

Culture: The Key Ingredient

SEPTEMBER 1, 2017



In the piece “The Necessity of Culture Fit,” Daubenspeck and Associates identified culture fit as the most important factor in determining success in a position. We defined ‘culture’ as the sum of organizational design, interaction, productivity, purpose, and external factors. Furthermore, they communicated how both culture fit and understanding an organization’s unique character is imperative to the growth, progress, and future success to that organization.

“Workplace culture still stands as the most important factor in determining whether a candidate will, or can, succeed in a position.”

Workplace culture, which is comprised of an organization’s values, goals, and practices, still stands as the most important factor in determining whether a candidate will, or can, succeed in their position. If an organization’s strategies are what define what needs to be done, and its human resources are what executes those strategies, then its culture is what determines *how* those strategies are executed. In other words, a firm’s capability to implement strategy is a product of the relationship between its employees and the culture within which they are embedded.

Individuals in a cohesive culture share a single set of operating assumptions about their workplace. These shared expectations guide behavior and shape relationships within the company. This productive culture increases job satisfaction, which is why a great workplace culture is consistently a must-have for top prospect candidates.

An organizational culture that aligns with long term strategic goals creates productive bonds between an organization and its workers. Efficient communication allows individuals to share their insights to advance



company improvement, and motivates them through ownership of clear goals and a positive understanding of their role. Culture therefore affects the ability of candidates to contribute to their firm's capabilities by altering their behavior, their choices, and ultimately their perceived relationship to the company itself.

A robust culture effectively integrates new personnel and operationalizes their unique skills and insights to fuel continuous improvement within the company. Morale, the flow of communication within a company, and the manner in which strategies are interpreted are all culture-dependent. Employees in a strong culture value the goals of the company, believe in following policy, and understand how to react to unexpected challenges. Thus, culture forms the foundation of a firm's capability to implement its strategies.

The above factors make culture the most important element of a firm's ability to effectively execute policy. For instance, in workplaces with occupational hazards, a strong "safety culture" leads to greater policy compliance, reduced accidents, and improved productivity. A work culture that aligns with organizational priorities minimizes implementation slippage—the difference between desired goals and actual outcomes.

Companies with a strong culture recognize and take advantage of their employees' full creative capacities. Individual capabilities become company capabilities when skill sets are aligned to the pursuit of specific goals, diverse insights are shared between peers, and employees are given ownership over specific outcomes and accountabilities. Such a culture functions so that employees work as one to deliver on company goals, and is a blueprint for the success of any organization.

About Daubenspeck and Associates

Daubenspeck and Associates is an international retained executive search firm. Based in Chicago and founded in 1982, Daubenspeck and Associates is a privately held corporation. Known for combining a global reach with a personal touch, they are experts in executive search, cross-border appointments, pioneering culture match assessments.

A Top-40 Search Firm with executive leadership identified by Business Week as one of the 150 Most Influential Headhunters in the World.

