



INDUSTRY- LEADING CASE STUDIES 2024

Transformation
Future Workplace Readiness
Leading With Purpose
Brand & Values
Employee Voice
Learning
Wellbeing
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Coaching & Mentoring
CSR & Corporate Sustainability
Culture Leaders & Teams



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BUSINESS CULTURE CASE STUDIES 2024

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OVERALL WINNER

SONY MUSIC'S PEOPLE-CENTRIC AND INCLUSIVE POLICIES ARE MUSIC TO THE EARS OF UNDER-REPRESENTED EMPLOYEES

Background

Sony Music UK has been on a mission to build a workplace that puts its people first while addressing key challenges related to diversity, equity and inclusion together with employee wellbeing. Six years ago, the company undertook a comprehensive review of its HR strategy, aiming to create policies and initiatives that would support employees at important life moments, improve retention and enhance leadership development. The idea was to both elevate talent within the organisation and attract new talent to sustain business growth.

With the systemic challenge of high childcare costs in the UK disproportionately impacting women, often forcing them to work part-time or exit the workforce altogether, Sony Music recognised in 2022 a need to foster a more inclusive culture, addressing underrepresentation in leadership and specific roles. It also wanted to ensure wellbeing across all life stages.

“Sony Music UK leads the industry with bold initiatives, putting people first and setting new benchmarks for inclusion and employee wellbeing”

Approach

The company's first step was to tackle the issue of childcare costs, which serve as a major barrier for many parents, particularly women, re-entering the workforce after having children. It introduced a pioneering policy that provides parents with up to £15,000 per year towards the cost of childcare, based on a tapered system that ensures those earning lower and middle incomes receive more significant support. This was the first such policy in the UK music industry and set a new benchmark for other industries to follow.

This initiative complemented a suite of other support systems, such as equal parental leave, flexible working arrangements and specific policies targeting key life stages such as menopause, fertility and pregnancy loss. Sony became the first UK private sector company to offer full pay during the neonatal period for parents of pre-term babies.

Beyond supporting working parents, it has worked tirelessly to cultivate a culture of inclusion and belonging. It rolled out mental health training for all staff in collaboration with MIND, launched mentorship programmes for employees from diverse backgrounds and developed talent programmes such as 'Featuring' to nurture future leaders. In particular, its A&R Academy



focuses on increasing female representation in traditionally male-dominated roles within the music industry.

Through data-driven insights, focus groups and partnerships with employee resource groups, Sony Music UK ensured that its policies are not only equitable but also impactful. Leadership buy-in was crucial throughout the process, with the CEO and senior leaders providing consistent support for these groundbreaking initiatives.

Outcome

Sony Music's holistic approach to supporting employees at various life stages has delivered impressive results. The childcare policy alone has been transformative, with working parents reporting a significant sense of relief and increased flexibility in managing their careers and family responsibilities.

Female retention has increased by 11%, with 51% of all promotions and 69% of new hires being women. Women now make up 55% of the senior management team – a 13% rise. Additionally, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation within senior management has risen to 30%, reflecting a 7% increase. Retention overall has improved by 8%, with specific gains of 14% for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees.

Externally, these efforts have not gone unnoticed, with Sony Music emerging as an employer of choice in a highly competitive industry. With 88% of employees recommending Sony Music as a great place to work, the company continues to set a high standard for creating an inclusive, supportive and high-performance culture.

TRANSFORMATION

UTILITY WAREHOUSE'S SPIRITED BEHAVIOURS DRIVE A PERFORMANCE-BOOSTING CULTURE



Background

Utility Warehouse (UW), a UK-based FTSE 250 company offering bundled home services, faced the challenge of rapid growth during the cost-of-living crisis. With an expanding customer base and workforce, the company's historically 'family-feel' culture began to show cracks. Employee engagement dropped, with an eNPS score of -11. This decline highlighted the need for a cultural shift, especially as UW set an ambitious goal to reach one million customers in 2024. The company needed to adapt its culture to enable a performance-driven mindset while maintaining a sense of belonging for its employees, aligning the business goals with a stronger internal foundation.

Approach

UW partnered with brand culture agency People Made, to execute a comprehensive culture transformation. The strategy was built around three key phases. Firstly, the company undertook extensive research, including focus groups with employees and interviews with the executive leadership team to assess the current culture and the changes needed.

Next, the team introduced a new North Star: "We help people stop wasting time and money." This clear, purpose-driven statement, paired with new company values like 'Daring' and 'Spirited', aimed to energise the workforce and transition into a future-

focused, performance-driven culture. Co-creation workshops with leadership and employees ensured that the cultural shift was collaborative, fostering a sense of ownership and advocacy across the business.

Finally, UW executed a bold, guerrilla-style launch to maximise internal impact. A head office car park takeover was designed to make a statement and key resources like a 'How We Work' playbook were developed to help employees embody the new values. People leaders were equipped with performance frameworks and goal-setting tools to integrate the new behaviours into their teams. A dedicated event, Elevate, provided leaders with the knowledge and confidence to lead their teams in this cultural shift.

“Utility Warehouse turned a -11 eNPS into a performance mindset that helped drive 14% annual growth”

Outcome

UW's cultural transformation has already produced significant results. By Q4 2023, the company had achieved its goal of signing one million customers, supported by a 14% year-on-year growth rate. Internally, the shift to a performance mindset is evident. Post-launch surveys showed that 100% of people leaders understand how this mindset supports growth and feel equipped to guide their teams. Additionally, 73% of employees reported feeling a sense of belonging, while 91% felt trusted to do their jobs effectively. These changes reflect a deeply embedded and sustainable cultural shift that positions UW for continued growth and success.

TRANSFORMATION

BY 'DELIVERING BETTER' EVRI
TRANSFORMS EFFICIENCY AND
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Background

In March 2022, Evri (formerly Hermes UK), the UK's largest dedicated parcel carrier, embarked on its biggest transformation project to date. The rebranding from Hermes to Evri was more than just a name change, it marked a shift aimed at improving operational efficiency, enhancing customer experience and reinforcing the company's commitment to its workforce and partners. To achieve this, Evri launched the Delivering Better initiative, designed to revolutionise its processes, particularly customer service.

With more than 730 million parcels delivered annually and 30,000 customer enquiries each week, manual processes used by customer service agents were unsustainable. Agents had to navigate multiple platforms, resulting in up to four minute response times per enquiry. This slowed service and created inconsistencies. As parcel volumes fluctuated – especially during Christmas – Evri needed a scalable, efficient solution to meet demand and improve service standards.

Approach

Evri's solution was to integrate intelligent automation into its customer service operations, enabling agents to handle enquiries faster and more accurately. The centrepiece was an AI-powered app, built with Robiquity, to streamline workflows. This intuitive app automated tasks like retrieving parcel details, updating CRM systems and sending email responses. Deployed via Microsoft Teams, agents could now use dropdowns and tick boxes to input information, ensuring consistency and reducing errors. This led to a significant reduction in enquiry handling times to just one minute.

“Evri's 'Delivering Better' initiative has transformed customer service operations, reducing enquiry handling time by 75% and boosting customer satisfaction”

A key priority was scalability. The solution was designed for up to 100,000 enquiries per week during peak periods without increasing handling times, giving Evri flexibility to adapt to demand. Despite challenges such as compressed testing timelines and additional governance requirements, the change was delivered on time and within budget.

Outcome

The introduction of intelligent automation cut enquiry handling time by 75%, saving Evri 441,000 hours annually. This efficiency gain allowed the company to improve service levels without increasing staffing costs.

Customer satisfaction rose from 82% to 87%. The improvement benefited not only customers but also retail partners, as happier customers are more likely to make repeat purchases. Evri's customer enquiry resolution rates jumped from 45% to 91% in 12 months.

Evri is now investing £1 million in further AI advancements. Its commitment to technology continues to strengthen its market position, delivering superior service for customers, partners and employees alike.



TRANSFORMATION

ARGENT ENERGY BREAKS DOWN SILOS TO ACHIEVE GLOBAL COLLABORATION

Background

Argent Energy, a rapidly growing renewable energy company, faced challenges as it scaled globally. Teams across its Cheshire and Amsterdam sites worked in silos, leading to inefficiencies, fragmented expertise and unresolved problems that impacted profitability. For example, one plant excelled in processing a particular kind of raw material while another struggled with this same feedstock. Tensions between functions, as well as data errors in the analysis, further hindered performance. To meet its ambitious goal of decarbonising global transport using waste materials, the company needed to foster collaboration across teams and locations.

“Argent Energy’s innovative ‘pizza slice’ approach broke down silos and delivered real process improvements and substantial cost savings while fostering a culture of collaboration and shared leadership”

Approach

Argent Energy launched a cultural transformation programme co-created with Anne Chatroux Executive Partnering. The course followed a unique 'pizza slice' model, selecting 24 participants from across different locations, functions and leadership levels. This cross-sectional approach ensured a diverse mix of operational and office-based colleagues, fostering peer-learning and collaboration. Despite the challenge of working across multiple sites, the cohort represented a balanced mix of culture, expertise, leadership experience and gender, creating an ideal environment for growth.

The course comprised three modules, spread over three months, emphasising trust-building, vulnerability and collaboration. Participants also received individual coaching, which helped them develop essential leadership skills such as vulnerability, active listening and collaboration.

As part of the programme, participants were grouped into project teams to address real business issues, such as improving production rates and managing feedstock quality. These projects aimed to deliver tangible improvements within a 12-week timeframe. The final outcomes were presented to the Executive Committee, showcasing the practical impact of the programme.



Outcome

The programme successfully addressed key operational issues and fostered a culture of collaboration. Eight business improvement projects were completed, yielding both qualitative and quantitative benefits. These included an improved induction programme, improving the experience for the 60 new employees joining annually, which contributed to a reduction in turnover from 16% to 14%.

Improved processes for managing feedstock quality positively impacted the company’s substantial annual feedstock costs. A new IT system that allows the sharing of best practices between operational teams will help with knowledge transfer and reduce production shortfalls. Meanwhile, significant cost savings were achieved from better management of feedstock deliveries by container.

The programme also enhanced employee leadership skills, with participants reporting improvements in listening, collaboration and their ability to set clear expectations. The cultural shift initiated by this programme has driven greater connectivity between Argent’s sites and functions, with the company now preparing to launch a third cohort of the course, aiming for long-term cultural transformation. Argent’s leadership has praised the programme’s impact, stating that the return on investment far outweighed the costs.

TRANSFORMATION

PROJECT X PARTNERS GUIDES HSBC LEGAL'S CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION TO NEW HEIGHTS



Background

In 2021, HSBC's Legal function faced significant cultural challenges, with employee engagement scores lagging 10-15% behind the wider HSBC Group. The disconnect between leadership's vision of 'Making Legal a Great Place to Work' and employees' actual experiences was evident. In response, HSBC Legal enlisted Project X Partners to lead a comprehensive cultural transformation. The aim was to address low morale, foster inclusivity and engage employees on a global scale. After successfully launching the People Programme last year, Project X continued to support and scale the initiative in 2023, driving further progress.

Approach

Project X Partners took a central consultancy role in reshaping the Legal function's culture. It conducted an in-depth discovery sprint to gather insights from employee feedback and surveys, identifying three strategic objectives: building a healthy, inclusive culture, improving engagement and developing people to create a world-class legal function. Project X introduced agile methodologies to ensure that the transformation was driven from the ground up, empowering employees to co-create initiatives.

The approach centred on setting up a robust People Programme Team comprising HSBC specialists and Project X consultants. Together, they facilitated working groups across multiple time zones, upskilling employees in agile methods like mural

boards and value-prioritisation techniques. This agile framework, allowed teams to generate quick wins and iterate on successful ideas, ensuring progress was both measurable and adaptable.

As the programme evolved, Project X expanded its consultancy role, guiding HSBC Legal through the development of a Global Legal Core Expectations framework to drive performance and a Legal Learning Ecosystem to support continuous employee development.

“Project X Partners scaled HSBC Legal's People Programme, boosting engagement and driving a sustainable cultural transformation”

Outcome

Project X Partners' consultancy has been instrumental in scaling the People Programme. Volunteer numbers rose from 89 in 2022 to 161 in 2024, while the number of initiatives grew from 24 to 32. The programme's success has been reflected in improved engagement scores: the Employee Engagement Index increased by 7%, with 81% of employees participating in the 2023 survey, up from 58% in 2021. Career development opportunities, including global legal shadowing and coaching circles, have enhanced employee satisfaction, while the DE&I initiatives have created a more inclusive environment.

Project X's consultancy has been a catalyst for lasting change, helping HSBC Legal align its strategic goals with employee aspirations, making it a true example of cultural transformation.

TRANSFORMATION

TRANSFORMING A HERITAGE BRAND TO THRIVE IN A MODERN WORLD AT POPULAR

Background

Popular, a 130-year-old financial institution originated in Puerto Rico, embarked on a transformative journey to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving banking landscape. Faced with growing competition, digital innovation and the effects of the pandemic, Popular sought to position itself as the most relevant and trusted bank in its markets while continuing to delight customers and being an employer of choice. To achieve this, it recognised that its culture needed to be more agile and responsive so that its 8,500+ employees could embrace new ways of working that aligned with the bank's long-term goals.

The challenge was not only to simplify and modernise its cultural framework but also to break down long-standing norms that were impeding speed of transformation. In partnership with consultancy Dragonfish, the bank aimed to unite its workforce around a compelling purpose while maintaining the heritage that had made it successful for over a century.

Approach

Dragonfish adopted a human-centred approach that placed Popular's employees, customers and communities at the heart of the culture transformation. Research and data collection informed the new purpose, involving 35% of Popular's workforce across six regions and consultations with 400 customers and 50 partners. This inclusive approach led to the development of the purpose: "We put people at the center of progress."

The process involved co-creating actionable

“Popular Bank's cultural transformation ensures that it is future-ready while reinforcing its position as a leading heritage bank”

behaviours and values with Popular's leadership, which were tested and refined across various markets. Dragonfish also worked closely with leaders to align the new cultural framework with Popular's strategic goals, focusing on agility, accountability and customer alignment. More than 1,600 leaders participated in an experiential activation programme, while 225 culture champions were mobilised to embed the new values across the organisation.

To ensure the new culture took root Dragonfish designed a comprehensive 12-18 month roadmap. This operational plan focused on embedding the values into daily practices, providing tools to assess team performance and integrating culture into leadership agendas through regular governance and measurement.

Outcome

Popular Bank saw significant improvements across employee engagement, customer satisfaction and financial performance, with 95% of colleagues feeling inspired by the new purpose and 94% of leaders motivated to model the new culture. Customer acquisition surpassed expectations, with the loan portfolio increasing by \$1 billion in 2023. Operating costs were reduced by 6% due to streamlined processes and improved ways of working.

Popular's new cultural framework, Somos Popular (We are Popular), has become a central driver of the bank's success, uniting employees and ensuring the organisation is future-ready.



FUTURE WORKPLACE READINESS

CATHAY FINANCIAL DRIVES DIGITAL INNOVATION AND FUTURE-READY SUSTAINABILITY

Background

Cathay Financial Holdings (CFH), Taiwan's largest financial institution, launched the 6S Project in 2021 to transform its culture in response to rapid technological advances, climate change and evolving workplace dynamics. With operations spanning multiple regions, CFH needed to enhance digital collaboration, improve employee well-being and integrate sustainability across the organisation. The 6S Project aimed to foster a resilient, adaptable workforce while maintaining leadership in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices, preparing CFH for the future of work.

Approach

The 6S Project focuses on six key pillars: Simple, Smart, Smooth, Smile, Safe and ESG – each designed to address critical areas of business and workforce development.

- **Simple:** CFH launched the Cathay Digital Co-Op Hub, a platform that integrates cloud and on-premises systems, streamlining collaboration and accelerating project execution across geographies.
- **Smart:** Through the Cathay AI & Auto Service employees can use low-code and no-code solutions to automate routine tasks and boost efficiency, driving future workforce readiness.
- **Smooth:** The Cathay iHR Service Hub supports recruitment, training and talent retention, ensuring seamless adaptation of diverse talent into the company culture, and enabling employees to upskill and reskill for evolving roles.
- **Smile:** The Cathay Welfare Hub promotes employee wellbeing with flexible work options, mental health support and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives to improve engagement and reduce stress.

- **Safe:** CFH implemented the Cathay Guard Service, a multi-layered cybersecurity framework certified by global standards, to ensure secure digital collaboration.
- **ESG:** As part of its commitment to sustainability CFH became the first Taiwanese financial institution to join RE100. The Cathay Care Hub integrates sustainability into daily operations, focusing on climate, health and empowerment, and earned CFH a leadership role at the World Climate Summit.

Outcome

The 6S Project has transformed CFH into a future-ready organisation. More than 2 million working hours were saved through AI-driven solutions and digital collaboration tools. CFH's patent portfolio expanded with 64 new fintech patents, and the company won the "Best Financial AI Project" award in 2023.

Employee satisfaction rose to 4.13/5 while retention improved by 43%. The iHR platform supported a 40.2% increase in diverse talent, keeping CFH competitive in attracting and retaining top employees.

CFH's sustainability leadership earned it recognition, including being named "Best Business Employer in Asia" five times. CFH continues to lead in ESG practices, positioning itself as a global example of sustainable finance.

By integrating digital innovation, sustainability and employee wellbeing, the 6S Project has positioned CFH as a leader in future workforce readiness, ensuring the company and its employees are prepared for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

“Through its 6S Project, Cathay Financial has built a future-ready workforce, driving digital innovation, sustainability and employee wellbeing with impactful results”



LEADING WITH PURPOSE

PURPOSE-DRIVEN TRANSFORMATION AT NOBLE FOODS FUELS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND BUSINESS GROWTH

Background

Noble Foods faced a pivotal moment in 2019 when it returned to family ownership under Sarah Dean, whose great-grandfather founded the business in 1920. After a decade of profit-driven culture the company recognised the need to re-engage its people and foster pride and inclusivity. With over 1,300 colleagues across diverse functions Noble Foods embarked on a cultural transformation to rebuild leadership and refocus on core values. The appointment of CEO Duncan Everett in 2020 marked the first step in this shift, setting the tone for a renewed approach to its people and future.

Approach

The cornerstone of this transformation was rebuilding the 'Story of Noble', developed with input from employees across the company. Honest feedback ensured that the company's message resonated with its people. The formation of the Noble Leaders Group (NLG), a team of 40 influential employees, representing all parts of the business, played a key role in driving this change. The NLG shaped the new purpose and values, providing colleagues a platform to influence the business's direction while fostering personal and professional growth.

The NLG promotes open communication, with quarterly meetings to discuss successes, challenges and ideas. A significant achievement was the 2021 launch of Noble Foods' new purpose:

“Noble Foods’ purpose-driven approach not only boosted employee engagement but also delivered impressive financial growth and industry recognition.”

“To better nourish people, animals and planet.” This purpose became the foundation of the company's strategy, supported by values encapsulated in the acronym TO CARE: Together, Ownership, Caring, Action, Respect and Excellence. These values informed daily interactions and became central to operations.

Noble Foods is also pursuing B-Corp certification for the group, aligning with its commitment to sustainable and ethical practices. The Noble Aspire programme was introduced to support leadership development, offering growth opportunities for both NLG members and front-line managers.

Outcome

Since introducing its refreshed purpose and values, Noble Foods has achieved remarkable results. Revenue has increased by 25%, while profits have grown by an impressive 61% since 2022. Employee engagement has significantly improved, with total turnover reduced by nearly 40% and voluntary turnover dropping by over 40% since early 2022. Additionally, the company has seen a 44% reduction in debt since 2021 and halved reportable accidents, fostering a safer and more inclusive workplace.

Noble Foods' efforts earned recognition, ranking among the top 10 food and drink companies to work for in 2023 and 2024. This transformation strengthened the company's financial performance and deepened connections with employees, suppliers and customers, proving that purpose-driven cultures yield exceptional results.



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LEADING WITH PURPOSE

MITIE BUILDS LEADERS FOR TODAY AND THE FUTURE

Background

Facilities management company Mitie faced a critical challenge in aligning its leadership development with its growth strategy and cultural shift. Mitie's existing leadership development programme was outdated, exclusive to certain levels of management and lacked alignment with the company's 'People-First' culture.

Mitie set out to create a multi-layered, blended development offer that would establish managers as custodians of the colleague experience, promote a values-led leadership approach and embed inclusion and wellbeing into all aspects of people management.

Approach

To address these challenges Mitie launched the People Manager Development Offer, a leadership programme designed around four key pillars: leading self, leading others, leading for performance and leading for the future. The programme followed a 'learn, apply, grow' methodology to ensure managers could develop their skills in real-time, applying their learning directly to their roles.

Key components included a comprehensive digital platform providing on-demand resources, tools and development materials for managers at all levels and core behavioural programmes, such as Leading Together and Leading with Respect, which offered practical, real-world leadership training. A strengths-based psychometric tool helps managers identify and leverage their strengths and those of their team members for better team performance. Additionally, the new Offer highlights which management apprenticeships are available to enable managers to gain formal certifications while applying their learning in real time.

The programme was designed to be flexible, catering to the diverse learning needs of Mitie's 4,500 managers and 2,500 supervisors. It emphasised real-life application through reflective practice, digital content and practical workshops, ensuring that leadership



development was continuous and directly aligned with the company's 'One Mitie' leadership standards.

Outcome

Since the launch of the People Manager Development Offer, colleague engagement is up by six points, reaching a record 63%. Engagement related to management behaviours increased by 2.64% and senior leadership engagement grew by 4.85%. The Leading Together and Leading with Respect programmes achieved Net Promoter Scores of 90 and 88, respectively. The completion rate for these programmes was 71% and 55%.

The programme was incorporated into the security services team's Sainsbury's Management Academy with a resulting 25% promotion rate. Meanwhile, regretted attrition among managers dropped by 2.4% and the uptake of management apprenticeships increased by 84%, with a 30% rise in colleagues achieving distinctions, showcasing strong engagement with the programme.

Qualitative feedback from managers highlights the programme's role in fostering inclusive leadership, reflective practice and meaningful development, empowering them to lead effectively and authentically.

“ Mitie's People Manager Development Offer boosted employee engagement, reduced management attrition and drove leadership excellence through innovative and inclusive learning ”

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BRAND & VALUES

DANONE RENEWS CULTURE WITH HOPE AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

Background

In early 2022, Danone launched the Renew Danone strategy, led by CEO Antoine de Saint-Affrique, to realign the company's business model for sustainable growth through greater alignment between purpose and performance. Danone's purpose, unchanged since 1972, is to bring health through food to as many people as possible. A key enabler of this strategy was a cultural refresh, rooted in Danone's HOPE values (Humanism, Openness, Proximity and Enthusiasm) and the introduction of new behaviours that reflected the company's renewed goals.



Approach

To support this, Danone's Culture Global team initiated an in-depth listening exercise, involving 95 interviews including Senior leaders, 45 workshops with over 700 Danoners and a survey with insights from more than 60,000 employees. This revealed that, while employees valued the HOPE values, only 20% fully understood them and only 40% observed the desired behaviours consistently in their workplace.

Based on these findings, Danone launched its Culture Change management plan underpinned by "Danone is what I do." This emphasised that each employee plays an active role in shaping the company's culture through their everyday actions. The plan refreshed the explanation of the HOPE values and introduced five new behaviours: Put Danone First, Lead with People, Keep it Simple, Be Accountable and Walk the Talk. These behaviours were designed to align with the Renew Danone strategy and drive performance.

The approach included three key phases. First, the company rolled out communication materials, such as

a memorable event launch, videos from the COMEX leadership and various digital resources, to raise awareness. Next hands-on and experiential training sessions lasting 1.5 days were provided by zone, to embed the new behaviours. Finally e-learning modules were developed to give employees a deeper understanding of these behaviours.

“Danone's cultural transformation empowers every employee to shape the company's future through their daily actions and behaviours”

Outcome

To date, 26,550 Danoners, representing 51% of the workforce, had completed the e-learning modules, which received a satisfaction rating of 4.5 out of 5. In addition 186 face-to-face training sessions were held across 23 cities, training 90% of executives and 80% of directors, with a satisfaction rating of 4.6 out of 5.

The cultural transformation has already led to a marked improvement in the prevalence of the 5 new behaviours. Compared to 2022, there was a 25% increase in employees frequently demonstrating "Put Danone First"; 17% increase for the "Lead with People Behaviour"; 5% increase for "Keep it Simple"; 22% rise in "Be Accountable" and, finally, a 22% increase vs 2022 on "Walk the Talk" Behaviour. Employees have embraced these changes, incorporating the behaviours into their daily work, as evidenced in meetings and interactions across the company.

Danone's culture transformation continues into 2024, with plans to embed these behaviours further into the company's daily routines and processes, ensuring lasting change and ongoing success.

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BRAND & VALUES

NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY SHINES BY PUTTING VALUES INTO ACTION

Background

In 2022, Northumbria University began embedding values and behaviours (VAB) into its organisational DNA. With a new Vice-Chancellor and a five-year strategy in development, aligning the university's culture with its strategic goals became crucial.

The university wanted to create a framework that would engage staff across both UK and international campuses and serve as a foundation for future growth. It began with a series of virtual focus groups, engaging over 100 colleagues to define the desired future culture. These insights were used by a 'core group' of 20+ staff to draft the VAB framework. At this stage, Northumbria realised the framework could be used to drive wider cultural change that resonated with diverse teams, from academics to professional staff.

Approach

Northumbria University partnered with The Culture Builders to design and implement a comprehensive engagement strategy around the VAB framework. A four-stage model was introduced: Explore, Introduce, Embed, Sustain.

Firstly, senior leaders came together to explore the work the core group had done on the VAB. The aim; to make the framework meaningful for their roles as the leaders of the institution: thinking through the implications for the broader culture they wanted to see; sharing their own stories of the VAB in action; and agreeing on how they would share responsibility for engaging with staff in the next phase.

The VAB were then launched through interactive events attended by over 1,000 employees across multiple locations and virtually, exceeding the 500 target. Senior leaders shared personal journeys to help staff connect with the framework. The university embedded the VAB into everyday operations through storytelling, feedback mechanisms and team 'charters'. The VAB were also included in performance reviews, decision-making processes, recognition activity and learning and development programmes to ensure they became a sustained and living part of the university's culture.

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Finally, ongoing consultation and resources were provided to ensure the VAB remained relevant and impactful. The university created a 360-degree feedback tool aligned with the VAB and incorporated them into strategy sessions, team development and policies, making them central to all aspects of university life.

“Northumbria University has witnessed substantial momentum in the adoption of their Values and Behaviours framework which has influenced decision-making and everyday practices, increased employee engagement by 7.8%, reduced turnover and fostered a values-driven culture”

Outcome

The transformation has yielded impressive results. The university's Engagement Index rose by 7.8% to 71.6%, with 91.4% of staff understanding the VAB. Additionally, 79% agreed that their managers demonstrated commitment to these values. Turnover dropped to 7.8% from a three-year average of 9.9%.

The Shine Awards, launched to celebrate staff exemplifying the VAB, received 204 nominations in 2024, a 14% increase from the previous year. The VAB framework has become central to Northumbria's identity, helping the university tackle future challenges and build a high-performing, values-driven institution.



COACHING & MENTORING

STICK + TWIST BUILDS A THRIVING
BUSINESS CULTURE FOR
STRATEGIC IMPACT

Background

Marketing consultancy Stick + Twist was founded in 2018 on the belief that a supportive culture is key to delivering impactful strategic solutions. With the marketing industry undervaluing strategic talent, the company's mission was clear: liberate strategists from outdated models, empower them with flexibility and responsibility, and foster a growth-driven environment. The company's founding vision of creating a win-win for both clients and employees shaped its unique approach to business culture, which is represented by the 'plus' in its name.



leadership development in partnership with Hyper Island, ensured the company continually evolves.

“ A commitment to creating a culture of personal and organisational growth has enabled Stick + Twist to achieve 285% revenue growth since 2021 ”

Approach

The cultural journey began in 2021 with a focus on defining core values. Through workshops and team discussions, three central values emerged: Liberated,

Ambitious and United. These were combined into action-oriented behaviours, creating a strong, cultural foundation with shared ownership across the team.

Building on this, Stick + Twist introduced an 8-week coaching programme for each employee, helping individuals align their personal values with their roles. The programme, delivered by Mind & Matter, encouraged self-awareness and leadership growth and was followed by team profiling to optimise collaboration. As the company expanded, it embraced self-managing teams, giving each 'squad' client and commercial responsibility and autonomy.

In the third phase, the company prioritised cultivating a growth mindset. The coaching programme extended into regular team coaching sessions, and a strategic measurement dashboard, The Curve™, was introduced to track both personal and business development through monthly reflections. This, combined with bespoke training programmes like a Masterclass Series and

Outcome

The results of Stick + Twist's cultural transformation have been striking. Since 2021, the company has invested £5,450 and 55 hours of coaching per head and seen 285% revenue growth,

driven by both client retention and new business wins. Stick + Twist boasts a 100% client retention rate, with major names like Lloyds Banking Group and Bupa remaining loyal partners. The company's ability to adapt and grow has also led to new strategic services, including its LivePulse digital research platform and a strategy training academy, which have contributed to an additional 12% uplift in annual revenue.

Internally, the cultural investment has paid off with zero employee resignations since its inception, while doubling in size in each of the last three years. The highly motivated workforce continues to deliver outstanding results, with a 97% client recommendation score and exceptional feedback from clients.

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COACHING & MENTORING

VML EMPLOYEES THRIVE WITH COACHING APP

Background

In 2021, VML (then Wunderman Thompson) recognised a critical need to enhance career coaching and mentoring for its global workforce of over 12,000 employees. Employee surveys revealed gaps in career growth, feedback and goal-setting resources. Traditional career development tools were either costly, unscalable or lacked customisation for VML's unique culture. To address this, the organisation sought to create an innovative, scalable process rooted in its branding expertise to empower employees to define and achieve personal success.

Approach

VML launched THRIVE, a bespoke career solution integrated into Microsoft Teams for accessibility and ease of use. THRIVE operationalised the company's personal branding philosophy through its 4Ps framework: Purpose (career ambition), Proposition (unique strengths), Personality (perceptions of value) and Priorities (goals).

The rollout began with annual global Career Hack events, featuring panels and coaching sessions led by senior leaders. The process extended throughout the year with tools like THRIVE Office Hours (supporting managers on how to guide employee career conversations), THRIVE Thursdays (dedicated times for self-reflection and coaching) and bias-free feedback training.

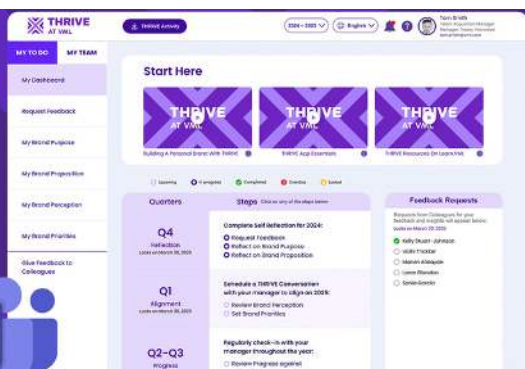
“What started as an organisation without a formal career conversation process has evolved into one where 72% of employees now actively participate”

Employees use the app to manage career and wellbeing goals, request feedback and access coaching dashboards. Available in seven languages its intuitive design includes just-in-time tutorials and office-level, regional and global leaderboards to nurture healthy competition, encouragement and best practices.

Outcome

THRIVE has achieved measurable success over three cycles. What started as an organisation without a formal career conversation process has evolved into one where 72% of employees now actively participate, with 80% of feedback requests successfully completed. The simple consumer-like UX has resulted in an 11% rise in employee-reported goal clarity and development awareness.

The app is now the most-used PowerApp across WPP, VML's parent company, and was adopted organisation-wide by more than 26,000 employees following the Wunderman Thompson/VMLY&R merger. Employees praise THRIVE for its transparency, user-friendliness and impact on personal and professional growth. An upcoming GPT integration will augment managers' coaching effectiveness through AI-generated colleague feedback summaries and custom coaching prompts. By transforming coaching into a seamless, meaningful experience, VML exemplifies a commitment to empowering its people.



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THOUGHT LEADERSHIP: COACHING & MENTORING

DEI COACHING, MENTORING AND SUPERVISION: A CATALYST FOR INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION



Background

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are essential drivers of organisational success, yet many leaders struggle to translate DEI values into actionable strategies. Coaching, mentoring, and supervision bridge this gap by equipping leaders with the skills, self-awareness, and tools needed to foster inclusive cultures. At EMCC UK, we recognise that achieving this requires more than policies; it demands diverse coaching pools that bring a breadth of lived experiences and cultural insights. Integrating DEI focused coaching into leadership frameworks, supported by coaches from varied backgrounds, is pivotal in transforming organisational culture and driving sustainable performance.

Approach

Embedding DEI into coaching and mentoring begins with creating safe spaces for self-reflection. Leaders are encouraged to examine their biases and cultural assumptions through guided coaching sessions. One-on-one coaching highlights unconscious biases and their influence on decision-making, while group mentoring fosters cross-cultural learning.

Supervision plays a vital role, offering practitioners a reflective space to examine their biases and assumptions. This process ensures coaches approach their work equitably and enhances their ability to guide clients in uncovering and addressing biases. Supervision serves as an accountability mechanism, helping practitioners reflect on their progress and challenges in fostering equity while reinforcing that DEI is an ongoing, evolving journey.

Actionable Solutions:

- Coaching: DEI-focused sessions to challenge assumptions and encourage inclusive decision-making
- Diverse coaching and mentoring pools
- Diverse coachee and mentee pools
- Mentoring: Diverse mentoring networks to amplify underrepresented voices and promote mutual learning
- Supervision: Reflective support systems ensuring coaches and mentors thrive professionally and deliver impactful and equitable services
- Leadership Development: Training on cultural competency, inclusive communication, and bias mitigation
- Unconscious Bias Mitigation: Strategies to reduce the influence of biases on decision-making and behaviours

“At EMCC UK, we remain committed to championing coaching, mentoring, and supervision as tools for transformative cultural change”

Outcome

Organisations who embrace DEI into coaching practices can expect measurable impacts: empathetic leaders, empowered teams, improved collaboration, and enhanced retention among underrepresented groups. By embedding DEI into leadership coaching and mentoring development, organisations build resilient, inclusive workplaces prepared to thrive in a diverse world. At EMCC UK, we remain committed to championing coaching, mentoring, and supervision as tools for transformative cultural change.

Content provided by  EMCC
United Kingdom

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

AECOM'S DIVERSE SUPPORT NETWORK EMPOWERS CAREGIVERS

Background

Balancing parenthood with a demanding career is especially challenging in STEM. AECOM noticed an increase in leavers amongst their employees post maternity, so embarked on a series of changes: to improve retention, particularly for women, and foster a more inclusive work environment for all caregivers, from biological and adoptive parents to those in same-sex partnerships or managing special needs.



Approach

AECOM reimaged its approach to inclusion, researching the diverse needs of multicultural families. Listening sessions with women's networks, ERGs and male employees revealed what meaningful support should look like. A key collaboration with UK charity Working Families, informed the development of a comprehensive roadmap that spanned eight months and prioritised inclusivity, with both global and local considerations. This effort was a collaboration between AECOM's People & Culture team and Working Parents community, with sponsorship from senior leadership to align the work with the company's broader ED&I strategy.

Peer support was overhauled, creating a robust network of Working Parent Champions and Maternity Buddies across the UK, Europe and India, offering a safe space for employees to share caregiving challenges. The initiative also introduced procedural changes such as increasing maternity pay

and streamlining flexible working options. This flexibility allowed caregivers to adjust working hours, opt for hybrid/remote work and access improved family facilities, such as breastfeeding spaces. AECOM further created 15 online toolkits focusing on intersectional support, including resources for parents of children with disabilities, LGBTQ+ parents and guides for new fathers.

“AECOM has significantly improved retention rates, increased gender diversity in leadership roles and fostered an inclusive culture by supporting caregivers, resulting in stronger employee engagement and contributing to long-term business success”

Outcome

The initiative yielded significant results. There are now over 50 Maternity Buddies and 50 Working Parent Champions, including men, adoptive parents and same-sex couples, reflecting workforce diversity. The Parenting Network grew from 130 to 300+ members, normalising caregiving for all.

Employees engaged in this network report feeling 2% more included than their non-caregiving peers, with a higher intent to stay at AECOM. Women's post-maternity leave rates have drastically improved, with retention increasing from a 29% dropout rate to just 5% and overall voluntary turnover of women dropping from 14% to 12%.

Strategically, this focus on intersectional support has driven an increase in women in leadership roles, rising from 13% to 16%, and gender-diverse hires in mid-level positions increasing by 7.8%. The success of this initiative underpins AECOM's belief that long-term business performance is linked to diversity, equity and inclusion. By embedding support for caregivers at all levels, AECOM is shaping an inclusive culture that fosters both individual and organisational growth.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

FROM GAPS TO GAINS: GATTACA'S ED&I TRANSFORMATION

Background

Gattaca, a global talent solutions provider, recognised that its traditional, sales-driven culture lacked focus on equity, diversity and inclusion (ED&I). The company's male-dominated structure resulted in gender imbalances, pay gaps and missed opportunities for cognitive diversity. Outdated recruitment practices and non-inclusive employee engagement strategies hindered profitability and competitiveness. Gattaca's leadership team saw ED&I not only as a moral imperative but as a critical factor in driving long-term business success. In response, the company launched a bold initiative aimed at creating an inclusive culture, improving employee satisfaction and building a diverse workforce.

Approach

To address these challenges, Gattaca integrated ED&I into its core business strategy, focusing on accountability, commitment and community. The company redefined its purpose, vision, mission and values, embedding ED&I into its everyday practices. A Head of ED&I was appointed to lead this transformation, with data collection methods introduced to monitor workforce diversity and inform the gender equity project.

Gattaca rolled out ED&I initiatives such as inclusive recruitment training, delivering 384 hours in the last year. Employee networks were formed, including the LGBTQIA+ Network, Females in Careers and the Menopause Support Network. A mentorship programme resulted in five women being mentored by the CEO. These efforts were supported by partnerships with organisations like Women in Rail, Women in Tech and Inclusive Employers, reinforcing Gattaca's commitment to inclusion internally and externally.

Cultural awareness and mental health were also prioritised, with a Mental Health Hub, new Mental Health First Aiders, and webinars on LGBTQIA+ inclusivity. A multi-faith and wellbeing room further highlighted the company's inclusive support. The firm also launched the Materna Grant, a STEM bursary for students from socio-economically



deprived backgrounds, in collaboration with the University of Portsmouth.

Outcome

Gattaca's ED&I initiative has transformed the company's culture and employee engagement. The employee engagement score rose from 7.6 to 8.2, with the diversity and inclusion score increasing to 8.4, above the professional services benchmark. Sixty-five percent of the global workforce participated in diversity data surveys, a 6% increase from the previous year.

Employee feedback reflects inclusion and support, with one staff member noting: "The first words spoken to me on day one were 'bring your whole self to work.'" Gattaca's clients have benefited from the focus on inclusive recruitment, with workshops and audits supporting their DEI journeys.

Gattaca's efforts earned recognition on Staffing Industry Analysts' 2023 list of "Best Staffing Firms to Work For," establishing the company as a DEI leader driving change in the talent solutions industry.

"Gattaca's DEI initiative has transformed its culture, creating a more inclusive workplace and driving long-term business success,"

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS & ASSESSMENT DRIVES GLOBAL INCLUSION WITH TRANSFORMATIVE EDIB POLICIES

Background

In 2021, Cambridge University Press & Assessment set out to create a globally inclusive workplace fostering a strong sense of belonging among its employees across 80 regional locations. This goal came in response to the findings of a culture diagnostic, which revealed that only 57% of employees felt the organisation's policies promoted equity and just 47% believed their perspectives were included in decision-making. Differing levels of maturity regarding equality and diversity across regions meant that creating a unified approach to EDIB (Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging) was challenging. Cambridge University Press & Assessment needed global EDIB policies that could transcend regional differences while respecting local cultures.



Approach

Cambridge's approach centred around a collaborative, globally-inclusive strategy to create a unified global EDIB policy together with global trans and non-binary inclusion guidelines. A newly-formed EDIB team, supported by external consultants like Unleashed and the Business in the Community, reviewed survey results and external good practice to ensure the policies would reflect the workforce's diverse needs.

Cambridge launched an EDIB Academy offering training on conscious inclusion, LGBT+101, trans inclusion and disability inclusion. Peer trainers from across global regions helped facilitate these

programmes, fostering mutual understanding and respect among employees. The organisation also created regional EDIB committees to tailor the policies to local contexts and support their implementation globally. Regular cross-cultural dialogue was encouraged and leadership accountability was key, with the Executive Board actively endorsing the policies.

Outcome

The new EDIB policies, launched in December 2023, have already begun to make a significant impact. Cambridge saw an increase in employee engagement scores, with 75% of employees now feeling a sense of belonging, up 8% from 2021. Additionally, 80% of employees believe the organisation is committed to inclusion, a 6% increase. The EDIB Academy has had broad reach, with over 2,700 courses completed globally and 32% of learners outside the UK, marking a major shift in regions with cultural sensitivity around diversity initiatives. This is evidenced in activities such as the first Pride celebration in Cambridge University Press & Assessment's Manila office, reflecting the growing sense of inclusion and belonging.

By creating a global framework that promotes equity while allowing for local cultural needs, Cambridge is successfully embedding EDIB into its organisational DNA. Looking ahead it plans to leverage its new EDIB data strategy to further refine its policies and measure their impact more effectively, ensuring continued progress towards a truly inclusive workplace.

“Cambridge University Press & Assessment's global equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging policies are creating a culture of inclusion and belonging across 80 regions, empowering employees worldwide”

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

AIRWALLEX'S DEI AND WELLBEING BLUEPRINT BOOSTS ENGAGEMENT IN EMEA

Background

Airwallex, a global fintech firm, is rapidly expanding in EMEA markets, including the UK, Netherlands and UAE. With scores of new hires in 2023 and a team of over 100 diverse employees, the company recognised the need to create a unified culture. Representing 38 nationalities globally, Airwallex needed to tailor its diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and wellbeing efforts to meet the distinct needs of each region. With research showing that strong DEI and wellbeing initiatives reduce burnout and improve morale, Airwallex set out to develop a scalable EMEA strategy, despite a very modest budget.

Approach

Airwallex adopted a ground-up approach, using in-house talent to build a DEI and wellbeing framework that embedded inclusivity into every aspect of the organisation. This wasn't treated as a standalone programme but integrated across three key areas: Bias was removed from recruitment processes by establishing unbiased interview frameworks and tracking diversity in the recruitment funnel. DEI surveys highlighted where women and other underrepresented groups were dropping out.

Secondly, a 'Culture Champs' group created a diversity calendar celebrating events like International Women's Day and Pride to spark discussions on DEI issues. Finally, using the Gallup StrengthsFinder tool, Airwallex helped leaders understand and celebrate their teams' strengths. A rotational DEI committee, led by EMEA leadership, ensured that senior management actively shaped the company's DEI strategy.

Airwallex also developed a comprehensive wellbeing plan based on eight pillars: emotional, occupational, environmental, physical, intellectual, social, financial and spiritual wellbeing. Two dedicated wellbeing weeks and monthly events promoted these areas, with topics like neurodiversity and stress management through breathing techniques.

Additionally, manager training embedded these global values into performance reviews, with quarterly awards recognising employees who exemplified the company's operating principles.

“Airwallex's bespoke DEI and wellbeing strategy created a thriving, inclusive culture, raising employee engagement by 7% and fostering a greater sense of belonging across the EMEA team”

Outcome

Airwallex's initiatives delivered strong results. The company now holds five DEI-related events per month, fostering inclusivity and awareness across the EMEA region. DEI surveys highlighted areas for improvement, such as a 64% male application rate, prompting diversity enhancements in recruitment. Bias training for managers further reinforced this effort.

Employee engagement rose significantly, from 73% in early 2023 to 78% by mid-2024. The wellbeing programme received high praise, with employees reporting better stress management and workplace satisfaction. Additionally, the integration of Airwallex's global operating principles improved engagement scores, which increased from 72% to 76%. The quarterly awards have become a key motivational tool for recognising employees who embody the company's values.



EMPLOYEE VOICE

QUILTER BRINGS AMBITION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND A GROWTH MINDSET THROUGH BOTTOM UP VALUES CREATION

Background

Wealth management company Quilter, recognised the need to undergo a cultural transformation to align with its strategic objectives of helping customers secure financial futures and enabling advisors to run more successful businesses. Following a comprehensive culture survey, Quilter's Board identified a critical need to strengthen key behaviours related to ambition, accountability and a growth mindset. To drive these behavioural changes, Quilter set out to redesign its organisational purpose and refresh its values.

Understanding that sustainable change is best achieved when driven by employees, Quilter aimed to co-create this transformation with its people. This approach not only fostered a sense of ownership but also ensured that the new values and behaviours would resonate throughout the organisation, empowering colleagues to deliver exceptional service to clients and advisers alike.

Approach

Quilter's approach centred on a highly inclusive and bottom-up process, designed by the Culture Activation Team and supported by over 50 Culture Champions. These nominated and volunteer representatives from across the organisation played a crucial role in engaging the workforce every two to four weeks, fostering participation and collecting feedback. The process was rolled out in five key phases.

In Phase 1, both colleagues and customers were engaged through in-person workshops, virtual forums and online surveys. More than 500 employees and 170 customers participated, generating over 800 data points. These insights helped the team understand how Quilter could perform at its best and what behaviours were necessary to achieve that.

Quilter then analysed the feedback and proposed value themes that reflected its strategic goals. This data informed the creation of draft values and behaviours, which were reviewed by the Executive Committee in Phase 3. The executive team provided

feedback to ensure the values would differentiate Quilter within the financial sector.

All colleagues then voted on the final values, ensuring strong internal support. Finally, the new values were translated into actionable behaviours through workshops that defined the 'on' and 'off' behaviours for each value. The result was a comprehensive framework that reflected the organisation's ambitions.



Outcome

The transformation led to the creation of four new values: Always Curious, Embrace Challenge, Stronger Together and Do the Right Thing. These values, launched at Quilter's all-colleague conference, received overwhelming support. Feedback from employees highlighted the positive impact of being part of the process, with many feeling inspired by the new values direction and their alignment with Quilter's future direction.

The values are now embedded into Quilter's daily operations, supported by ongoing leadership development programmes. Quilter's culture transformation has not only strengthened internal collaboration but has also equipped the organisation to achieve its strategic goals through a shared commitment to ambition, accountability and growth.

“ Building values from the bottom up was seen by employees as leaders showing humility, listening, empowerment and patience ”

EMPLOYEE VOICE

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT JOURNALS ITS WAY TO A CLEARER VIEW OF DIRECT SERVICES' IDENTITY

Background

Macmillan Cancer Support, one of the UK's most respected cancer charities, wanted to sense check and evolve the culture of its Direct Services team. This department, which includes critical support services such as the Macmillan Support Line, nursing and online communities, had undergone rapid growth and a shift to remote working during the pandemic. These changes created a need to re-evaluate the team's culture, ensuring alignment with Macmillan's mission while addressing communication, leadership visibility and employee wellbeing issues.

To address these challenges, The Culture Club was engaged to conduct a comprehensive culture review. The review aimed to uncover employee sentiment, understand existing cultural dynamics, and develop a roadmap for sustained cultural evolution.

Approach

The Culture Club took a creative, employee-centred approach to the culture review to live and breathe their daily experience. This began with a kick-off session involving senior leaders to define key objectives and address any assumptions about the culture. The team then introduced a unique data collection method through Culture Journals.

With journaling gaining traction in personal lives over the past decade, the organisation selected 15 Culture Guides to represent different areas of the Direct Services team. These Culture Guides completed reflective activities over four weeks, using a journal that encouraged deep engagement. The activities were framed around key areas such as workspace, relationships with managers, personal development and company culture.

The journals were supplemented by traditional research methods, including an employee engagement survey (125 responses), focus groups (110 participants) and one-on-one interviews with six senior leaders. This combination of qualitative and quantitative data allowed for a well-rounded understanding of the current culture.

The Culture Club used Atlas AI to anonymise and analyse the data, codifying insights and identifying key themes. These findings were validated in a series of workshops with 87 colleagues, ensuring that the results resonated with employees' lived experiences.

“A creative approach including journaling, improved leadership visibility and communication, driving a more engaged and aligned workforce”

Outcome

The culture review revealed significant insights into the needs of the Direct Services team. Key results included 91% of employees agreeing that the findings reflected their experience of a "good or bad day" at work and 81% confirming the findings accurately represented their relationship with their managers. The review led to five strategic recommendations, including clarifying the team's identity and improving communication and leadership visibility.

Macmillan Cancer Support has since begun implementing the plan, focusing on clarifying the Direct Services' identity and introducing 'No Change Zones' to alleviate constant pressure on employees. It also launched a Digital HQ for remote teams, an initiative that has been adopted by the wider organisation. The cultural transformation has already begun to yield positive results, enhancing both employee engagement and operational efficiency.



EMPLOYEE VOICE

ELIS UK'S EMPLOYEE VOICE BOOSTS
ENGAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY

Background

Commercial laundry service provider Elis UK had more than 4,000 employees across 30 sites, representing 72 nationalities, yet lacked a formal process to gauge employee sentiment. Annual appraisals were only conducted for managers, who comprised less than 20% of the workforce. In a rapidly changing market and a challenging labour environment Elis realised that employee satisfaction was critical to retaining talent, improving productivity and fostering a positive work culture.

To address this, Elis launched its 'Employee Voice' brand, aimed at giving every worker a platform to express their opinions, feel heard and contribute to shaping the company's future.

Approach

The first step was a comprehensive employee engagement survey in 2021. The survey addressed nine key themes: communication, engagement, leadership, manager, organisation, performance, personal development, role and team. Ensuring confidentiality and accessibility were top priorities.

The response rate was impressive, with 74% of employees participating – surpassing the 60% goal. Elis developed action plans based on the feedback, focusing on areas that mattered most to workers. Recognising the diverse needs of the workforce, Elis tailored its initiatives to each site rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach. Leadership was deeply involved, with the executive committee leading the process and local managers empowered to drive site-specific changes.

One significant outcome was the creation of Employee Voice Committees at all UK sites. Supported by a recognisable Employee Voice brand, these committees ensured that feedback loops remained open and employees could regularly provide input on issues and improvements.

“Elis UK's Employee Voice initiative has transformed the workplace, boosting engagement and empowering employees to shape their future”

Outcome

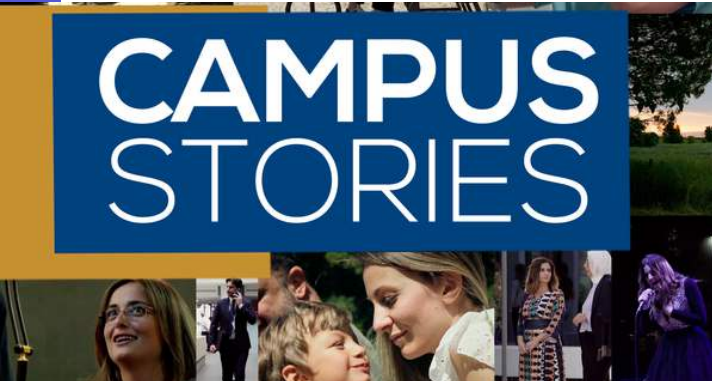
The Employee Voice initiative brought about meaningful changes across Elis. Over 500 actions were implemented between 2021 and 2023, from low-cost quick wins to large-scale projects. There were improvements in all nine survey themes, with employee satisfaction increasing by 20.8% overall. Key actions included the introduction of wellbeing spaces, free hot drinks and breakfasts, water stations and even loanable camping equipment for low-cost holidays.

Engagement deepened, with survey participation rising to 79% by 2023. Turnover dropped by 13.8%, recruitment costs were reduced by £345,000 while productivity rose 5.4%, further underscoring the initiative's positive impact on employee retention and operational costs.

Elis's commitment to transparency and action has fostered a culture of trust and collaboration, transforming how employees view their roles. Employee Voice has not only boosted satisfaction but also strengthened Elis UK's reputation as an employer of choice.



EMPLOYEE VOICE (INTERNATIONAL)

CAMPUS BIO-MEDICO SHARES VALUES WITH
AWARD-WINNING *CAMPUS STORIES*

Background

To commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Campus Bio Medico, an institution encompassing a university and a hospital in Rome, the organisation set out to create a unique project that would celebrate its legacy, mission and future. The project, aimed to recognise its growth from 30 to 3,000 students, reflects its 'Science for People' mission and supports the hospital's transition into an IRCCS (a research and care institution). As the university and hospital separated in 2022, leadership aimed to reinforce collaboration and a shared sense of belonging while preserving core values.

“*Campus Stories* brought together 300 employees in a heartfelt documentary that celebrated shared values and garnered international acclaim”

Approach

Campus Bio Medico chose to document its journey and culture through a collaborative documentary film *Campus Stories*. Unlike traditional productions, this film was self-realised, involving no professional actors or crew. Instead, the project was designed to reflect the authentic voices of the institution's employees and students.

Nineteen staff and students were cast to reflect a diverse mix of age, gender and roles. A dozen students from various faculties (medicine, engineering, nutrition) conducted interviews to foster genuine connections. Under the direction of Andrea Pellizzer, the interviews captured authentic stories of the people behind the institution's life.

Rather than following a set storyboard, the filmmakers chose a storytelling approach. This decision allowed the cast to freely share their experiences, aspirations and challenges, creating a deeply personal and moving narrative. The overarching themes of passion for service and love for the world emerged organically from these stories, which were then woven together to create a powerful film.

The documentary was first presented internally as a Christmas gift to employees and was later launched through a social media campaign and roadshow across Italy. The film was also submitted to international film festivals.

Outcome

More than 300 colleagues were involved in the casting and production, representing a broad section of the employee base and fostering a strong sense of collaboration and belonging. The film resonated deeply with staff, many of whom were moved by the authentic human stories of their colleagues. The first screening evoked heartfelt responses, with employees recognising themselves and their shared values in the narratives.

The film garnered over 10,000 views across social media, internal screenings and film festivals. The roadshow brought the film to donors, alumni, patients and local communities, further strengthening ties with the institution's stakeholders. Its stories have been used in training, new employee inductions, leadership workshops and values-based focus groups. These stories helped refresh the Purpose Charter by showcasing how core values are lived daily.

The film's impact is further evidenced by the recognition it received on the global stage, garnering two Best Documentary awards in Asia and Europe and nominations in Hollywood and Northern Europe. This helped to elevate the institution's visibility and cultural significance.

EMPLOYEE VOICE

HEALTHCARE HOMES GROUP REBUILDS THROUGH EMPLOYEE VOICE, SAVING MILLIONS AND IMPROVING CARE QUALITY

Background

Healthcare Homes Group (HHG), which operates 48 residential and nursing homes and 10 domiciliary branches with 4,000 employees, faced a severe decline by the end of 2021. After once boasting 94% occupancy and minimal use of agency staff the COVID-19 pandemic left HHG with occupancy dropping to 84%, employee turnover surging to 40% and £1.3 million a month spent on temporary staffing. HHG's senior leadership team was concerned that reliance on agency staff could impact care quality, prompting them to seek immediate solutions to rebuild and stabilise the business.

Recognising that employee engagement was key to reversing these trends, HHG partnered with ETS to develop a strategy that would repair the internal culture, improve communication and retain staff.

Approach

The first step was conducting a 'Your Voice Matters' engagement survey, designed to understand employee concerns around engagement, enablement and empowerment. The data revealed a critical need for improved communication between leadership and employees. ETS and HHG's HR team devised a plan focused on four key areas.

Firstly, leadership increased transparency by having Board members take responsibility for specific sites, introducing a bi-monthly *Insight* magazine and hosting 'Stop the Floor' meetings where senior leaders shared updates and addressed employee questions. HHG then launched employee voice groups and the 'Ask Gordon' initiative, providing direct access to the CEO and ensuring regular communication and feedback loops.

A refreshed employee assistance programme was introduced, alongside mental health sessions and other initiatives like menopause awareness training. Finally, new recognition schemes, such as 'Thank You' cards and the 'Time to Thrive' awards, were rolled out to

celebrate employee achievements at both local and company-wide levels.

Outcome

The impact of these changes was measurable. In the first survey 74% of employees participated, providing valuable insights. After the plan was established all 13 key areas identified in the survey improved, with 12 showing significant increases. The biggest gain was in communication, with 89% of employees feeling optimistic about the company's

direction, up 19% from the first survey.

“ Improved communication and employee engagement helped Healthcare Homes Group save £11.4 million in agency staff costs and improve care quality across its services ”

These internal improvements translated into significant operational outcomes. HHG reduced its reliance on agency staff from 14,000 hours to just 2,500 per week, saving £11.4 million annually. Employee turnover also decreased by 3% to 11% in key areas, while sickness rates dropped to 2.6%. Importantly, the quality of care improved, with 85% of HHG's services now rated as Good or Outstanding and a 9.6/10 score on carehome.co.uk.

Effective communication and employee engagement have not only stabilised HHG but also created a more resilient and thriving organisation for the future.



TALENT APPROACHES

WISE PAVES THE WAY FOR DIVERSE TECH TALENT

Background

Wise's mission "money without borders" has driven its focus on building diverse teams that reflect the global population it serves. Recognising the male-dominated nature of the tech industry, Wise set out to change the status quo by increasing the representation of women, non-binary individuals and other underrepresented groups within its tech roles.

Approach

To achieve these goals, Wise launched a series of initiatives, starting with WiseWomenCode in 2022. This three-day immersive programme provided women and non-binary individuals with hands-on workshops, networking opportunities and technical guidance to help them enter the tech world. The initiative quickly expanded across locations including London, Tallinn, Singapore and Budapest, supporting over 120 participants. In 2025, Wise will welcome a further 65 participants to the program.

Wise also rebranded its early careers programme as WiseStart, which includes internships, apprenticeships, graduate roles and career switcher programmes. To reduce bias, it adopted a rigorous selection process based on technical assessments and interviews conducted by a trained, diverse panel.

In addition, Wise introduced financial scholarships to support students from underrepresented communities in Estonia and the UK, offering mentorship and networking opportunities alongside financial support. Partnerships with organisations like SheCanCode and CodingBlackFemales have further enabled Wise to connect with diverse communities.

“WiseWomenCode transformed participant confidence, with a Net Promoter Score jumping from -38 to +90 after attending the event”

Outcome

Wise has seen impressive results from its efforts. By 2024, they almost doubled the number of women who joined compared to 2021. The WiseWomenCode programme also transformed participant confidence, with a remarkable increase from -38 to +90 in Net Promoter Score after the event.

WiseStart continues to grow, with 96% of interns receiving permanent job offers. The company has also awarded £30,000 in scholarships to 14 students and mentored 17 young people from underrepresented backgrounds.

Wise's commitment to diversity and inclusion has had a lasting impact, not only on its internal talent pipeline but also on the broader tech industry, fostering a more inclusive future for technology.

Sponsored by  GATTACA SOLUTIONS



TALENT APPROACHES

WELCOME-WALLA: HOW DISHOOM REVOLUTIONISED ONBOARDING AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Background

Restaurant group Dishoom faced significant challenges as the hospitality sector struggled to recover from the pandemic. With recruitment times exceeding two weeks and nearly 20% of front-of-house roles left vacant in London, employee turnover soared. Before the pandemic, one in three new starters left within three months; by mid-2021 this had worsened to one in two within just two months. The need for a solution was urgent as the company scaled from 800 to 1,900 employees to meet soaring demand. Dishoom sought to overhaul its onboarding process to reduce early attrition and ensure that new starters stayed for the right reasons.

Approach

The response was the Welcome-Walla programme, an innovative onboarding initiative introduced in May 2021 to boost retention by transforming the new-starter experience. The programme embodies the spirit of Seva – Dishoom’s belief that we thrive when sharing wholeheartedly and striving for excellence – by rethinking onboarding with a beginner’s mind and collaborating with 423 team members to create a training process fostering generosity, quality and personal growth.

Piloted at Kings Cross and later expanded across London, each location appointed a dedicated ‘Welcome-Walla’ to mentor new hires, ensuring

they had consistent support from day one. The programme offered a blend of digital learning (11%), classroom sessions (22%) and practical on-the-job training (67%), pairing new employees with experienced café experts. This hands-on approach helped starters quickly acclimate to Dishoom’s fast-paced environment.

To personalise the experience, new starters received welcome letters from Dishoom’s founder, weekly GM/new-starter breakfasts were introduced and artwork and history tours of the café delivered. Workbooks were created with QR codes linking to compliance and micro-learning content. The process even incorporated mindfulness exercises to support mental wellbeing.

“The Welcome-Walla programme transformed Dishoom’s onboarding process, drastically reducing turnover and enhancing employee satisfaction”

Outcome

The Welcome-Walla programme significantly reduced turnover, slashing new-starter exits from 11% in May 2021 to just 2% by September. Overall employee turnover dropped by 20%, marking Dishoom’s lowest turnover rate in its history. The programme has onboarded 1,475 employees, contributed to 211 internal promotions and led to an 8% boost in feedback scores. In addition, induction times were reduced by 1.5 days on average, resulting in significant savings. Today, the Welcome-Walla programme is integral to Dishoom’s operations, ensuring every new team member receives a generous and seamless welcome.



LEARNING

STARBUCKS UK CREATES INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES THROUGH BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE

Background

Starbucks UK has long employed deaf partners in select stores, primarily in Canary Wharf, where a passionate store manager, Toro Manca, established strong connections with the deaf community. In early 2023, Manca, now a district manager, proposed expanding this support by offering British Sign Language (BSL) training to all partners across the UK. The goal was to raise awareness of the deaf community and equip employees with basic BSL skills, fostering a sense of belonging for deaf customers and partners alike.

Starbucks faced the challenge of implementing this initiative at scale, with more than 16,000 partners across 1,200 company and licensed stores. The company aimed to create an engaging and accessible training module that could be delivered consistently across its stores.



Approach

To meet this challenge, Starbucks partnered with Attensi, a gamified learning platform provider, and the British Deaf Association (BDA). Together, they spent six months developing an interactive training module that combined games, avatars and video content, featuring deaf Starbucks partners. The module taught partners basic BSL, including greetings, common drink orders and the alphabet, while providing insights into the deaf community.

Partners were encouraged to engage with the training as many times as they wanted, with data

showing that, on average, partners completed the module 21 times. Revision materials were also made available to help reinforce learning. Importantly both deaf and hearing partners tested the module before its launch to ensure it met the needs of all employees. To make sure the content resonated with the wider deaf community, the BDA reviewed the training materials and provided feedback, leading to several adjustments.

“ Starbucks’ BSL training empowered partners to create inclusive experiences, driving meaningful connections with the deaf community.”

Outcome

The BSL training module launched in October 2023, and within nine months 65% of Starbucks partners had voluntarily completed the training. The module's success is evident from the high engagement levels, with partners choosing to revisit the training multiple times. Post-training surveys showed that 95% of partners enjoyed the learning experience, while 97% reported a better understanding of the deaf community and BSL. Additionally, 95% of learners expressed excitement to use their new skills in stores.

Anecdotal feedback highlighted the module's impact, with employees reporting increased confidence in serving deaf customers and feeling proud to be part of a company committed to inclusion.

Following the success of this initiative, Starbucks has developed a second phase of BSL training, which rolled out in October 2024. In addition, Starbucks are now partnering with DeafPlus to further increase employment opportunities for deaf individuals.

LEARNING

EDF RENEWABLES INSPIRES INCLUSIVITY AND LEADERSHIP GROWTH

Background

As one of the UK and Ireland's leading renewable energy companies, EDF Renewables (EDFR) is dedicated to combatting climate change. However, with 47 operational sites and a growing team, it faced challenges in leadership development and cross-regional collaboration. Operating locally meant employees expressed concerns about isolation, a lack of inclusivity and siloed operations. In response, EDFR sought to overhaul its leadership training to foster openness, belonging and strategic, rather than operational, leadership that could drive the business forward.

The Inspire Leadership Programme was developed to address these challenges, focusing on enhancing leadership capabilities, embedding inclusivity and strengthening emotional intelligence. Traditional management training had proved insufficient and EDFR wanted to create real, lasting change.

Approach

In partnership with t-three, EDFR launched the Inspire Leadership Programme, an 18-month initiative designed to instill new leadership behaviours and bridge cultural divides. The programme kicked off with a thorough diagnostic phase, involving interviews with senior leaders, employee surveys and listening groups, providing insights into barriers and shaping a tailored learning journey.

The programme used a variety of interactive and innovative learning methods. These included psychometrics, 360-degree feedback, immersive workshops, forum theatre and real-time scenario simulations to enhance emotional intelligence and inclusivity. A standout component was the non-anonymous 360 feedback tool called the 'Inclusivity Truth Teller,' which provided candid insights into leaders' inclusive behaviours and their impact on teams.

Additionally, a 'Making it Real' activity simulated real-world leadership challenges, where



participants worked on a scenario focused on meeting an accelerated Net Zero target. Participants received real-time feedback on their leadership styles, offering immediate insights and growth opportunities.

Outcome

“The Inspire Leadership Programme has helped transform leadership at EDF Renewables, driving inclusivity, trust and enhanced collaboration across the business”

The Inspire Leadership Programme has had a transformative impact on EDFR's leaders. Achieving a net promoter score of 9.1, the programme was praised for its deep impact on leadership and inclusivity. Over 150 leaders participated and 88% set goals, with 74% achieving them as verified by peers.

Key metrics from the company's 2024 survey demonstrated the programme's success: confidence in leadership decision-making improved by 8% while employee inspiration from EDFR's mission rose by 7%. Inclusivity scores increased by 6%, with more employees agreeing that all backgrounds were treated fairly at EDFR.

The programme also brought lasting cultural change, with participants now fostering trust, valuing flexible working and ensuring psychological safety. EDFR continues to build on the programme's success, embedding these practices throughout the organisation to create an inclusive, empowered workforce supporting their net-zero mission.

LEARNING

MITIE BUILDS SECURITY LEADERS FOR TODAY AND THE FUTURE

Background

Facilities management company Mitie recognised an urgent need to address skill gaps within its security team on one of its largest client accounts. Despite a consistent record of internal promotions, a skills gap analysis identified areas where managers and potential leaders would benefit from enhancing their skills in communication, leadership and commercial acumen. The goal was to redefine the perception of security roles from 'just a job' to a rewarding career path, empowering individuals with the skills and confidence to advance within the company.

Approach

In response Mitie launched the Management Academy, a tailored development framework designed to bridge these skills gaps. Spearheaded by the account's strategic account director and supported by the Internal L&D team and senior leadership the Academy was developed in collaboration with learning provider Learnmore and offered apprenticeship learning pathways that provided participants with nationally recognised qualifications.

The company integrated its current Mitie L&D offerings within the Management Academy's bespoke programme and provided a blended learning solution, including distance learning, face-to-face workshops, weekly study days and performance support resources. A key element was a distinctive sponsorship model where senior leaders were identified as

sponsors and were each assigned three learners, offering shadowing opportunities, senior level support and coaching throughout the programme. This approach united team members across multiple sites, fostering a network of emerging leaders.

Outcome

The impact has been transformational. Employee engagement scores increased by 9% and 25% of participants earned promotions, with the programme

“ Mitie's Management Academy is transforming careers and lives, shifting security roles from 'just a job' to a future-focused career ”

achieving an exceptional +94.1 eNPS rating. Beyond professional success, participants reported significant personal growth, with enhanced confidence and wellbeing translating into both their work and home lives. The programme has been so effective that Mitie is expanding the Management Academy model to a second cohort and also to other contracts, cultivating a culture of learning across the organisation.



CSR & CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY

UST FUELS SOCIAL CHANGE WITH A BLEND OF TECH INNOVATION AND INCLUSION

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Background

UST, a global digital transformation leader, has long embedded corporate social responsibility and sustainability into its core mission. Last year, UST took away a Business Culture Award for its efforts to integrate business, community and environmental sustainability, achieving significant progress toward its Net Zero commitment. Building on this success, UST has continued to expand its initiatives, focusing on digital transformation to drive social inclusion and community development. By leveraging technology, UST addresses challenges in education, livelihood and health for the most vulnerable communities, making a profound global impact.

Approach

UST scaled up its approach by merging technology with social inclusion, particularly in education and livelihood programmes. A cornerstone of this strategy is the creation of digital ecosystems in public schools in rural and urban slum areas across India, Malaysia, the USA, Mexico and the UK. These ecosystems include smart classrooms, digital libraries and computer labs, helping over 63,000 students from underprivileged backgrounds access better learning opportunities.

In line with its goal of empowering women and people with disabilities, UST launched extensive IT/ITES-based skills training programmes. More than 550 women and 195 individuals with disabilities have undergone training in technology-based skills with 90% securing employment through community-based livelihood initiatives or

internships through UST's 'Step IT Up' initiative, which helps disadvantaged and underrepresented communities enter the tech world. UST's efforts extend beyond education into healthcare, with programmes providing mobility devices and assistive technology for people with disabilities, allowing them to maintain their livelihoods and independence.

UST's work is grounded in strong partnerships with over 50 non-profit organisations globally, ensuring the programmes' reach and effectiveness. All projects are aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and UST employs an automated platform to track progress, ensuring real-time impact assessment and scalability.

“UST's digital transformation impacted nearly 118,000 lives globally, empowering vulnerable communities through education and livelihood programmes”

Outcome

In 2023, UST's initiatives touched nearly 118,000 lives across nine countries. The digital transformation of 152 schools improved learning environments, contributing to a 20% increase in enrolment in government schools across India, Malaysia and Mexico. The IT skills training programmes not only provided job opportunities but also fostered long-term employability for women and people with disabilities. Additionally, UST's community health initiatives provided medical devices to 1,680 individuals, improving their mobility and quality of life.

These initiatives demonstrate UST's commitment to driving social change through digital transformation, building a sustainable, inclusive future for all. Its efforts continue to evolve, scaling across geographies to bring technology-driven empowerment to the world's most disadvantaged communities.

CSR & CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY

'VIASAT BEYOND: SPACE' INSPIRES THE FUTURE OF SPACE SUSTAINABILITY

Background

Space sustainability has become an urgent issue as satellites and space debris increasingly pose risks to our planet's orbit. Global communications company Viasat recognised the need for fresh solutions. But space sustainability is not just a technical issue, it is also a human one. Everyone has a stake in protecting space and a diverse, skilled talent pipeline is crucial to unlocking the vast economic and social potential it offers. But how do you inspire the next generation to tackle such a complex problem?

The Viasat Beyond: Space Competition aims to do just that. By inviting students to contribute fresh, innovative solutions, it empowers them to shape the future of safe and sustainable space. The competition isn't just about finding technical fixes; it's about nurturing a new wave of thinkers, policymakers, designers and engineers who represent the full spectrum of society.

The programme's outreach extended to more than 1,100 students, challenging them to propose new ideas for managing space resources responsibly.

Approach

Viasat structured the competition to ensure inclusivity and accessibility. The company partnered with Springpod to reach students in years 12-13 from all backgrounds, offering resources to ensure equitable opportunity and ensuring that no barriers hindered participation. Over the course of several months, students engaged in interactive modules, webinars and tasks that deepened their understanding of space sustainability.

In a three-phased competition, students first submitted initial ideas on space sustainability. The top 30 teams were selected to further develop their solutions, focusing on policy, design and technical strategies. The five finalist teams were invited to Viasat's international headquarters, where they presented their ideas to industry experts. These teams received mentorship from Viasat employees,



helping them hone their proposals and gain valuable communication skills.

Outcome

The programme exceeded its goals, impacting over 2,700 schools across the UK. It successfully promoted diversity, with 56% of participants identifying as female and 21% coming from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The competition raised awareness of careers in space, with 90% of students reporting a greater understanding of the industry, 79% feeling confident in their future career prospects and 76% considered pursuing a career in this sector.

Viasat's initiative also facilitated valuable networking opportunities, connecting students with industry leaders from organisations such as the UK Space Agency and the Ministry of Defence. The winning project was a 'housekeeping' satellite proposal from 16-year-old Ash Goldsmith, designed to repair and upgrade existing satellites.

“Through Viasat Beyond: Space, 90% of students reported increased awareness of space careers and 79% gained confidence in their job prospects”

AGILITY & INNOVATION

BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION NAVIGATES COMPLEXITY THROUGH AGILE LEADERSHIP

Background

In the wake of the pandemic the British Heart Foundation (BHF) faced a pivotal challenge: how to equip its leaders to thrive in a rapidly changing and complex environment. With an evolving hybrid work model, the organisation needed to strengthen relationships, trust and agility within its leadership community. Recognising that past methods might not work for future challenges, BHF sought to build a leadership culture capable of navigating ambiguity and fostering an empowered, agile organisation.

This led to the launch of the ‘Leading Our Future’ programme, in partnership with Mayvin, a specialist organisation development consultancy. The aim was to develop leadership that could act bravely, make decisions with confidence and lead with agility in the face of complexity.

Approach

‘Leading Our Future’ adopted an innovative, real-time learning approach, engaging 130 leaders from January 2023 to March 2024. Rather than following a fixed curriculum, the programme evolved iteratively, shaped by the insights and needs of its participants. This allowed leaders to confront ‘wicked problems’ – complex, systemic challenges within BHF – and develop solutions in a dynamic, uncertain environment.

“Through the ‘Leading Our Future’ programme the British Heart Foundation empowered its leaders to embrace complexity, collaborate bravely and lead with agility”

The programme featured a mix of virtual masterclasses, in-person community events, inquiry sessions and action learning squads. It encouraged leaders to co-create their learning, fostering engagement and preparing them to lead in unpredictable situations. It integrated 360-degree feedback to help leaders reflect on their behaviours against BHF’s refreshed leadership standards.

Community events further provided space for leaders to explore the cultural shifts needed to



create a more empowered, psychologically safe organisation.

Outcome

The programme’s evaluation survey, conducted at both the start and end, demonstrated significant success. By the end, 91% of leaders felt comfortable working in complexity and ambiguity, a 15% increase. Furthermore, 89% of leaders reported a clear understanding of how to improve their leadership, up 36%, while 80% expressed feeling more comfortable acting bravely, with a 34% increase in bravery in relationships with peers.

The programme also strengthened leadership networks, with 89% of leaders reporting a trusted network within the community, up by 30%. This improved collaboration and problem-solving across BHF, helping to address systemic challenges more effectively. Additionally, there was a 36% increase in leaders who believed BHF made the most of diverse experience and perspectives.

Building on the programme’s success, BHF launched the ‘Future FIT’ initiative to further develop an agile, skills-based workforce, drawing on the practices introduced through ‘Leading Our Future’.

AGILITY & INNOVATION

EMPLOYEE-LED INNOVATIONS AT PROVIDE COMMUNITY TRANSFORM NHS CARE AND SAVE 1000S OF HOSPITAL BED DAYS

Background

Community Interest Company, Provide Community has been transforming health and social care services across England through innovation. Last year, it won an award for its digital triage system that revolutionised data processing in children's A&E. Building on that success, Provide Community continues to use technology to enhance patient care, reduce hospital pressures and support clinicians. Its mission to 'Transform Lives' through care, innovation and compassion remains central, especially amid NHS challenges. Key to this is fostering a culture of innovation driven by bold ideas from colleagues.

Approach

By prioritising people, teams collaborate to create innovative working methods and develop cost-effective software solutions, developed by subsidiary company Provide Digital, that deliver immediate, meaningful impact.

In 2023, Provide Community enhanced its innovation framework with new technologies to deliver care in creative ways. Central to its approach is the VirtuWard system, enabling hospital-level care at home, freeing up hospital beds and speeding up recovery. The ProQoL app, launched in 2023, revolutionises chronic wound care, improving patient outcomes and streamlining data for clinicians.

Provide Community has also expanded mobile healthcare with converted vans offering Long COVID clinics and other outreach programmes, including AR smart glasses for remote consultations. These digital innovations not only improve patient care but also reduce NHS workloads and waiting times. Partnerships with Integrated Care Boards and NHS Trusts ensure solutions are scalable and accessible, driving systemic change.

By creating hybrid teams of software developers and community nurses, Provide Digital delivers rapid, fit-for-purpose solutions that meet frontline workers' needs.

Close collaboration during pilot phases secures buy-in from Trusts, management, nurses and patients. As an employee owned, community interest company, with its routes within the NHS, Provide Community and its subsidiary companies develop solutions at cost, sharing them across Trusts to save significant development expenses.

“Provide Community's employee-led innovations save over 32,000 hospital bed days, improving care and reducing NHS pressures”

Outcome

VirtuWard saved over 32,000 hospital bed days and reduced administrative burdens, with 5,000 patients treated at home in 2023 alone. Administrative time savings are significant, with up to 40 hours per month reclaimed per service head through automated reporting.

ProQoL has improved wound care across services, while a Smart Referral System for musculoskeletal conditions cut waiting times from three months to one week in urgent cases, easing the burden on GP services. Innovation is embedded in the company's culture, celebrated through its annual colleague awards.

By harnessing innovation and a people-first approach, Provide Community continues to drive transformative change, improving care and alleviating pressures across the NHS.



WELLBEING (INTERNATIONAL)

FARMAK LEADS THROUGH CRISIS WITH UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES

Background

In 2022, as war escalated in Ukraine, businesses faced unprecedented challenges. Farmak, the nation's largest pharmaceutical manufacturer, had to ensure the safety and security of its employees while maintaining critical operations. Amid six million Ukrainians fleeing abroad and near five million internally displaced, Farmak's mission was clear: protect and retain its employees, continue manufacturing life-saving medicines and provide stability despite the turmoil.

Operating in Kyiv and Shostka, both impacted by the war, the company also evacuated staff from conflict-heavy Kharkiv. To address these challenges, Farmak launched a comprehensive wellbeing initiative, ensuring safety, security and stability for its workforce and support for those serving in Ukraine's Armed Forces.

Approach

Farmak's initiative prioritised employee safety and stability in multiple ways. Before the conflict intensified, the company had already begun constructing bomb shelters at plants, warehouses and offices. These shelters were specifically equipped to protect employees from missile strikes and chemical threats during air raids. Regular emergency drills ensured that staff knew how to act in a crisis. To avoid operational disruptions, Farmak invested €1.2 million in generators, enabling 26 production units to continue through blackouts.

Beyond physical safety, Farmak focused on financial and emotional wellbeing. The company raised wages three times, continued to pay salaries and bonuses and offered free health insurance – not mandated in Ukraine. Employees serving in the military received full salaries and essential equipment like drones and vehicles. For families of fallen employees, Farmak ensured continued financial support until their children reached adulthood.



“ Farmak has become an island of stability and security, supporting its employees and continuing to deliver life-saving medicines amid the war in Ukraine ”

Flexible work arrangements, legal counselling, expanded health insurance and opportunities for development were also provided, the latter particularly important to demonstrate confidence in the future. The company, which currently has 83

employees at the frontline, also donated more than €4.7 million to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine and responded to humanitarian needs since the start of the full-scale war.

Outcome

Farmak's efforts yielded impressive results. Employee turnover is just 7%, far below the Ukrainian market average of 12%. The company retained its entire 2,800-strong workforce, with an average tenure of nine years, reflecting loyalty and commitment. Despite the war, production levels were maintained, 22 new products launched and medicines continued to be supplied both within Ukraine and internationally.

Recognised as a top employer, Farmak was ranked as Ukraine's leading pharmaceutical company by Forbes in 2023. Employees report feeling secure and supported, with the company's investments fostering a resilient, purpose-driven workforce amid ongoing conflict.

WELLBEING

PERNOD RICARD POURS NEW LIFE INTO EMPLOYEE WELLBEING



Background

Pernod Ricard UK (PRUK) has long championed employee wellbeing, in alignment with its corporate mission to Create Conviviality and the principle of being Committed to Care. Starting in 2011 with a focus on physical wellbeing, PRUK's initiatives evolved significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic as mental wellbeing emerged as a critical concern. Employees faced new challenges, from balancing work and family demands like home-schooling to dealing with COVID-related illness.

These struggles were highlighted through HR conversations and anonymous feedback during company town halls, revealing a gap in mental health support. By 2021, despite existing efforts, employee engagement surveys showed mental wellbeing remained a challenge. Recognising the need for more targeted support, PRUK embarked on a mission to enhance its wellbeing programme to better address the evolving needs of its employees.

Approach

In response to the 2021 survey results, PRUK partnered with Unmind, a workplace wellbeing platform focused on mental health. The Unmind platform offers employees free, confidential access to 1:1 counselling and therapy sessions without the need for GP referrals. It also provides resources such as guided meditations, stress-reduction exercises and educational materials.

Implementing Unmind required a multi-phased approach. The HR team secured executive backing and engaged stakeholders, including Mental Health First Aiders and the technology team. To overcome the challenge of remote working during COVID, PRUK used webinars, intranet articles and direct communication from the CEO to ensure a smooth rollout. Access to the platform was made effortless with the integration of the Unmind app onto employees' corporate phones with a single sign-on. PRUK continuously analysed platform data to adjust the level of support, increasing the number of available sessions and offering services like couples therapy to further support employees' wellbeing.

“ Pernod Ricard UK's partnership with Unmind transformed mental wellbeing support, delivering lasting impacts on employee engagement and wellbeing ”

Outcome

The results were overwhelmingly positive. In the first 90 days, 36% of employees engaged with Unmind, with over 250 therapy sessions and nearly 500 mood check-ins. Employee feedback was stellar, with 100% saying they would recommend the platform. In the following engagement survey, scores related to employee wellbeing rose by six points and outpaced the industry average by 12 points. Wellbeing was cited as one of the organisation's top three strengths.

The sustained success of the initiative is reflected in the growth of Unmind's usage, now facilitating over 130 therapy sessions each month. The success in the UK has prompted expansion to other Pernod Ricard regions, including the Nordics, Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern LATAM, ensuring the long-term sustainability of this wellbeing commitment.

WELLBEING

ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY LEADS WITH WELLBEING IN CHALLENGING TIMES

Background

Faced with the UK's escalating dementia crisis, Alzheimer's Society has taken bold steps to support its staff. Dementia, the UK's biggest killer, has driven care costs to £42 billion. With nearly one million people in the UK living with dementia, any introduction of disease-modifying treatments will require monumental collaboration. Recognising the immense demands placed on staff, the Society's leadership has taken bold action to foster a high-support culture that boosts morale and enables employees to thrive.

By 2022, the Society's employee engagement score reached 84%, a significant improvement from 71% in 2020, reflecting growing satisfaction with how employee wellbeing was prioritised. However, it knew more could be done. When only 47% of staff felt leadership was connected to the daily realities of the organisation, it became clear that fostering a deeper sense of belonging and support was crucial. The response; a series of innovative measures aimed at boosting flexibility, wellbeing and overall employee satisfaction.

Approach

Alzheimer's Society's strategy focused on three key pillars: data-driven decision-making, inclusive wellbeing policies and flexible working arrangements. A working group, 'Better Together Wherever', was created to assess ways of working and ensure policies aligned with staff wellbeing needs. Surveys were conducted to understand how people preferred to work.

To further enhance support, the Society recruited a Wellbeing Lead and established a Wellbeing Working Group, with representation from across directorates and lived-experience networks. Their feedback shaped a wellbeing approach based on flexibility and inclusivity, with changes to policies such as the introduction of hybrid working options, enhanced maternity and paternity leave and volunteering leave. Through a range of employee listening mechanisms, additional areas for improvement, such as paid leave for carers and those undergoing fertility treatment, were highlighted and implemented.

The Society also expanded its employee networks, introducing groups focused on neurodiversity, grief

and bereavement and mental health. Supported by senior leadership, these networks offer a space for staff to share experiences and challenges, fostering peer support and solidarity across the organisation.

“Alzheimer's Society's unwavering commitment to staff wellbeing has fostered a culture of support, driving remarkable internal satisfaction and external success”

Outcome

The results of these efforts have been impressive. Alzheimer's Society became the only charity in the large category to feature in the *Sunday Times* Best Places to Work. Its wellbeing initiatives were recognised with accreditation as a Menopause Friendly Employer and 91% of staff reported feeling cared for by the organisation. Further temperature checks in 2023 showed that 89% of staff felt the Society remained committed to supporting their wellbeing and confidence in management increased to 89%.

This focus on internal wellbeing has had tangible strategic benefits as well. Fundraising grew by 12%, new corporate partnerships brought in £3 million and staff retention rates improved, with turnover decreasing from 23% to 14%. Glassdoor ratings jumped from 2.6 to 4.1, reflecting growing confidence in the Society's leadership. Alzheimer's Society continues to foster a high-support culture, enabling it to navigate the social care crisis with resilience and determination.



WELLBEING

NAVIGATOR TISSUE UK BOOSTS WELLBEING, CREATIVITY AND RESILIENCE BY POWERING POTENTIAL

Background

Navigator Tissue UK is a UK-based manufacturer that supplies toilet paper, kitchen towels, facial tissues, and wet wipes to major retailers. The business was known as Accrol Group for 30 years before being acquired by The Navigator Company in May 2024 and had faced significant pressures during the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused a surge in tissue product demand. Alongside the pandemic, the business has been impacted by port strikes, haulage shortages and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, putting immense strain on their 400 employees. These challenges raised concerns about burnout, prompting Navigator Tissue UK to prioritise wellbeing. They had already offered financial assistance and counselling but recognised the need to go beyond reactive measures. It wanted to build a workplace culture that would actively empower employees.



participation across the organisation. In addition, Navigator Tissue UK put 12 colleagues through the six-month NHP Practitioner Coach programme. These coaches continue to support their colleagues, ensuring POP principles are deeply embedded in Navigator Tissue UK's culture.

Approach

In September 2022, Navigator Tissue UK launched the 'Powering Our Potential' (POP) programme, designed to enhance employee wellbeing, creativity and resilience. The programme was built around the principles of mind, consciousness and thought, teaching employees to manage stress, shift their perspectives and perform at their best, even in difficult circumstances.

POP emerged from a two-day retreat in May 2022, where leadership explored how better mental wellbeing could drive performance. They agreed to phase the programme, starting with senior management before rolling it out across the workforce. The core involved eight weekly workshops led by HR Director Kathryn Robinson and ex-COO Mark Dewhurst, designed to help employees unlock potential and quiet psychological noise. These workshops fit into Navigator Tissue UK's fast-paced work environment, allowing participants to engage without affecting their responsibilities.

To drive engagement, each workshop cohort was personally addressed by COO Graham Cox, who shared his own experience with the programme. This senior-level involvement encouraged strong

“ By fostering a culture aligned with the natural workings of the human mind Navigator Tissue UK enables its employees to thrive and adapt seamlessly to ongoing challenges, resulting in effortless, high-performance outcomes without friction ”

Outcome

Since the launch of POP, Navigator Tissue UK has seen significant improvements in employee wellbeing and engagement. Over the last 18 months, the company experienced its lowest levels of disruption, even amid internal and external challenges. Absenteeism dropped to a record low 1.4%, compared to historical rates of 5%, reflecting a healthier and more

motivated workforce. Stress-related incidents declined, with almost no grievances reported.

The programme has also enhanced individual performance. Employee surveys revealed improvements in key areas such as clear thinking and innovation. Overall, 100% of participants reported benefits, with most experiencing improvements in multiple areas of their lives. By creating a culture in line with the way the human mind works, employees can thrive and adapt in the face of ongoing challenges in a way that engenders frictionless and effortless high performance.

WORKING ENVIRONMENTS & PRACTICES

XPS GROUP TRANSFORMS WORK CULTURE THROUGH FLEXIBILITY

Background

In 2021, XPS Group initiated a major transformation to meet the evolving needs of its 1,855 employees across 17 offices. Following the drastic shifts in working conditions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, XPS recognised that many employees thrived in more flexible work environments, particularly for neurodiverse individuals and those with health conditions or caregiving responsibilities. XPS recognised a dual challenge: maintaining its strong company culture while ensuring productivity and connection in a hybrid working environment.

Approach

XPS responded with 'My XPS, My Choice', a flexible working pilot programme. Employees could choose between a flexible contract, requiring one office day per week, or a full-time office contract. By mid-2022, due to the programme's success, it became a permanent part of XPS's operating model.

A user-centric approach was key to its implementation. Employees were deeply involved through surveys, drop-in sessions and discussions with managers. XPS also launched employee networks and developed infrastructure to support flexibility and collaboration. This included integrating Microsoft Teams, introducing a desk-booking system and creating wellbeing spaces and prayer rooms to make the office environment more welcoming for those choosing to work onsite.

Continuous feedback from employees led to further enhancements. The Office Head role was reinvigorated to strengthen community ties, and internal communications were improved with a revamped weekly newsletter. A behavioural charter was also developed to embed XPS's values

and ensure strong connections and collaboration, whether employees were remote or in the office. Inclusivity was another major focus, with the introduction of new policies such as the Transgender, Non-Binary and Intersex policy. XPS also gained Level 2 Disability Confident Certification, further supporting its commitment to employees from diverse backgrounds.

Outcome

“My XPS, My Choice’ has revolutionised workplace flexibility, creating a win-win scenario for employees and the business”

‘My XPS, My Choice’ has driven a profound shift in XPS's workplace culture. Over 1,400 employees opted for flexible contracts and employee engagement surged, with 80% rating XPS as an excellent place

to work. There was also a 17% increase in employees reporting a good work-life balance since 2021.

This flexibility has proven a win-win for both employees and the business. Revenue rose from £127.9 million to £196.6 million and profit before tax increased from £11.4 million to £62.5 million. This remarkable growth illustrates that flexibility can drive both employee satisfaction and organisational success.



WORKING ENVIRONMENTS & PRACTICES

CAE'S VIBRANT HUB WHERE PEOPLE, CULTURE AND COLLABORATION THRIVE



Background

Since its founding in 1992, CAE Technology Services has experienced continuous growth. By 2019, it had outgrown its Watford headquarters and a larger space was needed to accommodate its expanding operations. The leadership team saw this as an opportunity to create a workspace that truly reflected CAE's values. After securing a site in Hemel Hempstead in April 2020, just days into the COVID-19 lockdown, CAE faced the challenge of designing a headquarters that not only supported hybrid working but also reinforced its commitment to collaboration, wellbeing and a vibrant culture.

Approach

The move for CAE out of Watford into their wholly-owned space, allowed the company the fresh canvas to create the built environment the company always wanted to give its people. The leadership team partnered with design firm Woodhouse and engaged employees through surveys, workshops and interviews to meet their needs. The feedback revealed that staff valued spaces for collaboration, wellbeing and relaxation, and wanted to eliminate siloed working.

The result was a design that embodied CAE's core values: loving your job, working together, doing things differently and advocating belonging. The new headquarters, which opened in September 2021, features a large central atrium with a colourful mural representing CAE's purpose, values and behaviours. Flexible workspaces include hot

desks, collaborative meeting hubs, solo desk booths, soundproof phone pods and a library for quiet work. For downtime, employees can enjoy a communal café, a wellbeing space, a prayer room and even a games room.

The office design with high ceilings, open spaces and biophilic design elements such as natural light and greenery aimed to create a destination employees wanted to return to, especially as the world emerged from the lockdown.

“CAE's new headquarters has become a vibrant hub where people, culture and collaboration thrive, setting the standard for future workplaces”

Outcome

The new CAE headquarters quickly became a hub where employees, partners and the wider community could thrive. The flexible working environment helped ease the transition back to office life, with staff excited to return. Employee feedback was particularly positive about the enhanced collaboration spaces, which allow teams to work more closely together. The success of the Hemel Hempstead office led CAE to replicate the model in its Northern Hub in Warrington, which opened in 2023. Both spaces have proved instrumental in supporting hybrid working, fostering belonging and promoting CAE's culture.

The new headquarters has also become a valuable asset for CAE's partners and the local community, with organisations such as the Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce and charity One YMCA using the space for meetings and events, strengthening CAE's community ties.

WORKING ENVIRONMENTS & PRACTICES

EMC3'S ALISTAIR GRAHAM LEADS A
REMOTE-FIRST REVOLUTION IN COMPANY
CULTURE

Background

As a remote-first company, emc3 faced the significant challenge of building and maintaining a cohesive company culture where employees feel connected, despite geographical distances. Under the leadership of Alistair Graham, the full-service events agency transitioned to this model during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rather than downsizing or scaling back, Alistair made the bold decision to embrace a fully remote workforce, even after the world began reopening. This shift was essential to the company's global expansion, particularly as the team spread across the UK and US. Ensuring employees did not feel isolated while maintaining a high level of engagement became Alistair's primary focus as he set out to create an inclusive and supportive environment for a dispersed workforce.

“Alistair Graham's leadership has transformed emc3 into a model of connection, innovation and employee wellbeing in a remote-first environment”



annual budget per employee for learning & development and company culture. New employee benefits, such as Vitality Health Insurance, are regularly reviewed and improved to meet team needs. In 2023, Alistair appointed a dedicated culture team to elevate these efforts with fun events like remote quizzes and painting classes.

Approach

Alistair, affectionately called “Mr Company Culture”, tackled the challenges of remote work head-on by fostering a deep sense of connection and wellbeing among emc3 employees. A cornerstone of this initiative is the company's annual ‘Conn3ct’ week, which sees the global team unite at the London office headquarters, featuring various workshops, team-building activities, and a 2-day offsite country retreat. This initiative bridges the geographical gap, encouraging camaraderie and shared purpose.

Beyond in-person meetups, Alistair has embedded various practices into daily operations to keep the team connected. Regular bi-weekly calls and active participation in fun Slack channels have helped maintain a friendly, communicative culture, while anonymous feedback systems ensure that employees' voices are heard and concerns addressed.

Alistair also introduced initiatives focused on mental and physical wellbeing, offering flexible work schedules, decompression days and a £5,000

Outcome

Under Alistair's leadership, emc3 has achieved remarkable results. Employee satisfaction surged to 92%, with retention rates climbing in a sector renowned for long hours and burnout. The remote-first strategy, once a response to external pressures, has become an asset, fostering a loyal and engaged workforce. emc3's innovative cultural practices have earned numerous awards, including Employer of the Year and Best Place to Work. Furthermore, Alistair's efforts to promote diversity and inclusion, alongside his work to make emc3 a certified B Corporation, highlight his holistic approach to leadership. By creating a company culture that prioritises connection, growth and wellbeing, Alistair has successfully turned emc3 into a beacon of remote-first innovation and excellence.

BUSINESS CULTURE TEAM

ZOPA BANKS ON ITS PEOPLE TEAM TO DRIVE GROWTH AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Background

Zopa Bank aims to build Britain's best bank, enhancing customer financial health while offering competitive credit and savings products. As the bank rapidly grew and acquired its first company, it faced multiple challenges: reducing employee attrition, boosting productivity and maintaining high levels of engagement across a diverse workforce. The People Team was tasked with ensuring the bank's business strategy succeeded by fostering a culture of excellence, collaboration and innovation, all while navigating a fast-paced business environment.

Approach

To meet these challenges Zopa's People Team transformed its structure and focus over 18 months. Key to this was introducing strategic business and talent partners, alongside a people analytics team to better align with business goals. A standout move was the creation of the People Experience team to 'own, influence and develop' all employee-facing experiences, from engagement to benefits and internal communications.

This team worked closely with leadership to analyse the business and employee landscape, using feedback and insights to shape the long-term people strategy. Zopa introduced quarterly OKRs (objectives and key results) to keep the team aligned with company-wide goals, ensuring people outcomes were integral to the overall business strategy.

The 31-strong People Team employed innovative methods to monitor and enhance the employee

lifecycle, using platforms such as PYN alongside more traditional tools like surveys and workshops. It focused on fostering an inclusive culture through workshops, coaching sessions and offsite team days, strengthening collaboration and alignment across departments.

“ Zopa's People Team transformed engagement and retention, driving the bank's first-ever profit and customer growth ”

Outcome

Zopa's People Team delivered exceptional results, improving employee satisfaction and driving business growth. The team's efforts reduced voluntary attrition from 15% to 10%, increased employee tenure and earned a 4.5/5 Glassdoor rating, with 92% of employees saying they would recommend Zopa to a friend. Engagement scores exceeded targets, with the most recent survey achieving a 73% engagement rate and record 93% participation.

On the business side, Zopa Bank surpassed 1.2 million customers and posted its first pre-tax profit of £15.8 million in 2023. The People Team's focus on engagement and retention directly supported this growth, helping Zopa secure a leading NPS score of 72 and win multiple customer-voted awards, including across all product categories at The British Bank Awards 2024.

Zopa's People Team has been instrumental in shaping a highly engaged, productive workforce that has driven the bank's business success, proving the powerful link between strong people strategies and sustainable growth.



UNITING TEAMS & ORGANISATIONS

DOLE'S LEADERSHIP PIPELINE DRIVES GLOBAL COLLABORATION

Background

Following the 2021 merger of Total Produce and Dole Food Company, the newly combined Dole plc became one of the world's largest producers of fresh fruits and vegetables, with over 34,000 employees across 75 countries. The merger created a strategic need to successfully unite two large international companies, each with their own long histories and values. Whilst the historic operational model focused on local ownership, the senior leadership team recognised that building even greater collaboration across the whole group would encourage innovation and identify additional commercial opportunities. Long-tenured leadership created a risk of career stagnation, whilst the Group's decentralised nature required a culturally sensitive approach to integration. There was a need to invest in supporting a cohesive, global culture that could drive strategic alignment and leadership development across a diverse workforce.

Approach

To address these challenges, Dole launched the Key Talent Programme (KTP), designed to develop future leaders, bridge cultural divides and foster a cohesive, globally-minded workforce. The programme featured a blended learning approach with two phases. In phase one, participants underwent Hermann Brain Dominance personality profiling to understand different working styles, followed by a 12-week immersive business simulation, where teams from across regions focused on running a business in competition with other entities. This simulation encouraged cross-functional collaboration and strategic thinking.

In the second phase, participants attended a four-day workshop in Sweden to present their simulation results and tackle real-world strategic problems posed by senior executives. They visited a local Dole operation to explore innovative supply chain solutions and participated in leadership and cultural immersion activities. Mentors and coaches supported participants throughout the programme, helping them navigate organisational challenges.



The programme emphasised inclusivity, increasing female participation and representation from non-European regions, while aligning with business objectives to support Dole's global strategy.

“The Key Talent Programme has unified Dole's diverse global workforce, driving collaboration, cultural understanding and business success across 75 countries”

Outcome

The Key Talent Programme has been instrumental in enhancing Dole plc's collaborative culture, enhancing cross-functional relationships and operational efficiency. Previous KTP participants report examples of driving cost reduction and building new cross-company commercial relationships as a result of completing the programme. In a 2023 survey, 100% of participants reported improved networking skills and 97% noted increased collaboration.

The programme also strengthened cultural understanding, reducing communication barriers and fostering better decision-making across regions. Retention rates among participants are high, with 89% remaining at Dole and 35% receiving promotions. Female participation increased from 18% to 41%, and representation from outside Europe rose from 17% to 45%.

Now 88% of participants view Dole as an employer of choice. The programme continues to build a diverse and skilled leadership pipeline, positioning Dole for future growth.

UNITING TEAMS & ORGANISATIONS

INDEPENDENT GOVERNANCE GROUP CREATES A UNIFIED CULTURE THROUGH MERGER

Background

In February 2023, the merger of Ross Trustees and Independent Trustee Services marked the creation of Independent Governance Group (IGG), the largest merger in the professional trustee space. This significant consolidation presented a cultural challenge; integrating two distinct organisations while ensuring alignment around a shared purpose, values and behaviours. The merger also brought 75 new hires into IGG, adding further complexity to building a cohesive company culture.

The challenge was to establish a new culture framework that aligned with IGG's purpose, ensure a healthy organisational culture and to foster diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), wellbeing, innovation and learning initiatives. From the outset, IGG's vision was to be the provider of choice for trustees and industry talent, while maintaining competitive edge through strong client service and internal collaboration.

Approach

IGG collaborated with CoachAdviser to help clarify its purpose statement, define core values and identify corresponding behaviours. The research process included qualitative interviews and quantitative employee engagement surveys. Several away days were held, allowing employees to contribute to the development of the Culture Framework. This collaborative process helped build a strong sense of ownership among employees.

CoachAdviser worked closely with the IGG team to develop a culture framework around six core values: Prioritising People, Driving Innovation, Embracing Diversity, Building Collaboration, Delivering Excellence and Creating Impact.

IGG prioritised open communication, with CEO Andrew Bradshaw leading the initiative to create an inclusive culture where employee feedback is actively encouraged. A dedicated DEI Committee, chaired by Chief People Officer Manpreet Sohal, leads initiatives such as monthly EDI meetings, training and external campaigns. A Wellbeing Committee supports mental and physical wellbeing through team activities, workshops and forums.

“IGG's Culture Framework has successfully united two firms, fostering a diverse and inclusive culture that supports innovation, collaboration and client service excellence”

Outcome

The establishment of IGG's Culture Framework has led to significant cultural and operational improvements. Employee surveys showed that 72% of staff agree that IGG “puts people first” and 87% believe that IGG “embraces diversity”.

All values have become embedded in IGG's operations, with teams using the framework to guide client service and internal collaboration. Centres of Excellence have been created, allowing teams to share knowledge and best practices across the business. This has strengthened IGG's ability to deliver excellence, retain its market leading position and foster innovation in key areas such as pension scheme funding solutions.

The framework has also helped drive IGG's growth strategy, with the firm expanding its client base by 7% and managing over £320 billion in assets. Despite the rapid growth, staff turnover rates have remained below 9%, demonstrating the strength of the company's culture and the impact on retaining talent.



UNITING TEAMS & ORGANISATIONS

HEIDELBERG MATERIALS BREAKS SILOS
AND BOOSTS PROFITS THROUGH
TEAMWORK

Background

Heidelberg Materials, with five main business lines, faced a persistent issue; improving the relationship between its Asphalt and Contracting divisions. While successful and interdependent, the two teams operated with conflicting goals: Asphalt prioritising high margins and Contracting seeking low costs. This silo mentality led to inefficiencies and missed opportunities despite attempts over a decade to resolve the tension. A fresh approach was needed to foster collaboration and maximise opportunities.

Approach

Heidelberg first interviewed regional directors to identify key challenges. The senior leadership team then realigned key performance indicators (KPIs) to drive collaboration, focusing on shared objectives rather than competition.

Next, Heidelberg organised regional gatherings across four key areas: the North, Midlands, South-East and South-West. These events brought together 100 employees, including people from both divisions. The sessions began with workshops focused on understanding the current state of inter-departmental relationships. These were followed by evening events designed to build personal connections.

The second day featured playful, yet focused activities aimed at fostering a ‘one team’ mentality.

Teams then developed action plans for improving collaboration, with the leadership team’s role shifting to supporting these ground-up initiatives. The difference in this project was clear; the actions and ideas came from employees, not management directives.

Outcome

The programme had a profound impact on Heidelberg’s internal culture. The relationship between the two business lines improved dramatically. Language shifted from negative generalisations to more collaborative discussions, with individuals now recognising the challenges each department faced. Joint success stories were shared across the business, fostering a sense of unity.

Operational efficiencies improved significantly. For example, Asphalt plants are busiest and most profitable in the mornings. Contracting now schedules work to avoid peak times, using production capacity during quieter periods. This simple but impactful change had previously gone unnoticed. Additionally, communication has improved, reducing misunderstandings and conflicts. Employee engagement rose by 14%, with teams reporting a stronger sense of camaraderie and satisfaction.

Financially, the project contributed to an estimated £2 million increase in profits, thanks to fewer errors and improved productivity. The effectiveness of the relationship between the two divisions, which was initially rated at 5.1, rose to 7.8, with aspirations to reach a 9. This shift towards a more collaborative culture has resulted in record profits for both business lines and has laid the foundation for continued success.

“ Heidelberg Materials improved collaboration between business lines, leading to a £2 million profit boost and a significant cultural shift toward teamwork ”

UNITING TEAMS & ORGANISATIONS

UNITING A GLOBAL COMMUNITY AT
PROJECT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

Background

Three years ago, Project Management Institute (PMI) partnered with Kin&Co to address a key challenge: defining a new culture that would reconnect its vast and diverse global community. PMI, an organisation comprising 11,000+ volunteers, 670,000+ members and over 500 staff across 130 countries, faced significant cultural fragmentation. Leadership changes and a shift in strategic direction had diluted the company's identity and weakened the connection between staff, volunteers and regional chapters. This disunity was hindering PMI's ability to achieve its ambitious growth strategy, impacting focus, efficiency and overall market leadership.

The task was to create a new set of values and behaviours that aligned with PMI's strategic goals and unite its community through an authentic, inclusive process. The goal was to energise staff, volunteers and leaders around a shared vision, enabling the PMI community to drive cultural change from within.

Approach

Over the course of 18 months, Kin&Co and PMI collaborated closely to co-create the values and behaviours. The methodology, guided by the principle that colleagues should drive and own the cultural shift so that it felt authentic, involved a three-stage behavioural change process: Listen, Unite and Energise.

In the Listen phase, the focus was on creating spaces for open dialogue. Surveys, focus groups and

interviews across PMI's global community revealed key challenges and opportunities. Additionally, a two-day joint session with PMI's Board and leadership team allowed unspoken cultural issues to be addressed, fostering alignment and connection.

Kin&Co then worked with the PMI community, leveraging a Culture Ambassador network to bridge geographical and role divides. Through locally-led discussions, creative activities and virtual events, the programme brought PMI's diverse global membership together, ensuring that every voice was heard in shaping the new culture.

Finally, the Energise phase focused on bringing the new values to life through action. Senior leaders were upskilled to model the new culture and a series of 'quick wins' demonstrated its impact even before the final cultural shift was complete.

“PMI and Kin&Co united a global community through culture, transforming leadership and engagement across 130 countries”

Outcome

More than 1,300 members actively engaged in shaping the new culture and 80% of the community felt energised by the transformation. The programme led to a 36% increase in leaders visibly role-modelling the new culture, with 100% of senior leaders agreeing that the new values aligned with PMI's strategic goals. Engagement and loyalty surged among senior leaders, while discretionary effort increased by 21%.

The new culture is now a cornerstone of PMI's operations, reflected in a global campaign and a new Culture Hub. As a result, PMI is better equipped to execute its growth strategy, fostering unity and driving performance across its global community.



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