

Map Culture & Compass Culture:

Use both to help your credit union thrive!

Key Takeaway: Knowing when and how to invest in both types of culture is vital to success

Creating your Mission, Vision, and Values is an integral component of success. Further, defining your Statement of Differentiation is a critical next step. But, putting it all into action is what will position your credit union to thrive, not just survive. And that requires a world-class culture.

There are many definitions of “culture” and numerous pieces to the puzzle of success. The culture that works at one credit union may not work as well at another. And the critical puzzle pieces at one may be different than at another. But defining your culture and identifying those critical pieces should be a primary action step for your credit union.

In general, there are two types of culture: 1) a map culture where structure and discipline are key and 2) a compass culture where individuality within the structure is necessary for success. Both types have distinct advantages and knowing when to promote each type is vital. Investing in both is necessary for sustainable success long into the future.

With a map culture, credit unions have defined their “way” of performing and they’re consistently training and reinforcing a primary set of skills and behaviors. From the very first day, employees are taught about “our way of doing this task” and “here’s what we need you to do and say”. If you want to do it right, there needs to be structure, discipline, and consistency.

A compass culture requires a credit union to define their vision of what they want to accomplish; it means defining the desired future state – be it one month from now or five years from now. There’s less focus on skills and behaviors and more focus on accomplishing the result. There should be guardrails that provide structure, but individuality rules the day, not conformity.

Too many credit union leaders focus too much on just one of these types of culture in all situations and fail to recognize the times when one type will be more effective than the other. Further, there are times and situations when both types of culture are necessary to produce a desired result. For instance ...

“Investing in a highly productive culture can and will produce unparalleled returns for employees, members and communities.”

Creating Great Member Experiences

- **Map Culture** – great for creating standards across all branches and channels
- **Compass Culture** – encourages the personal touch that many people want

Coaching

- **Map Culture** – sets the expectation for type and frequency of coaching sessions
- **Compass Culture** – allows for adapting to individual preferences, effectiveness

Deepening Member Relationships

- **Map Culture** – specifies what is and isn't acceptable regarding sales approach
- **Compass Culture** – salespeople can make personal connection with members

Investing in a culture that can nimbly transition from map to compass requires focus and dedication. And that needs to come from the very top of the organization. This isn't a Human Resources task; it needs to be a C-level task. It should garner the same focus and dedication as all other tasks and strategies your execs and Board are considering.

MAP CULTURE	COMPASS CULTURE
Goals and desired outcomes are defined	Vision is defined – what we will be in the future
Specific skills and behaviors are trained	Individual skills and behaviors flourish
Uniformity is necessary for success	Variations of the norm are accepted
Stick to the discipline	Encourage new, innovative ways
Structure promotes teamwork	Success leads to teamwork
Confidence is instilled, as a result	Motivation runs high
Necessary for strategic objectives	Highly effective with tactical plans

Too many credit unions (and their employees) are content with simply surviving and holding steady when they should be focused on thriving and growing. Investing in a highly productive culture can and will produce unparalleled returns for employees, members and communities. No other investment you make can produce a top- and bottom-line impact like a thriving culture can.

But, remember: there is no finish line to this initiative, it must be an ongoing focus and effort. As the immortal Walt Disney said, "Disneyland will never be finished. It will continue to grow and evolve as long as there is imagination left in the world." You must consistently find new and different and better ways to find the right type of culture your credit union needs to thrive.

If your credit union is ready to go to that next level or maybe you think you're there but want to confirm it, our consultants are here to help. We are the only firm serving credit unions who are focused squarely on creating cultures that differentiate your credit union in the eyes of employees and members. Let us know when you're ready to talk about helping your credit union's culture. We can be reached at fi-strategies.com/contact-us or 636-578-3280.