

Respect

The Foundation of a Successful Nonprofit Work Culture

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Abstract

Today's modern organizations are complex. Nonprofit leaders juggle a number of demands including fostering the organizational vision, achieving results and outcomes, working with limited resources (including part-time staff and volunteers), and creating a culture that encourages employee satisfaction. Organizational culture, both informal norms and formal norms, can create patterns for effective leader–follower relationships based on respect, trust, and open communication. This paper provides an in-depth review of one nonprofit organization that serves as a role model for creating such a culture. It describes in detail organizational initiatives that promote a positive impact on employee engagement. Additionally, qualitative findings from a company-wide survey offer suggestions for nonprofit leaders to increase employees' involvement at work and enhance leaders' positive workplace behaviors. The paper also discusses implications for leaders, employees, and nonprofit organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: nonprofit organizational culture; workplace respect; trust; employee engagement

The 21st Century Nonprofit Organization

The workplace today is changing considerably in both for-profit sectors and nonprofit sectors (Nahavandi, 2015). It has a greater focus on technology, workplace demographics (including diversity and inclusion), competitive markets, and service standards (Bryson, 2018). These forces drive change in nonprofit organizations specifically due to an increased need for clarity in the organization's vision or purpose and a reliance on many stakeholders. Noor et al. (2015) referred to a collaborative culture within the nonprofit sector that highlights the need to work *together*. A collaborative and participative culture has been defined as shared leadership that includes an ongoing exchange of information, the sharing of resources, and a dynamic emphasis on help and support (Routhieaux, 2015). In a nonprofit organization, this entails working with all ranks and levels from the board to volunteers.

The Complexity of Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a far-reaching and impactful system of norms, values, and expectations in the workplace. Schein (2017) described culture as a blend of artifacts, beliefs, and actions that foster a particular way to accomplish work or form relationships. Leaders play a large role in transmitting the culture through words and actions, both formally and informally. Employees also contribute to an organization's culture by aligning their goals with organizational goals and supporting company initiatives. Culture has been described in various dimensions and categorizations, for example, in terms of the extent to which people are driven by individualized power sources, in terms of collaborative teams, or in terms of reflecting egalitarian norms (Nahavandi, 2015). Through communication of shared values and behavioral norms, each organization builds its own unique culture. To that end, it becomes the responsibility of all employees (regardless of rank or title) to foster a culture built on respect, trust, and integrity. Doing so has been associated with positive organizational outcomes such as employee satisfaction, economic return, and productivity (Schein, 2017). The complexity of organizational culture is expressly apparent within nonprofit organizations where the mission of the organization is the central focus, where innovation is needed to drive frequent change, and where employees fall into many classifications (e.g., full-time, part-time, volunteers; Jaskyte, 2004; Paull & Omari, 2015).

Langer and LeRoux (2017) described a scarcity of research that investigates the link between organizational culture and effectiveness in nonprofit organizations. They found that a developmental cultural framework with a focus on change, transformation, and growth fits within the scope of most nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit organizations hold an important place in the broader societal landscape, traditionally serving important humanitarian and civil needs that require external support and partnership through resource acquisition and cooperation. The flexibility associated with a developmental culture requires strong leadership that fosters teamwork and collaboration among employees (Noor et al., 2015). Similar to the idea of a developmental culture, Routhieaux (2015) described the need for shared leadership in nonprofit organizations. Shared leadership can be characterized by leadership activities that are broadly distributed among employees, decentralized decision making, recognition of diverse perspectives, and the gathering of collective input to solve complex issues. For these reasons, trust and respect become the cornerstone of an effective nonprofit work culture.

Respect in the Nonprofit Sector

Organizations are only as good as their employees. In fact, employee engagement and satisfaction have been predominant factors in understanding organizational success and productivity for years (Nahavandi, 2015). Although today's complex organizations use terms such as "human capital" and "knowledge economy" to describe the vital role of employees in decision making, problem solving, and strategic planning (Noor et al. 2015), have they lost focus of one critical aspect of the workplace—treating others with respect? Respect can, in fact, be leveraged to enhance the human capital associated with the mission and humanitarian vision of many nonprofit organizations.

Respect in the workplace can be defined as kind and friendly consideration between all people (leaders, employees, board members, volunteers, and other stakeholders) wherein these people value diverse perspectives, personalities, and roles without discrimination (van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010). Similar to shared leadership, respect can foster attitudes of competency and self-efficacy, building feelings of autonomy and self-worth (Freund, 2017). Respect entails treating others fairly, without special treatment or favoritism, and building bonds of trust. It also is associated with feelings of self-worth and appreciation (van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010). Although not difficult to understand, these principles can be challenging for an organization to implement.

Building respect is particularly pressing in nonprofit organizations that are mission based and fueled by both leaders and followers who support the mission, share resources, and exchange ideas. The Golden Rule teaches us to treat others as we would like to be treated. It seems like obvious, simple advice, yet in practice it can be hard for us to master. For example, almost daily there is a great deal of "tough talk" in mainstream media and communication channels. However, evidence suggests that nonprofit organizations can thrive by creating a culture based on empowerment, trust, and respect. In Page, Boysen, and Arya's (2019), the findings describe how nonprofit employees can benefit by playing a role in the organizational culture, understanding the organization's mission, and fostering trust within workplace relationships.

The significance of respect is amplified in the nonprofit sector largely because of the dynamic between staff and their board of directors (Freund, 2017). Board and staff relationships are central to the success of nonprofit organizations. Board members must respect staff decisions, processes, and protocols in meeting strategic objectives and goals. Likewise, staff need to respect the oversight, vision, and leadership of their board in daily operations (Willems et al., 2017). Even if parties do not agree with each other, a respectful foundation allows for a constructive and productive ability to solve problems together and resolve conflict effectively. This mutual respect, similar to Langer and LeRoux's (2017) definition of a developmental culture within nonprofit organizations and Freund's (2017) description of nonprofit shared leadership, creates the solid foundation that nonprofit organizations need to achieve their mission, which requires collaboration, openness, and trust. Respect between staff and board affects the organization's brand as well. A nonprofit organization's brand is often colored by balanced relationships, which can be evident in meetings, at events, on projects, and throughout the community (Cornforth, 2012). The importance of respect in a nonprofit work culture cannot be underestimated.

Work culture begins to erode if a board interferes in the staff's ability to meet organizational goals. This form of disrespect can occur when board members cross the

boundary of their role and encroach on staff duties. For example, a rift could develop if a governing board attempts to control internal processes. Staff and board members must be mindful of where their roles begin and end, which highlights the need for fair and balanced practices (Cornforth, 2012). Similarly, work culture is at risk when staff disrespect their board. This can happen when staff do not adequately support the board. For example, respect will fade fast if a fundraising board is not properly supported by a staff that provides related structure, support, and activities. Nonprofit organizations with flourishing work cultures can often attribute success to a mutual respect between board and staff (Freund, 2017). Nonprofit leaders need to pay particular attention to the connection between respect and work culture to maximize success and ensure a strong bottom line.

Why Respect Is Important for the Employee

Feeling valued on the job is an important dynamic for many employees. Building intrinsic motivation and drive becomes easier when bonds of trust and respect have been formed between leaders and followers and among coworkers (Nahavandi, 2015). As mentioned, many aspects of today's workplace diminish these feelings, causing workplace incivility to become a greater issue (Taylor et al., 2017). Workplace incivility consists of rude and discourteous behavior in mainstream organizational life. It can cause burnout, withdrawal, and ultimately turnover. The negative outcomes of incivility provide more reasons for the promotion of positive workplace interactions. Additionally, Bryson (2018) discussed that this "culture of fear" can push nonprofit and public sector organizations away from the driving goals of their mission, causing more chaos and disruption of organizational planning and outcomes.

According to Maeso (2017), the most important step of building respect is for the organization to know its people. Because employees are key to the success of business, this makes perfect sense within nonprofit organizations, which rely heavily on full-time, part-time, and volunteer employees (Paull & Omari, 2015). Maeso described five steps that create an organizational culture based on respect and that reflect aspects of collaboration, trust, and equity:

1. Show good leadership by being ethical, setting the standards, acting with integrity 24/7, and valuing people.
2. Be accountable by holding yourself and others responsible for behavior and actions.
3. Show respect to all; it is essential.
4. Communicate your expectations of a respectful workplace constantly.
5. Have the courage to do something! Don't just do things right, do the right thing! (p. 29)

The foundation of respect is demonstrated by employees' treatment of each other, the language used, and the commitments that are kept. Geue (2018) claimed that positivity promotes the best in the human condition. By understanding different perspectives, appreciating diversity of thought, and being accountable for and holding others accountable for their actions, a person creates a culture that supports positivity, transformation, and innovation (Jaskyte, 2004). Mutual interactions built upon trust, respect, and confidence can bring out the best in people. A climate of positivity can increase employee engagement and productivity through pro-social activities that

demonstrate appreciation, affirmation, and respect. This can promote greater feelings of self-worth and value at work (Geue, 2018; van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010).

In the nonprofit sector, heightened levels of respect and positivity can guard against frequent burnout and stress, which can occur with major donor events, new or changing initiatives, and a constant reliance on many stakeholders. Respectful and positive mindsets and behaviors can also minimize frustration for those working with tight nonprofit budgets and with frequent turnover of volunteers who support organizational objectives. With fewer financial resources and with the need for greater human resources to get the job done, respectful and collaborative work relations can go a long way. To that point, Alfes et al. (2016) found that volunteer engagement in a charitable nonprofit organization positively relates to volunteer happiness and perceptions of self-worth and negatively relates to intentions to leave the organization, highlighting the importance of volunteer engagement to the organization and to creating a positive culture.

Why Respect Is Important for the Organization

Creating a positive climate based on respect is important not only for employee well-being and self-worth but also for building a culture that fosters productivity and effectiveness. Cameron et al. (2011) found that positive practices predict organizational performance and improvements in effectiveness over time. These findings give credence to the fact that what is good for the employee is also good for the organization.

Cameron et al. (2011) developed a positive practices scale with six dimensions that give insight into building positivity in workplaces:

- **Respect:** People trust and have confidence in one another, treating one another with integrity, dignity, and gratitude.
- **Care:** People show interest in and respond to one another, genuinely caring for one another as friends.
- **Support:** People honor and support one another in their endeavors, building strong relationships through kindness and helping those who are struggling.
- **Inspiration:** People share enthusiasm and inspire one another by drawing out the good in one another.
- **Meaning:** People are motivated, renewed, and elevated by their work as they see the greater purpose in work and discover its profound meaning.
- **Forgiveness:** People do not place blame on one another for errors but forgive one another's mistakes.

They found that measured positivity affects organizational variables such as employee participation, customer satisfaction, and turnover (Cameron et al., 2011). These findings support the conclusion that creating a positive culture built on trust and respect can positively impact organizational effectiveness.

Mitchell and Yates (2002) discussed similar findings with respect to the cultural health of nonprofit organizations. They recommended 12 steps for the use of organizational culture as a competitive tool. A subset of these are relevant to this paper and include check whether your culture is strong or weak, evaluate how compatible your culture is with your objectives, promote a culture of personal growth, stress your mission, plan ceremonial activities, and maintain feedback mechanisms (pp. 33–34). The culture of nonprofit organizations serves as the basis of the organization's purpose or

mission. This culture can begin with the board but is typically reflected in all levels of employees from high-level leaders to part-time volunteers. Ensuring that the culture aligns with the objectives of the nonprofit is paramount, because board members seek to achieve the goals and outcomes set forth by the mission (Cornforth, 2012). Langer and LeRoux (2017) discussed that the culture of many nonprofit organizations is developmental, focusing on growth and expansion through fundraising and stewardship. The mission of the organization is woven through all of these practices that highlight the intersection of culture, mission, purpose, and effectiveness. As a result, when a positive culture built on mutual trust and respect delivers upon these objectives, the organization can use ceremonial practices to gain further momentum. This paper presents best practices that create respect at the heart of the culture of one nonprofit organization.

Method

Case Narrative

This paper provides a detailed analysis of one nonprofit organization. Programs and initiatives at the company have created a culture based on positivity, respect, and trust. Examples of the company's efforts and qualitative data collected from an annual culture survey serve as the basis for this analysis. IRB approval to conduct an on-site survey was received, and leaders of the organization approved the use of the company name and information about specific initiatives in this paper.

About the Company

Founded in 1960 and headquartered in Romeoville, Illinois, Christian Brothers Services (CBS) is a nonprofit Catholic organization that administers cooperative programs in the areas of health, retirement, property/casualty, and technology, as well as financial, administrative, and Catholic school consulting to church congregations, organizations, and dioceses.

The CBS (n.d.-b) mission statement follows: "CBS exemplifies the Lasallian tradition by understanding the needs of their members, protecting the human and financial resources of institutions and guiding member organizations in finding practical solutions to business needs" (para. 1). The term "Lasallian" stems from Saint John Baptist de La Salle, patron saint of teachers and the founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools who was known for educating the young, especially the poor (M. Quirk, personal communication, July 24, 2019).

Founded in 1960 by Brother Joel Damian, CBS began as a mutual cooperative purchasing group for Chicago area high schools conducted by the de La Salle Christian Brothers. Under Brother Damian's leadership, the Brothers realized that pooling the financial resources and risk exposures of the schools would allow both the congregation and the individual institutions greater financial strength and leverage to purchase better coverage, with higher limits, at significantly reduced costs—benefits that commercial insurance carriers could not offer to nonprofit organizations. Over time, the company has grown to administer and serve seven trusts, which provide a variety of programs to faith-based organizations in the United States (CBS, n.d.-a).

CBS and these trusts are not insurance companies but are plans in which member organizations pool their financial contributions to realize greater financial strength

and increased purchasing power, which translates to better coverages at significantly reduced rates. The approach of pooling risk and participating in self-funded plans for health, retirement, and property/casualty helps to protect member organizations from the large premium fluctuation, which can often be experienced in traditional insurance. In addition, a trust plan provides more flexibility, from greater choices of coverages and benefits to a vast array of risk management services and health benefit programs. CBS is the administrator for the trust plans; however, each trust is governed by its own board of trustees elected from participating member organizations (CBS, n.d.-a).

Christian Brothers Services Board of Directors

The CBS Board of Directors oversees the company. The board comprises approximately 12 elected members. The board chairperson facilitates the meetings, which occur three times a year. The board provides governance oversight and input about the strategic plan, monitors results, and reviews the president's and chief executive officer's performance. Upper management meets with the board annually to review accomplishments, opportunities, and challenges. The board has been particularly instrumental in assessing growth opportunities such as acquiring other companies. Although CBS does not work with volunteers or host fundraising events for the organization, the Catholic School Management division of the company works with members in these areas.

Christian Brothers Services' Work Culture Journey

The work culture journey of CBS started approximately 60 years ago when the company formed. Over time and without focus, factors such as growth, technological advances, hiring practices, and changing times began shaping the work culture. Decades later, the company intentionally works at instilling an effective work culture and is an employer of choice, largely because of the work culture.

Early Beginnings of Christian Brothers Services' Work Culture

As in many organizations, CBS's work culture developed organically at first. The work culture was impacted by facets such as its location within a faith-based university, the physical presence of Brothers on campus, religious artifacts as office décor, and norms to include prayer in gatherings. These early beginnings of a work culture would eventually take shape and evolve into best practices.

Hiring for Work Culture and Skill Fit

The word about CBS's mission spread and made for a compelling backdrop to a growing company. Worldwide mission initiatives were being funded by CBS's modest margin. This benevolent giving continues, proving to be more than a competitive advantage, but also a way to draw mission-focused job candidates. CBS's work culture continues to be impacted by its ability to attract employees who want to make a difference both in their role and in the world. Hiring for culture and skill fit is a critical part of the successful CBS work culture. Maximum levels of employee engagement and productivity result when job candidates are assessed through the dual lens of qualification *and* work culture fit.

Intentionality and Work Culture

As CBS continued to grow, a work culture began taking shape more intentionally. With added employees came an increasing number of company events and traditions, which framed a culture characterized by service, dedication, commitment,

excellence, teamwork, respect, and compassion. The company held fundraisers for colleagues going through hardship, established special service awards and recognition opportunities, and consistently showed appreciation to employees. The company participated in nationwide initiatives such as Customer Care Week and National Save for Retirement Week. In addition, CBS invited employees to attend CBS University, a program designed to enlighten participants about the company's history, mission, values, structure, Lasallian heritage, and vision. The work culture continued to form more purposefully with each activity, meeting, celebration, program, and communication. CBS was routinely behaving in ways that would soon be defined in terms of core values.

Leadership and Work Culture: Company-Wide Culture Surveys

After many decades, company leadership changed and CBS hired a new president and chief executive officer. Brother Michael Quirk came onboard as the third company leader in only 50 years. Under Brother Michael's direction, the company distributed a work culture survey to employees to gather their perspectives and ideas. The survey gave employees the chance to rate the work culture and make suggestions for improvements. Survey results were reported to employees and included action items to further advance the work culture. Employees knew the company heard their input when ideas became a reality. In addition, employees felt respected because the leadership team listened and acted on suggestions.

CBS Culture Champions

One of the action items resulting from the original survey was creating a team called the CBS Culture Champions. The Culture Champions are a cross-divisional team tasked to promote the company mission, bolster company spirit, and enhance team building. The Culture Champions achieve this in many ways and visit other companies with high-functioning work cultures to hear their stories, glean ideas, and be inspired. The Culture Champions helped catapult a good work culture to a great work culture and are entrusted with important work such as helping to define the company's core values.

Core Values and Work Culture

CBS leaders invited the Culture Champions to team together to modernize the company's core values. CBS was nearing its 60th anniversary and leadership recognized that after decades of growth and marketplace changes, the values should be reestablished. The process of determining core values was rigorous and included researching the core values of similar companies and companies with admirable work cultures. As part of the process, they encouraged CBS employees to surface words that embodied the essence of the company. Because many of the words meant the same thing, they then grouped the words into categories. The employees discussed those categories and compared them to the core values research. They made overarching word choices to capture the essence of the common themes that had emerged. They announced the final set of core values as Lasallian, Humble Stewards, Servant Leaders, Relational, and One Company:

- **Lasallian:** The company's founder, de La Salle established Lasallian principles as faith in the presence of God, concern for the poor and social justice, respect for all people, an inclusive community, and quality education.

- **Humble stewards:** being a careful steward of resources and operating with an approach of modesty.
- **Servant leader:** choosing to serve others first by placing attention on the needs of members and other stakeholders.
- **Relational:** connecting in a friendly and personable manner. Relating well with others.
- **One company:** working with attention on the company as a whole rather than individual divisions.

The Human Resources division of CBS explains that the company's core values reflect employees' behaviors both internally with coworkers and externally with stakeholders (B. Blanton, personal communication, July 24, 2019). Employees celebrated the core values and every employee received a mug inscribed with those words. The management team facilitated lunch-and-learn sessions about each core value to clarify the meaning and engage employees with the core values.

On posters around the building, the company features employees who exemplify a core value. The posters explain how the employees demonstrate a core value and are periodically updated to feature a rotation of employees. The core values became common language used to recognize employees and were eventually included in the annual performance management process.

Human Resources and Work Culture

To infuse work culture into performance management, CBS updated its employee appraisal process to include reflection about how employees demonstrate the core values. The company updated the performance appraisal form with a section asking for examples of how the employee exemplifies each core value. Additionally, managers were encouraged to create ownership through cascading aligned goals. This goal-setting approach helps employees understand the connectivity needed to succeed with projects. The Human Resources division provided oversight to the performance management evolution by offering training on the new expectations. They shared examples of cascading goals, along with sample language describing how an employee might represent the core values. Linking performance management and core values has helped align the hiring and performance appraisal processes, which has led to a work culture of engaged and productive employees. In addition, Human Resources distributed total compensation documentation to employees to show the full value of their benefit package including time off, health benefits, reimbursement programs, and so forth. Employees were further enlightened about the many ways the company compensates their efforts.

Signs of an Effective CBS Work Culture

An inspired and engaged workforce began driving breakthrough results. For example, the company started receiving awards in areas such as customer care and communications. Also, more company-wide teams began to form, including a Health Initiative Team that focuses on employee well-being by providing exercise opportunities, healthy snack options, and educational information. The company placed focus on festivities ranging from seasonal parties to unique celebrations. For example, employees reflect on the company mission with French pastries in honor of the company's French heritage on Founder's Day. CBS began encouraging employees to participate

in community service projects, which could be done on company time, as part of a Demonstrating Lasallian Values initiative. Traditions were started such as an annual “Office Olympics” day that allows employees to participate in team activities that unite employees from all divisions. The CBS leadership team remains committed to sustaining a highly engaged and effective work culture, having experienced the outcomes.

Maintaining a Flourishing CBS Work Culture at Every Level

The CBS work culture allows for shared accountability and respect. Employees understand that they contribute to a company work culture by showing up each day, participating, interacting, performing, respecting each other, and contributing. The company offers leaders, managers, supervisors, and team leads professional development opportunities, knowing that their leadership skills drive an engaged work culture. Everyone in a company needs to recognize that they are an essential part of the work environment. Equally important, a strong communications effort promotes the company activity, which affects work culture.

Marketing as a Work Culture Driver

The CBS marketing team is an important work culture catalyst that promotes the company’s mission, news, and information. The employee newsletter features segments about the core values, Culture Champions, mission, Lasallian heritage, and other updates. CBS’s magazine includes feature articles about the mission of its members. The company’s social media channels promote the work culture in numerous ways from announcing employees who win the CBS Spirit awards to promoting employee involvement in community service projects. The marketing team also created the building’s wall art, featuring a collage of images depicting the CBS mission. They crafted a unique lobby display to promote stories of the Christian Brothers, and a digital presentation consistently showcases company milestones on monitors throughout the building. The CBS marketing team instinctively and proactively surfaces opportunities to promote the company’s mission and values, which is a critical cog in a company running with an effective and dynamic work culture.

Connecting Work Culture and Strategic Planning

CBS leadership includes work culture–related projects in the company’s strategic plan to sustain an engaged and productive work culture. For example, in 2019, every employee participated in an online education program designed to help employees understand the company’s Lasallian heritage and better connect their role with the company’s mission. This project falls under the goal of fostering an organizational culture that values agility and innovation, which supports the larger objective to innovate and develop. Creating “I am Lasallian” posters is another example of a work culture project that supports CBS’s strategic plan. The posters spotlight employees who exemplify a specific core value. Measures are important for gauging the success of the strategic plan, so the company routinely issues a work culture survey to employees as well.

Work Culture Surveys as a Key Performance Indicator

The CBS work culture continues to be monitored and enhanced through periodic employee surveys, which generate feedback and ideas. The company uses historical

data to benchmark survey scores to ensure employee satisfaction stays at top levels. Open-ended survey questions allow for ideas and input, so both quantitative data and qualitative data are collected. The CBS Board of Directors reviews the work culture survey scores as a key performance indicator. The survey process guards against workplace complacency and creates an important feedback mechanism. Results from the 2018 CBS work culture survey shaped the implications and conclusions of this paper.

Ongoing Commitment to Work Culture

Perpetual dedication, passion, and drive sustain a desirable work culture. Nourishing an excellent work culture is a conscious choice that CBS makes. The company realizes that it is not fully defined by the marketplace, the competition, past successes, or any one dynamic. CBS recognizes that it is free to choose and develop an exceptional work culture. In doing so, everyone in the company enjoys knowing they work together toward a more engaged and dynamic work culture. A culture of engagement and high performance motivates CBS employees to do their best for the success of the company and for the benefit of their customers and clients.

Discussion and Results

The 2018 work culture survey at CBS highlights many positive elements of the culture that employees recognize and appreciate. The survey also reveals opportunities for the company to continue to grow and enhance its culture. The 21-item engagement survey was issued to employees and allowed participants to rate components of the company's existing work culture, provide feedback about the work culture, and share insights regarding their feelings of psychological safety. The participants were informed that the survey was confidential. The survey contained scaled and open-ended questions. The 10 qualitative, open-ended questions allowed participants to express their feelings about their work culture.

CBS distributed the survey to approximately 200 employees who work at the company's headquarters. The participants represented all levels of employees, including top management. The survey response rate was 72%, with 144 of 200 employees responding. The highest percentage of survey responses came from professionals with no managerial duties. The results of the engagement survey showcased that employees felt both staff (employees) and leadership can impact organizational culture. When leadership analyzed the qualitative responses to the survey, several themes regarding further cultivating a strong and positive culture at CBS emerged. The open-ended responses were read, analyzed, and coded by topic. The frequency of each topic was calculated and those with the greatest frequency appear in Table 1. Leadership categorized these opportunities as low impact, high impact, easy, and difficult. This categorization kept the focus on ideas that would have a high impact and be easy for the leadership to implement. Ideas categorized as both low impact and difficult were not given high priority.

Many of the high-impact suggestions summarized in the survey point to an opportunity for the leadership to shape communication throughout the organization. A large portion of the qualitative feedback relates to communication and opportunities for personal and professional development.

Table 1

Categorized Sample of Open-Ended Comments From the 2018 Christian Brothers Services Culture Survey

Category of survey suggestion	Category of survey suggestion	
	Easy	Difficult
High impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgment and recognition • Anti-bullying training to treat others fairly • Be kind and friendly to others • Company events to get to know each other • Analysis of performance review process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask/listen/act • Formal mentorship • Guard against silos
Low impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ease dress code • Team/division activities to build collaboration and trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More meetings • Avoid micro-management • Reduce rumors

Suggestions from the survey point toward the desire of employees to foster a culture based on respect, positivity, and inclusion. Survey respondents used these specific words (i.e., “respect,” “positivity,” and “inclusion”) in their responses and also commented about the importance of kindness and friendliness as well as equity and perceived fairness of treatment across employees. Respondents mentioned items such as asking and listening, valuing opinions, soliciting feedback, providing recognition, and additional mentorship opportunities. The survey feedback reflects the overarching theme of increased respect in the workplace. Specifically, the comments support the desire of employees to increase respect toward the expertise, talent, and potential of members of the organization at all levels. These characteristics align directly with the qualities associated with nonprofit effectiveness.

Implications and Best Practices

The initiatives at CBS form the foundation for best practices that build and sustain a culture based on respect within a nonprofit organization. The company carefully considers the organization’s mission, vision, and purpose. Additionally, it has—of great importance in the nonprofit sector—an appreciation for shared leadership (Freund, 2017) that includes allocating shared resources, exchanging ideas, and using a broad range of employee support. With this in mind, the tips outlined by Mitchell and Yates (2002) provide a framework for the best practices shared by CBS leadership and key takeaways that can benefit other nonprofit leaders, practitioners, and educators.

Set Leadership Tone at the Top

Leaders serve as powerful role models, guides, and mentors. The focus on leadership is pronounced in today’s organization. Leaders hold a great deal of responsibility to model words, actions, and behaviors that accurately reflect the intent

of the organization's mission (Nahavandi, 2015). In a nonprofit organization, this is paramount for many reasons, including vying for grant dollars and funding. Nonprofit leaders must reflect on their abilities and then bridge any skill gaps while building on strengths. Donors and foundations are more inclined to support an organization with effective managers. CBS continually develops its leaders through training, consulting, performance management, and continuing education.

Reinforce Your Mission Through Culture

Nonprofit organizations are defined by developmental cultures focused on growth and change (Langer & LeRoux, 2017) and collaborative cultures based on shared knowledge and resources (Noor et al., 2015). These are not competing concepts, rather complementary. When combined, these cultures show the nature and demands of the nonprofit organization, which needs to ensure that the culture and mission align. Nonprofit leaders must reinforce their mission through culture. CBS did this by creating a culture of “champions” who reinforce and bring to life the importance of the company mission. In addition, surveys, strategic planning, and performance management tools align with the mission at CBS.

Promote a Culture of Growth and Development for Employees

To work collaboratively and allow for employee participation, leadership and employees need to feel and extend trust (Freund, 2017). This builds respect in a nonprofit organization. Nonprofit leaders will benefit from ensuring that respectful two-way relationships are helping the organization meet goals and create pathways for all employees to develop and hone their skills. Supplies, support, and aid can be scarce in the nonprofit sector, so maximizing existing resources is helpful. Doing more with less requires leaders who command respect and lead by example. CBS relied on existing relationships with university faculty to create a leadership and management development program to enact these principles. In addition, CBS hosts professional development workshops on topics such as civility in the workplace, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence at work. Employee feedback indicates these offerings are valued and should continue.

Celebrate Through Ceremonies

Positive actions and a respectful culture should be celebrated. Nonprofit leaders can reinforce positive behaviors by calling attention to them. Celebrate when employees work together to achieve their goals or make suggestions to build bridges rather than walls. Celebrating a collaborative, respectful culture is inherent in the activities supported by the CBS president and leadership team. Celebrating through ceremonies is important in the nonprofit sector, which often lacks the recognition events common in the corporate world. Celebrations can also help engage and retain part-time staff, volunteers, and boards.

Create Ongoing Checkpoints to Monitor and Course Correct as Needed

Managing and maintaining a culture based on respect takes time and practice. CBS collected data through surveys and interviews with employees to ensure the culture was truly being enacted. Leadership reviewed the data, prioritized action steps, and maintained the standards they felt aligned best with their mission and purpose. Creating checkpoints and recalibrating along the way is important in the nonprofit

sector, which tends to operate with fewer staff and less resources. Nonprofit leaders must incorporate checkpoints and monitoring into their project planning.

Specific Leadership Suggestions

The main takeaways for leaders of large and small nonprofit organizations can be summarized in a few important points about building a culture based on respect.

Collaborative Culture

Nonprofit success is dependent on the ability of the organization to orchestrate many moving parts, including employees of differing status (full-time, part-time, volunteer, etc.) and competition for scarce resources. The notion of shared leadership, as discussed in this paper, highlights the leader's role in finding methods to work together and in valuing diverse and varied perspectives (Noor et al., 2015; Routhieaux, 2015). There is a lot to juggle yet nonprofit leaders can increase success by respecting and valuing the differences of their workforce and encouraging collaboration across jobs. As exemplified at CBS, this can be achieved through various communication channels (e.g., newsletters, town hall meetings) and ongoing leadership training. Smaller nonprofit organizations can achieve this by creating opportunities (e.g., video conference calls, surveys) for staff, board members, volunteers, and other stakeholders to share input and feedback freely.

Respect Can Build Efficacy and Competence

No organization can succeed if it is not productive and effective. Respectful work practices as role modeled by leadership can build employee confidence, thereby increasing competence and confidence to get the job done (Freund, 2017). Feelings of appreciation and rewards for positive collaboration can increase employees' beliefs that they can achieve greatness in their work. Self-efficacy and confidence can be reinforced by communication and respect delivered by leadership. CBS uses its Culture Champions, employee culture surveys, and ongoing assessment of organizational culture to increase employee contributions. Smaller nonprofit organizations can instill respectful work practices to build efficacy and competence with mindful practices (e.g., demonstrating appreciation, giving credit, recognizing strengths of individual team members).

Build Mutual Respect and Avoid Workplace Incivility

Nonprofit leaders have the challenging task of working with a wide range of stakeholders from the board to volunteers. It is not uncommon for tension to occur, especially as workplace incivility is on the rise. Leaders maximize their ability to build a culture of respect when that respect is *mutual* (Bryson, 2018). Showing appreciation for each role and its contribution is important. Role modeling of mutual respect starts at the top, including how nonprofit leaders interact with the board. A culture of fear is unproductive and can weaken the ability of an organization to create a collaborative culture, as discussed. Mutual respect can also build confidence and competence, helping each member of the organization to contribute to their fullest potential. Human Resources and hiring practices (e.g. person-organization fit) at CBS help to ensure each employee feels they contribute to the overall organizational mission. Smaller nonprofit organizations can utilize the same practice of hiring with an eye on both culture and skill fit.

Implications for Teaching Work Culture

The art of education and teaching organizational culture takes time and practice. This article highlights that leaders play a fundamental role in building respect through collaborative and participative practices. These qualities ring true for teaching organizational culture, especially within nonprofit organizations. Education should focus on the mission or purpose of the organization, because all other tenets of organizational success stem from its mission. Teaching practices that model respect, empathy, and inclusion, as outlined in this paper, are necessary for nonprofit organizational success. Educators should understand organizational culture as far-reaching and affecting all aspects of human, economic, and informational capital. Therefore, nonprofit organizations should emphasize the creation of learning platforms that mirror the qualities sought within each organization and by its leadership.

Future Directions

In its nearly 60-year history, CBS has gained important and practical insights into creating and fostering a positive work culture. These lessons learned can be applied more broadly to other organizations and by educators and practitioners as well. Moreover, it is necessary to delve more deeply into a number of aspects of the findings of this review of one nonprofit organization. Foremost, a broader study with a more diverse sample will provide more insight into the prevalence and nature of the contributions of respect, communications, employee engagement, employee input, and core values to a positive work culture in nonprofit organizations. Another study could build on work of Mitchell and Yates (2002), further exploring the contextual contributions of factors such as setting leadership tone from the top, reinforcing mission through culture, promoting a culture of growth and development for employees, celebrating through ceremonies, and creating ongoing checkpoints to monitor and course correct.

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