Culture: Soul and spirit

Part 2

Conrad Brand – inavit iQ leadership

Background

In this article, the third in our series for 2016, we explore the role of organisational culture as a key imperative for performance differentiation and an agile workforce. In the previous article the need for an agile culture was explored.

Culture has to originate somewhere, though. It doesn't just happen. It is the responsibility of leaders to determine a cultural vision for the company, live and breathe it themselves, and then help to steer the rest of the company in the right direction. Culture comes directly from the behaviour of the leaders, and it is their duty to involve and inspire the whole of the organisation.

In this article a suggested culture journey framework is provided for when an organisation is contemplating a culture change process.

A suggested culture journey framework

Culture change at both the organisational and individual level takes time. People – much less
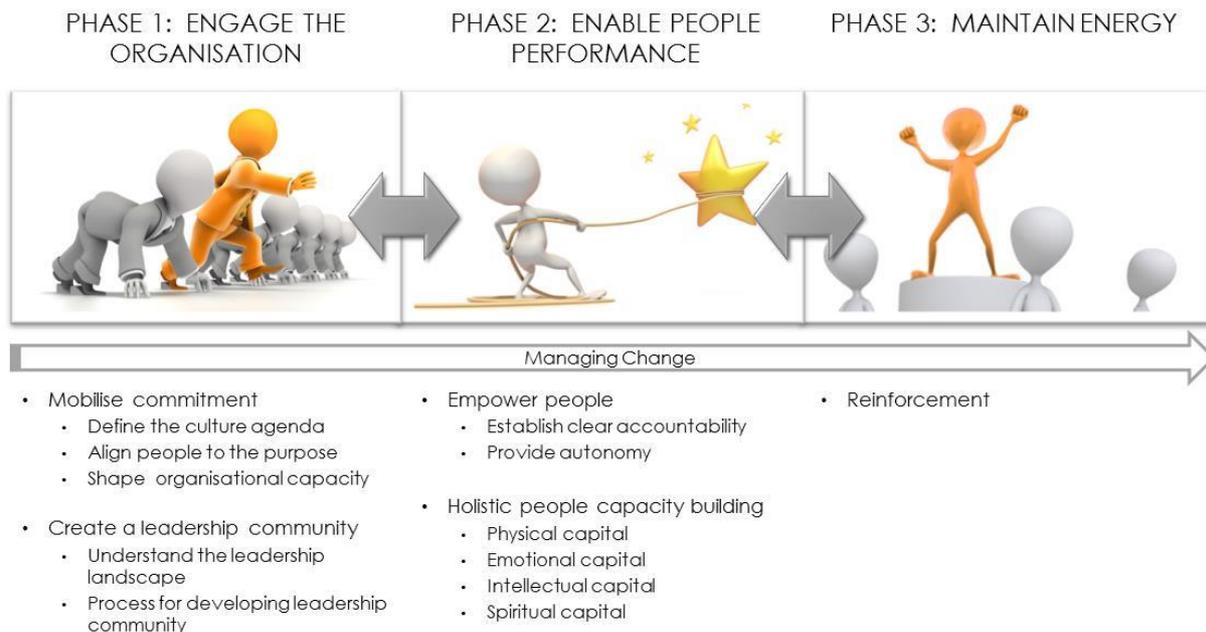
The Idea in Brief

In this article, part two, the author explores and provides a suggested journey map for changing organisational culture. This article follows part 1 that explored why culture matters for organisational performance.

In essence, culture is not something that just happens, but rather the consequence of deliberate interventions and learned behaviour that are orchestrated to move towards the desired culture envisaged in the organisation.

organisations – can't be expected to change overnight. Because of this, it's vital that the desired culture shift and associated interventions and development programmes are consistent and enduring.

Most organisational transformation efforts are iterative by nature. Although the phases overlap and interact, some sequence to changing culture does matter. The following three-phased framework, with specific suggested interventions per phase, is suggested when embarking on the journey of changing organisational culture:

PHASE 1: ENGAGE THE ORGANISATION | PHASE 2: ENABLE PEOPLE PERFORMANCE | PHASE 3: MAINTAIN ENERGY

Managing Change

- Mobilise commitment
  - Define the culture agenda
  - Align people to the purpose
  - Shape organisational capacity
- Create a leadership community
  - Understand the leadership landscape
  - Process for developing leadership community

- Empower people
  - Establish clear accountability
  - Provide autonomy
- Holistic people capacity building
  - Physical capital
  - Emotional capital
  - Intellectual capital
  - Spiritual capital

- Reinforcement

Figure 1: A suggested culture change framework

Each phase and its suggested interventions will be *briefly* explained in the remainder of this article.

PHASE 1: ENGAGE THE ORGANISATION

Mobilising people behind a planned change is a fundamental first step in culture change. Obtaining participation and understanding of proposed changes in the journey to a new culture creates energy. When there is positive energy, people are more focused on the possibilities and are excited about renewal efforts. A renewal effort is worthless, unless all employees are dedicated to maintaining it. To get everyone on board for the culture change, it is necessary to integrate it into every corner of the workplace. This phase is in essence about crafting the culture journey and ensuring that the employees embrace the requisite changes required by leadership.

There are two key initiatives suggested for this phase, each with specific steps, which are:
Key initiative 1: Mobilise commitment
1. Define the culture agenda;
2. Align people to the purpose, and
3. Shape organisational capacity.

Key initiative 2: Create a leadership community
1. Understand the leadership landscape and the
2. Process for developing leadership community.

Phase 1: Key Initiative 1: Mobilise commitment

Step 1: Define the culture agenda
The culture agenda contains the following elements:
1. Understanding the current culture and
2. Clarifying the culture ambition (aspired values and key behavioural shifts).

1. **Understanding the current culture**
   Most culture change initiatives are triggered by changes in the organisation's business landscape, for example changes in market conditions; commodity market prices; life cycle fluctuations; gaining market share; increase in competition, etc. Organisations then define adaptive business strategies (this article will not expand on the design of business strategies) to mitigate changes in the business environment, and invariably realise a change in culture is required to support the new business strategy.

Any effective culture change process must commence with an assessment and understanding of the organisation's current culture and the elements that will support or inhibit the achievement of the new business strategy.

2. Clarifying the culture ambition (desired culture)

With an understanding of the current culture, the leadership of an organisation can conceptualise *the desired culture, which is the aspired values and key behavioural shifts, defined as the culture ambition*, which will be supportive and important to assist them in achieving the new business strategy. A well defined culture ambition provides clarity about what people do, whom they do it for, and the ways they can go about collectively reaching their goals – down to the level of each individual's job. To tap into deeper levels of motivation, individuals must feel they are contributing to something meaningful, such as making a difference to people's lives or society. The culture ambition must define the value it creates for the people it serves, and not merely what the culture means for the new business strategy.

Values support what is important to the organisation in achieving the new business strategy and desired culture and guide the organisation on how it should conduct itself. Core values, and associated defined behavioural shifts for each value, should be shared by all people in the organisation, and ideally amongst stakeholders of the organisation as well.

Core values must have defined behavioural shifts that indicate how these core values will be displayed, because without a behavioural definition of values, confusion reigns when staff members try to hold each other accountable for those values (Edmonds, 2010). It is suggested that the core values and behavioural shifts are identified by leadership, but a collaborative process is followed with the workforce in clarifying the associated behavioural shifts for each core value to ensure the workforce are co-creators of the culture ambition, leading to higher levels of commitment to the values and behavioural shifts.

A culture ambition can spread through an organisation if it is authentic and provide real meaning for employees. When organisations define their culture ambition to include moving from a current behaviour to an alternative behaviour per value, employees can understand and believe how their own personal brand and goals can be achieved by the organisation's culture ambition.

Intended business benefits

It should also be noted that, as part of designing the culture ambition, organisations must also articulate the business benefits to be realised through the culture change process. To ensure that a culture change process achieves the stated objectives and business results, a key focus would be on monitoring and measuring project performance, understanding the relationship between project inputs, solutions, outcomes and business value add.

The compilation of the intended business benefits should follow the following logic:

- Whatever the culture change process does and delivers, must lead to demonstrable business value add;
- In order for something to add value, the culture change process should ensure that the right outputs / outcomes are delivered;
- This means that culture change process throughputs / solutions must be relevant to the intended outputs / outcomes; and
- This ultimately requires that the inputs or the recommended culture change process solutions must be fit-for-purpose and feasible.

Step 2: Align people to the purpose

Leaders who are clear about their company's reason for being (purpose/new business

strategy) and who define what is important to execute on the culture ambition (core values and behaviours), are able to deliver and sustain both performance and employee satisfaction over time. The creation of a purposeful culture – one that holds employees accountable for always striving to exceed performance expectations while modelling the organisation's declared values – is critical for business leaders in today's marketplace.

Words about an envisaged culture change, have little or no meaning unless each individual can connect their personal significance, (or value proposition), to the envisaged culture ambition.

People need to engage in conversations before they understand, own, or internalise the intended culture ambition. Getting alignment behind the culture ambition through people is the foundation of mobilising commitment in Phase 1.

Various interventions and processes can be utilised to engage with employees and explore opportunities to align their personal value proposition (their part to play) to the culture ambition. The topics to be covered are depicted below:

Table 1: Engaging with employees

DIMENSION	DEFINITION
Context	The culture agenda must explain why changes are needed now. Fundamentally answer the following questions: • Why is the culture change necessary? • Why is the culture change happening now? • What is wrong with what we are doing now? • What will happen if we don't change?
Purpose	Be clear on defining what the purpose is of the intended culture change initiative, that is, it is intended to achieve what...?
Scope of the culture change	At a high-level, articulate what elements of culture will change and who will be impacted. Conversely, be sure to highlight what will not change, as this provides boundaries and a sense of stability for people.
Process	Describe how the culture change program will be implement. Provide an overview of the main steps of the intended process.
Benefits	Highlight the benefits that are expected as a result of the culture change. Address all levels of benefits: strategic, tactical and operational level.
Consequences	List the consequences of delaying the proposed culture change. This is an often overlooked, but very important aspect to the story.
Expectations (Part to Play)	Stipulate for the workforce what is expected of them, specific behavioural changes that are required to achieve the culture ambition. Make it clear that everyone has a role to play in successfully implementing the culture change. People must understand how their personal goals can be linked to the culture ambition to create meaning and purpose for them as individuals to effectively contribute.

Increasingly organisations are realising that a meaningful workplace and a connection to purpose dramatically improve levels of engagement and, ultimately, people performance.

With the increase in diversity in the workplace and the choice of talent to work in a non-traditional workplace, organisations are also faced with rethinking the traditional employee value proposition. A successful employee value proposition includes a consistent and common theme that employees relate to about their workplace (Du Plessis, F., Muir, C. & Verwey, A., 2016).

Step 3: Shape Organisational Capacity
Organisational capacity can be defined as the working mechanisms the organisation requires to execute its new business strategy, such as processes, structure, systems and technology. Organisations that execute strategy effectively understand that execution is not possible without the requisite organisational capacity.

Organisational capacity is a key lever to the successful achievement of the culture agenda (that is understanding the current culture and defining the culture ambition). Consider, for example, if an organisation, as part of its culture ambition, wants to have a culture of empowerment, but a supervisor still requires five signatures to purchase material; the ambition of empowerment will never be realised in this manner. Similarly, if an organisation seeks empowerment, but a supervisor is not allowed to make a decision regarding the development of his/her staff, empowerment will remain a fallacy.

In the examples above, the organisational capacity processes and systems would foster a climate of disempowerment. For a successful culture change process all facets of organisational capacity at a strategic, tactical and operational level must be aligned and adapted to support the core values and behavioural shifts envisaged in an organisation's culture ambition.

Phase 1: Key Initiative 2: Create the Leadership Community

Step 1: Understanding the leadership landscape

Leadership should play a key role in accelerating, reinforcing, and sustaining culture change throughout the organisation. For this reason organisations need to make culture change a more significant aspect of their leadership development programmes and overall leadership agenda. In order to understand the requisite leadership agenda, it is suggested that organisations commence by defining the leadership landscape required for supporting the culture ambition. The following questions (Table 2 below) can be explored to assist organisations in understanding their leadership landscape. It is not suggested that these questions are a definitive list, but would like to propose that they form a useful point of departure. It is only by beginning to ask these questions, and finding your own answers through rigorous dialogue, that your organisation will be able to be clear about what leadership excellence means for you, given your unique context.

Table 2: Defining the leadership landscape

Question	What are we trying to understand?
What are the key changes in our external environment that changes how we need to think about our competitive positioning and strategy?	How the world and industry we are in (or going to be in) demand of us to think differently about what we offer to whom.
What are the business benefits we should deliver and to whom?	What do key stakeholders (customers, investors, employees, community) really expect of us?
Given the business strategy and benefits to be delivered, what type of leadership do we need now and in the future?	What should our leadership (at all levels) look like if we are going to be able to meet the external challenges and culture ambition?
Given our leadership requirements, do we have the right number, capability and competence for now and the future?	What are the current and future gaps, given what we have now and will need over the shorter and longer term to achieve the culture ambition?
Are we clear and aligned on the leadership behaviours to be displayed across all leadership levels?	Are we clear and aligned about our mindsets regarding leadership and leadership excellence? Are these aligned to the culture ambition?
Do we have a robust yet flexible methodology to identify, develop and retain leadership talent?	Do we have the requisite approaches and methodologies to identify leadership talent?
Does our leadership profile and behaviour create a culture in which all people can be their best?	Will our culture ambition enable strategy to flourish?
Does our leadership behaviour lead to more committed and engaged people with higher levels of performance?	Are our people fully committed to our promise to key stakeholders?
Do we manage to create a positive reputation amongst external stakeholders based on our leadership excellence?	Do external stakeholders see us as an example of a brand they respect?
Does our leadership create the capacity to pro-actively deal with change and effectively navigate the organisation through change?	Do we have the ability to deal with change in a resilient manner?

Step 2: Developing the leadership community

In their research on how culture drives performance, Kotter and Heskett (1992) came to the following conclusion regarding leadership's role in culture change: "The single most important factor that distinguishes major culture changes that succeed from those that fail is competent leadership at the top." 23 Years later, this conclusion still seems to be valid, as

indicated by the research undertaken by Korn Ferry (2015) whose findings state that culture change starts in the executive suite. Top leaders need to define the culture, communicate it to the organisation at all levels, and act and behave in ways that reflect and reinforce the desired culture ambition.

To improve cohesion and coherence Korn Ferry (2015) further argue that culture change occurs ultimately when a critical mass of leaders adopt new behaviours consistent with their organisation's strategic direction. This clearly suggests that leading culture change cannot be dependent on, or limited to, the acts of a few heroic individual leaders to ensure culture change in an organisation.

The requirement is that all leaders at every level in the organisation consciously share a common purpose. They should furthermore have a high degree of congruence not only on the how of achieving the organisation's strategy and purpose, but also – and more importantly – on the why. This is what Van der Merwe and Verwey (2016) refer to as the "organisational leadership community" [1].

Mobilising the leadership community will ensure that leaders at all levels are aligned and better equipped to harness collective movement towards an organisation's culture ambition. Minnaar and Pienaar (2016) suggest the following process for the development of the leadership community:
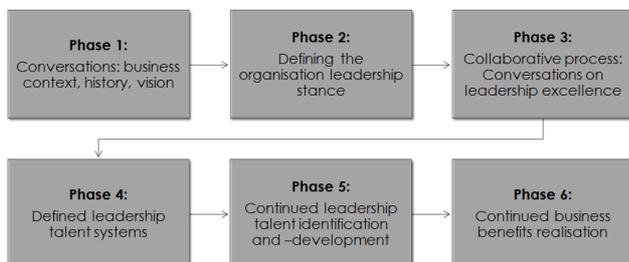
Figure 2: Leadership Community Development Process

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[1] For a comprehensive description of developing the leadership community readers are referred to the book: Building the Corporate Leadership Community by Van der Merwe and Verwey (2016).

Leaders have an incredible impact in all sorts of conscious and subconscious ways; what they do, the way they think, the way they make decisions. Employees watch what leaders do and they imitate it. Ensuring congruence amongst the leadership community to foster an effective culture change will facilitate "the way we do things".

PHASE 2: ENABLE PEOPLE PERFORMANCE

Organisational culture encompasses an organisation's expectations, experiences, philosophy and values that hold it together and is expressed in its self-image, inner workings, interactions with the outside world and future expectations. It is based on shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, and written and unwritten rules that have been developed over time and have become instilled in the mind-set of people.

Whilst Phase 1 of the suggested culture framework has created fertile ground for change, Phase 2 must address the entrenched mind-sets of the organisation to enable achievement of the new business strategy and culture ambition. This phase thus focuses on the elements that ensure employees feel like valued, contributing partners.

Engaged employees see the value of their contributions to their companies' purpose. Enabled employees are supported by receiving the right tools, training and coaching. Energised employees are recognised for their individual contributions and are encouraged to have a balance between their work and home lives. Healthy accountability helps people feel they can connect their personal significance, (or value proposition), to the envisaged culture ambition.

There are two key initiatives suggested for phase two, each with specific steps, which are:

Key initiative 1: Empower people
1. Establish clear accountability
2. Provide autonomy

Key initiative 2: Holistic people capacity building[2]

1. Physical capital
2. Emotional capital
3. Intellectual capital
4. Spiritual capital

Phase 2: Key Initiative 1: Empower people

Empowerment means leadership sharing power and authorising people to think and make decisions. Empowerment is a process of balancing freedom with control in a way that leadership and employees accept equal responsibility and accountability. It is about helping employees steer their way through choppy waters and offering the tools, resources, and clear expectations to help them move forward successfully. Employees who feel that their leaders are enabling them to thrive on their own are more likely to view their entire company through a happier lens.

Step 1: Establish clear accountability

In simple terms, an organisation must achieve its goals and objectives as set out in its business strategy to remain relevant to shareholders. Effective leaders provide clarity on what their people do, whom they do it for, and the ways they can go about it to collectively reach their goals – down to the level of each individual's job.

A high-performing leader's greatest urgency must be establishing employee priorities and accountability. Similarly, leaders of high performing cultures never take their eyes off the goal and make certain that their employees keep their eyes on it too. Great leaders understand that their first responsibility is to translate the organisation's strategy and purpose into day-to-day priorities and accountabilities for their people, aligned to the

suggested behavioural shifts defined in the culture ambition.

When done right, performance management yields higher levels of engagement, retention and organisational performance (Pulakos, Mueller-Hanson, O'Leary, & Meyrowitz, 2012). They further suggest that the creation of a high performance culture requires concentrating on establishing effective performance management behaviours first, and then making sure that the performance management system reinforces and supports those behaviours. This means:

- Setting clear expectations for employees so they can deliver.
- Communicating expectations on a regular basis.
- Providing feedback in real time whenever exceptional or poor performance is observed.
- Helping employees develop expertise that maximizes their potential.
- Helping employees find solutions to problems.
- Playing to employees' strengths rather than their weaknesses in work assignments.
- Acknowledging employees' strengths while also addressing development needs.
- Providing regular, informal feedback.

A culture of performance may be enhanced by reminding people that they engage in performance management behaviour every day – with their children, spouses, peers, friends and suppliers. Once people make this connection, they can better grasp the meaning of performance management in the workplace.

Step 2: Provide autonomy

Establishing clear accountability safeguards against cultural failure. A lack of accountability is one of the most corrosive elements of ineffective work cultures. It leads to people failing to take responsibility, missing deadlines, making errors in judgment, overpromising, having misunderstandings and disagreements, and so on. Holding people accountable is not about criticising them, but rather about assigning

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[2] Please note that although the author is highlighting the above HR processes (in the context of suggested culture change framework) it does not mean other HR processes, e.g. Talent Management, are less valuable in creating a new culture. All HR processes require alignment to an organisation's business strategy and culture ambition.

responsibility with realistic goals, evaluating progress, and making positive course corrections. The key to effective autonomy lies in finding a balance between flexibility and compassion on the one hand and tough love on the other. With clear performance accountabilities in place to support the business strategy and culture ambition, providing clear autonomy boundaries is an important supportive culture enabler to ensure people meet the set accountabilities.

The practices listed below are suggested to foster a culture where people experience the required autonomy to achieve their objectives.

Ensure that:
•   People have a very clear understanding of the organisation's strategy and what it means at their level of functioning;
•   Know where they fit into the achievement of the business strategy;
•   Understand their roles and responsibilities;
•   Understand the boundaries they operate within regarding decision making and problem solving at their level;
•   There is a climate where people feel free to speak up;
•   Provide opportunities for learning and knowledge sharing;
•   Involve people in goal setting and decision making processes;
•   Provide sufficient support and resources; and
•   Delegate appropriately, with the purpose of creating growth.

Providing autonomy does not mean withdrawal of involvement by leadership. On the contrary, it requires clear direction and appropriate support, and it requires a clear definition of authority.

Phase 2: Key Initiative 2: Holistic people capacity building

For employees to be enabled, organisations must provide the right tools and equipment, clear daily direction from leadership, flexibility in how the job gets done, and help in meeting work obstacles and challenges. To maximise people's capacity organisations must match

individual strengths and motivations to organisational needs and development must align the individual's values, beliefs and behaviour to the new culture and intended behavioural shifts.

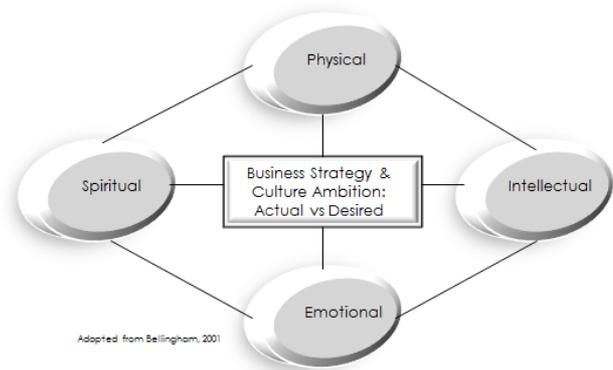For a healthy culture, the author suggests a holistic view to create people performance:

Figure 3: Holistic people capacity building

In enabling people performance to realise the organisation's business strategy and culture ambition, an organisation should take cognisance of the four dimensions depicted above. People should be developed at physical, spiritual, intellectual and emotional level. Each of these dimensions must further be understood in terms of its current state in relation to the business strategy and culture ambition, and the actions to be implemented to close the gap.

The following table provides a definition of each of the four dimensions and typical associated interventions that must be either aligned to the business strategy and culture ambition if already in existence in the organisation, or designed and implemented if not in existence:

Table 3: Holistic people capacity building

Dimension	Typical interventions indicative of this dimension
Physical: Recognising and responding to signs of stress and needs for a healthy and safe work environment	• Policies regarding harassment and equal opportunity are in place and enforced • Confidential grievance process in place and enforced • Demographics reveal appropriate gender, age, ethnicity, educational level, job status mix • Appropriate security and insurance measures are taken to ensure employee safety • A safety culture is promulgated and followed • Work environment ergonomically sound • Health incentive systems are in place • Lifestyle skill-building programs are accessible
Spiritual: Building community and purpose to develop people to their full potential so that people are connected in an ongoing way with the organisation	To a large extent interventions in this dimension is very much dependent on the kind of culture an organisation intends to create. Typical factors that ensures people experience spiritual connection to the organisation are: • People's unique gifts are celebrated • Processes are in place to encourage people to reflect upon and acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses • There is support for "whole person" development • There is willingness to accept and initiate feedback • There are agreed-upon levels of honesty • The process for addressing issues and concerns is well defined and clear to all who come in contact with the community
Intellectual: Providing learning and developmental opportunities and developing intellectual capital	• Ensure the appropriate learning and development opportunities to achieve the business strategy and culture ambition are in place • A talent management strategy to attract and retain employees • Access to technology to ensure customer growth • Knowledge management strategy to foster a learning culture • A structured innovation process
Emotional: People feel connected to the internal brand of the organisation	• Business strategy execution defined at each level of the organisation • A positive climate conducive to performance • An attractive Employee Value Proposition • The organisation's external brand creates engagement • There is a culture of service and product quality • The leadership community is healthy and supportive of the culture and climate • Annual measures of performance and culture to indicate progress • Employee assistance programs • Recognition and reward systems supportive of the culture ambition

It is clear that the suggested list of interventions to enable people performance in phase 2 of the suggested culture framework each requires specific attention and adaption to an organisation's intended business strategy and culture ambition. Holistic people development is much more complex and comprehensive than can be covered in this article.

PHASE 3: MAINTAIN ENERGY

In this final phase the organisation needs to determine the results of the culture change process and recycle the process. Leadership needs to take a hard look at how far the organisation has come and how far it still needs to go, and then rekindle the energy in the organisation to proceed.

Phase 3: Key Initiative 1: Reinforcement

The human brain is wired for habit; we are physiologically programmed to revert to our old habits – unless the organisation has reinforcements in place to ensure transition towards the culture ambition of the organisation. Reinforcement simply means monitoring whether the culture change is being sustained or not. With effective reinforcement, one can avoid losing the momentum generated by the initial deployment of the culture change, and prevent employees from holding on to the old ways of working and behaving.

The following mechanisms can be utilised to facilitate the reinforcement of a culture change:

1. Collecting and Analysing Feedback
The process of gathering feedback from employees through interviews, focus groups or surveys can assist the organisation to understand where the culture ambition is taking hold and where there are still obstacles. The feedback the organisation gathers will be helpful in developing corrective actions to ensure the culture change achieves its intended benefits.

2. Constant review
Changes are successful when they are fully implemented and embraced in an organisation. Constantly reviewing organisational capacity elements such as processes and systems ensures that the culture change is taking place and that the business is realising the full benefit of the culture ambition.

The manner of review will be very specific to the organisational capacity elements that required adaptation to achieve the culture ambition. Only by completing formal assessments and reviewing performance data can the organisation understand if the new culture has been taking hold or not, whether organisational capacity elements are supportive of the culture ambition and where further corrective action is required. In addition to the review of performance measures to determine the effectiveness of changes made in organisational capacity, the organisation must also review the progress towards its culture ambition. Survey the entire organisation twice each year. Publish results throughout the organisation in as many ways as necessary to ensure all staff members know how the organisation is doing with the movement towards the culture ambition.

A last review to be performed, although an organisation will conduct progress reviews throughout the culture change process, is to assess whether intended benefits as indicated in Phase 1 have been realised. The intended results and outcomes of the culture change are inextricably connected to whether the defined culture ambition becomes part of how employees do their jobs and behave – which means that the measurement of benefits realised are directly related to how well the culture change process was implemented.

3. Accountability systems
Effective culture change requires that accountability is built into the normal day-to-day business operation. If an organisation implements any form of change and no associated adaption are made to performance management systems, then accountability for leading and implementing intended changes will be lacking. Building accountability into objectives of leadership ensures responsibility for the success of the culture change process.

4. Recognise individual and team contributions
Celebrating successes not only increases morale, it also builds support among those that may need to "see it to believe it." Constantly seek evidence of major milestones and identify early successes, even if they are small. Here are some hints to create successful celebrations:
- Organise ways to recognise groups and individuals and make the recognition public;
- The CEO should publicly recognise that the organisation has achieved key milestones in the culture change;
- Use normal meetings as an avenue for recognition of achievement;
- Ensure key sponsors and stakeholders are aware of these achievements;

- Involve leaders to award these recognitions; and
- Provide supervisors with ways to recognise their employees.

Stated objectives to achieve the culture ambition are unlikely to become a reality if the adoption by employees to the new culture is not being reinforced.

5. Conduct After-Action Reviews

Perform an after-action review for the culture change process. An after-action review is a post - project analysis of what worked and what did not. This analysis informs the lessons learned for the next intended change process in the organisation. Learn from the mistakes and from the successes. Begin to build change management competency into the organisation.

Keep in mind that the after-action review has several sources of information apart from the change management team, including:
- Employees on whom the culture change had an impact;
- Customers and suppliers in the process; and
- Sponsors, stakeholders and leadership in the organisation.

Input from each of these groups should be considered when evaluating overall performance. The outcome of this activity should be the documented lessons learned and changes envisaged for renewal efforts in the organisation in future.

Final remarks

In this article it was concluded that culture is the self-sustaining pattern of behaviour that determines how things are done (Jon Katzenbach, Carolin Oelschlegel, and James Thomas, 2016). The author has endeavoured to provide a suggested culture journey map to ensure the creation of sustaining behavioural shifts by:
- Assessing its current culture;

- Defining the desired culture, which is the aspired values and key behavioural shifts, defined as the culture ambition;
- Mobilising a leadership community to support the culture ambition;
- Enabling a holistic people performance environment; and
- Establishing reinforcement mechanisms for the culture ambition.

To a degree, culture can be compared to natural forces such as winds and tides. These elements are there in the background, sometimes unnoticed, sometimes obvious. Endowed with immense power, they can waylay plans and inhibit progress. They can't really be tamed or fundamentally altered. But if you respect them and understand how to make the most of them, if you work with them and tap into their hidden power, they can become a source of energy and provide powerful assistance (Katzenbach et al., 2016).

As always, we also invite all our readers to engage in conversation with us about this article. Questions, comments, challenges – all will be welcomed as input that also shapes and enriches our own thinking.

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