CASE STUDY 3

Purpose-Driven Culture as Organisational Capability

J. Frank Harrison III, Coca-Cola Consolidated, t-factor and the pathway from purpose to culture and people development

Online resource for *The Overlooked Source of Human Capability and Character: Why Faith and Belief Matter in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*

Organisation	Coca-Cola Consolidated: the largest Coca-Cola bottler in the United States
Faith or belief contribution	Faith-shaped organisational purpose
Pathway (Figure 9)	Purpose to culture and people development
Related points in the paper	Point 2 (qualities of character); Point 4 (character becomes culture); Point 5 (culture and enterprise value); Point 9 (five pathways); Points 11 and 13 (governance)
Key themes	Purpose-driven culture; servant leadership; faith and corporate values; people development; customer service; community engagement; t-factor; culture transformation; Board governance
Primary audience	Boards; CEOs; CHROs; culture leaders; purpose leaders; leadership-development teams; responsible business leaders; faith-and-belief workplace leaders

Summary

This case study illustrates the third of the five pathways in Figure 9 of the paper: purpose. It shows faith-shaped organisational purpose being translated into culture and people development, with leadership, service and profitable growth intentionally connected.

The paper argues that character becomes culture through repeated behaviour (Point 4), and that human capability becomes organisational capability when it is recognised and reinforced through leadership, culture, management practice, learning, policies, systems and accountability (Point 9).

Coca-Cola Consolidated provides a distinctive example. The company publicly states its Purpose as: to honour God in all it does, to serve others, to pursue excellence and to grow profitably. Its t-factor initiative extends that purpose into a wider training and transformation platform designed to help other leaders build purpose-driven, servant-based workplace cultures.

Frank Harrison, Chairman and CEO of Coca-Cola Consolidated, describes this culture not as an abstract statement but as a way of leading: truth and integrity create trust; humility puts others first; morality means doing what is right; service goes deeper than selling; excellence requires doing things well; and growth begins with growing people.

This is the purpose pathway. Faith-shaped purpose is not held at the edge of the business. It is translated into culture, leadership, service, operational discipline, community engagement and sustained organisational identity.

The organisational context: purpose as culture

Coca-Cola Consolidated is the largest Coca-Cola bottler in the United States, serving consumers across 14 states and the District of Columbia. The company makes, sells and distributes beverages from The Coca-Cola Company and other partner companies in nearly 300 brands and flavours to approximately 60 million consumers.

Within that large commercial context, Coca-Cola Consolidated presents purpose as central to culture. Its public statement says the company strives to fulfil its Purpose: to honour God in all it does, to serve others, to pursue excellence and to grow profitably. It also states that service is at the core of its culture, including service to teammates, consumers, customers and communities.

Frank Harrison's welcome video reinforces the same point. He tells new colleagues that the company has a powerful purpose-driven culture and that culture matters because, when the culture is right, the business can do incredibly well. Purpose is not positioned as something separate from business performance. It is presented as the foundation for performance.

For the paper, the important point is not that every organisation should adopt Coca-Cola Consolidated's exact wording. The important point is that this case shows faith-related purpose being operationalised as culture. Purpose is not only posted on a wall. It is used to frame values, leadership behaviour, customer service, people development, excellence and growth.

From stated purpose to leadership values

Harrison describes the first part of the company's purpose, honouring God in all we do, as being about values. He connects it to truth, integrity, humility and morality. If there is no truth, he says, there is no trust; if there is no trust, there is no relationship.

This matters because organisational capability requires translation. Faith language alone does not create mature organisational practice. It becomes capability when it is translated into concrete values and behaviours that shape how people lead, serve, decide and relate.

In Harrison's description, truth and integrity are not private virtues. They become the basis of trust. Humility is not weakness. It means putting other people first. Morality is about character and doing what is right. Service is not limited to selling and delivery. It means knowing customers, caring about their families and sometimes stepping back from selling in order to serve.

These map closely onto the qualities of character the paper argues organisations increasingly need: wise judgement, integrity, responsibility, trustworthiness, stewardship and care for others (Point 2). In this case, they are being linked directly to the company's purpose and leadership expectations.

Service as a business discipline

A central theme in Harrison's video is service. He describes serving others as essential to relationships with customers, but he quickly moves beyond transactions. Selling products, pricing strategies and delivery matter, but they are not enough. Leaders and teammates must go deeper by knowing people, helping them and serving their families where appropriate.

Harrison's phrase is simple: sometimes the task is not "sell, sell, sell," but "serve, serve, serve." He then connects this to business growth, saying that if the company could have 15,000 servant leaders, it would not be able to build enough Coca-Cola plants to handle the volume.

That statement captures the lesson of this pathway. Service is not treated as a soft value competing with commercial performance. It is treated as a business discipline that can deepen relationships, strengthen trust, improve customer connection and support growth. The paper makes a related observation in Point 5: care for others can contribute to, rather than constrain, value creation.

For Boards, this is an important example of faith-shaped purpose moving beyond identity or expression into operating philosophy. Service becomes part of how the organisation understands sales, customer relationships, leadership and growth.

Growth begins with people

Harrison also connects purpose to growth. In his words, growth is good, growth is right, and the company must grow its people because no company grows unless its people grow.

That idea aligns with the paper's observation that employment is itself a formative environment (Point 4): an organisation can strengthen or weaken the character on which it depends. The question is whether organisational systems help people become more fully capable, not merely more productive. Growth is not only market expansion. It includes people development, leadership formation, stronger relationships and deeper service.

Coca-Cola Consolidated's broader transformation narrative makes the same point. *The Transformation Factor* presents culture as something leaders must build, model and steward. It emphasises investing in people, helping them recognise their fullest potential, creating vitality, growth and purpose, and leading through service.

This is not simply a faith statement. It is a human capital statement. It asks leaders whether people are being treated as costs to be managed or as persons whose growth enables organisational growth.

t-factor: sharing the model beyond the company

The t-factor website describes its purpose as transforming workplace cultures around the world for good, for God and for growth. It presents t-factor as a Coca-Cola Consolidated training initiative that shares the company's transformation journey and its approach to building a purpose-driven corporate culture.

The t-factor platform also identifies leadership values that support this transformation: purposeful, servant, inspirational, educational and credible. Servant leaders are described as focused on others, humble, encouraging, inclusive, good listeners and possessing foresight. Credible leaders are ethical, trustworthy and believable.

This is a further stage of translation. The company is not only practising a purpose-driven culture internally. It is packaging, teaching and sharing its culture-building approach with other leaders and organisations.

t-factor is what the paper calls the company's learning platform. It is an example of faith-and-belief practice becoming external thought leadership, connecting internal culture, leadership formation, stakeholder service and wider social contribution. It also raises a useful Board question: what has our organisation learned about purpose, people and culture that could benefit others?

Guardrails for pluralistic organisations

This case also requires careful interpretation. Coca-Cola Consolidated's purpose is explicitly theistic and Christian in inspiration. In some contexts, that may be authentic, well-governed and deeply embedded in the organisation's history. In other contexts, Boards will need different language and structures that fit their legal, cultural, workforce and stakeholder environment.

The paper does not recommend that every company copy another organisation's faith language. Its position is that Boards govern conduct, culture and organisational conditions, not employees' beliefs, and that a faith-friendly workplace is not one that promotes religion or privileges religious employees (Point 13). For most large, pluralistic organisations, that means ensuring that people of all faiths and none are treated with dignity, that participation is voluntary, that no employee is coerced, and that workplace standards apply fairly and consistently to everyone (Point 11).

The transferable lesson is not that every organisation should use identical words. The transferable lesson is that purpose must be translated into culture, leadership, systems, trust and service. If a company names faith as part of its purpose, it must also build practices that protect dignity, support inclusion, avoid coercion, strengthen accountability and serve the common good.

What this case shows

This case illustrates eight features of the pathway from purpose to culture and people development.

1. **Faith-related purpose is connected to business identity**
   Coca-Cola Consolidated does not present purpose as a side initiative. Its stated purpose frames culture, values, leadership and growth.
2. **Values are translated into leadership behaviours**
   Truth, integrity, humility, morality, service, excellence and growth are connected to how people lead and relate to customers, teammates and communities.
3. **Service is treated as a strategic discipline**
   Service is not only philanthropy or kindness. It shapes sales, customer relationships, trust and growth.
4. **Growth is linked to people development**
   Harrison's message that no company grows unless its people grow connects purpose to human capital and leadership formation.
5. **Culture is operationalised**
   The t-factor initiative turns the company's purpose-driven culture into training, resources and leadership development for others.
6. **The model is shared externally**
   t-factor shows how an internal culture model can become an external resource for leaders seeking workplace transformation.
7. **Purpose is connected to community impact**
   Coca-Cola Consolidated publicly connects its purpose to service in communities and local partnerships.
8. **Translation requires guardrails**
   The case reminds Boards that explicit faith language must be handled with voluntariness, inclusion, non-coercion, fairness and respect for people of all faiths and none.

Board implications

For Boards, this case raises practical questions under each of the paper's four Board lenses.

RECOGNISE **Does the organisation recognise the potential contribution of religion or belief?**

- **Purpose:** Is our purpose a statement, or does it actually shape culture, leadership and decisions?
- **Values:** Have we translated our stated values into behaviours that people can recognise, practise and be held accountable for?

ENABLE **Can employees bring religion or belief into working life appropriately and voluntarily?**

- **Governance:** If faith is part of organisational purpose or culture, are there clear guardrails protecting voluntariness, dignity, inclusion and fairness?
- **Human capital:** Do our systems help people grow as whole persons, or only as productive units?

VALUE **Is the organisation open to perspectives and insights shaped by religion or belief?**

- **Leadership:** Are truth, integrity, humility, service and accountability treated as leadership capabilities?
- **Service:** Do we understand service as a strategic discipline in customer, teammate and community relationships?
- **External learning:** Do we have culture practices that could serve as resources for other organisations?

REVIEW **Are the organisational conditions working consistently and responsibly?**

- **Measurement:** Is purpose visible in leadership development, culture measurement, community engagement, retention, trust and long-term value?

The four lenses are those in Figure 13 of the paper. They are not sequential steps. Boards govern the organisational conditions for contribution, not what employees believe.

Practical leadership lessons

This case suggests five practical lessons for senior leaders.

1. **Make purpose operational**
   Purpose becomes capability when it shapes values, decisions, leadership expectations, customer service, people development and accountability.
2. **Treat service as strategy**
   Service can deepen trust, strengthen relationships and create long-term value when it becomes part of how the business operates.
3. **Grow people to grow the business**
   Organisational capability links performance to human development. A company grows sustainably when its people grow.
4. **Translate faith language into inclusive practice**
   Faith-related purpose must be expressed through behaviours that protect dignity, avoid coercion and serve people well.

5 **Share what works**
A mature organisation can become a resource for others when it has learned how to build trust, culture and purpose in practice.

How this case connects to the paper

The Overlooked Source of Human Capability and Character argues that as AI expands what organisations can do, the character of those deciding what they should do becomes more consequential, and that religion or belief is an important and frequently overlooked source of that character.

Coca-Cola Consolidated's t-factor example shows what this can look like when faith-shaped purpose is connected to culture, leadership, service, excellence, growth and external learning.

This is the purpose pathway: faith-shaped purpose gaining expression in how an organisation forms leaders, serves stakeholders, develops people and creates long-term value.

The case should not be read as a universal template to copy. As the paper notes, the five cases differ in sector, geography, scale and level of implementation. It should be read as a vivid example of the deeper question every Board must ask: how do our deepest commitments become culture, and how does culture become lasting value?

Key quotes

> **"Our purpose is to honour God in all we do, to serve others, to pursue excellence and to grow profitably."**

> **"If there is no truth, there is no trust."**

> **"Every now and then, you gotta back off sell, sell, sell and just ... serve, serve, serve."**

> **"No company grows unless its people grow."**

Source note. This case study is based on Coca-Cola Consolidated's t-factor website, J. Frank Harrison III's *The Transformation Factor* website, Frank Harrison's welcome video transcript, and the framework developed in Brian J. Grim, *The Overlooked Source of Human Capability and Character: Why Faith and Belief Matter in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*, Religious Freedom & Business Foundation and Faith@Work UK, London, 2026. It is one of five case studies summarised in Point 9 and Figure 9 of the paper. Watch the talk: vimeo.com/1082476677.

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