their managers. The quality of the employee/manager relationship is crucial for a productive and positive work environment. This individual relationship is framed by the overall corporate culture. **A positive business culture is good for business and the bottom line.**

There are numerous reasons to create and maintain a positive work culture. Retaining employees is key as baby boomers age and the workforce shrinks. **Employee satisfaction leads to high levels of retention as well as motivation, productivity and high quality work.** Employees value a workplace with open honest communication, respect, fairness, balance and opportunities for development. In *Creating Healthy Organizations,* Graham Lowe stated that a positive work culture "energizes employees to excel in their jobs and supports them to meet their personal needs and goals."

Experts point to many different characteristics of positive workplaces, six key components are:

Open and honest communication – While this sounds like a cliché, it is one of the most frequently identified characteristics of a positive work culture.   Open communication should take place between employees and between management and employees. Employees need to know their role in the business strategy and experience open communication about the financial realities of the business. Listen and build relationships.   Set clear standards, goals and expectations.

Rewards and recognition – Employees at all levels appreciate recognition for their work both financially and in non-monetary ways. Recognition can be simple and done one-to-one with a manager or publicly among peers or in newsletters and companywide publications. The recognition should be specific and authentic, praise goes a long way.

Trust, respect and fairness – A culture of respect, trust and fairness leads to higher level outcomes as teams work together to produce outcomes without the distractions of mistrust and suspicion.

Learning and development- Employees appreciate the opportunity to learn, grow and develop. Have the resources in place to encourage continuous learning environment. Mentoring is a positive way to provide continuous learning for the mentor and mentee along with forming professional ties that foster engagement.

Teamwork and involvement- Employees flourish in an environment in which their work has visible impact on the company's' success. Be clear about how all work impacts the company product and bottom line.

Work and life balance - Companies with highly engaged employees have a culture of balance and model balancing the demands of home and work through policies, practices and culture.

Use Coaching and Feedback- This approach generates an atmosphere of learning, growth and challenge. A respectful dialogue focused on improvement coaches employees to perform at the next level.

While adherence to all these principals doesn't promise a positive workplace, they do set the tone and foster the continuing development of a positive culture.   Managers set the bar and should lead by example to promote a positive healthy workplace culture.

BETH GILLEY | VP BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
21351 Gentry Drive, Suite 250, Dulles, VA 20166

703.444.2254| bagilley@lytleeap.com | www.lytleeap.com

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