

ETANDEM CLUB PARTNERS

PERSPECTIVE

DEVELOPING A POSITIVE CULTURE: PHASE 1-INPUT=VALUE

You are correct. Developing a “positive culture” is a bit vague and subjective, as what is positive to one person, may not be positive to another. However, a universally-shared opinion of having a culture that contributes to a happier and healthier working environment (or even home environment) is eliminating “silos” and getting more involvement and input from those impacted by a decision. We all know that you can’t, and shouldn’t, survey every single person for every single decision, but there is one key way in which you can dramatically increase inclusion and collaboration, thus creating the feeling and culture of unity...inclusion in strategic development.

The average club consists of approximately 85 employees; around 20 of those (24%) are mid-level managers supervising the staff and implementing operational and policy-based changes fueled by strategic initiatives of which they had no part in creating. Simply put, they are required to carry out the orders as directed by those that, often times, do not have to face the proverbial music or are held directly accountable for the impacts of these changes. It’s no wonder that so many mid-level managers in so many businesses are opting out...they get all the accountability with none of the input. Interestingly enough, those in the boardroom seem to be shocked when these folks leave, sometimes offering additional compensation to soothe their weary souls. While I’m sure they all appreciate the additional coin in their pocket, they aren’t leaving for money, they are leaving, because they do not feel valued. Decisions that affect them everyday are made behind closed doors and without their input. Developing and fostering a positive and unified culture is an impossibility under this operating and governing model.

Combatting this “silo’d” environment is actually not that difficult, in action, but a dramatic change in thinking by the current decision-makers is required and is the biggest challenge to overcome. The strategic planning process must include more than just the Board and Executive Management; it must also include select key mid-level managers who can provide the bridge between conceptual strategy and reality; as sometimes the two can be very different. While the baby-boomers that often times sit in the board seats, the upcoming generation demands to feel valued and respected. Gone are the days of Bushwood Country Club’s Judge Smails’ attitude of “the world needs ditchdiggers, too”. Today, for a club to thrive, the member experience is 100% dictated by the employee experience; and the employee experience must be one of inclusivity, trust, and a feeling of being valued.