

20 tenets of culture

A Best Practices Guide





20 Tenets of Culture: A Best Practices Guide

We are excited that you have elected to make BetterCulture’s 20 Tenets of Culture program available to your employees. It is a fantastic investment in their personal success and the growth of your business.

The 20 Tenets program has been meticulously designed to optimize both employee participation and impact. However, there is a limit to the amount of benefit a software solution alone can deliver your organization. When the 20 Tenets program is skillfully utilized by leaders and managers in your organization, it can make an even greater impact for employees, teams, and culture.

This guide, provides a detailed roadmap of best practices for getting the most out of your investment in the 20 Tenets of Culture. These suggestions are optional – but HIGHLY recommended.

Pro Tip: As you work through this guide take a few moments to think about how you will define success during the 20 Tenets Program. Here are a few goal examples:

1. *“When executives are more consistently recognizing and reinforcing the right employee attitudes and behaviors.”*
2. *“When teams are using the Tenets to elevate their performance, recognize stars, and become more cohesive.”*
3. *“When supervisors are building stronger bonds, and helping make employees more successful at work and in life.”*



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Resources for Your 20 Tenets Administrator

REQUIRED VS. OPTIONAL PARTICIPATION

The first decision you need to make in implementing the *20 Tenets* program is whether you want to make employee participation optional or mandatory.

BetterCulture is pleased to work with your organization either way. However, your decision on whether you run the *20 Tenets* initiative with all, or only a portion, of your employees will impact how you can make use of the program.

Our standard recommendation is that employers will get more out of the program if they ask/require all employees to participate in the program; however, there are reasons to consider both approaches.

Why Choose the Mandatory Participation Approach (recommended)? There are several advantages to the mandatory approach:

- The entire organization will be on the same page,
- The program will have a broader impact,
- The aggregate data for the organization will be more complete and useful,
- Several of the best practices methods listed in this guide (for example: discussions in team meetings or reviewing *20 Tenets* progress as part of annual evaluations) are dependent on all employees participating in the program, and
- Those team members who might otherwise not participate (often the employees who would benefit most from embracing the *20 Tenets* content) will participate! When these more cynical or under-developed employees get exposure to the *20 Tenets* content, they might just find it more engaging, practical, and helpful than they expect.

Why Choose the Optional Participation Approach? When you make participation in the *20 Tenets* program optional, it sends a clear message that *20 Tenets* is a learning opportunity, and a unique employee benefit, that the organization is offering. You are likely to have stronger engagement in the program among the individuals who opt-in. That means those who choose to participate will be more likely to consume coaching content, make use of the tools on their *20 Tenets* dashboard, and lean into discussion and growth.

If you choose to make participation optional, the quality of the process you use to invite people to participate becomes even more important. If introduced well, you should expect good participation from your most engaged (and probably your higher performing) employees.



There may be an opportunity to expand participation as the program progresses if your early-adopters become champions for the program. For example, by enlisting your most enthusiastic and respected *20 Tenets* participants to encourage other employees to participate, you will be more likely to have additional employees opt-in.

There are, however, some downsides to making participation optional:

- The employees who have the most room to grow and improve (presumably some of your more cynical or negative team members) are the least likely to opt-in. This is a big missed opportunity for much-needed coaching and growth.
- Making participation optional will limit your ability to have organization-wide communication and conversation about topics from *20 Tenets*.
- The organization-wide data and metrics from your Company Insights dashboard will be less useful and representative of the entire organization. This will hamper your ability to identify organization-wide trends, benchmark against other organizations, and track your organization's own scores year-over-year.

USING YOUR ADMINISTRATOR DASHBOARD

We built *20 Tenets* in a way that you, the *20 Tenets* Program Administrator, can make use of your organization's aggregate data (found in the "Company Insights" tab) in multiple ways:

1. Monitor employee participation in the program
2. View organization-wide data on employee self-perception across the *20 Tenets*
3. See how employees view your current culture on each of the *20 Tenets*
4. Compare your organization's *20 Tenets* scores against other organizations
5. Set organization-wide goals to improve certain Tenets
6. Track year-over-year progress



Introducing the Program to Your Employees

The way you introduce *20 Tenets* to your employees is important. A great introduction will make an offering sound exciting and will generate interest and engagement; a listless introduction will make even a fantastic offering sound lackluster.

You should introduce the *20 Tenets* program as an opportunity for your employees – because it is! In offering the *20 Tenets* program, your organization is making an investment in each employee to help them find greater success – not only at work, but in life. BetterCulture will reinforce that message over the course of the yearlong program. Employees should feel fortunate to work for an organization that invests in their success!

HERE ARE SAMPLE 20 TENETS EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS INTENDED FOR ALL EMPLOYEES:

Version (A): For organizations running *20 Tenets* as a mandatory initiative.

*We are excited to announce a new organization-wide initiative intended to help every [insert organization name] employee find greater success at work and in your personal life. The program is called **20 Tenets of Culture**, by BetterCulture.*

The 20 Tenets program is an anonymous, self-directed personal and professional development program that has a proven track record of improving individual performance, team chemistry, and organizational culture.

We are asking every employee to participate in this initiative. It's easy, fun, and has the potential to provide a big return for you personally and for our organization.

Next Steps:

- 1. Click here and create your 20 Tenets account using [your work email address].*
- 2. After setting up your account, you will take a brief assessment asking you to rate yourself on 20 skills or behaviors (the "20 Tenets"). It will take you 20-30 minutes to complete. [Optional: Please complete the assessment on paid time.]*
- 3. After you complete the assessment, BetterCulture will ask you to pinpoint just two Tenets (called your Focus Tenets) where you believe you can improve.*

Please complete the assessment by [insert date]. Your responses go directly to BetterCulture and are completely anonymous.

Once you complete the initial assessment, you will immediately receive a brief coaching video for each of your two Focus Tenets. Then over the rest of the year we will all receive emailed coaching content from BetterCulture every two weeks designed to propel personal success and help us build and protect a great work environment.



We're excited to kickoff our 20 Tenets journey. It's a fantastic investment in both our organization and ourselves!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly.

[Salutation, Name]

Version (B): For organizations offering 20 Tenets as an optional initiative.

*We are excited to announce a new benefit – one that has the potential to help every [insert organization name] employee find greater success at work and in your personal life. The program is called the **20 Tenets of Culture**, by **BetterCulture**.*

The 20 Tenets program is an anonymous, self-directed personal and professional development program that has a proven track record of improving individual performance, team chemistry, and overall organizational culture.

Your participation in the 20 Tenets program is optional, but it is being offered to us as an investment in our personal success. It's also easy, fun, and has the potential to provide a big return for our organization. So, I hope you will join us and participate!

Next Steps:

- 1. Click here and create your 20 Tenets account using [your work email address].*
- 2. After setting up your account, you will take a brief assessment asking you to rate yourself on 20 skills or behaviors (the "20 Tenets"). It will take you 20-30 minutes to complete. [Optional: Please complete the assessment on paid time.]*
- 3. After you complete the assessment, BetterCulture will ask you to pinpoint just two Tenets (called your Focus Tenets) where you believe you can improve.*

Please complete the assessment by [insert date] if you would like to participate. Your responses go directly to BetterCulture and remain completely anonymous.

Once you complete the initial assessment, you will immediately receive a brief coaching video for each of your two Focus Tenets. Then over the rest of the year participating employees will receive emailed coaching content from BetterCulture every two weeks designed to propel personal success and help us build and protect a great work environment.

We're excited to kickoff this 20 Tenets journey! It's a fantastic investment in both our organization and ourselves!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly.

[Salutation, Name]



SECOND PROMPT: FOLLOWING EITHER VERSION A OR B ABOVE

It may be necessary to prompt staff again to complete the *20 Tenets* self-assessment. After the first week or so, something similar to the following can be sent to all who have not completed the assessment.

I have heard great feedback from so many about the 20 Tenets program we have started. It is a fantastic opportunity for us as an organization, and each of us as individuals, to be more successful.

If you have not yet made time to complete the 20 Tenets self-assessment, please do so soon. Here is the signup and assessment link again: [LINK]

We will be referencing the 20 Tenets throughout this year, and we would like everyone to feel part of the process and understand the program. So please find time soon to complete the self-assessment. Feel free to give me a call or drop me a note directly if you have any questions.

[Salutation]



Sharing Results with Your Employees

As the Program Administrator, you will have access to the Company Insights page within your administrator dashboard. Here you will be able to view aggregate data for your organization.

After the enrollment period closes, we suggest you communicate something interesting to your employees about the pattern of the scores. A common approach is to share the top three scoring Tenets as well as two or three Tenets that were scored lower on average by your employees. For example, *“Tenets where our ratings indicated the most room for improvement as an organization are _____ and _____.”*

You will want your messaging to be positive. *20 Tenets* is not designed to find problems; it's built to find opportunities for improvement and growth. Your messaging can be strictly factual or a bit lighthearted. For example, *“If you chose one of those top company scoring Tenets as one of your two Focus Tenets, you should have plenty of role models to learn from! :)”* Or, on the other hand, *“If you are really good at one of the Tenets that we collectively scored ourselves lowest on, we sure can use you as a role model!”*

We also suggest you share some information on the Tenets that were most frequently selected by all employees as Focus Tenets. For example, *“You might be curious as to which of the 20 Tenets were most often selected as Focus Tenets by the members of our staff. The top three Tenets employees targeted for personal growth were _____, _____ and _____.”*

Finally, you could also include a statement such as: *“Using BetterCulture’s 10-point rating scale, on average our employees indicated a desire to improve their performance by [insert #.#] points on their two Focus Tenets this year. Wow! If we are each successful at reaching those goals, the impact for both us and our organization will be fantastic!”*

PERSONALIZE THE 20 TENETS TO YOUR ORGANIZATION

Have some fun with *20 Tenets*. Each time a new coaching video is released, find a way to communicate creatively about it. Personalize the message in a way that relates it to your organization. Tell a story. Create a video. Find a quote or cartoon. Share a picture from your actual work setting. It can be heartfelt or amusing; a mix of both is probably the best approach.

The goal of your *20 Tenets* communication should be to reinforce key concepts, continue to encourage participation, prompt a specific action, or personalize the content to your specific organization.



LEAST SELECTED TENETS – PUMP THEM UP!

The Company Insights page within your administrator dashboard provides a wealth of helpful data. We know from experience that there are some of the *20 Tenets* that are less likely to be selected by participants as Focus Tenets. Nevertheless, those Tenets are included in the program because they are critically important to the creation and protection of a healthy work culture.

We suggest you look at the Tenets that were least selected as Focus Tenets, and perhaps make an extra effort to highlight those coaching videos in team meetings or send an all staff communication note encouraging team members to watch the coaching video the week one of those lesser-selected tenets is featured. This is particularly important when you see this pattern: a Tenet is not often selected by staff members as a Focus Tenet, and yet that Tenet receives comparatively low scores from participants on the question asking them to rate their colleagues' performance.

RECRUITMENT: STAND OUT TO JOB APPLICANTS

As a *20 Tenets of Culture* customer, you may be eligible to use the designation of "A BetterCulture Company" or "A BetterCulture Organization!" If you see value in being able to promote your organization using that branding, reach out to your BetterCulture account representative for more information.

Other organizations are using this positive branding on their website, in employee email signature lines, on job application forms, in job ads, and in other ways to help attract and retain talent.

When people ask what it means, tell them it means that your organization cares about creating a healthy culture and investing in its people! If they want to know more, tell them more details about *20 Tenets* program that you make available to your employees to advance both their professional and personal success.

RECOGNIZE YOUR ALL-STARS

Each time a new Tenet coaching video is sent out to all staff, it's a great practice to encourage employees to reflect on and acknowledge colleagues who excel on that particular Tenet. If you have an internal communications channel, peer recognition platform, or other recognition system, put it to work recognizing *20 Tenets* stars. This is an easy, organization-wide way to keep the *20 Tenets* mojo rolling!

The impact is threefold: (a) it gets people reflecting on and talking about *20 Tenets*, (b) it lets the role model employees know how much they are appreciated, and (c) it increases the informal power and influence of the employees making the greatest contributors to your organization's cultural health.



STAFF EVALUATIONS & GROWTH PLANS

Ask employees to bring their *20 Tenets* results to their regular 1-on-1 meetings with their managers or to their annual evaluation visit. Ask them to identify where they scored themselves particularly high and what they selected to work on as their Focus Tenets. Supervisors can then share their thoughts as to where the employee might have room to grow as well as highlight those Tenets where the employee excels. This can be a terrific foundation for a conversation about gains made and goals yet to be accomplished.

Some organizations elect to use the *20 Tenets* as part of their employee evaluation process – or at least an adjunct conversation starter to go alongside their existing process. Consider this question for a moment: if an employee who brings adequate knowledge, effort, and integrity to the workplace were to exude the *20 Tenets* in their day-to-day interactions with colleagues and customers, what would be the likelihood that you would be thrilled to have them as part of your team and organization? BetterCulture believes those odds are off the charts.



Executive Team Participation

Your executive team can do a lot to increase the return on your investment in *20 Tenets*. If they participate, role-model, self-disclose, reinforce, and enthusiastically support the *20 Tenets* program, your employees will do the same.

Even without executive participation, your organization will see a positive impact, but your gains will be watered down by the signals sent by your executive team's conspicuous non-participation.

So execs, get on board! Here are a few ideas that make it easy, easy, easy!

PROVIDE ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE TOP

As the *20 Tenets* program hits its second month, have someone in the C-suite send a note to all employees. Use the communication to draw attention to the most recent *20 Tenets* coaching video that has been released to all employees. You can personalize the email with something along these lines:

Hi everyone. I just want to encourage you to make time to watch and enjoy the 20 Tenets coaching videos we are all receiving this year from BetterCulture. The one that came out this week, [insert recent 20 Tenets title], was great. It made me think of several things I can (and should) do to raise my own awareness and performance!

I have also enjoyed using the personal dashboard BetterCulture has created for each of us. If you have not checked that out, I encourage you to do so.

As I have watched Albert in the coaching videos so far, I'm excited to see just how much this program can contribute to our organization's culture and my personal success. I hope you will have the same experience.

This process of communicating to team members about the most recent *20 Tenets* coaching video can be periodically repeated throughout the year, perhaps with messages reflecting on the specific Tenet coming from two or three different members of the executive team. Here are a few approaches executives may choose to take:

- *"I so agree. I can't stress the importance of this Tenet enough!"*
- *"This is something I'm working on myself. It's one of my personal Focus Tenets. It hasn't been easy, but I think I'm making progress!"*
- *"Remember, this Tenet is one of our identified organization-wide growth areas. Please lean in with me over the next few weeks to see if we can make some real progress!"*
- *"I know we're good at this Tenet already...but can you imagine how terrific each of our teams would be if we all could 100% follow Albert's advice on this one? Wow – that would be something!"*



- *“Goodness, when I started working here, this was one of the areas I needed to work on most. [Insert name] tells me I’ve made some progress, but I know I still have plenty of room to grow!”*
- *“This is one of the most important characteristics our hiring team looks for in candidates (and it’s HARD to find!). If you know anyone who knocks this Tenet out of the park, please let them know we’re hiring!”*
- *“I’ve watched several of our team members make real progress on this one [name names, if appropriate]. It’s great to see so many of you really leaning into the 20 Tenets program. It’s making a BIG difference!”*

This type of encouragement from top leadership is easy to do and will always be time well spent!

USE 20 TENETS AT AN EXECUTIVE MEETING OR RETREAT

The *20 Tenets* can be a fantastic framework to structure discussions at an executive retreat. If you’d like to hire BetterCulture to facilitate for you, let us know. Otherwise, here are some self-led approaches that can be useful:

1. Share your organization’s aggregate data (on the “Company Insights” tab) with the executive team, reviewing the *20 Tenets* from the highest average score to the lowest. Discuss implications and ideas for building on strengths and improving weaknesses.
2. Map the *20 Tenets* to your organization’s own core values. Discuss specific opportunities and strategies to emphasize your organization’s core values within the *20 Tenets* framework.
3. Have the executive team look at the Tenets that will be featured in the upcoming coaching videos. Discuss actions that your executive team members can take to draw attention to each Tenet as the coaching videos arrive. For example, consider creating a schedule for individual members of the executive team to send out a note sharing an insight or story related to a given Tenet the day after that coaching video arrives, encouraging employees to watch the video and reflect on its message.
4. Have the executive team members consider their own departments/operational areas. Encourage each member to identify 3 Tenets where they think their department excels and 3 Tenets where they think their department has room for improvement. If you have a trusting and open executive team, an alternative (and actually better) process is to have the team members identify 3 strengths and 3 growth areas for one another’s departments. This process can generate helpful feedback for some leaders who might be surprised to learn how their operational area is viewed by others.
5. At the end of the year, have the executive team review your organization’s aggregate data and focus on the Tenets that show the largest gap between the average score employees gave themselves and the average score obtained when employees were asked to rate their peers. (Note: peer rating data is collected during the quiz after each coaching video, so it will only be tabulated for the Tenets that have been sent to the



entire organization in the current program year). When the gap is large, it may suggest that a significant number of employees are not as proficient on a certain Tenet as they think (i.e., you may have a bit of a “self-delusion gap”).

SHARE RESULTS WITH YOUR BOARD

If you have a governing board, they will often find the aggregate data from *20 Tenets* valuable – and they will always find it interesting! The *20 Tenets* administrator dashboard gives you some great summary information that can be included in board presentations.



Manager Best Practices

The *20 Tenets of Culture* program can be a useful resource for managers throughout your organization. There are many ways that managers can capitalize on *20 Tenets* to spur employee development, improve team chemistry, manage performance, strengthen relationships, and improve employee engagement and retention. Here are a few specific ways that managers can make good use of *20 Tenets*.

DISCUSS 20 TENETS IN TEAM MEETINGS

Establishing a cadence of reserving a few minutes to discuss *20 Tenets* in regular team meetings is a great way to maximize the benefit of *20 Tenets* across your organization.

Technique 1: Goal Sharing

After the initial *20 Tenets* self-assessments have been completed, team leaders ask all team members to bring their self-assessment scoresheet with them to the next team meeting. Have each team member share which two Tenets they selected as their Focus Tenets for improvement. With most teams, this will lead to productive discussion. A second benefit is that when individuals publicly share their improvement goals, it increases their likelihood of success. Finally, knowing what colleagues are working on gives each team member the opportunity to notice, encourage, and celebrate the progress of their colleagues.

Technique 2: Watch and Discuss

Another helpful feature of the *20 Tenets* program is that, through the administrator dashboard, your organization will have immediate access (via the “Content Library”) to the individual coaching videos for all *20 Tenets*. This enables any manager to review the Tenets, identify a topic that would be beneficial for their team, and then play the related coaching video in a team meeting to spur discussion. The discussion can focus on how well the team is living up to that specific Tenet and what could be done to become even better.

Some of the Tenets that stand out as a great foundation for a team discussion include: Tenet 1 (Coachable), Tenet 2 (Helpful), Tenet 3 (Assume Positive Intent), Tenet 4 (Friendly Friction), Tenet 5 (Welcoming), Tenet 8 (Saying Thanks), Tenet 9 (Brag-’em-Up), Tenet 10 (Gather & Sow), Tenet 11 (No Gossip), Tenet 13 (Restraint), Tenet 14 (All Aboard), Tenet 19 (Unspeakables), and Tenet 20 (Laughing Matter).

Technique 3: Find Your Stars

- **The retreat exercise:** The following can be a terrific exercise for a team retreat where you have more time. Take a list of all *20 Tenets* and have the group – as a whole or in smaller groups – identify employees within the organization who are great role models for each of the respective Tenets. This process focuses on the positive attributes of those around us and helps increase the informal power of those who contribute most to the cultural health of your organization.



- **The 10-minute exercise:** At team meetings, have the group discuss the most recent Tenet. An engaging and positive way to do this is to have the group identify some of their coworkers who exemplify that Tenet. In short, ask the question, *“Who in our organization is absolutely amazing at this Tenet?”* **Pro Tip:** If you do this exercise and someone outside the immediate team is identified as a role model, make sure someone (or multiple people) on the team drops that person a note letting them know how much they are noticed and appreciated! (See Tenet 10: Gather & Sow).

ENCOURAGE PEER-TO-PEER SHARING AND DISCUSSION

Encourage employees to share their *20 Tenets* self-assessment results with their colleagues in 1-on-1 conversations. Encourage them to discuss strengths, goals, and opportunities for improvement. Through these conversations, employees will become more aware of how others see themselves, and perhaps they will also learn something about how well their own self-perceptions line up with the reality of how they are viewed by others!

PERFORMANCE COACHING WITH PROBLEM EMPLOYEES

The *20 Tenets* listing can be a resource to a manager who is trying to clearly identify a problem behavior or attitude that is limiting the success of an employee. With the employee in mind (let’s say, Mary) a supervisor can look down the listing of *20 Tenets* and consider this question: *“What are the Tenets where I would really like to see Mary improve?”* On occasion, this won’t clarify the situation or be a good match to the presenting problem(s). If so, no harm, no foul.

But on some occasions one or more the Tenets will pop out as being at the core of Mary’s performance issues. In that instance, the supervisor may find it helpful to use the relevant *20 Tenets* coaching video content in one of three ways:

1. The supervisor may want to watch the respective coaching video to find coaching messages the supervisor can use when talking with Mary.
2. The supervisor could send a link to Mary asking her to watch a specific video before the two of them meet, highlighting the importance of the needed improvement on the Tenet and helping to spur on-target discussion.
3. The supervisor may want to use one or two of the videos with Mary as they are meeting in person to discuss expectations. This process can help make expectations clear and understandable. It can also be impactful to have the problem employee hear such messages from an outside, credible source, letting the supervisor reinforce the message and set the expectations for improvement.

