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# HOW DOES ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE SHAPE YOUR BRAND

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## How does organisational culture shape your brand

Brands are much more than a name or symbol of a product. Leadership and people-management specialist and author, Karen Gately, believes that in a highly competitive world with the pressure on many organisations to lift their game intensifying, leaders are wise to define brand more broadly as the reputation that underpins consumer confidence and inspires buying decisions.

So how does organisational culture fit into this definition? Gately defines culture as the way things are done within an organisation. However, she cautions against believing that organisational cultures exist in a vacuum. "It's entirely possible for an organisation to be confronted with behaviours from within their ranks, that are not reflective of culture. Once off, exceptions to the rule while problematic are not reason alone to ring the culture alarm bell."

Gately knows that there are many examples of organisations who have failed spectacularly in maintaining trust in their brand because of a profit-centric culture. "Findings of the banking royal commission provides endless examples of a lack of integrity and poor behaviour," she says.

"It's evident the issues exposed were far from isolated incidents of poor decision making or selfish actions on the part of random individuals. In many instances, these behaviours were instructed, encouraged and rewarded by the organisations they worked for."

As we've seen post-royal commission, distrust damages brands.

So how can leaders shape a culture that makes a positive influence on your brand? Gately lists three ways:

### **Set clear expectations around employee behaviours**

Creating a powerful brand through people starts with being clear about what is expected and needed. Leaders are wise to invest in ensuring every person on the team understands what successful behaviours look like. In other words, ensure a clear line of sight between how people go about their jobs and the influence that has on brand reputation.

### **Understand the touch points between your business and customers**

Build understanding of the touch points between your customers and business, and the opportunities people have to influence trust and loyalty. Create awareness of the ways in which behaviour influences not only what people think, but also their subconscious reactions to your brand in the future. Reflect on for yourself on when you have held an opinion about an organisations brand but have struggled to identify exactly why you feel the way you do. Sometimes people don't even bother to work out the answer. They simply move on to a brand they feel better about.

### **Get your hiring process right**

Creating a great culture is unquestionably influenced by the quality of hiring practices. Getting it right from the start requires a disciplined and uncompromising approach to selecting people who are aligned with the organisation's values. From there what matters most is that people are held accountable for the standard of behaviour they bring, and influence they have on your organisations brand. Reward and recognise brand ambassadors and take decisive steps to address the attitudes and behaviours of those who are not.

*Karen Gately, founder of Corporate Dojo, is a leadership and people-management specialist. Karen works with leaders and HR teams to drive business results through the talent and energy of people. She is the author of The People Manager's Toolkit: A Practical Guide to Getting the Best From People (Wiley) and The Corporate Dojo: Driving Extraordinary Results Through Spirited People.*