CPA Practice Advisor

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make sure yours stays healthy so that it bolsters your firm's bottom line, too.

Oct. 20, 2023

As many of us in the accounting profession have learned over the years, and especially in the current environment of talent scarcity, structuring a high-performing team in your firm is no easy feat. Whether you have worked to build an engaging and effective culture or not, your practice has a culture.

I know from my experience in building companies over the years, each part of the culture-building process needs to be intentional if you want your culture to positively contribute to ROI and the health of your firm. Beyond just having a "great"

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ROI. How can you do this?

There are five key principles that I have used many times to build an intentional culture that in turn increases return on investment (ROI). Here they are so you can use them to create an intentional, ROI-generating culture in your firm:

1. **Culture begins before day one.** The culture of any organization is like someone's personality. Many people don't give company culture much thought because there are so many other things to focus on. Yet culture can be one of the most important aspects of your firm especially when you are trying to attract new professionals. They will pick up on your brand, the way your recruiting process works, and even your social media presence will reflect your culture so be sure yours are intentionally curated.

- It's no secret that companies that have a poor work culture often have a poor work environment as well. Your firm could have a great base but if your culture isn't positive or welcoming, you will end up hiring and training new staff over and over again rather than nurturing the individuals you do find who work well with your firm. High turnover in employees comes at a high cost to the company in turnover costs as well as reputation.

On the flipside, companies with positive cultures and reputations are able to easily find new talent and retain them, attracting highly qualified individuals. If you are able to intentionally create a positive work environment, the A-players you attract will have a positive impact on your firm's return on investment.

- Your organization is there to help your stakeholders. Good company culture recognizes that its stakeholders are its clients *and* its employees.

When employees feel as though they are part of the company's mission and vision,

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flexible working arrangements, and good pay. Restructuring our cultures and business models can be the change that needs to happen to retain these new employees.

- Going through this process one time and calling it good isn't going to cut it. Continuous growth along with authenticity and transparency will help you create a positive work culture. Think of this process like a game of chess. You always want to stay three steps ahead of the competition. Frequently growing will allow our employees to realize their true potential and the true potential of your firm.

The most important takeaway here: You have the power to define and, if needed, redefine your company culture *before* you grow and make sure you communicate it internally so your team can help you stay true to your vision for the type of firm and environment you want to create.

Remember, culture is contagious, whether it is positive or negative. It's up to you to make sure yours stays healthy so that it bolsters your firm's bottom line, too.

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Paul Hamann is an expert on determining reasonable compensation for closely-held business owners. He has educated more than 100,000 tax advisors and valuators on the topic of reasonable compensation and has been published in numerous national and state journals.

Hamann, along with other experts in their own fields founded RCReports in 2010. RCReports cloud software determines reasonable compensation for closely-held business owners and is used by CPAs, EAs, tax advisors, valuators, forensic accountants and attorneys when they need to determine a reasonable compensation figure for a client.

When Hamann isn't in the office, he enjoys spending time with his wife and

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