FRONTLINE LEADERSHIP

Fostering Effective Workplace Cultures

Frontline Leadership | Experienced Leaders
October 22, 2026
Estevanny Jiménez Turns, MBA, SHRM-SCP, SPHR

PURPOSE

What We're Here to Accomplish

Understand what your leadership teaches people.

Analyze how your professional presence and daily leadership decisions influence workplace culture.

Strengthen accountability and everyday norms.

Apply strategies that strengthen accountability and reinforce effective workplace norms.

Respond in ways that support people and results.

Respond to performance and behavior concerns in ways that support employees and organizational outcomes.

CASE STUDY 1

What Culture Do You See?

READ AND DISCUSS

Read the case study and discuss the questions in your handout with your group.

SHARE AN OBSERVATION

Remember your group number and be prepared to share one key observation grounded in the case.

RECOGNIZE

The Gap Between Values and Experience

Stated value	Repeated experience	Possible learned rule
Empowerment	Mistakes trigger questions about who approved the decision.	Ask first, even when told to act.
Well-being	Constant responsiveness earns praise. Capacity concerns suggest inflexibility.	Availability proves commitment.
Employee voice	Leaders ask for input, but workload concerns remain private.	Some concerns are safer to discuss privately.

What experience would make the stated value believable?

RECOGNIZE

Culture Is the Everyday Experience of Work

People learn what matters by watching what repeatedly happens.

What is visible	Decisions, interactions, responses to mistakes, and whose contributions receive recognition.
What becomes normal	Who speaks up, who decides, how people handle pressure, and what they believe they must do to succeed.
The leadership question	What are people learning from my actions, especially when priorities compete?

CASE STUDY 2

A Reputation for Results

READ AND DISCUSS

Read the case study and discuss the questions in your handout with your group.

SHARE YOUR INSIGHTS

Remember your group number and be prepared to discuss with the larger group.

EXAMINE

Three Lenses for Understanding Culture

INDIVIDUAL

What information, skills, or support might be missing?

Context, judgment, experience, confidence, and behavior.

SYSTEMS

What conditions make this behavior likely?

Workload, incentives, processes, resources, and decision rights.

LEADERSHIP

What do my actions model, reward, correct, or allow?

Delegation, feedback, consistency, and responses under pressure.

FOR DEEPER EXPLORATION

Schein’s Organizational Culture Model, Systems Thinking, Ladder of Inference, 5 Whys, and Root Cause Analysis.

EXAMINE

One Pattern Can Have Several Contributors

Observed pattern	Possible contributor	Question before acting
Decisions wait for Chris.	**Individual:** missing context or confidence in judgment.	What does the employee know, and what decision would they recommend?
	Systems: formal approvals, unclear authority, or competing demands.	Which decisions genuinely require approval?
	Leadership: quick solutions and repeated revisions may make approval feel necessary.	What happens when someone chooses a different workable approach?

The same behavior can call for different responses.

Control, Influence, and Organizational Responsibility

Within your control	Requires influence or partnership
Your responses, recognition, feedback, and meeting practices.	Cross-department handoffs, shared priorities, and competing deadlines.
Clear expectations and decision boundaries within your authority.	Policy approvals, resources, staffing, and formal decision rights.
Documenting the pattern, impact, and action you have taken.	Securing a decision from the accountable owner and communicating it back.

Limited authority still leaves responsibility to act, raise the issue, and follow through.

SMALL GROUP APPLICATION

A Leadership Response for Chris

Evidence	What does Chris currently reinforce? What is fact, and what is your interpretation?
Inquiry	Use the lenses to identify a contributing factor and one question you would ask.
Response	Choose one feasible change. What will Chris personally do differently?
Cultural effect	What should employees experience and learn? What follow-through will make it credible?

A Worked Example: Changing the Approval Pattern

Clarify	Before the next recurring deliverable, agree on the outcome, decision authority, consultation triggers, and a checkpoint.
Change the response	Ask for the employee's recommendation and reasoning before offering a solution. Let a sound alternative stand.
Reinforce	Recognize good judgment and early escalation. Review outcomes together and adjust support.

Intended lesson: ownership includes judgment, clear boundaries, and support.

Conditions for Effective Independent Decisions

Purpose and priorities

What outcome matters, and what trade-offs are acceptable?

Information and context

What constraints, facts, and downstream effects must be understood?

Authority and boundaries

What can I decide, and what requires consultation or approval?

Capability and judgment

What knowledge, practice, and feedback do I need?

Resources and support

Do I have time, tools, access, and someone to consult?

Feedback and review

How will we learn from the result and adjust the agreement?

1:55–2:05 PM EASTERN

Break

Return at 2:05 pm Eastern

Next: responding to a setback while reinforcing the culture you want.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXTENSION

When Ownership Has Consequences

Chris has been working on empowering their team members to take ownership over more decisions.

The team needed a quick decision and Chris was not available. Alex, the most senior member of Chris's team, changes a project handoff to meet a deadline.

The change impacts another department's workflow and delays the next stage.

Chris had assumed changes affecting another department would be discussed first. That boundary was never explicit.

PAUSE

The First Response Sends a Cultural Message

Notice your default

Do you take over, demand an explanation, blame, avoid the concern, or remove decision authority?

Separate the event from the interpretation

“The handoff changed and created rework” is observable.
“Alex can’t be trusted” assigns meaning before inquiry.

RESPOND

A Deliberate Leadership Response

Pause	Regulate your reaction.
Contain and Repair	Contain and repair the impact. Focus on immediate recovery work.
Understand and Reflect	Explore reasoning, missing information, conditions, and your own contribution.
Learn and Reset	Agree on expectations, boundaries, support, and follow-up.

A first, recoverable mistake calls for teaching, repair, and follow-through.
A missed expectation can also require a process change or clearer information.

What Your Leadership Reinforces

Model	What do people see me do about boundaries, disagreement, mistakes, and commitments?
Reward	Whom do I recognize, and for what? Do I praise last-minute rescue more than prevention?
Correct	Which concerns do I address promptly and consistently, including with strong performers?
Allow	What becomes acceptable when I overlook it or repeatedly make exceptions?

A Completed Leadership Action Plan

Gap	We say well-being matters, but every senior request displaces existing priorities.
My contribution	I routinely add work without naming what will move. The team learns that capacity concerns are unwelcome.
Action and partners	At Monday’s planning meeting, review competing deadlines. Where priorities conflict, ask the accountable leaders to agree on trade-offs.
Evidence and review	At the next planning meeting, review what changed and ask whether priorities are clearer and concerns easier to raise.

Pair Share

The Challenge in Your Organization

IDENTIFY AND DISCUSS

Choose a current, recurring situation that affects you, your team, or your results.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Share only details you are comfortable discussing and avoid identifying individuals.

Consistency is tested when change becomes inconvenient

Evaluate the trade-off before returning to the old pattern.

1 Clarify the benefit	What culture gap should this behavior close? What should improve?
2 Weigh the trade-offs	What time, effort or risk does it add? Who bears the costs and benefits?
3 Examine the friction	Is this a learning curve, a need for support, or evidence of harm?
4 Check the impact	Compare results and employee experience with the starting point.
5 Decide and review	Continue, add support, adjust or stop. Set a date to reassess.

Stay consistent with the value. Be willing to adjust the approach.

REFLECT

Workshop Self-Assessment

Yes / Somewhat / Not yet

Awareness	Can I identify a gap between stated values and the experience my leadership helps create?
Response	Can I address a performance or behavior concern while examining contributing conditions and retaining accountability?
Application	Have I chosen a feasible change and a way to check whether people experience a difference?

COMMITMENT

What Will You Put Into Practice?

I will _____
by _____.

I will check whether it helps by _____.

Culture becomes credible through what people repeatedly experience.