



## Transforming a Company Culture to Achieve Customer Delight

By Steve Miggo, Safelite AutoGlass®, Senior Vice President,  
Human Resources & Leadership Development

*"Culture cannot only stop a change effort dead in its tracks,  
it can also propel it to great heights."*

– The Secret of a Winning Culture by Larry E. Senn & John R. Childress

**W**alt Disney used to have a popular phrase: "Don't pass the trash." The idea behind this philosophy is that everyone within an organization is responsible for its reputation. If there is something that needs done, like picking up trash, take the initiative to do it. It represents what every business leader knows: a winning culture must be embraced by every employee or success will not happen.

Research<sup>1</sup> validates this notion that employee engagement is integral to customer satisfaction:

- 70 percent of engaged employees feel they have a good understanding of customer service in comparison to just 17 percent of non-engaged workers, according to a report by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
- 75 percent of highly engaged employees think they can reduce costs and improve customer service and quality, according to Towers Perrin.

A culture of customer delight does not just happen – it was to be woven into the fabric of an organization. A leader can have a fantastic vision and strategy, but the road – what happens along the way – can present barriers, including bureaucracy, unwritten rules and personal habits within an organization. On the reverse side, company habits and culture can also work for the company and propel its success. These are considered "cultural enablers" – the fuel that lights the fire to get you to the place you want to go.

### Case Study in Cultural Transformation

Safelite AutoGlass® has not become the nation's leading provider of vehicle glass repair and replacement services by accident. In 2009, the company set about on a four-year strategic plan to transform its culture into one focused on customer delight. Since, customer satisfaction surveys have increased each year, reaching an impressive 84 (out of 100 on the Net Promoter Score) by the end of 2010.

The steps Safelite® implemented can be compared to a race. You must know your course. You must have good coaches. You must train your muscles for strength and resilience. You must strive for improvement each time by understanding what may have slowed you down.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://business.ezinemark.com/greater-employee-engagement-can-improve-customer-service-16a1722037f.html#ixzz19cCxxIBB>



### *Setting the Course: Defining a Company Culture*

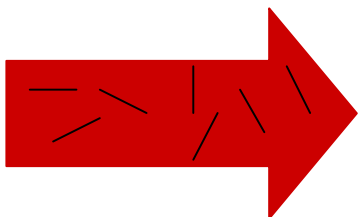
To ensure Safelite's employees understand that we are striving for a culture focused on customer delight, we developed "Destination 2012," which clearly defines the company we want to be and the behaviors that will get us there. In other words, we set the course.

Too often, cultural transformations fail when they ignore the human and behavioral side of change. After all, a company's employees are its brand. Their habits define the company culture. If people don't know what actions they are to take, there will be no consistency.

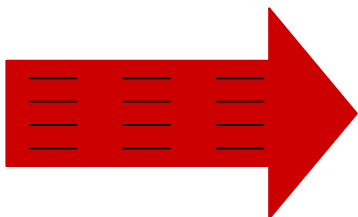
Within Destination 2012, Safelite® leadership outlined the six core competencies it expects from its people:

- **Live Our Values:** Do what's right.
- **Think People First:** Recognize that having great people is the ultimate competitive advantage.
- **Have Passion for Creating Customer Delight:** Deliver optimal experience internally and externally.
- **Understand the Business (And Your Role in It):** Learn and apply position expertise and industry knowledge.
- **Be Innovative:** Think differently for better business results.
- **Drive for Extraordinary Results:** Show personal desire, energy and focus to succeed against high standards.

This puts everyone on the same path. In *The Secret of a Winning Culture* by Larry E. Senn & John R. Childress, they illustrate how there is no power in fragmented efforts. When people are aligned, it creates an enormous amount of synergy. Everyone is heading toward the same goal. In a weak culture, people blame and point fingers and do things differently.



In a **weak culture**, everyone acts differently and has different agendas.



In an **aligned culture**, everyone acts consistently powering the company forward.

© *The Secret of a Winning Culture*  
by Larry E. Senn & John R. Childress

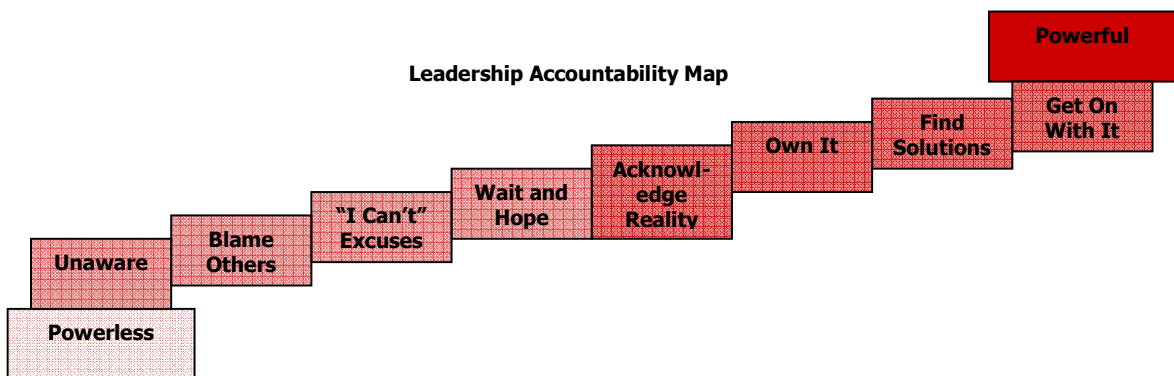


*Coaching for Performance: Leadership Must Pave the Way*

To increase employee engagement of the core competencies outlined in "Destination 2012," it must begin from the top. If a company's leaders do not live and breath the company's core competencies, these winning behaviors will not spread throughout the organization. This creates the alignment the company needs to achieve customer delight.

Consider this: Organizations are shadows of their leaders. As a leader, people are watching you. Employees take their behavioral cues from what they see from you. If you yell and scream, they'll take that cue from you. If you don't care, they won't either. When standing in the afternoon sunlight, your shadow looms much taller – leaders must carefully manage the shadow they cast on their staff.

To prepare Safelite's leaders for our cultural shift and their role in it, we shared with them a "Leadership Accountability Map."



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As you can see in this map, there is a path to how leaders embrace problems or concerns in their employee environment. Some blame others while some just believe they can't fix it. Others will just wait and hope it works itself out. These are powerless leaders. As you work your way up the ladder, good leaders will begin to acknowledge reality, then they'll begin to own it. When they begin to find solutions and take control, they become powerful leaders. In other words, sticking your head in the sand and failing to tackle a problem will not get you where you want to be.

Another way we communicated to Safelite's corporate executives in order to build buy-in for "Destination 2012" was to make sure they understood that the charge of delivering customer delight doesn't just lie with forward-facing employees (the call center representatives and technicians) but also with management. Managers serve a different customer – the internal customer. Therefore, compensation for managers is tied to performance (individually, company-wide) – and tied to reaching the goals set by "Destination 2012." If they do not provide the support their teams need, they will be not be rewarded.



### *Training Your "Muscles": Supporting Forward-Facing Employees*

After corporate executives and managers have embraced the cultural transformation, the focus must be re-directed more broadly – to all employees. We achieve this by thinking, "people first," one of the core values named in "Destination 2012." How do we treat our employees? How do we hire, train and compensate them appropriately in order to achieve customer delight?

To create an atmosphere where people want to come to work and do their best, we have focused on the following "People First Pledge".

- **Leadership:** Great leaders create engagement among associates who in turn deliver extraordinary results.
- **Focus:** Concentration on people as a key part of our business strategy positions us for success.
- **Talent:** Having great people is the ultimate competitive advantage.
- **Caring:** Sincere concern for people's well-being creates loyalty, increases retention and it's just the right thing to do.

Once employees have embraced cultural competencies, they should be recognized for their positive efforts. Safelite® has a number of employee recognition programs in place, including personal phone calls from the CEO to thank an employee when they've done something great and consistent with our cultural competencies. It is important for employee recognition programs to reward the winning behaviors outlined in the company's strategic direction – aligning incentives with core competencies reinforces them throughout the organization.

### *Strive for Improvement: Gauge Employee Engagement Frequently*

To ensure Safelite® has achieved employee engagement, the company uses several tracking tools. Monthly "pulse checks" are randomly emailed to employees to survey their feelings about the organizations. In addition, an annual company-wide employee opinion survey measures our core competencies. Participation rates are even a way to gauge engagement – disengaged employees rarely take the time to provide feedback. The survey checks for several ways we know our employees will feel if they are fully engaged – they will feel ownership, satisfaction, commitment, pride and advocacy. These types of questions are all included in the survey.

So far, employee surveys indicate we are well on our way to cultural transformation. In 2009:

- 94 percent of Safelite® associates agreed the company has a strong emphasis on customer delight.
- 90 percent said Safelite's values have been clearly communicated.



Secondly, Safelite® created the Associate Promoter Score (APS) similar to Bain & Associate's Net Promoter Score (NPS). This method asks our employees, "How likely is it that you would recommend Safelite as a great place to work?" Subtract your percentage of detractors (those that have a negative opinion) from your percentage of promoters (those that love you) and you get your APS.

## **Make It Work For You**

Where is it that you want to take your company? Before you set out on a path of cultural transformation, take into consideration a path that has been proven effective.

- Create a map for what your company will be, how you will get there and what your employees need to do to make it happen.
- Bolster support through excited and supporting leaders.
- Don't leave your employees out of the equation – communicate constantly and take their input into real consideration.

Good luck along your journey.

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### **About Safelite AutoGlass®**

Safelite AutoGlass®, founded in 1947, is the nation's leading provider of vehicle glass repair and replacement services. In addition to nearly 400 stores, Safelite® provides mobile service to more than 95 percent of the U.S. population in all 50 states. The retail vehicle glass division specializes in replacing all types of vehicle glass damage in all types of vehicles. In addition to replacement services, the company operates a team of repair specialists that are dedicated to delivering the highest-quality windshield repairs in the industry.

In addition, Safelite® provides property and casualty claims management services to more than 100 insurance and fleet clients, including 17 of the top 25 U.S. property and casualty insurance companies. A Safelite® operates three national contact centers and manages a network of more than 8,700 claim fulfillment providers.

Safelite® is also the nation's largest exclusively domestic producer of windshields for the vehicle glass replacement market. The Columbus, Ohio-based company employs nearly 10,000 people across the United States and serves more than 4 million customers each year through its company-owned operations. For more information, visit [Safelite.com](http://Safelite.com).