Selecting the Right Candidates for your Business’s Culture

**What is culture and why is it important?**

An organization’s culture reflects the overall vision, goals, and values that the organization is built upon. Company culture determines what is normal within the organization and it influences the organization’s systems and procedures. Many companies are created with culture in mind and the culture will reflect the leaders’ own personal values and ideas for future development and growth. However, not all businesses are brought to life with such foresight in mind. Small businesses will often develop and adopt culture during periods of growth and expansion. During these periods, it’s important to step back and to see what kind of culture is forming, says William Craig, a contributor to Forbes magazine in his recent article ‘What is Company Culture and How Do You Change It?’.

In this day and age, culture is the lifeblood of an organization. It affects how prospective new hires view your company and it is also one of the major factors in employee retention and turnover rates. As an executive, it’s important to know the ins and outs of your organization’s culture to select candidates that will fit in well with the organization’s existing structure.

As more Millennials enter the working world, unlike generations before them, they are looking for more than just job security in their careers. Millennial applicants are looking at a company’s values and environment. If you want to retain these new hires, it’s going to take more than just financial compensation to keep them around – they’re looking for engagement, professional growth, and purpose.

**More than just job security…**

Greg Besner, CEO of CultureIQ states that company culture is more important than ever and applicants are now looking for culture in the companies to which they are applying. In addition to competitive financial compensation and other benefits, applicants want a clear purpose; they want to know what they are doing really matters. They are looking to be engaged in their roles and free from distractions; they want an environment where they can trust their fellow co-workers; and they want to continue learning and growing; continued learning is important for the individual’s self-improvement.

**How do I change my company culture and what can I do for my employees?**

As mentioned above, there are few simple things that you can provide for your employees to help shift the culture within your organization into something more positive. Here are a few key things that can create strong culture and promote employee longevity…

*Purpose:* Employees want to see that what they are doing directly affects the company’s success. Making this tangible through reports or demonstrations is a great way to instill that feeling of purpose in your employees.

*Engagement:* Employees will need to be engaged to best fulfill their purpose. Make sure your work environment is free of unruly distractions and empower your staff to optimize their roles and engage each other as well.

*Trust:* Trust is critical and is important in more that one way. Trust is crucial in order for employees that rely on each other to help complete tasks to make deadlines and insure that work is done to standard. As a leader, securing trust and making sure your individual staff members pull their weight falls on you.

*Continued Learning:* Giving your employees the necessary tools and resources to continue learning and contribute to the organization not only helps them with their self growth, but also reinforces their purpose and worth in the company. It tells them that they are a valued investment and team member.

*Flexibility:* To many employees, flexibility is often more important than compensation. Making sure your employees have a healthy work-life balance will help insure employee happiness and, in turn, help you retain your talent.

**Selecting a suitable applicant for your culture**

In the past, an applicant would be selected based entirely on their experience and skills set. These days, since applicants are far more concerned with the atmosphere and culture of the company than previous generations, as an employer, selecting a candidate that is a good cultural fit is important to foster longevity in your organization. It is important to consider an applicant’s skills and experience, but in addition, make sure they will mesh with your company and the current values and personalities within it.

“If you’re planning on bringing a new employee on board soon, consider hiring for company culture instead of just considering the candidate’s skills and experience,” says Sanita Harbour, Business News Daily contributor, in her article ‘Beyond Skills: How to Hire for Cultural Fit’. She goes on to say that choosing employees based on how well they reflect your organization’s values is now key in selecting new workers.

During an interview, you can ask questions that will allow you to get a feel for the person’s values and personality. Questions like “Who inspires you and why?” or “What motivates you to come into work everyday?” or “How do you rely on others to make you better?” or “What is your superpower?” might seem off the wall and irrelevant but they can actually allow you to get a feel for the applicant and how they see certain things. Their answers might surprise you, and from their answers you might be able to better determine if they will fit in with your company’s current culture and get along with your staff to be the happy, efficient and long-term employee that you need them to be.

In addition to asking open-ended questions, there are other ways to determine if your candidate will be a good cultural fit for your business or organization. It is important to introduce applicants to other staff members and see how they interact or you can compare them to other employees that share similar traits.

“At Voyig, it is important that we take a hands-on approach towards building teams and hiring people that are the right cultural fit. We apply this to hiring our own employees but also in our recruitment practices for our clients” said Jessica Surber, President at Voyig. Organizational culture is dictated by the values, behaviors, beliefs and norms set by Senior Leadership of an organization. Culture is expressed through the words and behaviors of each employee, not only executives, but also department leadership sets an overall tone.