

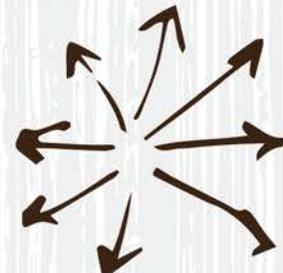
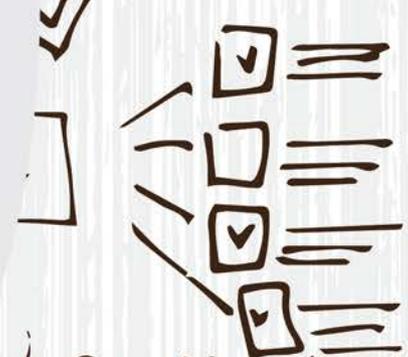
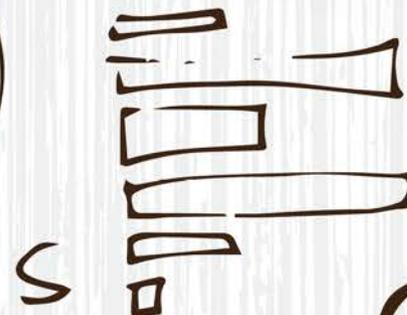


**WHY CULTURE EATS  
STRATEGY FOR**

*Breakfast*

AS GOOD AS YOUR COMPANY'S STRATEGY MAY BE, IT IS YOUR CULTURE THAT EXECUTES UPON THAT STRATEGY AND CREATES A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE.

BY MIKE JACOUTOT



MEDIA  
MANAGEMENT  
TEAM 1+1=2



PLAN

IDEA



DEAL

!??

MONEY

MANAGEMENT

TEAM

Too often, companies have a strategic plan but do not have a culture plan. Any company without a culture plan to “operationalize” their strategy is putting success at risk.

You see, as good as your strategy may be, it is your culture that executes upon that strategy and creates a competitive advantage. These days, there is no such thing as a sustainable competitive advantage in terms of a strategy or product. Competition can copy your strategy and your products, but no one can copy your culture. Just ask those who compete with Southwest Airlines or Zappos. Your culture is your brand. Building a great culture doesn't come from the HR department. It comes from how the leaders live inside the business.

While I have never been a musician, I am told all music is made from the same 12 notes. All cultures are made

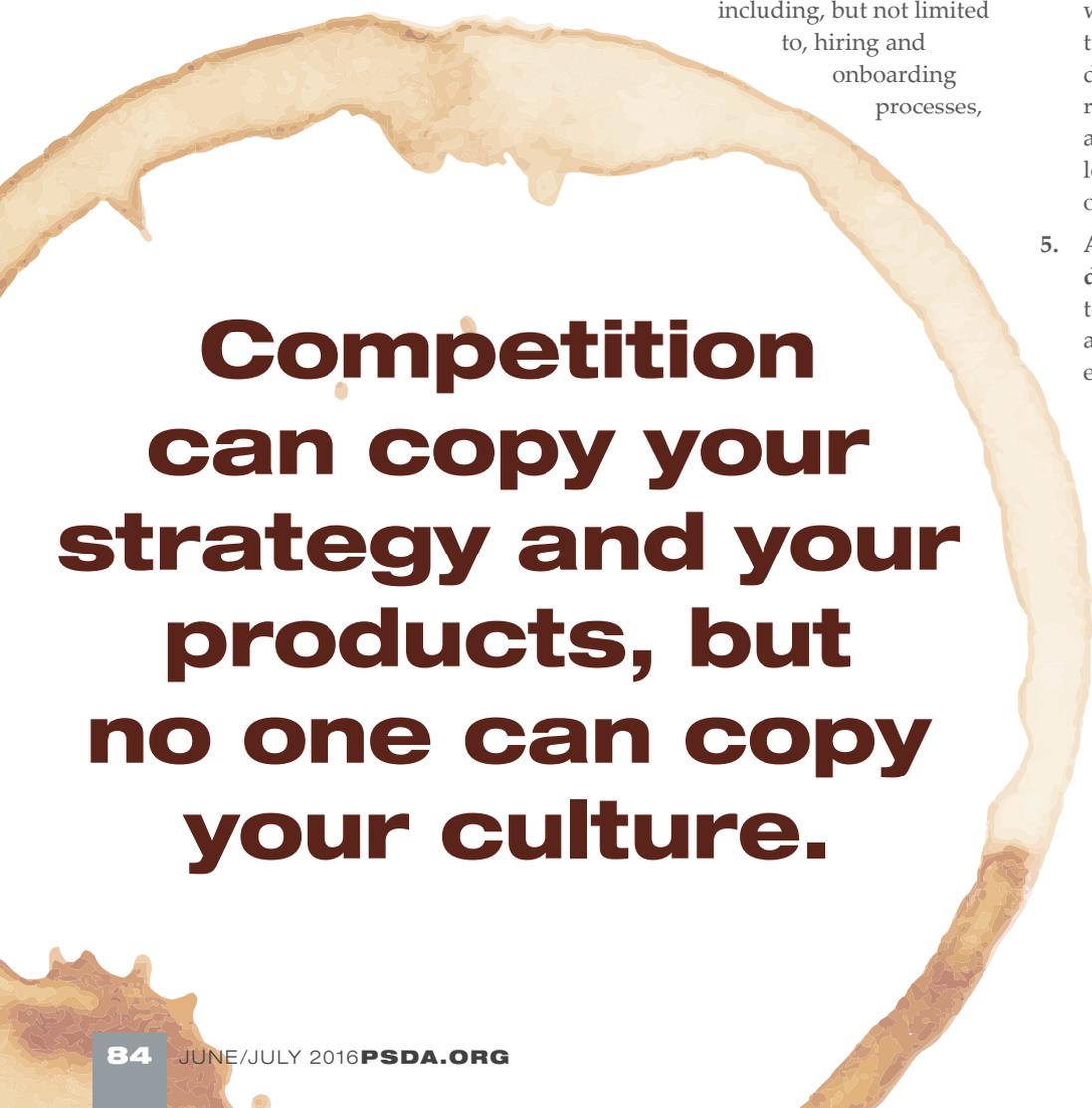
from the same six components: attitude, beliefs, values, behaviors, relationships and environment. When strategy and culture collide, culture will always win. The strategy becomes “shelfware.” The culture lives on.

Here are six tips to align culture with strategy:

1. **Complete a voice-of-the-employee survey.** On an annual basis, you should be measuring employee engagement. The survey should effectively measure engagement in areas of the basics (what do I get?), backing (do I have support?), belonging (do I belong?) and becoming (are there opportunities for me to learn and develop?).
2. **Complete a deep review of your culture.** Engage an unbiased outside firm to do a cultural assessment. Looking at everything including, but not limited to, hiring and onboarding processes,

employee engagement, turnover, communication, recognition, rewards and cultural readiness. If acted upon, this may be the best money ever spent.

3. **Create and communicate meaning.** A financial goal alone simply will not cut it in 2016. Companies that tie their vision to meaning for their employees are more successful. One of the greatest visions of all time was JFK's “We choose to go to the moon! We will put a man on the moon by the end of this decade!” When a NASA janitor was once asked what his job was, he replied by saying, “I am helping to put a man on the moon.” Meaning is a powerful thing.
4. **Develop the proper learning progressions to ensure capability.** As your company begins to transform itself to align with the strategy, ensure your training elicits and reinforces the desired skill. The ability to change requires an ability to learn. Create an environment of continuous learning and become a learning organization.
5. **Align recognition and rewards to drive behavior.** If you are trying to improve customer retention and loyalty, then reward your employees for doing so. If you are trying to improve shared services performance, then develop a shared services scorecard and reward for improvement.
6. **Communicate and recognize performance often.** Quarterly town halls, monthly conference calls, newsletters, CEO updates sharing where the company is from a financial perspective and recognizing performance are keys to success. As the late Sy Syms, a New York clothier used to say, “An educated consumer is our best customer.” The same principle applies here. An educated employee is the



**Competition  
can copy your  
strategy and your  
products, but  
no one can copy  
your culture.**

## All cultures are made from the same six components: attitude, beliefs, values, behaviors, relationships and environment. When strategy and culture collide, culture will always win.

best employee. Let them see how the company is performing from a revenue and profit perspective on a weekly or monthly basis. Recognize top performance. Remember: Recognized behavior gets repeated. Unrecognized behavior goes away.

Unfortunately, most business leaders don't take the time to learn exactly what makes up an organization's

culture, and even fewer know how important it is to the bottom line. Trust me; your culture has an unbelievable impact on the bottom line.

Just consider this: Every interaction your employees have with a customer is a moment of truth in which the customer may form an opinion of your company and, thus, your brand.

Does your company have a culture plan? ■

---

**Mike Jacoutot** is the founder and managing partner of Butler Street, a team of process-driven, knowledge-sharing executives who help companies achieve lasting results in the two most challenging areas: client and talent development. He can be contacted via [butlerstreetllc.com](http://butlerstreetllc.com).

---

## Got a Folder Headache?

*Take two aspirin...and call us!*

- Experienced Staff
- Competitive Prices
- Promises Kept

 **Admore**<sup>®</sup>  
Presentation Folders and More!



800.523.6673 | [admorefolders.com](http://admorefolders.com)