Pearl Meyer

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Coaching Culture from the Top



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Transcript

Aalap: There is very little coaching of the culture. You coach how to get results all the time, what things make work more efficient, have a more value added products. That happens on a constant basis from top to the bottom of the organization, but very little time is spent on coaching culture. It's almost assumed that individuals lower down in the organization already have alignment to the vision, the value, the mission of the organization. Spending more time on actually figuring out where those gaps are would be very beneficial.

Melissa: I was just going to say, this kind of just one more thought on that one. This kind of goes to the implicit nature versus the explicit nature of things. When we develop a mission, a vision, a purpose of the culture of the organization, we're very explicit of how and what we want to do and how we're going to go about doing it. Then, years pass, people come and they go and sometimes to your point, we're very specific about the business strategy, how it works, what we're expected to do over the next six months, 12 months, 36 months, and how we're performing, but we forget how we're supposed to go about doing what we're supposed to do. Does it come back to say as senior leaders and even as board members because tone at the top starts there as well, is that we need to remind and be more explicit

about what it is we're trying to do and how we're going to go about doing it.

I'll give you an example. This was a few months ago, but diversity in the technology industry is a little challenged-

Aalap: I was going to say, such as it is. A little.

Melissa: As it relates to the board room or in the organization itself. The sales force CEO came out and said, "That's not acceptable," on a main stage he came out and said, "That's not acceptable and as an organization we're going to make this a priority. If there are people within the organization who don't buy into that, then there's probably another place for you to go." That, to me, was a very explicit way of saying, "A part of our culture, we're going to make an importance around diversity. We're going to engrain it as a part of our culture. I, the senior leader of the organization, am going to stand up here and tell everybody that. If you don't like it, there are other places for you to go." That was a very explicit message.

You still have to start with a direction and that was a very clear direction.

Jan: One of the commissioners that I was speaking to about your comment, Melissa, around this implicit/explicit was a comment that sometimes we think it's enough to say our employee population and that kind of culture at the core, "Do the right thing." We assume that everybody knows what the right thing is or everybody agrees about what the right thing is. Sometimes it's not enough to just say, "Do the right thing." Sometimes you have to tell people what you mean when you say that.

About the Authors

Jan brings 30+ years of executive compensation and governance experience, advising boards and management on strategic human capital decisions tied to long-term value creation.

Aalap specializes in executive compensation strategy—governance, pay-for-performance, and incentives—helping companies align business, people, and compensation strategy for effective programs.

About Pearl Meyer

Pearl Meyer is the leading advisor to boards and senior management helping organizations build, develop, and reward great leadership teams that drive long-term success. Our strategy-driven compensation and leadership consulting services act as powerful catalysts for value creation and competitive advantage by addressing the critical links between people and outcomes. Our clients stand at the forefront of their industries and range from emerging high-growth, not-for-profit, and private organizations to the Fortune 500.