

Turning Workplaces Into OYPLACES by Janet Lee

WHEN THE PEOPLE WIN, THE BUSINESS WINS.





We're very happy that you're interested in creating a Joyplace

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Business Culture Consultants Introduction

Why Joy?

"Success is not the key to happiness." Happiness is the key to success."

Albert Schweitzer

In my thirty-something years of working life, I've had many ups and downs. When I look back, I see that the peaks all had something in common: they were the times I felt the happiest.

So the question came to me, was I happy because things were going well, or did things go well because I was happy? Which came first?

The quote above reminded me that I give my best when I am in a state of joyful creation. When I have clear purpose, an inspiring and trustworthy team, my family (humans as well as cats and dogs) is fine, and my finances are decent, I will naturally give my 100% to the task at hand. This had led to award wins, client accolades, business growth, and most important to me, deeply meaningful transformation in people.

I've also experienced being disillusioned with my CEO, frustrated with the fragmented team, resentful that so much was required of me when others were happily languishing in cold storage. Unsurprisingly, that was the most unproductive time, for me, my fellow zombies, and our clueless employer.



Since becoming CEO of 95%, I have been consciously working on our own culture while guiding leaders from various industries to enhance or transform theirs. I have learnt that it is possible to create a joyful workplace, and in this eBook, I will share how you can do it too.

~ Janet Lee

How Joy Drives Business

When we talk about Joyplace, we don't mean a playground or holiday camp. We see a Joyplace as an environment where people are driven and triumphant.

It is a company culture where people feel safe, secure and cared for. They experience trust and connection with their colleagues and management.

This provides a solid foundation for greater achievements. People of all levels dare to take on ambitious challenges. They strive to deliver high quality work. They push themselves to hit and exceed targets.

And they do it all because they want to, not because they are paid to.

They are self-motivated and resourceful because they find meaning in what they do, and they take pride in achieving excellence.

They genuinely care for your clients and business as much as you do. Don't be surprised to find them constantly thinking about how to move the needle on your company's most important business metrics.

Their growth feeds the company's growth, which in turn spurs their growth to the next level. It's a perfect win-win cycle.

This is your winning team. This is the natural outcome of turning your workplace into a joyplace.



People intrinsically seek JOY

Joy connects people more powerfully than almost any other human experience. The connective power of joy is clearly visible in sports. When a team performs at its awe-inspiring best, overcoming its limitations and challenges, every player — indeed, the entire arena — experiences a brimming ecstasy that lifts the team even further.

> Success sparks joy. Joy fuels further success. Everyone is caught up in the moment.

Alex Liu (Harvard Business Review, July 2019)

> "Happy employees give a damn.

Happy employees are more loyal.
Happy employees are healthier.
Happy employees breed happiness.
Happy employees take more risks.

Happy employees not only raise the organisation's productivity but also make it a magnet for the best talent out there."

> Gerald Ainomushiga (6Q)

Chapter 1

Building a Joyplace



Tried & Tested

As CEO, I often test out concepts, models and frameworks on my own people before we recommend them to our clients.

Over the years, many people have come and gone. There have been different characters with different skillsets, but they are always joyful and positive, fully switched on, and game for any challenge. They sincerely care for each other, for the business, our clients, and will do whatever it takes to achieve the best possible outcome.

This was, and still is, a consistent characteristic of my team at 95%.

I tried to figure out what we were doing right, and see if it could fit into a framework that would be easy to understand and replicate.

One day, at a meditation retreat in India, I suddenly remembered Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory.

When I matched the model to what we were doing, it made sense: when we are worried about our finances, or family, or stuck in a rut with no growth, it is difficult to give our best.

But when our needs are fulfilled, we have inner peace and a natural desire to make a meaningful difference. And when we do, we experience joy. Not just a fleeting happiness, but deep joy.

The key to productivity is joy, and the way to joy is by fulfilling your people's needs.



The Key To Joy

Here's how we see Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs applied to the workplace.

Level 1 : Physiological Need

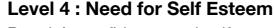
People are earning enough to afford a roof over their heads, easy access to clean air, food and water. There is no need to worry about survival.

Level 2 : Need for Safety

In the workplace, people feel safe and secure physically, mentally and emotionally. They don't have to waste energy being constantly guarded against judgement, back-stabbing or emotional blackmail.

Level 3 : Need for Love & Belonging

Instead of artificial harmony, there is genuine care, concern and commitment to see each other succeed. People don't shy away from confronting and resolving issues, because there is trust. It is also important that people have enough time to be with their families and loved ones.



People's confidence and self esteem go up every time they achieve a great result, and are recognized for it. The millennials love a steep learning curve and will not hesitate to leave managers and companies that slow down their progress.



When people have a clear sense of purpose, work becomes meaningful. What's your company's vision? Your workforce will be more committed and resourceful when they know that their efforts are contributing to a greater cause, than helping the boss buy a new BMW.

A Joyplace fulfills all levels of needs





A Quick Checklist

Tick off the areas listed in this checklist to see if there are any gaps or areas to be strengthened in your company, and acknowledge the areas in which you are doing well.



For a more comprehensive diagnostic, move ahead to page 30



Are your perks and benefits relevant and meaningful to your people?

As the leader, it is natural that you would want to give your people the same things that bring you joy. However, this can be a costly misstep if you don't truly understand what they need.

When you use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as the guide to building your Joyplace, you will not waste time and resources on the wrong things.

Here are some examples that I uncovered during my consultation sessions with CEOs.

Company A created a top notch office with gym, café, reading area, nap area, karaoke area. However, these facilities are so poorly utilized that they need to incentivize participation.

The unmet need : there was no sense of love and belonging. So people didn't feel that they could let their guard, much less their hair, down.

Company B's way of supporting their people to be more tech savvy was to give them each a tablet. They were shocked to find these same tablets (with the company logo) being sold on e-Bay the very next day.

The unmet need : the lower level staff were hard pressed to make ends meet and saw this as an easy way to get money. They didn't understand the company's purpose at all.

Company C had been taking their employees on fantastic company trips to Tokyo, London, and even to see the Northern Lights. Instead of excitement and appreciation everytime a new trip is announced, people expressed weary sighs and made excuses not to go.

The unmet need : people yearned to have more time with their families. A simple Family Day outing in Port Dickson would have pleased them a lot more.

Chapter 2

The Blueprint for Joy



The Blueprint for Joy

Once you've identified what can be enhanced in your company's culture, the next challenge is how to go about implementing change.

You'll see so many things that can be improved, but doing things randomly will only keep you busy without achieving much impact.

We developed a step-by-step blueprint for you to focus on the 'must haves' instead of being distracted by the 'nice to haves'.

Culture change only happens when behavior changes. And getting your people to adopt a new way of thinking and behaving is not as difficult as you may imagine.

Based on our understanding of human behavior and how people respond to change, we have engineered a culture installation strategy that many of our clients have successfully implemented. We call this The Blueprint for Building Business Culture, or 3BC for short.

This tried and tested blueprint provides you with a strategic approach to effectively cascade your desired culture without triggering a tidal wave of resistance, or worse, indifference.

The key to its success is the careful attention given to the role of the leaders and the 4-phase sequential roll out.





The Blueprint For Building Business Culture



Phase 1 : Conception

To shift from a default to a consciously designed culture, start with a review of your Purpose, Vision, Mission and Values. What do you conceive?

As values are conceptual and intangible, people with different upbringing may interpret them differently. To create alignment, spell out how you want people to behave. This forms your Culture Manifesto.

Next, work out the Measurements of Success, and set targets for the next 6 - 12 months. With these in place, you will be able to monitor the progress of your culture and how it is making an impact on business.

Recommended Activities : The Joy AuditTM Diagnostic • A series of Visioning Workshops or retreat to brainstorm and conceptualise the desired culture.



Phase 2 : Gestation

This critical phase is often overlooked. To avoid the pitfalls of a premature launch, the leadership team needs to be given the opportunity to internalize the Culture Manifesto and start walking the talk.

If they are not visibly seen to be role modelling the desired culture, you will not get buy-in from the rest of the employees. This is a good time for the leaders to invest in upskilling themselves.

This is also the time to start creating evidence of change. Identify one or two changes that will improve employee wellbeing, and demonstrate that the management is serious about this.

Recommended Activities : Internalisation Workshop for Leaders & Managers • Executive Coaching for Leaders • Brainstorm session on Internal Customer Journey, with action plan. This can be policies, rituals or fixing the environment.



The Blueprint For Building Business Culture



Phase 3 : Birth

When you are ready to launch, plan your Culture Cascade to gain buy-in by touching both head and heart.

Understand that while the management has gone through the process of accepting change, ground level executives may not see such far-sighted horizons. The CEO and Management Team and/or HODs need to paint a clear 'Burning Platform' that even the youngest person in the company can understand.

Components of a successful Culture Cascade : The Inspiring Leaders Speech, Management Team and/or HODs to echo the same message, Evidence of Change, Listening Circle to gain feedback, Internalisation Activity, Linking Vision To Roles, Department Action Plans, Pledge Ceremony, Acknowledgements. Within one month, visit each department to follow up on action plans and celebrate wins.



Phase 4 : Growth

Just as the birth of a child signals the beginning of a lifetime of nurturing, the launch of your culture is just the beginning.

The next step is to start building an ecosystem that will drive and sustain the change. In order for the values to come alive, they need to be embedded into daily operations and performance management.

Culture is meant to drive business, so monitor the culture measurements of success together with your business review.

Recommended Ecosystem Pillars : Operationalising Values Workshop to review and improve systems and processes • Culture Communications • Culture Champions • Mentoring and/or Coaching Skills for Leaders and Managers • Evaluate Technical Skills and Competencies • Rewards & Recognition • Onboarding • Career Planning • Capturing Culture Stories.

Chapter 3

Inspiring Culture Heroes

Here are some of the most inspiring stories about CEOs who have built their culture with an understanding of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. They are my heroes, and I hope their stories inspire you too.



Gravity Payments

In 2011, Co-Founder and CEO of Gravity Payments, Dan Price was hit with the hard realization that while he took home \$1.1 million every year, some of his staff were struggling to make ends meet with minimum wage of \$35,000 per annum.

Their most basic need was not met.

Over the next three years, he gave 20% pay increments and in April 2015, he announced that the minimum wage would be increased to \$70,000 per annum. To make this happen, he cut his own pay to \$70,000 and sold off a couple of his properties.

6 months later, both revenue and profits doubled.

Five years later, headcount doubled, customer base doubled, and payment processed increased from \$3.8 billion to \$10.2 billion.

Price said "When you take care of people, they have the energy and focus to take care of the business."

When the Covid-19 pandemic cut their revenue by half, the company was making a loss of \$30,000 a day.

Price was now faced with a grave decision: lay off 20 percent of his employees or go bankrupt. Price estimated his company would be bankrupt in four to five months.

Price himself spent 40 hours video calling 200 employees and asked for ideas. He said "I don't believe in top down decisions".

Within 24 hours, 98% of the people he spoke to volunteered to take paycuts, ranging from 5% to 100%. Both Price and his COO were among those who took a 100% pay cut.

Price said "This decision bought us some time. But more important, letting our team decide how to save the company made it clear that we were all in this together.

"It empowered them to focus on their work of helping struggling businesses without worrying if they could feed their families or pay rent."



The Scenario

When French multinational advertising agency Havas acquired Malaysian digital agency Immerse, the two cultures came together like oil and water.

Despite the management's best efforts, the employees were still longing for the good old pre-acquisition days. Morale was low and the leaders knew that something needed to be done.

The Unmet Needs

Our culture diagnostic, The Joy Audit[™], found many unmet needs that were causing high stress levels and burnout.

Firstly, both companies had great team spirit and close bonds preacquisition. But when they came together, it felt like there were strangers in their home, and they couldn't let their hair down and be themselves.

Their sense of love and belonging was suddenly fractured.

Secondly, due to the different nature of their previous businesses, they had different skillsets and work disciplines. Instead of coming together in complementary synergy, there was conflict and confusion.

We found that they were prouder of the work done in their previous agencies than what they were creating now.

For people in the creative industry, doing great work not only satisfies their need for esteem and recognition, it also fulfils self-actualisation needs as their creations are an expression of their potential selves.

We recognised that this was the key to the culture transformation.



The Solution

The culture transformation's objective was to help the staff let go of past glory by setting a brave new vision, and ambitious goals that would lead to a greater future together. Something that they can all strive for together, as one unified team.

Phase 1: Conception

In a series of Visioning Workshops, the management team comprising of leaders from both agencies came together and developed a new vision : Unlocking Potential.

They saw this as their higher purpose: to use their talents to unlock the potential in their clients' brands, in their own business, and in each and every individual at Havas Immerse.

They looked at the global Core Values and came up with definitions and behaviours that were relevant to the Malaysian office.

This remains as the fastest transformation we have ever seen, and full credit goes to the Management Team led by Group MD Andrew Lee, Managing Partner Jeffrey Tang, Chief Creative Officer Kerry Khoo and Chief Financial Officer Yeoh Li Ching.

Their fierce determination to unlock their own potential as leaders, put egos aside and be open to grow from feedback set the example and pace of change for the rest of the leaders.



Phase 2: Gestation

Key activities during this period included :

- They set an extremely ambitious goal : 30 award-worthy ideas by the end of 2019 that could be submitted to award shows in 2020. It seemed like an impossible mission as they had only managed 1 or 2 ideas the previous year.
- They broke this company-wide goal down to department goals so that everyone was clear about their contribution.
- They got 95% to run an Idea Generation workshop for a group of key people.
- The Management Team and a selected group of leaders went through a 3-month transformational coaching programme to unlock their own potential. They achieved huge breakthroughs in mindset and became the role models of the new culture.

Phase 3: Birth

Andrew and his team ran a cascade that won head and heart buy-in. They spoke sincerely and passionately about the company's new vision and how it impacted everyone.

They shared the ambitious goal of 30 award-worthy ideas and inspired everyone to create a bright new future together and leave the past behind.



Phase 4: Growth

To sustain the growth of the newborn culture, they implemented the following:

- AskAndrew app which allowed people to post questions to the MD anonymously and provided a non-judgemental platform for them to let off some steam.
- They developed a mental health policy where anyone who felt overwhelmed could seek counselling at the company's cost.
- Level 300, a monthly townhall where 5 people make presentations on a subject that is close to their hearts. This builds confidence and presentation skills while exposing the whole company to the immense diversity of talent within the company. It also allowed everyone to get to know each other better.
- A cross-department Mentoring Programme to increase exposure and develop well-rounded talent.
- A group of influencers of all ranks were invited to be Culture Champions. Their role is to be the bridge between management and the people, and to install rituals that bring the culture to life. Upon acceptance, each Culture Champion serves a 12-month term, after which they will nominate their successor.



The Results

Within just a few months, the whole agency was infused with a new energy. People were enthusiastically volunteering to take on more. Even the younger ones wanted to be involved in new business pitches and were ready to give up personal time during weekends.

- The number of ideas contributed at brainstorms increased fivefold. The Creative Heads now had a pool of ideas that they could build upon, instead of having to do all the ideation on their own.
- They achieved the targeted 30 award-worthy ideas so quickly and were so confident of their work that they started submitting the ideas for awards in 2019 itself. By year end, they had won 22 local and regional awards. They had done the impossible!
- Revenue exceeded the forecast by 10%.
- When MCO was implemented, there were no delays or missed deadlines. People pulled together and remained productive.
- People kept going up to the MD with new initiatives and ideas for their clients. They were even more driven to unlock their clients' potential, in crisis time.

The true test of how strong your culture is, is in time of crisis. Because of all the hard work put in the previous year, Havas Immerse is in excellent shape to ride out this storm.

The Scenario

Malaysia's national reinsurer Malaysian Reinsurance Berhad under the leadership of President and CEO Zainudin Ishak embarked on a culture transformation journey in 2018 with the goal of achieving a high performance culture.

The Unmet Needs

Our culture diagnostic, The Joy Audit[™], found that their employees' Physiological and Safety needs were well taken care of. They had cordial relationships with their colleagues and were given flexible working hours to handle family obligations.

They were comfortable. Too comfortable.

Only a small handful were results-driven, and eager to learn, take on challenges and grow. The majority were passive and complacent. Many people had not experienced a sense of achievement for many years; some as many as 20 - 30 years!

Some were jaded and just passing time until retirement.

When asked why they chose to work at MNRB Group, a majority cited the perks and benefits instead of a bigger cause or purpose.

Clearly, the Level 4 (Self Esteem) and Level 5 (Self Actualisation) needs were not being met.

The Solution

Phase 1: Conception

After a series of in-depth interviews with the management team, we helped them encapsulate their noble mission in the phrase 'We Protect Everyone'. They selected three Core Values – Integrity, Collaboration and Expertise – to define high performance.

Phase 2: Gestation

The culture transformation focused on four pillars to drive change: People, Process, Platform and Communications. Key activities during this period included :

- Improving Processes to achieve 100% on time submission with zero error.
- Enhancing workplace safety by improving air-conditioning ventilation and buying new ergonomic chairs.
- Developing the leaders through coaching programmes :
 - a) 23 HODs and Managers were selected to be Key Drivers and they went through a 3-month coaching programme to achieve breakthroughs in mindset. As a result, they started achieving results that they never realised was possible. This became the new standard of performance.
 - b) 4 Management Team members elevated their performance through Executive Coaching



Phase 3: Birth

After spending almost a year in gestation, we ran a series of cascade sessions in early 2019.

When the CEO introduced the vision to the employees, he emphasized that the vision wasn't just for their customers, they must protect each other too.

He made the vision relevant to every single employee, and spoke passionately about how every morning when he got into his car, he trusted his driver to protect his life.

We gave each person the opportunity to voice out and contribute to action plans. We made it experiential, fun and relatable to everyone.

A sweet surprise came a few days after the cascade : the tea lady (Kak Hawa pictured below) served the leaders' morning coffee with an explanation that from now on, she will be using less sugar because she is 'protecting' them.





The Results

- Financial Reports on time with zero error for three cycles and counting
- The Retrocession and Claims department achieved 150% of the 'impossible' target given by CEO
- FY2019 was stricken with typhoons and earthquakes, but people fought hard to protect each other. Although revenue was down, profitability increased from 6.7% in 2018 to 7.4% in 2019.
- Their FY2020, which closed in March 2020, saw a 15.3% revenue growth, while profitability was maintained at 7.4%.

People pushed through because they had a common vision and the aligned Management Team and Key Drivers gave them evidence that they could all do so much more.

We met one of their vendors about a year after the Cascades, and when we shared this case study, the vendor said "Now I know what happened to them. My colleagues and I were very surprised at the change we saw in them. Now they are not only proactive and efficient, but they are happier and more energetic. They even dress better!"



Chapter 4

The Leader's Role



You Are The Source

As a leader, you are the source of everything that your team is experiencing. If you are worried and stressed, tired and frustrated, they will feed off that energy and mirror your state.

Now more than ever, leaders need to radiate calm, confident clarity. This may easy to do in good times, but this pandemic demands that we raise our own level of Self-Mastery.

In an airplane emergency, parents need to put on their own oxygen mask first before attending to their children. The same thing applies to your business.

As a leader, you need to take care of your own needs first. Only then can you focus on your people and attend to their needs.

When we are troubled or tired, our energy levels are low. This will cause our tolerance level to drop, and negative emotions can be easily triggered. If you find yourself getting irritable or shorttempered, spend some time working on your inner state.



Take time for quiet reflection, either by yourself or with a coach, and look at what needs are being threatened. If you can shift your mindset, your emotions will stablise and you'll be in a better position to inspire yourself and others.

Be mindful of what energy you are giving to your team. If you expect the best from them, they need you to give the best of you.

"We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm. Some are on super-yachts. Some have just the one oar." Damian Barr

Can we still find joy in the midst of a crisis?

The pandemic has shaken our needs at every level and this quote by Damian Barr helps us understand that our people are in different situations.

We can't take people for granted and assume that they are okay. We need to check-in with them regularly and frequently, especially if they are working remotely. Not just in terms of work, but also on their wellbeing.

As mental health becomes an increasingly prominent concern, leaders need to have empathy and compassion.

We need to reach out to understand what our people are going through. They need our understanding and support, but may not know how to speak up. We need to be the ones to extend a listening ear, and a helping hand. Chapter 5 What You Can Do Now



Diagnose Your Present Culture

Quite often, leaders are the last to know what people are really thinking and feeling. Many Asians are brought up to be non-confrontational and tolerant. We tend to avoid addressing issues head on, so when something is not working, there is either gossip or resignation. We don't know how to give feedback in a responsible and constructive way, so we suck it up until there's a complete breakdown.

We designed The Joy Audit[™] with the combination of online survey and face-to-face interviews, to help business leaders find out the extent to which their people's needs are being fulfilled.

The simple questions in the online survey are based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, where people are guided to indicate their level of satisfaction in the respective areas. This helps leaders pinpoint the areas to be improved.

For a more thorough understanding of the situation, we conduct one-onone interviews for a further deep dive.

With The Joy Audit[™] you'll be able to set clear priorities on what needs immediate attention instead of guessing and hoping that you are doing the right things to activate performance.

Try the free online survey The Joy Audit™



The Joy Audit[™]

95%'S AWARD WINNING CULTURE SURVEY

About the Author

About the Author

Janet Lee Culture Consultant & CEO of 95%

Award winning advertising maven of 20 years, Janet Lee has since pioneered the field of business culture consultancy in Malaysia.

She established Ninety Five Percent Sdn. Bhd. (95%) in 2004. As a training academy in the early days, the team designed and delivered experiential training programmes to give advertising professionals of all levels from across Asia a quantum leap in their careers.

The key to the success of 95%'s programmes is the foundation of personal growth: this activates people's internal drive to continuously push boundaries in the pursuit of excellence. As a result, many of her early graduates are now among the senior management teams of some of the most highly awarded advertising agencies in the region.

She ventured into culture change when agency CEOs asked if she could transform the mindset of the entire agency to be as positive and driven as the typical 95% graduates'.

Janet's unique background in both advertising and people development makes her a valuable asset to leaders who want to evoke greater engagement from their employees, and bring out their warrior spirit.

As a passionate advocate in company culture, she is a regular speaker at leadership conferences for YTL Corporation, Malaysia Property Inc,



Colgate Palmolive, Malaysian CMO Conference and CEO Groups like Vistage, Entrepreneurs Organisation and Owners' Circle. She has also been featured numerous times on BFM and Malaysia SME.

Connect with Janet Linkedin 95% Facebook Page



We spend so much of our time working (at home or in the office) and if that isn't a fulfilling and joyful experience, we would have wasted a big part of our lives.

That's why we aim to turn workplaces into joyplaces through custom-designed business culture programmes.

We work with CEOs and Transformation Drivers to (i) design their desired culture (ii) secure whole-hearted buy-in (iii) coach behaviour change and (iv) build an ecosystem to sustain the culture while driving business.

Our proprietary tools include The Joy Audit[™] and The Blueprint for Building Business Culture.

Since Covid19, we have been helping companies build winning teams: teams

that are aligned, accountable and achieving results. Teams that are willing to go above and beyond in order to thrive.

At 95%, we are a team of full time staff and associate coaches whose greatest satisfaction comes from making a difference to our clients and to each other.

We are bound together by our realisation that this work we do, is not a job, it's a calling. And that is what gives us joy.



HR Magazine Vendor Of The Year

- Best Employee Engagement Consultant (2017, 2018, 2019)
- Best Executive Coaching Provider (2018)
- Best Employee Engagement Solution Provider - The Joy Audit ® (2017)
- Best Team Building Solution Provider (2017)

Visit our website

References & Credits

Special Thanks for all your efforts to build joyplaces, and for supporting this book.

MNRB Holdings Berhad Transformation Team Leaders

Din Merican, Jun Ishak, Nazzahatol Azura binti Aziz, Syed Muhammad Faizal Ahmad, Noorazimah Tahir, Fuzaidah Yusof, Muhamad Rizal, Abdullah Abd Mutalib. And the hard working Muhamad Syafiq Shafie.

Malaysian Reinsurance Berhad

Zainudin Ishak, Ekmarrudy bin Othman

Havas Immerse Andrew Lee, Kerry Khoo, Yeoh Li Ching and the team of leaders and culture champions

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