



World Safety Journal

A peer-reviewed journal,
published by the World Safety Organization

Journal Homepage:
<https://worldsafety.org/wso-world-safety-journal/>



Assessing Workplace Culture and Organizational Influencers

Michael Brown^{1*} and Teresa Bateman²

¹ Director with Cobalt Safety West in Canada and CEO for Pertium Group, Canada

² Principal Director with Callidus Arte Solutions, Canada

KEYWORDS

Workplace
Culture
Leadership
Mentors
Peer Pressure

ABSTRACT

Workplace culture is a synthesis of the social order in which we live or work, as well as the rules that govern that environment. It is critical for ensuring a safe, supportive, and productive working environment. Leaders bear the responsibility for creating, embedding, evolving, and ultimately manipulating a positive workplace culture. Senior executives, local managers, and supervisors all contribute to the culture of any organization by how they interact with one another, with their employees, and by how they communicate their expectations on work priorities. The organization's framework should define the values that guide its operations as well as the methods used to achieve its objectives.

The purpose of this article is to examine a variety of issues associated with workplace culture and leadership, the advantages of mentors for workplace culture, and peer pressure's impact on workplace culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

Workplaces are dynamic environments with many factors to consider when building teams. Building a positive workplace culture is essential to ensuring a safe, supportive, and productive environment for workers. This is not just important for the retention of workers but also for knowledge transfer and enhanced safety practices within the organization. Instead of just focusing on the end goal of production, these basics should stress trust, respect, and equal opportunities for everyone. Workplace culture is a big and changing idea that includes a lot more than what was mentioned. There are tools available to help managers and leaders create a work culture that puts health, safety, and performance first.

Mentoring is a great way to teach new employees and future leaders new skills and help spread the best ways to do things. Mentoring relationships should be supported at all levels of an organization because they can have a culturally changing impact. Mentors are peers with similar experience who can assist employees in understanding what is expected of them and how to perform well in their jobs. A company's safety culture should include training and mentoring for new employees, because these

* Corresponding Author: michael@pertium.ca

things lead to more productivity, a safer workplace, and important and complementary "hands-on" learning. It also promotes a positive workplace culture and fosters good coworker relationships. Mentoring takes time and requires leadership and organizational commitment; therefore, organizations should make time for these one-on-one relationships. The effects of peer pressure in the workplace can be traced back to the effects of peer pressure in the workplace.

Peer pressure is a big part of making decisions every day, and it can be even stronger at work. Studies have shown that when friends or colleagues are present, the number of risks people take more than doubles, implying that workers may find it more difficult to control impulsive or risky behaviors. Organizations should focus on developing a positive workplace culture because research shows that doing so has significant benefits for employers, employees, and the bottom line. Leaders, supervisors, and managers play an important role in making peer pressure work in a positive way by focusing on doing things correctly, adhering to regulatory requirements and client policies, and emphasizing workplace safety and other expectations.

Everyone in an organization, from the CEO to the office administrators to the contractors and laborers, contributes to the workplace culture, and each person has a different motivation for the work they do each day. Positive communication and good communication from all leaders and supervisors in an organization make all the difference in creating a positive and safe work culture, as well as an overall environment where employees can help them achieve their production and profit goals. This can result in happier employees, a safer workplace, fewer people leaving their jobs, and more work being completed.

2. WORKPLACE CULTURE and LEADERSHIP

Workplace culture is a combination of the social order we live or work in and the rules of that environment. "Cultures tell their members (workers) who they are, how to behave toward each other, and how to feel good about themselves" (Schein, 2010). There are several core factors that contribute to the development of workplace culture, including psychosocial aspects like leadership style and management practices and how work is organized, including employee responsibility and autonomy.

According to the academic organizational culture expert Edgar Schein, leaders have the responsibility to develop and maintain a good workplace culture, as "culture is... created, embedded, evolved, and ultimately manipulated by leaders" (Schein, 2010). This is a key role for leaders that never ends, because "leadership is involved in creating the culture at every stage of the organization's growth and maturity" (Schein & Schein, 2016). It is not just the role of top leadership to shape workplace culture, as all levels of leadership are accountable regardless of title or position. Senior executives, local managers, and supervisors each contribute to the culture that is developed for any organization through how they engage with each other, their workers, and how they communicate their expectations on the priorities of the work.

So, how does an organization do this? The framework of the organization should define the values they work by. This is established through their mission, vision, values, and goals. It also includes the means used to achieve their goals. For example, how they work together, how they measure achievement of goals, and what corrective strategies are used to adjust to achieve the goals (Schein, 2010). These fundamentals must focus on mutual trust, respect, and opportunity for everyone involved, not just the final goal of production. But most importantly, the organizational framework must 'embed health and safety in every aspect of the workplace' (WorkSafeBC, 2022).

Workplace culture is a large and dynamic concept, involving multiple factors beyond those noted. Once an organization's fundamentals are in place, there are countless resources to support leaders and supervisors in creating a workplace culture that focuses on health, safety, and performance. In most jurisdictions, workplace culture and health and safety resources are available through local or national occupational health organizations and align with the expectations for health and safety programs. Some of these resources also focus on developing supervisors and workers through mentoring; let's examine these factors further.

3. THE BENEFITS OF MENTORS FOR WORKPLACE CULTURE

An experienced mentor can have a culturally changing impact within an organization, supporting the significant growth of the team. Workplace safety is directly impacted by achieving shared understanding. This makes it important to support mentoring relationships at all levels of an organization. Chances are that at some point in everyone's career, a mentor was supportive in a work role, hopefully more than once. These influences can be vital to professional growth, supporting education, training, and success in a position. Organizations routinely schedule classroom or online training for their people yet fail to allow mentors enough time to successfully mentor. This time can be a fantastic investment in the future productivity, safety, and culture of an organization.

Mentoring is about helping another person learn through a one-to-one relationship. "A mentor is a seasoned professional who informally guides a less experienced person." (D'Angelo, 2022). It's an excellent method of transferring knowledge and promoting best practices at work. As well as an effective way to develop new workers and future leaders within an organization.

"A mentor is someone to look up to—someone who was once in your shoes and creates a path to success." (D'Angelo, 2022).

However, mentors are not always seasoned employees; sometimes they are peers with similar experience, advising and guiding each other as they learn the role. The best mentors are the ones who can clearly explain what is expected of them and how to do their jobs well. When someone who cares about their work shows a willingness to share this information, the team and organization benefit. There are many resources and best practices to help organizations start a mentoring program. Organizations should consider new employee training and mentoring as components of their safety culture, starting at recruitment.

Do not underestimate the value of sharing knowledge within an organization; it supports increased productivity, a safe workplace, and offers complimentary and essential "hands-on" education to supplement a training course. It also fosters good co-worker relationships within your organization and helps workers translate their job learning into practical skills. Additionally, mentoring grows leadership skills for all involved and builds on a positive workplace culture. Good intentions are not enough; mentoring takes time and requires leadership and organizational commitment. When workplace culture and overall safety benefit from mentoring, it is a clear choice for organizations to schedule time for these one-on-one relationships to take place. Organizations that communicate well are the safest places to work, and mentors can have a huge role in enhancing communication and supporting workers to do the same.

"Show me a successful individual, and I'll show you someone who had real positive influences in his or her life. I don't care what you do for a living—if you do it well, I'm sure there was someone cheering you on or showing you the way. A mentor."

Denzel Washington

4. PEER PRESSURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON WORKPLACE CULTURE

How much of the good and bad about an organization's culture can be traced back to the effects of peer pressure in the workplace? Peer pressure can be a big part of making decisions every day, and this can be even stronger at work. Comments, reactions, and body language from supervisors and co-workers have a powerful impact on decisions made in the workplace. Consider this scenario: A deadline is approaching, the job needs to get done, and the supervisor is not asking or considering questions about safety, quality, or workplace culture; they want to assure the work gets done so the organization (and the supervisor) can meet its target. The result: corners get cut, chances are taken, and if it goes right, everyone is happy and profits are made. However, if something goes wrong, there are damages: someone gets fired, or worse, someone gets hurt. This scenario demonstrates peer pressure or peer influence, which is defined as:

"The pressure that a peer group puts on its members to fit in with the group's norms and expectations. Peer pressure may have positive socialization value but may also have negative consequences for mental or physical health" (APA, 2023).

Some studies have shown that the number of risks people take more than doubles when their friends or colleagues are watching, compared to when they are alone. This outcome indicates that workers may find it more difficult to control impulsive or risky behaviors when their co-workers (peers) are around.

"Even though it's assumed that stress and pressure make employees work harder, better, and faster, [many] organizations don't see the hidden costs" (HBR, 2015, para. 3).

Injuries, illnesses, and long-term health problems caused by stress, as well as the effects of accidents at work, are examples of these hidden costs. The HBR says that between 60 and 80% of accidents at work are caused by stress (2015, para. 4). Since these statistics come from studies that were conducted years before COVID, the stress that workers feel from their peers may be much higher today. This makes it even more important for organizations to focus on creating a positive workplace culture. While it can be hard for workers to resist the influence of their peers, especially in the heat of the moment, this influence can also have a positive effect. According to the Harvard Business Review (HBR), research shows that "a positive environment will lead to dramatic benefits for employers, employees, and the bottom line" (HBR, 2015).

Leaders, supervisors, and managers play a big part in making peer pressure work in a good way. Much of the data available today on psychological safety in the workplace demonstrates that when employees feel like they matter to their employer and team, they ask for assistance when needed, communicate better about problems, are more engaged, are willing to learn and grow, and are more creative and innovative (HBR, 2015). As noted earlier, organization leaders set this example, leading the culture of the organization. Supervisors and managers transfer this through a focused importance on doing things the right way, following regulatory requirements and client policies, and highlighting workplace safety and other expectations that are part of the daily work. If leaders are only asking about the bottom dollar and schedule, the workplace culture and safety will suffer. Positive communication and good communication from all leaders, supervisors, and managers in an organization make all the difference.

5. CLOSING THOUGHTS

Although a complex task, managing culture must be a priority for organizations. We must not forget that everyone in an organization contributes to workplace culture, from the CEO to the office

administrators to the contractors and the laborers. Do not underestimate the value of good people sharing their learned knowledge. Every person also has different motivations for the work carried out every day, and these motivations may change over time. Regardless, the value of a successful workplace culture doesn't just make going to work nicer; it also increases production and helps to ensure safe practices in the workplace, improving the overall workplace and safety culture of an organization. The positive effects of workplace culture can be seen in happy workers, a safer place to work, fewer people leaving their jobs, and more work getting done. Most organizations' long-term success is directly linked to how well they can create a positive and safe work culture and an overall environment where their employees can help them reach their production and profit goals. ultimate Win-Win.

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AUTHORS

Michael Brown serves as Director with Cobalt Safety West, Canada, and CEO for Pertium Group, a construction support services company that provides solutions to busy worksites in western Canada. A recognized international public speaker with over 18 years of experience as an HSE professional working in oil and gas, refineries, mining, heavy civil construction, marine, aviation, and industrial workplaces, he brings common-sense solutions to workplace safety.



Teresa Bateman has a Master of Arts in communications and over 30 years of experience in health care, regulation, and competency development with focused roles overseeing strategy, standards, best practices, and communication. She studied team dynamics and psychological safety in the workplace and has presented internationally. She is the principal director at Callidus Arte Solutions, a boutique consulting company in Canada, and contracts with Pertium Group as director of people and impact.