



TOOL #18: DESIGNING A NEW WORK PLACE CULTURE

When organizations are merging, it is important to think consciously about what kind of culture the employees, Board Members, and volunteers wish to have. One of the best ways to integrate the groups of employees is to have a process for designing the new culture. Here is an exercise that can be carried out by the entire workforce or within individual departments:

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Make sure each person has something to write on.
2. Hand out the questions below, one set at a time. Ask each individual to answer the questions in Set #1. Make sure to give people enough time to think about their responses.
3. When everyone is done answering the questions in Set #1, repeat the process for Set #2 and Set #3 (around two to four minutes per question, thirty minutes for eight questions).
4. After individuals have answered all the questions, they should pair up in groups of two or more to discuss their answers. Each pair or group should include people from the "original" nonprofits.
5. Each group should come up with one recommended answer for each question. Allow sufficient time to discuss the answers for each set of questions.
6. When finished with Set #1, repeat the process for Set #2 and Set #3 (around five to ten minutes per question, total one hour).
7. When all of the questions are answered, have everyone share their responses with the entire group assembled. Discuss the responses and choose one recommendation, if possible, for each question (one hour).
8. Report out the recommended choices to management and the Board of Directors.

NOTE: As individuals answer the questions, they should keep the following in mind: What about our previous workplace culture would I like to preserve? What would I like to change?

Each of the question sets can be found on the pages following.



SET #1:

1. What reactions would you like to see from a new employee about our work culture?
What would inform these reactions?

2. What are the two most important values our workplace can have? How would we know if we were living up to these values – what would we see, feel, or know?

SET #2:

1. What type of employee feedback system would you like to see? For what types of issues?
2. What should we celebrate, and how? (Examples: birthdays, promotions, departmental goals)
3. What is it about our culture that should enable us to succeed? What aspects of our current culture might make it difficult to succeed?

SET #3

1. What should be the work hours?
2. What should be our dress code? (Examples: casual, professional)
3. What should be our accountability to each other in terms of response time for communication?



REFLECTION AT THE END:

1. Review what you did today. What recommendations did you make?
2. Were you surprised at any of the responses? What encouraged you? What discouraged you?
3. What patterns did you pick up among the responses? What new insights did you learn?
4. What will you, personally, do differently after this conversation?
5. What are the next steps?

