

Seven Steps to Creating a Winning Team Culture



A winning team culture includes great teamwork, strong collaboration, amazingly talented employees, sound leadership, effective planning, and consistent decision making. In the end, it all comes down to the people. As Southwest Airlines says, “Our number one customer is not our customer; our number one customers are our employees. If we take care of our employees, our employees will take care of our customers.”

The culture of an organization, winning or otherwise, is defined as soon as people join together. It is the pride in workmanship, commitment to the team and each other, and a sense of belonging. When everyone recognizes that they are part of the team and that everyone should take responsibility for their personal contributions, the culture is created. The question is: Is it the culture you want to have or be a part of?

To help create a winning team culture, follow these seven strategies:

Hire right: It all begins with hiring the right people and getting them in the right positions. This doesn’t mean that you look for the most qualified; instead it means having a minimum skill set requirement and then hiring for the attitude will fit into your culture.

“Creating a winning culture all begins with hiring the right people and getting them in the right positions.”

1 Raise the bar: Set the level of performance expectations up front and communicate them to everyone. This includes what your team stands for and the values they represent. This ensures that everyone is on the same page and there is no confusion.

2 Display that you care: The old adage “people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care” has never been truer. Some might think this shows vulnerability; rather it demonstrates strength for the leader as well as the team. A winning culture thrives in an environment of support. When support is missing, employee engagement deteriorates and employees become detached.

3 Live the winning culture every day: A winning culture is a mindset, as critical at the front line level as it is in the board room. This means that managers need to be present in the workplace, at least emotionally if they cannot be present physically.

4 Be a cheerleader: The great coach Paul ‘Bear’ Bryant said, “If anything goes wrong, I did it, if anything goes semi-right then we did it, and if anything goes just right, you did it.” He shared those words with his team frequently, and they believed him. Nothing gains employee buy-in faster than praise and recognition.

5 Foster growth: “If you’re not growing, you’re dying” is a truism that resonates here. By encouraging individual growth, employee engagement, and productivity, you naturally increase a positive team culture.

6 Enjoy yourself: When employees see you having fun in what you do, they will recognize that fun is acceptable. Having fun

in the workplace is a business strategy that engages employees, and when employees are truly engaged, turnover is reduced and the winning culture is stronger. Morale is increased and productivity is elevated.

Market-leading companies are often voted as a top place to work and there is a reason for this — they have a winning team culture. Is your team culture a winning culture?

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