

Redefining culture

Crowd-sourced views on
the meaning of culture



**Redefining
Communications**
www.redefiningcomms.com

In August 2021, founder and business communications strategist, Jenni Field, asked her LinkedIn community how they would define culture.

With over 65 comments on the post, we thought we would collate them and share in a handy PDF for you!



**Redefining
Communications**

“

For me, it's how the company's values translate into the atmosphere and attitudes of the workplace. Are staff there as assets to be developed, or does the business just hope for 2-3 years of work out of them before they move on? Do teams collaborate to drive innovation and move the business forward, or do they work to their remits and nothing more? Is a work-life balance encouraged, or are you expected to run yourself into the ground? And do managers coach their teams or just administer them...?

Stuart McBride
Communications Manager, R3

”



**Redefining
Communications**

“

How people behave when no-one is looking, or what happens automatically, what the company/its people defaults to.

David Orford
Transformation Communications
Manager, Nomura

“

I was taught "How we do things round here."

Alan S Morrison
Owner,
ASM Media & PR

“

The aggregate of the predominant behaviours displayed on a daily basis by the humans in the organisation.

Nick Propper
CEO,
Impact Human Performance



Redefining
Communications

“

If company culture is the combination of different influences acting within an organisation and flowing from it... then national culture could be the combination of different influences acting within that nation and flowing from it.

Matthew Partovi
Founder, Culturevist

“

At a very basic level, the gap between the stated values and priorities of an organization and its actual values and priorities, combined with the tone, pressure and language used to manage that gap.

Mike Klein
Principle, Changing the Terms



**Redefining
Communications**

“

For culture today I like, Deal and
Kennedy's definition:
'it's the way things are done around here.'

For culture tomorrow I like:
'it's how we will do our best work together.'

I think the really interesting bit is then what
fits inside these high-level statements
because that's where organisations can start
to get purposeful and tune/design e.g.
decision-making, org-structure, feedback,
org-learning, approach to change, approach
to conflict and a few dozen more :)

John Faulkner Willcocks
Founder,
Wild Ducks

”



**Redefining
Communications**

“

Schein has a really good one focused on the concept of shared assumptions. Makes sense to me. I really don't understand why some people believe you can't define it. I've heard that of course but can't see why not.

Adam Zuckerman
Product Leader,
Willis Towers Watson

“

In reality, the work cultures I've experienced is closer to this definition, i.e shared 'assumptions' rather than the more ideal shared 'values', because different staff (depending on where they are in the organization) will experience it somewhat differently than others would. I also believe who gets fired, promoted and exit can also demonstrate the true reflection of an organization's culture.

Noor Yuslinda
Freelance writer



**Redefining
Communications**

“

I had to really wrestle with this when writing my first book, *The Power of Company Culture*. In the end, I created this definition which resonated with me and other leaders I surveyed the most.

Hope it helps:

"Company culture is the combination of the easily seen ideals like vision statements and values, combined with the harder to see norms, behaviors, languages, beliefs and systems."

Chris Dyer
Author and speaker

”



**Redefining
Communications**

“

Vibe, sounds silly but can't think of a better word to describe it.

Chris Lane
Strategic Engagement Manager,
Heathrow

“

A set of shared values, beliefs and behaviours which glue and hold the organisation together.

Rod Cartwright
Strategic Communication Consultant

“

Well, an organisational culture consists of beliefs, attitudes, practices and customs to which people are exposed during their interaction with the organisation.

Usman Islam
Accounts, Spatial



Redefining
Communications

“

I think this is difficult to define because it is so subjective and depends on your ethnic background, age, education, sex, personal taste etc. Also lived experience. An individual's experience of culture, can change over the course of time. I grew up in a small Devon market town but went to university near London and worked abroad and in an around the home counties before returning to Devon 8.5 years ago. My exposure to different cultures has shaped my own feelings about culture.

Julia Besooijen
Marketing,
National Trust

”



**Redefining
Communications**

“

How it feels to be part
of our organisation.

Carrie-Ann Wade

**Director of Communications and Engagement,
Cat's Pajamas**

“

Simply its the way of life of a
group/community living in a specific area.

SF Shah Tirmizi

Facilitator, Aims Education System

“

Such a good question but also a complex one
to define in words. For me personally, culture
is defined by how people feel and - stemming
from that - how they behave because of how
the interactions, environment and
relationships make them feel.

Sophie Thomas

Marketing Manager, Marketscan



**Redefining
Communications**

“

“The way we do things around here” but this can also be split down further to: “the way we SAY we do things around here” and “the way we ACTUALLY do things around here.”

Caroline Birch
HR Consultant and Culture Specialist

“

I think people often have unrealistic expectations of a homogeneous culture in organisations. You might achieve that somewhere that has invested a lot of time and money into defining what they want their culture to be, and then made it happen through leadership, policies, training, comms, consequences for not conforming etc. But generally, where this has not happened, there are micro cultures all over an organisation and it can vary a lot, from great to absolutely stinking, depending on the individuals that have influence in each immediate environment.

Josephine Graham
Marketing and
Communications,
Bradford Council



“

Internal brand.

Lyndon Johnson
Founder,
Think Different(ly) Communications

“

Shared values, beliefs
and behaviours!

Cassie R
Student

“

How we behave when
no one is looking.

Charlotte Goodban
Executive Coach

“

Short version "it is the company's
character. It is WHO they want to
be doing what they do!"

Debra Ann Thurtell
Business Solutions Coach,
Simply Going Beyond



Redefining
Communications

“

How many stars are there in the sky? A question of equal importance. And just as likely to have a meaningless answer. I used to consult with CEOs on culture. I would begin by asking the CEO and each officer to describe what they believed was their current culture. I had to stop doing this because it was so embarrassing. You could not have recognized they were talking about the same company. So, let's say, Chris, you have the right answer, now what and how many people do you suppose would agree? The thing we should notice when talking about culture, for all the definitions and experts, there are few if any stories documenting how a company, or even if any company changed its culture to the extent the business was impacted, without changing the leader, of course. Culture, along with employee engagement and employee experience, are topics making vendors rich and companies unchanged.

Jim Smith
CEO,
Enterprise Management Group

”



**Redefining
Communications**

“

In the last place I worked they talked about culture as: Who we are going to be on the journey? What's it like to be around us? What do people experience when they're with us? It's not very concise but I think it goes some way to explaining what we mean when we talk about culture.

Carly Cook
Freelance,
Carly Cook Comms

“

Culture is made up of a collective of habits, behaviours, values and attitudes. It is the heart beat of a business or a society.

Jenny Chapman



**Redefining
Communications**

“

Culture is what defines a company and the way that it acts everyday to its customers and staff. Values mean nothing if no one follows them or people are not assessed or supported/developed against them.

I know or sounds weird but you cannot pretend to have an inclusive culture if you are not inclusive etc... so many talk about cultures that cannot be measured or noticed.

Paul Morgan
Director of Learning,
Organisational Development
and Benefits at ForHousing

”



**Redefining
Communications**

“

It's people's default behaviour informed by their learned personal characteristics and their observed and experienced personality of their employer in action. The latter being much harder to acquire these past 18 months while WFH.

Mike Bickerdike
Colleague Communications Manager, Tesco

“

For me, the real definition is often: what behaviour will this organisation not tolerate? I think that's when you see the real culture, for better or worse.

Ed O'Brien
**Head of Issues & Media Management, Global
Corporate Affairs team at KPMG**

“

When I think culture, I use Flamholtz and Randle’s definition of organizational culture as the “corporate personality”. The values, beliefs, and norms which influence the behaviour of people as members of an organization.

As with many concepts that relate to organizations, it is important for an organization to define what culture is for itself and ensure that colleagues are aware of that definition, and viewing the environment through that lens when discussing challenges and opportunities.

Gail Baxter
GB Communications,
Principal

”



**Redefining
Communications**

Redefining Communications

Taking you from chaos to calm by helping you:

- Diagnose the root cause of chaos
- Training and coaching your teams
- Working with you to take the chaos away

Get in touch:

info@redefiningcomms.com



**Redefining
Communications**
www.redefiningcomms.com