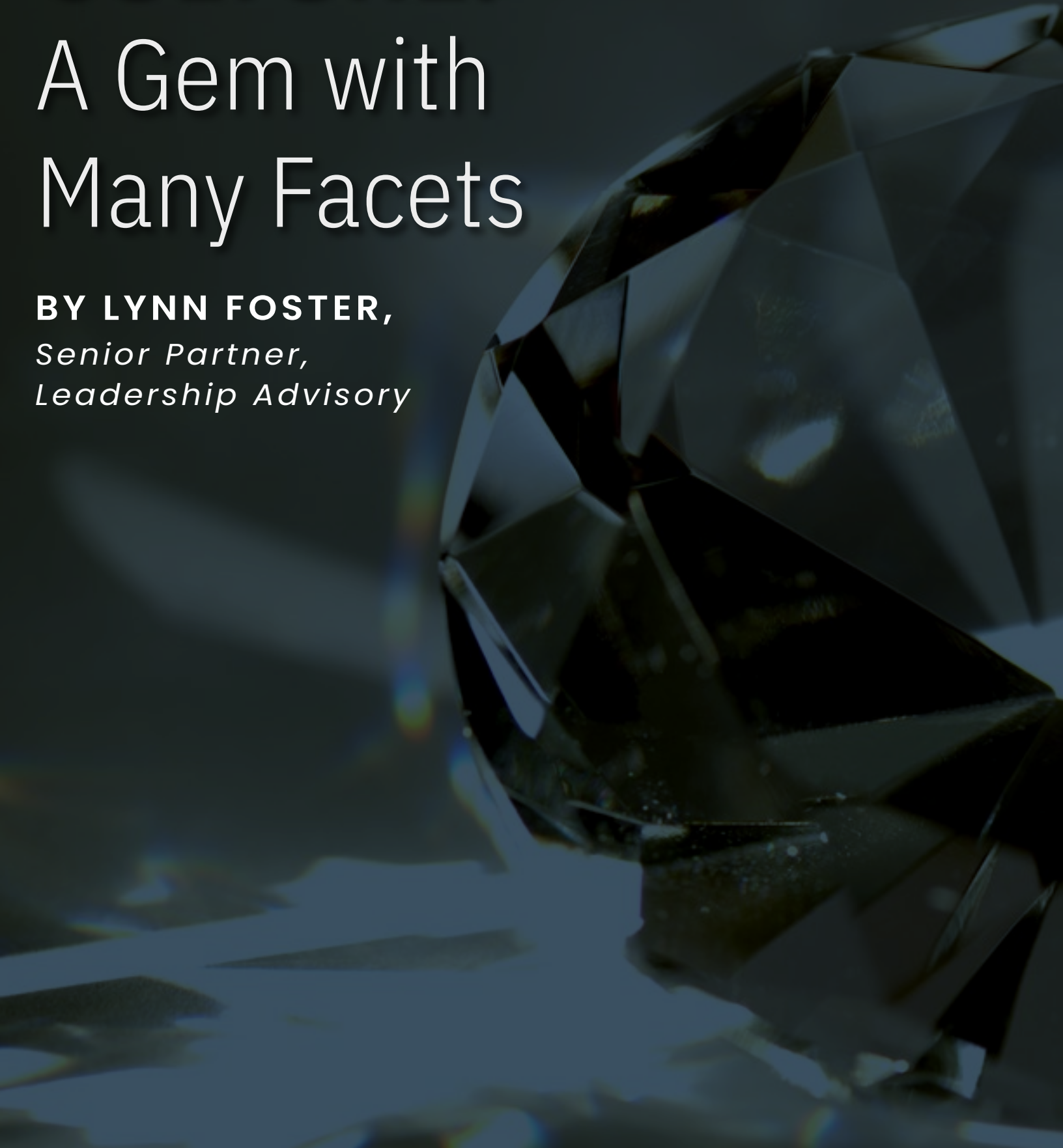


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# **CULTURE:**

## A Gem with Many Facets

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A truly effective culture is precious, but often rare. A strong culture that truly shines can energize and align teams and propel an organization forward. It is a “critical lever” for executing strategy.

Think about culture as an organizational gem with many facets (i.e., each one of something many-sided, a particular aspect or distinct feature of something). That’s the beauty and brilliance of culture. It is not one-dimensional and therefore cannot be managed in a narrow or linear way – and the same goes for people.

What follows are F-A-C-E-T-S to consider in helping culture to truly shine and have positive impact:



## FEEDBACK

- Incorporate informal feedback loops alongside communications to confirm what others actually heard/understood vs. the message you intended. This is key to maintaining alignment and information-sharing. It also infuses an openness from leaders to course-correct along the way if needed.
- Establish recurring feedback through conversations and dialogue, especially from credible, trusted sources.
- Don't rely solely on engagement surveys: They are not sufficient alone to stay connected to culture and they should not be used as a grading report for culture.

## ALIGNMENT

- Strategy and ways of working need to align (and must be re-aligned as your strategy or context changes).
- Include culture as a standing agenda item during leadership and business meetings (including townhalls/CEO updates).



## CHARM

- Take time to get to know and fully appreciate your culture.
- What are the most powerful and productive elements of your culture – what draws people to it? These are unique elements to be cared for and protected.
- Does the culture reflect your organizational values?
- Are there culture elements that refract (i.e., bend or shift) the values? Note: this is where real and potentially significant risk comes into play.
- Do you create space for celebration/ acknowledgment in ways that spotlight or draw productive attention?

## EXPERIMENTATION

- Reframe culture as a way to amplify and generate sentiments of “awe”. This helps to create one of the key conditions needed for continuous improvement, innovation and, ultimately, growth.
- As mentioned earlier, feedback is key and it is also closely connected to the spirit of experimentation. Be sure to acknowledge when people try out new behaviors or related desired elements of the culture. Recognizing their genuine effort/willingness to try sends a strong sign of encouragement from leadership. The goal is impact rather than perfection.
- Look at microcultures that may exist within your organization which could provide useful clues and valuable direction on what could be done elsewhere to achieve or accelerate growth. The same applies in the opposite direction (i.e., clues and direction for what you need to avoid or don’t want to replicate).



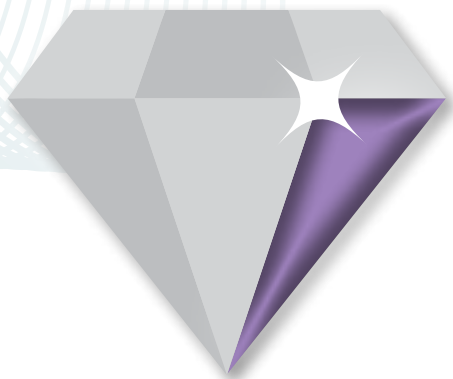


## TEAMS

- No matter where you are on your culture journey (i.e., forming, evolving, radically transforming, or simply sustaining a great culture already in place), all stages require an executive team to care for it.
- Consider this: how recently, and how often, does the executive team have focused discussions on culture to accelerate your strategy?

*Note: This helps determine if/which elements of the current culture to bring forward, leave behind, or repurpose/renew.*

- Treasure your best culture facets; and don't overlook the importance of what brings joy.



## STORYTELLING

- Stories and examples are overwhelmingly powerful in reinforcing your culture. They are the hallmark of what you say about your culture – and what your culture signifies about your organization.
- This becomes especially important in the context of M&As as each organization will have its own culture and, therefore, its own catalog/history of stories. The key is not to erase any respected past. Instead, build the bridge to a new catalog of culture stories and examples. In the absence of new stories and examples, people will understandably cling even more to what they knew, rather than what could be known.

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