The Cure for Unhealthy Culture at Your Church

How can you protect and grow your church culture, without having to be negative all the time?

Either you will manage your culture, or it will manage you.

Simply defined, culture is the way people think and act.

Every organization has a culture, which either works for you or against you – and it can make the difference between success and failure. Managing the organizational culture so that leaders, managers, and team members think and act in the manner necessary to achieve desired results has never mattered more.

When most organizations try to improve their culture, they focus on the negative aspects, and try to fix them. This sounds reasonable, but the opposite approach is much more successful. You may find greater success in identifying a few positive attributes within your culture that are connected directly to your identity and mission. Focus on them and find ways to accelerate and extend them throughout the organization.

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [The Culturetopia Effect](#), by Jason Young

What drives high performance for any company, organization, or team? How do successful companies create high fulfillment and high engagement within the employee workforce where people can do their best work?

The key to real success for any workplace lies at the very heart and soul of the organization it s culture. When business leaders understand how to measure, define and drive company culture and take action to integrate the values and behaviors consistent with an environment of care and accountability, they will witness an emerging, motivated workforce characterized by optimism, productivity, fulfillment and innovation high performance and high fulfillment. When this occurs, Culturetopia has been attained.

In *The Culturetopia Effect*, speaker, trainer and author Jason Young provides his valuable insights and practical ideas on how to create Culturetopia in any organization. He shares years of observations and experience with companies such as Southwest Airlines, Walt Disney, 3M, Cisco Systems and others, that have developed unique, high performance cultures and have experienced Culturetopia.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

Every organization has values – even if they are not stated or acknowledged. Values alone do not guarantee success, because values can drive an organization toward maintaining the status quo, ignoring current realities, and even leading them to fail. The values of an organization must be ones that ultimately produce behavior throughout the organization that will help it achieve its desired results.

Values are used every day to guide every employee's workplace behavior. Whenever an employee is in doubt about what to do next in any situation, then the company's values can provide guidance. In an organization that aspires to become successful by building a culture of cooperation, values provide an attitude ecosystem that works to guide employee behavior in every job, every moment of the working day.

In Culturetopia, there are no conflicts in the application of values; there is a complete and consistent values alignment.

This "values alignment" is obtained when your organizational values have the following six characteristics.

Honesty

If the values of the company are inconsistent with the personal values of those who espouse them, employees will be unmoved by the insincerity. Values that are not based on truly held principles are merely platitudinous words and the values will not stick.

Relevance

The stated values of the company must be aligned with the needs and the aims of the company and its workforce. Irrelevant values are either ignored or cause conflicts or confusion.

Clarity

Stated values should not be fuzzy notions. The values should be aligned with reality by describing what they mean in practice.

Selectivity and Persistence

Achieving a workforce that is aligned with company values is a process that includes selecting, training, coaching, and reinforcing.

Consistency

The stated values of a company must be applied equally to all stakeholders. There cannot be a separate set of values for a specific group. You should be able to ask anybody within a company to describe the values and they should be the same.

Reality

The actions of the company must be aligned with the company's stated values. Stories containing actions taken by employees that reflect the core values of the company are often repeated

Jason Young, *The Culturetopia Effect*

A NEXT STEP

Write your existing values in rows down the left side of a 2 flip chart pages. Next, write the six characteristics in one column each across the top of the pages. Add one more column for a total score. You should have a table that looks something like this:

Our Values	Honesty	Relevance	Clarity	Selectivity and Persistence	Consistency	Reality	Total

In your next team meeting, review your values as measured by the six characteristics, and rate them from 1 to 5, where one is "we are nowhere near the ballpark in this area" and five is "we are killing this area." Add each value row for a total score at the end.

First, exalt any values scored from 24-30, by doing the following:

- List 5 ways to maximize this value as a decision making filter.
- Craft 2-3 ways this value is visibly and tangibly demonstrated in a ministry area
- Anchor a key verse or passage of scripture to this value.

Next, evaluate any values scoring 18 or less by doing the following:

- List 5 ways this value is holding us back organizationally.
- Ask if there is a better way to state or restate this value for impact.
- If needed, eliminate this value to keep culture clear.

Finally, examine any values scoring from 19 to 23 by doing the following:

- List 5 ways this value should have more impact.
- Ask if there is a way to define or demonstrate this value and increase it's impact?
- Weigh this values place in our culture with a pros and cons list. Move forward after a time of prayer. Answer the questions in section 1 above for any values that "make the grade."

Now present your new, better-defined values set to a larger leadership team. Ask them to weigh in on what they like best and how they see these values lived out across the church. Continue to build conscious culture around these values.

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*This is part of a weekly series posting content from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix** Book Summaries for church leaders.*

SUMS Remix takes a practical problem in the church and looks at it with three solutions; each solution is taken from a different book. As a church leader you get to scan relevant books based on practical tools and solutions to real ministry problems, not just by the cover of the book. Each post will have the edition number which shows the year and what number it is in the overall sequence. (SUMS provides 26 issues per year, delivered every other week to your inbox).

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