Three Reasons Why Team Culture Matters

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Over the past two years, my team has experienced a lot of growth (from 20 to 100+ team members). This growth has been complicated by COVID, with all of our team working remotely, although we have always had a mix of remote and in-office employees. The combination of growth and fear of "losing touch" with people prompted me to put a lot of time and effort into developing culture in a more intentional way.

I have come to believe that investing in my team's culture is one of the most important ways for me to spend my time as a leader. Despite all of the day-to-day issues that consume my time, and the endless stream of emails, I have committed to several habits that help me maintain a focus on culture building. Here's why:

1. **One word: turnover.** I probably don't need to state the obvious here, but the job market is super competitive right now, and switching jobs is a common occurrence for many professionals. Bigger companies may be offering richer pay or benefits, while smaller companies may promote "perks" (e.g., flexible schedules or special titles) and be more nimble (less red tape). Regardless of your size, or the size of your competitors, everyone wants to be a part of something greater than themselves and feel a meaningful connection to their work. When team members are focused only on their individual performance, or feel siloed within your organization, it makes it much easier for them to leave or be open to a change. Highly engaged team members, who are inspired by a larger vision and committed to the team's success, will not be as easily lured away from your company for a few extra dollars. They don't want to let the team down.

2. **All hands on deck!** As you scale, you need problem-solvers, even when you are not in the room. There is no way one person can solve all the problems of an organization. Many of us have joked, if I could only clone myself, or a talented member of the team. News flash: you can't! Not only will there be problems that you cannot solve, but there will also be problems you cannot even see from your vantage point as a leader. While you may observe symptoms of a problem, you may not be close enough to the root cause to diagnose and solve it. Therefore, having a team that is motivated and empowered to solve problems, regardless of whether you know, is a critical organizational competency as you scale.

3. **You need ambassadors.** Everyone must be invested in sharing the culture with new team members. Just like with solving problems, you may not be able to personally acclimate each new team member and model your expectations. You need everyone

within the organization to do that if you want the “newbies” to understand and embody the values of your culture. Say it with me now: I can’t do it all!

If you want to start or expand your focus on developing your team culture, check out some Easy Habits to Build Team Culture. I hope these reasons inspire you to commit more time to culture building activities. If you would like to see some examples of easy exercises that you can begin doing with as little as one hour per month, check out some of my recommended Culture Building Activities and tracking tools. Feel free to download, modify and make them your own!