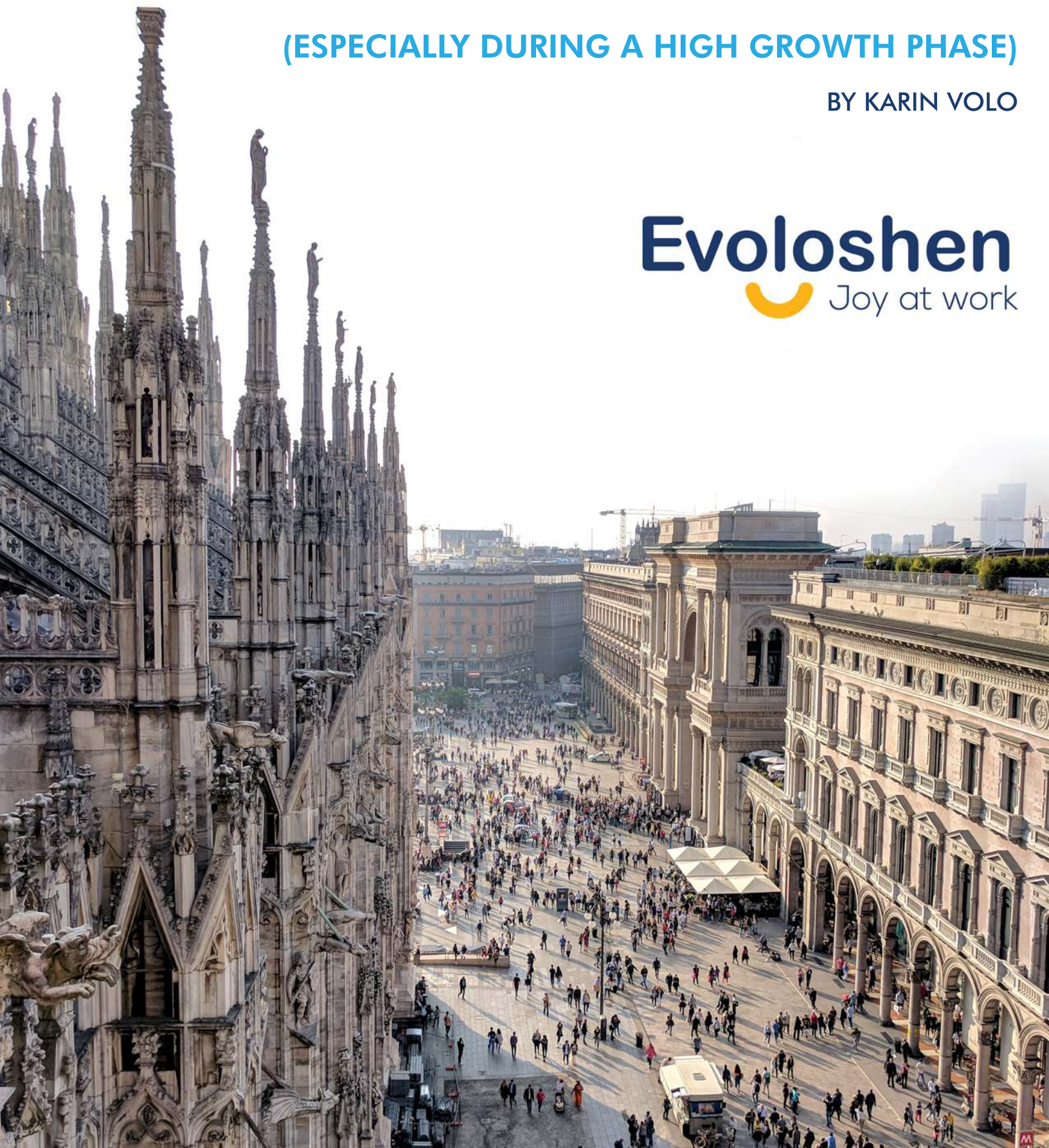


# THE 10 BIGGEST MISTAKES WHEN WORKING WITH CULTURE

(ESPECIALLY DURING A HIGH GROWTH PHASE)

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# 10 Biggest CULTURE Mistakes

The culture of a company is top of mind for most CEOs and management teams. It is often thought of as hard to get a grasp of, something intangible, making it harder to work with for leaders. The following report was compiled from experience working with leaders and companies all over the world and seeing what they are doing well....and what they aren't doing well regarding culture and engagement.

The following briefly outlines the 10 biggest mistakes regarding culture and a few insights as to why these are all important....



## #1 Not Having a Bigger Purpose



The bigger purpose is the WHY you do what you do. In today's market, both customers and employees want to see the good that you do as a company. It is becoming more common to have a purpose statement but still not the norm. Research shows that purpose-driven companies will be the ones to thrive and succeed, as having that purpose is what will give the competitive edge.

When you have a clearly defined bigger purpose it:

- ✓ Unifies the communications internally and externally
- ✓ Makes it easier to recruit top talent
- ✓ Builds a deeper emotional connection to your customers and employees and gives them a reason to support what you do

Do you have a clearly defined, concise purpose statement? If yes, that's great! You are well ahead of the majority of companies out there. If not, this is something you may want to prioritize ASAP.



## #2 Not Having Authentic Values

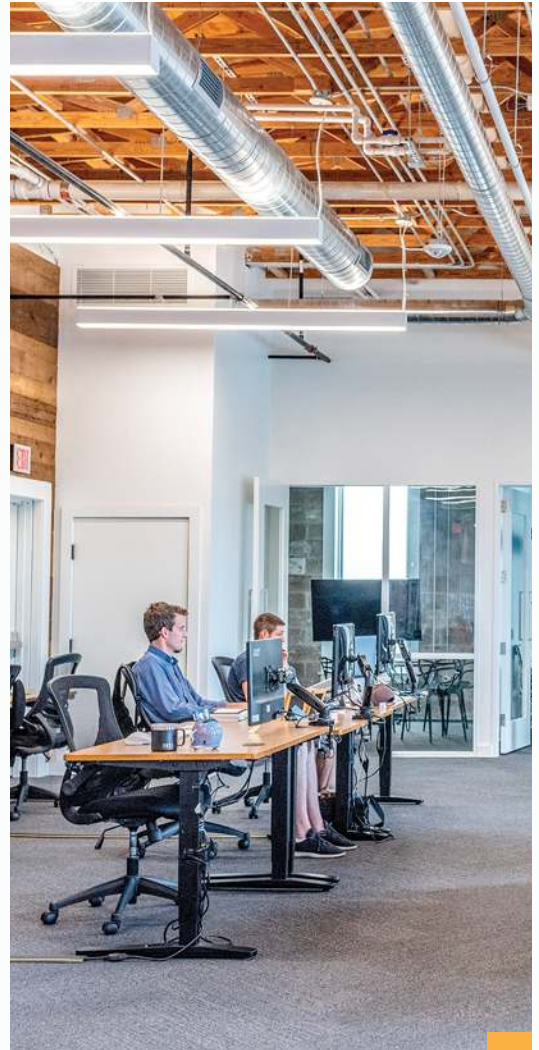
Most companies are pretty good at having values these days. Unfortunately, they often end up on the wall and don't really mean anything; they are not emotionally anchored into the DNA of a company culture. When they are authentic, they are sometimes called living, breathing values.

You want to have values that:

- ✓ Define who you are
- ✓ Can guide employees with decisions
- ✓ Both customers and employees can relate to and be aligned with

What do you think is important with values? Do your employees know your values? Are they aligned and able to guide decision-making in your company?

Remember that as a leader, you set the example....so are YOU living your company's values?





## #3 Not Hiring for Values



Related to #2, it is so vital to hire for values FIRST. When the values are defined well, it makes it easier to recruit and retain great talent. After so many years in headhunting, this is a mistake I've seen time and time again!

You want to hire for values because:

- ✓ Candidates are attracted to joining a company culture that is aligned with their personal values
- ✓ Employees will stay longer because there is a sense of belonging and they instinctively know what behaviors will be good for the company
- ✓ It's easier to train for skills than values

Are the people you are hiring aligned with your company values? One of our favorite examples is with Zappos, who happen to have 10 values (which can be a bit too many but it works for them). They have a 10-step hiring process, one to evaluate each value for potential candidates. "Be humble" is one of their values....the challenge for them was how do you evaluate that one? So they added the input of the driver and receptionist on how a candidate treated them. If the candidate acted like they were better than the driver, that would actually eliminate them from the process. If you think about it, that reinforces the importance of the driver and that all people are valuable in their company. Pretty powerful way to use their values to hire.

# TRUSTWORTHY

## #4 Not Being Trustworthy

Trust is a BIGGIE! It is the foundation for all relationships and communication. Without it, you're toast! Research shows that high trust organizations outperform low trust organization by 600%.

It's interesting to note that while trust in governments, institutions, and media are significantly decreasing, the trust in an employer is starting to increase, according to the latest Edelman Trust Barometer research. This means there's a great opportunity to move the business forward when you focus on trust.

Trust is essential because:

- ✓ You can get things done faster, which has a direct correlation to costs
- ✓ Your employees will be more engaged and more loyal to you
- ✓ Your customers want to know they can trust you and your company to do the right things

I'm just highlighting three key points but there are many more. Think of trust in a 360° perspective – from the management, to the board, to the employees, to the customers, to the vendor, partners and suppliers.

How authentic are you and how transparent is your company culture? Do you think you have a high level of trust in your company?



**People say they care, but it means nothing until they prove it.**

## #5 Not Caring About People



It's actually sad to have to write this one down but I see so many organizations that treat people as numbers, as resources, that do not see them as whole individuals. This absolutely leads to disengagement and I'm sure a BIG reason why the global engagement numbers are tanking—according to the latest Gallup poll, 85% of people are NOT reaching their full potential at work because they are disengaged or actively disengaged.

Companies, or more specifically leaders, who have compassion and treat their employees well, will do much better than those who don't. It is that simple. Compassion and caring go a long way in the workplace! Do not underestimate this one!

Caring is important because:

- ✓ It shows a level of high emotional intelligence—why do you think E-IQ is such a hot topic for leaders?
- ✓ Genuine caring connects us, which will make us stronger
- ✓ As Brené Brown recently said, we need to “rehumanize the workplace” with brave leaders—caring is a great place to start

What are your thoughts? How would you rate yourself on this parameter? Is that the same answer your team would give you? Good information to have!

# USING BUSINESS ..... AS A ..... FORCE FOR GOOD



## #6 Not Contributing

One of the 5 Cultural Keys defined in our book Engage! is contribution. The world has changed quickly now and the market, particularly the younger generations, are looking for companies that want to making a positive impact. Writing a check for a charity at the end of the year just doesn't cut it anymore—it's far too impersonal. It's about being actively involved in some cause that is making the world a better place.

It used to be considered a marketing gimmick to show how a company is doing good things but the mindset of CEOs is rapidly changing to wanting to use business as a force for good. CSR initiatives are linked to improving the bottom line. What better way than to get the company's employees involved in that impact. It honestly doesn't matter what it is—as long as it is happening and you can tell good stories about it!

It's best to choose something that is aligned in some way to the business, such as a tech company supporting tech students, outdoor clothing company supporting environmental issues, etc. Find something that makes sense and inspires your employees to get involved.

You should add contribution to your culture strategy because it:

- ✓ Builds trust and integrity when you contribute in an authentic way and show that your company is a force for good
- ✓ Is a great magnet to attract top talent, especially from the younger generations
- ✓ Gives meaning to the employees and a sense of pride that they work at the company, helping retain great people long term

Is your company making a positive difference? If not, what can you start to do to make a positive impact?







## #7 Not Investing in Your People



According to Harvard research, one of the three key motivators for employees is development. By not investing in your people, it sends a message that you do not care, they are not important, nor are they valued. Investing in your people so that they can grow, learn, and develop themselves both personally and professionally is a GREAT investment! And it is something that will help attract the young talents coming into the market.

Give your employees ownership to develop in the way that is meaningful to THEM. This helps them take ownership of their career path and look for ways they can contribute to the company.

Developing your people is a sound investment because:

- ✔ It increases loyalty to the company and shows you care about them as a whole person
- ✔ This increases engagement and energy when employees can pursue things they are interested in
- ✔ Even if they do eventually leave, you have improved their lives and they have the potential to be future customers, partners, buyers, etc.

Is this important in your company? How can you improve in this area?

CFO to CEO: What happens if we invest in our people and they leave?

CEO: What happens we don't and they stay?



## #8 Not Giving Your Employees Space

So what do I mean by this? Far too many employees are totally overwhelmed and stressed out. When they have too much on their plate, there are way too many meetings that often are a waste of time, and too many emails to be answered. When you do not have the space to think, creativity and productivity decrease significantly. Research shows that people are more productive in 90-minute intervals than working straight through for hours at a time.

Even not taking vacation has a long-term negative impact. As humans, we need to recharge our batteries. This is partly why mindfulness has become much more mainstream. We see the positive benefits of having some time to relax and calm our thoughts.

Enhance the workplace by:

- ✓ Reducing the amount of meetings—if possible do the meeting on a walk to be active—and reducing emails
- ✓ Making it OK to take some downtime such as having a meditation room, encouraging vacation time, giving the opportunity to leave early when you've reached your goals, etc
- ✓ Prioritizing employee well-being through exercise, eating well, and opportunities for personal development

These are just a few ideas to increase productivity and creativity in the workplace. What other ideas come to mind?





## #9 Not Celebrating Enough



Of the 5 Culture Keys we work with, this one tends to be the weakest across the board. When you don't celebrate your success along the way, even those small wins, you are robbing the joy from your day, your week, and your journey to success.

Make sure to recognize and appreciate those small steps along the way as it will energize you to keep going.

Celebration is essential to culture because it:

- ✓ Helps you focus on the things going well
- ✓ Reinforces behaviors you want to see in your company by showcasing them
- ✓ Inspires, motivates, and makes your peeps happy! Which leads to better results, more well-being, and more camaraderie at work

If anything, we need to celebrate way more in life and it sure wouldn't hurt to have a bit more fun at work! How do you celebrate success at work?

A celebration helps team members find the "magic" in their day to day.



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## #10 Not Systematizing Your Cultural Activities

Your culture exists—it almost has a life of its own. The way people feel about coming to work at your company is critical to its success. You work with it by default or deliberately—it is actually a choice.

As a company grows, you will naturally put into place systems and processes to make things run smoothly...why wouldn't you do that with the culture as well? The good news is that it is absolutely possible and when you do, it will become ingrained into the company's DNA.

It's good to systematize your culture because it:

- ✓ Helps you to reinforce the behaviors inside of your company
- ✓ Will attract and retain top talent
- Is your brand to the inside of your company—make people fall in love with it!

You are probably doing many good things with your culture. And there is certainly room for improvement and development. If you are truly passionate about creating an environment where people can thrive, then let us support you on that journey.

Evoloshen has been working with cultural and organizational development for many years and our partners have many years experience in helping companies thrive. From engagement, to building trust, to discovering your company's purpose statement, to hacking your culture...we have the know-how and experience to empower your employees and help you to create that amazing culture you'd love to see.

Feel free to reach out to us at [Support@Evoloshen.com](mailto:Support@Evoloshen.com) and schedule a **Culture Strategy Session**. We'd love to find out if we are a good fit to work together and make an incredible impact on your employees, your company, and make the world a better place together!

