

WORKATHLON

GUIDE

Measuring your Hotel's culture - Why & How to do it

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INTRODUCTION

Whether you are running a seasonal hotel or not, you wish your employees are engaged, motivated, and excited and that they will stick around for a while. Well, usually there's one word you hear again and again: **culture**. And righteously so; the sentiment of your hotel and the people who come to work there every day has a huge impact on your happiness, and your overall success.

Creating a hotel culture doesn't happen overnight — and it certainly doesn't happen by accident. It's easier when your staff turnover rate is low and when the hotel is operating all year-round. Let's see how you can create a positive hotel culture and how and why to measure it.

WHY IS HOTEL CULTURE SO IMPORTANT?

One thing you should know is that every company has a culture. Regardless if you cultivate it or not, culture is what defines your company's value and vision. You ask any hotel whether or not they have a culture of "excellence" and "service-oriented attitude" and they'll claim they do. But the values and culture of your hotel can't be described in a list of generic words. High performing hotels can meaningfully describe the ideal culture and experience that they want for their employees to have.

You may not see the benefits of culture right away. A hotel that commits to improving its culture today might not realize the benefits until those customers decide whether to return to the same hotel for a vacation. Culture is much more than your performance in the moment; it's about committing to a better performance in the long haul and creating brand loyalty.



CULTURE INCREASES ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

There have been a lot of recent studies suggesting that a healthy company culture leads to better performance. In fact, happy employees are 12 percent more productive than the average worker. If culture empowers employees to perform better their jobs that leads to further innovation in a hotel. That could mean that an employee would take an initiative to better service a customer because, in a way, culture has led them to do so.

The challenge for most hotels is consistency. How do you keep a consistent and coherent culture when your staff turnover is high, and a newcomer might not adhere to this culture? In this Guide, we'll take you through some ways to create and measure your culture to finally make sure that there is an alignment between culture and behaviour.





HOW DO YOU MEASURE CULTURE?

When it comes to evaluating the culture of a company, some experts argue that something so intangible can't be measured. Can common vision, goals, missions and behaviors be measurable?

For a long time, measuring culture was something that was done once every six months using an engagement survey. This, however, hasn't proved efficient or effective. Culture measurement should be treated as an ongoing process. This means that in the same way you measure budget and sales planning every few months, this should be how you discuss people and culture data too.

At the same time, continuous surveying isn't the best solution either. According to Dr. Jason McPherson, "90% of companies using continuous surveys can't keep their response rates above 50% when the same people are being surveyed weekly or monthly." So what do we propose? Targeted, effective pulse surveys.

HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE SURVEY

There should be a clear purpose for each survey, what exactly you would like to measure with this survey (we recommend 7-10 questions). The purpose of a survey, usually evolves around the following 3:

- Track engagement levels & drivers of engagement
- Understand if action plans are working so you can make modifications quickly
- Demonstrate that employee feedback is important to the organization

What's important to know is that once you've sent that survey you need to take action. So, don't bite more than you can chew. In the next survey you send, you should have already taken action as a result of the previous survey in order to show that these surveys have meaning, result to action and therefore change towards the better. Otherwise you will be plagued with survey fatigue, where your employees will slowly lose interest in filling out the surveys.

So how do you start? We recommend using an annual engagement survey as a starting point. Use that in order to plan the other surveys that follow based on the results of the first one. It should not take more than 10 minutes to fill in, but it should be thorough and comprehensive in order to be able to drive results. That usually means the baseline engagement survey will be around 40 questions. The options of questions and the follow up surveys, which we recommend around 4 per year, some smaller (10 questions) and 2 deep dives (25-40 questions) are around the topics of company values, individual effectiveness, benefits, wellbeing, managers' effectiveness, team effectiveness and inclusion.

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SOME TIPS ON LAUNCHING SURVEYS

Tip #1: Make sure the CEO is on board

The surveys should be something embraced from the top and not just an HR action. Speak to the CEO/Hotel Manager early on and create the survey with their feedback and support.

Tip #2: Choose a company to support you with the surveys

Going manual with the surveys in 2019 is a no-go. Surveys need to be easy for the employees to navigate and complete and easy for the HR department to analyze. So choose your provider wisely.

Tip #3: Explain the purpose of the survey

Like any new initiative, employees might be reluctant in the beginning and simply not understand the reason for the surveys. So, make sure that you explain the value of the survey. Education and communication are keys to getting people on board.

Tip #4: Show it's a process

From the first survey to the second you will see a difference. People will participate more openly when they realize that they weren't reprimanded from the first one. If changes were made since the first one, employees will realize the commitment that is being made from the hotel to listen to its employees' feedback the same way it listens to its customers'.



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Tip #5: Share the results

Once you have a briefing from the results, share it with your employees and involve them in the action planning. Have a session with the managers and discuss the results and actions that can take you closer to your goal. This will help you encourage the team to participate and support the surveys.

Tip #6: Wondering what things to measure?

We've defined 10 company culture metrics that you should track:

- Communication
- Innovation
- Agility
- Wellness
- Environment
- Collaboration
- Support
- Performance
- Responsibility
- Mission & value alignment

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LAST WORDS OF ADVICE

Employee engagement doesn't come overnight. You really need to ask questions such as "What do I want to understand about my people? What is the culture I want to achieve? Do we have a clear vision and mission?" Companies do not start with the mission to just make money, it's usually an entrepreneur who sees a vision and an opportunity. They have passion for what they build and create a certain hotel for certain reasons. Take the example of Barry Sternlicht who founded Starwood Hotels in the 1990's, when no one could predict its future status as a premier worldwide hotel brand. Last year, Starwood was acquired by Marriott for \$13 billion, and its innovative culture was largely to be thanked.



Creating a hotel culture takes time. So, before diving into metrics and measurements, make sure you have a clear culture that employees and customers perceive. Define what your property values are and build a system around maintaining good communication. Your employees have a lot to tell you about what's working and what's not. Take pride in your employees and create an environment where they can thrive. What we can ensure you is that a great company culture will lower your staff turnover rate, will improve brand perception, will increase productivity and affect guest experience. These in turn will improve your bottom line and make it a more enjoyable place to work.

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ABOUT WORKATHLON

What we do

Workathlon is a Hospitality Platform which was created by industry experts and aims to facilitate talent acquisition, management and retention with the use of innovative AI technologies.

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