



Culture Counts Workbook

Based on the Biz Bite: *Culture Counts - How Workplace Values Drive Business Results*

Presenter

Theresa Chochran
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Video

Use the QR code or link to watch the recording:
youtu.be/eh4LUxvEMo8



Watch video

How to use this workbook

This workbook helps business owners, managers, and team leads turn workplace values into everyday behaviour. Use it to assess your current culture, define your desired culture, strengthen leadership modelling, and choose practical next steps.

Core idea: Culture is not soft stuff. Culture shapes performance, retention, customer experience, discretionary effort, and whether people bring their best ideas forward.

The culture alignment roadmap

No.	Focus	What to do
1	Know your North Star	Define the cultural destination for your business, your people, and your customers.
2	Assess the current state	Find out what is really happening. Ask why, listen carefully, and be ready to hear hard feedback.
3	Model the values	Owners and leaders must walk the walk. Culture fails when leaders check boxes but do not model behaviour.
4	Build accountability	Clarify what accountability, ownership, and well-conceived mistakes mean in your workplace.
5	Communicate and reinforce	Repeat the vision, train leaders, empower employees, and review progress over time.



1. Culture is business performance

Teresa's message is direct: the people in your business are your power. When people are engaged, focused, supported, and connected to the vision, the business is stronger. When culture is weak, people disengage, do the minimum, or leave.

Thriving culture	Poor culture
Engagement and discretionary effort	Quiet quitting and minimum effort
Pride, purpose, and stronger customer experience	Turnover, frustration, and loss of trust
Ideas, innovation, and creativity	Fear of mistakes and employees checking their brains at the door
Retention and resilience	Recruitment churn and preventable cost

Culture cost check

Teresa noted that replacing an employee can cost about one year of that person's salary. Use the space below to estimate what turnover may be costing your business.

Position / role	Annual salary	Estimated replacement cost	Notes



2. Assess your current culture

Before changing culture, understand what is already happening. Teresa recommends asking why until you understand the root cause. Mediocrity may come from unclear vision, weak leadership, lack of strategic priorities, unclear jobs, or people not being in the right seat.

Area	What are we seeing now?	What would strong culture look like?
Vision		
Leadership modelling		
Accountability		
Communication		
Innovation and ideas		
Employee engagement		
Customer experience		

Questions to ask

Done	Item
☐	Do employees understand the vision and long-term goals?
☐	Do leaders model the values they expect from others?
☐	Do people know how to win in their roles?
☐	Do we reward ideas, initiative, and well-conceived mistakes?
☐	Do we ask for employee voice and then act on what we hear?



3. Turn values into behaviours

Values only work when people know what they look like in daily behaviour. Use this worksheet to turn broad values into observable actions, leadership habits, and employee expectations.

Value	What it looks like every day	What leaders must model	What we will stop doing

Command-and-control warning signs

Done	Item
☐	Policies dominate instead of purpose and judgment.
☐	Leaders enforce rather than coach or facilitate.
☐	People play it safe and stop bringing ideas forward.
☐	Mistakes create blame instead of learning.
☐	Employees feel like they should check their brains at the door.



4. Lead the culture before asking others to live it

Teresa was clear that culture must come from the top. If the owner or senior leader checks a box but does not check their attitude or accountability, the work will not stick. Leaders need to be authentic, trustworthy, clear, compassionate, and willing to push when needed.

Leadership behaviour	What this means in practice	Your action
Create a compelling vision	Name where the organization is going and why it matters.	
Build trust with authenticity	Show up consistently. Be clear, kind, and honest.	
Ensure goal clarity	Make sure everyone knows how to win in their role.	
Encourage innovation	Make room for ideas, learning, and well-conceived mistakes.	
Coach and mentor	Ask questions such as: What would you do? What have you tried?	
Appreciate effort	Say thank you and recognize people when they show up with the right skills.	



5. Ask, listen, and act

If you ask employees for feedback, be prepared to act. Teresa recommends starting with vision, understanding the current state, using a survey or 360 process where appropriate, and choosing the top three things employees want changed.

Employee voice prompts

Done	Item
☐	What helps you do your best work here?
☐	What gets in the way of good work?
☐	Where are we unclear about priorities, standards, or accountability?
☐	What should leaders do more consistently?
☐	What is one small change that would improve how work feels here?

Top three culture actions

Action	Why it matters	Owner	Due date
1.			
2.			
3.			



Culture Action Plan

Culture change is not instant. Teresa notes that it can take one to three years to see the needle move, depending on organization size. Small businesses may see movement faster, but consistency still matters.

Timeline	Focus	Specific action
Next 30 days	Clarify the North Star and current-state gaps.	
Next 60 days	Model leadership behaviours and communicate expectations.	
Next 90 days	Train, reinforce, and act on the top three employee feedback items.	
Ongoing	Review progress, celebrate improvement, and adjust.	

One value I can model tomorrow
