

# Culture Change 101



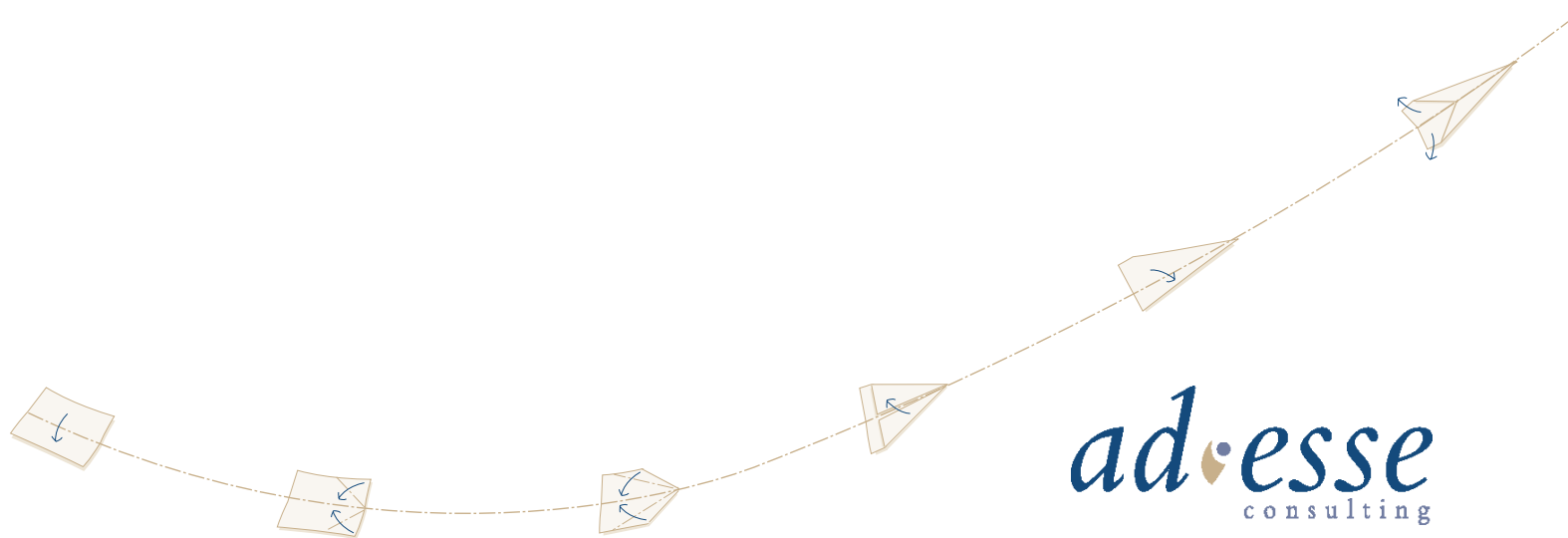
## QUESTION:

What is work “culture”? Why is it important?

## OUR VIEW:

Simply put, work culture is the reason behind why employees do the things they do! Or, an assortment of values and customs shared by employees/teams in the organisation that directs interactions with one another and with others outside the organisation. This blend of attitudes, experiences, beliefs and values then determine the general manor of how work does or doesn't get done within organisations.

These values and beliefs (work culture) influence the goals and/or objectives that employees choose to pursue, while guiding the standards of behavior they use to achieve them. From these value sets, norms and guiding principles are developed that lay down what is acceptable behavior in any given situations and so control the behavior of members towards one another.



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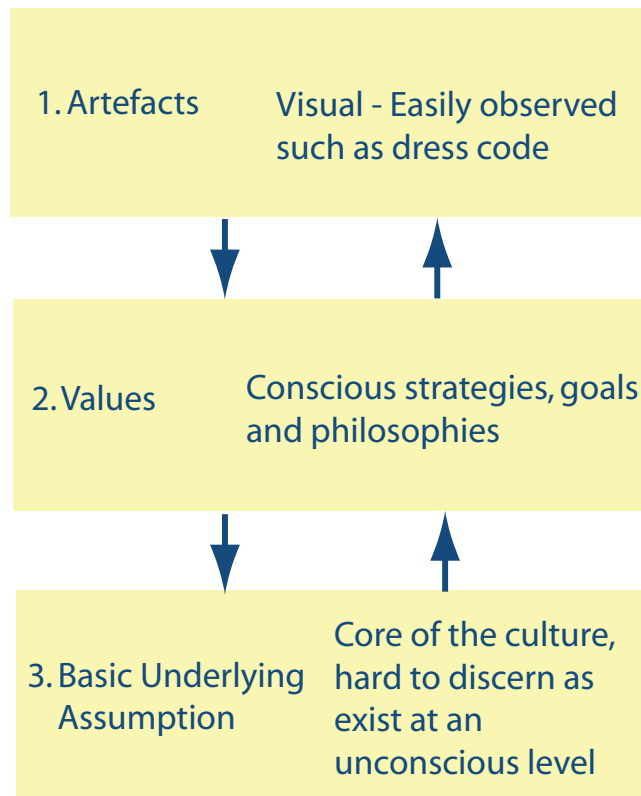
## QUESTION:

Does an organisation have an “unconscious”?

## OUR VIEW:

Cultures, like the people that defined them, are multi faceted complex beings. Just like those people, they have both conscious and unconscious states of mind.

This is best illustrated by using the “Three Levels of Culture” model developed by Edgard Schein.



Schein - Three Levels of Culture Model (1992)

According to Schein, organisational learning, development and planned change cannot be understood without considering culture as the primary source of resistance to change.” So Leaders who aspire to change their work culture must first seek to make the unconscious conscious. Know where the start point is, so you can accurately determine how to get to where you need to be.

So that’s work culture in a nut shell. All seems reasonably straight forward and uncomplicated...until you decide you want a new one!

## QUESTION:

Why is it so difficult to introduce a “continuous change culture”?

## OUR VIEW:

Hopefully by now you are well equipped to begin answering this last question for yourselves, but let me share our view with you.

Ever increasingly, organisations aspire to move away from planned sporadic interventions (usually initiated after identifying significant problems) towards a culture of continuous change; A culture where everyone is encouraged to challenge continuously in the relentlessly pursuit of perfection.

Most culture change programmes recognise the need to place great emphasis on the following;

- Management support & commitment
- Feedback and review process steps (effective communication)
- Clear ownership and accountability
- Employee empowerment
- Tangible metrics to be able to measure results/change

And these alone may create significant change in the short term. However, if you choose not to attack head on the existing underlying values and beliefs the current culture may be strong enough to weather the “change” storm and resurface just when you think you’re home and dry.

So to increase your chances of success the intervention needs to first explicitly challenge the current “way we do things around here” mentality and offer a more appealing option. Use it to develop a new language that employees want to learn and can gain a new sense of belonging from to help them move away from the old culture.

Finally, it takes time, effort and commitment from everyone and only then truly brought to life if communicated consistently in a way that creates a sense of importance and that helps mark it out as different.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

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