

The Shape of Your Influence - Part 1

Winston Churchill is credited with the insightful quote, “we shape our buildings and our buildings shape us.” He was correct; the buildings we gather in shape the culture of those in the buildings. The statement can be applied to other influences as our ministries and organizations are shaped by more than the buildings we utilize. Here are ten things that leaders shape that in turn shape the organizations those leaders lead.

1. Values

Values that are celebrated, championed, and reinforced shape the culture of a ministry or organization, and leaders set the tone and pace for how those values are emphasized. Unwise leaders arrive and declare a new set of values, as if they can speak a set of values into existence and immediately declare a culture out of nothing. Only the Lord can declare something out of nothing, but leaders *can* shape the values and shape how the values are operationalized.

2. Mission

Values are about identity and “how we live around here,” and the mission is about what the ministry or organization does. Whenever a leader clarifies mission, the clarity shapes the activity of the ministry or organization. An unclear mission shapes the culture too, but in adverse ways. When the mission is not clear and not consistently heralded, confusion and conflicting goals abound.

3. Strategy

The strategy is *how* a ministry or organization works to accomplish the mission. Leaders shape the strategy; they lead the team to decide where time and resources are allocated. That strategy shapes how the ministry or organization serves people. It shapes how people’s time is utilized and where energy is invested. Leaders shape strategy and strategy shapes organizations.

4. Measures

Leaders are partly responsible to decide what is measured, and what is measured as most important. What is evaluated and measured shapes the priorities and activity of a team in a ministry or organization. A scorecard impacts how people behave. If the wrong things are measured, the wrong behaviors are rewarded. If nothing is measured, then people invent their own priorities. If what is measured is closely connected to the mission, then the scorecard helps focus people on what is most important.

5. Leadership development

Leaders are responsible to develop future leaders. How leaders form future leaders greatly impacts the future of the ministry or organization. The values, skills, and beliefs that are poured into future leaders today will be poured out in the organization tomorrow.

Leaders must care about the values, mission, strategy, measures, and approach to leadership development in the organizations they lead because the organization today and the organization tomorrow are formed by those things. As you read the list, are there 1-2 items that require more of your thinking and focus? Shape them well as they shape the team you are leading.

> [Read more from Eric.](#)

Next week: Part 2