

## Culture clash

It stands to reason that a company wouldn't want warring subcultures within its walls. **Doesn't it?**

**A**CTUALLY, MICHAEL TUSHMAN thinks that conflicting subcultures can strengthen a company's overall culture. Tushman, a professor at Harvard Business School, is the developer along with David Nadler of the Congruence Model, which 40 years after its creation remains crucial to our understanding of organizational performance.

A key tenet of the model is that culture can amplify or diminish a company's performance. In an interview with the *Brunswick Review*, Tushman argues that there are no "right" or "wrong" cultures, but rather strong and weak ones. Creating a strong culture requires time and resources. If nurtured in alignment with a company's identity and strategy, culture can enhance profits, and make it easier to recruit, retain and develop talent.

"Strong-culture organizations consistently outperform weak-culture organizations, or cultures that are diffused," Tushman says. "In a strong-culture organization, you can employ regular people and they will do extraordinary things. They are on fire, rooted in the culture."

Among Tushman's suggestions is one that some people may find surprising: leaders should not insist on uniformity, but instead develop "ambidexterity" by allowing multiple cultures to grow organically as long as they fit under the company's core guiding principles. "Multiple subcultures that are contrasting with each other" can provide options and increase resiliency, Tushman says.

For more of Tushman's thoughts, visit [www.brunswickgroup.com/review](http://www.brunswickgroup.com/review).

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## The HAPPINESS policy

### The UAE has created a new government post: the Minister of Happiness

**I**N 2016, THE UAE RAISED A FEW eyebrows when it appointed the world's first Minister of State for Happiness. The post went to Her Excellency Ohood bint Khalfan Al Roumi, one of five women appointed to the country's cabinet.

How can any state institutionalize something so elusive? Isn't quality of life better gauged by hard numbers – such as GDP, life expectancy, social support outlays?

Perhaps. Yet there is ample evidence to show that treated separately, happiness is an effective measure of social progress and deserves to be the goal of public policy. The Kingdom of Bhutan has been championing gross national happiness as a measure of progress since the 1970s. At the UN, the World Happiness Report has also been produced annually since 2012, rating nations based on the happiness of their people – Norway topped the list this year, incidentally.

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A happy workforce is better able to focus on delivering success. The UAE is simply applying that theory to a larger group: 9 million people.

Is it working? His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the UAE's Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, admits it is early days. He said the country was at the "beginning of our journey" when the Cabinet endorsed the National Happiness and Positivity Charter last year. Yet progress is evident.

As well as the Happiness Minister, 60 Chief Happiness Officers have been appointed and trained in the "science of happiness" at the US's Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley. They work on "Happiness Councils" in every government department on initiatives to create

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a happier society. Customer service centers have been re-focused as "customer happiness centers," and the Happiness and Positivity Heroes Medal was introduced to reward uncommon efforts to make people happy.

More recently, the Friends of Happiness Platform, a website encouraging public involvement in the National Happiness and Positivity Program, was launched and the Emirates Center for Happiness Research was opened. One of the center's chief jobs is to assess happiness indices, an important topic as the country wrestles with the best way to benchmark success.

A survey in the UN Happiness Report shows that the country is going in the right direction. In 2016, it was the 28th happiest place and this year it had risen seven places to 21st. The authors of that report believe that high GDP, life expectancy, generosity, social support and freedom, and low levels of corruption are the key drivers of a happy society.

Just the sorts of things governments are elected to tackle. Perhaps there is a place for "happiness" after all.

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