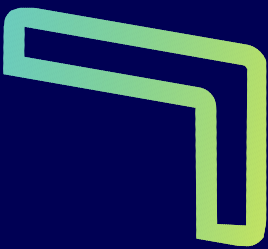




DOCUMENTATION LEVEL:
1 | PURPOSE
Why we do the things we do

People and Culture Process

Book of Culture



INDEX

PEOPLE AND CULTURE PROCESS 3

OUR VALUES..... 8

PRINCIPLES 10

People and Culture Process

The People and Culture Process defines our unique personality as a group. It is the way we do things instinctively, based on our values, principles and deep beliefs.

We are a community of believers and doers! Through our behaviours and attitudes, we believe we can change the way the world moves, in a joyful way.

Organisational culture is the common understanding of core values, guiding principles and beliefs that help us perceive which behaviours and boundaries are appropriate and acceptable.

It is what provides us a clear guidance to know what's right and what's wrong. When in doubt, our culture is what guides us in making the right decisions as individuals and as a company.

At the same time, our culture is the invisible and powerful force that connects us all; that influences our self-direction, passion, autonomy, and freedom of speech. It is the main component that guides everybody's discretionary decision making into a common way of doing things.

People and Culture Process

A healthy culture drives success.

Culture expresses who we are through values and beliefs and guides what we do through individual behaviours. It is intangible because much of it is anchored in unspoken rules, behaviours, mindset, and social patterns. Complementing the written policies and processes, these intangible aspects guide individual attitudes and how team members interact, collaborate effectively, and work efficiently.

We shape our culture with a set of Values and Beliefs applicable to all levels within the organisation. These values and beliefs define what is encouraged, discouraged, accepted, or rejected within our community. At CTW, our culture is designed to allow us to evolve in flexibility and autonomy in response to changing opportunities and demands. It is defined to provide each individual the freedom, willingness, and autonomy to experiment and make decisions on their own.

Culture doesn't exist in a single person, nor is it simply the average of individual characteristics. It resides in shared behaviours, values, and assumptions and is most commonly experienced through the norms and expectations of a community, that is, the unwritten rules. It's a mental model of how we interpret and respond to the world around us.

Culture is the organisation's most important asset. It is defined by the people we have in the organisation (those who don't fit in tend to leave) and will determine the people we will be able to attract (we are more likely to attract and select individuals who seem to "fit in").

Culture cannot be faked, at least not for a long time. People are hardwired to recognise and respond to it instinctively. It propagates based on individual stories and relies on each one being able to articulate their story.

No index entries found.

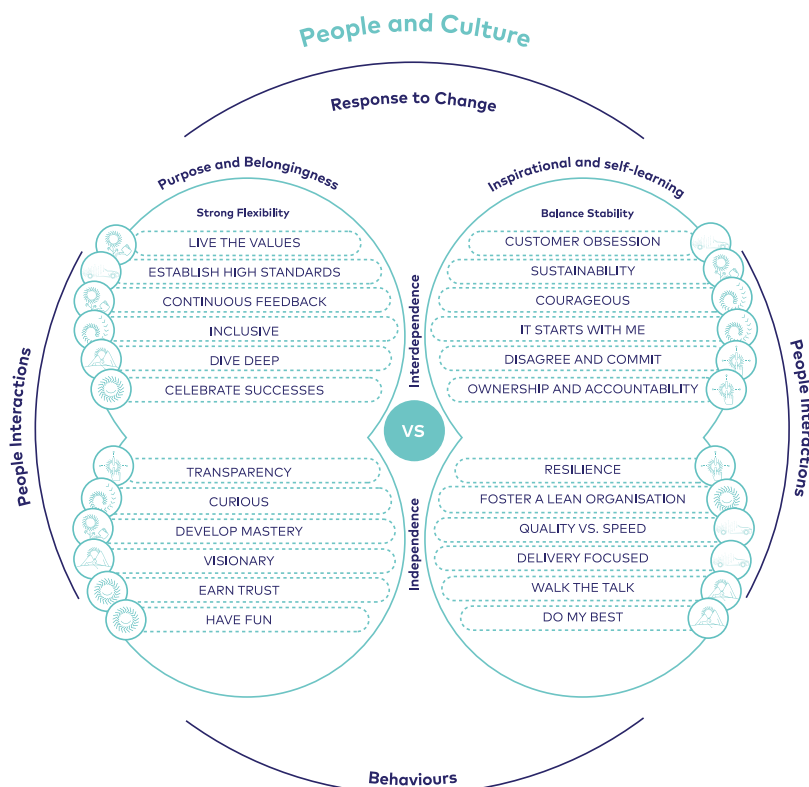


Figure 1 Critical TechWorks Culture Representation

Culture does not happen overnight. It is a journey.

Our People and Culture approach is characterised by two dimensions: how people interact (interdependent versus independent) and their response to change (flexibility versus stability). These two dimensions, **People Interactions** and **Response to Change** have been followed since the company's foundation. They don't depend on the company size and frame the behaviours expected from each company member.

These two dimensions are essential to define the company culture because they balance each other. These necessary trade-offs guarantee the company doesn't fall too much for one or the other side. A culture just focused on People Interactions, characterised by styles related to caring, purpose, learning, and enjoyment, needs to be balanced by behaviours from Response to Change, which are characterised by results, order, commitment, and authority. If this balance doesn't exist, we will be dysfunctional and unable to succeed in the long term.

How culture contributes to agility and mastery.

Our organisation's operation is based on the agile mindset, methods and tools. We believe they facilitate responding to the changing needs of customers, deliver value faster and leaner, and build a culture of innovation and continuous improvement. Building this “agility mindset” culture is a continuous growth process, not an achievement or an event. What makes agility valuable is trying new things, learning from them, and then iterating; the process of failing, and learning from failures; and the process of reinforcing agile behaviours.

A focus on deliberate practice, detailed feedback and an improvement mindset are what creates true growth and mastery.

We also believe that a successful agile culture contributes to increasing the happiness levels at work by encouraging team and individual autonomy, self-direction, mastery and purpose.

As such, we encourage the mechanisms that create a happy work environment:

Connection. When we feel connected to the people we work with, to our job, to our mission, we feel happy at work. Culture reinforces this connection and connection is an essential pillar of the culture we want to create at CTW, the way people interact at their workplace and in promoting a healthy relationship amongst colleagues. Our CTW work culture unites and connects people with different backgrounds, experiences and who have varied attitudes and mentalities, providing them with a sense of unity.

Recognition. Expressing our gratitude to others can significantly boost our happiness. It can also have a powerful effect on the recipient and help strengthen your relationship. We strive for a feedback culture that does not only facilitate constructive ways of improvement, but at the same time favours praise and recognition of our efforts.

Inspiration. Feeling inspired everyday by what we do, our mission, our purpose; The culture of the workplace also goes a long way in promoting healthy cooperation. People try their best level to perform better each day and earn recognition and appreciation for that effort. The culture of the workplace has a direct correlation with people's motivation to perform.

Leadership. Feeling empowered to be responsible and make decisions. Leadership is a shared responsibility; therefore, regardless of our role, proficiency or tenure, everyone can and should act as a leader when appropriate by identifying and solving problems and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and feedback, shared responsibility, and mutual accountability.

Trust & Transparency. An environment that promotes trust and transparency. On an individual level, this means that each and every one of us should develop relationships of trust with colleagues, creating open and honest channels of dialogue, speaking freely and respectfully, and being open to different perspectives.

Individually Challenged. Feeling individually challenged by the purpose and job role. Getting out of my comfort zone, to strive for my best. Every person is clear regarding his/her role and responsibilities and strives hard to accomplish the tasks within the established goals. Newcomers also try their best level to understand work culture and turn the organisation into a better place to work.

Autonomy. Having the autonomy to do my job the way I see fit. I have the power to make decisions that might go off script, bend the rules and do what I see fit if I believe it is the right thing to do for the greater good of the company. The I symbolize that this autonomy is at an individually but also at a team level.

Lightness and Joy. Working in an environment that breathes lightness and joy. Focused on creating joy by delivering great work, where everyone is heard and valuable for their contribution and not for their status or power.

Our values

When we started, we defined our Values based on several workshops. In these workshops, we asked people to share stories of what Critical TechWorks culture meant to them and, through that, worked out a set of different Values that were observed most often. We also asked the company founders about their vision for the company. As a result, we came up with six values, which we believe are still valid today.

Although we believe our values remain the same, we learnt there are some dependencies and precedence between them. Figure 2 shows our six values in a pentagon representation to express these dependencies and precedence. What the image translates is the following:

The values “We believe in uncompromised engineering excellence” and “We value people's autonomy over processes” are the basis of everything. Without these values, our ideals and the company's model break down. If we are not good at what we do (better than most), there is no purpose in existing as an organisation. If we do not pursue and demonstrate Autonomy, we cannot have the organisation we designed; it doesn't include the elements to deal with a lack of autonomy, such as solid directives and command and control. Autonomy and Engineering Excellence are the bare minimum, but simply existing is not sufficient; everyone must put them into practice and live them through every task, and they shouldn't be seen as perks; they are real behaviours that we all must follow with civility and altruism.

The values “We care how we get to the top” and “We leave no one behind” come once we have the bare minimum. We shall exist in harmony, aiming for social justice and inclusive policies. However, that only has meaning if it is built on top of the individual and group rigour, exigence, accountability, and responsibility provided by the two Values “We believe in uncompromised engineering excellence” and “We value people's autonomy over processes”.

We should understand that only together can we be significant. Every single individual matters, but only together we can have a meaningful impact. We shall aim for no less than “We go above and beyond” we want to make things happen, and when something feels finished, a new and more ambitious thing is there to be done.

The value “We believe in joy in motion” naturally emerges from this value set, as we should take great satisfaction in being part of something unique. If the layers made by the pentagon vertices are our Maslow pyramid, Joy in Motion is what glues the layers together. We believe that without everything else represented by the five previous values, maybe there is some joy, but for sure, there is no motion, and joy with no motion is temporary and meaningless.

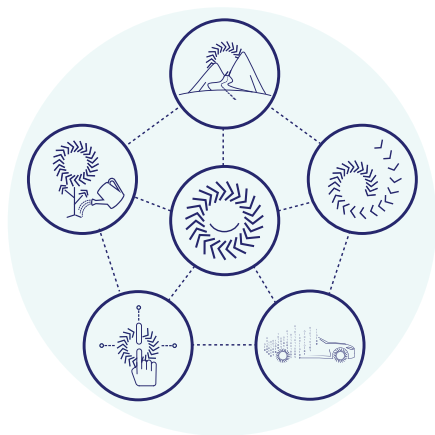
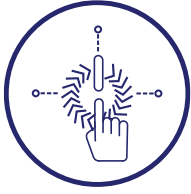
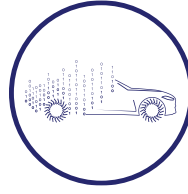


Figure 2: Values Pentagon



We value people's autonomy over processes

We trust in our judgement over processes. We believe that self-direction is what makes self-organised teams surpass themselves. Autonomy and self-reliance go hand in hand with responsibility, freedom of choice and transparency; it is what makes us authentic. Autonomy in a safe environment is the fuel of authenticity. We do not need to be pushed; we are always willing to go the extra mile and think out of the box.



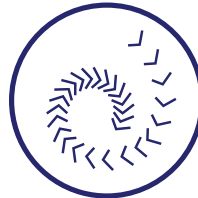
We believe in uncompromised engineering excellence

We expect nothing less than excellence from ourselves. We stimulate and support each other to work smarter and improve working methods as the art of getting things done. We foster simplicity over complexity, good design over technical debt, responding to change over fixed mindset and user experience over design because it enhances agility and delights users. We engineer ingenuity, think creatively and embed safety and security in what we do.



We care about how we get to the top

We trust that each one of us will show up every day to deliver our very best. We step in, exercise transparency, are brutally honest, authentic no matter what, no matter who, no matter where; this is an act of courage and bravery. We act courageously in favour of our customers, users, teams and ourselves.



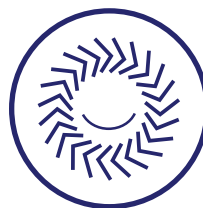
We leave no one behind

We love diversity; it's the uniqueness of each one of us that makes us strong. We know we do not walk alone; we fall and rise together and no one is left behind, even when someone leaves. We connect, learn and share as humans. We serve each other to accomplish things together and we never give up until it's done.



We go above and beyond

We love meaningful ambitions and we want to change lives for the better. We have the courage, boldness and selflessness to pursue our beliefs and inspire others along the way. We commit ourselves to learning, mastery and growth in order to continuously redefine our aspirations.



We believe in joy in motion

What we feel after delivering demanding, arduous and excellent work together is joy. When we come together to overcome the impossible, the unbelievable, we feel joy. Joy is what keeps us alive, drives our happiness, builds real friendships and keeps fear away.

Principles

“A principle is a kind of rule, belief or idea that guides you.”

Values are the core aspects that we prioritise. They define our identity and guide our interactions with the world. Principles complement the Values, which are the rules and beliefs that steer us as individuals and as a community. They shape our thoughts and actions.

These guiding principles apply to all Critical TechWorks people and culture matters. We believe that these principles contribute to developing a great culture, facilitating agility, and building happier and more motivated teams. They aren't implementation guidelines; they focus on the behaviours that each individual should demonstrate to give the company the drive to get things done.

Our principles focus on the behavioural and leadership principles that should exist in everyone, independently of the area, role, and proficiency. They are written to make clear that our organisation model requires leadership behaviours from all of us. Of course, some principles apply more to one case than the others. In such a large organisation, we all should act as leaders regardless of our position, role, or proficiency at a specific moment.

We could have the principles as a flat structure unrelated to the values, but using the principles associated with each value is essential. They provide context to each value, making it easier to relate to what the value means and what behaviours are expected. We achieve Values together, while Principles are behaviours we should demonstrate as individuals. That's why Principles are written in the first-person singular “I”.

Values and Principles are our collective definition of how we make complex decisions to promote a consistent, sustainable, and integrated organisation designed to be a Software Engineering Machine!

Values and Principles contain not just what we pursue today but have some inspiration for what to achieve in the future. They instigate the perpetual spirit and feel that at CTW, it is never done; there is always something we can do better. Our Values and Principles are challenging by nature and are not achieved by accident. Living CTW Values and Principles requires collective and individual effort to fulfil them every time, even when they appear challenging or unreachable. It is not a matter of agreeing or disagreeing; our Values and Principles define the Company we are. There is no right or wrong: they are what they are.



We value people's autonomy over processes

Ownership and Accountability. I own and take full responsibility for my actions. I clearly understand the company's priorities and don't sacrifice them for personal or individual achievements. I act on behalf of the entire company, beyond just my own team or myself. I am part of the solution. I never say, "That's not my job or responsibility!"; "I don't have time!"; "I thought people already knew..."

Resilience. I face adversity, challenge the norm and go against the flow even if it all seems to say otherwise. I accept that the path may not be easy, but I am persistent when filled with belief and a vision that others cannot yet see. I find ways to reach my goal and have people stand by me. I am comfortable dealing with the uncomfortableness of making tough decisions when needed, always keeping the organisational vision and needs in mind. I bounce back from challenges stronger than before.

Transparency. I am bravely honest and don't settle in the face of opacity. I am the first to admit what is not going well and to make it transparent to the organisation. I enable transparent behaviours in individuals and teams, establish concrete tools that facilitate monitoring, and easily share information among stakeholders and the organisation.

Disagree and Commit. I respectfully challenge decisions when I disagree, even when doing so is uncomfortable or exhausting. I am not dogmatic when I understand that it could be better things to do what we are doing. I prioritise integrity over conformity. Once a decision is made, I fully commit and remain loyal while staying open to necessary adjustments.



We believe in uncompromised engineering excellence

Customer Obsession. I prioritise customers' real needs and use only the technical solutions that best serve them. Although, I consider the most advanced technical solutions, my work is relentlessly focused on fulfilling and exceeding the customer's expectations and satisfaction. I work to ensure customers are thrilled with the final outcome, which can involve making tough decisions early on, such as how to navigate deadline expectations to deliver the best possible solution.

Establish High Standards. I have relentlessly high standards, even if sometimes these standards seem to be unreasonably high. I continuously raise the bar and drive others to deliver and keep running high-quality products. I am tolerant of unintentional mistakes but sharp with irresponsibility and lack of commitment. I ensure that defects are not sent to customers and that problems are fixed and stay fixed. I advocate for the best engineering practices and standards.

Delivery Focused. I focus on key inputs from individuals and teams to deliver long-lasting quality and value in a timely fashion. Despite the unknowns and unexpected difficulties imposed by others, as well as my own mistakes and setbacks, I know how to find ways to meet or exceed the demands of the situations and never settle. I am focused on delivering valuable products that users and customers love.

Quality vs. Speed. Quality and Speed are relevant but sometimes contradictory. I know how to take calculated risks and balance these decisions. I know that speed is relevant if it has a direction. When quality is sacrificed just by speed, I prioritise quality over quantity and work with my team to develop plans to get the product in the right shape in the shortest possible timeframe. I motivate and support builders who do the right things in the right way.



We care about how we get to the top

Develop Mastery. Others can teach, but only I can learn. From books and classes, I get the fundamentals, but mainly by applying and teaching others, I perfect my skills through continuous learning and mastery of skills, enabling team members to navigate complex problems with confidence and autonomy. I am always looking to motivate and promote the best, recognising exceptional talent and keeping them challenged and motivated. I also recognise who needs to do more and encourage them to change their actions if they do not show concrete improvements.

Continuous Feedback. I provide regular, focused, constructive and honest feedback, acting as a driver of my personal development. I know that there is no positive or negative, just feedback. I practice feedback focused on strengths, areas for improvement, and concerns rather than ways to judge or rank people, but I point out what is wrong and should be changed when I see these behaviours in others. I use feedback as a continuous tool to build pragmatic and actionable development in others rather than a year-on-year exercise focusing on retrospective ratings or appraisals.

Sustainability. I understand that my actions have an economic, environmental and social impact and that I can directly contribute to the company's Sustainability. I work relentlessly to accomplish more with less. The company's sustainability is above my individual or my team's interest. I use company resources with the same diligence, care and long-term perspective as if they were my own. I constantly challenge myself and others if reuse and efficiency are being neglected. I am responsible for speaking up when I notice waste or unnecessary expenditure. I set the example and developed the same behaviour in others.

Live The Values. I know our values and what they mean, and I am the best representation of our beliefs and what will keep us on the right track. I never compromise our values and demand the same from others. I don't hesitate to step into the uncomfortable zones to call attention to anyone acting against our values, Code of Conduct, or company policies. I do it with respect and empathy while being clear and loud.



We leave no one behind

It starts with me. I shall be the change I want to see in others. I shall not ask more than I can give. I know that responsibility “starts with me”. I fight the good fight, and I am resilient in my pursuit. I act on what I can influence and change. I think about the company I want to work for some years from now and support its development.

Courageous. I show bravery and boldness in the face of challenges. I acknowledge fear and confront it rather than avoid it. I am not intimidated by fear; fear keeps me alert. I evaluate situations carefully and decide to act even when the outcome is uncertain or complex decisions must be made. I persist with resilience and strength when facing hardships and setbacks, as I know I am not alone. I admit my mistakes and seek help when needed.

Curious. I never stop learning and consistently seek to improve myself and others. I chase and take all feedback as valuable and work to become a better version of myself. I don't accept the first option, follow orthodoxy or get stuck in finding the perfect choice. I develop this curiosity in myself and others and never settle.

Inclusive. I promote freedom of speech and expression. I know it is the basis for creating a culture based on diversity where everyone counts and has the power to make things happen. I shouldn't wait to be invited to the discussion. I participate by sharing my ideas and contributing to make better decisions even when others disagree. I know inclusiveness is my responsibility. It prevents group thinking and leads to more efficient problem-solving. I respect differences even when I don't agree with or understand them.



We go above and beyond

Dive Deep. I operate at all levels, stay connected with the details, and foster close relationships with individuals and teams. I monitor frequently and use data to base my decisions rather than feelings. I have accurate information at my fingertips and am sceptical when metrics and team messages differ.

Walk the Talk. I am the first to act by my stated beliefs, values, and promises. I practice what I preach. I lead by example through my actions, focus, energy, and commitment. While I point the way and motivate others to walk the path, I am the one who opens the way when the need arises. I foster legitimacy from what (and how) I do, not from the title or any other attribute, such as hierarchy or years of experience.

Visionary. I think big because thinking small keeps me in my comfort zone and stops me from going beyond. I create and communicate bold directions that inspire actions and results. I think differently and look for different perspectives to develop people and improve products and the organisation. I bring others to my vision to make it stronger.

Do My Best. I know that doing my best may not be enough. I understand the importance of challenging each other as long as we do it constructively, respectfully, and without taking things personally. I think big, aim high, and try my best every day; I know thinking big takes the same energy as thinking small. I am humble and transparent about what I don't know. I open myself to learn from anyone and keep my ego in check. I am confident about what I do know, but I never allow myself to become arrogant.



We believe in joy in motion

Earn Trust. I listen carefully, exercise empathy, and treat others respectfully. I am vocally self-critical, even if by doing so, I may feel embarrassed. I always express my thoughts and create the context for others to do the same. I know that together we are stronger, and that cohesion comes with trust. I assume the consequences of my choices and develop my sense of selecting the best for the organisation.

Foster a Lean Organisation. I work to keep the organisation lean by collaborating to reduce the management, command and control to a minimum. Still, I don't treat everyone in the same way because I recognise that some people need directives to develop their skills and achieve success. I don't look behind the shoulders to see what others are doing; whenever I can, I stand in front of them to teach and plan what needs to be done. As a true Lean practitioner, I maximise my flow, demand maximum quality not only from others but, above all, from myself, and actively look out for all opportunities to reduce waste in everything I touch.

Celebrate Successes. I recognise individual and collective achievements and successful milestones, both big and small. I foster a positive work environment, boost morale, and work to keep motivation high within the team and others around me, especially when times are tough and we need to stand and not hide. I know proper recognition is associated with lasting and meaningful results; it comes from hard work, setbacks, and tenacity.

Have Fun. I believe that fun works. I know that having a purpose, a compelling vision, and developing good products is not enough; there must be a culture of engagement that makes work enjoyable. I create a context of professionalism that delivers excellent work while doing it with commitment, accountability, and technical excellence. If I am not getting personal satisfaction from what I am doing, I am the first to slow down and ponder the actions I will take next towards fulfilling my goals while having fun along the way.

Revision History			
Version	Date	Description	Author/Reviewer
1.0	March 2020	Published	Several contributors
1.1	Jun 2020	Small updates	Madalena Marinho
2.0	Sep 2024	Revise the People and Culture Principles	Several contributors

Information Classification Level and Access List	
Classification level	Internal
Disclaimer: The content of this document, regardless of its classification, is under copyright of Critical TechWorks, released on condition that it shall not be copied in whole, in part or otherwise reproduced (whether by photographic or any other method) and therefore shall not be divulged to any person other than the addressee (save to other authorised offices of his/her organisation in need of knowing such contents, for the purposes for which disclosure is made) without prior written consent of Critical TechWorks.	
Access list	
The access list attribute is considered complementary information and should be used to clearly indicate which recipients shall have access to the content of this document, following the principles of least privilege and need to know. If access list is left blank the access is applicable to the entire scope covered by classification level.	

**Get ready
for a journey
like no other!**



**Critical
Techworks**

CTW-2020-PCS-00007
