THE IMPACT OF CREATING AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE CONNECTED TO SAVING WILDLIFE

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Abstract
Creating an organizational culture connected to saving wildlife is powerful. Too often, our organizations focus solely on connecting with our visitors, forgetting to also engage our employees, volunteers, and boards. Evidence collected at the Houston Zoo over the past three years shows an overwhelming case for first engaging internal audiences in the organizational mission, creating an army of conservationists who live and breathe the mission and infuse it into everything they do. The data gathered demonstrates that engaging employees in our mission coincided with their gaining conservation knowledge and self-efficacy, better understanding of how the Zoo saves wildlife and their roles in doing so, and developing organizational pride. These employee changes strengthen our institution’s impact on saving wildlife, increase our productivity, and increase staff retention rate— all aspects that not only help our mission, but also our bottom line. These important results, coupled with increased donations to our mission from our guests and other contributors, demonstrate the power of aligning organizational operations with organizational purpose. Taken together, these findings provide evidence that zoos and similar organizations should work intentionally to better engage employees in their missions, helping to create cultures that empower and inspire staff to achieve the organizational mission.