

bink.

Culture by design

A toolkit for building high-performing
life sciences organizations



Hello! We're bink.

The life sciences industry is experiencing unprecedented change and accelerated growth.

From mergers and acquisitions to a constant stream of new competitors and the demands of digital transformation, companies are challenged to evolve faster than ever.

And this is happening at a time when employees demand more than just a job – they want purpose, connection and engagement.

When intentionally managed and consistently reinforced, culture becomes the glue that creates a sense of connection and the compass that guides organizations through rapid change, uncertainty and transformation. In fact, culture is one of the most powerful – and most underutilized – tools for driving organizational performance.

At bink, we help life sciences companies harness culture as a strategic asset – one that connects leadership vision to employee action, especially in moments of accelerated change.

Whether you're scaling a new therapeutic area, integrating global teams post-merger, or facing market disruptions, culture is what helps employees stay grounded and move forward. While your strategy tells them what to do, your culture guides them on how to make decisions, collaborate and take action.

What holds many companies back is a lack of understanding about how to shape and shift their culture. This toolkit dives deep into the topic of high-performing cultures – what they are, how they drive outcomes, how to build them and how to sustain them over time.

Our approach draws from decades of experience helping life sciences companies navigate transformation and build cultures that thrive. Read on and let's make culture your competitive edge.

Culture isn't just what you say about your company.

It's what people experience every day, in every interaction.

It lives in the way a manager gives feedback, the way a leader celebrates a win, or the silence after a big announcement. It shows up in who gets promoted and how layoffs happen, who gets heard and how decisions get made.

Your culture is what guides employees during moments of uncertainty. And at a time when the world of work feels more uncertain than ever before, intentional focus on culture matters.

What most companies get wrong is leaving their culture to chance, misjudging its impact and failing to take steps to strengthen it to [drive business results](#).

This toolkit is designed to demystify culture – to help you see it as something that can be designed, reinforced and evolved across every stage of the employee experience, from hiring to offboarding. Each section offers reflection prompts, practical guidance and resources to help you close the gap between what you say your culture is, and what employees actually experience.

Because when your beliefs, values, behaviors and employee experiences are in sync, culture is more than a concept – it's a competitive advantage.

Pro tip: [How to align your corporate values with behaviors](#)

Culture isn't a moment – it's a system.

Design it intentionally across every stage of the employee lifecycle.





Day One &
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Recruiting & hiring

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Put your culture on display — early, clearly and intentionally.

Your hiring process is your first, and often most powerful, opportunity to express what your company believes, what it values and how it operates.

From the careers page to the final interview, every step is a chance to show, not just say, what makes your culture distinct.

Culture should be embedded in every touchpoint with candidates, not reserved for onboarding or all-hands meetings later. When you infuse recruiting with your values, behavioral norms and beliefs about success, you don't just attract candidates who *can* do the job — you attract those who will thrive in your environment.

Best practices for emphasizing culture in your recruiting and hiring processes:

Get specific about what your values look like.

Before you can [hire for values](#), you must define how they show up in real life. If you value “customer-first thinking,” that might look like asking the right questions, resisting shortcuts, or elevating quality. Document observable behaviors tied to your values so that everyone involved in hiring knows what to look for.

Design a values-forward interview process.

Move beyond traditional interview questions and surface alignment with your values and beliefs through thoughtful behavioral prompts. Dig into how candidates make decisions, handle ambiguity, or manage tradeoffs. Avoid generic questions. Instead, tailor them to reflect your culture’s operating style.

Hire for your lived values, not just aspirational ones.

Aspirational values sound impressive. But your [true culture](#) is revealed in what gets rewarded, promoted and repeated. Take time to audit your recent promotions, exits and performance reviews. What behaviors drive success? What habits create friction? These patterns are your culture in action, and should be reflected in your recruiting process.

Train interviewers to assess for culture add, not sameness.

Not everyone knows how to spot cultural alignment – or the difference between “culture fit” and “culture add.” Standardize your evaluation process, equip interviewers with clear criteria and provide training on your values, biases and interviewing techniques.

Reflective questions:

- Are your values clearly defined with real-world behaviors, not just abstract words?
- Does your careers page showcase values through stories, testimonials and language?
- Do job descriptions reflect company beliefs and behavioral expectations?
- Are interview questions tied to specific values and decision-making patterns?
- Are interviewers trained on values-based evaluation and unconscious bias?
- Do reference checks explore values alignment and culture-aligned behaviors in action?
- Do hiring decisions prioritize alignment with the company's true operating model?
- Does leadership model the values in how they engage with candidates and new hires?

Additional learning:

- [Linkedin Talent Blog: Job posts that cite well-being, flexibility, and culture get more applications](#)
- [Indeed Career Guide: A guide to hiring for cultural add \(with tips and benefits\)](#)
- [Indeed for Employers: How to attract candidates with company culture](#)
- [Business.com: Why it's important new hires fit a company's culture](#)



Day One &
Onboarding

Day one & onboarding

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Day one & onboarding

Build belonging through belief and behavior.

Embedding cultural touchpoints from day one sets the tone for how new hires connect, contribute and carry your culture forward.

Onboarding is where employees begin to shift from “outsider” to “insider.” It’s a time of openness and vulnerability.

This stage is also where unwritten norms start to take hold. Helping people understand “how we do things here” – from Slack etiquette to leadership access – supports smoother integration and a stronger sense of belonging.

Best practices for culture-forward onboarding:

Treat culture as a central pillar, not a bullet point.

From day one, make it clear that your culture isn't a "nice to have." It's part of how things *get done*.

Use onboarding to reinforce the importance of values, company mission and the mindsets that drive success.

Demystify the unwritten rules.

Unspoken norms can either help new hires feel "in" or leave them feeling unsure. Be proactive about naming how things work: how meetings run, how feedback is given, how decisions get made, how accessible leaders really are.

Introduce beliefs and behaviors, not just policies.

Don't stop at what your company *does*. Talk about *how* and *why* you do it. Share the stories, decisions and team dynamics that reflect your core beliefs. Define how values show up in day-to-day behaviors, especially under pressure.

Make it relational, not just informational.

Great onboarding isn't a solo sport. Pair new hires with culture champions, onboarding buddies, or cross-functional cohorts. Reinforce that every role connects to the bigger mission, and every employee has a stake in shaping the culture.

Reflective questions:

- Is culture presented as a core part of onboarding, not an afterthought?
- Are values and beliefs introduced with real-world stories, examples or lived experiences during onboarding?
- Do new hires meet leaders and peers who actively model cultural values and behaviors?
- Are norms and “how we work here” practices explicitly named (e.g. how meetings run, Slack behavior, decision-making pace)?
- Are employees introduced to team rituals or traditions that foster connection?
- Does a buddy, mentor or culture ambassador help bridge early relationships?
- Does onboarding include learning about the company’s history, mission and impact?
- Are managers trained to reinforce culture and set expectations during onboarding check-ins?

Additional learning:

- [SHRM: Oboarding: The key to elevating your company culture](#)
- [Harvard Business Review: Onboarding isn't enough](#)
- [Bamboohr blog: 5 Strategies for building company culture with your new hires](#)
- [Workvivo: Introducing new hires to your company culture and values](#)



Daily communication &
employee engagement

Culture is created in the moments in between.

Employees look for cultural cues everywhere: Who gets credit? How are decisions explained? What stories get told and retold? That's why daily communication is one of the most powerful tools for shaping culture.

Culture isn't built in company town halls or values posters — it's built in the everyday interactions that happen across email threads, Slack channels, 1:1s, team meetings and informal celebrations. These moments are where values are either reinforced or eroded — where your culture becomes something employees *experience*, not just something they're told about.

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And at the center of it all are **managers**. Managers are not just conduits of information — they're the most consistent, visible and influential culture carriers in your organization. Their tone, behavior and communication choices shape how culture is interpreted, experienced and lived out at the team level.

Best practices for embedding culture into daily communication:

Treat every touchpoint as a culture cue.

Every status update, team meeting, or internal announcement is an opportunity to reinforce your cultural priorities. Infuse communications with your values, connect them to broader beliefs and speak with consistency across channels.

Activate managers as culture builders.

Managers play a frontline role in interpreting and modeling culture. Equip them with talking points, recognition tools and coaching support that help them reinforce the right behaviors, decisions and team norms.

Celebrate culture in action.

Recognition reinforces behavior. Publicly shout out moments when individuals or teams embody core values. Bonus: empower managers to lead this effort in ways that feel personal and team-relevant.

Make values visible through storytelling.

Stories give culture texture. Use them to spotlight when values show up in action — especially in moments of success, challenge or change. Don't just announce outcomes — narrate the *how* and *why* behind them.

Close the loop with employee feedback.

Communication shouldn't just cascade, it should circle back. Integrate listening strategies (like pulse surveys, anonymous Q&A, or post-all-hands feedback forms) to hear how your culture is landing in practice.

Reflective questions:

- Do internal messages (emails, town halls, Slack, newsletters) reflect company values and beliefs?
- Are leaders and managers consistent in the language they use to describe goals and decisions?
- Are managers equipped with tools to model and message cultural priorities (e.g., meeting templates, values prompts)?
- Do employee spotlights and team stories showcase desired behaviors and success aligned with values?
- Are feedback loops (surveys, listening sessions, check-ins) built into your communication flow?
- Is there a clear link between company goals and individual/team contributions?
- Do recognition programs include informal and formal ways to highlight values in action?
- Do internal communications reinforce not just what's happening, but how it connects to purpose?

Additional learning:

- [bink: 3 steps for a successful core values implementation plan](#)
- [Staffbase podcast: From buzzwords to behavior: building a culture that lives its values](#)
- [Cerkl blog: 12 Tips on how to effectively communicate culture in the workplace](#)
- [Forbes: Building A high-performing culture starts with employee engagement](#)



Growth & development

Build the habits that shape high performance.

How people grow, advance and are recognized at work sends a clear and lasting message about what your company really values.

Growth isn't just an HR initiative. It's a strategic expression of your culture in motion. When your values and behavioral expectations are embedded in development systems, they become more than posters – they become performance drivers.

Too often, growth strategies are siloed from culture conversations. But in high-performing organizations, they're deeply connected. **Career mobility, recognition and feedback are opportunities to reinforce what good looks like.**

And once again, **managers play a pivotal role.** They are the front lines of development, performance conversations and retention. If they aren't equipped to coach through the lens of your values – or worse, if they reward behaviors that contradict them – your culture starts to crack at the core.

Best practices for culture-aligned development:

Connect performance to values, not just output.

If you want people to live your values, you need to evaluate them accordingly. Integrate values-based competencies into performance reviews and feedback systems. Reward how goals are achieved, not just whether they are.

Make recognition part of your culture toolkit.

Peer-to-peer shoutouts, manager praise and company-wide awards should spotlight behaviors that reflect your values and fuel the culture you're trying to grow.

Create multiple paths for growth.

Growth doesn't always mean moving up. Offer opportunities for employees to grow laterally, deepen expertise, or take on special projects that stretch their skills all while reinforcing the behaviors you want to see more of.

Empower managers to coach for culture.

Managers need tools but even more, they need training. Invest in building their ability to give meaningful feedback, support individual goals and recognize growth in ways that align with your culture. When managers get this right, employees don't just grow, they stay.

Align development systems with your business strategy.

Don't treat culture and strategy as separate. If your business strategy demands collaboration, innovation or accountability, your growth systems should reward those exact behaviors explicitly and repeatedly.

Reflective questions:

- Do performance management criteria include values-based behaviors – not just KPIs?
- Are managers trained to deliver feedback that reflects your company's cultural expectations?
- Are peer-to-peer or values-aligned recognition programs in place and actively used?
- Do employees have access to clear, visible growth paths, including vertical and lateral opportunities?
- Do leadership development and succession planning frameworks reinforce culture as a success factor?
- Do learning programs reflect both technical and cultural competencies?
- Do success stories (promotions, awards, transitions) reinforce what “great” looks like here?

Additional learning:

- [McKinsey: Building a learning culture that drives business forward](#)
- [Forbes: Learning and development are key to workplace culture](#)
- [Lattice: How to make employee development part of your culture](#)



Day One &
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Exit & retirement

Endings reveal what your culture is really made of.

Handled well, exits can strengthen trust, reinforce values and deepen cultural credibility. Handled poorly, they can undermine years of culture-building in a single conversation.

How people leave your company – whether by choice, circumstance or design – speaks volumes. Departures aren't just HR transactions; they're emotional, symbolic and highly visible cultural moments. They create stories employees will tell long after they've left, and shape how those who stay feel about where they work.

This is especially true during **layoffs and restructures**. While hard choices may be necessary, how you communicate them, how leaders show up, and how remaining employees are supported can determine whether your culture weathers the storm or fractures under pressure.

Departures are also an opportunity to listen deeply, recognize contributions and maintain a respectful relationship that extends into alumni engagement, referrals or even rehiring.

Best practices for culturally aligned departures:

Make exits human, not transactional.

No matter the reason for departure, every employee deserves dignity, clarity and appreciation. Center your values in the offboarding process by recognizing contributions, explaining context clearly and offering thoughtful closure.

Treat layoffs as culture-defining moments.

Layoffs require speed and clarity, but not at the expense of empathy. Prepare leaders to communicate with transparency and compassion. Offer resources to both exiting and remaining employees. Model the same values you promote during good times.

Gather culture-specific feedback.

Exit interviews shouldn't just ask what went wrong. They should surface insights about how culture was experienced, where values felt real (or not) and what might have made someone stay longer.

Recognize and celebrate legacy.

Whether someone is retiring, transitioning, or moving on, find ways to honor their contributions in ways that reflect your culture. Not every goodbye needs a gold watch — but it should feel meaningful.

Keep the door open.

Alumni can become ambassadors, mentors, future clients, or even boomerang hires. Foster connection with a lightweight alumni strategy — even just a LinkedIn group or occasional check-in — to show your culture doesn't end with employment.

Align succession with cultural goals.

Who you choose to promote or prepare for future leadership sends a loud signal about what (and who) you value. Make sure your succession planning reflects the cultural direction you're trying to grow into and not just who's "ready" today.

Reflective questions:

- Do exit interviews explore how culture was experienced (values, behaviors, alignment)?
- Is feedback from exits reviewed and used to improve the employee lifecycle?
- Are layoffs handled with clarity, consistency and compassion across all levels?
- Are leaders and managers trained on how to communicate during challenging transitions?
- Do departing employees receive recognition or acknowledgment aligned with your values?
- Are alumni invited to stay connected via referrals, content or community groups?
- Are remaining employees supported and invited into open dialogue?
- Are exit practices consistent across departments, levels, and locations?

Additional learning:

- [HR Morning: Boomerang hiring grows – A new retention strategy for HR](#)
- [Linkedin: Why company culture is a key factor in exit planning](#)
- [Linkedin: You can go home again – building organizational culture through alumni employees](#)
- [Culture Amp: Laying off employees: how to do with compassion](#)
- [Linkedin: Cultivating a culture of appreciation: why how you say goodbye matters](#)

Bonus tool: your culture check-up

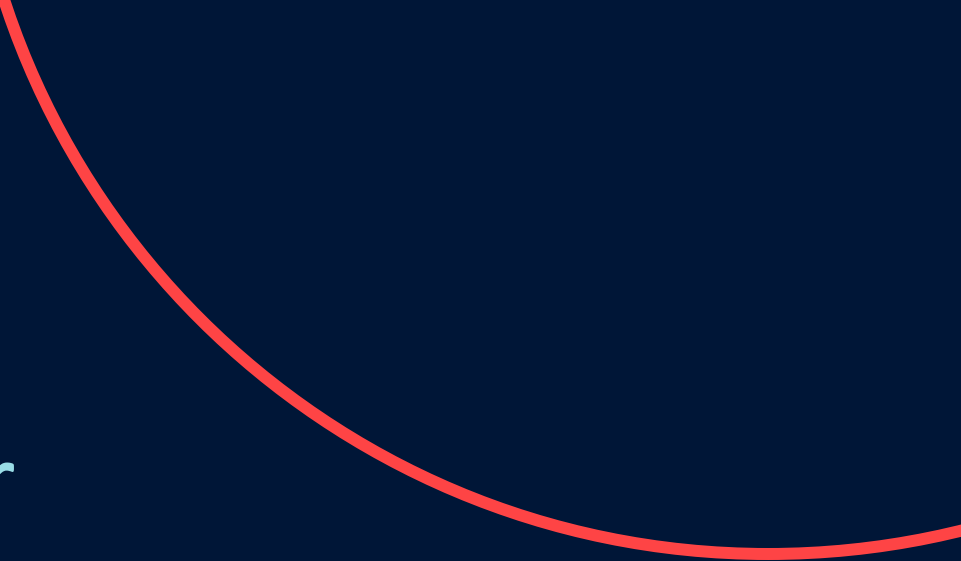
Where might your culture be slipping through the cracks?

**Use our quick diagnostic to assess how well your culture
is integrated across the lifecycle.**

You'll receive tailored insights to help you spot gaps, realign efforts and turn culture into your most strategic asset.

[Take the Culture Check-Up](#)





Build your culture with intent, or let it happen by accident.

Culture isn't a side project — it's a strategic system that drives performance, connection and resilience.

When culture is strong and aligned, it empowers teams to collaborate more effectively, adapt to change with confidence and accelerate progress, ultimately driving better business outcomes and delivering solutions that change lives.

Whether you're scaling a new therapeutic area, integrating global teams or navigating transformation, culture is the throughline that turns business strategy into real-world action.

Strategy tells employees what to do. Culture helps them decide how.

At bink, we partner with life sciences leaders to shape cultures that do more than inspire – they align teams, accelerate progress and fuel lasting growth.

Our approach brings together strategy, communication and systems thinking to build cultures that perform under pressure and thrive over time.

If this toolkit sparked new thinking or raised new questions,
[we'd love to keep the conversation going.](#)

Let's build a culture that works as hard as your science does.



[Subscribe](#) to our monthly newsletter for more actionable insights to help you turn culture into a competitive edge.





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Culture powers performance.