

Member's Quarterly

Spring 2019 Edition

Feature

Five Steps to Lead Your Troops Out of the Trenches

How do you improve your workplace culture?

Life is too short to be working in a miserable environment. But what can we do from the trenches of management to make change? We can't authorize the building of gyms, introduce new policies giving employees more paid days off or front expensive employee development programs. That's done by the senior executives. They're the ones responsible for creating amazing workplace cultures, right?

It's true that the culture of an organization is based on the behaviours of its leaders. However, even middle managers are leaders. I once thought that I had to wait for head office to drive change and set the stage for how we worked together. Then I decided to become the general of my own army.

As the leader of a regional team, we went to work on becoming a high performance team. This included addressing how we worked together as a management team and also how we could pull together to better manage our employees. We developed a vision for our business unit and agreed on the values that were most important for our combined success.

Over the course of several years, we were able to shift things from being silo functions merely existing in the same building to a cohesive, aligned and committed, results-oriented team. When we felt that our head office wasn't providing enough information, we didn't complain about it. Instead we invited key players with the information our team needed to our management meetings. We became proactive. It wasn't long before senior executives began to send compliments our way.

So what can you do to make your business a better workplace for your employees? Here are five steps to help you.

#1 Assess what your current environment is really about. Is it filled with teamwork or mistrust?

#2 Get crystal clear on the purpose of your business unit and how it contributes to the greater organization. Communicate to your employees the purpose and how each and every one of them can contribute to its success.

#3 Define what you'd like the workplace to look like. Perhaps you'd like more social activities or more ongoing professional development. Outline what is needed in order to deliver most effectively.

#4 List the things you can change within your own sphere of influence. If you don't feel your team has the right information to get the job done, how can you improve it? Be proactive.

#5 Build an action plan with dates, resource requirements and accountabilities. Build it into your annual business plan.

Don't let the fact that you're working in the trenches of middle management stop you from improving your culture. Every operation needs a strong line of defence as well as an offence that keeps everyone moving forward. You can and should be the commander in charge of the corporate culture around you.

Share.

Carol Ring is the Founder and President of The Culture Connection. She is the author of Ignite Your Culture: 6 Steps to Fuel your People, Profits and Potential and Awakening the Workplace. She can be reached via email at carol@carolring.ca



Carol Ring
President,
The Culture
Connection