7 Things Great Workplace Cultures Have in Common

(Through the Lens of **The Cultural Microsphere™**)

A practical guide for leaders who want to strengthen culture from the inside out.

Click or swipe through each page to explore the Guide and reflect on how you can take greater ownership of your workplace cultural experience.

Every workplace is different, but the best ones share a few things in common.

This guide explores the shared foundations that enable cultures to thrive, based on **The Cultural Microsphere™**, a model developed by Christopher Hudson to help organizations define, measure, and progress culture through the lens of the employee experience.

Want a better culture? Start by strengthening what surrounds your people.

1 Growth is Prioritized, Not Assumed

Cultures that thrive invest in the growth of their people, all of them.   Employees who grow, stay.

Human Behaviors to Look For:
- Managers regularly give developmental feedback
- Career conversations are part of 1:1s
- Employees share learning goals openly
- Managers act as mentors and coaches

Alignment Strategies:
- Develop a career lattice framework with levels and pathways for natural career progression
- Track participation in learning programs
- Audit 1:1s for career discussions
- Pulse surveys on skill development opportunities

2 Systems are Both Scalable and Adaptable.

Rigid tools and clunky workflows slow cultures down. Thriving cultures invest in systems that remove friction and adapt to change.

Human Behaviors to Look For:
- Employees surface inefficiencies without fear
- Teams flex workflows based on needs and not legacy habits
- Cross-functional collaboration runs on aligned, AI-enabled platforms

Alignment Strategies:
- Audit workflows for unnecessary complexity
- Track tool usage and effectiveness across teams
- Identify systems that no longer serve the current scale

3 Psychological Safety is Practiced, Not Preached

It's not enough to say "bring your whole self to work." Great cultures actively create space for candor, inclusion, vulnerability, and new ideas.

Human Behaviors to Look For:
- Employees challenge ideas without negative consequences
- Mistakes are shared and discussed as learning moments
- Team members admit uncertainty and ask for help

Alignment Strategies:
- Conduct psychological safety pulse surveys
- Track participation in open forums or innovation sessions
- Train leaders in inclusive feedback and trust-building behaviors

4 Underperformance is Addressed Promptly

Great cultures don't ignore performance issues. They address them with clarity and compassion.

Human Behaviors to Look For:
- Managers provide direct, supportive feedback and focus on accountability
- Teams uphold shared performance standards
- Underperformance is met with action (not avoidance)

Alignment Strategies:
- Track frequency and quality of performance conversations
- Monitor team morale and engagement where performance gaps exist
- Recognize managers who handle accountability well
- Terminate employment when it's time

# 5 Communication is Open and Multi-Directional

Cultures that truly progress create a continuous exchange of ideas, questions, and clarity. When people feel heard, cultures move faster.

Human Behaviors to Look For:
- Employees ask questions and share ideas in meetings or forums
- Leaders explain not just the "what," but the "why"
- Teams engage in feedback loops

Alignment Strategies:
- Conduct internal comms audits (e.g., who's talking, who's listening?)
- Track engagement in town halls, team updates, and Ask Me Anythings
- Have regular alignment check-ins
- Promote transparent decision-making across functions
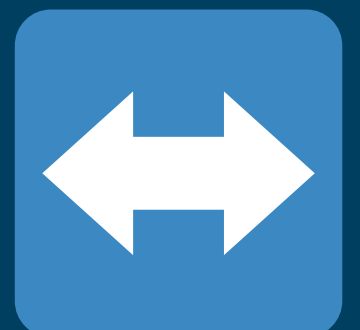
6 Effort is Seen, Valued, and Honored

When employee effort is honored, celebrating wins is more impactful! Recognition builds momentum.

Human Behaviors to Look For:
- Managers recognize progress, not just outcomes
- Teams debrief after setbacks and successes
- Employees speak with pride about their contributions

Alignment Strategies:
- Review frequency and distribution of recognition across teams
- Use peer-nominated programs to surface unseen effort
- Analyze how recognition ties to core values and business goals
- Celebrate process improvements and learning

7 Change is Normalized and Supported

In thriving cultures, change is a normal part of the rhythm and never seen as a disruption. Teams navigate change with less fear and faster execution.

Human Behaviors to Look For:
- Employees suggest improvements before they're mandated
- Leaders model curiosity and flexibility
- Teams adopt new tools and processes without long delays

Alignment Strategies:
- Track adoption metrics for new initiatives or systems
- Recognize "change champions" in each department
- Survey how supported employees feel during transitions
- Build time for reflection and iteration into rollout plans

The Cultural Microsphere™ | A framework by Christopher Hudson
www.christopherhudsonhr.com

The Cultural Microsphere™

These 7 foundations strengthen the employee experience at the Cultural Microsphere level. Culture lives across all 5 layers. Use this framework to guide your next culture conversation, team reset, or leadership decision.

MISSION

Sets the organization's overarching purpose and direction.

CORE VALUES

Act as a set of guiding principles that define how employees are expected to behave.
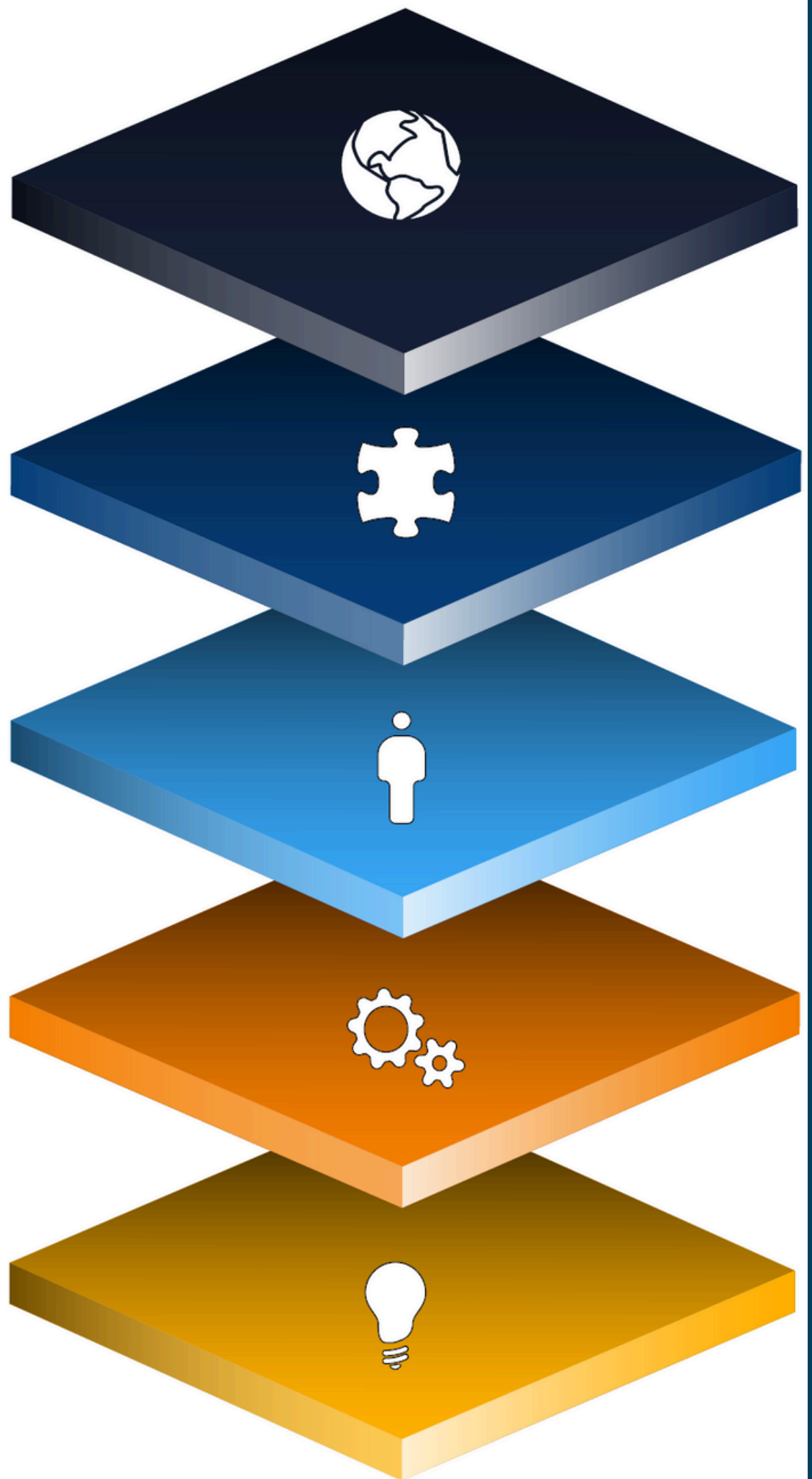
HUMAN BEHAVIORS

Are the observable and measurable actions that bring the core values to life in everyday work.

CULTURE

At the macro level, it is defined as the ways in which employees create, collaborate, and innovate to solve problems and to produce business outcomes.

CULTURAL MICROSPHERE

At the micro level, it is shaped by the investments each employee makes in time, in effort, in commitment to change, and in bringing their personal values to work.

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