Intro: Hi, everyone. Today, we invite you to join my conversation with the president of a Christian-led company that has increased its revenue eightfold, and he attributes it to their flourishing culture. Discover the principle communication strategies that have worked for them and how they can work for you, next.

Female: This is the Flourishing Culture Podcast. Here’s your host, president of the Best Christian Workplaces Institute, Al Lopus.

Al Lopus: Welcome to another episode of the Flourishing Culture Podcast, where our goal is to equip and inspire you to build a flourishing workplace. We are here to help you eliminate workplace distrust, improve your employees’ experience, and grow your organization’s impact. And before we meet our special guest today, I urge you to subscribe to this podcast. As a result, you’ll receive our action guide. It’s our gift to help you lead your organization’s culture to the next level. To subscribe, simply go to bcwinstitute.org/podcast. Hit the Subscribe button, and receive our free action guide.

Also, if you could share this podcast with others, and rate it, it would really mean a lot to me. Thank you.

And now, let’s meet today’s special guest.

Troy Meacham is president of ACR Supply Company, North Carolina’s leading wholesale distributor for heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and refrigeration. Did I get all that right, Troy? And welcome to the podcast.

Troy Meachum: Yes, you did, Al. And thank you so much for having me back. I really appreciate it. Love what you and your organization are doing for the Kingdom.
Al: Well, thank you, Troy. And I’ve gained so much from the amazing success story that you’re going to share with us in the next few minutes. And it’s a story, I believe, that every Christian leader, whether it’s a for-profit or not-for-profit organization, needs to hear.

Troy: Awesome. Yeah, I’m super excited to share anything that the Lord has done in and through our business. We’ve been blessed over the years. The Lord’s brought us some amazing people. We’ve been able to really focus on improving processes and especially around the area of communication, but the biggest part of, I would say, our success is our people. And I don’t just say that. I mean that with all my heart. It’s something that I’ve started praying specifically about back in the early to mid ‘90s that the Lord would bring Christian men and women into our organization or that He would bring those nonbelievers in our organization to know Him. And I just can’t say enough about what the Lord’s done through that and how He has blessed our organization. And now we’re just trying to be obedient and be good stewards of what He’s put under our care.

Al: Gosh, that’s great. And before you tell us the full story, just a little context of our conversation. You joined the family business, ACR Supply Company, what, back in ‘93 when you became the general manager? Is that right?

Troy: Actually, it goes back a little bit farther than that, Al. My dad started in ‘77. I joined him in ‘80, right out of school. And so it’s kind of a journey of several years. I accepted Christ in ‘88. But in ‘93, I came back to our home office, and my dad made me the general manager of the company at that time.

Al: Yeah. And since that time, you’ve had an increase in revenues, like, a sevenfold increase, as I understand. That’s fantastic.

Troy: Yeah. Like I said, we’ve really been blessed, and we actually started tracking most of that around ‘97. And so we spent this year or two), we’re going to probably end up right at about 32 million in sales. So yeah, we feel very, very fortunate, Al.

Al: Oh, that’s great. That’s about an eightfold increase, as I look at it. Wow.

Troy: Yeah. Like I said, we’ve really been blessed, and we actually started tracking most of that around ‘97. And so we spent this year or two), we’re going to probably end up right at about 32 million in sales. So yeah, we feel very, very fortunate, Al.

So Donald Miller is a well-known author of the book Building a StoryBrand, and I think we’d all agree with Miller, who believes that you’ve got to find pain points in your customers day-to-day life in order to figure out how to solve their problems. And looking back, what were some of the serious pain points in ACR Supply’s workplace culture that needed to be solved, and why?

Troy: Well, Al, I truly believe if you create a work environment where your people get up every day and they want to come to work and they really enjoy what they do every day and they get fulfillment out of it, they will take care of our customers and the culture as well. And so some of the pain points back then, Al, were we—my dad and his vice president did a wonderful job. But what it was, Al, it was more of a ‘70s, ‘80s styles of management, which is the way everybody was. And so what we found was the culture kind of was like everybody else. There was nothing special about our culture, and we all kind of agreed upon this. So we really started working hard to create that culture where God’s glorified, but most important, where people get up every day and they really, truly desire to come to work.
So I would say the biggest pain point, we had a number of wrong people on the bus. And so we had to really start having those crucial conversations and helping people understand what was broke about their contribution to the culture, what they needed to do to fix it, and then what the future needed to look like. And if they couldn't make that change, then we loved them, but they just couldn't stay. It was just too important.

I love the phrase change people or change people. So we worked really hard to pour into and help people change ultimately as a steward of the business. If they can't change, then we have to change, and we have to move them out.

So that's what we began to do very intentionally. We began to try to get more right people on the bus, get the wrong people off the bus, and started talking very intentionally about what a healthy culture looked like. So we started communicating that on a regular basis. And I could go on and on about that. We started through the whole orientation process. And so that really began the systemic change and changing the culture. We began to really communicate what our expectations were for it.

Al: So that was one of the pain points, had some wrong people that needed to find another bus to get on, right?

Troy: That's exactly right.

Al: Yeah. Were there any others?

Troy: Yeah, so, Al, one of the things we identified is our people really didn't know how to deal with conflict well. And you think about it, in the culture today, that's kind true for almost everybody. And so we started working very hard and trying to educate people and give them the proper tools they needed to be able to deal with conflict in a healthy way and have a healthy outcome. Now, it didn't always happen that way, but we worked hard to try to equip them with the right life tools to be able to deal with it.

So, I think I’ve told you before, but I’m certified to teach a class called Crucial Conversations. And so everybody who comes to our organization has got to sit through that 16-hour course. And I teach and I facilitate it. We do it once or twice a year, depending on how many new team members we have. And that’s really, really equipped our people. Honestly, Al, most people say it helps them more on a personal level than it does a professional level, which I love. I love making a difference in people’s family lives and their personal lives.

So and I guess the third pain point, too, is—and again, this is not any type of indictment on my dad or our vice president, Lee, at the time, but we were kind of entering an age in the marketplace where we really needed to think about really taking care of our people and caring for them in a new and different way. And this is kind of evolving. And you know today’s a different world than it was back in the ‘80s and ‘90s. And so I guess what really God laid on my heart, most importantly, was that outside of my wife and my son, my family, that my ACR family was my most-important ministry and that God just laid on my heart I need to care for them and truly take care of them in a way—and love on them and
encourage them along the way personally, professionally, financially, spiritually. But ultimately, they just know that I truly loved them and cared deeply for them.

Al: love what you’re saying here, no question, Troy, that you really experienced some pain points around difficult people, people that really couldn’t—make sure they had healthy communication patterns, and the way that you looked at people, and you’ve really turned that around, and what a testimony that is. And as a leader of the Best Christian Workplaces Institute, I’d like to say, you can't improve what you can't measure. And what specifically in ACR’s culture did you need to measure and not leave out or leave the guesswork.

Troy: Oh, I’ll tell you, you’re speaking to my heart now, Al. Years ago, long before we started even doing the Best Christian Workplace Institute Survey, we started doing a team-member satisfaction survey. And I just got to tell you, that was some of the best—that’s the best thing we’d ever done, because ultimately it’s about taking care of our people, and this culture survey that we do every September and we do it every single year, it provides us the feedback we need so that we know how our organization can be better. So it was very specific and very measurable. It takes about 30 minutes for each team member to fill it out. So we get 100 percent participation every year to fill out the culture survey.

We take this as a leadership team. We sit down in a room together at our offsite two-day retreat every year, and we read through all the responses. And then we come up with very specific measures and things that we can do to help improve the culture. So I just can’t—one of the most-important questions on the survey, Al, that we do and also using your tool as well is that question about, do you feel like the company’s listening to me? Do they take the information we gave last year and do something about it? and we get almost 100 percent response or agree on that question almost every year because we actually take the information and do something with it. Just more constantly working on trying to create that right culture and listening to our people. It’s a big deal.

Al: Yeah, boy, it really is. And in fact, that what I see, Troy, is that employees love to see that culture survey coming because that gives them a chance to honestly give you feedback that they know you’ll pay attention to. Yeah.

Troy: Exactly right.

Al: And when you do pay attention to it, you do act on it, it really is important. And we’ve seen, unfortunately, employees say, “Well, why are we doing this again, because nothing happened to the last one that I’ve filled out?” So, yeah.

Troy: Exactly. It’s like busy work, and I don’t want to create busy work. If I ask somebody’s opinion, I want to actually act on it if it’s possible. And to your question about measuring, what we’ve actually done with this is we’ve created year-over-year trend lines to be able to see where we’re improving in any different given area, because that’s the way the survey is built. It’s that we’re able to see, just like in your organization, using the Best Christian Workplace Survey, we’re able to see where we improved and maybe where we dropped the ball. This particular year, we just got through with our survey. We identified a couple of areas we really need to work on from a communication and from a culture
perspective. But think about it. If we had not done that Survey, we would be flying blind right now. We’d have no idea that that’s going on. But we’ve already not only identified and we’ve already began to work on those things and in implementing a number of changes for next year for our planning process. So it’s been huge for us to be able to—the whole measurement thing is a big deal, so I’m a huge fan.

**AI:** That’s great. So, you’re willing and courageous. I mean, this does take courage to ask your employees for their honest feedback. But you don’t stop there. I mean, that’s what you’ve been saying. You don’t stop there. After getting the survey results back, you actually are doing something remarkable and practical.

**Troy:** Yep, yep. Well, I also learned one thing. We talk about it a lot. You never ask somebody their opinion. They get mad at them for telling you what they believe. And so no matter what it is, even if it’s not framed in the right way, we still take that information. We are professionals, and we work through it, and we try to find out what we can do to make things better. So we love it when people give us good, honest, candid feedback. It’s the only way, Al, that we’re going to be able to make our organization any better.

**AI:** So, Troy, you’re really speaking to the sweet spot of your company’s top four culture strengths that come out of the Best Christian Workplace Survey. And the Survey gave your employees the freedom to say that ACR Supply, first of all, acts on the suggestions of employees; and then secondly, involves staff in decisions that affect them; thirdly, that you seek the suggestions of employees; and then finally, fourth, that you encourage your employees to experiment and be innovative. Those are all part of our healthy-communication driver. So tell us about these four strengths as part of your action planning, and how has action planning actually improved the health of not only the communication factor but the workplace culture overall?

**Troy:** Right. So with the Best Christian Workplace Survey we did last year, we’ll do it again this year—actually, two years ago. Now we’re doing it again this spring, and also with the culture survey, I kind of alluded to it earlier. But what we do with that, Al, is we bring that information together as a team, and then we actually have smaller teams that break up to work on specific areas, specific feedback that we’ve gotten, that we go, “Okay, we got to fix this. So now let’s put a team of people together to work on this, and let’s make change happen for the better.” Sometimes you can’t change things, right? Sometimes you just think they’re systemic, that you can’t actually work on or act on it. But if it’s doable, something that we feel like we really can improve the work environment, the culture, and eliminate hurdles and roadblocks for our people to do their work every day, we’re all over it.

So taking all the suggestions, the culture feedback does that. But then we take it a step further after that. We actually get these people and say, “Listen, okay.” We do what we call a readout, Al, where we sit down with the results on every single individual team member and say, “Okay, here’s what kind of feedback we’ve got in this area. You tell me, if you were leading this project, if you were head of this department, or if you were Troy Meacham, what would you do to fix this?” And so that’s what they do. And so you wouldn’t believe the incredible insight of feedback that we get. Even if they didn’t say something about that issue, it’s really cool because they may have an insight or they may have thought about it, but they just didn’t take time to write it into the survey. So actually asking their opinion,
getting them involved at the individual level—we have almost 90 team members—every single one of them are sat down with and met with over the culture survey. It’s a pretty phenomenal process. And we do that, too, also with the Best Christian Workplace.

So I think what it does, it really spurs on team-member engagement and this whole thing about creativity. When you start asking people to think, “Okay, if you were in charge 100 percent and you could do whatever you wanted to do, what would you do?” You start asking that question, it’s pretty amazing some of the stuff you get back because I believe all of us are smarter than one of us. And so you start getting a collective feedback from your team because they’re out there on the frontlines every day. I’m not. Our leadership team is not. And they know what’s going on inside the organization. That’s just really helped us. This whole process has really helped us in the area of communication and just execution and just really building that work environment that can attract in some ways. It’s like a light, a light in the marketplace.

Al: I know you’re a member of the C12 group, and I’m sure you think about this from a biblical perspective. Is there a God-honoring, biblical principle that our podcast listeners might think about as you build healthy or a flourishing culture?

Troy: Very much so. Let your yes be yes, and let your no be no. Be consistent. Do what you say you’re going to do. And I know that sounds very simple, but I think some of the most-miserable work environments on the planet are where you have an inconsistent leader, where you have no idea—you can’t predict what they’re going to do from day to day. One day they’re up here; the next day they’re down here, and they’re just all over the place. What a miserable place to be. So we just try to be consistent in our messaging and our values and everything that we do every single day, the way that we communicate and lead our teams, that consistency and predictability, I think, is a big deal. And I think that’s really helped us build this flourishing culture that we have at ACR.

Al: Yeah. And the integrity, that’s really at the core of Christian character. There’s no question about that. Yeah. Gosh, that’s right.

You know, as great as this is, Troy, I know there’s even more to your story. And the Survey helped to reveal one outstanding strength, and that is that of our eight drivers, healthy communication is really strong. And why is healthy communication so key and so critical to your culture?

Troy: Oh, man. When we started doing surveys years ago, the worst score on the survey was communication. It was bad. And so, Al, we started being very intentional, how can we make this better? because it was frustrating. How could everybody listen to this podcast in their organization if they have more than two people in it? At some point, communication has been a source of frustration.

So we’re a part of the Malcolm Baldrige process. It’s the organization that started back in the ‘80s—Ronald Reagan started it—to help small businesses grow. Well, part of that best-practice sharing organization, we found this communication grid. And what it is, it’s a matrix, basically, of how do you communicate this organization with your people? How do you communicate with your customers? How do you communicate with your vendors? And so on and so on. And what are you doing to communicate with them? So we listed all these things out on a communication matrix. And so maybe...
we have—we have a Wednesday morning call where we talk to our team members. That’s internal to our team members. It’s done—well, actually, every other week. And we list all these different ways we communicate and the frequency of the communication and who the target audience is. And this really helped us say, “Okay, you know what? In this area, we need to communicate more or more effectively in these areas because we’re not really communicating to our customers enough. We’re not communicating with our team members enough,” and so on and so on. That communication matrix really was a game changer. And on top of that, we take that and show it to our people because many times people gravitate towards “I don’t feel like we communicate good around here.” Well, that may be the same person who didn’t read the email or didn’t join in Wednesday morning coffee call or so on. And it’s frustrating. But you start telling people, “Here’s the way we’re communicating with you. We need you to engage. We need you to be a part of this communication process because we don’t want you frustrated, and we need you to have the information you need to be successful here at ACR.”

AI: I trust you’re enjoying our podcast. We’ll be right back after this brief word about a valuable tool that can pinpoint the true, measurable health of your culture.

Male: What if you could get an upper hand on unwanted turnover, relationship conflicts, struggling morale, and unproductive staff, and, at the same time, increase the effectiveness and impact of your organization? You can with the Best Christian Workplaces Employee Engagement Survey. This popular, proven resource pinpoints the true health of your workplace culture and ways to improve it.

You’ll get a detailed breakout summary of the eight essential ways your culture and your organization can flourish, all from a principled, practical, faith-based approach that works. Join the more than 800 satisfied organizations, churches, and Christian-owned businesses who have said, “Yes.” Sign up online today at bcwinstitute.org. The Best Christian Workplaces Employee Engagement Survey. It’s your first important step on the road to a flourishing culture.

AI: All right. Now, let’s hear more from today’s guest.

So, a communication grid or a communication matrix and including how you communicate to your people, and so you’ve got this every-other-week, Wednesday-morning call. What are some other touch points for your employees on communication?

Troy: I think probably one of the biggest changes, it was a cultural change, and it was something that many companies already have implemented. But for us, it was pretty hard. About eight or nine years ago, we basically began to communicate through exchange and the exchange environment, Outlook Exchange environment. I know that sounds simple for a lot of people, but a lot of people may not. But having shared calendars, Al, and having access to people’s shared calendars, being able to set up meetings, being able to look at people’s calendars, that has helped us so much inside of our organization because now just in a second, I can see people are open for a meeting, a call. So that shared Outlook Exchange environment is really huge for us. That’s one way, that’s the biggest way we communicate inside of our organization. It’s not always just email. It’s either some data points, it’s shared folders, but the calendar is such a big deal, Al. And now everybody can see my calendar. Now, if I got a private appointment, it’s marked “private,” but everybody can see my calendar. They know
what’s going on. They don’t feel like things are being hidden from them. And just that one alone has been huge for us.

Another one that we do is we have a three-year leadership program called Lead, and a lot of the leadership team spends time in pouring into our members of those particular classes for any given year. That’s another way we do it. And I could go on and on. There’s a list of those we spend a lot of time trying to be intentional in communicating with our team.

Al: Similar to how your strategic action steps are principle based, is there another principle or a root to your commitment to healthy communication, Troy?

Troy: One of my favorite authors, Al, is Patrick Lencioni. I know you know who he is, and a lot of people’s podcasts may actually know who he is. He’s written a lot of wonderful books, but his whole concept of communications out of organizations is something he’s pretty passionate about. There’s a couple of quotes here that I use and know fairly well. The first one says, “If you could get all the people in an organization rowing in the same direction, you could dominate any industry, in any market, against any competition, at any time.” Healthy communication is vital. Think about what he just said. That is amazing. So that’s been our goal at ACR Supply. With all the things that we do around the area of communication is trying to get everybody aligned, working in the same direction, not at cross purposes, so that we can dominate our industry. So that’s our goal. That’s what we’re trying to do.

The second one says, “When there is trust, conflict becomes nothing but the pursuit of truth, an attempt to find the best possible answer.” Trust is everything when it comes to communication. I’ll give you a real practical example. We just had our two-day offsite, going over our culture or feedback information. Because there’s such a high level of trust inside of that room, we were able to have some very passionate conversation because nobody questioned other people’s motives. Does that make sense?

Al: Yeah.

Troy: Nobody questioned other people’s motives. Everybody knew we were pursuing the truth, and we wanted to get to the bottom of whatever the issue was so that we could really get the best resolution for whatever that problem was. And I’ll tell you what, Al. Because we worked so hard on building that trust and how to deal with conflict in the right way, it has been so wonderful to be able to sit back and watch in a room where your leadership team can really vehemently or passionately disagree with one another, but at the same time there’s still that high level of respect and trust and even love in the room. And I tell you what. Lencioni’ll tell you, that’s a wonderful thing. And it’s not only necessary; it’s vital for the success of any organization—a church, a company, anybody.

Al: You know, it’s interesting, the use of the terms like “rowing in the same direction,” and that’s so much like the image of the body of Christ. Or as Jesus wants the body to be in unity, or any group, they’re united we stand, divided we fall. And unity is such a big part. And then, of course, the pursuit of truth. That’s “the way, the truth, and the life.” But your point about being able to really push the conversation to the point where you’re really seeking the truth and people aren’t feeling like they’re
being attacked but you’re really focusing on a topic, that really does get to the bottom line and to the truth, as you say.

You know, I’d be remiss to ignore the fact that healthy communication includes some top-down communication. And you’ve already given us this idea of the communication matrix. Is there a memorable example of how your leadership or that of your senior team has helped to spearhead a healthier culture with more effective, productive employees who love coming to work?

Troy: Yeah. We’ve had several specific situations that have happened where our leadership team really stepped up to the plate and were able, through more effective communication, deal with some really difficult stuff, Al. And so there have been a couple instances that I can think of. One is in this past year; one’s several years ago, that through the culture survey and different ways we try to communicate. We had some pretty significant issues going on that we would not have addressed, Al, it would have been detrimental to the company. And my heart, my passion, is the culture piece. And if anything is threatening the culture of ACR Supply, I tell our team constantly, we must pay attention to it. We must be on that. We’ve got to protect the culture because that’s what makes us different. That’s why everybody on our team is in the room and working at ACR Supply because we are different. And that requires, what you’re saying. That requires our leadership team to be strong, good communicators. We ask that of them. We give them the training to do it, but we hold them accountable to do it.

So example, to answer your question, and I’m going to give you a generic answer, but it’s specific because happens all the time. When somebody comes to one of our team members with an issue, with a problem, we train them—and many of them do this, if not most of them do this—they listen. They make sure they listen first, and they’re able to lead more effectively. They learned something and then lead them more effectively through the situation. What they’ll do is say, “Okay, if you were in power 100 percent to fix this problem, what would you do?” And then they would listen and make them think about, “Okay, how am I going to fix this?” And then what they would do usually, if there’s interaction with another person, they’re having conflict, they will charge that person to go back to the individual they’re having conflict with, have a meeting with them—a one-on-one—by the end of the week, by Friday at 4:30, and then get back to me with how that goes. Al, I cannot tell you how successful that simple little process is, because suddenly—it’s true. We’re men; we’re fixers. I’m a fixer, right? I want to fix it myself. I used to do that so much. And the monkey would be taken from my team members’ back and put on my back; now I got to go fix a problem. We’re trying to push our team members to step out there, not fear conflict and make it about healthy conflict, and actually solve the problem. And so every single time we do that—I would say almost every single time we do that—that person ends up being much closer to the individual they were having conflict with, and the situation usually is not only resolved, Al, but the relationship is stronger.

Al: So, go to that person one-on-one, and talk about it before Friday at quitting time. That’s your whole. Yeah.

Troy: Yeah, that’s it. And it works really well. Really well. That’s the best practice I learned years ago. It has been so helpful. And so now people still come to me with problems, but they know what I’m going to tell them to do.
Al: And the other thing that you’ve said is you’ve had communication training. Each one of your employees have been involved in training on how to communicate and follow these patterns.

Troy: Yes. It’s called Crucial Conversations Training. I got certified to teach that class, probably about 12, 13 years ago. It’s a 16-hour course, that, like I said, once or twice a year I’ll have a group of new team members. I just got through doing a training just about a week ago in the fall time for a new batch of new team members. And it just went phenomenal. Went really, really well.

Al: Well, one of the best part of your company’s culture is the fact that a high percentage of your employees are fully engaged. And the average of employee-engagement level at Christian for-profit businesses is that about half of the employees in an organization are engaged. But in your case, it’s 70, almost 74 percent are fully engaged. And I’d just like to say congratulations. Of all of your outstanding people, let me ask, tell us a story of a person whose words and actions cause you to say, “Now, that’s a truly engaged employee.”

Troy: Oh, yes. I know exactly. Who I thought about first, his name is Wayne Bullock. Wayne’s been with us over 30 years. He’s been a long-time tenured team member. And I’ve spent much of my adult life with Wayne. We’ve known each other. We’re now just very close, best friends. But Wayne was part of the old culture at ACR Supply, and he was part of the old-school environment that we had. And I was a young guy, and he’s about my age. But we came to the organization, me just a few years ahead of him. But one of the things that—Wayne was one of those early adopters of the culture, and he and I had several crucial conversations. And told him, I said, “Wayne, I truly want to build an environment where people get up every day and want to come to work, where they really enjoy what they do every day.” And so I began to really sit down with him, and I identified what was broke and what we’d need to do to fix it and so on. And even though we had major conflict through that time, Wayne was one of those guys that listened to me. He heard what I was saying, and he began to catch on to the dream of building that kind of environment where people really do love what they do every day, come in every day. They actually have friends at work. They love one another. And so Wayne started out, years ago, he was an old, grizzled welder, worked out in the shipyard or whatever, working on steel. And now Wayne’s the kind of guy now that he and I, we talk to each other on the phone. When we see each other, we give each other a hug, and we tell each other how much we love each other. And it’s just one of those guys who really got it. He understood exactly what it is we’re trying to do in building that culture. And he is now probably one of the most-effective communicators inside the company. And he’s the kind of guy that when he speaks, people listen. And so Wayne’s probably helped me in the culture, in building this culture, probably more so than anybody in the company.

Al: Wow, that’s a great story. Thanks, Troy. And as you say, anybody can change, it sounds like.

And Troy, you’ve just mentioned the use of an executive coach. Now, tell our listeners the idea or a description of how that coach has worked with you and your organization.

Troy: Sure. We’ve worked with Robert now for about probably 10 years as well. What we do is he doesn’t come in to fix people. That’s not what we hired him for. We hired him to help us to become better communicators, better listeners. He has a lot of skill sets in the area of communication and conflict resolution. So he actually leads year one of our Lead program, which those are the workshop-
type scenario once a month, with those team members. But Robert has worked with our individual team members that I’ve assigned some time to work with Robert, and so they would meet once a month. And they would just really start doing life. They get to know one another. And Robert was able to help them with any given area that maybe they struggled in the area of listening better or conflict resolution, or maybe they got this issue going on their life. And so Robert has been able just come in, and he’s just got that kind of spirit about him that’s very—he’s a peacemaking kind of guy. He’s a caring, compassionate person, and he’s able to help people work through some really difficult stuff because, Al, I know everybody’s got a story, right? Every one of our team members, even our leadership team, we’ve got issues going on in our life. And Robert’s been wonderful to come alongside of our team and really help us grow in just different areas and learn how to be better at what we do, better at our jobs and better communicators.

**Al:** You know, you’ve given us a lot to think about here, Troy. And as you step back and see how ACR Supply has built a flourishing workplace culture, what in your mind has been the strongest, even the most-significant link between the growth of your culture and your increase in the success in your business overall? Is there a principle here that leaders need to know?

**Troy:** Yeah, you just said it. There’s a direct correlation with creating a healthy culture where your people really enjoy what they do every day and they get fulfillment out of it, with gross revenue and net profit. I think there’s a direct tie there. And I think that honestly I’ve worked more on the culture side than the profitability side for many, many years. But what I have learned is I need to pay attention to both of them, but when you’re working on and you’re really building that right culture where communication is high, conflict resolution is working, and people care about one another, they actually love one another, it’s just really supernatural the way the Lord works through all that and begins to really build a successful organization, with the customers are drawn to it.

Think about it. I think it’s a light/dark issue. I think people don’t want to walk into a place of business where there’s a dark cloud, where there’s a cynicism and negativity, where it’s just not organized, and there’s no unity on the team. So I think that as a team, we are very unified. We have our problems. We have our issues, don’t get me wrong. But overall, unified. I think people in the HVAC world that we work in look at ACR Supply almost kind of as a lighthouse. They come in and they know they’re going to feel better when they leave, they’re going to get their problem solved, but more importantly, they’re going to get served and cared for while they’re in. And so I just believe that, to answer your question, yes, they’re tied directly together, and it’s made a big difference in our bottom line, in our sales, over the years. But originally, when we started this whole process, trying to just love on them, encourage, and make a difference in people’s lives. So, I hope I answered your question.

**Al:** That’s a great answer. And it’s something that I keep talking about as well. You know, there’s a service profit chain that has been around a long time and came out in the *Harvard Business Review*, where you’ve got engaged employees that stick around long enough to become highly productive, they are able to serve your customers so that they’re satisfied and actually become loyal. And when you get loyal customers, you see your revenues grow and profitability increase, and the way you get engaged employees to have a culture like you’re talking about.
And I love what you’ve taught us today about healthy communication, and that it all started with a communication grid, where you’ve actually identified who it is you’re going to communicate with, how often, and the way you’re going to communicate with them, including every other Wednesday, all-employee call. I know that you’ve got one-on-ones. You’ve got many other communication patterns and processes that you use. And again, that link that you see that a healthy culture leads to a growing revenue and bottom line.

So to conclude our interview, Troy, how about one final thought, maybe even an encouragement, that you’d like to leave with our listeners.

**Troy:** I would say this, Al: this does take a lot of work, a lot of people in leadership. When you start investing time and effort into helping people grow personally, professionally, financially, and to make a difference in their life, it’s a lot easier than simply being a boss. It's a lot easier than simply being a dictator. But I’ve just got to say this: it’s worth the time, especially from a Kingdom perspective. For me, the reward I have received just internally, just the blessing I've received to see people grow in all these different areas and to be able to make a big contribution to your organization has been huge for me. It’s been such a blessing to see people grow over the years and become the kind of team members you want—the ideal team players, Lencioni will say. And we’ve seen that. It’s taken a lot of time and effort and even money, but it’s really paid off for us.

**Al:** Yeah. I love it. Your advice: it takes work. And it does take work, doesn’t it? But it’s worth the time.

**Troy:** It does.

**Al:** Yeah. Troy Meachum, president of ACR Supply Company in Durham, North Carolina, thanks for sharing your wisdom, insights, and stories, and thank you for investing yourself into everyone who’s been listening and benefiting from all you shared with us today. Troy, it’s really been a pleasure. Thanks for being back on our podcast.

**Troy:** Thank you so much, Al, for having me. I really appreciate it. I love your organization. Can't wait to do our next Best Christian Workplace Survey in early spring.

**Al:** Yep, great. Well, I’m sure we’ll be talking soon. Thanks, Troy.

**Troy:** Thank you.

**Outro:** I want to thank you for joining us on the *Flourishing Culture Podcast* and for investing this time in your workplace culture today. If there’s a specific insight, story, or action step you’ve enjoyed in these past few minutes, then please share it with others so they can benefit as well. If you’ve enjoyed this podcast, please be sure to show your support by rating, reviewing, and subscribing wherever you listen. You can also share this podcast with friends on social media.

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greater impact and growth for your organization. We'll see you again soon on the *Flourishing Culture Podcast*. 