

# The SESCO Report

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Your "Human" Resource Since 1945

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## Does Your Management Team Affect Your Organizational Culture?

A good, positive organizational culture is critical to an organization's success. From recruitment and retention of employees, good morale and productivity and support for organizational growth are the results of a good organizational culture. Organizational culture is shaped by many factors, leadership chief among them. The values, vision and goals of your organization come from the top down. Management's actions can encourage a quality culture that keeps employees happy, attracts new talent and builds a quality job environment. On the other hand, managers may negatively affect the culture and move it away from its intended form.

### What Makes a Good Organizational Culture

A good organizational culture does not spontaneously occur. You build it in large and small ways throughout many areas of the organization. For example, your hiring process needs to go beyond looking at applicants to meet the base job requirements. New hires should share similar values to your business to fit in immediately.

Your organization's vision should be more than just a pithy statement on your "about" page. It should be the driving force behind your company, guiding all critical decisions.

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**The most important question you can ask yourself is do you provide sufficient resources to empower and develop your staff and managers?** Your managers and employees need the right tools to handle their job duties to work toward the long-term goals of the organization. These resources may include new technology, a specific type of work space or foundational skills training. Employees should be fulfilled by their positions. If they don't understand their place in your organization or feel that their input is not valued, they will not maintain the company's culture. Managers also need to watch closely for signs of disengagement and proactively address problems before they negatively impact the team.

### How Managers Reinforce Your Company's Culture

**Managers directly influence corporate culture through leadership, communication and delegation.** They can strengthen your business culture by ensuring that their actions and words adhere to the values and vision of the organization. Managers need to set a good example for their team to encourage adoption of the culture. Clear and transparent communication promotes frequent feedback, sharing and collaboration with staff. Managers have an easier time in conveying cultural values when they have the communication channels readily available.

Your managers' leadership style should be shaped by the culture. If your company emphasizes a positive work-life balance and working together, then managers should show that through their actions. The team needs a positive role model to look up to and emulate. In this environment, managers should collaborate with



other teams as a way of bringing these values into their leadership skills. Delegation also plays a role in cultural reinforcement. Your managers empower team members with responsibilities capable of showing them a big picture of their work. They have ownership of this duty and understand how it fits into the company's plan. Their job isn't disconnected from the vision. In fact, it's an integral part of it. Effective delegation gives your managers more time to emphasize the organization's values and builds trust within the team.

### The Importance Proper Training Has on Culture

Proper communication techniques are the most important tools to influence organizational culture in a positive fashion. Managers must take steps to increase their team's comfort level. If employees don't feel confident talking to leadership, opportunities to reinforce culture gets lost. Your company's values get lost due to mixed messaging as upper management says one thing, but frontline managers say another. This confusion makes it difficult for employees to remain engaged, so their communication skills are one of the best tools a manager can have.

However, effective communication skills don't spontaneously appear. Managers require proper training to know how to handle employee communication, the right practices to put into place and listening strategies. Organizations who want

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## MANAGEMENT TEAM

to establish and maintain a very positive culture, which results in a satisfied workplace thus creating high morale and subsequent efficiency and productivity, must invest in training and developing managers. Companies also need to give managers the resources and support they need to achieve the desired culture. SESCO strongly suggests that in 2017 a priority should be on developing and training managers to support the organization's culture. **The benefits of training greatly outweighs the expenses related to a negative company culture resulting in high turnover, low morale and subse-**

### quent poor productivity and quality.

Clients are encouraged to explore SESCO's leadership programs to include:

- Vital Learning Leadership Series
  - Essential Skills of Leadership
  - Essential Skills of Communicating
  - Coaching Job Skills
  - Communicating Up
  - Managing Complaints
  - Delegating
  - Developing Performance Goals and Standards
  - Effective Discipline
  - Improving Work Habits

- Providing Performance Feedback
- Resolving Conflicts
- Supporting Change

- John Maxwell Training - SESCO is now a certified John Maxwell presenter.
- One-on-One Coaching and Individual Development
- Team Development and Building

Our resources are vast, our trainers are professional and certified, and your return on this investment will be immediately noticeable.

## 10 Steps to Effective Organizational Growth

While most executives and senior management teams look at organizational growth as the big decisions such as strategic planning, it really happens in the small day-to-day decisions, especially from frontline managers. Therefore, in order to be committed to organizational growth, the small day-to-day stuff needs to be analyzed, taken into consideration and developed to create a growth-oriented atmosphere.

In his books **"Developing the Leaders Around You," John Maxwell gives us 10 questions to ask concerning organizational growth:**

1. Has the organization made a specific commitment to grow and develop leaders?
2. Is the organization willing to spend money to develop leaders' growth?
3. Is the organization willing to make changes to allow individual growth?
4. Does the organization support leaders willing to make the difficult decisions necessary for personal growth and the growth of the organization?
5. Does the organization place an emphasis on production rather than position or title?
6. Does the organization provide growth opportunity for its leaders?

7. Do organizational leaders have a common vision and share it with their employees?
8. Does the organization think big?
9. Does the organization promote from within?
10. Are there other leaders within your organization willing to pay the price of personal sacrifice to ensure their growth and the growth of others?

If you are truly interested in growing your organization, you need to explore each one of these questions and subsequently develop a plan specifically to

develop your leadership team. In turn, your leaders will then be able to develop and mentor their employees which will undergird your strategic plan and grow the organization. Without developing effective leaders, strategic planning falls on deaf ears and you

simply will not have the internal skills and resources to grow your organization. This is why most strategic planning falls to the wayside about one month after the planning session. Then a year later, the plan is dusted off, updated and again placed on the shelf.

Developing and growing a company means much more than just having a plan and implementing it. It means having a team that is willing to grow given the opportunity to grow with it. How much you grow your company is determined by how willing you are to do what it takes to make growth happen -- developing effective leaders.

### Special Thanks to New SESCO Clients!

The Wood Mortuary, Inc. - Greer, SC  
Scott County Redevelopment & Housing - Duffield, VA

Friendship Enterprises - Bristol, TN  
Cha Technologies, Inc. - Johnson City, TN

Nardolillo Funeral Home - Cranston, RI  
Wagner Family Funerals - Cassopolis, MI

Nicewonder Group - Bristol, VA

The Island Funeral Home and Crematory - Hilton Head Island, SC

The Tire Warehouse - Clifton Park, NY

Family Crisis Support Services, Inc. & The Advocate Center - Norton, VA

Town of Pennington Gap - Pennington Gap, VA

Grimshaw & Associates, LLC - Macon, MO

## New EEOC Guidance Requires a Fresh Look at Your Non-Retaliation Policy

**All companies should review and update their employment and disciplinary policies now** that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has updated its guidance regarding retaliation against an employee's anti-discrimination activities.

The federal government prohibits discrimination based on race, national origin, color, sex, religion, disability, genetic information, including family medical history or age (40 or older). The EEOC is the agency charged with enforcing the workplace anti-discrimination laws, such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Equal Pay Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

**Retaliation against an employee is the most frequently alleged basis of discrimination that the EEOC deals with and is found in about half (50%) of all discrimination charges in recent years.**

What's new in the guidance: The guidance issued in recent months updates the EEOC's guidance from 1998 and is effective immediately. **It clarifies that employers cannot take a "material adverse action" against an employee who engages in "protected activity," which includes:**

- Communicating with a supervisor regarding employment discrimination.
- Resisting sexual advances or intervening to protect others.
- Requesting reasonable accommodations for disability or religion.
- Complaining to management about an EEOC-related compensation dispute.
- Talking to coworkers to gather information in support of an EEOC claim.
- Participating in the EEOC process, say by filing a claim or serving as a witness for someone who has filed a claim.

A material adverse action includes demotion, discipline or termination of employment and actions such as threatening to reassign an employee, workplace sur-

veillance and making disparaging remarks about the employee or a family member of the employee in the media.

### SESCO Tips to Prevent Retaliation Claims

In light of the increased emphasis against discrimination in general in the workplace as well as the issuance of the new guidance, employers should expect more awareness of the issue and that missteps on an employer's part will trigger retaliation claims.

SESCO's advice to employers to minimize the likelihood of retaliation violations include:

- **Maintain a written, plain-language anti-retaliation policy** and provide practical guidance on the employer's expectations with user-friendly examples of what to do and not to do.

The policies and procedures should have a reporting mechanism for employee concerns about retaliation including access to a process for information resolution and a clear explanation that supervisors who retaliate against employees can be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

- **Train all managers, supervisors and employees on the written anti-retaliation policy**, and send a message from top management that retaliation will not be tolerated.

Offer explicit instruction on alternative, proactive, EEOC-compliant ways these situations should be handled.

In particular, managers and supervisors may benefit from scenarios and advice for ensuring that discipline and performance evaluations of employees are motivated by legitimate, non-retaliatory reasons.

- **Offer guidance to managers and supervisors alleged to have engaged in discrimination** about how to handle personal feelings about the allegations when carrying out management duties or interacting in the workplace.

Emphasize that those accused of EEOC violations, and in particular managers and supervisors, should not act on feelings of revenge or retribution, but also acknowledge that those emotions may occur.

- **Check in with employees, managers and witnesses** during a pending EEOC matter to inquire whether concerns regarding potential or perceived retaliation exist. That may help the employer spot issues before they fester and reassure employees and witnesses of the employer's commitment to protect them from retaliation.
- **Identify and implement process changes when retaliation is discovered.** Review available data or other resources to determine whether particular organizational components have compliance deficiencies. Then, identify causes and implement responsive training, oversight or other changes to address the identified weaknesses.

SESCO specializes in developing compliant policy, training managers and employees and investigating complaints of discrimination, harassment and retaliation on behalf of employers and in responding to EEOC charges.

### SESCO Client Feedback

*"Feedback from our employees is a vital part of making improvements. Joel is great to work with. Adam is very knowledgeable and accessible when a need arises. SESCO provides excellent service."* ~ Robert Buckles, Vice President of Human Resources - Tri-City Extrusion

*"By getting the DiSC profiles completed we were able to see how applicants would fit within our organization."* ~ Comfort Systems USA

*"SESCO helps keep our members up to date on employment issues. Jamie is always a pleasure to work with. She is timely and material and information presented is always well prepared. SESCO is knowledgeable, prepared and professional."* ~ Debra Blom, Director of Member Services - Virginia Association of Home Care & Hospice



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### Featured Product of the Month

#### SESCO's HR Compliance Guide

The purpose of the Human Resources Management Guide is to provide organizations with a complete guide for a myriad of government regulations and HR restrictions that apply to businesses.

This manual contains many of the SESCO systems which have proven to ensure its clients' compliance with federal and state employment regulations.

Manual includes:

- Sample Policies
- Explanations
- SESCO Staff Recommendations

**Retainer Clients: \$99.00**

**Non-Retainer Clients: \$129.00**

### SESCO's Spring Seminar Series 2017

**Bristol, VA**

Courtyard by Marriott

**March 8-9, 2017**

**Effective Leader/Manager**

**April 5-6, 2017**

**Human Resources -  
Understanding the Basics**

**May 10-11, 2017**

**Human Resources for the Advanced  
Professional**

**Richmond, VA**

Virginia Community Healthcare Association

**March 21-22, 2017**

**Effective Leader/Manager**

**April 18-19, 2017**

**Human Resources -  
Understanding the Basics**

**May 23-24, 2017**

**Human Resources for the Advanced  
Professional**

(SESCO has partnered with one of our valued clients, Virginia Community Healthcare Association, to host our Richmond Seminar Series.)

Visit our website at [www.sescomgt.com](http://www.sescomgt.com)

State and National Business and Trade Associations, Chambers of Commerce and Human Resource Associations are welcome to contact SESCO to book a professional speaker for annual conventions and seminars. Contact Bill Ford at 423-764-4127 or by email [bill@sescomgt.com](mailto:bill@sescomgt.com).

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