

CHAPTER 3: Creating a Culture of Well-Being

ESSENTIAL OUTCOMES

This chapter provides special emphasis on the fact that the culture of an organization strongly influences the well-being of the organization, particularly its safety and health. At the beginning of the chapter, culture's importance as an influencer is discussed in order to convey its impact on employees and its relationship to employee engagement. Legal requirements are then discussed, along with the importance of building a culture of well-being, with special attention on programs that help create a healthy and safe environment. The chapter concludes with a review of the programs that help create a culture of well-being.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Describe organizational culture.
2. Explain the impact of organizational culture on employees.
3. Discuss the relationship of organizational culture and employee engagement.
4. Describe the link between culture and healthy and safety in the workplace.
5. Cite the measures to use to reduce health and safety concerns.
6. Explain the importance of building a culture of well-being.
7. Describe the programs and services that help create well-being in the organization.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Organizational culture
- Culture and employee engagement
- Culture and health and safety in the workplace
- Measures to reduce safety concerns
- Importance of building a culture of well-being

STUDENT MOTIVATION

Many students are working, and those that aren't will eventually work when their course of studies is done. Students need to be aware of the factors that contribute—or detract from—a safe and healthy work environment. Especially important is the role that supervisors play in building/maintaining culture and creating a sense of well-being.

BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Based on student experience, or the experience of their parents, students may only think about a person's physical well-being in the work environment. However, as will be discussed in this chapter, the mental well-being of a person is also impacted by the work environment.

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

1. Ways of engaging students at outset of class:

Discussion: Using At Work with HRM 3.1, ask students to explain in their own words what “organizational culture” is and also to comment on their experiences with organizational culture. Probe as to whether or not their supervisor took an active interest in helping them understand how they were to act and behave at work. (This relates to LO 1 and LO 2.)

2. Other activities:

The following activities relate to LO 3:

- a. *Review Figure 3.1 and create discussion:* Ask students whether they agree that more-engaged employees tend to be more productive, are more committed, and have better work relationships. Probe to determine any of their personal experiences at work.
- b. *One-minute paper:* Ask students to conduct an Internet search using the phrase “employee engagement” and then explain what they found and learned.

The following activities relate to LO 4:

- c. *In-class activity:* To stimulate class interest in the concept of employee involvement in safety and to provide some specific examples of unsafe working conditions or practices, ask students to see if there are any safety issues in the classroom.
- d. *Brainstorm:* Review At Work with HRM 3.2 for ideas about employee involvement in creating an awareness of a healthy/safe work environment. Ask students to brainstorm other ideas they might have to promote safety in the workplace.
- e. *Discussion:* Explain to students that, given the focus on culture as part of ensuring that the workplace is safe and healthy, publisher Thomson Reuters created an award to recognize and honour the safest employers in Canada each year. The 2015 award for the Best Health and Safety Culture went to the Vancouver Airport Authority (Liz Bernier, “Creating culture of safety excellence,” *Canadian HR Reporter*, November 30, 2015, 11; and Canada’s Safest Employer Awards 2015, <http://www.safestemployers.com/>). Of particular importance is the focus also on young worker safety.
- f. *Discussion:* Ask students to describe safety training programs with which they have had some experience. Have them elaborate on the types of personal safety equipment they have worn and some of the problems of having to comply with rules regarding its use. Using Toolkit 3.1, determine if they feel incentives work in promoting safety awareness for younger workers.
- g. *Discussion:* Using Figure 3.2, review with students the legal duties and responsibilities of employers, employees, and supervisors as they relate to health and safety issues.
- h. *Discussion:* Using Figure 3.3 and HRM and the Law 3.1, ensure students understand the financial penalties that can be imposed when organizations do not pay attention to a healthy and safe work environment, and what can be done to reduce the risk of penalties.
- i. *Discussion:* To impress on students the link between culture and healthy and safety in the workplace, you may wish to ask students to read Jake MacDonald, “Weld Founded,” *Report on Business*, November 2015, 44–51, which describes the emphasis that a Winnipeg manufacturer puts on the well-being of its employees.

The following activities relate to LO 5:

- j. *Brainstorm:* Review Toolkit 3.2 and At Work with HRM 3.3; see if students have other ideas about creating successful health and safety incentive programs.

- k. *Discussion:* Review Toolkit 3.3 carefully. Students should be made aware of the indicators of workplace violence. Remind students that, as more and more provinces become concerned with this issue, legislation is being passed requiring employers to undertake risk assessments and take action to make the workplace less prone to violence.
- l. *Discussion:* Since awareness of bullying in the workplace has increased, have students read Ethics in HRM 3.1. Create small groups and ask each group to answer the Critical Thinking Questions. Have each group report back to see if there are any common themes.
- m. *Discussion:* To reinforce the responsibilities that employers have in maintaining an organization that is physically and psychologically safe, have students read Sarah Dobson, "\$1 million lawsuit filed against Starbucks," *Canadian HR Reporter*, October 5, 2015, 1. The article describes one employee's claim that they were assaulted and abused and that Starbucks failed to follow its internal policies. You may also wish to have students investigate the current status of the lawsuit.
- n. *Discussion:* Using Manager's Toolkit 3.3, review the measures organizations can take to reduce violence in the workplace. Ask students if they have worked where there was a policy on violence. If there is one, ask students to bring a copy to class for further discussion.
- o. *Discussion:* Ensure students understand the significance of stressors in their work life and the psychological impact of those stressors. Students may experience the same type of stressors when attending school. Review Toolkit 3.4 and probe whether or not those same factors exist in a school environment. Also, review Figure 3.4 with the students and determine if some of those tips might work in a school setting.

Pertaining to LO 6: Review At Work with HRM 3.4 and then discuss the Critical Thinking Question.

Pertaining to LO 7: Ask students for their perspectives on the various other services that an organization might offer to improve the overall well-being of its staff. Probe whether or not those services might be undermined if the style of management was not supportive or understanding. Conclude the discussion with a review of the impact organizational culture has on the health and safety environment in any workplace.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

You may wish to make use of the test bank, web quizzes, or, at the end of a class, ask a student to summarize the key points from the lesson.

REFLECTION ON TEACHING

1. What worked? What didn't?
2. Were students engaged? Were they focused or did they go off on tangents?
3. Did my assessments suggest that they understood the key concepts?
4. What could I do differently next time?
5. How can I gather student feedback?
6. Are there other techniques I could use to present the materials?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Opening Vignette

This is a story about Dave Holmes, G Adventures' Purpose Camps mayor. The company focuses on small group travel experiences in exotic destinations. The company feels that one of the things that separate it from other companies in a very competitive market is its employees. Time and time again, travellers indicate that G Adventures has the best people working for it. As a result, a great deal of emphasis is placed on employee well-being and ensuring that the culture supports and enhances that well-being.

Lecture Outline

Learning Outcome #1

1. Organizational Culture

Presentation Slide 4

Explain that organizational culture has often been described as the “personality” of any organization. It is the collective understanding that every employee has of the beliefs and values that guide their actions and behaviours.

Learning Outcome #2

2. Impact of Culture on Work Environment and Employees

Presentation Slide 5

Emphasize that organizational culture has a tremendous impact on the employees and the success of any organization. Explain that the students will come to understand what culture can do to create a sense of well-being in an organization.

Learning Outcome #3

3. Employee Engagement

Presentation Slides 6-7

Explain the definition of “employee engagement” and review Figure 3.1 so that students can better learn and understand what makes employees engaged and what the organization can do to improve engagement.

Learning Outcome #4

4. Creating a Healthy and Safe Work Environment

Presentation Slides 8-9

Emphasize that the day-to-day responsibility for health and safety rests with everyone in the organization and reinforce the impact that culture has on the health and safety behaviours in the organization. Discuss the particular importance of the safety and health risks for younger employees. You may wish to have a discussion about whether or not your students share the view that younger employees may be at more risk.

5. Workers’ Compensation

Presentation Slide 10

Describe that workers’ compensation insurance provides benefits in the form of wage-loss payments and medical/vocational rehabilitation if an employee is injured or becomes seriously ill due to a workplace situation.

Presentation Slide 11

Remind students that the cost of workplace accidents and injuries is very expensive, and therefore organizations will take steps to minimize unhealthy and unsafe situations. Discuss HRM and the Law 3.1 with students so that they fully understand the extent of penalties for an unsafe work environment.

Learning Outcome #5

6. Promoting Workplace Health and Safety

Presentation Slides 12-13

Explain that many organizations will have a formal safety program and that in many cases it is the responsibility of the HR department. However, even if there is an HR department, the success of any program depends on the managers and supervisors in the operating units. Review Toolkit 3.2 with students so that they understand the types of incentives that can be used to create better health and safety.

A. Promoting safety awareness

Remind students that the managers and supervisors play a key role in ensuring that the culture supports a healthy and safety work environment and motivates employees to be health-and-safety conscious.

B. Proactive safety awareness programs

Explain that organizations use a variety of different techniques to promote safety awareness. Use Toolkit 8.1 as a take-off point to see if there are any safety posters in your institution. Depending on the age of the students, you may also wish to probe why young people appear to have such a high incidence of accidents. Emphasize the importance of supervisors communicating the need to work safely.

C. Enforcement of safety rules

Explain that there is a variety of ways in which safety rules are enforced. Among these are employee handbooks, bulletin-board notices, signs attached to equipment, and regular safety meetings.

D. Accident investigations and records

Employers are required to maintain records of all occupational injuries and illnesses. In addition, the identification of their causes, the actions taken to correct them, and the preventative measures taken for future work must be identified.

E. Review with students the following concerns in the workplace:

Presentation Slide 14

WHMIS—Employees who work around or directly handle certain materials are required to identify these materials through the procedures outlined in WHMIS. Ensure students know what WHMIS stands for. Since some of the symbols are now used on consumer products, review the symbols in Figure 3.4. Query the students on whether they were made aware of any hazardous materials in their workplace.

Psychological strain—Isolation, constant emails, and music can create both distractions and mental strain.

Cumulative trauma disorders—Jobs that require repetitive motions of the hands or arms are resulting in increasing numbers of injuries. Part of the increase is due to the increasing number of computer-related jobs. In order to minimize problems, employers will encourage mini-breaks and exercises plus repositioning of the tool.

7. Workplace Security, Violence, and Bullying

Presentation Slides 15-16

Emphasize that workplace security achieved a new level of prominence due to the events surrounding September 11, 2001, and that expectations about workplace security continue to draw attention. Explain to students that security isn't just threats of terrorism or war but any type of disaster or workplace violence. Consider the possibility of extreme weather events as well as earthquakes. Also, remind students of the prominence that bullying has now received and the increased expectation that employers keep employees safe from psychological harm.

Organizations continue to be more proactive about ensuring that employees feel secure and safe from workplace violence.

Presentation Slide 17

Review with students what "stress" means and how what is stressful to one person may not be stressful to another.

Learning Outcome #6

8. Building a Culture of Well-being

Presentation Slide 18-19

Explain that it is generally recognized in our society that better health is definitely beneficial to the individual and the organization. Further, it is important to realize that current research has indicated a close relationship between physical and emotional health and a person's job performance. As a result, employers are taking a more comprehensive approach.

Learning Outcome #7

In this context, there are other programs that the employer may offer to encourage a healthier lifestyle.

A. Health services

Explain that this can include everything from a first-aid kit to an on-site physician and nurse.

B. Wellness programs

Many organizations will encourage health through programs that emphasize exercise, nutrition, weight control, and avoidance of substances harmful to health. Point out that organizations can reduce both health costs and absenteeism costs with wellness programs.

C. Disability management

Describe how organizations are taking a more integrated approach to both short-term and long-term absences, particularly when the organization focuses on a healthy work environment where employees want to return to work.

D. Employee assistance programs (EAPs)

Explain that many employers, particularly larger ones, have a broad view of health and therefore have designed programs to meet both emotional and physical needs. Such a program uses trained professionals who typically do only short-term counselling and then refer the person on to specialists in the area of need. Describe that EAPs initially started to deal with substance abuse, primarily alcohol, but have grown to deal with personal crises and emotional problems. Remind students that psychological problems in the workplace are becoming more prevalent and that they are estimated to cost Canada's economy \$51 billion per year (Mental Health Commission of Canada, "Making the Case for Investing in Mental Health in Canada," accessed May 14, 2015).

Emerging Trends

Before moving on to the end-of-chapter materials, review Emerging Trends 3.1 with students. You may wish to probe students on their experiences with the increasing concern about bullying.

ANSWERS TO END-OF-CHAPTER MATERIALS

Review Questions

1. What is organizational culture?

Organizational culture is the collective understanding of beliefs and values that guide how employees act and behave, also known as the "personality" of the organization.

2. How does culture affect employees?

It provides the compass for guiding what employees do and say. Culture has a profound impact on the success of the organization. It can affect whether employees want to be at the organization and stay; it can affect how managers treat employees; and it can facilitate whether the organization is innovative or not.

3. What is employee engagement?

Employee engagement is the amount of commitment and dedication an employee has toward the organization. Ways that employers can create an engaged workforce are listed in Figure 3.1, page 77.

4. What is the legislation that covers health and safety in the workplace?

Workers' compensation.

5. What are two ways employers can reduce their workers' compensation cost?

These are listed in Figure 3.3 on page 83.

6. What can employers do to reduce health and safety concerns in the workplace?

Since you are looking for specific ways, students will have a variety of answers; ensure that most of the points listed on pages 83–95 are covered.

7. What are some of the safety expectations in a typical work environment?

Keeping the work environment free of physical hazards; training everyone regarding safety; involving employees in maintaining a safe environment; conducting safety risk assessments; and designing and implementing safety programs.

8. What is cyber bullying?

Bullying by using communication technology and information.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In the HRM Close-up, Dave Holmes comments on the financial cost of investing in G's staff. What is his reason for making this investment?

He believes that customers see the employees as a competitive advantage; the company also believes in a wholesome approach of well-being; and that this helps the company attract and retain staff.

2. You've been hired by Rim Auto Parts as the manager of its largest store in a major city. Part of your responsibility is to continue to foster an organizational culture that focuses on a healthy and safe work environment. How would you approach this and what might you do?

As the manager, it would be important for you to have a clear understanding of what the company currently does to focus on health and safety. You would also need to build a relationship with your staff and encourage them to be involved with their own health and safety. You would want to know the details of any joint health and safety committee, such as how frequently it meets, what are the issues it is dealing with, and what support there has been from the store manager in taking action.

3. You have recently started working in a large retail store as a management trainee. You are asked to develop a series of actions to improve employee engagement. What might you consider and why?

Students will have a number of answers; ensure that the major points in Figure 3.1 on page 77 are included; ask students why they gave the answers they did.

4. You work in the medical equipment and pharmaceutical department at a local hospital. Your department is responsible for dispensing medical supplies and prescriptions to patients. There have been recent incidents in which patients have been quite vocal and threatening in their behaviour toward staff. As a consequence, you and four other staff members have been appointed to a task group to undertake a workplace violence audit and then develop appropriate procedures. What steps might you take to do the audit, and what procedures might you use to minimize the possibility of workplace violence?

Students will have a variety of answers, which would include information on pages 90–91 and in Toolkit 3.3.

5. You have recently joined a community recreational centre that hires many young workers. You are told of a growing concern about the health and safety of these employees. What would you do and why?

Students will have a number of different suggestions. Ensure that mention is made of careful training and orientation as well as ensuring that they know it is OK to say no if they are asked to do any work that is unsafe. If not mentioned, remind students that a culture of safety will also go a long way to help younger workers know of its importance. The reason for doing so is that, since younger workers may not have much work experience or training, it is up to the employer to help them understand the need for safety on the job.

6. As a senior manager at a large insurance company, you've been asked to explain the company's approach to wellness by commenting on its slogan, "Well is not just a program—it's a message and how you deliver it makes a difference." How would you explain the slogan's meaning?

Students will have a variety of answers but ensure that they make reference to potential reduced costs of illness and absenteeism. Also, ensure that they make reference to the culture of the organization and its impact on how employees receive the message.

DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLS

These exercises are designed to use in or out of the classroom setting. Some of these can also be done as an assignment to be handed in.

NOTES FOR END-OF-CHAPTER CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1: Culture and Healthy Organizations

1. If you are working or recently worked, how would you describe the culture of your organization?

Students will have a number of different responses, depending on their work experiences. You may also wish to use Hofstede's organizational cultural model at <http://geert-hofstede.com/organisational-culture.html> and have the students use the model to answer the question.

2. Do you think you'd fit into Ikea's culture? To assess, go to www.ikea.com/ms/en_US/the_ikea_story/working_at_ikea/our_values.html# and answer the 10 questions. What did you learn about yourself?

You may wish to have students do this outside the classroom and then report back. If your room is equipped with Wi-Fi, you may wish to ask students to do this in the class or select several students to do so and then discuss it with the entire class.

Case Study 2: Safety Concerns at the Grand Hotel

1. Why might the accident and injury claims be increasing?

Claims might be rising due to the age of employees, the level of overall experience, and whether or not there are other issues around employee morale and motivation. Students might have other ideas.

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2. By law, workplace safety is the responsibility of the employer and employee. What else can Grand Hotel do to ensure that employees are doing their work in a safe and healthy way?

The Grand Hotel may wish to develop a more visible “safety awareness” strategy, create a health and safety committee, develop an incentive program to reduce accidents and injuries, and possibly include safety and health objectives in the performance management system. It may also wish to see if any stated values relate to safety as well as to examine the culture of the hotel.

3. Do you think the hotel has a culture of well-being? Explain your answer.

Students will have a variety of opinions. While the hotel does have a stated policy regarding its culture of well-being, it isn't clear how engaged the employees are, how empowered the employees are in doing their work, and exactly what kind of management is visible.