

Team-Culture Training

“The people you work with are people you were just thrown together with. I mean, you don't know them. It wasn't your choice. And yet you spend more time with them than you do your friends or your family. But probably all you have in common is the fact that you walk around on the same bit of carpet for eight hours a day.”

- A character in the original British version of *The Office*

That show and its American counterpart are great examples of how a bad Team Culture can really kill any possibility for success an organization might have. Of course, some businesses enjoy a culture of happy, engaged employees who are focused on the team mission and committed to fulfilling its long-term vision. These companies:

- Attract, inspire, and retain quality team members.
- Successfully adapt to change and thrive under adverse conditions.
- Inspire extraordinary loyalty from the people they serve.
- Consistently operate with peak efficiency.
- Have a harmonious, cooperative, and stress-free work environment.

Does this describe your current operation? If not, I can tell you why in one short sentence: you don't have a well-established Team Culture. Team Culture is the combination of the underlying values, beliefs and behaviors that either support or undermine your company's highest ideals.

If you already employ a support staff, your Team Culture will be a determining factor in your journey to success. But even if you are a one-person operation, development of a Team Culture is necessary to establish consistent, rational, and positive rules of engagement for every occasion both for you and for your future staff as you grow.

Your Team Culture is the manifestation of the following defining documents. We'll be delving into each of these in greater detail, but let's first define them and see how they work together.

- **Shared Team Values** is a list of the fundamental ideals that you, as a company, value most.
- Your **Emerald City Vision** is a short pronouncement of what you want the company to become (and how you want it to feel) through the embodiment of your Shared Team Values.
- Your **Code of Honor** is a list of internal rules—incorporating your values and vision—describing how team members deal with the public, the company, and each other.

Your organization's success and your personal success depend on how well you define and live by each of these important concepts. In fact, companies whose teams embrace shared values enjoy a 29 percent greater profitability than other firms (*Watson Wyatt Work Study*).

Below is a list of some of the ideals that make up Team Culture. How would your team score in each of these areas?

- Commitment/loyalty
- Supportive/harmonious environment
- Effectiveness of systems
- Work ethic/efficiency
- Shared priorities
- Selflessness
- Camaraderie/team orientation
- Positive attitude/enthusiasm
- Shared values and vision
- Trust in leadership

Team Culture is one of the most overlooked elements of success in business, and implementing it is simple, powerful, and free. But it's not easy. The challenge in developing a strong Team Culture comes down to how strongly it is embraced by the team members and how consistently it is supported by the leaders.

What makes a great Team Culture? If you look at [Fortune's list of the best companies to work for](#) you will see some commonalities that make for such a great work environment, which is part of Team Culture. Certainly benefits and fair pay are part of the equation, but more often than not it's the little things, such as having an effective system of employee feedback, flexible scheduling, shared vision, consistent policy enforcement, team building, and recognition for notable actions. These are things that a company of any size can do without breaking the bank.

For more ideas on creating a great Team Culture, pick up a copy of [Change the Culture, Change the Game](#) or [The Great Workplace](#) (save a tree--and some money--by picking them up used or for your book reader).