



An essential guide to:

How culture fuels performance



“Culture is not just the backbone of strategy; it is the strategy, shaping how people think, feel, and behave.”

Why Culture is the True Advantage

In an era defined by volatility, digital disruption, and heightened customer expectations, culture is a CEO's most influential opportunity. Get it right, and our teams will be aligned, inspired, and ready to adapt and embrace change, whatever the future holds.

As trust in brands and organisations now exceeds that in governments and media, companies have unprecedented influence to drive progress. High trust is a potent source of advantage—when teams are aligned around shared purpose, they move faster, respond quickly to evolving needs across the system, and innovate with greater purpose and impact.

With **45%*** of CEOs believing their company won't be viable in 10 years on their current path, there is an urgent need to reinvent business models for **sustainable, multi-dimensional value creation.**

As leaders worldwide drive vital transformation at every scale, it's never been more important to reimagine how we work together. By strengthening the connections between people and performance, we build resilience and position ourselves to deliver meaningful impact, today and tomorrow.



Rethinking How Culture Drives Transformation and Performance

Our *Cracking the Culture Code 4.0* research demonstrates that alignment across **Brand, People, and Customer** is the critical differentiator between high and low performers:

High-performing organisations show a

182%

stronger cultural alignment
compared to low performers.

Customer alignment has emerged as the strongest driver of performance, surpassing traditional people and engagement metrics.

Employees motivated by purpose are

93%

more likely to recommend their company's products and services.

Business leaders must now see culture as the foundation for vital transformation. It is not static; culture needs to be shaped, measured, and continuously evolved to drive both short-term success and long-term sustainability.

Culture as an Ecosystem

Culture is a **holistic and interconnected ecosystem**. It is shaped by:

Purpose

Why we exist

Vision

Where we're heading

Mission

What we are here to achieve

Strategy & Goals

How we will get there

Values & Behaviours

How we act



When Brand, People, and Customer are aligned, culture becomes a **competitive advantage**, driving performance, innovation, and trust.

Culture Alignment and Our Six Signatures



Trusted & Valued

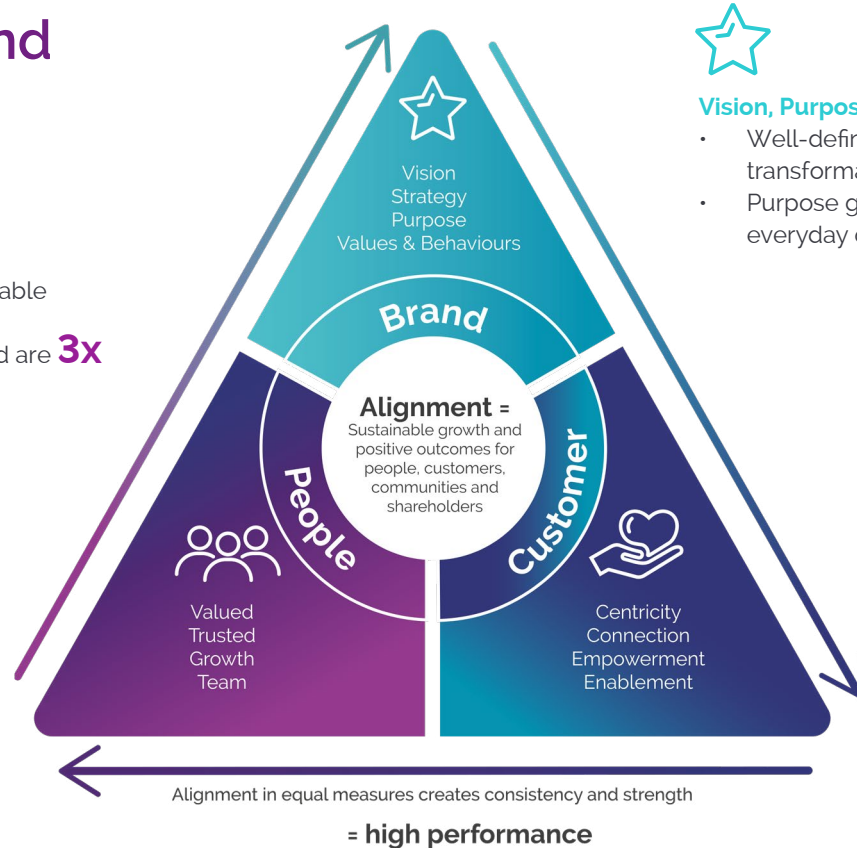
- Psychological safety and empowerment enable people to perform at their best.
- Organisations where employees feel trusted are **3x** more likely to retain talent and customers.

Meaningful Work & Impact

- Employees with clear goals are **2.8x** more likely to be highly engaged.
- Role clarity and personal contribution drive engagement.

Personal Growth

- Learning and skill development foster fulfilment, motivation, and resilience.
- Fulfilled employees are significantly more likely to advocate for their organisation.



Vision, Purpose, Values & Behaviours

- Well-defined, aligned and embedded to guide transformation and growth.
- Purpose gives meaning to vision, while values shape everyday decisions.



Customer Connection for All

- Every role, regardless of function, is connected to customer outcomes.
- Sharing insights and stories ensures alignment across the organisation.

Customer Centricity

- The customer is at the heart of decision-making and brand storytelling.
- Leaders who prioritise customer empathy elevate both CX and EX.

5 Top Tips for Leading Culture for Tomorrow

1. Use Data and Insight to Drive Action

Go beyond engagement surveys. Measure cultural alignment across the system and highlight opportunities to improve connections and business performance.

2. Simplify and Strengthen Your Culture Blueprint

Avoid "one-and-done" culture statements. Build a clear, actionable blueprint that employees understand, believe in, and live.

3. Futureproof Leadership

Resilient leaders adapt quickly, embrace change, inspire teams to keep learning and improving, and balance performance with wellbeing.

4. Mobilise Communities to Embed and Sustain Change

Create culture champions across the business. Sustained culture change happens through empowered networks and communities, not just top-down initiatives.

5. Build Great Experiences from the Inside, Out

When your people are engaged and empowered, customers feel it and both become advocates for your brand.



Unlocking potential through insights

Following its acquisition by Toyota Financial Services, KINTO UK faced a moment of transformation — the challenge was not just to address gaps, but to amplify what was already working and uncover the unseen cultural factors influencing performance, engagement, and customer experience.

Dragonfish partnered with KINTO to deliver a *Lumin culture diagnostic*, with **71% of employees participating in the survey**, combined with leadership interviews and benchmarking against high-performing organisations. This approach revealed hidden cultural blockers as well as untapped strengths that were driving collaboration, customer focus, and team pride.



These insights gave leadership a sharper, shared understanding of their cultural DNA — what to protect and what to evolve. From there, we co-created a clear, actionable roadmap that balanced quick wins with long-term priorities and established a culture measurement baseline to ensure sustained improvement and alignment with strategy.

[Read more about this case study here >](#)



Co-creation as a catalyst for culture change

First Bus, one of the UK's largest regional bus operators, knew that to truly transform and thrive, it needed more than a new strategy — it needed a culture created with its people, not just for them. With 12,800 employees across 52 depots, the challenge was to unite a fragmented workforce behind a shared purpose and way of working.

Dragonfish partnered with First Bus to co-create 'Our Way', a bold culture narrative, purpose, values and employee value proposition, shaped by voices from every level of the organisation. More than 100 leaders came together in immersive sessions to define a purpose rooted in *Customer Connection* and *Genuine Care*. 'Our Way' was then brought to life through powerful activation campaigns — from depot events and branded materials to hands-on tools that enabled managers to facilitate authentic conversations with their teams.

The results were rapid and meaningful:

Employee
engagement rose by
9%
in the first quarter
post-launch.

Nearly
8,000
frontline
conversations were
logged as managers
embraced a more
open, human
leadership style.

Turnover declined
as employees felt
more connected,
valued, and
aligned to the
company's vision.

“Dragonfish really connected with the strengths and realities of our organisation, helping us to evolve our purpose and culture and put people and customers at the heart of our transformation.”

Kevin Green, Chief People Officer

[Read more about this case study here >](#)

Sustaining Culture: Turning Values into Everyday Action

Rainbows Hospice set out to build more than just a set of values — they wanted to create a culture that could be lived and sustained across every corner of their organisation. With a diverse mix of clinical teams, central staff, retail teams, volunteers, and trustees, they needed a unifying culture that would align with their strategic ambitions and day-to-day realities.

Dragonfish partnered with Rainbows to co-create a set of values and behaviours that truly reflected who they are and how they work. But the real transformation happened when embedding the values into the everyday experience of staff, volunteers and beneficiaries. Leaders were equipped with a tailored culture toolkit, workshops, and practical actions to integrate these values into everyday decisions, conversations, and service delivery.



The impact was both emotional and measurable. **Employee engagement rose by 15%, and 97% of staff said they were proud to work at Rainbows.** Volunteers also recorded their highest engagement scores to date — evidence of a culture that resonates at every level.

"We have seen a real engagement and proactivity around incorporating Our Values into everyday actions and conversations. We have even asked the children, young people and families that we support to explore what Our Values mean to them."

ulia Bates, Director of People, Rainbows Hospice

Why dragonfish?

Dragonfish is a multi-award-winning global culture and performance consultancy. We help leaders drive vital transformation by **bringing together People, Brand and Customer** strategies into powerful alignment. The result: meaningful progress and lasting impact at every scale.



Working in partnership with clients across sectors in the UK and worldwide, we add value through:

Strategic impact

Connecting strategy across your entire organisation and addressing multiple C-Suite challenges simultaneously.

Pioneering insight

Bringing multi-disciplinary expertise and 10+ years of groundbreaking research and experience to all of our work.

True partnerships

Building capability from frontline to boardroom, investing in long-term partnerships that drive ecosystem change.

Evidence-based results

A strong track record of award-winning transformations that enable our clients to evolve and thrive through change.

"We thrive on helping organisations join the dots between their purpose, people, and customers – turning culture into a living strategy that accelerates performance and long-term success."

Proven global scale

Positively impacting over 1 million working lives through partnerships with over 90 brands across the impact, public and private sector all over the world.

The Culture & Performance Cycle

Impact

Embed and sustain culture to elevate performance and impact.

Discovery

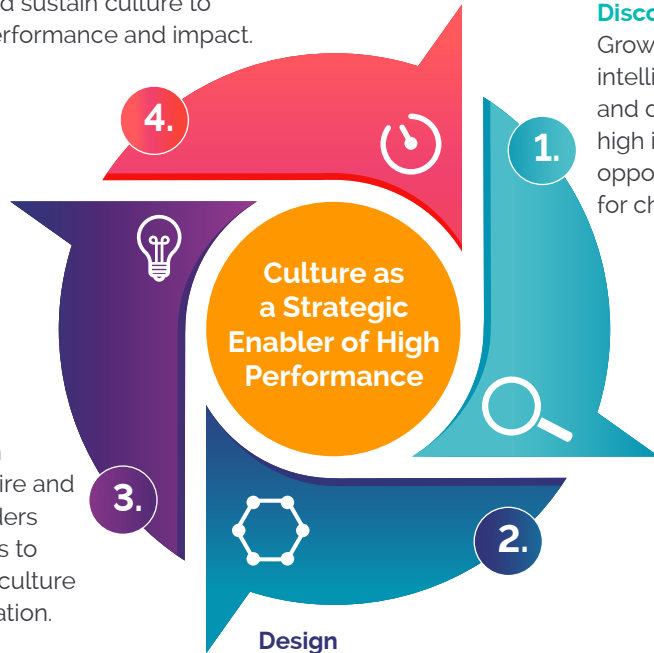
Grow culture intelligence and define the high impact opportunities for change.

Activation

Align, inspire and equip leaders at all levels to drive vital culture transformation.

Design

Connect the dots (people, brand, customer) and co-create the future blueprint.





For more insights and support
in shaping your culture,
visit **www.dragonfishuk.com**
or contact **hello@dragonfishuk.com**.

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