TRANSFORMING CULTURE

IN LARGER ORGANIZATIONS

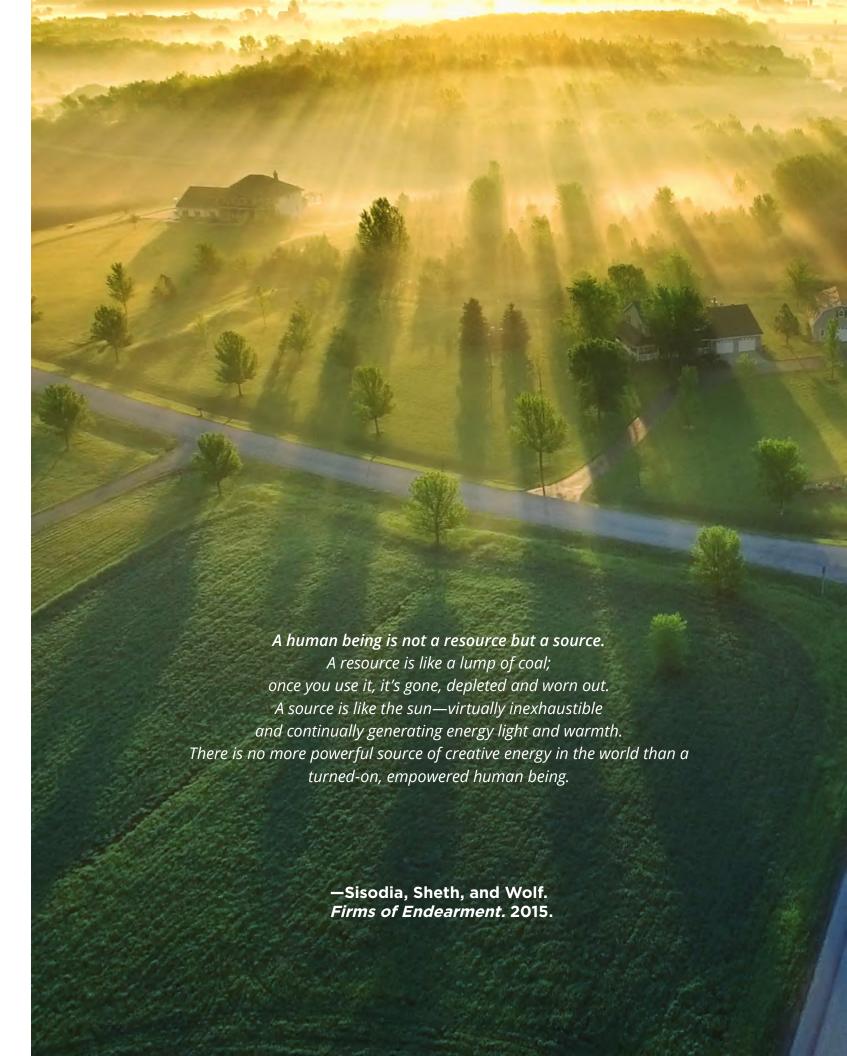Key learnings, exercises, and case studies

By Ashley Munday
and Tor Eneroth

in collaboration

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Barrett Values Centre

A human being is not a resource but a source.
A resource is like a lump of coal;
once you use it, it's gone, depleted and worn out.
A source is like the sun—virtually inexhaustible
and continually generating energy light and warmth.
There is no more powerful source of creative energy in the world than a
turned-on, empowered human being.

—Sisodia, Sheth, and Wolf.
***Firms of Endearment*. 2015.**

TRANSFORMATION BEGINS WITHIN

I have traveled around the globe and have eaten a simple rice dish while sitting on the dirt floor of the home of an Indian brick maker, a woman who lived in abject poverty and had many reasons to be unhappy but was not. Ironically, some of the most miserable people I have met are managers and knowledge workers in North America, people who seemingly have many reasons to be happy.

Aon Hewitt defines employee engagement as "the level of an employee's psychological investment in their organization." In their 2017 Trends in Global Employee Engagement report, they note that North American engagement rates have dropped to 64 percent and that only 59 percent of employees are committed to stay with their organizations. Have you simply accepted attrition or "churn" as your new normal?

We have lackluster engagement amid rapidly changing market conditions that require companies to innovate and adapt quickly. We live in critical times of change, with economic, geopolitical, and environmental factors influencing business decisions each day. Despite the need for rapid change, 70 percent of change management initiatives fail. Is it any wonder given the engagement levels? It seems we are doing a poor job engaging the hearts and minds of employees. When was the last time you experienced a top-down mandate or one-way communications inspiring change and action?

Culture is often believed to be a magic ether that permeates the right organizations, or prescriptive rules that dictate an ideal model. Leaders are left to their own devices to work with culture. Top teams often create a list of values without understanding how to integrate them in a meaningful way, or they develop ad hoc promotional materials, trainings, or initiatives that don't create cohesive change.

Questions about meaning, motivation, and culture have defined my life's work. Corporations are some of the most powerful systems on the planet, and I have witnessed and facilitated true transformation among teams and across large organizations in my previous role at Barrett Values Centre. Nedbank in South Africa, for one, turned its organization around completely, going from near bankruptcy to thriving revenues, high engagement, and extraordinary cultural

health measures. I continued this work as an independent consultant to national and global organizations until I had my own personal transformation when my son was born and I took time off to be with him.

What excites me about working at SweetRush is that this company has always put "engaging hearts and minds" front and center. The first time I saw the recruitment video we produced for Cisco engineers, I wanted to apply to be one! Paired with deeper culture work and a true understanding of how change can be successful, SweetRush can now impact employee performance in ways that our clients have not seen before, and this, to me, is so exciting.

Tor Eneroth, my former colleague at Barrett, and I decided to write this e-book as a resource and workbook for leaders to get started on the culture journey in a meaningful and tactical way. It is directed to leaders in larger organizations, but the lessons are applicable to anyone who manages a team. Work with culture engagement can be done at an executive level as well as within a small group. Aligning culture with strategy is a powerful enabler for any team.

My hope is that you will use this book to identify your next steps in fostering a vibrant, high-performing work culture. Please reach out if you have any questions or if I can be a resource to you as you embark on this important journey.

Cultural capital is a fundamental driver of financial performance. Building it is good for the bottom line, and for humankind.

All my best,

Ashley

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I. INTRODUCTION

Imagine a workplace culture where excitement fills the air, where everything is done to enhance the customer experience, where innovation thrives and teams easily adapt to unforeseen circumstances, where your senior team works toward a shared vision of success, and where people genuinely care for one another, feel recognized, and receive support within the organization.

Cultures like these are not created overnight. They aren't formed by policy, procedure, and measuring key performance indicators (KPIs). High-performing cultures have values alignment, mission alignment, and low levels of fear. These are cultures where employees can bring their beliefs and values to work and where there's a shared belief, throughout the organization, that they have a high-performing culture.

Our intention for this paper is to introduce the concept of transforming culture in larger organizations, those with more than 1,000 employees. We've seen organizations transform their cultures and ignite success time and time again. This paper includes three brief case studies, an overview of the concepts and key learnings about transforming culture, and exercises to help you get started. Our hope is that this paper will give you the confidence and the tools to begin one of the most important and catalyzing journeys in your organization's history.
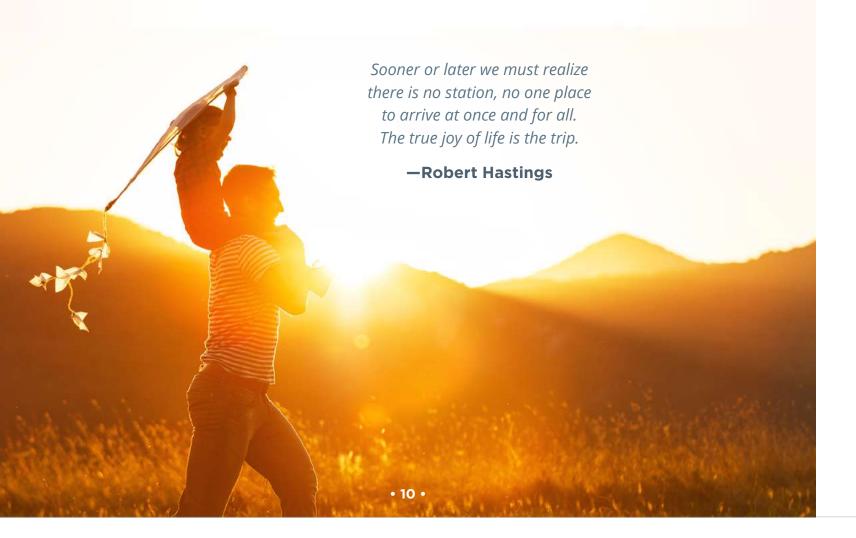
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WHY TRANSFORMATION?

While culture change involves engineering a process and managing the moving parts, transformation takes place on the inside. **Transformation involves human beings and all the feelings, beliefs, and values that motivate them. It's about working with people's motivations to create something bigger and better than you could have imagined alone.** It takes time and needs to be cultivated, like a plant or any living thing. While change is a process from "this" to "that," transformation unleashes the best of what can be. Transformation frees human potential and accesses our collective wisdom.

Sooner or later we must realize there is no station, no one place to arrive at once and for all. The true joy of life is the trip.

—Robert Hastings

CULTURE IS A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION

Throughout this paper, we refer to the **culture journey**. Leaders on a transformational path need to respond to market conditions as well as to the needs of their internal teams. You will create visions and then reshape them. Culture is not a place you arrive, but a way of being that you will develop and evolve over time.

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II.
CASE STUDIES

In the following case studies, you will learn more about the concept of the culture journey. We have selected three organizations in various regions of the word—Old Mutual Group, Volvo IT, and Unilever Brazil—because they had different intentions and approaches toward cultural transformation. There is not just one way, but many ways, to successfully work with your culture.

CASE STUDY 1: VOLVO IT

Consistent and persistent work with our wanted culture is one of our critical success factors.

—Magnus Carlander, CEO, Volvo IT

Volvo IT (2000–2010)	
INDUSTRY:	Technology
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:	6,000
NUMBER OF CULTURE AMBASSADORS:	500
OPERATIONS IN:	Europe, Americas, Asia, Oceania, Africa (20 countries)

Volvo IT is a global company based in Gothenburg, Sweden. Its primary role is to provide IT services and support teams to the global network of Volvo industries. It worked proactively with its culture starting in 2000, led by a full-time Culture Manager who was a nonvoting member of the executive team.

This case study covers Volvo IT's cultural transformation and development journey over 11 years (2000 to 2011).

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The core of the culture journey was the Culture Ambassador Program, initiated in 2001. Over the following years, Volvo IT trained more than 500 Culture Ambassadors, who actively developed the culture throughout the organization.

The fundamental intention and belief with this Culture Ambassador Program was to empower and train all formal and informal leaders to develop their capability to grow a desired culture. It was an ongoing journey to find, define, grow, and care for their espoused core values.

The focus of the culture work evolved as Volvo IT responded to the changing market conditions, strategic ambitions, and needs of the organization, employees, and stakeholders.

Here are the themes that emerged over the years in its culture journey:

GROW ONE COMPANY:
THE VOLVO IT IDENTITY (2000—2002)

At the start of the journey, Volvo IT was a newly formed company created by consolidating the IT departments from seven Volvo business units plus the Group IT department. The first challenge was to form a shared culture for the new organization that was mainly in Sweden, Belgium, and the United States. Teams were identified with their old business units, so there wasn't a shared identity. This led to internal positioning and competition. The company's key challenge was to develop a shared set of values and culture among the dispersed teams and create one Volvo IT identity.

GROW CUSTOMER FOCUS (2003—2008)

Once the cultural norms had been established internally, Volvo IT began to focus externally. After it became a separate entity from Volvo, the former internal relationships turned into customer/supplier relationships, which called for new behaviors and attitudes. Additionally, Volvo IT started serving external customers. During this period, Volvo IT grew from 3,000 employees to 7,000 employees at its peak in 2009.

Grow One Company 2000—2002

Grow Customer Focus 2003—2008

2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011

2008—2010 **Ensure Resilience**

2010—2011 **Realize Strategy**

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ENSURE RESILIENCE:
CULTURE IN DOWNTURN (2008—2010)

As soon as the financial crisis hit, business at Volvo and Volvo IT declined. Volvo IT had to make urgent decisions to cope with the recession. Consequently, it had to let go of 2,000 of its 7,000 employees and consultants in six months' time to adjust to reduced business volume. While it was a difficult time, leadership was conscientious about living their values to maintain their desired culture and not erode trust. Employees knew that it was a matter of long-term sustainability. Employee satisfaction rates remained around 90 percent.

REALIZE STRATEGY:
CULTURE AS AN ENABLER (2010—2011)

Once the market began to recover, Volvo IT grew again, reaching 7,000 employees and contractors in 2011. During this period, the focus of the culture was on fulfilling its strategy while continuing to develop and care for its culture.

> **During these 10 years, Volvo IT continually trained its Culture Ambassadors to work co-creatively with their teams to secure their strategic objectives and culture.**

THE OUTCOME

Volvo IT maintained extraordinarily high levels of employee satisfaction, even when it had to reduce its staff by 2,000 employees. **Its Employee Satisfaction Index remained around 90 percent over five years.**

Customer satisfaction increased more than 30 percent during this decade. Several customers surveyed had 100 percent satisfaction.

Project delivery precision improved from 55 to 90 percent.

The company was selected as best in class for most attractive IT employer (rated by Universum).

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CASE STUDY 2: OLD MUTUAL GROUP

I believe that the culture of our business is critical to its success. We monitor our culture using an annual process of engagement with all our people—the Barrett Cultural Values Assessment. Managers all around the organization are tasked to address issues raised. … We understand and believe in the importance of putting our customers at the heart of our business and creating the right culture and behaviors to support our vision of becoming our customers' most trusted partner. This will continue to be critical to our success as we head into the future.

—Julian Roberts, CEO, Old Mutual PLC

Old Mutual Group	
INDUSTRY:	Financial Services
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:	57,480
OPERATIONS IN:	Africa, Asia, North America, South America

Old Mutual Group is a leading international long-term savings, investment, and protection group. Three of Old Mutual Group's well-known brands at the time of writing are Nedbank, Old Mutual, and Skandia.

Transforming the culture across all the Old Mutual Group businesses started with Nedbank in 2005. It became group-wide when the aspiration of becoming

"our customers' most trusted partner" was articulated as part of the Old Mutual Group vision in 2010.

Work was done with the executive leadership teams to increase self-awareness, build trust in relationships, and cascade a practice of strategic storytelling. Organizational structures and processes were aligned to support the development of the desired culture from the top down, including the group operating model, performance management, selection assessment, leadership development, and, most recently, the incorporation of cultural entropy levels (a measure of dysfunction) into the long-term incentive plan for executives. Staff members had no doubts that the organization was taking its values and culture seriously.

Recognizing that working with the top leaders would not be enough to catalyze and sustain the change in the geographically dispersed teams, Old Mutual began to embed a capacity for culture change into the business via the introduction of Culture Leads, first in its UK-based Wealth business and later in the South Africa-based Emerging Markets businesses.

The role of Culture Leads, primarily senior managers, is to actively sponsor the transformation in their business units and stimulate deeper dialogues around living the values.

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Culture Leads are equipped with a set of skills to support transformation in their teams. The Culture Leads are skilled in making change happen "on the ground" in their part of the business. An important aspect of the role is to both support and challenge the Executive Committee members to drive the change agenda and carry this agenda, or change story, further into the organization. Thus, the culture transformation is embedded throughout multiple levels in the business.

THE OLD MUTUAL CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION TOOLKIT

click to
learn more

is a resource developed for the Culture Leads.

It includes sections on:

• Building mindsets and capabilities

• Transforming your leadership

• Holding meaningful team meetings

• Debriefing the annual culture assessment results

• Working with organizational assessment results

• Working with leadership assessments

CASE STUDY 3: UNILEVER BRAZIL

At the heart, we're encouraging personal meaning. This is where growth happens. To make meaning is human. To choose the meaning we make is to be leaders.

—Rob Mallick, Culture Consultant, Unilever Brazil

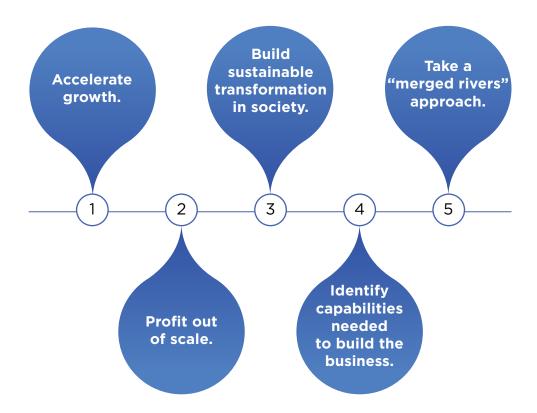| Unilever Brazil	
INDUSTRY:	Consumer Goods
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:	10,000+
OPERATIONS IN:	Brazil

Unilever Brazil had an incredible legacy built over 80 years; however, in 2004–05, after decades of strong growth, revenues slowed and the business needed renewal.

In early 2008, Kees Kruythoff, the newly appointed chairman, along with the Unilever Brazil board, launched a transformational effort to reignite growth.

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They recognized a need not only to address strategic challenges and manage operations but also to address the organizational culture. They had five big thoughts:

1. Accelerate growth.
2. Profit out of scale.
3. Build sustainable transformation in society.
4. Identify capabilities needed to build the business.
5. Take a "merged rivers" approach.

In "merged rivers," cultural transformation and operations(strategy/KPIs), like two Amazonian rivers that merge, had to be managed in an integrated fashion—not either/or or even side by side, but together, simultaneously.

THE PROCESS

Unilever Brazil developed a shared understanding among senior leadership that **the concept of a linear process can be outdated and ineffective**. Truly dynamic work with cultures is very much in the moment and allows for human dynamics.

The company conducted a **Cultural Values Assessment every six months**.

Disciplined attention was maintained for 36 months.

The company emphasized that leaders create culture, and encouraged board members to reflect on their personal values and the culture they desired to create at Unilever Brazil. The board led the executive team (ET) through the same process. And then the ET led all 250 managers through the process as well.

The company established rituals and meaning, (i.e., regular, consistent practices and time for reflection on key espoused values).

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Needs were continually reframed (e.g., when there was an overemphasis on safety, company leaders taught the need for risk taking and vulnerability).

THE OUTCOME

Revenue grew by 3 percent in 2008, 7 percent in 2009, and into the double digits by the second quarter of 2010. Revenue growth was also driven by increases in market share, not price.

Entropy, the degree of unproductive focus, fell from 37 percent to 19 percent, and then to 10 percent in 2010. Entropy in the top team fell from 31 percent to 8 percent.

Instead of a culture characterized by caution, short-term focus, internal competition, and consensus, **employees now experience a business with long-term perspective, shared vision, teamwork, and a strong orientation toward customer satisfaction and the development of leaders.**

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III.
KEY LEARNINGS

After decades of experience organizing and leading cultural transformation in organizations with more than 1,000 employees, we have identified several key factors for success.

To begin, we suggest that you and your management team reflect on these together. Discuss what you do well and what you may need to consider or do differently going forward.

"Culture eats strategy for breakfast" is a remark made by Peter Drucker and popularized by the president of Ford Motor Company. The point is this: if you don't have a strong culture, you won't be able to effectively execute your strategy in a sustainable way. At the same time, if you don't have the focus and direction of a strategy, your culture won't survive.

Your current culture—"the way things are done around here"—is the enabler, the power center that provides the energy to align people to strive for a shared objective. **This culture should be the expression of your mission, vision, and values.**

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There's not one "right" model of corporate culture.

Many of us are looking for the best, most effective, or most successful culture. There isn't a model for what a corporate culture should be. In a time when companies are doing a great deal of benchmarking and many thought leaders are sharing insights, you must develop the right culture for your organization. **Corporations are living systems.**

Start by understanding:

the mission, vision, and values of your organization

your personal needs and motivations

the behaviors and actions needed to create the desired culture that supports your strategic ambitions

Keep in mind that culture is always changing in response to internal and external influences.

What you measure, you can manage.

Even though there's no prescription for a perfect culture, you will need to measure your unique culture over time. It will be critical to track the impact of your initiatives and adjust your course.

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Organizations don't change; people do.

You cannot expect your culture to change unless you are willing to transform yourself as a leader. This requires leadership development with an intimate understanding of who you are, how you behave, what is important to you, and, most importantly, what you need to find fulfillment in your life. When you are transparent about who you are, what you truly want, and what you find unacceptable, you will be seen as a person with integrity and will develop trust among your teams.

Cultural transformation must begin with authentic leaders who value human beings. When the top team leaders slow down to listen to the people in the organization and act upon those employees' needs, transformation will begin. Many leaders are often too busy to listen to their own personal needs. They can also miss what is going on around them. Leaders at all levels need to continuously slow down and stay open to the needs of their employees.

It is important that leaders see themselves as a vital part of the whole and shift focus from self-interest to common good.

Start at the top and the bottom.

It is often said that culture change must start at the top, with the leadership. This is true, but not the whole truth. **You also need to create programs and opportunities to involve employees in developing your culture.** People naturally want to work for organizations that value their people and their culture. You can start in small groups within the organization to demonstrate the impact of culture change on team performance. For organization-wide change, however, you'll need to empower leaders at all levels to live the desired culture.

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Dialogue is key.

Culture is not like a machine that you construct and manage. It is more like a living plant that you must nurture. To cultivate this "living entity," it is crucial to engage and involve people because they are the expression of your culture. The only way to achieve this is through dialogue or, even more precisely, through co-creative dialogue. **Just by inviting dialogue, you are starting your culture transformation.** Through reflection and conversation, people develop a collective awareness of what's functional and dysfunctional and begin to define the way forward toward the desired culture.

Transformation takes time.

As Stephen Covey is attributed as saying, **"With people, slow is fast and fast is slow."**

We live in a world where speed is revered. When it comes to culture, however, speed is not a success factor! This process involves human beings. Doing it too fast is like trying to jump from one side of the change curve to the other. It just does not work. If you try to push and go too quickly, your employees will be reluctant to act the next time you face change. **So, instead of moving too fast, try investing time and being persistent and consistent.**

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Perspective from the Field

Pleuntje Van Meer, a founding partner of Synnova and a global leadership consultant with decades of experience transforming culture in large organizations, agrees:

I have learned some important lessons over the past ten years working on business transformation with large and medium-sized, multi-national organizations:

- *The commitment of the leaders is vital. A leader-led intervention is necessary to shift the mindsets of the organization.*

- *The Human Resource Department and those responsible for strategy need to fully partner with the leadership in co-creating the culture change story.*

- *Transformation takes time.*

- *You cannot treat cultural transformation as a project with deadlines and deliverables. It is more of an emergent learning process.*

- *Success requires clarity of direction, and healthy internal and external interpersonal connections based on trust. Only when this happens will people in the organization feel they can fully bring themselves to work.*
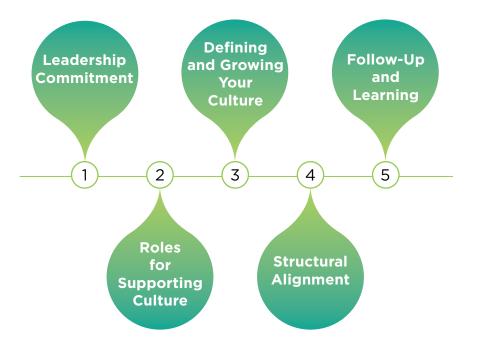
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IV.
"GROWING" YOUR DESIRED CULTURE

Creating a culture of engagement is like gardening. This is why we use the phrase "growing your culture"— so that we can remember it's an organic process.

It takes intention, planning, time, attention, and adjustments based on conditions. There is no prescriptive linear way to do this; however, we've identified five areas for growing your desired culture:

Each of these areas takes attention and planning, so it's important to select just a few to focus on at a time. Read through the following pages and highlight three to five vital activities that are relevant to your organization in the next three months. Revisit the list every three months to review your accomplishments and identify the next vital activities to focus on.

Everyone knows that leadership is essential to transform a culture, but often the roles and responsibilities are not entirely clear. Here are some tips to create leadership commitment at all levels of the organization:

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1. Leadership Commitment

☐ ROLE OF CEO

It is critical for the CEO to lead the culture. CEOs who are committed to culture talk passionately about it every day. They have personal and clear stories about why they are working with culture. They are consistent and persistent in living the values and building the culture. They have low tolerance for people who are not working to better the culture. They walk their talk!

☐ BOARD COMMITMENT

You will need buy-in and support from the most senior reporting team or structure for organization-wide success. This is often a corporate board. Organizational priorities are typically established from the top, and culture must be included, especially since it is so critical and needs attention over a long period of time.

☐ COMPELLING SHARED REASON

The top team should develop a compelling shared reason for working with culture. This group should have a clear picture of where they are and where they want to go. They should understand the current culture and have a shared vision of the desired culture.

☐ SELF-AWARENESS

All members of the top team should develop self-awareness and know their values, purpose, personality, behaviors, and impact on the people around them. Each leader should also understand how she or he aligns with the desired organizational values and culture.

☐ WALKING YOUR TALK

All members of the top team should develop ongoing awareness of and feedback on their behaviors, communications, and the perceptions of others.

☐ INVOLVEMENT AND COMMITMENT

Develop a strategy and process to share your culture and involve all your managers. The strategy should include programs for managers to increase their own personal awareness and expectations about their behaviors.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Does your top leadership team have a compelling and shared reason for working with culture?

2. Do you regularly share your personal values and explain how they relate to the desired culture of your organization?

3. Are you considering your organizational values as you make decisions? When you share how your decisions relate to the organizational values, it nurtures the culture.

4. When you give presentations, do you share stories about values and culture?

5. Do you invite feedback on your behavior? Do you use it to help you improve yourself and better "walk your talk"? Do you have ways to measure this improvement? Are you truly open to the feedback? Do you act on it?

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2. Roles for Supporting Culture

Just as you have leaders responsible for HR, finance, and communication, you also need a leader to address the cultural journey and ensure that it is taking place. Someone must be assigned to the role of Culture Manager—it's not going to take care of itself. Established departments are often at capacity with other strategic objectives and may have difficulty taking on another dimensional responsibility. It is also important that this role work across all departments and divisions to develop and care for the ongoing transformation of the culture. Candidates for this role need particular experience and training to execute the culture initiatives effectively. In addition to the Culture Manager, other employees throughout the organization should be trained to support the culture initiatives.

☐ CULTURE MANAGER

The primary role of the Culture Manager is to be the "guardian" of the culture. Neither the designer of the culture nor its primary promoter, this person keeps track of what is happening in the culture. The Culture Manager also develops organization-wide programs and specific interventions that enable the culture to develop in line with the changing needs of the organization, employees, and external stakeholders. This role must be internal, with a clear and direct connection to the CEO and top management.

☐ CULTURE AMBASSADOR

Culture doesn't just happen at the top. Transformation must occur throughout the organization. Culture Ambassadors are managers and employees who are trained to promote culture initiatives. They represent the organizational culture, provide valuable perspective about whether the culture is being lived among their teams, and facilitate frequent dialogue with employees about the values and behaviors that are necessary to support shifts in the organization's strategy. Having one cultural ambassador for approximately every 50–75 employees should provide a critical mass of people for cultural transformation.

The book *Get Connected* **is a field training guide** for Culture Ambassadors.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Is anyone assigned to support the CEO in leading the cultural transformation journey?

2. In your organization, is there a critical mass of people who could facilitate the daily journey to grow your desired culture?

3. Do you offer tools and training to support individuals in hosting the dialogue needed to transform the culture?

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Transforming Culture in Larger Organizations ▶ "Growing" Your Desired Culture
Roles Supporting Culture

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3. Defining and Growing Your Culture

Many leaders think culture is created by defining core values and implementing them. It's so much more than that. The real work is to align the different aspects of your culture. Creating your desired culture should be engaging, tangible, and visible in daily interactions. It requires a systematic approach to make this happen.

☐ **SHARED VISION AND MISSION**
Everything starts with clear intention. It is critical to involve the whole organization in defining the vision and mission. This will define your culture and strategy.

Related exercises:
4 Whys from the book *Get Connected* (p. 75 to 103)

☐ **CULTURE MEASUREMENT**
Baseline measurements will help you understand where you are and where you want to go. These should be repeated annually or semiannually to track your progress. This includes existing/traditional "output" and "outcome" measurements, along with the more "causal" culture measurements (Barrett, *The Values-Driven Organization*, 2013, pp. 43–44, Second Edition). Barrett Values Centre's Cultural Values Assessment (CVA) is one of the most comprehensive "causal" measurements available.

☐ **DEFINE WANTED BEHAVIORS/ACTIONS**
The results of the culture measurement should be shared with teams throughout the organization. Groups then discuss the results to reflect on strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. In these workshops, teams define wanted norms and behaviors.

Related exercises and worksheets:
From CVA to Action from the book *Get Connected* (pp. 52–55 and 129–145).

☐ **HANDLE DYSFUNCTION**
Issues in your culture inhibit a team from effectively executing your strategy. Address the dysfunction by creating a clear plan of action, detailing the values and behaviors that you want to establish.

Related exercises and worksheets:
From CVA to Action from the book *Get Connected* (pp. 52–55 and 129–145).

☐ **ALIGN STRATEGY AND CULTURE**
Each of your strategic initiatives should include a connection to culture. How do you want people to do this work? How does it relate to the values, vision, and mission of the organization? How does it relate to your desired culture?

Related exercises and worksheets:
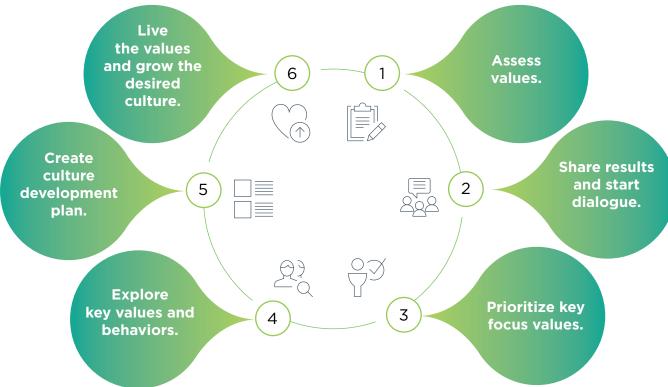Align Strategy and Culture guide from the book *Get Connected* (p. 109).

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☐ CONTINUOUS DIALOGUE

You need to make sure that you invest time for daily and continuous dialogue about desired behaviors. True dialogue enables people to internalize the values and concepts and makes it more likely that they will be engaged going forward. It is the departmental manager's responsibility to make sure time and space is provided for continuous dialogue.

☐ FROM CVA TO ACTION

- 1. Assess values.
- 2. Share results and start dialogue.
- 3. Prioritize key focus values.
- 4. Explore key values and behaviors.
- 5. Create culture development plan.
- 6. Live the values and grow the desired culture.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Do you have a way to measure the values and culture of your organization?

2. Do you measure and manage the dysfunction and fear (energy leakages) in your organization?

3. Have you shared your vision, mission, and values throughout your organization? Do people have a clear understanding of where the organization is going and how this relates to their role? Do the vision, mission, and values empower people to work interdependently?

4. Are your strategy and culture aligned? Have you thought about how your strategy should be executed based on the culture you want to grow?

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Defining and Growing Your Culture

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4. Structural Alignment

You must consistently work on culture with various parts of the organization—including HR, communications, and strategy—in addition to the top leadership team. Collaborating on culture is extremely important and easily missed.

You need to ensure that the structures and systems of your culture and the communications about it are aligned.

Structures, policies, procedures, and incentives reflect the value systems of the current leaders and the institutional legacy of past leaders. They dictate what behaviors are acceptable and encouraged and what behaviors are unacceptable and discouraged.

The following are examples of some of the most important policies, procedures, and programs that should reflect the organization's espoused values:

- Decision-making processes should be values-based because they allow us to break with the past and create a new future based on what is important to us individually and as an organization.

- HR processes and structures need to be consciously aligned with the wanted culture. This includes employee selection, evaluation, and development.

- Leadership development and management training programs should include training and reflection on values, culture, and wanted behaviors.

- Organization-wide values-awareness programs should be established and maintained.

- Reinforcement materials—including videos, pamphlets, and posters—should be provided.

- A values-based coaching program and coaching culture should be implemented and cultivated.

- The company brand and/or customer promise statement need to be aligned with your desired culture.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Have you intentionally reviewed your structure and systems to ensure that they are aligned with your espoused vision, mission, and values?

2. Do you know when and how to make values-based decisions, especially among your top management team?

3. Do you have visible material to reinforce your wanted values and behavior?

4. Is your brand or customer promise aligned with your company values and culture?

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5. Follow-Up and Learning

Transforming culture is an iterative process. Building feedback loops for learning and growth is one of the most commonly forgotten steps in the journey. These steps will help you learn where to focus your attention and let you know when you need to correct your course:

☐ **DAILY FEEDBACK**
Feedback is an effective way to visualize and manifest a desired culture. "Effective feedback enables the receiver to walk away understanding exactly what he or she did and what impact it had on them. When the result is this specific and this direct, there is a better chance that the person getting the feedback will be motivated to begin, continue, or stop behaviors that affect performance" (Weitzel, *Feedback That Works*, 2000).

Related exercises:
Effective Feedback from the book *Get Connected* (p. 173)

☐ **REFLECTION AND "LESSONS LEARNED" MEETINGS**
We need to invest time to stop, reflect, and learn collectively. This helps us develop shared meaning and an understanding about what works and what does not. The purpose is to enhance your team's ability to transform and learn.

Related exercises:
Team Learning from the book *Get Connected* (p. 165)

☐ **RECOGNITION, CELEBRATION, AND REWARDS (Performance/Behavior Awards)**
People like to be caught doing things right. This is contagious, so the more you do this, the more it will spread. Traditionally we are not good at celebrating what is right and good around us. By intentionally focusing on the positive, we also grow the behavior and culture we want to see.

Recommended book for ideas:
1501 Ways to Reward Employees, by Bob Nelson

☐ **QUARTERLY CULTURE REPORT**
There must be a way to track and learn from your culture journey. This is different from the traditional linear ways to measure progress. The purpose is to create a shared picture of each team's current culture journey through data collection and dialogue.

Related exercises:
Culture Report from the book *Get Connected* (p. 185)

☐ **ROLLING THREE-MONTH PLAN**
This plan includes focus, actions, and dates. It helps the top team and the Culture Manager review, focus, and manage the cultural transformational journey.

This whole article, with its related activities and questions, is meant to serve as base for building a Rolling Three-Month Plan to manage your culture.

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☐ **A CULTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

This plan includes desired values, actions, responsibilities, and dates. It helps each team review, focus, and manage the cultural transformational journey.

There is an example of a Culture Development Plan in the book *Get Connected* (p. 54).

☐ **FOLLOW-UP CULTURE ASSESSMENT**

Define how and when you intend to follow up to see the effect of your efforts and the evolution.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

- Culture Development Plan Example (GC pp. 54 and 141)
- Quarterly Culture Report (GC p. 185)
- Team Learning Guide (GC p. 165)
- Effective Feedback Guide (GC p. 173)

SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Do you have an overall plan for managing the culture development in your whole organization?

2. Does each team in your organization have a Culture Development Plan connecting values and behaviors?

3. Is your culture open to feedback and reflections that help you learn from your daily experiences and performance?

4. Do you celebrate your successes and reward desired behaviors?

IN CONCLUSION

This is a beginning, rather than an ending. Start by asking yourself the vital questions throughout this paper. This is not an all-inclusive list of questions and activities. It is a starting point and something for you to continuously nurture.

To learn more about transforming organiza-tional culture, please contact Ashley Munday at SweetRush or Tor Eneroth at Barrett Values Centre.

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NOTES AND IDEAS

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V.
OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES

LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT
Personal Values Assessment
New Leadership Paradigm
Leadership Values Assessment

ROLES FOR SUPPORTING CULTURE
Culture Manager Job Description
Roles and Responsibilities in Culture Work
Get Connected

DEFINING AND GROWING YOUR CULTURE
Get Connected
Old Mutual Cultural Transformation Toolkit

STRUCTURAL ALIGNMENT
Values-Based Decision-Making Exercise
Values-Based Decision-Making Scenarios

FOLLOW-UP AND LEARNING
Get Connected (GC)
- Culture Development Plan Example (GC pp. 54 and 141)
- Quarterly Culture Report (GC p. 185)
- Team Learning Guide (GC p. 165)
- Effective Feedback Guide (GC p. 173)

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SweetRush is a world-class leader in enhancing employee performance for well-known brands through blended learning, design deliverables, and culture development.

Tor Eneroth, Network Director at Barrett Values Centre, is responsible for the Network Team at Barrett, which serves a global network of almost 4,000 CTT consultants; develops training programs, seminars and social media; and performs research and other outreach activities to grow the CTT consultants' skills and confidence so that they can better fulfill their missions as cultural transformation practitioners. Tor's role includes guest speaking, executive coaching, and consulting. He is also a member of the Barrett Values Centre Management Team. Tor's core values are respect, learning, trust, making a difference, and vision.

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Barrett Values Centre® provides powerful metrics that enable leaders to measure and manage the cultures of their organizations and the leadership development needs of their managers and leaders.

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