

STEPS TO CREATE CULTURE

You've likely heard Peter Drucker's idea that culture eats strategy for breakfast. I love that concept. Culture is more powerful than anything else in your church or organization. You can teach whatever you want, mandate whatever you want, or create programs to change things; but in the end your culture will drive what you do and who you are. Want to change the way people live and act? Change the culture.

But it takes time to change or create culture. Over the years, at Pantano Christian Church, we've created several cultures that powerfully influence who we are. Here's some of the "cultures" I've helped create: 1) a culture where we live out and practice vulnerability, transparency, and personal honesty; 2) an empowering culture (Giving away authority and responsibility); 3) a culture of change (People expect that we will change!), 4) a generous culture (Not telling others to be generous, but being a church that is generous giving away our possessions, money, people and leaders).

But how do you change or create a culture. Below is a great summary I took from Dave Ferguson (Lead Pastor at Community Christian Church in Chicago), with a few edits, regarding how to create a culture. He's right on! You can't skip any of these steps. And they will take longer than you think necessary!

Step #1: Declare It

Assuming you have been able to determine the culture you want to create there comes this pivotal moment where you make a commitment and know there is no turning back. It doesn't have to be eloquent or ready for publication; it just needs to be personal.

Step #2: Do It

The second step is for you to *do it!* You will be tempted to teach it or vision cast it. Please resist. Before you teach it, you need to do it yourself. As the leader, you are the primary culture creator. Culture is more caught than taught. You will reproduce *not* what you teach, but what you *do!*

Step #3: Brand It

Once you declare it and do it, you may be thinking, "Ok, now can I teach it?" Please hold off just a little longer. This third step will help you teach it to your organization more effectively. Your next step in creating a hero-making culture is to *brand it*. Branding includes making your culture sticky by creating new language and telling stories.

Step #4: Teach It

Now you are ready to *teach it*. You need to feel it in your heart before "they" will live it out in their lives. People need to feel your passion. And one of the best ways to help them feel it in their hearts is by telling stories. You also need to get it into your head. You need to understand intellectually how it is grounded in the values of your church. Finally, you need to give permission and encouragement for others to live it out themselves. The goal is to change behavior. You want to get a significant percentage of your people behaving in this new cultural focus to influence others and create culture.

Step #5: Recognize It

In the words of Ken Blanchard, “Catch people doing it right.” What gets rewarded gets repeated. You can recognize it in a hallway conversation or by sending a note, a text, an email; posting on social media or writing a good, old-fashioned letter that can be kept and reread.

Step #6: Repeat It

To actually create culture, you have to repeat steps 1 through 5 – over and over. You will think that your people will have heard it a hundred times and are bored and sick of it. Not true! It is just now starting to sink in and change the culture. So don’t stop repeating it, over and over again. When it comes to creating culture, intentional repetition is your ally. Repeat it. Repeat it. Repeat it.

Step #7: Institutionalize It

Create the language, systems, policies, calendar, etc that make the cultural value a part of your church.