RANE

Shifting Company Culture in the #MeToo Era

The best way organizations can comply with new anti-harassment regulation is to look at compliance through sociological and behavioral lenses to identify if your corporate culture is enabling workplace harassment, rather than through a set of "check the box" activities. RANE Experts Daniel Forrester of THRUUE and Dr. Christine Allen of Insight Business Works offer their thoughts on how to understand how to evaluate, measure, and shift corporate culture to minimize the risk that your organization will wind up in the headlines.

There is a large-scale cultural shift occurring that is being expressed through the #MeToo movement, Allen says. Forrester agrees and says there is a desire for more transparency and a millennial workforce orientation towards values and value-based leadership.
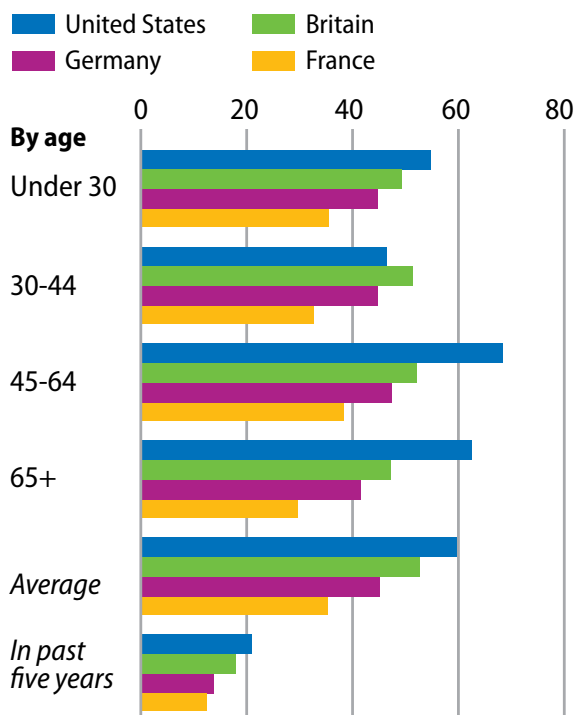
- **Allen** believes the #MeToo movement is here to stay, and says companies should move closer towards a 50-50 ratio of males and females on corporate boards and in senior leadership positions. Some European countries and US states — including New Jersey and California — are legislating these changes by creating quotas for the number of women represented on corporate boards.

- **Forrester** adds that more balanced boards tend to stay focused on values and behaviors and shine a light on issues such as employee safety, equality, trust, inclusion, and diversity.

Forrester recommends companies use diagnostic tools that measure the norms, values, behaviors, and cultures of both individual employees and sub-cultures across the organization. This enables a comparison between the values in the consciousness of employees, and those that are reflected and desired in the workplace.

- **Forrester** notes that measuring culture and measuring employee engagement are not the same thing. Many corporate leaders and boards don't figure that out until too late and they discover that their "engaged" workforce is in crisis.

Unwanted attention

"Have you ever been sexually harassed by a man?"
% of women responding "yes"

■ United States ■ Britain
■ Germany ■ France

By age
Under 30
30-44
45-64
65+
Average
In past five years

Source: YouGov   *Surveys fielded Oct-Nov 2017

Source

- Questions to anonymously ask all employees and the board include: What are your personal values that define who you are? What are the values, norms, and behaviors that you see in the current culture of your organization? Are they the same? How do they support or inhibit transformation to the "desired culture"?

- **Forrester** points out that certain values — such as bureaucracy, hierarchy, information hoarding, and a silo mentality — can often contribute to the culture of an unsafe work environment that may enable harassment or other forms of abuse.
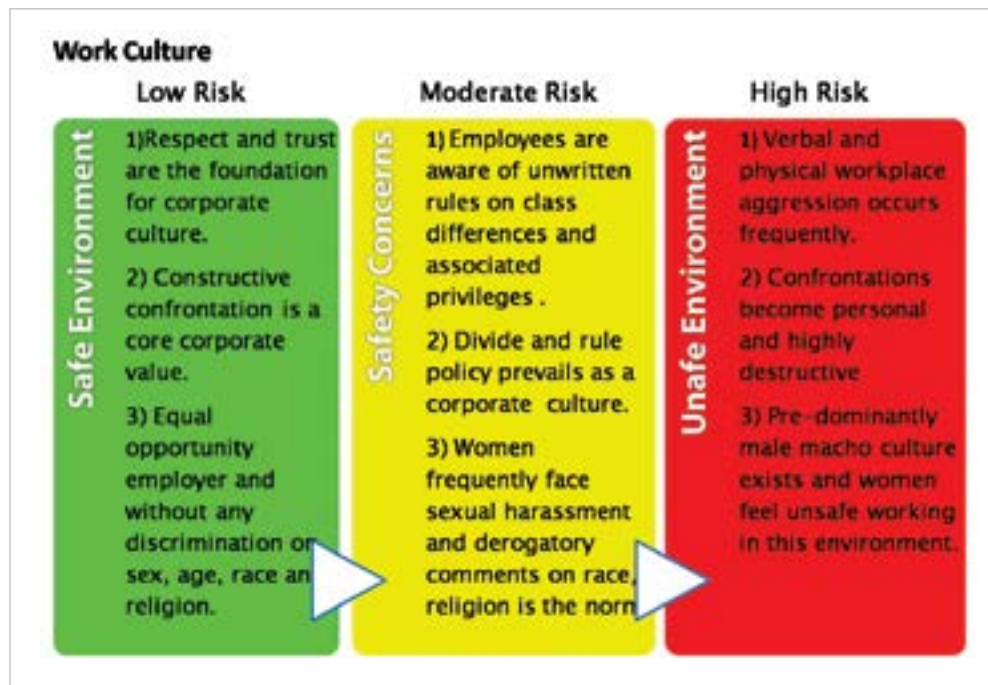
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From a policy perspective, Allen explains that companies must create top-down policies that ensure equity and fairness are positively reflected at all levels. This means creating a safe, open, and collaborative work environment.

- Zero-tolerance policies are largely ineffective because they discourage productive dialogue and, therefore, cannot address underlying issues.

- Collaborative environments encourage open dialogue when lesser offenses are committed, **Allen** says, allowing issues to be identified and addressed.

- Companies must be able to have difficult conversations about harassment, including with senior leadership, and praise individuals who speak up, **Allen** says.

- **Allen** says a company's senior leadership team must act as role models to exemplify the desired cultural change**. Forrester** adds that the "tone from the top" always matters, but only if it is met with middle managers who are empowered and given the skills to effectively address cultural problems — and then given time, sustained attention and the decision rights to drive change.

- **Forrester** adds that a company cannot simply copy or import another organization's culture. A high performing culture requires sustained management attention, commitment, and investment across years.

Work Culture

Low Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk
Safe Environment	**Safety Concerns**	**Unafe Environment**
1) Respect and trust are the foundation for corporate culture.	1) Employees are aware of unwritten rules on class differences and associated privileges .	1) Verbal and physical workplace aggression occurs frequently.
2) Constructive confrontation is a core corporate value.	2) Divide and rule policy prevails as a corporate culture.	2) Confrontations become personal and highly destructive
3) Equal opportunity employer and without any discrimination or sex, age, race and religion.	3) Women frequently face sexual harassment and derogatory comments on race, religion is the norm	3) Pre-dominantly male macho culture exists and women feel unsafe working in this environment.

Source