

Transforming organizational culture: Real-world examples from Arbinger



Organizational culture serves as the beating heart of any company, influencing its values, behaviors, and overall performance. A positive and thriving culture fosters [employee engagement](#), collaboration, and innovation—helping organizations meet their goals, improve employee relationships, and ultimately thrive. A negative culture, however, can be detrimental.

The challenge is, transforming organizational culture is no easy feat. It requires a fundamental [shift in mindset](#), behaviors, and established norms.

But that's where Arbinger comes in. Over the last 40+ years, we've worked with organizations worldwide to drive mindset shifts that create lasting change. In this article, we explore four compelling examples of how Arbinger's approach and training has revolutionized organizational cultures.

1. Changing systems and improving results at a healthcare company



The challenge: Plum Healthcare was founded in 1999 with a goal to create a healthcare company without the persistent problems that plague many healthcare organizations. Their strategy centered on acquiring and transforming dysfunctional long-term care and rehabilitation facilities. To achieve the accelerated growth the organization was looking to achieve, they knew they needed to overhaul their culture to a people-centric approach.

The solution: Plum Healthcare sought Arbinger's assistance in developing a leadership model, an organizational cultural framework, and front-line staff tools to facilitate a successful transition for each newly acquired facility.

Initially, Arbinger consultants provided strategic in-person consulting and virtual coaching to the executive team. They guided the development and implementation of a strategic roadmap that would enable cultural transformation during and after each facility acquisition. As a result of this initial

work, the executive team was able to develop policies and implement collaborative work practices that would serve as the footings of an outward mindset culture. Through ongoing coaching sessions, Arbinger worked to equip executive leaders with the skills to grow and develop every facility administrator throughout the company.

The partnership also included:

- Customized training programs
- Facilitator training and certification
- Deployment across facilities



Using Arbinger has dramatically improved clinical quality, resident and employee satisfaction, and regulatory outcomes. Arbinger's tools enable us to deliver better and better quality care for residents through deep and sustainable collaboration.

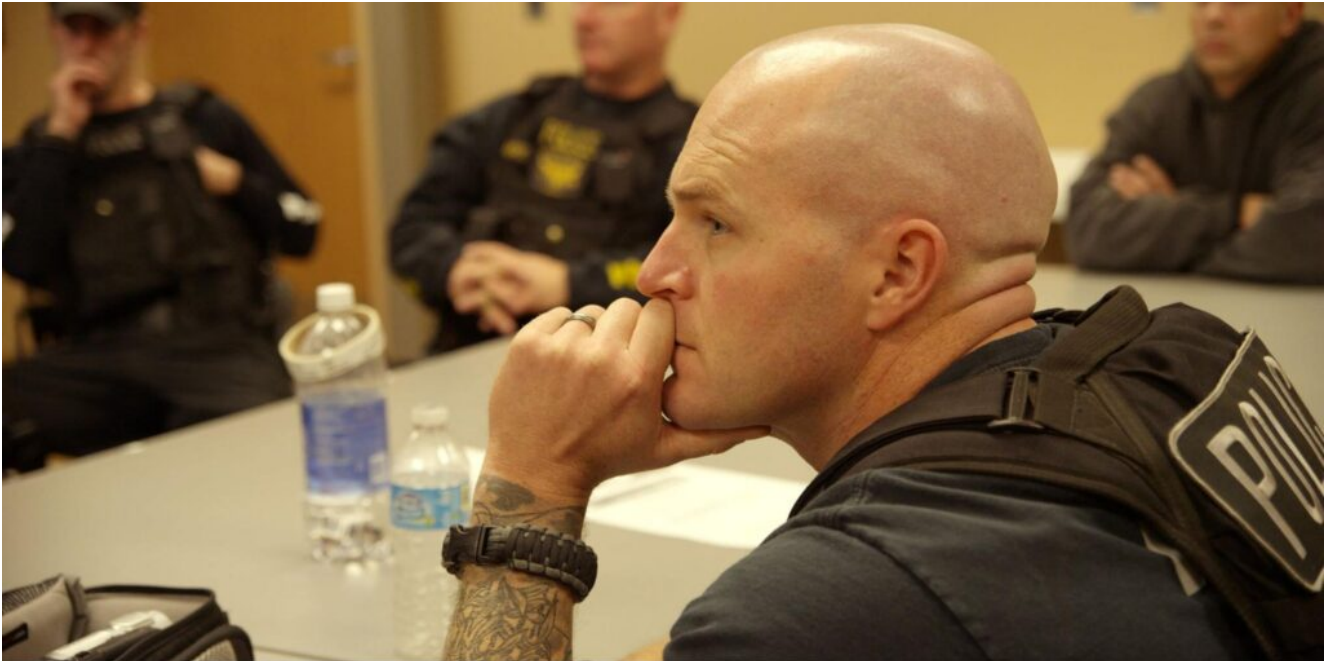
Paul Hubbard – Co-CEO and Co-Founder

The results: By implementing Arbinger's tools across the organization, Plum grew at a remarkable rate. The most significant highlights include:

- Increasing its number of facilities and employees by almost 500%
- Growing to operate 63 skilled nursing facilities and 5 home health and hospice agencies strategically located throughout California, Utah, and Arizona
- Incorporating over 3,900 nurses into Plum's healthcare system
- Improving Clinical Quality Measures by 37%
- Federal citations at Plum facilities, a key indicator of quality of care, were 34% less than the average number of citations received by competitor companies

Watch the full story of Plum's transformation here:

2. Driving change through law enforcement leadership development



The challenge: Throughout 2008, tensions were building between the police department of Kansas City, Missouri (KCPD), and the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP). The disagreements between the organizations led both parties to hire attorneys—and the collective bargaining process was shaping up to be drawn-out and contentious. KCPD’s Chief of Police was desperate to prevent the seemingly inevitable battle with the FOP. After reading [Leadership and Self-Deception](#) and attending an Arbinger workshop, KCPD’s chief decided to bring Arbinger to police headquarters.

The solution: KCPD and Arbinger brought together department heads, members of the FOP, and a few other key leaders to engage in Arbinger’s intense process that was geared toward law enforcement [leadership development](#). The room was arranged so that members of the FOP and members of the department were sitting among each other. Those present described the workshop’s beginning as “icy and hostile.” But one participant recalls, “it wasn’t long before we could see the walls beginning to break down and people starting to connect with the other people in the room.”

As the training continued, officers who had not spoken to each other in years started conversing. The results were immediately transformative.



There is a huge difference between the way we used to operate and the way we are now. There is an openness to others and a level of helpfulness that simply didn't exist before.

Ward Smith – Firearms Training Supervisor | KCPD

The results: The 1910 Squad was notorious for receiving community complaints. But since introducing Arbinger's law enforcement leadership development practices, community complaints have evaporated. In fact:

- The squad has not received a complaint related to a search warrant in 10 years since the transformation process was initiated
- The change has also increased efficiency: In the first five years after implementing Arbinger, the 1910 squad recovered more illicit guns, drugs, and money than they had in the previous decade
- For these exceptional results, the 1910 squad earned a special unit citation

Watch the KCPD story here:

3. Fostering collaboration amid organizational restructuring at an office supply retailer



The challenge: With over 34,000 employees, Staples is a well-known office supply retailer on a global scale, having successfully weathered evolving markets and a competitive industry over a period of 35+ years. In 2013, Staples embarked on a massive restructuring of its European operations, perhaps the largest undertaking of its kind in the industry. The scope and complexity of the changes were substantial, involving significant job cuts and extensive revisions to roles and responsibilities.

The solution: Arbinger consultants carefully gathered relevant contextual details to inform their efforts and support Staples' organization restructuring. This information was utilized to design customized workshop sessions for the senior levels of Staples Europe leadership. Arbinger facilitators met with the leadership team every three to six months from June 2013 to January 2015. This format provided flexible, ongoing support adapted to the evolving needs of the transitioning

division.



Staples has better results thanks to the new mindset of all the players within the company.

Roland Laschet – Managing Director | Staples Retail Benelux

The results: Because of their work with Arbinger, Staples Europe was able to better execute the intricate components of their major organizational restructuring. And by focusing attention on the mindset that underlies productive behaviors, senior leadership was able to strengthen their working relationships.

The team at Staples saw monumental shifts in:

- Employee understanding, communication, and cooperation
- Finally controlling runaway levels of stress and negative tension
- Unleashing the latent talent and cooperation waiting within their workforce

Watch Staples' transformation unfold here:

4. Unlocking key metrics that improve team performance at this non-profit organization



The challenge: Dr. Reddy's Foundation works to support India's most underprivileged youth in attaining sustainable livelihoods through its flagship program, LABS, which has trained over 290,000 young people. However, due to financial limitations, LABS was restricted to 75 centers and 25,000 youth annually, leading to the adoption of a social business model where participants contribute a nominal fee.

While this change allowed the foundation to serve more youth in more locations, it required increased efficiency. The foundation faced obstacles in achieving this efficiency, including a broken organizational culture and interdepartmental issues requiring the CEO's intervention. They needed a solution that would help them align their organization.

The solution: Many interventions fail when leaders delegate ultimate responsibility for change to someone else. Because

the Arbinger consultant who arrived to assess the foundation's problems knew the critical importance of leader buy-in to improve team performance, he invited the CEO to expressly state what his role as the organization's leader would be in the transformation effort.

Once he'd expressed this commitment to his key leaders, the CEO and leadership team began an initial facilitated work session. The workshop provided a common language for the top 30 leaders that:

- Helped the leaders heighten their self-awareness
- Provided a framework and tools for self-management
- Provided opportunities to apply the framework and tools in their work with each other

Arbinger also worked together with the team at Dr. Reddy's Foundation to:

- Redefine organizational and individual objectives
- Shift from holding people accountable to helping people hold themselves accountable
- Refine policies and processes to ensure they were inviting an outward mindset. Department leaders worked alongside individual team members to revise department and individual objectives
- Review processes and structures and more effectively track improvements



Arbinger provided the courage to make key decisions which have resulted in significant internal improvements and dramatically improved enrollment rates. Through Arbinger we have completely transformed our culture.

Rod Larson Jitendra Kalra – Former CEO | Dr. Reddy's Foundation

The results: Overall, there has been a significant improvement in collaboration, teamwork, and support between departments. People are now treating people as people. A senior department head at Dr. Reddy's Foundation has said that Arbinger brought considerable change in their way of working and has dramatically impacted our results. Because of their new way of working, the leadership team was able to generate the consensus needed to take major, unprecedented steps to remove roadblocks to success.

Some of the biggest highlights include:

- Complaints are nearly non-existent
- Dramatic improvement in student enrollment and retention
- Interdepartmental blaming and resulting silos are now relics of the past

Watch this video to learn more about Dr. Reddy's transformation:

Organizational change can start today

While cultural transformation doesn't happen overnight, making small changes right now can begin to make a real impact on the way your teammates see each other, speak to each other, and work together. When you consider the stories we recapped in this post, you can see that even cultural challenges that were once viewed as "broken", "icy", and "hostile" were resolved by shifting mindsets. Are you ready to experience the impact of a mindset shift?

Chat with our team of experts to learn more about how Arbinger can help you achieve your business goals. [Request a consultation here!](#)