



Tom's

# Schin Sights

**October? Yeah Q4 is here (again)**

When I started writing this, we were in that spell of 3 straight days of rain. Now we're back to cool, dry and leaves building up on my lawn. Time to start decorating with spiders, cobwebs and skeletons...





NOT the kind of Buzz we're talking about

## Latest on Culture

It's STILL not a buzzword. But it still has that feel of fluff that some still haven't been able to put their finger on, nor get a sense of its ROI. I know because I get that look – a lot.

Let's think of it this way. Without healthy culture, your workplace is ok some days, meh the others. There's no hum, no constant state of innovation and creativity (design people aside). It's sort of like the routine of the day. You roll out of bed, pour your coffee, catch up on news from the night before, and head to work without realizing you're still wearing your pajamas. It's those days you just say F-it, and wear jeans and sneakers because you gave up on the wardrobe piece of your day. The desire to feel confident about how you look and the energy put into having an AWESOME day are gone. People come to work and give you a nod instead of a hello (if that!).

How does it feel to work with that? Does it motivate you? Do you get jazzed to do something cool? Help someone with a big problem? I didn't think so.

Now think about that time when you had an awesome client meeting with amazing results. You got a signed contract, or a design you came up with and spent hours on was approved and your client was excited about it. Now you get to celebrate with your team who helped you. Or your manufacturing team figured out a way to streamline and make process more efficient saving everyone from doing that mundane task. The "I'm so glad we don't have to...." Feeling. It's a sigh of relief and you get a sense of, "what else will I be able to do with this free time and energy?"

Ok – that’s not a number, but it’s an essence that leads to the number. When you’re pumped and energized, you do more. We know this. How are we getting our business owners and finance teams to feel THAT ROI? The strongest organizations pay attention to the heartbeat. They’re regularly asking themselves if their core decisions and strategy align with the values of the organization. What if leaders had to always ask themselves, “Does this show that I’m walking the talk?” and then decide if it’s the right move. There will always be hard decisions in business, and sometimes you have to go against the grain, it’s HOW you do it that matters. If you’re in a place where they just don’t give a monkey’s uncle, then you’re truly in the wrong circus.

## Latest Blogs

It’s been a minute since the last issue of Sch-Insights, so you there are two posts here in case you missed them. **The first one** is about owning your own hot mess. I love talking about accountability, and love it even more when I’m called out for not putting my muscle where my mouth is (I’m human).

**The other piece** is about the danger of complacency in leadership roles. Long story short, if you’re going to take a leadership role, do your part. Don’t say “I’m too busy.” That doesn’t do ANYONE any good.

## Leadership thought of the day

I have had a post it sitting on my desk for months. It has the word “Blinders” on it. It’s had lots of reference points, in lots of conversations. The visual I regularly think of is blinders on a race horse. It helps us stay in our own lane, removing distraction from our realm of view. In some scenarios, this is quite useful. That said, as leaders we need to learn to recognize when we have “Blinders Syndrome” (yeah, I think I just coined a corporate buzzword!). What I’m describing is when we get beyond the point of the helpful attribute, and drift into the shadow side and they’re getting in our way.



Example: Blinders can help us when we’re being pulled in six directions, and need to focus on the most important task. They help us when our people need our undivided attention and they get it!

The shadow side of blinders is that if we keep those blinders on for too long, we start to build a bias toward what’s in front of us, vs. all around us. The narrower our focus is, the less open we become to hearing outside ideas, innovation, creativity, and OPINIONS. It can cause us to become poor listeners

and when that happens, the people we impact get turned off, and eventually stop paying attention to us. It can happen really quickly too – so be careful!

A leader's opinions are valuable if people will listen. Good leaders provide information and guidance to help our people make good decisions (and yes, sometimes we have to make the hard decisions). That knowledge doesn't do any good if no one is listening - hence blinders syndrome.

Be diligent about when you're being open to new ideas, and when you're not. Also recognize, and coach/guide your teams about this. Bias & blinders are a reactionary element. We can train ourselves to use them to our advantage and stay away from the dark side (even if they have cookies).

## Sharing

My friend Katie Bradley launched her own podcast this spring. Katie inspires me to work harder. Her lessons around her horses and the equine industry overall, just goes to show you that you can apply lessons from any number of places – IF you're prepared to see it. It's like the Simon Sinek reference to a race with a friend. Simon saw a bagel at the finish, his friend saw a line (look it up). Here's [Katie's podcast link on Spotify](#) – give it a listen! I'm sure you'll enjoy:



## The Extras

1) It's speaking season. I just wrapped up my third DisruptHR presentation. I find these events so exhilarating. While not everyone likes to prepare/present, I have always found it inspiring to learn & apply lessons from other inspiring presenters. Absolutely had a blast. Met some new people, learned new things, and generally had a fun time sharing my message (that video will get posted when it's ready). I also got to speak at the annual NYS SHRM conference (Putting PIPs in the Ground: Building Change-Ready Leadership). Then in November, I'm thrilled



to be speaking at Paylocity's Elevate Virtual Conference!

*If you're looking for a speaker for your event, let me know. I have some canned material but generally like to cater messaging to the audience and theme. (Wink Wink, Nod Nod)*



2) We made it. Yup – it's live! "This meeting should have been a podcast" is on the airwaves (brought to you by the WrkDefined network). Join my co-host, Tom Horne and I, as we navigate the nuttiness of corporate jargon, things impacting the culture & engagement headlines, and other absurdities.

Oh- by the way, we'd love your HELP. If you have a great story to share with us about absurd meetings (or even absurd jargon) leave us a message on our Speakpipe channel (keep names and companies anonymous please!).

3) The other stuff. Are you looking for an accountability partner? Someone to keep you on track with things you KNOW you need to do, but aren't? Schedule some time with me and let's talk about it.

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Have other questions, or just want to connect? Email me at [tom@buildbetterculture.com](mailto:tom@buildbetterculture.com)

Tom

PS – As always, email me what you liked in this newsletter. LOTS going on! Please share this with friends too! Tx

