URL: https://stvp.stanford.edu/blog/videos/what-you-do-defines-your-culture

Andy Friere, Co-founder and CEO of Axialent, argues that what leaders do–not what they say–defines the organization's culture. Friere suggests that most leaders are not actually aware of how what they do is perceived and shapes culture. However, shaping a strong culture is one of the most important activities for any entrepreneur because it determines, in part, whether the company goes on to success after the founder leaves or whether it fails.

Transcript

   You, as leaders of the organizations, you cast a tremendous shadow in the way you run your business and the message you send to the organization.. And many of you are completely unaware of those messages that you send.. And what we're going to be talking about in the next hour, it really has to do with becoming more aware of the culture you are building in your organizations.. For those of you that don't have an organization, my invitation is that you start asking yourself how are you as a father, as a mother, as a friend, in your interactions with other people.. And what I can guarantee that you'll realize is how important it is to know the kind of messages you send to your organization, the way you do things.. Not what you say, but what you do.. There's a phrase I really like that says, "What you do speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say." So we're going to be talking about that, and I'm going to be putting all this in the context of, I'm going to look like a corporate consultant now, but I think it has a very important message behind it.. So why 'culture'? Well, I know that you all love your organizations, and you really think about the mission and where you want to go.. But I'm sure that very few of you have sat down and said, "Well, what kind of culture do I really want to build? What's going to make this company become successful and unique?" And if someone were to ask me, I was taping a video for Endeavor, and they were asking me, "What's the uniqueness of the Endeavor entrepreneurs?" And I said, "The cultures that they build in their organizations, that's really unique." And I find this is very timely because, at least my experience is, a company really transcends its leader when the culture is so strong that you can leave your CEO and the company can keep on going as good as it was before.. It can keep its path very strongly..

   My experience of Officenet is, when I left the company, it started growing at twice the growth while I was there.. But just the fact of leaving an organization that has a strong culture, that allows you to be able to have a new CEO taking over, and the company continues growing.. And a weak culture is one where all the culture is dependent on you, and when you leave, then the company goes under.. Why? Because you were the company.. You weren't able to transcend yourself when you were building the company...