



TRIBAL LEADERSHIP

Professor Dave Logan presented his concept mapping five stages of corporate culture.



DAVE LOGAN

Dave Logan took part in a training session of SIBUR's Marketing and Sales staff and talked about tribal leadership, a concept detailed in his book of the same title developed over 10 years of rigorous research into firms across the globe.

According to Logan, this research revealed a number of patterns reproduced across companies regardless of their location.

Dave Logan is one of the world's most-known corporate culture and team building experts and the author of Tribal Leadership, a bestselling book titled after his own concept. His clients include over thirty Fortune 500 companies.

One such pattern is the impact of corporate culture on business success. Sociologist Peter Drucker, as Dave Logan quoted, said, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast". He is positive that, to improve performance, a company should change its culture first before focusing on strategy.

CORPORATE CULTURE IS NOT A SET OF RULES ENSHRINED IN SOME FORMAL DOCUMENT – IT'S ABOUT REAL EMPLOYEE INTERACTIONS. AND TO CHANGE IT, THE MANAGEMENT SHOULD FIRST LEARN TO ANALYSE THE CULTURES OF THE NATURALLY FORMING CORPORATE TRIBES.

A large firm may have hundreds or even thousands of employees, but it's simply impossible to take this crowd and build a close-knit community out of it.

People will just split into groups depending on mindset, each with its own distinctive views and values. Dave Logan calls these groups "tribes".

Based on the members' work ethics and attitudes towards the company, he has distinguished five tribal stages built around hostility, indifference, personal ambitions, teamwork, and global values. In defining the tribal stages, Logan uses phrases that would most accurately describe their world views.

Stage One. "Life sucks".

According to Dave Logan, about 2% of employees in Western companies belong to Stage One.

These people are convinced that life is inherently unfair and surviving is all they can do. They don't care a bit about their work or its impact. They are openly hostile to their colleagues. In fact, they are hardly a group as many of them are socially alienated.

But you can't ignore them, as even one tribe of this stage might harm the company.



Stage Two. "My life sucks".

Similarly to Stage One, this tribe is a drag on the company's development. These people are sure that their lives are miserable and unfortunate and that the company underestimates their input and gives them too much work. They believe they need to work because everybody else does but don't want to grow professionally, living for the weekends and salaries instead. They are apathetic, neither making any decisions nor having any specific goal. Logan says their share can be as high as 25% depending on the company.



Stage Three. “I’m great”.

The biggest tribe (up to 48% of the staff). These are people who want to fulfil their potential. They are “lone warriors” who know and do their job well. But can they really contribute to business development? Hardly so. To save time on explanations, they won’t share any information with their colleagues. While leaders of this group have no problems climbing the career ladder and can easily work their way up to high-level positions, they don’t think outside the box and thus are unlikely to grow professionally. They limit their opportunities by rejecting others’ innovations and not listening to their own colleagues.



Stage Four. “We’re great”.

Companies dominated by this tribe have great potential. Its members consider themselves a team united by common goals and values. While internal competition at Stage Three requires hand-picking employees for each task, Stage Four ensures unrestricted information exchange between people. These innovative, committed and enthusiastic groups can account for up to 23% of the staff. Their desire to compete with other tribes is the only gap between them and Stage Five.



Stage Five. “Life is great”.

Although reflecting less than 2% of the workforce, these tribes are the ultimate development drivers. They believe life can be changed for the better. They are in competition with what's possible, not with another tribe. They focus on the market to come up with solutions that will give a competitive edge to the company. They work to bring something new to the world – like creating a technology – and develop and transform the company's business.



From tribe to tribe

Once a manager has identified these tribes within their team, instead of leaving them as is, he or she needs to try and move each tribe to the next stage.

CREATE TRIADS: BRING TOGETHER TWO TRIBAL LEADERS WITH DIFFERENT COMPETENCIES AND ADD A THIRD ONE TO CONNECT THEM AND MAKE A WHOLE. LET EACH BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE OTHER TWO.

To move employees from Stage One to Stage Two, send them to a tribe where Stage One behaviour is unc customary.

At Stage Two, you have to be a nice guy who listens to constant whines about life being unfair. But you can find the most promising employee within this tribe and mentor him or her as if they were a Stage Three person, saying things like “I think you've got real potential”. Assign them tasks you know they will be able to complete quickly. A positive result will show them how important they are so one day or another they will actually start using Stage Three language. When this day arrives, make them a mentor for somebody else, and so on. This way you will be able to promote Stage Two to Stage Three entirely.

A lift to Stage Four requires assessing every member at Stage Three to assign these people tasks they cannot handle individually. Create triads: bring together two tribal leaders with different competencies and add a third one to connect them and make a whole. Let each be responsible for the quality of relationship between the other two. Base discussions on shared values and direct the tribe using microstrategies.

If you have a true Stage Four team that can handle any assignment, ask them such questions as “How can we become perfect?”, “How can we make history?”. Engage with Stage Four to focus on a microstrategy that will create a disruptive innovation. This way you will get a Stage Five tribe, the future of business.



“Companies with higher-stage tribes have higher earnings, hire the best talent (while also putting effort into developing their existing staff), serve their markets better and enjoy it greatly,” concludes Dave Logan.