

We have entered into the 'Experience Economy' era.

Whether employees and customers want to work with us, or buy from us, depends, to a large extent, on what experience they have in their contact with us.

It is also increasingly recognised, in the world of **VUCA**, that organisations that develop from a **knowledge-based** approach, by focussing on the **mindset** of the people who make up the organisation, will do better. This approach shows how important it is to invest in culture and work, to create an environment that stimulates development and enables people and businesses to realise their potential.

Get to know us better and see what path we have chosen over the last few years to build our competitive advantage, how we build the experience of our employees and customers in their contact with us and what discoveries we have made along the way.

### Who are we?

- We are a company that comprehensively supports customers in the development of their business, regarding IT.
- Since we work for different clients, from different industries, in different methodologies and technologies, tailored to various projects and in different models of co-operation, we are able to respond, nimbly, to changing business needs.



Fig. About Isolution

We are betting not only on **diversity**, but also for **personal and professional development**.

Therefore, at the heart of our strategy lies the division of the company into:

- core services (Isolution Core), where we support our customers
- and development activities, where we develop in the areas of R&D (Isolution R & D) and creating products based on our original ideas (Start-up Processor).



Fig.: Isolution Strategy

We start from the assumption that we would not be able to develop and change if it were not for our employees. They are our strength, and it is thanks to them, that we have maintained a presence on the IT market for almost **20 years**.

Without the involvement of our employees, we would not have been able to implement our strategy. Knowing this, we **have been developing and investing in our organisational culture** for years; all that is left for us to do now, is grow and constantly reach for more.



We do not have a mission and a vision, because we have observed that few people understand what the difference is, and hence the practical value for all of us.

We were more impressed by Simon Sinek's concept of the "**Golden Circle**", which we have adopted for our needs.

- The essence of **why we do what we do** is that we start from the centre. We want to create a working environment that supports our need for development and gives us the opportunity to realize our potential.
- How do we do that? By investing in the organisational culture and the way we work.
- What do we do? We create software and, more recently, we also create products



### Fig.: Golden Circle by Isolution



### WHY?

At the heart of our DNA is growth and the belief **that**, as we grow, we are able to deliver ever more value to our customers, so they grow as well.

Satisfied customers entrust us with new projects and often establish long-term relationships with us, which in turn increases our revenue, thanks to which we can also develop our business.

This conviction and our human-centred approach, as well as the **partnership between us**, as a company and our employees and customers, are reflected in our logo.



Fig.: Isolution's Logo

The central element of our culture is the human being in each of us. We want everyone who is in a relationship with us to grow and become a better version of themselves every day, not only in the context of work, but also in personal life. For this reason, we are involved in such projects as Management 3.0 Series 'meet-ups'.

Openness to diversity is also a consequence of our people-centric approach. Our team consists of very different people, with different interests and competencies, each one performing different roles within the organisation. What we have in common is the direction we are travelling in.



Fig.: Different people, different roles, same goal

What we still have in common is values.

• We like to get involved in what we do because we work with passion. What does this mean in practice? In our case, in a nutshell, it is about curiosity, that is, constantly asking questions, understanding a given role within the company, or a team, or a project, as also, understanding our approach to work, our goal orientation and our proactivity.



Fig.: Commitment according to Isolution

• We take a responsible approach to our work. In practice, this means that we take care of communicating our needs, proactively creating the right conditions for effective work, passing feedback on to other team members and making bold decisions, all of which enables us to do this work.



Fig.: Responsibility according to Isolution

• We focus on co-operation, in order to build relationships both with customers and other team members, through the exchange of knowledge, support, taking care of the working atmosphere and trust.



Fig. Co-operation according to Isolution

• We build relationships and trust, which in practice means teamwork, mindfulness of the needs of others, belief in good intentions and openness to feedback.



Fig.: Trust according to Isolution

In Sinek's model, the essence of the matter is to answer the question: **why do we do what we do**? This sense is often very universal. Many companies want to change the world for the better, develop in a sustainable way and take care of the environment.

The main differences will arise as to '*how*', i.e.: **how do we want to achieve this goal**? In our case, it is an investment in the organisational culture and the way we work.



### HOW?

At the heart of our culture are:

- Autonomy
- Mastery
- Purpose

That is, the three main motivators according to Daniel Pink, which make us just want to get involved in what we do.



Fig.: Motivation according to Daniel Pink

### How do we inculcate a sense of autonomy in our people?

Fig.: Autonomy according to Isolution

 We trust each other. Together, we set goals and give ourselves the space to choose the path to achieve them. Thanks to the Delegation Table, we know the extent to which we can make our own decisions. For more information on the Delegation Table, follow these links: <u>https://bit.ly/3jLbqy3</u> <u>https://bit.ly/2GFRhT1</u> <u>https://bit.ly/3jKfmGp</u>



Fig.: Delegation Table - levels of delegation.

• We have transparent promotions and salary ranges. We do not wait a year to promote an employee or to give him/her a pay-rise. A leader, a team-mate or someone else equally involved, can submit a person for promotion any time and then jointly determine whether something else is worth doing, in order to get the promotion. A transparent salary ranges allows us to actively influence our salary level.







Fig.: Communication of promotions on a virtual company information board



# TRANSPARENT SALARY RANGES

### Fig.: Transparent remuneration scale

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Fig.: Communication of the salary scale on a virtual company information board in the TeamToolbox application.

### • We have several development options.

- We communicate information transparently about all projects implemented in the company. Anyone, at any time, may declare a wish to participate in one of them. (Project Forum).
- As part of the corporate business accelerator, we can report and, after a positive review, develop our product idea (**Start-up Processor**).
- With a view to future projects, we can expand our expertise, for example, in the field of AI (**R&D**).
- We can also decide, for ourselves, what we will allocate our training budget to and decide on an additional days off (training and development system) for this purpose.

HOW



Fig.: Project Forum - agile project change in response to engineers' needs in the field of development

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Fig.: Communication of new projects within the framework of Project Forms on a virtual company information board

- We choose our benefits ourselves:
  - As part of the **Cafeteria System** we can use medical care and the MultiSport card and insurance; we can also buy air tickets for holidays for the amount collected.
  - As part of our proprietary **Initiative Market** system, we can freely create benefits or CSR action and allocate funds to any initiative found in the Market.



Graphics: Initiative Market in the TeamToolbox application.

### How do we inculcate a sense of development in our people?

We understand development in several dimensions:

- Awareness of their own key competences (strengths). This shows our potential at any given moment.
- Interests that will show the perspective of our future development.
- **Matching projects to current competencies**, taking into account developing interests, in order to give space for future development in the area of interest.
- We develop **employees' interpersonal skills; this results in better relationships** and outcomes, both professional and personal.



Fig. Competence vs. interest v. project. We use potential when we can develop both competences and interests in the current project.

To develop both competencies and interests, we have several solutions.



Fig. Tools that satisfy the need for mastery, that is, substantive development.

We are building a Matrix of Competencies. As a company, we are aware of the precise nature of our strengths and interests, both of which show us the possible direction of the company's development, which will be supported by internal motivation for the development of our community. You can read more about the Competence Matrix here: <a href="https://bit.ly/3luSAmE">https://bit.ly/3luSAmE</a>

#### isolution culture

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### **SKILLS MATRIX**

Fig.: Competence vs. knowledge vs. interest

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Fig.: An example of the Competence Matrix in one of the teams

• We are developing a system of training and development, thanks to grassroots initiatives. Our employees propose training courses that are worth taking part in; they also organise themselves, in order to gain competence in a particular field. We all have at our disposal a budget of the same amount, which we can spend freely to apply for various certificates.

HOW

- We organise internal workshops and meetings where we share knowledge, project experience and discuss new trends.
- **We support mentoring.** We support the process of finding mentors for people looking for this form of development.
- We have a corporate library, where anyone can order books on any subject of interest to us.

How do we maintain a team spirit and create a sense of purpose and belonging to the company as well as in dispersed teams?



Fig.: Sense of purpose and belonging according to Isolution

On a weekly basis, we measure the level of satisfaction with work in the company, with working with clients and with the tasks performed. Each area, project leader, or team is responsible for responding to all downgrades on an ongoing basis and implementing solutions to address the build-up of frustration and burn-out which all lead to excessive employee turnover.



# **HAPPINESS INDEX**

Fig.: Satisfaction levels as part of the Happiness Index



### PURPOSE

Fig.: Sample of a weekly report showing average values, attendance and individual parameters

HOW



Fig.: Sample questions in the Happiness Index

Examples of Happiness Indexes with declines and increases, the "*I see you*" function, thanks to which the user knows who saw his HI, as well as the custodians of individual threads, whose goal is to implement changes that affect an individual's improvement in the level of satisfaction.

We base our work on goals. We have already tested the OKR method. We are close to the Spotify's Rhythm approach. However, the most important thing is to know which direction we are going in and what we want to achieve as a company and as a team and as individual specialists, also.



Photo.: Goals of the people & culture team, transparently displayed in the conference room.

- We have common values. These are not only hung on the wall, but manifest themselves in everyday conduct, too. This Culture Book, updated on a regular basis, is our own, personal application, where we can track whether adopted values, such as:
  - co-operation,
  - commitment,

- trust,
- responsibility,
- and development

... are still alive and whether there are any new values which would be worth including in our company's values. The virtual Book of Culture makes it possible to see how these values are used to build relationships in teams even without working in the office every day.

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Photo.: Selected stories, KUDO thanks sent in the context of our corporate values

✓ We approach each person individually. In this respect, one-to-one meetings are a great help; they not only aim at exchanging knowledge and insight about work, but also impart a mutual, better knowledge of one's needs, expectations and dreams.



Fig.: The 'one-to-one' meetings concept

We are developing our system of recommendations. The moment a member of our team recommends a job to a friend, we know we are doing a good job. In 2019, 40% of newly hired people came from recommendations. • Lead programme. Satisfaction = commitment. This can also be seen from the number of reported sales leads. In 2019, 30% of new leads came from our colleagues.

### Apart from autonomy, mastery and purpose, what motivates us?

For example, our social initiatives.



# **SOCIAL ACTIVITY**

Fig.: Social initiatives implemented in Isolution

- We organise Management 3.0. *meet-ups* as part of our non-corporate activities. We are engaged in creating a community that aims to change the approach to management in organisations and gain knowledge about new trends and solutions that help to bring this management to another, more effective level.
- We have created our own proprietary programme "**Programmers for children**". We believe that it is worth sharing knowledge. At our company's premises, we have trained, *pro bono*, a dozen children in the basics of programming.
- We support innovative approaches to education based on knowledge from the IT industry, such as EduScrum, which promote the implementation of Scrum methodology in schools.
- We share knowledge. We not only organise *meet-ups* and *webinars* for the Management 3.0 community, but we also share our knowledge about solutions that we, ourselves, have tested and implemented.
- We are the originator of the Unique Company map, an initiative bringing together the best employers who want to stand out for their organisational culture.
- With the **Initiative Market**, which we use within our corporate **TeamToolbox** application, we not only support corporate CSR initiatives, but also support funds and actions that we admire and use, to help our loved ones and friends through life's difficult situations.

Our sense of belonging to the company is also reinforced by **corporate rituals**.



- We celebrate **birthdays and important moments in our lives together**, such as weddings, the birth of a child and certain anniversaries of the commencement of work.
- We organise **integration events**, such as corporate Christmas Eve celebrations, hackathons, barbecues, LAN parties and football matches and we all watch these and films together.
- We provide fresh fruit and sweets, which.
- Sweets according to the birthday tradition, are brought by guests to birthday parties.

Isolution's organisational culture is also shaped by its **emphasis on feedback and appreciation**, which support the building of relationships and team co-operation and impact on an increase in efficiency.



Fig.: Feedback culture according to Isolution

- We measure the **Happiness Index** on a weekly basis. We continuously collect feedback on the work in the company- both work with the client and with regard to tasks. On this basis, we take measures to prevent burn-out, resulting in excessive employee turnover.
- We inspire the organisation to organize **one-to-one meetings** which allow us to collect feedback on our work on an ongoing basis and we also give feedback on how we work in the organisation.
- We collect feedback on such events as starting work, promotion, pay rises and leaving the company.
- Kudo and Merit Money Cards are also a form of collecting feedback that we use to indicate events and conduct that are consistent with those corporate values for which we want to reward our employees.

We also build a **culture of appreciation**, because we believe that a sense of being appreciated translates very strongly into commitment and, as a result, productivity at work.

 We send Kudo cards through our TeamToolbox application. These are words of thanks for support, in situations where we cannot cope on our own, as well as expressions of gratitude for all the kindnesses, trust, commitment, responsibility and co-operation received.

You can read more about KUDO here: https://bit.ly/33GNoWy https://bit.ly/2SSIz6B



Fig.: Kudo cards allow conduct, in accordance with company values, to be acclaimed

• We also award Merit Money - a virtual currency - as a gesture of appreciation for support. The currency we receive is accumulated so that we can use it to pay in the Initiative Market.

Read more about Merit Money here: <a href="https://bit.ly/3daVIGN">https://bit.ly/3daVIGN</a>

SOLUTION CULTURE	HOW
MERIT MON	

Fig.: A mechanism for transferring virtual currency to each other in TeamToolbox.

• Nor do we forget to appreciate and provide feedback directly and on a daily basis.

When implementing projects, we are inspired by such methodologies, philosophies and approaches as:

- Agile and Scrum
- Kanban
- Lean Management
- Management 3.0
- DNA CRISP

KANBAN	LEAN
ORIGINAL IDEAS	
7 - E + E	

Fig. Our inspirations

Based on these inspirations, we have used, *and still use*, many tools **that help us organise our work**, **build teams and stay engaged** 

- **Promotions Board** agile promotions, according to which you can nominate a coworker, a teammate, or yourself, for promotion at any time
- **Delegation Board** a board showing the delegation of tasks transparently indicating the possibility of making decisions in individual areas
- Kudo cards a tool to help build a culture of appreciation in companies
- **Competence Matrix** a tool that aggregates knowledge about the competences and interests of colleagues at work
- Merit Money a tool to help build a culture of appreciation in companies
- TeamToolbox a tool to help build engagement in companies



# Organisational culture goes *hand-in-hand* with project/team culture. Our agile approach, our attitude to people and interest in modern management methods are also evident in individual teams.

In projects implemented in whole or in large part by us, we jointly develop a culture of working in the project based on:

- **Principles for the implementation of a project**. From the very beginning, we define the roles, responsibilities and principles according to which we work, by setting up a dedicated team
- Good practice a set of guidelines to be followed every day
- **Solutions Register** a place where we assemble reusable components that can be used in future projects
- **Scrum Master** where we work in Agile Methodologies, which is also responsible for measuring the level of customer satisfaction (NPS)
- Product Owner a customer representative who decides on the direction of development, priorities and makes business decisions.



Fig.: Principles for the implementation of projects according to Isolution

This approach to implementing a project allows project teams to create their "specific" culture, which is tailored to the context, the client and the people who make up the project team.

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Project role	Responsibility	Best pro	ictices
Developer		Task < 1 MD	1MD=8h
Quality		Code Review	GSuite
Analyst		Jira	Standup
(P)		DoD	DoR
Devops		Kanban	Slack
PM		Event Storming	Risk Register
Architect		Delegation Board	RACI Matrix

Fig.: "Project culture" in detail: rôles, responsibilities and a sample of good, project practices

Our approach, our way of thinking, our philosophy of action and mutual relations are described in **Isolution's DNA** which was created using Agile Manifesto as a model.



### **OUR DNA**



Corporate culture and design also translate into an approach to organisational structure, which is non-hierarchical in Isolution and consists of a 2-person management board, team leaders and a team of engineers and specialists. Our main assumption is that we do not hold positions, we 'role play' within the organisation. That way, we do not create an elaborate hierarchy. We assume *roles* that are really needed at a given stage of development.

Working in different teams, we strive to achieve a common goal. An important element of working with goals is the use of OKR, which we have modified, that is, simplified for our needs.



Photo.: Different teams - one goal

Each team has its own leader who can count on the support of a designated person from the Management Board. He/she works directly with the Board Member. The rules for decision-making within a particular team are defined by the Delegation Table established between the leader and the Management Board.

Working on the implementation of common goals requires co-operation between teams and the search for solutions that do not cause anyone to object; this is the **CONSENT** method.



Fig.: Structure - details

From the perspective of several years of continuous experiments and improvements to existing solutions, we can say one thing. The best results are obtained by combining a friendly working environment with the creation of space for the development and use of the potential that we have in organisations.



Fig.: Synergy between organisational culture and development, including design



### What do we do?

### We make software.

We create digital products for our customers. We carry out IT projects comprehensively, using different co-operation models.

We focus on delivering value to our customers by choosing the technological solutions bestsuited to their requirements. We care about the quality of our work. We work in agile models. You can find out more about our offer here: <u>www.isolution.pl</u>.

### What inspires us on our journey?

In creating our culture, we were inspired by other organisations and personalities in the world of science and business. Finally, we want to share with you, the quotes that moved us and the interesting articles and books that will expand your knowledge about the ideas we use.



What this means for us, in practice, is that we should focus on managing the system, not managing people. We want to build an environment that gives space for development, frees people's potential, builds a sense of value and has a real impact on the goal. We believe that a committed, responsible expert in his field does not need external control from the manager; the goal is enough.

isolution culture

"Management is too important to leave it to the manager"

JURGEN APELLO

We believe that each of us has a role to play within the organisation and everyone can influence the management of the organisation. For this reason, we like to ask questions and are open to feedback and new ideas.

isolution culture

# "Management is 5% instruction and 95% communication"

JURGEN APELLO

Communication is essential. We believe that an efficient flow of information is enough to perform a given task well.

isolution culture

"Engage people, improve work, and delight clients"

JURGEN APELLO

The key to success, in our opinion, is commitment. It is because we are committed that we have the power to grow. As a result, we carry out our duties better and better, thereby meeting the needs of our customers.

"Happy employees ensure happy customers. And happy customers ensure happy shareholders – in that order"

SIMON SINER

For many years the starting point of our business has been our shareholders. Today, more and more often, we start with our employees. It is on their sense of satisfaction that a competitive advantage is built.

isolution culture

"Your employees come first. And if you treat your employees right, guess what? Your customers come back, and that makes your shareholders happy. Start with employees and the rest follows from that."

HERB KELLEHER

People, projects/products, profit - exactly in that order.

SOLUTION CULTURE

"People power. They are the real engine of every business. Good people aren't just important to the business. They are the business"

RICHARD BRANSON

Especially in an industry based on people, their knowledge and skills.

Below we recommend a list of books on organisational culture, Management 3.0, turquoise organisations, interesting stories on companies that build cultures that are a *person-centred*.

### LITERATURE

- Jurgen Appelo "Managing for Happiness"
- Frederic Laloux "Reinventing organisation"
- Marko van Gaans "Naked Espresso: An In-depth Case Study of Management 3.0 Practices in Action "
- Ricardo Semler "Maverick"
- Ricardo Semler "The Seven-day weekend"
- David Marquet "Turn the ship around"
- Richard Sheridan "Joy Inc".
- Jacko Willink "Extreme Ownership"
- Jason Fried, David Heinemeier Hansson "Re-work"
- Mark Horstman "The Effective Manager"
- Jim Whitehurst "Open Organisation"
- Yvon Chouinard "Let My People go Surfing"
- Ed Catmull "Creativity Inc."
- Chip Wilson "Little Black Stretchy Pants"
- Daniel Pink "Drive"
- Simon Sinek "Start with why"
- John P. Kotter "Our Iceberg Is Melting: Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions"
- Merrick Rosenberg: "The Chameleon: Life-Changing Wisdom for Anyone Who Has a Personality or Knows Someone Who Does"
- Ike Lasater" Collaborating in the Workplace: A Guide for Building Better Teams"
- Ken Blanchard "One-minute manager"
- Patrick Lencioni "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team"
- Walter Isaacson: "Invent and Wander: The Collected Writings of Jeff Bezos"

### VIDEO/TED

### Simon Sinek "How great leaders inspire action"

https://www.ted.com/talks/simon\_sinek\_how\_great\_leaders\_inspire\_action?referrer=playlistthe\_most\_popular\_talks\_of\_all

### Daniel Pink "The puzzle of motivation"

https://www.ted.com/talks/dan\_pink\_the\_puzzle\_of\_motivation?referrer=playlistthe\_most\_popular\_talks\_of\_all

### Berne Brown "The power of vulnerability"

https://www.ted.com/talks/brene\_brown\_the\_power\_of\_vulnerability?referrer=playlistthe\_most\_popular\_talks\_of\_all

David Logan "Tribal leadership"

https://www.ted.com/talks/david\_logan\_tribal\_leadership

Jason Fried "Why work doesn't happen at work" <u>https://www.ted.com/talks/jason\_fried\_why\_work\_doesn\_t\_happen\_at\_work?language=pl</u>

Ricardo Semler "How to run a company with almost (no) rules" <u>https://www.ted.com/talks/ricardo\_semler\_how\_to\_run a company\_with\_almost\_no\_rules</u>

David Marquet https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqmdLcyES\_Q

### Links to interesting sites and articles

Management 3.0 <u>https://management30.com/practice/</u>

DNA CRISP https://dna.crisp.se/docs/index.html

Get in Real by Basecamp https://basecamp.com/gettingrea

### KUDO

https://management30.com/practice/kudo-cards/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OotzTcZ2a4 https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/kudo-cards-co-zrobi%C4%87-%C5%BCebydzia%C5%82a%C5%82o-d%C5%82u%C5%BCej-piotr-medynski/

### MERIT MONEY:

https://management30.com/practice/merit-money/

MOVING MOTIVATORS

https://management30.com/practice/moving-motivators/

EMPATHY MAP https://medium.com/@cassierobinson/a-user-manual-for-me-d3a851fbc694

STAFF POTENTIAL (PL) https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/jak-uwolni%C4%87-potencja%C5%82-ludzi-worganizacjach-piotr-medynski/

WHY (PL) https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/po-co-tworzymy-organizacje-firme-piotr-medynski/