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## In this Edition:

| Value and Manage Diversity -                                |
|---|
| The Top Talent Will Come                                    |
| to You?Page 4   |
| How Do You Evalute the Future                               |
| of Your Business?Page 6                                     |
| What to Do When   |
| Corporate Speak Doesn't                                     |
| Match Corporate Culture?Page 13                             |
| How Will You Go   |
| Through College?Page 17                                     |
| Don't Be A Leader If You Won't                              |
| Make The EFFORTS!Page 19                                    |
| How to Live Up to   |
| Your Own ExpectationsPage 21                                |
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# Value and Manage Diversity The Top Talent Will Come to You

By Susan Klopfer

"Say what?"

As soon as she left the graduation stage, diploma in hand, Jill received a whisper from her favorite professor, "Remember to be aware of the prevailing corporate culture, wherever you go."

Jill paused to wonder just what the professor was talking about, faintly recalling the word "culture" from her organizational sociology class.

Her professor was only concerned that her best student might have a tough time "fitting in" at any company in this rural, conservative state. Jill, an arty person, wears self-designed clothing, sports a tattoo and remains culturally close to her Louisiana Creole roots, reflected in her mixed language.

In any work environment, a dominant set of rules or customs arise over time that guide the way work is done, becoming what is called the organization's culture.

Researchers Deal and Kennedy popularized the idea of developing positive corporate cultures in their 1982 book Corporate Cultures. This idea became a central role in corporate strategy, with some organizations still clinging today to the idea of having a strong and tight corporate culture where all employees must "fit in" to be productive and happy.

In 1988 one sociologist defined four types of corporate cultures: the academy (exposing members to different jobs so they can move within the organization), the club (which is concerned with people fitting in), the baseball team (with its well-rewarded stars who leave for better opportunities) and the fortress (concerned primarily with survival).

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Other models soon appeared, and it was thought that employees would work better and be happier if they were in the "right" corporate culture, one they naturally fit into. Not untypical were dictates like, "Managers should model the behavior they wish to encourage, and then reinforce the desired culture with visionary statements or slogans, celebrating employees' successes or promotions, distributing newsletters, hiring culture-compatible staff..."

Today's employees increasingly come from diverse social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, with different personalities and experiences. So how does this idea of knowing and maintaining a fixed culture stack up with today's recognition of managing and valuing diversity, recognizing diversity's important role in increasing markets, and as a response to globalization?

Not well.

Today's managers, rather than finding the "right" job candidates to "fit" the existing culture or corporate mold are better served by paying attention to the management of cultural differences, concerning themselves more with valuing and managing diversity.

Writes R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr., a diversity management expert: "Women, Hispanics, Asian Americans, African Americans Native Americans and others outside the mainstream of corporate America bring different, important and competitively relevant knowledge and perspectives about how to actually do work, how to design processes, reach goals, frame tasks, create effective teams, communicate ideas, and lead.

"When allowed to, members of these groups can help companies grow and improve by challenging basic assumptions about an organization's functions strategies, operations, practices, and procedures" - in others words, by challenging and diversifying the existing and "understood" corporate culture.

When companies start thinking about diversity holistically - providing fresh and meaningful approaches to work - "and stop assuming that diversity relates simply to how a person looks, where he or she comes from, how they will "fit in," they will be able to reap the full rewards [of diversity]."

As for Jill, she just might be better off in today's economy by setting up her own graphics shop.

Both she and her professor could be certain the corporate culture of this new business would support broad diversity, making Jill far more competitive with a host of larger businesses that still don't get it.

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# How Do You Evaluate the Future of Your Business?

By Jon Allo

When you establish a business and it's running well, you may not want to make any changes. But it's important to review your business regularly and make sure it still aligns to market forces. This could lead to small changes or it may lead to a major business overhaul.

Evaluating your business helps you predict how it will perform in the future.

Revisiting a business plan at the right time and adjusting the strategy can save or destroy a business.

Here are 5 ways to evaluate your business and your future.

#### 1: Revisit your goals

As an entrepreneur, you're trying to achieve your goals and a good strategy is what will get you there. So if your goals change, then change the path to get you there. When you achieve your goals, you'll probably establish new ones. As a result, you need to change resource allocation to keep moving forward.

Sometimes goals change to accommodate market changes, the competitive landscape, or changing customer needs. Hence, it's important to reflect on the strategy as these changes happen.

#### 2: Analyze customer needs

The main goal of every business is to serve customers' needs in a more profitable way than its competitors. But customer needs evolve. So in order to become a successful entrepreneur, you need to be able to

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think strategically and continually generate new insights into the emerging needs of your audience. You should be able to shape your current or future products to best meet the evolving needs.

#### 3: Review innovation changes regularly

Innovation is creating new value for customers. The new value could be technological, but it can also be generated in marketing, service, experience or process. It could be earth-shattering or it could be minor.

To keep your business moving forward, pay attention to your customers, market, and competitors to know when the new value or innovation is being offered and by whom. Then, assess your goals and strategies to know if you can change them to accommodate the new value in the market.

#### 4: Review your business efficiency

Most new businesses work in a short-term and reactive manner. This offers flexibility, but it's time-consuming and expensive as you move from launching your business to concentrating on developing and growing it.

Balance your ability to respond quickly with a clear strategy. This will help you decide if your actions are appropriate.

As you try to move your business forward, determine if there are internal factors holding it back and solve them.

#### 5: Assess your financial position

Many businesses fail because of poor financial management or poor planning. Sometimes entrepreneurs forget their business plan.

For your business's success, develop and implement sound financial and management systems. Updating the original business plan is a good place to begin. When assessing your finances, consider your cash flow, working capital, cost base, borrowing, and growth.

Every successful business owner has made mistakes in their business at some time or another. It's all part of the learning process. Although mistakes are going to happen, you can avoid a number of common business mistakes. We Are Committed To Career Opportunities For All



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# What to Do When Corporate Speak Doesn't Match Corporate Culture

By Dr. Bruce A. Johnson

We've all heard top business leaders proclaim: "This is the best place to work as our leaders are visionary, and will help propel our company into the future", or, "We strive to promote inclusivity and diversity in our workplace, making us a top employer, while creating value for all", or, "Our innovative leaders are some of the best you'll find in the industry, demonstrating empathy and compassion for all employees, while embracing passion for our values and mission".

Yet what is your reaction when you read these types of statements for

your organization or institution? Do you immediately feel inspired, because you recognize these qualities within your firm? Or do you view the words as corporate speak, designed to flatter and impress, without holding much weight?

From my time in higher education over the past 16 years, I have found very few academic institutions that have a corporate culture which matches the corporate speak, or words written and published by its leaders. This is especially true for the for-profit (and non-profit) online schools. When it comes to enrollment and retention numbers, there is often one primary concern, and it isn't the culture of the firm. Why else would an institution decide to value profit over employees, and layoff high-performing employees, especially those who are willing to work hard?

I understand this is the "world we live in now", and there are "no guarantees in life", and more importantly, "employment is at-will". Yet I find it amazing when leaders tout how valuable their organization or institution is, and then allow the actual culture of the firm to deteriorate into a place no one actually enjoys

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working at, and only remains at due to financial need. This leads to a question then of what does a person do when they find themselves in a position of working for a firm where the culture is a mismatch to the corporate speak? Or should you do anything if this is detected?

#### **Leadership Puffery Online**

Where most of the leadership statements can be found, regarding the working environment of an organization or institution, are online. For the most part, this type of wording is used in public relations statements, and social media posts. When posted by the organizational or institutional leaders themselves, it is a form of puffery designed to help elevate their feeling of status, self-worth, and sense of position within the industry. It is also a reminder to you, as

someone under their position, of what they have accomplished, and how valuable they are, should you ever forget.

Now if you are starting out in your career, you may find this level of puffery inspiring, as a means of thinking about what it is you could accomplish in your career. You may not recognize the disconnect between the words and the actual culture, and perhaps there isn't any at this time. If the words match your organization and how it operates, believe me, this is a firm you want to build a career with over time. I'm fortunate now to work part-time for an academic institution that is a certified B-Corporation, which further exemplifies their commitment to the values they promote. But finding an institution that has a culture which matches the words spoken by its leaders is rare. Most leadership puffery will be personal in nature and unrelated to what the needs of the employees are now.

#### Caring (and Not Caring) About Employees

At the very heart of the issue about corporate speak matching (or not matching) the culture of an organization or institution is the issue of how much the firm cares (or not cares) about its employees. If you really want to know how much your firm cares or doesn't care about its employees, find your firm's leaders on social media. First, if you cannot find them on social media, that may be your first interesting clue. Next, once you've located your leaders, take a week or two and really pay attention to what it is they post. Are they invested in their employees, or are their posts simply puffery, proclaiming their virtues, and the virtues of their leaders?

Here's are some examples: Do your leaders honestly address downturns? Will your leaders address laying off

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employees at the holiday season? Do your leaders address poor working conditions, when there are known issues that have gone on for years, and the firm has gotten a bad reputation? In other words, what your leaders post about is going to tell you very clearly what they are concerned about most, and it won't take long to determine. All the diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in the world are never going to make up for: #1) a workplace culture that allows managers to gaslight their employees, #2) employees being forced to work 80-hour work weeks as salaried employees, #3) employees living in fear of their managers, and #4) employees being let go in retaliation for reporting poor management.

### What You Can Do When You Are in a Poor Working Culture

Let's be clear: An employer is always going to believe they have the upper hand in an employment situation, and for the most part, they are going to. Employment is at-will in most states. If you report a manager, even with evidence, the manager is always going to be believed over an employee. This means you must go beyond learned helplessness and take control of your career. I understand the economy is challenging and for many careers, jobs are few and far between. But what you can do is to be proactive immediately. If you are working within a culture that is anything but positive, now is the time to start developing another pathway forward. You must think beyond the present, as you never know when you will be the next casualty. This is always going to be a possibility when working in a negative environment.

If your leaders are promoting values that align with the work culture you are in now, and you are supported by your manager, then you should feel fairly secure about your job and your tomorrow. But if there is any mismatch between the corporate speak and the corporate culture, you should have your eyes open and beware. I've learned the hard way about trusting an employer, especially one I began a journey with many years ago, and then waited nine years to work for. I should have seen the signs ahead of time, and all I can do now is what I do best, help teach others. The organization or institution may be the place you want, but if the leadership is not focused on the needs of its employees, you may find yourself distressed, discouraged, disappointed, and eventually displaced. Don't let this happen to you. Pay attention to the culture and environment you're in, and be certain you're in control of your career.





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## How Will You Go Through College?

By Bob Roth

Young adults go to college for different reasons and do it in different ways. Some go for social reasons, some to satisfy their parents expectations, others for the challenge, but most students see college as a way to obtain their employment objectives. They go through college in ways they believe will help them achieve those goals. Importantly, students interested in launching their careers can improve their outcomes by better understanding their target employers, how they think and what they expect of college graduates.

Wise students understand that they

earn employment success, one semester at a time, as they go through college. They know that good jobs won't just fall into their laps; so, they are willing to work hard and smart.

Employers have needs and expectations for each job opening. To help them choose the best candidates, employers will want to see and hear how well each applicant has performed and what they have accomplished both within and outside of the classroom.

Seniors and recent grads must understand that they will be competing against other qualified candidates. That's why it is important for beginning students to develop and follow an employment plan that gives them the knowledge, experience and successes that will interest and impress their target employers.

With that in mind, first and second year students may want to think about the following questions:

- 1. Have they identified their field of interest?
- 2. Will they devote the time, thought and research needed to develop a step-by-step employment plan?

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- 3. Does their plan involve the identification of target jobs and target employers?
- 4. Have they chosen the best major, minor and electives for their employment goals?
- 5. Will they research their target employer needs and expectations for the jobs that are of interest to them?
- 6. Will they immediately begin to incorporate those employer needs and expectations into their on-campus and off-campus activities?
- 7. Does their plan involve gaining some job-related work experience before they graduate?
- 8. Does their plan require them to build relationships with potential references in their field of interest? (Professors, Employers, Alumni and Others who work in their field of interest)
- 9. Does their plan require them to build a list of successes and accomplishments in their field of interest?

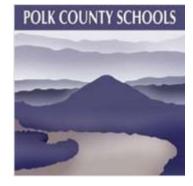
In the job market, average students can often outperform students with better grades by doing the things that allow employers to see their potential. Of course grades are important to employers; but, grades are only one aspect of student potential and are not always good predictors of success on the job.

Few jobs require only intellect. Most good jobs require employees to recognize needs, make decisions, take action, get things done, deal with multiple and difficult tasks, overcome obstacles, collaborate with and build relationships with others and contribute to the success of the organization. When job applicants can provide stories and examples of their successes and accomplishments both within and beyond the classroom, they will stand out from the competition.

Employers love to talk with references who have first-hand knowledge of the student's attitude, personality, work ethic, experience, knowledge, skills, performance and accomplishments. What those references say will always influence the employment decision one way or another. Therefore, college students must constantly look for ways to demonstrate the desirable performance and outcomes that are wanted and needed by their target employers.

When it comes to job offers, the way students go through college matters. And so, the question becomes, How will you go through college?

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# Don't Be A Leader If You Won't Make The EFFORTS!

By Richard Brody

Although, many people, are, either, elected, selected, or ascend to positions of leadership, unfortunately, only, a small - minority, actually, go on, to become meaningful, realistic, relevant, effective leaders! After, more than four decades, of personal involvement, in nearly, all aspects, related to leading, from identifying and qualifying, to training, developing, and consulting to thousands of actual, and/or, potential leaders, to personally, serving, as a leader, on several occasions, I strongly feel, many people, proceed, forward, for the wrong reasons! The

reality, often, is, one should not, become a leader, if he is not ready, willing, and/or, able, to make the **EFFORTS**, needed to be the best one, he can, possibly, be! With, that in mind, this article will attempt to, briefly, consider, examine, review, and discuss, using the mnemonic approach, what this means, and represents, and why, it matters.

1. Effort; empathy; emphasis; effects; excellence: Leading requires someone, to exert the quality effort, consistently, to benefit, serve, and represent, his organization, and stakeholders! He

must be willing and able, to regularly, listen effectively, and learn from every conversation, and experience, in order to proceed, with the needed amount of genuine empathy! This must direct, his emphasis, and when, it is, the effects, have a much greater chance, of leading - to, meaningful, true excellence!

2. Face facts; face fears: Don't deny them, or try, to run - away, from, or, create your own, alternative reality, but, rather, face facts, and address reality, in a proactive manner, without procrastination! It often requires,

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expanding the limits/limitations, of your personal comfort zone, and proactively, face your fears, and become a better leader!

- 3. **Future; fruition:** Quality leadership requires, and demands, paying attention to present needs, while focusing on the ramifications, and impacts, into the future! It is a leader's responsibility, to bring quality ideas, to fruition!
- 4. Options; opt; opportunities; offer; optimize; organized: One must be organized, to successfully, address the best path forward! He must consider and review, all viable options and alternatives, and opt, for the best possibilities! Take advantage of opportunities, which present themselves, or make your own opportunity! Consider, carefully, what you may have, to offer, the specific group! A leader's duty is to optimize his service, and proceed, effectively, and efficiently, in an organized manner!
- 5. **Reasons; rationale; relevant:** What might be, your reasons, for wanting, to lead? Examine, carefully, your personal rationale, and proceed, in a worthwhile, relevant way!
- 6. **Trust; timely; time tested:** To lead, you must earn your stakeholders trust, and, to do so, you must proceed, forward, consistently, in a well considered, timely manner, taking advantage of time tested, techniques, experience, knowledge, expertise, and wisdom!
- 7. **Strengths; stronger; service; system; sustainable solutions:** Take advantage of, both, your, and your group's strengths, and use them, to make the organization, better, and more meaningful! Your leadership, will only provide quality service, if/ when, you perceive and conceive of, and create/ implement the best system, to produce, sustainable solutions!

Quality leaders make their **EFFORTS**, make a difference, for the better! Are you up to the tasks?

#### MINORITIES & SUCCESS

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## How to Live Up to Your Own Expectations

By Rosina S Khan

Sometimes we set higher standards for ourselves, and our goal becomes to attain more material possessions. But is that what satisfies you? How can you live up to your own expectations? Read on to find out.

Too many times, we do not want the right stuff. Every time we aspire to something, we should ask ourselves, "Is that what I want? Will it make me happy? Will it make my family happy?"

Of course, for most people, money is a needy thing. They feel they would do a lot better if they had much more money.

How can somebody be happy with his own lot? The answer is: Live simple. Expect little. Give others.

It's in giving others and gratitude for what you already have that lies the real secret. Help others and be thankful for your life.

They will work bountifully to give you more assets and wealth. You will have enough. You will not have to worry about living paycheck to paycheck.

The other two conditions: "Live simple" and "Expect little" work wonders. You end up getting more beyond your expectations.

Yes, thinking small often helps you to reach higher and higher. You are only expecting little, but you are true to your family and work. The Universe sees that and is happy to give you more. In this connection, you need another criterion that is happiness or high vibes.

Once you have high vibes but expect little, live simple, help others, and are true to your family and work, the Universe conspires to give you a large amount of wealth beyond your expectations.

So, if you ever had a fleeting thought that having money considerably could

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help you better, yes, provided you follow the above conditions, you will meet your expectations.

Pray to God, the Almighty, and let Him know your desires. Then forget, let go and stay detached. This way you allow money and wealth to roll in.

But if you always worry and check on why money hasn't shown up yet although you have expressed your desires to the Universe, it creates blockage and you do not allow money and wealth to pour into your life.

Look upon the concept of money as a good thing. Express your desires for it but stay detached and in high spirits. Don't think further about it.

You will let it enter your life when the Universe decides it is the right time. So, hold your patience, do what you love, and let go. Money will land upon you 10-folds or more.

This is exactly how you live up to your expectations. It can be your goal, but you do not continuously check on it. Try the tips I mention here in this article and see how it goes. What I have said is actually a rule of thumb, and if you follow them, wealth and money are sure to follow you. Gotcha?

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