New label for each Type of Culture		Former label
ENGAGEMENT >70%	Culture of **Soaring**	**New**
ENGAGEMENT 60% – 70%	Culture of **Succeeding**	Formerly **Success**
ENGAGEMENT 50% – 60%	Culture of **Surging**	Formerly **Ambition**
ENGAGEMENT 40% – 50%	Culture of **Strengthening**	Formerly **Consolidation**
ENGAGEMENT 30% – 40%	Culture of **Striving**	Formerly **Reaction**
ENGAGEMENT 20% – 30%	Culture of **Struggling**	Formerly **Blame**
ENGAGEMENT <20%	Culture of **S.O.S.**	Formerly **Blame+**

BPA's 7S Model of Engagement
From S.O.S to Soaring

Reasons for changing the labels in BPA's Type of Culture Model

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Over time, we noticed that some of BPA's Type of Culture labels had lost their efficacy in communicating key parts of each Type of Culture. For example:

- Too many work units in 'Blame' and 'Blame+' were being blamed for being diagnosed as a Culture of Blame/+. "Blame" is one of the things being experienced in these Types of Culture, but being blamed for it can only make it worse.

- The labels of 'Reaction' and 'Consolidation' did not adequately capture the amount of work (even dynamism) that managers were putting into building stronger cultures.

- The label 'Ambition' had some negative connotations associated with being 'too ambitious'.

- And for some time now, we've been noticing important differences in the higher levels of a Culture of Success – enough differences to end up warranting their own label, a 7th Type of Culture.

Firstly, each of the BPA Types of Culture are multi-faceted with many interconnecting parts that a simple label just can't do justice to.

In developing better labels for these Types of Culture, we decided to focus on the same variable in each Type of Culture – the amount of change momentum that the type of culture has embedded in it.

In essence, as the Type of Culture improves, one feature of this improvement is the increasing level of Change Momentum. Yes, this is only one variable, but it is consistently present to varying degrees across all BPA's Types of Culture.

So, we decided that this was a good anchor for setting the label for each Type of Culture. And because Momentum is a dynamic thing, the labels were cast as action words except for the lowest Type of Culture which has very minimal change momentum.

Culture of **Soaring** (New)

A Culture of Soaring captures the exuberant, 'pumped up' nature of teams, divisions, and even whole organisations, in the higher end of what was formerly known as a Culture of Success.

People in this type of culture feel empowered to do anything they put their mind to but can risk losing touch with other parts of their organisation who don't share this worldview.

For example, it is common to find many executive teams in this type of culture, so the challenge for them is to implement their decisions in a way that brings the rest of the organisation along with them.

At its best, this type of culture is able to engage other work units, even the whole organisation, and bring them along on the journey. There are some helpful lessons to reflect on in these cases.

Firstly, we see that the leaders in this version of the Soaring Culture are surprisingly humble– they don't boast about what they've achieved but are very quick to give credit to those around them.

Secondly, they seem to have a constant mind-set of "self-critique" – what can I do better, what can we do better, rather than, what can you do better. And their attention turns very quickly to even the smallest areas for improvement.

So, if a work unit reaches this type of culture, then the lesson about how to make the most of it is: Be humble, share the credit widely, and practice "self-critique".

Culture of **Succeeding** (Formerly Success)

A Culture of Succeeding (formerly Success) captures a strong sense of achievement, performance, hitting targets, or reaching goals. It is a very desirable type of culture to aim for because of its tremendous impact on organisational outcomes.

The level of energy and momentum in this type of culture can potentially carry with it high levels of stress, and sometimes, high levels of single-mindedness.

High levels of stress can lead to burn-out and other similar forms of psychosocial harm. Paying attention to self-care and individual well-being is a must-have in this type of culture.

High levels of single-mindedness can sometimes trigger the trap of pride/hubris. Being proud of what you do is one thing, but letting hubris creep in can lead to missing the subtle cues that things are changing and therefore what worked well yesterday, might not work as well tomorrow.

Remember the saying about the Rooster - "Today a rooster, tomorrow a feather-duster".

Culture of **Surging** (Formerly Ambition)

A Culture of Surging (formerly Ambition) captures the dynamic nature of this type of culture.

This Type of Culture encourages continuous change and is very responsive to new ideas and new projects.

At its best, it is great fun to work in – always exploring new options, building new capabilities, and opening up new opportunities.

Sometimes, it can become overwhelmed with taking on too many things and too many projects without quite finishing any of them.

This Type of Culture benefits from a disciplined approach to how best to use the limited resources available to it.

Culture of **Strengthening** (Formerly Consolidation)

A Culture of Strengthening (formerly Consolidation) captures the sense of building on past successes, consolidating the hard-won gains already made, but still addressing the large number of areas of potential weakness.

It is very common for organisations or divisions in this type of culture to have quite a wide spread of sub-cultures – some work units in the higher types of culture mixed with other work units in the lower end types of culture.

It is equally common for leaders in these organisations to raise the question about what's working in the high-end work units, and how can it be applied to the lower-end work units.

At its best, this type of culture is going about its business in a very hard-working and diligent manner.

It has learnt the value of addressing problems at their root cause and is starting to learn the importance of capability development as a method of addressing chronic problems.

Well-structured capability development is like a highway bypass – it stops chronic problems from re-occurring because it creates new systems and processes that totally bypass the system that used to create these chronic problems.

Sometimes, this type of culture stalls and starts to slide backways. Perhaps they see the hard work they've done as sufficient to make life bearable again, and they want to ease back on how much effort they are putting into it. But Culture is like driving up a hill – if you take your foot off the accelerator, then you're probably going to roll back down the hill.

Culture of **Striving** (Formerly Reaction)

A Culture of Striving (formerly Reaction) captures the huge amount of effort that is being put into making things better – but not always with the desired result.

A lot of effort is being put into resolving what feels like a continuous river of problems. People often talk about being 'on-the-back-foot' and never really getting on top of things.

The volume of problems, together with the pressure to keep things working, makes it very tempting to keep applying band-aids rather than fixing the root cause of problems.

Yet, it is the use of band-aids (which are only temporary fixes) that means the problems just keep recurring again and again – hence the continuous river of problems. A very vicious cycle indeed!

The path forward out of the Type of Culture is to put in that little bit extra effort (and there is never a convenient time to be doing it) in order to fix problems at their root cause, and over time, to reduce the river of problems to a more manageable flow.

Culture of **Struggling** (Formerly Blame)

A Culture of Struggling (formerly Blame) captures the sense of almost constant struggle, even warfare, with workloads that are too demanding, management that is not supportive enough, resources that are totally inadequate, etc, etc, etc.

I think you get the picture why people in this Type of Culture (who often care enormously about trying to do the right thing, especially for their clients) feel like they are banging their heads against a brick wall.

The fact is - they need help. Increased levels of support are key to this situation and often some type of circuit breaker is required to turn this culture around.

In the short-term, it might be support in helping them to implement sensible solutions to their biggest problems, or it might be support in injecting emergency resources to get things back on track.

But in the longer-term, the key step is to identify and address the root cause(s) that continues to fuel this type of culture's underlying sense of aggrievement. Until this is dealt with, then this Type of Culture will find it very difficult to 'move on'.

Culture of **S.O.S.** (Formerly Blame+)

A Culture of S.O.S. (formerly Blame+) captures the 'cry for help' from the people in this type of culture because they are experiencing their working environment as a situation that is becoming more and more difficult, more and more unbearable.

Apart from its traditional meaning, SOS also stands for "Stalling Or Sliding". In this Type of Culture, there is almost no sense of forward momentum (hence, Stalling), and in many cases, a palpable sense of momentum going backwards (hence, Sliding).

There is often a strong sense of being rudderless, leaderless, misunderstood, overwhelmed, or isolated from the normal flow of the organisation. Sometimes, their manager has tried to do the right thing and keep things running as well as can be expected by 'bunkering' them down – but in doing so, further isolating them from the normal flow of the organisation.

It is relatively common to see 'leadership churn' in this type of culture. Stable, consistent leadership is key to emerging from this type of culture – leadership that is focused on providing stability and direction, as well as developing stronger linkages with the rest of the organisation to combat that sense of isolation.

This is a 'hard gig' for any manager, and they deserve all the emotional and resource support possible to help them get through it.