

Culture transformation

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ABSTRACT

This article is the culture transformation. Culture transformation is a term used in public policy making that emphasizes the influence of cultural capital on individual and community behavior. It has been sometimes called repositioning of culture, which means the reconstruction of the cultural concept of a society. It places stress on the social and cultural capital determinants of decision making and the manner in which these interact with other factors like the availability of information or the financial incentives facing individuals to drive behavior. These
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cultural capital influences include the role of parenting, families and close associates; organizations such as schools and workplaces; communities and neighborhoods; and wider social influences such as the media. Variation in behaviour and thinking within organisations can be explained by membership of external cultures. Interestingly, this shows that just over one third of people are less influenced by the predominant organisational culture for their behavioural cues than say family or national cultural background.

INTRODUCTION

Whether an organization's employees and leadership realize it or not, every organization has a culture. It's defined by what the people of the organization do culture is the sum of all behaviors. Do employees go out of the way to help each other? Is there a unified approach to the way employees treat customers? It's different for every company, but the behaviors that define a culture are always there. The question is: Is it the culture you want? If it's not, it's possible to transform the existing culture into one that supports the short- and long-term success of the organization.

Culture transformation is a term used in public policy making that emphasizes the influence of cultural capital on individual and community behavior. It has been sometimes called repositioning of culture, [1] which means the reconstruction of the cultural concept of a society. [2] It places stress on the social and cultural capital determinants of decision making and the manner in which these interact with other factors like the availability of information or the financial incentives facing individuals to drive behavior.

In general, cultural stereotypes present great resistance to change and to their own redefinition. Culture, often appears fixed to the observer at any one point in time because cultural mutations occur incrementally. [3] [4] [5] Cultural change is a long-term process. Policymakers need to make a great effort to improve some basics aspects of a society's cultural traits.

Culture transformation is a shift that can take place throughout an entire organization or in individual departments and teams. It requires changing the hearts, minds, and skills of the workforce to support the desired culture. Individuals must first have the conviction (heart) to change their behavior. Then, they must understand what behavior change looks like (mind) and have the necessary tools (skills) to change.

[6] [7] so aptly put it in his book, Purpose, Passion, Path:

"The exact nature of a culture transformation is simply that the people within the organization are behaving differently in some fashion, on a

consistent basis, and that different behavior is being supported by each manager. The results of adopting those new behaviors will result in improved metrics, or outcomes consistent with what has been determined as essential for the long-term success, and maybe even survival, of the organization. The transformation will be achieved when the desired results, or metrics have been achieved. A transformation is therefore a process whereby, over time, people behave differently and the organization benefits in some fashion as a result. If these benefits are required, then a transformation is necessary.”

This is a lot to digest, but when you break it down, it is an achievable goal. The first step is to determine why a transformation of culture is needed. The second is to learn how to do it most effectively [8].

Why Undergo a Culture Transformation?

The underlying reason behind a culture transformation must be to achieve corporate objectives. Without this impetus, there will not be sufficient motivation to maintain the necessary momentum to create lasting behavior change [9]. The specific objectives will depend on where your organization currently is and where you want to be. They might include goals such as:

- Improving safety
- Delivering excellent customer service
- Engaging employees
- Fostering leadership excellence

Regardless of what your corporate objectives are, they must be clear from the beginning so you can use them as touchstones throughout the process.

How to Achieve a Culture Transformation

A successful transformation requires full engagement and buy-in from all levels of leadership throughout the organization. Leaders play a vital role in modeling and coaching the desired behaviors that will permeate the company. Without a commitment from leaders to transform the culture, employees are not likely to make lasting behavior changes on their own [10] [11].

Model of culture change

These cultural capital influences include the role of parenting, families and close associates; organizations such as schools and workplaces; communities and neighborhoods; and wider social influences such as the media. It is argued that this cultural capital manifests into specific values, attitudes or social norms which in turn guide the behavioral intentions that individuals adopt in regard to particular decisions or courses of action [12]. These behavioral intentions interact with other factors driving behavior such as financial incentives, regulation and legislation, or levels of information, to drive actual behavior and ultimately feed back into underlying cultural capital.

Where are we now?

Perform assessments to diagnose where the organization actually is versus where you think it is. Leadership sometimes has a different perception of the culture, so it is important to collect accurate data and input from the organization as a whole. In order to determine how the majority of the organization perceives the company culture, use a discovery process that includes:

- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Interviews with high-potential employees
- One-on-one interviews with executives
- Digital voting platforms

Set organizational goals and objectives so you know when you have succeeded. This might be a market expansion, becoming innovative leaders in your industry, or standing out as a company that provides extraordinary customer service. Or it might be higher employee engagement

and lower staff turnover [13]. Whatever your specific objectives are, they must be clearly defined so that you know what success looks like.

Why do we want to change?

Clearly articulate the reason for the change. This includes communicating with both leaders who will support the transformation and employees who will have a hand in making the transformation actually happen. Examples of reasons include:

- Fixing a problem or filling a gap
- Capitalizing on an opportunity
- Entering new markets
- Attracting and retaining top talent

As Phil Geldart writes, "When people understand the benefits that will occur as a result of a successful transformation, or even during the journey, then they are much more willing and able to support all the efforts that are required to achieve it" (Purpose, Passion, Path).

What is our line of sight?

After determining where the organization currently is, where you want to be, and why you want to get there, the next step is to create a line of sight from the beginning to the end of the transformation process [14] [15]. After defining the path, this line of sight must be continuously highlighted so it stays top-of-mind throughout the transformation. This can be achieved through periodic check-ins, milestone celebrations, and measuring success along the way.

Simply stated, culture transformation is the collective shifting of individual behaviors to support a shared goal. It's a demanding process, but can be achieved and is highly rewarding when done properly.

Do We Really Need a Transformation in the First Place?

When looking at opportunities, both in the near-term and the long-term, management may believe that a culture transformation would be of benefit [16]. In fact, it may not be just the opinion of management, but the Board may in fact require a culture transformation; or outside bodies may demand some form of culture transformation; or results from

surveys such as customer feedback data may indicate the need for a culture transformation. Any one of several sources may trigger the need for action. The desired transformation may not need to encompass the entire organization, but rather need only to be focused on a single area. Whatever the focal point, or the identified need, some form of culture shift has been indicated as being required.

The Challenge of Transformation

Culture transformation is not for the faint of heart. There are many hurdles to successful transformation, not the least of which is the determination to stay the course. We are all familiar with the phrase, "flavor of the month," and this very often describes initiatives begun within organizations but which do not come to fruition for one reason or another. Like anything else, culture transformation can easily be sidetracked. However, unlike other initiatives, the consequences of doing so are much more severe. Once underway a culture transformation has made clear to the organization that there is dissatisfaction with the current state and that steps are being taken to change it [17]. The second major consideration is the other side of the same coin, and that is a recognition that true transformation will not occur quickly, nor easily. To begin a culture transformation is to recognize right from the outset that the journey will be one of a number of years, and that patience must be demonstrated as people understand what is required and how to behave.

Achieving culture Transformation

The term is used by Knott et al. of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit in the publication: *Achieving Culture Change: A Policy Framework* [18]. The paper sets out how public policy can achieve social and cultural change through 'downstream' interventions including fiscal incentives, legislation, regulation and information provision and also 'upstream' interventions such as parenting, peer and mentoring programs, or development of social and community networks.

The key concepts the paper is based on include:

- Cultural capital - such as the attitudes, values, aspirations and sense of self-efficacy which influence behavior. Cultural capital is itself influenced by behavior over time
- The shifting social zeitgeist - whereby social norms and values that predominate within the cultural capital in society evolve in over time [19]
- The process by which political narrative and new ideas and innovations shift the social zeitgeist over time within the constraint of the 'elastic band' of public opinion
- The process of behavioral normalization - whereby behavior and actions pass through into social and cultural norms (for example, Knott et al. argue that the UK experience of seat belt enforcement established and reinforced this as a social norm)
- The use of customer insight
- The importance of tailoring policy programmes around an ecological model of human behavior to account for how policy will interact with cultural capital and affect it over time [20].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion there are a few things to note. The first thing is just how situational our behaviour and thinking can be. That we can behave in very different ways in different situations based on the culture. Secondly this study shows just how much of a cultural shift people are making at work. This explains why people can behave so very differently in a work environment to how they would otherwise. Thirdly, just how dominant the organisational culture is at work and the impact it has on our thinking and behaviour. This weighting of the organisational culture and the professional culture together accounts for

almost $\frac{2}{3}$ (61.33%) of all of the possible cultural influences on behaviour at work. These findings show that many people are able to switch from one cultural setting to another and change their behaviours more or less to fit in with the operating culture of the moment. Also that variation in behaviour and thinking within organisations can be explained by membership of external cultures. Interestingly, this shows that just over one third of people are less influenced by the predominant organisational culture for their behavioural cues than say family or national cultural background.

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