



## Creating a BLC Culture

No, I didn't misspell BLT, as in the sandwich! One of the top concerns of Senior Leaders in all types and sizes of businesses, including professional practices, is attracting, developing and retaining top-notch people. Whether "Geeks," "Geezers" or "In-Betweeners," you need great people to work your strategies and help you achieve your goals. Creating a **BLC Culture** can do just that. Louis Gerstner, retired CEO of IBM says that, "...an organization is nothing more than the collective capacity of its people to create value."

What is a BLC Culture? It is a culture in an organization in which people want to "belong," "learn," and "contribute" to the success of the business. It starts with creating a **Business Operating System for Enterprise Results® (BOS)** that **connects, communicates and couples**. The BOS® connects all the initiatives in your business such as leadership development, strategic planning, performance management, and process improvement to the Core of your organization (its mission, vision and values). The given here is that you have defined your mission, vision and values and have communicated them in a meaningful way. If not, then that becomes your first step. The BOS® accomplishes this connection in a way that allows all your business units to communicate using a common language. Just like your computer has an operating system that enables all the software loaded on it to import data from one program to another, the Business Operating System® breaks down silos and enables business units to work effectively together without

turf wars and function-specific buzzwords.

Once the connections are made and communicated using this process then the real work of the BLC culture can begin. The next step is to couple the individual's Core with the Business' Core. It's amazing, as we have seen, when you allow people to figure out their own mission, vision and values (an energizing exercise in itself) and how that links to the Core of your business. It gives meaning to the work they do and empowers them to go the extra mile.

So what does "BLC" really mean and what are some actionable steps that you can take beyond connecting, communicating and coupling using the Business Operating System for Enterprise Results®? Everyone wants a sense of belonging, that's why we belong to families, civic and religious organizations. It's why many people, just like the individuals in your business who chose to come to work for you, work for organizations. Here are some steps you can take to create a culture of **BELONGING**:

- ❑ The first day an employee shows up to work, have someone there to greet them, introduce them to others and give them the lay of the land. ("Hi and here's your work area" doesn't count!)
- ❑ Each morning that you see an employee, say "Good morning." (You'd be surprised how many people tell us that their boss doesn't acknowledge their presence.)

- ❑ Make sure employees understand their roles and responsibilities as well as your expectations. (Handing them a job description doesn't qualify as achieving this action item!)
- ❑ Sponsor business functions that include employees' families. (Make them voluntary, as some employees would rather spend their time away from work—away from work people!)
- ❑ Provide business logo items to employees (for example: memo pads, coffee mugs, shirts).

Everyone wants to continue to learn, grow and develop. In these fast changing times, you can't afford not to. Even if you stay in the same position for years, the requirements of the job will keep changing and you must also change just to keep up. From an organization standpoint, customers want higher quality, faster and more cost-effective products and services which translates into employees producing higher quality products and services more effectively and efficiently. That requires continuous learning. Remember the definition of insanity, "Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." Here are some actions for creating a **LEARNING** culture:

- ❑ Provide feedback on performance to employees on an ongoing basis. (Saving it up for the surprise end of the year performance evaluation is counterproductive.)
- ❑ Sending employees to training is only one way to develop people (and not always the best way). Consider coaching, shadowing, temporary assignments and participation on problem solving teams.
- ❑ Pass on articles of interest in professional and trade journals.
- ❑ Delegate one of your responsibilities that have become routine to you but that would be new and challenging to your employee.
- ❑ After returning from a learning experience, ask the person to teach others who would also like to learn. (And what a great return on your investment!)
- ❑ Articulate clearly how what individuals do contribute to the success of the organization. (“Here’s how what you do matters…”) And then do it over and over again as they continue contributing.
- ❑ Thank people for a job well done. (An attitude of “Why should I thank them; they get paid to do their jobs,” gets you compliance. It buys you arms and legs, not people who want to go the extra mile.)
- ❑ Give timely, well thought out performance evaluations. (The message you send to your employees when evaluations are not timely and well thought out is that they are not a high priority for you. Just think about how important feedback on your performance is to you.)
- ❑ When individuals go the extra mile, write a personal note to them, take them to lunch, put a memo in their personnel file, recognize them at a staff meeting, present them with a

certificate—just to name a few ways. (A word of caution about recognition...some people like group recognition while some are embarrassed by it and would prefer one-on-one rewards. Know your employees and what they consider rewarding.)

In summary, to create a BLC Culture, first make sure that you have designed your Business Operating System for Enterprise Results© so that it connects all initiatives you have in place and those you are yet to develop, enables communication across business units, and couples individuals’ Cores with the organization’s Core. Then, it’s on to actionable steps to implement ways of belonging, learning and contributing that enable you to attract, develop and retain top-notch people who will help you achieve your goals and create value.

©The Goldner Group 2005

Lastly, everyone wants to know that their coming to work everyday makes a difference. They develop pride in knowing that they have contributed to helping the organization achieve its goals and move toward its vision. Here are some ways that you can provide recognition for **CONTRIBUTING:**