



**Webinar: Who gives a shift?  
How hybrid working could change workplace culture**

**Speakers**

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**Kate Went**

Hello, and welcome to another one of our A&A sessions. Good afternoon to our UK listeners, hello, and good morning to our international friends. And if you've joined us before for one of our sessions, thank you very much for joining us again. If you are new here, thank you very much for joining us for the first time. So we are running a session called 'Who gives a shift? How hybrid working could change workplace cultures'. So, maintaining a healthy culture isn't something that just happens. It takes work and vision to make sure that any gaps aren't crowbarred apart. Toss in remote working, and that tricky situation becomes even more challenging. With zoom fatigue, long days spent tuning in from our spare rooms and hearing the time of the team's alert in our sleep, those months of face-to-face famine definitely had a big impact on our wellbeing. But what did it do to our culture and our communications? And what about those on the frontline whose workplaces never changed? Are those divisions of experience things that could damage cohesion if left unchecked? While every workplace is inherently unique, some truths are universal, and it's never been so important to surface what our culture truly means to us. My name is Kate Went and I'm marketing manager at employee engagement consultancy scarlettabbott. I'm joined for this session by my colleague and culture and measurement expert Lisa Hawksworth, and we are absolutely delighted today to be joined by our guest panel, Adam Brayford, Director of Global internal communications at Bananatag, Lottie Bazley, advanced communications consultant at Staffbase, and Paul McKinley, VP of communications and remote working at Cimpres and Vistaprint. So thank you so much, panel, for joining me. We are going to be taking your questions throughout the session. So as they come to you just pop them in the chat, we will answer as many of them as we can. But to kick us off, I think let's start with something that on the face of it seems like quite an easy question. Lisa, tell us, what is workplace culture?

**Lisa Hawksworth**

So it's a big question, right? It's really difficult to define. And it can be quite nebulous. So culture is a word that's thrown around a lot. We want a 'good' culture, we want the culture that so and so has. But ultimately, culture is

a manifestation of a lot of the things that happen in your organisation. So it can be behaviours, processes, interactions, symbols, rites and rituals. It's ultimately the DNA of your organisation - how people work together to get things done. And it can be a sum of the parts of all the people there. It can be a sentiment from leadership, and it can even be influenced by how your organisation is structured, and literally how communications and processes flow.

### **Kate Went**

Brilliant, that's a great summary of culture. I think we all have ideas of what it is, what it isn't, but can we change it? Can culture actually be changed? And who owns it? Who's responsible for it? I'd love to hear your thoughts around the panel on that. So do feel free to jump in with your thoughts on culture.

### **Paul McKinlay**

I'll jump in if no-one else will right now. Yes, absolutely, it can be changed in and in both directions, for the better and for the worse, whatever that means. And I know that's very contextual within every single organisation. I think however big our organisation is, every single one of us can influence our culture. And then, as you lead teams, as you lead larger teams, as you have more of a responsibility and a role, I think that grows and that responsibility grows with you. I think it can be changed by new people coming into the organisation, especially by new leaders coming into the organisation but let's not only name people as the thing. It can be named by a business, it can be changed by a business being disrupted. And like by a pandemic, for example, if that should ever happen, or by something seismic like everybody suddenly working from their homes. So yes, absolutely, it can change and it can change overnight. So a long curation of trying to get where you want to be can be immensely disrupted by a major happening, or a new CEO, or any number of things.

### **Lisa Hawksworth**

I think the point is as well is why you might want to change it and postpone what you want to change it 'from' and 'to', as well. So, a lot of people talk about 'oh, we want to change the culture. We want to be x,' But actually, what is it that you're trying to harness and where you're trying to get people to? Because there's so many moving parts. Like Paul says, all it takes is a global pandemic to hit overnight, or a new CEO to come in and the sense and the feeling in the organisation will change. So it's making sure you've got a really clear picture of what you believe your culture to be and where you want it to be. If you're going to manage that change as well.

### **Adam Brayford**

Yeah, I could give an example of that, working at Bananatag. And, of course, now we've merged with Staffbase. So my colleague, Lottie, is here today, which is lovely. But we went from a culture that where employees saw themselves as family with each other, you know, which was lovely. But we wanted to shift that to a culture of a high performing sports team. And that's not unique to those of you who do reading about culture, but one of the key differences there is that you support each other, you have a clear goal, you're working towards it. It's a little bit competitive, but you also deal with issues when issues crop up, whereas in the family, you kind of suppress them and just let them bubble. And so in terms of who owns it, just to speak to that part of the question, I think there's partial ownership in a lot of places, by leaders, by the employees themselves. It's certainly more of a topic of discussion, as I've seen it, in organisations where the HR department is called "people and something" - "people and culture", "people and experience". But I think it starts with identifying

what are your organisational values, and let them guide your behaviour during hiring and performance management. And really, you know, of course, for a comms pro, like myself, really trying to align where you see your internal audience now and where you're trying to go.

### **Lottie Bazley**

Yeah. And just to add to that point, actually, Adam, I completely agree with you in that a company's strategy and values kind of guide the culture, right? You know, if your company's strategy is, "we rake money in" or, you know, "we're changing the future of technology while saving the planet", it's not to say that one is better than the other. But it's just important to recognise that that will have an impact on how your employees are conducting themselves. But as you say, Adam, also the type of employees that you're attracting in as well.

### **Lisa Hawksworth**

That's a really good point there Lottie, because actually, whether you're trying to save the planet or make a shedload of cash. You know, that could be (I mean, I've never seen the second one is as an organisational goal, specifically) it doesn't matter where you're heading, right? In terms of where you want to be. And to Paul's point earlier, you know, cultures can change for the better or for the worse. But actually, the point is, your people need to all be aligned behind a common culture that's aligned to your organisational goals, that's where you're strongest. If you're pretending to save the planet, but actually aiming to make a shedload of cash. That's where the bad culture happens where the misalignment happens.

### **Paul McKinlay**

And I think alignment is such a good point. But an alignment isn't word for word alignment to every statement in a set of values or principles, right? There's a polar scale of where any company can be that you've just described, and somewhere in the middle, most companies land to decide where they wish to be, and the type of people they want to recruit and how they want to work. But within that there are there are shades of "I'm really good at this", "I'm really good at selling", "this is where I really fit" and building external relationships. And you can be super successful, without completely rigid alignment to some kind of culture. But hopefully, the culture is defined well enough that the people outlying on any end of any spectrum will decide that this isn't the right place for them to be, and that they should go and pursue that career somewhere else where they could be more successful.

### **Lisa Hawksworth**

Yeah, I think you raise a really good point on the new starters coming in as well. Because if they're told the organisation is one thing, and they get here, and it's quite another, then that that creates a level of attrition misalignment and that can actually have a negative effect. And then, even recently, we've been talking about how the alumni actually help to inform an organisation's culture. Because actually, culture is a manifestation of the stories we tell ourselves and each other, right or wrong, it's a lot, it's a lot of history as well. So people are, you know, joining your organisation not having the experience that they expected, and then leaving your organisation negatively. They're telling that story and that can go full circle, so I think it's important to consider it's not just the people that work in the four boxes of Teams (we don't have four walls anymore) it's not the people who work in the four walls. It's the people who are coming in, going out and, you know, moving around it as well.

**Kate Went**

That's such a good point, Lisa. I often say that we review our careers and jobs like we review our meals on TripAdvisor. We're on Glassdoor, and we're giving the inside track on our experiences now. And certainly for the younger generations coming through, that's just par for the course, reviewing their experiences and passing that knowledge on. So you want to make sure it's aligned. I'm going to go back to a point that Adam made, but just before I do, for the new folks that have joined while we've been chatting, do feel free to ping questions throughout the session. Don't wait till the end, feel free to jump in with your culture questions, your challenges, observations, experiences, whatever you've got on your mind, because we want to go through as much of that as we can. So do feel free to get active in the questions section. Adam, I wanted to come back to that point that you touched on about the fact that during that little thing we've been through - the global pandemic - you've also gone through a merger. So Staffbase and Bananatag, two completely different companies, have come together remotely in a pandemic. That's no small thing to go through. And that's two completely different cultures merging. What did that look like? And was there anything particularly that was put in place to mitigate the risks of two cultures clashing as they came together?

**Adam Brayford**

Yeah, really good question. So we put a lot of thought into that. Obviously, when you're talking about workplace culture, the pandemic added a stressor. But on top of that, coming together as two organisations who, you know, even the people within their teams haven't seen each other for a while, that was a stress on your bonds. And we're talking about people who are starting new in the organisation. Some of them had never met their coworkers, and now we're adding on, at least for the Canadian team, triple the number of employees. Nothing like the number of employees that Paul is working with over there. But you know, going from 150 to 500 is, is quite a shift. Going from a startup mentality to one of a growth company. So, yes, absolutely. In Canada, Bananatag, we could say we are known for our fun culture. And of course, Staffbase similarly with just winning the world and winning every fast growing award and really high performing. And bringing together two different teams is not easy. And it takes a lot of work. So we had to listen to employees. And, of course, our engagement surveys are a really big part of that. And one of the things that I spoke about on a webinar yesterday is, you know, you can expect in a time of uncertainty that there's going to be discomfort, and people are going to feel insecure about their position and their future in the company. And so we certainly our engagement scores drop during that time. Overall, but especially in Canada, where you know, you're joining a new company, and you're not really sure if we're going to keep the best of what's part of our organisation. And so the biggest thing was listening to that, and then equipping our leaders with the necessary information to show up, be transparent, deal with those into issues, introduce measures to turn them around, which of course, we have been fortunate to make a big impact on that since then. And we're now kind of all aligned around shared values that we co-created together in a shared direction, which is wonderful. Doesn't mean it's perfect! It's just kind of constant work. So, and we might talk about it in a bit. But a couple of weeks ago, we did our annual employee retreat, Staffbase camp, with a little piece delivered from each of the five countries in which we operate. And that had a big impact on our kind of shared understanding of where we're going as a company. And it was intended to be in person, obviously, we couldn't. But I think we're just, you know, if there's one thing that we had on our side there, it's that everyone's going through a lot of change around the world. So this just helps, in terms of culture. We need to be used to change it's not going to stop.

**Lottie Bazley**

I'm glad you posed that question to Adam, because I actually joined just after the merger. But in my old role, I was actually part of a similar kind of merger, but on a slightly larger scale. And I think when you take a step back and look at the cultural differences, the locational differences, that it can seem like a really big task to try and bring these two companies together. But one thing that we really focused on when the two companies came together, was to, kind of, remove as many cultural differences as you can, even if they're really small things. So, if you've got people from either side doing the same job, you can give them the same job title. If you've got people in different uniforms, you can put them in the same uniform. And as an internal comms team, we made a real effort to show and tell the things that we were doing. So even if you weren't affected by these changes, you still see, "oh, okay, we are coming together". We're not waiting for this one day where we're all going to feel like one company.

**Paul McKinlay**

I was going to talk about something else from deep history that I was involved in, as you can see, I've got some grey in my beard. And so I was in ASDA when we were acquired by Walmart. And if you want to talk about culture differences between the deep south of the US and a very successful, (in fact, that the founder grew the biggest company in the world in his own lifetime), phenomenally successful company at the time, and then this Yorkshire based UK supermarket group that was acquired, and just those cultural awakenings, or clashes that happened throughout the whole organisation through that process was handled pretty well, but was really challenging for people in the UK. And to get their heads around. For a couple of examples. Walmart does, what they call, a cheer or a chant. And they start every meeting with it and fully expected the folks at ASDA to just start on the shop floor doing a "give me a W, give me an A, give me an L ...". Not what happens in Dewsbury on a Tuesday morning just before you start a shift, usually. My first trip to Bentonville, Arkansas, where it seemed to be very important for me to get off this 12 hour journey to get there, and to go and visit the founder of the company, which was somewhat of a surprise to me, and then to go and see his office and old Roy his his dog is stuffed in there, and you go and kind of pay respects to all of that. I think it's very challenging for people sometimes, especially at the receiving end of an acquisition to be open minded about all of the great things that are presented as opportunities here. And so as you think about merging of cultures, or at least putting oil in the wheels between two cultures, and over time deciding to try and find the best of both, just to be super open-minded, and to encourage all team members to kind of experience first and then complain, rather than complain first.

**Kate Went**

Such a good point. And I think, you know, markets are very fluid at the minute, I think there's been so much changes and a lot of companies that have suffered in the pandemic. And I think we will probably see quite a lot of mergers as things start to recover and companies coming together. So it's going to be an interesting time to see what companies do to combat the challenges of mergers in terms of culture. We've got loads of questions coming through. So I'm going to have a look at some of those now, Rhys asked a good question: "I recently heard someone say that culture can be defined by the worst behaviours that an organisation will tolerate. Is this fair?" Any thoughts on that?

**Lisa Hawksworth**

There is a really good quote by Craig Groeschel. And it's "your culture is a combination of what you create and what you allow". So, you know, in my old work, I worked for a university and we had terms of reference for how we'd work together. So it was a team charter and how we aligned to our brand attributes of being compassionate and fearless and approachable and all that stuff. But at the same time, you know, what you allow to go on. So talking about going from a dysfunctional family mentality to a high performing sports team, when there's behaviour that did not serve our organisation, did not serve our culture, identifying what that was, having conversations among leadership about how we're going to deal with that, whether we see it directly, whether it's through other managers providing them with the skills to do that. I think that's a really good definition. Not just about the good stuff. It's about the bad stuff, too, isn't it?

**Lisa Hawksworth**

Yeah, but also the bad stuff doesn't need to be true in order to influence the culture. So I was doing some research where we were looking into why an organisation doesn't innovate. And there was a bit of a fear of failure. They are in a fear of stepping out the box, fear of challenge upwards. And when we probed into it, it was all back to this past situation that happened, or series of situations that happened, long before. A lot of these people that had started this organisation, it just continued through the rumour mill and kind of snowballed as well, it had gotten legs - snowballs with legs - you know, it really got big to the point where people are actually using a story that didn't really happen to influence the behaviour. So if you're noticing negative behaviours and behaviours that are the ones you don't want, it's worth really asking the question as to why they're there. And not just accepting that they are there.

**Lottie Bazley**

In OVO we did a lot of employee surveys, we did them once every quarter. And we were working with, I looked after about 2,000 people in the internal comms role I was in before, 85%, also of which were already remote, kind of before Coronavirus. And every time we did the survey, we would make an effort for someone from the engagement team to go out to these teams that scored particularly low and find out why is it they'd scored low. And you know, we had this exercise where we were making them put sticky notes on "why they scored this low?", "why they scored that low?". And it was really funny because a lot of the stuff that they were saying were things that weren't true that things that don't happen, they don't exist. But because they were working remotely, and they only really speak to the few people in that team, you know, we were pulling down these sticky notes going, "that's not true, that's not true, we don't do that, no-one's ever said that". But because they were kind of allowed to be in this little bubble by themselves, getting all riled up, we went there, and we just kind of broke all of those myths. But because we hadn't spoken to them about it before, that was why they'd scored really low in the survey.

**Paul McKinlay**

I love this question. I agree with everything everyone has said. And I think you can add any number of words on the end of that sentence. So your culture is defined by what you allow. Okay, I can understand that. I think it's a great point. Your culture could also be defined by what you aspire to achieve, or what you encourage, or who you hire, or what you role model is. And so I think to have that as a hard definition of what your culture is, is too

much for me. I don't think that's a definition of culture. But I definitely think it's an influencer of culture along with all of those other things.

### **Kate Went**

Fantastic. I want to put a pin in measurement and come back to that, because we've got a few questions around surveys and measurement data, which I know Lisa, you will be very keen to get into. And I'm just going to go into a question from Andrew before that. "What conversations and strategies are you witnessing around business leaders considering hybrid culture as an opportunity to recruit talent that is less local to work sites? And thinking about how this could be better for the business? I.e. more diverse or cheaper?" Have you been around any of those particular conversations?

### **Paul McKinlay**

Oh, well, I have for sure, because I've been leading, during our transition to a fully remote workforce. And so we took the decision early in the pandemic, Last August, I think it was. So five months into when we all went home on March the 11th or whatever date was right for you, and the business was perceived to be performing well, team members were productive, they were engaged, they were giving us good feedback about the state of how they felt and leadership felt things were going well. And so we took an early decision to make this permanent. And all of those decisions have been driven by two things. One is we're still founder-led. And so Robert, our founder, when I took on this role, I met with him and I said "what do you want to achieve with this?" and I was expecting the "Can you go fix people's problems and try and make it better for them to work remotely". And his statement was, "I want remote working to be a towering strength of our culture, and a competitive advantage". And that just changed the game for everybody working on this and team member experience has just become the overriding flag that we've been charging behind to try and deliver over the last year. And I think we've seen so many benefits and the ones we never talk about are the costs we've saved. Of course we've downsized real estate, but we've spent money to redesign it into great collaboration space. We've also given people monthly allowances to invest in their home office, we give new hires a chunk of money to get set up. Yeah, we've saved money on real estate, but let's invest to make this a towering strength of our culture with our team members. And so the PNL is much less important in this than having 1000s of really engaged people through the process. And I'm privileged to work with a leadership team that has been just steadfast in that team member experience goal. And those conversations are constant about "how do we optimise for everyone's experience?", "how do we nurture the culture that we now have in in this model?" We've hired hundreds of people nowhere near real estate over the last 12 months that we've ever had, the cognitive and cultural diversity that that is bringing into the organisation is just fantastic. And we're also creating economic opportunity in places around the world that not unique to us, but that is now becoming a really valid place for people to live and work and have great careers. And so yes, all good, all good experience, lots of challenges still, we're one year into a multi-year transformation to make this work. But remote has given us such a supercharge. People say how are you going to rebuild culture when you can get back together? And my responses is we're supercharging culture with remote as a fantastic asset for team members to have at their disposal.

### **Kate Went**

Well, I'm sold. Let's have a job at Cimpress please! That sounds fantastic. And I think it's good to not focus on necessarily the financials, but the benefits to people and that reinvestment back into people and the new way

that it looks. I really liked that. I had a question that I was going to ask, which is very similar to a question that Sarah has asked, so I'm going to go with Sarah's version. "Can the culture and hybrid model ever be the same as the culture was when everyone was full time in the office?" Who wants to jump in on that one?

### **Lisa Hawksworth**

I was going to say, I think it depends what you mean by that? Is it the culture overall? Is it the phone? Is it the sense of working together? And I think it's working out what really made you strong when you were in the office, and working out how you can replace, replicate and build on that virtually. I was speaking to some people this morning, and I said, "how has working remotely affected you?" and he said, actually, it's levelled the playing field, I'm one of three people out in this country. And now I feel I can connect with anyone globally. And I'm of the same standing. And I think, for them, particularly, it's made their cultural, what they say their sense of their culture, stronger. So it's around defining what you think is important and protecting that, rather than being concerned that it's changing overall.

### **Adam Brayford**

And to that end, we had a number of hybrid workers before, but they were certainly in the minority. And to just talk about making work more equal, they would always be those people who are joining the meeting via zoom, and you kind of forget, they're there. And then they'd say something, and you'd jump, because you'd hear them over the speaker. And they would strain to hear what you're saying with everybody in the room. And so now, with everyone experiencing meetings and conversations in the same way, it definitely democratises that and it makes it a little bit more level. At the same time, you know, having just recently travelled for work over to Germany to the Staffbase headquarters, there is something about working side-by-side with people that you cannot replicate online. Even just that idea of working side-by-side with someone and when you're talking to them not having to look at them face-to-face. So, you know, "Hey, how about this, Lottie?" and she's like, "No, Adam, that's a bad idea." And we carry on working. Right, but until I look at it on a global scale, you have to look at those, aspects that were important to your culture and figure out how you can translate that online. And for us, we had amazing offices and beverages and coffee and food all the time and games and to realise really quickly, that isn't necessarily culture-making, right Your culture is about more than just the physical space. It's about how you onboard your employees, how you treat them how you facilitate interaction and then how much of work is fun versus getting stuff done. And so, you know, one of the things that's been a real kind of proud moment, in the last year and a half is just hearing brand new people who have been on boarded, talk about what an amazing experience that was online and how they were worried about joining a company fully remotely, but how they got to meet so many different people. And we really put an emphasis on connection and like, I think it was Lisa who said, you know, you can just meet anyone in the world CEO can drop in at any meeting. And you know, that's not going anywhere anytime soon.

### **Lottie Bazley**

And you know, Coronavirus obviously changed the way that everyone works. But remote working was always a thing before Coronavirus. It's just perhaps now companies that hadn't experienced that before do now. And I think to a point that Lisa made earlier, when we were talking about whose responsibility is culture, I think this is where you really need to use the leaders within your company, because those are the people that are having that kind of one on one time with your people. So not necessarily kind of C-suite leadership, but line managers



and just people who are generally a bit more influential within your business. Those are the people that we need to rely on more, because they have the ear of people more often, they have that one-on-one relationship. People trust them, hopefully. And so that's when we can really use the kind of individuals to help us with culture, rather than office space, or giving everyone a pizza on a Friday, or whatever we might be missing now.

### **Paul McKinlay**

It's all in the definition as well, though, right? So if hybrid can mean, half of our people are in the office all the time, half of our people are remote all the time, they do what suits them, That's really hard to manage for and to be successful in, but definitely is achievable. Hybrid can also mean, we're going to require (force) all of our people to be in an office two days, or three days a week. And if that happens, and the company's at war with our team members now, which can't be good for culture, over this topic in public, debates about it with their team members, and if that's the route that you're choosing to go down, then people actually lose 95% of the benefits of being remote. If you ask them to be in somewhere one day a week, because they can't choose where they want to live, and they can't manage that their time and their life around the work that they need to do. So I think hybrid can be huge for culture as a flexibility option. But really giving people freedom and accepting that the watercooler moments that everybody supposedly wishes for, were actually really annoying for the people who weren't at that watercooler at that moment. You know, when you and Adam and Kate came back to the rest of the team and said, "hey, we've just had this idea and made this decision", I'm furious! I wasn't there and you didn't let me input to that decision. And so yeah, I mean, for us, I there are no doubt companies that this is not right for But for us, giving people 100% of freedom to make their own choice has been just an eye opener, and there's unleashed a culture and an injection of adrenaline into the culture.

### **Kate Went**

Brilliant. I just want to get back to a point that Lottie was making there, because it ties in really nicely to a question from Patrick. So, in talking about getting leaders and line managers to get that conversation going and to kind of lead by example, when it comes to sort of setting the tone of the culture. Patrick's asked, "in your opinion, should the company culture and values be directed by leaders and founders? Or should they be co created with colleagues?" What do you think to that? And also, what do you do when a people's cultural aspirations and the leadership aspirations aren't aligning? Any thoughts on that?

### **Lottie Bazley**

Happy to chip in first. It's one of those things where, and I'm probably going to become unpopular for for saying this, if we constantly going out to our people - I agree that the employee should have a say, at times, but you know, ultimately there are people leading the business that know the direction of the business, they know where they want the business to be, they know which direction we're headed, and they should absolutely come up with what they think should be right. And you know, if you've got a few employees, if you're a small enough business, and you've got a few employees that you can ask at the time, when you create these, great, you can get their input. But ultimately, we can't be going out to our people every couple of weeks or every couple of months, or however often we think we should be. to say, "what do you think about this?" You know, "how's the culture, how's the value, let's change it", because then you lose sight of what what the company strategy is, what the values are. So I absolutely think that if you can see that your people are unhappy with the culture, or unhappy with the values, then that's the time that you can think about changing it. But if we're constantly

changing where we're going, and what the culture is, and what our values are, then that's not going to be a particularly successful business. And ultimately, that's what the leaders are kind of there to do.

**Lisa Hawksworth**

Yeah, I think it's getting really specific on what the differences are, why they are there, and to what extent those differences matter. Because you could be at risk, as well of boiling the ocean and trying to solve the world. Whereas actually, it could just be two or three key things that will help you get realigned. But it's that whole listening, insight, measurement point that goes, "actually it's not this big problem. It's these problems", and they're the ones that you can affect.

**Paul McKinlay**

I think you again, is contextual for the organisation that you're in, if we're founder led, it's completely appropriate that a founder of a business drives a lot of their personality into the organisation. And of course, that's going to drive culture. It's also appropriate if a leadership team believes we were not obsessed with our customers enough to be successful, then, of course, we should work to instill that much more strongly in our in our culture in our DNA through our hiring and existing team members. But I think the other end of the spectrum is when all the team members look at you. It's like when your cat brings you a dead mouse that the cat thinks is present, right? The new values come from on high from the leadership team and the team members are looking at it like it's a dead mouse, because we don't recognise that, we don't want it. We don't like it. Why are you talking to us about this? And so, yeah, I think the so many of these things are contextual, which is why they are owned by everyone in the organisation.

**Lisa Hawksworth**

Yeah, and the contextual point, as well, is no two organisations are the same. They're just not. They've got different leaders, they've got different structures, they've got different people who work in them. So the more you can listen to and understand your organisation, will help you decide whether to bring them a dead mouse, or maybe bring them something else.

**Kate Went**

I love that. And just your point there about the differences. Jared has asked: "are corporate cultures really that different or distinct? Or are we all actually honestly pretty similar distinctions between similar companies? Just a myth?" I think, Lisa, you probably disagree, because I know how you do your work to diagnose a culture and you would say there are definite distinctions, right?

**Lisa Hawksworth**

Yeah, there are, I think there are, and there are definite distinctions. Because like that structure, culture, structure, leadership, people who work there, how the information flows, what you expected people, how you onboard, how you outline everything will make an organisation slightly different. The macro challenges of whether you are a finance organisation or a trading company, you know, what's happening in the external market, will affect how your people sense and feel and what how they need to behave and how they serve their customers as well. So absolutely, really different.

**Paul McKinlay**

It's a great question, how awful would it be if our challenge was to just find the same job? That's going to be exactly the same, but just trying to make more money? Yeah. How depressing would careers be? You find places where you love and you thrive? And you have fallen? You it just fits for you? So yeah, I think it's a great question, but I think they're all really different.

**Kate Went**

Absolutely. We are going to the last five minutes, so we're going to try and cram a few last questions in if we can. No mean feat with a topic as big as culture, but we will do our best So, Daniel is asking: "I'm an at an organisation that I feel is drifting from its mission and culture, moving from member focus to more about partners. How can I help shift the culture back as someone who's not part of senior leadership and not in a revenue generating position?" Tricky. Any thoughts from anyone on the panel on that one?

**Lisa Hawksworth**

I'd say prove that you're right first, because actually, if you're going to engage leadership to understand that something's a problem or that something needs to change, you need to prove you're right. And you need that insight behind you. I work with a tonne of very smart people and very smart clients who have a wealth of experience. And they know instinctively what's happening in their organisation, or how it feels or that something's right or that something's wrong. But having that insight, really gives them the leverage to make the changes. I can't believe a sales team would ever go to a CEO and go, "we're going to sell this product" and have no numbers to underpin the argument. And that's exactly the same for us and looking at culture.

**Paul McKinlay**

I was going say to Daniel, keep asking great challenging questions like that, and encourage people to think whenever you get the opportunity get encouraged them to think about the direction.

**Lisa Hawksworth**

Yeah, I think the more the more you can talk to people, the more you can listen, the more you can prove your anecdotes, the stronger your argument is the better.

**Adam Brayford**

And on the flip side for at least the you know, the people and culture or communication pros in the audience, encouraging your leaders to be comfortable with the uncomfortable and just be vulnerable enough to field questions that they might not have answers to, or the perfect answer to, and trying to create that culture where you can ask any questions anyone at any time. That's a tough place to be because you risk losing face in front of your employees. But you know, if you create that bond of trust over time, where you're willing to take questions and go, "Hey, I might not be willing to deal with that now, but I'll take it away and come back." That's the flip side of how we can help our leadership to invite those kinds of challenges. Because, you know, we all know that leadership can have their blinders on to certain issues that are going on in their organisation and sometimes they are very numbers focused and lose sight of other things. Jason from Audacity Communication would say that it's our job to be the conscience of the organisation and to see that and to call it out.

**Kate Went**

I'm going to go to a question from Amy: "my organisation is making a transition to hybrid with a large portion of our staff remaining remote, while a large, large minority will continue reporting, some will struggle, the remote on site. Our organisation wants to do a lot of surveying, but we have a history of not doing a great job of using feedback or reporting back, how can I impress upon my colleagues in other parts of the organisation that we need to set expectations for how feedback will be used and the necessity of sharing results?" Lisa, talk to us about data.

**Lisa Hawksworth**

Never ask a question, if you're not going to do anything with the answer, I think is the short answer. There's no point but Amy, you're probably in something new you've inherited as well. So I'm doing a few of these clients as well in terms of putting in quite rigorous listening strategies. So the clients that do it best, they do a quarterly bit of insights, that isn't just a survey, actually genuine listening and conversations and problem solving as well. And then they have a session where they feedback that data, and they do something as a result. And they do that every quarter. And for the first couple of quarters, it was quite a low take up. But once people see and get confidence that you're actually doing something with what you're telling them, then you'll earn that trust. You've lost that trust a bit, so you've got to earn it back, which is going to take a little bit of time. But the more you can put rigour and routine around, not just gathering the numbers and gathering insight, but actually going right stakeholders. This is what the organisation is telling us, what are we specifically going to do as a result and by when that's when you're you'll get that trust in you'll earn it back.

**Kate Went**

We have come up to time, and we've still got loads of questions. I'm so sorry, if we didn't get a chance to get to yours. We will follow up and I will share the questions with the panel in case anybody wants to follow up on some of those. But thank you so much panel for your insights and to everyone for asking the questions. Lisa, you shared a stat with us this week, which I want to leave people with because I think it just really underpins how important culture is. "52% of a given company's value is from intangible assets. So that is things like your culture. So that's why it's so important."

**Lisa Hawksworth**

Yeah, everything but it's the stuff that cannot be put on a pot specifically on a spreadsheet. I think that's huge.

**Kate Went**

Yeah, absolutely. So that is a great stat to keep in your back pocket when you're talking to leadership about why this stuff matters because it does. Thank you so much. Lisa Adam, Lottie, Paul, Thank you to our audience. We will share the recording with you. And if you want any more on culture, I do recommend that you go and check out our latest podcast episode featuring Lisa talking about 'Smells like Team Spirit' where we are talking about culture. So if you want to dive into a bit more culture, smarts and insights, then definitely check that out. But in the meantime, and thank you so much, everybody, and hopefully we will see you at another session soon. Thank you very much.