

CULTURE PRIORITIES

Definition

A “culture priority” is a clear and concise list of principles—backed up by more specific, behavior-based descriptions—that make it absolutely clear what is truly valued in your culture, and why that is valued.

Clear and Concise. Don’t try to sound cool. Try to sound real.

Principles. High-level values are lovely, but they don’t represent real choices. Get your principles to a level of clarity that will actually drive behavior in the workplace.

Behavior-based descriptions. Nail it down with a series of bullet points or sentences that paint a more tactile picture of what that principle looks like in real life.

The why. The principles and behaviors you choose are chosen for a reason—because they work. If you can’t explain exactly why that is, then people won’t adhere to them.

Client Example

Here’s an example from one of our clients:

We lead the way.

We are expected by stakeholders to be at the forefront; so we are intentional in the way we take calculated risks in order to innovate, change and stay ahead of the curve.

- Discussing and defining risk is part of our normal decision-making process.
- We accept that there will be some risk when we move away and/or improve upon our existing processes. Failure or shortcomings may arise; however, we will collectively learn from these experiences and proceed forward.
- We test and experiment early and throughout the process.
- Responding with “How could we make that work?” is preferable to “That won’t work because...”
- We take time to celebrate and reinforce what’s working well.
- We value timeliness in product selection and development.
- We support ensuring time and space for new ideas to “take root.”

EXERCISE: COME UP WITH A PRIORITY STATEMENT RELATED TO INNOVATION

Imagine that you did a culture assessment, and you discovered the following patterns related to innovation:

- Your culture values the CONCEPTS behind innovation:
 - Creativity
 - Future focus
 - Inspiration
- Your culture does NOT put as much attention to the ACTIONS that support innovation:
 - Risk-taking
 - Experimentation
 - Beta testing and proto-typing.
- In other words, you talk the talk around innovation, but you don't walk the walk.

NAME/DESCRIPTION OF PRIORITY:

BEHAVIORS. WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN THE REAL WORLD:

Part 3: CULTURE “PLAY”

Definition

A “play” is something that you either create or change about the way you do things in your organization that is intentionally designed to move your culture in the direction of the priorities you have identified.

EXAMPLES:

Cross-functional teams. Create several new teams drawn from multiple departments whose task is to work on a common project or solve a specific problem together. This play may rely on additional plays related to cross-departmental communication. One such team could be a team you convene to be ongoing stewards of your new workplace culture.

Internal communication. Change or introduce specific processes related to how internal teams communicate. It could include sharing of meeting minutes more broadly, creation of periodic check-in meetings, or it could involve an extensive technology change (e.g., adopting a tool like Slack or Basecamp) to ensure more effective cross-functional communication.

Performance Reviews. Revise the performance management process to ensure that individuals are evaluated and rewarded based on how well they collaborate and communicate with others in the organization.

For a full Playbook, you would take time to flesh out your plays, develop timelines, and identify both resources needed or anticipated obstacles to completing them.

For now, focus on the first step:

What would you do?

How would it move the needle on your Culture Priority?

EXERCISE2 : BRAINSTORM SOME DRAFT "PLAYS" RELATED TO INNOVATION

Come up with some changes you could implement that would move the needle on the priority you drafted in the previous exercise:

WHAT WILL YOU DO:

HOW WILL IT MOVE THE NEEDLE ON YOUR PRIORITY: