

# Success Depends On Your Culture

The culture of a business is often overlooked by leaders. Or if considered at all is thought to be of little consequence. After all, as long as the clients are happy and buying from you, business is great, right? However, the very question of how successful you will be and for how long lay in your business culture.

According to The Conference Board of Canada – Learning and Development Outlook 2005 report, **"Only about a quarter of organizations (28%) believe that risk taking is actively encouraged and supported. Likewise, only 30% feel that failures are constructively discussed."** So what does this mean to you?

I believe this response reflects the lack of an innovative and learning culture in the majority of Canadian organizations. Unless your employees are comfortable pushing the envelope they will always do just what they have always done. Unfortunately, with the rapid advance of both technology and competition, "what they have always done" is not good enough.

To stay ahead in any market you need to be on the innovative edge of new ideas and services. To improve the quality of your product or service you need to be improving continuously. To meet the competition you need to be ever aware of ways of improving your profit margin. This allows you to pass along a measure of savings to your clients and still improve your own bottom line.

The answer – your organization's culture. If your organization's culture is one of reasoned risk taking, then improvements will seem like a normal part of business. If your culture is one where employees are encouraged to express their ideas for process improvements, continuous small but significant change will be a norm for you.

Ask yourself;

- When was the last time an employee presented an improvement to what they do or how they do it?
- Are employees aware of how to document, measure and improve their work processes?

The solution lay in creating a culture of continuous improvement where staff and leaders cooperate to make each day/week/month/ year better than the last. Employees taught how to look for improvements and encouraged to do so will stay longer and be more productive.

*Gordon J. H. Newman, CPT*

*Gordon is President and Founder of The Newman Learning Group Inc. an organization dedicated to providing value add solutions to improve the bottom line performance of organizations.*