# RYP QUARTERLY

November 2023

# If Culture Precedes Performance – What Precedes Culture? …. The Answer is Climate!

**Staff engagement survey after staff engagement survey reveals the biggest cause of staff disengagement is poor management. Indeed, poor direct line managers is the biggest reason why good staff leave. You do not need a survey to reveal poor managers. You just need to walk around and feel the climate they create for their staff!** Climate is what every Manager creates for their team. It is the environment in which a team operates. Poor climate = poor team morale and poor performance. People who quietly quit their job do so for two reasons: Because their work is unfulfilling, or, because of their manager.

> *Culture is shaped over time. It takes years to cultivate and takes time to shape. Climate is immediate. It is the environment created by a manager for their direct staff. It has immediate effect and can change rapidly.*

## CULTURE V CLIMATE DEFINED

**Climate is often confused with Culture**. Whilst aligned, they are different. It is important to understand the difference. This has been researched by many academics over the years, and The Oxford Review has a good summary:

> *Organisational Culture: If the system of shared assumptions, values and beliefs that govern how people behave within an organisation. Culture is difficult to change as it is embedded in the behaviour of individuals and can be best described as the "personality" of an organisation.*

> *Climate: Climate Is the environment every leader creates for their direct team or office. "What you feel when you walk in." It is how employees within an organisation work together locally, which is a direct result on how they are led and managed.*

> *Culture outlines the way things should be done. Climate reveals how things are done.*

## MACRO CULTURE IS MADE UP OF MICROCLIMATES

Often when describing a poor organisational culture, what is really being described is a poor team climate, or more specifically poor local leadership.

**To put it succinctly:**

> **Culture =** Ways things ought to be done (Values & Principles)

> **Climate =** Environment in which people work (The Team Chemistry)

This is why any organisational culture is dependent on local leadership. It is why no two business units, offices, or branches are the same. Head office may well drive and lead organisational culture, but its local practice and application will depend on the local team climate, which is owned by and endorsed by the local Leadership. If the local manager does not role model, endorse or enforce the organisations' purpose, values, behaviours, and principles, then it is safe to assume they will be not deemed relevant or important by local staff. The synergy between a macro-organisational culture and local team climate is vital for the overall success and alignment of any organisation.

## LOCAL MANAGERS OWN TEAM CLIMATE

The local team climate, the atmosphere in which team members work is shaped and owned by the local management team. This ownership encompasses critical leadership responsibilities including:

1. **Role modelling**, endorsing & enforcing agreed organisational wide values, behaviours, beliefs, and principles.
2. **Setting expectations** of what acceptable performance looks like, goal setting, and team disciplines.
3. **An Adaptive Leadership Style** that engages, motivates, teaches, and empowers team members. Being an autocratic micro manager will always demotivate staff.
4. **Credible Leadership.** Credibility is the basis for leadership. It is the little things done each day by a leader that builds a trusted relationship bank with staff.
5. **Effective communication** within the team and with management. There must be open lines of communication that are deemed safe and credible by staff.
6. **Conflict resolution is a must**. Difficult conversations should be deemed "normal conversations" by staff. If there is a trusted and respected climate within the team, then any conflict should be easily and quickly dealt with – without it festering.
7. **Recognition is key.** Staff must feel valued and respected, and at the same time, their efforts are acknowledged and appreciated by local line managers.

# COMPARING CULTURE & CLIMATE

| ELEMENT | CULTURE | CLIMATE |
|---|---|---|
| **DEFINITION** | Deeply ingrained values, behaviours, practices, and principles that shape how employees work and make decisions | Immediate perceivable atmosphere within a workplace or local team. It reflects the mood, attitude, and enthusiasm of employees |
| **LONGEVITY** | Culture is long term and relatively stable. It develops over time and is influenced by an organisations history, leadership and values | Climate is more short term and can change quickly. It is directly influenced by local management and local events |
| **FOCUS** | Culture deals with deep seated beliefs and values that guide the organisations overall mission and purpose | Climate deals with the immediate feeling of any team. The emotion and day to day energy of any team |
| **MEASURABILITY** | Culture is best measured through the lived experiences of staff and customers (How things are done and what is valued) | Climate is best measured by what you see, feel and hear from a team (Attitudes & Behaviours) |
| **INFLUENCE** | Culture influences the long term ingrained behaviours, decision making and overall identify. It sets the tone for how things are done | Climate influences short term morale and job satisfaction. It is influenced by how staff are locally managed and motivated. It impacts how people feel about coming to work each day. |
| **CHANGE** | Culture is shaped over time by decisive leadership through behaviours, recognition and symbolism, and aligned reward and recognition systems | Climate is immediately impacted by how a local leader acts, behaves, coaches, and supports their staff, or not. Their actions or inactions have immediate consequences on the team |
| **IMPACT** | Culture is long term and is a key component of any organisations Brand. It forms part of what attracts potential staff and customers | Climate is day to day. Will change when local managers leave. It is impacted by poor managers tolerating toxic staff, or good staff having a toxic manager. |

**Workplace Culture** is a deeper long term set of beliefs and values that define an organisation (internally and externally). It is a direct reflection of what is valued by the Executive Leadership Team who sets the tone and credibility of how things ought to be done.

**Workplace Climate** is the more immediate and changeable atmosphere that employees experience. It is a direct result of local leadership and team dynamics. It is how a team teams!

> *Local Leaders, Managers, Supervisors all own and are responsible for their Team Climate*
> *Poor Team Climate = Poor Local Management*

## 10 INFLUENCES OF LOCAL TEAM CLIMATE – A CHECKLIST

The mood, attitude, behaviour, and expertise of a manager will directly impact the climate any team they oversee. What follows are 10 influences that impact Team Climate. Use it as a checklist to rate any Manager. This should be self-rated by a manager to see how self-aware they are, whilst also allowing the team to rate how they are led (upward feedback). Any feedback is good feedback! The feedback should be ongoing and constant, not deferred

to an annual survey, or a blunt 360' feedback instrument. Just simply ask!  Team Climate is a living breathing dynamic, not an annual survey or score!

**INFLUENCE 1 SAFETY:** This is both physical and emotional safety. The workplace must be physically safe. It also must emotionally feel safe, where staff know they can share thoughts or provide the gift feedback knowing it will be appreciated, without fear of retribution. Staff must also know if they make a mistake they will be supported by their manager. The manager must assume best intentions.

**INFLUENCE 2 BELONGING:** All team members must feel a sense of belonging. Key is to lead an inclusive, supportive, and welcoming team chemistry, where everyone has a role to play, and diversity and inclusion is valued.

**INFLUENCE 3 ACHIEVEMENT:** A sense of progress and achievement is what motivates people. Having something to aim for and celebrate when it is achieved provides any team with a sense of fulfillment, confidence, and unity.

**INFLUENCE 4 RECOGNITION:** People like to achieve things, but also be recognised for their achievements. Thanking people, demonstrating gratitude, and publicly acknowledging the efforts of team members is what fuels a sense of accomplishment and pride.

**INFLUENCE 5 APPRECIATION:** Any thanks or acts of appreciation must be authentic. These do not need to be tokenistic gifts, but rather genuine verbal appreciation for when someone goes over and above the day to day to help lend a hand or make a difference. This is what **will fuel the likelihood of future volunteerism in other team members.**

**INFLUENCE 6 RELATIONSHIPS:** The relationship team members have with their manager is key. You do not need to be friends. But Trust and Respect must form the basis of the relationship. This must be two-way. It starts with how any manager treats their team members. Their lived experience is everything.

**INFLUENCE 7 FLEXIBILITY:** Everyone will have a need from time to time to have some flexibility in their work-hours (for whatever reason). Everyone must manage their personal and work commitments. Being open and supportive of trying to accommodate personal needs will demonstrate empathy and understanding to family needs by a manager. If this is absent, staff absenteeism will simply increase.

**INFLUENCE 8 MEANINGFUL WORK:** People need to feel their work is meaningful and adds value to the team or the mission of the organisation. If work is not meaningful, it just becomes another task or job to do! Meaningful work and feeling valued go hand in hand.

**INFLUENCE 9 AUTONOMY:** No one has ever said they perform better when they are micromanaged. People like autonomy and responsibility. It allows them to get on with their work, set their own goals, and manage their own priorities. People soon tire of being told what to do and when to do it!

**INFLUENCE 10 FUN:** The X Factor. Do the team enjoy coming to work? Do they enjoy being part of a team? Are there team rituals (formal and informal) that allow the team to socialise

with each other, discuss ideas for improvement, and acknowledge "wins?" A sense of Fun fosters open and welcoming team dynamics, and allows for direct conversations to occur when needed, without fear of retribution. A good indicator of team Fun is how a person feels on Sunday night about coming to work the next day and their week ahead!

## **FINALLY**

A healthy and positive workplace climate is the direct result of local leadership. It requires a leader's intent. Climate is influenced by how a leader thinks, acts, and behaves. Team Climate is felt and observed the moment you walk in a door. If the staff are friendly, enthusiastic, motivated, and welcoming that is a direct result of how they are being managed. The biggest crime Senior Leaders make is ignoring the attitude and behaviours of the worst performing front-line managers.

> ### *A SAD FACT*
> *Tolerating a Poor Manager always results in a Poor Team Climate. Team Climate rests with the worst behaviour role modelled by a manager. Too often this is ignored or tolerated by Senior Leaders. If you need to conduct a survey to reveal a poor local manager – the Senior Leaders are asleep at the wheel!*

## *Facta Non Verba – Deeds Not Words*

*David Stewart (B Ed, Grad Dip Sports Science, master's Business Leadership) David is the Founder & Principle of RYP International – A Coaching & Advisory Practice. He has worked globally with organisations, their leaders, and teams to develop their capability and culture to maximise performance.*