

UGRs

A BREAKTHROUGH CONCEPT TO CREATE A
POSITIVE, PRODUCTIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE



PRESENTED BY:

STEVE **SIMPSON** | STEF **DU PLESSIS**



THE POWER OF WORKPLACE CULTURE

In their landmark 1992 book "corporate culture and performance", authors Kotter and Heskett found evidence of an irrefutable truth – that workplace culture drives performance.

In what had previously been based on intuitive logic, the research underpinning this book provided evidence that corporate cultures impact on an organisation's long-term economic performance. Organisations with strong workplace cultures increased revenues by almost five times more than that of organisations with poor cultures. In addition, organisations with positive cultures significantly outperformed other organisations on measures including workforce growth, stock prices, and net incomes.

The book was not only a landmark because of the empirical evidence it provided. The text proved to be a significant catalyst in terms of getting leaders, perhaps for the first time, to seriously consider their own organisation's culture.

Because of this ground breaking work, leadership teams now consider workplace culture to be an important issue in the strategic management of their enterprise. Our own research, for example, has revealed that around 80% of senior leadership teams have a moderate or higher commitment to creating a positive, productive culture. It's fair to say therefore, that over the past 20 years

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there has been considerable growth in the awareness of workplace culture as an important foundation stone for organisational success.

Awareness alone will however not bring about any shift towards the creation of a more effective culture. Leaders also need the knowledge, skills and tools with which to facilitate culture change. And our research also shows these components are in short supply. The truth is, whilst most leaders now understand that culture is important, few understand the concept in any meaningful, practical sense. And many do not know how to manage it.

And so, well intended as they may be, their efforts to improve workplace culture have in most cases resulted in one of two courses of action. In some organisations, attempts are made to improve the culture with limited success, resulting in increased levels of cynicism at both staff and management levels. In other organisations, given the lack of know-how and appropriate resources, no meaningful attempts are made to improve the culture, resulting in a workplace culture functioning through "chance" or "luck". But UGRs changes all of that forever.

GREAT COMPANIES

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POSITIVE  **UGRs**

because they are

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INTRODUCING THE UGRs CONCEPT



UNDERSTANDING WORKPLACE CULTURE

This is where the concept of UGRs® has a big part to play. UGRs stands for “unwritten ground rules”. It is a concept initially created by Australian-based Steve Simpson, and further developed through his partnership with Stef du Plessis, based in South Africa.

UGRs are best defined as people’s perceptions of **“this is the way we do things around here”**. They drive people’s behaviour, yet they are seldom talked about openly. Examples of UGRs in organisations include:

- *At our meetings it isn’t worth complaining because we know nothing will get done.*
- *The only time anyone gets spoken to by the boss is when something is wrong.*
- *The company talks about the importance of service but we know they don’t really mean it so we don’t really have to worry about it.*

UGRs such as those above, work against the bottom-line performance of a company. The best of vision and mission statements, strategic plans, and business plans – even when backed up by policies and procedure documents – count for nothing if the UGRs are not aligned. Research into UGRs has revealed that a remarkable 70% of non-managers believe organisational performance could be improved by 50% or more if the negative UGRs in their organisation were addressed.

Over the past 20 years, the UGRs concept has been developed substantially. It has been deployed in organisations from many varied sectors across the globe as a tool to boost bottom line performance. Over that time, the concept and its implementation tools have been refined, improved and tested, again and again. Now, the UGRs methodology for workplace change is supported by a suite of online tools that have been developed to mobilise and sustain culture change, in line with the strategic objectives of the organisation.

WHAT OUR UGRs CLIENTS HAVE SAID

UGRs initiated a corporate “Road to Damascus” experience, creating the foundation for our future sustainable success.

Ian Cockerill

(Then) President, Gold Fields Limited: A global precious metals mining company, listed on the NYSE, operating throughout Africa, Australia, and South America.

In the 1980s it was **Situational Leadership** with Ken Blanchard.

In the 1990s it was **Body Language** with Allan Pease.

In the 2000s it was **Good to Great** with Jim Collins.

Now its the time for UGRs and Steve Simpson.

Guy Russo

CEO, Kmart, Australia
Leading Australian department store chain

There is no doubt that our UGRs programme dramatically improved both our safety and operational performance. UGRs is a sure formula for success because the process engages employees at all levels. I have no doubt that UGRs can significantly boost the culture across any company – so long as management really get behind it.

Gareth Taylor

(Then) Vice President for Barrick Africa:
Barrick is the world’s largest gold producer.

Stef’s UGRs workshop was undoubtedly the highlight of our convention – for the second year running he was voted “best speaker”. His knowledge and the manner in which he presents, make him possibly the best speaker we have used.

George Steyn

Managing Director, PEP Retail Group
PEP is the biggest single brand chain store in Southern Africa

ABOUT THE CREATORS OF UGRs



STEF DU PLESSIS CO-DEVELOPER OF UGRs

'Stef's programmes have nation-building potential.'

Former South African President Thabo Mbeki

'One of South Africa's most influential motivators.'

Council on Education in Management

Stef du Plessis is regarded as a leading resource by CEOs on five continents when it comes to growing their people and developing their leaders. They also turn to him when they need to get their people engaged with, and committed to, the execution of their strategic intent.

Over the past two decades, he has spoken at some of the world's most prestigious events – including both the Asian and the European HR Directors Summits, and twice at the Million Dollar Round Table in the USA. Stef has worked with executive teams the world over, helping them to improve their bottom line results. He has also worked extensively with the UK-based Academy of Chief Executives.

Stef transcends the conference stage and goes beyond the boardroom: much of his work involves the implementation of long-term, company-wide transformation programmes.

Stef holds a Master's degree in leadership, from the University of Johannesburg.

STEVE SIMPSON CREATOR OF THE UGRs CONCEPT

'Australia's leading corporate culture authority.'

e-Customer Service World (UK)

'The leading Australian Customer Care Guru.'

SOCAP Europe

Steve Simpson is an international speaker, consultant and author based in Australia.

He has worked with organisations across a host of industries globally, helping them improve their bottom line using UGRs.

Steve has featured at two World Conferences on Customer Service Management in the US where he rated in the top 10 speakers. He was the only Australian to feature at the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals (SOCAP) Annual Conference in New Orleans, the HDI Conference in Las Vegas and the recent European Conference on Customer Management in London. Steve has shared the stage with Tom Peters (on four occasions), Professor Gary Hamal (twice) and Hon Paul Keating, former Prime Minister of Australia.

He has a Master's degree from the University of Alberta, is the author of two books and is a contributing author to a further two books.



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