

Decoding culture series

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Purpose: Piecing together the purpose puzzle

Finding purpose and meaning in what you do is the key to living a happier life. And creating a company culture that connects to a higher purpose – that is, beyond solely financial rewards – is the key to driving sustainable business success.

Despite being one of the main drivers of culture, for many firms there is still work to do to decrypt what this ambiguous term means in the context of their own business.

In this guide, the first in our series on decoding your culture, we identify the individual components that make up a purposeful culture and provide tips on how to piece it all together.

Why should you care:



Purpose is the 'why' behind your organisation. The reason it exists. Aligning your purpose, culture and values will help provide direction for your business, and carve out a clear roadmap to get you there.



When purpose lies behind every stage of the customer journey, you'll likely see higher customer engagement and loyalty, stronger compliance, more innovation, cost savings and revenue growth.



If your staff feel like their day-to-day working lives directly contribute towards a wider purpose, they're more likely to find the intrinsic motivation to work hard, strive for better and do the right thing for your customers.



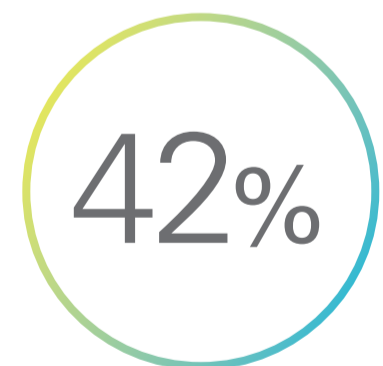
Most firms have made good progress around defining their purpose. But given the regulator's unrelenting focus on cultural transformation, scrutiny on how you create a purposeful culture and how it manifests will only increase.



Societal expectations have changed over the last few years. As consumers and employees, younger generations increasingly want to align themselves with purposes that resonate with them. They're also more likely to vote with their feet, so you'll need new tactics to satisfy this shift in demographics.



of people who work in purpose-driven firms feel engaged by their work



of purpose-driven firms outperform non-purpose driven firms

The pieces of the purposeful culture puzzle

There's no right or wrong when it comes to decrypting your firm's purpose. And there's no useful picture on the back of a box to help you piece it together — that's what makes this puzzle so challenging! Your unique 'why' will depend on your products or services, and the customers and markets you serve. What matters is how this purpose is defined, communicated and continually reinforced.

So, what does a purposeful culture look like? And after years of culture being labelled a 'nice to have', how can you make sure it doesn't become just another empty catchphrase, gathering dust in the graveyard of failed initiatives?

A CLEAR ROADMAP

1

Your employees need to understand the strategic direction of your organisation: what is your business trying to achieve, and how does each individual contribute towards reaching that goal? Clearly defining your vision and mission statement is helpful place to start.

But bear in mind that purpose goes beyond what you say, or the company values pasted on the boardroom wall. It needs to truly resonate with your employees and be rooted in how your business creates value for your customers. After all, any disconnect between what you say and do will only leave them with the sour taste of inauthenticity. For many businesses, its purpose already exists. It's what your employees believe about the work they do and what guides their decisions and behaviour. The challenge is discovering it and channelling it in the right way.

2

A SENSE OF BELONGING

As humans, we're hardwired for connection. We want to be part of a tribe. But while feeling like we're part of a team is a natural human instinct, feeling that our team is working towards a common purpose in alignment, and our individual contributions are valued, is even more powerful.

And it's a consideration that's never been so important. With remote working on the rise, it's all too easy for newly virtual workers to feel disconnected from their colleagues and the company they work for.

3

MEANINGFUL WORK

Along with a sense of community, as human beings we are always looking for meaning. And we want to feel like our life, and the work we do, has it. Grand mission statements often fall flat when we can't see how our contribution matters. So when employees can clearly see a concrete link between their day-to-day roles and a greater cause, they're much more likely to be motivated to do the right thing.

4

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

To bring all these elements together, and to really unite your workforce behind your purpose, you need to back it up with a culture of psychological safety. Foster a climate where people are free to express themselves openly and feel comfortable challenging decisions and behaviours. Not only does this encourage innovation, but it also reduces the risk of misconduct as colleagues feel more confident to call out mistakes.

>> Find out more in our final piece in the series: #5 Psychological safety <<

How it all fits together

It's all about communication

In our experience, communication is almost always a sticking point. There needs to be the right amount of it, it needs to focus on the right things and it needs to have real substance behind it — all supported by a consistent, multi-channel communication strategy. Here's some key things to consider:



- **The tone from above, below, and everywhere in between:** The biggest influence on our working lives is our direct line manager. So while the tone from the top is important, this needs to permeate throughout your business, driven by staff at all levels. Get middle management on board and you're halfway there.
- **Effective feedback loops:** Equally, as much as your purpose needs to be communicated from above, it also needs to come from the ground up. Keeping lines of communication open - for example, through formal colleague committees - will provide opportunities for both reinforcing your purpose and, crucially, helping to understand and shape it.



Get your staff involved

How much input do your employees have in key decisions? And if that's not practical, how open are you to challenge? An environment where we feel safe to challenge decisions and put forward new ideas is key to bringing a sense of meaning to our working lives. Ultimately, if employees feel like they have a voice and their input is valued, the more invested they'll be in the success of the business.



Invest in training

How can you feel like the work you do has meaning if you don't fully understand your role and responsibilities? Feelings of inadequacy only breeds demotivation. On the flip side, you're much more likely to feel a sense of belonging and align yourself to a common purpose if you feel like the organisation you work for is investing time, energy and money into your development. We can develop a comprehensive training and competency framework and help you stay on top of it.

Hemisphere is the missing piece in your puzzle

In every complicated puzzle there's a key piece that suddenly makes the solution seem clear and the route to the end easily achievable. For the culture puzzle, you've got Hemisphere.

Hemisphere, our big data analytics programme, gives you the ultimate insight and intelligence into your business to decode your culture, measure and track it, and ultimately transform it.

We'll untangle the web of cultural drivers in your organisation, making intangible beliefs and assumptions into something tangible, and uncovering whether your 'why' is really working.



Powered by state-of-the-art culture analytics technology



Calibrated by psychology and behavioural science



Underpinned by deep conduct risk expertise

Hemisphere gives you more detail and insight than any other programme. Put us to the test.

Book a demo