



AUTHOR / KEY CONTACT

Company Culture

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‘Company culture’ can be described as the ‘personality’, ‘ethos’ or ‘shared values’ that sit within an organisation, and every company will be different.

A company’s culture is likely to move and change according to the business pressures at the time, the challenges and successes they experience and the leadership structure that is in place. The changing expectations of employees and customers will also help shape the culture of the organisation. Regardless of our role or level of seniority within an organisation, we all play our part in influencing the culture and working environments around us.

Keeping the company culture in mind and ensuring that it continues to act as a positive strength has many benefits for business owners and managers, including increased productivity and focus, helping to attract and retain top talent, reducing absenteeism and improving the overall mental and physical wellbeing of the workforce.

How do we encourage a positive company culture?

Everyone in the organisation should be aware of the objectives of the company, its shared values and how they personally fit in to the structure. Induction programmes can help ensure that new starters to the business enhance a positive culture.

Policies and procedures, including those related to anti-bullying and harassment and equality, diversity and inclusion, should be up to date and backed up by appropriate training for all staff. Setting expectations around behaviour at work will help ensure consistency and allow action to be taken quickly and fairly if conduct falls below acceptable standards. This can help avoid poor behaviour negatively impacting the employee experience.

We have written previously about the benefits of providing effective performance management systems and fair and transparent reward schemes to help promote good company culture, but these should be regularly reviewed and adapted in line with best practice.

Employee priorities will continue to change and adapt, for example, remote working and family friendly policies

can be important, wellbeing initiatives and mental health support can be the top priority for others and some employees may be driven by financial reward.

Although policies, procedures and benefit schemes play a part, it can be helpful to look at areas that may be less obvious. For example, does the organisation welcome feedback, are managers and supervisors approachable, and do they provide a safe and supportive environment for employees to raise concerns?

Encouraging trust between employees and senior management can be helpful in improving the overall culture of the business.

What does the current culture look like?

The best way to understand the culture of an organisation is to ask the workforce for their views and take time to review any available data. The contents of mental health risk assessments and exit interviews can show trends that require improvement.

If you don't currently provide a platform for staff to give feedback, is this something that could be introduced in the form of a staff survey, an ideas box or by creating an employee forum?

Improvements don't always need to be on a large scale. Company culture can be improved by achieving smaller 'wins' such as improved integration between teams, coaching and mentoring opportunities, social events or practical solutions such as adjustments to workstations, access to facilities or more certainty around working hours.

Why culture matters

A 'toxic' workplace culture can mean a combination of many different things, perhaps an unpleasant and ineffective environment with unmotivated employees, badly managed teams, or an environment where exclusion, unfairness, inappropriate behaviour or poor communication is allowed to exist without being addressed.

When an organisation has a reputation for creating or enabling a hostile or toxic culture it can be very damaging. Employees can struggle to progress and find it difficult to achieve a healthy work-life balance. Whether it is down to workloads being unfairly distributed or chaotic working hours, constant worry can also lead to an increase in sickness absence and a general feeling of resentment.

If you would like to review your policies or introduce procedures that can help improve the culture of your organisation please do not hesitate to contact the [Employment Team](#) by emailing online.enquiries@la-law.com.