



BUILDING A CULTURE OF HAPPINESS

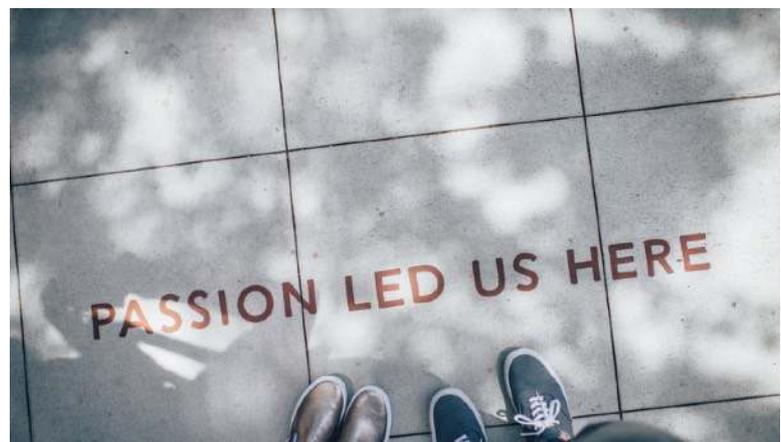
DOES CULTURE REALLY MATTER?

When Vishen Lakhiani from Mindvalley focused on his culture, this is what he experienced:

- ▶ huge growth – his business exploded 400%
- ▶ work became fun – he had terrific employees, got to do team vacations and fun parties
- ▶ he started living a dream life – the business was generating money and he loved his life again
- ▶ he started getting dream clients
- ▶ he no longer had to fight to get the next client – they started flocking to his company
- ▶ his role changed – his role was now to say “no” to clients, potential employees and opportunities because he had so many
- ▶ he started getting great job applicants for roles. He stopped advertising. People started applying regardless
- ▶ and his company won awards

His biggest sales day was when he was passed out on the beach, miles away from the office.

HAPPINESS IS THE NEW PRODUCTIVITY



Vishen Lakhiani from mindvalley.com states his big turning point in business came when he realised it's not about strategy, the marketing plan, having the best business plan or the best people. It's about *mindset*.

He had to intentionally create his company culture.

DOES CULTURE REALLY MATTER?

Since Vishen started paying attention to how he wanted his company to be, he has won awards and his biggest sales day was when he was passed out on the beach, miles away from the office.

For him, it's all about getting into flow - and having a focus on creating an environment which sets his team up for success. He needed everyone to be rowing in the same direction. I know how it feels when I am in that space. That's when magic happens. But how do you put it into actionable words?

I've studied what Vishen Lakhiani from mindvalley.com has to say on the subject and here's what he said ...



HOW TO GET INTO FLOW

Vishen believes flow is the balance of two things:

- ▶ being happy in the now, right now
- ▶ having a positive vision of the future

But you must also be aware of the paradox of intention:

- ▶ You must have goals, but your happiness cannot be tied to those goals.
- ▶ You must be happy before your goals are achieved. Be happy in the now. Happiness comes from the journey, not the destination.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FLOW

“We forget the importance of being in flow. Large chunks of humanity are trapped in careers they hate. Wake up dreading. If you do not enjoy what you do you cannot be in a state of joy.”

A STATE OF FLOW

‘Flow is the mental state of operation in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energised focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity. In essence, flow is characterised by complete absorption in what one does.’
- Mihály Csíkszentmihályi

His theory is that you are generally in one of four states:

1. downward spiral

unhappy where you are now, with no vision of the future. Focused on being miserable. It just gets worse.

2. current reality trap

happy where you are right now, but no vision of the future. Not unhappy enough to do anything to change things. However, our two spiritual needs – to grow and contribute – are unfulfilled. Result: – mediocrity and no fulfilment.

3. stress and anxiety

not happy right now but big visions of the future. A lot of people are here. You have terrific visions, but aren't functioning with maximum impact because you're unhappy.

or the preferred state:

4. flow

happy in the present, with grand visions of the future

His equation is:

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \text{thought} \\
 \text{(vision of the future)} \\
 + \\
 \text{emotion} \\
 \text{(current reality)} \\
 = \\
 \text{flow} \\
 \text{(attraction)}
 \end{array}$$

Vishen states that being in flow magnifies the impact of whatever you do. Notice when you're in flow and when you're not – your focus should be on bringing yourself back to flow. He calls the practice or discipline of keeping in flow 'blissipline'.

He says, “Your passions are breadcrumbs that lead you on the path to your destiny.”

As well as authoring these insights and theories, Vishen also outlined ten tactics that he uses to reinforce that philosophy. How would your working life change if you introduced them?

- 1.gratitude
- 2.awesomeness report
- 3.pay yourself first
- 4.appreciation
- 5.the 45/5 rule
- 6.sharing and trading knowledge – learn by teaching
- 7.meditate and visualise
- 8.sponsored fun
- 9.positive stamina
- 10.experience and connections

Let's look at them each in turn:

1. GRATITUDE

Practice gratitude daily.

Mindvalley.com set up a website called <http://www.gratitudelog.com> which they deem "the Happiest Place on the Internet. The community for spreading gratitude and appreciation. Open to shiny, happy people, businesses, and organisations the world over. It's where everyone can go to express gratitude."

The mindset is 'what you appreciate, appreciates'. So magnify happiness. Research also shows that when you express gratitude your happiness goes up – Vishen quotes a university study that showed after 30 days of consistently expressing gratitude every day your overall happiness goes up 25%. Not a bad return on investment.

When was the last time you not only expressed gratitude, but did it publicly and shared it with your team? It's a great way to get to know your colleagues and staff better too by understanding what they are grateful for in their lives.

2. AWESOMENESS REPORT

This is used to share cool stories from inside work, outside work, celebrate new innovations and what went right on a weekly basis. It's designed to honour the successes of the previous week in a process that makes gratitude visible. Everyone celebrates together what went right and employees get recognised for their contribution.

By bringing in funny rituals they also create a sense of joy. They have a 'bell of awesomeness' which is rung when a new sales record is hit. The school where I have done my professional coach training live their values every day. To 'create fun with a little bit of quirk' they do the same when a new coach joins. To celebrate the decision to change their and others' lives through coaching a bell is rung. I was welcomed with singing!

All these touches formalise gratitude, bring joy to the employees and reinforce your values.

Contrast that with the normal dry weekly reporting where the main focus is on what hasn't been achieved, what needs to be fixed ...

As Vishen points out, it doesn't stop things going wrong from time to time – but instead of focusing on issues as negatives, employees are motivated and empowered to find solutions themselves. And that often leads to great leaps in insight and new amazing solutions.

Profits with purpose and pleasure. Can you swap your weekly work in progress meetings and progress reports for awesomeness reports? Or incorporate some of these learnings to create more focus on the good stuff?

3. PROFIT SHARE – PAY YOURSELF FIRST

At Mindvalley.com, 10% of profit goes to employees. First. Before anyone else is paid.

As a result, their team's salary cheques can double. As Vishen says "Nothing happens til you have a dream and start big."

The net result is that employee goals and management goals are tied together. There is perfect alignment. No 'us' and 'them'. When you get a massive crunch day nobody minds making extra effort to work all the hours to get it all done. And get it done right. First time.

In Simon Sinek's 'Leaders Eat Last' he also explores the concept of creating a circle of safety. There is usually a circle of safety around senior management – those in the circle look out for themselves and others in the circle. When you extend your circle of safety to include your teams – and demonstrate it by paying them first – you create willing intrapreneurs, who treat the business like it's their own. Willing to take risks. Who care about every dollar like it's their own. Who will strive to get the job done right, first time, every time.

Where do you focus? On what's going right or what's going wrong? And have you created an environment where intrapreneurs can flourish in your business?

4. APPRECIATION

As Shawn Achor shows in his book 'The Happiness Advantage', happiness is created not by the weather, how much money you have or how handsome you are, but by the strength of your social network.

Vishen has taken this principle and made it actionable. Mindvalley.com have created what they call the 'sweet sugar love machine'. Like many companies, employees are singled out for praise – however this isn't just a Manager's Choice Award or Employee of the Month.

This enables employees to lavish appreciation for each other every time it happens. Vishen says, "Like flowers flourish in water, employees flourish in praise."

The 'sweet sugar love machine' is a piece of software and employees send virtual gifts online to reward, appreciate and praise their peers.

As a result office politics have gone – everyone is too busy helping each other.

Love Week is another extension of this. Every person is designated a Secret Angel for the week (usually on the run up to St Valentine's Day). Every day during the week they get to receive and give. It could be a cup of coffee. A flower. A song. A picture. Their Secret Angel is revealed at the end of the week. Employees love it and report they get the most out of giving.

As a result, happiness increases and continues long after love week is over. You can see more about it [here](#).

How do your staff show appreciation and gratitude for each other? How strong are your teams' social networks?

5. 45/5 RULE

There are always times when we need to work longer hours. At Mindvalley.com, the usual working week is 45 hours maximum. And they have a sub rule – 5 of those must be invested in 'learning new stuff'.

So 40 hours are spent executing, 5 hours on mindset, meditation, marketing.

They send their staff off to seminars around the world. Or they spend their time reading.

Researching the latest cool ideas. Or doing things they are passionate about.

"The more you invest in your mind, your knowledge and your experiences, the richer you will be."

A Tony Robbins' philosophy aligned with this is CANI – constant and never ending improvement.

How much time are you investing in your mind and those of your co-workers? Are you green and growing or ripe and dying?

6. SHARING AND TRADING KNOWLEDGE - LEARN BY TEACHING

The 45/5 rule is great for the individual – but how does the company benefit? Well, the next principle means the individuals don't keep their new-found knowledge to themselves. They have to share the knowledge that they've learned. They learn by teaching. And they become better by teaching.

The old adage of 'see one, do one, teach one'.

As Tony Robbins says, "Knowledge isn't power, knowledge in action is power."

How do you make sure your company is on the leading edge? How do you satisfy your team's thirst for knowledge – do you do it in a way that enables and enriches the rest of the team as well?

7. MEDITATE AND VISUALISE

The next on Mindvalley's list is group meditation. Vishen says "You better have a vision for what you want for your life."

He provides a guided meditation for his staff and gets the to imagine their life in six months time, how productive they will be, what types of awards they have received, what are they doing at work.

His desire is to raise their vision of future. The gratitude, awesome report, 10% of profit, appreciation, the 45/5 rule all contribute towards his teams' happiness in the now. This helps them visualise the future.

In terms of flow, this is the second part of the equation - having a positive vision of the future.

Do you have an empowering vision of the future? Do your employees share it? Do they have their own empowering vision for their lives?

8. SPONSORED FUN

A team that plays together, works together. Or words something like that.

Vishen believes that sponsored fun – throwing 70s parties, having Hallowe'en fun, summer parties – mean that teams work better together.

And he's even turned it into a way to expand in a cost efficient way – rather than spending money on recruitment, he invests the same money into parties. Lots of parties. And invites his teams to bring their super cool friends. There's no better way to demonstrate your values than to live them. And many of those friends decide to become part of mindvalley.com.

Could you use your budgets more creatively? Could you find ways to engage your staff in a way that would raise their happiness level to new heights?

9. POSITIVE STAMINA

Vishen says "There's no point looking backwards, I only remember the good."

He has the mindset that when things go wrong, you should look past it, create bold new vision of the future and stay focused.

SO VISHEN'S PARTING ADVICE?

Keep your employees happy. Raise their emotions. Find joy in the present. And in their vision of the future. Put your employees in flow.



"The human heart is the most selfish organ in the body.

The richest blood, the most oxygenated, that's the blood the heart takes for itself and then lets the rest go to the other organs. If the heart didn't do that, it dies and takes out all the other organs.

It has to be selfish to survive. For the other organs to survive.

Your own happiness comes first and then you can make your colleagues and co-workers happy.

When things go wrong, when an employee is feeling down, rather than the employee focussing on the failure, they focus on where they want the project to be. They flip to focus on that vision. From there comes new ideas, a new vision of the future and it makes the old problem look like a gift.

"Learn to manage your mind. Do not let a situation lure you into thinking negatively. Sometimes you will fail but you'll learn for the next time. Every time a negative thought comes at you ZAP IT! Replace it with positive thoughts. That takes energy but the result will be stamina, positive stamina, the necessary ingredient for success." Donald Trump.

I've worked for companies where failure was the focus. And guess what? You get what you focus on.

In neuro linguistic programming terms (NLP) there is no failure – only feedback. With each piece of feedback, you are one step closer to success.

So how can you get your employees to change their focus and create massive success as a result?

10. EXPERIENCE AND CONNECTIONS

According to Jim Rohn, you are the sum of the five people closest to you. The people that you hang out with will average out who you become. Expand your mind by hanging out with amazing minds.

Create friendships.

"You're happy when you help others become happy."
Dalai Lama

How can you create more opportunities for you and your employees to spend more time with great minds?

BONUS: THE RECRUITMENT LOTTERY AND HOW TO SURVIVE IT

Solution: Hire Based on the Social System Fit

We've recently had a spate of questions, asking for support on recruitment, particularly around engaging the right people. **The solution is to hire based on social system fit (culture); the adage hire slowly, fire fast is one well worth remembering.**

It's not easy - often there is the issue of needing someone quickly, and we end up wanting who turns up to be the 'right' one so badly, that we ignore the signs are that they are not. Employers are often after a fast, simple solution and become blinded by the pressure of the current situation.

The easiest way to fall into this trap is to look at the potential employee's skill set, and if there is a fit then hire them ... fast and simple! Can you do the job? Yes? You're hired!

This may appear to work initially, but it is the start of problems to come because there is an assumption that if the employee has the required skills, then they automatically know what they are doing. Essentially an employer is saying, "I am engaging you for your skills only."

However, a person's skills and competencies are only part of what they bring to the role - an important, but small part of the whole - so it makes sense that their skills and competencies can only be part of a successful hiring strategy.

To have a WHOLE perspective is so much more ...because when the problems created by

differences in values, power struggles, work ethics that don't match and communication styles that grate, that's when the employer realises that they forgot something in the hiring process: *they forgot to hire with the social system, aka the workplace culture, in mind.*

Or worse - perhaps maybe the hiring practice is reflective of the workplace culture!

Assuming the workplace culture is resourceful (we can help if you're not sure!), ask where does the employee fit into the workplace social system (not just the technical systems of skills and knowledge), and what is it about them specifically that makes the fit a strong one?

For instance, when interviewing, ask them which of your company values resonates with them the most and why. Ask them scenario-based questions that reveal their spontaneous responses such as "What would you do if your To Do list doubled overnight?". One of our favourites is "if you were hired, what tasks would you *not* be prepared to do?" Their answers will give you a pretty good understanding of their standards, attitudes, and the behaviours that will show up in your workplace before too long if they do join you.

So remember, gather your evidence: the answer to the question "is there a social system fit?" should always determine whether you hire or not, and that will mean you win the recruitment lottery every time.

Bonus Author: Diane Gray, Change Play Pty Ltd, edited by CCI

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Our CEO - JULIE ALEXANDER

There's never been a better time for a different approach to company culture and change.

Change that is purely project or systems-led, isn't holistic or sustainable. Change that only focuses on giving people leadership skills, without addressing the fundamental culture, or the business environment, will fail. The speed of change is increasing; adaption to change is too slow, and companies are reactive. You need more than a bandaid.

Our solutions are flexible. Which means that whether you need culture and change transformation, or training to increase your bench strength, or want to understand the theory of change, or mentoring and coaching, our team is here to support your best talent – and help you get the most out of your existing programs too.

It's faster results for fast times. By moving beyond engagement, education, and empowerment, our method challenges the established notion of change being achieved purely through empowerment and alignment. By focusing on attunement and ownership through the lens of culture, teams and business, you effect sustainable change. And you can start reaping the rewards today.

Passionate about creating workplaces that bring out the best in the people, and the best in each business, the creator of the Summits and Changing Change International (CCI) is business executive Julie Alexander.

Changing Change International (CCI) is a global consultancy that specialises in partnering with successful business leaders to produce breakthroughs in performance, and transformation in critical areas of their business, by creating attunement in thinking and behaviours that are fundamental to success.

Bottom line? We want to change the world through changing the culture of organisations, unleashing the best in every person, and the best in every workplace.

We founded Changing Change International (CCI) in 2016 with the vision of changing the way change happens in business – creating culture transformation and change that is sustainable, replicable and ecological, so that the culture, team and business is change-ready and change-resilient. Everyone gets to do what they love, and love what they do, and enjoy better results.

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

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