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2-2016

# What does your workplace say about your company culture?

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### Citation

GOH, Clarence. What does your workplace say about your company culture?. (2016). Research Collection School Of Accountancy.  
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# What does your workplace say about your company culture?

15 February 2016 / By [Clarence Goh](#) / [Asia Pacific](#)



Disengagement in the workplace can create toxic environments – research has linked such disengagement with decreased client interactions and reduced collaborative performance, increased absenteeism, and a rise in workplace harassment. A recent *State of the American Workplace* study conducted by Gallup estimated that active disengagement in the workplace costs the United States between US\$450 billion and US\$550 billion annually.<sup>[1]</sup>

Maintaining a disengaged workplace inflicts a monetary cost on firms and putting in the effort to develop an engaged workforce can make financial sense – the same Gallup study found that organisations with high employee engagement rates (average of 9.3 engaged employees for every disengaged employee) achieved 147% higher earnings per share than a separate sample of industry peers who, on average, had lower engagement rates.

## **Culture is the key to increasing engagement**

In commenting on the importance of culture to a firm, Wehuns Tan – CEO of the fast-growing advertising technology firm Wishabi – was quoted as saying that “culture is infectious – it’s viral and it’s central to accelerating your business.”<sup>[2]</sup>

Certainly, company culture can significantly affect real business outputs. According to one estimate, companies that actively develop their culture return 516% higher revenues and 755% higher incomes than competitors who don’t.<sup>[3]</sup> Genuine expression of a strong and vibrant company culture can also serve to attract new talent – in another workplace study, the combination of organisational culture and workplace facilities was found to be more influential than salary and benefits in guiding a job candidate’s choice of employer.<sup>[4]</sup>

**‘Workplace expression’ is a crucial tool in allowing cultural values to generate employee engagement**

While many business leaders are growing to appreciate the importance of good workplace design, they should strive to develop a more holistic view of workplace strategy. A comprehensive workplace strategy is not limited to simply creating an efficient workplace; it should also aim to allow a firm’s cultural values to inform, direct, and generate employee engagement.

Firms with good workplace strategies create environments where employees:

- **Feel good when they come to work.** Employees have an expectation that firms will cover all the hygiene factors related to workplace design; firms should ensure that employees' health, safety, and well-being are taken care of.
- **Feel involved, and part of something larger.** Employees need to feel that what they do is meaningful. Good workplace design can give employees control over the way they work, making them feel they are trusted and given flexibility to complete tasks in their own way.

People interpret a strong culture from their workplaces. The office environment is the ideal tool for leaders to communicate their firms' brand proposition and to reignite their employees' motivation. The workplace is where executive strategy should become 'real'—where the vision and mission of an organisation should manifest, and drive performance.