

# Culture Matters

## Guidance Document

### Introduction

We often get the question of where to start in fostering inclusive workplace culture. It isn't just about creating a pleasant environment or friendly. It is about elevating an otherwise largely transactional relationship--work in exchange for money--to create a space where employees feel valued, supported, and empowered to contribute to organizational shared goals.

### Approach

This Guidance Document is a starting\_point designed to help all organizational members assess workplace culture with a focus on **three pillars of inclusive workplace culture**: (1) collaboration and communication, (2) employee voice and wellness, and (3) professional purpose and growth.

### How to Use this Document

For each item below ask:

Are we currently doing this? If not, why?

What steps can we take to implement or improve this practice?

Who should be involved in making this happen?

Depending on your organization, each one of these items may not be relevant or necessary. However, organizational best practices suggest that most organizations should be doing most of these things to promote inclusive workplace culture.

The last page of this document asks users to describe and provide examples for several important inclusive workplace practices.

## Collaboration & Communication

Collaboration and communication are the foundation of any thriving organizational culture. When individuals across teams and departments work together seamlessly, they harness collective expertise, foster innovation, and drive meaningful results. Open communication ensures that ideas are exchanged freely, preventing misunderstandings and aligning everyone toward shared goals.

A culture rooted in collaboration encourages diverse perspectives, allowing for more creative problem-solving and well-rounded decision-making. It also cultivates trust and transparency, essential for addressing challenges and celebrating successes.

- Do we have a shared set of norms and expectations for behavior that all team members are aware of and agree to follow?
- Do we encourage employees to view colleagues as internal customers, emphasizing helpfulness and collaboration?
- Are there regularly scheduled meetings or other opportunities to assess team dynamics, celebrate wins, and address priorities and challenges collaboratively?
- Do we otherwise communicate effectively and regularly through email and/or other methods?
- Are there opportunities for organizational members from different teams to collaborate on initiatives, fostering innovation and breaking down silos?
- Do we prioritize inclusive language and promote inclusivity in all forms of communication?
- Do we highlight, incentivize, and reward employees who go above and beyond to support their colleagues or customers?

### NOTES:

## Employee Voice & Wellness

A culture that values employee voice and wellness is essential for fostering a productive, engaged, and resilient workforce. When employees feel their perspectives are heard and respected, they are more likely to contribute ideas, raise concerns, and take ownership of their roles. When employees feel heard and valued, engagement and morale naturally increase, contributing to higher productivity and retention.

Wellness, both mental and physical, is equally critical to sustaining high performance and morale. Organizations that prioritize employee well-being recognize that individuals bring their whole selves to work, and supporting their health leads to increased focus, creativity, and job satisfaction.

- Do all employees know how and where to access important updates, policies, and resources?
- Are there systems for employees or organizational members to share their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions anonymously or directly?
- Is there dedicated time for leaders to hear from employees or organizational members about what's working and what's not in a structured, open environment?
- Do we use anonymous surveys or other feedback measures to assess employee or organizational member satisfaction, workplace climate, and areas for improvement?
- Do we make efforts to ensure that employees feel safe to express ideas, make mistakes, and ask questions without fear of retribution?
- Do we have a reasonable and equitable system for requesting and approving flexible working arrangements where warranted, considering the needs of employees and organizational goals?

### NOTES:

## Professional Purpose & Growth

Fostering a sense of professional purpose and growth within an organization is essential for long-term success and employee fulfillment. When individuals understand how their roles contribute to broader organizational goals, they develop a deeper sense of meaning and motivation in their work. A clear professional purpose aligns personal values with organizational objectives, driving engagement, accountability, and a commitment to excellence.

Equally important is providing opportunities for continuous growth. Employees who feel supported in developing their skills and advancing their careers are more likely to remain loyal, innovative, and invested in the organization's success. Encouraging professional development not only enhances individual performance but also strengthens the overall capacity and effectiveness of the organization.

- Do we help employees understand how their roles contribute to the organization's mission and objectives?
- Do we make efforts to democratize organizational knowledge and practices so that it is accessible and helpful to all employees and organizational members?
- Are organizational tasks and assignments distributed using methods that promote fairness and universal employee growth?
- Do we provide opportunities for professional development that align with the organization's mission and purpose such as training, mentorship, and skill-building (including but not limited to how give and receive constructive feedback effectively)?
- Do we provide training and resources to help employees understand and navigate cultural differences, both within the workplace and in interactions with clients or stakeholders?
- Do we regularly recognize and celebrate individual and team achievements to reinforce a sense of value and purpose?

### NOTES:

## Inclusion Best Practices

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Onboarding New Employees Effectively		
Building Rapport & Personalizing Interactions		
Seeking Collaborative Solutions		
Providing Objective & Regular Performance Feedback		
Communicating Clearly & Regularly		
Emphasizing Wellness & Flexibility		
Encouraging Professional Growth		
Managing Cultural Conflict		