Nurturing a Healthy, Safe, Sustainable Workplace Culture

Margie Weiss*

Weiss Health Group LLC, Neenah, WI, USA

Why does healthy, sustainable living matter? Healthy people, healthy worksites and health-promoting "green" processes all intersect at the bottom line. Healthy, safe, sustainable work environments are key for recruiting and retaining team members. These environments lower cost, decrease inputs, and provide better products and new business models while optimizing human health and wellness. Healthy, safe, sustainable work cultures help companies to:

Manage resource risks

Sustainable products use less-polluting materials, consume less energy, require fewer materials, and are more easily recycled, reused, decomposed). Healthy employees utilize less costly healthcare.

Adapt to changing regulatory requirements

Sustainable processes focus on recycling, emissions control, consumption of water/energy, waste management and reduce the use of raw materials. Healthy employees effectively utilize mandated health care resources.

Engage employees and customers

Utilizing experience ecology thinking and exploiting sustainable competencies lead to redesigned service delivery, increased customer and employee loyalty and attachment to the organization.

Drive innovation

Healthy, sustainable living competencies require collective learning and increased capacity for innovation, prevention, health promotion, and environmental management.

Capture market space

Healthy, sustainable living core competency is not easily duplicated. It requires facility redesign, service delivery changes, and radical culture change and process innovation.

Nurturing Culture Change

What does it look like? What is the payback?

There are six dimensions to consider in building healthy, safe, sustainable workplace cultures. These dimensions include: Consistency, Stability, Trust, Confidence, Dedication, and Attachment. Companies can guide culture change by assessing their organization with metrics that align with each key dimension [1,2].

Consistency

Setting and sharing the vision with team members and customers.

Leadership must embrace and share the vision for promoting healthy, safe, sustainable living for all. This vision must be clearly aligned with company values, business goals, financial forecasts, performance expectations and shareholder expectations. Visions can be shared in a myriad of ways: newsletters, pronouncements, strategic planning and shareholder reports. Most importantly, leadership must model and espouse healthy, safe, sustainable practices at work, at home and in the community. Consider hiring an HSLL-Healthy, Sustainable

Living leader instead of breaking responsibilities into the traditional silos of health, safety and environmental management.

- Does your company have a vision for consistently promoting the health and safety of team members and customers?

- Are branch and field location's health promotion programs aligned with your business goals?

- Do branch/site goals advocate for employee health and safety?

- Do you set site-specific objectives for health, safety and sustainability annually?

- Does your company have a vision for environmental sustainability and stewardship that is consistently shared with team members?

- Are operational plans, facility management, purchasing and production activities align with sustainable business goals?

- Are policies and procedures aligning with your sustainable business goals?

- Are team members at all levels educated on the true cost of safety and health care and their effect on business success?

- Are team members educated on the impact a safe, healthy workforce has on overall business success?

- Does your company consistently share its vision on health and safety, sustainability and stewardship with customers?

- Are team members at all levels educated on the true cost of "lean" and "green" service delivery and their affect on business success?

- Are all team members educated on the impact lean and green manufacturing and services have on overall business success?

Stability

Demonstrating the commitment, communicating and measuring effectiveness.

Leadership must communicate, train, measure progress and report back to team members on a regular basis. Training begins with on boarding of new team members and is strengthened at every opportunity. For example, companies with field-based pre-shift exercise routines should begin every work day in the office and every corporate meeting with a set of pre-meeting exercises. This consistently reinforces

that field and office staffs live and work in a culture that supports and encourages health and safety.

- Does your company provide a safe and healthy work environment

- Is site leadership committed to health, wellness and safety as an important investment in your people?

- Do onsite work teams provide support participation in health, wellness and safety programs?

- Does your company measure the effectiveness of health, safety, and sustainability initiatives on a regular basis?

- Do site leaders view the level of employee health and wellbeing as an important indicator of business success?

- Do site leaders routinely share health and safety reports and debrief team members on "near miss" reports and action plans?

- Do site leaders view sustainability metrics as important indicators of business success?

Trust

Trusting in the organization to do the right thing.

The organization's facilities, policies, procedures and benefit plans must clearly demonstrate that healthy, safe, sustainable living is of paramount importance to the organization. From facility design to employee benefit programs, the actions of the company will help to insure that team members can trust the organization to always be acting in their best interest. Use experience ecology thinking to assess the physical, behavioral and informational clues that demonstrate the company's commitment to a healthy, safe, sustainable workplace. *Physical* elements include all aspects of spatial integration. These include sights, sounds, sensations, temperature, illumination, the pace of production lines, etc. *Behavioral* elements include all movement sequence interactions between workers, customers and the work environment. This determines person-to-person interactions, time to complete a process, sustainable practices. *Informational* elements include all the documents, forms, signs, communication activities, such as spoken word, gestures, postures, impression and idea exchanges between customers, workers and the environment.

Trust is the emotional, often unconscious, response to external cues and internal scripting that depict the company's commitment to its vision. Customer experiences are built on the type and intensity of the emotional experience arising from each interaction [3]. This, in turn, affects attachment to the organization.

- Do your team members and customers endorse and trust in your company's sustainability and stewardship initiatives?

- Can your company be trusted as a leader in protecting the environment?

- Do your customers appreciate and trust in the company's stance on promoting the health and wellbeing of team members, their families and the community?

Confidence

Measuring self-efficacy.

Team members readily acknowledge that they are in control of how they live their life. It is incumbent upon the organization to find ways to increase their self-care knowledge, skills and access to care, thereby increasing self-efficacy and the ability to care for themselves, their family and ultimately the community in which they live.

- Are team members confident in their ability to promote their own and their family's health and safety?

- Are team members confident in their ability to promote sustainability and stewardship at work?

- Do team members feel they can consistently integrate sustainable business practices with exceptional customer experiences?

Dedication

Recognizing and rewarding team members.

Leaders must consistently recognize and reward healthy, safe sustainable living and work practices. Team member engagement falls along a continuum from merely adhering to safety regulations to actively participating in health and wellness programs. Organizations that take the time to understand the drivers for involvement will be more successful in engaging team members in healthy, safe, sustainable practices. Conducting needs and interest assessments may help to determine effective work-base program delivery strategies.

- Does your company's recognition philosophy link health and safety with sustainability and stewardship initiatives?

- Is site leadership committed to promoting healthy, sustainable living as an important investment in human capital?

- Does each site offer incentives for team members to stay healthy, reduce their high risk behavior, and/or practice healthy, safe, sustainable lifestyles?

- Is your company dedicated to rewarding team members who provide exceptional customer experiences?

Attachment

Fostering loyalty.

Market differentiation is the direct result of superior team member and customer interactions, which result in enduring relationships and loyal customers. Companies have to manage the relationship between work environments, products/services and customers to go beyond satisfaction. Employee and customer experience correlates with loyalty measures. Improving the worker and customer experience produces a positive bottom line effect. Mere satisfaction often translates to low levels of loyalty. Work environments and products which meet or exceed utilitarian needs and fulfill prevention goals enhance satisfaction. Meeting or exceeding hedonic wants and fulfilling promotion goals enhances delight. Delighting customers improves loyalty as measured by word-of-mouth and repurchase intentions more than satisfaction [4]. Customers place a higher priority to meeting utilitarian needs but once they are met, the principle of hedonic dominance motives customers to focus more on the continued fulfillment of promotional goals [4].

- Does your company have a reputation as a great place to work?

- Does your company's focus on healthy, sustainable living make your customer experiences noticeably better than the competition?

- Will your team members and customers recommend your company to others because of your company's reputation for addressing environmental and community needs?

Nurturing Workplace Culture

Healthy, safe, sustainable work cultures are catalysts for organizational and technological innovations. How can we recognize an organization that "gets it?" Do you know of organizations in which the conversation has changed, leadership has been redesigned and the company is moving in a sustainable direction? Here are some tips [5,6].

- The organization has a clearly articulated definition of health, safety and sustainability; how they are linked and, an understanding of how they affect business. The evidence shows up in vision, mission and policy statements.

- The organization's integrated health, safety, and sustainably strategies receive sufficient focus from senior management and all responsibility and accountabilities are clear. Leaders clearly communicate, model and mentor to the triple bottom line-healthy people, healthy planet, and healthy payback.

- The organization has the required capabilities and tools to execute the health, safety and sustainability strategy effectively. Integrated teams are guided by a "true North" vision and work in a collaborative fashion with shared metrics.

- The health care organization has conducted a thorough assessment of the drivers of health, safety and sustainability and the integration that presents the greatest opportunities and potential risks to the business. The organization's health, safety and, sustainability agenda is aligned with relevant external stakeholders (i.e. supply chain, vendors, shareholders, customers). Assessment data and outcome metrics address the people factors and the environmental aspects of business. Self-efficacy and collective efficacy are leveraged to reshape the organization's culture. The community becomes a point of collaborative efforts for driving corporate social responsibility.

- The organization has a clear and compelling business case for integrating health, safety and, sustainability efforts over the short term (1-3 years) and long term (4+ years). The organization has used this analysis to guide where and how the organization will deal with health, safety and sustainability as business issues. The organization's strategic plan clearly demonstrates integrated interventions, realigned structure, emphasis on employee growth and development, training and mentoring. Internal and external communication clearly depicts a sustainability culture enmeshed with personal health, wellness and safety.

- The organization's health, safety and, sustainability strategy is integrated with operations, processes and culture. The plan is operational zed, evaluated and constantly refined. The organization has established targets for health, safety and, sustainability efforts along with shared metrics for ongoing measurement, tracking and reporting Adapted from ISO 14000 major focus areas, Welcoa Well Workplace and "The Sustainability Audit". MIT Sloan, The Business of Sustainability, 2009 Special Report. http://sloanreview.mit.edu/special-report/the-business-of-sustainability/ 9/17/2009

How does your company culture measure up?

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