

10 Ingredients of a High- Performance Culture



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Should You Obsess Over Culture?

Kinda...

A high-performance culture signals you're doing something right (or many things!). It helps with hiring, retention, and so much more.

Just check out this stat: If a culture deteriorates, **71% of employees** would look for new opportunities elsewhere.

But I've also seen leaders obsess over culture to no avail. They create something that feels "forced" or contrived.

So what are they doing wrong?

Well, they're focused on the wrong things.

Let me explain...



What is Culture?

It's a hard thing to define. If you Google it, you'll get 1,000 definitions. **Here's mine:**



**CULTURE = THE COLLECTIVE
EXPERIENCE OF THE TEAM**

A great culture means that people are having a positive experience working at your company.

A poor culture means the opposite. So, culture is a reflection of how the team feels about the workplace.

It's an output, not an input.



What ingredients do you need to create a high-performance culture?

1. Well-Defined Values



Values are your cultural DNA.

They act as your compass, guiding decisions and behaviors even when you're not in the room.

To define your values:

- **MAKE THEM EASY TO REMEMBER BUT POWERFUL IN IMPACT**
- **3-5 ONLY**

The more actionable, the better. Get your values right and communicate them clearly, and culture will flourish.

2. Exciting Vision

When people feel part of something bigger, they become inspired to contribute.

The most motivating visions describe an ambitious future world in vivid detail:

- **PAINT A BOLD COMPANY VISION**
- **SUMMARIZE IN 4 POWERFUL SENTENCES**
- **TIMELINE: 3, 5, 10, 20 YEARS COMMUNICATING THE VISION REPEATEDLY OVER TIME IS KEY**

It should be visible throughout the company and reinforced constantly.

Craft a vivid vision, and culture will align behind it.

3. Crystal Clear Goals

Well-defined goals act as milestones for achieving the vision.

The most effective goals are limited to only the 3 most important – any more leads to diffusion of effort:

- **SET ONLY 3 TOP GOALS PER YEAR (AND MAKE THEM MEMORABLE)**
- **ADD 1-3 MEASURABLE OUTCOMES FOR EACH**

Crystal clear goals align people to priorities and provide the roadmap for your culture.

4. Individual Autonomy

Micromanagers kill morale and creativity.

The fix is not more oversight but providing a crystal clear vision and empowering your team to achieve your collective goals.

With autonomy, people feel purpose-driven, not process-driven. So:

- **DON'T MICROMANAGE. EMPOWER THROUGH CLARITY**
- **LET YOUR TEAMS FIGURE OUT THE "HOW"**

Provide clarity of goals and vision, then let your team surprise you. Autonomy is the fuel for cultural excellence.

5. Well-Trained Managers



Your managers have an outsized impact on culture through their team and management style:

- **DEVELOP YOUR MANAGERS INTO LEADERS**
- **PRIORITIZE THEIR DEVELOPMENT**
- **SET YOUR TEAM UP FOR SUCCESS**

Well-trained managers are force multipliers for your culture.

Prioritize developing your managers into strong leaders – then the team can succeed without you there.

6. Praise, Recognition, Celebration

Publicly praising progress maintains high standards and motivates teams.

But don't publicly air discontent.

Handle issues constructively during 1-on-1s to avoid demotivating others.

Many leaders also fail to **celebrate wins** enough. Make it frequent and baked into operations:



- **RECOGNIZE TO SET AND MAINTAIN A HIGH BAR**
- **ACKNOWLEDGE EXCELLENCE PUBLICLY**
- **TACKLE UNDERPERFORMANCE IN PRIVATE**

Recognition is rocket fuel for culture.

7. Work-life Boundaries

Work-life balance starts with leadership
setting the tone.



Burnout is deadly and contagious. When leaders burn the midnight oil, teams feel pressured to follow suit.

Maintaining healthy boundaries is now even more important, so set core collaboration hours and be mindful of after-hours communication:

- **THE EXAMPLE STARTS WITH YOU**
- **NO WEEKEND SLACK-BOMBS**
- **ENCOURAGE TIME OFF WORK-LIFE BOUNDARIES**
ENABLE A HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE CULTURE FOR ALL.

8. Diverse Perspectives

Many founders aim to hire people just like themselves.

But this leads to groupthink.

Intentionally building a diverse team introduces different spices into the **cultural “soup.”**

To tap into its full potential, you must proactively include diverse voices in discussions:

- **ENCOURAGE THE ACTIVE SHARING OF IDEAS**
- **VALUE DIFFERENCES OF THOUGHT AND BACKGROUND**

Diverse perspectives prevent insular groupthink.

9. Strong Connection to Impact

Linking daily work back to the company's mission provides meaning and purpose.

Reinforce purpose through real customer stories. Put faces to the impact being made:

- **LINK DAY-TO-DAY WORK TO COMPANY MISSION**
- **REINFORCE HOW EVERY ROLE CONTRIBUTES**
- **PURPOSE DRIVES RESILIENCE**

A strong connection to impact is **rocket fuel for culture.**

10. Aligned Upside

Reward stand-out contributions
as they happen.



- **PEOPLE WORK HARDEST WHEN PROPERLY MOTIVATED**
- **IMPLEMENT PERFORMANCE BONUSES**

Having an aligned upside enables a
winning culture.

Design your incentives smartly to bring
out the best in people.

**Get these 10 ingredients right first.
Then, culture will blossom on its own.**

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leadership & startup
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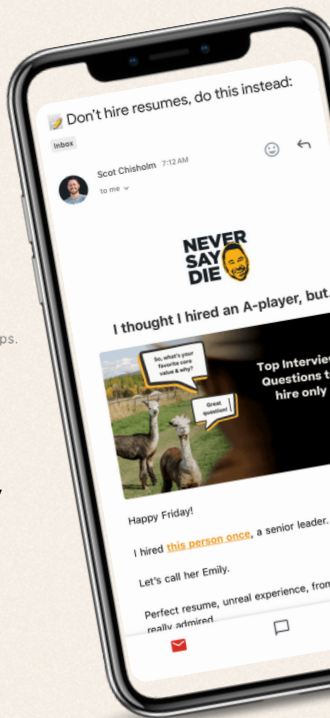
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