

CULLING CULTURITIS

How to Rid Your Company of this Toxic
Disease and Build a Winning Culture

Ashok Miranda



10-10-10
Publishing

Culling Culturitis. How to Rid Your Company of this Toxic Disease and Build a Winning Culture

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ISBN-13: 978-1717139436

ISBN-10: 1717139434

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Publisher

10-10-10 Publishing

Markham, ON

Canada

Printed in Canada and the United States of America

To Ana, my lovely wife and soul mate. Without your encouragement, great advice, and unwavering support, I would still be on page 15.

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Praise for Culling Culturitis

“Ashok Miranda’s storytelling is refreshing and captivating. His passion to help leaders build exemplary cultures comes shining through.”

- *Iqbal Jumabboy, CEO, BlackBook Hotels*

“Solid advice for firms on how to inoculate themselves against *Culturitis*. We now have a new term for toxic culture disease, and the wisdom to spot the early infestations.”

- *Mark Edwards, Former CEO, dnata Singapore*

“Ashok has leveraged his rich corporate experience to bring much needed focus and clarity to businesses, about why they exist and what difference they make in the world.”

- *Dr. Virginia Cha, Entrepreneurship Professor, Singapore*

“*Culling Culturitis* is a comprehensive culture creation guidebook, drawn from Ashok’s rich corporate and consulting experiences. For business leaders and HR professionals who want to build a winning culture in their organisations, this book shows the way, step by step. Highly recommended.”

- *Seto Lok Yin, Deputy Principal, Republic Polytechnic, Singapore*

Culling Culturitis

“The two must-haves, for any startup, are to get your company DNA figured out early, and get the right people on-board, who are aligned with your business philosophy. This book shows you how to achieve this. Read it and build the culture foundations of a successful startup business.”

- *Vinod Muthukrishnan, CEO, Co-Founder, CloudCherry*

“Ashok has demystified company culture, and probed deep into what creates successful companies. Make this book your go-to guide to designing your dream company.”

- *Jefrey Gomez, Managing Director, APAC, Econsultancy*

“An invaluable read for any entrepreneur starting out in business.”

- *Craig Bristol Dixon, Entrepreneur in Residence, muru-D, Singapore*

Foreword

I first met Ashok Miranda in Singapore in April 2017. I was intrigued by his fascination for company cultures. We spoke at length about what it was that created great companies and what also makes them fail. When he told me his new book was titled “*Culling Culturitis*,” I couldn’t help but smile. We now had a new term for toxic company culture, *Culturitis*!

Ashok’s book is packed with great insights and myriad examples. I found the *culture stories* from his rich corporate experience with Walt Disney Television and Sony Pictures Television very insightful and entertaining. He also provides a novel process to create a strong culture, the **ADCOE** culture transformation blueprint which you as a business leader will find extremely valuable.

The book provides sound advice on how to unearth the *soul* of your business and decode your company DNA. How to attract the right people, hire for culture fit and create an exemplary work environment. A place where people *want* to go to work rather than *have to*.

I’ve read my fair share of business books; however, there’s very little information out there on how to build a strong company culture. This is a real gem for business leaders and should be on every top company executive’s desk.

Culling Culturitis

After reading this book, you will be inspired to, in Ashok's words, "build a company that employees love, customers adore, and the world admires."

Raymond Aaron
New York Times Bestselling Author

Preface

Why You Need This Book

As a business leader, at some point, you have probably wondered about your company culture. You've either inherited a culture, are in the process of changing one, or want to design and build your very own. There are tons of books on business strategy and how to build a business. However, there are very few that talk about company culture and provide a blueprint to creating a winning culture.

Why do businesses need a strong culture? Think of culture as your operating system. Without this, you can't *boot up* the business and operate it to its full potential. Culture is the glue that binds people together and aligns everyone around a core purpose, propelling the business forward. But a strong culture isn't easy to achieve. So often, we hear of companies and startups that have either failed, are failing, or are running at a fraction of their former glory. Whether it's ethical issues, lack of innovation, poor staff morale, failing to adapt to a change, weak leadership, or taking critically wrong decisions, most often, at the core of these issues, lies a weak company culture. I call this *culturitis*—the dreaded toxic culture disease. If left unchecked, it will consume and corrupt a company, ultimately causing its downfall.

Culling Culturitis

A strong culture, on the other hand, fuels passion in employees, and creates an exemplary work environment, where people *want* to go to work rather than *have* to. Creativity and innovation flow through the company, people are aligned with and motivated by a *greater good* cause, and want to contribute towards a noble mission. Culture trumps strategy, and if you get it right, all the other pieces fall into place.

In this book, I have incorporated insights, learnings, and culture experiences, from my 16- year corporate journey with leading multi-national media companies. I've included the ADCOE culture transformation blueprint, a step by step process, to fast-track the creation of a strong culture. I'm sure you'll find this book and my culture creation process very valuable and practical to implement. Make this book your go-to culture guide to help you build your dream company—one that your employees love, your customers adore, and the world admires.

The Discovery of Culturitis

In the midst of all this disruption and change, my new path was unfolding. As my calling became clearer, I gave up the job search. I had finally discovered what I was meant to do. I was going help build purpose-driven companies, with strong cultures, that truly stood for something and were going to make a positive difference in the world—companies that were passionate about creating customer-centric brands that were relevant in a consumer controlled digital age. I was going to help businesses design exemplary work environments that foster growth, both for the business and the people working there—workplaces where people *want* to go to work, and not *have* to. I was filled with new energy and was now being pulled by my purpose: to transform the world of business for good.

The word, *culturitis*, first cropped up while writing my first blog about toxic company culture and how to effectively inoculate a business from this. Equating bad company culture with a disease, makes sense. If you think about it, toxic culture is like a disease. Like cancer, it infects and eventually consumes and cripples a company if left unchecked. I made it my quest to find an effective cure for culturitis. I was obsessed with figuring out a process to help leaders build a winning company culture and keep culturitis at bay. There was a blueprint to the culture creation process that companies could use to inoculate themselves against this silent corporate killer, and I was determined to find it. Companies needed a new operating system to play and be successful in the new digital economy, as the old way of doing things was no longer relevant. They needed a new operational blueprint, which started with a business philosophy that was connected to the brand essence and the consumer experience. The concept slowly started to crystallize,

A Tale of Two Cultures

and the various moving parts of a culture transformation process began to fall into place.

I called this the ADCOE culture transformation blueprint, which was an acronym derived from each step of the process. But before I get to that, let's first understand how culturitis starts to infect and spread within a company, and how to spot the tell-tale signs of a toxic culture.

CHAPTER 3

The Tell-Tale Signs of a Culture Gone Bad

Catching culturitis early is critical. Like a cancer, toxic culture spreads fast. Even the best people, with the best interests, will eventually become contaminated, and succumb to this deadly corporate disease.

Defining Company Culture and Who is Responsible for It

Before we go into spotting the culturitis red flags, it's important to define what IS company culture. Company culture can be defined as the company operating system, a code, or an internal belief system that everyone abides by and agrees upon—the guiding principles you want everyone in the company to be aligned with. In a healthy company, this is what a good culture delivers. However, unfortunately, a lot of business environments are far from healthy.

The company culture is typically set by the top leadership—the CEO, MD, founder(s) or business owner(s)—and, in larger organizations, the board. It's important to note, fundamentally, that it's people, and not the company or business per se, that are responsible for nurturing the company culture.

Company culture is in many ways intangible and abstract. It's not that obvious, but you can certainly feel it. You can sense and

pick up the culture vibe in companies just by being around people and seeing how they behave.

How to Spot the Signs of a Toxic Culture

Now, let's take a deeper look at some typical tell-tale signs of culturitis. Let's begin by doing a company CAT scan (culture assessment test) to spot the early signs of a culturitis infestation:

1. The Heads Down Culture

There are times when I walk into a company and can immediately sense that things are amiss. The receptionist couldn't be bothered, and people walk past you like you don't exist. I call this the *heads down culture*, where people walk around looking down, busy doing their own thing, oblivious to what's going on around them.

This reflects a deeper issue, where employees aren't free to express themselves, and just go about doing what they must do, and nothing more. They can't wait for the end of the work day to burst out the door!

2. We are Incomunicado

The office vibe is serious. You may as well have entered a morgue! People just don't communicate, and all you hear is the clicking sound of fingers hammering away at computer keyboards.

No one talks, jokes, or says much. The atmosphere is very formal and business-like. Employees interact on a need-to-do basis; there is none of that friendly banter or jovial moments that go with a friendly office vibe.

Newbies or visitors can sense this vibe and will wonder what really happened here. People would rather email or WhatsApp each other than walk across to the adjacent desk and have a chat!

More evidence of this negative culture is when people refuse to speak up, even when things are obviously unpleasant. They choose to remain silent and ignore the issues.

3. The One-Way Meeting Syndrome

You get the meeting invite and are excited to participate. When you get there, no one is talking, except senior management or the meeting organizer. It's just a download of info, and when the question, "Does anyone have any comments or suggestions?" goes around the room, the organiser may as well have asked this to Greek tourists in Thailand! Crickets would love this room for its silence! The mood is sombre, and employees aren't interested in participating, as they know that their opinion isn't valid, listened to, or cared about.

Things might have started well, but at some point, there was no acknowledgement, encouragement, or credit given for their inputs, thoughts and ideas.

As a result, meetings are typically just one-way, with no inputs, ideas, or comments from attendees. Everyone is happy just stonewalling and being a bench warmer.

"I'll just wait for the meeting minutes," is what you generally hear after the meeting.

4. We Just Don't Help!

The fourth sign of culturitis brewing is when people stick to what they are doing and don't care about helping anyone else. This reflects a very individualistic and silo culture. "We just don't care, and it's everyone for themselves," is the message that is being sent out loud and clear.

I personally experienced this and found it extremely unsettling. For new employees, this sets the tone for the rest of their career in the company. All the initial euphoria, enthusiasm, and gung-ho-ness of joining a new company, quickly disappears.

This stems from the top. Senior management isn't helpful, and expects everyone to fend for themselves. People are afraid of sharing their knowledge, for fear of losing their importance and the little power they command.

It is expected that everyone should figure it out for themselves. No mentoring here, just tormenting!

From a work environment perspective, there is hardly any inter-department mingling or cross pollination of ideas.

5. Politics and Power Play

In this company environment, it's clear that it's all about power, hierarchy, and titles. Everyone loves to flash their name cards to remind you about their position and who they are connected with or know.

You meet certain employees, and the first thing they brag about is themselves, belittling their subordinates or new hires at the outset.

Their power egos arrive before they do, and they can't stop reminding those below them of their ability to leverage their corporate political affiliations and connections.

It's not about the work or what the good intentions of the company or department are; it's about how they got to where they are and how they will do anything to protect their turf.

6. The Sick Leave Syndrome

You notice a high absenteeism rate in the office. There's also a clear pattern emerging. People appear to be maxing out their sick leave, and staying away at crucial periods when they are needed the most.

I find this particularly prevalent in Asian office cultures, where employees who have been hurt or disillusioned with their managers or co-workers, deliberately stay away to make a silent protest point.

You also notice this absenteeism at meetings, company D&D events, recreational events, or town halls.

Also, employees don't give notice of their leave, and they don't bother to call their manager if they have fallen ill suddenly. These are clear signs that something *sick* is going on in the organization, and needs to be cured soon.

7. We Love and Live by Our Rules!

In this environment, it is clear that rules and policies are very important. Everything is by the book, and no one can break the rules. *Best practices* run the organization, and no one dares to question or challenge them. What you hear all the time is, “Here, this is how it’s been done and should be done.” New ideas are frowned upon, and no one wants to rock the boat. There’s no room for innovation and creativity; oh no, that would be way too radical to attempt.

It’s the company’s way or the highway. Senior management, and HR, love and stick by the policies, rules, and regulations they have so meticulously crafted.

Everyone treads carefully, afraid to step out of line or suffer the consequences. This translates into subdued ideas, a reluctance to change and, ultimately, stagnation in growth.

8. A Good Idea is Only Good if it Comes From Me

The eighth sign is not so obvious, but you can pick it up after a while. It’s about implementing and executing challenging ideas. Typically, in this environment, the employees with higher rank dominate and make the decisions.

They will listen to everyone but, in the end, will do what they think is right. No one else can take credit for a big or game-changing idea. They make it clear it came from them, or it was their brainstorm initiative that drove the idea. They are always at the centre and under the spotlight.

This stems from leadership with deep insecurity and the constant need for self-flattery and self-validation. This behaviour makes people reluctant to contribute their thoughts and ideas, as they know they will get no credit for them.

9. We Love Staying Put

The next sign of a toxic culture is when there is clear resistance to change. Although HR or leadership may want to implement change, there is a general lack of enthusiasm and excitement for the initiative. This usually happens when there is a deep infiltration of a *culture of inertia* that is perhaps left over from the previous leadership. Merged and acquired companies oftentimes must deal with this *inherited culture* issue.

In this instance, drastic measures are called for from the new or merged leadership team. They need to swiftly craft and articulate a new vision, align and agree on new values, and come up with a powerful communication strategy. The new culture needs to be implemented quickly to eradicate this manifestation of culturitis.

10. Bottom Line Focus and Lack of True Purpose

The company is chugging along, but everyone is mainly focused only on the bottom line, with no greater sense of purpose. The “WHY” is clearly missing. Even with the senior management team, everyone only speaks about the next quarter, or what needs to be done to achieve their immediate target. The greater good and purpose of the business isn’t communicated, which results in a general lack of passion and commitment from the rank and file.

The job kind of gets done, but that's about it. The lack of vision and non-articulation of the business philosophy, makes the employees feel that they are just cogs in the wheel and are not contributing towards something bigger. The job feels mundane, and everyone just gives their bit and nothing more. The end of the working day can't come soon enough for them.

Leadership is focused on delivering on the bottom line, and that message is conveyed to the rank and file during reviews and town halls.

The opportunity to articulate a greater good vision, and thus fire up passion and commitment from employees, is a lost opportunity. Also lost is the potential of the business to innovate and scale to greatness, and have a bigger impact on the world. People are rewarded for hitting their goals, not for challenging the status quo and creating the potential for new revenue streams. Radical and non-conventional thinkers don't last too long, as their behaviour upsets the balance and vibe of the business.

11. The Rumour Mill Effect

The next sign of culture toxicity is the evidence of a culture of gossip and corridor whispers. This toxic chat culture is extremely damaging to the positive work environment, and is a dangerous method of power play.

This chatter, often fake, spreads fast through the office gossip mongers, along with speculation and negative energy, which will weigh down the productive work environment.

The Tell-Tale Signs of a Culture Gone Bad

You often see a select few (the corridor clique) head outside to chat secretively at any excuse. It feels like the rumours never stop. Those who don't fit in with the conversation, or are being gossiped about, end up being isolated.

This creates unnecessary tension among employees, and breeds speculation and doubt.

We've covered a few typical toxic culture red flags. But there's more lurking in various iterations and forms of the ones we've talked about. Most companies don't even know they have culturitis. It has become a way of life, deeply ingrained in the people, and everyone has learnt to live with this pain. It's only visible to people on the outside.

Do a *CAT scan* of your business, and see what shows up. You might be surprised.

Now that you know how to spot toxic culture situations, let's take a positive step and look at how you can create an exemplary work environment.

In the next chapter, we'll talk about the origins of the Culture Playbook, and why you need one.

CHAPTER 4

The ADCOE Culture Transformation Blueprint

A strong company culture does not happen by accident or by coincidence. It is by design, by creating your ‘culture playbook,’ and following through with steadfast conviction.

Origins of the Word, *Playbook*

The idea of a playbook comes from sport, particularly American football. It is a team’s secret weapon to success. It captures the winning strategies and tactics of the team. As there’s not enough time on the field or in locker rooms to teach a player everything he needs to know, the playbook is a handy go-to and ready reference resource.

Oftentimes being 600–800 pages long, the sports playbook accounts and details all the winning moves and player positions unique to the team. It encapsulates the coaches’ thoughts, ideas, and game plans over the years, and documents the winning moves and learnings from the various games played.

It is an accumulation of the coaches’ knowledge, and serves as a guide post for a winning play.

Why Every Company Should Have One

The company culture playbook incorporates the cultural values and moral compass by which the company is governed and operated. It serves as a guidebook to run the company. It provides a path that shapes judgment, values, and culture.

It is a template that provides the operating system for the business, and a guiding light—a beacon if you will—for purpose-driven leadership; a document that will serve as an organizational design masterplan, with a goal to building an exemplary and amazing company that employees love, and customers adore.

Most successful and progressive companies have some form of a culture playbook that articulates how the company should be run. This doesn't just live on a shelf or is locked away in some filing cabinet; instead, the text of the document is practised and preached at every given opportunity. It becomes a living transcript, a company mantra that everyone embraces and lives by.

If you talk to the founders of successful startups like HubSpot and Airbnb, the one thing the founders say they would have liked to have created in the early days, is their culture playbook.

ADCOE, a Novel Process for Culture Creation

Through my work experience and relentless quest to figure out what makes successful companies successful, I've developed a culture creation process, and have refined it over the years to what I now call the **ADCOE** culture transformation process.

CHAPTER 6

DNA

Don't be identified by your products and services. Be known for what you deeply believe in, and what difference you are making in the world.

Deciphering Your Company DNA

Through my own experience in the corporate world, and from studying both successful and unsuccessful companies, I have realised that employees and customers today demand more from companies and brands.

It's no longer about the products and services that a business delivers, but rather what that business stands for and why it really exists. We are talking about PURPOSE, which is at the core of businesses—that noble mission that fuels the energy, and fires up passion in people to give their best every day.

In this chapter, we'll take a close look at what really construes purpose, and how to differentiate between purpose, vision, and mission. These are often misunderstood and misinterpreted.

Together, your purpose, vision, and mission, when in alignment and in harmony, form the company DNA, the core building blocks

for your successful business. Profit and success are a by-product of having a deep philosophical belief, which propels the business forward and gives it true meaning.

Purpose in one line, is the distinctive difference you are making in the world. It's why you exist as a business: your *raison d'être*. It's what you deeply believe in, and the *greater good* reason why the business was created. It's what motivates you to go to work every day.

Simon Sinek beautifully articulated this in his TED talk, and book, *Start with the Why*.

Most businesses know what they do (their products and services). They know how they do it (their processes and systems), but very few businesses know WHY they do it. Understanding your “why” is crucial to building your DNA.

Your purpose is the business beacon and your North Star. It's your *business conscience*, your guiding light, and the moral and ethical company compass.

Let look at a few purpose statements, and decipher what they mean:

Disney's Purpose is to Spread Joy, Happiness, and Optimism in the World

Everything the Walt Disney company does is benchmarked against this. The company is at its best when they achieve this in everything they do. Whether it's building theme parks, producing

movies and TV shows, designing cruise experiences, or creating video games and merchandize, if the core purpose isn't achieved, it's not Disney.

When I joined the company, I vividly recall my orientation session. This was over two days. Among many of the brand videos I was shown, one stands out in my memory. This video was about Walt's dream and what he wanted to achieve. He was driven by his unrelenting passion to create a novel fantasy land—a magical and fun place where people could escape the mundane outside world, and simply enjoy themselves. The video highlighted Walt's tough journey and his unwavering determination to create his masterpiece and make a difference in the world.

This deep philosophy guides the business even today. Every new venture is assessed against the company purpose and if it delivers on it. On my first trip to the Disney HQ in Burbank, I was amazed at how top leadership was so in synch with this purpose.

Everyone spoke about their projects and new initiatives, and how these would fulfil this greater good of uplifting lives and bringing joy and happiness to kids and families throughout the world.

Every five-year strategic planning meeting was ultimately about how kids and families would be impacted by the company. Profits, EBITA, and bottom line success were all by-products of successfully delivering on the company purpose and brand promise.

It's no surprise that given all this, Disney is worth what it is today, and consistently ranks among the best places to work globally. This is the power of purpose.

Why Purpose Matters

Having a purposeful business philosophy is what attracts people to the company and, more importantly, retains them. At Disney, it's not uncommon to find people who have been with the company for 20–30 years, employees who have been there for most of their working lives and are still contributing passionately.

Purpose leads to another important question: What business are you really in?

Most leaders or employees, if asked what business they are in, would describe what they do, their products, or services. Leaders of purpose-driven businesses describe their company by what benefit they bring to the world. There's a significant difference here.

Today, people want to work for companies that stand for something beyond their products and services. They don't just want a job. They want to feel like they are making a difference in their own way. They want to feel significant, contribute towards something bigger, and give more meaning to their work.

This is where purpose matters.

Let's look at a few other purpose statements:

I had the pleasure of working with Tony Fernandes, CEO of Air Asia, on *The Apprentice Asia*. During our interview chats, he reiterated the purpose of Air Asia, which was *empowering everyone to fly*. You see this purpose statement on all Air Asia aircraft: "*Now everyone can fly*." It was clear he was not in the budget airline business but in the business of bringing the joy of flying to everyone. There was a clear benefit to the world in what he was doing. The purpose

transcended the transactional nature of the business, and that is special. Tony Fernandes articulates this *inner branding* philosophy whenever he has the opportunity to do so. Employees of the company are aligned around a core business philosophy that provides a benefit to the world.

Southwest Airlines' new purpose statement, crafted in 2016, is, "*We exist to connect people to what's important in their lives through friendly, reliable, and low-cost air travel.*"

I love how the big benefit, and what they stand for, is clearly expressed in the line, "*to connect people to what's important in their lives.*" They bring this purpose to life through real stories of passengers using the airline in times of distress, and by showing real empathy and heart for them—a nice example of living your purpose.

Walmart's purpose is to *save people money so that they can live better*. Again, a clear benefit to society purpose statement that expresses what difference they are making in the world.

With their recent closure of several stores, they need to now re-evaluate their mission and business strategy on how they intend to deliver on this purpose in the digital age.

Mark Zuckerberg is very clear about Facebook's purpose. For over ten years, it was about making the world more open and connected by bringing friends and family together. He has since tweaked it to be about empowering people to build communities, and thus bring the world closer together. This expanded purpose reflects Mark's vision for Facebook, going forward. It's not just about giving people a voice but also helping build common ground, so people can move forward together. Participation in communities

has been on the decline worldwide, and Facebook wants to change this. It wants to build common ground so people can participate in meaningful groups, meet new people, and get new perspectives.

At the time of writing this book, Facebook is under fire for its privacy issues. As the company has grown, it has seemingly let its guard down on protecting user privacy. The allegation of unwarranted user data harvesting has highlighted major operational issues that need to be urgently addressed. This is a major breach of trust between Facebook and its users who share their personal information with the platform.

A great purpose got Facebook to where they are, now it's about running the company ethically and upholding the promises made to their users. Being transparent, responding fast, taking ownership and making changes quickly to protect the interests of the billions of Facebook fans is what the world is waiting for Facebook to deliver on, fast.

Build social value is one of Facebook's core values that is being scrutinized very deeply right now. Everyone is watching Facebook to see how the company will act to regain user trust in its platform and deliver on its purpose of empowering people to build communities.

Airbnb's purpose is a powerful differentiator

Airbnb's CEO, Brian Chesky, never talks about Airbnb being in the apartment rental business; he talks of Airbnb as a company that allows you to "belong anywhere," implying that you are always at home, no matter where you travel, and you will experience a place like a local. This is the deep benefit and purpose that Airbnb is built on, and what its customers ultimately experience.

Airbnb’s “Belong Anywhere” business philosophy and purpose is what drives the company and the experience for its customers. Brian Chesky knows that if he can provide this experience each time a guest lives at a host’s apartment, he is *on purpose*.

Recently, Airbnb took this idea to a whole new level by introducing *Experiences*, where you can book local experiences with natives and experts in their areas, from Pilates to power boat rides, to bar hopping with a mixologist—another creative way of delivering on the “Belong Anywhere” philosophy, and a clear differentiation from a hotel experience.

Once you know what you stand for, it becomes clear what you need to do. It’s astonishing that Airbnb, at the time of writing, is valued at over 30 billion dollars, has handled over 200 million guests, and has over 4 million listings world-wide. That’s more than the top five major hotel brands combined, and this is mind-boggling when you consider that Airbnb owns no real estate!

Ed Catmull, President of Pixar, said it well when he talked about Pixar’s purpose: *“The real goal of what we’re doing is to have a positive impact on the world.”*

Transforming an Industrial Company

I recently consulted for an industrial manufacturing company. The business had been around for a long time and was quite successful. However, due to a downturn in the market, the business was going through some challenging times. Looking at their vision and mission statements, and their website and brochures, it was evident that they were very product focused. This also came across in the way senior leadership spoke about their business. It was clear

that we needed to go beyond the product, find the *soul* of the business, and discover the purpose and what benefit they brought to the world. After a few sessions and deep introspection, we crafted a purpose statement that everyone was happy with and excited about. They were no longer going to be identified by what they did but rather by WHY they did it. Going beyond the products they offered, they were now about “*empowering progress to build a better world.*” This new purpose statement energized the team and brought focus to their brand and communication messages. They were no longer just a manufacturing company; they now had a bigger reason for their existence. They were in the *empowering progress* business, with a cause to help build a better world. This new purpose was going to transform and propel the business forward.

Figuring out your purpose is the first step in creating your winning culture. Now, let’s move on to vision and mission.

Crafting Your Vision Statement

Urgent vs Important

It is top leadership's duty to ensure that once the purpose, vision, and mission are pronounced, they don't get lost in the day-to-day running of the businesses. Given the distractions of running a business in the information digital age, it is not uncommon to lose focus and be distracted by things that constantly demand your attention. I call this *busy-ness*.

Most leaders run around fixing what's urgent, while forgetting what is important. Focusing on the company DNA is what is important, as well as reminding employees at every opportunity about WHY they do what they do.

Bring your company DNA to life by every means possible: internal communications; meetings; town halls; state of the union addresses; campaigns; physically around the office (frame up the statements); celebrate and reward people for their contributions towards delivering on your mission.

With your company DNA figured out and in place, you have created the first stage of your vaccine against culturitis. Your immunization plan is moving ahead towards full eradication of this deadly corporate disease. You are on your way to building the dream company you always wanted.

Let's now move on to another crucial next step in the **ADCOE** culture creation blueprint, the first of the four codes: crafting your company code.



About the Author

Ashok Miranda is a *business transformation architect* and founder of **Transform and Transcend**. Ashok helps businesses transform to reach their full potential and be successful in the digital age. He has led diverse teams and won multiple global awards for his creative campaigns during his corporate tenure with leading global media companies, **Walt Disney Television**, and **Sony Pictures Television**.

Ashok is a highly sought-after speaker, trainer, and consultant. He is regularly invited to speak and conduct his transformative workshops and master classes at major industry events, conferences, and seminars. He is also a guest lecturer and conducts workshops at the top startup accelerators and universities in Singapore and the Singapore Chambers of Commerce.

Ashok delivers game-changing insights on company culture, branding, digital marketing, and customer experience. He is passionately committed to building purpose-driven companies and customer-centric brands that are relevant in today's hyper-connected digital economy.

Ashok's inspiring talks and training programs have sparked change, and transformed thousands of business leaders, executives, business owners, founders and aspiring entrepreneurs.

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