



# Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board

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August 12, 2015

TO: Senior Management Team  
FROM: Rick Garza, Director  
SUBJECT: Liquor and Cannabis Board Culture Update

Culture can be defined as “What we value.” Leading by values shapes the organizational culture, defines who you are, and creates the results you experience. It determines what is accomplished, who gets hired and promoted, and how decisions are made. It conditions what gets communicated, how it is communicated, what is important, how people dress, and how employees feel about the agency.

People actively seek to be on each other’s team and work in the spirit of partnership. They see the big picture and celebrate even minor successes in moving closer to what they want to create. People are released and empowered to effectively use their talents while moving us closer to realization of our overall mission and vision. It reflects what you say “yes” to and what you say “no” to. Actions always speak louder than words. As a management team we need to demonstrate a strong commitment to developing and nurturing a strong culture. Culture has a huge impact on productivity, morale and customer service.

Our strategic plan outlines the goal “Recruit, develop, retain and value a highly competent workforce.” Through this goal, we have made a commitment to help our employees succeed. This means that we as leaders demonstrate balance between the bottom line and the human element.

The following is a list of expectations I have outlined in defining our agency culture. It will be important that we put into action what is defined below. We are the role model in defining what our culture is.

## **Instill Alignment with Each Decision**

Each decision provides a choice point in which we can align values with actions by addressing two critical questions:

1. Is what I am doing right now bringing us closer to where we want to be?
  2. Is what I am doing right now honoring the spirit of the values we say are important?
- Require decision making that is timely and based on best data available.
  - Encourage creativity and thinking outside the box.

## **Recruitment and Retention**

- Hiring is one of the most important decisions we make. Hire winners!
- Ensure alignment between the individual and organizational mission, vision and values.
- Value diversity. Build your recruitment pools to reflect candidates from different backgrounds for leadership positions as well as key front line roles.
- Help all employees see the “big picture.” Employees must understand how they fit into the agency mission, and how they impact our customers and each other.

## **Succession Planning**

- Capitalize on our areas of core competencies.
- Build employee capacity and expertise and mentor for promotions and leadership.

### **Empowerment**

- Create an empowered environment that ensures employees are competent to perform.
- Provide employees the opportunity to give input on changes made within your division.
- Use tools such as employee and customer surveys as feedback for opportunities to improve.
- Help each other succeed and work together.

### **Improve Work Processes and Eliminate Waste**

- Promote and lead the expectation for efficient business practices and the innovative use of technology.
- Use Lean to make value-added activities a focal point of your operations.
- Identify and train process improvement champions within your division.
- Involve all employees in process improvement activities, both within your division and agency-wide.
- Monitor and track progress of process improvement projects to completion. Report results of cost and time savings.
- Manage change that results from process improvement ideas that may impact employee roles and responsibilities.

### **Communication**

- Communicate, communicate, and communicate.
- Honor and respect the institutional knowledge of long term employees.
- Encourage and facilitate group problem solving among employees.
- Promote an environment where people feel comfortable to speak up.
- Face-to-face communication is preferable to email. Keep it simple, clear and direct.

### **Be Accountable and Instill Accountability in Each Other**

- Be a wise steward of state resources.
- Do what it takes to stay within division budgets. Have a recovery plan if we are over budget.
- Take advantage of best business practices and efficiencies wherever possible.
- Incorporate Results Washington into your normal business activities. Achieve results that are measurable and driven toward outcomes that make a difference.

- Be tough on issues but tender on people. All employees are accountable and must instill accountability in each other.
- Provide balanced, ongoing and timely feedback to employees about their performance and expectations. There should be no surprises on performance and development plans (PDPs).

**Pay Attention to Risk Management. Your job is filled with Risk!**

- Routinely conduct informal risk assessments to provide contingencies, and anticipate and head off problems.
- Plan ahead and think through issues in advance.
- Ensure policies and procedures are being followed within your division.
- Remember the importance of training staff daily for high risk low frequency tasks.
- Instill a process for checks and balances to help uncover “blind spots.” The management team needs to know the impacts of a particular division and its impact on the entire agency.

**Create the “WOW” Factor! Provide excellent Customer Service!**

- We must be good at what we do so that people insist upon our existence.
- Integrate into our culture the expectation of providing excellent customer service.
- Look for opportunities each time we interact with our customer for the customer to say “WOW” when they finish the contact.
- Listen to the “Voice of the Customer.” Feedback is a must and we should view it as an opportunity to listen to our customers. We should make it easy for our customers to provide feedback to us.
- Instill with our employees the importance of getting things done right the first time. Communicate customer service commitment to our employees.

Thank you for all that you do every day to serve the citizens of the state of Washington.

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