

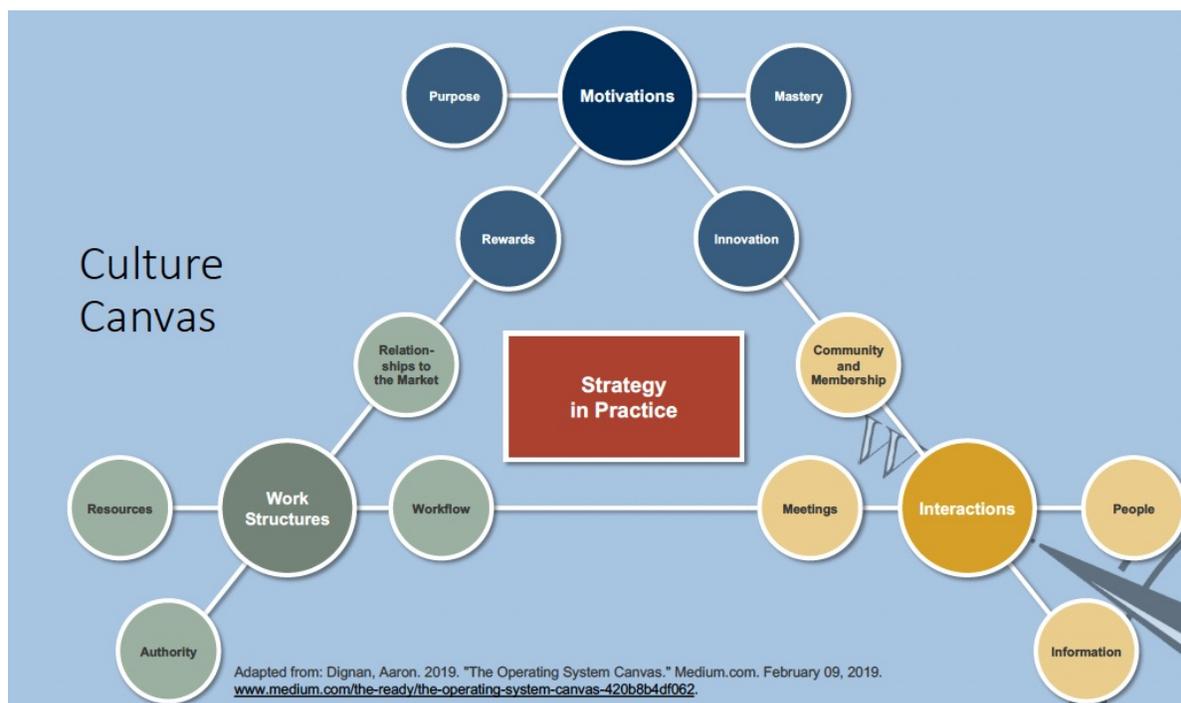


Fieldnotes from CFAR's CultureLab Volume 3, November 2022

Welcome to the third issue of *Fieldnotes*, CFAR **CultureLab**'s newsletter on organizational culture. This edition focuses on the intertwining of **culture** and **strategy**, something we see emerging in our work in multiple ways. If you enjoy reading this newsletter, please share it via your social networks, forward it to other people who may appreciate it, or send us your feedback and ideas.

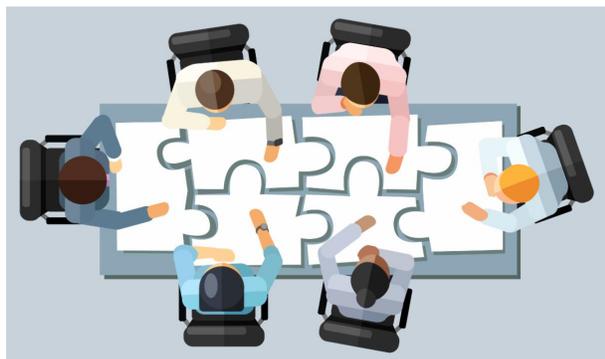


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Organizational culture and **strategy** have long been seen as separate and discrete domains

and areas of focus, with strategy looking at the external, market-facing elements of the organization, and culture as the internal perspective on how we get our work done and interact with each other. But this boundary has been less prevalent in our work over the last few years, as we see organizations building a focus on culture and community into their strategic planning processes, seeing culture as critical to success. In fact, one outgrowth of both the pandemic experience and its aftermath and the racial awakening following the murder of George Floyd in 2020 has been an increased awareness of culture and strategy as **deeply intertwined and interrelated**. Culture doesn't always “eat strategy for breakfast,” as Peter Drucker purportedly said, it often interacts with strategy, sometimes in a difficult wrestling match, and sometimes in a more artful dance. There is productive tension at this boundary, as we like to say.



A recent piece entitled “[Does your culture fit your strategy](#)” in *Strategy & Business* illustrates this interconnection well, as the authors ask questions about potential disconnects between culture and strategy. They argue for the need to “accurately define the dominant traits of an organization and how they might impact its ability to deliver on its strategic goals, as well as the workplace experience it offers to employees.” Ultimately, leaders should identify and magnify elements of the existing culture that both support the company’s strategy and are sources of pride. Not easy work!

“No cultural trait is inherently good or bad. On the contrary, just about any trait can include both strengths and weaknesses.”
- Alice Zhou, Mara Kelly, and Christopher Hannegan

We have also started reading [Melissa Daimler](#)’s new book “[ReCulturing: Design Your Company Culture to Connect with Strategy and Purpose for Lasting Success](#),” where she takes a **systems approach** to designing company culture at organizations both large and small. At CFAR, we are strong believers that “the development of culture goes beyond defining your values—it’s codifying them in behaviors and how you make them show up in processes and practices.” And we believe in the power of systems thinking too! As Daimler nicely frames **the connection between culture and strategy**, “Strategy is **what** we’re working on. Culture is **how** we’re working. And purpose is **why** we’re working.”



The integration of strategy and culture shows up in CFAR’s NextGen Family Business Peer Group, [led by Senior Manager Katelyn Husereau](#), which provides a forum for support and accountability as it consults on live business and family topics and challenges. In one of our most recent meetings, we discussed the issue of culture and its importance in attracting and retaining talent, especially in today’s job market. For culture change to be successful, it must be led through influence rather than

control or mandate; overlooking the importance of culture can hold back performance and collaboration.

We recently sat in on a webinar conversation from [American College of Healthcare Executives \(ACHE\)](#), “*A Conversation on DEI&I: Methods for Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategies in Healthcare Institutions*” with [Devray Kirkland, Vice](#)

[President, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Chief Diversity Officer at Cardinal Health](#). The session demonstrated the **value that implementing a DE&I strategy can have for healthcare institutions** and discussed the benefits of promoting conversations about DE&I in the workplace and fostering a culture rooted in belonging. Some key takeaways: the importance of continuing your own DE&I personal development journey, communicating your DE&I strategy both internally and externally, and providing forums for employees and other stakeholders to provide feedback on your strategy and tailor it accordingly.

A Conversation on DE&I: Methods for Advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategies in Healthcare Institutions

Devray Kirkland, Vice President, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Chief Diversity Officer at Cardinal Health

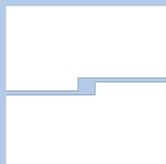


Lastly, [CFAR Vice President and Principal Jennifer Tomasik](#) reflects on the idea of **systemness** in healthcare, where cultural alignment gets elevated to the strategic level in her [interview with Wharton Healthcare Quarterly](#) celebrating its 10 years of publication. Systemness has always been relevant to our Healthcare Practice, but has become even more critical as we help growing delivery organizations consider the key elements that power their ability to succeed in an ever-changing landscape.

We would love to hear your experiences of where culture and strategy come together in your work in impactful ways—what you are learning at this boundary? Please share your thoughts, and this newsletter itself. If you are not a *Fieldnotes* subscriber yet, please subscribe below.

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