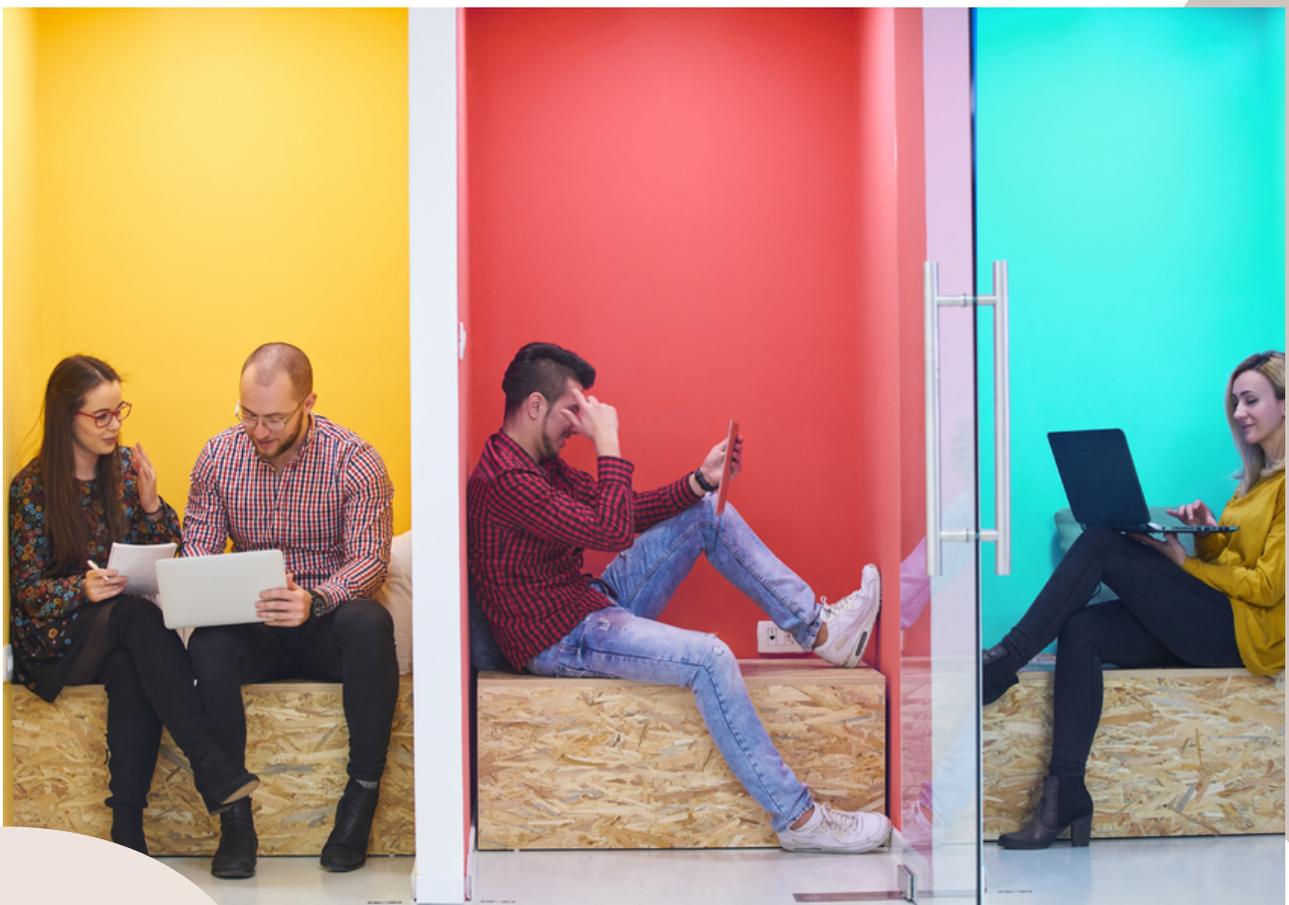


*The Scaleup's Guide to Creating*

# A CULTURE PLAYBOOK



DISCOVER YOUR NEXT POWER MOVES IN 3 SIMPLE STEPS

**BY AGA BAJER**

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# Welcome!

*I'm Aga. I'm so glad you are here. Get comfortable and let's get started!*

Let me guess...

You downloaded this guide because you want to build a culture that works for your business. One that jibes with your purpose, strategy, and brand, that is authentic, adaptable, and powerful. You want your company to be a place where employees do the best work of their careers while having a sense of fun, meaning, and belonging.

This guide will help you figure out your next power moves to get there.

# The Big Five of a Culture Playbook

There is no "one-size-fits-all" when it comes to culture but helping startups, scaleups, and Fortune 500 companies grow taught me one thing: there are five essential elements you need in your playbook. I call them **The Big Five**: Purpose, Core Values,, Core Desired Feelings, a Stunning Colleague Manifesto, and a Leader Manifesto.

## Purpose

Your purpose is a coherent narrative that speaks about why you are in business in the first place and what kind of dent you want to put in the world.



## Core Values

Your core values are the key principles that you and your team uphold at work.



## Core Desired Feelings

They describe the emotional impact you want to have on your team members, customers, and the world at large.



## A Stunning Colleague Manifesto

A description of what it takes to be considered a stunning colleague in your company.



## A Leader Manifesto

Outlines the core leadership principles, and the impact you want your leaders to have on their teams.





# Ready, steady, GO!

*Set aside twenty  
minutes to go  
through the steps  
on the following  
pages.*

Many leaders and their teams believe that the time spent on this exercise was one of the best investments they ever made. Do it yourself and follow through on the actions you identify as a result and I'm confident that you'll feel the same in a few months!

**Ready to dive in? Let's GO!**

# Steps overview

It doesn't matter how advanced you are when it comes to creating your playbook. What matters is that you are willing to take the first step, and then the next - and the next one after that. This is the only way we can ever move forward.

01

## CHECKING FOR COMPLETENESS

In this step, you'll take stock and capture your Big Five. Are you starting from scratch? That's ok. Do you already have a few pieces of the puzzle in place? Even better!

02

## CHECKING FOR DEPTH

Check how deeply embedded your Big Five are in the fabric of your company culture. Are they just an abstract idea? Or something that everyone in your company lives and breathes?

03

## PLANNING YOUR NEXT MOVE

After you complete the first two steps, you will be ready to move to the final one - identifying what action to take next to strengthen your Culture Playbook further.

*If you quit on the process, you are quitting on the result.*

IDOWU KOYENIKAN

# 1 Checking for Completeness

By taking stock of your Big Five, you get a clear overview of what's already there and what might be still missing. Don't worry if you can't answer all the questions - most people can't. It's not about reaching perfection, it's about making a quick completeness check and getting it all down on paper (or into your device - **this PDF is fillable!**)



# 1. Your Purpose

I found that it's best to approach purpose as a cohesive narrative consisting of three statements:

- **A mission statement.**
- **A philosophy statement.**
- **A vision statement.**

Let's have a look at each of them:

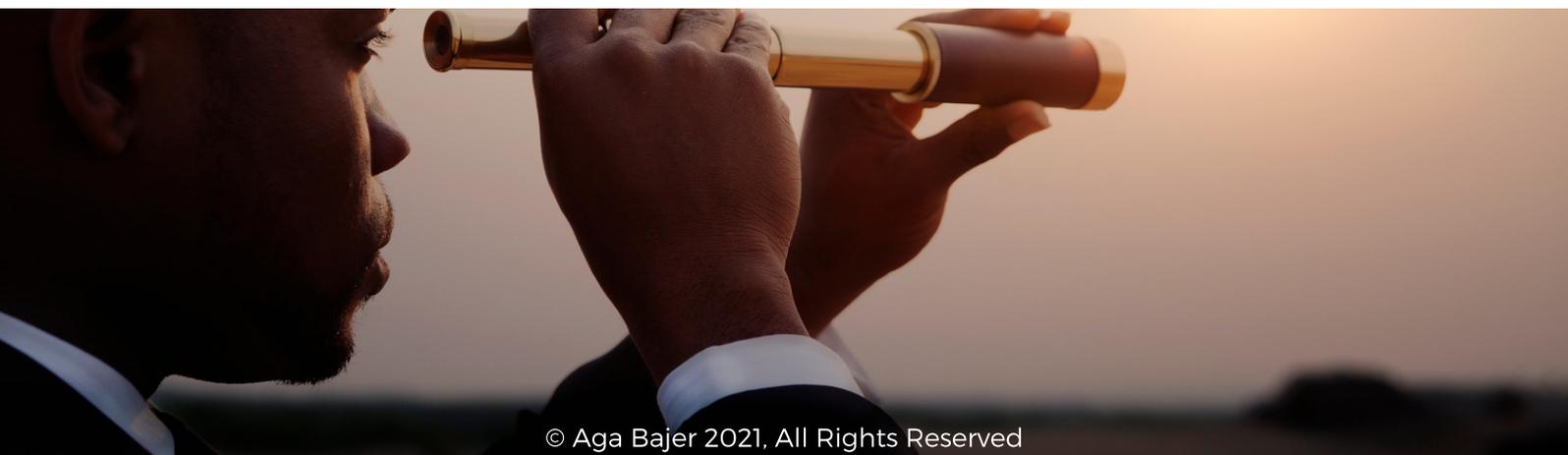
## Your mission

A mission statement is basically saying: "We wake up in the morning and go to work every single day to do X, so that others can do (or become) Y. And we can't think of anything else we'd rather do."

### Example:

"Empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more."  
(Microsoft)

**HOW DO YOU SERVE, AND WHAT IMPACT DO YOU WANT TO HAVE?**



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# 1. Your Purpose - cont

## Your philosophy

Your philosophy statement describes the core belief that got you in business in the first place. It's your big WHY, the thing you feel most passionate about. It's how you'd complete this sentence:

"We do what we do because we believe that (...)"

### Example:

"We believe that musicians make the world a better place." (Encore Musicians)

**WHAT IS THE CORE BELIEF THAT GOT YOU IN THIS BUSINESS IN THE FIRST PLACE?**

## Your vision

Your vision statement describes the world you dream of and help to create.

### Example:

"Our vision is a thriving, interconnected world where life is improved through invention." (Good Machine)

**HOW WILL THE WORLD BE BETTER AS A RESULT OF YOU WORKING ON YOUR MISSION?**

# 2. Your Core Values

Your core values are the key principles that you and your team uphold at work. They provide you and your teammates with simple yet powerful guardrails. A really effective set of values has a headline, a short description, and a more detailed description that outlines specific behaviors you strive to adopt, as well as the ones you refuse to accept. Shoot for three values if possible. Five is the absolute maximum.

## Example:

### Continuous Growth

*We believe that for things to change, we have to change. We keep pushing ourselves to become masters of what we do, embracing a growth mindset, lifelong learning, the power of deliberate practice, and curiosity. We thrive on challenges and see success and failure merely as a springboard for growth and stretching our current capabilities.*

We strive to...	We refuse to...
<b>Celebrate growth opportunities</b> - because the first step to improvement is acknowledging that we can (and will) do better. → We look for ways to improve and grow; we actively pursue activities that help us move towards mastery.	<b>Hide our deficiencies</b> - because true growth requires vulnerability, involves large doses of awkwardness, and openly admitting: "I don't know," or "This is still not working the way we want it to."
<b>Embrace challenges</b> - because we learn best when we have a growing edge, stretching ourselves to do something that goes beyond our current comfort zone. → We willingly take on challenges, especially those that require gaining new knowledge and developing new skills and we always set developmental goals.	<b>Feel intimidated by others</b> (no matter how capable or successful they are) - because their success is merely an indication of what is possible.
<b>Engage in feedback conversations</b> - because there's no better way to gain insight on how we can improve. → We reflect on our progress and ask others for feedback. → We give candid feedback with positive intent to highlight what works and help with what could work better.	<b>Get paralyzed by fear of failure</b> - because failure is merely information; it tells us what doesn't work and helps us figure out what does.

**WHAT DO WE VALUE MOST? WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES THAT HELPS US BE AT OUR BEST?**

# 3. Your Core Desired Feelings

Your core desired feelings describe the emotional impact you want to have on your team members, customers, and the world at large. The emotions and feelings your company and your brand generate have the power to make you magnetic, or... indifferent. If it sounds a bit fluffy, here is something to ponder: Research shows that companies that resonate with their customers and employees on the emotional level bring 1800% higher ROI than their counterparts. (Source: Raj Sisodia, *Firms of Endearment*)

**Example:**

Free ❖ Inspired ❖ Welcome ❖ Motivated ❖ Involved ❖ Optimistic (Flowe)

**WHAT IS THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT WE NEED TO HAVE ON THE EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS TO PLAY OUR BEST GAME?**

People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel.

MAYA ANGELOU

# 4. A stunning colleague manifesto

As Netflix famously states, "a great workplace is stunning colleagues." Creating this workplace requires describing what exactly you mean by a stunning colleague.

## Example:

1. Have a truly excellent work ethic. Inject passion and enthusiasm into everything you do and every team you work with.
2. Always strive to produce award-winning and industry-leading work.
3. Never settle for average. Aim for remarkable. Always think "How can I do that better? How can I make that more amazing?"

(Propellernet)

**WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A STUNNING COLLEAGUE AT OUR COMPANY?**

# 5. A leader manifesto

This final part of your playbook outlines your core leadership philosophy, and the impact you want your leaders to have on their teams.

**Example:**

We believe –

- In purpose-driven leadership.
- In managers who have the willingness and courage to lead.
- In managers who build and run healthy teams.
- That leadership is a group sport

(Spotify)

See the full leader manifesto [here](#).

## WHAT ARE OUR CORE LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES?

# 2 Checking for Depth

Are some of your Big Five superficial? So far mostly just words on paper? It happens. But unless they get deeply embedded into the fabric of your company culture, they won't be of much use.

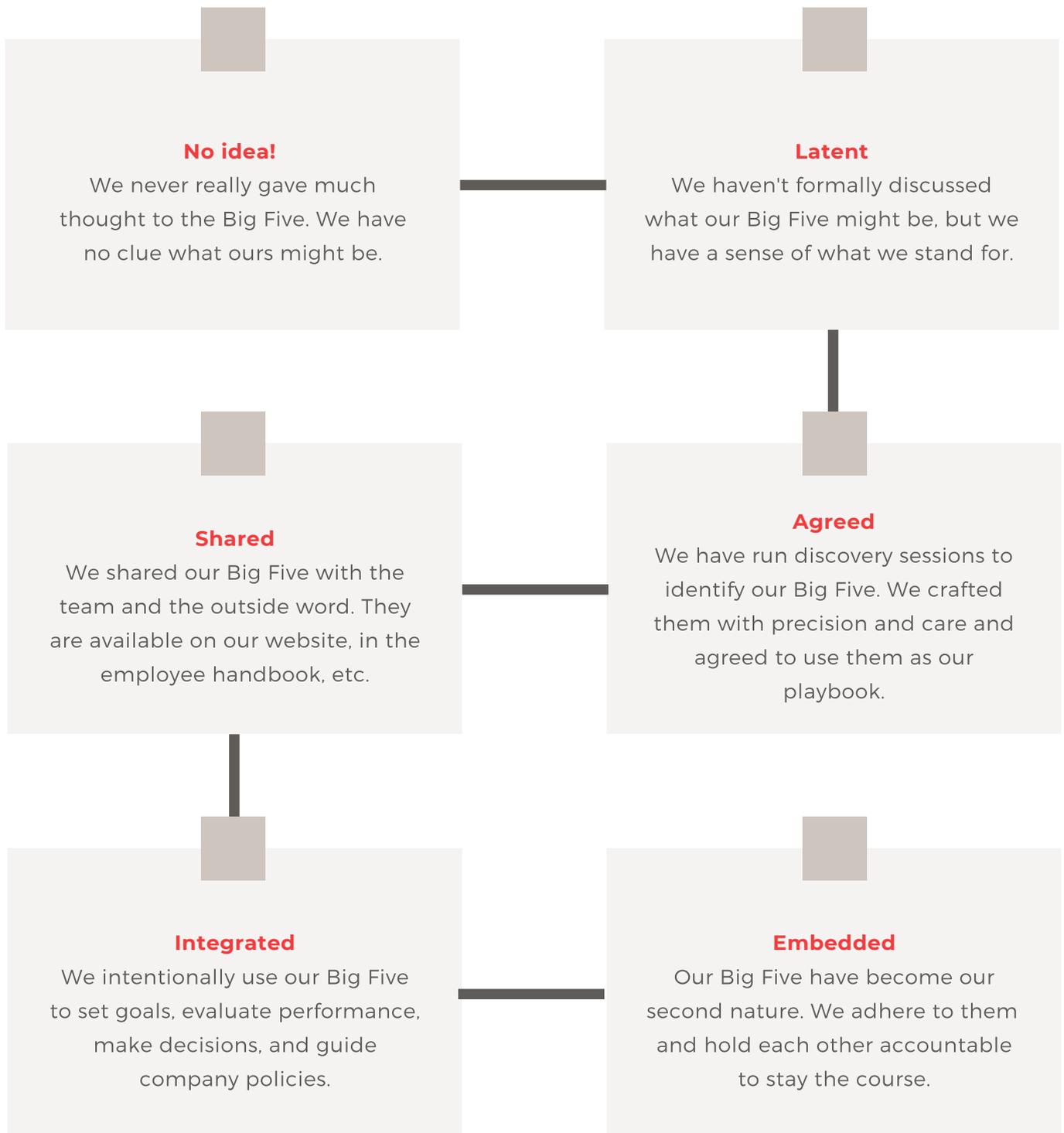
A Culture Playbook can only be game-changing when it drives how you and your teammates operate daily. This is your ultimate goal, the holy grail of any playbook - getting to the point when everyone is able and willing to play according to the rules you have agreed on.



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# So, where are you now?

Rome wasn't built in a day. Activating and operationalizing your Culture Playbook is a journey with six distinct milestones. To figure out where to go next, you first need to know your starting point. Check the box above the milestone you've reached so far.



# 3 Planning Your Next Move

Now that you have taken stock of the Big Five and identified how deeply embedded they are, you are in a perfect position to decide what to do next.

You'll find useful prompts to help you reflect on the next page.



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**WHAT ARE THE OBVIOUS GAPS THAT YOU SEE IN YOUR BIG FIVE?**

**WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE BEST PLACE TO START FILLING THEM IN?**

**WHAT IS THE NEXT DEPTH MILESTONE YOU NEED TO BE WORKING TOWARDS?**

**WHAT IS THE FIRST SMALL STEP THAT YOU WILL TAKE TO GET THERE?**

**WHEN WILL YOU TAKE THE FIRST STEP?**



## Final Words

An effective Culture Playbook is always a result of a collective discovery process, not design as many consultants will want you to believe. Culture lives in the stories we tell ourselves and others. To engage your whole company in sharing these stories and crafting an effective Culture Playbook, you can use my Fireside CHAT process. If you join our CultureBrained™ Community, you will find the relevant guides and a workshop that shows you how to facilitate the process.

*Story was more crucial to our evolution than our much-touted opposable thumbs. All our thumbs do is let us hang on. Story tells us what to hang on to.*

- LISA CRON



# Join me and other culture leaders!

I'm Aga Bajer, a culture strategist, the author of *Building and Sustaining a Coaching Culture*, and the creator and host of the [CultureLab Podcast](#). I help purpose-driven companies thrive by unlocking the power of their culture.

I'm also the founder of **CultureBrained™** - a first-of-its-kind virtual community for culture leaders and champions who want to find NEW ways of cultivating remarkable cultures at scale in this brave new world of remote and hybrid work.

If you are ready to scale and expand your team, you'll need a supportive community of peers. This is why I'm happy to invite you to join us.

You can find more information about joining CultureBrained™ [here](#).

Looking forward to seeing you there!

*Aga Bajer*  
Culture Strategy

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