

A culture of respect

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Respect is a word that usually evokes a positive conversation in that most human beings feel that respect is important and valued. The problem has been that almost no one really thinks about or understands what it means to respect someone, create a culture of respect among people or for that matter what it means to be to be respected. We don't generally normally think of respect as an action but as a feeling or judgment about other people. The purpose of this literature review is to give leaders, line managers, project managers and change agents practical assistance in creating a work environment where everyone feels valued and expected and where harassment and bullying are unacceptable. The guidance draws on information from a number of resources and research documents produced in recent years. Leaders who fail to tackle discrimination, harassment and bullying pay a price. The cost to an organization can be measured in:

- lost time because staff are affected by stress and ill health
- lower engagement due to low morale
- reduced work output and quality of service
- lost resources due to trained and experienced people leaving the organization

Organizations are complex systems with their own rules and cultures.

The way that organizations manage people plays an important role in the creation of a culture that is either respectful or bullying towards its employees. An organization has to ensure that its systems and culture do not reward bullying behavior, but rather that such behavior will be discovered and challenged. Literature Review Defining Respect The word respect originates from the Latin " respectus" which means " to look" or " to
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look back”. The term can be distinguished as having something to do with observation.

If the prefix " re" implies " again", then we have the concept of respect as meaning something like " looking again" (Selman, 2001). Respecting another means we are “ looking" at the other person in a particular way. Although we may or may not agree with another’s worldview or perspective, we are open to listening and honoring their opinion. Conversely, disrespect conveys a behavior in which we are generally closed to certain possibilities and conversations with them. Although respect is just a word, what it means and what it distinguishes for us can make all the difference in how we observe ourselves and others.

In the article Leadership and respect, the author suggests that while respect is a context for any relationship, we as individuals make the choice whether it is an expression of our commitment to effective relationships with others or whether it becomes part of a culture and worldview that separates and limits us. Stephen M. R. Covey suggests that the foundation of effective relationships is trust. While us as individuals may have positive intent, people judge others based on consistent behavior. The single biggest violation of trust is integrity.

Covey asserts that integrity is of greater importance than honesty. Although honesty is crucial, integrity is made up of three other components: congruency, humility and courage (2006). It stands to reason that respect begins with leaders displaying an honorable character which is consistent in nature with the values and goals of the organization. If leaders simply pay “ lip service” when people are watching, yet act in an inconsistent way in

private, the foundation of trust has been damaged and it will be difficult at best to create an atmosphere of respect. How Respect is Developed

Creating a culture of respect begins with a commitment to seeing everyone as worthy of respect. As previously suggested, while we don't always have a choice about our automatic judgments and predispositions, we do have a choice about what our valuations mean and the weight we give to them in our day to day relationships (Selman, 2001). Covey describes building trust and respect within an organization as a cause and effect relationship. The author suggests that there are taxes and dividends companies can avoid and leverage in an attempt to develop a culture of respect (2006) (fig. 1. 1).

Taxes | Dividends | | Redundancy | Increased Value | | Bureaucracy | Accelerated Growth | | Politics | Enhanced Innovation | | Disengagement | Improved Collaboration | | Turnover | Stronger Partnering | | Churn | Better Execution | | Fraud | Heightened Loyalty| Figure 1. 1 As organizations develop a culture of respect, standards and values have an impact on an employee's perception as to what is acceptable behavior (Tehrani, 2001). Organizations going through this type of cultural transformation need to engage all pertinent stakeholders in the development process. This universal participation and buy-in dramatically increases the likelihood of success.

How Respect is Sustained

Armstrong International is a privately-owned mid-sized manufacturing corporation in Michigan which has been steadily growing even during the recession. In their 109 year existence they have never had a single layoff. According to the company's fourth-generation Chief Executive, David Armstrong, the secret to their success is establishing a work culture based

on respect (Earing, 2012). Specifically in an industrial organization, Armstrong believes the key to a successful manufacturing operation is one that focuses on building a culture based on core values, such as honesty and respect. “ It all goes back to the golden rule—‘ Do unto others as you would do to you. ’ Treat your employees with respect and courtesy, and communicate with them about what’s going on,” (para 12).

Tehrani suggests that organizations need to practical and emotional support to people in conflict when issues arise (2001). Although an organization with a sustained level of respect is characterized as having an atmosphere of trust and dignity, it is equally important for leaders to be actively involved in being aware and diagnosing the signs and symptoms of bullying and harassment. Nancy R. Lockwood theorizes that workplace diversity is no longer just about anti-discrimination compliance, but also that it focuses on inclusion and the impact on the bottom line. Leveraging workplace diversity, and thus diversity of thought, is increasingly seen as a vital strategic resource for competitive advantage.

More companies are linking workplace diversity to their strategic goals and objectives--and holding management accountable for results (2005). Thus, HR plays a key role in diversity management and leadership to create and empower an organizational culture that fosters a respectful, inclusive, knowledge-based environment where each employee has the opportunity to learn, grow and meaningfully contribute to the organization's success. Conclusion Organizations will never completely eradicate human beings from having judgments about themselves and others. However, as leaders we can establish an environment of respect and live by the principle of trust.

Like all values, respect cannot be legislated or regulated into existence. It must be learned, coached and demonstrated by leaders throughout the organization. Respect, as has been distinguished, is the context for all relationships and can be created through commitment within every day interactions. Achieving a environment where all people are fully engaged and respected is a large undertaking that requires tremendous focus and leadership. It cannot be something you do on the corner of your desk or when you have time. You need to observe evidence that the behavior is evident and institutionalized within the organization.

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