

Executive Master Thesis

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**INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM SHIFTS, INTENDED AND
UNINTENDED OUTCOMES: A CASE STUDY OF A CONSULTING
INTERVENTION INCORPORATING THE CLINICAL PARADIGM IN A
SOUTH AFRICAN BANKING ORGANISATION**

ABSTRACT

There is increasing focus on changing organisational culture in order to help organisations strategically differentiate themselves and create more authentic work environments. When looking at culture change there is a view that organisations don't transform and that organisational transformation or culture change process is based on individual change processes. However changing individuals is not easy. Embedding lasting change must address unconscious psychic dynamics both within individuals and teams; often rational approaches alone are insufficient in producing fundamental shifts.

This research presents a case study of a large South African banking organisation employing 28 000 employees, that in a time of turnaround and crisis, chose to differentiate themselves by positioning their culture as a strategic competitive advantage. To support this they designed and implemented a large-scale corporate culture intervention which sought to address rational and emotional aspects of individual and team behavior and deal with the deeper underlying unconscious behaviours that inhibit change in individuals and teams. The intervention approach chosen incorporated the thinking and perspectives of a clinical approach. It was led by the leaders in the bank and over an 8 year period it reached the top 8000 leaders, primarily in intact team formats.

The case study analyses data from the top executives and the most senior 10 teams in the bank and examines how the clinical paradigm can be applied to large-scale culture transformation processes in order to support deeper levels of change. It explores how a leader - led culture change processes incorporated both aspects of a rational and emotional change. The research focuses on some of the distinctive conditions that may warrant incorporating a clinical approach to large-scale culture change. It examines intended and unintended outcomes, shifts in individual and team behaviour and what components of the clinical intervention contributed to the shifts. As a secondary focus, it discusses the key difficulties or resistances to this approach.

This case study suggests that a psychoanalytically informed clinical approach can be used on a large scale at a senior level in today's organisations in order to enhance the individual and team awareness and functioning, and in so doing indirectly impact on organisational wellness and health. The research demonstrates how the clinical approach, when practically applied, contributes to both intended and unintended outcomes in individual and team change processes. The research confirms the importance of integrating both rational and emotional change processes as part of an overall cultural transformation journey. The results also illustrate how some of the key components of the clinical paradigm contributed to the shifts.

Key words: organisational case study, clinical approach, group coaching, culture change intervention, intended and unintended outcomes, organisational change processes, individual change process, psychoanalytically informed organisational intervention.