How to build a strong **company culture**

Getting your company's culture right is as important as nailing your business strategy.

A strong, positive company culture creates a great place to work with **loyal and productive staff** supporting your business growth.

On the flipside, a negative company culture can damage your employer reputation and leave you struggling to attract top talent.

Or - in worst-case scenarios - you could find yourself the subject of damaging news headlines.

But we're not going to let that happen. In this guide, you'll learn about the importance of company culture and we'll share our top tips to help make yours stronger.

Let's get started.
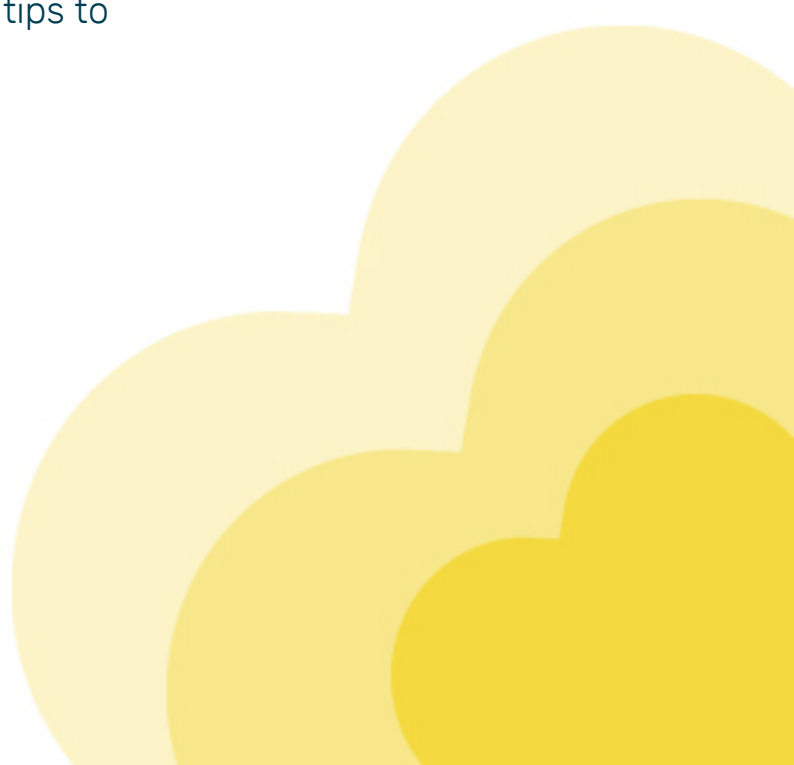
Why is it important to build a strong company culture?

It's clear that a toxic company culture can damage a company's public image. It can also harm productivity and staff morale, this in turn limits long-term growth.

So, whether you employ a team of 50, or just a handful, building a strong company culture **matters**.

Without your staff, your business stops running. **Put people first** and your business is more likely to succeed.

There are **plenty** of ways to build a great company culture as your business grows. Here's our top tips to help your SME develop and strengthen it's culture...

How to build a strong **company culture**

1 Establish your culture by defining your values

Your values are the reasons **why** you do what you do. It's what your business is built upon. They steer the way your people behave, treat one another and go about their day-to-day work.

Your culture is a consequence of your values.

So before you do anything else, you must establish your company values.

1 People first

2 Growth mindset

3 Can do attitude

- **What is the business' purpose?**

- **What do I want the business to be known for?**

- **Which characteristics do we value in our employees?**

2 Communicate your values

Now you've nailed down your values, you must **communicate them to your people**. Only when this is done can they translate into company culture.

One way of doing this is to get your people together for an afternoon and communicate your values in an engaging and inspiring way. Invite them to participate - this way they'll be more likely to engage with your vision and contribute towards building your new culture.

Going forward, ensure projects and initiatives are underpinned by these culture-relevant values and communicate them at every employee onboarding.

3 Hire for cultural add

Hiring the right people is an important way of building a strong company culture, which makes hiring for culture fit seem like a great idea. You ask candidates what they value in a company and gauge if they align with your culture or not.

But this isn't as good an idea as it sounds.

Hiring on the basis of cultural fit can quickly create a "me-too" environment where everyone thinks the same. It also limits employee diversity – and that's proven to be bad news for company culture and business results.

Instead, hire for **culture add**. Ask what candidates can bring to your SME that will move your culture in the right direction.

4 How does your culture define success?

The way a business defines, measures and rewards success says a lot about its culture.

Agree how you will measure company and individual performance. Think also about the way your definition of success reinforces your culture.

☆ Will you reward employees for hitting targets, or award them bonuses for passing certain levels of turnover?

☆ What about customer satisfaction or cost-reduction?

Each type of measurement sends a message of its own and affects the way your culture develops.

MAKE SOMEONE'S DAY ✖

Give a colleague Kudos to let them know they've done something 'above and beyond', or check out the latest leaderboard

Give some kudos to… ▾

Kudos type… ▾

Enter a message…

Give kudos

OBJECTIVES (12M)

Above Average

Abigail: 1
Company avg. 0.05

5 Be transparent

Transparency helps improve **trust** and **satisfaction** for your employees. It's also an important component of a strong culture.

Running a business is not always plain sailing, so don't try and hide the low points. Instead, celebrate the highs and analyse the lows, consulting with staff about where things have gone wrong and what can be done to improve them in the future.

Remember to be transparent about your successes too; be sure to share any upturns in revenue, exciting business or personal achievements and business-growth.

6 Do what you say you're going to do

Building a strong company culture is about practicing what you preach. Company values are only worth something when you put them into practice.

If you say you're a 'people-first' company, demonstrate this by investing in your people. Failing to deliver on your promises creates a distrustful and disloyal culture.

Live up to your promises and you'll be rewarded with a strong culture and a happy, engaged and motivated team.

There's our top tips to help you develop and strengthen your SMEs culture. Of course, company culture isn't a one-size-fits-all, but we hope you find these points useful and can tailor them to your business.

Have any questions? Ask them in the Culture Club Forum. Here, you can get advice from us at Breathe and discuss topics with other SMEs who have also joined the Pledge.

Next up...

How to measure company culture

Company Culture

30 December, 2020 by Laura Sands

Top 5 goals for your business' company culture

Company Culture

2 December, 2020 by Laura Sands