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Top 5 reasons why a great charity culture drives productivity

A positive workplace culture equals a productive and successful charity – we explain how, and what charities can do to start harnessing the power of culture.

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Workplace culture is defined by a mix of an organisation's leadership, values, traditions, beliefs, relationships, attitudes and behaviours that contribute to a working environment.

In a non-profit context, organisational culture is usually closely tied to its vision and mission. In a charity, people work for a cause, and there's a clearly defined purpose beyond just the need to bring in funds. But that doesn't automatically translate to a positive and productive workplace culture.

That's because culture is more than just a high-level concept – a great organisational culture has to manifest in the

behaviour of everyone involved and filter down into strategy and execution. It permeates everything that an organisation does and underpins how things get done. And this relies on having the right systems and processes in place – which digital tools can help lay the foundations for.

Here are top 5 reasons why charities need a great company culture to harness productivity:

1 – It increases staff performance

A [study](#) by Warwick University found that happy workers are 12% more productive than their unhappy counterparts – so if you have a poor culture, you can expect lower returns.

It shouldn't be too surprising that staff work better when they are motivated, engaged, feel a sense of purpose in their work, are appreciated and feel included.

2 – It engenders trust

A workplace culture in which management are open and honest with staff breeds openness all round, showing them that they are an integral part of the organisation, which ultimately means more engaged employees who are confident in their leadership and the decisions they make.

The charity sector itself is built on a system of trust, and internal trust is quickly translated to outside stakeholders when your staff become advocates for your organisation who are genuinely willing to fly the flag for your cause. This in turn drives your organisation further towards its goal of creating more supporters, donors and funding streams.

3 – It creates loyalty

A great workplace culture can't be undervalued. It's what makes somewhere a great place to work, which keeps good people onboard for the long term, and makes people feel they are a part of something they're proud to represent.

As a result, charities can spend less time and expense recruiting for new staff and volunteers and more resources go directly towards their cause.

4 – It helps attract better quality staff and volunteers

As well as helping to retain the great staff already within an organisation, a great workplace culture can be an attractive force.

A recent study found that [80% young people research a company's culture before considering a job](#). In the charity sector, people often join for that feel-good factor beyond just a paycheck. Often people leave the commercial sector in order to find a role that fulfils them on a more personal level, and so are going to be particularly in tune to culture and the vibe you are projecting. Investing in your organisation's culture means investing in talent attraction.

5 – It boosts finances

The bottom line is, culture is absolutely tied to the bottom line.

Breathe HR's [Culture Economy Report](#) found that 34% of British workers left their job due to poor company culture, which is costing the UK economy an estimated £23.6 billion per year.

If employees and volunteers are feeling content in their roles and retention levels are on the up, this equates to a wad of cash saved on recruitment and agency fees, a stronger supporter base means a steady stream of donations coming in, and your organisation will perform better overall, driving growth.

Not only this, but a harmonious culture means better communication and processes between staff, which means smoother, more efficient processes, unlocking many small cost and time savings. These can easily add up over the long run.

So what's next? Here's what you can do to start thinking about workplace culture in your charity:

- Gather genuine insight from your staff and volunteers, whether through surveys or face-to-face chats, and engage with their concerns and issues.
- Make an assessment of where your culture is at now, looking at the systems, policies and pain points in your internal culture that are helping or hindering your organisation to live its values authentically.
- [Check out this article from Breathe HR](#) for more on how to properly measure your organisational culture and the various elements that need to be considered.
- [Take the Breathe Culture Pledge](#). This is a commitment that employers can make towards investing in their company culture, regardless of their size, to benefit their people and propel their business forward.

To find out more about how HR software can help your charity put people and culture first, [check out Breathe](#). Breathe provides a cloud-based HR software for businesses and charities with up to 250 employees. All UK registered charities are eligible for a 50% discount, and Breathe also offers a free trial.

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