

THE AI CONSULTANT: EMERGING INSIGHTS ON CULTURE CHANGE

Andy Lyon | Partner | Lyon & Associates

I've been using AI in my consulting work for a couple of years—initially for the basics: writing support, transcription, and summarising data. But something shifted when I took it further. I built a bespoke GPT model trained on the best thinking in leadership and organisational culture. I call it The Culture Guru. Tongue-in-cheek, yes—but when I ask it, “What would a world-class culture thinker say about this?”, I often get sharp, provocative responses. I don't always agree—but I always learn.

Here's what this work is revealing:

AI surfaces the unspoken

Ask AI to analyse culture, and it doesn't just echo what's said—it picks up tone, structure, and language patterns. It reveals assumptions people live by but rarely name. One exec put it well: “It's like holding up a mirror and realising how much of our culture is implied, not said.” That's where insight begins.

AI highlights the gaps between words and actions

Feed it policies, values, leadership comms—and AI often shows where the story breaks down. We say we value openness but avoid tension. We talk autonomy but layer in control. AI doesn't judge. It notices. And what it notices are the subtle inconsistencies people feel but don't say. These are often where trust falters and alignment drifts.

AI is now a cultural actor

AI isn't neutral. When it's working with me, it takes on aspects of how I think—my tone, values, and assumptions—and reflects them back. And in turn, I'm influenced by how it responds. This creates a subtle but important loop: we shape AI, and AI shapes our framing, choices, and narratives.

In this way, AI becomes part of the cultural system. It highlights certain things, downplays others, and subtly reinforces what's seen as important or acceptable. The real question is: What kind of culture is the AI learning from—and what is it reinforcing in return? If we're not paying attention to that, we risk hardwiring in the very patterns we're trying to shift.

So what's the lesson?

AI won't fix your culture. But it will reflect it—clearly, quickly, and often more objectively than we might be comfortable with. Used well, AI doesn't replace human sense-making—it strengthens it. It helps spot patterns, challenge drift, and hold up a mirror to how things really work. But make no mistake: AI is now in the game. It's not just observing culture—it's shaping it. How we prompt it, train it, and use it matters. The question isn't whether AI is influencing your culture—it's whether you're using that influence consciously.