

How to identify culture derailers; Ways to build change resilience; and more

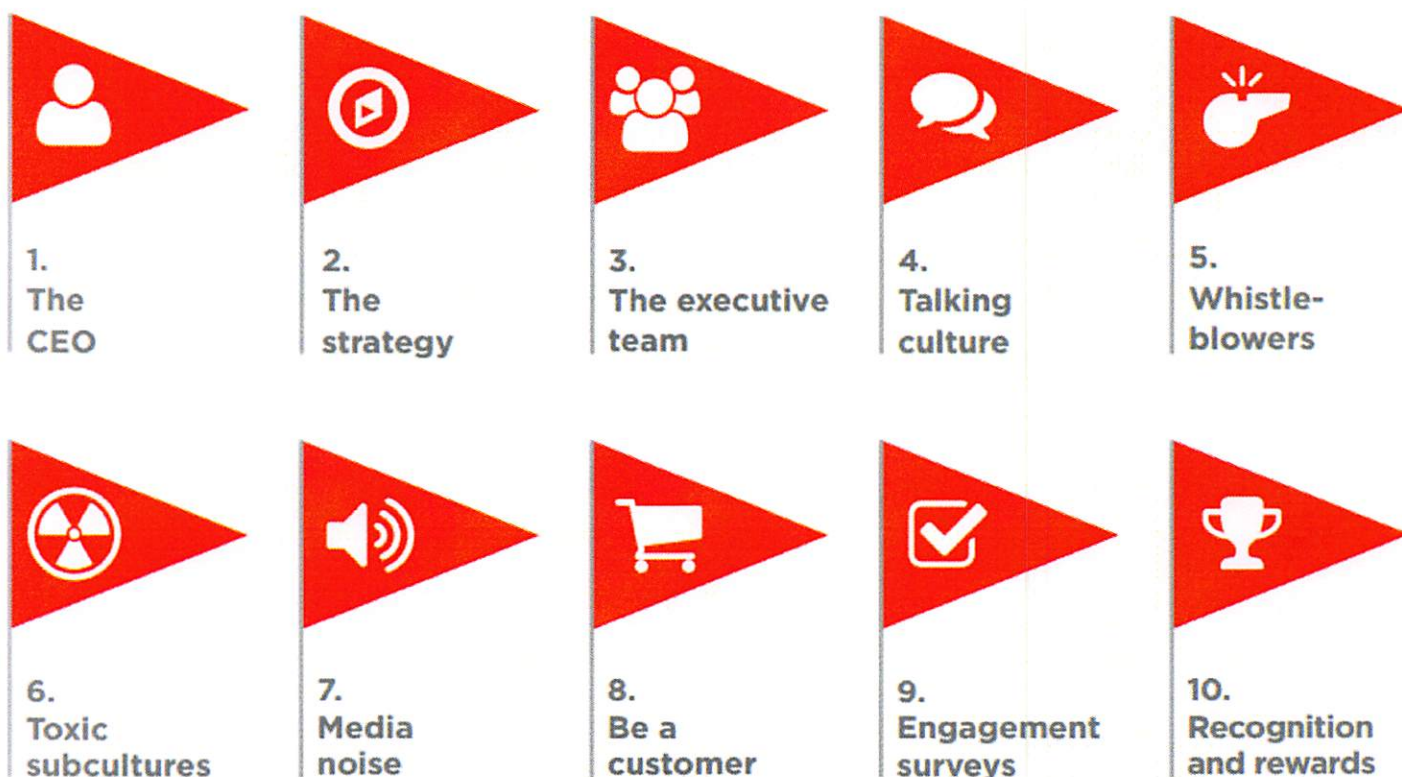
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10 red flags of culture derailers

Maintaining focus on 10 key areas can help prevent an organisation's culture from derailing, according to a new Korn Ferry report.

"People often say after a crisis that they could see the warning signs. The red flags were there, hiding in plain sight, accessible to those closest to them if they had known what to look for," says the report, which is based on a study of 13 Australian board members and CEOs.



It says the 10 markers of a derailing culture are:

1. **The CEO** – How the CEO values and demonstrates culture should be a key performance indicator, and a "god-like" CEO should set off warning bells;
2. **The strategy** – "Do you know the kind of culture required to drive the strategy, and was the strategy created in the context of culture? Is culture enmeshed in how the organisation goes about achieving its performance targets? Is it measured? The answer to all these questions should be yes," the report says;

3. **The executive team** – Look out for hierarchical clues that indicate a closed door at executive level, and ensure the team is diverse in gender, ethnicity, experience and education;
4. **Talking culture** – Leaders should talk about culture with others and determine if everyone is on the same page. "Try to meet employees in diverse roles and ask them what they think works well and what doesn't";
5. **Whistleblowers** – "Is there a formal [whistleblower program](#)? What is the process when an employee needs to speak up? And most important, how are whistleblowers treated? Ensure you have access to whistleblower reports and that you are aware of the process";
6. **Toxic subcultures** – Subcultures can be difficult to identify and challenging to change, but they must be disrupted to ensure the organisation's culture goals aren't derailed, the paper says;
7. **Media noise** – Leaders should follow the organisation on social media platforms and closely review social media monitoring reports, as such sites reveal a lot about the business;
8. **Be a customer** – Experiencing the culture in the way a customer does can reveal aspects of the culture that might otherwise be hidden from leaders;
9. **Engagement surveys** – "Be forensic in your review of employee engagement surveys and HR data. Red flags will show where there are consistent issues every year, where there is low morale, high turnover, or pockets in the organisation where results are at odds with the overall picture"; and
10. **Recognition and rewards** – Employee behaviour will align with what the organisation values and rewards the most, whether it be the sales executive who exceeded targets or the worker who revealed a culture breach that could hurt the brand.

[The Tone From The Top](#), Korn Ferry, March 2016