

BUILDING A **POSITIVE** WORKPLACE CULTURE



All workplaces have a culture that shapes how things get done, how people interact and engage with others and what is appropriate and acceptable behaviour.

Workplace culture influences the management, organisation and application of work and is defined by the collective view of all employees. All work activity, interactions and relationships are impacted by this collective view.

A positive workplace culture will produce beneficial employee and work outcomes and create a pleasant working environment, while a poor culture will have a negative impact on both employee and business performance.

Building a positive workplace culture is also important in attracting and retaining skilled staff in your business.

The importance of good leadership

A positive workplace culture starts from the top. Whilst all employees have a role in creating a positive workplace, the words and actions of leaders in your business provide the examples for your employees to follow.

Leaders and managers of teams can make a significant contribution to the development of a positive workplace when they:

- give clear and consistent instructions and messages that reinforce positive workplace behaviours;
- demonstrate the type of behaviour they expect from other people;
- deal promptly with issues that may undermine a positive workplace; and
- recognise and celebrate individual employee and team successes.

The leadership of a business sets the tone for the entire team and is critical in building a positive workplace culture.

Getting the right workplace fit

Because the workplace culture in your business is created from the collective view of all the people that work there, it follows that getting the right mix and fit of employees is important.

People differ in their personalities, views and values and an understanding and recognition of these differences is essential in supporting your business to create a positive work environment.

The right workplace 'fit' is where the values and behaviours of an individual employee align with those of the people they work with and those of the business.

In businesses where there are high levels of accord and a positive outlook, employees will generally experience:

- greater job satisfaction;
- closer identification to the business;
- stronger loyalty;
- stronger commitment;
- lower absenteeism; and
- higher levels of job performance.

People working in jobs they like and for businesses that share their personal values will typically be happier in the workplace and more productive.

Building employee engagement

How a person feels about the work they do, the people they work with and the position and direction of the business they work for impacts on how engaged they will be.

Fully engaged employees will promote the work they do and the interests and reputation of the business they work in, positively.

Improved engagement starts with the stated position, and the objectives and commitments of the business which can be clearly identified through vision, mission and values statements. Employees need to know what the business stands for, how it operates and where it is heading.

Your business can build and maintain employee engagement by:

- regular, positive communication that reinforces the value of the work people do;
- asking for feedback and listening to what employees say;
- providing employees with the tools and resources they need to do their job effectively;
- supporting employees with professional development and training;
- caring for the welfare and well-being of employees;
- recognising and rewarding extra effort and outstanding results; and
- encouraging fun and humour in the workplace.

Examples of employee engagement include having regular meetings with staff to check on progress and to resolve any issues, having a training and professional development plan for each employee, and introducing health and well-being programs in your workplace.

The value of teams

In many businesses there is a need for people to work in teams and to interact with others.

Businesses often establish teams to take advantage of the combined skills and experience of their employees. Teams generally get things done faster and more efficiently while also providing an opportunity for learning, development and team building.

Bringing together individuals with different experience, skills and temperament to work in teams requires good management. Understanding the motivation and interests of individual employees is important.

Teamwork is essential in the creation of a positive workplace. Good team processes that provide clear direction, set targets and goals and support the delegation of work will result in positive workplace behaviours in your business.

Positive teamwork builds trust, reliance and cohesion in the workplace.



Building a positive workplace culture

You can build, maintain and develop a positive workplace culture in your business by:

- demonstrating strong leadership and setting good examples;
- consistent and regular two-way communication with employees;
- understanding the views, values and motivations of individual employees;
- offering opportunities for professional development and growth;
- recognising and rewarding effort;
- establishing and building strong teams; and
- caring about your employees.

For more information, resources and practical tools to help you plan, attract, develop and retain a skilled workforce, visit:
www.workplace-essentials.dtwd.wa.gov.au



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