Tips for Maintaining Culture During Times of Growth, Diversification or Change

1. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate. Make sure your message is consistent throughout the organization – from managers, to supervisors, to employees. Ensure the communication is 2-way and provides opportunities for people to ask questions, provide feedback, exchange ideas, etc. During change don’t wait to communicate until you have all the information. Tell people what you know and provide ongoing, timely updates as more information becomes available.

2. Recruit key employees as ambassadors of your culture. Select people who strongly believe in, and role model, the culture you want to preserve. Provide them with support and flexibility to act as a coach/mentor to new employees in regards to your culture. Add this responsibility to their job description and if possible, include their effectiveness in this role in their annual performance and compensation review.

3. Hire the right people. When hiring people during times of growth, it’s easy to become more focused on skills and experience than on values and organizational fit. But during this time, it’s important to be disciplined about bringing in the right people and invest in providing new employees formal training on your culture.

4. Take time to do the things you value as an organization in the midst of growth and change. Continue to take time to do the things that bring you together as an organization and create a sense of intimacy and caring – even in the midst of busyness. Examples include: social events; recognition of birthdays, anniversaries, babies; celebrations of a job well done; community involvement projects, etc.

5. Ensure you have business systems and processes in place that support the culture you desire. Creating and maintaining a positive culture is a complex challenge. It’s not enough to simply have initiatives focused on creating or maintaining the culture you want. You must also have systems in place that help you manage fundamental business issues and handle problems as they arise. All the progress you make through employee programs, initiatives and ambassadors can be undone by inadequate communication, poor coordination between departments and lack of follow-through on key decisions.
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1. How would you define your culture today?

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2. How do you think your staff/employees define your culture today?

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3. What key elements of your culture do you want to maintain during your time of growth or change? Which elements do you want to increase/improve?

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4. What resources, programs, efforts do you currently have in place (or are planning to put into place) to maintain/improve key elements of your culture?

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5. How will you know if these efforts are effective in accomplishing your objectives in the new environment? In other words, what does success look like?

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