

# UNLOCKED:

CULTURE

KEY INSIGHTS FROM **THE IN** GROUP 2023

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# HOW TO CREATE A HIGH-PERFORMING CULTURE.

Professor Damian Hughes is an international speaker, best-selling author, and alongside Jake Humphrey, co-host of the much-loved High-Performance Podcast. An expert within the world of sport, organisational development, and change psychology, Hughes helps organisations create high-performance cultures.

In a recorded conversation with The IN Group's CEO, Nick Baxter, and the founder and CEO of Caraffi, Graeme Paxton, they explored the ways in which organisations can create a high-performing culture. We've unpacked the highlights of their fascinating 90-minute session so you can find out how high-performance cultures are created.

**NICK: What does high-performance mean to you? Has it changed since you started The High-Performance Podcast?**

**DAMIAN:** It's changed massively, yes. Like a lot of people, I had a perception of high-performance that was stereotypical: it focused on coming out on top, winning the trophies, making money, and being a champion who was lauded. What preceded that was struggle, sacrifice, hard work, late nights, early starts, and all that goes with it. High-performance back then was solely focused on outcome.

That changed when I met Phil Neville, who was the head coach for England's Lionesses. Phil and his brother, along with a few former colleagues, bought a hotel just opposite Manchester United's Old Trafford. During the pandemic, they opened it up to NHS workers who needed a place to stay for free.

I told Phil that I admired what he did. I thought it was far-sighted, generous, and kind. What he said next was one of those penny dropping moments where the true meaning of high-performance to me shifted completely. He said, "I just think you've got to do the best you can, with what you've got, in the moment you're in."







improving, not your performance compared with someone else's. Thinking about it in terms of who ends up on top, can often lead to unhealthy versions of high-performance – for anyone, doing anything.

I once asked Dame Kelly Holmes about how much of her success in the Olympics was down to her ability to run really fast, or her ability to run really fast under pressure. It was the latter, she replied. She explained that it wasn't all down to how hard she trained. Some of her coping skills and resilience came from dealing with personal trauma.

That's something important to remember: we all have mental health issues at some stage in our lives, whether it's stress, or depression, or a life-long battle with how much self-care we give ourselves. It's a scale that will vary for everyone, but something that will always impact our performance.

**GRAEME: Do you believe that high-performers sometimes need to reverse engineer a narrative when they think about how they got to where they are because it's so hard to see at the time?**

**DAMIAN:** Yes, they do, and studies about the stories we tell ourselves back this up. It's why if you interview an elite performer, you want to ask them about the traits that they consistently developed as opposed to how they achieved success in a particular season, for example. When you talk about those, you'll get closer to the real story.

What's always intrigued me about high-performance hasn't been seeing the wins and the bright lights that they bring, but what precedes them: the sacrifice, the dedication, the discipline, the hard work, the diligence, etc. I call all those traits and characteristics "the work in the shadows".

If you look at my own journey from a retrospective narrative, what I do now seems to make perfect sense. My dad founded one of those dark and gritty boxing gyms in Manchester City; it was an oasis in the middle of a concrete jungle. I grew up around guys who went on to become Olympians, boxing champions and achieve significant success, despite having a less than easy start in life. Back then, Manchester City was Europe's third poorest district. Yet despite the social deprivation, crime, gang culture, and unemployment, I feel really blessed that I grew up there.

Dad's gym really was an oasis. People would show up and felt seen, heard, and respected. Why did they? It was because we all made a concerted effort to comply with certain cultural norms. One of those was there was no bad language allowed in the gym. Now this wasn't about being virtuous, or taking a moral high ground, but because discipline was one of the non-negotiable behaviours that we had to develop when training. The coaches at the gym argued that when you're faced with a tough situation, and your first response is to swear, it indicates a lack of discipline that will probably cost you somewhere down the line.

Another thing we did to maintain self-discipline and keep the gym feeling like an oasis was to shake hands with everyone we met as soon as we came in, as a mark of respect. It didn't matter if we were going up against each other later on, we still had to respect that self-discipline as it was part of what shaped our cultural norms. When you think about culture in that way, you start to view culture as fundamental to our societal DNA.

Another thing that went on to shape what I do today began in university, when I was talking to a lecturer about possible research avenues.





What is helpful, however, is to find a common language that brings our notions of culture to life. By looking at an organisation's behaviours and traits that manifest as culture, so we reduce misunderstanding and communicate more effectively when talking about it.

Why exploring common language is constructive stems from organisational psychology studies in the early 1990s, carried out by Stanford University's James Baron and Michael Hannan, and published in 2002. They lectured on the ways that they believed culture could drive competitive advantage. The issue was, at the time, they had no data-driven evidence to back it up – which is less than ideal in academic research. As they were close to Silicon Valley, they got some funding to go explore and see if their ideas had legs. Their exploration continued for nearly twenty-five years.

## **Five types of organisational culture**

Baron and Hannan identified five types of culture. Sometimes they saw an amalgamation of two or more cultures at play, but generally these five categories crop up over and over again in organisations, regardless of their size, sector, or industry.

### **Star Culture**

The first type is a star culture. These are organisations that raise a heap of VC funding and can hire the best talent, pay the highest salaries, get the plushest of offices that they fill with cool stuff. Then they sit back and wait for all that talent to come together and deliver spectacular success. One of the startups Baron and Hannan researched was Google. Whilst Google was a monumental success, the reality is that around 98% of star cultures eventually crash and burn.







### What keeps a CEO awake at night?

There are three things that keep a CEO awake at night. One, customers: have we got enough of them, are they spending enough money with us now and is that set to continue or grow in the future? Two, cash: do we have enough money to fund the growth, expansion, or acquisitions we want? Three, talent: have we got the right people, in the right jobs, who are doing the right things?

### How is a CEO reassured these are getting done?

Easy. A clearcut strategy, target metrics/KPIs, and accurate data to track performance.

Customers are owned by the chief marketing officer (CMO) and cash is owned by the chief financial officer (CFO). Both have clearly defined strategies and clearly align KPIs with the performance of the business. A glance at any analyst report of a FTSE 250 or Fortune 500 company will show you a chairperson or CEO statement peppered with metrics, graphs and insights relating to customers (customer acquisition, customer retention/growth, lifetime value of a customer etc.) and cash (EBIT, profit conversion, margin etc.). There is no surprise that these two positions have become the most likely succession to CEO. They have defined a path and draw a direct line between their performance and the success of the business; they matter.

Now let's look at how talent is run and owned, which is the third thing that keeps CEOs up at night. The chief people officer, or HR director, is hardly ever considered as a potential successor for the CEO. Why's that? Is the business world against them? No, I don't think

so, nor is their role less important. According to PWC's Pulse Survey last year, more than three-quarters of CEOs say that hiring and retaining talent is unquestionably their greatest pathway to growth – outweighing digital transformation investment and cutting costs. Therefore, the role of people leaders is critical to CEOs and the board.

### Where HR directors and chief people officers go wrong

The reason that the people function doesn't get considered is because it rarely articulates its importance to the success of an organisation by writing a cohesive and measurable strategy. Knowing that alone is one of the key differentiators between what we see as forward-thinking CPOs and service-led HRDs. I use that terminology for the following reason.

Human resources has renamed and rebranded itself goodness knows how many times over the last twenty years. HR director was the norm, then they were given the title of chief HR officer. Chief HR officers redefined themselves as chief people officers, and I'm sure we'll see yet more rebranding in time.

What does this mean? Unfortunately, it means that a people function struggles to position itself as strategic or commercially minded. The impact of that perception is a loss of influence on the board. Brutal as that might sound, it's what I have seen from real world experience consulting on all things people for the best part of two decades.

The fact that HRDs and CPOs are not considered in succession planning is a direct consequence of what seems like a collective, sector-wide

recruiters (wrong again). Sometimes it's outsourced to learning and development (wrong, wrong, wrong). Your EVP is the essence of your culture and the distillation of who you are. Prioritise the creation of an authentic EVP which is unique, compelling and relevant; it's your north star and will provide the bedrock of any measurable and scalable people strategy.

How do you create a purpose-led EVP? Begin by asking these five questions:

1. Why should people work in our organisation?
2. Why do they love our organisation/what do they dislike?
3. Do we have the talent density we require to achieve success?
4. Do we communicate well with our people?
5. Have we built the right environment for high-performance?

### **Three – Measure your people function and align your metrics to business performance**

The majority of CPOs measure the outputs of their people function. They list the number of hires made in this type of role with this type of pay grade; they count the number of complaints lodged against the organisation; how many tribunals they had or managed to avoid; the number of performance reviews completed; and how much it costs to run their people function. Sometimes in people and culture teams metrics include how many communications have gone out; the range of

incentives they've brought in; the engagement levels for events and personal development talks.

These are all well and good but fall into what Gallup would term, in their article [Why HR Leaders Never Become the CEO, but Should](#), as "keep your job safe metrics", which is a way of defending your function by highlighting what's been done. These don't carry the kind of impact that CEOs listen to.

This isn't an opinion; it's based on analysis and reporting. Look at how annual reports are written, or what shareholder quarterly calls cover. In both of these, you'll see an abundance of tracked and evaluated metrics, such as customer growth, customer acquisition costs versus the lifetime value of a customer, the average value of a basket, or how many new accounts have been won through lead generation and new business. Why is that? Because they know the metrics to measure and how to show their strategic value to a business's goals.

For investors, the CFO will show how the business is performing. They measure how customer conversions impact revenue, what a business is spending to grow, where they've cut costs, and how these tie to EBITDA. The best CFOs do this with metrics based on the past and use forecasting to show how this might raise further investment and grow the business even more.



# WHY YOUR CHANCES OF GOING FROM CPO TO CEO ARE LOW.

Graeme Paxton speaks to Kate Hodsdon.

**In this article, I talk about the advantages that working strategically rather than tactically offers people leaders. In it, I address some hard truths about the common perceptions that CEOs and their board have about CPOs and argue they're the reason barely any CPOs make it to CEO.**

It's sad, often unfair, but that's how it is for 99% of business. Now, I don't have hard data to back up that claim but have spent over fifteen years working with people leaders and following their careers, so stand by it from experience.

To illustrate: picture your board of directors. Now, imagine you've just heard your CEO's leaving. What is the first thing that comes to mind? "Hmmm, I wonder who's going to replace them ... ?" Naturally, this varies according to your firm's sector, industry, service, and product offering, but still, imagine the board sitting around an oversized table. You'll have the CEO and alongside them probably the CPO, CTO, CFO, CMO, CSO and COO. Who do you see taking over? I reckon it was either the COO, CMO, or CFO, right?

If you just imagined the CPO taking over as chief exec, you're in such a small minority, I'd love to know. The fact is, we just don't see people leaders in the same way that we do business leaders.

Why is that? Why do we not equate people leadership with business leadership? How can we actively change this perception? And, what can CEOs do differently when it comes to the training and development so that the next generation of people leaders get to change this? Let's consider these one by one, now.

## **Why we don't equate people leadership with business leadership**

Often, when you move up the ranks in HR, you rarely get the same breadth of business experience compared to other managers. For marketing and business execs, there's always a chance to move around internally, or switch from sales to operations, marketing to digital, etc. In the people and culture function, managers generally stay within their department, so as they move up their career ladder,

# CORPORATES, CREATIVES, AND CONTRARIANS - WHY MISFITS ARE THE KEY TO UNLEASHING THE FULL VALUE OF YOUR CULTURAL MIX.

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Alf Rehn speaks to Kate Hodsdon.

Alf Rehn is a professor of innovation, design, and management at the University of Southern Denmark, and is recognised as a thought-leader in the field of innovation and creativity. In addition to being an academic, he is a bestselling author, a strategic advisor, a board professional, and a globally active keynote speaker. For more, see [alfrehn.com](http://alfrehn.com) or connect with Alf on [LinkedIn](#).

## **A new understanding of your most valuable resource**

"Sure, she has a great portfolio and the competencies we need, but I am just a bit worried whether she's the right fit for our culture. Her views were somewhat contrarian in quite a few of the questions I asked."

"Yeah, I was thinking the same. She came across as quite confrontational in the interview, and I think it is important that we retain our team culture of psychological safety."



What is often forgotten in all this is that there is a third archetype, one which goes against the grain of the first two. This category is regularly overlooked, frequently disliked, generally misunderstood and at times, simply despised (and then fired). In my experience working in innovation, contrarians are often perceived as the ultimate enemy of a cultural cohesion, and the smooth running of a corporation. This is far from wise for leaders today.

### **What makes a contrarian, contrarian?**

As a word, “contrarian” evokes a plethora of emotions and reactions. To some, it refers to an iconoclast, someone brave enough to say the unsayable, or do what few of us would ever dare. Thinking about the likes of Christopher Hitchens (one of the most outspoken writers of all time); Germaine Greer (famous feminist and author of *The Female Eunuch*); Anita Roddick (who founded of The Body Shop decades before vegan beauty and natural skincare became a norm); Warren Buffet (the world’s fifth richest man and founder of Berkshire Hathaway is what’s called a “contrarian investor”); and then there’s Michael Burry (the investor who *The Big Short* was based on). To others a contrarian is a troublemaker, someone who challenges you and disagrees out of stubbornness, arrogance, or bloody-mindedness. There’s a tendency to view contrarians as innately confrontational, however, this does not fully grasp the contrarian mindset.

It is this misunderstanding and misrepresentation that leads so few organisations to actively seek out contrarians when hiring, and why the value of the contrarians they do have lurking around seldom benefits the business – who wants a confrontational colleague on their team? Rather few, it seems.

Some think that creatives are contrarians, but I’d challenge that. Most creatives take direction from corporates (i.e., leaders and the board) without pushing back or challenging assumptions). They work in a systematic way that follows fairly standard processes. It’s only contrarians who can shake things up for either of them. Corporates feel threatened and annoyed by a contrarian’s questioning, yet without that type of unconventional energy, don’t wonder if you’re not truly innovating.

We all know the story: throughout history, organisations and institutions have been built by people with a unitary vision and a shared purpose, led by people who could establish this – corporates and creatives together. When we look to the great organisations of the past, this is what we often think about; they had a commitment to an idea, the steadfast pursuit of an ideal, and the absence of doubt. Great companies back then had great cultures, ones where people were aligned and wholeheartedly “all in.”

That’s a nice story, suitable for a historical epic or a series on Netflix, but it is a rather simplistic way to consider culture and organisations. Almost all organisations – past, present, and future – comprise people who follow the script, toe the line, and accept the company narrative.

This is where contrarians come in. Whereas many still think that history is made by great leaders, who craft great stories, true change agents are a tiny minority who opt to go against the grain and challenge why “the way we do it around here” has ended up a kind of organisational holy grail. They are the ones asking why things have to be a certain way, or asking why best practice for one means best practice for all.

As things stand, you are likely to have contrarians on the payroll already, yet you are getting little to no value added from them at the moment. Organisations are notoriously bad at harnessing the potential of contrarian thinking and often view it as disruptive and unhelpful. The first step to unlocking the potential of contrarian thinking is to create an organisational culture where risk-taking and diversity of thought is not only encouraged but rewarded. Leaders need to both formally and informally acknowledge the value of contrarians and reward them for their ideas. Furthermore, leaders should actively seek out contrarians' perspectives on important decisions and be prepared to make time to understand and analyse the differences between the majority opinion and the minority view.

One of the companies I work with on all things innovation-related is a major, publicly listed Nordic corporation in real estate. Their CEO is a humble and open person, who has often stated that he is rarely challenged by the people that work there – which includes a decent number of smart creatives. He cherishes the times when his company takes in students and interns for summer jobs. In fact, he makes a point of having lunch with them, so he can listen to their ideas. During one such lunch, an intern stated that they didn't get why there wasn't an easy-to-use online portal for the company's rentals. After hearing this, the CEO went to his executive team to find an answer. He was told that it had never been requested, and was far too complex to build easily. Out of curiosity, the CEO created a stealth team with the summer intern and some technicians from IT just to see what was possible. They got given just a few weeks to create a proof of concept, and what do you know, they'd already got a fully functional prototype site up, as well as a tsunami of interested sign-ups.

## How contrarians help creatives

Some will still assume that creatives are, by their very nature, contrarians. This is an understandable, yet quite critically flawed assumption. Creatives tend to work from a pattern, a school, a design language. They are excellent at giving ideas shine, spin, and style, but their core skill is very, very rarely to challenge, but to beautify.

True contrarians are the key agents in making creatives challenge their current worldview. They're the kinds of thinkers who will not accept any of the ideas that your ad agency thought were "ground-breaking", as true and given.

Instead, I see a contrarian as a kind of creativity coach who helps creatives to break with their frameworks. In his work with the alternative rock'n'roll magazine *Ray Gun*, graphic designer David Carson broke all rules of typography when trying to make an incredibly boring interview with Bryan Ferry more engaging (and to make a point about celebrity full stop). He set the whole interview in the font Zapf Dingbats (a set of graphic symbols that have no way of being connected to letters of the alphabet or even interpreted with any consistency). Why? Because he wanted to experiment and see what it would be like to break a traditional framework. The artist Tracey Emin's "My Bed" could not be more contrarian, whilst at the same time being as objective as objective can be. Sometimes, what scares us most is facing reality.

In an organisation with lots of creatives but few contrarians, you'll see creative work, but it will increasingly hew towards what's safe and already known. Over time, it will stagnate into a known language, crystallised forms, with little to give it energy or new form. With a few contrarians in the mix, creatives are empowered to experiment more and test things, and less wedded to design systems,



marketing “spam”, and actively encourages people not to sign up to their newsletter. As for their website, it deliberately breaks almost every best digital practice that you’ll find. The result? A huge increase in brand awareness and levels of engagement that would be hard to measure fully. Courageous character matters.

Contrarians tend not to be great builders. Instead, they are great challengers of the status quo, the kind of people who wonder if a taxi company actually needs to own cars (Uber). Left to their own devices, contrarians can steer even the greatest company into the wall – lest we forget what happened to WeWork. – so we must be aware that the art of corporate collaboration with contrarians lies in recognising the power of alternate ways of seeing things, whilst not letting them completely run wild. Once again, the power of both/and thinking is important for contemporary strategy so it balances corporate logic and contrarian craziness.

### Building a better mix

I imagine your organisation already has all the corporates it needs. To complement these, you want a hefty number of creatives to bring an aura of newness and forward thinking to your current offerings. The critical aspect will be the way you either embrace or shut out contrarians. If you hire for “cultural fit”, you may be doing damage to your company without even realising it. And, if you ostracise those who do not live up to an arbitrary standard of “cultural fit”, you may well be denying your company one of its most important developmental inputs. If you hire just to keep the culture “as is”, you are denying your organisation what it needs to grow.

On their own, contrarians will never end up creating all that much. They are too difficult, too confrontational, and not inclined to enjoy the slow, long slog of producing things. They are, in their way, like salt. No one would enjoy a meal which is mostly made of salt. That said, few of us would enjoy a meal without salt either, and far too often one comes across food with too little salt than slightly too much. Contrarians are like the salt of your organisation. They bring out the best in the creatives, and they push the corporates out of their comfort zone.

So should you hire contrarians? Yes, yes you should. Not because of their contrarian attitude, but due to the ways they can help your organisation be all it can be. You need your corporates, for their organised, structured way of working you need to be functional. You also need your creatives to make you look good, sound great, and grow your brand awareness.

None the less, you also need contrarians, and you need to know how to take care of them.

There will be contrarians in your organisation already, unless they’ve been cowed into silence or drained by endless attempts to tame and change them.

You need to understand your employee mix – who is a corporate, who is a creative, and who just might be a contrarian. Having solid, hard workers should never be underestimated, nor should creatives. Yet the ideal mix for organisations wanting to innovate and grow is to make sure that you have enough contrarians, so everyone shines and can be who they are by nature.

# SCALING CULTURES WITHOUT BREAKING THEM.

Frontier Economics is a consultancy that specialises in the fields of competition policy, Regulation, dispute support, public policy, and business strategy. Founded in 1999, with just a few economists in a tiny London office, they now have almost five hundred staff and seven offices across Europe. Offering economic advisory across major strategic, regulatory and policy issues, their clients are diverse and include global organisations, regulatory agencies, and government departments. Sector agnostic, Frontier, is known for its work in energy, technology and digital, telecoms, financial services, retail, transport, water, health, and education.

**We asked Frontier's Managing Director, Phil Burns, to share his experience about scaling their business internationally without breaking their core culture.**

## How we broke the norm

When I describe myself as an entrepreneur, I can tell that most people are thinking, "An economist who's an entrepreneur? Really?" which makes me smile because they're right, economics is often seen as a rather dry academic field, the "dismal science.". But as founders back in 1999 when Frontier began, we were.

In those early days, we realised that we had a bunch of economic skills that were highly marketable in a world that was quite staid and academic, and far from service driven or commercially minded. We thought this created a wonderful opportunity. When you think about the decisions that government agencies make around whether to let a merger go through, or what happens in the water sector over price controls, for example, these matter massively to an organisation's bottom line and strategic direction. So, we worked entrepreneurially to provide economic advice and support that was tailored to a client's problems, communicated with clarity, so it could be easily translated into the client's decision-making.



of the firm.

As we thought about the business at large and our vision for it, we began investing time in working out how we would develop as an entity and what the right governance measures might be. We knew from experience that if we didn't establish our cultural roots, there would be fragility.

### **Why we said no to external investment**

The two key ingredients to our culture successfully scaling were clear from the start: first, every employee would be a shareholder. This meant saying no to external investment and the external shareholders that always come with it. This has built a strong sense of affiliation in the firm, and a sense of shared endeavour and commitment.

The second ingredient was clarifying our values. We didn't do this through an agency coming in to "do" our branding and tell us which values would sound good: we did this as founders based on who we were and why those values mattered so much to us.

We identified that being open, interesting, profitable, and fun were what drove all of us and as simple as they sound, they just worked because we know how and what they feel like in the business day to day. Whilst some might challenge us on economics being fun, we had a blast from the off and to this day, nothing's changed.

### **Values as a market edge**

Frontier's values and culture encourage everyone to bring their whole self to work. By not having a structure that equates being successful with knowing how to play a political game to climb the corporate ladder, we can just get on with our jobs. Our culture requires us to be engaged and entrepreneurial; to ensure that all parts of the firm strive to achieve their full potential; and that each part makes a strong contribution to



cross-cutting partnerships and organic cultural growth.

### **Three – Stamp out group think**

We do our best not to indulge another strong human instinct: the need to mix with like minded people. That undermines diversity and inclusion, innovation, builds group think and echo chambers, and puts a barrier in front of value-adding cross-practice/cross-office partnerships and partnerships between economists and BMT staff.

The underlying conscious and subconscious motivations that underpin these forces are extremely strong; indeed, they are hard wired within all of us to lesser or greater degrees. The role that both the central and devolved leadership plays is to “hold the space” and resist these forces. If you don’t, then safety nets can evolve into a tangled mess that, over time, run the risk of strangling an organisation. Whilst this way of seeing scalable organisational design, and the culture that supports it, was something that grew naturally in Frontier, I was rather pleased to know a leading academic called Frédéric Laloux felt the same. His book *Reinventing Organizations: A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness* may sound grandiose but it’s a must-read for all leaders interested in how to scale without becoming overly-regulated and getting bogged down in policies.

### **Growing pains when scaling culture**

All that said, our experience, of scaling our culture as we grew without breaking it, has not been without its bumps. There was a degree of discomfort we had to get comfortable with along the way.

When we were relatively smaller, with 50 to 100 people, we scaled our culture by role modelling and being hands-on as directors. We

don’t run a kind of consulting business where we just fly in a director to have a few words of wisdom with our client and then fly them out again. We remain heavily involved in the coalface. So, through our directors’ project work, our ethos, culture, and brand were laid down and communicated through daily, hand-in-hand engagement with junior staff.

As we grow, it is harder for that direct connection with all staff to be maintained, and this can weaken the communication and living of our culture to all. So, we’ve worked to build stronger cross-cutting networks around the firm that can allow our culture and values to be lived and experienced widely. When feedback via staff surveys suggests we might not be doing that as well as we could, a degree of humility is essential in tackling the good and the bad. Our values have stayed constant but as the business has grown by around 15% per year, how we have lived them operationally has evolved – which has kept us in a constant state of healthy adjustment, forcing us to face into the inevitable tensions and trade-offs that arise.

As we grow further, the importance of a strong cadre of leaders who not only have the full set of skills that make them excellent economics consultants, but also the deep levels of emotional intelligence that equip them for the challenges of leading a company like ours becomes ever more relevant and critical to our future success.

### **Scaling globally by behaving locally**

When we open new offices, we expect that our leadership fosters both an authentic local culture that respects the local environment, clients and people, and also strongly connects to the whole-firm culture. It’s not an either/or: we don’t want

anti-learning, and undermines the values that we know has fostered our success.

**So, where does the buck stop?**

There are several answers to this question, as you'd expect, given the type of firm we are. To those to whom responsibility is devolved, we expect that this will be executed in the service of the firm as a whole. These responsibilities will vary across practices, offices, BMTs, and for each cohort of staff. We don't have detailed KPIs and balanced scorecards to monitor performance, but we do have mutually reinforcing discipline facilitated through open communication, feedback channels and performance reviews, with central leadership playing an important role in this process. And the central leadership itself is accountable to the wider group of Directors, our Board and our shareholders (our staff) for ensuring that our business runs smoothly day-to-day, and for creating the enabling conditions under which opportunities are optimised, risks managed, our culture and brand enhanced, to fulfil our potential and support our medium-term sustainability.

**What about the money?**

It's no accident that profitability is one of our values, and as a self-owned business, virtually all our profit ends up back in the bank accounts of our staff. The fairness of the division of the spoils is a critical driver of sustainability, one we work hard to get right. I saw the cost of getting it wrong time and time again with professional service firms in the 1990s and early noughties. Many









## Cultural nuances when reading others

I cannot place enough importance on respect when trying to read others. Whether in a personal relationship on a first date, or as a leader, manager, or fellow colleague, trying your best to read others means accepting there is no “right” interpretation of a situation. Respect leads to shared interactions being valued as subjective, deeply personal, and nuanced, which both requires and empowers a sense of genuineness.

Meyer’s thoughts on cultural relativity as a shared experience of hearing and seeing others as individuals and as a collective, I believe is critical to this. It may be that I feel as if I’ve read someone and understood where they’re coming from, and yet someone else who’s sharing that same experience, may read the situation completely differently. It comes back to what Stephen R. Covey famously wrote in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*: “How you treat the one reveals how you regard the many, because everyone is ultimately a one.” This is how I’ve witnessed cultures that grow person to person, and then go on to support an organisation.

## Being aware of intersubjectivity when reading others

Intersubjectivity is the appreciation that in any social encounter we bring conscious and unconscious biases as two people, or subjects. When respect and empathy underpin our interaction then we can explore what’s happening between us without feeling a need to objectively find who is “right” and who is “wrong”. So, when I talk about reading people, I don’t mean assessing what you personally experience there and then; it starts before that as a direct result of the environment which you set to ensure everyone feels safe enough to be open.

When difficult conversations are needed in business, reading someone doesn’t mean taking the high ground and coercing someone into responding so your preconceived belief is vindicated. It is the opposite. In an environment where honesty is respected and there is no fear of judgement, reading people is something that we can all do. It is not a technical skill but rather a way of connecting embodied by humanity, compassion, and authenticity. As we can easily fall into fear-driven defensiveness, reading others takes concerted effort, humility, and practice, because there’s a comfort in familiarity and often an initial discomfort in what’s not.

## Authenticity – easy to talk about, harder to live by

I tried to find out how many organisations state that authenticity is one of their values. I gave up after finding percentages varied so massively it was futile. Suffice to say, most companies will have in their corporate message somewhere that empowering their people is central to their culture. At The IN Group we too have authenticity front and centre of ours, in case you wondered. This didn’t come from a branding exercise, but rather from a survey about how our people felt about working with us. Various words were used, but the essence of authenticity cropped up time and time again.

The reason I believe it did, is because our need to be ourselves and not hide who we are, is something that anyone, anywhere, and at any stage in their life, values when they feel it. Authenticity to me is about being free to be human. It encompasses our faults, fears, and fragilities, as well as our strengths and a feeling of pride and contented acceptance in who we are.

In my personal experience working within Europe and the US, I have not found a single person who does not appreciate that they

In our San Diego office, our team are up and working early so they can leave to work out or go for a run.

Commitment is not proven by the hours someone works, but how their contribution serves the team as a whole. Similarly, accepting various lifestyles supports the intensity and pace someone maintain, as well as the attitude a person shows towards their work and that of their colleagues accordingly. When there is no need to hide or defend cultural differences, so trust can blossom over the need for a cookie-cut culture.

### **What this means in real life**

In one-to-ones, a C.I.A. commitment is not something I measure through someone's pipeline. Nor is intensity through a competitiveness to win new business, or long hours a reflection of your attitude about success. These pitch people against each other and don't show me that my team are truly living by our values.

Through genuine conversations, that start with how you feel about you, then how you feel about you and me, and onto how you feel about others in your team, so early signs of blockers and opportunities come to light. Authenticity is meaningful as a value when it's demonstrated. I care more about seeing someone trying to do a good job, trying to be a good person, and trying to do good by their clients. Any areas of struggle, we work through with training, mentoring, coaching and development. It's a case of being OK with meeting halfway and remembering that respect and trust enable the cultural relativity that collectively drive a team's collective performance.

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### **Good starts, bad middles and happy endings**

A friend of mine recently talked about working with a successful, fast growing organisation in the Nordics. The benefits of the experience they brought was undeniable. A first meeting was set up and my friend walked through their initial growth ideas for the company's founders on Zoom. The founders listened intently, and my friend ended the same way as always, which invited completely honest feedback. Complete honesty to my English friend pitching versus what complete honesty to their Nordic client meant was interpreted somewhat differently.

As round two opened on Zoom, my friend was thanked for their time researching opportunities and the depth of strategic thinking that they'd clearly put in. However, one by one, every other idea was pretty much dismissed as wrong. A little taken aback at the directness of the feedback received, my friend was worried that they had missed the mark and the opportunity to work together had vanished in thin air. Yet, in reality, the opposite was true.

What happened was the Nordic founders felt so happy to be being offered a chance to be "completely honest and direct" that they accepted the invitation and did just that. Unbeknownst to my friend was that far

# HOW TO CLIMB A MOUNTAIN: THE KEY TO CORPORATE RESILIENCE.

Martin Hewitt in conversation with Nick Baxter. Written by Alex Voskou.

**Martin Hewitt is team leader and founder of Adaptive Grand Slam (AGS). He served eight years as a commissioned officer with the Parachute Regiment, working on operations and training exercises in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and North America. Martin was injured whilst leading his men in combat in Afghanistan. These injuries paralysed his right arm and ended his military career.**

**Resilience** /rɪˈzɪliəns/ *The capacity to withstand or recover from difficulties; toughness.*

When I think about the word 'resilience,' I realise it's been possibly the single most important trait I've needed for everything I've done in my career, whether in the Parachute Regiment, skiing on the development team for Great Britain, or running my own challenge events business. I also realise that many of the lessons I've learned along the way are just as applicable to the corporate world. Whether you're starting out, scaling up, or adapting your business to grow in a challenging environment, here are the key lessons I've picked up on how to build a resilient organisation.

## **Adapt**

I was injured in Helmand Province, Afghanistan in 2007, losing the use of my right arm. When it became clear, after 13 operations, months of rehabilitation and doctors' advice, that I wasn't going to be able to continue my career in the military, I needed to redefine my purpose.



What do you do? Do you just become bitter and twisted? Or do you put your energy into something else that's hopefully more constructive? The military's transition process helps you understand what transferrable skills you have. I'd been to university beforehand. I realised my experience and character traits could lend themselves pretty well to civilian life and hopefully, achieving success commercially in one way or another.

Knowing I thrive in a team environment with changing risks, I realised that I wanted to get involved in something that was going to enable me to be in that space again, and have a position of responsibility. This led me to setting up Adaptive Grand Slam, organising physical challenge events which include climbing the highest mountains in the world and walking to the North and South Poles.

As I've learned since moving into the corporate world, something might happen on your organisation's journey that means you have to change the way you work, the way you think, the way you provide a service. COVID did that for many organisations. With tough economic times on the horizon, we'll need to continue adapting. Understand the challenges your clients will be facing, know what it is about your offering that will help them meet these challenges, and change your offering to continue to be relevant.

## Support

Resilience doesn't come from leaving your people to figure out their problems on their own. It comes from ensuring they've got the support structure in place to help them overcome their challenges. In the military, you're doing something that's very dangerous, with all manner of psychological, moral and ethical challenges. Your commanding officers have a responsibility to provide leadership, mentoring, and emotional support, and therefore need a high level of emotional intelligence.

As well as the leadership command team, non-commissioned officers, medical team, regimental medical officer and psychologists, you've got a careers management officer who's been through the ranks and achieved a lot in their career. The Padre, who's not part of the land management system or in command of anybody directly, provides an independent, non-judgmental ear for anyone who wants to share their concerns and challenges.

Giving your people independent support outlets who they can approach without fear of judgement is crucial to building a resilient organisation where everyone knows that they're not alone. It also shows your people that you really care about them and, even more importantly, are willing to go through those challenges with them.

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**It's so important to give people the opportunity to develop and put the resources in place to enable them to do that. We have a responsibility to try and understand what they're thinking, why they're behaving the way they are or why they're not performing, and then address it.**

# WHY BRILLIANT PEOPLE FAIL BRILLIANTLY.

Kate Hodsdon speaks to Lionel Hill and Ian Bromwich.

When we think of failure, most of us would prefer to avoid it. From exams to driving tests, and interviews to promotions, success is the goal. When it comes to innovation, failing is not always a bad thing, as we learnt in our interviews with two transformation leaders.

**Lionel Hill is the Global Chief Technology Officer at the private equity firm Permira. Prior to joining Permira, Lionel worked for Revantage Europe, a Blackstone company, as Europe CTO for three years. Prior to that he spent six years with CBRE and 10 years with UBS in technology roles.**

## **How do you view failure within the context of innovation?**

It's hard to imagine a scenario where you can have a genuine ground-breaking innovation without failure having been part of that story to some extent. Far from being undesirable or something to try to avoid, failure should be accepted as inevitable in the process of innovation.

When managed properly, failure is an opportunity to learn something new, but the key is to recognise what's failed and to do so quickly. Think about scientists: they won't necessarily learn something from a successful experiment, other than that their initial hypothesis wasn't flawed. However, during an experiment, when something fails and you realise you've got something wrong, you can take failure as a concrete piece of information that shapes what you do next. With technological innovation, you must look at it in the same way.

Failure is cast iron proof that you've got something fundamentally wrong, or that there are a set of circumstances that you need to rethink before moving on.



The first is to take small risks to begin with, not huge, existential risks that can topple a service line or entire growth strategy if they go wrong. Smaller risks don't matter if they fail, provided you learn from them. The second thing is to build up a successful innovation track record, little by little, as a team within your organisation.

How does this alter the attitude to technological risk? It's logical: if you take a small risk, and it's a win somehow, maybe next time you'll have permission to take a slightly bigger risk, and a slightly bigger one after that, as the cycle of innovation develops.

Pivotal to this approach is to always remain within the context of something that's permissible and doesn't risk jeopardising the firm as a whole.

### **"Culture" is a highly disputed notion. How do you appreciate the meaning of culture as it relates to innovation?**

Culture is often created from the top down. As a leader, you can define the culture, but you also have to live it, bring it to life, and do it in a way such that everyone else recognises that you walk the walk as a leader. This is also true in the context of risk-taking within innovation.

An environment where there's complete transparency and honesty is fundamental to this. When something goes wrong, you must make sure very quickly that everyone is informed and aware of it. This ties back to "failing fast".

If a culture doesn't encourage transparency and there's a fear of speaking up early on, you'll fail slowly, incur greater costs and damage cultural trust when innovating next time.

The second fundamental part is, if you're always going to attempt to learn from failing, you need to have a culture whereby risk is tolerated. When honesty underpins this, and everyone knows when something goes wrong, then you can quickly flip into analysis and ask openly, "So why did this fail? What went wrong here?" but without blaming, shaming or passing the buck. This objective analysis will then serve to simply inform that something will be different going forward. This approach protects an innovative culture.

### **Is continually failing good for culture and morale?**

I believe it is when it's contextually positioned within the right frame. You have to set what the boundaries are, what the risk is that you'll be willing to tolerate, and then you need transparency and honesty about where you are in your innovation journey and how close you're getting to that point.

When each failure can be seen as a step towards reaching an ultimate objective, then this is the ideal state to aim for. This allows innovation to switch from being an emotional conversation to a commercial one. Knowing in advance at what point you're prepared to keep pivoting, push on, or call it a day is the role of the leader in this process.

### **Would you say this relationship with risk-taking is somehow easier for people working in private equity and financial services?**

Yes, I believe risk-taking is part of our commercial DNA. And there are lots of things any technology leader can learn from how asset managers spread and manage their risks across their portfolios.

For example, if you were to consider your roadmap or project list as a portfolio of technology innovations, then you could classify them in terms of how risky they are.



Ian Bromwich

Ian Bromwich is the Managing Director and UK CIO for HSBC UK, technology investor and advisory CTO. He has spent his entire career in technology, and mainly in financial services for firms including Egg, Alliance & Leicester, Lloyds, Barclays and RSA Insurance Group PLC. Prior to that he founded and ran a start-up at the earliest days of the internet in 1996, which he sold to Morse PLC, a FTSE 250 company.

**The venture capitalist Mark Suster said the tech start-up mantra of “fail fast, fail often” should be replaced with “launch and learn” or “adjust and pivot”. What do you think about that?**

I agree. Better is “adapt and learn” as “fail fast, fail often” indicates that failure is bad. But thinking about failure from an innovation or growth perspective, it’s a learning opportunity to explore what went wrong. How do we scale? Where do we need to improve? When we launched our start-up in 1996 – Hughes Rae Ltd – we were at the forefront of a whole raft of technologies, such as mainframe

integrations to the browser, app server set ups, and content management systems; we were learning every day, because we had to. Everything back then was new, and there weren’t the tech ecosystems that we have today.

**Egg was ground-breaking when it launched the first ever online credit card in September 1999. When you joined them in 2002, your start-up had built Egg’s tech infrastructure. How did you take your learnings from your start-up into a fast-growing, regulated financial services business?**

### **Tell us about an innovation that failed, and what you learnt from it?**

It was in the early days of mobile technology and involved the Nokia phones that used to slide down – the Nokia Matrix 8810 phone for anyone who remembers. I was on a panel hosted by Jeremy Paxman with someone from the telecoms company 3, and a sales director from Morse (the company who had just bought my start-up).

I was asked what I thought about the future of mobile – the rest of the panel talked about wireless access protocols, which was how they used to get the internet on phones then. They said that phone marked a huge leap for mobile technology and I said with full confidence: “No, it’s not. The loading speed is too slow, the screen is too small, and the user-interface too basic to get the internet to run on my phone.”

They all disagreed, but mobile was an innovation that wasn’t ready or mature enough until Steve Jobs came along, focused obsessively on design, and reimagined the entire user experience. His obsession with customer-orientated design for the iPhone left Nokia, Blackberry and Motorola high and dry.

### **What systems and processes support innovation?**

AA test and learn mindset that starts small, develops quickly, and removes blockers step by step, rather than shooting for the moon as so many people think innovation has to be.

I call this a steal thread approach. Don’t try to build an entire product. For example, if we’re working with software, and seven systems need to integrate, don’t try and get all seven at once. Start with one, then two, then three and see at that point, how you might improve the system before you get to seven. It keeps failures low,

quick to resolve and with immediate insights that lead to learning.

Imagine you want to be a new quant trading platform that’s the first in the market; one question I ask myself when pitching new innovations is – would I put my own money into this? If not, why pitch it to a board as a shiny idea? This is where non-emotive comparisons to your competitors are essential in innovation.

To do that, look at data and reporting. A review on UX in banking just came out and benchmarks the performance of apps against each other. If I see that one of our apps is ranking 7/10, then I’d ask the board if we could work on getting to a 9/10, as opposed to investing in a new app or service line. This is where you see if an organisation really does have an innovation culture that’s committed to continuous improvement, or not.

### **How important is understanding where a business is in terms of its innovation cycle?**

There’s not a straight answer, and I think I think for certain areas like UX, digital and open banking then you must continually evolve and innovate. On the other hand, if you’re replacing a core CRM system and you want to move to a state-of-the-art one, you need it to work seamlessly from day one; but once it does, it’s pretty much done (unless something breaks!).

Innovation cycles depend heavily on knowing who you’re serving. Building a digital experience for teenagers means obsessive focus on UX and UI, and speed of load times: to teenagers, if your app isn’t working in about three seconds, they’re gone, and it’s deleted. Design simplicity is key there.

I often wonder what a banking app would be if it were designed by Apple. I imagine they’d cut









Ketan Patel

### **I want change but don't make me change anything**

What I've seen as a CIO leading change and transformation, is that they often stir up a deep fear in people which is tied to our human need for belonging and security.

There are always challenges around staff adopting change at the pace that we need them to. A common theme I've seen is that people react in three ways: they either opt to stay as they are and resent change, withdraw but follow begrudgingly, or grow through transformation.

This is a cultural pattern with an impact that all leaders must be aware of from the start, and keep an eye on when innovating.

In my experience, every organisation undergoing change will meet friction, miss deadlines, expect twists and turns halfway through, or see their innovation goals flunk completely, which comes down to one

overarching fail: a lack of clarity and direction in how the mission, vision, and purpose of transformation is communicated.

Getting these to resonate with every single person in an organisation is one of the toughest challenges for leaders today.

It's why I like to compare transformation to rowing a boat. You've got to get from A to B as smoothly as possible, or you sink. This analogy is perhaps too simplistic for some, but it's an example I've found everyone can grasp when considering any kind of change in direction implicit in innovation.

The coxswain who leads the team faces forwards as a focal point so that everyone moves their bodies to rhythm and rows in unison. But before they begin to move, the coxswain has to be crystal clear about where they need to row, how they should best position themselves, and assess who's best as the front row, and who's best as the rear row.

### **One team. One direction. One objective.**

When thinking about the delivery of their vision, leaders do best when silos are removed. Transformation involves technology but if it's only perceived by people as an IT project, an immediate disconnect will appear for those who don't understand, or have much time, for technology.

Successful transformation should have one budget, one team, and one hierarchy. When there's a gluey harmony of shared buy-in, so divisions that often come with a change agenda are greatly reduced.

Goals for each business unit must be clear. What those goals are, and the milestones to meet them are then fairly easy to agree. From here, project roles are identified, and the right tools resourced, and the necessary skillsets allocated so the transformation's focus is understood and accepted by all involved.

Without these, I see project politics fester time and time again, as people try to protect their personal agenda, team resources, and budgets – which ultimately focuses their minds in the wrong place.

When this cultural toxicity bubbles up, transformation stagnates as people lose sight of what they were trying to achieve at the outset.

No matter how good a leader you are, when you end up managing the project, rather than managing the outcome, you'll be straddling two very different camps. The result is a cultural disconnect that leads to chaotic working, self-preservation, and silos.

### **There is no change without behavioural change**

Managing the potential conflict of behavioural change is less a science or process, and more an art that transformation leaders must

cultivate. Success here doesn't come from merely analysing data, giving innovation a massive budget, or bringing in a market leading CTO. It comes from a leader's willingness to learn why humans behave as they do, which requires empathy more than anything.

Any CEO can give a shiny sell about "our great new future" at a company conference, but that is not enough if it sounds like a personal quest.

When leaders don't start by seeking first to listen to, and then acknowledge, the challenges their people face, and then commit to supporting and serving their needs, it'll be lonely at the top when no one buys into their vision.

The bigger the organisation, the likelier it is that this disconnect will eventually arise.

### **Successful transformation is when inspiration and operation are in sync**

Actual operational needs must be first and foremost on a transformation agenda. Otherwise, why bother?

It is so easy for leadership teams to sit in board meetings and look at the competition, or market trends, and project what they can do to keep shareholders or investors happy. This is lethal and why innovation so often fails. It's the wrong starting point.

Leaders have to start with a tangible "why" when considering outcomes that offer measurable value. Again, I might sound like I am stating the obvious here, but personal opinions based on uneducated assumptions are disastrous to transformation. Asking "stupid" questions at the outset are fundamental to any system change (and in my experience, there's no such thing as a "stupid" question).

Whether this approach is called agile working or design thinking is irrelevant. The principles behind both are essential for leaders to understand and respect.

This is why people working in UX, digital transformation, cultural change, or systems engineering almost always have one thing in common: they do not just accept a vision or an idea. They are critical thinkers who value iterative feedback loops that either prove a hypothesis has ground or not. Working this way creates open-thinking because it isn't driven by ego or stubborn attachment. It is rooted in first principles and a respect for testing and learning that's quintessential to innovation.

Now, some leaders might argue against this and refer to Henry Ford's famous quote: "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses" and not his then bizarre idea of a car replacing horses as the future of transportation.

To that I'd say, you're talking about an outlier, who is not your average corporate CEO.

Henry Ford had been tinkering with mechanics as a child, and trained in engineering before he began thinking about what a replacement for horses could be. He built, iterated, redesigned and rebuilt, what became the first car over a six six-year period. But he didn't even build a car at first, he spent years designing and building a prototype that was its predecessor – the quadricycle.

Even when the first quadricycle was finished, he hadn't got the measurements right, so had to hack off parts of each side to get it out of his garage in Detroit and test it on the road. Then when he did, people thought he was barking mad!

That being said, what he did have, and transformation still needs today, is a vision that ties to a real-world need.

That vision, little by little, needs to be tested in small, component parts, so that one by one they each add up to something that works and carries value. Whether big or small, an innovative idea is only successful when the innovation itself works.

It took time for people to trust in Ford's innovation. For a long time, he was seen as rather odd by those around him. Culturally, he didn't have the smoothest path to adoption.

It reminds me of self-driving cars today – there's potential there – but we're far from having a car that people trust, has a viable path to market. Still the idea carries weight and is a start even if it has years of iteration, testing, and pivots ahead. The investment will only succeed when we can buy into its actual value and earns enough trust for us to shift our deeply ingrained notions about driving.

### **Internal mission versus external observation**

When leaders have been in an organisation for many years, and grown within it, they're likely to have a somewhat biased view of the business.

This is where having an external perspective that is non-emotional and impartial helps bring an objectivity to leaders contemplating transformation, but who are not exactly sure where to start. Interim experts are often invaluable at this stage.

A board must have a degree of humility and openness for this to work, but do well when they start such conversations early on. Walking through the vision, mission, and purpose with an honest, outside assessment of the pros and cons might kill an initial idea dead. Nonetheless, if they





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**Innovation, investment, and transformation unite over one thing: listen to people, watch what they do, and watch what they don't do.**



# BUILDING A CULTURE OF ALLIES.

**Marc Lesner is a partner for Investigo's strategy and consulting team in New York and heads up the Pride subcommittee of The IN Group's DEI committee. Derek Mackenzie is an executive director for Investigo and the founder of *Campaign*, the recruitment industry's first professional network for the LGBTQ+ community.**

## Why is it your problem?

You're not gay, though. Why do you care? Aren't their rights recognised now?

That's just a selection of the common responses when a straight person says they want to be an ally for the LGBTQ+ community. From the outside looking in, the perception is that things have got better. In the UK and USA at least, same-sex marriages are now legal and we live in a fairly tolerant and open society where people are free to be who they want to be. Right?

Not entirely. For many people in the LGBTQ+ community, the fear of discrimination remains genuine and valid. According to Stonewall, one in five LGBT people have experienced a hate crime or incident in the last year, because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. A 2021 study by the charity found that one in ten LGBT employees felt they missed a promotion in the past year alone because of bias. Of the 5,670 Fortune 500 board positions, only 26 are held by LGBTQ+ individuals. That's 0.4%. The newly coined "lavender ceiling" refers to the barrier LGBTQ+ employees face in their careers and the low levels of C-suite inclusivity in most organisations. If a lot has been done, these stats show how much there still is to do.

## Why be an ally?

Allyship's not about getting involved in a cause because you've got nothing else to do, or because it makes you feel good about yourself. Allies from outside the LGBTQ+ community, who are willing to learn about the challenges faced by underrepresented groups and give them a voice, are incredibly important to making change.

Marc Lesner, who heads up the Pride pillar of The IN Group's DEI committee, has seen first-hand the positive impact of allyship from outside the community. "The importance of that kind of allyship," he said, "cannot be underestimated. Those in underrepresented groups can voice their opinions and concerns but are they listened to and acted upon? The answer is often no when those who have the decision-making power do not form part of the underrepresented group and cannot truly put themselves in the same position. Allies who interact closely with the underrepresented group start to experience the feelings and thoughts of that group and develop a better understanding of what they may be dealing with. They can then in turn serve to make the situation real to others outside of the LGBTQ+ community."





**When you  
make something  
everyone's  
problem, that's  
when everyone  
can work  
together to  
solve it.**

#### **Give your people a voice**

Your people need to know that they have the freedom to express themselves and build communities without judgement. In 1999, an Amazon employee who wanted to connect with other LGBT colleagues created an email list he called “glamazon” – a contraction of gay and lesbian Amazon. Today, Amazon has more than 40 glamazon chapters around the world, from Seattle to Sydney, and has participated in more than 100 Pride

celebrations across the globe this year. This goes to show how giving a voice to your people can allow a single employee to create something truly global, and truly valuable to LGBTQ+ people across the company. Glamazon is just one of many affinity groups at the company which unite communities, instigate initiatives, and increase awareness.

#### **Unite across boundaries**

When you face a siloed culture, how can you find psychological safety? Who's there for you? Who's an ally when loneliness and anxiety set in?

Our Executive Director Derek Mackenzie, a long-time advocate for LGBTQ+ rights, recently launched Campaign, an LGBTQ+ recruiters' network. In a traditionally straight, high-performance sector that's fiercely competitive, the initiative will give recruiters from the LGBTQ+ community and its allies the opportunity to share ideas, emotional support, and change-driven inclusivity strategies to improve the representation and inclusion of LGBTQ+ people across every facet of recruitment.

Derek said: “Inclusion is an inside job, so rather than fighting alone, I'm teaming up with recruiters (and forgetting we're technically competitors) to unite our community. So welcome to Campaign – recruitment's first-ever UK-based peer-to-peer LGBT+ network.” Campaign's here to empower and advise



# THE **IN** GROUP



**INVESTIGO**



**InX**



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