



# CRF COMMUNITY EVENT ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE AND CHANGE

CRF'S OD, Culture and Change Community met on 10<sup>th</sup> March to discuss rebuilding the workplace culture post-pandemic. These notes summarise the discussion of the session.



## ESSENTIAL CHANGE INGREDIENTS

CRF and PARC Director, Mike Haffenden took us through a checklist of key elements to consider when developing a plan for culture change.

- Analysis of situation
- Agreed, written and approved outcomes
- Clear plan with objectives
- Senior management buy in (more than head nod)
- Involvement of those impacted
- Agreed budget
- Identify possible consequences and plan for how to mitigate them
- Prepare the ground rules for employees
- Remember Beckhard's change equation (see figure 1)!



## THE CHANGE EQUATION

### Context

Developed by Richard Beckhard, one of the founding fathers of OD, the change equation presents the key preconditions for successful change to happen. Like all good models it has stood the test of time, is accessible and useful.

This simple, but versatile model proposes that change –[C] – will only occur when the product of...

- a - dissatisfaction with the way things are
  - b - a shared vision of how things should be
  - d - knowledge of the practical first steps to get you from where you are to where you want to be
  - b - belief that change is achievable
- ... is greater than X-the perceived costs of making the change. Costs can be financial, emotional, people, time etc.

### Applications

- You can use the change equation in a number of setting and through the change cycle. Possibilities are:
- as a diagnostic tool at the start of a proposed change - review each of the elements of the change equation, e.g. How much dissatisfaction is there? How do we know? How is dissatisfaction manifested? or ask people to rate each elements of the equation and justify their rating;
  - use the equation as a means of evaluation: Has the level of dissatisfaction changed? In what way has it changed? What additional interventions might we need to make?
  - use it to design workshops or other event

### Further reading

R Beckhard and R Harris, 'Organisational Transitions'



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## WHAT HAVE CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES CAUSED US TO THINK ABOUT?

- What is not in a desirable state?
- How do we improve 'involvement' and communication?
- Is there a shared and understood vision?
- Have all jobs got clear deliverables?
- How good is our management/leadership?
- How good are our policies?
- How good is our technology?
- Reward practices – Have they/should they change?
- Teams unite around task

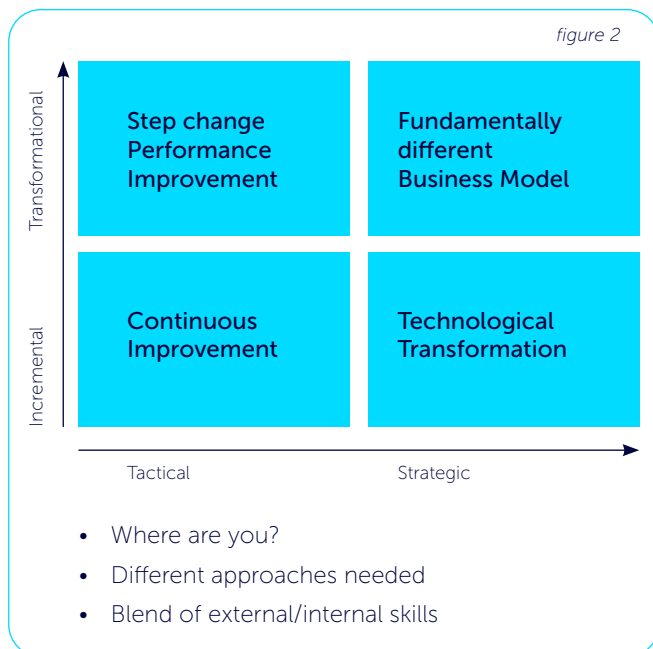


Figure 2 This is CRF's Transformational VS Incremental Change Quadrant that signposts change factors for you to explore in more detail.

Attendees then discussed how they are measuring and shaping culture as they return to the office.

### What are organisations doing to assess the current culture within a team as people have been returning to the workplace?

- One attendee said it's not a pure approach to assessing culture, but a combination of understanding the employee experience, which also overlaps with culture.
- Adopting a listening strategy, which gives HR the opportunity to hear from employees at different points in the employee lifecycle, but also when there is something significant happening, which impacts the business. They will seek feedback at that point and find out what the mood is in the business, what the response to it is, and how it's impacting people day-to-day.
- One attendee found that team culture within teams had been well preserved throughout the pandemic, even with a hybrid workplace approach. However, it's been more difficult to preserve the culture between one team and another. There needs to be more of a period of adjustment here.
- Putting together networking events which help people come together from different locations. Moving these events to being virtual has helped give opportunities to make more of those connections across the organisation, rather than it being location specific. One organisation has deliberately tried to continue some of those virtual networks.
- Giving people time to adjust to the new ways of working – see what works and what doesn't. Form person to person relationships again – something which happened less between teams.
- One attendee said they take the time to have a conversation with their leavers, rather than giving them a survey. You don't get to the heart of the problem with a survey.
- New joiners are asked to fill out a survey about their new joiner experience throughout the journey – from before they considered joining, through the talent acquisition process, through onboarding and then into the business and settling in.
- Getting feedback throughout the employee lifecycle also brings value. Carrying on those engagement conversations if people have had a period off for a sabbatical, sick-leave, or maternity leave.



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- The population of people in client facing teams who go through a formalised promotion process at certain stages. The organisation knows that is a pivotal point, and a milestone in people's careers, and it's also a potential flight risk when people aren't successful. Therefore, lots of information around that is gathered.
- One organisation has launched Network of Engagement Partners: every location will have one person representing them. The role has evolved into being a mechanism for tracking employee voice. They host a conversation with that group of people and pose 2-3 questions about something impacting the organisation. This allows people to hear perspectives from different parts of the business. One of the board directors listens to the feedback and shares it directly back with the board, and HR shares it with the CEO and decides what action to take.

### How is culture being measured?

- Culture change is inherently hard to measure.
- The pandemic has been a huge experiment – don't ignore survey and anecdotal data – sprinkling it with hard data is very useful.
- It's important to ask, what are the bonds that form between teams, individuals, and organisations, that make it sticky?
- One challenge has been people spending much more time with clients at the expense of strong [internal?] relationships. The quality of relationships across the organisation, particularly between divisions, had started to fragment rapidly.
- Taking data and interpreting it and thinking what action you can deliberately take to make changes.
- Time spent in 121 meetings had an effect on engagement – you can see the correlation. The bonds between people are important, it has a cost and retention aspect. To improve those bonds, it's important to make it clear that 121 meetings are not optional. You must continuously engage with your team.
- Tracking how big a new starter's network is expanding over time – and then thinking how to develop and stretch that.
- You can interpret datasets, gather some real insights and act upon it. It's time to make some very clear choices based on some of the behaviour that's occurred over this period.

### What has been helpful in measuring change?

- When it comes to implementing culture change, people are often bit lost about the objectives. It's crucial to be clear about where the organisation is trying to get to.
- It's helpful to get teams to specify, when the culture change is finished – what will people be experiencing? What will different stakeholder groups and employees see, feel and hear?
- Establishing a set of statements that you can use as a template to monitor the results of the change – get people to score their experience of the change. Do it every six months depending on the change to see if we're getting there or not.
- Learning from mistakes is more important than being condemned for mistakes.
- Using refreshed values and connecting backwards from the vision.
- Carrying out a gap analysis. Trying to get a feeler of people in terms of where they are and what are their own personal values. One organisation said this gave them good insights around work life balance, retention, and compensation.
- Working around focus groups and getting people involved in in-person workshops to get real feedback from people.
- Creating checkpoints around exit interviews. Gaining genuine data from people who have left the company has been valuable.
- Pulse surveys provide very quick feedback in terms of engaging employees. The fact that it's anonymous makes people feel comfortable to answer honestly.
- Getting people together under one roof to recognise achievements and enhance the culture. For example, for one organisation, the exercise of recognising women for International Women's Day ignited conversations about the changes they want in the organisational culture.



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### What are the key factors to look out for in staff feedback?

- The feedback that one organisation had from staff about the impact on team culture during the pandemic, was that there was a greater degree of trust, delegation and decision making. So much was pushed downwards. They felt empowered to use skills and expertise without requiring sign-off.
- What were those factors that really motivate people? It was trust, being recognised and having a single purpose.
- Subcultures – trying to identify what drives different cultures, whether they're justified and whether those ways of working are acceptable. In some cases, it feels right to have nuance.
- Working closely with the executive team and the leadership development programme to hold a very clear polished mirror up to how behaviours, decisions and processes at the very top will set the tone and exemplify what the organisation wants to do. Particularly for the executive team to be a team and not a representative from their own tribes.
- Value-aligned competence behaviour framework. This should focus on what should be the constants, and what should be the consistent experiences that are felt by everybody.

### How do you activate the desired culture?

- Push decision-making back down locally rather than having central control.
- Demonstrate honesty and trustworthiness.
- One organisation mentioned that they were adopting the 'freedom to succeed' value, which allows people the freedom to make mistakes and take accountability. This drives responsibility, accountability, and innovation.

### How do you improve trust?

- One organisation is tracking what is happening with their employee experience and engagement, and how it correlates with their customer satisfaction scores.
- Using role-modelling and rolling out coaching to management and business leaders.
- Investing heavily in the people space by giving great performance feedback, brilliant conversations, and weekly check-ins.

### Embracing microcultures

- Microcultures exist but we shouldn't assume they are bad. They exist for good reason and have adapted to operate.
- The environment and the physical place of the work is important– you can't ignore it. It's important to consider how to acknowledge that microcultures exist and allow the good bits to flourish but be clear about what doesn't work.

### FURTHER READING

CRF 2021. **OD, Culture and Change: A Framework for Analysis and Diagnosis. Briefing Paper.** <https://www.crforum.co.uk/research-and-resources/od-community-framework-for-analysis-and-diagnosis/>

CRF 2021. **OD Symposium: Improving Agility, Learning and Action. Post Meeting Notes.** <https://www.crforum.co.uk/research-and-resources/postmeeting-notes-od-symposium-improving-agilitylearning-and-action>

**R Beckhard and R Harries, 'Organisational Transitions'**

LSE Business Review: **Developing a tool to understand corporate culture from the outside** <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/businessreview/2017/10/17/developing-a-tool-to-understand-corporate-culture-from-the-outside/>

Post Meeting Notes: **Behavioural Change Advisory Session - Corporate Research Forum** <https://www.crforum.co.uk/research-and-resources/post-meeting-notes-behavioural-change-advisory-session/>

### crf SAVE THE DATE



*The next session of the Organisation Development, Culture and Change Community:*

July 5, 2022 at 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm BST

Register your attendance [here](#). Also please [get in touch](#) with any topics that you would like to discuss and feature at the next session.