

WHY CULTURE MATTERS MORE THAN STRATEGY

WHEN IT COMES TO TALENT RETENTION, SALES,
CUSTOMER SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP



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Ever *have* to do something you just didn't want to do? The truth is, you probably didn't do your very best in that moment—you didn't give it your all because your heart just wasn't in it. The same is true when it comes to business. When employees aren't happy or motivated, they can't do their best work.

That's why culture matters more than strategy in business when it comes to talent retention, sales, customer service and leadership. It takes more than solid planning and smart decision-making to turn a good business into a great one. At the end of the day, it takes people—and a strong culture—to rise above the rest.

Still not convinced? Read on for more about these top experts and tips that have helped businesses rethink the importance of culture.



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STAN SLAP

Understanding the complexities and nuances of business culture and leadership puts Stan in a class of his own. Stan is a thought leader and author of many bestselling books that offer top business **leadership insights**, including the New York Times bestseller *Bury My Heart in Conference Room B* and *Under the Hood: Fire Up and Fine-Tune Your Employee Culture*.

In his book *Under the Hood: Fire Up and Fine-Tune Your Employee Culture*, Stan outlines the 7 Deadly Sins to cultural commitment. Here are his tips to remedy the first deadly sin which is "failure to respect the power of an employee culture":

Give your culture context: why is this happening?

- Revisit decisions made and unmade
- Don't focus context exclusively on revenue goals

Give your culture predictability: what will happen next?

- Provide simple rules for living
- Hold predictability drills

Give your culture a sense of self: who am I as part of this?

- Help to answer the question What do you do?
- Help to answer the question What did you do today?

Bottom Line: Give your Employee Culture ENERGY



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ROBERT RICHMAN

Ask Robert what makes a business successful and he'll undoubtedly point to culture. That's because he's proven it to top businesses as a **culture architect** and top keynote speaker on culture. Robert is widely known for co-creating the Zappos Insights program, which helps to educate companies on the successful ways Zappos has developed their reputable employee culture.

Here are some **"Immediate Win"** ideas from Robert's Cultural Toolkit:

- **The "Reverse Beta":** Rather than the "test beta" which is trying something new to see if it works, try stopping something that might not be working.
- **Eliminate Personal Offices:** Leaders should be integrated with the employees rather than being out in separate office spaces.
- **Eliminate the dress code:** This costs nothing and employees see it as a huge benefit.
- **Install a popcorn machine:** At Zappos this was wildly successful for getting people out of their day to day trance, inspiring creativity, and leading to further cultural change.
- **Lose "that guy":** Removing a person who is dragging down morale will be like pulling a weed from the garden.
- **Offer Recognition and Awards:** Acknowledgement is like the gasoline for the engine of culture.



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JAMIE NAUGHTON

Jamie knows that great results are impossible without a great company culture. As Zappos' Chief of Staff, she works closely with CEO Tony Hsieh to build and maintain the stellar culture that Zappos is now famous for. In her valuable role, Jamie is an expert at understanding what motivates employees, how to **impress customers** with service and what it takes to boost sales through the roof.

Here's what Jamie had to say when *HR Hero Line* asked how Zappos' culture integrates with their brand:

"We believe that your company's culture and your company's brand are really two sides of the same coin. In essence, your culture dictates your brand. With the Internet, it's hard to hide who you really are. You can create marketing campaigns to sell your customers on how cool, innovative, and customer service-focused you are. But in the end, if your employees don't live up to that image then your customers will find out and will probably tell dozens of others about it — and maybe even blog about it"

Additionally, Jamie describes Zappos' culture by their 10 core values:

- Deliver WOW through service.
- Embrace and drive change.
- Create fun and a little weirdness.
- Be adventurous, creative, and open-minded.
- Pursue growth and learning.
- Build open and honest relationships with communication.
- Build a positive team and family spirit.
- Do more with less.
- Be passionate and determined.
- Be humble.



While “**culture**” is one of the most important parts of a business, it is also one of the hardest parts to understand. How do we measure or monitor culture? One helpful way is to focus on people, purpose and **performance**. Remember that your business begins with people. As people, we naturally crave information that we need to survive—how will I survive on this team or under this manager or in this company? Ensuring your employees feel informed and secure with your business will ultimately lead to more energy focused on your business.

An employee culture will also thrive when employees have a strong sense of self—where they feel good about what they’re doing and how they’re personally contributing. When employees feel secure, fulfilled and valuable in their roles, performance levels will skyrocket, allowing profits to follow suit. In the end, making employee culture a business priority can be one of the most valuable decisions you make when it comes to talent retention, sales, customer service and leadership.



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