

Openness and Decentralized Decision-Making Are Common Globally

Allen Smith, J.D.

Company culture is essential to a thriving multinational's business. However, many different types of workplace cultures exist around the world. In fact, SHRM's 2026 Global Workplace Culture Report identifies eight distinct culture types.

Eight Types of Workplace Culture

"Growth Collaborator is the most common workplace culture type, but all eight types are represented globally, across countries, industries, and organization sizes," the report said. "This diversity shows that culture is largely organization-specific, reflecting the unique ways that organizations structure work, make decisions, and shape relationships, rather than being determined by geography, industry, or size alone."

Digital Tool: SHRM Employee Handbook Builder

Growth Collaborator cultures scored highest on open and collectivistic, followed by long-term growth mindset with flexibility and adaptability, the report found.

"Openness is prioritized with candid [feedback](#) and [emotional intelligence](#) fostering trust and collaboration," the report noted. "Leaders focus on long-term impact and purpose while navigating change with [resilience](#) and calculated risk-taking. Decision-making is decentralized, empowering teams and individuals to act with autonomy."

Openness is common across the globe, stated Anna de Guzman, SHRM senior researcher, and Ragan Decker, Ph.D., manager of EN/ES Research at SHRM. Three of the four most common culture types can be considered to be open and collectivistic within their interactions and relationships: Growth Collaborator, Strategic Architect, and Tactical Architect, they added. Steady Collaborator cultures are also strong in open and collectivistic interactions and relationships. These four cultures combined represent 75% of the sample, which is somewhat due to the popularity of Growth Collaborator cultures.

Of the 27,159 workers surveyed across 25 countries between July 28 and Aug. 26, 2025, 37.2% were in Growth Collaborator organizations. The next most common global culture type was Strategic Architect at 16.8%, followed by Tactical Architect and Disciplined Achiever at 11.1% each. Other less prevalent culture types were Steady Collaborator (9.7%), Efficient Achiever (6.2%), Ambitious Maverick (4.5%), and Resolute Maverick (3.3%).

Importance of Workplace Culture

For a global company, "nothing is more important than to have a common culture," which can sustain the organization through crises, said Bill George, an executive fellow at Harvard Business School. George previously served as chair and CEO of Medtronic, a global medical technology company.

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Companies can make strategic changes and adapt, but they shouldn't drift away from their cultures, he said.

"The purpose and values have to be common," though a company should adapt to cultural norms of local sites, he noted. How workers dress and cultural traditions will vary by nation, George added. "Adaptability is critical to be successful in each of a company's markets."

Multinationals should understand national cultures, agreed Donald Dowling Jr., an attorney with Littler in New York City. "A company launching new offices in, say Rome and Sao Paulo, obviously should account for realities of Italian and Brazilian culture," Dowling said. "It's harder for a multinational to understand what is unique in its own corporate culture — how its own particular institutional quirks will play to new hires and stakeholders in overseas markets."

Openness can be advantageous, according to George. "I'm a great believer in sharing problems." He said he wouldn't fire a worker for making a mistake but would fire them for covering it up.

Report Recommendations

The 2026 Global Workplace Culture report provides a new way of understanding workplace culture. The report views culture as intentional and ever-changing, rather than simply labeling it as good or bad. Another key element is that the report suggests organizations should choose a culture that drives the specific outcomes they are looking to achieve.

George said that culture needs to have longevity. It adapts, but if a company drifts away from its workplace culture, rather than the planned adoption of a new culture, it loses strengths that allow the company to be unique and to sustain success, he cautioned.

The report recommends that companies take the following steps to cultivate a culture that aligns with organizational strategy, goals, and workforce dynamics:

- **Design** culture as a strategic asset.
- **Leverage** culture type insights to drive strategic differentiation.
- **Redesign** work systems around human-centric performance.
- **Optimize** culture to evolve with business needs and workforce dynamics.

"Culture is not static but a nuanced and evolving aspect of organizational life," the report stated.

"Leaders and HR professionals are encouraged to take a data-driven approach to understanding their unique cultural identity, leveraging its strengths while addressing areas for growth."

The report's findings emphasize the value of intentionally shaping culture to align with strategic goals, business objectives, and workforce dynamics, de Guzman and Decker stated.