

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

that helps employees feel supported and drives results. In recent years, forward-thinking firms have focused on creating growth cultures rather than performance-based cultures.

Sandra Wiley • Jun. 03, 2021



Firms spend a significant amount of time and money creating a company culture that helps employees feel supported and drives results. In recent years, forward-thinking firms have focused on creating growth cultures rather than performance-based cultures.

What's the difference? In a [Harvard Business Review](#) article, Tony Schwartz,

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

It's easy for leaders to pay lip service to building a supportive and thriving firm culture. We can write inspiring mission and values statements, slap the right words on the company's website and fall into the trap of communicating caring but not following up with action.

As management guru Peter Drucker once said, "what gets measured gets managed." So how can we measure something as complex and nebulous as culture? In my experience, it boils down to six essential measurements.

Leadership

In a growth culture, people feel safe taking risks to drive innovation. They know they won't be penalized for failure because firm leaders recognize that failure is an essential part of growth. Failing forward and failing fast is not only accepted; it's encouraged.

Like culture itself, leadership can be challenging to measure. These roles stand for so much that merely measuring the financial effectiveness of each individual isn't enough.

Pulse surveys can be a great way to gain feedback from employees, and questions can center around how employees feel about the leaders within the organization.

Communication

Continuous learning and personal and team development are essential to a strong growth culture, and all of this depends on communication.

Because there are many different ways of communicating, there are also different ways of measuring communication. Intranets are useful for observing how

departments communicate with each other and how internal communications are

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

other employee health and wellness elements, instead putting pressure on people to produce better results in the short term.

In a growth culture, leaders recognize that short-term bursts of intense productivity aren't sustainable. When they focus on taking care of people, employees find more meaning and purpose in their work, are more engaged and committed to the firm, and sustainably produce exceptional work in the long term.

When your firm practices wellness, the results speak for themselves. Employees who feel looked after have higher retention rates, lower absenteeism and are generally happier. Putting a high priority on employee health has an enormous impact on your firm. People return to work quicker, are more productive and save the firm money that would otherwise be spent on hiring replacement staff.

Agility

In today's marketplace, firms need to respond to changing dynamics quickly — a concept known as agility. Agility can be used to describe a lot of things, but in its essence, it is adapting and refining the processes and operating of the business to meet changing technologies and changing client demands.

You can measure how agile your firm is by measuring time scales, client complaints and quality scores. If you're not already tracking these metrics, start now to get a baseline and continue to monitor them as you make improvements.

Environment

Giving feedback on an annual, semi-annual or even quarterly basis doesn't work in a growth culture. To learn and improve, people need to be given feedback on and discuss their strengths and weaknesses continuously. This helps people feel more confident and be more creative and adaptable.

Opening up feedback is an excellent way to create two-way, continuous feedback in

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

thinking in innovative ways.

There are many effective ways to measure innovation:

Do you have a research and development budget?

Do your team members use the latest technologies and communication tools?

Are your everyday processes executed efficiently?

Do you measure financial returns and incremental revenues?

By demonstrating innovation and providing the right tools, employees will develop a mindset of curiosity and growth.

The foundation of any successful firm is its people, and keeping them healthy and happy depends on strong firm culture. Identify the essential elements of your firm's culture, look for ways to measure those elements and seek continuous improvement. When you start measuring what really matters, your firm and people will thrive.

=====

Sandra Wiley is president of [Boomer Consulting, Inc.](#)

Firm Management

CPA Practice Advisor is registered with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) as a sponsor of continuing professional education on the National Registry of CPE Sponsors.

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us