Permission to Grow: Building a Culture of Experimentation

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Organizational Culture

- Culture Consensus – the degree to which members interpret a broad set of norms similarly
- Norm Intensity – the degree to which members conform to the most important norms regularly

Potential Benefits

- Increased employee retention
- Recruit better talent
- Employees are more productive
- Better decision-making
- Generate more revenue (Do what you do better)
- Improved brand reputation

Potential Drawbacks?

- Strong organizational cultures stifle creativity, innovation, and adaptability (Goncalo & Staw, 2006; Nemeth & Staw, 1989)

- Strong organizational cultures promoted consistent financial performance under stable conditions, but in dynamic environments their performance became less reliable (Sørensen, 2002)

Organizational Culture Redefined

- Culture Consensus – the degree to which members interpret a broad set of norms similarly

- **Norm Content** - the actual substance of particular norms

- Norm Intensity – the degree to which members conform to a particular norm regularly

(Chatman, Caldwell, O'Reilly, & Doerr, 2014)

Positive School Culture

"A school's culture has far more influence on life and learning in the schoolhouse than the state department of education, the superintendent, the school board, or even the principal can ever have," (Barth, 2002)

- Improves student success and achievement
- Increases teacher investment and improvement
- Enhances student behavior
- Encourages commitment and increases both motivation, and self-efficacy (sense of competency)
- Staff and students treat and acknowledge others with compassion and respect

Norms of Positive School Culture

- Students feel safe both physically and emotionally
- Policies and procedures are consistent and predictable
- Classrooms stimulate all the senses
- Atmosphere free of undue pressure and stress
- Challenges are neither too easy nor too difficult
- Promotes the development of mental, physical, aesthetic, social, and emotional skills
- Promotes exploration and the fun of learning
- Relationships and interactions are characterized by openness, trust, respect and appreciation
- Faculty is professionally focused on continued growth

Think, Pair, Share

What are the defining markers of the culture in *your school*?

- How strong is the Cultural Consensus?
- What is the Norm Content?
  - Select a few **key** actions or beliefs that **define** your school
- For each of the identified norms above, what is the Norm Intensity?
  - How uniformly and consistently is this norm followed?

Adaptability / Innovation

A culture characterized by an intense focus on adaptability is associated with:

- being willing to experiment and take risks
- being innovative
- being quick to take advantage of opportunities
- not being focused on "making your numbers"
- improving financial performance even in a turbulent industry
- may "protect" firms from becoming overly-inertial and relying on common routines that prevent it from identifying and adapting to environmental changes

(Chatman, Caldwell, O'Reilly, & Doerr, 2014)

Norms of a Culture of Innovation

- Innovative mission and vision statements
- Democratic, lateral communication (*trust*)
- Reduction of risk / Incentive schemes
- Collaboration
- Safe spaces
- Flexibility
- Boundary spanning
- Leadership

Think, Pair, Share

How would you like to shift the culture in *your school*?

- What Norms of your current school culture do you want (need) to change?

OR

- What new Norms do you want (need) to establish at your school?

- What adjectives would you use to describe your school once the culture shift has been accomplished?

Culture Change Leadership

To drive culture change, you must:
- Believe deeply in the need for the outcome
- Commit yourself to making it happen
- Invest significant time (and have patience)
- Prioritize financial allocations
- Be the change you want to see in your culture

Mindset

Entity (Fixed)	Incremental (Growth)
• Intelligence (and other abilities) are fixed at birth • Tend to avoid challenge & risk • See evaluation & feedback as judgements	• Intelligence (and other abilities) are changeable • Tend to embrace challenge and opportunities for growth • See evaluation & feedback as tools for growth

Carol Dweck - Self-Theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality and Development, Psychology Press, 1999

Self-efficacy

- An individual's belief in his ability to perform certain actions
  - Based on realistic self-assessment
- Where performance determines outcome, efficacy beliefs account for most of the variance in expected outcomes (Bandura, 1997)
- In **<u>every</u>** area in which is has been studied, self-efficacy is the single strongest predictor of success

Teacher self-efficacy

- A teacher's belief in his ability to impact student learning makes a difference in his teaching and in his students' learning (Bandura, 1997)

- "Researchers have found few consistent relationships between the characteristics of teachers and the behavior or learning of students. Teachers' sense of efficacy … is an exception to this general rule" (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990)

Building a Culture of Innovation

- Define the vision. Talk the talk. Walk the walk.
  - Requires extreme clarity about what, how, and when
- Remove silos and strengthen / create channels of communication
- Embrace and celebrate failure
- Invest in people and build relationships
- Look for opportunities for unusual collaborations and inter-departmental partnerships

Building a Culture of Innovation

- Be open to new ideas and be willing to rock the boat
- Trust your people and your vision and be prepared to go to bat to protect and defend them
- Radical change is often accomplished through small, incremental steps
  - Must be real and meaningful. "Gimmicks" will usually backfire
- Make a plan – as detailed as possible – and take it one step at a time

Potential Barriers & Pitfalls

- Insufficient understanding of current culture
  - Cross-check your analysis with others from different perspectives
- Silos – people with something to lose
  - Identify who gains what from the current system & what's "in it for them" after the change
- Skeptics
  - 20-60-20 rule
  - Be true to your vision
- Inertia ("That's the way we've always done it")
  - Ask why. Encourage others to ask why. (Be prepared to have many of your decisions questioned)

Potential Barriers & Pitfalls

- Fear of the unknown
- Ineffective / insufficient communication
  - Communicate, educate, shmooze, talk. And do it well.
- Power grab / power shift
  - Clear rules of engagement
  - Democratic communication is not necessarily shared decision making
- Board of Directors / HOS (your supervisors)
  - Education / conversation
  - Contained culture shift

Brainstorming

Consider the areas is which you want (need) to shift the culture in your school

- Identify two small, incremental changes that will start the shift [must be meaningful – "no gimmicks"]

- Identify at least two barriers that might interfere with your planed changes

- Brainstorm ways to overcome the hurdles in your way

Homework

Make a plan!!

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