SUCCESS BY THE NUMBERS

5 Characteristics of Positive Culture that Breed Powerful Results
By Marc Kramer

Few would argue that a positive work culture breeds sound strategies and delivers results that exceed expectations. But while toxic, kill-or-be-killed cultures can yield results, too, the pain, drama and carnage that tag along don’t lead to long-term success. Consider these statistics:

- Health care expenditures at high-pressure companies are nearly 50% greater than at other organizations, according to the Harvard Business Review.
- The American Psychological Association estimates that more than $500 billion is siphoned off from the U.S. economy because of workplace stress, and 550 million workdays are lost each year due to stress on the job.
- In studies by the Queens School of Business and by the Gallup Organization, disengaged workers had 37% higher absenteeism, 49% more accidents, and 60% more errors and defects. In organizations with low employee engagement scores, they experienced 18% lower productivity, 16% lower profitability, 37% lower job growth, and 65% lower share price over time.

Here are five characteristics of leaders who build strong, productive cultures that lead to long-term success:

1. **Top Down** – Set the example through words and deeds. Leaders that are inclusive encourage calculated risk-taking and straightforward feedback.

2. **Ethics and Morals** – Organizations whose stock prices, sales and admiration grow the fastest are ones that are never under investigation such as L. Gore, Berkshire Hathaway and Comcast.

3. **Listening** – Solicit input from everyone up and down the organization. Leaders that welcome and appreciate different perspectives generate remarkable results.

4. **Thoughtfulness** – Be deliberate and action-oriented, such as President Abraham Lincoln, PepsiCo’s Indra Nooyi, Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg and Oprah Winfrey, founder/CEO of Harpo Productions.

5. **Loyalty** – Employees need to know – and be reminded – that leaders won’t embarrass them when they make mistakes and that they will stand with them when the seas get rough.

Effective leaders know that a successful strategy doesn’t come from their brain alone, but from the collective input of the people and teams that surround them. The result? Enterprise-wide buy-in and impassioned execution.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marc Kramer, executive-in-residence at the Haub School of Business, is a serial entrepreneur, author of six books and has run over 20 startup and four turnaround companies. His expertise is in launching new ventures, marketing, market research, sales, raising capital and leadership. He also writes a national column for American City Business Journal, a regional column for SmartCEO magazine and provides weekly entrepreneurial educational content for KYW News Radio. Follow him @marcdkramer

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