

Lutheran education workplace culture

What is workplace culture?

Workplace culture is defined as the atmosphere or climate of the work environment. It is the perception of how it feels to work in Lutheran education, within a particular location, office, school, team or for a specific leader. It is the ideal operating environment required to provide a working climate that will enable people to work sustainably at their highest potential.

Workplace culture exists in within every organisation and team. Workplace culture evolves in the absence of it being moulded, or purposefully created by the leaders of the team or office, or school. In leaving this to chance, it is equally likely that the resulting work culture will be effective or ineffective in supporting the direction and purpose of the organisation, and may either help or hinder the ability of the team members to operate and work at their best.

Why is workplace culture important?

Workplace culture effects organisational effectiveness. An unmanaged culture is likely to result in lower levels of motivation and, at times, cynical and disenchanted individuals providing minimal contribution. A positive work culture results in higher levels of motivation and effort from the people within that team or unit or school, and has been shown through research to drive higher levels of effectiveness and productivity.

An effective culture is about creating an “energised”, outcome-focused work environment that attracts, sustains and retains the best professionals available and intentionally develops leaders for the future.

In almost all cases where research is available, groups or teams that rate well on key workplace culture measures, operate more effectively and deliver stronger outcomes than those with lower ratings.

A highly effective workplace culture doesn't just happen - it is created and sustained by leaders and their teams.

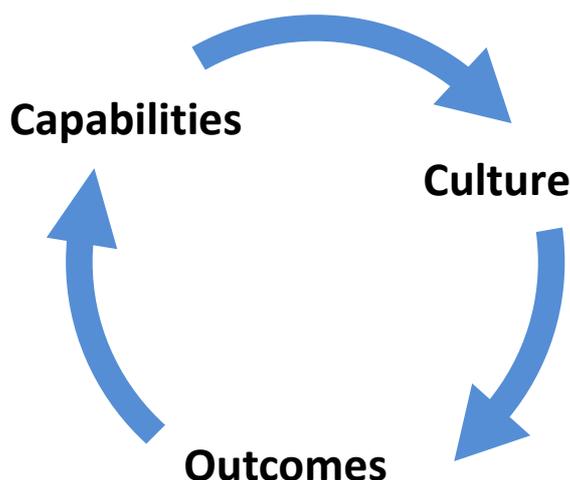
Leadership and Culture

While workplace culture plays a critical role in influencing the behaviour of the members of an organisation and the outcomes it produces, the demonstrated capabilities and behaviour of leaders plays a particularly vital role in creating and shaping the culture. Leaders create and manage culture consciously and unconsciously by reinforcing values and assumptions through their own behaviour, as well as the structures, infrastructure, processes and procedures they establish to guide others' behaviour.

Edgar Schein of Harvard Business School suggests that the most important function leaders have within their organisation is the creation and management of workplace culture.

The diagram to the right represents the powerful inter-relationship between capabilities, culture and outcomes for Lutheran education. The 'loop' acts to reinforce either positive or negative outcomes.

Considering the context of Lutheran education, intentionally building and developing a highly effective cadre of Lutheran education leaders who can drive this culture nationally is a key strategic imperative.



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Why is work culture important to Lutheran Education?

Instead of considering the indicators as existing at either end of a continuum whereby having strength in one indicator necessarily means weakness in the other, we propose thinking about how both indicators of a Lutheran culture dimension can coexist and flourish together in a way where both can be equally strong and effective. This often represents a key challenge for leaders, but creates a valuable and effective way of operating to embed the unique Lutheran distinction nationally. It is particularly challenging when leaders are required to effectively “hold” seemingly paradoxical creative tensions in educational settings.

Managing this creative tension will provide a focused lens through which both of these aspects of daily work in Lutheran Education are seen and felt as equally important, rather than one trading off the other in a state of continual compromise. They will also enable leaders to continue to ensure our Lutheran Education workplaces are distinctly Lutheran and upholding the ethos of the Lutheran Christian teachings.

