

Employee sense-making in the midst of fast growth (and COVID -19)

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ABSTRACT

In November of 2019, Bonham Architects, a medium-sized Midwestern architectural firm, acquired Johnson McCauley Architecture, a small firm in an adjacent market. For Bonham, it was an opportunity for quick growth by accessing a fully developed market and the long-standing client relationships the partners of Johnson McCauley had built over five decades. The new book of business from Johnson McCauley, and the growth Bonham had already begun experiencing in its own market necessitated a flurry of hiring over a five-year span that included the emergence of COVID-19. How and where people worked was rapidly changing, both because of the newly acquired satellite location and because of the pandemic. Bonham leadership was faced with a challenge. How do you help employees, both established and newly hired, make sense of and thrive in their changed working environment?

This real-life case puts students in the position of the leadership team and asks them to strategize how they would approach the managerial implications of culture change. They will practice describing the current state of an organization, accurately diagnosing the pain points of the current state, and prescribing a course of action for addressing those pain points. This is a factual case based on a real organization, though names and some details have been changed for confidentiality.

Key Words: Organizational culture, fast growth, COVID-19, organizational structure, organizational change

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INTRODUCTION

In November of 2019, Bonham Architects, a medium-sized Midwestern architectural firm, acquired Johnson McCauley Architecture, a small firm in an adjacent market. The acquisition held promise for both firms. For Bonham, it was an opportunity for quick growth by accessing a fully developed market and the long-standing client relationships the partners of Johnson McCauley had built over five decades. For the two partners at Johnson McCauley who would join Bonham as employees upon the acquisition, the move allowed them to capture the value of their firm years ahead of their retirement and to continue to do the work they loved without the burdens of ownership. For Mason Keener, the owner and president of Bonham Architects, the new book of business from Johnson McCauley, and the growth they had already begun experiencing in Bonham's own market necessitated a flurry of hiring. Bonham Architects, a 40-person firm in 2016, had more than doubled in size by 2021.

To further complicate matters, within weeks of the finalization of the acquisition, COVID-19 lockdowns began. It quickly became clear to Keener that, despite COVID-19, Bonham's business and the need to increase human resources would continue to grow. But how and where people worked was rapidly changing, both because of the newly acquired satellite location and because of the pandemic. Keener was faced with a challenge. How do you help employees, both established and newly hired, make sense of, and thrive in their changed working environment?

A Period of Fast Growth

When Viv Mercer, Director of Human Resources, joined the firm in 2017, she was only the 44th member of Bonham Architects. Previously a small family-owned firm, when Keener and his partners took over ownership in 2013, they did so with a growth strategy in mind. As the business grew, so did the number of employees. In 2016, the firm moved their Minneapolis headquarters into a new, larger building and then expanded that space again in 2017. In 2018, a new satellite office opened in Des Moines, Iowa and later that year Bonham acquired the Des Moines-based Johnson McCauley bringing in both their book of business and their employees. The growth of employees between January 2016 and December 2021 can be seen in Figure 1 (Appendix).

As Bonham grew, the culture began to shift, and Keener understood well the need to revamp their brand, messaging, and marketing materials to reflect the firm's evolving identity. Originally driven by modest values such as doing good work for clients, having positive project outcomes, and promoting the individual growth of its employees, the expanding Bonham Architects redefined themselves based on more ambitious values. Advancing the architectural industry, strengthening communities, and a commitment to sustainability all became important. Mission and vision statements that reflected this change were clearly articulated both internally and to clients. The Bonham website was relaunched. A newly established marketing team ensured consistency of messaging in all marketing media, including press releases, requests for proposals and client interviews. Even the larger space that Bonham had moved its offices into reflected the new branding. It became clear to Bonham employees that growth was the new focus.

Though Bonham had successfully leveraged its growth and changing culture as a platform from which to relaunch itself into the market, internally, pain points were beginning to emerge. For many of the employees who joined the firm as it switched to new ownership, it felt as though something important was being lost as the firm grew. “When I first started, it felt like it was a new firm. There was a lot of learning going on and a lot of interaction as we tried to figure it out together. And a lot of helping each other out”, said project leader Jeff Todd. Todd continued, “Back then, the office was always buzzing. People hung around a lot longer than people do now. We even grabbed drinks together after work.” Bonham had a distinctly family feeling. As Todd described, “Our office manager helped develop a lot of the culture in the office – kind of like an office mother. For a while, she would frequently buy breakfast for everyone on her own dime.” Lindsey Wright, a design lead with Bonham added, “We used to have potlucks, and everyone would be super proud to bring their recipes and there would be an abundance of food. We had much more of a small firm vibe.” Bonham employees in the early days had a work hard, play hard mentality, but as the workload grew, people in the office became more heads down. Conversations were mostly work focused. New people came on board and some of the original employees left the firm, and over time many of their treasured rituals faded or disappeared.

In 2016, Bonham employees worked in fluid, informal teams to stay nimble. Leaders were accessible. Team building happened organically. However, as the scope and number of projects grew, it became evident that a more robust organizational structure was needed. As management experimented with various ways to arrange employees into work teams, long-time and new employees alike frequently experienced role ambiguity, or a lack of clarity around what was expected of them. For many of the new employees, including those that came from Johnson McCauley, uncertainty as to where they fit in, what they should be doing, and who was in charge of them had a disorienting effect. Long-term employees in the firm had a different set of concerns. A more complicated organizational structure made it increasingly difficult to ensure that team goals aligned with firm goals. Communication deficiencies between and within teams created both gaps and redundancies in the workflow. Inefficiencies in the flow of decision-making created bottlenecks. For Todd, the flow of decision-making was particularly problematic. Todd related, “Decision-making is centralized to the max, and it's not working. There are several people in the firm that could share in the decision-making, but they haven't been empowered to do so.”

The Pandemic Problem

For many industries, architecture and engineering among them, COVID-19 changed the way work was being done, but work continued. Bonham Architects began sending its employees home to work remotely in the spring of 2020. In-person meetings, both internal and client-facing, were converted to virtual meetings. Construction site visits were thoughtfully scheduled and carefully planned. An organization that was already becoming larger and more geographically dispersed was now experiencing another layer of employee distancing – remote work.

Bonham employees were plunged into the world of virtual meetings, cloud-based platforms, and home offices. For those who were slow to embrace newer technologies, it was an

overwhelming time. McCauley recalls, “Old Johnson McCauley was very low tech, and it forced non-tech-fluent people into the tech world fast. On top of that, some didn’t have the resources to be able to work at home.” Others welcomed the new way of working, appreciating the flexibility it offered. They found that they were much more efficient without the typical office distractions, especially when working on heads-down tasks. Even proponents of remote work, though, were quick to admit working relationships suffered during the pandemic. As Mercer noted, “...there was much lost in the absence of one-on-one encounters,” and the lack of informal social contact made people feel more disconnected from their teams than ever. When Bonham began bringing employees back to the office in late 2021, the reactions were mixed. Some were excited to come back and reconnect with their colleagues. However, as Wright remarked, “The architecture community is so small in our area, we all know each other, and everyone knows what every other company is doing with their hybrid policy.” Consequently, some employees left Bonham for organizations with more flexible work at home policies.

Keener’s Dilemma

Bonham Architects had over doubled in size in just a few short years. The culture of Bonham was rapidly evolving. Keener and the leadership team needed to help Bonham employees make sense of their changing environment. The good news was that Bonham employees were motivated to weather the challenging times. Todd summarized, “The work that we do is probably the best you can do in all of architecture. It’s rewarding. We get to design schools to help children learn. I still love to talk about the net-zero building project I was a part of. We love what we do here.” What could Keener do to keep from losing the sense of commitment and shared purpose among employees as the organization was growing and becoming more dispersed, both because of geography and the realities of hybrid work?

TEACHING NOTES

Case Synopsis

In November of 2019, Bonham Architects, a medium-sized Midwestern architectural firm, acquired Johnson McCauley Architecture, a small firm in an adjacent market. The acquisition held promise for both firms. For Bonham, it was an opportunity for quick growth by accessing a fully developed market and the long-standing client relationships the partners of Johnson McCauley had built over five decades. For the two partners at Johnson McCauley who would join Bonham as employees upon the acquisition, the move allowed them to capture the value of their firm years ahead of their retirement and to continue to do the work they loved without the burdens of ownership. For Mason Keener, the owner and president of Bonham Architects, the new book of business from Johnson McCauley, and the growth they had already begun experiencing in Bonham's own market necessitated a flurry of hiring. Bonham Architects, a 40-person firm in 2016, had more than doubled in size by 2021.

To further complicate matters, within weeks of the finalization of the acquisition, COVID-19 lockdowns began. It quickly became clear to Keener that, despite COVID-19, Bonham's business and the need to increase human resources would continue to grow. But how and where people worked was rapidly changing, both because of the newly acquired satellite location and because of the pandemic. Keener was faced with a challenge. How do you help employees, both established and newly hired, make sense of, and thrive in their changed work environment?

Research Methodology

This case was developed based on primary sources including interviews with the president of Bonham Architects, a partner from Johnson McCauley, now an associate at Bonham, the director of human resources at Bonham, and two additional Bonham employees who have been with Bonham for seven or more years. Secondary sources such as news reports, social media sites, and company websites provided additional information. The names of the firms and employees have all been changed to protect confidentiality.

Target Audience

This case was written to be used in undergraduate and MBA level organizational behavior courses. The focal themes of the case align well with discussions on organizational culture and culture change. The case will also invite discussions on performance management, structure, and decision-making. Because it connects to themes covered throughout a typical organizational behavior course, it can be useful as a capstone assignment that demonstrates the interconnectivity of organizational decision implications. This case has been classroom tested.

Learning Objectives

By analyzing and discussing the case, students should be able to:

- describe the impact fast growth can have on organizational culture;
- diagnose the pain points these changes create both to structure and people;

- prescribe a selection of organizational levers that can be used to alleviate these pain points.

Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe the culture of Bonham Architects before they began experiencing fast growth? How would you describe it two years later?
2. What effect did culture change have on the structure of Bonham? What effect did it have on people in the firm?
3. How did the onset of COVID-19 affect the organizational change Bonham was already experiencing?
4. What can Keener do to manage the challenges created by the fast growth of Bonham?

Answers to Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe the culture of Bonham Architects before they began experiencing fast growth? How would you describe it two years later?

Instructors should first prompt students to recall the elements of culture: artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions. Describing Bonham Architects using these elements provides a snapshot of its culture at two points in time, the period prior to the onset of fast growth and the acquisition of Johnson McCauley, and the period after. The descriptions are summarized in Tables 1 and 2 (Appendix).

To describe the movement of one cultural state to another, instructors should next prompt students to locate Bonham Architects, prior to the onset of the fast growth and the acquisition (2016) and after (2021), on the Competing Values Framework. The Competing Values Framework is best understood as a two-by-two diagram where one axis indicates an organization's relative focus on internal vs. external concerns and the second axis indicates an organization's relative preference for flexibility vs. stability. The result is four categories of culture: Clan, Adhocracy, Hierarchy, and Market (Cameron, Quinn, Degraff, & Thakor, 2022). The mapping of the two firms on the Competing Values Framework is captured in Figure 2 (Appendix).

Teaching tip: Because the axes of the Competing Values Framework represent a spectrum, Students may map the two points in time slightly differently. That is okay. What is important for students to perceive is the movement the firm makes on the diagram. Perceptive students will already be connecting this map to the pain points resulting from the fast growth of Bonham Architects.

2. What effect did culture change have on the structure of Bonham? What effect did it have on people in the firm?

Structure Implications: Often organizations are slow to recognize the need to change culture and only do so when negative implications start to emerge. Structural implications may include overlapping or unclear job boundaries, diminished capacity and agility, and declining workforce engagement (SHRM, n.d.). With rapid growth, it becomes difficult for decision-making and leadership to be retained exclusively by the small number of owner/partners that

represent the leadership of the firm. Decentralizing decision-making in growing firms often means creating new, mid-level leadership and then empowering them with decision-making authority. Doing so allows the firm to respond more quickly to changing circumstances (Kinicki, 2021).

People-related Implications: Cultural change has implications on employees as well, including unmet employee expectations leading to increased dissatisfaction, withdrawal cognitions and eventually turnover. Cultural change can result in new relationships, including people who are now managing their peers, creating opportunities for some and hard feelings for others. Even when the need for culture to evolve is apparent, change can create fear and resistance from employees making it exceedingly difficult to enact.

When addressing this question, students should be able to diagnose the pain points felt most saliently by Bonham Architects. The key here is to move students beyond describing the firm and move toward diagnosing important areas that need to be addressed by Bonham leadership. A list of both structural and people-focused pain points can be found in Table 3 (Appendix).

Teaching tip: Top students will be able to convey the interconnectivity between structural and people-related pain points unprompted. This insight should be rewarded and reinforced for the benefit of other students.

3. How did the onset of COVID-19 affect the organizational change Bonham was already experiencing?

Positive and negative implications of remote work have been documented in various studies and in the popular press. An understanding of the broader workplace implications of remote work is a good start. Students should then extract evidence of the implications of remote work on Bonham Architects from the case. They should conclude that remote work resulting from the onset of the pandemic affected employees by adding another layer of distancing and ambiguity to their roles in the firm and their relationships with other employees. A more detailed list of implications that students may identify is included in Table 4 (Appendix).

4. What can Keener do to manage the challenges created by the fast growth of Bonham?

Having both described Bonham Architects through the lens of culture, and diagnosed the pain points resulting from cultural change, students should move toward prescribing a course of action in their answer to this question. Utilizing the mechanisms for leading employees through cultural change as outlined by Edgar H. Schein (1983), instructors should ask students to identify the mechanisms, or levers, most relevant to the pain points being experienced by Bonham employees. Angelo Kinicki (2021) offers a table that summarizes the most potent mechanisms for changing organizational culture originally identified by Schein. It may be helpful to show students Table 5 (Appendix) and review what is meant by each of these mechanisms before this part of the assignment.

From this list, students should be able to recognize that mechanisms most closely related to the pain points articulated by employees of Bonham are as follows:

- Deliberate role modeling, training programs, teaching, and coaching by others
- Rites and rituals

- The workflow and organizational structure
- Organizational systems and procedures
- Organizational goals and criteria throughout employee cycle (hire to retire)

Deliberate role modeling, training programs, teaching, and coaching by others: To help employees make sense of the shifting culture of their organization, managers have several tools that can be employed. Role modeling is a way of leading by example, demonstrating behaviors that are consistent with the norms of the new culture. Training programs that facilitate socialization into a new organizational culture, whether for new or existing employees, provide an immersive experience where the mission, values and goals of the organization can be articulated and internalized by employees. Ongoing teaching and coaching of employees deepen this internalization. Employees who receive ongoing teaching and coaching are nearly three times as engaged at work than those who do not receive it (Kinicki, 2021).

Students should be drawn to this mechanism as a lever for addressing issues such as new employees feeling disconnected from their assigned teams and unsure of how they plug into the workflow. Using this lever may also be useful in helping new employees understand the norms of the firm and feel more socially connected to their coworkers. Examples of how students might apply this lever and the outcomes they can expect from the application are listed in Table 6 (Appendix).

Rites and rituals: Rites and rituals in organizations are powerful tools for reinforcing organizational culture as they touch every element of culture: observed artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions. They are activities both formal and informal, planned and unplanned, that create shared experiences for the members of the organizations. Moments of celebration or recognition, or routine gatherings where employees socialize and bond with each other could all be considered rites and rituals. Rituals are particularly important to existing employees who feel a sense of psychological safety and purpose through these shared behaviors (Keswin, 2022).

Bonham employees spoke warmly about events such as potlucks and office breakfasts and how meaningful they were to them in their early days at the firm. Informal social functions such as drinks after work played a significant role in generating positive feelings about the people they worked with. The change or disappearance of these events as the firm grew left many employees with the feeling they'd lost something important. For these reasons, students should be drawn to this mechanism as a lever for addressing pain points. Examples of how students might apply this lever and the outcomes they can expect from the application are listed in Table 7 (Appendix).

The workflow and organizational structure: When an organization is small, the organizational structure tends toward a functional structure where decision-making is centralized at the owner level. The communication between employees in different functional roles necessary for efficient workflow is carried out with relative ease since there are only a small number of employees. However, as organizations grow in size and number of employees, this efficiency is lost and new ways of organizing and making decisions must be pursued. Often, as organizations grow, they experiment with various other structures such as hierarchical, divisional, and team-based structures. Decision-making is decentralized to mid-level managers. Coordination of effort among and between teams means communication needs to be more intentional and programmed into work activities.

Bonham management has made strides to formalize how work gets done. The creation of a divisional structure has helped them manage the growing volume of work and has reduced role ambiguity somewhat. However, as of the writing of the case, decision-making remained fairly centralized and whether they had selected the right fit structure was still an open question. Employees described issues with efficiency, communication between teams, and lack of empowerment in decision-making as pain points. Examples of how students might apply this lever and the outcomes they can expect from the application are listed in Table 8 (Appendix).

Organizational systems and procedures: Organizational systems and procedures describe the way work gets done in an organization. Of special focus recently is the dramatic impact COVID-19 has had on the way we communicate with one another, how we hold meetings, the tools we use to do our work, and the place we work from. Once limited to face-to-face, phone, or email as channels for communication, virtual tools such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams are now ubiquitous in the workplace and used for formal and informal meetings alike. As many people are returning to the workplace after being forced to home offices during the pandemic, they are doing so with a desire to keep the benefits of remote work while regaining the advantages of working in the office. Employers are grappling with writing policies that clearly articulate the expectations for employees in our new hybrid working environment. Designing an effective hybrid policy carries high stakes. Workers in hybrid arrangements are more likely to stay with their organizations (Gratton, 2023).

Because of the pandemic, there was a sudden technological shift in how work was done at Bonham. Post-COVID, Bonham needed to define what a return to the office would look like. Students should recognize that Bonham's efforts to manage these monumental shifts in the work environment and employee's responses to them fit into the mechanism of organizational systems and procedures. Examples of how students might apply this lever and the outcomes they can expect from the application are listed in Table 9 (Appendix).

Organizational goals and criteria throughout employee cycle (hire to retire): As the organization becomes larger and more complex, instituting a formal performance management process can provide clarity around roles, goals, and expectations for employees. A good performance management process clearly defines the boundaries and interconnectivities of each employee's role. It sets employee goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART goals). It makes clear how individual efforts connect to larger organizational goals. An effective performance management process improves the performance of the team and increases job satisfaction in the employee (Kinicki, 2021).

With so many new employees and a new structure being piloted, knowing the firm's goals, having clarity around how their roles contribute to firm goals, and the feedback critically important to maintaining good performance was much more challenging. Once able to rely on informal methods, employees in the growing firm were finding themselves less likely to know what pursuits were important to the organization and what the organization expected of them. For these reasons, students should be drawn to this mechanism. Examples of how students might apply this lever and the outcomes they can expect from the application are listed in Table 10 (Appendix).

Activities

50 Minute Activity

This case would ideally be used following a lecture on culture and culture change. Following the lecture, students should be instructed to read the case. If this topic is covered over the course of two class sessions, it may be helpful to have students read the case at the end of the first class while the lecture material is still fresh and reread it again at the beginning of the second class to help them internalize the facts of the case. Once the case has been read, instructors should begin the following sequence of activities:

Group Work (20 minutes)

- Break students into three groups: Describers, Diagnosticians, and Prescribers.
 - Describers should be presented a handout that includes the following:
 - Discussion question 1
 - Tables 1 and 2 (Appendix) without the answers and Figure 2 (Appendix) without the plots
 - Instructions telling them to discuss as a group, fill in Tables 1 and 2 (Appendix) and plot the firm at two points in time, 2016 and 2021 on the Competing Values Framework diagram.
 - Diagnosticians should be presented a handout that includes the following:
 - Discussion question 2 and 3
 - Tables 3 and 4 (Appendix) without the answers
 - Instructions telling them to discuss as a group and fill in Tables 3 and 4 (Appendix)
 - Prescribers should be presented a handout that includes the following:
 - Discussion question 4
 - The Twelve Mechanisms for Changing Organizational Culture
 - Instructions telling them to discuss as a group and identify 3-5 of the twelve mechanisms they believe would be most helpful to Keener, given the pain points identified in the case.

All Class Work (30 minutes)

- Describers, Diagnosticians, and Prescribers spokespersons report their responses to the class.
- Select 3 of the mechanisms the Prescribers identified in their group work.
- As a class, fill in the appropriate tables (from Tables 5 through 10 (Appendix)).
- Instructor Debrief: Ask students to reflect on the interconnectivity of the selected mechanisms, noting how utilizing one often has implications on another. Remind students that even good problems (fast growth) can have negative implications if not managed thoughtfully.

Capstone Application

Although this case is written around culture change, managing a changing culture touches a multitude of organizational behavior concepts. For this reason, it is useful as a capstone project. A possible version of a capstone project could be designed as follows:

Student groups will read the case and answer all four discussion questions in the form of a written proposal. In their proposal, they will present their case for change in the form of an executive memo. An executive memo is frequently used in business to propose ideas to the

executive team of the organization. They will use the proposal to persuade Keener and his leadership team to pursue organizational changes to address the pain points resulting from Bonham's fast growth and will then lay out a framework for how the change might be rolled out. Within the proposal, they should set an agenda for how they will make their case, describe the current state, diagnose the issues, and prescribe a recommended course of action. They should provide evidence to support their recommendation, and proactively address the potential critiques of the proposal. If the instructor desires, the written proposal may be accompanied by a team presentation where the team presents as though they are presented to Keener and his leadership team.

Epilogue

As of August 10, 2023, Bonham Architects, after weathering a dip in the number of employees during the "great recession", has resumed its growth trend. Several changes have been implemented to address the fast growth pain points identified in the case. In an effort to revive the feelings of connectivity once felt strongly by employees, Bonham has created Community Groups for employee participation through Yammer. Bonham has launched a robust performance management process for all employees to provide meaningful feedback to employees, articulate clear expectations for good performance, and ensure goal alignment at all levels of hierarchy. Keener and his team continue to evaluate Bonham's first-generation hybrid work policy to see if changes are needed to better meet the preferences of employees. The firm continues to utilize a divisional structure as an arrangement for work teams. To improve upward and cross-divisional communication and coordination, Bonham established an associate advisor group that meets biweekly to share information, brainstorm improvements, and provide guidance to Bonham leadership.

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APPENDIX

Figure 1

Total Employees January 2016 through January 2022

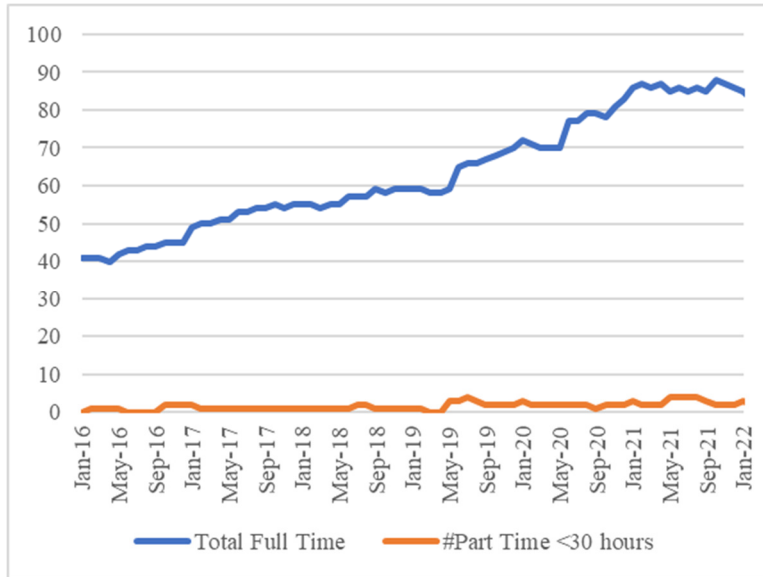


Figure 2

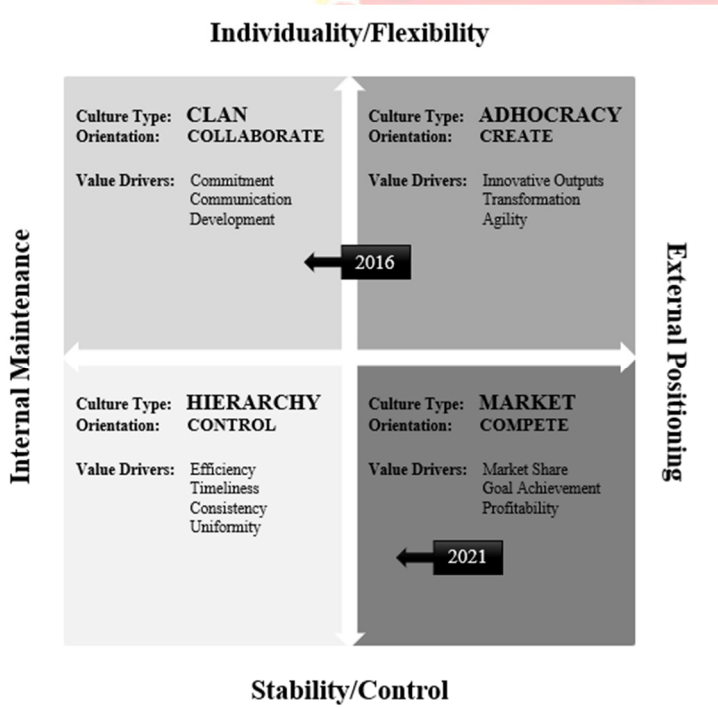


Table 1***Bonham culture prior to growth***

Artifacts	Espoused Values	Underlying Assumptions
Potlucks & shared breakfasts	Doing good work for clients	Learn from each other
Office “Mother”	Promoting individual growth	Work hard, play hard
After hours socials	Positive project outcomes	Leaders are accessible
Sense of being a family		Nimble teams mean fluid workflow
Minimal team structure		Team building happens organically

Table 2***Bonham culture after growth***

Artifacts	Espoused Values	Underlying Assumptions
New logo and website	Advancing the industry	Growth is the focus
People heads down, busy	Strengthening communities	Most decisions needed to be made at the top
Conversations more work focused	Commitment to sustainability	
Formal team structure		

Table 3***Pain points due to culture shift***

Structural	People-related
New employees experience role ambiguity on their assigned team, unsure of how they plug into the workflow	Loss of family feeling many had in original culture

More layers of management, but still centralized decision-making creates bottlenecks and inefficiencies	Employees feeling uncertain about where they fit in and what they should be doing
Deficiencies in communication between teams	Frustration with lack of empowerment in decision-making

Table 4*Implications of employees working remotely*

Positive	Negative
More flexibility	Lack of informal social contact made people feel disconnected from their team
More efficient without typical office distractions	Discontent among some because of inflexibility of the return-to-work policy
Better for heads down work	Sudden technologic shift in how work was done left less tech-savvy employees overwhelmed
	Lack of resources to set up a home office

Table 5*Twelve mechanisms for changing organizational culture*

Mechanism	Observable Artifact	Espoused Value	Basic Assumption
1. Formal statements	x	x	
2. Design of physical space, work environments, and buildings	x		x
3. Slogans, language, acronyms, and sayings	x	x	
4. Deliberate role modeling, training programs, teaching, and coaching by others	x	x	x
5. Explicit rewards, status symbols, and promotion criteria	x	x	x
6. Stories, legends, or myths about key people and events	x	x	x

7. Organizational activities, processes, or outcomes		x	x
8. Leader reactions to critical incidents and organizational crises			x
9. Rites and rituals	x	x	x
10. The workflow and organizational structure	x		x
11. Organizational systems and procedures	x	x	x
12. Organizational goals and criteria throughout employee cycle (hire to retire)	x	x	x

Table 6***Deliberate role modeling, training programs, teaching, and coaching by others***

How to Apply	Expected Outcomes
Utilize a formalized onboarding process that includes training on cultural elements	Newcomers will understand the norms of the organization and will feel a greater sense of belonging
Job specific training that provides contextual information about how their role connects to other activities in the workflow	Increased sense of meaning in their work, reduced task ambiguity
Formal mentoring program	Better understanding of culture of the organization, career development guidance, social connection

Table 7***Rites and rituals***

How to Apply	Expected Outcomes
Reinstitute potluck for events that can be consistently celebrated in the now larger firm (important work anniversaries, retirements, etc.)	Existing employees feel renewed connection to those rituals that had been important in the past
Create opportunities for responsible outside of work socializing	Building social connections between employees will alleviate feelings of

	disconnection and improve working relationships
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Table 8*The workflow and organizational structure*

How to Apply	Expected Outcomes
Determine which employees are ready to be empowered with decision-making authority, determine the scope of that authority, and make sure decision-making aligns with structure.	Increased efficiencies in workflow, higher productivity, increased motivation in employees, improved relationships between levels of management
Institute standing meetings for delivery teams leaders to share information with one another	Improves communication between teams, ensures better integration when using a divisional structure

Table 9*Organizational systems and procedures*

How to Apply	Expected Outcomes
Institute a hybrid work policy that clearly articulates expectations, strikes the right balance between flexibility and connection, and is at least somewhat consistent with relevant competitors' policies	Enhanced productivity, increased empowerment and motivation, reduced turnover
Adequate training on technological tools used to conduct business seamlessly regardless of location of employee	Reduced anxiety among employees less familiar with technology

Table 10*Organizational goals and criteria throughout employee cycle (hire to retire)*

How to Apply	Expected Outcomes
Launch formal performance management process	Clarity around goals, improved alignment with organizational goals, identifies training needs, increased employee motivation

<p>Touchpoint opportunities for managers and employees to exchange ongoing, informal feedback</p>	<p>Improved employee-manager relationships, allows for quick course correction to stay on track with goals, cultivates a culture of collaboration</p>
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