



Stanford eCorner

Five Archetypes of Culture

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Andy Friere, Co-founder and CEO of Axialent, provides five basic cultural archetypes into which organizations fall: 1) Achievement, 2) Innovation, 3) One-team, 4) People-first or 5) Customer-focused. Friere argues that ultimately organizations need to develop strength in all five archetypes. However, Friere emphasizes that organizations cannot develop all five at once. Instead, organizations can only successfully develop one archetype at a time, a process that requires a few years of focus on each individual archetype sequentially.



Transcript

We basically developed five archetypes. So we said it doesn't matter what culture you have. It will fall into one of these five, and only one of these five. And then you can start saying, "Well, we can change the name." Performing culture is "achievement." People first, one team, innovation, customer focus. It doesn't matter, really, the wording you use, it will always fall into one of these five. And I invite you. If you have like, "Well, what about product? We're really focused on building amazing products." Well, that's innovation. So that's an innovative culture. If you're really focused on people reaching sales and a lot of pressure in a sales organization, well that's very much an achievement culture. And you will want to develop these five.

So it's a fact that you want to achieve these five. The best way to do that is to choose one that's going to be your torch that you're going to be carrying to build a differentiated organization. One of those five is going to make the difference. And at some point in time--normally, a culture change process takes two or three years. So after two years, you start saying, "Well, you know, we're doing pretty well around achievement. Now let's go to the next step, which is becoming more client-focused." That's sort of the pace at which you can change things. You're not going to be, "This month, we're going to do client focus, and the next month, we're going to do innovation. And in six months, we'll just cover them all, and we're great. That's not going to happen. It takes a lot of time.