



The Contemporary FD: your cultural and control reading list

When we selected culture as the theme for the third Contemporary FD event, we did so in part because we seem to have reached a tipping point in how people view organisational culture. And we think that creative, forward-thinking FDs and CFOs are as keen as any leader to understand how to create, shape, evolve and build out the culture of their enterprises.

If we think about what might shape the value of organisations, plants and machinery fall some way short of brand and intellectual property. But although they're not as well valued as brands, 'assets' such as employee engagement, customer experience and creativity are the true keys to sustainable value creation.

It's not just us — or the excellent speakers at Contemporary FD — that think so. Here's a short reading list to help you continue the journey into culture...

Culture metrics

Uber shows us why culture really needs to be tracked and reported: <https://www.recode.net/2017/4/18/15327848/workplace-culture-measurement-metrics-healthy-uber>.

There are lots of articles on culture metrics. This piece lists nine — mostly around simple HR data you should already be gathering: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lizryan/2015/02/18/care-about-your-culture-here-are-nine-metrics-to-watch/#70952ae63863>

And here's another, emphasising the value of employee surveys: <https://blog.kissmetrics.com/roi-of-company-culture/>

Diversity and inclusion

Wisdom of crowds? Try the "bias of crowds" — which has chilling effects on your workplace diversity efforts: <http://behavioralscientist.org/bias-crowds-phenomenon-means-corporate-diversity-efforts/>

Do you need to highlight the value of diversity to financial results?

Fortune has your back: <http://fortune.com/2017/01/18/leadership-diversity-bottom-line-career-advice/>

As does MIT: <http://news.mit.edu/2014/workplace-diversity-can-help-bottom-line-1007>

DuPont: <http://www.dupont.com/corporate-functions/media-center/featured-stories/may-2017/diversity-and-the-bottom-line.html>

Cisco: https://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en_us/about/ac49/ac55/docs/Global_Diversity_Primer_Cisco_Chapter.pdf

And McKinsey: <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters>

Employee engagement

It's an old saying: "Look after your employees; they'll look after your customers; your customers will look after your shareholders." But we're finding new ways to articulate a need to prioritise employee experience: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/deniselyohn/2018/01/02/2018-will-be-the-year-of-employee-experience/#65ae28b1c8fc>

Watch out for employee burnout — a real risk in creative and fast-growth businesses: <https://hbr.org/2018/02/1-in-5-highly-engaged-employees-is-at-risk-of-burnout>

Culture and finance

When PE giant Blackrock says investee business cultures should contribute to society, you know that it's become a hard metric: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/15/business/dealbook/blackrock-laurence-fink-letter.html>

There's no better brain-food (apart from Contemporary FD, of course!) for fast-growth companies than First Round Review. It's American, true, but its astonishingly broad and deep content archive is perfect for 'from-the-trenches' advice:

<https://search.firstround.com/search?query=culture>

The CFO as secret weapon in the battle to change culture: <http://www.cultureuniversity.com/the-cfo-your-cultures-secret-weapon-for-change-that-executive-teams-ignore/>

See also: <https://strategiccfo.com/culture-drives-financial-results/>

And one CFO explains why culture is key to good financial management: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/workday/2017/10/27/workdays-cfo-why-i-care-about-corporate-culture-and-you-should-too/#c08ff52164ec>

Also: a startup CEO tells what his CFO taught him about culture: <https://medium.com/@mitchellharper/what-a-cfo-taught-me-about-company-culture-cfe5995747a7>

Harriet Harman

Read Helen Lewis' excellent profile from last year: <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/feminism/2017/03/harriet-harman-irresistible-force-0>

Harvard Business Review

These guys are obsessed with culture — and so should you be (may require registration and/or subscription)

Why 'keeping score' of culture matters: <https://hbr.org/2013/12/a-winning-culture-keeps-score>

Why CEOs take CR seriously: <https://hbr.org/2018/02/more-and-more-ceos-are-taking-their-social-responsibility-seriously>

Is "culture" the wrong term? <https://hbr.org/2015/04/why-company-culture-is-a-misleading-term>

Former Boots CEO Richard Baker agrees, arguing that "behaviour" is more measureable and manageable...