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Culture and ethics need to be the same conversation

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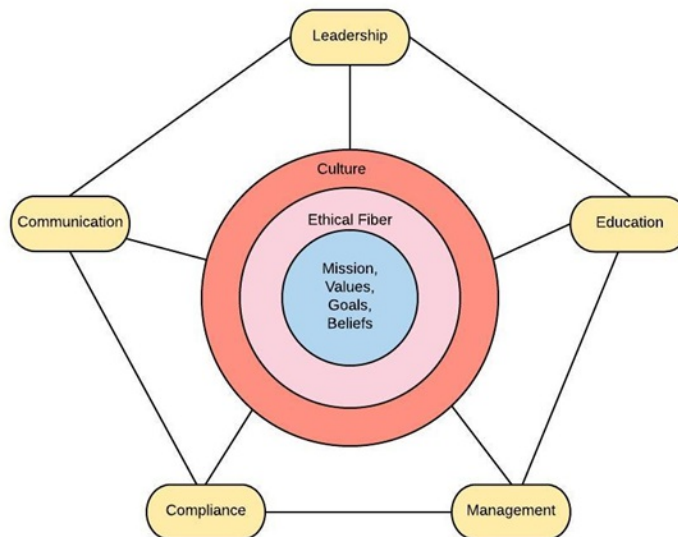
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How much have we all read in the past decade about the importance of culture? What have we done to address it? Maybe you changed your office structure to an open plan? Maybe you adopted business casual attire? Maybe you started Free Breakfast Fridays? Is this enough?

We all know these things affect employee engagement, retention, productivity, etc. and boost or reduce profitability. Simon Sinek in his discussion on the “golden circle of why” (why, how, what)^[1] tells us that Millennials are the first workforce to expect to go to work every day to a place they love and to have the flexibility to work when they want, how they want, and where they want.

In a blog post we published on our website on 22 July 2018, we espoused that there’s something missing from all the talk about company culture, like a house of cards built without enough foundational cards. The foundational piece that’s missing is the ethical fiber of the company. The SLG Culture Core depicted in Figure 1 identifies the intersection of compliance and ethics as concentric circles within a pentagon of connected influencers on the why: the ethical fiber and the culture of an organization.

Figure 1: SLG Culture Core



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It is not possible to have a company culture that drives an organization forward unless the company’s ethical

fiber is part of its core. We hear about ethics all the time, but never in the same sentence as culture. They are treated as different animals that coexist in separate contexts. They call it business ethics and have college and MBA courses on it. It's touted as a company's social responsibility and moral compass.

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