

SAFETY CULTURE

Safety is not just about following regulations and check lists. On-point culture is the keyword to a team that is fine-tuned and focused on what they want to achieve. Nick Peardon of Treeincarnation tells us more.

WORDS | NICK PEARDON - TREEINCARNATION

More often than not, attempts to improve safety commonly consist of 'safety' meetings (largely their fundamental purpose isn't to improve safety), gear checks, arial rescues and ensuring sufficient time is allocated towards jobs.

However, what has the biggest impact, and what also largely goes overlooked, is ensuring an on-point culture.

Culture, especially in larger organisations, is typically put aside or dumped in the 'too hard' basket due to the fact it's difficult to report on, and because there is a general lack of awareness on how to effectively develop and nurture it.

Bottling culture and putting metrics on it so it can be reported on can be difficult, sure, instilling procedures to ensure the longevity of a culture can also be deterring as well.

However, choosing to remain ignorant to it because of its perceived complexity is a poor excuse in allowing it to fall by the wayside.

I'm a big advocate for having alignment within an organisation. Alignment in the sense of being on the same page, sharing similar values and uniting to work towards what the business intends to achieve.

This not only provokes a camaraderie within a team, but most importantly serves to ensure each team player has everyone else's back.

Being the third most dangerous job in the country, in a lot of scenarios the nature of



the work means a worker's life is commonly in the hands of one of their colleagues.

All the safety meetings in the world wouldn't prevent an accident from happening nearly as well as compared to an aligned team in an on-point culture.

A word on Culture

Culture is not wishy-washy. Leaders who neglect it find a whole amass of greater problems they have to deal with and it is this misconception that is largely is foundational to the inefficiencies many businesses face today.

To avoid it would be to largely do the biggest disservice to all in the business and to all who come into contact with the business.

For a lot of organisations, the problem stems not from a lack of structures in place to best help promote great culture, but from their recruitment process.

It was the masterful Jim Collins who stated, in his proclaimed book *Good To Great* "get the right people on the bus, and the right people in the right seats."

Our staff on boarding process at Treeincarnation ensures that only the right people get in. What determines a candidate to be 'right' largely comes down to identifying alignment in values.

For instance, if a candidate applies for a position and doesn't recognise benefits in having an informal, fun, spontaneous and high-energy approach to how we go about doing business, then likely they aren't going to resonate with our practice of having 'prank days' every week. Prank days stems from recognising the importance of having fun at work and everyone's need to want to enjoy coming to work as well. It is one of the ways in which we maintain and amplify the camaraderie in the team.

While no one really lasts in the industry unless they enjoy it, no one is going to last in an organisation unless they get along with the people in it. Alignment is where it starts.

Understanding that culture is a constantly moving target. These weekly rituals that boost culture are key to ensuring each team member remains aligned for the purpose of high performance, staff fulfilment and safe work practices.

What similar procedure could you implement within the organisation in which you work?



For some it might be an in-house climbing competition, for others it would be singing kumbaya.

What ever it is for you, the point of it all is not to simply have an exercise that you do each week. That is against the point. It's about alignment and it's about congruence with what ritual fundamentally encompasses the culture at its' core.

It may be difficult for you initially to think of something. If this is you, good. This means you're on the right track. Wrestle

with it and continue to unpack it until you think you are close to the answer. What this might also uncover is a lack of parameters in the recruitment process around determining who gets into your organisation in the first place.

If this is also you, have a think about the values your people on your bus most commonly share and recruit based on them.

When you have a culture of what I call '3am guys' (a team who would remove a dead body for each other at 3 o'clock in the morning), the chances of having accidents or even close calls are significantly reduced.

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