

The importance of maintaining company culture when scaling

When starting a business, the culture you want to create is likely to be one of the first things you talk about; it's an essential ingredient in building a team of people who hold the same principles and will work to achieve common goals. But it's all too easy to let that culture slip down the priority list as your business grows.

At CellPoint Digital, we've experienced rapid growth in a relatively short period and are continuing to expand our teams and open new offices. But despite the dramatic changes we've seen, our mission, values and culture have remained consistent

Why is culture important?

Company culture is more than just the working environment you create – especially given the number of firms now operating a hybrid or home-working arrangement. It encompasses your company mission, leadership style, values, ethics, expectations and goals.

While a long list of perks will certainly attract a high volume of candidates as you grow your business, it's your culture that will attract the *right* candidates –

those that will fit seamlessly into your existing team and help you outperform the competition.

When the culture you create aligns with your employees, they are more likely to feel valued and will ultimately become productive and loyal members of your team.

The vast majority (*77%*) of workers say they consider a company's culture before applying for a job, and almost half of employees would leave their current job for a lower paid opportunity at an organisation with a better culture.

If you're a startup, or feel your company lacks a clearly defined culture, it can be difficult to know where to start. But the chances are you already know what sort of company you want to be, and perhaps more importantly, what you don't want to be, which is a great starting point in establishing culture.

Establishing culture

Start by agreeing a strong set of values with your leadership team. This will involve not only talking about what you stand for, but identifying what makes your company unique.

Discussions may be fairly broad to begin with; do you have a traditional management style where job responsibilities are clearly defined and formal progression routes are in place, or is it a more casual workplace, where roles are more fluid and employees can take on new roles as the needs of the business evolve?

As you explore the finer details of what your culture looks like, some of the things you might talk about are a culture of appreciation, in which team members provide recognition and thanks for the contributions of others, or trust, where team members can express themselves and rely on others. Performance will also be a key theme, as will teamwork. You might also talk about innovation and integrity.

Psychological safety is becoming an increasingly prominent part of company culture as employers recognise the importance of protecting staff mental health. This provides the support employees need to take risks and provide honest feedback.

Employee benefits like flexible working form part of your culture, and say a lot about what matters to you. We have long operated a flexible working policy, understanding that the best person for the job may not be based in the same location as head office.

Five core values have been pillars at CellPoint Digital since 2007; mission first, ownership, trust and transparency, ethical, and one team. These pillars provide value to our customers, meaning for our team and guide our business. Team work is also essential to us, and by working in teams we integrate knowledge, experience and competences to achieve great results.

These values are expected to be upheld by employees in every action and interaction, resulting in a creative, collaborative and successful organisation.

Your aim should be to define culture in this way; as clear, observable behaviours that can be demonstrated in day-to-day actions.

Once you've outlined your values, the next step is to share them with your employees and get their honest feedback. There are lots of listening tools available that make it easy for employees to express what they're feeling and for you to collect and analyse the results. Once you see what's working and what isn't, you can act on those findings while they're still relevant. Not only will this strengthen your culture, it will lead to better employee engagement.

Maintaining culture

Now you've established what your culture is, you need to maintain it. Do not be tempted to let it slip down the priority list as you scale up. Maintaining culture is not something that will get in the way of growth. On the contrary, it is essential in finding the right people for your team and for continued success, so make sure you prioritise culture fit at every point of the hiring and onboarding process.

At CellPoint Digital, we are proud to have a dedicated head of culture and team whose role is to nurture the unique CellPoint team spirit, not least by recruiting people who embrace our values and mission.

Being able to adapt as your company grows is key to having a healthy culture. Some core values will stay the same as your company grows, while others will change. Remain flexible and keep listening to feedback; a culture that encourages employee voice is essential, as failing to do so can lead to lost

revenue and demotivated employees. Staying open to those changes will allow you to scale in a way that allows you to preserve the most important aspects of your culture.

A healthy company culture is a common denominator in all successful businesses. It ensures engaged employees, reduced turnover and improved productivity. By establishing a great culture from the outset and developing your team around it, you can preserve that culture as your company continues to scale.

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