

CORPORATE CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

BACKGROUND

In 2011, City Council unanimously adopted the Transforming Government principles. With changing citizen expectations, a shifting workforce and a Council committed to transforming government, a Corporate Cultural Transformation project team was assembled to define the organization's culture and determine system-wide changes to implement the desired cultural orientation across all service areas, programs and processes.

The mission of the Corporate Cultural Transformation Project was to develop a set of common Corporate-wide practices, behaviours, values and norms to further align organizational performance and service delivery towards a citizen-centric point of view; and to prepare Administration to strategically implement the elements of a common citizen-focused culture into the business approach and systems at The City. The table below provides a summary of the completed phases of the project.

Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
2012 September to 2013 January	2013 February to 2013 June	2013 September to 2014 May
Discover	Dream	Design
Aimed to discover the positive core of The City of Calgary: what is it that allows staff to be at their best and what does their best look like? What works well?	Focused on learning the attitudes, behaviours and habits staff would need to exhibit when Working Together with a Focus on Outcomes for Citizens.	Established HOW staff action the findings of the first two phases. What would change in an average day? What tools would be needed to allow that to happen?

Following an extensive literature review of best practices on organizational culture, the project team set out to determine the attitudes, behaviours and habits of employees that would allow them to be at their best and to be citizen-focused in their work. Over 18 months of facilitation the project team engaged over 6,000 participants during the three phases of the project including members of Council, citizens, front-line workers and Administration leadership and asked them to consider how to better serve citizens. The following is an overview of the findings of each completed phase:

Phase I – Discover	
Discoveries	<p>It was discovered staff feel most effective in two situations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Times of Crisis: these are either actual emergencies or a period of heightened urgency, and 2. Special Projects: this is work that is considered out of the normal or day-to-day repetitiveness. <p>The project team set out to determine what these situations have in common and to discover what situations lead our staff to being efficient. The discoveries fall into two themes:</p>

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	<p>1. Working Together This category represents employees’ collective desire to work as a cohesive unit. The ability to form and utilize these relationships was seen as a key to the success of The City of Calgary.</p> <p>2. Focused on Outcomes for Citizens This category focuses on the purpose of daily work and the way staff execute that work to be as goal-oriented and efficient as possible. The most engaged and effective employees are those who know not just what they do, but why they do it.</p>
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Phase II – Dream

Discoveries	<p>To identify attitudes, behaviours and habits, staff were asked “what it would take to create a great team, and what would it take to lead us a common citizen-focused mindset?”</p> <p>A high degree of alignment in the answers to both questions were observed, as well as alignment across all business units and staff disciplines. It was discovered that “we are more the same than we are different.”</p> <p>Here are the top answers to the questions:</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>The diagram shows two columns of attributes. The left column, titled 'A Great Team', lists: Listening (pink), Appreciation (yellow), Commitment (blue), Purpose (red), Taking Responsibility (purple), and Simplify (orange). The right column, titled 'Citizen-focused', lists: Listening (pink), Simplify (orange), Taking Responsibility (purple), Commitment (blue), Transparency (green), and Purpose (red). Lines connect the terms: Listening to Listening, Appreciation to Simplify, Commitment to Commitment, Purpose to Purpose, Taking Responsibility to Taking Responsibility, and Simplify to Simplify.</p> </div>
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Phase III – Design

Discoveries	<p>A team of operations managers from four different business units in three different departments was assembled to discuss how they could enact the findings from the two previous Phases – especially “working together”.</p> <p>The team felt empowered by working “outside the box” and found much common ground through the Collective Impact Model, which consists of five conditions:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A common agenda,• Shared measurement systems,• Mutually reinforcing activities,• Continuous communication, and• A backbone support organization. <p>It was discovered that ensuring the culture permeates through all activities is possible, but requires a lot of coaching and purposeful re-designing of systems and processes.</p>
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STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITES

The Cultural Transformation Project Team has identified a number of strategic opportunities to advance Corporate-wide practices that support the drive towards a high-performing citizen-first culture within the organization. The project team has also identified three key leverage points as the foundation for advancing the Corporate culture. These are:

- The City Manager should be the executive sponsor for the implementation of the Corporate-wide practices, values, norms and behaviours that support the desired strategic direction to ensure a top-down drive in focus.
- Human Resources (HR) should support the implementation of Corporate-wide practices, values, norms and behaviours; however, due to importance of ensuring that the cultural work is aligned with the processes and systems of performance-driven management practices, HR should be supported with a governance team of representatives from across the organization that reflects the full diversity of the workforce.
- The organization must have a common understanding of how to work together and focus on outcomes for citizens. This means developing practices on how to collaborate within Administration, with partner agencies and with citizens.

The following table articulates other strategic opportunities to unleash the capability and capacity of the people in the organization to achieve a citizen-first culture and performance-driven management practices.

Citizen Success Is Our Success

- Commit to the following: value the citizen experience as an important measure; work together – with citizens and each other – to provide efficient and effective services and take a collective focus on positively impacting the lives of all people in our community.
- Focus on improving the quality of our relationships with each other, internally and externally, because they are reflected in the quality of the services provided.
- Continue to strengthen partnerships with community organizations to develop fair, equitable and inclusive services.
- Consider the voice of the customer in all programs and services.

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Alignment on Purpose

- Develop fewer, larger areas of priority focus to which more areas are held accountable.
- Develop a single Corporate strategy and plan that aligns results for citizens with business plans, work plans and reports.
- Simplify all plans and strategies to connect to the single Corporate plan and provide a direct line of sight for the ultimate purpose of all activities; and to show the connection of the current business cycle activities to longer term plans.
- Simplify all reporting formats to be more focused and visual so that all employees and citizens understand what is being communicated.
- Use learning and development to reinforce a citizen-first mindset, build customer focus and empower employees.
- Establish a public or customer commitment with minimum service standards so customers know what to expect from The City and for employees to know what to achieve.

One City

- Focus all transactions and interactions, internal or external, on a single point of view: the citizen or customer.
- Focus all work plans, activities, strategies and communications in the same direction.
- Adhere to a single Corporate brand and related protocols to avoid causing confusion with citizens, customers and competition between employees.
- Build and connect internal service delivery to ultimately serve the citizen and customer.

Ideas to Innovation

- Commit to defining innovation as not about getting to perfect, but about getting to better.
- Develop a formal innovation and recognition practice with clear criteria to assess the feasibility of ideas and submissions received from citizens, businesses and employees and to align all parties in the creation of the resultant programs or services.
- Unleash access to all data to drive ideas and innovation.

Accountability

- Implement Collective Impact, Service-based Budgeting and Results Based Accountability as tools to build a great community through aligning budgets to community outcomes.
- Assign and allocated people resources towards achieving outcomes and provide flexibility within that outcome-based frame.
- Encourage enterprise and systems thinking as the primary orientation in the provision of internal services in addition to addressing specific business requirements.
- Develop shared services to support end-to-end service delivery for citizens and customers.
- Define internal cost recovery philosophy, parameters and thresholds.
- Establish a consistent performance measurement and reporting practice to support outcomes and action-based service delivery.

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Inclusive, Fair and Equitable

- Allocate resources to integrated service areas to provide a more equitable range of services across diverse communities and citizens.
- Recognize that employee diversity is the strength of the organization and make it a business imperative that all systemic barriers to diversity and accessibility are actively eliminated.
- Build a shared accountability framework where everyone understands their role to create an equitable and inclusive work environment.
- Expect collaborative and shared leadership practice by broadening the control of a few and empowering decision making and leadership in all staff within their roles and responsibilities.
- Define and describe “local parameters” for decision making to increase confidence and likelihood of success.

NEXT STEPS

Culture is the largest system in any organization, and impacts both the real and perceived performance of organizations. Organizational cultural transformation is a process that requires time, effort, consistency, alignment, leadership and constant communication. Paying attention to organizational culture is critical; otherwise organizations end up with divergent cultures resulting in inconsistent or uneven service delivery. In municipal government, citizens have the expectation that everyone in the organization is working together to converge the interests of the individual with the interests of the greater good. The current culture of The City of Calgary and the opportunities outlined above ideally position the organization to purposefully develop leading practice in this area with Calgarians as the beneficiaries.

Through the work related to the Action Plan 2015-2018, more specifically, the actions responding to Council's Priority of “A Well Run City”, and in alignment with the focus areas of the strategic plan that will be presented by the City Manager, Administration is well positioned to advance the desired cultural orientation across the organization.