

# WORKPLACE CULTURE

Building One That Thrives Beyond Covid-19

A joint study on Workplace Culture was recently conducted by the Institute of Human Resource Professionals ("IHRP") and aAdvantage Consulting Group ("aAdvantage"), which aims to inspire commitment and action towards culture building. aAdvantage is pleased to share our Point-of-View on Leading and Managing Culture: The "Why, What and How" of Culture Building, as organisations look beyond Covid-19, to thrive in the future. To access the full guidebook, [please click here](#).

**366** respondents



were required to pick 10 words from a list that best reflect their current and desired organisation culture.

**TOP 10**

words chosen, based on the collective number of votes cast on each word.

## CURRENT CULTURE VALUES

- cost reduction
- results orientation
- continuous improvement
- brand image
- customer satisfaction
- hierarchy
- bureaucracy
- employee engagement
- accountability
- digital connectivity

## DESIRED CULTURE VALUES

- balance (home/work)
- employee engagement
- employee recognition
- coaching/mentoring
- leading by example
- leadership development
- agility
- continuous improvement
- empowerment
- transparency

## 3 KEY THEMES EXPERIENCED IN THE CURRENT CULTURE

### ATTENTION ON EVOLVING THE BUSINESS



Covid-19 necessitates new ways of doing things in business operations. **Evolving the business becomes a priority** for most organisations as a necessity for survival and to meet shorter-term organisation performance metrics.

### PERFORMANCE-FOCUSED

The long-drawn effects of Covid-19 has taken its toll on organisations and business performance. Many organisations respond to the financial stress by **focusing on immediate business results and keeping customers satisfied**. We also observe an emphasis on **taking ownership of results**, whether on an individual, team or department level.



### HIERARCHY, BUREAUCRACY & COST REDUCTION



In the pursuit of shorter-term business results, structures, processes or policies may have been put in place to **maintain standards, connectivity, & "optimise" cost**. When done excessively, these could result in **negative staff perceptions of 'Hierarchy', 'Bureaucracy' and 'Cost-reduction'**, particularly when awareness and buy-in efforts fall short.

This perceived culture may also also be the result of **insufficient communication, clarity or transparency** from leaders on the direction and plans. The presence of potentially limiting factors like **hierarchy, bureaucracy & cost reduction** could be inhibiting in the long term.

## WHAT'S THE DESIRED CULTURE GOING FORWARD

The Desired Culture Values provide meaningful insights into what the participants see as priorities in addressing the Current Culture needs, and their aspirations for high performing culture going into the future. The 3 key themes are:

1

### EVOLVING THE BUSINESS & BUILDING TRUST

Organisation trust is the **foundation of business evolution**. When there is "psychological safety", employees express their opinions freely and true debate can take place, leading to innovations, clarity and buy-in to organisation commitments.

Whilst many might look to organisation leaders for the answers in the past, organisations need to tap on the **collective wisdom of its workforce** in navigating the unknowns of the future.

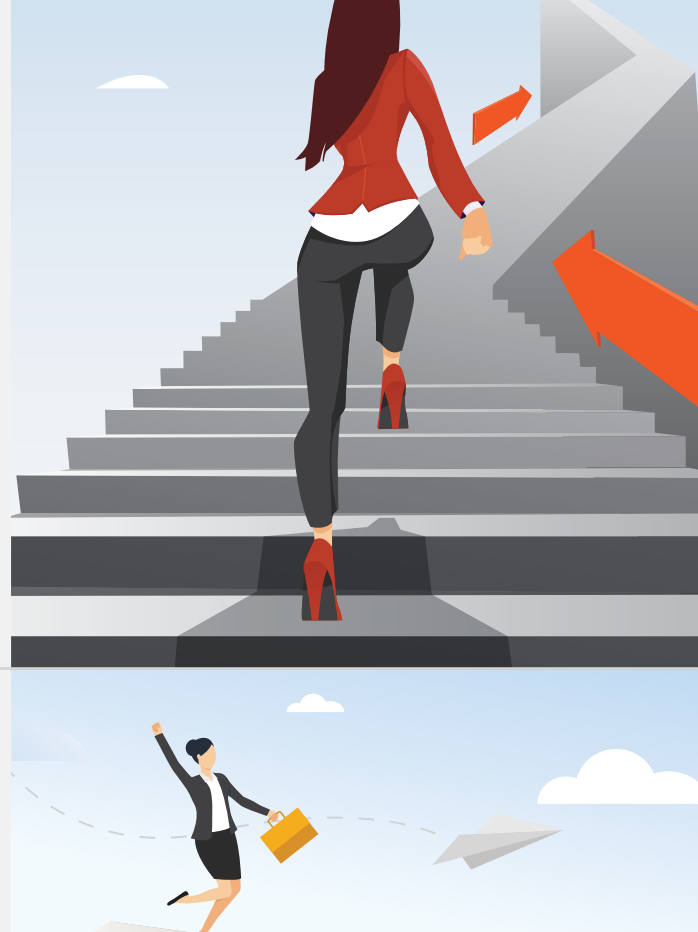


2

### PERSONAL WELL-BEING & DEVELOPMENT

Employees' overall well-being and development might **unconsciously take a back seat** vis-à-vis the increasing demands for business performance and evolution.

There needs to be purposeful efforts to continuously engage employees through **authentic care, recognition and staff development**, both personally and professionally. Leadership teams in particular, will have to align, live out and reinforce desired beliefs and behaviours, including work-life balance in the hybrid workplace environment.



3

### LEADERSHIP CONSCIOUSNESS & DEVELOPMENT

The **call for leaders today** focuses on the ability to establish leadership of purpose and vision and to create the right conditions for teams to achieve desired outcomes.

**Organisations transforms when leaders transform.**

Leaders at all levels can play their part well in areas of clarity and transparency, coaching and empowerment, walking the talk and regular check-ins. As leaders, they must also be willing to let go of their egos and commit to self-development.



## AADVANTAGE'S POINT OF VIEW: LEADING PRACTICES IN DRIVING & SUSTAINING CULTURE

### Leading Practice 1 Senior Leadership Team Commitment



**Top Management:** Be clear. **Align aspirations** and **maintain a people-centric approach** to culture and leadership development. Establish meaningful dialogues.

### Leading Practice 2 Take Stock of Current & Desired Culture



A clear picture of the **employees' needs and motivations**, as well as their view of the current and desired culture. Identify **cultural strengths** as well as potential limiting factors preventing the group from freeing their full potential together.

### Leading Practice 3 Culture Roadmap & Culture Network



Invest time in **forming a solid foundation for WHY and HOW** the group wants to work with their culture, over the next few years, within the organisation. There is no point in starting a cultural development journey unless the entire management and partners are on-board.

### Leading Practice 4 People Manager as Role Models



**Leadership at all levels** have a clear view of their leadership behaviours, in relation to the desired culture, and how they can more consciously and continually cultivate and develop them.

### Leading Practice 5 Ongoing Review & Improvement



Culture is a **"living" entity** and therefore must be **continually reviewed** and visible in order to be cultivated. It is necessary to be able to listen to the energies and needs of the organisation, in order to act upon them.

### Leading Practice 6 Systems Alignment & Reinforcing Change



Establish structures and systems to **consistently support and nurture the espoused culture**. All processes should be in line with the espoused culture and there needs to be established methods, to continually follow up and cultivate the culture.

No Culture Transformation Journey is the same and each organisation needs to determine the order and scope that best apply. It is an iterative process that requires reflections and adaptations along the way, always hearing the voices of stakeholders involved.

**From our experience... Most organisations need it, but avoid it. And struggle to achieve sustainable results. This is your OPPORTUNITY... Are you prepared for the Journey?**