The Empowered Cultivator Program
Design Brief

Problem Statement

Cultivate wants to provide a program with free, entry-level instructional content and tools anyone can use to begin building their practice as an **empowered cultivator.** Currently, there is little to no free instructional material available to everyday practitioners in large organizations who want to feel more empowered and capable of instigating positive change in their organizations, and this program can meet that need.

The design of this program should be self-paced to meet the diverse learning preferences of different audience types and accommodate the desire for rapid design/development and delivery that won't require substantial staff time to facilitate on an ongoing basis. Since short correspondence-style courses are currently popular in the context of L&D, Cultivate would like to experiment with this format in order to assess the desirability of this type of self-paced, short-form instructional modality and its effectiveness for instilling the mindsets & skillsets empowered cultivators need to be successful. Participants in the program should also be given access to the Cultivators Community and strongly encouraged to join & participate in the conversation with their fellow participants throughout the course as a social learning component.

The underlying research, principles, models, and concepts included in the design will also serve as a foundation for developing other Cultivate products, including planned programs related to community building and empowering leadership. Specific tools/ resources designed for inclusion in the program may also be packaged and shared as independent artifacts per Cultivate's content marketing plan.

Milestones

- Learning Design & Development: Sept 25 – Nov 13, 2020
- Visual/Email Design & Development: Nov 13 – Nov 27, 2020
- Available for Participant Registration: Dec 11, 2020
- Program Delivery Begins: Jan 11, 2020

Audience

This program will target employees in large organizations at any level who want to instigate change but are lacking the formal authority/power they may feel they need in order to implement that change. These individuals require the mindsets and skillsets to be confident in themselves/their ideas, understand & exercise their power for collective benefit, influence others to support their cause, and take calculated risks to push the boundaries of the status quo in their organization.

Empowered Cultivators

What makes an empowered cultivator in the context of this program?

- They have an unyielding *commitment to change*.
- They have *strong values* that lead them to *pursue changes that benefit others/their communities*, not just themselves.
- They gain a *civic reputation*; they are seen as someone who lives their values in their work and as someone who cares about their community members/colleagues and their organization as a whole.
- They *lead-by-doing*, no matter what level of formal authority they may or may not have.
- They *exercise intentional leadership* through mentorship, sharing their skills/knowledge with others, building relationships, and community involvement.

- They have *autonomy*/control over how they spend their time and how they approach achieving specific goals/deliverables/outcomes in their work.
- They are *effective and influential communicators*.
- They *speak up often* to share their opinions, insights, and ideas with colleagues and leaders at all levels of the organization.
- They are willing and able to *ask hard questions, share dissenting opinions, and provide critical/constructive feedback to anyone*, even those in senior positions.
- They know how to *elicit honest feedback from others*, and pursue that feedback consistently as a tool for continual learning.
- They are *genuine* in their interactions with others, and show up as their authentic selves.
- They adopt a *mindset that changing things for the better is everyone's job*, not just the job of those with a specific title or level in the org.
- They are *invested in their organization's mission/vision* and able to make intentional contributions to that mission/vision.
- They are *engaged and excited* to come to work.
- They have *access to organizational knowledge*; and they *share knowledge with others* to navigate their org's dynamics and move ideas/changes forward more effectively.
- They *continuously cultivate self-awareness* of their strengths, opportunities, and impact on others.
- They are *aware of their own power and privilege*, and they *use their power to empower others*.
- They *do not think of power as a zero-sum game*, but as a force for systemic change when exercised intentionally and collectively.
- They *understand the inherent value of diversity & inclusion*, and *embed participatory, inclusive strategies throughout their work*.

Barriers

What are some common barriers to empowerment?

- Lack of empowered role models, especially role models they can easily relate to.
- Isolation: minimal exposure/connection to others who may have similar values or ideas about improving their organization.
- Culture makes it dangerous to fail, and thus, dangerous to experiment with new approaches/strategies/ideas.
- Organizational roles are rigid and immovable, as is the leadership hierarchy.
- No support for developing the mindsets necessary to see themselves as innovative, creative, or empowered.
- Siloes are isolated from one another and territories are strictly policed.
- Little to no opportunity for cross-functional knowledge-sharing or collaboration.

Instructional Modalities

- Format: Self-paced, email-based correspondence course; Text and image-based content with links to additional resources.
- Length: One email per day for 7-10 days; Absorbing the content and completing associated tasks should take no more than 30 minutes (total) per day.
- Additional Details: Include various tasks or "assignments" with each day of content. Encourage participants to complete and/or share assignments via the Cultivators community. Course content should be supplemented with models, examples, and tools whenever possible.

Learning Objectives for Participants

By the end of the course, you (the participant) will be able to…

- **Learn the basics:** Walk away with a clear understanding of the qualities, behaviors, and mindsets empowered cultivators leverage to instigate positive change in their organizations. Identify the benefits of shared/collective power and models for fostering positive culture change in complex systems.
- **Know thyself:** Assess the current state of your individual empowerment and the collective empowerment of your existing networks/communities. Evaluate your individual attitudes toward change, autonomy, and action.
- **Identify opportunities:** Practice applying strategies that leverage curiosity, analysis, and critical thinking to identify viable opportunities for improving your organization.
- **Create a vision statement:** Articulate a vision for how your organization's culture might foster greater empowerment for its employees, and the benefits of that change for all key stakeholders.
- **Lead by doing:** Try out new tactics for empowering yourself & others through collaborative leadership & values-driven action.

Deliverables

Course Content
Content to be delivered via 7-14 emails (one per day).

- 3.5-5 hours of self-paced, text & image-based content.
- Learning activities/assignments to be completed individually and/or within the Cultivators Community.
- Concrete resources that support the learning objectives (e.g. models, templates, tools).

Feedback Survey & Data Collection Recommendations
- A mechanism for collecting feedback about participants' experience, e.g. NPS score
- Recommendations for collecting additional insights about participant outcomes via email analytics, engagement in the cultivators community, responses to assignments/tasks, etc.
- Pre- post-assessment?

Registration & Emails
- Registration page on Cultivate website.
- Email templates/layout designs for course content.
- Email analytics & reporting capabilities.
- Automation (to automatically send emails to registrants per a specified schedule).

Community Channel
- A dedicated channel for participants within the Cultivators community.
- A direct link to the channel to be included in course content/marketing.