

MAINTAINING A CHANGED CULTURE [POCKETBOOK]

Culture transformation is a long journey, but it does come to an end. Once the objectives of the transformation have been achieved, your organization has reached its destination.

The next objective is to sustain those results. As circumstances both within and outside the organization change continuously, it is leadership's job to ensure that the culture remains consistent going forward. Without active, visible support from leadership, an organization's culture will begin to fragment and become less impactful, as employees lose their sense of direction and clarity around the organization's mission and values, or new employees join bringing their own perspectives from previous employers.

Here is a five-pronged approach for sustaining culture transformation long after the process of change is over.



1. STAY ACCOUNTABLE TO THE DESIRED OUTCOME.

- After the change has been implemented, don't lay aside the metrics you used to assess whether it was successful. Continue reporting on them so that everyone in the organization knows how well the results of the change are being sustained.
- Think about how you want your organization to be described by employees and customers. These words—which should also appear in your mission statement and values so that all employees are aware of them—should continue to define your culture years after the change is complete.
- Create visual reminders of the importance of the change. This could involve regular messages from the CEO or another senior leader, dashboards posted on the company's intranet (in order to show progress toward measurable goals), or eye-catching posters on the walls.

2. CELEBRATE SUCCESSES.

- Use the same metrics that determined the success of the change in order to identify related achievements that occur after the change has been implemented. For example, if one of the desired outcomes was for the customer service team to reduce resolution times for customer-reported issues by 35 percent, and by the next quarter it has been improved by 45 percent, you'll know you have a cause for celebration.

3. SUSTAIN AND STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE BY INCORPORATING IT INTO THE HR CYCLE.

- Recruit employees who demonstrate qualities and personal attributes that are aligned with the organization's culture and mission.
- If possible, repurpose training content used during the change initiative for the onboarding process. This ensures consistency so that new employees understand the overarching mission and how they fit into it.
- Reinforce the desired behaviors in the performance management process, aligning individual goals with organizational goals and basing criteria for promotions on them.

4. TAKE REGULAR PULSE CHECKS.

In order to ensure you are sustaining the results from the culture change, you can also gather qualitative feedback from employees and customers on a regular basis. This could involve:

- Surveys
- 360-degree performance reviews for the leadership team
- Customer and employee focus groups

5. BUILD AND MAINTAIN CONVICTION.

In order to actively sustain change, employees' "hearts, hands, and minds" must be engaged.

- Inspire employees' pride in their work and the organization overall. This can be done by recognizing behavior that exemplifies the outcome and linking it to the organization's overall success, as well as reporting the organization's positive impacts on customers, the local community, or society.
- Help employees continue to build desirable behaviors and skills by providing followup training after the change process is complete.
- Ensure leadership's behaviors, words, and actions remain consistent with the goals of the change.