

ACE WOMEN'S Network™ Michigan

Mentoring Mondays

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Creating a Success Culture

The idea of a success culture is the result of a world-wide survey conducted in the early 2000s that included 139 offices in 29 professional service firms in 15 countries in 15 different lines of business. The basic question in this particular survey was “Are employees’ attitudes correlated with financial success?” The answer to the question varied, but in most cases it was yes. And in those “yes” cases, it was found that there were high levels of commitment, dedication and enthusiasm toward organizational goals.

Where there is less commitment, dedication and enthusiasm, how can a leader or manager create a culture that promotes growth and/or measurable returns? These are some concepts that come to mind:

Teamwork;

High institutional standards; and

Strong employee development programs.

But the real key is the character of the individual leaders and managers.

The success culture is about creating a community. It is not about just teamwork. It is much more. It is about a community where people feel a mutual sense of responsibility and obligation to support each other. Each accepts her/his share of the responsibility – as well as challenges – that face the organization. It is not a random collection of people who happen to work in the same firm or who happen to be members of the same organization, but individuals who feel a sense of “being in this together.”

According to some of the most effective leaders or managers, here are some ways to achieve this kind of community.

As you grow, help people grow – invest in professional development programs;

As you grow, work to build loyalty to the organization;

Give regular updates to ensure that everyone is informed and knows why a decision was made;

Earn trust by supporting and encouraging discussion;

Enforce the rule that people don't leave until they ask if anyone needs help;

Face success and failures as a group – don't be so quick to point the finger;

Good communication ranks high in every successful endeavor. Create formal and informal means of information sharing. Here, it is important for employees and members to always be ready with the one-minute “elevator speech.”

And the list goes on. But these are not arbitrary rules of good people management. These are the practices of the most successful and profitable offices throughout the world. The message is clear. Accept the challenge. Have the courage to believe that the message from your leadership is clear and that the strategy is not to wait until tomorrow, or until someone else implements the plan. Remember, you reap the benefits of what you do, not what you hope to get done someday, if it is convenient and you are not too busy.