

Practical Wisdom

Five Key Strategies that any leader can start using today to improve the culture of their organizations.

Leadership skills and qualities are essential to building a constructive culture. Utilizing effective leadership, balanced between task and interpersonal facilitation, leads to a more constructive culture, higher levels of motivation, coordination across the organization, and better quality and adaptability.

1. Develop a Constructive attitude or style of thinking. It all starts here. Many years ago, Douglas MacGregor discovered that great leaders all have the same basic assumptions about the people who work for them: they are smart and have good ideas, they care about the organization, and they trust them.
2. Train and develop on the job. Catch people doing something right. Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson identified that one of the key leadership practices was to actively catch people doing something right and then praise them for it. Regularly provide on the job feedback, and when you do need to correct behaviour, make sure to aim for a ratio of 3:1 of compliments to corrections.
3. Encourage and enable your people to take moderate risks. Taking a risk means that sometimes it doesn't work out. If you punish people's mistakes, they will stop taking any risks. Help them set S.M.A.R.T. goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and have a Time frame) which provide people with a clear set of expectations – and thus establish a consistent, Constructive culture.
4. Involve people in creative problem-solving. Encourage people to “think outside the box” and be innovative whenever possible. Constantly strive to “do it better”. Involve people in decisions that affect them. This simple teambuilding tactic works. Just make sure to balance the amount of time spent teambuilding to match the significance of the decision.
5. Look for ways to expand people's jobs where possible. Making jobs more challenging, providing greater responsibility, and giving qualified people more decision-making opportunities will encourage more employees to think and act Constructively.