



# The AB culture

## We are what we value

Defining, protecting and fostering the way we do business

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[www.abcomm.co.uk](http://www.abcomm.co.uk)

# What is culture?



Millions of words have been written about company culture. Another long explanation is not needed or useful.

So, let's keep it simple.

Culture is not a poster on a wall. It is not a set of neatly defined values in a handbook. Culture is palpable – you sense it. From the moment you step through the door of an organisation. It is not one thing but many. Culture lives, breathes and evolves in our collective language, values, habits and actions.

Culture is at its best (or worst) during the tough times when people's backs are against the wall. It is our *default* behavior. It is how we behave when no one is looking.

In short, culture is the way we get things done.

# Where does culture come from?



Culture cannot be imposed. It is intrinsic to the group – already there. It comes from a shared understanding of history and heritage; the adoption of shared beliefs and values.

Culture is the consensus of where we came from and where we are going.

It comes from behaviour that gets rewarded and chastised. What we collectively agree is good and bad.

One individual cannot own the culture. Although a single individual can epitomise it or be its antithesis.

# Why does culture matter?



A strong, shared culture equals fewer rules. It means people know *instinctively* how to behave without looking at the handbook.

It empowers people to act without seeking permission or verification.

It avoids misunderstanding, timewasting and mishaps.

It makes the sum of our parts greater than the whole.

You can ignore culture but it doesn't go away. The choice is whether to actively cultivate it or leave it untended.



# What is the AB culture? \*

\* The agreed articulation of our culture is a reference point for employees, clients and suppliers – future, present and past. It is a constant reminder of what we seek to protect and grow as we respond to ever-changing market conditions and business challenges.

# #1 We care



We **take care of business by taking care of each other**. We do not live to work. Family, health and happiness come first. We do not want sacrifice or martyrdom.

We **have each other's back**. We **look up**, taking in the world around us. We keep an eye out for others. We are kind, considerate and caring.

We believe **the good guys win in the end**.

We are **generous with what we know**. We want to help – to share, advise and assist with shouldering the load.

We **check our egos at the door**. Our confidence does not give way to condescension. We are never in competition with each other. **Every success is a group win**. No matter how many star performers were involved, we know success is always a *combined* effort.

## #2 We are free and autonomous



We employ talented, capable people and allow them to **get on with it**.

We **trust** the people we employ. We don't look over their shoulders or micro-manage them.

**Role profiles are not straitjackets.** Indeed, we encourage our people to step out of the confines of their designated jobs and explore new, interesting paths.

We celebrate initiative and having a go.

We know that **blame cripples empowerment.** We understand the value of lessons learned. In our experience, success that comes from a hard-fought battle always tastes sweeter.



## #3 We are accountable

Each of us takes our responsibilities seriously. We are **capable of making tough, difficult decisions** and focusing on **commercial realities**.

We are **happy to be held accountable**. We do not duck and dive, or dodge the bullet. We know what needs to get done and we get on and do it.

When we make a mistake, we don't blame or obfuscate. We work out what went wrong and how to stop it happening again.

We have broad shoulders and can stand our ground. We have confidence in our professional expertise.

But **when we need help, we ask**.





## #4 We challenge and grow

We know how quickly organisations, brands and skills can become outdated. We believe the **best defence against obsolescence is to explore and grow.**

**We are curious** – full of questions and queries. What? When? And most importantly, *why?*

We are **not afraid to challenge or be challenged.** If it has always been done that way, perhaps it is time for a change. **AB's traditions are treasured but not blindly revered.**

Where you start at AB is not where you end up. But not every opportunity announces itself in flashing lights. Each of us understands the need to **actively seek out ways to progress.** We are a **bunch of hand-raisers** – volunteering for the next challenge.



## # 5 We are inclusive

We believe great ideas can and do come from everywhere. We love a brainstorm. If we had a middle name it would be **collaboration**.

We have **fun** when we can. Regular socials, fund-raising events and celebrations throughout the year help us bond as a team. That's why we employ **people who like to join in**, who want to be a part of something.

We **value diversity**. Not simply the diversity we see – male, female, black, white, gay or straight – but something deeper; an alternative way of looking at the world.

We respect and acknowledge the views of others – even if we do not always agree with them. We are **attentive and open**. We believe **those who listen harder learn more**.

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