

# Culture change case study:

Creating a culture  
to support a community

silva

# Silva Homes

**Silva Homes is a major provider of homes and support to customers living in Berkshire and the surrounding communities. Since 2018 Silva has been on a major journey of transformation and they recognised that the culture and behaviours of the business are key to delivering this change successfully.**

## The challenge: aligning culture to strategy

Silva recognised that people were the key resource for the business. Through their tireless work, the team was already supporting the local community and thousands of families to have a home.

However, when Silva introduced their new strategic plan, it marked a tangible shift in ambition and focus – so it was clear that ways of working and the behaviours that people model would need to shift. The culture needed to be reviewed and refreshed to be more closely aligned with the new strategic priorities.

## The solution: defining and developing a culture that works for Silva

The starting point was to understand Silva's existing culture. This was built by speaking with people throughout the organisation – from those in support services like IT and finance to frontline employees in customer relations and repairs and servicing - using a variety of methods, including Rubica's culture survey, qualitative interview based on appreciative inquiry and short video interviews.

This approach gave a breadth of perspectives on the current culture and, perhaps more importantly, signalled the expectation that everyone in the company would get involved in shifting the culture towards one that would set Silva up for the future.

Insights from these interactions were the foundation for a one-day story builder workshop with the leadership team to co-create a clear narrative for the culture change. This was rooted in the current reality for colleagues, whilst describing 'what could be' at Silva and why that change was critical for the delivery of the strategy and long-term sustainability of the organisation.

### Engaging influencers

To share the rationale and accelerate the change in culture, a group of 'Beacons' were identified - influential people within Silva.

Working together, a Beacon team contract was developed which defined how they would work: to support and sustain the evolution of the culture by role modelling new behaviours; listening to colleagues and encouraging feedback; spotting when things weren't being understood or where there were concerns and exploring ideas on how they could be refined.

### Shaping a culture roadmap

Armed with a strong understanding of both Silva's current culture and the cultural aspiration (the culture that would most support their strategic priorities), a clear, well-evidenced and prioritised outline of beliefs to either address, protect/enhance were established and prioritised.

## Could your culture use a kick-start?

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Working collectively with the leadership team and Beacon Community, we explored what demonstrable behaviours were needed to embed helpful beliefs at a leadership, team and individual level. Then a short list of the most relevant mechanisms was identified to encourage and reinforce those behaviours daily.

Taking the agreed outputs of these discussions, a blueprint (the culture change canvas) was developed and agreed that defined the prioritised beliefs, optimal behaviours, and mechanisms that would help to quickly form the desired culture at Silva.

### Mobilising the canvas

Once Silva's culture change canvas was defined, it was time to apply it. The priority mechanisms identified were:

- A more structured approach to team meetings and 1:1's where the right content is shared so everyone:
  - Understands the strategic direction and the part they play within it.
  - Has an opportunity to discuss, understand and feedback on content shared.
- The introduction of a timelier reward and recognition system that:
  - Regularly shares 'well done' moments - inspiring others and building confidence to do the same.
  - Shares best practice.
- Improved ways of working - providing managers with opportunities to develop their capabilities so they can better support teams and individuals to deliver successful results.
- Empowering the Beacon Community – giving them the authority and autonomy to develop a plan that is aligned to the canvas, encourages an ongoing dialogue and best supports individuals in sharing ideas, opportunities and concerns when it comes to Silva's culture.

### The results: Impressive fast-track culture change

In just 6-months the organisation is already experiencing a notable difference: "It is really noticeable that our culture has shifted. People are actively talking about and are focusing on beliefs and behaviours. This is providing people with evidence that things are going to be different and as a result they want to be part of this organisation moving forward", says Rob Smyth, Executive Director of People, Digital & Change.

The Silva culture change canvas is also helping to inform the way the organisation operates: "We now have a clear sense of the desired behaviours at an individual, team and leadership level. These are playing an integral part in our recruitment and selection process. All recruitment now focuses on behaviours and beliefs – this has created a huge sea change in the types of people that we are getting into the business and the way that we are working" says Rob.

Silva's focus on culture has also inspired the introduction of new initiatives like a graduate programme. This is bringing fresh talent and new ways of thinking into the organisation. It has even seen the creation of a new graduate role dedicated to culture: "One of the newly recruited graduates will be taking on the ideas and outputs from our culture workshops, conversations and other interventions. So, over the next 6-months there will be a whole host of initiatives, projects and programmes introduced that will help to further drive our culture forward" says Rob.

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**“Rubica’s culture change work is fantastic. It blends the framework for asking the right questions with an empirical rigour, but also offers practical tools. Going through Rubica’s various steps and taking that journey has been vital. We couldn’t have done that by ourselves.**

**Everything throughout the business is now framed through our culture and our defined beliefs and behaviours - that is down to the process that Rubica have taken us through. It’s been invaluable and without the support of Rubica, we wouldn’t be where we are today.”**

**Rob Smyth, Executive Director of People, Digital & Change**

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