



WORKPLACE CULTURE AND ITS IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONAL EFFICIENCY

How do broader external environmental factors along with COVID-19 and ethical dilemmas affect organisational culture and its performance?



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Executive Summary

In light of Covid19, the labour sector has undergone a drastic change and has led both workers and companies to change the approach to work itself and this has strongly influenced the organizational culture, environmental factors and ethics. The final reading of the report will be based on the company I work for, Vinoteca Ltd, a chain of six restaurants in England born from the idea of two people who love wine and everything that revolves around the hospitality sector. The impact of the pandemic has radically changed the way in which both customers and the organization approach services, sales and above all it has given a strong signal on the culture of the company itself. The report will focus on the type of organization and how external factors (Covid19) have completely changed the internal factors present within the organization. Subsequently, a Pestle analysis of the company will be carried out and then Porter's five forces will be applied, and the type of organizational structure present in Vinoteca Ltd will be analysed and compared with other different organizational structures. Furthermore, the corporate culture will be defined with respect to other different types of cultures with the aim of benefiting from it, investigating how workers learn, maintain, and support the internal corporate culture. Finally, the McKinsey OHI model will be applied with the aim of facilitating organisational change and implementing new strategies through an analysis of the cultural web, and this is one of the most crucial steps for a company, especially for those that have a large number of employees, since it is difficult to change the visions and beliefs of the workers, and it is precisely for this reason that managers are constantly evolving in transmitting the future visions and directions of the company trying to involve the team through commitment and benefits. The case studies carried out during the second term to support the thesis will be illustrated in the appendix section.

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Introduction

Upon reopening after the months of lockdown, companies found themselves facing a very different scenario from the one they had left behind. How much has the pandemic influenced the change in corporate culture and how will it still have to change? The main reason for writing this report is based precisely on the cultural change that is taking place in the company I work for, due the opening of new restaurants not only in London but throughout the English territory, and above all due to the entry into the company of the new HR Director who is carefully reinforcing corporate values and creating a new mission and vision in agreement with the CEO.

The company I have chosen to analyse in this report is Vinoteca Ltd, a chain of 5 restaurants in the UK, focused more on the sale of wines from all over the world. The reason why I decided to put Vinoteca Ltd under observation is due to the change that the company itself is facing. Covid-19 has certainly damaged the restaurant sector for more than a year, but on the other hand, any crisis can give rise to a new project, new ideas, and this is exactly what prompted me to adopt a critical vision on the company I have been working for four years.

The work carried out illustrates in the first phase an overview of Vinoteca Ltd containing all the necessary information, followed by the introduction of the tools and techniques such as PESTEL analysis and Porter's Five Forces, which I will use in the following section by analytically applying one of the two to Vinoteca Ltd considering external factors. Furthermore, using my experience within the company, I will demonstrate the current corporate culture present within the management, first underlining the culture creation process, and in the final phase the application of McKinsey's OHI framework which will help the HR Director in the phase of cultural change of the company through new strategies, considering internal factors. As already mentioned, the main reason that drives me to write this report comes from the opportunity that the company has given me, over the years I have accumulated a vast knowledge of the restaurant sector, but upon reaching my degree, my goal is to continue this beautiful experience in the human resources sector, therefore, in this moment of transition and considering the Covid-19 challenge, I believe it is necessary and vital to produce ideas, strategies, plans to facilitate the change of corporate culture.

Vinoteca Ltd Background

In agreement with the UK Global Database, Vinoteca Ltd began operating in the restaurant sector in 2005, the idea was born from the meeting of Charlie Young and Brett Wontoon, both in the sector but with different backgrounds, together they open the first restaurant in Farrington with the aim of give the customer the opportunity to have a wide choice of wines, more than 200 carefully selected wineries, in a friendly and informal environment, inspired by the design of Italian and Spanish bars.

There are currently four restaurants open in London in different areas, and two more are planned to open shortly, including the first regional one as it will be located in Birmingham. As mentioned in a restaurant magazine, the opening of Birmingham is a consequence of the closure of a restaurant located in Soho, due to a license change that took place after years of activity. (globaldatabase, 2021)

To date, Vinoteca Ltd has 157 employees, of which 60% are employed in the managerial part, and the remaining 40% occupy the FOH (front of house) and BOH (back of house), in accordance with the last statement of the financial year. of March 2019, therefore before the advent of Covid-19.

Financials

According to VINOTECA LIMITED latest financial report submitted on 2019-03-31, the company has EBITDA of £363,240.00, Total Liabilities of £3M while the Net Worth of £495,589.00.

	2012-03-31	2013-03-31	2014-03-31	2015-03-31	2016-03-31	2017-03-31	2018-03-31	2019-03-31	8-year trend
EBITDA	57,434.00	114,237.00	151,833.00	180,689.00	246,142.00	237,230.00	307,567.00	363,240.00	
Net Assets	526,240.00	538,774.00	604,582.00	670,536.00	768,526.00	879,073.00	468,441.00	495,589.00	
Total Assets	1,015,749.00	1,290,007.00	1,468,627.00	2,615,584.00	2,669,910.00	2,303,806.00	3,474,748.00	3,226,802.00	
Working Capital	-43,937.00	-62,007.00	-242,218.00	-255,259.00	-454,554.00	-290,639.00	-713,567.00	-335,604.00	
Reporting period	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	
Total Liabilities	489,509.00	751,233.00	864,045.00	1,945,048.00	1,901,384.00	1,424,733.00	3,006,307.00	2,731,213.00	
Consolidated A/cs	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
Employee Numbers	-	-	-	-	131.00	126.00	142.00	157.00	

Despite the growth that took place over the years to come, Charlie and Brett continue to support their employees and are daily involved in all the activities that occur both inside and outside the company, confirming the shared values they have created since the opening of the first restaurant and which we will analyse in the second section of the report, while in the next part a brief introduction of PESTEL Analysis and Porter's Five Forces Model.

(*) **EBITDA**: According with this channel on YouTube, is a formula used to calculate the real net profit of the company, without including taxes and all costs pertaining to maintenance. (Storyteller, 2020)

PESTEL Analysis applied to Vinoteca Ltd

To analyse the macroeconomy we use the PESTEL analysis, its purpose is to analyse the economic aspects of each single region. When deciding to start a business, the use of PESTEL is essential as it helps to calculate the risks and benefits by conducting a market survey. PESTEL derives from the acronym Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal. It is a study that consists in the analysis of these factors, and each time it depends on the market in which you want to open your business. (Business, 2016) Listed here, my personal PESTEL Analysis applied to Vinoteca Ltd:

Politic: European and national regulations on restaurant structures remain unchanged for now, while the expectation of new amendments is increasing as regards the importation of products from other non-European countries, Brexit, as mentioned in an article by The Wine Economist, has brought England to first place as a non-manufacturing country and therefore an importer, with the greatest risk of tax increases and this does not benefit existing and future businesses. (Veseth, 2017) In the meantime, Vinoteca Ltd is not experiencing any kind of gap in the sales service, as the wines are foreign but distributed by English suppliers.

Economic: the consumption of meals away from home is growing slowly, even though Covid-19 has had an enormous impact on the market, despite the fact that the number of restaurants is increasing. The wine market is constantly expanding, especially in Asia, and as noted in this WineSustainable article, the purchase of wine has been successful during the period of restrictions, technology is making great strides, and people can benefit with a simple click, of a virtual wine tasting, and this does nothing but increase company sales. (Halmari, 2020) Furthermore, Vinoteca Ltd provides the public sales service in restaurants, but also has a website where the customer can order food and wine facilitated by discounts based on the subscription they choose.

Socio-cultural: the wine-gastronomic culture in England acquires more and more cultural importance, enhanced especially not from its link with the territory, but the presence of people of different cultures and ethnic groups, in accordance with the Office National Statistics, sales are no longer the same as before, but the data make us hopeful, and as can be seen in the graph, an increase is perceived in the following year, albeit slow, but an increase nonetheless. (Ramuni, 2021)

Technological: a wide choice of different apps that can enhance the consumer experience (labels smart, QR code technology, online booking, hotspot, and promotion) as confirmed by an article in one of the most famous food magazines in the UK. (SIEFKEN, 2020)

Environmental: the restrictions imposed by heads of government around the world have had a huge effect on the tourism and restaurant sector, people no longer travel as before as there are several steps to follow before moving from their country, this has created restaurants a high customer loss, but likewise again technology has helped restaurants implement other sales channels, such as delivery as cited by HospitalityNet. (Nieves, 2020)

Legal: Covid-19 has had an enormous impact on this aspect, since the government, to ensure the safety of citizens, has implemented a list of orders and procedures to be followed before using any type of service, these have helped most not to spread the virus.

Analysis of Hospitality Industry applying Porter's Five Forces model

In this section, an overview of the external factors affecting marketing, and to have a complete analysis I am going to use Porter's five forces model. Forces are meant all external facts that will impact the strategy the company intends to use, and forces include suppliers, customers, and competitors. Despite the impact that the model can have on business strategies, it does not change the fact that all companies are usually dependent on the factors just mentioned. (Jurevicius, 2013) A graph I drew depicts the full list of all factors of the Porter's Five Forces model.



Bargaining power of suppliers: local producers of cured meats, cheeses, vegetables, high quality fruit, also producers of glass bottles, packaging, labels, caps etc. With the increase of the activities of e-commerce, let's assume that Vinoteca Ltd does not need to contact the nearest supplier: there is therefore a wide availability and low conversion costs.

Potential entrants: Already existing restaurants that decide to introduce new services, such as catering open to the public, among their offers. Wine shops and wineries who decide to provide the customer with new gastronomic experiences to combine with the main product (wine). Landowners in the area, who decide to use their lands to produce local denomination wine. Those who already own an agricultural business, but who decide to change the type of good produced (for example: oil producers, farmers who produce fruit and vegetables).

Substitute Products: According to a research done by Food Hygiene Company in London there are 107,973 restaurants, including every type of service offered, and based on the products Vinoteca Ltd offers to customers, all these restaurants could be potential rivals. (foodhygienecompany, 2020)

Bargaining power of buyers: The high number of restaurants open in London mathematically suggests a large number of people living there, and this is a fact that must be taken into consideration since these people could all become potential customers.

Vinoteca Ltd corporate culture

The corporate culture of a restaurant is the model with which we act within the company. Some define it as the set of all employee behaviours when no one observes them. In any case, we are talking about a unique, unrepeatable model, which clearly and effectively identifies a history, values, vocation, objectives, in one word, identity. (Linnenluecke, 2010) The company culture of Vinoteca Ltd is based on 5 key elements:

1. **Vision:** defines the future towards which the entrepreneur aspires in a given period of time, represents the "what". It is almost never important outside the company, it serves internally, it motivates the entrepreneur and employees. The vision of Vinoteca Ltd is based on creating an informal and friendly environment for customers inside the restaurants.
2. **Mission:** what are the steps to be taken day after day to achieve the vision, represents the "how". It is something that changes over time because it adapts to the change of the environment (external and internal). Vinoteca Ltd promotes local producers and is constantly looking for new wines to offer to its customers.
3. **Values:** these are the principles through which the company expresses itself and in which all collaborators must be recognized; it is not enough to write them; it is necessary that all people live daily inspired by these values. This way the people who will be hired later will have a guideline to follow.
4. **Culture deck:** summarizes the company culture in the form of a presentation: it contains vision, mission, values, genetic code (they are a series of phrases or quotes that tell how to act in the company following the values, the mission, and the vision).
5. **Handbook:** explains how to work within a company, furthermore, as can be seen in the appendix section, the OHI has been completed in several sections and here I have a brief discussion on some points. According to McKinsey, the OHI (organizational health index), is nothing more than a questionnaire based on corporate health, to be clearer it is a tool used by both public and private companies and serves to monitor and improve overall organizational performance. (Hoehn, 2020) The survey or questionnaire is based on various aspects and determines the values present within the company, and this brought to the management of Vinoteca Ltd shows that:

Vinoteca Ltd has a mission statement and the people involved in the organization have a clear picture of the purpose of the company itself, furthermore we have an up-to-date leaflet or written information on our services including Covid-19 issue where every single customer is guided step by step both inside the restaurants and online to follow the measures currently present given the pandemic. Other information regarding Vinoteca Ltd's OHI is attached in the appendix section. In relation to the questionnaire just discussed, an overview of the cultural web follows in the next section.

Cultural web within Vinoteca Ltd

It was developed in 1992 by Gerry Johnson and Kevan Scholes and this theory involves analysing the assumptions and practices established in the organization, in order to build an effective strategy that aligns with each element of the model. (businessballs, 2020) This includes the stories, routines, symbols, structures, and processes that guide the organization. In other words, it is about examining the way things are done, breaking bad habits and restoring a business culture that guides productivity. With this strategy, you have to continually ask yourself these questions: What works? What is not working? How can it be improved? The key is to break this analysis down into six key elements:

Stories: Vinoteca Ltd during the induction organized for new hires, tells the story that constitutes the birth of the company, and the most important goals achieved over time.

Habits and routines: Vinoteca Ltd induce employees to follow certain criteria, from personal image to respect for the customer, the rules are not straight but they are still rules to be respected.

Symbols: Vinoteca Ltd employees wear an apron with the brand, for clothing and only required to wear classic shoes and not trainers.

Organization structure: Vinoteca Ltd follows a hierarchical organizational structure, the roles within the company are well defined and each individual employee has their own responsibilities to respect, with the arrival of Covid-19 the HR Director is trying to redesign the company structure by addressing the related skills and responsibilities to the pandemic, to highly trained employees in the sector.

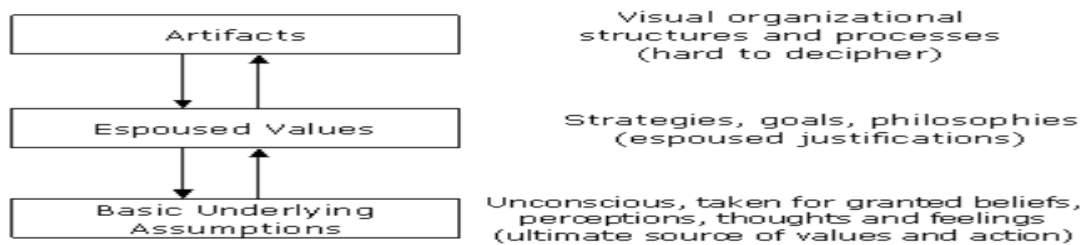
Control Systems: The managers of Vinoteca Ltd are required to create internal competitions in order to establish bonuses on sales, the employee who sells more products is entitled to an economic reward and for this internal control systems are used, where all staff are aware of the results achieved.

Power or command structures: The HR Director of Vinoteca Ltd constantly monitors the performance of employees through consultations with the general managers of the restaurants, through meetings. Furthermore, after three months of work the employee has an interview with the HR Director, where

he is rewarded with a pay increase if his performance within the company is proceeding in the right direction.

Edgar Schein's model of organisational culture applied to Vinoteca Ltd

Three Levels of Culture (Schein)



What does our organization transmit externally and, even earlier, internally? For this analysis, the theory on organizational culture of Edgar Schein, is certainly useful. According to Schein, the model is divided into three levels of which all are related to each other. (Juneja, 2015)

Artifacts: How the company looks like? The furniture, the technology, the use of space. Vinoteca Ltd restaurants follow a design ready to accommodate customers with different needs, from the student who must work on the laptop, to the business customer who must organise a company meeting.

Explicit values: When evaluating a company or other type of organization, there is nothing more immediate than reading the "About Us" page on its website. Vinoteca Ltd in fact, makes use of internal communication channels that allow employees to share ideas and opinions with the management, therefore the creation and internal interaction between employees aims to create that organizational glue called "sense of belonging".

Assumptions: Schein notes that organizational culture is based primarily on a deeper level, known as the unspoken: this level represents all the corporate rules that employees don't need to mention all the time with the aim of influencing the company.

Relationship between Vinoteca Ltd culture and organisational financial and non-financial performance

According to professors Edward Deci and Richard Ryan of the University of Rochester, there are six main reasons that push people to work, this theory was written in 1980 and adapting it to the present times we find that the six main reasons are: game, intention, potential, emotional pressure, economic pressure, inertia. (McGregor, 2015) Play, intention and potential contribute to improving and increasing the performance of employees in the company, while the last three can damage these same performances. The best solution for companies is to increase the good reasons to work while reducing the bad ones. A high-performance organizational culture therefore maximizes the reasons for play,

intent and potential and minimizes those inherent in emotional pressure, economic pressure, and inertia. The organizational culture of Vinoteca Ltd is also based on all six of these reasons and presents itself with a hierarchical structure, where the corporate roles are well defined, and the responsibilities well addressed.

A good organizational culture helps to improve the satisfaction of the final customer, aspires to greater employee motivation and therefore to an increase in sales and therefore in company revenues, and according to the research carried out for the realization of this report this can be considered the highest ratio between the culture of Vinoteca Ltd and financial and non-financial performance.

Example illustration

An example to take into consideration is the theme of territorial protection, corporate social responsibility, and sustainable development, are of great importance for many companies that consider them part of their culture. Pursuing sustainable business models also strengthens the corporate image in the eyes of new employees in the recruiting phase and generates greater involvement, and this will improve corporate performance both financially and not as the team is more productive when it is involved.

What is an Ethical Dilemma?

The ethical dilemma is based solely and exclusively on issues pertaining to the ethics that connotes the professional activity of a worker towards the client, manager, or company. (Mann, 2019) Ethical dilemmas must be characterized by precise indications but must not express what is right or what is wrong within the company. In other words, the ethical dilemma is not solved as a problem, also because it is not, and therefore there is no kind of solution to solve it. Furthermore, when an ethical dilemma is created, there is no manager who must explain to the employee how to behave in that situation, this would involve the violation of the intentions of the worker, and therefore would create a gap between the choices of the worker and the will of the company. The individual should develop genuine reasoning by trying not to rely on the consequences of the decision made but should be based on the motivation for making the most appropriate decision. The following approaches have been deduced to solve an ethical dilemma:

Vinoteca Ltd Ethical dilemmas

The food industry is today more dynamic than ever and inclined to dialogue. Those who buy not only aim to satisfy a primary need, but want to enrich themselves, through the product, with added values, whether they are of an identity, inspirational or social nature. I always repeat to myself how necessary it is now to move towards an idea of food - made well - and - capable of doing well. From my point of

view, this means talking about good products in a broad sense, both inside and out; it means enhancing the rediscovery of lost flavours, in the light of short production chains that are increasingly attentive and respectful of the environment and its workers. Sustainability, understood at 360 °, must in fact be the guiding pillar at the base of our strategic choices. Vinoteca Ltd's mission is to use products selected by local producers who take environmental factors into consideration, reducing the use of plastic, avoiding wineries that use pesticides, but this is written in the mission, but the customer does not know it, there are no notices posted in restaurants, and this is the only dilemma present in the ethics of culture of Vinoteca Ltd.

Another example of an ethical dilemma within Vinoteca Ltd concerns food for the staff, each member of the company is entitled to two meals during his time in the workplace, the first is breakfast, and the second is lunch. Considering the raw materials chosen by the company, there shouldn't be any concerns about the quality of the product, but unfortunately 60% of employees are forced to bring their own food, or as an alternative they must spend their money by buying a meal that allows them to face a hard day at work. The problem in question derives from a mistreatment of food cooked for the staff, this goes against the corporate culture creating a dilemma that could be solved with constant meetings with the kitchen staff, inducing them to treat the food so that the staff remains satisfied and not angry.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, analysing the ethical dilemmas present within Vinoteca Ltd, I consider the idea of suggesting to the human resources department to take these concerns seriously, as over time there could be a controversial action against the company by employees. , and this factor can lead the company to collect bad publicity in the event that these dilemmas are brought to the centre of attention also towards the customer. Therefore, structuring and scheduling more meetings with staff may perhaps help the company staff to overcome some obstacles and make company values even stronger and more important.

Individual Reflections

In this term I studied a subject that is for me one of the most crucial as regards my future career within Vinoteca Ltd, starting from the first lesson the teacher established a group interaction with us students, making us live real situations that they can happen within a company, and they can weaken or strengthen the values that make up the corporate culture. Taking into consideration the hierarchical structure of Vinoteca Ltd, there is a clear vision of the pre-established roles and the people to take into account for each single problem that arose during a simple working day, given my knowledge learned during my long career in the catering sector I have reinforced the idea of corporate culture

through models and theories that are truly vital for the achievement of results and satisfactions to the whole of a company that, despite ethical dilemmas, pandemic crisis and other types of vicissitudes, continues to expand and confirm the values shared with employees and also customers. With the learning of the meaning of corporate culture, to date I can confirm that in my future career in the human resources department, I would try to keep every detail under control, starting with the unspoken words, they are a lethal weapon for a possible corporate disaster, as employees could accumulate resentment and anger towards the company, and this would worry the expansion and enlargement of the company business. So, taking into consideration the learning of the company culture, and doing a personal SWOT analysis on my decision making skills, I would organize through an internal communication program, discussions and recommendations that every single employee would like to share with the management of the company, this would lead to the employee a sort of understanding on the part of the company, since many times it happens to work in environments where it is forbidden to share one's ideas, one's thoughts, as there is the risk of being fired. I believe that communication is the basis of any type of activity required for carrying out new strategies and development plans.

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Appendices

Organisational Health Check

1. Stating our purpose	No	Nearly	Yes
1.1 We have a mission statement	☐	☐	☒
1.2 Our (current) aims (still) comply with our constitution	☐	☐	☒
1.3 We ensure that all the people working in our organisation understand its purpose at an appropriate level (staff and volunteers)	☐	☐	☒
Notes:			

2. Information on services and promotion of work	No	Nearly	Yes
2.1 We have an up-to-date leaflet or written information on our services including Covid-19 issue	☐	☐	☒
2.2 We have a website or webpage with up-to-date information	☐	☐	☒
2.3 We make information available to users with special needs, on request	☐	☐	☒
2.4 We produce an annual report	☐	☐	☒
2.5 We keep our stakeholders (<u>e.g.</u> funders and potential funders, key organisations and groups) informed about our work such as sending them our annual report or invite to AGM	☐	☐	☒
2.6 We make use of the media to promote our work (press releases, radio etc.)	☐	☒	☐

3. Administration and paperwork	No	Nearly	Yes
3.1 We have a clear administrative system in place	☐	☐	☒
3.2 All our procedures are documented (so that staff and volunteers know what to do in case of absences or sudden staff changes)	☐	☐	☒
Notes:			

4. Finances	No	Nearly	Yes
4.1 We have written financial procedures (for banking, petty cash, cheques etc.)	☐	☐	☒
4.2 We produce quarterly reports (at least) on accounts	☐	☐	☒

4.3 Accounts and financial reports are presented to our Management Committee for review and planning (at least quarterly)	☐	☐	☒
4.4 We have a fundraising strategy which seeks funding from a variety of sources	☐	☒	☐
4.5 We know what level of reserves we need and what we can spend them on	☐	☐	☒
4.6 We have this amount set aside	☐	☐	☒

5. Internal Communication	No	Nearly	Yes
5.1 We hold regular staff meetings (as appropriate)	☐	☐	☒
5.2 Volunteers are invited to or represented at staff meetings	☒	☐	☐
5.3 The minutes of staff or management meetings are available to all staff and volunteers	☐	☒	☐
5.4 We communicate project updates internally on a regular basis	☐	☐	☒
5.5 We hold an annual 'away-day' for teambuilding and/or planning for trustees, <u>staff</u> and volunteers	☐	☐	☒

