

HOW TO BUILD YOUR TEAM CULTURE THIS YEAR

AN INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT GUIDE BY
AAI EMPLOYABILITY



The organisational culture of your business is as essential as any other part, and yet it is often one of the most overlooked parts of business strategy.

It is all too easy for business owners to bury their heads in the sand over their organisational culture. When it's going wrong, it can seem like an insurmountable problem to tackle.

Achieving a harmonious place to work for all members of your team does not happen by chance, and it won't happen on its own either.

It's a critical business deliverable which should be involved in every aspect of your company plan. In a challenging business environment, only teams with the best organisational culture will thrive.

Has it been a while since you reflected on the culture of your organisation? In this guide, we will explain how to assess and build a strong team culture, so let's get started.

Joy Lewis
CEO
AAI Employability





HOW CAN WE DEFINE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE?

Company culture is more than just an HR buzzword; it is the shared goals, values and respect of your team. Strong team culture is centred around collaboration and connection.

No matter the size of your team, if there is a strong shared vision of the future and goal, this is a great foundation. There is the need for every member of the team to understand, respect and recognise each other.

When you think about improving your company culture from where it is currently, think about:

- YOUR COMPANY'S 'MISSION' - WHAT IS YOUR ULTIMATE GOAL
- THE PRACTICES THAT YOU CARRY OUT EACH DAY, AND HOW THESE RELATE TO YOUR TEAM
- THE VALUES THAT UNDERPIN WHAT YOUR BUSINESS STANDS FOR
- THE 'PERSONALITY' OF YOUR ORGANISATION

Many businesses understand why organisational culture is important, but they struggle to build and cultivate it for themselves.

This is because it is something that must be planned for and worked on continuously. If your team culture is a statement that gets written into your company mission and is then forgotten about, you are unlikely to experience its many benefits.

WHY IS A STRONG CULTURE ESSENTIAL?

When your team lacks a strong culture, it operates essentially as a group of people who have nothing in common except for the same employer. Culture is essential in employee engagement, and the following data highlights how crucial employee engagement in your team will be to your success.

Studies by the Gallup Organisation and the Queen's School of Business found that disengaged workers had:

- **37% higher absenteeism**
- **49% more accidents**
- **60% more errors and defects**

It was also found that organisations with low employee engagement had:

- **18% lower productivity**
- **37% lower job growth**
- **65% lower share price over time**

All successful organisations have one thing in common – high employee engagement as a result of great team culture.

Signs that your team culture has been damaged and your organisation is suffering include:

- **High employee turnover**
- **Lack of collaboration between team members**
- **Decreased performance**
- **Absenteeism**

There are many reasons your company culture may become damaged. A lack of clarity surrounding your organisation's core values, inadequate or negligent management and a lack of effective feedback can all contribute to a breakdown in culture.

So, what can you do to rebuild your culture if factors have created change?



1. REVISITING YOUR COMPANY MISSION

Your mission statement should be a concise sentence, which sums up what your business is and why it exists. Separate to this, your values are a list of core ethics which make up your culture and drive the organisation to achieve its mission.

Revisiting your mission statement is essential when your business has been through a time of change, which many have experienced recently.

How has your business changed since you last revisited your mission statement?

HAS YOUR COMPANY BEEN MERGED OR ACQUIRED?

HAVE YOU RECENTLY CHANGED YOUR PRODUCTS, SERVICES OR OFFERS?

ARE YOU GROWING AND EXPANDING?

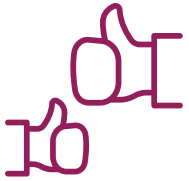
HAVE YOU HAD TO MAKE REDUNDANCIES?

HAS YOUR LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE CHANGED?



If your business has made any of these changes recently, it's time to produce a mission statement which encompasses your business truthfully.

Think about who your business is, what it stands for, the societal issues that you believe in and what makes you unique as a business. Use these values to create a mission statement in which employees can find real meaning in.



2. GIVING MEANINGFUL FEEDBACK

A study from Gallup found that only a third of employees believe the feedback they are given is useful and will help them improve.

Feedback does not only mean constructive criticism; it can also mean highlighting and praising your team when they do a great job or excel in their role.

There is an art to giving feedback which bolsters and encourages an employee; giving feedback the 'wrong' way will leave team members feeling deflated and hopeless.

The following are examples of how to incorporate feedback to help develop your team culture.

- Always give feedback in a timely way – when something goes wrong, don't try to ignore it. Address problems straight away so that they are dealt with quickly and don't have time to damage the team's environment
- Make time for regular check-ins with your team – a once a year appraisal may be too long and can make employees feel isolated, forgotten about or misguided.
- Be specific – if you need to address poor performance, be specific with times, dates and examples. Unclear feedback may only serve to confuse employees.
- Never give feedback to a team member in front of others; always have performance conversations in private.



**WHEN YOU
ARE BUILDING
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3. CREATING A CULTURE OF TRUST

When you are building a team culture, trust is essential.

For an excellent team culture, your employees must trust that you are holding people responsible, that you are treating everyone fairly and that you are transparent in everything you do.

When trust is lost within an organisation, this is the fastest way to toxic team culture and the problems that come with it.

Demonstrate that you trust your team by allowing them to work independently and autonomously. Don't place 'blame' on individual team members as this will ultimately create an environment where team members are scared to make a wrong move. This leads to a loss in productivity.

Approach challenges together as a team; ask employees for their input on company issues even if it is outside of their usual remit. This will ensure employees feel included, valued and trusted. **Be honest and transparent, and always keep your promises.**



4. FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP, NOT 'MANAGEMENT'

Managers and leaders are two different roles, although naturally, the two often get confused.

Organisations can have plenty of managers but lack distinct leadership. Anyone can be promoted to a managerial role; that does not mean that that person is going to inspire their team to be better. Often, it is simply a title.

Leaders will be essential in rebuilding your team culture from a period of crisis or significant change.

So what makes a great leader?

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

This is a characteristic which is only going to become more in demand. Individuals with high emotional intelligence have incredible self-awareness which allows them to read emotions and drive mood within a team.

EMPATHY

Being able to empathise with team members allows leaders to get to the root of any problems quickly. A team with empathetic leaders will be closer, more resilient and ultimately, happier than one with leaders who lack empathy.

AGILITY

The ability to have an open mind and quickly flex to the ever-changing environment is key.





5. RECRUITING NEW EMPLOYEES

Perhaps the most effective way to strengthen your team culture is in your recruitment process.

In employing the 'right' team members to drive your organisation in the way you want, you are building the team culture that you strive for.

To create a harmonious culture, it is essential that you employ individuals who share your values and can get on board with your mission, alongside their exceptional skills.

Hiring team members who cause the culture of your organisation to strain and who don't share your values is a fast way to damage the culture you have worked so hard to build.

FINALLY...

Finding candidates who can positively contribute to your team culture is an extra layer in the recruitment process which is not always an easy task.

As an experienced inclusive recruitment company, we will work with you to help your organisation achieve success by finding the 'right' employees to create and maintain an excellent team culture (culture doesn't stand still!).

Welcoming diversity and inclusion is key to healthy team cultures. This is where we thrive, along with identifying individuals with the skills, expertise and experience your organisation needs.

Getting a little extra help with everything from recruitment to writing job descriptions and onboarding could be crucial for organisations trying to stay competitive in a candidate-led environment.

To find out how we can help you strengthen your team culture this year with an expert, seamless recruitment process, get in touch today.

Joy Lewis
CEO
AAI EmployAbility

YOUR NEXT ACTIONS

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR SERVICES, CONTACT US
TODAY AT
[AAI-EMPLOYABILITY.ORG.UK](https://www.aai-employability.org.uk)

GET IN TOUCH WITH THE TEAM: TEAM@AAI-EMPLOYABILITY.ORG.UK

GET IN TOUCH WITH THE CEO: JOY@AAI-EMPLOYABILITY.ORG.UK

ABOUT AAI EMPLOYABILITY



AAI is an award-winning social enterprise that supports the private, public and third sectors to access talent of all ages, skillsets and backgrounds. It also helps businesses to better attract and retain diversity.

AAI has been a highly respected name for 12 years now, offering tried, tested and flexible inclusive recruitment services from ad hoc, short-term projects, including internships and maternity leave, to permanent positions. It has worked with over 1100+ growing businesses of all sizes, including Scottish Government, the NHS, Phoenix, SMEs and an array of startups and charities.



AAI will support both employers and candidates before, during and after the post, as the need arises. It uses its surplus to support disadvantaged people and marginalised groups struggling to enter the workforce.



AAI also works with private-sector businesses offering tailored social-impact projects around the themes of gender and racial diversity, disability and supporting the third/voluntary sector. These projects are aimed at improving attraction and retention of staff as well as providing tangible and reportable social and financial impact.

ABOUT JOY LEWIS



Joy joined the Centre for Scottish Public Policy in January 2009 and spun out AAI EmployAbility (then, Adopt an Intern) a year later. The company has since gone from strength to strength, placing over 1800 graduates and returners into valuable paid work across the UK.

She served for 20 years in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and has lived and worked in Brazil, Argentina and Germany. Joy also worked for many years in fashion retail where she recruited, trained and mentored women for Sales Manager posts, culminating in a successful business in Germany.

After addressing their first employment injustice of unpaid graduate internships, Joy and the AAI team have widened their scope of inclusive employment to include diversity and inclusion services to help more businesses to grow and more talented people to access opportunity.

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Designing Your Sector Career in 2023 - Finished

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Once you've established your long-term career goal, lay out the skills necessary to progress through that path, and assessed the market job demand. Taking the next step in your career path. However, before you jump into applying for a new job or requesting a promotion, there are a few things you can do to improve your chances of success.

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