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By Rick Boxx

FIVE STEPS TO A HEALTHY BUSINESS CULTURE

In my book, *Unconventional Business*, I identify five steps towards developing a healthy, ethical culture within a company or organization. The first step is “Assessing the strength of your culture.” Years ago, I reviewed a culture assessment tool with a business owner. He gave himself the highest rankings, assuring me his staff would as well. When my assessment for his company was complete, however, this owner learned his entire team had rated his leadership – and the culture of his organization – very low.

1 Corinthians 3:18 says, “**Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise.**” To establish a healthy culture, begin with an objective assessment of your existing culture; otherwise, you are likely to be deceived.

The second step is to “Cast vision for the future.” In 1961, during the “Cold War” with Russia, U.S. President John F. Kennedy cast a bold vision. He proclaimed America would place a man on the moon by 1970. By publicly communicating his dream, Kennedy set the stage for the fulfillment of that vision.

In Habakkuk 2:3, the Lord told Habakkuk, “**For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail.**” Your team needs a vision of what the culture of your organization could look like in the future. If it is compelling enough, they will help you achieve that vision.

Step three is to “Develop your strategy and tactics.” Your culture will not change unless you take the necessary steps. A friend and I were consulting with a contractor on his business culture. While developing the strategy and tactics, it became obvious this contractor had language barriers requiring some adjustments. These helped the process – and the business – to move forward successfully.

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Proverbs 16:9 teaches, “[The mind of man plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps.](#)” When developing your strategy and tactics, begin with the vision of the future, invite God into the process, and break down the necessary steps your unique situation will require.

Step four is to “Communicate, communicate, communicate.” If you do not constantly communicate values and vision for the future, they can be easily forgotten. Some leaders host events focused on company values. Others scroll their values on TV screens or post signs on office walls.

In Deuteronomy 6, God communicated His laws by telling the Israelites, “[You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.](#)” To develop a healthy culture, communicate values frequently and consistently.

The final step is to “Make periodic assessments and adjustments.” A company had a fairly strong culture. However, when a partner of the business left, taking customers and employees with him, this devastated the organization’s culture. Developing a culture is not a destination, it is a journey.

Facing an enemy attack, Nehemiah, had to assess his culture and adjust while rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. In Nehemiah 4:9 he wrote, “[But we prayed to our God, and because of them we set up a guard against them day and night.](#)” As part of your plan for building a healthy culture don’t forget to schedule periodic assessments.

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Reflection/Discussion Question

1. How would you describe your company's – or organization's culture – right now?
2. What are the culture's strengths, as you perceive them, as well as its weaknesses?
3. Why is an organization's culture important? Are not profits and losses, production numbers and sales, the primary considerations? How can a culture – good or bad – influence business successes or failures?
4. If you were to focus on just one of the five suggested steps for building a healthy business culture, which would it be – and why?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Proverbs 24:27, 27:23-27, 29:18; Ezekiel 34:12; John 10:1-5,11-15; Philippians 2:3-4

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