

The P4 Organizational Culture

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The key to success in the workplace – for individuals and collectively – is building strong, trusting relationships. In the public sector, this is especially true. Our governance structures; the array of complicated populations and services we provide; our built in systems of checks and balances. It seems that just about everything we do requires interacting with other people.

I believe organizational culture is critical to building those relationships. But what is it really? How do you define or measure it? Two definitions I came across on the internet were:

Organizational culture is a set of shared values, the unwritten rules with which are often taken for granted, that guide employees towards acceptable and rewarding behavior.

Organizational culture encompasses values and behaviors that “contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization.”

From a strict clinical view, this makes complete sense. But who or what impacts and creates this culture. In my 20+ years of experience, I have witnessed that **most organizational cultures are set by the tone and personality of their leader.**

As a leader, eyes are always on you. A boss once told me when I entered executive management that you now “speak through a megaphone.” I love catchy slogans. A couple that resonate with me include the Pier 1 Imports saying “find what speaks to you” and the old Closeup Toothpaste commercial that said “you never get a second chance to make a first impression.” **I aim to set a culture that truly “speaks” to my staff and is also a reflection of what is important to me.**

I am an “F or Feeler” on the Myers-Briggs personality test. I tend to be more glass half full than half empty. And then it just came to me – the P4 organizational culture model. It stands for:

- 1. People first.**
- 2. Perseverance.**
- 3. Passion.**
- 4. Positive.**

These attributes are so important to me. I smile every time I write or talk about them. My staff at the UNC System and State Budget Office embraced it. I hear folks talking about it in the hallway. It's

created a very positive buzz. It speaks!