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*Nothing changes until behaviour changes.* You've built new operations objectives and management systems, but how will you know when these new systems and process improvements had an impact? You won't know until behaviour changes. You've integrity state-of-the-art training protocols, but how will you know the training worked? You won't know until behaviour changes. A company can be dedicated to improving culture, but you don't know culture is improved until behaviour changes.

An organization's culture is simply patterns of behaviour that are repeated over time. Culture is actionable. Culture can be measured and, like all metrics, has behaviours linked to it. Culture is an outcome. It is the product of the most often practiced behaviours in an organization. Think of culture as a constellation of behaviours. Each star represents behaviour, all working together in a particular way to form workplace culture. We shift culture by shifting the behaviours that make up that culture, doing some things more, some things less, and some things just slightly different.

The foundation of this shift in your cultural constellation is understanding *why* your culture is where it's currently at, good and bad, and then how you can take what's working and what's not and start shifting the behaviours of the members of your culture. Nothing changes until behaviour changes. This is where leaders come in. And this is where Applied Behaviour Science comes in.

## The Science behind Culture Change

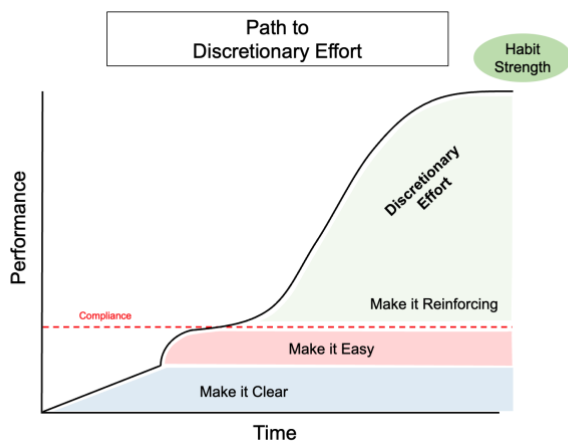
Applied Behaviour Science (ABS) is the science that explains why people do what they do and how to maximize behaviour change. People do what they do, good and bad, because it works for them. It might not work for you as their leader and it might not work for the company, but the behaviour is occurring because it works for the individual. A central focus of leadership is to understand why people are doing what they're doing so that we can ensure we're giving them what they need to encourage the desired behaviours and discourage the undesired behaviours.

**Culture is a constellation of behaviours.**

Decades of research have evolved and improved upon methods to assess performance, get behaviours going, maintain behaviour change, and enhance data-based decision making. Whether it's how to accelerate learning, improve morale, build safe habits, or improve performance deficiencies, ABS offers proven tools that can be used by leaders in any industry to avoid wasted time and resources with trial-and-error and searching for the latest leadership fad. Don't reinvent the wheel – use it!

## Discretionary Effort

Leaders around the world have used ABS principles and tools to maximize performance and improve the morale of individuals and teams. ABS builds teams that choose the safe, ethical, and desired options because they “want to”, not simply because they “have to”, creating habits and sustainable culture change. This



discretionary effort goes above-and-beyond the minimum performance expectations, showing people the value of exceeding at their job duties and supporting their co-workers. Leadership solutions and decisions are not selected based on opinion or subjective accounts, but on objective observations and data. This creates workplace improvements that can be explained and, most importantly, replicated.



Regardless of industry and complexity of a given worksite, every behaviour is a choice made by the individual. Sometimes an individual chooses the safe, ethical, desired behaviour. Sometimes they choose an undesired option that does not align with company expectations. There are always multiple ways to get a given outcome. SCCi chooses to get to valued outcomes by maximizing and supporting the most valuable piece to any organization – the people.

Each behaviour has a competing choice or choices. Each choice, whether it be the desired behaviour or the undesired behaviours competing with the desired option, has things prompting the behaviour to occur and outcomes that determine whether the behaviour will continue. Those factors, that come before behaviour occurs are called antecedents and prompt people to act or behave a certain way. Consequences (or outcomes) follow all behaviours and influence the likelihood of the behaviour being repeated. Frequently repeated behaviours need to be encouraged (i.e., reinforced) over time to form habits. Even if we can't identify what those antecedents and consequences are, they're there. If they weren't there, behaviour would not be occurring. That's the fun of science, it's predictable! The behavioural choice with the strongest antecedents and strongest positive consequences wins.

The **ABC model** (Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequences) describes the interrelationship between antecedents and consequences as behavioural influencers and predictors. Decades of research have shown that, in the absence of consequences, antecedents are weak at sustaining new behaviours and turning desired behaviours into habits. Antecedents are tactical and typically easy to manage, so there tends to be an overreliance on antecedents and a lack of consistent use of consequences to positively shape behaviour. Consequences are perceived differently by each individual performer; they are more difficult to manage AND they have more influence over behaviour. Antecedents will only get behaviour started; without consequences, either those that occur naturally in the environment or by others, the behaviour will cease.

For example, if antecedents were enough to prompt desired behaviours and turn them into habits there would be:

- No need to ever say “thank you” for anything
- No need to ever remind anyone of anything
- No skill building exercises
- No learning aids
- No performance management systems to provide employees with feedback
- No company stewardship, dashboards or tracking systems
- No “points” systems or loyalty rewards for shoppers
- No scoreboards at sporting events, no referees, penalty systems or team celebrations
- No employee recognition systems
- No contingent compensation systems (everyone would receive the same salary)
- No sales incentives
- No stock option plans
- No police force and no prisons

If antecedents were enough to activate and sustain all behaviours, we would simply need to show others what to do once, tell them to do it, and never follow up again.

## Field Coaching for Sustainability

We improve culture by changing the behaviours that make up that culture. These behaviours need to be activated through antecedents, but it's what happens when the behaviour occurs that dictates whether you'll have *sustainable* culture change. People need to see that good things happen when they adhere to company expectations, this is how habits are built. Field Coaching is the mechanism by which leaders use ABS to ensure there is a system of accountability and support in place for their team. Field Coaching supports those leaders responsible for behaviour change, meeting them where they work, addressing barriers and fine tuning the most valuable leadership strategies for maximum impact. Field Coach ensures that the good things happening because of the leader and those impacted by the leader are recognized so that these behaviours continue.

## Leadership: Clear, Easy, & Reinforcing

It is the role of leaders to influence the behaviour of others and strengthen culture by making culture change CLEAR, EASY, and REINFORCING.

### **Make it clear.**

What are the specific behaviours expected of others to form the goal company culture?

### **Make it easy.**

Help make it as easy as possible for others to perform the expected behaviours. Help identify barriers hindering performance, using open-ended questions to determine what's getting in the way so you can offer support.

### **Make it reinforcing.**

Provide positive reinforcement when these behaviours occur, shaping progress by reinforcing incremental progress toward optimal performance.

## About the Authors

**Dr. Nic Weatherly** is the VP of Operations of SCCi. He is an executive, field coach, and Behavioural Science expert with over 15 years of success leading progressive people operations and culture change. Dr. Weatherly's expertise is in maximizing safety and leadership performance by monitoring KPIs, implementing science-based coaching practices, and establishing results-focused objectives and timetables using an individualized, collaborative, and sustainable approach. He has given or contributed to nearly 100 scholarly presentations and workshops worldwide on training, safety, and leadership topics, co-authored the book *Deliberate Coaching*, and has been published in numerous peer-reviewed scientific publications. Dr. Weatherly has a Master's and Ph.D. in behaviour analysis from Western Michigan University and is a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst-Doctoral.



**Stephen Quesnelle** is a Co-founder of Sacred Cow Company inc. He is an accomplished executive, field coach, professional facilitator, published author and keynote speaker with over 30 years of leadership development experience. Stephen specializes in change management and lasting culture change. He has an MBA and a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Ottawa, is a Lean Sigma Green Belt, certified Behaviourist, Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) and is certified in several psychological tools such as Human Factors, Myers Briggs (MBTI), Emotional Intelligence (EQi) and TKI Conflict Modes.



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