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Focus

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Building a Team of Entrepreneurs

One secret to building and sustaining a great company is to encourage entrepreneurial behavior among employees who are, for the most part, not entrepreneurial (if they were, they would be working in their own company). Employees are more productive and deliver more *discretionary* effort when leaders create a culture that rewards entrepreneurial spirit. **Personal entrepreneurship** is a discretionary act.

You need a balanced culture to develop personal entrepreneurs within your company. This

culture depends on hiring the right people and maintaining a humane workplace. There are many humane values, but the following cover most of the bases.

1. Excellence - pride of achievement
2. Joy. A joyful workplace uplifts the human spirit. Have fun and celebrate.
3. Innovation
 - a. Strategic: doing the right things, and
 - b. Operationally: doing things right
4. Respect for employees, clients, suppliers, and the community
5. Teamwork - enriches employees' quality of work life
6. Social profit - analogous to profit sharing, investing in the community
7. Integrity

The correct company culture has the following attributes.

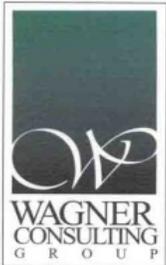
1. Strong beginnings. Get all new hires off to a good start, and especially demonstrate the values and behaviors management most desires.
2. Continuous learning; keep the saw sharp.
3. Encourage "ownership" attitudes among employees. This includes but goes beyond the concept of equity ownership; it also means owning processes and problems.
 - a. Visualize the difference between a business owner -- who will spot anything out of whack and will stoop down to pick up a stray piece of paper -- with a disengaged employee who moves around in a slow daze.
 - b. Picture the energy and sense of urgency of an employee who loves their job and strives to do their best.
 - c. The desired culture will include a "See it, own it, fix it" mentality among all staff, not just top managers.

Finally, leaders who want to encourage personal accountability and professionalism:

- Model the desired behavior,
- Show employees they are valued as *people*, not just workers,
- Give employees decision space to succeed,

- First extend trust to receive trust, and
- Always remember to say, "Thank you. You made a positive difference today."

Tom



Tom Wagner

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