



WORKPLACE COVERT CULTURE

Abalinx 19 January 2014 Peter Adamis

What is work place culture, what does it mean and how does it affect you. The work place culture may come into two forms, Overt and covert. When you leave the Australian Defence Force and apply for a job on the outside, you will be greeted with open arms by employers who appreciate and respect your skills. However there are employers who

shall utilise your hard earned skills without any form of acknowledgment, remuneration and you may be subject to a covert cultural environment.

What I mean to say here is that in any workplace environment there is the overt culture that is the public image to the outside world and there is the covert culture that exists beneath the surface. It is not always run, managed or controlled by the managers and/or the appropriate authority figures. It may be coordinated or influenced by members who had been in the organisation for a long time and know the ropes, it may be the receptionist, the cleaner, the boss's secretary, a union representative and sometimes middle managers. The trick is to try and identify the influencers in each of these organisations and harness their talents, networks to your advantage.

When you are hired by management, it is on the basis that they like you, you relate well, you fit in with their culture. You will work hard, bring something new to the organisation and you could be manipulated and/or moulded to the organisational culture. Unless you are an exceptional person with extraordinary skills and have a mentor (a member of the board), you will have no problems. Wrong. Don't take things for granted because you have all the pluses on your side as it may backfire on you without you even realising it. Never underestimate the influence of the covert workplace covert culture that exists in organisations.

Identify the influencers early, (seek advice from trusted members if need be or ask the board). If you are seen working at the level of efficiency that I know that we have been trained to operate at, your high work ethics may cause some angst, anxiety, instability, loss of self esteem, a lowering of morale, and the start of a covert undermining campaign against you. Therefore you must use all of your wits, knowledge of people, interpersonal skills, work ethics, and conflict management to find the path that is seen as the least attack or a danger to the rest of the organisations work force. If the employees and employers like you, you will be given hints from all different quarters. The trick is to identify the hidden hints, suggestions, recommendations and subtle directions.

If you are in a managerial role (and many of you will), then seek out, identify, utilise and harness the covert cultural elements to your advantage and that of your organisation. Sometimes you will have them on side, other times you will be forgiven by the covert culture for making silly mistakes that are not in the interest of the members and that of the organization.

The trick again here is to have more positive rungs on the board rather than no rungs at all. No rungs mean that you cannot climb the corporate ladder. (Trust me said the digger before he put his head above the weapon pit during a live firing exercise.)

Have faith in yourself, your skills, your knowledge, experiences, training, work place ethics and morals. When in doubt (you will be many times) and/or when faced with insurmountable odds, go back to the basics and act like a professional. This something that no one can touch you with.

If you have any stories and comments that can help our men and women who are contemplating on leaving the Defence Force, then do so here via the comments section. All comments will be published except if they violate the policies of the website. Feel free.



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