

**Awakening a sleeping beauty - Has Fortis found the right magic potion for cultural change?**

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**Summary:**

This research highlights the impact of both a company-wide leadership development programme “Leadership for Growth” and the introduction of a set of corporate values “the fortioomas” on an organizational culture. It is based on a case study of the cultural change programme at Fortis, a multi-national Financial Services Group, with 58,000 employees working for various business divisions across the globe. Field research via qualitative interviews and ethnographic studies took place over 6 months in 2006 in five locations, Brussels, Paris, London, Utrecht and Mello (France). It was cross referenced against quantitative survey results and was framed by a literature review.

The cultural transformational programme is currently one of the largest of its kind being implemented in Europe today (Interview: De Boule, 2006) due to complete phase one in 2008. There are 14 fortiooma values designed to influence language and behavior: Deliver Results, Encourage Diversity, Focus on the client, Develop yourself, Team Spirit, Drive performance, Set the example, Communicate the story, Be positive, Show courage, Act as one, Stimulate entrepreneurship, Be mobile, Driven by passion.

**Recommendations:**

Ensure any leadership or cultural transformation programme is followed up with communication & support or the change will not spread

Implement a coordinated support programme and make cultural change a job to help business leaders maintain momentum

Tackle hierarchy paralysis if present, rethink traditional command & control views of leadership in structure, processes and people

Take on the difficult conversations at all levels (starting at the Ex. Co.) around daily competing commitments and value trade-offs that are embedded in the culture

National cultural traits should be taken into consideration in change expectations and when communicating change