

The Business Case for Culture Elevator Speech Exercise

Overview

An elevator speech is a brief persuasive statement that is used to spark interest in a topic. The ability to briefly describe the business value of culture may prove to be the difference in gaining leadership and stakeholder support for culture initiatives.

Use the two sets of questions below as prompts for you to think about the major elements of culture in your organization, and then link them to performance at multiple levels. To complete this, follow these steps:

- 1. Complete the Exercise below by writing down your answers for each element of culture and link to performance (Questions 1 and 2).*
- 2. Then, combine the most powerful statements into your elevator speech.*
- 3. Once you have devised your speech, time yourself saying it aloud. It should take no more than 30 seconds for you to complete it verbally.*
- 4. Next, before you use it in a performance setting, deliver it to some of your colleagues and ask for feedback about whether or not it motivates them to work on your organization's culture. If not, ask them what they would change and how.*
- 5. Update your speech accordingly.*
- 6. Deliver your speech to stakeholders.*

As a quick reference, here is the definition of Organizational culture: is the product of individual and collective experiences within the work environment, which guide and inform the way we interact with each other and, in turn, the way we serve our customers. Key elements within organizations that shape culture include mission, goals, systems, norms, and beliefs. Culture is truly all encompassing and its impact is pervasive across contexts.

Exercise:

Question 1. What are the elements of culture at your organization?

Take a moment and think about the organization where you currently work. What is it like to work there?

- *Do you feel like you have the support you need to reach your full potential as a human being?*
- *Do people treat each other with dignity and respect and demonstrate genuine interest in getting to know and supporting one another?*
- *Do leaders coach each individual at their needs, demonstrate care and concern for each individual on their team, and foster a team environment characterized by open dialogue, voicing suggestions and opinions, and constructive feedback?*
- *Do teams work across organizational silos to collaborate and achieve goals?*
- *Is there a clear strategic plan that dictates work and connects the mission to strategic goals, to concrete objectives and to operations? Does every individual understand how their work fits into the strategic plan and the organization's success?*

Question 2. How do they relate to performance?

Now, combine this information together. What is your global (overall) perception of your organization? Once you have the global perspective in mind, think about how it impacts effectiveness at multiple levels by answering the questions below. Each connection you make between your global perspective and its impacts on effectiveness is evidence that supports the business case for your organization's culture.

- *Your effectiveness inside and outside of work?*
- *The effectiveness of your team?*
- *The effectiveness of your business area?*
- *The effectiveness of your organization overall?*