

MILES | ADVISORY

Culture by Design



Building your best culture

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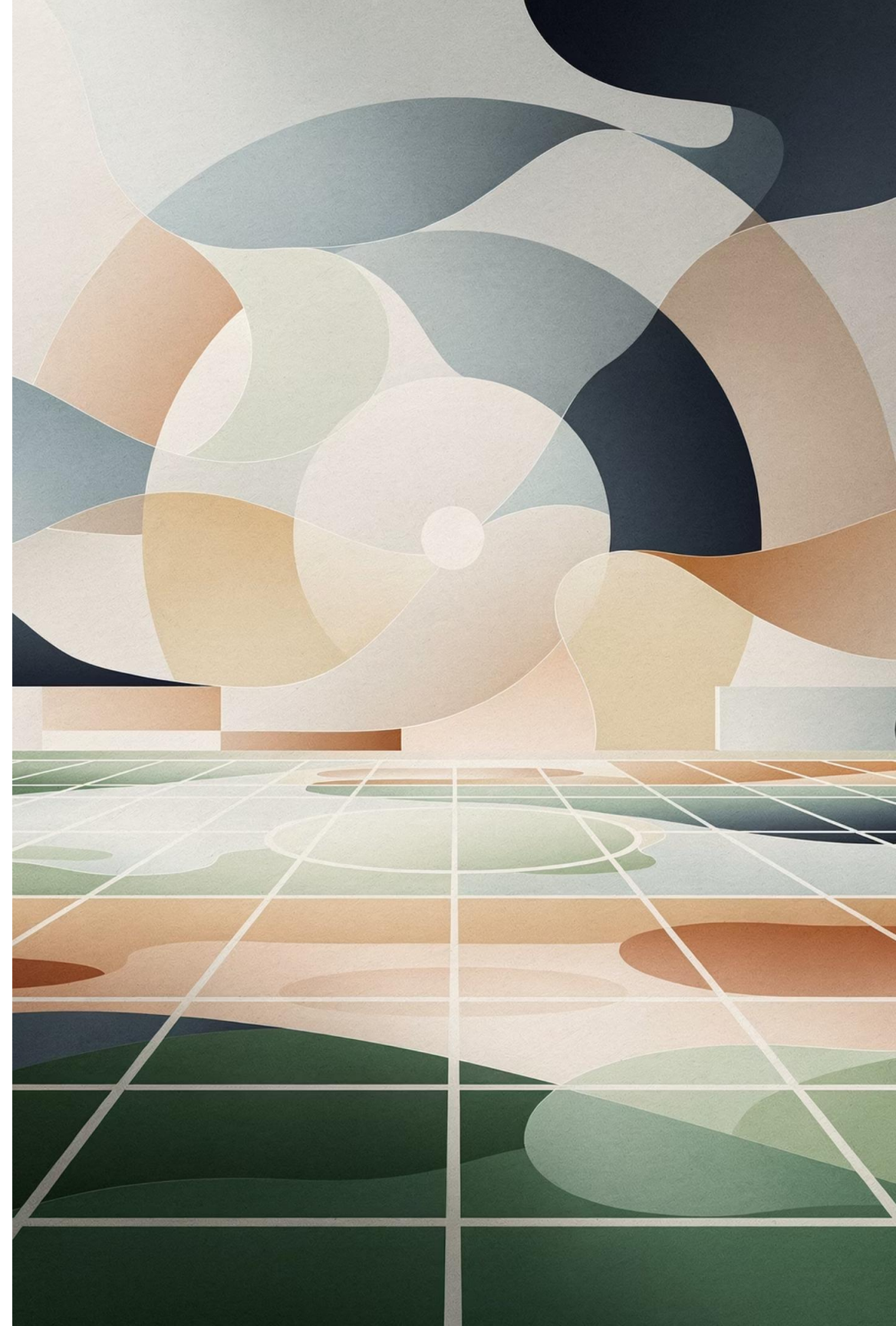
Much of what we read
about **culture** is wrong

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Two common errors

1. Culture is accidental
2. Culture is impossible to define

// Culture eats
Strategy for
Breakfast.



And if a business believes it cannot **define** culture properly, it cannot **design it intentionally** – which means it misses one of the clearest levers for helping a business grow, thrive, transform, and make the most of the people you hire.

How to design your culture: with intention

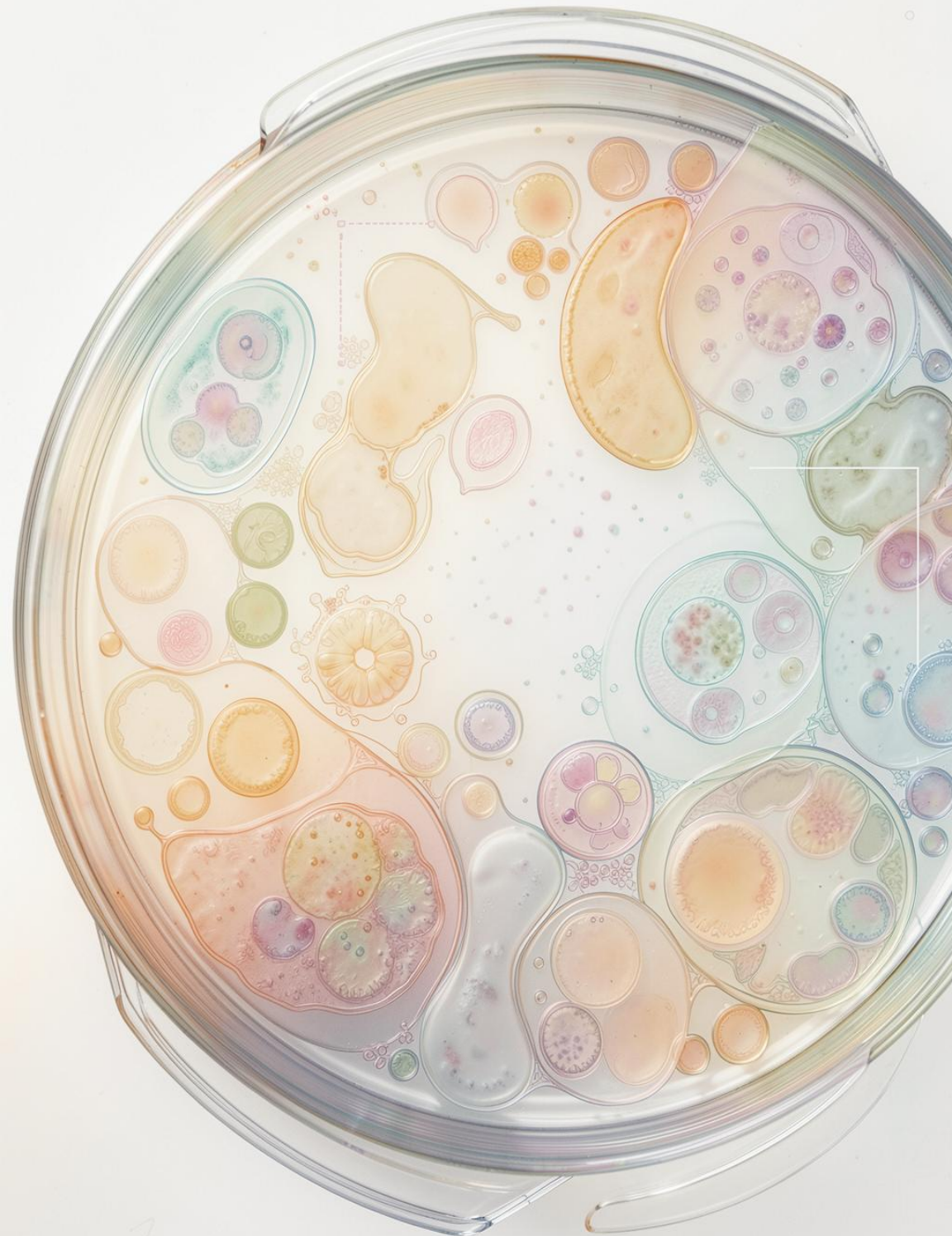




It's not about culture eating strategy
for breakfast.

It's about having a culture strategy.

So, what *is* culture?



So, what *is* culture?

“Something that will grow on a piece of bread if left long enough...”

Oxford English Dictionary



So, what *is* culture?

"Culture is the system of everyday behaviours that support the achievement of business goals."

Deloitte Culture Perspectives



Guaranteed

Culture \neq atmosphere

Not 'atmosphere.'

Habits, rituals, behaviours – the way your people do things to deliver the outcomes you want.





If you are five minutes early, you are already ten minutes late.

— *Vince Lombardi* —

AZ QUOTES

THE MARGINAL GAINS THEORY





Great people succeed in one business yet fail in another

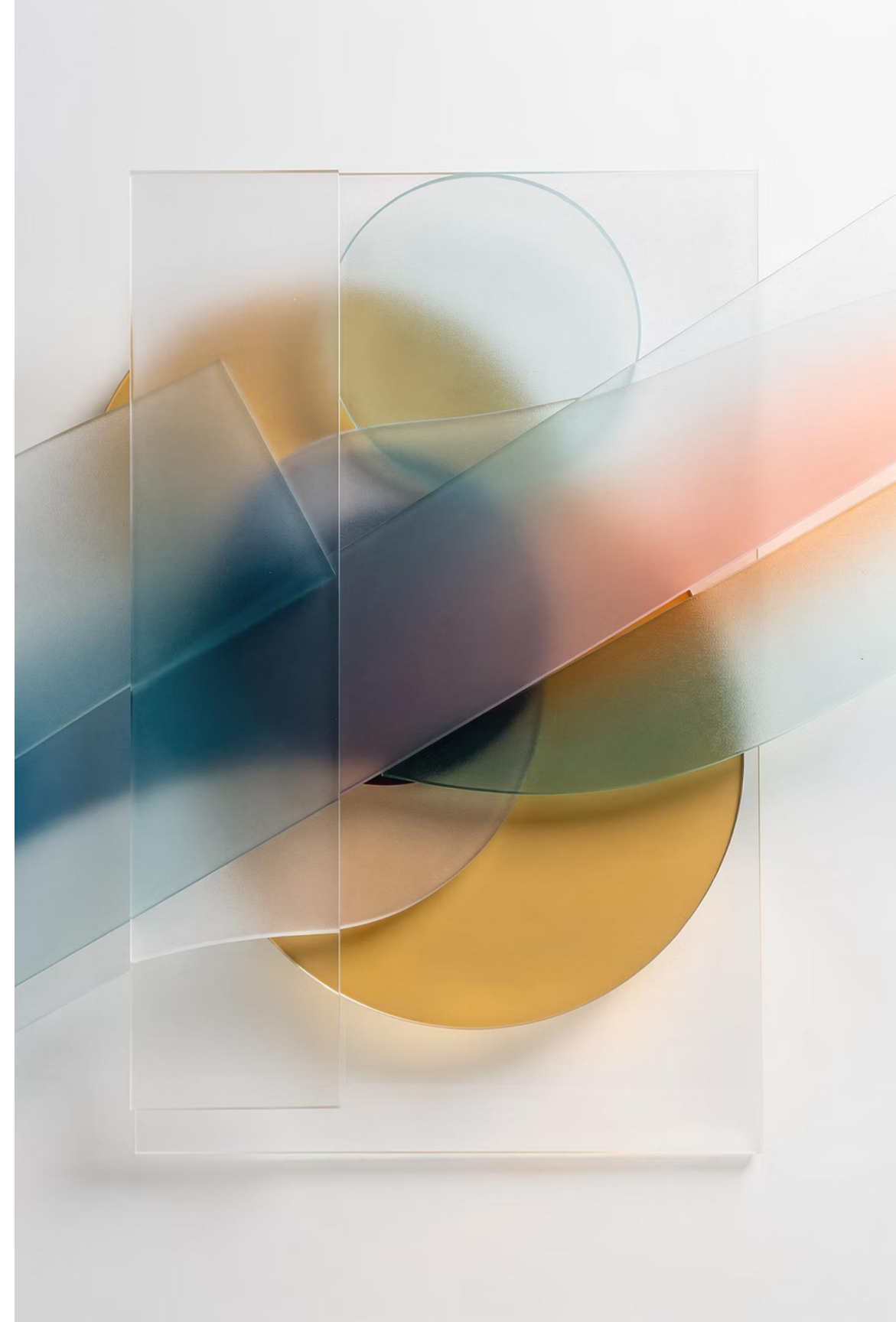


83% of mergers fail to deliver the expected outcomes
Culture is cited as the main factor

McKinsey & Company.

Culture requires **intention** and investment.

Investing in culture isn't about vouchers or benefits platforms.
It's about investing in culture design.



A Culture Model: Basic building blocks

Three simple elements make
up our Culture Model



A Culture Model: Basic building blocks

The destination

Three simple elements make
up our Culture Model



A Culture Model: Basic building blocks

Three simple elements make
up our Culture Model



How people need to behave to
reach that destination

A Culture Model: Basic building blocks

Three simple elements make
up our Culture Model



An environment that makes it
easy to behave in the way you
want them to, and hard to
behave in a counter-
productive manner

A Culture Model:

Enablers: Systems + Signals

Systems

- Do you recruit against behaviours?
- Are incentive plans aligned to produce the behaviours that you want?
- Do you exit people whose behaviours or mindsets aren't in line with what you expect?



Signals

- How you communicate – about 'culture' but also, in general
- What, who, and how you celebrate
- What you prioritise/ shine a spotlight on

Management & Leadership

- How they role-model
- What they reinforce
- What they 'let slide'

Enablers either underpin or undermine target culture

Do your systems and signals **underpin**,
or **undermine**, the behaviours you need
to achieve your goal?

If you are changing...

- 1 Get clear on the new destination
- 2 Define the target behaviours
- 3 Evaluate your enablers



Many businesses find even existing enablers are not well-aligned



Employee of the
Month?



Building Your Culture Roadmap

01

Honest Appraisal

Audit systems and signals - what's helping, what's harming

02

Identify the Gaps

What do you need to continue / start doing / stop doing?

03

Build Capability

Support people - you can't ask for new behaviours without enabling them

Your Role in Culture Design

You may not own incentives or promotion – but you **do** specialize in people communications. That's a meaningful lever.

- ✓ The goal: an organisation where everyone understands the goal, knows what's expected, and is fully on board.



Communication is Critical to Culture Design



Where are we going?

People need to understand the destination



What does it mean for me?

Personal relevance drives behaviour change



Why should I care?

Belief drives the right behaviours, more often

Not everybody speaks "BoardRoom"

What are we trying to do?

Real Example

\$500M energy company. 700 employees. 8 countries.

8 Exco members interviewed - **no two answers the same:**
"what are you trying to do?"

Real Risk

Half thought: **product company**

Half thought: **platform company**

Alignment before growth



Saying it again -
but **louder** - is not
a comms strategy.

That's just a British person overseas...!



Employer Branding is a **powerful** transferable skill

The same skills used to **attract** talent can **align and motivate** the people already inside the business.



People cannot create a future
they feel does not include them.

Define the **Future State** – Then Communicate It

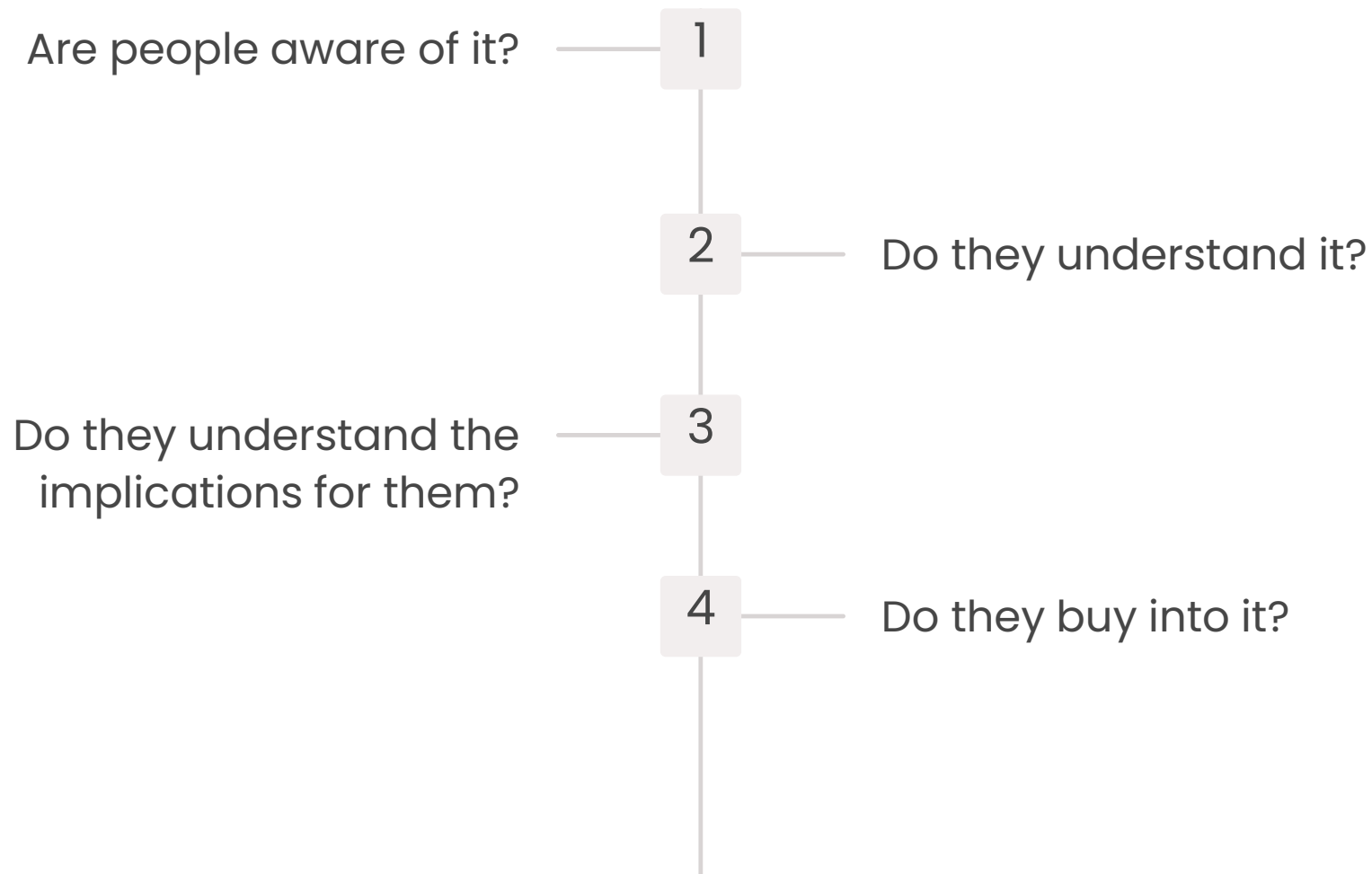


Ask These Questions

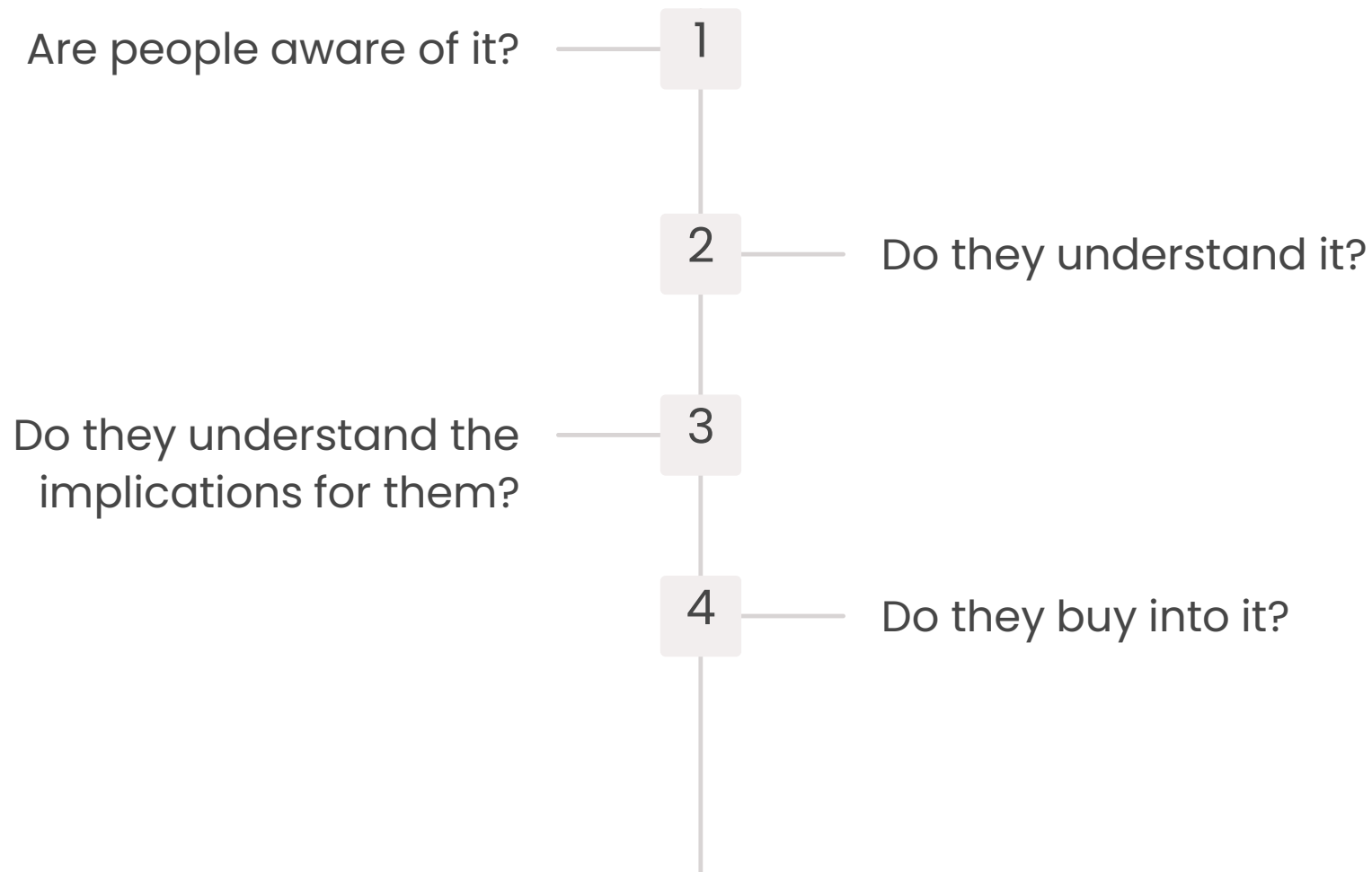
- Why are we doing this?
- What will the business look like after?
- How will it be better?
- What behaviour change is needed?

Without this, people revert to old behaviours
– and the investment is wasted.

A checklist for communicating a new end state/ vision



A checklist for communicating a new end state/ vision



- Your leaders
- Your managers
- Your comms teams
- Your employees



The 'role' of a leader..

...is not just to be a role model

When David Brailsford determined his cyclists would win more races if they got better sleep - he didn't sleep better himself and share the film.

He increased the hotel budget. Hired a van for tailored mattresses. Bought better pillows.



The Real Role of a Leader in Culture

Define It

Involved up front in shaping the culture

Invest in It

Sign off the budget.
Give time and attention.

Enable It

Create conditions that make right behaviours easier – and wrong ones harder.

i The role of a leader is not to role model culture – it's to **enable** it.

How coherent is your own Strategic Narrative?

- Do we have a vision, mission, values, purpose, behaviours and EVP?
- Do they all talk to each other, or not?
- Do you have one strategic narrative document that sets them all out and helps them makes sense?
- If you had to draft one, could you – or would you need to invent parts of it?

A valuable role for comms: a Strategic Narrative



One Clear, Coherent Story

Bringing together purpose, behaviours, values and culture – often for the first time:

- Employer brand + internal comms working together
- Sustainability / ESG in the room
- Purpose, values, behaviours and EVP aligned



Align the comms.
Align the people.
Align the culture.

Go Design a Culture Fit for the Future

→ Get in front of your boss

Start the conversation about deliberate culture design

→ Find your moment

Values refresh, transformation, ways of working. One narrative

→ Design your culture

Design a culture fit for the future your business is trying to build.

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