

## Your starting point:

# Culture refresh with a focus on customer alignment.

It looks like your culture could use a healthy dose of customer-centricity. Starting your journey here will completely reorient your team—in the best possible way—and set you up for the stages of the journey yet to come.

## Starting steps:

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### 1. Cozy up to your customers

- We get pulled in so many directions—by our teams, by executives, by competitors, by shiny new technologies—that sometimes we lose focus on the vital component of any winning organization: an obsession with serving customers.
- Remedy this by setting out to gain a fresh perspective on your customers.
- We find that many organizations are filled with untapped data and insights. So be sure to look for existing sources of reliable customer insights before you conduct new research.
- Many research methods (performance data, customer service logs, social media insights) can provide useful insights, but qualitative research is especially crucial. Quantitative data is excellent for understanding what customers do. But to understand why they behave the way they do, you'll need to talk to them. So take this opportunity to learn as much as you can about their mindsets, needs, desires and behaviors.
- Once you have mined existing data and conducted new research, map out what you've learned and identify potential implications (or working theories) for your strategy. Be prepared to conduct follow-up research to validate and expand the findings.
- If you already have personas and detailed quantitative and qualitative data about customer needs and behaviors, gather your team together for an immersive refresher on who your customers are, what they need and how your business can best meet those needs.
- We like a simple exercise where you ask team members to fill out a lightweight customer profile for each of your main customer segments—without doing any research; purely from memory.
- You can then compare the results against the real data and insights to quickly unearth any foundational misalignments between your customers and your team.
- If you don't have valid customer data and insights, focus your energy on developing these things first.

- We also encourage you to set up sessions in which team members "walk in the shoes of customers" on a regular basis. This can include customer visits, focus groups, retail job-shadowing or listening in to customer care calls.
  - The goal is to help the team deeply understand customer mindsets, needs, desires and behaviors as they relate to your organization. Consider including these sessions as part of the yearly/quarterly work cadence.
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## 2. Draft a new cultural charter

- With your marketing management team, write a cultural charter that consolidates the insights gathered from the team and your own observations to date.
  - Ask them to find the commonalities and connections with the organizational culture, while also articulating the elements that are unique to the marketing team.
  - Culture is expressed in both values (aspirations) and behaviors (what you do), so make sure to highlight the distinction between the two.
  - We recommend starting with the values and then crafting behaviors by asking how you will know if you are living the related values.
  - These behaviors become practical proof points for enabling values to become tangible.
  - When writing the cultural charter, be succinct but also leave room for your values and behaviors to be brought to life uniquely by the different people on your team.
  - Be cognizant of the things that you can change and those that are outside of your control. It is important to name items that live at a global or organizational level which cannot be immediately impacted by your culture-building efforts with the marketing team. These items become an executive to-do list for you to take to senior leadership.
  - Once it's crafted, share your cultural charter with the team and treat it as an iterative document that the team can give feedback on and management can continue to refine.
  - Keep an eye out for opportunities to incorporate and reinforce the cultural elements into your team's regular workflow and processes.
  - These might include your performance reviews, onboarding and even key working documents like briefs. For example, if you're asking your team to be customer-focused, then you'll need to prompt them to do customer research and validation as they develop their work.
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## 3. Build customer personas

- For a customer-focused culture to thrive, it's important to "invite the customer into the room" during your working process.
- This doesn't always make sense in a literal way, but can be accomplished by clearly identifying the main customer personas.

- If you don't have them already, create a set of personas that are representations of customer groups based on a common set of needs, demographics and/or the nature of their relationships with your organization.
  - Personas make it easier for team members to empathize with your customers. Team members can ask: "How would Joanne react to this?" and review their work and the strategy behind it from her perspective.
  - Summarize what each persona is thinking, doing and feeling, and the barriers the persona faces in relation to your brand.
  - Provide context about the persona's lifestyle and life stage and highlight preferred media usage. Make them as human as possible. Give them faces, ages, names and stories.
  - Develop and validate these personas with your team to ensure that everyone is in agreement about who they are serving.
  - This will also leave room for experts on the team to add important details based on direct experience. For example, if you have a call center or a customer support team, use this opportunity to tap into their front-line expertise.
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## Book a free one-hour consultation

Get started with (even more) confidence by adding nuance and context to these recommendations.

To book your free one-hour consultation with our team of experts, drop us a line at [start@themoderncraft.com](mailto:start@themoderncraft.com).

“If you’re on a mission to make change happen, you want Modern Craft in your corner.”

-Jon Mamela, CMO, Tourism Toronto