"Corporate culture is the only sustainable competitive advantage that is completely within the control of the entrepreneur."

- David Cummings, Co-Founder, Pardot

Good business culture is one of those elusive things that you know it when you see it, and you love it if you’re a part of it. Corporate culture in many ways is like a family system, and like a family system, themes, beliefs and personalities blend together to formulate a vibration or feel to them.

Companies which can adapt to change and stay flexible breed a culture of resilience. This toughness and passion to tackle all challenges, serves as a bonding agent for all employees, working together for the betterment of the business. Ever in the background, corporate culture defines a business, drives a team’s work ethic and steers results.

**INSIDE THE COMMUNITY**

New IFBE director Brian Brogan shares his thoughts on why company culture is so important...
Brian Brogan  
Director, The Initiative for Family Business & Entrepreneurship

Q. How would you define a winning corporate culture?

A. Each company has an opportunity to create a way for employees to not only be invested in his or her own specific role, but to be truly concerned for the well fare of the company as a whole. This will come about when the work/life balance is realized. When an employee or team member understands that his or her actions affect the whole in both positive and negative ways, you have a teammate who has bought in to the company. Another winning element is enforcing the perspective that all workers of the company are not employees but team members with a common vision and stated goals. Communication is imperative in order to build trust and create open lines of interaction.

Q. In your past experience, what core values have been carried on through generations of a family business that help to shape the culture and overall strategy of the business?

A. A common value which I have seen and personally experienced is a strong work ethic. This may be a cliché to observers, but to those who have had this modeled to them, it is real. A strong work ethic is more that just putting in long hours or punching a clock. It is the understanding that what you focus on grows.

Another core value which I believe holds true for multi-generational family businesses is a sense of humility and attitude of service. Humility comes from being around long enough to have experienced the good times and the lean ones. Having a value system or belief that sometimes even the best plans can go astray, but knowing that being of service always has a need will bring about demand and ultimate success.

Q. Any advice on how someone not in a leadership position can positively influence a company's culture?

A. I am a big believer in acting as if.... meaning that if you are looking to having a bigger role in a company then start moving and behaving from that point of view. Being a positive influence on your company’s culture is what all owners look for from their team members. It could be in the form of showing leadership in an area that needs attention or it could be quiet doing the
I recently attended my brother-in-law’s 25th-year retirement ceremony from the United States Marine Corp. I learned that one of the main factors contributing to his rise in ranks from captain to lieutenant colonel was that he volunteered to go on deployments and take certain jobs which others would not do or found too risky.

By being a positive team member, working to execute on the company mission, and helping others along the way is always a sure way to be recognized as affecting corporate culture.

Become an IFBE insider!
Learn more about membership

OCTOBER EVENTS

The Family Business Legacy Speaker Series featuring Christian Haub

Wednesday, October 4, 2017
11:30am-1:30pm
at Saint Joseph’s University

Members & Partners: Free
Open to the Public

Join us on October 4th for a lecture and the presentation of our Family Business Legacy award to Christian Haub, co-CEO of Germany-based Tengelmann Group, one of the world’s largest family-owned and diversified retailing companies. Hear the lessons learned over five generations that built a remarkable legacy.

Register to Attend!

SAVE THE DATES

Thursday, November 9, 2017
Family Business Seminar: The Value & Role of Family Meetings
8-10:30am
Saint Joseph’s University
Members & Partners Only
RSVP

Thursday, December 7, 2017
Holiday Cocktail Reception
5:30-7:30pm
Location TBD