CULTURE BLUEPRINT ACTION KIT

A Step-by-Step Guide to Diagnosing Your Culture and Taking Action

A free resource from

Mission-Driven Momentum: Nonprofits, Leadership & Growth

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Organization: _____ Date: _____

Completed by: _____ Role: _____

HOW TO USE THIS KIT

This kit is designed for executive directors, leadership teams, boards, and anyone else who wants to move from understanding their culture to actually doing something about it. It is meant to be worked through, not just read.

For deeper context on the frameworks behind this kit -- Schein's Three Layers, Lencioni's Five Dysfunctions, and the case for treating nonprofits as the businesses they are -- listen to Episode 12 of Mission-Driven Momentum or read the companion blog post at missiondrivenpod.com.

Tip: This kit is most powerful when used with your leadership team. Work through Phase 1 individually first, then come together to compare what you each see.

Phase	Focus	What You Will Do
Phase 1: Diagnose	**See your culture clearly**	Use the Culture Signals table and Health Scoring tool to build an honest picture of where things actually stand.
Phase 2: Decide	**Prioritize the gaps**	Identify which culture-strategy gaps are costing you the most and decide where to focus first.
Phase 3: Act	**Build momentum**	Work through a sequenced 90-day action plan designed to create visible, credible movement.

PHASE 1: DIAGNOSE

Before you can change your culture, you have to see it clearly. This phase gives you two tools for doing that: a set of behavioral signals that reveal what your culture actually is, and a short scoring exercise to rate its health.

Step 1: Read Your Culture's Signals

Culture shows up in behavior, not in mission statements. The questions below each reveal something specific about how your organization actually operates. Answer based on what you observe -- not what you'd want to say in a board meeting.

Ask This	It Reveals	Your Answer
Where does the organization actually spend its money?	What it truly values	
Who gets promoted or publicly recognized?	What behaviors actually get rewarded	
What happens when someone makes a mistake?	Real relationship with trust and accountability	
What topics are off-limits in meetings?	Where fear and power operate	
What do new hires learn about "how things really work" in their first 60 days?	The culture actively transmitting itself	
When did someone last openly disagree with leadership in a meeting?	Actual trust level in the room	

Step 2: Score Your Culture's Health

Rate each statement below from 1 to 4. Be honest. A score of 2 or below on any single item is worth paying close attention to.

1 = Rarely or never true | 2 = Sometimes true | 3 = Usually true | 4 = Consistently and demonstrably true

Culture Health Statement	Score (1-4)	Notes
What we say we value matches how we actually behave day to day	_____	
When someone makes a mistake, the response is constructive, not punishing	_____	
People feel safe raising concerns or disagreeing with leadership	_____	
Decisions get made, committed to, and followed through on	_____	
Performance issues are named and addressed, not avoided	_____	
We measure whether our work is achieving outcomes, not just whether we're busy	_____	
Different departments communicate across boundaries regularly	_____	
New people are hired to add something different, not just fit in	_____	
TOTAL SCORE		*32 = strong	24-31 = functional	16-23 = gaps present	Below 16 = needs urgent attention*

Step 3: **Reflect as a Team**

If you are working through this kit with your leadership team, use these questions as a starting point for discussion after everyone has completed Steps 1 and 2 on their own.

▸ *Where did your individual answers diverge most? What does that divergence tell you?*

▸ *Which signal or statement surprised you most? Why?*

▸ *Where is your espoused culture -- what you say you believe -- furthest from your operating culture -- what people actually experience?*

▸ *Is there one underlying assumption that everyone in this room knows exists but nobody has said out loud yet? Say it now.*

Team Notes

PHASE 2: DECIDE

Not every gap is equally important. This phase helps you look at what you found in Phase 1 and decide where to focus your energy first -- based on what is actually costing your strategy the most.

Step 4: Name Your Gaps

Look back at your culture signals and health scores. Identify the two or three gaps where your culture is most directly working against your strategic goals. Be specific.

Gap 1

The gap: _____

How it shows up day to day: _____

What it is costing strategically:

_____

Gap 2

The gap: _____

How it shows up day to day: _____

What it is costing strategically:

_____

Gap 3 (if applicable)

The gap: _____

How it shows up day to day: _____

What it is costing strategically:

_____

Step 5: Prioritize

Use the table below to place each gap in context. Be honest about the strategic cost -- that is what should drive your priority ranking, not what feels most comfortable to address.

Culture Gap You Identified	Strategic Cost If Left Unaddressed	Priority (High / Med / Low)	Who Needs to Be Part of This Conversation

Step 6: Reflect as a Team

▸ *Do you agree on which gap is the highest priority? If not, what is driving the disagreement?*

▸ *Which gap has been quietly accepted as "just how things are" for the longest? What would it take to name it directly?*

▸ *Is there a gap on this list that leadership is part of creating? What would it look like for leadership to own that?*

Team Notes

PHASE 3: ACT

Culture change is slow. But starting is not. The goal in the next ninety days is not transformation -- it is visible, credible momentum that signals to your team that something is actually shifting. Add owner names and track status as you go.

Step 7: Work Your 90-Day Plan

Phase	Action Step	Owner	Status
Days 1-30	Share the Culture Health Scoring (Phase 1) with your leadership team and discuss the results together.		
Days 1-30	Name one underlying assumption that is working against your strategy. Write it down and say it out loud in a team meeting.		
Days 1-30	Ask five people at different levels: "What happens here when someone makes a mistake?"		
Days 31-60	Choose one visible leadership behavior to change -- something small and observable that signals the cultural shift you want.		
Days 31-60	If silos are a factor, schedule the first cross-departmental conversation where each team shares current priorities and challenges.		
Days 31-60	Review your last three hires. Were they cultural fits or cultural adds? Decide what you want your next hire to bring.		
Days 61-90	Revisit your gap prioritization table. What has shifted? What needs more attention?		
Days 61-90	Publicly acknowledge one moment where the culture you are building showed up. Celebrate it specifically.		
Days 61-90	Identify which gaps need to be built into your next strategic planning cycle and assign ownership.		
Ongoing	Repeat the Culture Health Scoring every six months. Compare scores over time to track real movement.		

Step 8: Before You Close This Kit

Answer these before you set this down. These are the three things most likely to determine whether anything actually changes.

What is the single most important thing your organization can do in the next 30 days?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is the one behavior you personally commit to changing?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Who else needs to be part of this conversation that isn't yet?

_____

_____

Three Things to Carry Forward

- What you tolerate is what you endorse. What you celebrate is what you incentivize. What you ignore is what you accept.
- Culture change does not start with a policy. It starts with a visible behavior from leadership that shifts an underlying assumption.
- Running well and doing good are the same thing. A culture that treats financial discipline as opposed to mission will never sustain the mission.

NEED MORE SUPPORT?

Podcast: Listen to Episode 12 at missiondrivenpod.com

Blog: Read the companion blog post for deeper examples and real-world stories

Consulting: Need hands-on help with culture, strategy, or organizational development? Contact The Scanland Group.

contact@thescanlandgroup.com | thescanlandgroup.com

From The Scanland Group:
Keep leading with heart, keep showing up with purpose,
and keep creating a world where everyone belongs.