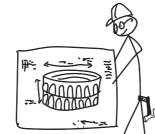# Mark's top tips on culture change

What's it all about?

We often hear 'We need to change our culture' from the Executive Team – a request that's much, much easier said than done. Since culture is all about 'how we do things round here', the process of changing this can often take years and, although Rome wasn't built in a day, bits of it were!

How we'll do things in the future

What you want your future culture to be must be rooted in the organisational vision and strategy. Involve people at all levels in describing the ideal culture that will drive and achieve both. Tease out observable behaviours which reflect this brave new world

Where are we now?

You'll need to understand the starting point. Ask people to describe 'how things are done around here' – both the written and unwritten ways of doing things. An employee opinion survey also provides great clues to the current culture as does observation of meetings and day-to-day work life

Describe the change

Having a start and end point gives you the solid foundation to understand what needs to change and if it's evolution or revolution that's needed. Involve as many people as possible to identify which parts of the culture work well (and need preserving) and which parts you need to leave behind. More than likely, this will lead you to a new set of organisational values

Our philosophy on...

We believe that culture change is a full 360° activity. It has to involve everybody in the organisation whilst at the same time being driven and role-modelled by the Executive Team. Culture also needs to be rooted in clearly-defined values and behaviours that are embedded in all internal processes

Who will benefit?

Executive and HR teams will benefit from these top tips, which share our insights into how to change an organisation's culture

paint a picture

Describe the future culture, understand where you are now and identify the gaps

before we start

Start at the very top

Organisational culture is significantly influenced by the way senior leaders behave, so it's vital to start with this group. Define the required behaviours (linked to the new values) of the future culture and work with the Executive Team (through coaching and other interventions) to ensure they are visibly and consistently behaving in the new way

What gets rewarded gets done

Senior leaders are no different to other employee groups and should be rewarded and recognised for achieving their targets. Great role models of new ways of working could be set behavioural targets (in addition to other performance KPIs) measured through 360° appraisals or an employee opinion survey

bring it to life

As the journey of change begins, start at the top with senior leaders role-modelling a new way of working

Rambu-tips
on culture change

Write the story

An engaging culture narrative that's linked to your vision and strategy story will help people understand what needs to change and why. As you've involved people in defining the new culture, it's also a perfect way to thank them for their involvement and keep them updated on progress

keep on learning

Books that will help:

Organizational Culture and Leadership by **Edgar Schein** - a classic reference for those seeking a deeper understanding of culture dynamics and leadership from the father of organisational culture

Corporate Culture and Performance by **John P. Kotter and James L. Heskett** - the guru Kotter argues company cultures need to stay flexible

The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business by **Patrick Lencioni** – a fascinating read where Lencioni concludes that an organisation is healthy when its management, operations and culture are unified

make it stick

Culture needs constant focus and attention throughout the journey of change – it will never be achieved by simply putting posters on walls

Adapt and flex

As the culture starts to shift, so the world around your organisation is changing too. Use the review process to understand how you might need to flex and adapt your culture as you go along to respond to these external changes

Align processes too

From recruitment to appraisal, look at all processes that may run counter to the desired, future culture. Ask yourself a question such as, "Are we recruiting people with the right fit for the new culture?" and, "Does our appraisal system reflect the new values and behaviours?"

Review and measure progress

Your journey to changing culture may be a long and evolving one that takes several years, so it's vital to check progress along the way. We'd recommend using a variety of measurement tools here from the quantitative, e.g. employee opinion surveys to the qualitative, e.g. employee working groups and observation

Visit these websites:

www.hbr.org – loads of great articles on culture

www.forbes.com – useful articles including a leadership checklist on changing culture

www.cipd.co.uk – has some useful resources in the Knowledge Hub on organisational culture and behaviours

Or give us a shout:

+44 (0) 1858 461071 / hello@rambutan.biz / **www.rambutan.biz** and we'll help you to change your culture

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