

# CREATING A WORKPLACE CULTURE THAT WORKS

How small businesses can create a thriving and engaging team without a huge budget or HR department

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**INFINIUM**HR  
PAYROLL AND HR SOLUTIONS

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# AGENDA

- Introduction – Why it's Important
- Defining Your Workplace Culture
- Building a Culture Without Breaking the Bank
- Leadership's Role in Building Culture
- Practical Action Steps
- Real Life Success Stories



# Introduction

# Why Care About Workplace Culture?

## Compete Beyond Compensation

Culture is your edge. Small businesses may not always match big companies on salary or perks, but a positive, people-first culture creates a more attractive workplace that attracts top talent and wants to do more to succeed as a team.

## Boost Retention and Loyalty

A healthy culture encourages employees to stay. When people feel respected, heard, and supported, they're far more likely to stick around. That saves your business thousands in turnover costs and lost productivity.

## Improve Productivity and Operations

A clear, intentional culture fosters better communication, less friction, and more accountability. When your team understands the "why" behind their work and feels part of a shared mission, workflows are smoother, collaboration is easier, and productivity rises.





# Why Care About Workplace Culture?

## Stay Agile and Ready for Growth

A culture that encourages teamwork, flexibility, and individual/team ownership, makes your business more resilient. Whether you're scaling up or facing tough changes, a strong cultural foundation keeps your team aligned, loyal, and focused.

## Strengthen Your Employer Brand

Culture is the foundation of your reputation as a workplace. Positive reviews on job boards, word-of-mouth, and social media all stem from how people feel at work. A great culture turns employees into advocates, and that's great for hiring and for business. Positive energy spreads!

## Build Compliance Into Everyday Behavior

Strong cultures are rooted in values like respect, fairness, and accountability, qualities that naturally align with wage and hour compliance, positive employee behavior, and legal best practices. When employees are engaged and managers are trained, compliance becomes proactive rather than reactive.



# The Impact on Retention, and Productivity

- Improved Employee Retention
- Better Productivity and Engagement
- Easier Recruiting
- Fewer HR Issues
- Improved Customer Experience
- Resilience in Tough Times







# Defining Your Workplace Culture





# How Do You Define Culture?

## Start with Your "Why"

Ask yourself and your team:

- Why does this business exist beyond profit?
- What do we value most?

## Talk to Your Team

Culture isn't something you create for your team—it's something you create with them.

- Hold short, casual team discussions or anonymous surveys.
- Ask: What do we love about working here?
- What frustrates us? What does a great team look like to us?
- Look for patterns in what's said and what's not said.

# How Do You Define Culture?

## Observe Behaviors (Not Just Policies)

Culture shows up in how things get done, not just what's written in the handbook.

- Are people collaborative or siloed?
- Are decisions top-down or bottom-up?
- Do people take initiative or wait for direction?

## Define Core Values (and Make Them Real)

Don't just slap generic values on the wall—define what they look like in action

Example: If “Respect” is a core value, what does that look like in daily communication, meetings, or feedback?



# How Do You Define Culture?

## Align Hiring & Operations

Once values and culture are defined, they should show up in:

- You're hiring process...hiring for culture fit and skills reaps long term rewards.
- How you handle new clients, problems, challenges...a team collaborating from shared goals and values is far more effective

## Revisit and Evolve

Managing your culture is an ongoing process. Schedule a "culture check-in" every 6-12 months.

Ask: Is our culture working for us? What needs to evolve?



A thriving workplace culture doesn't happen by chance—it's built deliberately, step by step. Start small, grow intentionally, and evolve as your company does.





# **Building a Culture Without Breaking the Bank**

# Workplace Flexibility - What

## Offer Alternative Workweek Schedules

- 4/10 or 9/80 schedules give employees 3 day weekends

## Embrace Remote and Hybrid Work Options

- Let employees split time between home and office based on workload or team collaboration needs

## Consider Part-Time Employees

- Offer reduced or part-time schedules to retain experienced workers who want better balance.

## Implement Staggered Start and End Times

- Accommodate different personal schedules by offering flexible arrival and departure times



# Workplace Flexibility - How

## Use Technology to Stay Connected

- Leverage cloud based platforms like Slack, Zoom, and Monday to support collaboration across flexible teams.

## Don't Micromanage Activities

- Focus on outcomes, not just time spent. Clearly define performance expectations and deadlines, then give employees autonomy.

## Measure What Works and What Doesn't

- Use regular one-on-one meetings or anonymous surveys to ask employees how flexible arrangements are working - and adjust when needed.



# Encouraging Communication

## Create a Culture of Transparency

- Transparency starts at the top. Leaders should openly share company goals, performance metrics, and even challenges.
- When employees understand why decisions are made and how they impact the business, they feel trusted and respected.

## Encourage Bottom-Up Communication

- Ideas shouldn't only come from the top. Great cultures empower employees at all levels to speak up, innovate, and shape the future of the company.





# Empowering Teams

## Set Clear Objectives, Not Instructions

- Instead of dictating how something must be done, define the problem and the desired outcome — then ask the team how they'd tackle it. Give them parameters but let them own the solution.

## Let Teams Test and Own Their Ideas

- Encourage teams to solve their own challenges. Not everything will work — and that's okay. What matters is creating a culture of experimentation and improvement, not perfection.



# Recognizing & Rewarding Employees

## Make Gratitude Part of Your Culture

- Build in “thank you” time at meetings. Celebrate wins, both big and small, team and individual, and don’t hesitate to give shout outs publicly.

## Say It Out Loud

- Don’t underestimate the power of a sincere “great job” during a team meeting or one-on-one. Be specific. Instead of “nice work,” say, “Your extra effort on that client deadline helped us retain a key account. Thank you.”

## Peer-to-Peer Recognition:

- Encourage employees to shout out coworkers for helping them or going above and beyond. This builds camaraderie and shared accountability.



# Recognizing & Rewarding Employees

## Use Small Perks to Make Big Impact

- **Bonuses or Gift Cards:** Even a \$25 gift card with a handwritten note feels great. Give them randomly for hitting goals, solving a problem, or modeling core values.
- **Flexibility Perks:** Let them leave an hour early, work from home for a day, or choose their own project milestone reward.
- **The Power of Food:** regular luncheons are a great idea, but be sure to throw in a surprise coffee run or luncheon when the team has wins, or even losses to help them stay positive.



# Low Cost Benefits

- 401k or IRA Retirement Plans
- Dental, Vision, Life and Chiro Bundles
- Employee Assistance Plans
- Legal Shield Plans
- Supplemental Insurance (think the Duck)
- Pet Insurance
- Floating Holidays
- Gym Memberships





# Low Cost Perks

- Birthdays Off or Off Early
- Extended Holidays
- Healthy Office Snacks and Beverages
- Mobile Car Washes
- Work from Home Days
- Team Events Off Site
- Health and Wellness Days
- Educational and Personal Growth Opportunities





## **Leadership's Role in Culture**

# Leadership Sets the Tone



- People follow examples more than words.
- When leaders demonstrate transparency, respect, and accountability, those behaviors spread across the team.
- When leadership is reactive, defensive, dismissive, or inconsistent, it fosters mistrust and disengagement.
- Employees can feel when a leader is micromanaging and trying control processes and methods.
- Culture must be seen as a core business priority—not just an HR initiative—and leaders must own it.



# Modeling the Desired Behavior



- The best way to define your culture? Live it.
- Show up with consistency, fairness, humility, and follow-through.
- Do what you say you're going to do
- Under-promise and over-deliver
- When leaders take accountability, own mistakes, and act with integrity, they create space for employees to do the same.
- Clear expectations mean little without leadership walking the talk.



# Coaching Managers to Lead

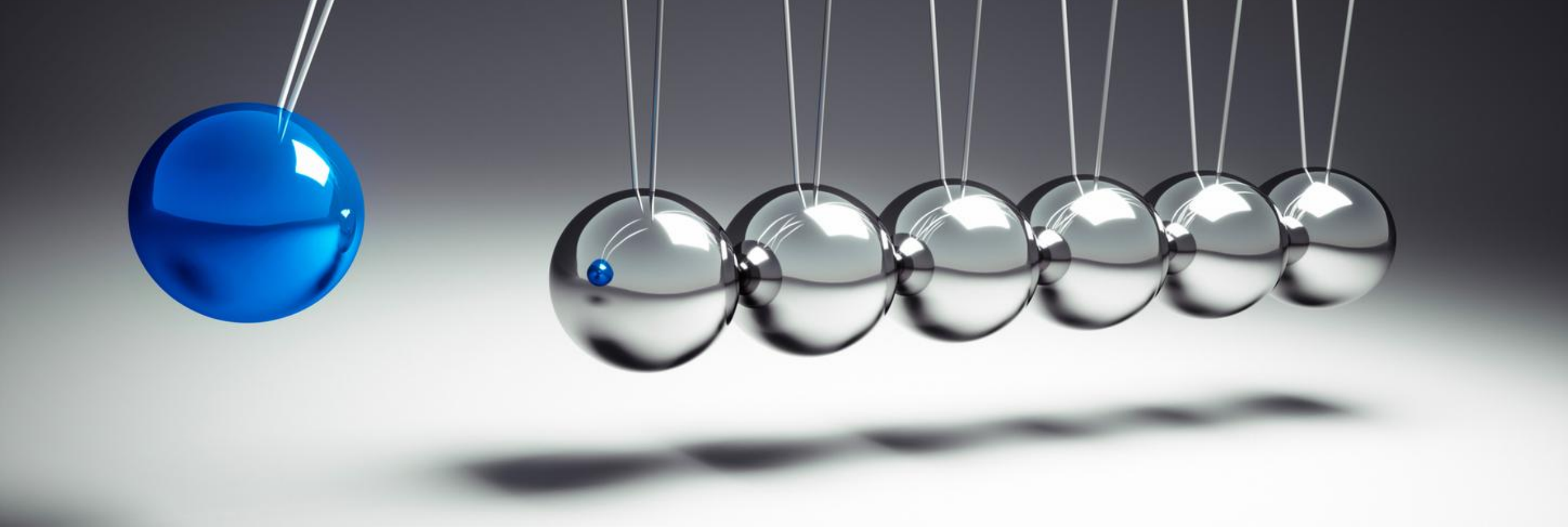


- Your managers are your front line in your culture building efforts, without their buy-in, culture dies.
- Ensure they are equipped with the ability to deal with conflict resolution and have a basic understanding of emotional intelligence.
- Are they approachable and able to listen, give feedback, and foster trust
- Do employees feel safe and valued?
- Is there a plan for regular check-ins, feedback sessions, team huddles, and are the communication channels open?



# Culture Doesn't Happen by Accident

- Strong cultures are intentional. They're built through consistent actions, regular feedback, and the willingness to evolve.
- Recognizing employees who demonstrate your values, investing in their growth, and celebrating wins (even small ones) helps reinforce the culture you want to build.
- Leadership must actively nurture it—it doesn't run on autopilot.
- Just remember, every policy, process, and communication either supports or weakens your culture—there's no neutral ground.



# Action Steps

# Time for Action

## ✓ Identify Your Company's Real Values

Beyond slogans, what do you really stand for? Talk with leadership and employees to define (or redefine) the core values that will guide your workplace behavior and decisions.

## ✓ Start the Conversation

Kick things off by talking to your team. Ask how they feel about the workplace, what's working, and what's not. Be open, listen actively, and show you're serious about improving.

## ✓ Send Out a Culture Survey

Use an easy form tool like Google Forms or JotForm to collect anonymous feedback. Ask about values, morale, communication, recognition, leadership, and what employees would change.

## ✓ Assign a Culture Team

Form a small internal team of employees from different departments or roles. Task them with reviewing survey results and brainstorming improvement ideas. This gives ownership and visibility to the initiative.





# **Real Life Success Stories**

# Work-Life Balance

## A Local Marketing Agency

- ✓ **Challenge:** Employees were struggling with work-life balance, especially parents managing school drop-offs.
- ✓ **Solution:** The agency implemented flexible work schedules, allowing employees to start anytime between 7:30 AM and 10:00 AM as long as they worked their full hours.
- ✓ **Impact:** Employees felt trusted, reported less stress, and productivity actually increased because they worked during their most effective hours.

**Takeaway for Small Businesses:** Even if you can't offer full remote work, flexible scheduling helps employees manage their personal lives while staying productive.

# DIY employee Perks Program

50 Employee Manufacturing Company

- ✓ **Challenge:** Employees wanted perks, but the company had a limited budget.
- ✓ **Solution:** Leadership gave employees a monthly perk fund (just \$25 per person per month) and let them vote on how to use it. Sometimes they chose team lunches, wellness stipends, or fun outings.
- ✓ **Impact:** Employees felt ownership over the perks, increasing engagement and participation in team-building activities.
- ✓ **Takeaway for Small Businesses:** A small budget for employee perks can go further when employees decide how to use it.

# Communication & Feedback Culture:

## A Local Coffee Shop

- ✓ **Challenge:** Employees didn't feel heard and weren't sure how they were performing.
- ✓ **Solution:** The owners implemented monthly one-on-one check-ins, where employees met with a manager for 15 minutes to discuss how they were feeling, what they needed help with, and career goals.
- ✓ **Impact:** Employees felt valued and listened to, and the business reduced turnover by 30% in the first year.
- ✓ **Takeaway for Small Businesses:** Regular 1-on-1 meetings (even 15 minutes a month) show employees you care about their growth and well-being.



Culture doesn't need to be fancy. It just needs to be real. The clearer and more intentional you are about defining it, the easier it becomes to attract and retain people who believe in what you're building.





# Thank you!




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- ✓ **Payroll & Tax Management** – Accurate, reliable payroll processing with full tax compliance.
- ✓ **HR Support & Compliance Guidance** – Expert advice to help you stay ahead of labor law changes.
- ✓ **HR Automation** – Streamlined onboarding, timekeeping, compliance, benefits, and more.
- ✓ **Employee Relations & Best Practices** – Proactive guidance to minimize risk and enhance workplace culture.

Whether you need day-to-day HR support, payroll solutions, or proactive compliance strategies, Infinium HR is here to help.

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