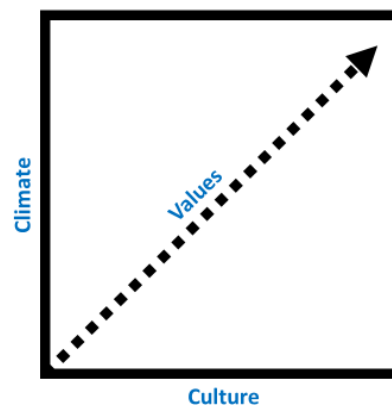


Leadership Brief: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE DURING A CRISIS

Disruptive and VUCA are the popular words these days used to describe what we are in the middle of. VUCA is a concept that originated with students at the U.S. Army War College. The acronym includes: Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity. The global and organizational challenges invite the best of leadership competency and leadership behavior. Redundantly casting vision about organizational culture is one of your best leadership tools in the middle of a crisis that is touching every aspect of society and work life.

Take a Peek Behind the Organizational Curtain

Two factors that affect organizational development and organizational health are always in the sightline of effective leaders. The Culture - Climate Matrix © is simple to explain but far from simplistic to lead in times of crisis.



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- **Culture:** Describes the values-driven ideal of how team members at all levels of employment are expected to work together in achieving strategic business outcomes.
- **Values:** Define the culture. They prioritize what a company thinks is non-negotiable in describing how work gets done. Leaders create that ideal picture of organizational culture by articulating a unique mosaic of organizational values. Values are not just ideas to believe. They are behaviors to be lived.
- **Climate:** Is the honest assessment of how consistently every employee lives out those values on a daily basis. The Culture Gap measures the distance between the ideal and the real. It varies moment by moment in every team and every department throughout the entire company. Closing the gap between culture and climate is an often - hidden challenge of leadership.

The Non-Negotiables of Crisis Civility

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- **Behavioralize Each Value.** What does each value look like in daily work life? For example, if you were expected to be a respectful team member, what would you always do? What would you never do? Your answers identify a cluster of behaviors describing a person who treats others with respect. It's an active learning process that moves an idea to think about...to someone I am and something I do throughout my workday with team members, vendors, customers, and even the UPS driver.
- **Give Immediate Feedback.** When you see a team member treat someone with disrespect, now you have a picture to hold up in giving them feedback in real time. Three steps are involved in giving feedback: (1) This is what I observed... firsthand not hearsay. (2) This is the impact it had on other team members. (3) This is my expectation going forward given the values we have agreed that define the culture of how we work together. See Kim Scott's Radical Candor on how to create a culture of feedback.
- **Practice Consistent Accountability.** Nothing disengages a team like the star performer who plays by a different set of rules than everyone else. Accountability to the behaviors that reflect the values and define the culture must be consistent across the board. Top performers who get by with what others don't get by with destroys trust within the team as well as team performance and team leadership. The critical word is "consistent." Consistent accountability by the leader contributes to trust and respect.

Leadership Debrief

Don't forget the values that define your organization's culture. It is one of your best leadership tools to build high performing teams and organizations succeeding in the navigation of crisis seasons.

Learning and Leading with you,

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