Designing a Company Culture

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The Lepage Center's Strategic Advisers program connects Tulane students and recent graduates with New Orleans area entrepreneurs and small business owners who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The advisers are working for the businesses full-time for 10 weeks during the summer of 2020, providing immediate services based on each business's specific needs.

The strategic advisers meet weekly via video conference to discuss what's going on at their companies and to learn from one another. **Last week we discussed work and life, and advisers were asked to imagine they were CEOs with the chance to set their company culture.** Below are some examples of what the advisers envisioned:

"I would want employees to enjoy being around their colleagues both inside and outside the office. Furthermore, I hope that our culture is like that of a successful professional sports team. Employees, our company’s players, would be willing to perform challenging work for great rewards, essentially the same as strenuous training for the goal of winning championships. Employees would encourage each other and find ways to help their “teammates” improve because of a common understanding that a company succeeds or fails together. Lastly, the managers would serve more as guides once employees are trained. They would be available to answer questions and solve problems, but still trust their workers to uphold the company’s culture and perform quality work. Employees should be open to suggesting new ideas and continuous improvement regardless of their rank so that the whole organization can improve."

"If I were to design my own company culture, I would encourage employees to take midday run breaks and go out for lunch with colleagues. I would also plan events during the workday to give employees a break from the normal tasks. Book clubs, running clubs, and office potlucks are all fun and creative ways to encourage community and productivity while taking a small amount of time away from the office."

"With more responsibility, workers feel more accomplished when a task is completed and recognized by their peers. Team building also becomes more essential in times like these because of the lack of face to face contact."

"I think my ideal company culture is one where everyone truly shares the same ambition, attitudes and goals. I think if that is achieved then there no longer has to be a nagging feeling of “oh I have to do this.” As long as everyone shares the same goal, then it is so much easier to work collaboratively and with the understanding that what is trying to be accomplished is worthwhile. Of course there will always be menial tasks and stuff no one wants to do, but I think in any field if you’re really devoted to the end goal, then it makes those tasks easier and more rewarding knowing you have contributed."

"Taking COIVD-19 out of the equation, if I could design my own company culture I would design one that compliments a flexible work-life balance. I see great value in having in-person meetings, an inclusive collaborative office space, and events. However, my own company culture would be reminiscent of the current flexibility embedded in remote work and not be confined to the rigid “traditional” eight-hour

workday. In doing so, employees could have more control of their schedules and manage their workflow on their own terms in a manner that coincides with their lifestyles- whatever that may be."

"If I could design my own company culture, I would make sure everyone at the company has mutual respect for each other, and is able to leave the office at the end of the day and maintain a friendship with their coworkers. I would enact weekly happy hours, fun extracurricular activities such as a company workout class, company movies, and company game nights. I would also give employees the option to work from home 2 days a week as long as their productivity doesn’t drop."

Note: Some quotes have been edited for clarity