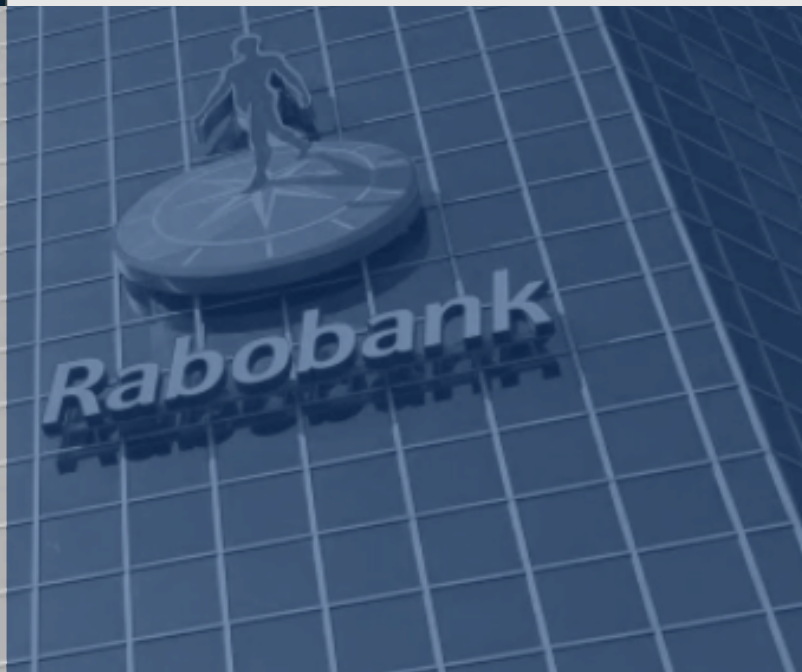


Rabobank transformed its organisational culture by focusing on trust, transparency, and employee engagement.

Through partnerships, internal programs like Culture Coaches, and continuous feedback, the bank saw improved psychological safety, faster decision-making, and stronger alignment with its values - positioning it for sustainable growth and global impact.



Introduction

Rabobank Case Study: Transforming Culture for Organisational Growth

Rabobank, a prominent financial institution, has long recognised the importance of fostering a strong and resilient organisational culture. Over the years, the bank has made considerable efforts to enhance its internal culture, aligning it with its core values and purpose. This case study highlights Rabobank's journey to build a more constructive, human-centric culture, how it leveraged external support, and the ongoing progress in its organisational culture transformation.

The Challenge

As a financial institution, Rabobank operates in an industry where trust and integrity are paramount. In light of the Royal Commission and Senate inquiries that raised significant concerns about the culture within the banking sector, Rabobank realised the urgency to ensure that its organisational culture was both strong and transparent. The bank wanted to ensure that its culture was not just a set of values on paper but something that was deeply embedded in everyday operations, influencing decision-making, customer relationships, and internal processes. The challenge was not only to demonstrate that the bank was operating with integrity but also to continuously evolve and adapt its culture to stay resilient and forward-thinking, particularly in a rapidly changing business environment.

The Approach

~ Human Synergistics Partnership:

Rabobank partnered with Human Synergistics to gain insights into its organisational culture. The first step in this collaboration was conducting a comprehensive cultural diagnostic Organisational Culture Inventory® (OCI), akin to an "MRI" of the bank's culture. This external, independent assessment helped the bank identify strengths and areas for improvement within its culture. The results provided a clear baseline from which to measure future progress and set a strategic focus for cultural development.

~ Culture Coaches Program:

One of the standout initiatives from Rabobank's cultural transformation was the introduction of the Culture Coaches Program. This program involved selecting high-performing employees who understood the bank's purpose and values and were natural influencers within the organisation. These "Culture Coaches" were tasked with promoting positive behaviours, reinforcing cultural values, and helping to address any issues that arose within the divisions they represented. The Culture Coaches played an essential role in creating a feedback loop within the organisation. They met regularly with directors and senior leadership, facilitating open discussions about cultural issues and potential solutions. Their ability to influence and engage peers at all levels helped to build trust and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

The Approach

~ Communication and Transparency:

Throughout the transformation, Rabobank emphasised the importance of clear, transparent communication. The bank regularly hosted live webcasts with executives to share updates and hear directly from employees about their experiences and challenges. The executives also supported the Culture Coaches, ensuring they were well-equipped to implement cultural initiatives across the organisation.

~ Continuous Improvement and Feedback:

Rabobank prioritised continuous learning and feedback loops. The Culture Coaches were equipped with tools like playbooks, which allowed managers to have structured discussions with their teams about the bank's values, behaviours, and culture. These playbooks facilitated open dialogue about how to address challenges in a constructive manner. The organisation also emphasised peer-to-peer recognition through the Cheers for Peers program, which became a popular way for employees to acknowledge each other's contributions, particularly in the virtual work environment.

Additionally, Rabobank conducted periodic surveys to gather feedback from employees on the progress of the cultural transformation. The bank used these insights to adjust and refine its initiatives, ensuring alignment with the broader goals of trust, psychological safety, and empowerment.



Results & Impact

After two years of focused cultural work, Rabobank saw significant improvements in its organisational culture. The follow-up "MRI" assessment showed notable shifts toward more constructive behaviours, including increased humanistic - encouraging behaviours, as well as a reduction in passive defensive and perfectionistic tendencies. These positive changes reflected the bank's efforts to foster a more supportive and outcome-oriented culture.

Some of the key outcomes from this cultural transformation included:

- **Stronger Psychological Trust and Safety:** Employees reported a noticeable improvement in trust and safety within the organisation, leading to more open conversations, giving and receiving feedback, and constructive challenges.
- **Increased Awareness of Values and Behaviours:** The bank's employees demonstrated a high level of awareness regarding Rabobank's code of conduct and expected behaviours, which was a significant achievement considering the complexity of the financial industry.
- **Progressive Business Development and Faster Decision-Making:** With a more aligned culture, the organisation began to make faster decisions and engage in more constructive business development discussions.
- **Leadership Engagement:** Senior leaders were actively involved in the cultural transformation process, ensuring that culture was not just a top-down initiative but something that resonated across all levels of the organisation.

Conclusion

Rabobank's cultural transformation serves as a powerful example of how an organisation can navigate the complexities of change by focusing on the human side of business. With the leadership of the executive team, the support of the Culture Coaches, and the ongoing commitment to continuous improvement, Rabobank has created a culture that supports its values and strategic objectives.

	Past		Present		Future
	2020 percentile	Change	2022 percentile	Gap	Ideal percentile
Constructive					
Humanistic-encouraging	63	+19 ✓	82	-16	98
Affiliative	49	+16 ✓	65	-22	87
Achievement	45	+9 ✓	54	-33	87
Self-actualising	40	+18 ✓	58	-35	93
Passive/Defensive					
Approval	46	-10 ✓	36	+24	12
Conventional	61	-14 ✓	47	+32	15
Dependent	40	-16 ✓	24	+15	9
Avoidance	59	-13 ✓	46	+32	14
Aggressive/Defensive					
Oppositional	64	-12 ✓	52	+7	45
Power	27	-11 ✓	16	+10	6
Competitive	45	-6 ✓	39	+18	21
Perfectionist	52	-17 ✓	35	+21	14