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Mind Your Culture Gap to Keep Your Top Talent

Cynthia Emrich & Anna Beninger
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Today’s Speakers

Cynthia Emrich
Vice President & Center Leader,
Catalyst Research Center for Career Pathways

Anna Beninger
Director, Research
Catalyst
The media has portrayed aggressive workplace cultures as:

• Unique to Silicon Valley and Wall Street
• A “women’s issue”
About Our Sample

Part of Catalyst’s global longitudinal study of highly talented employees in the pipeline

- 148 women (30%) and 344 men (70%)
- Earned MBAs from premier schools around the globe
- Graduated between 1996 and 2007
- All working full-time
- 88% in for-profit or professional services firms
- 67% in global organizations
- 40% in senior executive or C-suite roles
Workplace Culture:
The behavior required to fit in and be successful in an organization

Culture Gap:
The difference between the current and preferred workplace culture—that is, the culture that high potentials have vs. the culture they say they want
What Do YOU See?

What kinds of behaviors are encouraged in your current organization? (Select all that apply)
A. Always follow orders, even when they’re wrong
B. Blame others for mistakes
C. Think in unique and independent ways
D. Never “rock the boat”
E. Support colleagues
What kinds of behaviors would you want to see in your ideal organization? (Select all that apply)

A. Always follow orders, even when they’re wrong
B. Blame others for mistakes
C. Think in unique and independent ways
D. Never “rock the boat”
E. Support colleagues
Aggressive Workplace Culture Behaviors

Which of these statements does not strike you as an example of an Aggressive behavior Organizational Culture Inventory®?

A. Do things perfectly
B. Cooperate with others
C. Use the authority of one’s position
D. Outperform one’s peers
E. Be hard to impress
Which of these statements does not strike you as an example of an Aggressive behavior from the OCI®?

A. Do things perfectly
B. Cooperate with others
C. Use the authority of one’s position
D. Outperform one’s peers
E. Be hard to impress
Which of these statements does not strike you as an example of a Constructive behavior from the OCI®?

A. Maintain one’s personal integrity
B. Share feelings and thoughts
C. Think ahead and plan
D. Never relinquish control
E. Help others to grow and develop
Which of these statements does not strike you as an example of a Constructive behavior from the OCI®?

A. Maintain one’s personal integrity
B. Share feelings and thoughts
C. Think ahead and plan
D. Never relinquish control
E. Help others to grow and develop
**Constructive Behaviors from the OCI®**

A. Maintain one’s personal integrity  
B. Share feelings and thoughts  
C. Think ahead and plan  
D. Help others to grow and develop

**Aggressive Behaviors from the OCI®**

A. Do things perfectly  
B. Use the authority of one’s position  
C. Outperform one’s peers  
D. Be hard to impress
Which option below best characterizes how your current workplace culture compares to your preferred culture?

A. It’s more aggressive than I’d prefer.
B. It’s less constructive than I’d prefer.
C. It’s both of the above.
D. It closely matches the culture I’d prefer.
Women and Men Want (Mostly) The Same Thing

Women and men high potentials agree on workplace culture:

**CONSTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR**

Both would prefer to work in cultures that are more constructive and less aggressive.¹

Both agree that the biggest gap in their workplace cultures is that they are not constructive enough.²
The Culture Gap Matters, A Lot

Percentage of High Potentials Likely to Leave When the Culture Gap Was:

- **WIDE**
  - **WOMEN**: 44%
  - **MEN**: 46%

- **NARROW**
  - **WOMEN**: 3%
  - **MEN**: 23%

*93% reduction*

*50% reduction*
The Culture Gap’s Influence on Satisfaction Is Part of the Story

The Narrower the Culture Gap, THE MORE SATISFIED HIGH POTENTIALS ARE WITH THEIR:

WORK AND ADVANCEMENT  PAY  SUPERVISORS  ORGANIZATIONS' COMMITMENTS TO WORK-LIFE QUALITY AND DIVERSITY

A narrower culture gap and greater employee satisfaction combine to predict high potentials' intention to stay.

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1. Encourage ongoing dialogue across the organization about how a constructive culture aligns with and supports your organization’s vision, mission, and values.

2. Ensure transparency in your performance management systems so that employees understand how to engage in and role model constructive behavior.

3. Recognize and reward employees who model and champion inclusive, constructive behavior.

These steps are inspired by Catalyst’s Corporate Practice change model: Culture Matters: Unpacking Change and Achieving Inclusion
Questions & Discussion
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