

Confronting Culture for Lasting Change

By: Melissa Sims

When you hear Tony Moore speak, you will hear him describe himself as a culture architect. As a disrupter. A designer. A man who is well versed in creating order from chaos. But when you *listen* to Tony Moore, you will get the sense that he's a gardener. So many of his analogies center around the soil that your mind will begin to contemplate what this man's backyard must look like.

On a sultry morning in the city, Tony addresses a collective of HR professionals who have gathered at the Pyramid Club to sip coffee and drink his Kool-Aid. He begins his keynote by explaining that in order to reap change that lasts, you must confront culture. Culture is the soil in which everything in your organization lives or dies. As he puts it, "your culture is perfectly aligned to get the results you are getting." Mull on that for a moment. And if that doesn't elicit an "a-ha!" moment, consider his next point: you are not a victim of your organization's culture. You are either an active participant or preserver of your culture. *Ooof!* The crowd shifts a little uneasily in their seats and pens hover about the handouts as we process this. You mean, we are part of the problem? He quickly rescues us. Yeah, we might absolutely be a part of the problem but we're also part of the solution. "If you change the culture, you change the outcome," he says. All we have to do is figure out what outcome we're looking to achieve. And tweak the culture...ahem, the soil...so that we're reaping that which we set out to grow.

But how do we go about changing the composition of our organization's culture? The first step is to realize that this is going to take some digging. Most change initiatives fail, Tony says, because we aren't getting at the heart of the problem. We are treating the symptom. A poor diagnosis will lead to an ineffective intervention. In other words, prepare thyself to peel back the onion. Second, involve your people! The link between employee engagement and performance is real. Research underscores the obvious—employees who are engaged take positive action to further their organization's reputation and interests. Third, as Tony says, "start where you are and work your way out." If you wish that information flowed more freely from the C-Suite down to your level, begin by taking the pulse of how often and how freely you share information with your direct reports. In other words, germinate the culture at your own level that you want to see take root organization-wide.

Want more of Tony Moore? Sign up for his e-newsletter, <http://tonymooreSpeaks.com/stayconnected>, delivered to your inbox every week. You won't be disappointed. Want more resources and support? Consider exploring the resources that the Greater Philadelphia Association of Change Management Professionals (acmpphilly.org) offers or Change Management Institute USA (<https://www.change-management-institute.com/events>).

About the Author

Melissa Sims is the Regional Chief of Human Resources for the Northeast Region of the National Park Service. She began her career with the Park Service as a Management and Program Analyst at the National Mall and Memorial Parks in Washington, D.C. in 2010. She has served the Northeast Region as both a Partnership Specialist and, most recently, as the Regional Employee Development Officer. Melissa is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Sociology and Systems Engineering. Melissa also holds a Master of Science in

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