

VPS NEWSLETTER

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TRAINING SPOTLIGHT

Leadership Readiness for 2026

Through Metrix Learning, VPS supports organizations with targeted training in:

- Leadership communication during change
- HR strategy and workforce planning
- AI fundamentals for leaders
- Culture-driven leadership



FEATURE ARTICLE

Culture Is the First Strategic Decision of 2026

2026 is shaping up to be a pivotal year for organizations navigating accelerated AI adoption, leadership transitions, and renewed merger and acquisition activity. While deal volume and technology investment are gaining momentum, the real differentiator will be how organizations manage their people, leadership alignment, and culture. [Continue from page 2.....](#)

EVENT RECAP



December 12, 2025 Black Heritage Western Gala

Hope Malveaux and Miracle Semien attended the Black Heritage Western Gala, an elegant evening celebrating culture, heritage, and community leadership. The event honored excellence and unity while highlighting the importance of preserving history and empowering future generations.



CULTURE SPOTLIGHT

Define Culture Before You Scale

As organizations prepare for AI adoption, M&A activity, and leadership changes, one question matters most: Do your leaders share a clear understanding of how work gets done and decisions are made?

Culture standards move beyond values. They define expectations, behaviors, and accountability.

In 2026, organizations with clear culture standards will experience smoother integrations, stronger leadership alignment, and faster execution.

This year, VPS is intentionally elevating culture work as a core strategic offering because clarity is a competitive advantage.

HR TRENDS AND COMPLIANCE UPDATES

January is the ideal time to reset. Key priorities include:

- Confirming leadership roles and decision authority
- Reviewing policies tied to data, AI, and technology use
- Ensuring documentation for leadership transitions
- Validating employee classifications and reporting structures



Compliance Watch:
Early alignment reduces downstream risk.

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Culture Is the First Strategic Decision of 2026

Boards and executive teams are increasingly recognizing that culture is not a post-deal concern. It is a core success lever that directly impacts value creation, retention, and integration speed.

Organizations that fail to define culture standards early often experience resistance to change, leadership friction, and lost momentum especially during AI-driven and transformational deals.

In 2026, culture is not just part of the strategy. It is the infrastructure that supports every strategic decision.



M&A INSIGHTS IN FOCUS Why HR and Culture Are Central in 2026

Global M&A activity is expected to grow in 2026, with a more bullish deal environment than 2024–2025. As financing conditions stabilize, both corporate and private equity dealmakers are signaling renewed confidence and an increase in deal volume particularly in technology, healthcare, industrials, and AI-enabled “buy and build” strategies.

What’s different this cycle is the role of HR and culture:

- Boards and deal teams are now treating human capital as a primary value driver, not a soft consideration. Some advisors are even stating, “human capital is the deal.”
- Research consistently shows that 30 percent or more of M&A value loss is tied directly to culture and people issues.
- Deals with strong culture management are estimated to be about 50 percent more likely to achieve intended synergy targets.

HR’s role in the deal lifecycle is expanding:

- Pre-deal, HR is being brought in earlier to assess leadership strength, retention risk, cultural compatibility, DEI considerations, and workforce readiness for AI and transformation.
- Post-close, HR is expected to lead integration across org design, communications, retention strategies, culture alignment, and reskilling—placing culture alongside financial and operational integration as a cornerstone of success.

As a result, organizations are increasing investment in HR technology, culture analytics, and AI-driven people insights to gain real-time visibility into engagement, sentiment, and integration risk.

2026 presents a strong window to position HR and culture solutions as risk-reduction and value-creation engines for M&A heavy organizations, not optional programs.

FINAL WORDS

2026 will reward organizations that lead with intention.

At VPS, we believe culture, HR strategy, and leadership alignment are inseparable. One truth is becoming undeniable: culture is no longer a “nice to have.” It is the foundation that determines whether AI investments succeed, mergers thrive, and leadership transitions remain stable.

We look forward to partnering with you as you navigate a year of opportunity, growth, and transformation.

Culture is still the answer.



CLIENT HIGHLIGHTS

Supporting Leadership Continuity During Transition

Recently, VPS supported an organization navigating a critical executive transition. Recognizing the risk of lost institutional knowledge, leadership engaged VPS

to develop a structured transition summary to support continuity.

The transition captured key responsibilities, active priorities, stakeholder relationships, and cultural nuances essential for leadership alignment. This approach reduced disruption, protected momentum, and ensured the incoming leader stepped in with clarity and confidence.

Leadership transitions are inevitable. Disruption is not.

PRACTICAL CULTURE TIPS

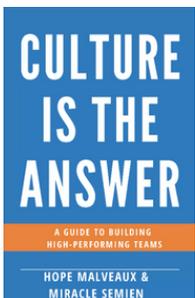
Set the Tone Early

January sets the tone for the year. Encourage leaders to clearly communicate:



Culture Tip of the Month:
Clarity creates alignment.
Alignment drives results

- What success looks like
- How teams are expected to work together
- Which behaviors are non-negotiable



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