THE ACCOUNTABILITY & CULTURE REALITY CHECK

INSIGHTS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS



RESEARCHED AND SUMMARIZED BY SAM SILVERSTEIN

Sam Silverstein Inc

THE ACCOUNTABILITY INSTITUTE

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THE FINE PRINT

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A MESSAGE TO LEADERS

We asked more than **1,000 employees** a simple question: *"How would you rate your organization's culture?"* The answers revealed truths that challenge assumptions—and expose costs many leaders don't see until it's too late.

This report goes beyond opinions. It uncovers both the hidden and not-so-hidden costs of culture that are already impacting your bottom line—through turnover, disengagement, lost productivity, and missed opportunities. It also reveals what separates organizations that struggle to sustain performance from those that consistently win.

To make the insights **clear and actionable**, we grouped cultures into three categories:

- **Poor cultures** are failing or broken—marked by misalignment, distrust, and dysfunction.
- **Mediocre cultures** are functioning but underperforming—inconsistent, complacent, and quietly expensive.
- **Strong cultures** are reliable, healthy, capable, and repeatable—they create ownership, accountability, and results.

Mediocre culture is the most dangerous. It looks "good enough," but it steadily drains energy, commitment, and profit. Strong cultures, on the other hand, create environments where people take ownership, leaders act with clarity, and organizations don't just survive—they thrive.

What you'll discover in this report may surprise you. More importantly, it will position you to make informed decisions that strengthen culture, improve performance, and build a more profitable, resilient organization.

I invite you to explore the findings with honesty and curiosity. What you learn here has the power to change how you see your organization—and how **you** lead it forward.

Leaders, more often than not, over estimate the quality of their culture. Only real data should be used to determine if you have a strong or poor culture.

Sam Silverstein



About Sam Silverstein and The Accountability Institute

Sam Silverstein is an accountability and workplace culture expert, award-winning keynote speaker, international business advisor, researcher, bestselling author, and the founder of The Accountability Institute.

As the CEO of The Accountability Institute, Sam works with executives globally who want to create sustainable, high-performance, cultures, where people take ownership, and organizations thrive.

You can learn more at www.SamSilverstein.com and www.TheAccountabilityInstitute.com

NATIONAL STUDY GOALS

WHY THIS RESEARCH MATTERS

Corporate culture has long been dismissed as a "soft" business concern: something HR worries about while the "real" work of strategy, operations, and finance drives results. **At The Accountability Institute, we know better.**

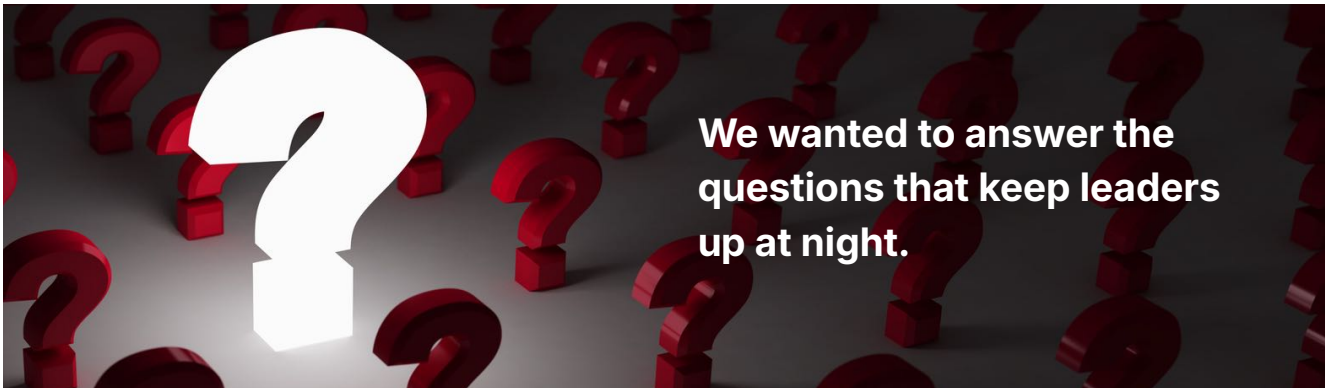
For **over three decades**, we've worked with organizations across the world, within numerous industries, from Fortune 500 companies to fast-growing startups. Through our extensive experience, we have learned and observed firsthand what happens when culture is treated as a strategic priority rather than an afterthought.

The patterns are unmistakable: Organizations that get culture right...

OUTPERFORM,
OUT-INNOVATE,
AND OUT-RETAIN.

Those who don't, pay an invisible tax on every initiative they attempt.

This report quantifies what we've observed in organizations and establishes a national baseline that tracks how American workplace culture evolves over time. This inaugural report represents the first year of what will become an annual benchmark: ***a consistent measure of where we are as a workforce and where we're heading.***



How does culture affect the bottom line?

We measured connections between culture quality and retention risk, pay vulnerability, customer impact, and productivity indicators.

What separates organizations where people thrive from those where they merely survive?

By segmenting responses into poor, mediocre, and strong culture tiers, we identified the specific factors that create exponential performance differences.

Why do some companies retain talent effortlessly while others hemorrhage their best people?

We examined the interplay between compensation, values alignment, psychological safety, and the decision to stay or leave.

How does accountability function as a cultural foundation?

We examined the presence and absence of accountability and excuse-making patterns, and their measurable impact on business outcomes.

How do generational differences shape the culture experience?

With four generations now working side by side, we examined whether Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Boomers experience workplace culture in fundamentally different ways.

The answers, as you'll see throughout this report, are both **clear and actionable**.

Culture isn't *soft*.

It's **measurable**, **manageable**, and **directly connected to every metric that matters**, including the bottom line.

REPORT METHODOLOGY

SURVEY DESIGN

We designed a comprehensive survey that covers the full spectrum of workplace culture experiences.

Our goal was to uncover the drivers of strong cultures and the causes of weak cultures.

Questions explored culture perception, mission and values alignment, leadership trust and credibility, psychological safety and voice, accountability and excuse-making, supervisor behavior, work-life balance, recognition and development, ethical pressures, technology support, and retention drivers. The survey combined scaled responses, yes/no questions, and open-ended prompts to capture both quantifiable patterns and qualitative insights.

SAMPLE SIZE AND COMPOSITION

Total Respondents	1,008 U.S. employees across industries, company sizes, and career stages.		
Gender Distribution	Female: 51.7% Male: 47.7% Non-binary: 0.5% Prefer not to say: 0.1%	***Geographic Distribution***	South: 38.7% Midwest: 24.3% Northeast: 21.2% West: 15.8%
Generational Distribution	Gen Z (Born 1997–2012): 19% Millennials (Born 1981–1996): 39.0% Gen X (Born 1965–1980): 25.0% Boomers (Born 1946–1964): 17.0%	***Tenure Distribution***	10+ years: 29.7% 1–3 years: 21.8% 3–5 years: 21.7% 5–9 years: 18.5% 0–1 year: 8.3%

Respondents rated their company's culture on a simple 1-10 scale. We then cross-tabulated all other responses against this culture rating to compare experiences across three distinct tiers:

Poor Cultures
Rated 1–5 (18.7% of respondents)

Mediocre Cultures
Rated 6-7 (27.1% of respondents)

Strong Cultures
Rated 8-10 (54.2% of respondents)

This segmentation allowed us to move beyond averages, which often hide **the most important patterns**, and identify what specifically differentiates thriving organizations from struggling ones.

The gaps between poor and strong cultures, often spanning 40 to 50 percentage points on key metrics, **reveal the true magnitude of culture's impact.**

THE DATA AT A GLANCE

BEHIND EVERY STATISTIC IS AN OPPORTUNITY.

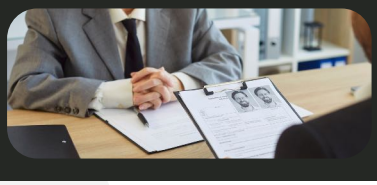
42%

of employees feel promotions and rewards often seem politically motivated rather than performance-based.



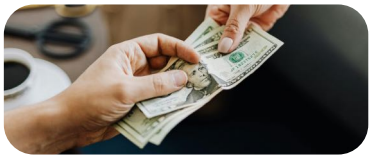
73%

of employees won't even interview at a company with a known bad culture, regardless of compensation.



45%

of employees would accept a lower salary to work at a company with great culture.



70%

of all employees say excuses hurt their company's results.

55%

of people stay at their current organization primarily because of its culture.

69%

of people in poor cultures have considered leaving their job in the last six months.

These findings reveal what separates **thriving cultures** from **struggling ones** and the specific levers leaders can pull to *close* the gap.

The data we've gathered points to specific, actionable changes that can **transform** how your employees experience work every single day. The organizations that act on these insights will separate themselves from competitors still wondering why their people keep leaving.

THE MISSION & VALUES GAP

Every organization has values, but values only matter when they translate into action. **The mission only drives performance when people feel connected to it**, when they understand how their Tuesday afternoon tasks connect to the bigger purpose.

Employees need to know them, believe them, and live them daily. **Lived values are what truly define the culture.**

EMPLOYEES KNOW THEIR ORGANIZATION'S VALUES

42.3%	Poor Cultures
90.0%	Strong Cultures

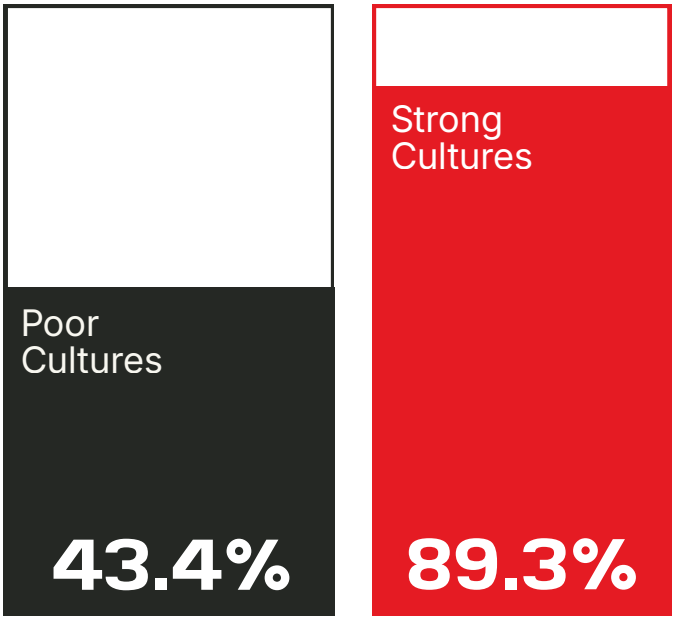
VALUES ARE CLEARLY COMMUNICATED

48.2%	Poor Cultures
91.5%	Strong Cultures

EMPLOYEES FEEL CONNECTED TO THE MISSION

34.4%	Poor Cultures
88.3%	Strong Cultures

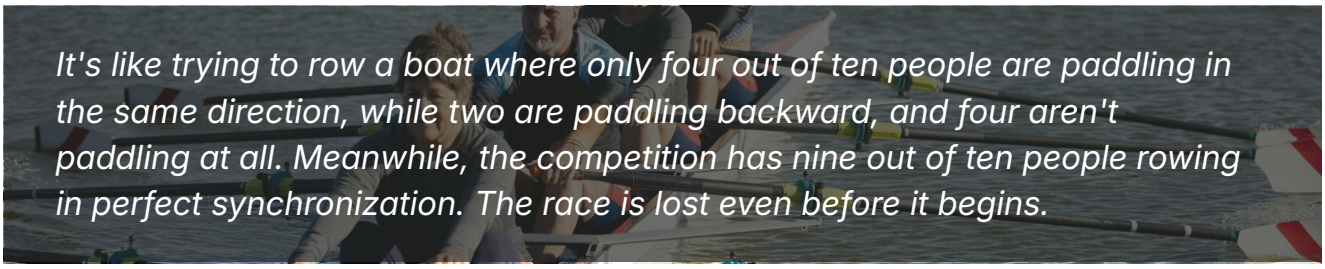
HOW MANY EMPLOYEES ACTUALLY LIVE THE ORGANIZATION'S VALUES?



When less than half of employees know the organization's values, the majority of the team is making thousands of daily decisions without a compass. Every customer interaction becomes a guess. Every vendor negotiation reflects personal judgment rather than organizational principles. Quality standards vary by department, team, and individual.

This isn't culture by design; it's culture by accident.

The bottom line is brutal but simple: organizations with poor cultures operate with less than half their workforce actually engaged with fundamental purpose and values.



THE CULTURE-COMPENSATION TRADE-OFF

Money matters, but culture keeps employees walking through the door every morning. People often believe that compensation is king in the talent market. But our data reveals a fundamental shift in what the workforce values, and the implications for organizations clinging to old assumptions are profound.

WHAT EMPLOYEES REALLY VALUE

As we saw earlier, **nearly half (45.2%)** of employees would accept a lower salary for great culture. These aren't entry-level workers with few options; they span all levels and industries.

The internal conflict is real: 35.6% of employees admit they sometimes feel like they're trading their values for compensation, a compromise that eats at engagement daily.



Meanwhile, **69.0%** would leave if company values contradicted their own, no matter the paycheck.



Most strikingly, **73.2%** wouldn't even interview at a company with known bad culture, regardless of the compensation package.

THE HIDDEN COSTS

Organizations with poor cultures are not competing for the full talent market; they're fighting over **the remaining 26.8%** who either haven't heard about the culture problems or are desperate enough to overlook them.

These candidates are rarely the best in any field.



THE REALIZATION THAT ORGANIZATIONS WITH POOR CULTURES MUST ACCEPT IS STARK: THEY GET LESS QUALIFIED CANDIDATES WHO DEMAND MORE MONEY AND STILL LEAVE FASTER. IT'S THE WORST OF BOTH WORLDS.

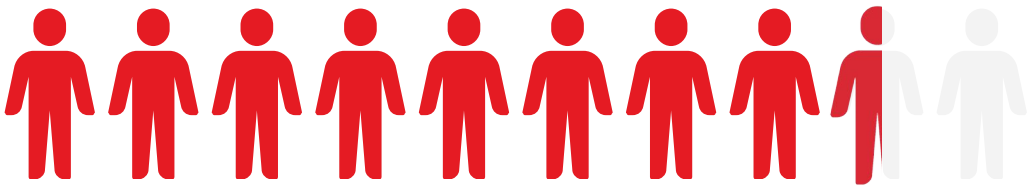
THE DOUBLE PENALTY

Organizations with a poor culture face a **particularly huge problem**. They must pay more to attract talent since 73.2% won't join bad cultures regardless of pay. Yet even after paying premium salaries, they still lose people faster.

WE ASKED EMPLOYEES IF THEY WOULD LEAVE THEIR COMPANY FOR JUST 10% MORE PAY.

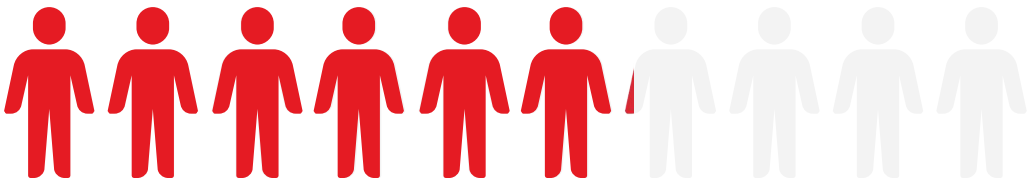
86.2%

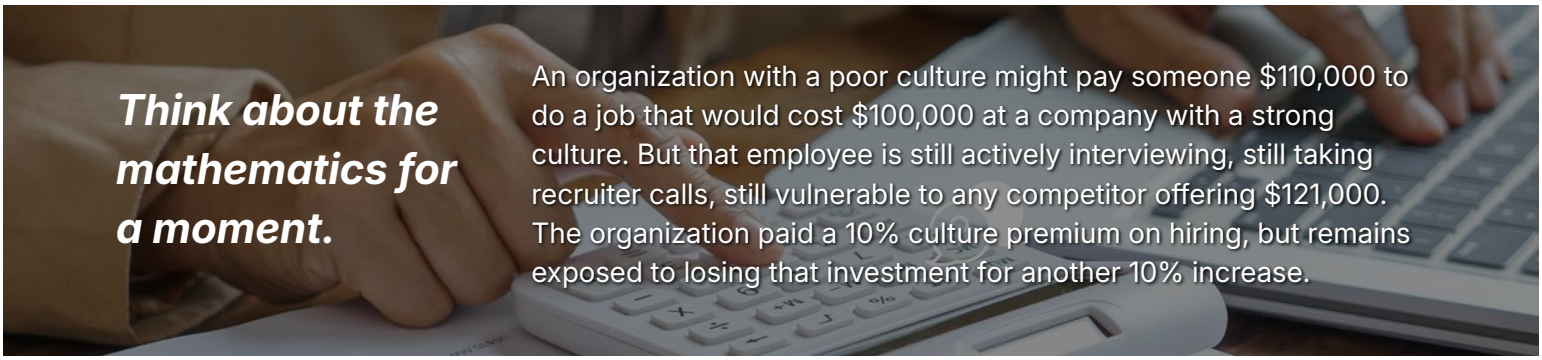
of employees in poor cultures would leave for just 10% more pay



61.0%

of employees in strong cultures would leave for just 10% more pay





Think about the mathematics for a moment.

An organization with a poor culture might pay someone $110,000 to do a job that would cost $100,000 at a company with a strong culture. But that employee is still actively interviewing, still taking recruiter calls, still vulnerable to any competitor offering $121,000. The organization paid a 10% culture premium on hiring, but remains exposed to losing that investment for another 10% increase.

Poor culture companies must **overpay to attract, overpay to retain, and then overpay again to replace**. A company with 1,000 employees and a poor culture might face millions in additional compensation costs annually, plus millions more in turnover expenses, all because they haven't invested in culture.

The irony is painful.

Many organizations claim they can't afford culture initiatives, employee recognition programs, or leadership development.

Yet they're already paying far more in ***"culture taxes".***

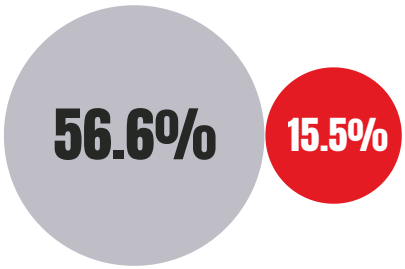
THE CULTURE–ETHICS ALIGNMENT

Ethics form the backbone of sustainable business. They determine whether customers trust a brand, whether talent wants to work there, and whether investors feel secure. **Ethics can make or break an organization**, and is the foundation upon which the organization is built.

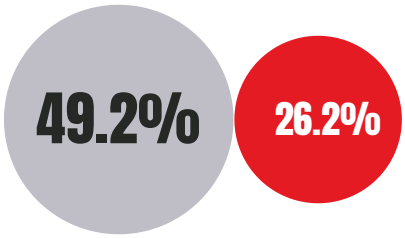
THE VALUES CONTRADICTION CRISIS

The data reveals a stark divide between what organizations claim to value and what employees experience daily:

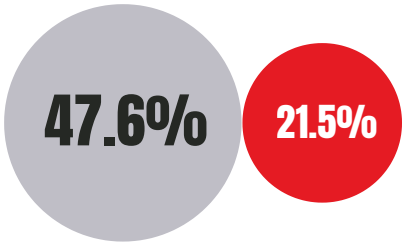
In poor cultures:



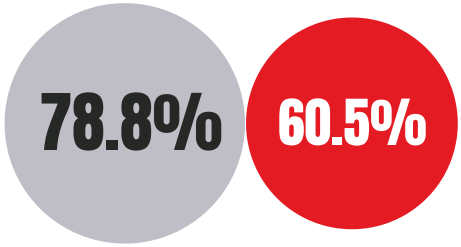
More than half **(56.6%)** say their company doesn't align with personal values, compared to just **15.5%** in organizations with strong cultures.



Nearly half **(49.2%)** felt pressure to compromise their values, versus **26.2%** in strong cultures.



Similarly, **47.6%** felt ethically uncomfortable with decisions their company made, while **21.5%** in strong cultures report this discomfort.



Perhaps most surprisingly, both **78.8%** in poor cultures **60.5%** in strong cultures and say ethics take a back seat to business results.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF MISALIGNMENT

When nearly half of employees in poor cultures feel pressure to compromise their values, organizations aren't just risking turnover. **They're building a foundation for disaster.** These employees face two paths, neither of which is good for the organization.

SOME SIMPLY LEAVE, TAKING THEIR INTEGRITY AND THEIR TALENT ELSEWHERE.

- But they don't leave quietly.
- They tell recruiters why they left.
- They warn former colleagues.
- They write anonymous reviews that future candidates read.



The organization's reputation is destroyed one departure at a time.

THE OTHER GROUP MIGHT BE THE MOST DANGEROUS: THOSE WHO STAY AND COMPLY.

- They learn that ethics are negotiable,
- That values don't mean anything,
- That "how we do business" means cutting corners when possible.



These employees don't just compromise their own values; **they teach others to do the same.** They further corrupt the culture, spreading ethical flexibility throughout the organization.

The competitive disadvantage compounds over time.

*Organizations where **56.6%** of employees experience values misalignment can't attract principled talent.*

They can't **build trust with customers who increasingly care about corporate ethics.** They can't innovate effectively because employees spend energy managing moral conflict instead of creating value.

Meanwhile, competitors with strong ethical cultures enjoy the opposite advantages. With only 15.5% experiencing values misalignment, the company attracts talent seeking purposeful work. They build lasting customer relationships based on trust. They innovate freely because employees aren't distracted by ethical dilemmas. **And, inevitably this all shows up on the bottom line.**

SUPERVISOR VALUES EFFECT

Direct supervisors shape everything. They translate values into daily decisions. They turn mission statements into priorities. **They make culture real or expose it as fiction.** Our data reveals just how profoundly a single factor,whether supervisors live organizational values, determines nearly every aspect of employee experience and business performanc

YOUR MOST CRITICAL CULTURE LEVER: LIVING THE VALUES

44.4% of everyone who considered quitting due to culture problems said **"MY SUPERVISOR DOESN'T LIVE THE VALUES".**

39.0% of everyone who felt pressure to compromise personal values said **"MY SUPERVISOR DOESN'T LIVE THE VALUES".**

38.0% of everyone who say customers suffer from internal dysfunction said **"MY SUPERVISOR DOESN'T LIVE THE VALUES".**

75.8% of everyone who are happy with their workplace experience say **"MY SUPERVISOR LIVES THE VALUES".**

Employees learn to ignore official communications because they know the real story comes from watching what their supervisor rewards and punishes.



Across every single metric, employees with supervisors who don't model values are much more likely to experience negative outcomes. **When a supervisor is not living the values, the people in the culture witness them preaching collaboration while practising the opposite.** They hear about customer focus while witnessing corner-cutting. They're told integrity matters while being pressured to compromise their own values.

These employees aren't just disconnected from company culture; they're living in a reality where different rules apply. The business impact compounds daily as customers interact with employees operating in these misled cultures and receive inconsistent experiences. Quality varies by department based on whether supervisors actually care about stated standards.

THE LEADERSHIP TRUST DEFICIT

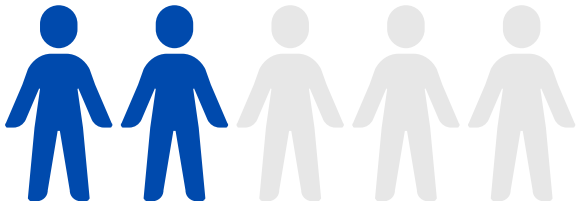
Trust is what holds an organization together. With it, decisions happen in minutes, strategies execute in weeks, and information flows like water. Without it, everything grinds to a halt. Our data reveals a trust crisis in organizations with poor cultures, which explains why some companies move quickly while others struggle to even get started.

SEEING A DISCONNECT BETWEEN LEADERSHIP WORDS AND ACTIONS

50.8% **In poor cultures**

35.8% **In strong cultures**

Even in organizations with strong cultures, two out of five employees question whether leaders mean what they say.



PICTURE THE DAILY REALITY WHEN HALF THE WORKFORCE OPERATES WITH THIS SKEPTICISM.

→ A leader announces a new priority.
→ Instead of mobilizing immediately, half the team spends time talking about the "real" agenda.
→ They text colleagues trying to decode what's actually happening.
→ They half-implement changes while keeping one foot in old processes **just in case this initiative, like others before it, quietly disappears.**
→ Instead of moving forward with speed, the team digs its heels in and thwarts progress and growth.

THE COMPANY PAYS "THE HYPOCRISY TAX"

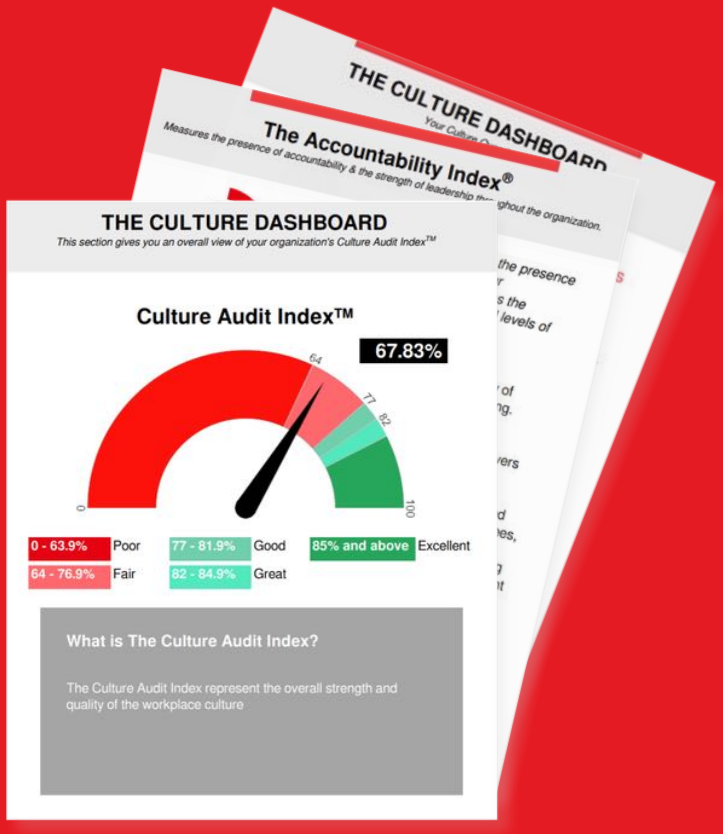
This hypocrisy flows through the organization. Mid-level leaders learn to make promises they won't keep. Sales teams learn to tell customers what they want to hear. Quality teams learn to adjust standards when deadlines loom.

The strategy doesn't die from active resistance but from passive non-compliance. Employees have been through multiple "transformational" initiatives that transformed nothing. They've witnessed countless "top priorities" that vanished without explanation.

The Culture Audit®

Real data. Real clarity. Real direction for leaders who refuse to guess.

The Culture Audit® gives leaders an unfiltered, data-driven view of what's really happening inside their organization—so you can stop assuming and start leading with precision.



The Culture Audit™

Reveals the gap between stated values and daily behavior.

Identifies the hidden costs of weak accountability and cultural drag.

Equips leaders with clear priorities for immediate, high-impact action.

Unlock the Power of Data.



Contact us today to schedule your assessment and take the first step towards building a thriving, ethical, and high-performing organization.

Learn more at www.TheCultureAudit.com or email us at Renee@SamSilverstein.com

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THE WORDS–ACTIONS DISCONNECT

Every organization faces moments when reality doesn't match goals. But when the gap between leadership words and daily actions grows, credibility dies. Our data reveals that this disconnect isn't just a poor culture problem; **it's a universal leadership challenge that even organizations with strong cultures struggle to overcome.**

WHERE THE DISCONNECT SHOWS UP

VALUES

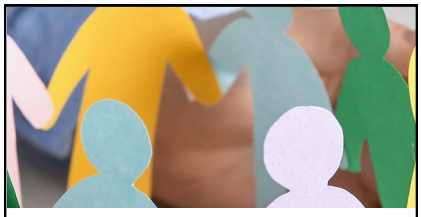


OVER ONE THIRD,

35.8%

of employees say their company promotes values but doesn't uphold them. Organizations showcase "integrity" on walls while pressuring employees to hit numbers at any cost. Each violation teaches employees that values are being used as marketing tools rather than operating principles. **This disconnect is equivalent to a lie, and once people feel they have been lied to, they question everything.**

TRANSPARENCY



ONLY

64.1%

feel informed about decisions affecting their role. Leaders promise open communication, then make decisions behind closed doors. They conduct town halls that share everything except what **employees actually need to know.**

DIRECTION



OVER ONE THIRD,

36.7%

often feel left in the dark about major decisions. Nearly a third of the workforce doesn't understand where the organization is heading or why. They learn about strategic shifts and decisions from **press releases rather than through their leadership.**

In strong cultures, the disconnect tends to be smaller. Leaders might occasionally contradict their words, but they usually self-correct. **The gap exists, but doesn't become a chasm.** In poor cultures, half the workforce faces systemic disconnection.

To fix this divide requires courage: make fewer promises and keep more of them. Communicate more clearly, more accurately, and more often. Choose transparency over avoidance, even when transparency is uncomfortable.

Credibility is built through aligned actions, one kept promise at a time.

THE MONDAY MORNING TEST

One simple question reveals everything about organizational culture:

"Is the thought of going to work on Monday morning stressful?"

THE ANSWERS TELL A STORY THAT GOES FAR BEYOND INDIVIDUAL ANXIETY:

In poor cultures, *53.4%* find Monday morning stressful.

In strong cultures, *39.2%* still experience that Sunday night dread.



Nearly half the workforce spends Sunday evenings with a knot in their stomach. Their families notice the mood shift as the weekend winds down. Sleep becomes elusive as their minds race through Monday's anticipated battles. **When 53.4% of employees in poor cultures dread Monday morning, organizations pay a price that compounds weekly.**

These employees don't arrive energized and creative; they arrive defensive and depleted. The ripple effects touch every business metric. Customer service suffers when representatives are unmotivated before taking their first call. Innovation stalls when engineers are exhausted before even starting their work. Sales stumble when account managers are too stressed to build genuine relationships. Even in organizations with strong cultures, where **39.2%** still experience Monday stress, **the organization is operating below its potential.**

However, rather than accepting Monday stress as inevitable, organizations could redesign Monday mornings to shift the emotional tone of the entire week.

THE MONDAY MORNING TEST

No Meeting Mondays (Before 10 AM):

Giving employees the first hours of Monday to ease into the week, organize priorities, and catch up without immediate pressure could reduce the anticipatory stress that builds on Sunday night. When people know they'll have time to get oriented, the weekend becomes more restful.



No Deadline Mondays:

Making Monday a deadline-free zone could eliminate the Sunday scramble that ruins weekends. When nothing is due on Monday morning, employees can better use Sunday night to recover fully.

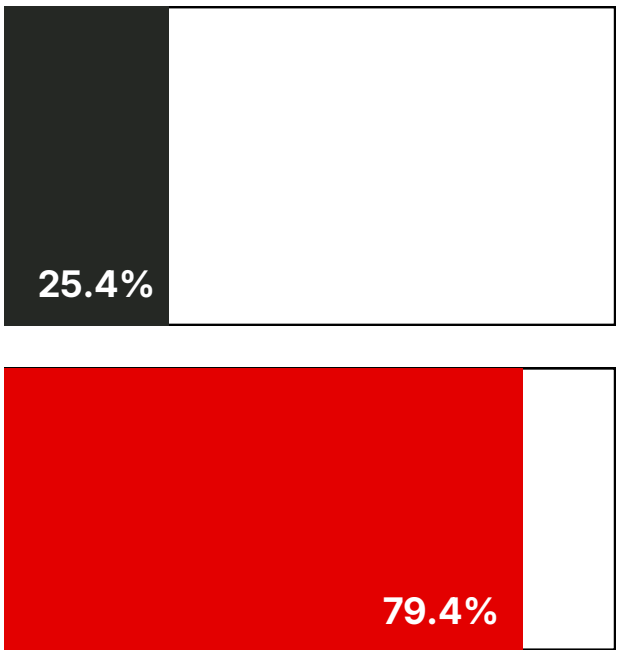


THESE INTERVENTIONS REQUIRE MINIMAL INVESTMENT.

They are policy changes rather than expensive programs, yet they could unlock five days of improved performance each week. When Monday morning stress drops, the benefits cascade: better customer interactions, higher creativity, improved collaboration, and reduced turnover. And, **your people understand that you care about them.**

THE LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY GAP

When mistakes happen, the response reveals everything about organizational culture. Do leaders step forward or step back? **Do they own failures or assign them?** Our data exposes a massive divide in how leaders handle accountability.



THE REALITY

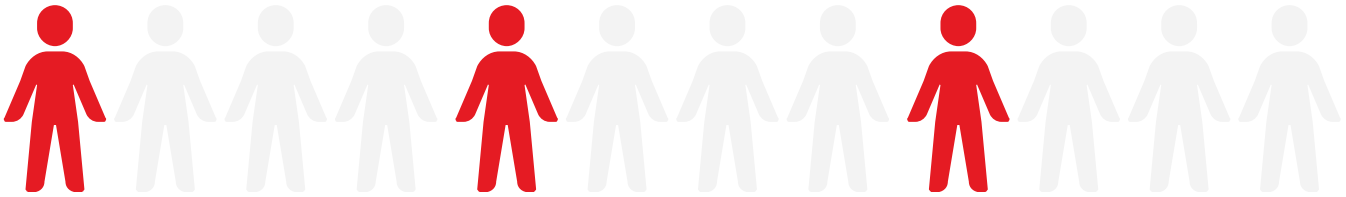
→ Overall: Only 61.4% say leaders take responsibility rather than blame

→ In organizations with poor cultures, 25.4% see leaders taking responsibility

→ In strong cultures, 79.4% see leaders taking responsibility

This 54-point gap explains why poor cultures remain poor. The organization learns to **perfect** the art of finger-pointing, excuse-making, and blame-shifting.

When only one in four employees sees leaders taking responsibility for mistakes, the message is clear: accountability is for other people: leaders are above the rules that apply to everyone else.





THE PROMOTION PARADOX

The accountability crisis deepens when employees see who gets ahead. In all organizations, regardless of culture performance:

41.9% **say promotions seem politically motivated rather than performance-based.**

37.3% **say being ethical doesn't help with promotions.**

This creates a sad reality for talented employees. They watch political operators advance while high performers stagnate. They see ethical corners cut without consequence while integrity goes unrewarded. The lesson becomes clear: **success comes not from excellence but from playing the game.**

FACED WITH THIS REALITY, EMPLOYEES MAKE ONE OF THREE CHOICES, ALL DAMAGING:



High performers look to leave for organizations where merit matters. These are often the best employees (the ones with integrity, capability, and alternatives). The organization loses precisely the people it needs most.



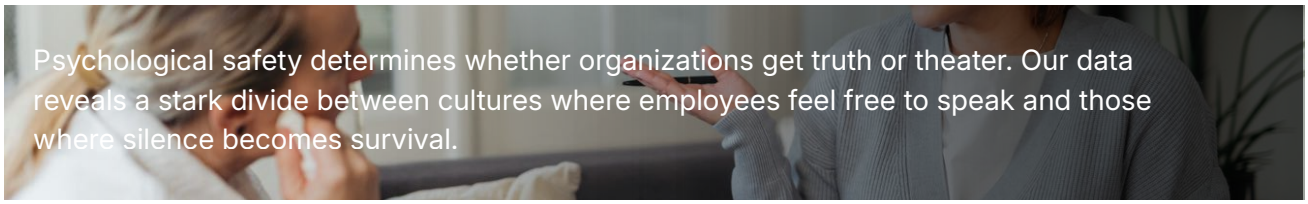
Some who stay adopt the behaviors that get rewarded. They learn to manage up rather than deliver down. They're perfecting political maneuvering over performance improvement. They choose expedience over ethics, and the culture corrupts one compromise at a time.



Others stay but mentally leave. They do the minimum required, no more. They stop suggesting improvements, stop taking risks, stop caring. They become expensive placeholders, collecting paychecks while contributing nothing beyond basic compliance.

When three-quarters of employees in poor cultures never see leaders take responsibility, and nearly half believe promotions are political rather than merit-based, the organization faces damage that cannot be quantified.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY INDEX



Poor cultures Strong cultures

"I FEEL SAFE TO SPEAK UP."



When only 36.5% in poor cultures feel safe to speak up, organizations operate partially blind and deaf. The majority of the workforce sees problems but stays quiet. **The 50-point gap between organizations with poor and strong cultures in speaking up represents millions of unshared insights.**

"I FEEL SAFE TO GIVE HONEST FEEDBACK."



Additionally, the 46.6% who don't feel safe giving honest feedback in poor cultures represent **lost innovation at scale.** These employees have suggestions for improving processes, but keep quiet.

"DISAGREEING WITH LEADERSHIP FEELS RISKY."



When nearly half of the employees in all cultures think that disagreeing with leadership feels risky, organizations lose their early warning system. Nobody challenges bad ideas until they become expensive failures. **Nobody questions flawed strategies until competitors expose them.**

"EMPLOYEES AT ALL LEVELS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SHARE THEIR IDEAS."



Furthermore, when only 40.2% in poor cultures feel encouraged to share ideas, organizations lose their greatest resource: collective intelligence. Every employee sees the business from a unique angle. Organizations where 87.4% feel heard operate with contributors throughout their business. **Every employee becomes a contributor, spotting opportunities and threats.**

THE MANAGER SUPPORT REALITY

The data on manager support reveals a fundamental truth: managers determine whether talent thrives or merely survives.



CAREER GROWTH SUPPORT: WE ASKED IF EMPLOYEES FEEL THEIR MANAGERS SUPPORT THEIR GROWTH.

In poor cultures, *35.9%* agree managers support their growth.

In strong cultures, *81.4%* agree managers support their growth.

What does the 45 point chasm mean?

The gap between poor and strong cultures spans 45 percentage points in career support. In poor cultures, **nearly two-thirds of employees experience career stagnation without their supervisors' support.** Ambitious employees quickly realize their careers have hit a ceiling. They update their resumes, take recruiter calls, and eventually leave for organizations that care about their development.

What does the 48 point gap mean?

The 48-point dialogue gap means poor cultures get **less than half the input, ideas, and insights of their competitors.** While strong cultures benefit from 80.2% of their workforce contributing thoughts, poor cultures hear from barely one-third.

Leaders hear only what they want to hear. Agreeable voices drown out critical thinking. **Consensus replaces creativity.**

LEADERS MAKING SPACE FOR DIALOGUE

In poor cultures, *31.8%* agree leaders make space for dialogue.

In strong cultures, *80.2%* agree leaders make space for dialogue.

THE MANAGER SUPPORT REALITY

THE DEVELOPMENT DESERT

In poor cultures, 33.4% agree that personal development is valued.

In strong cultures, 86.7% agree that personal development is valued.

What does the 45 point chasm mean?

This 53-point gap represents an organization that stands still. When only one-third of employees in poor cultures feel development is valued, **the organization is essentially announcing it has no future.** Two-thirds of the workforce in poor cultures receives a clear message that their growth doesn't matter. They're hired for what they can do today, not what they could become tomorrow.

THE TECHNOLOGY TRAINING CRISIS

In poor cultures, 36.0% feel they are adopting new technology at an appropriate pace.

In poor cultures, 39.2% feel supported in using new technologies

In strong cultures, 77.5% feel they are adopting new technology at an appropriate pace.

In strong cultures, 79.6% feel supported in using new technologies.

When only 39.2% feel supported by new technology, organizations are essentially throwing money at solutions employees can't or won't use. Picture the reality: **software licenses purchased but unused, as employees face new technology with no support.** This defeats the entire purpose of digital transformation.

Additionally, when 64% of people in poor cultures think the pace of technology adoption is wrong, **they're revealing a deeper dysfunction**. It's not really about speed; it's about readiness. Organizations are either pushing new tools onto unprepared workforces or moving too slowly while their competitors race ahead.

THE FEEDBACK AND LEARNING BREAKDOWN

"WHEN I SPEAK UP, MY VOICE IS HEARD."

In poor cultures, *34.4%* agree.

In strong cultures, *80.5%* agree.

THE ONE-WAY STREET

The 46-point voice gap reveals that poor cultures operate more like lecture halls than learning organizations. When only 34.4% feel heard when speaking up, organizations receive less than half the intelligence available to them. **Teaching without listening is like speaking to a wall.** Leaders deliver messages and announce initiatives, but they rarely receive the feedback that would make these efforts truly meaningful. They mistake silence for agreement, and never realise what might be wrong with their proposals.

In poor cultures, where only one-third of employees feel their input matters, **organizations continue to try to solve yesterday's problems while tomorrow's opportunities pass by unnoticed.**

THE MISTAKE LEARNING CULTURE

"WHEN I MAKE MISTAKES, I FEEL SUPPORTED RATHER THAN BLAMED."

In poor cultures, *36.0%* agree.

In strong cultures, *75.5%* agree.

When Failure Becomes Fatal

The 39-point gap in mistake support reveals organizations divided between those that learn from mistakes and those that repeat them. **When only 36% of employees feel supported after making mistakes, they develop hiding mechanisms.** Errors are often buried in revised reports, and failures are frequently reframed as external factors. This concealment culture creates compound ignorance. Leadership operates with false information, making decisions based on fictional success rates, while quality issues continue to grow because nobody admits to their existence.

THE FEEDBACK AND LEARNING BREAKDOWN

"THE COMPANY LEARNS FROM ITS MISTAKES AND IMPROVES."

In poor cultures, *31.2%* agree.

In strong cultures, *82.8%* agree.

Additionally, only 31.2% in poor cultures say their company learns from mistakes. **This means nearly 70% watch the same errors repeat endlessly.** The project management mistakes that derailed last year's launch reappear in this year's. The customer service failures that sparked complaints last quarter resurface this quarter.

Without learning mechanisms, **organizations become trapped in loops**. They don't just make mistakes; they repeatedly make the same mistakes. Each repetition costs more as customers lose patience, employees lose faith, and competitors who actually learn pull further ahead.

THE KNOWLEDGE COMMITMENT GAP

"THE PEOPLE I WORK WITH KEEP THEIR COMMITMENTS."

In poor cultures, *69.3%* agree.

In strong cultures, *90.5%* agree.

"I AM REGULARLY RECOGNIZED FOR MY CONTRIBUTIONS."

In poor cultures, *29.7%* agree.

In strong cultures, *80.9%* agree.

When 30% in poor cultures can't rely on commitments, the teaching infrastructure collapses. The mentor who promised guidance disappears. The colleague who agreed to share expertise gets "too busy." The training session scheduled for next week has been postponed indefinitely.

This issue compounds with the recognition gap.

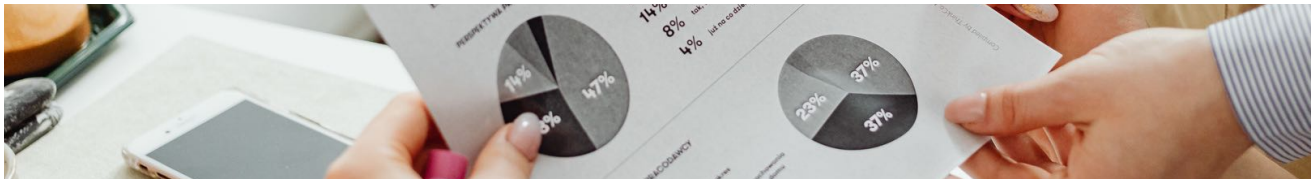
The 51-point recognition gap represents millions of missed teaching moments. Recognition isn't just about making people feel good; it's one of the most powerful teaching tools managers possess. Every time specific behavior gets recognized, it teaches the entire team what excellence looks like. These failures compound into organizational learning disability.

Broken commitments prevent knowledge transfer. Together, they ensure the organization never gets smarter, never gets stronger, never gets better.

THE VALUE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is at the heart of an organization's culture. When it's strong, the organization fights off dysfunction, mediocrity, and ethical drift. When it's weak, every cultural problem spreads unchecked. The impact of accountability is immediately obvious when comparing:





Accountability determines almost everything. The presence or absence of accountability creates a 22-point swing in retention risk, an 18-point difference in pay vulnerability, and a 28-point gap in workplace happiness.

When accountability fails, the organization enters a death spiral. Employees without accountability are significantly more likely to be actively seeking new jobs.

When people are not held responsible, a dysfunctional system emerges. High performers watch low performers face no consequences and ask themselves why they bother.

Employees witness daily failures: promises made but not kept, quality standards ignored, and service levels abandoned. **When nobody owns problems, problems own the customer experience.**

Customers are often unaware of internal accountability failures. They only know their calls don't get returned, their issues don't get resolved, and **their expectations don't get met.**

THE EXCUSE EPIDEMIC

Carbon monoxide is one of the most hazardous gases in the world. It is invisible and odorless, but deadly poisonous.

EXCUSES ARE THE ORGANIZATIONAL CARBON MONOXIDE.

Our data reveals an epidemic that crosses all industries, sizes, and even culture qualities.



The numbers are staggering:

* 70.1%	say excuses hurt their company's results.
* 47.1%	work with people who make excuses.
* 46.9%	accept other people's excuses.
* 46.2%	don't confront people when they make excuses.
* 32.2%	admit to making excuses themselves.
* 38.7%	admit to excuses being commonly used to justify missed deadlines or underperformance.

THE CULTURE MULTIPLIER

THE EXCUSE INFECTION RATES:

Poor Cultures Strong cultures

PEOPLE HAVE TO DEAL WITH EXCUSE-MAKERS

63.5%
37.5%

SAY THEY EXCUSES HURT RESULTS

72.5%
69.6%

ADMIT THEY ARE MAKING EXCUSES

41.3%
28.2%

The 26-point gap in having to deal with excuse-makers reveals that poor cultures have significantly higher excuse density. But here's the shock: even in strong cultures, 69.6% say excuses damage results. This isn't a poor culture problem; **it's a human problem that culture either amplifies or mitigates.**

THE ACCEPTANCE PANDEMIC: 46.9% ACCEPT EXCUSES, AND 46.2% DON'T CONFRONT THEM.

This passive acceptance is worse than active excuse-making. It creates organizational permission for failure. **When nearly half of employees accept excuses, they're not being polite or understanding. They are accepting mediocrity.** Each accepted excuse teaches that results are optional, that explanations substitute for execution, and that good stories beat good performance.



Calculate the hours: **If 47.1% work with excuse-makers, and each excuse requires explanation, discussion, and documentation, organizations lose thousands of productive hours to excuse management. Energy that could drive innovation instead drives explanation. Time that could solve problems instead assigns blame.**

THE COMPOUND COST

WHEN 70.1% SAY EXCUSES HURT RESULTS, THEY'RE DESCRIBING MEASURABLE DAMAGE:

→ Projects are delayed while teams explain why deadlines slipped.
→ Quality is compromised as excuses replace corrections.
→ Innovation is stalled because "we tried that before" becomes acceptable.
→ Customer trust is eroded as excuses replace solutions.
→ Talent departs as high performers tire of excuse culture.

The financial impact compounds quarterly. **Each excuse that replaces action creates slightly worse results. Each acceptance of failure lowers the bar further.** Each unchallenged explanation makes the next excuse easier to accept.

BREAKING THE CYCLE

The path forward requires recognizing that excuses are a culture infection that grows unless actively fought.

ORGANIZATIONS MUST CREATE EXCUSE-HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS WHERE:

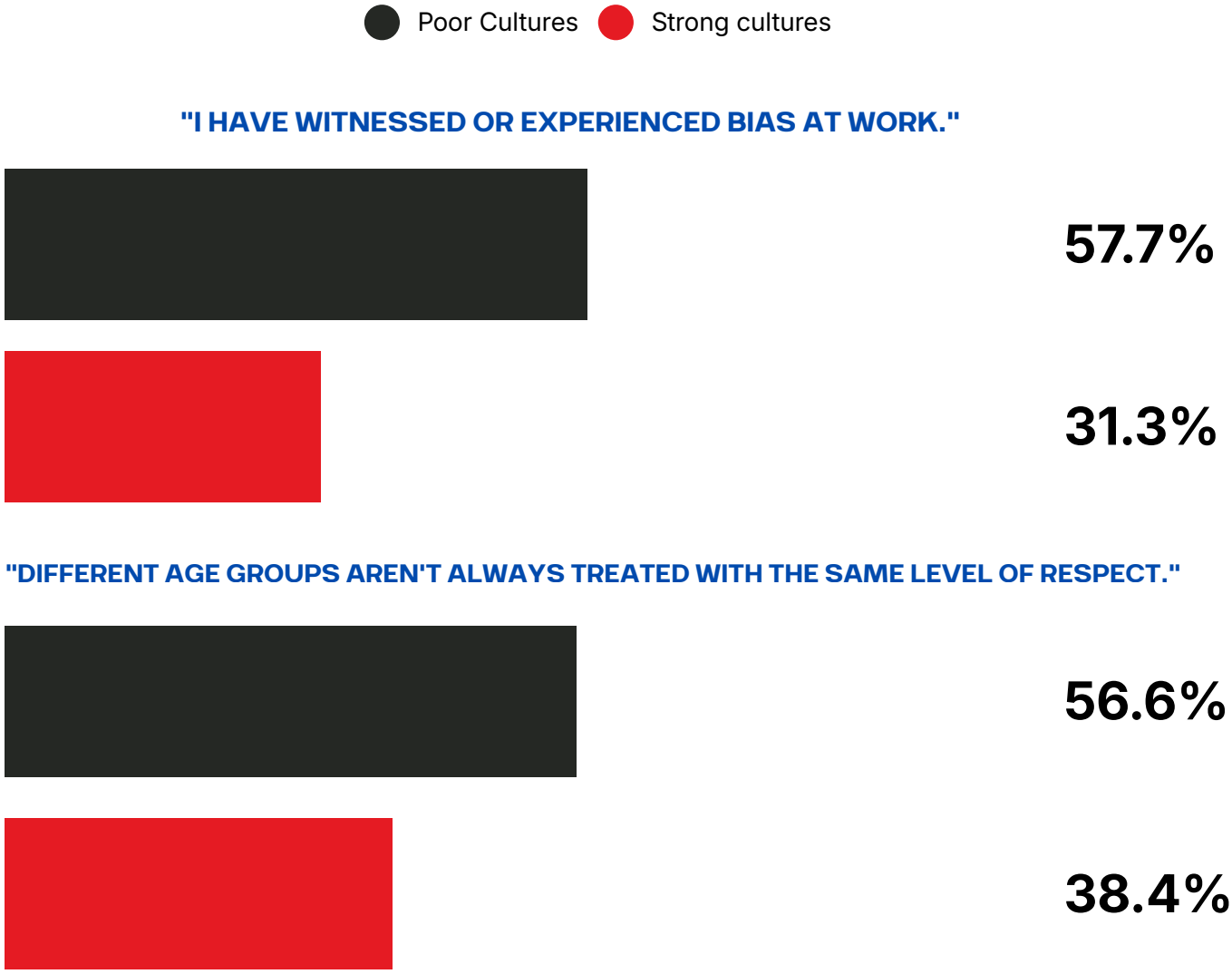
- **Results matter more than reasons**
- **Solutions outrank explanations**
- **Accountability trumps articulation**
- **Performance beats prose**

The excuse epidemic is real, measurable, and costly. But it's also solvable for organizations willing to stop accepting explanations for why things can't be done and start demanding evidence of what will be done. **Because in the end, customers don't buy excuses.**

COMPETITORS DON'T ACCEPT EXCUSES. AND SUCCESSFUL CULTURES DON'T ENABLE EXCUSES.



THE BIAS BARRIER



Bias is like organizational acid; it corrodes everything it touches.

When 57.7% in poor cultures witness or experience bias, they're describing environments where talent gets evaluated through filters of prejudice rather than performance.

The 26-point gap between poor and strong cultures in witnessed bias represents millions of moments where potential gets overlooked, contributions get minimized, and talent gets marginalized. **Each biased interaction not only harms the individual but also robs the organization of diverse thinking, creative solutions, and breakthrough innovations.**

More specifically, the finding that **45% of respondents perceive age discrimination deserves special attention.** In an era of five-generation workplaces, age bias creates particular dysfunction. Younger employees feel dismissed as inexperienced. Older employees feel pushed out as obsolete. This generational divide destroys knowledge transfer. Experienced employees withhold wisdom from those who don't respect them, while younger employees don't share fresh perspectives with those who dismiss them.

THE CUSTOMER PROTECTION CONNECTION

"CUSTOMERS DO NOT RECEIVE THE BEST POSSIBLE EXPERIENCE DUE TO INTERNAL DYSFUNCTION."

In poor cultures, ***58.2%*** agree.

In strong cultures, *28.2%* agree.



The 30-point gap between poor and strong cultures in customer impact reveals a fundamental truth: customers experience your culture whether they know it or not.

They may not directly see the dysfunction, but they feel its effects. The 58.2% of respondents from poor cultures admitting customers suffer represents billions in lost revenue across the economy. These aren't abstract impacts but measurable losses: service delays, quality inconsistencies, and promise failures. **An organization's customer experience connects directly to the bottom line.**

OVERALL, 56.8% AGREE THAT A STRONGER CULTURE WOULD DIRECTLY IMPROVE THEIR ABILITY TO RETAIN CUSTOMERS.

This is a clear sign. There is a direct line between employee experience and customer experience. While **58.2%** in poor cultures admit that customers are harmed by their culture, only 28.2% in strong cultures face this problem. This means organizations with strong cultures deliver consistent positive experiences twice as often. They're not just marginally better; they're operating in a different league. **Their customers stay longer, buy more, and bring more people to the business.**

THE BELONGING METRIC

Poor Cultures Strong cultures

"I FEEL A SENSE OF BELONGING AT MY WORKPLACE."



When only 49.7% in poor cultures feel a sense of belonging, more than half the workforce is present but not connected, working but not invested. And belonging is what transforms the workplace experience. **Employees who belong don't calculate minimum acceptable effort. They don't watch clocks or count tasks.** They solve problems outside their job description, help colleagues without being asked, and protect the organization's interests as if they were their own. They become accountable members of the team.



THE REFERRAL TEST

"I WOULD SUGGEST WORKING AT MY ORGANIZATION TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS."



This question cuts through all pretense. People might tolerate dysfunction themselves, but they protect those they care about. When only 46% of people in poor cultures would recommend their workplace to loved ones, they're delivering the harshest verdict possible: this place isn't good enough for the people I value.

The 41-point referral gap creates a recruitment multiplier effect. Strong culture organizations have the benefit of 87.6% of their workforce actively recruiting. **They access hidden talent pools through employee networks. They get pre-sold candidates who arrive with positive expectations. Their recruitment costs plummet while quality soars.**

THE PRIDE FACTOR

Poor Cultures Strong cultures

"I FEEL PROUD TO TELL OTHER PEOPLE WHERE I WORK."

49.2%
92.0%

The 42-point pride gap represents millions of daily micro-moments where culture gets advertised or hidden. In organizations with strong cultures, 92% of employees become voluntary brand ambassadors. Each proud employee is worth thousands in recruitment advertising they provide for free. In poor cultures, **only 49.2% feel this pride.** They speak poorly and become part of a negative brand conversation. They do not feel proud, and they most certainly do not want to recruit friends into their misery.



WORK-LIFE BALANCE

"MY WORK-LIFE BALANCE IS GOOD."

38.1%
82.9%

When only 38.1% in poor cultures have a good work-life balance, organizations are devaluing people for short-term results. They're trading employee well-being for quarterly numbers, and while it might work briefly, it always results in **burnout, turnover, and collapsed performance.**

"LEADERSHIP CARES ABOUT MY WORK-LIFE BALANCE."

24.4%
77.5%

WORK–LIFE BALANCE

The 44-point balance gap and 53-point caring gap reveal fundamentally different philosophies. Poor cultures extract maximum effort today without considering the consequences of tomorrow. **Strong cultures cultivate sustainable performance that grows and matters over the years.**

When only 38.1% in poor cultures have a good work-life balance, organizations are devaluing people for short-term results. They're trading employee well-being for quarterly numbers, and while it might work briefly, it always results in burnout, turnover, and collapsed performance. The finding that only 24.4% of individuals in poor cultures believe leadership cares about their well-being is particularly alarming. **More than three-quarters of employees get a clear message: the organization wants their labor, not them.** They are often viewed as resources to be maximized, rather than as individuals. This indifference can create toxic dynamics.

Employees will learn to conceal their personal needs, feign availability, and prioritize short-term survival over long-term sustainability. They may feel that admitting to a need for balance marks them as uncommitted. **In contrast, 77.5% of individuals in organizations with strong cultures who feel that leadership cares about balance aren't just happier, but also more productive. They bring full energy to focused work hours rather than a depleted presence to extended ones.**



THE CULTURE CHAMPIONS



The 43-point gap between poor and strong cultures in retention motivation reveals two entirely different workforces. **In poor cultures, only 27.2% stay for culture, while the rest are held by a lack of options.** These reluctant employees become organizational anchors. They slow change because change requires effort they won't give and they resist innovation because innovation requires engagement they don't feel. They deliver minimum viable performance because that's all that is required.

In organizations with strong cultures, **70.5% choose to stay for the environment itself.** These culture champions don't need retention bonuses or lock-in agreements. They're retained by something stronger than contracts: **genuine desire to remain.**

THE PURPOSE CELEBRATION

Poor Cultures Strong cultures

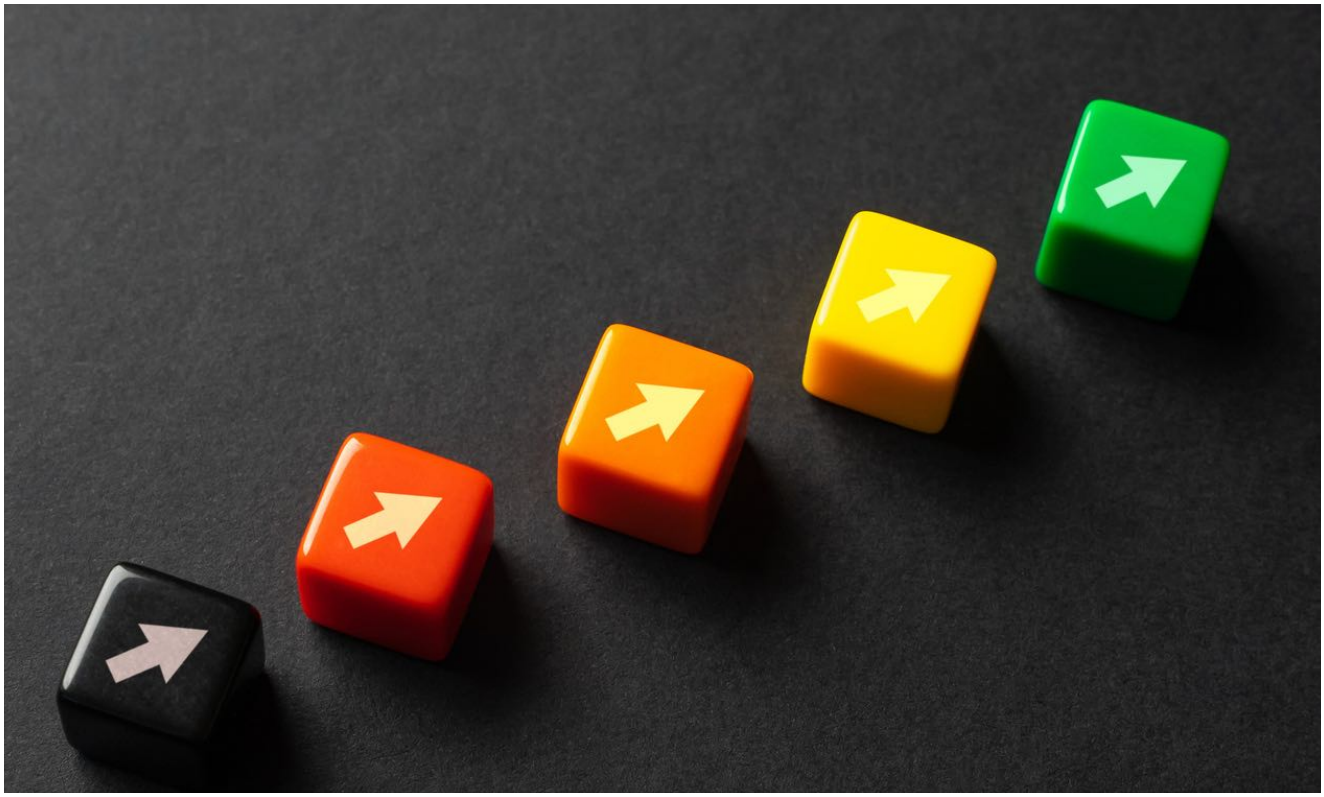
"I FEEL A SENSE OF PURPOSE IN MY WORK."



Purpose transforms everything it touches. Employees with purpose don't need motivation; they have mission. They don't require constant supervision; they have internal direction. They don't calculate minimum effort, instead, they pursue maximum impact.

When **88.7%** in strong cultures feel purpose, **nearly nine in ten employees know why their work matters.** They can connect today's tasks to tomorrow's outcomes, and everything is aligned and driven.

In poor cultures where **57.8%** lack purpose, work becomes repetition without reason. **Days blur into weeks of meaningless motion because employees can't explain why their work matters because they don't believe it does.** They can't celebrate impact they don't see or feel.



THE HAPPY WORKPLACE REALITY

"I AM HAPPY WITH MY WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE."

In poor cultures, **46.0%** agree.

In strong cultures, **92.0%** agree.

"MY WORK ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS MY JOB SATISFACTION."

In poor cultures, **48.7%** agree.

In strong cultures, **92.7%** agree.

The 46-point happiness gap between poor and strong cultures isn't just about feelings: it's about fundamental workplace satisfaction. **When only 46% of people in poor cultures are happy with their workplace experience, the majority spend eight hours a day in environments they dislike.**

THIS UNHAPPINESS DOESN'T STAY CONTAINED; IT SPREADS TO EVERY BUSINESS METRIC.

Unhappy employees serve customers unhappily. They collaborate because they must, not because they want to. **Their unhappiness becomes the customer's experience, the product's quality, and the brand's reputation.**

The nearly identical problem with environmental support **(48.7% poor, 92.7% strong)** indicates that the happiness problem is structural. Strong cultures build environments that actively support satisfaction through systems, spaces, and structures that enable rather than inhibit.

Poor cultures expecting different outcomes without environmental change are delusional. When only 48.7% feel their environment supports their satisfaction, the majority struggle to find fulfillment in their workplace. **Those who perform well succeed despite their environment, not because of it.**

Fractional
Chief Culture Officer™

The Fractional Chief Culture Officer™ gives you a seasoned culture strategist who **works with your leadership team** to define challenges, align values, and build a sustainable, high-performance culture that people actually live.

- **Brings clarity to what's really holding your culture back.**
- **Turns culture from an idea into a disciplined, organization-wide practice.**
- **Aligns leaders around shared priorities and expectations.**



Opt for a designed culture, not a default culture.

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THE GENERATIONAL EXPERIENCE

The data reveals that considerable generational differences exist. The patterns that emerge carry significant implications for how organizations attract, retain, and engage talent across age groups.

THE ETHICAL BURDEN

YOUNGER WORKERS CARRY A DISPROPORTIONATE SHARE OF ETHICAL PRESSURE IN TODAY'S WORKPLACE.

	Generation	Yes
"I've felt pressure to compromise my personal values at work."	*Gen Z*	35.8%
	Millenials	37.5%
	Gen X	27.6%
	Boomers	21.1%

	Generation	Yes
"I have felt ethically uncomfortable with decisions made by my company."	*Gen Z*	35.3%
	Millenials	30.1%
	Gen X	24.4%
	Boomers	18.9%

More than one-third of Gen Z and Millennials have felt pressure to compromise their values at work, compared to just 21% of Boomers.

Gen Z reports nearly twice the rate of ethical discomfort with company decisions as Boomers:

35.3% vs 18.9%

The implications for talent attraction are significant.

Creating a high-performing culture where values and ethics are held to the highest standard positions any organization to better attract younger workers entering the marketplace. Gen Z and Millennials are watching closely. They notice when organizations pressure employees to cut corners, and they remember. The companies that build reputations for genuine ethical commitment will have first pick of emerging talent. **Those known for values-compromise will struggle to recruit the best young professionals, who increasingly have options and aren't afraid to use them.**

THE GENERATIONAL EXPERIENCE

THE EFFECT OF MONDAY MORNINGS

"THE THOUGHT OF GOING TO WORK ON MONDAY MORNING IS STRESSFUL."

Generation	Yes
Gen Z	72.6%
Millenials	69.9%
Gen X	63.0%
Boomers	50.8%



Half of Millennials find Monday mornings stressful. **Nearly half of Gen Z feels the same.** Gen X isn't far behind at 44%. Only Boomers show relative calm, with just over a quarter experiencing that Sunday evening dread.

The message for organizations is clear:

Monday stress affects the vast majority of the workforce.

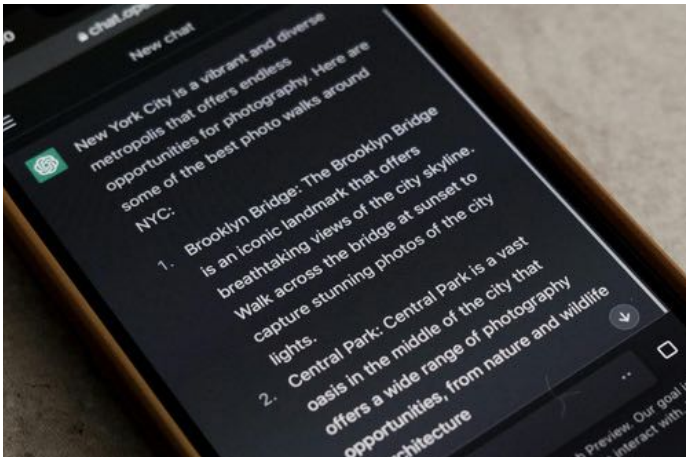
Three out of four generations report stress levels approaching or exceeding 45%. **This isn't a generational quirk to be explained away.** It's a widespread reality that demands attention. Organizations serious about performance, retention, and wellbeing need to address Monday stress as a cultural priority, not dismiss it as inevitable.

THE GENERATIONAL EXPERIENCE

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ANXIETY

"I FEEL AT RISK OF BEING REPLACED BY AI IN MY CURRENT ROLE."

Generation	Yes
Gen Z	32.6%
Millenials	27.3%
Gen X	23.6%
Boomers	16.0%



Contrary to assumptions that older workers fear technological displacement most, AI anxiety runs highest among the youngest employees. **About one-third of Gen Z feels at risk of AI replacing them, compared with just 16% of Boomers.**

This inversion likely reflects the realities of job types. Younger workers disproportionately occupy roles that current AI capabilities threaten most directly: content creation, data entry, customer service, social media management, and administrative functions. **These are precisely the tasks where large language models and automation tools have made the most dramatic advances.**

The finding also suggests a culture opportunity. Organizations that show their people, especially younger employees, that they are valued will create a motivated, high-performing culture.

THE GENERATIONAL EXPERIENCE



THE CUSTOMER CONNECTION GAP

	Generation	Yes
"Customers do not receive the best possible experience due to internal dysfunction."	*Gen Z*	45.8%
	Millenials	40.8%
	Gen X	30.7%
	Boomers	25.1%

	Generation	Yes
"I have underperformed for a customer due to internal dysfunction."	*Gen Z*	33.7%
	Millenials	28.1%
	Gen X	20.5%
	Boomers	17.7%

Younger workers are far more likely to report that customers suffer from internal dysfunction. **Nearly half of Gen Z (45.8%) sees customers receiving subpar experiences** due to internal problems, compared to just a quarter of Boomers.

The personal admission tells the same story.

One-third of Gen Z admits to underperforming for customers because of internal dysfunction, nearly double the Boomer rate (17.7%).

When younger employees see customer impact this clearly, organizations have both a problem and an opportunity. The problem: **dysfunction is visible and affecting service.** The opportunity: this generation is telling you exactly where the breakdowns are happening. Leaders who listen to their youngest employees will find a direct line to customer experience issues that need fixing.

THE GENERATIONAL EXPERIENCE



"WORK–LIFE BALANCE"

"MY WORK–LIFE BALANCE IS GOOD."

Generation	Yes
Gen Z	58.4%
Millenials	74.0%
Gen X	67.3%
Boomers	70.3%



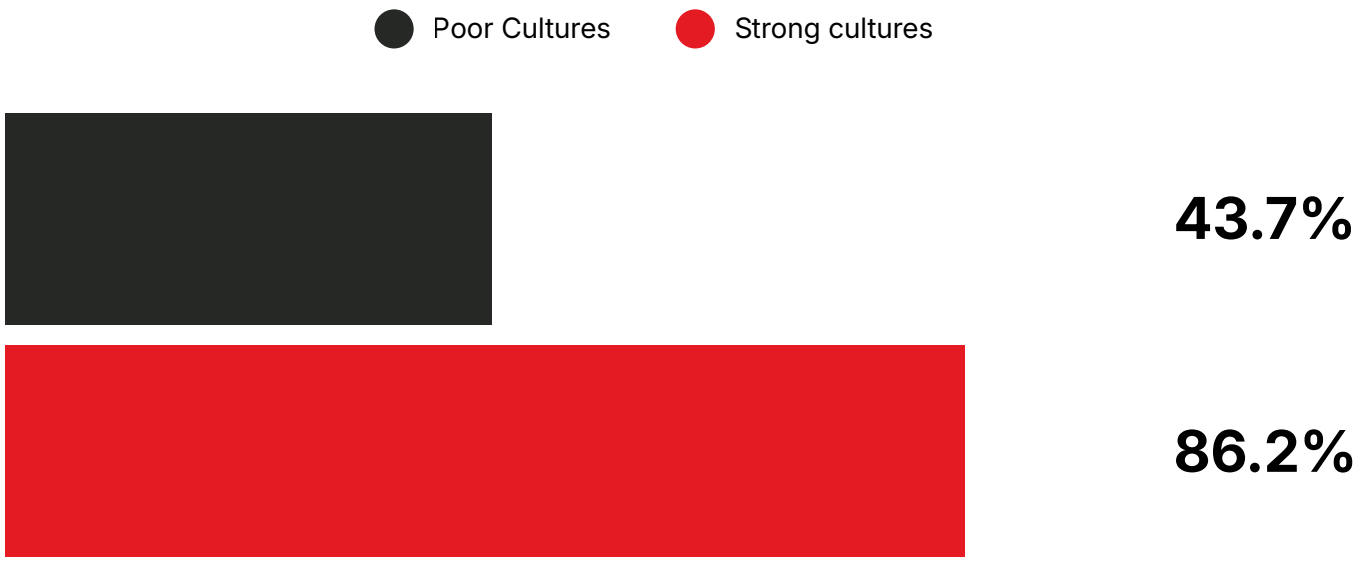
Gen Z reports the lowest work-life balance satisfaction at 58.4%, a full 15 points below Millennials at 74.0%. **Gen X and Boomers fall in between at 67.3% and 70.3%, respectively.**

Knowing that this problem exists positions leaders who want to create a high performance culture to address these real work life balance challenges. Mastering these areas can create a competitive organizational advantage.

THE GENERATIONAL EXPERIENCE

“EVERYONE HAS A VOICE”

"I FEEL MY GENERATION'S VOICE IS HEARD IN MY COMPANY."



The 42-point generational gap reveals whether organizations harness or waste the benefits of generational diversity.

When only **43.7%** in poor cultures feel their generation is heard, organizations operate with selective hearing, missing insights that could drive innovation, market understanding, and strategic advantage.

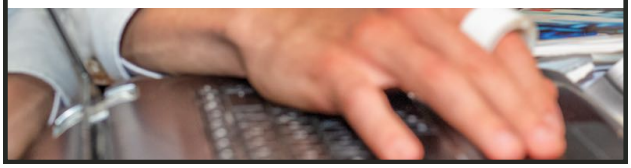
Each generation brings irreplaceable perspectives. Gen Z is well-versed in emerging technologies and cultural shifts. Millennials bridge digital transformation. Gen X provides institutional knowledge. Boomers offer relationship capital and wisdom. When all voices are heard, organizations get full-spectrum intelligence.

Organizations with strong cultures, where 86.2% feel fully heard generationally, leverage their strengths. **When everyone truly has a voice, leaders recognize that generational diversity is a competitive advantage, bringing different strengths to different challenges.**

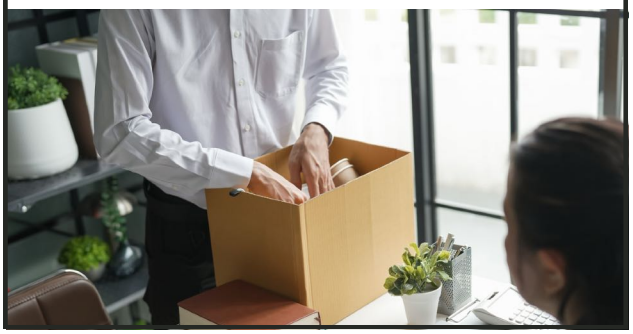
THE GENERATIONAL BOTTOM LINE

Gen Z reports the heaviest ethical burden, the highest AI anxiety, the worst work-life balance, and sees customer dysfunction most clearly.

Millennials experience the most Monday stress but report the best work-life balance and highest values alignment.



Gen X shows the lowest trust in senior leadership and the highest rate of considering leaving in the past six months.



Boomers report the least stress, lowest AI anxiety, and fewest ethical pressures, yet feel least heard generationally.

Each generation experiences the workplace differently. Organizations that recognize these patterns can respond accordingly rather than applying one-size-fits-all approaches that miss the mark for most of their workforce.

Organizations that understand these generational pressure points can target interventions where they matter most: ethics training and protection for junior employees, stress management for mid-career workers, AI upskilling to calm technology anxiety, and better listening mechanisms for experienced workers whose voices are going unheard.

The pride gap between poor and strong cultures is **39%**

AMAZING FACT

Employees in organizations with strong cultures are nearly twice as likely to be proud brand ambassadors, providing free recruitment, marketing, and retention power that money can't buy.

THE GENDER DIVIDE

Our data reveals persistent gender disparities across nearly every cultural metric. These are not minor variations but significant gaps that suggest men and women experience the same workplace culture in fundamentally different ways.

THE VOICE AND RECOGNITION GAP

Voice Being Heard

Gender	Yes
Males	70.9%
Females	60.4%
Gap	10.5 points

Recognition Feeling Fair

Gender	Yes
Males	72.6%
Females	56.6%
Gap	16 points

Regular Recognition for Contributions

Gender	Yes
Males	68.2%
Females	54.1%
Gap	14.1 points

These three metrics tell a connected story: **Women's contributions are less likely to be heard, recognized, or fairly rewarded.** The 16-point recognition gap is particularly striking, as it means women work in environments where their contributions go much more unnoticed.

This invisibility compounds over careers. Unrecognized contributions don't lead to promotions, and unheard voices don't influence decisions. The daily experience gap becomes a career trajectory gap. And, when someone does not feel heard over time, they stop speaking up.

The pattern many do not realize: at a meeting table, when a woman shares an idea, it gets heard but not acted upon. When a man repeats or builds on it, people suddenly engage. The idea gains traction not because it improved but because the messenger changed. Women watch their intellectual property being transferred in real time.



THE GENDER DIVIDE

Our data reveals persistent gender disparities across nearly every cultural metric. These are not minor variations but significant gaps that suggest men and women experience the same workplace culture in fundamentally different ways.

THE SAFETY AND SPEAKING GAP

Gender	Yes
Males	78.2%
Females	67.2%

Gap: 11 percentage points

When only 67.2% of women feel safe speaking up, compared with 78.2% of men, organizations lose critical intelligence. Women often see different risks, notice different patterns, and spot different opportunities. **But if they don't feel safe sharing these observations, organizations operate in part in the dark.**

This safety gap interconnects with recognition. When women speak up but aren't heard or recognized, they learn that speaking carries risk without reward. They calculate that staying quiet is safer than being ignored or, worse, penalized for being "difficult" or "aggressive".

These gaps don't exist in isolation; they multiply. A woman who doesn’t feel heard will soon not feel safe speaking up. The innovation deficit from missing a third of women's voices means breakthrough ideas go unshared, problems remain unsolved, and opportunities pass unnoticed.

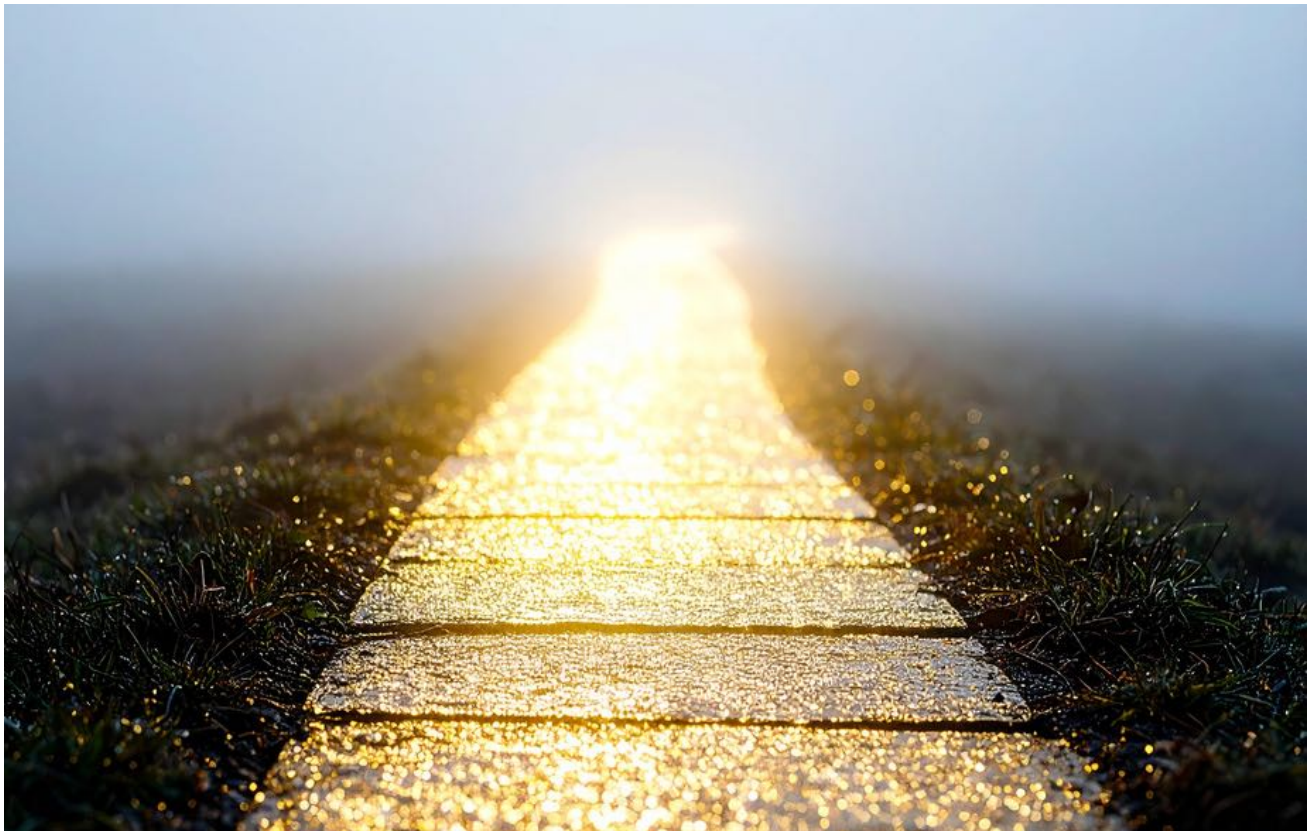
When unrecognized women leave for organizations that see them, **the talent drain costs millions in recruitment, training, and lost knowledge.** Most fundamentally, employees who aren't heard or recognized withhold their effort, resulting in performance losses that show up in every metric, from productivity to customer satisfaction.



THE PATH FORWARD

These gaps won't close through awareness alone; they require systematic efforts to make workplaces more equitable. Organizations must track recognition by gender and address disparities directly, making invisible patterns visible and unconscious bias conscious. Creating safe channels to surface unheard voices acknowledges that standard feedback mechanisms may not work equally for all genders.

The key to this shift is with leaders who successfully close gender gaps on their teams, making equity a requirement rather than a suggestion. The organizations that close these gaps won't just be fairer; they'll be more innovative, more profitable, and more sustainable than competitors operating with half their people underutilized.



KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR LEADERS

Celebration isn't about parties: **it's about daily recognition of what makes culture special.** The data reveals the stark contrast:

In Strong Cultures		In Poor Cultures	
90.2%	are proud to be associated with their organization.	**33.8%**	are proud to be associated with their organization.
87.6%	would recommend to family.	**46.0%**	would recommend to family.
82.9%	have a work-life balance.	**38.1%**	have a work-life balance.
88.7%	find purpose in their work.	**45.5%**	find purpose in their work.
89.5%	feel they belong.	**49.7%**	feel they belong.

The gaps are transformational differences. Organizations with strong cultures have twice the pride, belonging, and advocacy. They celebrate not through programmed events but through everyday experiences that make employees say, **"This is special."**

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR LEADERS

The mathematics of celebration is undeniable. When **90.2%** are happy and proud, when **88.7%** find purpose, when **87.6%** become recruiters, the culture celebrates itself. Every employee becomes a testament to what's possible. **Every day becomes evidence of excellence.**

The path forward doesn't require celebration committees or culture parties. It requires building something ***worth*** celebrating: workplaces where people feel proud, purposeful, and balanced. Where belonging is **natural**, and happiness is **normal**. Where multiple generations contribute their **best**.

When organizations achieve these fundamentals, employees don't need to be told to celebrate; **they can't help but share their joy.** The culture doesn't need artificial amplification; authentic excellence speaks for itself.

This is the ultimate measure of cultural success: when the vast majority of employees naturally celebrate simply by being proud, purposeful, and happy to be there.

Bring Hall-of-Fame Speaker Sam Silverstein In To Speak To Your Team.

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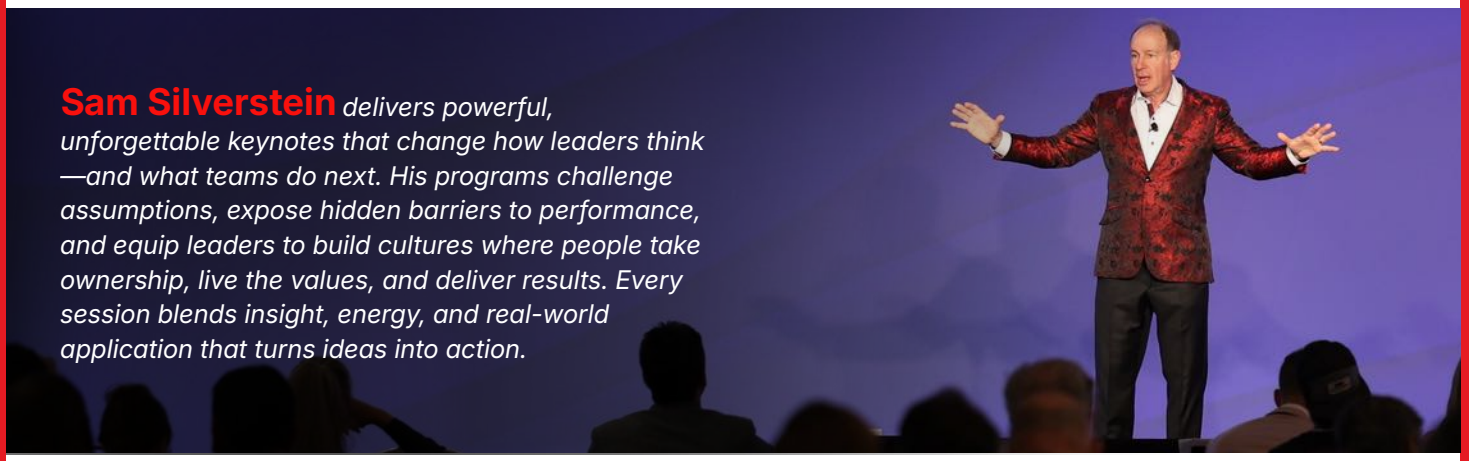

Sam Silverstein *delivers powerful, unforgettable keynotes that change how leaders think—and what teams do next. His programs challenge assumptions, expose hidden barriers to performance, and equip leaders to build cultures where people take ownership, live the values, and deliver results. Every session blends insight, energy, and real-world application that turns ideas into action.*

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→ He energizes rooms and engages every audience—from executives to frontline leaders.
→ He turns accountability into a practical, competitive advantage.
→ He exposes the real drivers of culture and performance.
→ He delivers transformational insight leaders can use immediately.
→ He moves people to act, not just applaud.

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BOOK SAM

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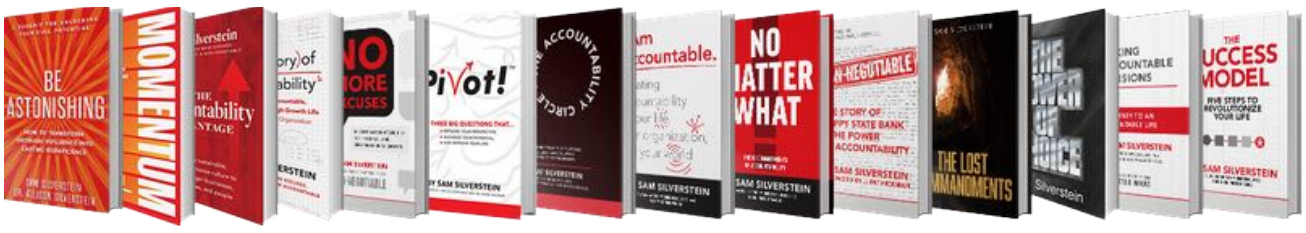

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Sam Silverstein

Author of 15 Books • Award-Winning International Keynote Speaker • Researcher • Founder, The Accountability Institute

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