Many insurers are seeking to remodel their culture. How can you translate your intentions into real changes in the way your people behave and make decisions during the ‘moments that matter’?

Insurance 2020 and beyond: Creating a winning culture
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Foreword

Welcome to Insurance 2020 and beyond: Creating a winning culture.

Our latest Global CEO Survey revealed that insurance is the second most disrupted sector in the global economy, behind only entertainment & media.¹ The disruption reflects the speed with which the social, technological, environmental, economic and political (STEEP) changes we’ve been anticipating are becoming a reality within the insurance industry.

The biggest drivers of change are technology and its impact on customer expectations. Nearly 70% of insurance CEOs see the speed of technological change as a threat to growth. More than 60% are concerned about shifts in consumer spending and behaviour. But technology also opens up huge opportunities, enabling insurers to boost operational efficiency, carve out alternative business models and use newfound insights to create customised solutions.

Insurance CEOs differ on whether they see more opportunities or threats. But one thing is certain, this is a great environment in which to compete.

Culture as the differentiator

Culture is the key to realising an organisation’s potential. Indeed, a more agile, innovative, risk-conscious and customer-centric culture is set to be the primary competitive differentiator in the new landscape.

In 2013, we issued ‘Insurance 2020: Unleashing the value from values’ which discussed how culture can be your greatest ally or your biggest enemy. Disruption has accelerated dramatically since then. As we’ve helped clients address new challenges, our approach to defining and changing culture has evolved. This paper reflects our latest thinking on how culture can unlock the value from values.

Many insurers are seeking to remodel their culture. The problem is that most are still failing to translate their high-level intentions into real changes in the way their people behave and make decisions during the ‘moments that matter’. Communications and training alone won’t drive change. As we explore here, it’s vital to identify people’s most telling habits and routines and actively shape them. The keys to achieving this are what we believe are the five rules of a high-performing culture:

1. Make sure your purpose, vision and values are clear, tangible and actionable
2. Align leaders around this vision and support them to lead the change
3. Engage the whole organisation and embed change through ‘moments that matter’
4. Baseline behaviour and measure progress
5. Use change levers to reinforce behavioural change

We hope that you find the paper useful. If you have any queries or would like to discuss any of the issues in more detail, please speak to your usual PwC contact or one of the authors listed on page 14.

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PwC

¹ PwC 19th Annual Global CEO Survey (2016) ‘Seizing the future’ (www.pwc.com/ceoinsurance). As defined by significant concerns over overregulation, new market entrants, the speed of technological change and shifts in consumer spending and behaviour (www.pwc.com/ceosurvey)
Values, culture and behaviour – what they all come down to
Values, culture and behaviour are often seen as ‘soft’, but they’re actually what drives the business forward – or puts it at risk. We believe they come down to:

**Values**
Who you are and what you care about

**Culture**
The shared assumptions that guide what you do and how you do it

**Behaviour**
The tangible manifestation of your culture – what you actually do or say

Moments that matter – how values, culture and behaviour make a difference
People’s values, the way people behave and the culture that influence them are most telling in the ‘moments that matter’ – the critical decisions and interactions where changing behaviour can have a disproportionate impact. Examples include the moment an underwriter agrees to accept a particular risk at a particular price or the moment a response is made to a customer’s first notification of a claim. Certain behaviours can be especially telling in the ‘moments that matter’, so it’s vital your people know which moments matter and focus on the behaviours that will have the desired impact.
The right culture is now recognised as the key to engaging with customers, responding to their fast changing expectations and ensuring that decision making reflects the values of the organisation in the moments that matter. The right culture can also foster innovation, quick decision making and a willingness to embrace new ideas and ways of working needed to compete in a sector undergoing technological transformation. Indeed, our analysis shows that a strong and effective culture is more highly correlated with sustainable high performance than strategy, operating model or product coverage.

So what defines a winning culture and how can it be instilled within the organisation? Cultures will always differ and there is nothing that makes one superior to another. But they do have common foundations:

- Clear and compelling sense of purpose – attracts talent and guides expectations
- Engaged employees
- Curiosity, creativity and readiness to challenge
- Alignment – what’s said is what’s done, even when nobody is looking
- Long-term impact decisions – includes the outcomes for customers, colleagues and other stakeholders, as well as the financial returns

The ability to respond to a constantly changing environment in an agile, adaptable and customer-centric way depends on the attitudes and capabilities of the workforce. Organisationally, there should be a shift away from developing and selling products through the separate siloes of design, marketing and distribution (looking inside-out) to discerning the needs and expectations of customers and working back to create the right solutions (looking outside-in).

To get ahead you don’t necessarily need a new digital strategy – you need a business model and a culture that puts the customer at its core, facilitated seamlessly by technology.
The ability to respond in an agile, adaptable and customer-centric way depends on the attitudes and capabilities of the workforce.

**Disruptive technology**
Disruption is having a profound impact on the insurance market. Some insurers have seized the opportunity to bring new technology and business models into their organisations, for instance buying start-ups and/or setting up innovation hubs or looking at how robotics and roboadvisors could be used in their business. The next challenge is to embed this into their existing legacy business to take advantage of a changing market place. Start-ups tend to have a clear culture and sense of purpose, something which more mature insurance businesses could learn from, both to adapt to the new world and to attract bright new talent.

**Customer-centricity in a data driven world**
Consumer trust has to be at the centre of your organisation’s strategic aims, however recent incidents (cyber attacks/technological failures) resulting in data loss or exposure have undermined this. The interface between an organisation and a customer has never been bigger or more complex, while in parallel our ability to harness data has grown exponentially e.g. insights into customers and your own organisation. Does your organisation and your employees treat your customer’s data in the same way they’d protect their own?

**Data-based decision making**
To support a new, faster paced business, you will need to use data and technology to support better decision making. Some firms are already exploring how new data can support the core business decisions of an insurer, for instance the use of weather modelling or targeted products based on demographic insight. To take full advantage of the opportunities presented by these new data sets, you will need clear accountability for risk. This will allow you to give your frontline teams more licence to embrace innovation, confident in the knowledge that they’re taking proper account of the risks they are exposed to and are providing an appropriate response.

**Key questions for your organisation:**

- Are you a customer centric or a product centric organisation?
- Do you know exactly what data you have, where it is stored, who has access and how it is protected?
- Do your people know who is accountable for decision making and do they have the right information to make the right choices?
- Are your people proud to work for your brand?

*For more questions, visit PwC’s Strategy&’s Org DNA Profiler survey which will diagnose your organization’s culture in minutes.*

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2 ‘Accelerating change: London FinTech 2015 - 2016’ Corporates are struggling to partner with FinTech start-ups. Our research shows that less than half (45%) of FS companies have FinTech at the heart of their strategy and only 27% have purchased services from FinTech companies.

3 ‘Millenials at work: Reshaping the workplace in financial services’, published by PwC, April 2012, examines the perspectives of those who have entered the workforce since 2000 around the world including what careers they would favour and what they want from them.

4 http://www.strategyand.pwc.com/global/home/what_we_do/services/ocl/ocl_service_areas/49036161/ orgdna-profiler
Most insurance boards know what values they would expect their employees to live up to. But few have actually been able to embed these good intentions and make a real difference to the all-important habits and routines that shape the culture within their business.

The mission statements of most leading insurers are a testament to how important culture and values are but if you looked at the values espoused by most insurers you would be struck by how similar they are. Fifty leading international insurers’ values include at least one of the following:

- Client focus
- Integrity
- Excellence
- Teamwork
- Diversity and Respect
- People and Quality

Values are important because they define what matters to your organisation and what it stands for. But in reality these high-level aspirations rarely provide clear guidance on how to behave day-to-day with customers or with each other. Most companies are failing to put the necessary focus or energy behind these values or bring them into line with performance objectives and incentives. As a result, employees are largely left to make their own interpretation of what’s important, which in most cases is doing what they’ve always done.

And while performance management and rewards can reinforce the desired culture and the behaviour it spurs, they can’t change them on their own.

Culture can only change and deliver the driving goals of your organisation if it’s second nature – built into your people’s habits and routines. A practical approach is to support your people to act their way into new ways of thinking, as opposed to trying to challenge and change the beliefs and assumptions of every individual within your organisation. In the next section we look at what it takes to develop this in practice.

A practical approach is to support your people as opposed to trying to challenge and change the beliefs and assumptions of every individual within your organisation.

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5 PwC analysis based on publically available websites in 2016
How to unlock the value from your values

How can you turn your values from aspirations into real and everyday features of how people behave?

Cultural change is not an end in itself; the overriding objective is to improve business performance. As Figure 1 outlines, creating a clear link between what the business wants to achieve and the way people behave and make decisions is at the heart of both effective cultural change and successful performance.

**Purpose**

The starting point is a clear articulation of your purpose, vision and values. Your purpose is what you’re in business to do, reflecting the value you deliver to shareholders, customers and society as a whole. This might be helping people to make provision for their retirement or enabling businesses to take the risks needed to fulfil their ambitions. Despite the obvious importance of insurance, asserting this sense of purpose has become a challenge for insurers, with staff losing sight of the value of what they do and the cover they provide often seen by policyholders as a cost to be minimised. It’s telling that 25% of insurance CEOs have changed their organisation’s purpose in the last three years to take account of the broader impact they have on society and 9% are considering this.6

The shifting industry landscape and the changing world it operates in provide opportunities to redefine and reassert your purpose, from providing effective support for an ageing population to understanding and managing the implications of a more volatile climate. Articulating your purpose in this way may help strengthen staff motivation and help overcome some of the lingering disillusionment created by the financial crisis. This is especially important in attracting the millennial generation coming into the workforce, many of whom are now reluctant to consider a career in insurance.7

A clear articulation of your purpose would also help to make sure what you do is properly valued by policyholders, investors and politicians, which will be reflected in stronger brand loyalty, higher share values and a more secure licence to operate.

**Vision**

Your vision encapsulates where you want to be and how you’re going to get there – your driving goals. This includes why customers would choose you over a competitor (e.g. cost, superior products, or better understanding of their needs), why people

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6 19th Annual Global CEO Survey (2016): ‘Seizing the future’ (www.pwc.com/ceoinsurance)
7 ‘Millennials at work: Reshaping the workplace in financial services’, published by PwC, April 2012, examines the perspectives of those who have entered the workforce since 2000 around the world including what careers they would favour and what they want from them
would want to work for you (e.g. your reputation) and why an investor would back you (e.g. ability to innovate or delivery of superior returns). The danger is allowing the stated vision to become too vague, intangible or unrealistic to provide meaningful guidance and expectations. There are lots of examples of organizations with very clear purpose and vision, for instance those focused on low cost travel or consumer brands renowned for design and innovation. In both cases, customers are clear about what to expect and employees know what they are being asked to deliver.

Values
In defining what you care about, your values could manifest themselves in areas such as how you treat your customers, or the importance you place on innovation, teamwork and empowerment. Values can’t exist in a vacuum – they need to be relevant to what your employees do in the pursuit of their personal and business objectives. For example, stating that ‘empowerment’ is one of your values is meaningless unless your employees are clear about how much autonomy they’re allowed in making decisions and what mandate they have to challenge superiors. It’s also important to demonstrate how this empowerment improves performance.

Clear and actionable
Inevitably, making sure your purpose, vision and values are sufficiently tangible and well understood is more easily said than done. In a business start-up, there is a clear sense of what the enterprise is, what it wants to be and individuals’ roles and responsibilities within that. But organisations can lose sight of their purpose, vision and values over time. As generally mature businesses, insurers are especially susceptible to this blurring of their guiding ethos.

Add in the complexities of independent brokers, distributors, contractors, outsourced services and other third parties, and your purpose, vision and values can become even more dilute. In the eyes of the customer these groups still represent you as an insurer, but how do you instill your values in these groups who aren’t your direct employees?

There is also a risk that key elements of the purpose, vision and values may be contradictory. Even if the people at the top are clear about what is expected, the people on the ground may be getting conflicting signals. For example, the desire to put the customer first may conflict with other objectives such as cutting processing times or reducing claims costs. But if staff have little guidance on the order of priorities they will make their own judgements, seek to second-guess what they think management wants, or disagree on what needs to be done.

The effectiveness of the link between purpose, vision and values at one end and business outcomes at the other depends on how well staff understand what is expected of them and the extent to which this is actively shaped and reinforced.

The critical few
In our experience, the organisations that focus on a few, specific elements to effect cultural change are far more successful than those who attempt to implement all-encompassing change initiatives. We have identified what we believe are the ‘critical few’.9

Firstly, focus on a small number of critical behaviours, i.e. the day to day ways of doing things that spread easily between employees. Identify the existing cultural traits that your people engage with emotionally which define your organization’s identity. And finally, engage the informal leaders of your organization, those individuals who are looked up to by their peers and can motivate others. Once you’ve identified these, you are in a great position to start making things happen.

In practice, we believe there are five rules for changing culture.

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1. Make sure your purpose, vision and values are clear, tangible and actionable

Set out a clear order of priorities, guidance on what should prevail when objectives conflict, and what habits and routines will need to change. If your stated purpose, vision and values are vague and meaningless, they won’t be acted upon.

Organisational buy-in is crucial. It’s important to convince your people that change is necessary, convey the potential benefits it offers and what it actually means for the way they do things.

2. Align leaders around this vision and support them to lead the change

The way leaders behave sets the tone for others to follow. The leading insurers are marked out by their CEOs’ ability to convey an open, compelling and consistent strategic vision, even if this means tough choices such as divestments and redundancies. The best people want to work for these companies.

Just as important is how leaders behave in line with the stated vision and values. Examples might include rejecting potentially profitable products if they might compromise the commitment to customers or insisting that all breaches of risk limits are reported to the board as part of a culture that promotes openness, accountability and challenge.

3. Engage the whole organisation and embed change through moments that matter

You can’t change an entire culture and way of working overnight, but key behaviours (i.e. what people say or do) can be shifted in a relatively short space of time. It’s important to engage everybody in an organisation and to concentrate efforts on the decision points and interactions that have the most impact – the moments that matter. Asking people to concentrate on changing their behaviour in one or two moments is a far more palatable ‘ask’ than demanding people change their beliefs, assumptions and values overnight. By changing behaviour in a few key moments, people are able to act their way to new ways of thinking, allowing them time to adapt.
4. Baseline behaviour and measure progress

Culture is very difficult to measure. Behaviour, however, is measurable and, as behaviour is the tangible manifestation of culture, this measurement can provide a good reflection of the overall culture of a firm. Recording a baseline of your current culture gives you a starting point against which to measure change.

Furthermore, it is a widely held view that ‘what gets measured gets done’. Measuring behaviour not only fosters self-awareness in your employees and demonstrates that you are serious about change, but it is also likely to influence people’s behaviours which will impact your culture over time.

5. Use change levers to reinforce behavioural change

Appropriate reinforcers such as organisational structures, communications, training, systems and reward need to align with the behaviour you want to drive. Missing out this crucial step may mean people receive mixed messages, as communicated values and actual ways of working do not match up. People need to feel that if they commit to change, they will be recognised for it.

Examples might include investment in big data mining systems and training in how to use the unstructured analysis to help enhance customer profiling. Reward structures should not only recognise improved revenue generation by an individual or team, but the impact of better customer understanding, satisfaction and retention on the long-term prospects of your business.

How long will change take?

A common question is how long the creation of a high-performing culture takes. Many of the key changes in behaviour and underlying habits and routines can be enacted relatively quickly, even if the overall cultural change may take longer. Once in train, new behaviours can often create their own momentum. But these quick wins can only be achieved if there is clarity of purpose, vision and values from the top and expectations of the front line are clear.

Focus on measuring culture

Measuring culture has moved on from annual staff surveys and focus groups. New technology, new data and new ways of mining it, new consumers, new market forces and new interactions between all of these and your organisation/employees mean new ways of looking at and tracking how your culture is evolving – and whether it’s moving in the right direction.

Cultural measurement frameworks should incorporate:

- metrics to monitor what influences people’s behaviour and how these are changing
- tools and techniques to measure actual and perceived behaviour across your organisation
- outcome measures of your people’s behaviour to link your strategic business priorities to your cultural change
- indicators of external perception of your organisation’s culture (e.g. social media)

A clear, repeatable approach to measurement covering these key points will provide backward and forward looking indicators for your senior management – and show regulators you’re proactively looking at organisational culture. Your baseline measurement may also provide your ‘case for change’ before embarking on a culture change project, so it’s wise to start thinking about it early on.

Conduct First: Measuring culture through behaviours

Conduct First is an online survey tool designed to help financial service organisations to define and measure behaviour within their business.

The scenario-based online survey presents employees with a dilemma and asks them to consider a range of potential actions. Employees’ levels of confidence in their chosen actions are also captured, which indicates the likelihood of those actions being taken in practice.

The tool measures what behaviours employees believe the culture of their organisation most encourages and, importantly, what factors most influence what actions they would take in a given situation.

Key findings provide actionable insights to support senior management in understanding the current trade-offs their staff believe they are likely to make and, crucially, what they believe the current culture of the organisation encourages. This is critical as evidence shows that, over time, people will tend to behave in line with this perceived culture.

One of the overarching benefits of Conduct First is that the content of the diagnostic is designed collaboratively with the organisation’s leadership to be bespoke for their business and aligned to their specific requirements. Supplemented with leadership interviews focus groups and elements of the measurement framework outlined above, Conduct First helps organisations understand their current culture and the interventions required to meet their goals.

10 http://www.pwc.co.uk/r2i/conduct-first.html
Could culture be the disruptive element in the insurance market that changes the game, changing the reputation of a firm – or even an industry – from a grudge product to one that customers recognise as helping protect what they value today and save for their future?

Insurance has come a long way from its origins insuring ships and their cargo, and nobody can be certain of what the future holds. But to make sure your firm can weather the highs and lows of whatever the future does bring, we believe the right culture will be critical.

Fast forward even a few years and the world looks very different. More transactions will be carried out through roboadvice and customers will demand a more bespoke service with more control over their long term saving. Millennials will be starting families of their own and looking to protect their loved ones, with very different expectations from previous generations of how they interact with their insurer. The next generation after millennials will start to become customers - how and from whom will they want to buy insurance?

To succeed, firms will need a digital, customer-centric, innovative, agile culture that quickly adapts to change. This is a long way from where traditional insurers are today. We know from experience that you can’t change culture overnight – so now’s the time to act.

Succeed in aligning your vision and values, tone from the top and employee behaviours and the potential benefits are infinite. Imagine the innovation of Apple, strength of reputation of John Lewis, the business model clarity of Easyjet and an impeccable regulatory record – these are all possible.

The insurer of the future
This paper has explored how people's behaviours underpin the culture of an organisation. At the same time, culture can have a significant influence on how people behave. A culture of fear, empowerment or entrepreneurial spirit will all promote different behaviours and emotions which can result in very different outcomes.

PwC and London Business School conducted a joint research study designed primarily to investigate the role of emotions in determining when and why employees try to beat internal competitors using creativity versus resorting to unethical behaviour.10 We predicted that when competition elicits anxiety, people will be more likely to increase their performance through unethical means. Conversely, when competition elicits excitement, people will be more likely to strive for creative means to win.

The study involved 2,431 managers from three UK financial services organisations representing insurance, retail banking, corporate banking and wealth management. Participants completed two online self-completion surveys approximately one month apart.

Survey 1 was designed to understand how the different ‘framing’ of a work situation affects both emotions and behaviour.

Survey 2 was designed to understand how the content and perception of organisational policies shapes an individual’s behaviour in competition.

We found that the emotional state of employees has a profound impact on the behavioural ‘paths’ they choose in order to win in competition.

Emotion is often ignored as a business tool but emotions are powerful drivers of behaviour. They can be triggered by the right management action leading to desired behaviours and better outcomes for clients and the business. When triggered in the right way, emotions can help managers drive better outcomes for clients and for the business. Left unmanaged or ignored negative emotions such as fear and anxiety can do the exact opposite.

**Implications for your culture**

- Create excitement about winning in the market and NOT a fear of losing. Understand the factors that result in this response and design your working environment accordingly.
- Design and deploy scenario based training for supervisors, managers and leaders in framing requests to achieve the desired business impact.
- Design HR policy and process to take account of the emotional response of staff and effectively communicate these policies.
- Review recruitment screening and on-boarding processes to encourage appropriate competition.

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10 [http://www.pwc.co.uk/industries/financial-services/regulation/why-you-can-scare-bankers-into-doing-the-right-thing.html](http://www.pwc.co.uk/industries/financial-services/regulation/why-you-can-scare-bankers-into-doing-the-right-thing.html)
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In addition to the names above, the editorial team is grateful for the contribution of Gabriel Harris from PwC UK.
Of further interest

Female Millennials in Financial Services: strategies for a new era of talent
Female millennials are set to play a critical part in future FS growth. What does the generation of women entering the workforce and moving into management positions want from the organisations they work for? www.pwc.to/reinvention

Making Diversity a Reality
Through an employee’s career we have identified milestones, during which an employee’s interaction with them is vital in fostering a culture of diversity. In this report we look at the enablers of change through this career journey and how organisations can take real actions that will have a positive impact on their employees and their business. http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/industries/financial-services/publications/making-diversity-reality.html

19th Annual Global CEO Survey: Key talent findings in the financial services industry
Financial services CEOs are concerned about the potential threats of a lack of availability of skills and speed of technological change pose to the growth prospects of their organisations. Balancing different priorities and developing the adaptive, diverse, digitally savvy and relationship-driven workforce needed will require a new mindset as much as a new skillset. See our findings from the 490 financial services CEOs we interviewed. www.pwc.com/ceostalent

Foraging a winning culture
In this paper we look at why it’s time for a new take on culture, which would seek to unleash the full force of your culture by aligning it with your overall strategic objectives. Rather than simply responding to regulatory demands and fixing the failings of the past, the priority would be building for the future. http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/industries/financial-services/publications/foraging-a-winning-culture.html

Opportunities await: How InsurTech is reshaping insurance
The report is a deeper dive into the insurance results of our recent FinTech survey and highlights the importance of insurance companies across the globe embracing a creative culture and putting InsurTech at the heart of their strategy. www.pwc.com/insurtech

Insurance 2020 & beyond: Necessity is the mother of reinvention
Insurance is facing more disruption than any other industry, posing threats for some and opening up promising commercial possibilities for others. What does this mean for your business? www.pwc.to/reinvention

Insurance 2020 & beyond: Reaping the dividends of cyber resilience
Fast growing demand for cyber insurance offers a huge commercial opportunity for insurers and reinsurers, but could also expose the industry to potentially devastating losses. How can your business put cyber insurance on a sustainable footing? www.pwc.to/cyber

Insurance Banana Skins
Insurance Banana Skins examines the risks facing the insurance industry and identifies those that appear most urgent to insurance practitioners and close observers of the insurance scene around the world. www.pwc.to/bananaskins

Why you can’t scare people into doing the right thing
PwC and London Business School conducted a joint research study designed primarily to investigate the role of emotions in determining when and why employees try to beat internal competitors using creativity versus resorting to unethical behaviour. http://www.pwc.co.uk/industries/financial-services/strategyandpeople/why-you-can-scare-bankers-into-doing-the-right-thing.html

19th Annual CEO Survey 2016
PwC’s Annual Global CEO Survey, now in its nineteenth year, aims to inform and stimulate the debate on how businesses are facing today’s challenges. Over the years, thousands of CEOs around the world have taken the time to share their views with us. pwc.com/ceosurvey
For the latest findings of the CEO Survey from the insurance industry, please visit pwc.com/ceoinsurance

Set up to do the right thing
The right culture is now recognised as the key to rebuilding trust and getting closer to customers. So what does a winning culture look like and how do you know that you’ve got one? http://www.pwc.co.uk/industries/financial-services/regulation/other/set-up-to-do-the-right-thing-creating-a-winning-culture.html

The Critical Few (Katzenbach paper)
Companies with the most effective culture seek out and continually reinforce so-called keystone habits. Companies that recognize and encourage such habits stand to build cultures with influence that goes beyond employee engagement and directly boosts performance. http://www.strategyand.pwc.com