

strengthening corporate cultures



In today's business world, survival is all about taking quick actions to stay afloat. *Romulo S Romero*, managing director, OTi Philippines, says leaders need to have immediate action plans in place

Understanding an organisational culture will indicate how it might fare on its corporate journey. If its culture is one that does not support its strategic goals and objectives, it becomes a liability. Particularly in times and seasons of economic, political and social turbulence, the organisational culture determines whether a company will survive, scale up or just disappear.

In last month's article, it was shown how the OTi Total Organisational Renewal (TOR) approach was a much needed solution when facing tough times. At the heart of OTi-TOR®, located in its core are: corporate purpose, vision, values and corporate culture. Whether preparing for upturns or downturns, organisations would do well to revisit these critical elements, with Organisational Culture as an integrating factor. Let us look at a case study about culture transformation:

A major pharmaceutical company arrested a sharp decline in its market share by addressing its corporate culture. The entry of a new CEO marked the journey of transformation. An organisational culture assessment was done to give management a handle of the situation. As gaps in current and desired culture surfaced, strategic alignment initiatives were put in place. The transition to an effective culture had to start with a clear vision, a clear sense of corporate and individual purpose, a re-articulation and revisiting of corporate values and, most importantly, a clarification process on expected

behaviours in support of strategic goals and objectives. The exercise provided the organisation with the opportunity to ask some important questions: How will we work together? How will we resolve conflicts? How will we communicate with one another? What behaviours will help or hinder us from achieving our purpose and vision? Are our behaviours consistent with our values? This journey of cultural change resulted in the company regaining its lost market share after 2.5 years.

Without a strong corporate culture, an organisation will face many difficulties maintaining its competitive advantage in the market. At one point in time, all organisations face a state of discontinuity and have to choose between the following three courses of action:

- » Conform (drifting) – maintaining the status quo, traditional bureaucracy and aristocracy
- » Reform (doing) – continuous improvement, planned incremental changes
- » Transform (being and becoming) – reengineering, reinventing, and strategic pragmatism.

The pertinent question is: what is my organisational culture now and which change will I implement? Do I need to renew the organisation and transform the culture?

Turbulent times or not, organisations will do well to consider if their current corporate culture is working for or against them. Whatever the answer, the exercise will be well worth it.



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OTi Philippines

Penthouse, Ace Building, Rada cor. Dela Rosa Sts. Makati Metro Manila Philippines

+632-8884490

<http://otiphilippines.com>