To receive codes for the recertification credits, plan to attend all 60 minutes of this webinar.

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thread Insight

How to Build a Great Workplace Culture

Presented by
Sarah Borsten, PHR

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Agenda

- Define culture
- Identify your culture
- Evaluate your culture
- Improve your culture

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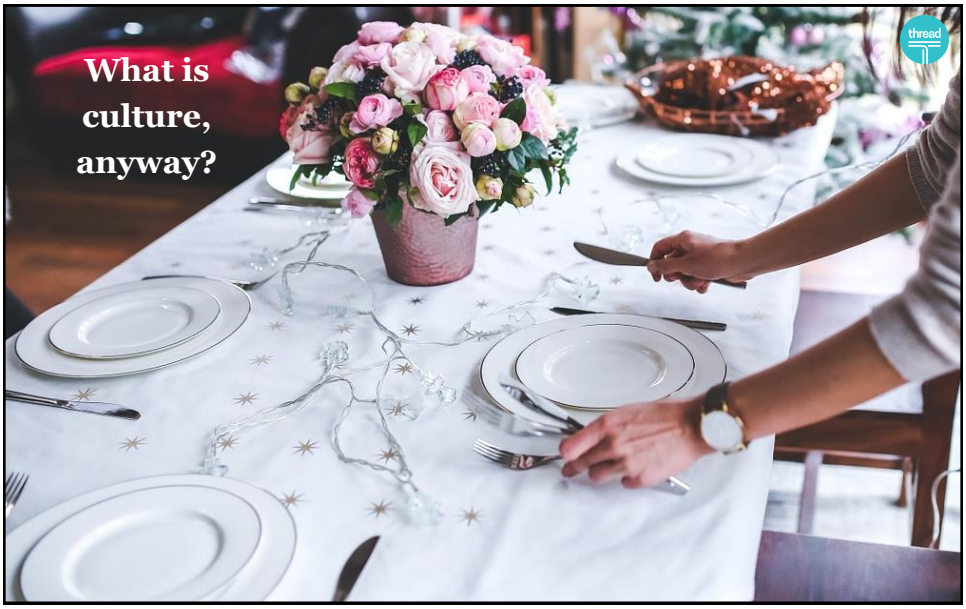
Defining Culture



Culture consists of the
rules, traditions, and **personalities**
of an organization.

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Rules

- **Beliefs, norms, values, and attitudes that have the been translated into expectations, policies, and procedures**
- Some require behavior; some just encourage it
- Inform the way people act, interact, and relate to each other

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Traditions

- **Ongoing and recurring practices**
- They give people the means to interact and form relationships
- People identify with and relate to their organization through its traditions

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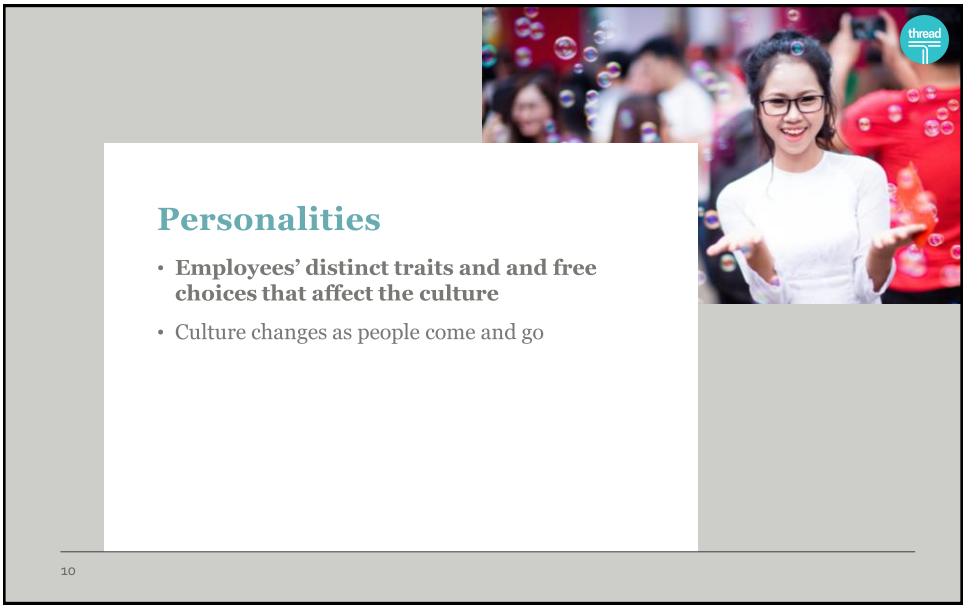
Traditions have staying power.


Personalities
• Employees' distinct traits and and free choices that affect the culture
• Culture changes as people come and go
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Cultures Vary. That's Okay.

- No one-size-fits-all culture
- Different people mean different cultures
- Rules and traditions working well in one place may work poorly in another

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How to Create or Change a Culture

- Establish new rules and traditions
- Reform existing rules and traditions

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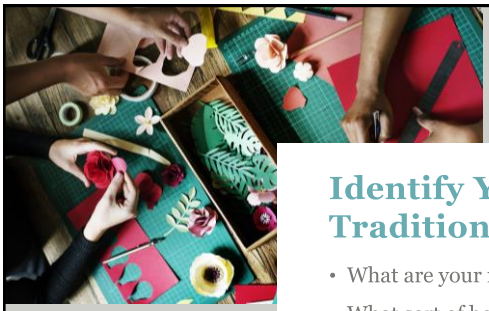
Identifying Your Culture



Identify Your Rules and Traditions

- What are your rules and traditions?
- What sort of behaviors and professional relationships do these rules and traditions encourage?

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Questions to Ask

- Do people trust and respect one another?
- How do they communicate?
- How do teams and departments collaborate and share their ideas?
- How do people generally respond to change?
- Do you host events throughout the year? Do people attend and enjoy them?
- What are meetings like?
- What management style do you use?
- How would you characterize people's interactions in three words?

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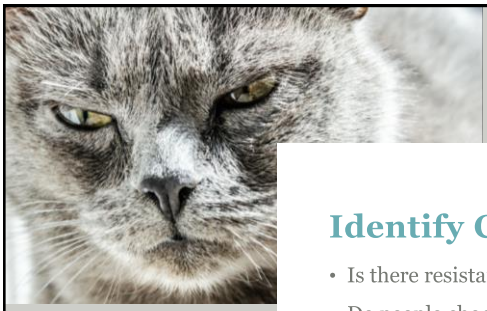

Identify Conflict

- Is there resistance to these rules and traditions?
- Do people choose not to participate in activities and events?
- If so, why?

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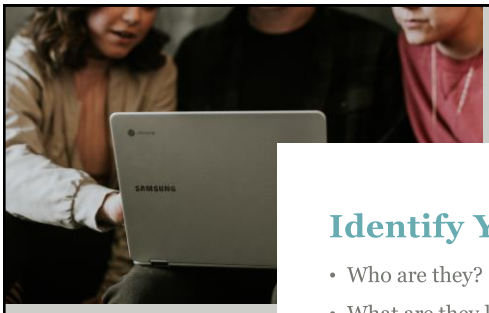

Identify Your People

- Who are they?
- What are they like?
- How do they get along?

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Form a Culture Committee

- Able to observe what's happening culturally in areas you might not see
- Bring multiple perspectives from across the organization
- Help you evaluate and improve the culture

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Evaluating Your Culture

Qualities of a Good Culture

- Clearly defined and understood, with backing core values
- Embraced by employees
- Aligned with the mission and vision
- Conducive to long-term success
- Stable through times of change and growth

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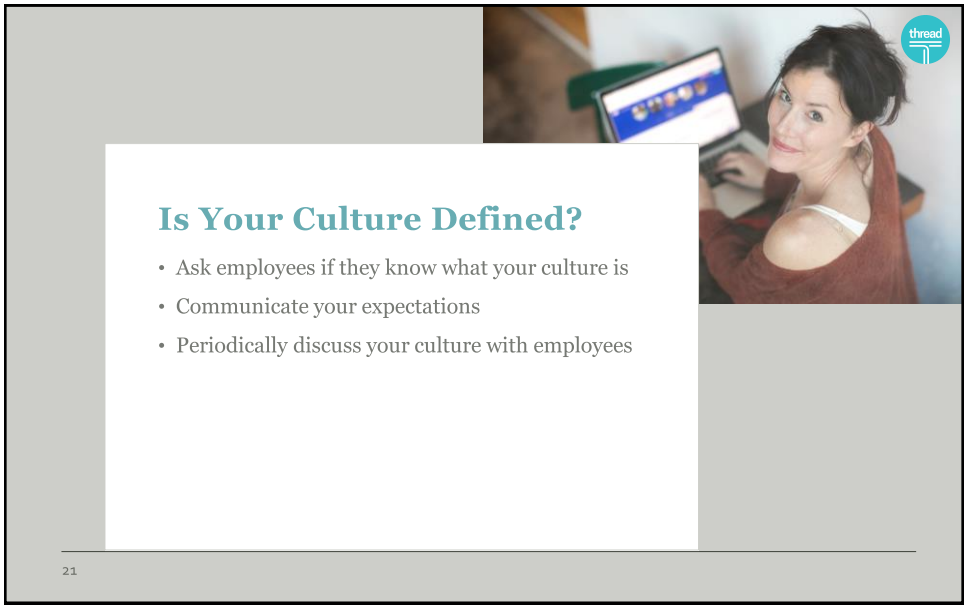
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Is Your Culture Defined?
• Ask employees if they know what your culture is
• Communicate your expectations
• Periodically discuss your culture with employees
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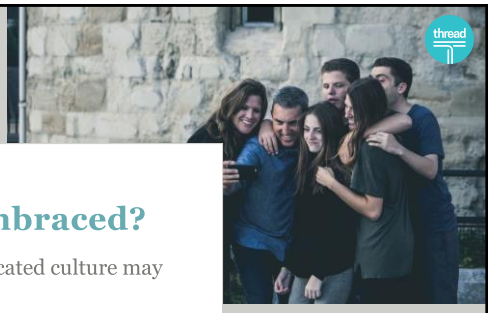
Why Have Core Values?
• Helps define the culture
• Motivates employees
• Keeps your organization true to itself
22



Is Your Culture Embraced?

- A clearly defined and communicated culture may not be embraced
- Emphasize that the culture is important by living it out in the ways you interact with employees
- Encourage employees to contribute to the culture

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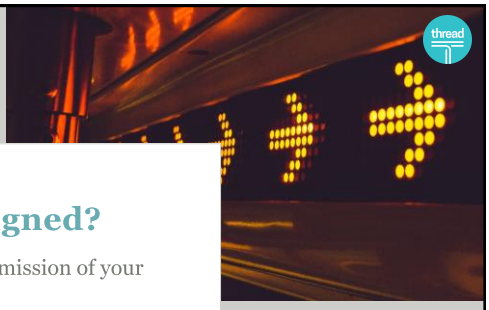

Is Your Culture Aligned?

- Your culture should further the mission of your organization, not stifle it
- The cultures of teams can have some variation, but shouldn't conflict with each other

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thread
Is Your Culture Conducive to Long-term Success?
• Are your core values the best ones given the purpose of your organization?
• Are there aspects of your culture that put you at legal risk?
• Do employees follow the culture because they have to or want to?
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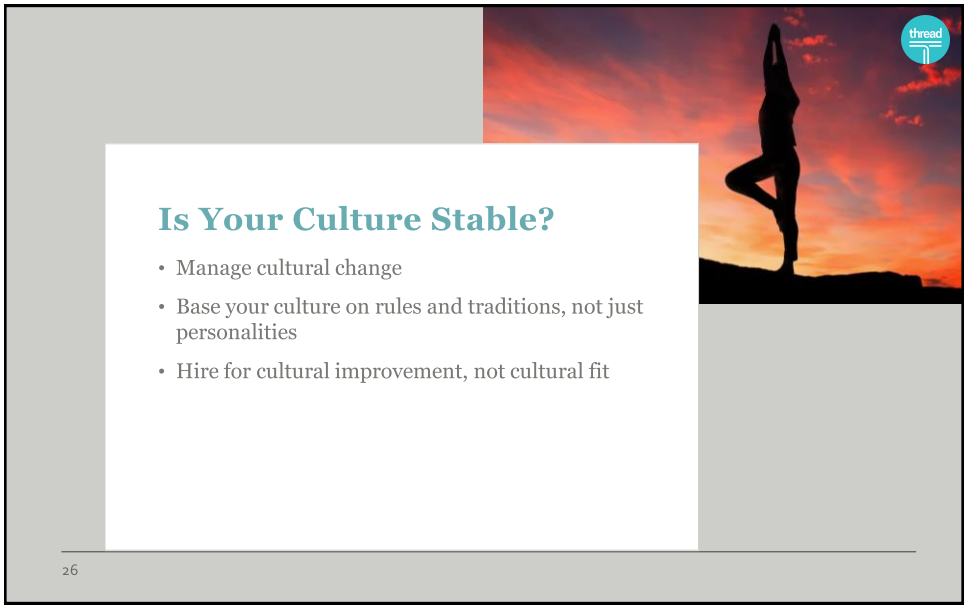
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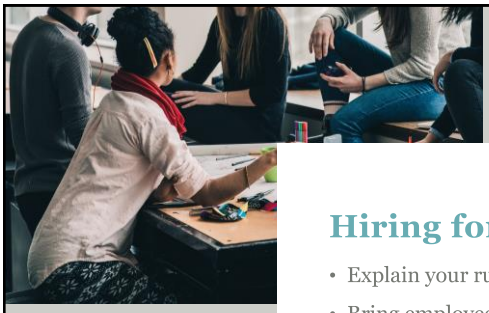
Is Your Culture Stable?
• Manage cultural change
• Base your culture on rules and traditions, not just personalities
• Hire for cultural improvement, not cultural fit
26



Hiring for Your Culture

- Explain your rules and traditions to applicants
- Bring employees from various departments into the interviews
- Ask about specific behaviors

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Improving Your Culture

Five Strategies for Improving Culture

- Establish trust
- Build community
- Help your employees live well and do well
- Strive for diversity
- Build effective teams

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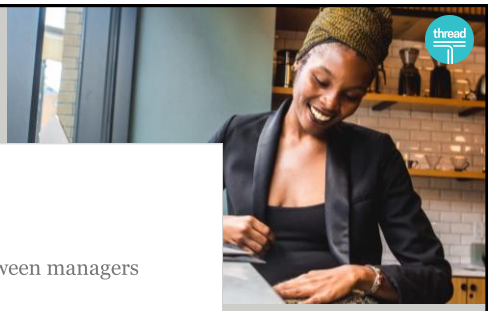

Establish Trust

- Great culture requires trust between managers and employees
- Trust is personal
- The workplace is often a place of distrust

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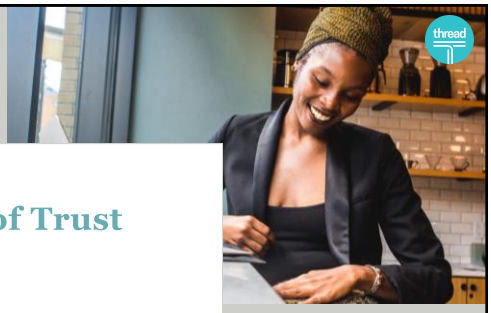

For a Foundation of Trust

- Be open and honest
- Don't spin
- Communicate regularly
- Be accountable
- Trust your employees

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Build Community

- Brings people together around a common purpose
- Strengthens social bonds
- Inspires loyalty during times of trial
- Gives meaning and purpose to work

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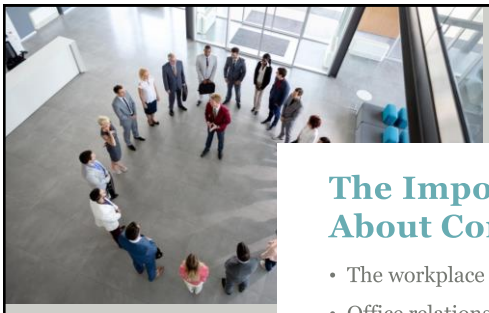

The Importance of Thinking About Community

- The workplace is a social place
- Office relationships will form no matter what

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Help Your Employees Live Well and Do Well

- Learn and master new skills
- Gain valuable experience
- Form connections
- Connect with wider community
- Contribute to human flourishing

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Results of Low Engagement

- Poor productivity
- Less creativity
- Higher absenteeism
- Higher turnover

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Low Engagement Has Costs

- Recruiting and hiring
- Onboarding
- Burden on staff
- Productivity loss
- Mistakes
- Further disengagement

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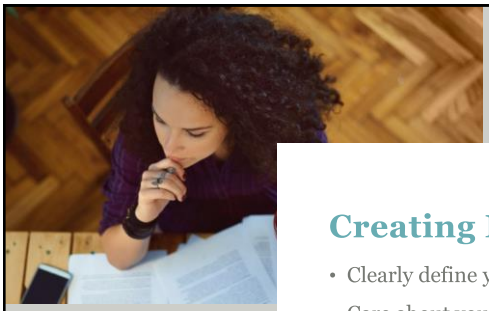

Creating Engagement

- Clearly define your purpose
- Care about your people
- Reward employees who go the extra step
- Welcome criticism and feedback
- Encourage work-life balance

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Strive for Diversity

- Encourage diverse ideas and perspectives
- Look for candidates who will enhance your culture
- Engage employees by creating a welcoming workplace

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Develop Effective Teams

- What it means to build a team
- How you measure a team's performance

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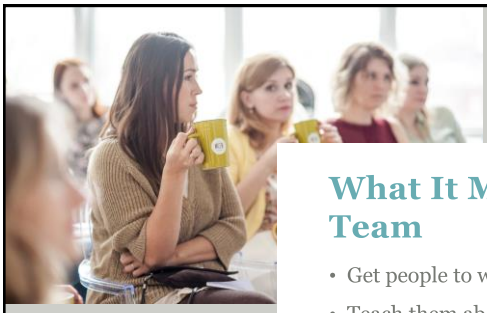

What It Means to Build a Team

- Get people to work well together
- Teach them about one another so they're better able to collaborate

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Choosing the Right Activities for Your Team

- Take note of the people on the team
- Engage them in a task that brings out individual preferences, values, and strengths
- Pay attention to the behavior of each person and discuss the differences with all of them
- Consider changes based on what you've learned

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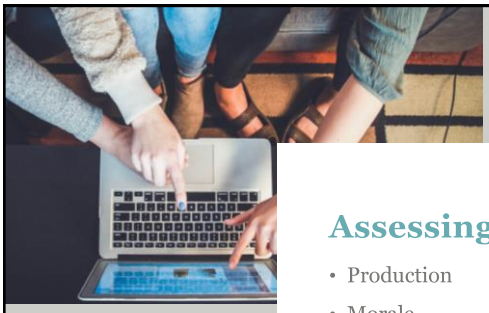

Assessing Success

- Production
- Morale
- Retention
- Efficiency
- Engagement

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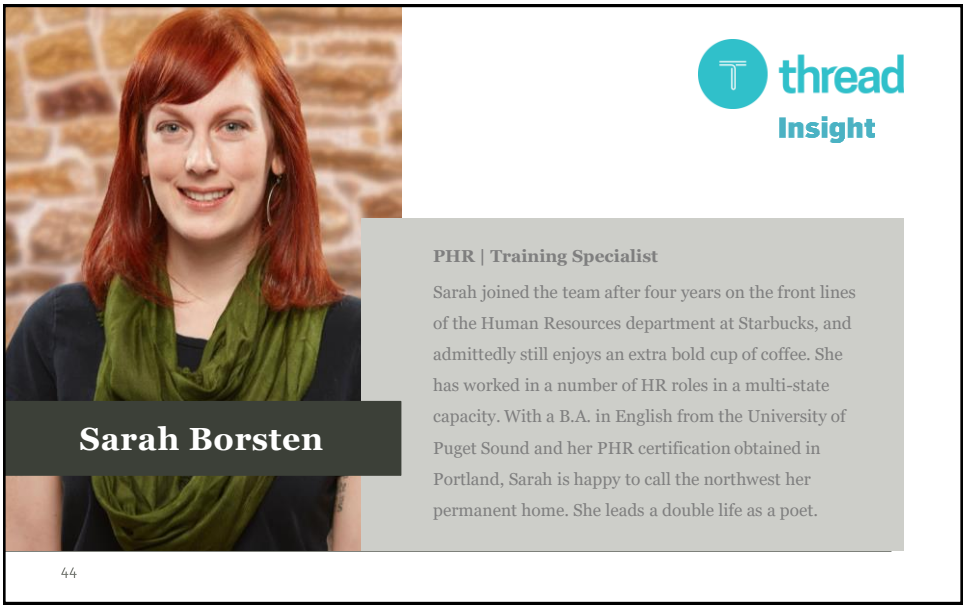
Q & A


Sarah Borsten
thread
Insight
PHR | Training Specialist
Sarah joined the team after four years on the front lines of the Human Resources department at Starbucks, and admittedly still enjoys an extra bold cup of coffee. She has worked in a number of HR roles in a multi-state capacity. With a B.A. in English from the University of Puget Sound and her PHR certification obtained in Portland, Sarah is happy to call the northwest her permanent home. She leads a double life as a poet.
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