



Cultural Transformation - Laying the Foundation for Change

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We see our Healthcare clients investing heavily in strategy, technology, and operating model redesign. Yet many transformation projects remain challenged because the organization is not **preparing to work differently.**

Culture within an organization helps shape decisions, behaviors, and adoption. For leaders of large-scale change efforts in healthcare, cultural transformation is not a soft initiative—it is the **foundation that will sustain improvement and long-term value.**

Many transformation programs focus on *what* must change:

- New technologies
- New care models
- New cost structures
- New governance

We have seen that the most successful transformation efforts focus on **how people will need to behave** once those changes are introduced.

What Cultural Transformation Really Means

Cultural transformation is not about slogans or values statements. It is about **changing everyday behaviors**, especially under pressure.

This often includes:

- How decisions are made and escalated
- How teams collaborate across silos
- How data is used in real time
- How accountability is balanced with autonomy

Culture shows up most clearly when trade-offs are required.

Some Common Pitfalls:

Assuming buy-in equals adoption - Agreement does not guarantee behavior change—especially in high-stress environments.

Treating culture as a communications issue - Messaging matters, but culture is shaped more by leadership behavior than by what is said.

Overlooking middle leadership - Mid-level leaders translate strategy into action. If they are not aligned or supported, transformation efforts routinely stall or fail to reach their full value.

Building Blocks of Sustainable Cultural Change

Leadership Role Modeling - Culture follows leadership behavior. What leaders reinforce—or tolerate—becomes the norm

Clear Behavioral Expectations - Organizations must define how decisions are made, how teams collaborate, and how success is measured

Reinforcement Through Systems - Incentives, performance management, and governance must support the desired behaviors—or old habits will persist

Capability Building - Lasting change requires new skills: leading through ambiguity, using data effectively, and working across functions

The Executive Imperative

Cultural transformation should not be viewed as a parallel workstream—it needs to be embedded as “connective tissue” to help your transformation efforts become permanent.

Organizations that invest in culture:

- Move faster
- Adapt better
- Sustain results longer

Those that don't often find themselves re-launching the same transformation every few years.

Key Takeaway

Transformation lasts only when culture evolves with strategy.

Technology enables change.

Process structures it.

But culture sustains it.

Leaders who intentionally shape culture build organizations capable of continuous improvement—not episodic change.

How Sunstone Helps

At Sunstone, we partner with healthcare executives to ensure transformation efforts **stick**. We help leaders align behaviors, governance, and operating models so change delivers lasting results—not temporary progress. Visit us at www.sunstonemanagementadvisors.com to learn how we help leaders move beyond vision and into execution, delivering results that are measurable, sustainable, and aligned with the realities of today's healthcare landscape

About the Author



Joe Rolewicz is a Founding Partner of Sunstone Management Advisors, a growth advisory firm focused on helping healthcare and insurance companies identify and unlock their full enterprise value. With over 25 years of experience leading complex transformation initiatives for healthcare and insurance businesses, he leads our Transformation Consulting Practice, leveraging experiences gained from over 50 different clients as well as Senior Manager roles with national consulting practices. He is also the former SVP of Planning and Project Management for a national managed behavioral health organization. Joe received his Bachelor's of Business Administration in Finance from James Madison University and a Master's in Business Administration from Loyola University in Maryland. **Questions or comments?** Feel free to contact Joe directly at jrolewicz@sunstonemanagementadvisors.com or connect with him on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/in/josephmrolewicz