



Organizational Culture:

Research Paper

limeade®

10.2020

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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

In recent decades, organizational culture has become an increasingly promising and popular field of study, with a goal of better understanding the nature of work, including employees' attitudes, workplace behaviors, and performance in the context of their organization's culture (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Malinowski, 1944). Researchers in various disciplines such as psychology, sociology and anthropology applied their collective perspectives and approaches to study culture and have, over time, proposed more than 54 different meanings and conceptualizations of organizational culture (Verbeke, et al., 1998). This is largely because culture is abstract, dynamic and often subtle in its character. The pervasive and powerful nature of culture works to guide employee behavior, sometimes unconsciously. In this paper, we describe what culture is, how it influences important organizational outcomes and how organizations can be intentional with their culture. Limeade research shows that employees who feel that their company genuinely cares about them have an overall better experience at work, including stronger commitment and higher engagement and well-being. Therefore, we examine the impacts of a culture that cares and investigate how companies can cultivate their culture through a lens of care.

Defining Culture

Organizational culture is defined as **a set of shared underlying assumptions about an organization regarding what is valued, how people should behave, and beliefs about what is "normal" within the organization** (Schien, 1999). These shared assumptions come in the form of formal rules (e.g., policies and processes) and informal rules (i.e., commonly understood expectations, standards, and norms) guiding workplace behavior and defining what is accepted and what isn't. Organizational culture is like an organization's personality — it is the collective set of reasons why employees across all levels of an organization behave the way they do. It signals, for example, what employees should pay attention to, how to react emotionally, and what actions to take in various situations (Schein, 2010).

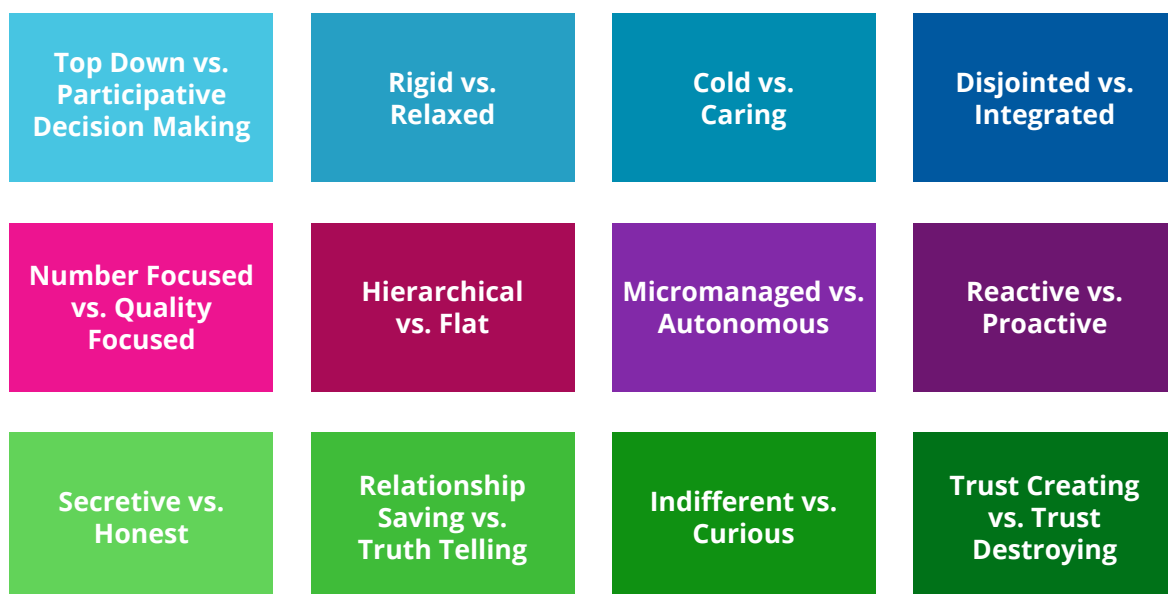
Schein (2004)'s model illustrates the fundamental components of organizational culture commonly reported in the literature. The model contends that organizational culture is comprised of three major components including artifacts, articulated beliefs and values and underlying assumptions (see Table 1). Variations and different combinations of these three components define an organization's culture.

Table 1. Schein (2004)'s Components of Organizational Culture.

Artifacts	There are four major categories of artifacts: (1) symbols (natural/manufactured objects, physical settings) (2) organizational language (jargon, slang, gestures, humor, slogans), (3) narratives (stories, myths, legends) and (4) practices (rituals, taboos, traditions) (Trice & Beyer, 1993).
Articulated Beliefs and Values	<i>Articulated</i> beliefs and values are the strategies, goals, and philosophies of an organization (articulated justifications). There are five key characteristics of organizational values: (1) they are concepts or beliefs, (2) pertain to desirable end-states/behaviors, (3) transcend situations, (4) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (5) are ordered by relative importance (Schwartz, 1992, p. 4).
Underlying Assumptions	<i>Unconscious</i> , taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings (ultimate source of values and actions). Challenging basic assumptions produces anxiety and defensiveness because they provide security through a sense of identity and a level of certainty (Schein, 2010).

As mentioned earlier, organizational culture can be abstract; however, it is a powerful force permeating across all levels of an organization and oftentimes across functional boundaries as well as geographical locations. It is important to note that there is no “good” or “bad” organizational culture. Rather, a culture has certain characteristics (for examples, see Figure 1) that either support or hinders an organization’s ability to meet business objectives — and in helping employees become and/or stay engaged, satisfied and productive.

Figure 1. Examples of cultural attributes.



Culture vs. Climate

Culture and climate are two complementary, but often conflated, organizational constructs. The biggest distinction between the two is that climate can be understood as the “what” one sees or experiences within an organization, while the culture is the underlying and deeply ingrained “why.” Climate is the set of more observable aspects of working in the organization and can generally be felt right away. For example, when employees use phrases like “fun,” “busy,” or “friendly,” they are describing the climate—what it feels like to work in the organization. When you dig deeper into finding out why the organization is “fun,” “busy,” or “friendly” you uncover the organizational culture. Culture is the set of rules, often unspoken, and the organization’s norms that employees come to learn over time, often by trial and error and by observing which behaviors are reinforced through the climate (Schneider et al., 2017).

Climate and culture are inextricably connected— culture drives climate and climate impacts culture (Schein, 2000). Because of the deep connection between culture and climate, any proposed change to the system (e.g., the implementation of a new work/life policy), especially if it is radical or far from the norm, should involve careful consideration of the organizational culture. Which aspects of the culture will support this innovation? Which will hinder it or even block it from being adopted?

WHY CULTURE MATTERS

Organizational culture is the single most important factor in determining an organization’s success or failure (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). It has been shown time and time again that company culture influences employees’ job satisfaction, morale, performance, engagement, attitudes, motivation, commitment to their organizations and turnover (Cameron et. al., 2011; Warrick, 2017). However, these companies only achieve favorable business outcomes when the culture is aligned with business objectives and strategies. When organizations put **intentional** effort into making their company culture align with their business plans and goals, employees across all levels of the organizations develop a sense of shared ownership and cooperative spirit to achieve these goals. This in turn helps unify employees’ assumptions, expectations and behaviors as well as company norms to create positive climates, resulting in more satisfied and productive employees. Additionally, companies with more aligned, “performance-enhancing” cultures (i.e., a tight alignment between company culture and business strategies) may have higher growth across domains, including revenue growth, stock price growth and net income growth. For example, Kotter and Heskett (1992) found that companies with aligned cultures had a 682% average increase in sales compared to a 166% average increase for companies without aligned cultures. They also saw a stock increase of 901% versus 74% for comparable companies. In short, aligning organizational culture with business objectives and strategies with intention and efforts pays dividends and is conducive to increasing revenue and growth — and creating an overall positive employee experience.

CURRENT VS ASPIRE-TO CULTURE

Company values are closely related to culture and are typically an articulation of what is important to the organization. However, many organizations espouse a set of values based on those they would like to have, not necessarily those that are current and manifest in the organization. Hence, company values often end up being the “aspired-to” cultural components of the organization that may actually mask or misrepresent the actual cultural components. Another point of confusion is the fact that company values are often thought of as an organization’s strategies, philosophies, mission or vision, not the true source of why employees behave the way they do. For these reasons, it is more appropriate to understand the organization at a deeper level, getting to the root cause of action—the basic underlying assumptions that define the organization’s culture. As organizational decision-makers, crafters of espoused values, and key individuals that establish the status quo, organizational leaders play a vital role in influencing culture (Kwantes & Boglarsky, 2007). Culture change requires a multi-faceted approach and leaders must lead this charge. We discuss this in more detail in the recommendations section.

CULTURES THAT CARE

We believe that companies will benefit from intentionally cultivating a culture that cares. Our own study on the Science of Care found that employees who felt that their company genuinely cared about them had higher commitment to the organization, lower stress and burnout risk and an overall better employee experience at work – higher engagement, greater sense of inclusion and better overall well-being (for more information, see the [Limeade Institute Science of Care POV](#)). To further understand cultures that care, we conducted a study on organizational culture and the impacts of caring cultures. We sought to demonstrate why culture matters, how it influences various work attitudes and decisions and how companies can make care a central and pervasive tenet of their culture.

CULTURES THAT CARE STUDY

Purpose of the Study

We conducted a study about organizational culture to answer four central questions:

- Research Question 1: **Why does culture matter to employees?**
- Research Question 2: **What are employees looking for in a company's culture?**
- Research Question 3: **How can companies infuse their cultures with care?**
- Research Question 4: **What are the impacts of caring cultures on the employee experience?**

Methodology

Survey: In March 2020, we administered the Caring Cultures survey via MTurk. In this survey we asked participants to reflect on culture in general and how they believe they experience it within their current organizations. We also asked questions about other aspects of their work experience, such as their engagement, well-being, and stress levels (further described below). The survey included 26 items with Likert-type response options (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, with a prefer not to respond option) and seven open-ended questions (see Appendix A table with all questions asked). We also asked participants to voluntarily supply information about their personal attributes and employment history.

Participants: After removing participants who failed to meet data quality checks or did not respond to the survey questions, we had N = 1386 respondents, all of whom were full-time employees residing in the United States (see Appendix B for full demographic breakdowns). About half of the participants were female (46%; 56% were male and 1% non-binary) and most were 25 years or older (96%) with a college or advanced degree (79%). Regarding employment experience, most participants had at least one year of tenure in their current company (94%) with a quarter of the sample reporting their current tenure at 10 years or more. About half of participants were individual contributors (53%), 36% were managers, and 7% were directors or executives (4% reported as "other" or preferred not to say). Over 20 industries were represented in the sample, with the largest percentages of employees working in education (11%), healthcare (11%), information technology (11%), and retail (10%). Most participants reported holding at least two jobs (96%) and working for at least two companies in their employment history (95%).

Analyses: To answer our central questions, we used three main analytic approaches:

1) *Descriptive:* We looked at the percentage of favorable responses for various questions concerning employee perceptions and sentiments about workplace culture in general. Specifically, we assessed the extent to which intentional effort is put into a company's culture and whether culture influences an employee's decision around where to work, how much effort to put into one's work, and how long to stay employed at a particular organization. We also assessed the extent to which working for an organization that cares influences employees' engagement, sense of inclusion, well-being, stress levels and commitment. For open-ended questions, we looked for themes in participants' responses in what people are looking for in an organization's culture, common mistakes made by companies regarding their culture and how companies can show they care about their employees (see Appendix A).

2) *Group comparisons:* We used the item "In the current organization I work for, the organization cares about me." to compare employees who reported that their company cares about them ("Yes" responses) with those who said their company does not care about them ("No" responses) on various measures of employee experience using Chi-square tests and t-tests. See Table 2 for the employee experience measures included in this study.

3) *Predictive analysis:* Finally, we used regression analyses to evaluate whether certain sentiments about company culture could significantly predict employee experience outcomes and which outcomes appeared most impacted by culture sentiments. The items used to evaluate culture sentiments were:

- "In the current organization I work for, the organization cares about me."
- "In the current organization I work for, intentional effort is put into our organizational culture."
- "In the current organization I work for, our culture is a competitive advantage that differentiates us from our competition."

Table 2. *Employee Experience Outcome Measures Evaluated in this Study.*

<i>Organizational Commitment</i>	
Commitment	I am committed to my organization.
Intent to stay	I intend to stay at my organization for at least...
Net Promoter Score	On a scale of 0 (Not at all likely) to 10 (Extremely likely), how likely are you to recommend your organization as a great place to work?
Likelihood to Recommend	I would recommend my organization to my friend as a great place to work.
Engagement	I feel personally engaged in my work.
Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs)	I go out of my way to do extra things at work that aren't necessarily required.

Inclusion and Well-being

Well-being	Overall, I have well-being in my life.
Stress levels	Which of the following best describes the current level of stress in your life?
Belongingness	I feel like I belong at my organization.
Ability to be myself	I can be myself at work.
Feeling included	I feel included in this organization.

RESULTS

Why is culture important to employees?

To answer this question, we used the descriptive approach to evaluate the participants attitudes and sentiments about workplace culture and how that relates to their decision-making. The vast majority of participants felt that culture is an important factor in their attraction to a particular company, selection of it a place to work, how much effort they put into their work while employed there and their desire to stay employed there (Figure 2). The responses indicate that people are much less likely to work at a company whose culture has a bad reputation. Additionally, about 69% feel that an intentional effort is put into their current organization's culture. These results suggest that in order to attract and retain top talent, companies should be putting an intentional effort into their culture and making their company a great place to work (see Appendix C for the distribution of responses to all questions asked in this survey). This is why culture matters – it plays a large role in how people decide where to work, how hard to work and for how long to work at a particular company. The following results further demonstrate these concepts and explore how companies can intentionally cultivate caring cultures in ways that matter most to employees.

90% *An organization's culture influences my desire to work there.*

80% *An organization's culture influences whether I want to put in as much effort as I can into my work.*

71% *If I had the choice between working at two organizations, organizational culture would be the reason why I would choose one over the other.*

86% *An organization's culture influences whether I keep working there.*

What are employees looking for in a company's culture?

How do companies create a great place to work? While many studies and our own on the Science of Care offer specific recommendations, we asked participants to weigh in through the lens of company culture. We asked participants to select the five most important attributes of culture that they look for in a place to work. Results indicated that most people are seeking cultures that invest in their employees, are supportive, trustworthy (can be trusted), flexible and show they value their employees (see Figure 3 for Top 10 Cultural Attributes).

Figure 3. *Top Cultural Attributes Employees Look for in a Place to Work (N=1486 Responses). See Appendix D for the full list of attributes.*



When asked about the mistakes participants have seen companies make regarding their culture, many highlighted the lack of those attributes – specifically, cultures that put profit over employee needs, that overwork and micromanage employees, those where employees feel lied to and distrust their leaders, those with clear biases in hiring, promoting, and compensation, and those that do not value their employees’ feedback, input, or feelings. One participant summed it up by saying, “They talk about their culture without showing it. Some ignore the concept entirely. They make the culture all about how the organization treats customers and not its own.” (See Table 3 for additional quotes from participants).

Table 3. *“What are the biggest mistakes companies make regarding their culture?”*

“Not enough transparency, especially about the little things (like whether you are expected to do things outside the stated job requirements, etc.)”

“Showing biases toward workers over others”

“Making people feel they can’t be themselves...like making gay jokes”

“Treating employees like they are disposable”

How can companies infuse their cultures with care?

The results above point to several cultural attributes that employees are looking for in a company's culture – and all correspond to aspects of care highlighted by our Science of Care study. Specifically, the participants in this study are calling out various aspects of perceived organizational support. Perceived organizational support is the feeling that one's company values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Kim, Eisenberger, & Baik, 2016). In accord with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), employees develop a more favorable orientation toward their organization in response to the organization's fulfillment of their socio-emotional needs (e.g., approval, esteem, affiliation and emotional support) and material goals and objectives (Casimir et al., 2014; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Gupta et al., 2016; Kurtessis et al., 2015; Rousseau, 1989, 1995; Shore et al., 2006). Thus, organizational support should be viewed as a central tenet of culture through which companies can show care for their employees.

This was further demonstrated when we asked participants to select the most important cultural attributes that show an organization cares about them, and the top-most selected attributes corresponded almost exactly to Figure 3 (attributes employees look for in an organization they want to work in). See Figure 4 for this list.

Figure 4. *Top Cultural Attributes That Show Organizational Care (N=1486 Responses). See Appendix E for the full list of attributes.*

- **Supportive**
- **Invests in its employees**
- **Values the whole employee**
- **Trusting (trusts its employees)**
- **Caring**
- **Listens**
- **Trustworthy (can be trusted)**
- **Honest**
- **Flexible**
- **Transparent**
- **Inclusive**
- **Learning Oriented**
- **Growth-minded**

What are the impacts of caring cultures on employee experience?

To probe further into why companies should cultivate caring cultures, we investigated its impacts on other employee experience outcomes. To do this, we split this research question into three parts:

1. A replication of our Science of Care findings, to determine if cultures that care do indeed hold up with better outcomes of interest.
2. An analysis of culture sentiments and their relative ability to predict key outcomes of interest.
3. An analysis of differences in caring culture outcomes by demographics

Science of Care

First, we re-tested our Science of Care findings to validate that those who feel their organization cares for them do indeed have significantly better outcomes. We evaluated this by comparing employee experience outcomes between two groups of participants based on their responses to the question “In the current organization I work for, the organization cares about me.” Those who said “Yes” comprised the Caring Culture group and those who said “No” comprised the Non-Caring Culture group. Across the board, the Caring Culture group had higher scores and percentage favorable on all outcomes. The vast majority of participants said that when working for an organization that cared for them, they also felt more committed to that organization (95% of respondents), more included in that organization (94%), more engaged in their work (92%), and had lower stress (85%) and better well-being (89%) compared to when they worked for an organization that did not care for them. The comparative results indeed upheld our previous findings that employees who feel cared for are statistically more committed to their organization, more engaged, less stressed, feel more included and have higher overall well-being (see Appendix F for graphs for full table and graphs of results).

Culture sentiments

Using multiple linear regression models, we then investigated which outcomes were best predicted by culture sentiments. We evaluated this using three culture sentiment items and included relevant demographic factors (e.g., tenure, employment experience, gender, and age):

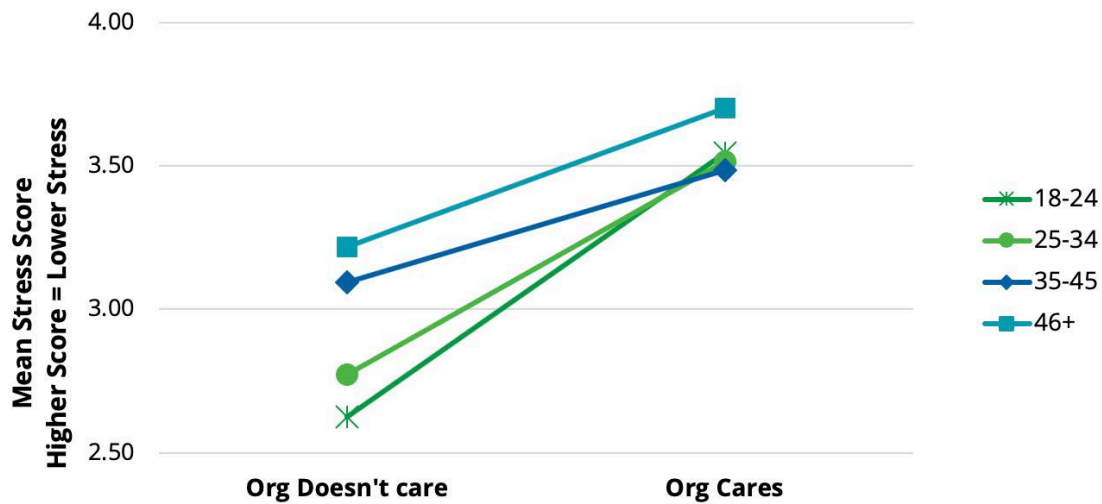
1. Caring Culture: “In the current organization I work for, the organization cares about me.”
2. Intentional Effort: “In the current organization I work for, intentional effort is put into our organizational culture.”
3. Evaluation of Culture: “In the current organization I work for, our culture is a competitive advantage that differentiates us from our competition.”

For each of these three culture sentiment items, the outcome best predicted across the board was whether people will recommend their company as a great place to work to others (see Appendix G). This ties in with the result for Research Question 1 indicating that a company’s culture is closely tied to their reputation, which can affect the attraction and retention of talent to their organization. Specifically, **culture sentiments explained about 60% of the variance in scores for the Recommend and Net Promoter Score outcomes** (see details in Appendix G). Culture sentiments were also good at predicting inclusion sentiments, particularly a sense of belongingness and feeling included at work (50-57% of variance in scores explained by culture sentiments). Culture sentiments were decent predictors of organizational commitment (48% variance explained), engagement (36%) and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) (25%). While still statistically significant, culture sentiments were least predictive of stress and well-being outcomes (explaining 9% and 19% of variance in outcome scores, respectively).

Differences in caring culture outcomes by demographics

Overall, the patterns of relationships between culture sentiments and employee experience outcomes were the same for participants with different employment experience, job levels and tenures and for men and women of different ages. There was one interesting exception, however – gender and age were both significant predictors of stress levels (see Appendix G for details). The results showed that stress was lower for participants that 1) worked for companies with a caring culture; 2) were men; and 3) were older. While women were more stressed than men regardless of whether they worked for a company with a caring culture or not, the higher stress levels among younger participants can be buffered by a caring culture. In other words, working for a company that cares about its employees may help reduce stress overall, but particularly among the youngest group of employees (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Stress levels for employees in different age groups as a function of whether they said their company cares about them.



CONCLUSION

Overall, the results of the Caring Cultures study illustrated that organizational culture is an important contributor to whether people want to work for a company, how hard they work, and how long they stay. When a company has a caring culture, a variety of other employee outcomes are positively affected (e.g., commitment, engagement, well-being). A caring culture most influences whether their employees will recommend it as a great place to work to others, implying that demonstrating care can improve a company's reputation externally. Our results show that care can show up in a company's culture through support, investment, value and trust. In short, employees are human beings and they don't turn off their humanity at work. They want to feel cared for as a whole person and not to be treated like a cog in a machine. Companies that infuse their cultures with care will foster that feeling among their employees, and that in turn will improve their productivity and performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS – TRANSFORMING CULTURE

Companies that spend the time to truly understand and optimize their cultures will be differentiated in the marketplace. One of the most common misconceptions surrounding organizational culture is that it cannot be changed — that it evolves on its own and “happens to” employees. However, the longer the mindset of “it’s always been this way” lives, the longer that mindset reigns. (see Table 4 for common myths regarding organizational culture).

Table 4. *Organizational Culture Myths vs Reality.*

Myth:	Reality:
<i>"We can't manage what we can't measure"</i>	There are numerous culture models and surveys that are empirically researched and validated to measure culture.
<i>"Culture takes years to change"</i>	The longer the mindset of “it’s always been this way” lives, the longer that mindset reigns. If you implement strategies correctly and consistently, you will see a culture shift faster than you think. The key is in intentional and continuous effort.
<i>"It's HR's job to worry about stuff like this"</i>	Since culture is a collective concept, it must be owned by the collective. Everyone must be involved and understand the assumptions, expectations, and norms — especially organizational leaders.
<i>"Culture doesn't matter"</i>	Culture plays a major role in attracting candidates and influencing work outcomes such as job satisfaction, morale, performance, employee engagement, motivation, and turnover (Warrick, 2017).

If you implement strategies correctly and consistently, you will see a culture shift faster than you think. The key is in intentional and continuous effort. Underlying this approach is the belief that organizational culture should be carefully crafted and diligently fostered and that a proactive, interventionist strategy should be created by leaders and managers (Conner, 1993). At a high level, leaders must first understand what culture is, why it matters, and what kind of culture they want to aspire to. Once leadership makes this a priority, identify, communicate, educate and engage employees in the cultural ideals. This could be carried out in workshops or training programs, or simply during one-on-ones and company meetings (see Appendix H for a conversation guide). Because leadership is one of the biggest influencers of culture, it is important for them to model and clearly articulate desired behaviors.

Once you begin taking these actions, the next step is to sustain them. Involve employees who you could envision modeling your company's culture and recognize and reward your current employees for practicing desired behaviors. See Appendix I for a list of specific ways you can further demonstrate care on a consistent basis. Another great way of sustaining a culture is appointing a culture team to monitor and manage the culture (Warrick, 2017). The key is to be intentional – show you care, be authentic and make sure that the aspired-to culture is aligned with business strategies and goals. Change takes time, but showing you care, that the company is tracking it and making strides, is enough to start changing organizational culture. Below are key tips to consider when transforming culture:

- Be **clear** about what business problems you are addressing
- Think of yourself as a **culture architect**
- Take a **top down and bottom up** approach
- Start with your **values**
- **Determine the gap** between current and aspired values
- Follow the **intentional culture circle** (see below)



- **Shared Vision: Why?** Has a shared vision of the desired culture been created? Has it been communicated and discussed with employees? This vision should articulate not only the what the desired culture is, but why. How does it support business objectives?
- **Behavioral expectations:** What are the behaviors that come alongside this desired culture? Have these behavioral expectations been established and communicated out? Are they written down and documented somewhere accessible?
- **Learning:** Have employees gone through the learning process about the desired culture and behavioral expectations? Do they understand the vision thoroughly? Is there a lack of awareness? Any misalignment?
- **Metrics:** How do you know you're making process towards the culture you are trying to create?
- **Champions:** Are there employees involved (both formally and informally) in actively championing the desired culture?
- **Communication:** How is the evolution to the desired culture being communicated? Is it being communicated consistency and clearly? Do employees understand their role in it?
- **Experiences:** What are the day-to-day (and more formal) experiences that re-iterate to employees "this is who we are and what we stand for"?
- **Recognition:** Are those who role model the desired culture the same employees who get rewarded and recognized? How are you reinforcing alignment to culture as well as taking action against misalignment?
- **People Practices:** Do current people practices and systems (e.g., performance reviews, succession planning, onboarding) support the desired culture?

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APPENDIX

Appendix A. Questions asked in the Caring Cultures survey (March 2020).

Predictor and outcome items:

Item Type	Category	Item
Predictor variables (culture sentiments)	Caring culture	In the current organization I work for, the organization cares about me.
	Intentional culture	In the current organization I work for, intentional effort is put into our organizational culture.
	Opinion about company's culture	In the current organization I work for, our culture is a competitive advantage that differentiates us from our competition
Outcome variables	Engagement	I feel personally engaged in my work.
	Recommend	I would recommend my organization to my friend as a great place to work.
	Recommend	On a scale of 0 (Not at all likely) to 10 (Extremely likely), how likely are you to recommend your organization as a great place to work?
	Stay	I intend to stay at my organization for at least...
	Committed	I am committed to my organization.
	Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs)	I go out of my way to do extra things at work that aren't necessarily required.
	Inclusion	I feel like I belong at my organization.
	Inclusion	I can be myself at work
	Inclusion	I feel included in this organization.
	Well-being	Overall, I have well-being in my life.
	Stress	Which of the following best describes the current level of stress in your life?*

*Custom scale: Relatively stress free [score 5], Some stress but it's manageable [score 4], Quite a bit of stress, but it's manageable [score 3], Quite a bit of stress; at times it's unmanageable [score 2], A great deal of stress; it is often unmanageable [score 1].

Descriptive items:

Category	Item
Effects on Company Attraction	An organization's culture influences my desire to work there.
	How do you gather information about an organization's culture before you work there?*
	Which of the following are the most important cultural attributes you look for in an organization that you want to work in? (Pick 5 from the list)*
Effects on Company Selection	If I had the choice between working at two organizations, organizational culture would be the reason why I would choose one over the other.
Effects on Retention	An organization's culture influences whether I keep working there.
Effects on Engagement	An organization's culture influences whether I want to put in as much effort as I can into my work.
Intentional culture	In the current organization I work for, there is focus on organizational culture.
Experience of culture	What are the biggest mistakes organizations make regarding their cultures?*
	How have you seen organizations demonstrate culture (positively or negatively)?*
	In the current organization I work for, I experience culture in my daily work.

Effects of caring cultures	I have worked for an organization that cared about me.
	When I worked for an organization that cared about me, I felt more committed to that organization than when I worked for organizations that didn't care about me.
	When I worked for an organization that cared about me, I had lower stress than when I worked for organizations that didn't care about me.
	When I worked for an organization that cared about me, I felt more included than when I worked for organizations that didn't care about me.
	When I worked for an organization that cared about me, I had higher well-being than when I worked for organizations that didn't care about me.
	When I worked for an organization that cared about me, I felt more engaged in my work than when I worked for organizations that didn't care about me.
	If your organization generally seems to care about you, what are the top 5 most important ways they are showing you that they care?*
	Which of the following are the most important cultural attributes that show the organization cares about you (pick 5 from the list)?*
	If an organization wanted to demonstrate to its employees that it cares about them, what are some of the things it should do?*

*Open-ended response or select 5 from a list.

Appendix B. Demographic breakdown of survey participants (percentage by group).

Attribute	Category	Percentage of Sample
Gender	Male	46%
	Female	53%
	Non-binary	1%
	Prefer not to say	0%
Age group	18-24	4%
	25-34	37%
	35-45	36%
	46+	23%
Degree attainment	High school diploma or equivalent (e.g. GED, etc.)	12%
	Other: Some college (without finishing)	1%
	Technical school degree or certification	7%
	College degree (2 year or 4 year)	57%
	Advanced degree (MS, MA, JD, MBA, PhD, MD, etc.)	22%
Current employment		
Tenure	Less than 6 months	2%
	6 months to less than 1 year	4%
	1 year or less than 2 years	11%
	2 years to less than 3 years	11%
	3 years to less than 5 years	20%
	5 years to less than 10 years	27%
	10 years or more	25%
Job Level	Individual-level contributor	53%
	Manager	36%
	Director	4%
	Executive	3%
	Other	3%
	Prefer not to say	1%

Industry	Banking	2%
	Biotechnology	1%
	Communications	2%
	Construction	3%
	Education	11%
	Electronics	1%
	Energy	1%
	Engineering	2%
	Finance	6%
	Government	8%
	Healthcare	11%
	Hospitality	4%
	Information Technology	11%
	Insurance	2%
	Law	2%
	Machinery	1%
	Manufacturing	8%
	Not For Profit	4%
	Other (please specify)	8%
	Retail	10%
	Shipping	1%
	Telecommunications	1%
	Transportation	2%
	Utilities	1%
Employment history		
Number of organizations employed	0-1	5%
	2-3	38%
	4-5	30%
	5+	27%
Number of jobs held	0-1	4%
	2-3	27%
	4-5	30%
	5+	39%

Appendix C. Distribution of responses across all items in the Caring Cultures survey (1=Strongly Disagree; 5=Strongly Agree).

Culture sentiment items:

Item	No			Yes	
In the current organization I work for, the organization cares about me. (1=Yes, 2=No)	24.53%			75.47%	
Item	1	2	3	4	5
In the current organization I work for, intentional effort is put into our organizational culture.	4.33%	15.96%	10.54%	45.85%	23.32%
In the current organization I work for, our culture is a competitive advantage that differentiates us from our competition.	6.71%	17.60%	20.85%	36.08%	18.76%

Employee Experience Outcome items:

Item	1	2	3	4	5
I feel personally engaged in my work.	1.30%	6.15%	7.16%	44.83%	40.56%
I would recommend my organization to my friend as a great place to work.	6.10%	8.65%	12.65%	37.43%	35.17%
I intend to stay at my organization for at least...	5.99%	8.57%	20.10%	16.93%	48.41%
I am committed to my organization.	3.10%	7.00%	10.25%	42.53%	37.11%
I go out of my way to do extra things at work that aren't necessarily required.	4.19%	10.69%	11.99%	44.98%	28.16%
I feel like I belong at my organization.	3.03%	9.31%	8.95%	42.74%	35.96%
I can be myself at work	2.17%	9.04%	8.90%	45.15%	34.73%
I feel included in this organization.	3.40%	8.68%	10.20%	43.02%	34.71%
Overall, I have well-being in my life.	0.72%	3.98%	6.95%	51.66%	36.69%
Which of the following best describes the current level of stress in your life?*	3.32%	12.48%	32.54%	42.78%	8.87%
Net Promoter Score Item	Scores 0-6			Scores 9,10	
On a scale of 0 (Not at all likely) to 10 (Extremely likely), how likely are you to recommend your organization as a great place to work? Coded (1=0-6; 2=9,10)	47.89%			52.11%	

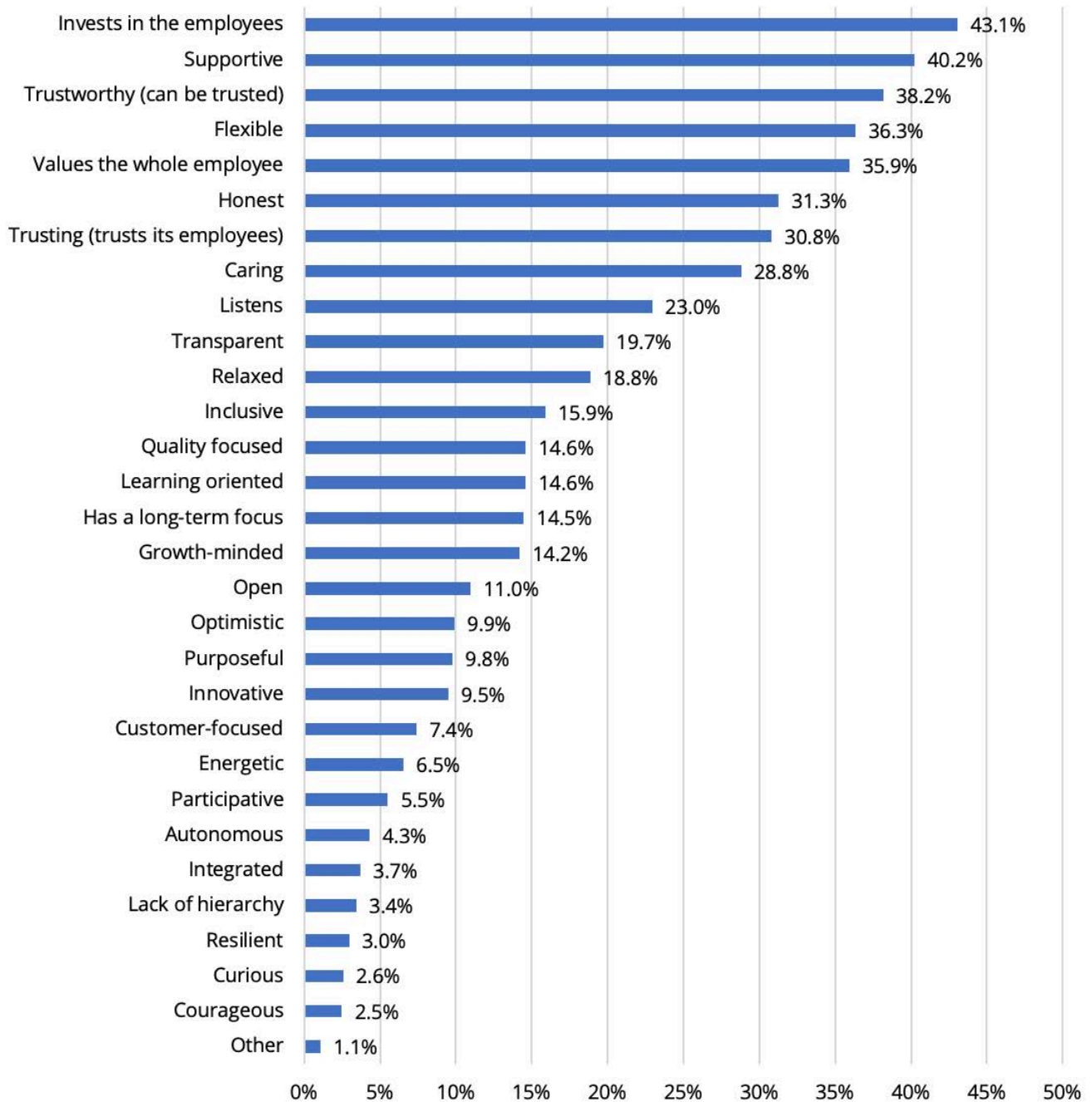
Descriptive items:

Item	1	2	3	4	5
An organization's culture influences my desire to work there.	0.79%	3.90%	5.56%	44.58%	45.16%
If I had the choice between working at two organizations, organizational culture would be the reason why I would choose one over the other.	1.66%	7.73%	19.49%	43.83%	27.29%
An organization's culture influences whether I keep working there.	1.16%	4.05%	8.47%	40.01%	46.31%
An organization's culture influences whether I want to put in as much effort as I can into my work.	2.10%	9.62%	8.47%	40.74%	39.07%
In the current organization I work for, there is focus on organizational culture.	3.76%	15.63%	11.79%	47.40%	21.42%
In the current organization I work for, I experience culture in my daily work.	2.82%	11.57%	13.02%	47.72%	24.87%
When I worked for an organization that cared about me, I felt more committed to that organization than when I worked for organizations that didn't care about me.	0.43%	1.39%	3.20%	27.61%	67.38%
When I worked for an organization that cared about me, I had lower stress than when I worked for organizations that didn't care about me.	0.57%	4.23%	10.59%	36.16%	48.45%
When I worked for an organization that cared about me, I had higher well-being than when I worked for organizations that didn't care about me.	0.57%	2.54%	7.61%	40.43%	48.85%
When I worked for an organization that cared about me, I felt more included than when I worked for organizations that didn't care about me.	0.65%	1.55%	3.91%	37.57%	56.32%
When I worked for an organization that cared about me, I felt more engaged in my work than when I worked for organizations that didn't care about me.	0.82%	2.29%	4.75%	38.95%	53.19%

Item	No	Yes
I have worked for an organization that cared about me.	11.04%	88.96%

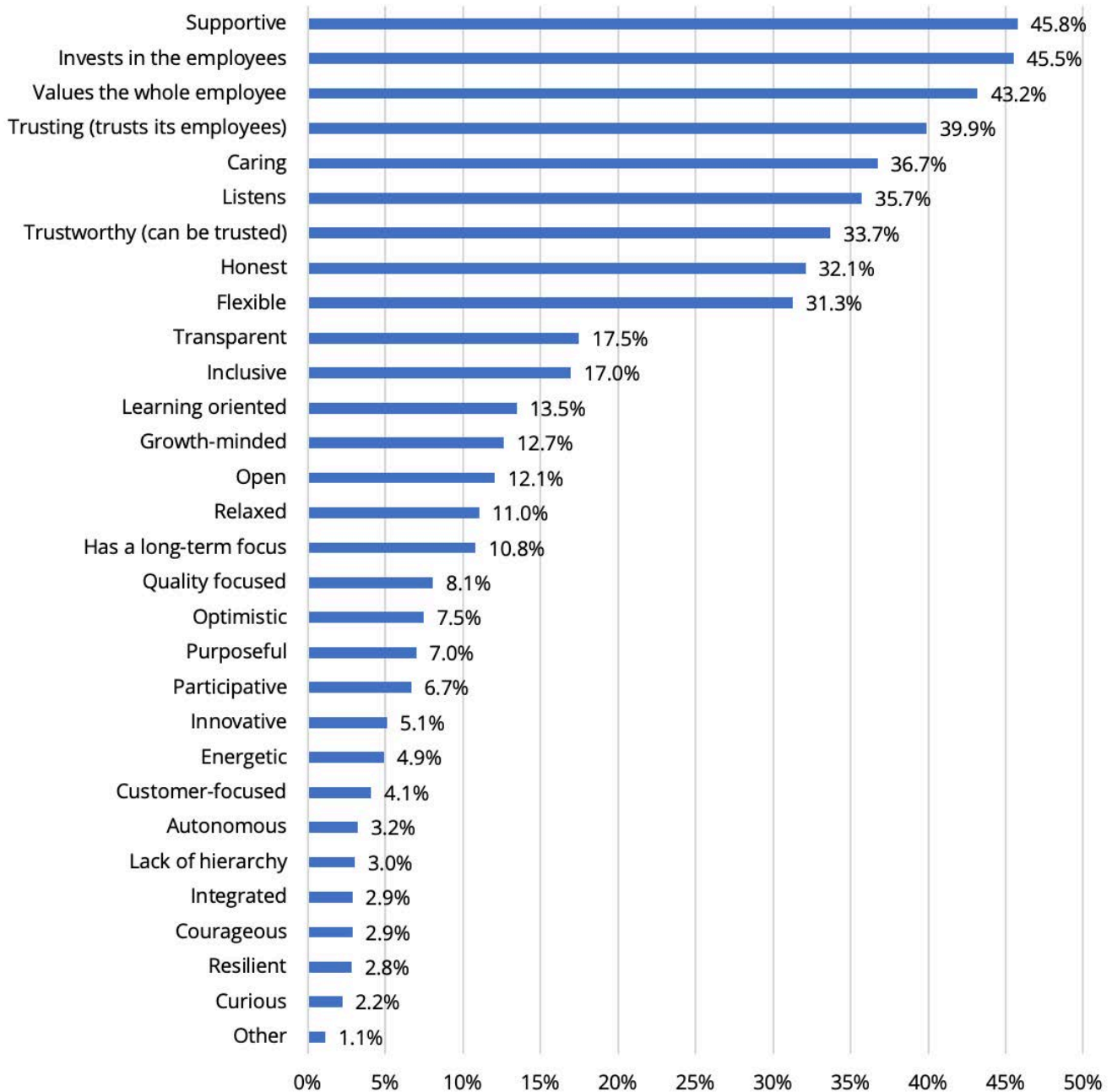
Appendix D. Key cultural attributes: percentage of participants who selected each of the following cultural attributes as the **five most important ones they look for in an organization they want to work in.**

Which of the following are the most important cultural attributes you look for in an organization that you want to work in? (Select five) N=1486 Responses



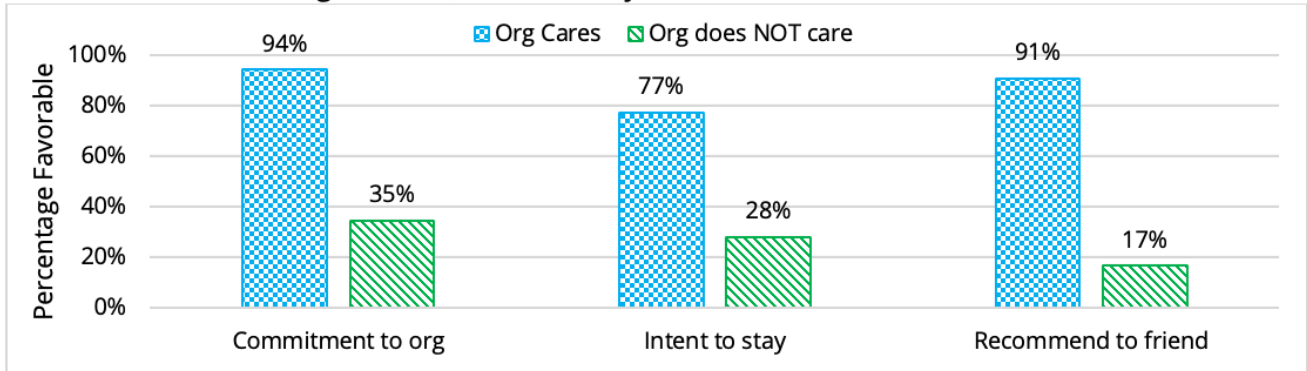
Appendix E. How organizations can show they care: percentage of participants who selected each of the following cultural attributes as the **five most important ones that show an organization cares about them.**

Which of the following are the most important cultural attributes that show the organization cares about you? (select five) N=1486 responses

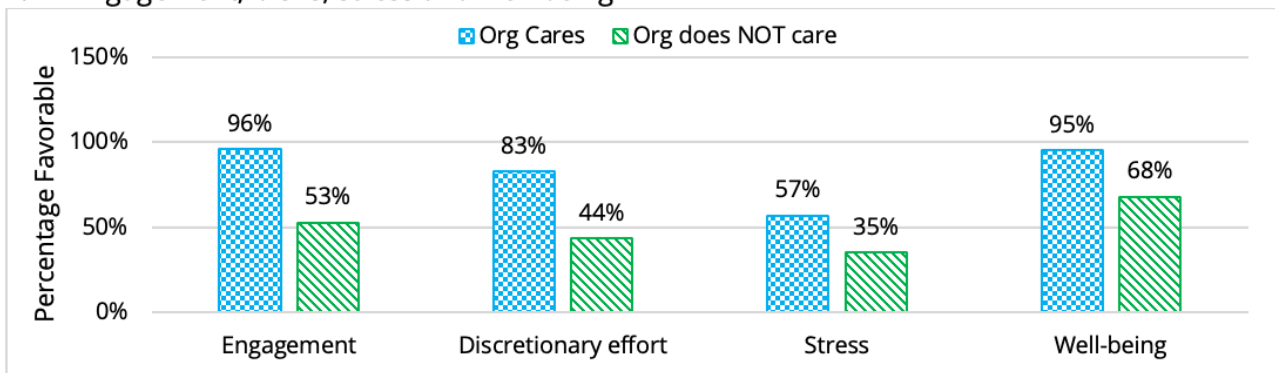


Appendix F. Effects of caring cultures: differences between participants who said their organization cares about them (blue checkered bars) vs. those who said their org does not care about them (green diagonal striped bars). F.1-3 show graphs of differences; F.4 shows a table of group comparisons. All comparisons between groups were statistically significant using Chi-square tests and t-tests ($p < .001$).

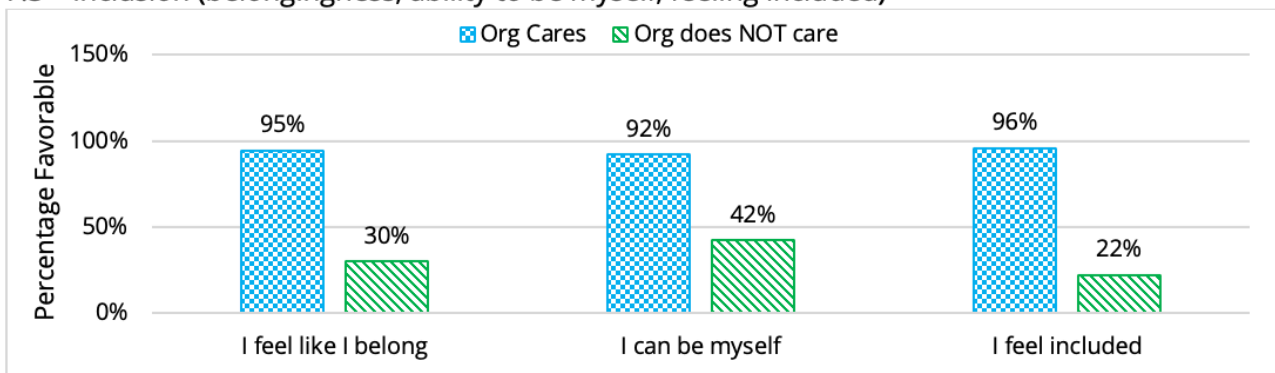
F.1 – Commitment to organization, intent to stay, and likelihood to recommend



F.2 – Engagement, OCBs, stress and well-being



F.3 – inclusion (belongingness, ability to be myself, feeling included)



F.4 – differences in employee experience outcomes between those working at companies with a caring culture vs those who do not.

Outcome	Caring culture* Mean score (standard dev, n) %Fav (Strongly Agree, Agree)	Non-caring culture* Mean score (standard dev, n) %Fav (Strongly Agree, Agree)	Significant Difference? t-value, p, Hedge's g** Chi Square tests on diff in %Fav
Commitment to org	Mean=4.41 (sd=.63, n=1046) %Fav: 94.26%	Mean=2.88 (sd=1.11, n=339) %Fav: 34.51%	t=24.1, p<.001, g=1.96 X ² = 560.01, p<.001
Intent to stay	Mean=4.29 (sd=.98, n=1025) %Fav: 77.27%	Mean=2.80 (sd=1.33, n=328) %Fav: 28.05%	t=18.7, p<.001, g=1.39 X ² = 263.63, p<.001
Net Promoter Score (0-10)*	Mean=8.13 (sd=1.66, n=1046) %Fav: 97.70%	Mean=3.32 (sd=2.58, n=340) %Fav: 23.3%	t=32.3, p<.001, g=2.50 X ² = 450.04, p<.001
Recommend to friend	Mean=4.35 (sd=.69, n=1037) %Fav: 90.83%	Mean=2.40 (sd=1.10, n=339) %Fav: 16.81%	t=30.7, p<.001, g=2.40 X ² = 700.08, p<.001
Engagement	Mean=4.45 (sd=.60, n=1045) %Fav: 95.98%	Mean=3.30 (sd=1.10, n=338) %Fav: 52.66%	t=18.4, p<.001, g=1.53 X ² = 380.77, p<.001
OCBs	Mean=4.09 (sd=.84, n=1045) %Fav: 82.78%	Mean=2.99 (sd=1.31, n=340) %Fav: 43.53%	t=14.6, p<.001, g=1.12 X ² = 199.14, p<.001
Stress (reverse scored)	Mean=3.55 (sd=.85, n=1046) %Fav: 56.98%	Mean=3.00 (sd=1.04, n=340) %Fav: 35.29%	t=8.8, p<.001, g=.60 X ² = 47.45, p<.001
Inclusion (average)	Mean=4.38 (sd=.53, n=1046) %Fav: 89.29%***	Mean=2.81 (sd=.90, n=340) %Fav: 14.71%	t=30.3, p<.001, g=2.43 X ² = 689.61, p<.001
Belonging item	Mean=4.39 (sd=.64, n=1045) %Fav: 94.54%	Mean=2.76(sd=1.09, n=340) %Fav: 30.00%	t=26.1, p<.001, g=2.10 X ² = 633.73, p<.001
Can be myself item	Mean=4.33 (sd=.69, n=1042) %Fav: 92.13%	Mean=3.02 (sd=1.13, n=340) %Fav: 42.35%	t=20.2, p<.001, g=1.59 X ² = 392.19, p<.001
Feel included item	Mean=4.40 (sd=.60, n=1043) %Fav: 95.78%	Mean=2.65 (sd=1.04, n=340) %Fav: 22.35%	t=29.5, p<.001, g=2.39 X ² = 794.41, p<.001
Well-being	Mean=4.38 (sd=.64, n=1042) %Fav: 95.01%	Mean=3.63 (sd=.93, n=340) %Fav: 67.94%	t=13.8, p<.001, g=1.04 X ² = 179.87, p<.001

*Favorable Net Promoter Scores included 9s and 10s.

**Hedge's g tells us if we should consider the mean differences negligible (<.2), small (.2-.5), moderate (.5-.8), or large (>.8).

***For the inclusion average score, percentage favorable included those with a score of >=4.0.

Appendix G. Effects of culture sentiments on employee experience outcomes: regression model output for each Employee Experience Outcome measure.

We assessed the predictive ability of three culture sentiment items on each Employee Experience Outcome, including demographic factors as control variables or moderators, where relevant (demographic variables were assessed for their relationship with each outcome separately). We checked for multicollinearity and noted that it was only present when moderators were included. Culture sentiment items were correlated at Pearson's $r = .55 - .59$ (Spearman's $\rho = .51 - .55$) and included:

- Culture 1: In the current organization I work for, the organization cares about me.
- Culture 2: In the current organization I work for, intentional effort is put into our organizational culture.
- Culture 3: In the current organization I work for, our culture is a competitive advantage that differentiates us from our competition.

Model (outcome ~ control variables + predictors + interaction terms)	R ²	F	Intercept	Control variables b, β	Predictors b, β
Engagement ~ job_level + n_jobs + culture1 + culture 2 + culture 3	.36	147.1***	2.44	Job_level: .11, .08*** N_jobs: .03, .03	Culture 1: .74, .35*** Culture 2: .14, .17*** Culture 3: .12, .16***
Recommend ~ job_level + n_jobs + culture1 + culture 2 + culture 3	.60	388.8***	1.49	Job_level: -.07, -.04* N_jobs: .0001, .0001	Culture 1: 1.36, .50*** Culture 2: .21, .20*** Culture 3: .20, .20***
Net Promoter Score ~ job_level + n_jobs + culture1 + culture 2 + culture 3	.61	415.5***	1.11	Job_level: -.18, -.04* N_jobs: .04, .01	Culture 1: 3.41, .52*** Culture 2: .44, .17*** Culture 3: .53, .22***
Intent to Stay ~ job_level + n_jobs + tenure_group + age_group + culture1 + culture 2 + culture 3	.37	106.5***	1.08	Job_level: -.02, -.01 N_jobs: -.09, -.07** Tenure group: .16, .21*** Age group: .19, .13***	Culture 1: 1.03, .35*** Culture 2: .15, .13*** Culture 3: .14, .13***
Committed ~ job_level + n_jobs + tenure_group + culture1 + culture 2 + culture 3	.48	203.4***	1.89	Job_level: .03, .02 N_jobs: -.009, -.008 Tenure: .05, .07***	Culture 1: 1.05, .44*** Culture 2: .14, .16*** Culture 3: .16, .19***
OCBs ~ job_level + gender + culture1 + culture 2 + culture 3 + gender*culture1	.25	74.4***	2.28	Job_level: .20, .11*** Gender: -.16, -.08	Culture 1: .55, .22** Culture 2: .10, .10** Culture 3: .20, .21*** Gender*Culture1: .03, .02
Inclusion – belonging ~ job_level + n_jobs + culture1 + culture 2 + culture 3	.50	265.3***	2.13	Job_level: .06, .04 N_jobs: -.04, -.03	Culture 1: 1.19, .49*** Culture 2: .14, .15*** Culture 3: .14, .16***
Inclusion – be myself ~ job_level + n_jobs + culture1 + culture 2 + culture 3	.35	144.1***	2.60	Job_level: .11, .07** N_jobs: -.06, -.06*	Culture 1: .95, .41*** Culture 2: .09, .10*** Culture 3: .11, .13***
Included in org ~ job_level + n_jobs + culture1 + culture 2 + culture 3	.56	332.3***	2.12	Job_level: .07, .04* N_jobs: -.04, -.04*	Culture 1: 1.38, .57*** Culture 2: .10, .11*** Culture 3: .13, .15***

Inclusion average ~ job_level + n_jobs + culture 1 + culture 2 + culture 3	.57	355.8***	2.29	Job_level: .08, .05** N_jobs: -.05, -.05**	Culture 1: 1.17, .54*** Culture 2: .11, .13*** Culture 3: .13, .16***
Well-being ~ job_level + n_jobs + tenure + culture1 + culture 2 + culture 3	.19	53.1***	3.08	Job_level: .01, .01 N_jobs: -.01, -.01 Tenure: .04, .09***	Culture 1: .51, .28*** Culture 2: .04, .06 Culture 3: .11, .16***
Stress ~ gender + age_group + culture1 + culture1*gender + culture1*age_group (removed culture 2 and 3 - not sig)	.09	27.9***	1.83	Age_group: .23, .20*** Gender: .37, .20***	Culture 1: 1.25, .58*** Gender*Culture1: -.19, -.16 Age_group*Culture1: -.15, -.23*

Appendix H. Culture conversation guide.

Leaders have a specific responsibility when it comes to culture—to define the future or “aspire to” culture of the organization. This needs to articulate the culture the organization MUST have in order for the organization to achieve its business strategy. Leaders tend not to be the best source for describing the current culture—front line employees’ descriptions are more accurate. Therefore, our recommendation is for a leadership discussion to focus on the “aspire to” culture. Here are some example questions (this can be more productive after there is a basic understanding of what culture currently is like at the company). Typically, this is part of a bigger study that includes employee feedback, but this guide represents a way to start a culture conversation with top leadership within organizations.

- **Step 1: Brainstorm.** Given our current business strategy, what are the behavioral norms, values, and beliefs that must be in place for us to be successful?
 - » (Let’s take each component of our business strategy and think that through...)
 - » Why is that so?
- **Step 2: Review of current values.** Now let’s compare that to our current values. Let’s talk through each value.
 - » How well is this value being demonstrated now (from our perspective)?
 - » Is this value still important for us to be emphasizing? Is it critical for us to achieve our business strategy?
 - » Which other aspects of the culture are helping the organization achieve its business results?
 - » Which other aspects of the culture are holding the organization back?
- **Step 3: Compare and discuss next steps.** How does our brainstorm in step 1 compare to our review of our current values in step 2?
 - » What did we learn?
 - » What’s missing?
 - » Where do we need to focus our efforts?
 - » How might we want to gather data from our employees to better understand our current culture?
 - » How might we need to update our current values?

Appendix I. Specific recommendations corresponding to the four most-cited attributes of a caring culture by survey participants (support, invest, value, and trust).

We identified themes within open-ended responses provided by survey participants to the question “If an organization wanted to demonstrate to its employees that it cares about them, what are some of the things it should do?” After identifying themes, we matched them to the four most-selected attributes of a caring culture – support, invest, value, and trust – to provide specific recommendations for companies to implement in order to demonstrate a caring culture. The matching of themes to attributes allowed us to infer what participants say they want regarding the biggest components of a caring culture.

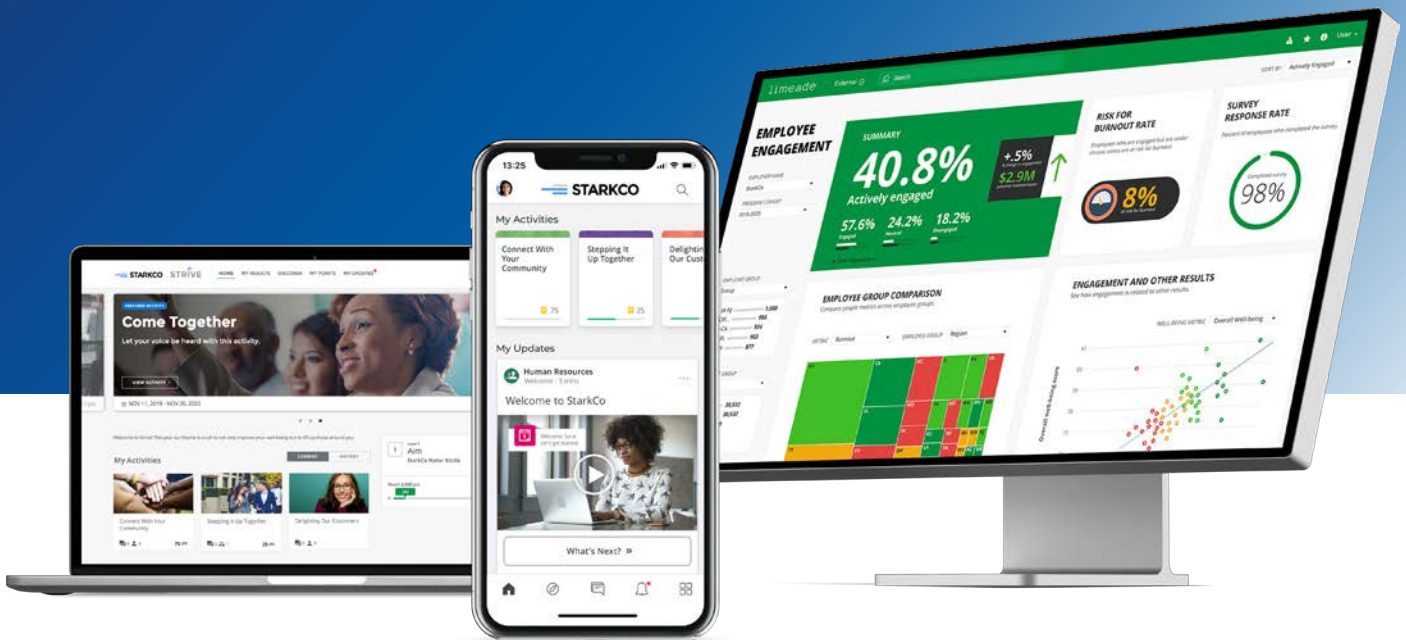
Support	Good communication from leaders with honesty and transparency; inclusive environment; recognition for their contributions; simple incentives (e.g., coffee, snacks); social events to support bonding and inclusivity.
Invest	Professional development and career advancement opportunities.
Value	Interpersonal relationships that feel genuine (e.g., when people ask about their weekend or kids, etc.); feeling heard and listened to.
Trust	Flexibility in work schedules and location (e.g., for new parents, etc.) if/when possible.



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