



Transforming Culture

■ How to deliver sustainable change to your organisation



KIDDY & PARTNERS



“The concept of behavioural change feels more relevant to the world of work now more than ever...”

Change takes many different forms in an organisation: a new technology platform, a restructuring or shift in strategy, a deeper focus on the customer or a call for increased creativity. It could even come in the form of a global pandemic, and a seismic shift to the world of work.

Organisations might put a lot of new processes in place, arrange people differently in new teams or spend money on various external solutions or technology. They might also ‘announce’ the new culture via a set of values or frameworks. But what if nothing’s changed six months later? Targets are still unmet, the return on the company’s investment of time and money is elusive and everything feels as it did before, potentially with a large dose of scepticism and frustration.


At the root of any significant change is behaviour. Put simply, what people do every day, how they lead, what conversations they have or don’t

have, how differences in opinions and experience are explicitly included or not, what gets tolerated and what doesn’t – it all makes up company culture. This idea isn’t new, but the depth of understanding around the impact of behaviour has certainly increased. The idea that employee behaviour is at the core of change has been talked about for a long time, but there’s clearly something missing. If this talk is all it takes, then all culture change programmes would work first time, every time!

The concept of behavioural change feels more relevant to the world of work now more than ever because the context has changed. We are experiencing multi-generational workplaces, changing attitudes to hierarchy, and of course the recent exponential increase in remote working. This is especially true amongst traditionally office-based industries. All of the above means increased opportunities – and challenges – for leaders.

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Against this backdrop of conflicting pressures, employee behaviours can mean the difference between success and failure for a business.

Leaders need to identify and make time for sustainable culture change to ensure that their ambitions are achieved.

Any change begins with a deliberate and conscious effort to alter individual behaviours or processes, but for it to become sustainable they need to become a well practiced habit. It needs to take root in what people do every day. Simply articulating what the behaviours need to be just isn't enough.

Focus is crucial. An abundance of competency frameworks, values and principles is likely to create ambiguity, not clarity. Behavioural change needs to be rooted in real life, bringing in many different departments, disciplines, and levels, and it needs to feel tangible and practical. Telling individuals in the business that they need to demonstrate 'integrity' or 'collaboration' is meaningless without practical guidance on what that means for them.

Behavioural change must be crystal clear. If a small number of non-negotiable

behaviours are outlined and demonstrated, and these can be replicated across the organisation at a peer-to-peer level, culture change has a fighting chance. Leaders can demonstrate the behaviours themselves, but they cannot enforce them; the trick is the combination of leaders who role model the behaviours and individuals influencing each other.

Learning and development professionals play a crucial role in facilitating behavioural change. They need to get people talking by enlisting highly connected individuals to act as advocates, discussing and demonstrating desirable behaviours, which in turn accelerates the change. They also communicate the value of the activity to the leaders, and express upon them the importance of individuals seeing these key behaviours role modelled from the very top.

If people don't change their behaviour, the company cannot change its culture. Significant transformation will only be achieved with leaders role modelling desired behaviours, positive change at a peer to peer level and strong, clear messages about the importance of behaviour change.



“Significant transformation will only be achieved with leaders role modelling desired behaviours...”

Did you know...



70%

of change programmes fail to achieve their goals, largely due to employee resistance and lack of management support

Why other programmes fail

Culture change programmes always begin with a catalyst – be it internal or external.

For example, an organisation that has historically been a market leader with values focused on profit and efficiency might find themselves being overtaken by the competition, and therefore realise they need to address their 'that's the way we've always

done it' mentality. Previously, a culture change programme to address this sort of thing might have included adding 'innovation' or 'creativity' to the values, and perhaps a communications campaign to convey this change to the workforce.

There's a number of reasons why this (well-intentioned) programme is likely to fail:

■ **The goals are too high level**

What does innovation really mean for all of the different roles within the business?

■ **The values contradict themselves**

Being innovative and taking risks is often a very different tactic to being as efficient and profit-focused as possible, and as such people don't know which of these values to prioritise

■ **There's no 'why'**

By simply receiving an order to change from up above, people don't know or don't understand the reasons behind that decision. They have little personal investment or motivation to change their behaviour.

This is an example of what not to do.

How then, do we make sure that change works?...



How can leaders make large scale behaviour change sustainable?

Here's 5 ways to ensure success...

1

Articulate a set of non-negotiable behaviours

Being clear about the end goal you have in mind is the pillar of any behavioural change, and leaders must be able to articulate the change they want to see. It doesn't matter whether it's becoming more customer-centric, creative or agile;

it just needs to be clear and have a strong rationale behind the need for the change. Leaders need to be clear on what IS included and what IS NOT included – what does good look like?



2

Take behaviours down to an everyday level

Imagine what your new culture needs to look like, and what sorts of behaviour are necessary to achieve it. Then look at the behaviours people in your organisation are enacting right now. What behaviours do you want to keep and multiply and which behaviours do you want to stop and let go now? Change can be achieved when you define a few concrete and vital behaviours,

not dozens of criteria that people can't remember, or don't understand. High level issues such as trust are important, and they need to be broken down. Think about how employees show trust – they make sure they arrive to meetings on time, or give effective feedback rather than moaning about people behind their back.



3

Embed new behaviours with peer to peer influence

Within any organisation, there'll be individuals who hold a certain amount of power and influence. These are the people that other employees tend to copy, and so they can quickly make new behaviours the norm within an organisation. These people don't have to be your organisation's leaders – in fact, more often than not they aren't. They're people with great connections

within the business, who can be trusted and who aren't part of the hierarchical authority. Harness these individuals and get them to help you create and communicate your desired behaviours and you've got a much better chance of the preferred behaviours spreading organically throughout your organisation.



4

Allow leaders to set the tone, supported by L&D professionals

Without endorsement from the top of an organisation, any cultural or behavioural change will struggle. Whilst leaders have an ability to support change, it's up to the rest of the organisation to actually make it happen. Along with learning and development professionals, leaders need to define how they want the organisation to look and be able to demonstrate their

chosen desired behaviours. It's important that they are personally invested, in order to create and support an environment in which change can be achieved and sustained.



Success in a nutshell

1. Know why you are changing and what you want to achieve
2. Articulate behaviours at an everyday level
3. Find out who your well connected employees are, and support them to exhibit your desired behaviours
4. Allow leaders to set the tone to support the work of the L&D professionals
5. Broadcast non-heroic stories that others can identify with and can see themselves doing

Tell the right story

What people talk about at work will help the idea of behaviour change spread. This isn't a comms plan, it's the narrative that flows through a workplace. Of course it includes values, literature and meetings and it must also include storytelling. Non-heroic stories which people can identify with and see themselves replicating need to be gathered and shared in both

formal and informal ways. When leaders pay attention to these stories (and ideally tell their own) it signals to the rest of the organisation that these are the behaviours they value.

Helpful Links

Here are some other resources that might be useful on your transformation journey:



Case Study

A comprehensive transformational change programme at Transport for London

[READ MORE](#)



Case Study

An award winning culture change and leadership programme at Sainsbury's

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Video

An interview with the Director of Communications at Bentley about transforming their communications in light of COVID-19

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Webinar

A conversation with a counter terrorism and intelligence giving advice for leaders facing uncertainty and change

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