# The Business Case for Culture (at Your Organization)

## Overview

The business case for culture is simple: if you care about the success of your organization then you should care about your organization's culture. 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 the summation of experiences at work. This is important to business for two major reasons:

1. Culture informs decisions and behavior; and
2. Culture influences the ability to attract and retain talent.

## Culture informs decisions and behavior:

Culture informs people in organizations of what they should do and why they should do it. It serves as a decision-making and behavioral guide for organizational members. Combined, decisions and behavior equate to performance. As a collective experience, culture is powerful because it influences groups of people to perform in similar ways. Organizations tend to be successful when culture influences performance in ways that achieve goals. When culture influences people to behave in ways that are not aligned with goals, organizational performance can suffer tremendously.

## Culture influences the ability to attract and retain talent:

Decisions and behavior dictate how organizational members treat each other, how leaders engage with their teams, and how systems support each member's professional and personal needs. This is how culture affects perceptions of the work environment. Positive culture fosters a desirable work environment where members want to remain with the organization. A desirable work environment attracts new talent. The ability to attract and retain talent is a major competitive advantage in the modern labor market, and talent is paramount to organizational performance and success.

## Bottom line:

*Culture influences organizational success through the collective level of talent and the quality of performance of the people in the organization. To be successful, it is imperative that organizations continuously monitor and devote resources to nurture a positive culture that aligns with its goals.*

## Understanding your culture:

*To invest in and improve the culture at your organization, you and your leaders must first understand it and how it influences performance in your context. The tools on this website are designed to assist you with this assessment. Here is a brief description of each:*

- *The Business Case for Culture: Elevator Speech. This tool prompts you to think about different cultural elements and how they impact performance at multiple levels in your organization. The links between culture and performance that you define may serve as the elevator speech for the business case for culture in your organization. Use this speech to convey to others in your organization the importance of devoting resources toward building a positive culture.*

- *Workplace Assessment: Engagement Culture Conversation. This tool contains multiple exercises designed to define the current and future state of your organization's culture and to identify specific gaps in between. It provides questions for interviews and/or focus groups that can assist you in identifying the specific attributes, behaviors, and tasks needed to foster a positive culture.*