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Culture Archetypes: People-first Culture

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Andy Friere, Co-founder and CEO of Axialent, describes the people-first culture archetype, one of the five basic cultural archetypes into which organizations fall: 1) Achievement, 2) Innovation, 3) One team, 4) People-first or 5) Customer-focused. Specifically, Friere suggests that people-first cultures are focused on building and developing organizational members above other potential activities. Friere describes the behaviors, symbols and processes that build this type of culture as well as the actions that destroy it.



Transcript

People first is about encouraging people to grow and evolve. It's about people. I was talking to Eduardo Elsztain, who spoke the first day. And I was talking about this, and he said, "We're a people first organization." He was just realizing that. He was saying, "I basically have people that are loyal to me and to my brother, and those that are loyal, I respect and I trust and I take care of them. And if they are underperformers, we give them a second chance. And it's based on trust. And it's based on history and loyalty, and giving people an extra chance and investing in developing them. So the typical mindset of a people first culture is: they are underperforming, I'm going to give them another chance. What do they need to become good performers? An achievement culture is: they're underperforming, good-bye.

Get rid of them, find someone else. So that is the tension. And that's why it's so important that you choose how you want to play your game. So there's a lot of equally spread benefits across the organization. You don't see huge offices. The symbols are: we're all equal, we all work together. A lot of the Internet boom was very much like a people first thing. We're all in this together, we share the wealth, we either win together, or we lose together. That was very much the energy. Maybe many of them were lacking achievement culture, but they were really focused on people wanting to work together and do things together.

A lot of training, a lot of issues at work and we really need to understand. We really care, we really want people to be happy. That is a people first organization. What you need to do is believe in diversity and giving equal opportunity to people and trust. And the deal breaker is distrust, I mean distrust, and believing that people cannot evolve, cannot learn, cannot grow. Some people say if they're bad, they're bad. Nothing's going to happen, nothing's going to change. Don't come with that crappy thing of investing in coaching and those things. It's not going to happen. Just get rid of that.

Well, that's an achievement culture. A people first will say, "Well, but you know, let's find them a place where they can shine and bring their strengths and bring all their strengths to the table so we can make this. Let's find them the right place for them in this organization. That is a people first culture.