

Creating Cultural Alignment

Culture—the way we do things around here—is the deeply embedded belief system that drives daily behavior. Culture can support organizational effectiveness or hinder it. The leader’s work is to shape the culture to achieve the organization’s vision through the people and practices that become habitual and mutually reinforcing.

Results—begin with strategic intention. What **results** does the organization promise? What **capabilities** does it require? That is, in order for the promised results to be realized, what organizational factors lead to success?

Edge—What does/can the organization have that no other organization has or can easily replicate? What makes it unique or gives it an edge?

Beliefs—What beliefs (values, ideals, and principles) underlie the success of the organization? That is, in order to achieve the vision and maintain the edge, we have to believe what? What is our organization’s guiding philosophy?

Experiences—When the beliefs are in action, what are the experiences people are having that demonstrate the values? What norms are practiced?

Every interaction—with colleagues, staff we manage, and other stakeholders—creates an experience. Interactions are how we “walk our talk.” They leave a lasting impression that telegraphs our true values more than anything we espouse. Leaders are especially responsible for identifying, creating and evaluating experiences.

Deeds—What are people actually doing? What behaviors do you see? Behaviors by leaders and managers set the tone amongst themselves and with their staff. If the leaders and managers see staff not taking desired actions, they then ask what experiences they, as leaders and managers, are creating for others.

Support—You may find that you are asking people to do things they’ve never done before. New behaviors may require skill building, coaching, as well as changes to systems, procedures, or structure. Provide the support for people to be successful in creating and living in the new culture.

