

Get Connected: Why smart business owners are getting connected with their feelings

Driven by a different kind of data not found on the dashboards of most businesses, one local business is helping Thames Valley organisations get connected internally to drive successful outcomes, quicker.

At a time when businesses are under pressure to move faster, deliver more, and constantly adapt, one thing is falling through the cracks: how people actually need to feel to do their best work.

That's the focus of The Culturevators, a Swindon-based consultancy co-founded by leadership specialist Sarah Dena, which is helping organisations across the Thames Valley put emotional culture on their the agenda.

"We talk a lot about KPIs and performance data — but what we're not tracking is the emotional energy driving (or draining) our teams," says Sarah. "Emotions are data too. And they offer some of the richest insight into culture, leadership, and collaboration that a business can get."

"Sales are made based on a feeling - Founders and Leaders are very clear in telling us how they want their customer to feel. So we take that data and ask, so your teams, working with those clients, how do they need to feel to create that experience for your client?"

A different kind of team conversation

The Culturevators' flagship session, Get Connected, is a facilitated team experience using the Emotional Culture Deck — a set of cards that help people express how they feel, and what they need to feel to thrive. Sessions range from 60-minute "culture pulses" to half-day workshops, depending on the needs of the team.

Recent clients include creative and purpose-led Thames Valley businesses such as Bright Affect, Social Butterfly Digital, and Gel Studios, who each took part in Get Connected sessions as a way to deepen team culture and spark open conversation.

"Oftentimes anything emotional is labelled as soft & fluffy" says Sarah. "But the opposite is

true — when people feel safe, connected, and clear about how they want to work together, performance improves. This isn't a 'nice-to-do' anymore - it's smart and strategic.

Why emotional culture matters now

With many teams adjusting to hybrid and remote models, and others scaling rapidly, the importance of emotional connection is real.

The common go-to fix? Let's create connection through "forced fun". Buy some beanbags for the office. Book a funky co-working space with a pool table for our next team day. Run a quiz night on Zoom.

“Social connection is important — and if your people feeling playful or competitive from a game of pool is going to drive the behaviour you need in your organisation, then go for it,” says Sarah. “But if you're doing it because you think it's what makes people feel connected, you're making a costly mistake.”

That's where Get Connected stands out. It's playful, simple, and yes, it can be fun — but its real value lies in creating space for people to express what conditions make them feel connected. It's not about gimmicks. It's about getting to the emotional heart of how your team works together.

“So many issues that get labelled as performance problems are emotional data,” Sarah adds. “And what can we do with data? Make meaningful, strategic decisions that will deliver a result that matters. Disengagement, resistance to change, even poor communication — they often stem from people not feeling seen, valued, or aligned with their team. Once you surface those feelings, you can work with people to move through them.”

From insight to action

Unlike traditional team-building exercises, Get Connected sessions don't stop at dialogue. The process helps teams translate their emotional insights into small, visible shifts in behaviour — such as check-in rituals, team agreements, or new ways of collaborating.

“Our goal is to turn conversation into culture,” says Sarah. “We want people to leave the room not just feeling heard — but feeling empowered to shape how they work together,

every day.”

The Culturevators’ message is clear: emotional culture is no longer optional. It’s strategic.

“Business leaders and Founders who realise that connection, trust, and belonging directly impact performance,” Sarah says. “When we stop long enough to listen to how people need to feel, we create cultures where people — and business — can grow.”

For more information about Get Connected or to book a session, visit

<http://www.culturevator.co.uk>.