

Culture at
Work Study

Presented by bink.

Culture at Work

2026 Research Report

300 culture practitioners
Cross-industry
Fully anonymous

bink.



**The culture we intend.
The culture we experience.
And the culture gap between.**

ABOUT THIS REPORT

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SECTION 01

Why we conducted this study

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Most companies
claim they care
about culture.
Reinforcing it is a
different challenge.

Most culture research measures how engaged or satisfied employees are.

We wanted to explore something a bit different: what are organizations actually doing to build culture? How is it reinforced? What do systems reward? And what do senior leaders get right or wrong when it comes to shaping culture?

Organizations often get stuck in the gap between valuing culture in principle and reinforcing it through systems and behavior.

What makes this study different

- 300 culture practitioners across industries, organization sizes and functions
- Fully anonymous responses, creating space for candid perspectives
- Conducted with Audience Audit, with distribution support from six partner organizations
- Focused on how culture is defined, reinforced and experienced during change and shaped by leadership and organizational systems

Across the study, respondents largely agreed on what creates a strong culture.

The knowledge is there. The challenge is consistently reinforcing the practices that create a strong culture

The organizations that close that gap do not communicate culture differently. They reinforce it differently.

The culture gap is the distance between intention and experience



The **culture gap** is the difference between what an organization intends and what employees actually experience.

SECTION 02

About the respondents

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The practitioners closest to culture work

300
respondents

54%
Director level
or above

Respondents represent the functions responsible for defining, communicating and operationalizing culture.

Function	% of respondents <i>Respondents could select multiple functions</i>
Internal Communications	59%
Human Resources	49%
Executive Leadership	30%
Operations	23%
Strategy/Transformation	20%
DEI	10%

Title	% of respondents
Director	30%
Senior Manager	18%
Manager	18%
C-suite	12%
Vice President, Senior Vice President, Executive Vice President	12%
Other	10%

A broad cross-section of organizations

No single industry, company size or ownership model dominates the sample, strengthening the cross-sector relevance of the findings.

Organization size¹

50-249	19%
250-999	27%
1,000-9,999	34%
10,000+	19%

Annual revenue

Ranges from under \$50M to \$10B+;
35% in the \$1B+ range

Ownership structure

Publicly traded	31%
Privately held	40%
Nonprofit	12%
Private equity-backed	7%
Other	6%
Gov't / Public Sector	4%

Industry

Life Sciences & Healthcare	19%
Manufacturing & Industrial	14%
Financial Services	10%
Construction	9%
Professional Services	8%
Education	7%
Retail	6%

Percentages are rounded. Remaining respondents span a range of other industries.

¹ 1% of respondents selected "I'm not sure."

SECTION 03

Executive Summary

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Four distinct mindsets explain how practitioners experience culture

These mindsets cut across industries and organization sizes. They reflect both what respondents believe about culture and what they experience inside their organizations.

The biggest differences are not in how much respondents care about culture, but in what they believe leadership is willing to do, and what their organizations consistently reinforce.

The data was analyzed to identify groups based on shared patterns of agreement across a selected set of attitude statements.



Blocked Advocates | 27%

Believe deeply in culture work but feel they lack the authority, resources or support to fix what is broken.



Culture Activators | 24%

Work in organizations where leadership behavior, systems and stated values largely reinforce one another.



Strategic Believers | 25%

See culture as a core strategic lever and driver of performance, even when their own organization has not fully operationalized it.



Reluctant Realists | 24%

Have seen culture treated more as performance than practice and are skeptical that meaningful change will happen.

Four findings from the research

While the four mindsets experience culture differently, four key findings cut across all respondents.

Together, they explain why organizations struggle to turn cultural intentions into employees' everyday experiences.

01

Leadership behavior is the strongest signal of culture

02

Culture is reinforced through systems

03

Culture requires authority, not just accountability

04

Alignment strengthens organizational performance

KEY FINDING #1

Leadership behavior is the strongest signal of culture

Employees judge culture less by what leaders say than by what they consistently model, reward and allow.

91%

agree that a disconnect between leadership messaging and behavior is one of the most damaging cultural forces inside organizations.

78%

agree that employees learn the real culture in their organization by watching what leaders tolerate.

51%

say high performers are sometimes, often or always allowed to violate cultural expectations in their organization.

KEY FINDING #2

Culture is reinforced through systems

Messaging cannot overcome policies, incentives and decisions that reward different behaviors.

68%

agree that structural systems matter more than messaging when shaping culture.

66%

agree that sustainable culture change requires disrupting existing incentives.

89%

agree that internal communications cannot compensate for misaligned systems within organizations.

KEY FINDING #3

Culture requires authority, not just accountability

Organizations frequently hold HR, Internal Communications and middle managers accountable for culture while limiting their influence over the systems employees actually experience.

54%

agree that those responsible for improving culture in their organization often lack the authority to change the systems that shape it.

55%

agree that middle managers in their organization are expected to drive culture change without sufficient support or resources.

KEY FINDING #4

Alignment strengthens organizational performance

When leadership, systems and communication reinforce the same culture, organizations are better equipped to navigate change, retain talent and deliver stronger business outcomes.

This study suggests the knowledge gap is largely closed. Respondents know what creates strong cultures. The challenge is consistently reinforcing those behaviors through leadership, systems and accountability.

95%

agree that their organization is better able to navigate change when leadership, systems and messaging are in alignment.

94%

agree that alignment among leadership is one of the most important drivers of organizational performance.

87%

say their organization's culture has influenced overall business performance.

84%

say their organization's culture has influenced retention.

Yet, only 14% of respondents say senior leaders in their organization view culture as a strategic lever tied to performance.

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Inside the four culture mindsets

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What separates the four mindsets

The four mindsets don't differ in how much they care about culture — all four do.

They differ in whether they see their organizations following through.

Mindset	I believe culture matters in general	I see culture operationalized in my organization
 Blocked Advocates	Strongly yes	No
 Culture Activators	Strongly yes	Yes
 Strategic Believers	Strongly yes	Not necessarily
 Reluctant Realists	Yes, in principle	No

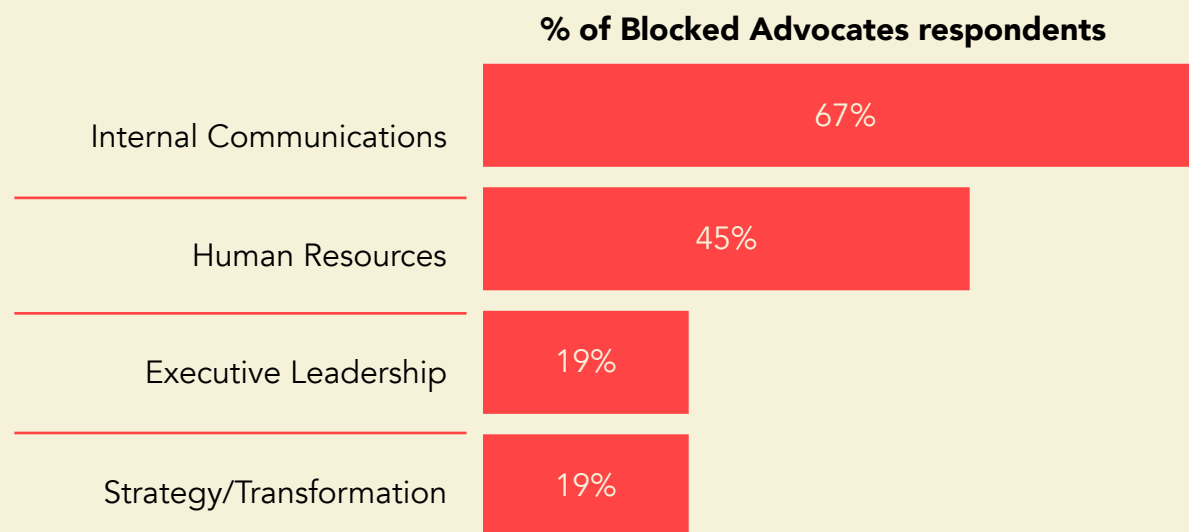
The data was analyzed to identify groups based on shared patterns of agreement across a selected set of attitude statements.

Blocked Advocates believe in culture work, but lack the authority to make it real



OVERVIEW

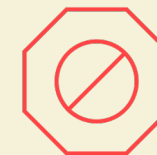
Blocked Advocates see the gap between the culture leaders intend and the culture employees experience, and they see it more clearly than any other group. They believe culture can be a strategic force but describe working in organizations where leadership, systems and everyday decisions rarely reinforce it. Many are responsible for improving culture yet lack the authority to change the systems shaping it.



Their profile shows where culture accountability often lands: heavily in Internal Communications and HR, with limited representation from executive leadership.

** Respondents could select multiple functions*

Data reflects responses from the Blocked Advocates segment.



Blocked Advocates believe in culture work, but lack the authority to make it real

WHAT THEY EXPERIENCE:

- 93% agree that there is a gap between what senior leaders want in an ideal culture and what employees experience day-to-day in their organization.
- 87% agree that senior leaders talk about culture more than they operationalize it in their organization.
- 84% agree that those responsible for improving culture in their organization often lack the authority to change the systems that shape it.
- 82% agree that middle managers in their organization are expected to drive culture change without sufficient support or resources.
- 33% rate their organization's culture as very good or excellent.

Blocked Advocates do not lack conviction.

They lack the authority and organizational conditions required to act on it.



Blocked Advocates reveal where culture breaks down

Compared with Culture Activators, Blocked Advocates report consistently weaker alignment across leadership, systems and employee experience. The contrast reveals where culture most often breaks down.

“For employees who have been employed more than 20 years, bullying, yelling, minimizing, undermining, and gossiping are all permitted because ‘they’ve done so much for this company.’ There are no repercussions for this behavior besides a ‘serious conversation.’

— Blocked Advocate respondent



CULTURE MATURITY

Only 25% describe their organization’s stage of cultural development as integrated and measured, compared with 64% of Culture Activators.

LEADERSHIP ALIGNMENT

Only 27% say leaders and employees are highly aligned in their perception of the current culture, compared with 75% of Culture Activators.

RECRUITMENT ACCURACY

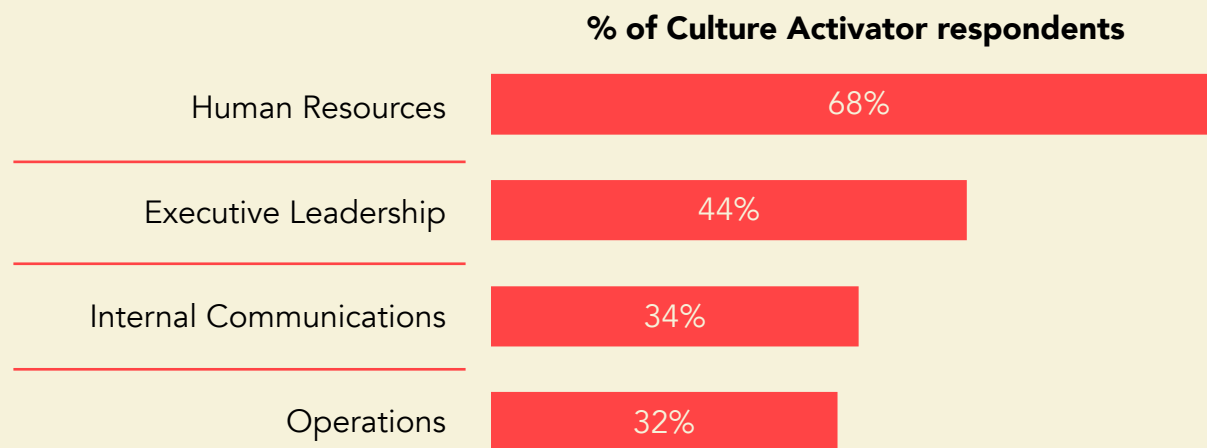
Only 28% say the culture described during recruitment reflects employees’ experience, compared with 80% of Culture Activators.

Culture Activators see culture consistently reinforced



OVERVIEW

Culture Activators' optimism is grounded in what they experience — not simply what they hope for. They describe organizations where culture is embedded in how leaders behave, decisions are made and success is measured, rather than treated primarily as a communications initiative.



Their profile combines strong HR representation with the highest concentration of executive leadership, placing culture expertise closer to organizational decision-making.

** Respondents could select multiple functions*

Culture Activators see culture consistently reinforced



WHAT THEY EXPERIENCE:

- 99% agree that culture is a key consideration in major business decisions in their organization.
- 98% agree that transparency is consistently demonstrated through leadership actions in their organization.
- 95% agree that senior leaders in their organization are visibly held accountable when their behavior contradicts stated values.
- 81% rate their organization's culture as very good or excellent.
- 68% report a senior leader in their organization publicly admitted a mistake in the past year.

Culture Activators stand out because they are more likely to see leadership behavior, organizational systems and accountability consistently reinforce the organization's stated culture.



Culture Activators show what systemic alignment looks like

Compared with the other mindsets, Culture Activators report stronger alignment across leadership behavior, organizational systems and employee experience. Their responses show what becomes possible when culture is intentionally embedded throughout the organization rather than left to chance.

“My observation is that leaders model the behavior they expect. Call out racism, bullying, ethical lapses and there is swift correction and discipline in accordance with our policies.”

— Culture Activator respondent



CULTURE MATURITY

64% describe their organization's stage of cultural development as integrated and measured, compared with 25% of Blocked Advocates and 17% of Reluctant Realists.

LEADERSHIP ALIGNMENT

75% say employees and leaders are highly aligned in their perception of the current culture, compared with 27% of Blocked Advocates.

RECRUITMENT ACCURACY

80% say the culture described during recruitment matches what employees actually experience, compared with 28% of Blocked Advocates.

CULTURE ON THE BOARD AGENDA

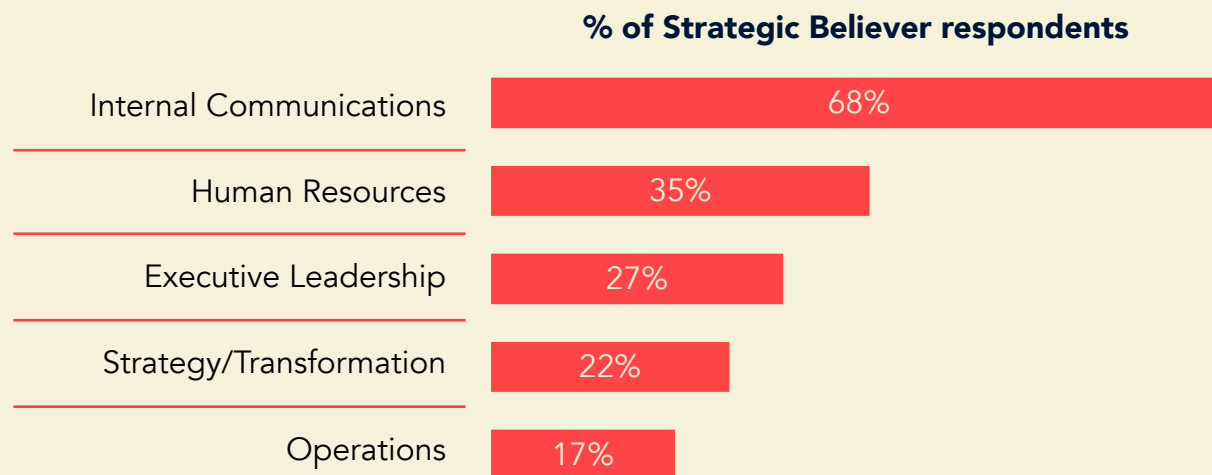
56% say culture is discussed frequently at the board level, compared with about 24% across the other three mindsets.

Strategic Believers see culture as a business imperative



OVERVIEW

Strategic Believers hold the strongest conviction that culture drives organizational performance. They consistently connect culture to business outcomes and long-term success, even when their own organizations have not fully embedded it into leadership behavior, systems and everyday decisions. Their belief is stronger than their organizational reality.



This group appears well positioned to see culture through a strategic lens but is less directly involved in the day-to-day systems and decisions that bring it to life.

** Respondents could select multiple functions*

Strategic Believers see culture as a business imperative



WHAT THEY EXPERIENCE:

- 100% agree that employees evaluate leadership actions more than leadership messaging in their organization.
- 98% agree that their organization is better able to navigate change when leadership behavior, systems, and messaging are in alignment.
- 90% agree that employees learn the real culture in their organization by watching what senior leaders tolerate.
- 52% rate their organization's culture as very good or excellent.

Strategic Believers do not need to be convinced that culture matters.

Their challenge is translating conviction into organizational practice.



Strategic Believers' conviction outpaces their organizational reality

Strategic Believers express the strongest conviction that culture drives performance. But far fewer describe organizations where that belief has been fully translated into systems and measurement.

“Senior leaders consider culture to be fun parties or events. They look to drive change by adding a slogan on an invite, rather than influencing through communication and transparency.”

— Strategic Believer respondent



CULTURE DESERVES RIGOROUS MEASUREMENT

52% agree completely that culture should be measured as rigorously as financial performance, compared with 32% of Culture Activators, 25% of Blocked Advocates and 14% of Reluctant Realists.

CULTURE PREDICTS LONG-TERM SUCCESS

55% agree completely that culture is a stronger predictor of long-term success than strategy alone, compared with 27% of Culture Activators, 24% of Blocked Advocates and 14% of Reluctant Realists.

HOW THEY DESCRIBE THEIR ORGANIZATION'S STAGE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Embedding is still underway

38% say they are actively embedding culture into systems.

Full operationalization remains limited

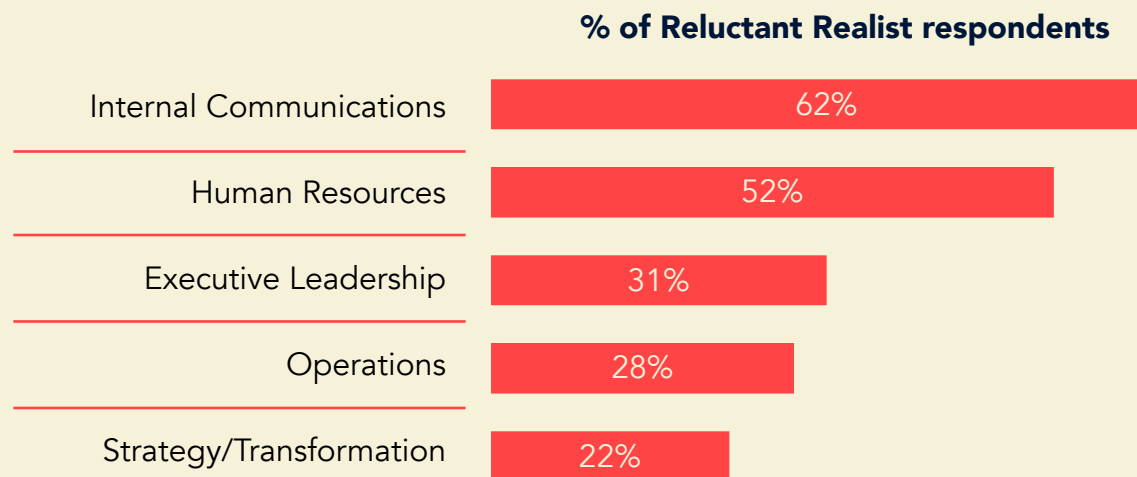
Only 33% describe their culture as integrated and measured, compared with 64% of Culture Activators.

Reluctant Realists have seen enough to doubt their organization will change



OVERVIEW

Reluctant Realists still believe culture can matter in principle, but repeated gaps between stated values and organizational behavior have made them guarded. They describe organizations where feedback is collected without action, performance outweighs values and culture is delegated rather than modeled. Their skepticism is not about culture itself. It is about whether their organization is willing to act differently.



Their strong representation in Internal Communications and HR places them close to everyday execution — where gaps between stated culture and organizational behavior are hardest to ignore.

** Respondents could select multiple functions*

Reluctant Realists have seen enough to doubt their organization will change



WHAT THEY EXPERIENCE:

- 90% agree that feedback is collected in their organization to signal listening more than to drive change.
- 84% agree that performance metrics hold more organizational importance than stated values in their organization.
- 81% agree that senior leaders in their organization treat culture as something that can be delegated rather than modeled.
- 72% agree that people who create cultural problems in their organization are tolerated as long as they deliver strong business results.
- 34% rate their organization's culture as very good or excellent.

Reluctant Realists are not skeptical of culture.

They are skeptical of their organization's willingness to change what it rewards, tolerates and acts on.



Reluctant Realists' skepticism is grounded in what they experience

Compared with Culture Activators, Reluctant Realists report less mature culture systems, weaker alignment between employees and leaders and substantially more leadership instability. Their skepticism reflects what they've consistently experienced — not simply what they believe.

"They reward leaders who manage up and who do not collaborate or work well with other teams."

— Reluctant Realist respondent

"... [Our] executive team believes the culture is great because employees can recite the Values. They do not share survey results or develop action plans based on employee input, so nothing improves."

— Reluctant Realist respondent



LEADERSHIP INSTABILITY

29% report significant executive leadership turnover, compared with just 3% of Culture Activators.

LEADERSHIP ALIGNMENT

29% say employees and leadership are highly aligned in their perception of the current culture, compared with 75% of Culture Activators.

RETENTION IS ALREADY AT RISK

24% report that culture is having a negative impact on retention, compared with 0% of Culture Activators.

CULTURE MATURITY

17% describe their organization's stage of cultural development as integrated and measured, compared with 64% of Culture Activators.

Data reflects responses from the Reluctant Realists segment.

How respondents rate their own culture

The four mindsets reflect different perspectives on culture and fundamentally different organizational experiences. The way each group rates its own culture illustrates just how wide the gap can be.

Overall, how would you rate your organization's current culture?

	Blocked Advocates	Culture Activators	Strategic Believers	Reluctant Realists
Excellent	12%	25%	5%	16%
Very good	21%	56%	47%	19%
Good	60%	19%	37%	48%
Poor	7%	0%	8%	16%
Terrible or Very Poor	0%	0%	4%	2%

Blocked Advocates cluster around "good."

Culture Activators are the only mindset where a majority (81%) rate their culture as "very good" or "excellent."

Close to half of **Strategic Believers** rate their culture as "very good."

Reluctant Realists are the only group with meaningful representation in "poor."

Where organizations are on the culture maturity journey

How would you describe your organization's stage of cultural development?

	Blocked Advocates	Culture Activators	Strategic Believers	Reluctant Realists
Integrated + measured	25%	64%	33%	17%
Actively embedding culture into systems	45%	32%	38%	38%
Early exploration	22%	3%	17%	31%
No intentional culture work	1%	0	7%	9%
Other stage	6%	0	5%	5%

- Blocked Advocates cluster in **active embedding** — suggesting they are doing the work but struggling to complete it.
- Culture Activators are far more likely to describe culture as **integrated and measured**
- Strategic Believers are evenly split being **integrated and measured** and **active embedding**.
- Reluctant Realists fall within **active embedding** and **early exploration**.

Organizations further along in integrating and measuring culture also report that employees and leadership are more highly aligned in their perception of the current culture.

When leaders and employees see culture differently, organizations can risk overestimating their progress on their cultural development journey.

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding

75% of Culture Activators and 42% of Strategic Believers say employees and leaders are highly aligned in their perception of the current culture, while 27% of Blocked Advocates and 29% of Reluctant Realists can say the same.

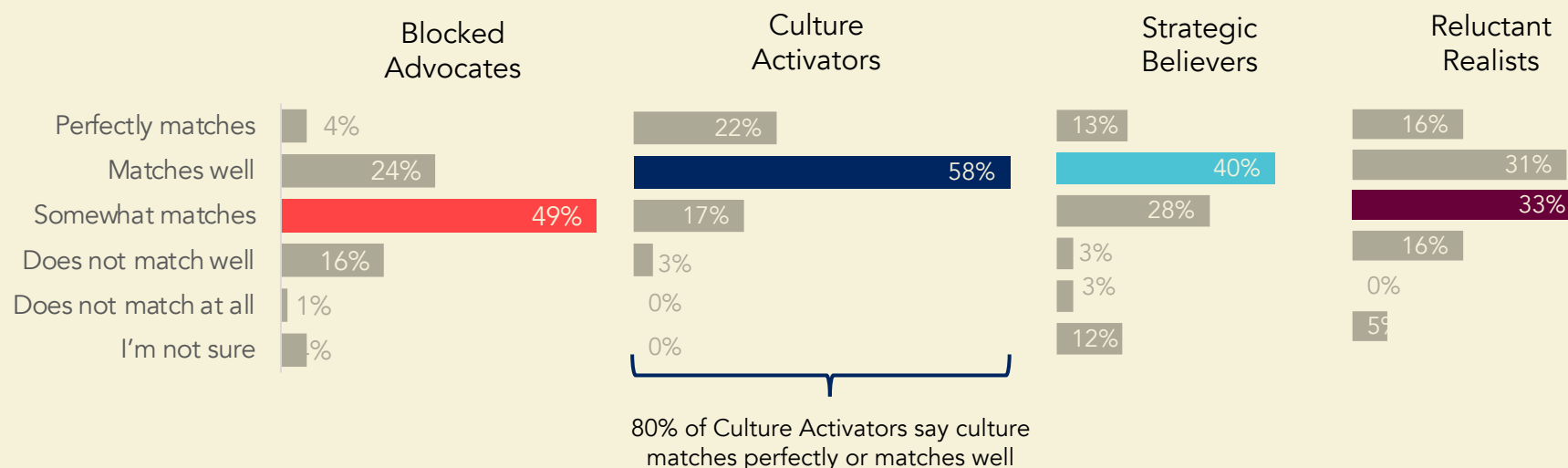
The gap between what's promised and what employees actually experience

Only **13%** of all respondents say the culture employees experience after joining perfectly matches what they were told during recruitment.

This is not primarily a recruiting problem.

It is a signal that many organizations cannot accurately describe the culture they are asking candidates to join, or they are not *willing* to describe it realistically..

How well does the culture described during recruitment reflect what employees actually experience after joining?



Leadership stability is a hallmark of Culture Activators

Culture Activators are more likely to report stable leadership, less likely to have experienced major organizational change and far more likely to rate their culture as very good or excellent.

These patterns suggest a relationship between organizational stability and more positive culture experiences, though they do not establish causation.

How would you describe your executive leadership team over the past three years?

	Blocked Advocates	Culture Activators	Strategic Believers	Reluctant Realists
Stable	22%	63%	33%	31%
Some changes	52%	34%	42%	40%
Significant turnover	25%	3%	25%	29%

Has your organization experienced major organizational change in the past three years?

	Blocked Advocates	Culture Activators	Strategic Believers	Reluctant Realists
Yes	88%	54%	82%	74%
No	12%	46%	18%	26%

TYPES OF CHANGES

Blocked Advocates were substantially more likely than Culture Activators to experience major organizational disruption:

LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS(S)

64% of Blocked Advocates
37% of Culture Activators

RESTRUCTURING OR LAYOFFS

55% of Blocked Advocates
22% of Culture Activators

MERGER OR ACQUISITION

24% of Blocked Advocates
10% of Culture Activators

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding

SECTION 05

Key findings + how to apply them

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FINDING #1: LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR

Leadership behavior is the strongest signal of culture

Employees pay closest attention to what leaders consistently model, reward and tolerate. Leadership decisions become the organization's most credible cultural signal because they reveal which values are truly non-negotiable.

91%

agree that a disconnect between leadership messaging and leadership behavior is one of the most damaging cultural forces inside organizations.

78%

agree that employees learn the real culture in their organization by watching what senior leaders tolerate.

51%

say high performers are sometimes, often or always allowed to violate cultural expectations in their organization.

"Senior leaders will tolerate behavior from managers that would not be acceptable from line employees."

— Blocked Advocate respondent



REFLECTION:

Where are your organization's actions sending a stronger message than your communications?

Look for places where results, status or seniority allow behavior that contradicts the organization's stated culture.

FINDING #1: LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR

Culture is revealed under pressure

Financial strain, restructuring and leadership transitions put culture to the test. Employees learn whether culture is a priority by watching what happens when competing priorities emerge.

78%

have experienced major organizational change in the past three years.

75%

of Blocked Advocates agree completely/strongly agree that culture becomes a lower priority in their organization when financial pressure rises.

54%

agree that an honest examination of culture in their organization would surface issues senior leaders prefer not to confront.

“Business drivers (and the customers who yell the loudest) tend to get extra attention and emphasis at the expense of employee well-being. If there are metrics that are falling or a big customer isn't happy, our employees are basically told to do whatever it takes to fix it.”

— Blocked Advocate respondent



BOTTOM LINE:

Organizations build credibility when difficult decisions reinforce the same values they promote during stable times.

FINDING #2: ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS

Strong cultures are reinforced by systems, not messaging alone

When culture programs do not land, organizations often respond by refining the language, increasing communication or launching another campaign. But messaging cannot overcome systems that reward, tolerate or reinforce behaviors that contradict the desired culture.

68%

agree that structural systems matter more than messaging when shaping culture.

66%

agree that sustainable culture change requires disrupting existing incentives.

55%

agree there is often internal confusion in their organization over what is a culture problem versus an internal communications problem.

REFLECTION:

If your communications stopped tomorrow, what systems would continue reinforcing your culture?

FINDING #2: ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS

Employees experience culture through everyday moments

Moments like these shape culture far more consistently than campaigns or slogans because employees experience them day in and day out.

Hiring	Onboarding	Promotions
Recognition	Performance Ratings	Exceptions

64%

of Culture Activators describe their organization's stage of cultural development as *integrated and measured*.

Compared with:

- 33% of Strategic Believers
- 25% of Blocked Advocates
- 17% of Reluctant Realists

The integration of culture across the lifecycle is what Culture Activator respondents are experiencing differently than other mindsets.

75%

of Culture Activators are very confident or extremely confident that major strategic priorities become part of everyday behaviors and ways of working compared to 43% of all respondents.

This is what's possible when strategy and culture come together.

Data reflects responses from the full survey sample.

BOTTOM LINE:

Employees don't experience culture as a single initiative. They experience it through hundreds of everyday interactions with your organization's systems. Improving culture starts by improving those experiences.

FINDING #3: AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Responsibility for culture is often assigned without authority.

Organizations often expect HR and communications practitioners and middle managers to improve culture without giving them authority over the leadership behaviors, systems and decisions that shape it.

54%

agree that the people responsible for improving culture in their organization often lack the authority to change the systems that shape it.

55%

agree that middle managers in their organization are expected to drive culture change without sufficient support or resources.

Practitioners influence:

Communication
Facilitation
Diagnosis
Manager enablement

Leaders influence:

Business decisions
Incentives
Promotion
Accountability
Resource allocation

Data reflects responses from the full survey sample.

REFLECTION:

Does accountability for culture align with decision-making authority?

FINDING #3: AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Culture becomes sustainable through shared ownership

The strongest organizations treat culture as a shared responsibility. Leaders establish priorities, model expectations and shape systems. HR and Internal Communications translate those priorities into everyday employee experiences.

56%

agree that culture ownership is clearly defined and understood across leadership levels in their organization.

Which statement best describes how culture is viewed by senior leaders in your organization?

Only 14% of all respondents say senior leaders view culture as a strategic lever tied to performance.

18% of all respondents say senior leaders view culture as an HR or People initiative.

"We have what some call a "nice culture" but that means people don't speak up or challenge ideas in meetings. Instead there's the meeting after the meeting behavior that undermines our culture."

— Strategic Believer respondent



Data reflects responses from the full survey sample. Open-ended comments were shared in response to the question "Is there a behavior that senior leaders tolerate that significantly undermines your organization's culture? If so, what is it?"

BOTTOM LINE:

Culture is most effective when leaders own the conditions that shape it and practitioners enable the behaviors that sustain it.

FINDING #4: ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT

Culture becomes a performance driver when words and actions align

Leadership messages are interpreted through the behaviors, systems and everyday experiences that surround them, not the words alone. When those signals align, communication becomes more credible and culture becomes a driver of organizational performance.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TODAY

ONLY 7%

of respondents say leadership communications are always interpreted as intended.

86%

agree that employees in their organization evaluate leadership actions more than leadership messaging.

WHAT'S POSSIBLE

94%

agree alignment among leadership is one of the most important drivers of organizational performance.

95%

agree their organizations are better able to navigate change better when leadership behavior, systems and messaging are in alignment.

Data reflects responses from the full survey sample.

REFLECTION:

Where are leadership behavior, organizational systems and communication reinforcing one another, and where are they unintentionally sending mixed signals?

FINDING #4: ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT

Strong cultures deliver measurable business value

Throughout this study, respondents reporting the strongest cultures had one thing in common: leadership behavior, organizational systems and communication consistently reinforced the same expectations. In these organizations, culture becomes a capability that enables stronger business performance.

INFLUENCE OF THEIR ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE

87%

say their organization's culture has influenced overall business performance.

84%

say their organization's culture has influenced retention.

While respondents recognize the business value that a strong culture can bring, senior leaders may not be there yet.

ONLY 14%

of respondents say senior leaders in their organization view culture as a strategic lever tied to performance.

BOTTOM LINE:

Organizations largely agree that culture influences business performance, but few manage it as a strategic business capability.

SECTION 06

What leaders can do next

What organizations can learn from the
respondents reporting the strongest cultures

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The conditions that make culture work are repeatable

To identify practical next steps, we examined the respondents reporting the strongest cultures — our Culture Activators.

Four repeatable conditions consistently distinguished them from every other mindset.

MODEL TRANSPARENCY

98%

of Culture Activators agree transparency is consistently demonstrated through leadership actions in their organization.

68%

of Culture Activators report that a senior leader in their organization publicly admitted a mistake in the past year.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Leaders build trust when they demonstrate openness, accountability and a willingness to learn.

The conditions that make culture work are repeatable

To identify practical next steps, we examined the respondents reporting the strongest cultures — our Culture Activators.

Four repeatable conditions consistently distinguished them from every other mindset.

PUT CULTURE ON THE BOARD AGENDA

56%

of Culture Activators say culture is discussed frequently at the board level.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Regular board attention signals that culture is a business priority, not simply an HR initiative.

The conditions that make culture work are repeatable

To identify practical next steps, we examined the respondents reporting the strongest cultures — our Culture Activators.

Four repeatable conditions consistently distinguished them from every other mindset.

ALIGN INCENTIVES WITH VALUES

69%

of Culture Activators agree completely or strongly agree that incentives and advancement decisions reinforce stated cultural values in their organization.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Employees believe what the organization rewards, promotes and tolerates.

The conditions that make culture work are repeatable

To identify practical next steps, we examined the respondents reporting the strongest cultures — our Culture Activators.

Four repeatable conditions consistently distinguished them from every other mindset.

MEASURE CULTURE SYSTEMATICALLY

75%

of Culture Activators say values-based behaviors are consistently measured in their organization.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Measurement helps leaders identify gaps, track progress and hold the organization accountable.

SECTION 07

Appendix

CLICK TO JUMP TO A SECTION

- 01 [Why we conducted this study](#)
- 02 [About the respondents](#)
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- 04 [Inside the four culture mindsets](#)
- 05 [Key findings + how to apply them](#)
- 06 [What leaders can do next](#)
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Methodology + about blink

SURVEY PERIOD

- Fielded: May 1, 2026 – May 28, 2026

PARTICIPANTS

- 300 respondents
- Cross-industry
- Anonymous

DISTRIBUTION

- Conducted in partnership with [Audience Audit](#)
- Distributed through bink and six partner organizations: [ContactMonkey](#), [EPM Scientific/Glocomms](#), [ICology](#), [Poppulo](#), [Simpplr](#) and [Workshop](#)

MINDSETS

- The data was analyzed to identify groups based on shared patterns of agreement across a selected set of attitude statements.

REPORTING NOTES

- This study reflects an overall margin of error of +/- 6.2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.
- Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.
- Some questions allowed respondents to select multiple response options.
- Findings reflect the experiences and perspectives of survey respondents and should be interpreted as directional rather than representative of all organizations or employees.

bink.

Culture powers performance.

bink is a senior-level advisory firm that helps leaders align business strategy and organizational culture to accelerate performance.

With particular expertise in the life sciences sector, bink partners with organizations navigating growth, transformation and other high-stakes moments to embed culture into leadership, systems and communications. Through research, advisory services and proprietary methodologies, bink helps organizations create cultures that drive innovation, results and long-term business success.

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