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Paul McDonald • Dec. 18, 2017



No matter if they offer similar services, each business has a different workplace culture. Some firms have a reputation for a relentless pace, whereas others pride themselves on family-friendly policies and programs. Some are known for having fun, others for being all business.

Whether it evolved naturally or is the product of constant refinement, your

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productivity and better customer service.

Here are seven ways you can cultivate this essential aspect of your firm.

1. Articulate your corporate culture. Culture is a nebulous concept to describe. Of course, you know what your workplace is like, but putting it into words may be a different matter. If your firm doesn't have a well-defined statement that captures the essence of your culture, spend time drafting one. You'll be better able to convey the organization's values and vision to your team and job candidates you want to join it.

2. Make corrections as necessary. Your corporate culture requires ongoing [communication](#) and feedback. Otherwise, elements that run counter to your values may take hold in the workplace. For example, if your firm prides itself on an openness to diverse perspectives and new ideas, gently yet firmly correct employees who go counter to this philosophy with their words and actions. Don't ignore these or other sources of [workplace conflict](#).

3. Show your gratitude. At the same time, reinforce positive behavior by letting employees know their efforts are appreciated. Celebrate actions that reflect the firm's mission. Some employers hand out certificates and gift cards to workers who demonstrate collaboration, save the day or go beyond what's asked of them. Others hold elaborate awards events attended by every member of the executive team to show top-down support for rewarding employees who exemplify company values. Financial productivity incentives and bonuses for attaining certifications can also be part of your effort to recognize role models.

4. Be the change you want to see. You are responsible for fostering the corporate culture just by virtue of being in senior management. This means your staff model their behavior after what you do and not necessarily what's on the website. For example, to promote a culture of entrepreneurship, don't punish people who dare to

innovate and, in the process, make occasional mistakes. Instead, adopt a no-fault

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oriented mindset. That value would be on shaky ground if you brought in brilliant but lone-wolf accountants and auditors. That's why it's so important to [hire for fit](#) in addition to more tangible aspects such as CPA status and tech savvy. You want employees who get along well with colleagues and won't negatively alter the culture you're trying so hard to cultivate.

7. Let job candidates know who you are. Publicize your culture to job applicants. That way, you'll have a better chance of attracting those who are a match for it. Start with your website's career section. Talk about your values, perks and professional development offerings. Perhaps even offer up a few employee testimonials. Then make sure these aspects are present and consistent across your job postings, marketing materials and social media channels, as well as promoted in [interviews](#).

Skilled accountants frequently have multiple options today. To attract and retain talented professionals, make cultivating your corporate culture one of your top business priorities.

Paul McDonald is senior executive director at [Robert Half](#), the world's first and largest specialized staffing firm. He writes and speaks frequently on hiring, workplace and career-management topics. Over the course of more than 30 years in the recruiting field, McDonald has advised thousands of company leaders and job seekers on how to hire and get hired.

Firm Management

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