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ATLANTA—February 3, 2006—Smart leaders know the power of workplace culture. In the recent negotiations between Disney and Pixar, one of the biggest questions was how to preserve the unique, highly-collaborative and successful Pixar culture in the larger corporate structure of Disney. The *Financial Times* even quotes Steve Jobs as saying, "We all know that's the thing that will determine the success here in the long run."

Corporate culture is the hot-button issue in the media, with growing and merging companies, and dramatic changes announced at mainstays like Ford and Nike. New leadership and merging sensibilities often require a "Culture Shift" that can make or break a company.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Mark Fields, head of Ford Motor Co.'s North and South American auto operations, has been drafted to fix the company's culture which has been described as toxic, cautious, cliquish and hierarchical. The "Way Forward" war room displays the quote "Culture eats strategy for breakfast" and "Culture is unspoken, but powerful. It develops over time—difficult to change."

The success of transformations or merger/acquisition deals repeatedly hinges on culture. Yet, all too often culture is either ignored or misunderstood. Drs. Sheila L. Margolis and Ava S. Wilensky, authors of ***There Is No Place Like Work: Seven Leadership Insights for Creating a Workplace to Call Home***, offer seven guidelines for organizations going through major change to help maintain productivity while encouraging loyalty and confidence:

1. **Understanding culture comes first.** Changes in all facets of a company must be aligned with the "new" culture. Therefore, you must understand and define the culture first.
2. **Employee participation is key.** Defining a "new" culture must start with leadership, but the process should include the entire organization. If everyone takes part in defining the core culture, they will be more supportive of the "new" culture.
3. **Defining culture requires getting to the core.** Culture is complex, but the core culture defines the few, most essential principles that are valued. Keep it simple.
4. **Constantly communicate the core culture.** Leaders and managers should seek every opportunity to share the principles that are the essence of the "new" company culture.
5. **Live the core culture principles.** Leaders and managers must act in ways that are consistent with the core culture; otherwise, employees will see it only as a joke. The elements of the core culture must be real and valued.
6. **Everyone must be a culture manager.** If everyone in the company sees themselves as a Culture Manager, working to ensure that all company actions are consistent with the core culture, there is a greater likelihood that the culture will thrive.
7. **A workplace should be the right place.** Employees who connect with the "new" culture will see work as an exciting place to be. But those who do not fit in the "new" culture will feel detached and at a loss and thus, may need to find a different workplace. Understanding core culture is fundamental to creating a workplace where employees feel a sense of community, connection and contribution.

Dr. Sheila L. Margolis and **Dr. Ava S. Wilensky**—the founding partners of CORE InSites Inc., a management consulting firm based in Atlanta, Georgia—are available for interviews. They specialize in organizational culture and the strategic use of human resources. Their clients include Shaw Industries, Cingular Wireless, Acuity Brands, and St. Jude's Recovery Center. They are featured speakers at meetings and events, and their work has been published in academic and professional journals and magazines. Pre-publication galleys of their April 2006 title ***There Is No Place Like Work: Seven Leadership Insights for Creating a Workplace to Call Home*** are also available from:

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