# Understanding and Developing Organizational Culture

The key to a successful organization is to have a culture based on a strongly held and widely shared set of beliefs that are supported by strategy and structure. When an organization has a strong culture, three things happen: Employees know how top management wants them to respond to any situation, employees believe that the expected response is the proper one, and employees know that they will be rewarded for demonstrating the organization's values.

HR has a vital role in perpetuating a strong culture, starting with recruiting and selecting applicants who will share the organization's beliefs and thrive in that culture. HR also develops orientation, training and performance management programs that outline and reinforce the organization's core values and ensures that appropriate rewards and recognition go to employees who truly embody the values.

* The importance of having a strong organizational culture.
* HR's role in fostering a high-performance culture.
* Definitions of organizational culture.
* Factors that shape an organization's culture.
* Considerations in creating and managing organizational culture.
* HR practices to ensure the continuity and success of an organization's culture.
* Communications, metrics, legal, technology and global issues pertaining to organizational culture.

An organization's culture defines the proper way to behave within the organization. This culture consists of shared beliefs and values established by leaders and then communicated and reinforced through various methods, ultimately shaping employee perceptions, behaviors and understanding. Organizational culture sets the context for everything an enterprise does. Because industries and situations vary significantly, there is not a one-size-fits-all culture template that meets the needs of all organizations.

A strong culture is a common denominator among the most successful companies. All have consensus at the top regarding cultural priorities, and those values focus not on individuals but on the organization and its goals. Leaders in successful companies live their cultures every day and go out of their way to communicate their cultural identities to employees as well as prospective new hires. They are clear about their values and how those values define their organizations and determine how the organizations run. . Even organizational cultures that have worked well may develop into a dysfunctional culture after a merger. Research has shown that two out of three mergers fail because of cultural problems. Blending and redefining the cultures, and reconciling the differences between them, build a common platform for the future. In recent years, the fast pace of mergers and acquisitions has changed the way businesses now meld. The focus in mergers has shifted away from blending cultures and has moved toward meeting specific business objectives. Some experts believe that if the right business plan and agenda are in place during a merger, a strong corporate culture will develop naturally