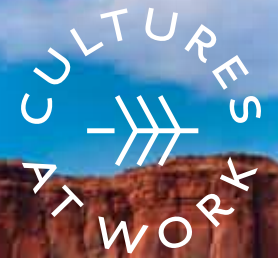


# THE BUSINESS CASE FOR COMPANY CULTURE DEVELOPMENT



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**OVER THE PAST THIRTY YEARS, I HAVE BEEN INVITED BY COUNTLESS ORGANISATIONS TO SUPPORT THEM TO WORK ON AND ENHANCE THEIR COMPANY CULTURE.**

Without exception, I always ask every organisation I work with an important question,

“Why have you chosen to work on your culture?”

My clients' responses to these questions have varied enormously in terms of the specifics. However, having reviewed in detail all of this the work over many years and across multiple countries, I have been able to identify six common reasons why organisations typically choose to work on their culture. In fact, I have yet to identify any motive for an organisation that has chosen to focus on its culture that does not fit into one or more of these six motivational categories.

The benefit of becoming familiar with these six motivations for understanding your company culture is that they enable you to consider the full scope impact a culture can have on an organisation. Not all of these will apply to your organisation at any given time, but I can assure you that at least one of them will. Knowing which motives apply to your current culture is an important status point that can enable you to take action before the need becomes urgent. Understanding the six motives for working on culture keeps you in an informed and proactive setting rather than being caught out by surprise and having to resort to fire-fighting your culture's needs after the event.





## THESE SIX MOTIVES TO WORK ON YOUR COMPANY CULTURE CAN BE DIVIDED INTO TWO CONVENIENT GROUPS.

The first group comprises three reasons to work on culture that is all to do with an internal aspect of culture. In other words how culture is impacting events and understanding within the business. The second group is again comprised of three reasons to work on culture that have connotations and connections to do with elements that lie outside of the organisation's culture.

Consider the six motives to work on your company culture, and consider how many of the six currently relate to your culture. We will begin with the three internal motives to work on culture first.



# 3 INTERNAL REASONS

## TO WORK ON YOUR COMPANY CULTURE

### 1. CLARITY

The organisation has no real understanding as to what culture it has created and as a result, does not understand what options are available to the business from a perspective of performance, tactical agility, sustainability and delivery of customer experience and staff fulfilment.

### 2. CONFIDENCE

Although you have some degree of clarity concerning the nature and form of your culture and its contribution to your business performance, customer experience and staff fulfilment, you are not confident that the culture you have is the culture you need. Nor are you confident that the culture you need can be attained from the culture you currently have.

### 3. COMPATIBILITY

It seems that you have not one culture in your organisation, but multiple cultures. Some of these cultures are compatible and contribute seamlessly to business performance and results. Others seem to struggle to collaborate or even integrate effectively with each other. Silo mentality is common and affecting results. Understanding culture compatibility is a vital awareness skill when it comes to considering merger and acquisitions too. Due diligence is fine for looking at the rational, logical and numeric aspects of merging two companies, but culture compatibility will never be able to be assessed with a spreadsheet and a calculator.

# 3 EXTERNAL REASONS

## TO WORK ON YOUR COMPANY CULTURE

### 1. COMPETITION

Although you have never felt the need or seen the reason to develop your company culture, your competitors have and you are now beginning to feel the impact. Competitors, even those who are new entrants to your market, are attracting and retaining talented employees compared to your company. Their reputation in the marketplace as a great place to work is being noted in traditional and social media alike. Your competitors are taking culture seriously and you are beginning to rapidly feel left behind.

### 2. CHANGE

Your organisation used to be the pride of your industry, but as happens to many great organisations, change doesn't wait for your approval and readiness. What used to work just isn't cutting it anymore. Your thinking is lagging, your decision-making and strategic options too. Could it be that, despite years of prior success, your culture is starting to prove to be outdated? Too hierarchical and inflexible, too slow, too old fashioned?

### 3. CUSTOMER

Your customer needs and expectations have changed. Trends have shifted and your customers have altered their preferences and priorities in response to these trends. Your service reputation used to be fantastic but now customers want more and differing offerings. Their relationship with providers such as yourself has morphed. They used to be entirely dependent on you, not so anymore! They have more options at a wider range of price points and they can access your services from anywhere in the world now. How is your view of the world out of step with the customer? What can be done to your company culture to realign with your customer expectations and their desired experience of doing business with you? What performance mind set is so locked into your company culture that adapting to the new market requirements is starting to feel beyond you.

# HOW MANY OF THE SIX MOTIVES FOR “WORKING ON COMPANY CULTURE” APPLY TO YOUR ORGANISATION RIGHT NOW?

If just one of them does, what impact could that one motive alone have on your organisation's performance? On its future? If there is more than just one motive that is relevant to your company, consider which are the most pressing and urgent and take action now.

Culture works and takes time, the best time to begin is now.



## ABOUT MICHAEL HENDERSON

Michael is a Corporate Anthropologist with over 30 years' experience advising and educating organisations on how to unlock the power of their culture for increased performance, employee fulfilment and customer delight. Michael is acknowledged as one of the best in the world in his field and is the author of ten books on culture performance and leadership. He has delivered two Ted Talks and is an international keynote speaker.

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