

A CULTURE THAT VALUES LEARNING

In high-performance organizations:

- The board, management, and staff **understand the organization’s mission and desired results and review them periodically to ensure that they are still relevant.**
- The board, management, and staff **continually seek to do even better for the people or causes they serve.**
- The board, management, and staff are **open and transparent about their results**—whether the results are positive or negative—to fuel learning and improvement.
- People in all parts of the organization have **high expectations of themselves** and of their peers.
- The board, management, and staff **take on the challenge of collecting and using information**, not because it’s a good marketing tool, and not because a funder said they have to. They believe it is integral to ensuring material, measurable, and sustainable good for the people or causes they serve.
- The board, management, and staff recognize they can’t fully understand the needs of those they serve unless they **listen to and learn from constituents** in formal and informal ways.
- The board, management, and staff take the time to **benchmark themselves against, and learn from, peer organizations** that are at the top of their field.
- Senior management leads by example and encourages people throughout the organization to **be curious, ask questions, and push each other’s thinking** by being appropriately and respectfully challenging. High-performance cultures are innovative cultures, mindful that every program and process eventually becomes dated, even obsolete.
- Senior management creates an environment in which staff members **feel safe acknowledging when there are problems.** They use what others might deem “failures” as an opportunity to listen, learn, and improve.
- Even the busiest leaders, managers, and staff members **carve out formal and informal opportunities to step back, take stock, and reflect.**