



TALENT4
PERFORMANCE



BUSINESS STRATEGY

Culture

How to Diagnose and Implement Your Organisational Culture

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By Alli Gibbons & David Klaasen

Introduction

Organisational **Culture** is the invisible hand that shapes the behaviour of individuals within a company, influencing everything from decision-making to employee engagement. It is the collective values, beliefs, and norms that dictate how things are done within an organisation.

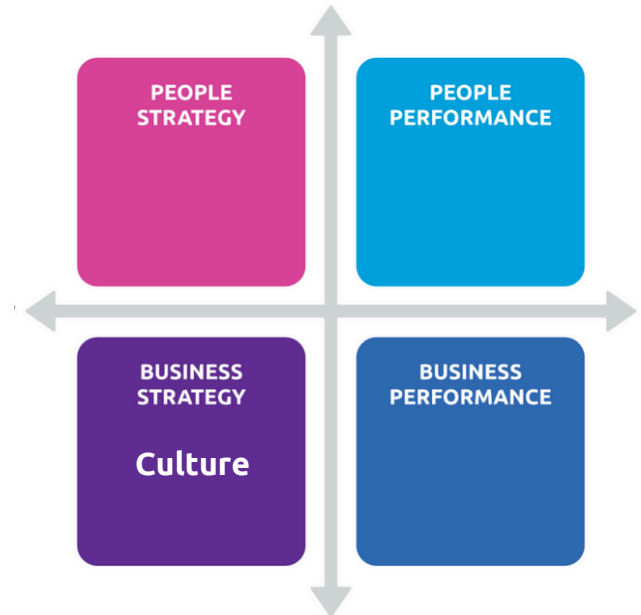
However, **Culture** isn't just an abstract concept; it's a critical driver of performance and strategic success. Diagnosing and implementing an organisational **Culture** that aligns with your business goals requires a structured and deliberate approach, ensuring that you develop the **Culture** you need to implement your **Strategy** and achieve your **Vision**.

In this guide, we will explore how to effectively diagnose your existing **Culture** and implement changes that drive sustainable success.

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The T4P Clarity Matrix™

Understanding organisational culture

At its core, organisational culture is about alignment. It's the alignment between the values that an organisation espouses and the behaviours that it rewards.

According to Patrick Lencioni in his article *Make Your Values Mean Something (i)*, the culture of an organisation can be understood through the lens of its values, which fall into four categories:

Core values: These are the deeply ingrained principles that guide all of an organisation's actions. They are non-negotiable and should be reflected in every decision and behaviour within the company.

Aspirational values: These values represent the ideals that an organisation strives toward but has not yet fully achieved. They are important for guiding future development but should not be confused with core values.

Permission-to-Play values: These are the basic standards of behaviour required for someone to be part of the organisation. They are often general qualities like integrity, honesty or teamwork that are expected as a baseline.

Accidental values: These values arise unintentionally and can either positively or negatively impact the organisation. They often reflect the personal biases or behaviours of influential leaders and can become embedded in the culture without conscious effort.



Diagnosing your current culture

Before you can implement any changes, it is essential to diagnose your current organisational culture accurately. This involves several steps:

Surveys and assessments: Use tools like employee engagement surveys, culture assessments, and behavioural analytics to gather data on how your employees perceive the current culture. Look for patterns that indicate alignment or misalignment with the stated values.

Cameron and Quinn's *Competing Values (ii)* framework provides a simple approach for identifying the dominant culture—whether it is collaborative, competitive, controlling, or creative—and assessing how well it aligns with your strategic goals. For instance:

- **Collaborative cultures** value teamwork and collective decision-making. They are well-suited for organisations that rely on cross-functional teams and innovation.
- **Competitive cultures** thrive on individual achievement and are often found in sales-driven environments where performance is closely tied to rewards.
- **Controlling cultures** emphasise order, precision, and consistency, making them ideal for industries where safety and compliance are paramount.
- **Creative cultures** focus on innovation and are characterised by flexibility and risk-taking. They are common in industries like technology or advertising, where new ideas drive success.

Focus groups and interviews: Engage with employees at all levels through focus groups and interviews. This qualitative data provides context to the quantitative findings, helping to uncover the stories and experiences that shape the current culture.

Observation: Pay close attention to how decisions are made, how conflicts are resolved, and how recognition is given. These everyday actions often reveal the true culture of an organisation, beyond what is written in policy documents.

Document review: Examine company documents such as purpose, vision and values statements, and strategic plans. Compare these with the actual practices and behaviours observed within the organisation to identify gaps between espoused and enacted values.



Interpreting the findings

Once you have collected data, the next step is to interpret the findings. Compare your findings with the desired culture you wish to foster. This analysis will help you identify areas where your current culture is supporting your strategy and areas where it may be hindering your progress.

Cameron and Quinn's *Competing Values* approach builds in an assessment of both the 'as-is' and 'to-be' cultures, providing clarity of any gaps, and identifying areas to prioritise for change.



Implementing cultural change

Once you have a clear understanding of your current culture and how it aligns with your strategic goals, the next step is to implement change. Here's how to approach this critical phase:

Define the desired culture: Clearly articulate the culture you want to develop. This includes not only the values and behaviours you want to promote but also the underlying assumptions that need to shift. Melissa Daimler's concept of *Reculturing (iii)* emphasises the importance of aligning values, behaviours, processes and practices to ensure that culture is embedded in every aspect of the organisation.

Align leadership: Change must start from the top. Ensure that your leadership team is fully aligned with the desired cultural changes and that they model the behaviours you want to see throughout the organisation. Leaders set the tone for

the rest of the company, and their actions will either reinforce or undermine the culture you are trying to build.

Communicate the vision: Effective communication is key to any cultural change initiative. Use multiple channels to communicate the vision of the new culture, and ensure that messaging is consistent and ongoing. Employees need to understand not only what is changing but why it is important and how it will benefit them and the organisation.

Integrate culture into processes: Embed the desired culture into your organisational processes. This includes the key people processes of recruitment, onboarding, engagement, performance management, reward and exit. For example, if collaboration is a core value, ensure that team-based goals are part of your performance evaluations and that rewards reflect contributions to team success. Other key processes include strategic planning and decision-making.

Embed practices that reinforce culture: Once you have integrated your desired culture into organisational processes, it is crucial to embed daily practices that continuously reinforce this culture. These practices—the routine actions and behaviours within the workplace—are where culture truly comes to life. The five core practices most companies perform on a consistent basis are communicating, meeting, learning, recognising and connecting. For example, if collaboration is a core value, establish regular cross-functional meetings or collaborative project practices as a norm.

Train and develop: Provide training and development opportunities that reinforce the desired culture. This might include leadership training, workshops on the new values, or team-building activities designed to foster the behaviours you want to see.

Monitor and adjust: Culture change is an ongoing process. Regularly monitor the progress of your cultural transformation through surveys, feedback loops, and performance metrics. Be prepared to make adjustments as needed to keep the culture aligned with your strategic objectives.



Overcoming common challenges

Cultural change is not without its challenges. Some common obstacles include:

- **Resistance to change:** Employees may resist cultural change, especially if they are comfortable with the current culture or uncertain about what the changes mean for them. Address this by involving employees in the change process, providing clear communication, and demonstrating the benefits of the new culture.
- **Inconsistent leadership:** If leaders are not consistently modelling the desired behaviours, cultural change efforts will falter. Ensure that all leaders are on board with the change and hold them accountable for their role in the cultural transformation.



- **Misalignment of processes:** If organisational processes such as rewards, recognition, and performance management are not aligned with the desired culture, efforts to change will

be undermined. Regularly review and adjust these processes to support the cultural shift.

- **Sustaining momentum:** Cultural change can lose momentum over time. Keep the change effort alive by regularly celebrating successes, sharing stories of how the new culture is making a difference, and continuing to engage employees in the process.

Measuring the impact of cultural change

To ensure that your cultural change efforts are successful, it is important to measure the impact over time. This can be done through:

- **Culture surveys:** Conduct regular surveys to measure how well the new culture is taking root. Look for changes in employee perceptions, engagement levels, and alignment with organisational values.
- **Performance metrics:** Track performance metrics that are tied to cultural change. For example, if one goal of the cultural shift is to improve collaboration, monitor metrics such as cross-functional project success rates or team-based innovation outputs.
- **Employee feedback:** Regularly solicit feedback from employees about how the culture change is affecting their work and their experience within the organisation. Use this feedback to make ongoing adjustments.
- **Retention and engagement rates:** Improved culture should lead to higher employee engagement and retention. Monitor these rates over time to assess the effectiveness of your cultural change efforts.

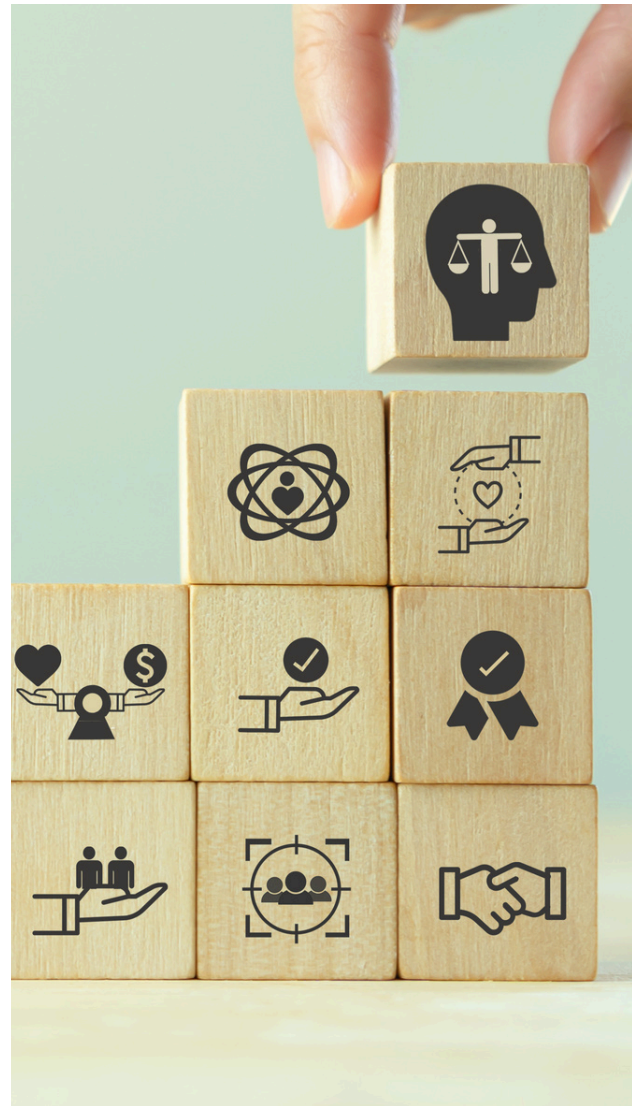
Conclusion

Diagnosing and implementing organisational **Culture** is a complex but essential task for any organisation seeking to achieve strategic success. By understanding your current **Culture**, defining the desired **Culture**, and systematically implementing change, you can create an environment where values align with behaviours, and everyone is working towards common goals. Remember, **Culture** is not static—it must evolve as the organisation grows and the market changes. Regularly revisit your **Culture** to ensure it continues to support your strategic objectives and drive long-term success.

If you would like to discuss how to develop your **Culture**, we're here to help. We can guide you through the process and provide the tools and templates you need to succeed.

Get in touch today at

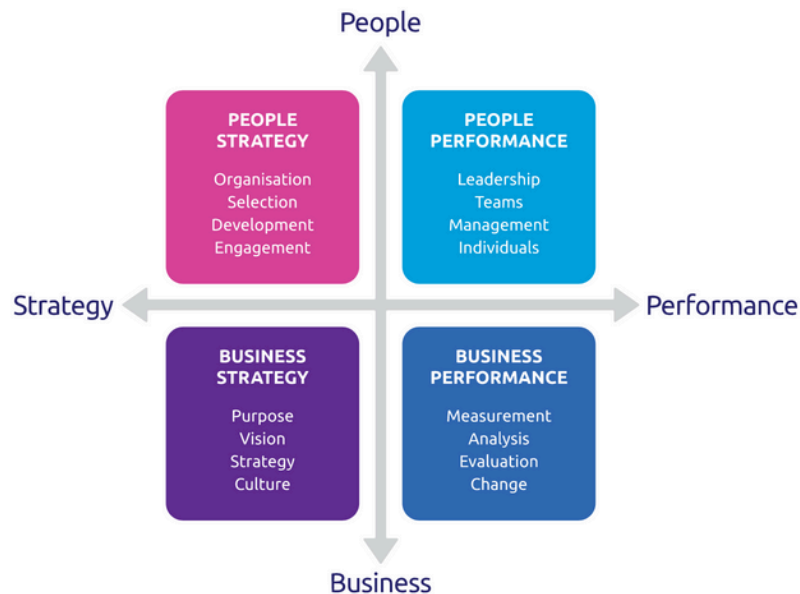
info@talent4performance.co.uk.



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- (i) Lencioni, P. (2002) '**Make Your Values Mean Something**', *Harvard Business Review*, 80(7), pp. 113-117.
- (ii) Cameron, K.S. and Quinn, R.E. (2011) *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture: Based on the Competing Values Framework*. 3rd edn. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- (iii) Daimler, M. (2022) *Reculturing: Design Your Company Culture to Connect with Strategy and Purpose for Lasting Success*. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

The T4P Clarity Matrix™



How do you and your top team score on the **Culture** element of the T4P Clarity Matrix™ Scorecard?

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