

# Workshop: Building strong departmental culture

Time for Strategy: 2024

## Objective

To create a set of behaviours and values that will drive success and foster cohesion within the department, while aligning with the broader company culture. This workshop will also address the unique needs and dynamics of the department, ensuring that every team member's role and insights are reflected in shaping the departmental culture.

## Workshop Duration

2 to 3 hours

## Materials Needed:

- ⇒ Flipcharts or Whiteboard
- ⇒ Markers & Sticky Notes
- ⇒ Handouts with Department-Specific Feedback Summaries (if applicable)
- ⇒ Sticky Dots for Prioritisation (optional)
- ⇒ Collaborative Platforms for virtual or hybrid meetings
- ⇒ Printed Summary Sheets or Culture Guide Template

## Agenda

### 1. Visioning Exercise (20 minutes)

- Ask participants to envision the ideal culture within their department. Prompt with questions like:
  - *What do we want to be known for as a department within the company?*
  - *What values should define our interactions, internally and with other departments?*
- Allow individuals to share their ideas, and document themes that emerge. This visioning activity helps surface aspirations unique to the team.
- Capture aspirations and begin to frame the ideal future culture.

## **2. Values Discovery and Alignment (30 minutes)**

- Divide into smaller groups to brainstorm department-specific values by answering questions such as:
  - *What behaviours support our work and make it effective?*
  - *What values are essential to how we achieve our goals?*
  - *How do we want other departments to perceive us?*
- As a group, discuss and align on 3-5 key values that reflect the desired departmental culture, ensuring they are distinct yet aligned with broader company values.
- Develop shared values that align with both departmental goals and the broader company culture.

## **3. Define Behaviours and Principles (30 minutes)**

- Translate these values into specific, observable behaviours within the department. For instance:
  - If a department value is “Collaboration,” behaviours might include sharing updates proactively, welcoming feedback, and supporting cross-functional teamwork.
  - If “Efficiency” is a core value, behaviours could be timeliness in communication, setting clear objectives for meetings, and minimising redundant steps in processes.
- Create clear, actionable behaviours that can guide team actions and decisions.

#### 4. “Start, Stop, Continue” Exercise (30 to 40 minutes)

- Conduct this exercise to identify:
  - **Start:** *What behaviours should we start doing to align more closely with the agreed-upon culture?*
  - **Stop:** *What behaviours are counterproductive to the team’s goals and values?*
  - **Continue:** *What strengths should we continue doing that benefit the department?*
- This activity grounds values into actionable steps and gives the team immediate takeaways for behavioural shifts.

#### 5. Accountability and Follow-Up (15 minutes)

- Conclude with a commitment circle, where each participant shares one action they will personally commit to that supports the department’s new cultural values.
- Assign accountability pairs or schedule regular check-ins to review progress and refine practices as needed.

## Tools and Tips

- **Use Collaborative Platforms:** Tools like Miro, Jamboard, or physical whiteboards are helpful for capturing and displaying ideas.
- **Document and Share Results:** Summarise the workshop's outcomes into a departmental culture guide or a quick-reference document. This acts as a “cultural contract” that can be revisited in team meetings or used as a framework for onboarding new members.
- **Seek a Neutral Facilitator:** If available, a neutral facilitator can encourage open conversation and ensure everyone’s voice is heard.

## Outcome

By the end of this workshop the team will have aligned on shared values and behaviours that enhance collaboration and performance. The team will also strengthen commitment and accountability within the department, creating a united front that aligns with the company’s broader mission and goals.

### More information

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