

Leadership and Culture transformation at ARN Media

Stronger cross-functional relationships, higher engagement, and a clear move toward a constructive leadership mindset. This cultural momentum now positions ARN for greater agility, resilience, and long-term growth.

Background

Leadership and culture transformation at ARN Media

Building a people-centred, innovative organisation by empowering leaders and evolving culture.

In 2024, ARN Media recognised that to stay competitive and responsive to internal and external business demands, a major cultural and leadership shift was necessary. The organisation's strategy needed to evolve beyond its traditional task-focused approach to leadership.

Many leaders at ARN were highly skilled technically but operated primarily in a command-and-control style — focusing on tasks, processes, and compliance. This style limited innovation and adaptability, critical factors for success in the changing media landscape.

Leadership decided to invest deliberately in building the right leadership capabilities and evolving the culture, aiming for a more innovative, empowering, and people-centred environment.

To start this journey, ARN engaged with Human Synergistics using their diagnostic tools, beginning with a culture survey and leadership development using the The Life Styles Inventory™ (LSI), a tool Angela Ewers, Chief People Officer had trusted for years for its robust data and proven impact.



Challenge

While many leaders were strong task managers, ARN needed leaders who could:

- Empower rather than micromanage.
- Coach rather than control.
- Inspire innovation and adaptability.

The leadership team faced the challenge of building the confidence and capability of their leaders to lead differently — by letting go of old ways and encouraging a constructive leadership style.

This transformation was crucial for unlocking higher engagement, fostering innovation, and positioning ARN for future growth.

Solution

Although ARN had strong leadership skills in place, evolving required a shift in mindsets and leadership behaviours:

1. Culture Survey Baseline.

Using Human Synergistics' Leadership/Impact® (L/I) and The Organisational Culture Inventory® (OCI) to gain clear insights and a data-driven starting point.

2. Build Leadership Capability.

Focused leadership development using the LSI, emphasising self-awareness, coaching mindsets, and reframing thinking styles for constructive behaviours.

3. Consistency in Messaging.

Maintaining focus on a consistent methodology and language of leadership development, ensuring that efforts were not diluted or confusing.

4. Focus on People Impact.

Shifting leadership focus from tasks to people, encouraging innovation, collaboration, and a safe environment where employees could thrive and contribute.

5. Leadership Coaching and Support.

Ongoing individual coaching to help leaders internalise new behaviours and thinking patterns, building their capability to support the cultural shift.

Outcomes

Motivation and Retention Improved.

Significant improvement in employee motivation, intent to stay, and pride in working for ARN.

Innovation Unlocked.

Teams felt more empowered to innovate and challenge the status quo, contributing to fresher ideas and new ways of working.

Higher Engagement and Collaboration.

More effective teamwork and stronger cross-functional relationships emerged as leaders fostered open communication and trust.

Clear Leadership Mindset Shift.

Leaders moved from micromanagement to empowerment, coaching, and inspiring their teams.

Cultural Momentum.

ARN is now better positioned to navigate ongoing changes, with a leadership culture that supports agility, resilience, and high performance.

Key Learnings

Hire and Promote for Leadership Mindset.

Focus on leaders who can empower others, not just manage tasks.

Use Data to Drive Buy-In.

Having structured, credible cultural and leadership data made it easier to gain executive support and track progress.

Consistency is Critical.

Sticking with a clear framework that built trust, avoided confusion, and accelerated culture change.

Safe Environment Fosters Innovation.

When leaders create a safe space, people feel confident to step up, challenge, and innovate.

Celebrate Progress.

Sharing wins, no matter how small, kept the energy and momentum alive across the organisation.



Over the past 3 years ARN has seen significant shifts in Culture!

