

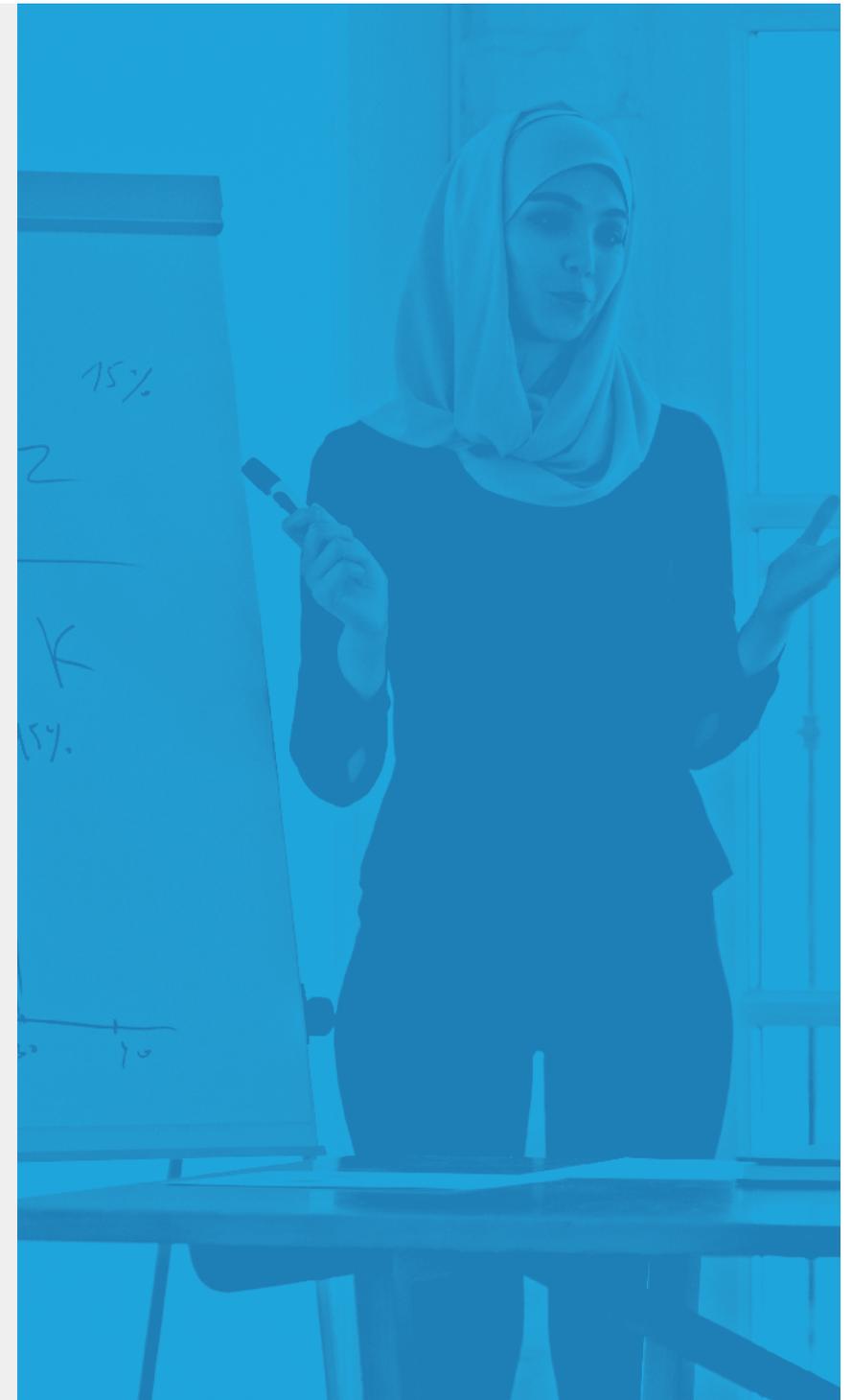
The Talent Development Culture Roadmap

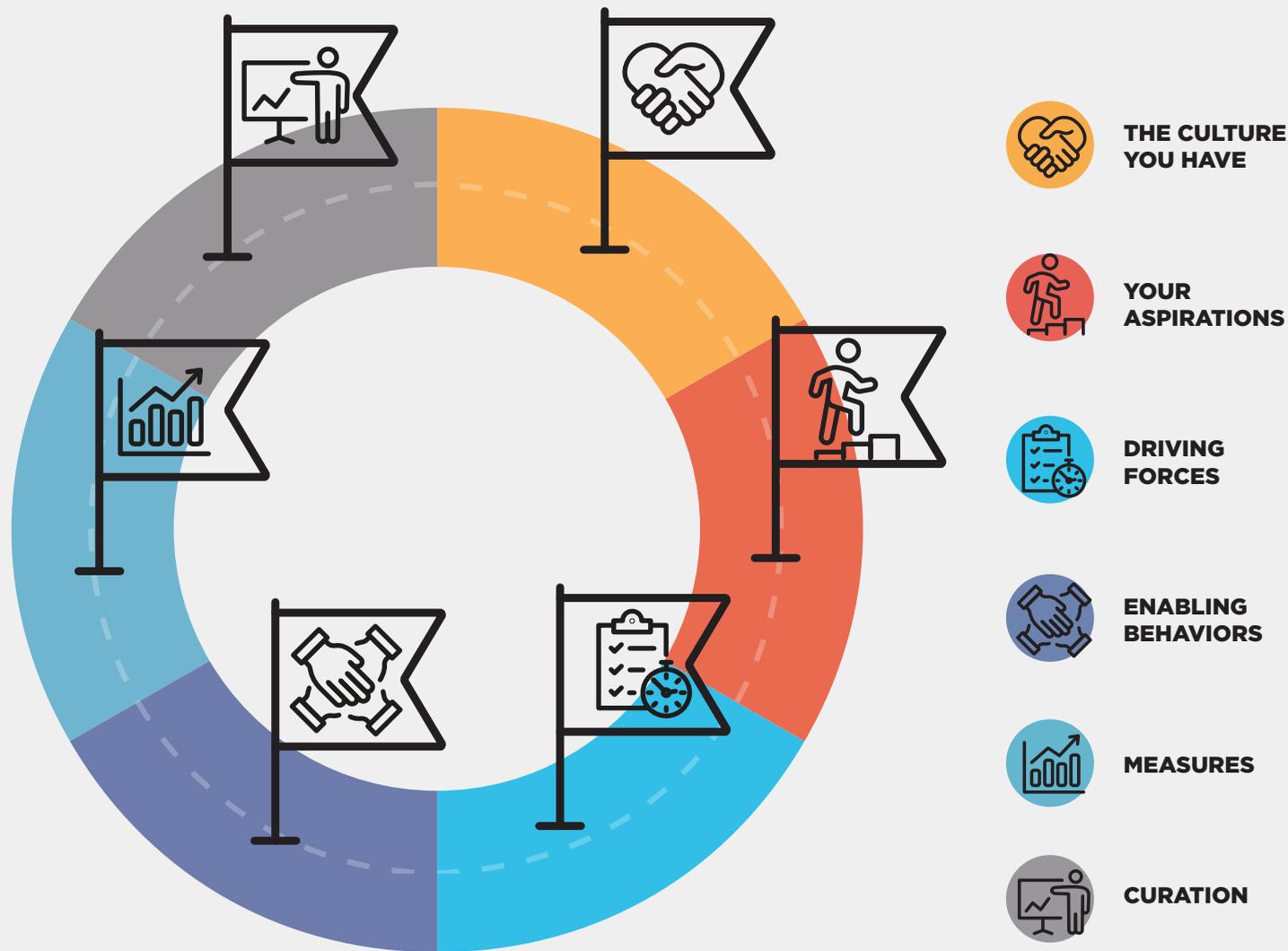
Talent Development as Guardian of Organizational Culture

The talent development (TD) function is uniquely positioned to act as the keeper and nurturer of organizational culture. **TD professionals can lead the process for defining, redefining, and promoting the culture that best serves the organization and its people by:**

- Keeping a finger on the behavioral pulse of the organization and tracking the gaps between aspirations and current reality
- Selecting and designing programs that promote the actions, decisions, and behaviors that align with the culture
- Teaching organizational leaders how to be effective owners and modelers of culture.

On the following page is a proposed roadmap for TD professionals to follow to become guardians of organizational culture. This roadmap was developed by the Association for Talent Development's [Chief Talent Development Officer \(CTDO\) Next](#) consortium of top TD executives shaping the future of the profession. CTDO refers to any individual leading and holding accountability for the overall development and execution of talent development strategy in an organization, regardless of whether that person is addressed as the chief talent development officer, chief learning officer, vice president of human resources, or another title.





The Talent Development Culture Roadmap

Who Should Use the Roadmap?

The Talent Development Culture Roadmap is for any TD professional responsible for driving organizational culture change. This can include a practitioner who is part of a culture change task force, a manager who oversees a change management initiative, or a senior leader who aligns strategy with culture transformation.

How Should This Roadmap Be Used?

The Talent Development Culture Roadmap is depicted as a circle because the culture transformation journey never ends. However, the journey has specific stops along the way, starting with identifying your current culture and ending with curating a learning and development culture.



The Culture You Have

Many sources reflect the current culture of an organization, and most notably, the people themselves. A cultural audit is one approach to uncover the current culture. **This effort seeks answers to these types of questions:**

- What are the company's purpose, vision, and values? Are they well and broadly understood? Do people think they are real and true?
- Are there differences in different parts of the business? (Are there micro-cultures?)
- How is power exerted in the organization?
- What do people spend time, attention, and money on?
- What are the informal rules that everyone understands?
- How is success rewarded, and how is failure addressed?
- Does everyone agree that leaders behave in a way that's consistent with the company values?
- How does communication happen?
- How do decisions get made?
- What is the company's risk tolerance?
- How do employees talk about customers?
- How do employees talk about their co-workers?
- How do employees talk about the company?



Where to Find Information About Culture

ON THE WALLS

Values statements, posted vision
Slogans, signs, and published mission
Policy manuals, written goals
Bulletin boards and honor rolls
Published measures, printed charts
Even furniture, lighting, works of art
Building names, trophy cases
Badges, dress codes, parking places
Office sizes, meeting spaces
And pictures of employee's faces

Source: John Coné, CTDO Next Catalyst

IN THE HALLS

Job titles, organizational structure
Management mentions of the culture
Programs for development
Social functions, family events
Rituals from days of old
Language, legends, stories told
Focus groups, surveys, opinion polls
The process used for setting goals
Suggestion programs, town hall meetings
Sanctioned games and standard greetings
How do we review performance?

Punishments for nonconformance
Heroes/heroines and what they get
How you get the budget set
Benefits and leveraged pay
How you schedule holidays
The way you handle resignations
Parties and other celebrations
Employee access to information
Use of teams, resource allocation
Workshops, training, education
Process for assimilation



Your Aspirations

The culture you want is stated in the company's documented purpose, vision, and values. Beyond these statements, the questions to ask to define your aspirations are the same as those in the culture audit. **Revisit step one (The Culture You Have) on the roadmap, and this time, use the questions to describe your ideal culture.**

Your goals may differ from your current culture because you've decided to change your culture and therefore have new aspirations—maybe you haven't yet succeeded in attaining your preferred culture.

Clearly defining the desired state and how it is perceived relative to current reality can be aided by:

- Focus groups
- Engagement surveys with aligned questions
- Net promoter score
- Employee net promoter score
- Customer retention and referrals
- External data (as in Glassdoor)





Driving Forces

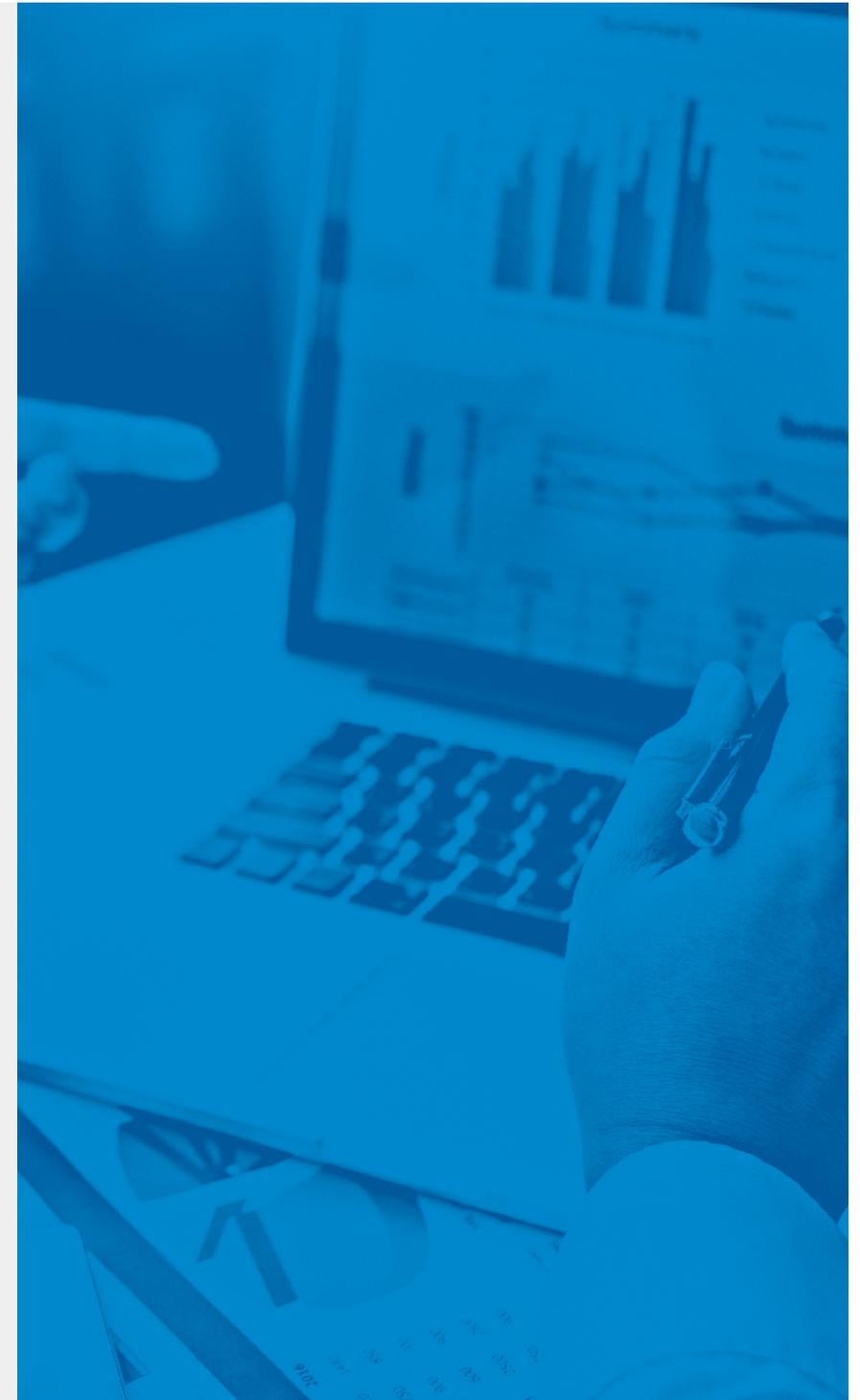
To understand the forces that impact culture and culture change, consider if any of the following exist:

- Influencers outside of the organization that are (or can) affect the culture
- New competitors
- New markets or market forces
- New customers or new customer requirements
- New social movements
- Changes in laws or regulations
- Economic or political uncertainties
- Disruptive technologies
- Employment market and trends

Next, determine the internal influencers that are (or potentially could be) affecting the culture, such as:

- Influential individuals or groups

- Changes in leadership and management or issues with current capability
- Physical and structural changes like new locations, mergers and acquisitions, new organizational designs, or the inadequacy of current infrastructure
- System or process changes, including new rules or policies or the growing inadequacies of the existing ones
- New initiatives or programs or the end of existing ones
- Skills shortages or other resource scarcity
- Changes in technology or the adequacy of current technology
- Financial concerns
- Average age of the company today and in the future
- Microcultures





Enabling Behaviors

The behaviors that sustain or reshape culture will, to some degree, be dependent on the elements of the culture that you want to reinforce or change. But some fundamental enabling behaviors are found in all vital cultures.

Consider asking if the capabilities needed to support the following key actions are widely present:

- Can your organization define all of the attributes of the culture (or the culture change) clearly? Does the explanation include the behaviors that exemplify the culture and those that are contrary?
- Are you organized and able to deliberately communicate the culture through messaging, training, storytelling, and traditions?
- Do your leaders and managers have the skills needed to exemplify the culture?
- Are you able to measure the health of the culture?
- Is accountability for curation of the culture clear? Does it include processes for addressing issues and concerns?
- Are the defined behaviors aligned with your development and onboarding programming?





Measures

What gets measured will be specific to each organization; although, **from a business perspective, most organizations will likely start with these three questions:**

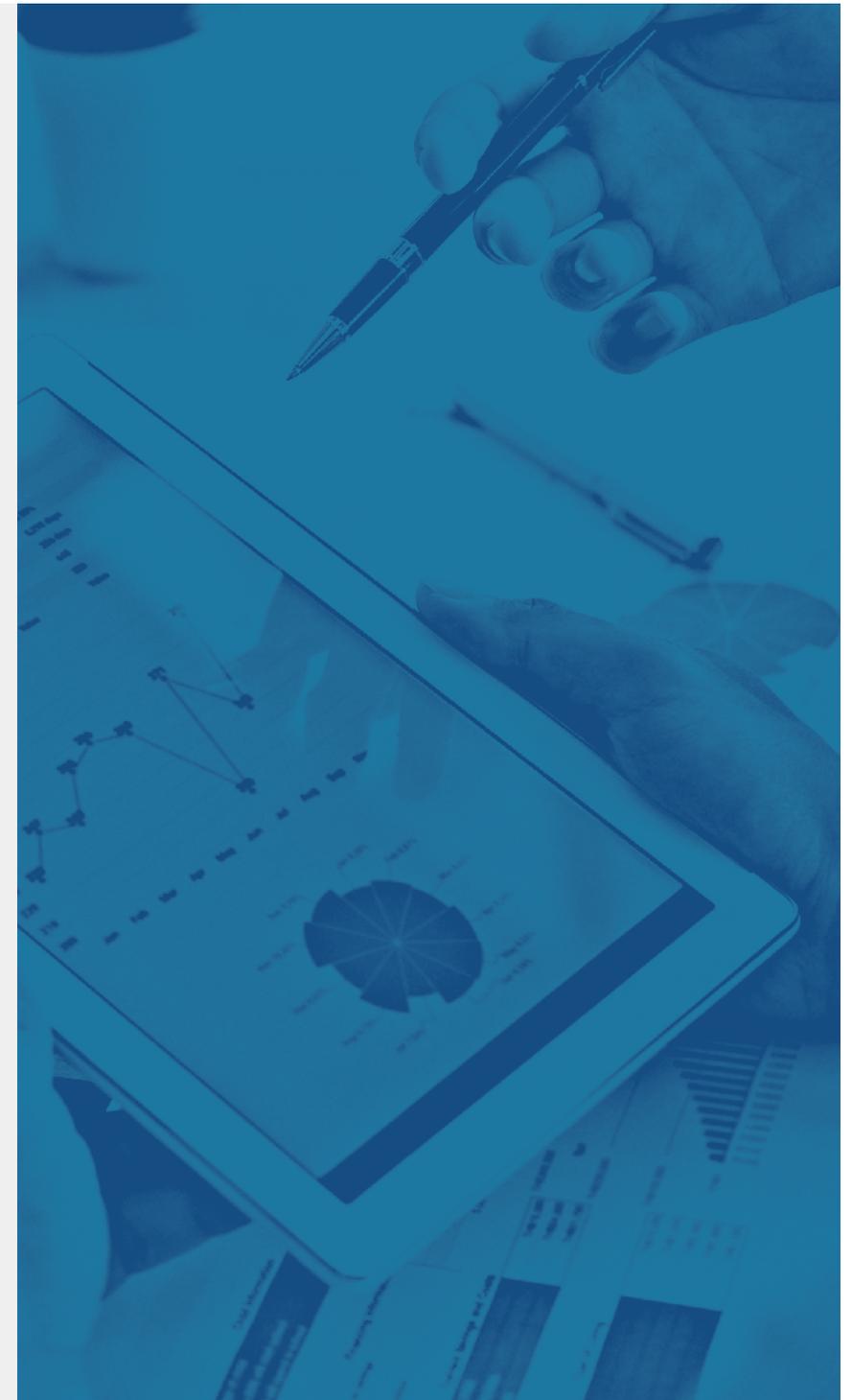
- Are we achieving our goals for productivity and financial performance?
- Do we have loyal and delighted customers?
- Do we attract and retain the best possible talent?

Many organizations use employee attitude or engagement surveys as indicators of cultural health, but the questions we ask employees can be targeted at information about the culture. **These questions can include:**

- Do employees know the mission, vision, and values? Do they agree that they are descriptive of the culture?

- Have they seen evidence that leadership models the culture?
- Do people feel supported by their managers?
- Do communication channels make employees feel involved and well informed?
- Is collaboration easy and common?
- Is the workplace conducive to health and productivity?

Human resources have long measured turnover as an indicator of organizational health. HR can also measure employee referrals, internal mobility, re-hires, business leads from employees, and employee resource groups.





Curation

This is the critical new role for the TD function. The curator collects information about the state of the culture, cares for (or sees that leadership cares for) key elements of the culture, researches and interprets the culture, and organizes communication of the artifacts of the culture.

These research strategies are central to curation:

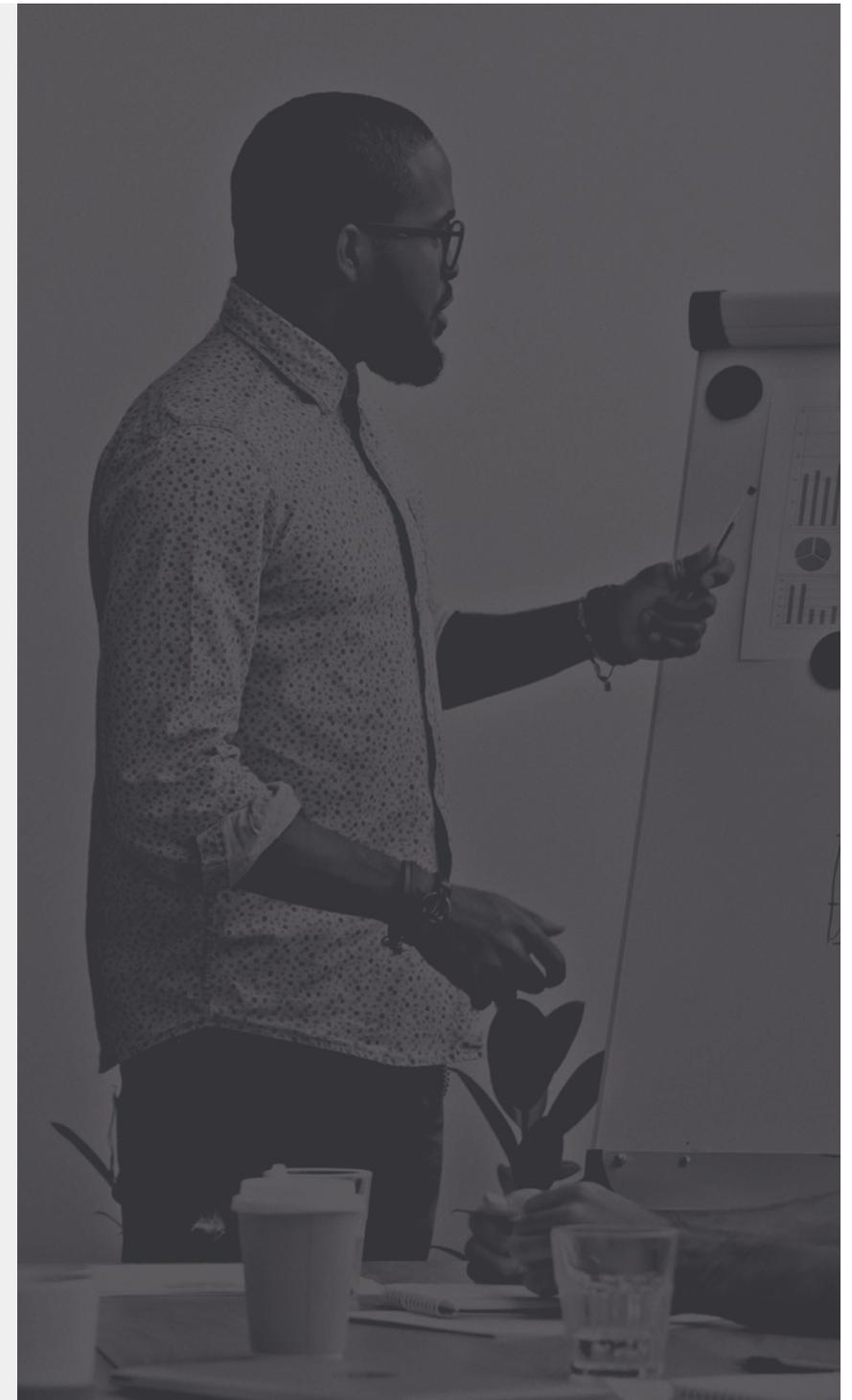
- Monitoring the indications of cultural well-being
- Recording and cataloging exemplars of the culture
- Leading the development and execution of plans for culture renovation
- Training leaders and others in the skills required to exemplify the culture
- Communicating stories that describe and reinforce the culture

- Maintaining a deep knowledge of the drivers of culture in the organization as well as new thinking and new approaches to sustaining or renovating culture.

Effectively carrying out this role requires the TD function to possess top skills in leadership, project management, analytics, research, and communication.

Three major responsibilities define the TD function's role as curator:

- Sustaining and reinforcing the fundamental and unchanging elements of the culture
- Integrating new groups, new processes, and new technologies into the organization in ways that are consistent with the culture
- Devising and executing a plan when renovating the existing culture is required.



Using the Roadmap to Transform Culture

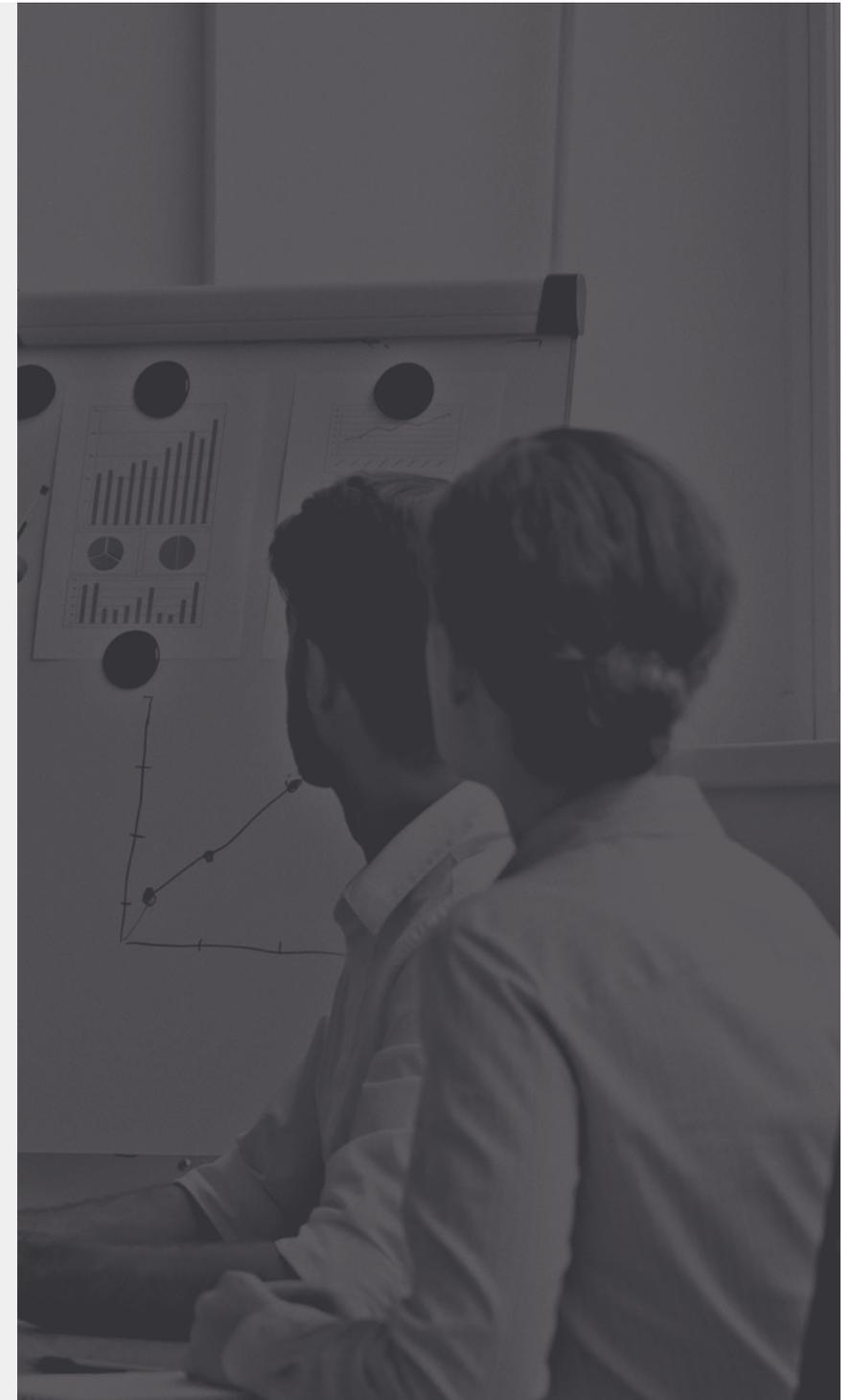
If culture is deliberate, then every organization will have a roadmap. It may be aimed at sustaining and reinforcing the existing culture; at integrating new people, processes, or technology into that culture; or at renovating the culture in a small or large way.

A successful roadmap has the answers to these questions:

- Do we have alignment between the culture we want and our stated mission, vision, and values?
- Is there clarity about how to behave within our culture?
- Are we communicating the stories that make the culture real?
- Do our strategies and goals support the culture?
- Does our performance management system reward those who model the culture?

- Do leadership actions reinforce and emulate the culture?
- Are there clear consequences for actions that conflict with the culture?
- Are there feedback processes that keep us informed about the health of the culture?
- And, most importantly, with any roadmap, are we able to track our progress using measures we all agree upon?

Today's organizations experience continuous disruption, so their culture transformation must be ongoing. The Talent Development Culture Roadmap is a circle because the work never ends. Talent development must continue to drive cultural change in the organization.



What Future-Forward Leadership Looks Like

CTDO Next is an exclusive organizational membership. Members make up the world's top talent development executives who are shaping the future of the profession.

“Next is a unique opportunity for me to get exposure to important topics of the future. Together with a diverse group of outstanding professionals, I can contribute to shape the future of talent development and prepare for the discussion we need to have in our company. The openness and trust are special and build the solid foundation we need to address the challenges ahead.”

— CTDO Next Member Eivind Slaaen,
Head of People and Culture Development,
Hilti Corporation

Learn more about joining
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