

High-Performance Culture: Linking Strategy to Execution

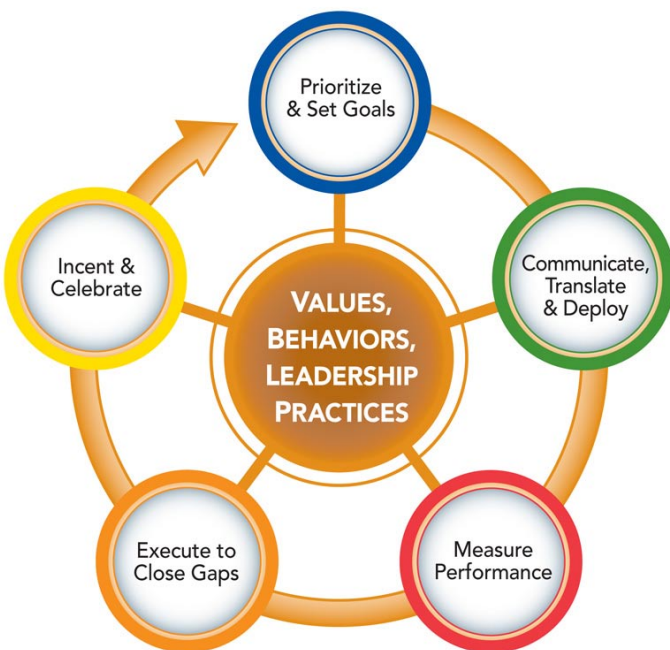
Every organization has a culture, commonly defined as a set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterize a company or corporation. The question so often asked is: Why do some companies have cultures that undermine their potential, while others have high-performing cultures that help speed them to their greatest success?

Management and performance improvement consultancy Guidon Performance Solutions defines a high-performing culture as one where a set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices deliver **superior execution**. When employees are universally committed to excellence, the organization's output and potential is wholly improved. However, transforming from a defacto culture to a high-performance culture requires more than just giving employees new marching orders about how to do their jobs.

To transform a culture you must encourage the people in the company to change their behavior, as well as how the company operates. This is only possible when senior leadership clearly defines the social architecture (how they want people to behave) and the business operating system (the tools and practices that define how work is done and reinforces the desired behaviors).

Far too often, cultural transformation efforts focus only on process issues or only on soft issues. In reality, the soft issues, as well as the process and performance issues must be linked and reinforce each other. The linkage of the two is much like an ecosystem—any imbalance between the components of the ecosystem leads to erosion of the culture. Successful transformation requires deliberate planning and actions—or “cycles of use”—to provide a foundation for the desired culture to thrive.

When Guidon works with companies to develop high-performance cultures, there are generally three primary objectives:



- **Alignment of strategy to execution.**
When strategy is disconnected from the day-to-day functions that will carry out the strategy, the result is a misalignment with management's intent. To align strategy and execution, senior leadership must have a robust and repeatable process for developing annual business strategies, communicating and cascading the strategy down through the organization, and a predictable tempo for follow-through and accountability.
- **Development of a standard delivery system.**
A common set of tools, practices and rituals are critical for superior execution. This provides clear expectations on how the business will operate, without limiting creativity. A common delivery system allows every individual to share expectations and terminology, which facilitates agility, alignment, and an esprit de corps to support extraordinary execution.
- **Cultural transformation and engagement.**
With visionary leadership and commitment to a shared purpose, employees can be engaged and their behaviors aligned with the organization's goals. Open communication and transparency fosters trust, while opportunities for personal growth strengthen organizational commitment.

Of course, this is a significant undertaking. However, by cultivating a more engaged, effective, and motivated workforce, the organization benefits from an increased ability to execute consistently, think innovatively, and react to change.

With the success that comes from newly found capabilities, employees feel more confident and valued, resulting in higher levels of employee retention, engagement, and performance.

Cultivating a high-performance culture requires leadership commitment, consistency, and clear vision of the desired goals. Strong leadership—coupled with deliberate “cycles of use” to reinforce behaviors and practices—provides a powerful recipe for driving superior execution and levels of performance seen in only the most successful organizations.

To learn more about High Performance Culture visit: <http://www.guidonps.com/services/people>



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About Guidon Performance Solutions:

Guidon is a global management consulting organization that helps clients achieve rapid, sustainable improvements in operational performance and growth. Guidon pioneered the combined application of Lean and Six Sigma in the service sector and has a proven track record working with clients in financial services, healthcare, government, retail, technology and other service organizations. With a full-spectrum of capabilities focused on people, process, and technology, Guidon provides strategic direction and hands-on implementation to guide cultural and organizational transformation. Guidon’s approach, aligned with client leadership, generates measurable results including revenue growth, cost reduction, productivity improvement, increased customer satisfaction and innovation.