



## “The Power of Community...The Power of Many Moving as One”

If you think about it, building culture has been addressed in virtually every book published this past decade on top performing businesses. But how do you create a strong culture within your business? Community building is the way. As culture is the heart and soul of your business, community serves as the body - don't take care of it and it will die.

After the vision and mission statements are written and the values and market position have been identified, many organizations believe that these components will simply integrate themselves into the business. As a result, posters are placed on the wall, “pledge cards” are handed out and the five steps of serving customers are circulated around the office. Once complete, many assume that no further steps need to be taken.

Much like a garden, culture needs a place to live and grow. The first step is deciding what you are going to plant (defining your culture). Next, you must go out and buy the plants and tools (people and training). However, if you think that your garden will simply grow and flourish on its own from this point forward, you are mistaken.

Healthy cultures grow in healthy communities. Communities are different than teams. Teams are functional. They provide specific results to the community at-large. Communities serve a bigger and more powerful long-term purpose. Their culture is the power of their “fertilizer”. As we all know, some fertilizer is not as good as others!

So, what is a community?

- A community is a group of people committed to and working towards a higher purpose (vision).
- A community has common interests (taking fantastic care of each guest).
- A community has agreed upon goals and is interdependent.
- A community is interactive with one another.
- A community is dependent upon each other. It is only as good as the sum of its parts.
- A community is deeply connected. When one person in the community is in trouble, others in the community reach out, support and assist in the progress of the member in trouble.
- A community is a group of people who have a common culture.
- A community thrives in the “positivity” of its environment. This “positivity” drives productivity.
- A community focuses on its strengths and leverages those strengths to get to its mission.
- A community is a powerful force.

Communities are built on six primary pillars. Great organizations fanatically work every day to ensure that these pillars are *all* strong. The power of building these pillars is a lot like compound dividends. The more you invest, the better your investment yields.

The six pillars of a great community are:

1. A strong sense of **connection** between the members (employees).
2. **Clean communication** – This is real talk, not “nice” talk. It is vigorous conversation used to work through problems. Clean communication is easy in good times, but is truly tested in difficult moments.

3. **Compassion** – Giving members of your community what they can have, in a way they can have it. Moving from a place of caring. Compassion is leveraging strengths, not focusing on weaknesses.
4. **Higher-purpose** – The knowingness that what you do as a member of the community makes a difference in the lives of others and your own.
5. **Participation** – If people are not participating, not only do you lose out on their gifts/strengths and optimal productivity, you also feel the drag of their energy.
6. **100% Responsibility/Accountability** – How are you working and delivering on your commitments and responsibilities to your community?

The power of building a strong internal community is immense. According to the *Harvard Business Review*, people who are happy are 53% more likely to stay with a company compared to those individuals who are unhappy. But most importantly, community members work differently together. They help clean up the mess, even if they didn't make it. They have an emotional commitment that no person is left behind. This decreases turnover costs significantly, improves productivity and ultimately drives profitability and asset value. Welcome to the community!

Renie Cavallari is CEO and Chief Inspirational Officer for Aspire, an international training and consulting company that provides products and services designed to help you optimize revenues and increase profitability. For more information, visit [www.aspiremarketing.com](http://www.aspiremarketing.com) or email Renie directly at [renie@aspiremarketing.com](mailto:renie@aspiremarketing.com)

2007©. All rights reserved. Renie Cavallari International, LLC.