

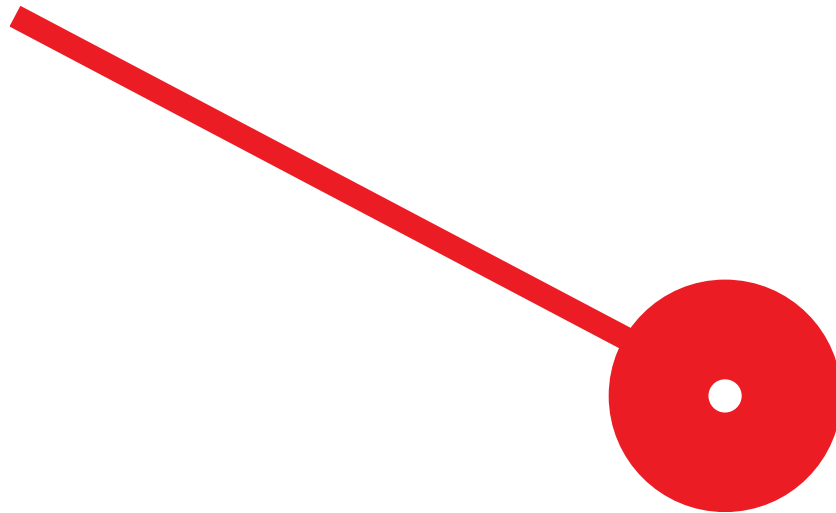


People & Experience (P&E) and Intercultural Competence (IC) as Structural Pillars for Sustainable and Innovative Organisations

Erika de Oliveira

10/2025

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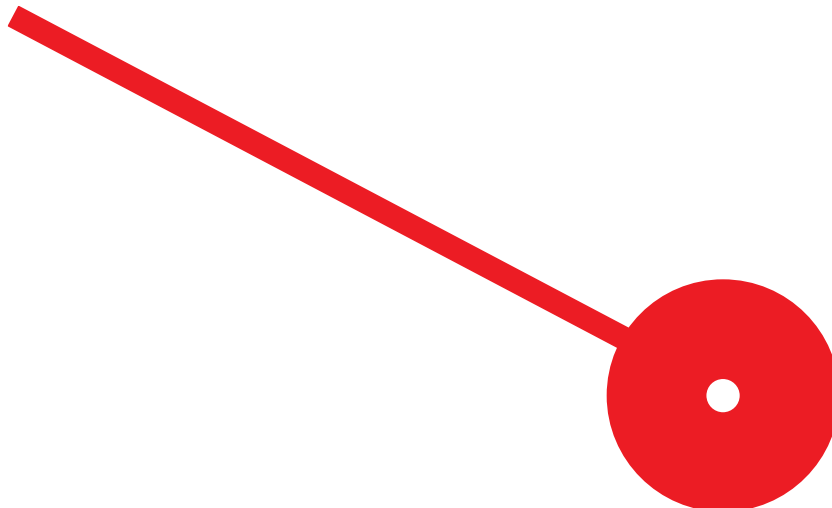




People & Experience (P&E) and Intercultural Competence (IC) as Structural Pillars for Sustainable and Innovative Organisations

Erika de Oliveira

Internship report presented to the Porto Accounting and Business School to obtain the master's degree in Intercultural Studies for Business, under the supervision of Professor Carina Cerqueira.



Dedication

Walking this path was only possible with the support of a few people, to whom I especially dedicate this project.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Cork Supply Portugal for the opportunity to carry out this internship. A special thanks to the Human Resources Department, who so kindly welcomed me and gave me the opportunity to learn. To Joana Castro, Fátima Gonçalves, Dulce Morão, Daniela Pinheiro, and Joana Teixeira, I will be eternally grateful, taking memories and lessons learned into my professional future. I am particularly grateful to Joana Castro, who guided me throughout this entire experience, sharing knowledge and experiences, always showing patience and concern for me at every moment of this journey.

Secondly, I wish to express my profound gratitude to the Master's in Intercultural Studies for Business at ISCAP and to all the professors who accompanied me. In particular, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Carina Cerqueira, for the availability, patience, and dedication with which she guided me throughout this process. Her support and guidance were essential for the completion of this report. Her professionalism and dedication to her students made me feel comfortable sharing obstacles and concerns, feeling supported at every moment. Her timely and persistent critical insight, as well as her unwavering commitment, helped to enrich every stage of this work.

I would also like to thank my friends Ricardo Silva, Mariana Pereira, and Patrícia Pinheiro for their support, patience, and unconditional motivation. I will be eternally grateful for their belief in me when I did not believe in myself. They never let me fall into discouragement and fought to help me see a positive outcome. Thanks to them, this process became lighter and transformed into an enjoyable experience.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Carla and Paulo Oliveira, the people who believe in me the most and fight for me. The care, love, and patience they have shown throughout this stage were indispensable. My parents are at the centre of every moment of my life, and it is to them that I dedicate all the achievements I attain. Without them, nothing would have been possible.

Resumo:

Este relatório explora o People & Experience (P&E) e a Competência Intercultural (CI) como pilares essenciais do sucesso organizacional no ambiente empresarial globalizado e competitivo da atualidade. O P&E coloca o bem-estar, a motivação, o envolvimento e o desenvolvimento dos colaboradores no centro da estratégia organizacional, enquanto a CI equipa indivíduos e organizações da capacidade de colaborar eficazmente através de fronteiras culturais. Em conjunto, promovem um ambiente de trabalho sustentável, inclusivo e inovador, capaz de navegar num mercado em constante evolução.

Na parte teórica deste relatório, analisaram-se modelos como a hierarquia das necessidades de Maslow, o modelo Job Demands–Resources e o guia *Harvard Work Design for Health*, que destacam a importância estrutural da motivação e do bem-estar dos colaboradores, bem como a forma como devem ser implementados numa organização. No que respeita à CI, a análise considera o processo e a pirâmide de Deardorff, a teoria da complexidade cognitiva de Arasaratnam e o modelo de Inteligência Cultural, todos eles sublinhando que a CI é uma competência desenvolvida de forma contínua através da reflexão e do apoio organizacional.

Estes conceitos foram então analisados através do meu estágio na Cork Supply. Durante esta experiência, colaborei com o departamento de Comunicação Interna e de People & Experience, participando em tarefas como a criação de conteúdos, a gestão de newsletters, a atualização da intranet, o planeamento de eventos corporativos e o desenvolvimento de iniciativas para programas internos (*We Care, Beyond Us, Taking Care of Tomorrow*). Estas atividades vão ao encontro de muitos dos princípios discutidos na literatura.

Os resultados sugerem que o P&E e a CI são iniciativas que colaboram positivamente e que permitem às organizações criar ambientes nos quais os colaboradores se sintam valorizados, motivados e conectados, ao mesmo tempo que fortalecem o seu empenho e a sua eficácia em contextos multiculturais.

Palavras-chave: People & Experience (P&E), Competência Intercultural (CI), Bem-estar, Desenvolvimento

Abstract:

This report explores People & Experience (P&E) and Intercultural Competence (IC) as essential pillars of organisational success in today's globalised and competitive business environment. P&E places employee well-being, motivation, engagement, and development at the centre of organisational strategy, while IC equips individuals and organisations with the ability to collaborate effectively across cultural boundaries. Together, they promote a sustainable, inclusive, and innovative workplace capable of navigating an ever-evolving market.

The theoretical part of this report examined models such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the Job Demands–Resources model, and the *Harvard Work Design for Health* guide, which highlight the structural importance of employee motivation and well-being, as well as how these can be implemented within organisations. Concerning IC, the analysis considers Deardorff's process and pyramid, Arasaratnam's theory of cognitive complexity, and the Cultural Intelligence framework, all of which underline that IC is a competence developed continuously through reflection and organisational support.

These concepts were then analysed through my internship at Cork Supply. During this experience, I collaborated with the Internal Communication and People & Experience department, engaging in tasks such as content creation, newsletter management, intranet updates, corporate event planning, and the development of initiatives for internal programmes (*We Care, Beyond Us, Taking Care of Tomorrow*). These activities reflected many of the principles discussed in the literature.

The findings suggest that P&E and IC are complementary strategies that enable organisations to create environments where employees feel valued, motivated, and connected, while also strengthening their commitment and effectiveness in multicultural contexts.

Key words: People & Experience (P&E), Intercultural Competence (IC), well-being, development

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List of Abbreviations

APPDI – Portuguese Association for Diversity & Inclusion

CITE – Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment, Portugal

CQ – Cultural Intelligence

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

HR – Human Resources

IC – Intercultural Competence

IPST – Portuguese Institute of Blood and Transplantation

JD-R – Job Demands–Resources Model

P&E – People & Experience

R&D – Research & Development

TCA – 2,4,6-Trichloroanisole

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalised and highly dynamic business environment, organisations are increasingly challenged to redefine their relationship with employees in order to achieve greater motivation, commitment, and lower turnover in the workforce. The contemporary workplace is shaped by globalisation, digital transformation, demographic change, and the rise of hybrid and remote work arrangements. These transformations require companies not only to compete in competitive markets but also to shift in their ways. The conversation around organisations has expanded, especially around the well-being of employees. It has become imperative to create sustainable, inclusive, and meaningful environments for their workforce. Traditional models of management are no longer enough; instead, organisations must adopt behaviours that place people at the centre of their strategy. This is the foundation of People & Experience (P&E), which emphasises employee well-being, engagement, and development as central pillars of organisational success.

The transformation that has been occurring in the organisational world has not only changed how companies approach their employees but also how people view them. Before employees started to be placed at the centre, organisations could be described as having a machine-like approach to their workforce. Although we have long parted ways with this behaviour, we are still witnessing an evolution towards a more humanistic manner. As a community, when thinking of a company, our preconceived ideas would guide us to focus on revenue, client portfolio, and global presence. Nowadays, we are more aware of the impact that employees' well-being has on a company, and tend to consider, alongside the previous indicators, the conditions provided to employees. This has led organisations to be more conscious of the culture and environment they create.

As globalisation becomes the new norm and the business market grows ever more competitive, there has been a rise in intercultural encounters within organisations. Companies with an international presence increasingly count on multicultural teams and international assignments. With the intensification of international relations, navigating cultural diversity demands more than technical skills; it demands intercultural competence (IC). Defined as the ability to communicate, act appropriately and effectively across cultural boundaries, IC has become a decisive factor for innovation, collaboration, and long-term competitiveness.

This ability to engage effectively with colleagues, clients, and partners across cultural boundaries is no longer optional. It is a necessity. This is where IC becomes essential. It can be understood as a combination of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours that enable individuals and organisations to communicate and collaborate effectively in multicultural contexts. Organisations now direct their efforts to encourage and develop IC among their workforces. This comes from the realisation that they must understand different cultures, economic environments, and communicate appropriately in order to achieve the goal of international business success. IC comes from a combination of elements that one needs to master and work on in a continuous process. It is heavily influenced by each individual's predisposition, urging self-reflection and sensitivity in every situation.

This report explores these two key concepts in an integrated way. It seeks to examine how P&E practices and IC contribute to organisational success and sustainability, while also reflecting on their application within an organisation. Together, P&E and IC represent two interconnected areas through which contemporary organisations can understand, engage, and empower their employees. The internship I undertook at Cork Supply, a company with a strong international presence and a structured employee engagement strategy, provided a valuable opportunity to observe these dynamics in practice. While the report is primarily theoretical, the internship serves as a case study that illustrates how academic frameworks are translated into organisational reality.

The main objective of this report is to contribute to the field of intercultural studies and people management by analysing the relation between P&E and IC, while also taking advantage of the knowledge provided in the Master's in Intercultural Studies for Business. The report aims to clarify conceptual definitions, explore relevant theoretical models, and critically assess how these concepts are implemented in organisational contexts.

Alongside deepening my academic knowledge, my goal is to highlight that P&E and IC are not merely abstract concepts but strategic players within the organisational world. Both areas directly influence employee motivation, retention, and engagement while also fostering innovation, creativity, and competitive advantage. By connecting these ideas to organisational practices, the report demonstrates how companies can align internal strategies with broader sustainability goals, inclusivity, and market adaptability.

In order to achieve these objectives, the report relies on two approaches. On the one hand, it draws on academic literature and theoretical models to frame P&E and IC within the wider fields of people management, intercultural studies, and organisational culture. On the other hand, it relies on insights gathered during my internship at Cork Supply. An experience that allowed me to observe how these concepts are applied in practice, particularly through internal communication strategies, employee engagement initiatives, and intercultural interactions in a company with an international scope.

The first step in developing my report was an extensive literature review, which covered books, peer-reviewed articles, and reports related to P&E, IC, organisational well-being, and innovation. This review provided the theoretical foundation necessary to discuss the concepts systematically.

Complementary to the theoretical research, my internship allowed for the integration and observation of organisational culture, international relations, and the business market. At the company, I engaged in activities related to internal communication, content creation, event planning, and employee engagement initiatives. This hands-on involvement provided a practical understanding of how P&E and IC manifest in daily organisational life. A document analysis was also undertaken, including internal communications (newsletters, intranet posts, TV Cork content), corporate documents (codes of ethics, sustainability reports), and external publications. These materials complemented my knowledge.

The internship also allowed me to grasp the reality of the difficulties in navigating the complexities of a group of around 400 people, many with different realities, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds. During my stay at Cork Supply, I had the chance to conduct interviews with two HR members of the company. These interviews offered qualitative insights into how employee engagement, communication, and interculturality are perceived and managed within the company.

In terms of P&E, several theoretical perspectives frame the discussion. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, mentioned in one of the interviews, reminds us that basic conditions of security and well-being form the foundation for motivation, and that even when these needs are guaranteed, it remains important to attend to them carefully. More recent frameworks, such as the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model (Galanakis & Tsitouri,

2022), explain how the balance between job demands and resources affects employee engagement, productivity, and health. The *Harvard Work Design for Health* toolkit (Lovejoy et al., 2024) provides a step-by-step methodology for implementing participatory well-being strategies in organisations, reminding us that every action must be carefully thought out and adjusted to the reality of the company. In addition, scholars such as Sethumadhavan (2025) and Smith (2017) highlight the role of psychological well-being, positive organisational culture, and alignment of employee experience with corporate strategy. Together, these perspectives justify the importance of P&E in contemporary management.

In terms of IC, the theoretical grounding is equally rich. Deardorff (2006) proposed both a pyramid and a process model that emphasise attitudes (respect, openness, curiosity), knowledge (cultural self-awareness and cultural contexts), and skills (listening, interpreting, relating), underlining that it is a never-ending, cyclical process. Arasaratnam (2016) advanced the notion of cognitive complexity, mindfulness, and intercultural motivation as crucial traits. The concept of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) (Araújo, 2022) further operationalises IC into measurable dimensions: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural. Despite their differences, these models converge on the idea that IC is not innate but must be cultivated through reflection, practice, and organisational support.

The interconnection of P&E and IC is particularly significant. P&E focuses on creating environments where employees feel valued, motivated, and connected to organisational culture. IC equips individuals and organisations to navigate diversity effectively. Together, they represent two different angles of the same goal, the capacity to put people first while embracing the intercultural realities of the modern workplace. This idea is what makes their study both academically and practically relevant.

To address all of these theories, the report is organised into three chapters. The first chapter introduces the concept of P&E, examining its evolution, strategic importance, and implementation strategies. It discusses models and frameworks that shape employee experience, focusing on well-being, recognition, career development, inclusion, and organisational culture. It also explores the challenges of implementing P&E in dynamic business environments. The second chapter focuses on IC, situating it within the context of globalisation and multicultural workplaces. It presents key models of intercultural

development, analyses the impact of cultural diversity on people management, and highlights the role of IC in fostering collaboration, innovation, and ethical responsibility. The chapter also considers how IC can be developed at both individual and organisational levels. The third chapter presents the internship experience at Cork Supply. It begins with the selection process and presentation of the company, followed by an overview of its history, mission, and sustainability initiatives. It then details the activities and functions I performed, including internal communication, employee engagement, and corporate social responsibility projects. The chapter concludes with a reflection on challenges faced, lessons learned, and personal growth.

In summary, this introduction has outlined the context, objectives, relevance, methodology, and structure of the present report. By focusing on P&E and IC, the study addresses two interconnected dimensions that are increasingly decisive in organisational life. The internship at Cork Supply served as an opportunity to connect theoretical knowledge with practical application, offering a valuable platform to explore how organisations can design meaningful employee experiences while navigating cultural diversity.

The central argument of the report is that P&E and IC must be understood not as isolated initiatives but as structural pillars of sustainable and innovative organisations. By integrating these dimensions, companies can create environments where employees feel valued, motivated, and connected, while also enhancing their ability to operate effectively in a globalised world

CHAPTER I – PEOPLE & EXPERIENCE

1 The implementation of People & Experience in companies

As we observe the conversation around People & Experience growing in the business world, we also notice a shift away from traditional ways of managing staff and towards a more mindful approach. There are several movements in time where the transformation in the importance of the worker is translated into various measures. Today, we live in a more holistic approach, where people and experience are expressions of that. This approach focuses on attending to employees' well-being and validating their wants and needs, helping to secure their motivation and meet their expectations.

The chapter aims to acknowledge the fundamental concepts of People & Experience, exploring and analysing their impact on the business world, which is constantly evolving and changing. It aims to understand its power within organisational culture, productivity, and market strategy. While navigating the seemingly simple nature of the concept, it also intends to dwell on its challenges.

1.1 Conceptual discussion: the concept of People & Experience

Nowadays, when we think of a company, our initial thoughts tend to focus on indicators such as annual revenue, client portfolio, global reach, and level of digitalisation. As a society, we generally do not consider employee well-being when characterising a company, nor do we reflect on how it may impact the organisation's performance and long-term sustainability. However, a company is fundamentally made up of people, its partners, its clients, and its employees. The last one plays a crucial role in shaping the company's identity and reputation, with the ability to influence all areas of the organisation through their actions. (Harris, 2007)

Within this line of thought, it becomes essential to highlight the importance of organisations taking steps to improve and strengthen their relationship with employees. This leads us to the concept of People & Experience (P&E). This approach places employees at the centre of organisational strategy, recognising that the experience they have within the company directly influences their motivation, performance, and talent retention. Companies have come to understand that employee actions have the power to shape the relationship between the organisation and its clients, either strengthening or weakening that connection. Moreover, employees play a key role in conveying the company's values and intentions to its external audiences. Satisfied and motivated

employees contribute to increased sales, greater visibility, and enhanced customer loyalty. (Harris, 2007)

P&E is the area within an organisation that focuses on employees, more specifically on how they perceive the company's purpose and their role within it. One of the core goals of this department is to help employees understand their function and how their contributions impact the organisation. This understanding fosters a stronger sense of belonging and emotional connection to their work and can also make them more resilient in the face of internal changes. When a company demonstrates genuine interest in employee well-being, it fosters greater inclusion, higher satisfaction, and a deeper emotional connection to the workplace. In essence, P&E is the part of the organisation that places people at the centre, nurturing their relationship with the company's goals, functions, and culture. It recognises the power of ensuring improved employee engagement, performance, motivation, and overall well-being. (Harris, 2007; Panneerselvam et al, 2025)

In today's dynamic professional landscape, there has been a significant shift in what employees expect or wish for in their work. People no longer view work solely as a means to earn a living, but also as a path to achieving a quality of life, fulfilment, and a sense of contentment. Still, work remains a means to an end; we work to sustain a healthy life. Yet, in today's world, it begs the question: "Why shouldn't we want to feel happy where we work?" or "Why would I work hard for a company that doesn't meet my basic wants and needs?" These questions are especially relevant among the younger generations, who have entered the workforce in recent years with a different set of expectations and values. (Li & Yang, 2023)

However, many companies struggle to keep up because everything around them is constantly changing. It's not just that people expect more from their jobs; there's also growing pressure from rapid technological advancements, frequent market disruptions, economic uncertainty, the rise of remote and hybrid work, artificial intelligence, and ever-evolving customer demands. While digital methods and market systems are advancing rapidly, many companies still operate with outdated, inefficient, and manual HR processes that hinder engagement and limit the organisation's ability to retain talent, making them unable to manage and engage their employees. This creates a significant distance between what today's workforce needs and what most companies are prepared to offer. (Li & Yang, 2023; Panneerselvam et al, 2025)

This is where P&E becomes essential. In a world where change is the norm, employees become one of the few stable assets a company has, and often its most valuable one. As organisations begin to understand that long-term success is directly tied to how people feel at work, there's a noticeable shift towards placing employees at the heart of business strategy (Harris, 2007). When employee experience is ignored or undervalued, the consequences become apparent. This can be seen through disengagement, poor collaboration, low morale, and reduced performance. On the other hand, when people feel seen, heard, and supported, they are more motivated, resilient, and aligned with the organisation's mission and goals. (Li & Yang, 2023; Panneerselvam et al, 2025)

As companies grow to understand that creating a workplace that is enjoyable and meaningful for employees is essential to business success, there has been a rise in departments dedicated to this mission within Human Resources. Although the objectives of these departments are becoming more clearly defined, there is still no single, universal name for them.

Companies adopt different terms according to their culture, priorities, or communication style. The most common name is "Employee Experience", which is widely used to describe this area. However, several other terms are also in use. For instance, Google, recognised for prioritising its employees, demonstrating their commitment to creating a safe and motivated place of work, earning it the reputation as one of the best companies to work for, uses "People Operations" to identify the department that is responsible for the positive environment in the company (Dahunsi, 2023). The IT operations company Atomicwork uses the term "Employee Success" (Atomicwork, 2025), while others prefer "People & Culture" or "Talent Experience". This paper adopts the term People & Experience, the same as the company Cork Supply, as it better suits the communication style used.

Although there has been more recent discussion of implementing departments dedicated to employee well-being, the concept itself has been studied for many years. Even before terms like 'People & Experience' gained popularity, there was talk of organisational commitment, internal marketing, endomarketing, organisational happiness, and engagement, concepts that aimed to align the organisation's objectives with the interests and motivation of its employees.

According to Rong & Cao (2015), the first step towards the P&E ideology can be seen in Howard Becker's work in 1960. Becker understood that work goes beyond simply performing a task. People often stay in their jobs even when it no longer makes sense, due to other motives he called "side bets." These side bets refer to the investments that people make while working, which are not necessarily the reason they took the job, yet they are a strong reason why they stay. Money is a significant factor, but not the only one. The reputation built in the workplace, the fear of starting over, the relationships formed, and the comfort of routine all contribute to making it harder for people to leave their jobs. Over time, people tend to accumulate more side bets without even realising it. They shape their lives around their jobs, which makes the decision to leave harder. (Becker, 1960, pp. 32–40)

Fast forward to the 1990s, and we see a growth in the understanding that organisations that attend to and hear their employees have an opportunity to achieve greater returns for them. Scholars like Saul Bekin, Berry, and Grönroos outlined the importance of companies adopting strategies tailored specifically for their workers, with the same intensity as they do for their customers. During this period, and thanks to the work of these authors, we see changes in the organisational conversations and people's behaviour towards their companies (Delgado, 2015). Looking at the work of Berry, we see that he was the first to refer to employees as "internal customers", a small yet impactful change, which amplified the employees' significance and role in the company, and also the conversation surrounding the business world. (Bohnenberger et al, 2019)

Berry's work in internal marketing began in 1971 and experienced key breakthroughs in the early 1980s and 1990s, all intending to prove that developing dedicated strategies for employees could enhance organisational performance. The model permitted the alignment of the company culture with human resource needs to more effectively achieve customer-related goals. In 1992, alongside Parasuraman, he developed a more formal internal marketing model. This model emphasised the need for organisations to attend to their employees' needs, just as they would with a customer (Bohnenberger et al, 2019; Delgado, 2015). It also reminded the organisation that these internal measures need to be done in continuous motion; they should evolve with employees and organisational dynamics. It worked as the base plan for organisations to work from the inside out to achieve their goals. It is believed that the simplicity of the fact that happy employees lead

to happy customers, which consequently leads to greater returns. (Bohnenberger et al, 2019)

Around the time Berry developed his internal marketing model, Grönroos also introduced one of his own. In his model, he argued that the same strategic marketing efforts a company uses for its external audience can also be applied internally (Delgado, 2015). The goal was to motivate employees and highlight their importance within the organisation, promoting job satisfaction and a stronger connection to the company, which are also key factors influencing the customer experience. Grönroos also made an interesting point about the role of leaders in making all of this work. He saw them as key players, since they are the authority figures closest to the employees. Through them, employees receive feedback, get exposed to the company culture, are encouraged to communicate openly, and are made to feel part of the process. All of this contributes to building a sense of belonging. At the core of the practices Grönroos outlines, we find internal communication, a factor also emphasised by Berry. For employees to feel connected and valued, they must be informed about what the company is doing and where it's going. (Bohnenberger et al, 2019)

It is based on the belief that as employees begin to feel like they are truly part of the company, they care more about its direction and success, actively contributing to business development and their own professional growth. In this sense, work is no longer seen simply as a job, but as a vocation. (Delgado, 2015)

Rafiq & Ahmed (2000) are often mentioned in the work of Brown et al (2025) and Bohnenberger et al (2019), as their model helped shape what we now understand as P&E. Their idea is that for this approach to really work, it needs to involve the whole company, not just the HR department. They argue that different departments should work together when it comes to designing and applying these practices. The goal is to avoid departments becoming disconnected from the rest of the organisation and to create a more collaborative environment. They also reinforce the idea that the same mindset used for external marketing should be applied internally, toward employees. All of this is meant to help people feel more in touch with the business and more motivated to engage with the company in a real, enthusiastic way.

In more recent years, we have the research of El-Sayed et al (2021), whose work emphasised that a strong organisational culture can foster greater job commitment, which

in turn has a positive impact on sustainable development, in the main areas (economic, environmental, and social). They stressed that companies need to work towards building a strong, motivated, and positive culture, which we can interpret as establishing a solid P&E department, as this directly influences how committed employees feel. Having committed employees is essential, as they tend to demonstrate a stronger work ethic and deeper engagement with organisational goals.

During the present work, I will mainly use the definition provided by the human resources manager, Fátima Gonçalves, from Cork Supply in the interview previously conducted. Cork Supply understands that P&E reflects the entire experience that the worker, or even the non-worker, has with the company. The worker's experience begins with the first interaction that someone has with the organisation, stating that it starts as early as the initial conversation with the candidates during recruitment, up until they leave the company (G. Fátima, personal communication, April 23 2025). As stated before, the theory provides the same view as the company does, in the sense that, "from the time a potential employee views the job opening at a company to the time they leave the company, all factors that employees experience during this time constitute the complete concept of EX (P&E)" (Plaskoff, 2017, as cited in Yang & Zhang, 2025, p.3).

Cork Supply has a well-organised P&E department, understanding it as "everything that organisations do to ensure that the worker's experience within and with the organisation is the best possible, allowing professional development and making people feel a sense of growth and progress" (G. Fátima, personal communication, 23 April 2025, *my own translation*). P&E pushes organisations to reflect on their actions and analyse the discrepancies in the level of attention given to customers versus employees. It reinforces the notion that it is an ongoing process that must continuously respond to employees' evolving needs and expectations. (Plaskoff, 2017, as cited in Yang & Zhang, 2025).

To further understand the line of thought of Cork Supply and Yang & Zhang (2025), we look at the following figure:

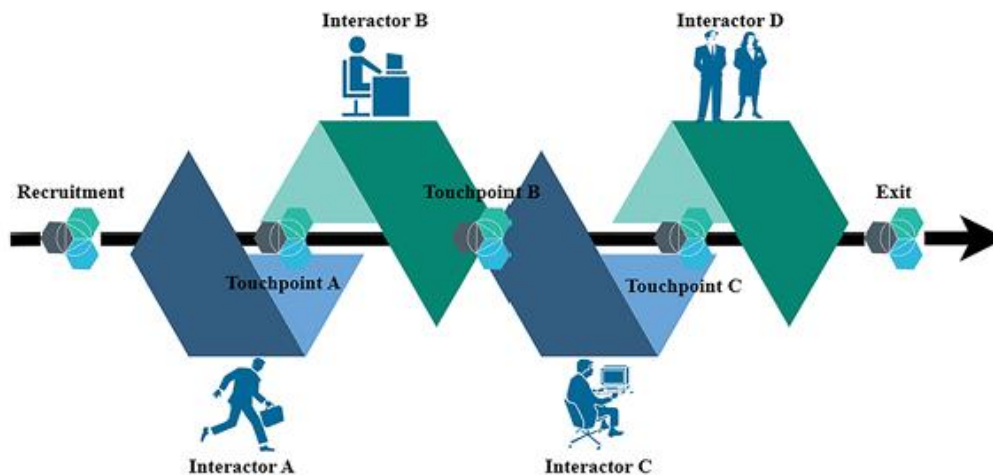


Figure 1: P&E journey map.
Source: Yang & Zhang (2025, p.4)

The figure provided by Yang & Zhang (2025) showcases the journey of P&E in an organisation. Highlighting the different key moments (touchpoints) of an employee's career, from recruitment to exit, and all of the people and factors (interactors) that have an impact on set moments.

Harris (2007), refers that “If consistency of brand experience is sought, this definition suggests the need for a balanced focus of nurturing and serving internal and external relationships.” (p.103), and in that sense, Cork Supply, looks to find the interests and the hobbies of their employees with the goal of offering internal activities that make them feel valued and as part of the organisation.

Examining the numerous authors who have investigated the necessity for organisations to implement strategies that provide joy, encouragement, fulfilment, motivation, and protection to their employees, we can see that this topic has been explored and validated from various angles. The need to improve employee productivity has always been present, and these studies show that the responsibility lies in the hands of the organisation. Companies have the power to improve their employees’ quality of life, and in doing so, they also optimise their own results.

1.2 People & Experience: New job market: New generation of employees

As we have become accustomed to, everything is constantly evolving, especially in the business world, which means that companies must make significant efforts to adapt to the new market. Technological advances, economic instability, geopolitical shifts, the urgent

need for environmental sustainability, and demographic changes are all factors transforming the market and will continue to do so through 2030. (Zahidi, 2025)

The increasing presence of younger generations in the workplace has led organisations to adapt their development strategies in order to meet evolving expectations. As noted by Fátima Gonçalves (personal communication, 23 April 2025, *my own translation*), “we’re making more and more efforts to invest in training, to create different learning methods like gamification, and to really give people the chance to learn in their own way. Microlearning is also something we’re working on, giving each person the opportunity to learn according to what works best for them. So that’s also a big part of it”. This aligns with recent research showing that “the new-generation employees have higher requirements for perceived organisational support [...] to provide them with resources and space for personality development” (Lu et al, 2023; Shi et al, 2017, as cited in Li & Yang, 2025). Together, these perspectives demonstrate the growing demand for flexible, personalised learning environments and the importance of organisations actively supporting both professional and personal growth to retain and engage younger talent.

Following the circle of life, we naturally see, over the course of time, generations fading from the workforce, others dominating the market, and new ones entering. Currently, we see that Millennials have an established position in the workforce, and Generation Z is entering in growing numbers. Keeping track of this fluctuation is crucial, as with the entrance of new demographics also come new ideas, methods, and expectations. (Eurostat, 2025)

Looking at some recent data from Eurostat (Figure 2), we can better understand the current labour market. In 2024, the employment rate among young people aged 15–24 was 37.1% for men and 32.7% for women. Among older people aged 55–64, the rate reached 71.4% for men and 59.4% for women. We see the younger generation slowly entering the market and gaining some space. Although with their entrance, we still see a bigger space taken from the older workers who, in more recent years, saw an even bigger stability, which can be attributed to the harsh economic state of 2020. (Eurostat, 2025)

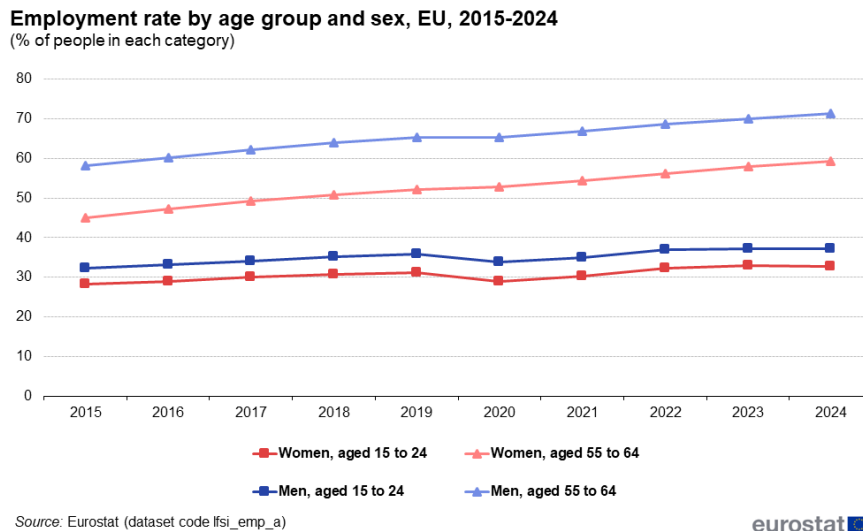


Figure 2: Employment rate by age group and sex in the EU
Source: Eurostat, 2025

Within these demographic changes, we see a shift in what people seek from their jobs and a rearrangement of their priorities in both life and work. People now have a new vision of the lifestyle they want, which strongly influences their approach to work. The shift occurring in companies due to demographic changes can be felt even more strongly as the younger generation enters the business world. (Trifan & Pantea, 2024)

These changes in the workers' needs and wants for a job aren't just from the latest generation (Generation Z). They were brought up by Generation Y, also known as millennials. This generation, which has a strong position in the market, has already parted ways with the traditional forms of thinking about what work should be. They looked for balance in all parts of their lives. With the entrance of Generation Z into the work scene, we see the need for balance even further (Racolța-Paina & Irini, 2021). With both generations, we're seeing a real change in the workforce mentality, and it's starting to influence both the organisational culture and the overall work environment. (Trifan & Pantea, 2024)

To put it simply, older generations were made to believe that work had to come first, no matter what, not really allowing themselves to care whether it had negative consequences for them in their personal lives. However, with the new workforce coming into the market, we see this ideology shift. The younger generation is not necessarily putting their job at the forefront, but this doesn't mean that they aren't ambitious or dedicated to their task within an organisation. They have come to the realisation that work and life can coexist;

one doesn't need to compromise the joy in life. They have made it all about work-life balance. (Trifan & Pantea, 2024)

One of the main ambitions of the P&E team is to retain talent, which leads us to a work-life balance. The idea, brought forward by the newer generations, of keeping a professional and personal life in balance has become a major factor in whether someone decides to stay with or leave a company. A company that can offer this lifestyle to the employee immediately becomes more attractive, as it encourages them to work and to stay. For many younger employees, work-life balance is almost non-negotiable. This is pushing companies to readjust their policies, rethink their culture, and take a serious look at how they can support this balance. Understanding the needs and priorities of this generation is crucial, and it's an ongoing responsibility for those working in People & Experience. (Trifan & Pantea, 2024)

Today's employees want more than just a paycheck. They want to build a career, they're after competitive compensation, they want to feel challenged and supported in their roles, and they want opportunities to make a real impact within the company, all without having to compromise other important parts of their lives. Nevertheless, the basics still play a fundamental role in what they're looking for; they want a company with stability and a trustworthy structure, health care benefits and flexibility within the company. These are all characteristics that the company needs to take into account when working towards attracting and retaining employees. (Racolța-Paina & Irini, 2021)

Generation Z is the new wave of workers entering the job market. and with them comes a whole different set of characteristics. They are quite a unique group of people, as they are the first to not know what it is to live without technologies or the internet. It influences the way they think, how they take in information, and how they see the world. they grew with the power of information at the distance of a button (Gomez et al, 2019). Their connection to technology is not only one of their biggest characteristics but is also one of the most appreciated by the business world. As the market continuously evolves to a more technological this asset becomes essential to help the company navigate its evolution. (Racolța-Paina & Irini, 2021)

According to Racolța-Paina and Irini (2021), HR professionals see the entering of the new generation as enriching, seeing that they have the ability to improve professionalism and productivity. They are known for their different mindsets, priorities, values and traits.

They have broadened the definition of what diversity is, not just limiting it to gender and race, and they deeply care about it. Their view on the world is also different as they are impacted by wealth inequality, rising living costs and a more expensive academic life, influencing how they view stability, career development, and financial goals (Gomez et al, 2019). They are open to change, accept it as part of the organisational culture. They are enthusiastic, ambitious, socially conscious, independent, with a critical entrepreneurial mindset, and dynamic, and their attitudes and expectancies of what work should be is, set an example for the older generations, breaking down the barriers constructed upon outdated perceptions. (Racolța-Paina & Irini, 2021; Gomez et al, 2019)

With Generation Z, some challenges have also been identified. For example, they're sometimes seen as having unrealistic salary expectations and a constant need for development through ongoing training programs. They've also been the target of certain stereotypes, like being too dependent on technology, lacking social skills, or not committing to companies long-term (Racolța-Paina & Irini, 2021; Gomez et al, 2019). As the authors Racolța-Paina and Irini (2021) remind us, we must bear in mind that these are only generalisations; focusing on them alone can be misleading. We may be talking about a large group of people, but we must not forget that each person is different and may not follow these characteristics. In this generation, each individual is a person and follows their true self.

In order for a company to address both the positive and negative traits of Generation Z, it needs to make some adjustments to attract and retain them. They're offering more attractive extra-salary packages, flexible work arrangements, well-being initiatives, better benefits, mental health support, and clear, open communication. While companies adapt to these new employees and their needs, they also need to find ways to stand out from other organisations. One of the ways they can do this is by offering specific, unique benefits (O'Boyle et al, 2017).

1.3 Strategies for implementing People & Experience

This part of the paper aims to explore the different strategies for implementing People & Experience within an organisation. To ensure the implementation is successful, the topic will be broken down into different parts. We'll look at the various steps involved in creating a positive work environment, starting with meeting employees' basic needs, then analysing the key strategies for effective implementation, and ending with practices to

foster a healthy and supportive workplace culture. To finish, we also look at the tools and methods that allow companies not just to keep track of the success of these strategies but also allow them to enhance and continue the work of P&E.

The chapter draws on insights from the book *The Fulfilling Workplace* (2013), research papers, reports, and interviews with Fátima Gonçalves on the 23rd of April 2025 and Joana Castro on the 22nd of April 2025, from the HR team at Cork Supply.

1.3.1 Procedures for creating a positive working environment

After comprehending the need for companies to adopt People & Experience practices to enhance work-life balance and consequently, the personal life of employees, it's important to think about how these practices can actually be integrated into an organisation. We have to note that this is a process that takes time. Although there is a need for change and adjustments in how organisations approach their workers, the truth is that the market, leaders, and people have become accustomed to systems that don't always put workers first. We've also mentioned the importance of routine, and how people revolve their whole lives around it. With this in mind, implementing P&E in an organisation needs to be strategised and carefully studied. It is a continuous process that must be adjusted to the company's and people's reality. Introducing new ways all at once and changing someone's routine and habits is usually not well received, sometimes not even by those who originally asked for it.

Before building something strong, there must be a foundation that can be trusted. In this line of thought, before defining and implementing any P&E practices, it is essential to ensure that the basic needs of employees are respected and guaranteed. This includes ensuring that they work in adequate physical conditions, with proper space, that fair contracts protect them, receive their salaries on time, and are provided both psychological and physical safety, and that their legal rights and labour protections are respected at all times.

In an interview conducted with Fátima Gonçalves (personal communication, April 23 2025), she stressed that any approach to P&E must begin with the securing and respect of the necessities and rights of the employees. When asked about the pillars supporting the company's approach to P&E, she mentioned the importance of building upon the needs described in Maslow's pyramid. Only after the company guarantees salary, legal compliance, the right to social security contributions, and other essentials can it evolve to

meet the higher-level needs of its employees. Without those secured, the company cannot start developing its P&E strategies, strategies that deal with self-esteem, challenge and role development, the promotion of health and well-being, and the establishment of communication across the whole structure. (G. Fátima, personal communication, April 23, 2025)

To fully understand what these basic needs are, we will look at one of the oldest and most used models referenced by Fátima Gonçalves (personal communication, April 23 2025), the Maslow pyramid. The theory in question was first introduced in 1943 and continued to evolve and expand over time. A more complete version was later published by the American psychologist Abraham Maslow in his 1954 book *Motivation and Personality*. (Tay & Diener, 2011, as cited in Ghaleb, 2024).

The pyramid has as its foundation the Physiological Needs. At this level, we find all the necessities that are essential to human life, such as food, water, shelter, rest, sleep, and air, among others, that are crucial for survival. Given their importance, these needs take priority over the other levels in the hierarchy. They are placed at the very base of the pyramid, as they must be the first to be addressed before any other needs can become motivating factors. (Pichère, 2015)

After physiological needs are met, the next level in Maslow's hierarchy is safety needs. According to Trivedi and Mehta (2019), they relate this level to "needs connected with the psychological fear of loss of job, property, natural calamities or hazards, etc" (p.39). Maslow links this level to job security, insurance, safe working conditions, or a stable income.

After the two needs above are met, comes the social need. This level in the hierarchy relates to the need for belonging, to feel accepted, and to build meaningful relationships. Connecting with others is in the nature of everyone, people seek to be part of a community that sees and hears them. At this stage of the hierarchy, it becomes especially important for organisations to cultivate a positive environment that encourages healthy interactions and close relationships with colleagues and superiors. (Trivedi & Mehta, 2019)

As we continue up the pyramid, we reach the next level, esteem needs. People want to succeed in their work; they spend the vast majority of their time fulfilling their tasks and strive to do them as best as they can. Individuals seek validation, respect, and ultimately growth within their roles. The desire for recognition, influence, and higher positions starts

to take place. These needs can be addressed through the recognition of their efforts, appreciation from colleagues and superiors, and opportunities for professional development. (Trivedi & Mehta, 2019)

At the top of the pyramid, we find the need for self-actualisation. This level is a bit more complex than the ones below it. While in the other levels the people surrounding the individual can have a direct role in helping fulfil their needs, in this one, it is not the case (Pichère, 2015). The need for self-actualisation comes from the person themselves as they seek to achieve something that has meaning to them; they want to feel as if they have done something that matters. To do so, they need to feel as if they have done everything that they could. It is believed that everyone has the ability to reach this level, yet recognises that only a few people do. (Trivedi & Mehta, 2019)

Maslow theorised that, in order to achieve overall well-being, individuals must have their fundamental psychological and emotional needs met. Wahba and Bridwell (1976) attributed the significance of Maslow's work to the fact that it "provides both a theory of human motives by classifying basic human needs in a hierarchy, and a theory of human motivation that relates these needs to general behaviour" (p. 213). To assist in the understanding of these needs, he organised them into a hierarchical structure, starting with necessities such as food and safety, and gradually ascending to higher-level needs like self-esteem and personal fulfilment. One of the most crucial aspects of Maslow's pyramid is that it does not have cultural limitations; the needs outlined are considered universal. (Tay & Diener, 2011, as cited in Ghaleb, 2024)

It becomes crucial to secure these basic needs because when individuals do not have their essentials met, those needs become their focus. The absence of fundamental necessities prevents employees from fully committing, performing, or even feeling motivated. These needs are non-negotiable for the development of a healthy and productive work environment. Still, within the range of People & Experience, it's important to understand that fulfilling the basics does not work as a motivating tool. As Maslow showcased in his theory, once a basic need is satisfied, it no longer motivates behaviour; it only does so when it's missing. So, when these needs are met, attention shifts to higher-level needs like recognition, sense of belonging, and personal growth. That's why, although securing the basics is essential, motivation depends on addressing other levels of need. (Trivedi & Mehta, 2019)

1.3.2 Implementing with Awareness: A Strategic and Sensitive Approach

After ensuring the basic needs of employees are met, it is then truly possible to move forward with the implementation of P&E strategies. This implementation must be carried out carefully, with awareness of the company's context and the specific characteristics of the people within it.

In an interview with Fátima Gonçalves, it became clear that the process of implementing actions in this area requires a multifaceted approach, focused on providing a positive experience for employees in all their interactions with the organisation. The interviewee further emphasises that the success of this area depends on its alignment with the company's strategic goals:

The employee experience addresses all these issues, so it is an area that must go hand in hand with the company's strategy, because this strategy of having internal potential, having good employees, having people who are truly committed to the organization and who give their best and innovate which is one of the very important components of the organization is only truly possible if this is actively developed, and that area exists for that purpose as well. (G. Fátima personal communication, April 23, 2025, *my own Translation*)

In addition, the interviewee highlights the need for the company to truly know its employees, so that the measures implemented actually make sense and are adjusted to the reality of those who work there. For Fátima Gonçalves, the magnitude of P&E goes beyond the workplace and touches on personal dimensions of individuals:

Employee experience also often goes beyond the work itself, doesn't it? It's about the company being aware of the interests and hobbies of the people who are here, in order to also provide internal activities that can make them feel valued and feel that their hobbies, their strengths, and their talents are also part of the organisation. (G. Fátima, personal communication, April 23, 2025, *my own Translation*)

This line of thought is also supported by Joana Castro from People & Communication at Cork Supply. According to her, the P&E department must position itself strategically in order to ensure that all values and objectives are clearly communicated to employees, as well as to guarantee a closer connection between leadership and the teams:

Basically, it supports here strategically not only what is the core and the business of the company, through, for example, communication with its employees [...]. It is essential that there is a department that supports the management, the leadership itself, that provides very close follow-up, so that it ensures a message is conveyed that is clear and aligned with the business objectives and also with the ways of thinking of Cork Supply. (C. Joana, personal communication, April 23, 2025, *my own Translation*)

Complementarily, Joana Castro highlights that the implementation of People & Experience strategies must carefully consider all key moments in the employee journey within the organisation. This view aligns with the perspective of Yang and Zhang (2025), who also emphasise the importance of these moments as strategic opportunities to reinforce the objectives and values promoted by the P&E area. By recognising and acting on these critical phases, from the initial onboarding to the employee's exit, organisations are better able to align the employee experience with the company's culture and objectives.

Joana Castro stressed that at every stage of the People & Experience practices, the core values and culture of the company must be present. She highlighted that not only does P&E need to be involved throughout the entire employee journey (from the interview to the exit), but also that these moments are key to reinforcing the company's image. These moments and the spread of the company's image do not happen naturally; a lot depends on leadership, as they are an important vessel of encouragement, support, and communication. Leadership plays a crucial role as a consistent force in spreading company values to the teams while also ensuring their commitment to the organisation. (C. Joana, personal communication, April 23, 2025)

In line with the ideologies shared by the Cork Supply team, there are theoretical frameworks that complement and reinforce these practices. One such framework is the model proposed in the *Work Design for Health* guide. This framework and toolkit were jointly developed by researchers from the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the MIT Sloan School of Management. Conducted by Lovejoy et al (2024), the guide outlines a participatory approach to implementing strategies that foster well-being within organisations. This model is based on five essential steps: starting the conversation about workplace well-being; identifying existing problems; developing an action plan;

implementing the defined measures; and reviewing the results achieved. It is a methodology grounded in scientific evidence from organisational science and implementation science, emphasising the importance of involving both employees and leadership at every stage of the process. In doing so, it ensures that the initiatives are aligned with the organisation's reality and are truly effective in improving the employee experience. (Lovejoy et al, 2024)

The first step presented in the *Work Design for Health* model is “starting the conversation,” a seemingly simple gesture but one with great impact, as it triggers all the subsequent actions the organisation intends to implement. This initial moment is fundamental to ensure a clear understanding, across all areas of the company, of the intentions and objectives of the initiative. Starting the conversation means creating a safe and welcoming space where dialogue is encouraged, where people feel heard and valued, and where they have the freedom to express their opinions, concerns, and suggestions. (Lovejoy et al, 2024)

The model further states that, for this stage to be successful, it is essential to involve all levels of the organisation, from leadership to frontline employees, ensuring a participatory and inclusive approach (Lovejoy et al, 2024). This view aligns with what Joana Castro highlighted in her interview, emphasising that the implementation of P&E practices can only reach its true potential if there is an active effort to bring employees closer and involve leadership:

It is essential that there is a department that supports management, the leadership itself, that provides very close follow-up [...] so that it ensures that it conveys a message that is clear and aligned with the business objectives and ways of thinking of Cork Supply. (C. Joana personal communication, April 23, 2025, *my own translation*)

Still within the scope of this first step, the model recommends that the approach be carried out carefully and progressively, in order to avoid a sudden disruption to the organisation's reality. It is important to consider the right moment to initiate change, as well as the people involved and their reactions to the proposed initiatives. This sensitivity to context is essential to ensure employee engagement and acceptance, minimising resistance and increasing the chances of success (Lovejoy et al, 2024). This logic is clearly adopted by Cork Supply, which seeks to start all its actions in an organic way and aligns with the

company's culture, always paying attention to the impact of the initiatives and employee feedback. (G. Fátima, personal communication, April 23, 2025; C. Joana, personal communication, April 22, 2025)

Within this line of thought, the *Work Design for Health* model also emphasises the importance of choosing the right moment to put initiatives into practice. The launch of projects within People & Experience should avoid periods of organisational instability or work overload. If an initiative is implemented at a time when employees and leaders are already under pressure, the result may be disinterest or even resistance from the teams, in addition to increased tension and frustration (Lovejoy et al, 2024). This perspective is equally shared by Fátima Gonçalves (personal communication, April 23, 2025, *my own translation*), who recalls the importance of adjusting measures to the organisation's context and to the specificities of each individual.

The second step proposed in the *Work Design for Health* model is to identify the problem, in this case, the factors affecting the health and well-being of the company's employees. For any initiative to have a real impact and truly fit the organisation's reality, it is essential that decisions are based on concrete data obtained through diagnostic tools adjusted to the company's context (Lovejoy et al, 2024). This idea aligns with the approach defended by the Cork Supply team, which emphasises the importance of maintaining constant attention to the reality of employees and adjusting measures to their specific needs (G. Fátima, personal communication, April 23, 2025; C. Joana, personal communication, April 22, 2025)

The model proposes that this phase be guided by three fundamental principles of work: control over work, work demands, and social relationships in the workplace. These are aspects that, according to scientific literature, are at the root of most situations of occupational stress, burnout, and professional dissatisfaction. Thus, data collection should focus on identifying risk factors associated with these dimensions, but also on areas of strength that can be leveraged as a basis for effective solutions. (Lovejoy et al, 2024)

The third step of the model concerns the creation of an action plan. This step marks the actual implementation. The foundation of this step lies with the teams, who are tasked with defining priorities based on the information gathered from the previous steps. For results to be noticeable, measures need to be implemented gradually, using few resources

but with the capacity to gain visibility and foster motivation, all alongside more elaborate and long-term implementations. The model emphasises the need for plans to have clear, measurable, and communicable objectives, and above all, for concrete steps to be defined, as well as the necessary resources. A crucial aspect highlighted by the guide in this step is the importance of the plan always considering the differences between departments and work teams, in order to avoid inequalities among them. (Lovejoy et al, 2024)

The fourth step, act, is directly linked to the implementation of the planned actions and highlights the importance of continuous monitoring to ensure the process proceeds according to the established plan, allowing for quick interventions whenever necessary and preventing unforeseen events. For this monitoring to be productive, it is necessary to create specific moments dedicated to this review, such as regular meetings with the teams, where the implementation plan can be reviewed, feedback collected, and the progress of the actions evaluated. (Lovejoy et al, 2024)

The model emphasises that monitoring does not need to be a formal or bureaucratic process. It can be carried out through simple methods, such as marking completed steps on a visual board, tracking participation in activities, making informal observations, or conducting regular check-ins with employees and managers (Lovejoy et al, 2024). It is also important to note an aspect mentioned not only by the model but also by Fátima Gonçalves and Joana Castro: communication. Maintaining clear, regular, and accessible communication with leadership and employees is fundamental to the success of the initiative. Using existing channels helps to disseminate progress, increasing interest and engagement from all involved (G. Fátima, personal communication, April 23, 2025; C. Joana, personal communication, April 22, 2025).

The fifth and final step presented in the *Work Design for Health* model is to review the results. This consists of periodically assessing whether the objectives defined in the action plan are being met. This evaluation is essential to understand the impact of the implemented initiatives and to identify necessary adjustments that can improve outcomes. Through the evaluation of results, those responsible for P&E can clearly understand what has been achieved and what remains to be accomplished, identify areas that need to be reassessed, and highlight new issues to be addressed. All this evaluation should be carried out strategically, understanding that some changes may require more time for their impact to be felt within the company. (Lovejoy et al, 2024)

This step closely relates to the second step of the model, using the same logic and tools so that the process remains coherent and P&E has the possibility to compare metrics throughout the implementation process. (Lovejoy et al, 2024)

One of the most important aspects of this step is the communication of results within the organisation. This communication allows for emphasising the value of the project and bringing employees closer to the initiative. Furthermore, it can go even further, sharing the results can be tailored to different audiences within the organisation, framed according to the varying interests of each group. (Lovejoy et al, 2024)

1.3.3 Fostering Positivity in the Workplace: Key Practices

For P&E's strategies, the company must ensure that there is an environment where they can flourish and actually have the chance to fulfil their goals. According to Fátima Gonçalves, the pillars that support the employee experience in the company are fundamentally based on three main dimensions: 1) health and well-being, 2) professional development, and 3) internal communication. She also highlights the importance of the basic needs in Maslow's hierarchy, previously described in this report, emphasising that “everything that is worked on, all the factors related to the development of self-esteem, and the idea that the person feels they are being developed and also challenged” (my *own translation*) are essential for employee motivation and engagement. (G. Fátima, personal communication, April 23, 2025)

Alongside this idea, Fulcher et al (2021) emphasise the need to set clear goals that connect each employee's performance to the collective success of the team and the organisation, stating that “the best way for people ops to demonstrate support to the business is to set appropriate and cascading goals. Cascading goals work like concentric circles, or Russian dolls, where goals are purposefully linked to achieve something bigger” (p. 103). This perspective reinforces the idea that each initiative should align the individual benefits of employees with the company's strategic outcomes.

Fulcher et al (2021) further underline the importance of building SMART objectives: 1) Specific, 2) Measurable, 3) Achievable, 4) Relevant, and 5) Timely. These objectives allow for monitoring the impact of actions and communicating those results to the main stakeholders. According to them, “once you understand the business direction (however you achieve that), then look to build objective, measurable goals that demonstrate how people operations support each goal” (p. 104). This approach strengthens the credibility

of the function within the organisation, transforms the traditional perception of the HR department, and demonstrates that investment in employee well-being and development is directly linked to business performance.

This strategic perspective aligns with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which Yang and Zhang (2025) explore to understand employee motivation and experience. They identify three basic psychological needs, such as competence, autonomy and relatedness. As they explain:

Basic psychological needs include three types: competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which are typically described as conditions that influence employee motivation, well-being, and performance. Therefore, creating workplace conditions in which employees perceive that their basic psychological needs are satisfied has already become a critical goal for modern companies. Combined with the SDT perspective, Employee Experience (EX) can be initially understood as whether the needs that employees value at work are being met. (Yang & Zhang, 2025, p. 62)

Aligned with these themes, the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, developed by Galanakis and Tsitouri (2022), stands out by offering a comprehensive framework to understand the factors that influence employee well-being and performance within organisations. This model is based on the premise that every single work has risk factors related to work, which can be categorised by job demands or job resources. As the authors explain:

Every profession has unique risk factors connected to work-related stress. These factors fall into two broad categories: job demands and job resources, yielding a comprehensive, holistic model that can be applied to a variety of occupational settings, regardless of the specific demands and resources implicated. (Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022, p. 2).

With this division, the authors understand job demands as all the physical, social, or organisational elements that require continuous effort and which, if not addressed, can result in emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion. Job resources, on the other hand, refer to everything that contributes to achieving goals, reducing the costs associated with demands, and promoting growth and personal development. (Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022).

Galanakis and Tsitouri (2022) also point out that “the interaction between job demands and job resources plays a crucial role in the emergence of job strain and motivation.” Particularly relevant, Galanakis and Tsitouri (2022) underline that “job resources have the greatest impact on motivation or work engagement when job demands are high,” which means that, in high-demand contexts, job resources become even more valuable because “when a worker is faced with high work demands, job resources become increasingly more valuable and prompt commitment and dedication to current responsibilities” (Bakker et al, 2007, as cited in Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022, p. 3).

It is also important to mention that, as the JD-R model also incorporates personal resources, these are understood as “the psychological traits or qualities of the self that are typically linked to resiliency and that allude to the capacity to successfully influence and control one’s surroundings” (Xanthopoulou et al, 2007, as cited in Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022). In other words, these are psychological traits that directly influence how employees cope with work demands. Understanding these traits allows the company to deepen and adjust its measures and, more importantly, to prevent employees from being exposed to risks.

P&E transcends organisational goals and structures. As previously stated, and reinforced by Sethumadhavan (2025), a positive environment plays a fundamental role in improving employee satisfaction, motivation, and performance. The author, after analysing several studies on the subject, states that “a good working environment has a positive impact on employee job satisfaction” (p. 133). This perspective is also shared by Smith (2017), who directly associates happiness at work with various behavioural and performance factors: “Employees’ experience of happiness in relation to work is said to influence factors including: orientation towards work and interest in work; persistence through difficulties; and productivity levels, all of which are particularly evident when compared to employees’ experience of unhappiness” (p. 24).

Smith (2017) further deepens the reflection by highlighting the impact of employees’ psychological state and the role of positive psychology in promoting well-being at work: “Happiness and wellbeing experiences for employees have garnished much attention in psychology research, as they are said to be fostered in the workplace through application of positive psychology” (Seligman, 2002, cited in Smith, 2002, p.24)

Numerous practices help foster a positive environment - the foundation of P&E. As we progress in this study, we recognise the necessary pillars that P&E must address, namely physical and mental well-being, work-life balance, recognition and career development, culture of inclusion, and social responsibility.

1.3.3.1 Physical and mental well-being

Within the sphere of physical and mental well-being, several studies emphasise the importance of investing in well-being by promoting employees' physical and mental health. This investment is strategic in nature, as it is fundamental to business success.

Isaac and Ratzan (2025), in their study on corporate wellness programs, found a positive return on the investment in practices that foster mental and physical well-being, using Johnson and Johnson as an example, stating that: "for every dollar invested in wellness they see a return of about \$4 in reduced health care costs, lower levels of absenteeism and higher productivity" (chap. 16). This data reinforces the relevance of initiatives that promote a comprehensive health culture, involving employees physical, emotional, and social aspects. They also demonstrate that directing efforts toward employee well-being is indeed an investment that will yield positive returns for the organisation.

Furthermore, Sethumadhavan (2025) underscores that "Maintaining your health and creating a happy work atmosphere go hand in hand. Work becomes more enjoyable when one is mentally and physically well, and maintaining good health is made easier in a positive work environment" (p. 140). Therefore, the development of an organisational environment that values well-being as a whole is essential to increase workers' satisfaction and performance. It is through this that people not only feel motivated to work but also feel motivated to fight for themselves, ensuring their often-neglected mental health and their physical well-being even outside the workplace. These measures have a true power to create a chain reaction in people.

When people feel good at work, they feel inspired to replicate it outside of work, which consequently inspires others in their lives to do the same. This dynamic can also be explained through the theory of reciprocity, originally proposed by Gouldner (1960), who described it as a universal moral code with two basic rules: "(1) people should help those who have helped them, and (2) people should not injure those who have helped them". In other words, reciprocity establishes that positive actions create an obligation to return the

favour, a mechanism fundamental to social life. Scholars like Cicero to Simmel have emphasised it as essential to society, underlying cooperation and cohesion.

In the organisational context, this principle gains particular relevance. The well-being initiatives can be seen as benefits offered by the organisation, which employees tend to reciprocate with greater engagement, loyalty, and productivity. As emphasised by Lartey (2021), the reciprocity norm encourages people to help others with the expectation that those recipients will help others in return. This “pay it forward” logic shows how organisational support can extend its impact beyond the company walls, creating a chain of positive actions that influences not only employees but also their families and communities.

However, scholars like Belmi and Pfeffer (2015) talked about the need to understand that the norm to function in its full potential may depend on the context it is in. As an example of this, the scholars argued that reciprocity may be weakened in organisational contexts because employees often attribute favours to being a part of the job and not a gesture of goodwill. The norm can struggle in scenarios built by the cold walls of the thought of “simply doing my job”. Despite these limitations, reciprocity remains a powerful tool for understanding why well-being initiatives generate positive ripple effects.

Cork Supply is an example of this philosophy, having created the *WeCare* program in 2020, precisely at a time when well-being gained central importance in companies due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In a context of great uncertainty and instability, the importance of implementing measures that support employees both personally and professionally, and that recognise the impact these measures have on people’s lives, became evident. The program was thus created with the objective of promoting employee balance through initiatives addressing areas such as sleep, financial literacy, relaxation practices, among others, with all activities being completely free and open to all employees. As Joana Castro stated: “WeCare came in this respect to deliver well-being to our employees, because we know that without it, there is no productivity, there is no happiness in the workplace” (C. Joana, personal communication, April 22, 2025, *my own translation*).

Although the average participation is around 30 employees per session, out of a total of more than 400, Cork Supply emphasises that the program is highly valued by the workers. This appreciation is noticeable both in satisfaction surveys and in the feedback they receive daily. As Joana Castro explained, “even if people do not participate, [...] they

value it, know about it, want more activities, and suggest more activities to be done” (C. Joana, personal communication, April 23, 2025, my own translation). This adaptation of the program to the company’s people shows how important it is to listen to those inside the organisation, and not to apply one-size-fits-all solutions, as also argued by Isaac and Ratzan (2025). Even when we talk about simple well-being measures, it is necessary to understand that the way they are received and experienced by each person is different.

In essence, programs like *WeCare* help raise awareness among employees and provide them with tools to take better care of themselves. But that is not enough, the main part always comes from each person’s own will. As Isaac and Ratzan (2025) emphasize, “We can’t force changes. But we can implement programs and institute policies that help employees understand that they are accountable for their health and responsible for their own lives” (Isaac & Ratzan, 2025, chap. 16). That is, the company can create the conditions, but true well-being only happens when each person also takes on that responsibility.

Well-being becomes an indispensable tool for companies. The efforts that each organisation implements to develop measures that promote this theme go far beyond benefiting individuals; they contribute to the success and performance of the organisation as a whole. In the case of Cork Supply, we observed a very important aspect in the implementation of measures aimed at physical and mental well-being, which is the fact that their impact is immeasurable. For these measures to be successful, they don't need to have great adherence; the simple fact that they exist and are accessible to everyone already has an impact by itself. When a company shows that it cares about its employees, and they feel it, that is one of the greatest achievements of this practice. Employees feel seen, feel safe, and realise that their place in the company goes beyond the mere act of carrying out a task.

1.3.3.2 Work-life balance

Moving forward with the numerous practices that help foster a positive environment, we now address the balance between personal and professional life. As previously mentioned, this balance has become a key factor in promoting employee well-being and motivation within organisations, especially among the newer generations. More than simply managing schedules, it is about creating real conditions that allow workers to reconcile professional demands with their family, social, and personal commitments.

Delecta (2011) cites Greenhaus (2002), who defines work-life balance as satisfaction and good functioning both in the work and personal environments, in such a way that there is no conflict between the two.

The balance between professional and personal life is not an exact science; it is something deeply subjective, depending on various factors such as personal, family, organisational, and even cultural conditions. As Delecta (2011) states, “work-life balance is [a] subjective phenomenon that changes from person to person” (p. 187). The author also highlights the challenge of distributing time, attention, and energy equally among all areas of life. When this balance is not achieved, the individual may suffer several consequences, such as mental health problems, less engagement with family, and, in more extreme cases, even the abandonment of professional life. As Delecta (2011) notes, the absence of this balance can lead to “lower family satisfaction,” “prolonged sadness, using drugs or alcohol,” and “decreased involvement in family roles” (p. 188).

Lockwood (2003) reinforces that “in a society filled with conflicting responsibilities and commitments, work/life balance has become a predominant issue in the workplace” (p. 1), explaining that the growing attention given to this topic is driven by three main factors: global competition, a renewed focus on family values, and the ageing workforce. In this sense, practices that support work-life balance have become strategic for productivity and talent retention. With increasing interest in this topic, employees have also become much more selective in their job search, considering work-life balance as a highly valued criterion and evaluating potential workplaces beyond the basic legal conditions and salary.

Organisations that recognise the importance of supporting their employees' personal lives tend to benefit from lower absenteeism, higher productivity, reduced turnover, greater employee engagement, and a healthier organisational culture. On the employee side, the benefits are reflected in improved physical and mental health, greater job satisfaction, and more balanced personal relationships (Lockwood, 2003). According to Lockwood (2003), “work/life programs offer a win-win situation for employers and employees” (p. 5), contributing to the construction of more human, inclusive, and sustainable business cultures. This view is supported by Delecta (2011), who states that “supportive programmes for the family life of employees in an organisation contribute to providing work–life balance. Thanks to these programmes, the employees will be encouraged, their attendance will be supported, and their efficiency will increase” (p. 188).

Organisations play a fundamental role in helping their employees find balance. It is their responsibility to know their employees and recognise the challenges of establishing work-life balance, going beyond simple schedule management and striving to create conditions that allow workers to reconcile professional demands with family, social, and personal commitments. From a strategic standpoint, offering measures such as flexible schedules, extended parental leave, or the possibility of remote work is not only an act of social responsibility but also a decision that directly contributes to organisational performance (Delecta, 2011). As Delecta (2011) highlights, “flexible working hours [are] one of the methods used to maintain work-life balance. [...] [A]nother thing which can be done is to allow employees to work at home away from [the] traditional work environment” (p. 188).

Cork Supply is a clear example of how these practices can be integrated into organisational culture. Among the measures implemented, flexible working hours stand out, allowing employees to better manage their personal commitments, as well as the possibility of remote work for the office team. Additionally, the company shows sensitivity during moments of greater vulnerability among its workers, offering small gestures such as gifts when someone is ill, a simple practice that reinforces the feeling of care and belonging. (G. Fátima, personal communication, April 23, 2025; C. Joana, personal communication, April 22, 2025)

The company cares not only about its employees but also about their families, providing support whenever possible and being present at various moments of the employees’ lives. Joana Castro, head of People & Communication, emphasises: “The possibility of flexible working hours [...] we also have telework, which, although only one day, represents an additional effort. Therefore, all these initiatives allow the employee to better balance their personal and professional life” (C. Joana, personal communication, April 22, 2025, my own translation).

By providing a work environment where people feel supported in managing their multiple roles, organisations are not only improving the quality of life of their employees and those in their lives but also enhancing the organisational culture and its performance. Happy employees lead to a more successful organisation. Fátima Gonçalves reinforces this view, stating:

Work-life balance is highly valued. I can say that Cork Supply is the company where I have worked that best promotes this balance. Here, people don't stay late working hard or pretending to work. There is a culture, coming from the top management itself, of respecting working hours. Moreover, there is great flexibility; if someone needs to attend an appointment, they can do so without problems. In fact, flexibility is a reality in the company. (G. Fátima, personal communication, 2025, my own translation).

1.3.3.3 Recognition and Career Development

Another important practice that helps foster a positive environment is recognition and career development. This may seem like a simple practice, often undervalued or overlooked, but in fact, it is a complex process that requires care, attention, and consistency. When a company invests in the growth of its people, it is, in reality, also investing in its own sustainability. The feeling of personal progress and the perception of being valued directly contribute to higher levels of motivation, commitment, and retention, making this practice an integral part of the P&E methodology.

According to Flint-Taylor & Robertson (2011), “a poor fit between the person and the requirements of their role is well known to be a major impediment to well-being. It often leads to stress and burnout” (chap. 9). In this sense, career development begins by ensuring alignment between the person and their role. It is no coincidence that there is a saying, “those who run for pleasure do not get tired”; for someone to feel satisfied at their workplace, they must enjoy the tasks they perform. This is, without a doubt, the foundation of everything.

A person should seek a job that provides a sense of fulfilment, but at the same time, the organisation has the responsibility to ensure a good fit between the individual's profile and the job demands. This implies considering not only technical skills but also emotional and social competencies. As Flint-Taylor & Robertson (2011) state, “the overall outcome [...] has been to facilitate the assessment of the full range of personal skills and qualities needed to achieve a good fit between an individual and the role” (chap. 9).

Recognition of the effort and impact of the employee assumes a very powerful symbolic dimension. Sethumadhavan (2025) argues that “developing a culture where everyone feels appreciated and inspired is more important than simply giving people a pat on the back” (p. 141). This statement reveals the complexity of this practice. Recognition goes

beyond the simplicity of a trivial and futile compliment; it is not only about rewarding results, but about valuing positive behaviours and reinforcing trust relationships.

The act of recognising someone and making them feel valued, regardless of their role, goes far beyond business benefits. It is a gesture that gives hope and makes the person feel seen. There is a certain beauty in this practice, as it can directly impact the employee's mental health and their behaviour in everyday life. Sethumadhavan (2025) further adds: "The magic of gratitude is that it raises spirits and gives people a sense of purpose and belonging. It makes you want to give even more, isn't that right?" (p. 141)

Recognition should also be seen as part of a broader talent management strategy. Sethumadhavan (2025), in his work, highlights that practices such as personalised development plans, mentoring programs, and continuous feedback are fundamental to creating meaningful career paths. The author Silva (2022) reinforces this view by pointing out other effective practices, such as coaching, job rotation, early leadership experiences, assignment of challenging tasks, and training in leadership skills. These strategies not only boost individual development but also strengthen employees' commitment to the organisation, preparing them to take on future responsibilities and contribute more actively to common goals. It is also important to note that for a company to adopt this behaviour, it must have the actual capacity to assign more responsibilities to employees. The company cannot fall into the mistake of offering empty promises to its employees, because if it does, the result will be the opposite of what P&E practices intend.

Both authors, Silva (2022) and Sethumadhavan (2025), reinforce that for these practices to truly make sense, leaders play a fundamental role. Flint-Taylor & Robertson (2011), aligned with these perspectives, argue that it is essential to ensure managers have a positive impact on their teams' well-being. As they state, "There is strong and generalizable research evidence supporting the inclusion of criteria related to impact on others' well-being when assessing and selecting leaders and managers" (Flint-Taylor & Robertson, 2011, chap. 9). A good leader must therefore not only recognise the team's efforts but also facilitate individual development. This is because, from the authors' perspective, "The nature of management and leadership means that the behaviour of people in these roles has a very direct impact on the well-being of those who report to them" (chap. 9). They are also the people closest to employees, responsible for guiding them in their roles and conveying organisational values. It is up to them to navigate

employees' feelings of frustration and sadness and to praise them when necessary. The leader must "read" their employees in order to maximise their potential.

1.3.3.4 Culture of Inclusion

Most workplace practices mentioned above can be driven by the company's effort to create a culture of inclusion. Building a culture of inclusion in the workplace is fundamental not only for promoting a healthy environment but also for the well-being and development of employees. The culture of inclusion has become a key strategy, not only because the business market is increasingly diverse but also because it has become an essential tool for improving organisational performance. As APPDI (2025) highlights, organisational culture should integrate the values of diversity and inclusion into all experiences and interactions of its members, from recruitment to the exit process.

Companies committed to inclusion must adopt a holistic approach that involves all aspects of human interaction within the organisation. APPDI (2025) explains that "the inclusive recruitment process represents only the first step of the cycle, and the organisational culture cannot be ignored, to ensure that all differences are well incorporated." (my own translation). The culture of inclusion must be continuously nurtured, always adjusted to the reality of the organisation.

In Sethumadhavan's (2025) work, we can observe the importance of integrating inclusive practices in organisations, promoting well-being, team development, and workplace health. Inclusive environments provide employees with a sense of belonging, which, in turn, contributes to improving their performance and engagement. As Sethumadhavan (2025) states, "Inclusion increases organisational commitment and citizenship behaviour while fostering creativity and lowering turnover" (p. 137). Moreover, organisations must revisit their corporate practices to ensure they promote equal opportunities, as suggested by APPDI (2025): "It is necessary to revisit corporate practices with a new perspective to ensure that the training and human resource management practices already implemented are promoting equal opportunities and Diversity and Inclusion" (APPDI, 2025, p. 3, my own translation).

The culture of inclusion is a continuous process that requires the involvement of all members of the organisation. It is not just an ethical issue but a vital strategy for organisational health and business success. As Dipboye et al (2025) observe, "Discrimination frequently occurs in the work organizations in which adults spend much

of their waking lives, and the costs to the individual employees, organizations and society are too large to ignore” (chap. 11). Therefore, creating an inclusive organisational culture is not only an ethical choice but also a strategic measure to improve well-being and productivity in the workplace. This is because “Creating a place where everyone feels like they belong, regardless of who they are or where they came from, is more important than simply checking 137 boxes” (Sethumadhavan, 2025, p. 131).

1.3.3.5 Social Responsibility

Social responsibility also plays a vital role in P&E, as over the past few decades, it has become a key connector between employees and the core values of the company. It functions not only as a bridge linking employees to organisational values but also as an integrative mechanism that aligns corporate culture with employee well-being and satisfaction. According to Crowther & Aras (2008), corporate social responsibility rests on three foundational pillars: accountability, transparency, and sustainability. These principles form the baseline for responsible, ethical, and sustainable practices within organisations. When embedded into P&E strategies, these pillars foster a corporate environment where employees feel engaged, valued, and aligned with the company's broader purpose.

Social responsibility has a great impact on a company, from the outside to the inside. We will mainly focus on the internal side, especially how it's perceived by employees. Zairi & Peters (2002) emphasised that Corporate Social Responsibility brings real benefits not only for the company's external reputation but also for its internal performance and work environment. Creating value for society through environmental actions, volunteer programs, and involvement in public issues helps employees feel proud of where they work.

It's human nature; people want to work somewhere that makes them feel good about themselves. They don't want to feel like they're working for a company that abuses its power or harms the community. Instead, they want to be part of something that's doing good, where they feel like they're helping others, directly or indirectly. That sense of pride boosts their motivation and strengthens their commitment to the company.

Cork Supply once again presents as an example. Having a strong sense of social responsibility, as well as being a strong believer in P&E, they have developed internal programs that honour both. Alongside the already spoken *We Care* program, they have

also developed the *Beyond Us* program, which focuses on social causes, and the *Taking Care of Tomorrow* program, which focuses on sustainability. (G. Fátima, personal communication, April 23, 2025; C. Joana, personal communication, April 22, 2025)

The *Beyond Us* program might be the one that presents as the greatest example of social responsibility being a fundamental tool to motivate employees and offer them a sense of pride. The program consists of collaborating with social causes and volunteering. The core aspect of this program is that, through it, the company offers 4 hours of work for the employees to dedicate to volunteering. It opens the doors for employees to volunteer and allows them to do it easily. It gives them a chance to help those in need and, consequently, makes them feel proud of themselves and also of the company. Still, through this program, there are several collaborations with institutions where employees can donate to the causes with items such as books, clothes, and food. It exemplifies how corporate social responsibility can extend employees' sense of purpose beyond the workplace, reinforcing a culture of community engagement and shared values (G. Fátima, personal communication, April 23, 2025; C. Joana, personal communication, April 22, 2025)

The *Take Care of Tomorrow* initiative encourages employees to adopt sustainable habits, not just at work but in their daily lives and communities (G. Fátima, personal communication, April 23, 2025; C. Joana, personal communication, April 22, 2025). From simple energy-saving tips to family-inclusive environmental education, this program reflects Crowther & Aras's (2008) sustainability pillar, aiming to inspire lasting behavioural change that benefits the wider ecosystem. It shows employees that the company cares about the environment and encourages them to do the same, even offering tools to do so. As the company shows that they are environmentally conscious, employees feel more at ease when it comes to their role in the pressing issue of sustainability.

According to Ali (2020), "CSR impacts a business's ability to attract top talent and affects employees' job satisfaction levels and retention rates" (p. 674). Social responsibility becomes a valuable tool in achieving positive results in employee satisfaction. This is due to the fact that people feel they work in a place that values much more than just productivity rates. People want to be a part of something great, and there is no greater purpose than helping others and the planet.

1.3.4 Tools and methodologies for measuring People & Experience

During this report, we can be sure of one thing, which is that P&E is a constant process and needs to be continuously adjusted to the reality of the organisations. For it to work to its full capacity and achieve the best result, the person responsible for the P&E needs to analyse the success rate of their practices. To do so, they use a variety of tools and methodologies. The analysis and rating of the P&E is crucial to make sure that the well-being of the employee is being taken care of and that there is a positive work environment, and that it can be optimised. The diverse tools and methodologies to analyse the complexity of the employee's perception and overall experience go from quantitative to qualitative measurements.

According to Lovejoy et al (2024), data collection to understand employee health and well-being should draw on multiple sources to ensure a more holistic diagnosis. For the gathering of information to be as complete as possible, not only should they consider different data they should also include every single employee and elaborate on different points of their stay at the company. Lovejoy et al (2024) lists several data collecting methods that allow that approach, such as “Informal conversations with key organizational stake-holders or frontline employees”, “Anonymous comments in employee suggestion boxes”, “Information from exit interviews”, “employee surveys”, “focus groups”, and “Administrative data on worker's compensation claims, sick leave patterns, worker turnover, absent-theism” (p. 16). This diverse use of sources allows for the triangulation of data, enriching the analysis and reducing biases, as well as ensuring the inclusion of different profiles within the organisation.

One of the most important aspects of data collection is to ensure that they are presented in different communications, so that it can attend to the different communication preferences of the employees. (Lovejoy et al 2024). The collection of data only works if the employees are willing to participate. With that, it's important to keep in mind that people are all different, an aspect that is the source of P&E's complexity, and that they process and deliver information in a very different manner from each other. There must be a catalogue of tools to measure P&E, which goes from formal to informal, surveys, anonymous channels, and suggestion boxes. Complementary to all of this, there must be continuous communication and an organisational culture that encourages and empowers employees to speak their minds and give their input confidently. (Lovejoy et.al 2024)

Fátima Gonçalves emphasised the importance of keeping track of what people think and feel about the P&E practices that are implemented in the company, stating that: “We have

to listen to people and get their feedback” (my own translation). The manager also mentioned the importance of having multiple sources of data, qualitative tools and continuous feedback channels, including post-activity surveys and suggestion platforms, all of which allow them to constantly tailor their methods and practices. (G. Fátima, personal communication, April 23, 2025)

In an ever-evolving world, it becomes only natural that we see that reflected in the tools and methodologies of P&E. As a reference to this, Fátima Gonçalves highlighted the growth in the use of gamification, design thinking and artificial intelligence in P&E, “We have already made extensive use of artificial intelligence to get inspired and to create contacts.” (my own translation). With new technologies and innovative methods like these, allows for there to space for fun and creativity to shine. Through them, P&E can achieve a greater level of personalisation and involvement with the employees. They are set and used to simplify communications. (G. Fátima, personal communication, April 23, 2025). With the example of gamification, we see communication being presented in a captivating, relaxed and engaging way, with the design thinking that there is the possibility to tailor the communication not just to the image of the organisation but also to the target audience within the company. The use of AI is on the rise, and not just allows us to simplify the process of building data collection, it allows us to enhance communication towards specific groups of employees. All of them come with the advantage of allowing a greater involvement with the team, and aligning them with the global trends will maintain the image of the company and achieve its goals.

In addition to the multifaceted data collection methods and innovative technologies discussed above, Meybodi et al (2024) present theoretical research that highlights the fundamental role of organisational culture and job satisfaction in shaping employee experience. In their research, they present a structural model that quantifies the impacts of various organisational factors on employee experience. Their study reveals that both organisational culture and job satisfaction have statistically significant effects on employee experience, confirming the robustness of these relationships. On the other hand, it was found that the physical environment of the workplace has no significant impact on P&E, a conclusion that goes somewhat against what we have been analysing. However, based on the analyses we have made in this report, we can conclude that although the physical space of the workplace is not as valuable as organisational culture and

satisfaction, it is still an important aspect of the employee experience, being directly linked to the image that the employee has of the company and how they feel about it.

The research also identifies three fundamental dimensions that influence the experience of workers. The first is organisational commitment, which represents the feeling of obligation and alignment of workers with the company's objectives, promoting job satisfaction beyond the mere performance of tasks. The second is interaction with management, which highlights the importance of communication from supervisors in creating meaningful experiences. The third is labour relations, which emphasises the social dynamics between colleagues as fundamental components of the worker's experience (Meybodi et al, 2024).

This knowledge reinforces the need for organisations to prioritise cultural alignment and satisfaction metrics in their P&E measurement systems. Building a supportive culture and promoting positive management relationships are essential for improving the overall worker experience. This aligns with the work of Lovejoy et al (2024), who emphasise qualitative and multi-source feedback mechanisms, and of Fátima Gonçalves (Personal communication, April 23 2025), who advocates for continuous and sensitive communication channels that reflect the internal reality of the company, always seeking to have tools and methodologies balanced across different teams.

Furthermore, Elmgasbi (2019) highlighted the need to have metrics aligned with stakeholder expectations, including employees. While doing so, he mentioned two interesting frameworks that can be integrated into tools and methodologies to measure P&E. The first is the Dutch performance management system, a concept created in the 1990s by Simme Douwe P. Flapper, Leonard Fortuin, Paul P.M. Stoop. It is a coherent approach to assessing a company's achievements, with a particular focus on understanding the relationships between various indicators (Flapper, Fortuin, & Stoop, 1996, as cited in Elmgasbi, 2019). The second is the Performance Prism, a performance measurement concept developed by Andy Neely, Chris Adams, and Mike Kennerley. It is structured around five interrelated areas, visualised as a triangular prism: stakeholder satisfaction, strategies, processes, strengths and resources (capabilities), and contributions. The Performance Prism is noted for its strong orientation towards identifying the needs of all stakeholders and is considered valuable during crises or market deterioration, when management might otherwise focus solely on financial results.

It incorporates customer expectations and employee sentiments, allowing for prompt responses to changing situations (Elmgasbi, 2019).

Organisations should consider this holistic perspective in their P&E strategies, ensuring that measurement systems are able to capture the complex interconnection between culture, leadership, and interpersonal relationships. This approach not only increases employee well-being and satisfaction but also promotes sustainable organisational performance. It is important that the measures also consider the constant technological evolution and changes in working ideas and perspectives. These tools and methods must be reviewed and worked on in such a way that they always have the employees at their centre.

Taking a step back, we understand that P&E is crucial for the success of any organisation, becoming a true strategic tool. Through the expertise of Fatima Gonçalves, the attention turns to the basic needs of the employees, explained through the pyramid of Maslow. With the foundation relying on the secular of the basic need showed in the pyramid, we are taken to other frameworks like SDT and JD-R, which allows for the comprehension of all of the element surrounding P&E, leading to a positive implementation of P&E. With this message becomes clear, when basic needs are secured and employees feel competent, autonomous, and connected, they respond with higher engagement, resilience, and performance. The more motivated the workforce is, the greater the return is for the organisation. The pillars explored, physical and mental well-being, work–life balance, recognition and career development, inclusion, and social responsibility, put this theory into action. They also show the importance of the HR department needing to adjust and cooperate with the reality of their organisational culture and workforce. The department can have a direct impact through activities and initiatives which have the capacity to truly make a difference, focusing on reinforcing culture, collaboration, and brand reputation.

Although the implementation may seem simple, for it to have the expected impact, attention must be paid to the implementation. For it to be properly implemented, there must first be a thought-out plan on the "how" they are going to do that, a plan that can be found in the guide and toolkit *Work Design for Health*. In the guide, the implementation process is broken down into dialogue, diagnosis, plan, act and review. With the reality of every organisation being different and P&E needing to adjust to them, the Dutch system and the Performance Prism allow for the necessities to be shown and to work continuously in a constant motion. It is important to mention that P&E is an ongoing effort, requiring

constant employee awareness, market dynamics, and societal changes, while aligning all initiatives with the company's culture and identity. By putting its people first, it not only has a positive impact on the people but also on the company as a whole.

CHAPTER II – INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

2 Intercultural Competence

With globalisation becoming a defining characteristic of today's business market, it has become imperative to develop the skills necessary to navigate this ever-changing landscape. Organisations must understand different cultures, the economic environments in which they operate, and adapt their communication accordingly, all to gain a stronger grasp of international business. The development of intercultural competence is therefore essential to P&E practices, going hand in hand. Only after acquiring the capacity to engage across cultures can P&E function to its fullest potential in a globalised market.

This chapter aims to understand what intercultural competence means within the context of the global business environment. To achieve a clearer understanding of this concept, we begin with a conceptual discussion, drawing on the work of scholars who have long studied this topic. Additionally, it is crucial to explore the impact of globalisation on people management. The discussion will be supported by academic literature and relevant articles.

2.1 Conceptual discussion

Intercultural competence (IC) in this ever-more globalised market is a must for internationalised companies. It involves the combination of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour that allow for more appropriate and effective communication and engagement within work practices across cultures. We can interpret this IC as a continuous process. People engaging in an international market must enter with the right morals and approach and have the ability to self-evaluate their behaviour to avoid mistakes. One not only needs to have the ability to create the space but also feel comfortable and encourage others in that space, a difficult process that can be mastered through constant work and studying.

Intercultural competence is a crucial determinant of success in contemporary international and multicultural business environments. According to Matveev (2017), the argument builds on earlier research demonstrating that the ability to adapt to cultural complexity directly influences both organisational performance and individual effectiveness abroad (Brislin, 1981; Kealey & Ruben, 1983). By referencing examples such as expatriate failure rates and market share losses (Tung, 1987), Matveev (2017) highlights the tangible costs of insufficient intercultural preparation. This aligns with Bennett's (1993) assertion that intercultural competence is foundational for bridging

cultural differences, while also resonating with more recent perspectives that connect it to global competitiveness and sustainability (Briscoe, 2015).

In that sense, Matveev (2017) situates intercultural competence within the dynamics of globalisation, where organisations increasingly operate through transnational networks, virtual structures, and global teams (Kogut, 1989; Jarillo, 1988; Shore & Cross, 2005). These organisational shifts reinforce the need for managers to lead diverse, mobile, and technologically interconnected workforces (Deardorff & Hunter, 2006). Intercultural competence extends beyond individual skill to encompass organisational culture and policy, positioning it as a strategic asset. As Matveev makes clear, the cultivation of intercultural competence is not simply a matter of personal development but a structural requirement for organisational effectiveness in a globalised economy.

Besides intercultural competence, the intercultural experience is also difficult to conceptualise, as every individual lives it uniquely. As Sarmiento (2014) explains, “true intercultural experience occurs when we can see ourselves and our work as if we were so-called others” (p. 605), almost as if empathy were a necessary means to perceive other people with different backgrounds, cultural or not. The relationship built between local and global practices creates a “dynamic tension [...] (that) encourages the epistemological and phenomenological adaptation, under a genuinely interdisciplinary and intercultural perspective” (Sarmiento, 2014, p. 605). In this sense, Deardorff (2006) provides a valuable breakdown of intercultural competence, identifying respect, openness, curiosity, and discovery as key elements. She also highlights the importance of knowledge and comprehension, particularly through cultural self-awareness (understanding one’s own cultural background, biases, and perspectives), which plays a fundamental role in engaging with other cultures. This deeper knowledge extends to both one’s own and others’ cultural contexts, roles, and impacts, while culture-specific information emphasises learning about traditions, customs, and practices. Finally, sociolinguistic awareness, understood as recognising the relationship between language and meaning within social contexts, emerges as crucial, since one must truly grasp what is being said to understand its intended meaning.

The strategic value of multicultural teams is evident in multinational corporations, where culturally diverse groups contribute to product development, board-level decision-making, and operational efficiency by leveraging a global pool of knowledge and

perspectives (Rhinesmith, 1996, as cited in Matveev, 2017). This relevance extends beyond corporate environments into geopolitical contexts, such as multinational United Nations teams, where cross-cultural cooperation is essential for mission success (Ilgen, LePine, & Hollenbeck, 1997, as cited in Matveev, 2017). Consequently, the development and management of effective multicultural teams emerge as a critical organisational priority, underscoring the importance of intercultural competence for both individual and collective performance in a globalised environment. To achieve high performance, deliberate strategies must be implemented, such as establishing clear goals and responsibilities through structured team charters and role assignments, which reduce ambiguity and enhance accountability (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006, as cited in Matveev, 2017). Complementary skills and intercultural sensitivity can also be strengthened through targeted training programs, mentoring, and direct cross-cultural experiences, enabling members to harmonise expertise and adapt to diverse perspectives (Bennett, 1993; Deardorff, 2006, as cited in Matveev, 2017).

Matveev (2017, pp. 89–90) further emphasises that multicultural teams possess distinct advantages in addressing the complex and adaptive challenges of twenty-first-century business environments. Their diversity enhances creativity, problem-solving, and the generation of novel ideas, making them particularly effective for tasks requiring innovation (Heifetz & Laurie, 1998; Triandis, Hall, & Ewen, 1965; Snell, Snow, Davidson, & Hambrick, 1998, all as cited in Matveev, 2017). Beyond innovation, they provide access to local knowledge and a deeper understanding of foreign markets, allowing organisations to tailor strategies to diverse consumer bases and capture global opportunities (Zahra, Ireland, & Hitt, 2000; Marquardt & Horvath, 2001, as cited in Matveev, 2017). Multicultural teams also offer access to specialised human resources, contribute to the development of global leaders, and foster learning organisations through cross-border knowledge acquisition and transfer (Lechler & Fallah, 2008; Hamel & Prahalad, 1994, as cited in Matveev, 2017). According to Matveev, their effectiveness depends on careful team composition, transparent structures, clear goals, and strong leadership, supported by high levels of intercultural competence that enable productive communication, adaptation, and collaboration (Ilgen, Major, Hollenbeck, & Seago, 1993; Maznevski & Peterson, 1997, as cited in Matveev, 2017).

In this regard, intercultural competence itself incorporates essential skills such as listening, observing, and interpreting, which allow individuals to pay close attention and

accurately gather information during intercultural interactions. Deardorff (2004, as cited in Deardorff, 2006, pp. 247–248) defines intercultural competence as “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 194). Complementary skills include analysis, evaluation, relating, and cognitive flexibility, which involve applying diverse ways of thinking and strategies across cultural contexts. A truly competent individual demonstrates the ability to adjust to varying scenarios, achieving both internal outcomes, flexibility, adaptability, empathy, and an ethno-relative worldview and external outcomes, effective and appropriate behaviour and communication that together constitute the development of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006).

In line with the ideologies of Deardorff (2006), Arasaratnam (2016), who also referenced the author in her work, emphasises the same characteristics of IC. Complementary to the ones mentioned by Deardorff (2006), Arasaratnam (2016) emphasised cognitive flexibility, which she called cognitive complexity. The scholar mentioned the importance of freeing one’s mind from stereotypes when engaging with different cultures. This allows for a stronger comprehension of cultural signals and helps in lowering uncertainty and anxiety.

Arasaratnam (2016) also highlighted some very interesting characteristics, like intercultural motivation and mindfulness. Intercultural motivation is the driving force of IC, all of the other elements don’t function properly if the person isn’t motivated or interested in interacting with others from different cultures. This can also be said about mindfulness, as it is the basis of everything. A more mindful person is one who’s going to have an easier time adjusting to differences and will have a more respectful approach in all interactions, without too much effort.

These traits may seem simple to the point where their emphasis doesn’t even make sense, but the truth is that success relies on the simplest efforts, and those are often forgotten. In this case, the ignorance of basic human interaction efforts can significantly hurt IC and, therefore, the success of the business.

The need for an employee who interacts with people from different cultures to acquire a set of abilities has long been known. With that, there have been models developed that allow for alleviation and assistance in the process of IC. Vegh and Luu (2019) made a comparison analysis between one of the most recent models, the Rethinking Intercultural

Competence Approach (RICA), and one of the longest-used models, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). RICA was seen as a more practical, methodology-driven model that offers a qualitative, in-depth, and continuous view of the developmental process. In contrast, DMIS was described as a theory-driven model, with its IDI tool providing a quantitative, scalable, and efficient way to assess an individual's or group's current developmental stage. In light of this paper, we will be taking a closer look at the RICA model, which sees the IC process as fluid and reflective. The model breaks IC down into qualitative measures, such as identity development, intercultural agency, and journal-based reflection as mechanisms for transforming cultural experience into deeper competence.

We can view IC as a key player in organisations with international presence and multicultural work environments. This idea is also defended by Ferreira and Rua (2025), who qualify a person with strong IC to be an overall better collaborator, being more innovative, quicker, and more creative when solving problems. They also highlight that a team built with a group of people from different cultural backgrounds is far more beneficial, stating that they are: “innovative and creative due to the integration of varied perceptions, wisdom, skills, and capabilities” (Phillips et al, 2015; West, 2002, as cited in Ferreira & Rua, 2025, p.17).

Every action has its barriers, particularly those involving a large number of people, which adds to the complexity of intercultural competence (IC). Braslauskas (2020) highlights that many of these obstacles come from within ourselves. One key limitation stems from assumptions: when individuals presume that cultural similarities make them the same, communication is compromised, a behaviour the author even describes as a “misguided and sometimes dangerous attitude” (p. 211). Other barriers include stereotypes, a sense of superiority, attributing greater value to someone solely based on their cultural background, and ethnocentrism, the tendency to evaluate another culture through the lens of one's own. These challenges underscore the importance of fundamental human behaviours, such as respect and openness, which Deardorff (2006) identifies as central to effective IC.

At the organisational level, multicultural teams, despite their strategic advantages, also face distinct challenges arising from differences in language, communication styles, values, and work norms. If not managed effectively, these differences may result in misunderstandings, conflicts, and coordination problems (Stahl et al, 2010; Earley &

Mosakowski, 2000, as cited in Matveev, 2017). To mitigate these risks, high-performing teams rely on clear structures, shared goals, and established norms of collaboration, which not only enhance productivity but also facilitate conflict resolution (Maderer, Holtbrügge, & Schuster, 2014, as cited in Matveev, 2017). Crucially, the development of intercultural competence among team members plays a decisive role, as it enables individuals to interpret behaviours accurately, adapt to diverse expectations, and contribute constructively to team objectives (Deardorff, 2006; Bennett, 1993, as cited in Matveev, 2017). When these practices are integrated, organisations can transform potential barriers into opportunities for innovation, knowledge exchange, and stronger global performance.

Braslauskas (2020) also argues about the importance of some barriers that are often overlooked, such as anxiety and uncertainty. One cannot be too uncertain or too confident, as both can lead to misunderstandings. The scholar also highlights that the mispreparation of the individual, the absence of a creative approach and the inability to resolve conflicts effectively can all limit interaction with others. One needs to understand the scenario and conditions of the conversation they are entering. IC is not a natural ability but a talent that individuals must actively develop and nurture. It's a continuous process where one can never be too comfortable. There is a constant necessity to self-evaluate and listen to those around us, as it helps navigate the difficulties that come with this competence.

2.1.1 Impact of globalisation on people management

The importance of IC is a consequence of the ever-growing globalisation within the business market. IC has become a necessity for every single business that wants to venture into the international market, to the point where, if a company does not possess some degree of intercultural competence, it is unlikely to succeed internationally. Within the magnitude of IC, it impacts every single area of the organisation, especially in people management. It influences how the organisation handles people, how they engage with them, and how they communicate with them. It also creates a sustainable, competitive, knowledgeable, and strong advantage over other organisations in the market. Furthermore, it shapes organisations' views on strategy and how they present themselves to the market. IC acts as a great source of innovation and enhancement. It is responsible for being a significant driver in the evolution of human resources and, consequently, P&E.

Intercultural competence has its greatest impact on people management and serves as a driver of creativity and innovation. As the workforce becomes increasingly diverse, the

ability to communicate across cultures and languages is crucial to unlocking the full potential of multicultural teams. Beyond communication, intercultural competence also fuels creativity and problem-solving, dimensions that have never been more important than in today's business environment. According to Santos et al (2025), contemporary organisations operate in a context marked by multiculturalism, where intercultural interaction is a daily practice that can give rise to extraordinary new forms of business. It enables a broader repertoire of perspectives, enhances problem-solving, improves communication, and fosters respect that goes beyond professionalism. In this sense, intercultural competence provides companies with the tools and capabilities needed to innovate and prosper in a constantly evolving business reality. As the authors note, "interaction between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds can give a company a competitive advantage, enabling originality and the ability to adapt to markets and cultural contexts" (Pless & Maak, 2004, as cited in Santos et al, 2025, *my own translation*).

Maximising the potential of multicultural teams, however, requires deliberate preparatory and ongoing management measures. Matveev (2017, pp. 89–90) stresses the importance of careful team member selection, clear goal articulation, transparent structures, and well-defined roles, all of which reduce ambiguity and enable coordinated action (Ilgen, Major, Hollenbeck, & Segoe, 1993; Maznevski & Peterson, 1997, as cited in Matveev, 2017). Alongside these structural measures, ongoing practices such as team-building activities, fostering effective communication, developing shared norms, and cultivating leadership that bridges cultural differences are essential (Milliken & Martins, 1996; Shoda, Mischel, & Wright, 1993, as cited in Matveev, 2017). Central to all these strategies is the development of intercultural competence, which equips team members to listen actively, shift perspectives, tolerate ambiguity, and adapt behaviours appropriately. When effectively integrated, these practices not only enhance team performance but also transform multicultural teams into engines of innovation, knowledge sharing, and sustainable competitive advantage in the global business environment.

Ferreira and Rua (2025) align with this perspective, as they also argue that IC is key to creativity, problem-solving, and innovation. Their research highlights how the richness of cultural perspectives, when supported by effective intercultural communication, leads to greater creativity, more comprehensive decision-making, and stronger collaborative outcomes. They also highlight the importance of the company being the main responsible

player for creating the connection between communication and creativity. It is in their hands to shape a company culture that motivates employees to do so. This idea leads us to P&E practices. Those responsible for company culture must be aware that they need to encourage employees to feel comfortable in their intercultural competence and to initiate conversations, which inevitably leads to creativity. P&E plays a key role in allowing intercultural communication to be meaningful and constructive.

A great deal of managing people relies on having a strong, creative, and collaborative team, where intercultural competence (IC) takes centre stage. Adams et al (2024) introduce the concept of collaborative capabilities, which are grounded in trust, commitment, and effective communication. These capabilities align team goals, encourage transparent knowledge exchange, and foster a willingness to share both risks and rewards. Their research demonstrates that no matter the extent of the tensions or disagreements caused by cultural barriers, IC provides the means to manage them. It is through IC that teams can communicate openly, listen to diverse perspectives, and collaborate effectively to achieve common goals. Araújo (2022) offers a complementary view through the concept of cultural intelligence (CQ), stressing its importance and stating that “interaction between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds can give a company a competitive advantage, enabling originality and the ability to adapt to markets and cultural contexts” (p. 42). From these perspectives, it becomes clear that effective collaboration does not occur by chance, but rather through conscious effort and learning. When employees are placed in intercultural environments, they adjust their behaviours, interpret perspectives accurately, and respond constructively to cultural differences, creating teams that collaborate, unite, and prosper.

Still, Matveev (2017, pp. 82–86) identifies numerous challenges in managing multicultural teams. Differences in language, communication styles, and values can significantly affect team dynamics and performance. One recurring issue is cultural imperialism, where assumptions of uniform thinking undermine decision-making (Lewis, 1998; Young, 1998; Parker, 1998, all as cited in Matveev, 2017). Geographic dispersion and coordination difficulties add complexity, as time-zone differences and location-centric decisions can reduce participation and trust (Handy, 1995; Boyle, Nicholas, & Mitchell, 2012, as cited in Matveev, 2017). Variations in communication competence, willingness to engage, and culturally influenced norms of conflict and leadership also contribute to misunderstandings and weakened cohesion (Christophel, 1996; Shenkar &

Zeira, 1992; Marquardt & Horvath, 2001, as cited in Matveev, 2017). Addressing these, and other, challenges requires deliberate strategies that enhance intercultural competence, preserve communication richness, and maintain cohesion.

To overcome these difficulties, Matveev (2017, pp. 82–86) stresses the need for structured management strategies and IC development. Clear communication protocols, defined roles, and established team norms are essential to reduce misunderstandings and strengthen coordination (Ilgen, Major, Hollenbeck, & Segoe, 1993; Maznevski & Peterson, 1997, as cited in Matveev, 2017). Leveraging technology appropriately, such as video conferencing and collaborative platforms, helps sustain communication across dispersed teams (Carmel, 1999; Mockaitis, Rose, & Zettinig, 2012, as cited in Matveev, 2017). Training in intercultural sensitivity and conflict resolution equips team members to adapt to diverse expectations (Bennett, 1993; Bantz, 1993; Schneider & DeMeyer, 1991, as cited in Matveev, 2017). By combining structural, technological, and interpersonal interventions, organisations can turn diversity into a driver of innovation, trust, and competitive advantage.

In addition, Matveev (2017, p. 92) highlights several intercultural communication skills that strengthen effectiveness in global contexts. These include valuing, observing, listening, thinking, speaking, and gesturing, each addressing a different aspect of cross-cultural interaction. Valuing refers to understanding personal, group, and cultural values such as attitudes toward independence, equality, or courtesy that shape behaviour in the workplace (Ricard, 1993, as cited in Matveev, 2017). Observing and listening improve sensitivity to environmental cues and culturally influenced communication patterns, while thinking and speaking encourage recognition of diverse problem-solving approaches and speech styles, supporting clarity and creativity (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Hall, 1976; Ting-Toomey, 1999, all as cited in Matveev, 2017). Finally, gesturing reflects the role of nonverbal communication, including body language and facial expressions, in conveying meaning across cultures (Ricard, 1993, as cited in Matveev, 2017). Together, these skills form a foundation for IC, enabling professionals to navigate cultural differences effectively, foster collaboration, and improve performance in multicultural organisational environments.

2.1.2 Remote and hybrid work in global teams

In the contemporary work market, remote work has been one of the most talked-about and important assets. Remote work has largely shifted conventional communication and work relationships, and IC application in these situations becomes crucial to navigate through the increased barriers built into these work arrangements.

Even though remote work seems like a fairly new approach to work, in the article by Sin & Kathiarayan (2023), we see that the concept of remote work can be traced back to the 1970s. The concept was introduced by NASA engineer Jack Nilles as an answer to traffic and environmental issues. The concept gained more structure with the rise of personal computers in the 1980s and further advanced in the 1990s with the spread of the internet (Sin & Kathiarayan, 2023).

Remote work has reached the magnitude it has today, mostly thanks to key aspects such as COVID-19, globalisation, demographic changes, and finances. With the new format of working, it disrupted the conventional communication techniques and channels, not to mention that the typical challenges of intercultural communication are magnified due to the nature of the technology being the vessel of interaction, leading to the loss of non-verbal clues. Yousef (2024) stresses the strain that this loss has, especially in the context of intercultural competence, as non-verbal cues are "influenced by culture, so if these are indeed eliminated, then some cultural factors could be considered to be eliminated too. Without these elements, the dynamics of group development, leadership, and individual influence attempts could potentially shift"(p.140). This absence can lead to even higher and more complex barriers as they amplify communication issues, misunderstandings, and struggles in following work frameworks. (Pacheco, 2024)

As the dynamic changes between teams in the common contemporary reality, there is a need to adjust the elements responsible for the success of the company, such as trust, communication and leadership. Although their importance remains, how they are approached shifts in more virtual environments. One of the biggest restraints felt is in the realm of communication. Yousef (2024) mentions this struggle by highlighting the limited and conditioned communication, due to the technology mediator, stating that "Virtual communication is routinely asynchronous; the time delay element can change the nature of collaborative efforts" (p.140). The scholar also notes that, while group dynamics can function effectively, they often require more time to develop compared to

when teams share the same physical space. When interactions are mediated by a screen, it takes longer to build trust and establish genuine connections. IC enters this problem by trying to navigate and make the difficulties feel easier. As Pacheco (2024) emphasises, "Cultural intelligence thus becomes a critical asset, enabling remote workers to interpret and respond appropriately to these differences, thereby enhancing team cohesion and performance" (p.9).

IC becomes key in navigating the complexities of virtual collaboration, as "remote work environments exacerbate the need for cultural sensitivity" (Yousef, 2024, p.8). There is a growing need for an appropriate framework, "Global organisations are increasingly recognising the need for effective integration between intercultural and technical skills, especially within the context of remote work" (Pacheco, 2024, p.3). This is due to not just having amplified restraint on team dynamics, but there is also the very important aspect that teams with remote workers commonly have different cultural backgrounds, which adds another layer of complexity. Through IC, and its most appropriate use, there is the chance to interpret and respond efficiently, in order to enhance performance. (Yousef, 2024).

In virtual teams, individuals often prioritise time efficiency and making sure that what they are doing has positively contributed to the team, and that the information is being transmitted properly. There is a downside to virtual teams; relationships between colleagues are not given the same level of attention, losing some of the humanistic aspects of working in a collaborative environment. In teams that work together without a computer as a mediator, we see that positive relationships between workers become increasingly more important to them. There is also a more subtle approach to the cultural differences, benefiting from the in-person cues that support the IC. (Yousef, 2024)

2.1.3 The Role of Intercultural Competence in Enhancing Human Resources

With diversity becoming the new norm within the workforce, it's only natural that companies are having to adjust to the reality of people management across multiple countries or through international partnerships. Also, with IC gaining more importance in the contemporary business market, it acts as a key driver in reshaping the practices and functions of the Human Resources (HR) department. IC has become essential for HR, serving as a strategic tool that is applied in all of the department's practices and activities.

For HR, IC can be crucial in recruitment and integration, conflict resolution, and the management of international or culturally diverse assignments.

For Fatima Gonsalves (2025), cultural diversity in a multicultural organisation should be viewed as natural, without ignoring some of the obstacles that it brings. Emphasis is placed on the difficulty of internal communication and people management, particularly when it comes to ensuring that all employees, especially those in international locations, are effectively reached. The solution for her team is to view this issue as a need to work continuously and innovate whenever possible. Each activity or communication must be carefully considered to foster inclusion and encourage participation. (G. Fátima, personal communication, April 23 2025)

2.1.3.1 Recruitment and Integration

Joana (personal communication, April 22 2025) goes in line with the perspective addressed by the mentioned authors, going a little further in her interpretation of cultural diversity, and that within IC, it is also necessary to pay attention to diversity in ages, level of education, and digital literacy, among others. The possessor of IC must go beyond just interpreting culture; they must also interpret the reality of each person themselves, and together with their characteristics and culture.

Within human resources, Joana (2025) highlights the fundamental work in uniting all employees from all realities. Joana states: “We have a key role in transmitting the message of organisational culture beyond borders. It means that we have the role of delivering a uniform message, regardless of border diversities, logistics diversities, and what strategies we adopt.” (*my own translation*).

The importance of leadership in breaking cultural barriers within the company is also emphasised: “Leadership plays a very important role in the unification of our audiences, regardless of their cultural differences.” (C. Joana, personal communication, April 22 2025). HR and leadership must work together to be able to transmit the company’s message and make everyone feel involved with the organisation.

Both Fátima (personal communication, April 23 2025) and Joana (personal communication, April 22 2025) emphasise the importance of recruitment and integration in building connections with employees. They highlight the first interaction between parties, where the company's image is presented and there is an assessment of whether

the person is a right fit for the company and vice versa. In multicultural environments, IC is crucial as it helps HR professionals understand how social representations and cultural expectations shape candidates' behaviours, values, and communication styles. Moura and Ferrari (2015) argue that shared social representations shape how people perceive work, authority, and collaboration. The HR representatives need to establish cultural connections and act as bridges between candidates and the organisation.

Santos et al (2025) reinforce that during the recruitment process, prioritise candidates who already demonstrate IC, as they will become a strong asset for the multicultural environment in the company. When IC is embedded in the recruitment process, HR can ensure better alignment between company culture and the cultural values of new hires, creating stronger team cohesion from the beginning. As the authors note, recruiters often seek "candidates with an entrepreneurial mindset and international experience" (my own translations, p. 14), valuing their demonstrated ability to adapt to varied cultures.

2.1.3.2 Conflict Resolution in Culturally Diverse Environments

Cultural diversity, while enriching, often brings conflicting views, norms, and styles of interaction. Without proper mediation, these tensions can increase and harm trust and harmony within teams. According to Braslauskas (2020), intercultural competence is essential for managing intercultural conflict because it provides the necessary frameworks to understand and overcome psychological barriers, develop specific skills, and apply appropriate resolution strategies. IC is essential in managing intercultural conflict, as it allows individuals to recognise the root of the problem and respond with sensitivity and flexibility. IC helps navigate complicated relationships between coworkers where the conflict comes from poor communication or cultural differences. It is up to the RH, with their IC abilities, to control and create an understanding and break down the barriers.

In line with this perspective, Moura & Ferrari (2015) argue that understanding and navigating cultural conflict transcends the simplicities of implementing policies. It involves all of the in-betweens of human interactions, such as gestures, tone, and social rituals. This need to expand the meaning of *cultural diversity* is followed by Joana Castro (2025), elevating IC to a higher ground of complexity.

There is a need for HR professionals who are IC to be vigilant and monitor the organisational environment, allowing them to adjust to the problematic and intervene earlier and more effectively, reducing the potential for escalation and reinforcing trust

among teams (Moura & Ferrari, 2015). This view emphasises the need for people with IC to not let themselves be clouded by their confidence in their abilities and to remain calm and collected when dealing with conflict within the organisation, as well as pragmatic and critical when approaching the problem. It is their responsibility to navigate the issue so that all parties feel seen and heard. Moura & Ferrari (2015) highlight the need to evaluate every situation and “read between the lines”: “The international management of an organisation goes beyond its structural and operational issues, and its success depends on the intercultural management of human relationships” (my own translation, p. 265).

As a tool for mediating and resolving conflicts that arise from cultural diversity, IC proves to be indispensable. However, the interview conducted at Cork Supply reveals a different reality, where intercultural conflict does not appear as a prominent issue. As the interviewee noted, “Cultural diversity has never been an issue for this organisation, neither cultural nor gender related.” (*my own translation*). She described the company’s approach as “very natural” and explained that “major diversity policies have never been necessary.” (*my own translation*). This suggests that the organisational culture itself operates as a preventive mechanism that mitigates the escalation of intercultural tensions before they become conflicts. The company’s emphasis on maintaining a “light-hearted and cheerful atmosphere” and on values such as *Make a Difference* fosters trust and collaboration that transcend cultural differences. In this sense, rather than requiring specialised conflict mediation, Cork Supply appears to rely on cultivating a strong, inclusive, and positive organisational culture as a proactive way to minimise conflict. (G. Fátima, personal communication, April 23, 2025)

2.1.3.3 Managing Intercultural Assignments

As companies expand globally, the need for employees to engage in intercultural assignments grows. Yet, not all professionals are equally prepared to operate across cultures. Ferreira and Rua (2025) and Araújo (2022) emphasise that organisations must proactively create support structures, such as training, mentoring, and internal communication strategies, to prepare employees for international assignments. The responsibility falls to the company’s Human Resources to properly prepare employees for successful international missions.

Araújo (2022) and Santos et al (2025) advocate for mentoring and training employees through a variety of activities and practices in order to achieve the best possible preparation and equip the workforce with IC, thereby creating a stronger team. To foster an inclusive atmosphere, organisations can use tools such as team-building activities and workshops to strengthen unity and promote clear communication within multicultural teams (Santos et al, 2025). By investing in the training of their employees, organisations not only boost individual performance but also enhance overall organisational agility and innovation.

Additionally, Araújo (2022) and UNESCO (2009, as cited in Araújo) note that promoting IC increases cross-cultural leadership effectiveness, strengthens multicultural teams, and improves coordination between international companies. For HR, this means that managing international assignments is not just a matter of logistics but of cultural strategy, one that requires continuous investment in IC development. We see in the scholar's work that IC can have a direct impact on leadership and the effectiveness of operations across cultures. IC allows for easier intercultural coordination and cooperation.

Fatima Gonçalves (personal communication, April 23, 2025) at Cork Supply puts this idea into practice, but in a way that feels much more continuous and naturally integrated into the company's culture, rather than as preparation for a single mission. As the interviewee explained, the company invests regularly in training, using approaches like gamification and micro-learning to adapt to different learning styles. What stands out is that, when trainings take place, such as those in the sales area, there is a clear effort to bring together employees from all nationalities. These moments end up becoming intercultural training sessions in themselves, where interaction and alignment happen in a very organic way. Communication with international teams is also supported by digital platforms, which provide a constant structure for connection and collaboration. This shows that, for Cork Supply, "preparation" is not a one-off event, but an ongoing process. By continuously bringing multicultural teams together in training, the company is, in practice, "equipping the workforce with IC" and building "a stronger team," just as Araújo (2022) and Santos et al (2025) defend.

2.2 The relevance in the business environment

In today's increasingly globalised business environment, cultural diversity within organisations has become both a reality and a strategic asset. Diverse teams, composed

of individuals from different cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds, have been shown to enhance innovation, creativity, and overall productivity. However, managing multicultural teams also presents distinct challenges, such as communication barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and conflicting work styles. At the same time, embracing diversity opens new opportunities, including access to global markets and improved decision-making processes. To fully understand these benefits, organisations must adopt ethical and socially responsible practices that promote inclusion, mitigate prejudice, and respect individual differences. Diversity and inclusion policies not only support moral and legal obligations but also play an important role in employee engagement and satisfaction.

The contemporary society and, therefore, the current organisational environment can't be explained outside of the concept of multiculturalism and globalisation, in that sense, "Some researchers described globalisation as the absence of international borders and trade barriers (Ohmae, 1995), the mixing of social and professional interests (Renesch, 1992), or the formation of one world as a single place (Robertson, 1995)." (Matveev, 2017, p.3). According to Thomas (2008, as cited in Matveev, 2017, p.3), processes of globalisation and the increasing interconnectedness among people are largely driven by transformations in economic and political spheres, the growing complexity of business contexts, the rapid advancement of information technologies, and the rise of new influential actors on the global stage.

Besides intercultural competence, the intercultural experience is something hard to conceptualize since every individual has a unique experience with it, however, "true intercultural experience occurs when we can see ourselves and our work as if we were so-called others" (Sarmiento, 2014, p.605), almost like the idea of empathy being a necessary mean to perceive other people with different backgrounds, being them cultural or not. The relationship built between local and global practices offers a "dynamic tension [...] (that) encourages the epistemological and phenomenological adaptation, under a genuinely interdisciplinary and intercultural perspective" (Sarmiento, 2014, p.605).

Intercultural experience can therefore be understood as a space of epistemological negotiation, where knowledge is no longer produced from a single focus of enunciation but emerges through dialogues between different worldviews. This process reinforces the idea that interculturality is not a static competence to be acquired, but rather a continuous practice of reflection and adaptation. In that sense, intercultural engagement assumes both

a transformative and critical dimension, as it not only expands cognitive horizons but also questions the power relations that structure knowledge production in contemporary societies.

In order to understand how important multiculturalism is in the workplace, we have to understand that the organisational world found in teamwork is the most common way of structure. According to Matveev (2017, p.78), groups naturally develop rules that guide member interaction, providing a framework for cooperation and shared understanding. These rules serve as mechanisms to enhance group productivity and effectiveness while simultaneously offering strategies for managing conflict (Maderer, Holtbrügge, & Schuster, 2014). In this sense, the establishment of group norms is not merely procedural but foundational to collective performance, as it enables members to anticipate behaviours, reduce uncertainty, and maintain cohesion. By highlighting the regulatory function of such rules, Matveev underlines their dual role in promoting efficiency and in supporting the resolution of interpersonal tensions, both of which are central to the success of group dynamics.

Matveev (2017, pp.78-79) highlights that the internationalisation of business has driven the widespread formation of multicultural teams, representing a profound organisational shift comparable to the rise of the multidivisional corporation in the mid-twentieth century (Dwyer, Engardio, Schiller, & Reed, 1994). These teams are increasingly central to global competitiveness, as they enable organisations to address complex market problems, improve communication, and respond effectively to geographically dispersed customer needs (Hofner Saphiere, 1996; Shokley-Zalaback, 2002).

Matveev (2017, pp.81-82) identifies several key factors for managing diverse teams, including clarity of goals, complementary skills, clearly defined responsibilities, and commitment, all of which contribute to coordinated effort and collective achievement (Hackman, 2002; Salas, Sims, & Burke, 2005). Both cultural contexts emphasise the importance of a cooperative climate, open communication, and mutual respect, reinforcing findings that psychological safety and intercultural sensitivity are essential for team effectiveness in diverse settings (Edmondson, 1999; Stahl et al, 2010). The alignment of these factors demonstrates that high-performing multicultural teams require not only technical and task-related competencies but also interpersonal and intercultural

capabilities, underscoring the multidimensional nature of team effectiveness in global business environments.

Innovation lies at the centre when discussing multicultural teams. That said, Edwards-Schachter (2018) refers to “innovation is the process and the result of the creation of something new that has its effects in the economy and technology” (as cited in Santos et. al., 2025, p.4). In this context, diversity has become an increasingly significant concern for organisations, as it has a direct impact on their innovation outcomes.

Cultural diversity in the business environment represents both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, multicultural teams tend to be more innovative and creative, as they bring together different perspectives, values, and communication styles, which enhances idea generation and leads to more comprehensive decision-making (Braslauskas, 2020). Furthermore, diversity can expand access to new markets and strengthen international negotiation capacity, particularly when organisations develop effective intercultural competencies based on cultural knowledge, sensitivity, and adaptive communication strategies (Braslauskas, 2020).

At the same time, managing diverse teams requires a conscious effort to address barriers such as cultural conflicts, stereotypes, and differences in perceptions of time, hierarchy, or formality (Hofstede et al, 2010, as cited in Braslauskas, 2020). Diversity and inclusion policies, therefore, play a central role, as they not only combat prejudice and promote ethical practices but also increase employee engagement and satisfaction. Creating environments of mutual respect and implementing collaborative conflict resolution strategies are essential to ensuring that cultural diversity translates into a sustainable competitive advantage (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, as cited in Braslauskas, 2020).

From an ethical and social responsibility perspective, organisations operating in multicultural contexts must ensure respect for diversity and equity in all interactions. Inclusive practices, such as transparent recruitment processes, anti-discrimination training, and support for minority groups, are not only moral imperatives but also strategic tools to foster trust and loyalty among employees. When companies actively commit to combating prejudice and building inclusive cultures, they reinforce their reputation,

strengthen internal cohesion, and promote long-term organisational sustainability (Braslauskas, 2020).

Understanding cultural diversity within organisations through the framework of social representations allows us to see how collective perceptions shape workplace interactions. Bueno and Freitas (2015) explain that employees interpret organisational life through symbolic constructions that influence cooperation, trust, and conflict. These representations define how individuals perceive “the other,” and consequently, how they act in multicultural contexts. When these views are open and flexible, diversity becomes a catalyst for innovation and collaboration; however, when they are rigid or stereotyped, they may reinforce barriers and limit the potential of intercultural encounters.

The authors note that intercultural management cannot be reduced to structural adjustments alone; it must also address the symbolic and relational dimensions of organisational life. Social representations act as lenses through which cultural differences are interpreted, and they often determine whether employees experience diversity as an enriching factor or as a source of conflict. In this sense, organisations must recognise that communication, power relations, and cultural imaginaries interact constantly in the daily life of employees (Moscovici, 1984, as cited in Bueno & Freitas, 2015).

Finally, Bueno and Freitas (2015) argue that promoting inclusive practices requires not only formal diversity policies but also an effort to transform the underlying representations that guide interpersonal relations. By fostering dialogue, valuing different perspectives, and encouraging collaborative interpretations of cultural differences, organisations can increase employee satisfaction, strengthen engagement, and promote a more cohesive environment. This approach highlights that the success of intercultural management depends on the ability to reshape collective meanings and to integrate cultural diversity as a strategic and ethical value within the organisation.

In the contemporary global market, interculturality has become a crucial driver of organisational innovation. Santos et al (2025) argue that cultural diversity among employees directly enhances creativity, the generation of new ideas, and the development of innovative solutions.

The authors also highlight that the benefits of interculturality come hand in hand with certain challenges. As noted by Da Camara (2008, as cited in Santos et al, 2025), diverse teams often outperform homogeneous ones in productivity and problem-solving

capacity, yet this potential requires effective diversity management to overcome cultural barriers and stereotypes. Policies that embrace inclusivity and diversity reduce resistance among dominant groups, while simultaneously increasing respect for unique contributions within the workplace (Mor Barak, 2011, as cited in Santos et al, 2025). In this sense, interculturality does not automatically lead to innovation; rather, it must be cultivated through conscious management practices.

Finally, intercultural competencies such as cultural intelligence and intercultural communication play a decisive role in transforming diversity into innovation. According to Santos et al (2025), employees develop openness, empathy, and the ability to adapt communication styles across cultures contribute significantly to team creativity and cohesion. Intercultural communication, when managed effectively, enables knowledge-sharing without loss of meaning, which is essential for organisational innovation (Pikhart, 2014, as cited in Santos et al, 2025). In this way, interculturality is both a cultural and strategic asset, capable of boosting competitiveness and long-term sustainability in organisations.

Intercultural communication plays a decisive role in stimulating creativity within organisations, particularly in multicultural workplaces. Ferreira and Rua (2025) demonstrate that employees from diverse cultural backgrounds contribute varied perspectives, experiences, and problem-solving approaches, which significantly enrich organisational creativity. Their findings confirm that Intercultural communication is not merely a supportive process but a strategic driver of innovation and business growth. Effective communication across cultures enables teams to transform diversity into tangible solutions, improving both performance and competitiveness in global markets.

At the same time, the authors highlight that intercultural communication is not without challenges. Misunderstandings, communication barriers, and cultural differences can hinder collaboration and create conflict if not properly managed (Washington et al, 2012, as cited in Ferreira & Rua, 2025). Nevertheless, when organisations implement inclusive practices and encourage sensitivity in communication, these challenges become opportunities for learning and creativity. In fact, culturally diverse employees often introduce pragmatic approaches that simplify processes, thereby increasing efficiency and productivity within companies.

Ferreira and Rua (2025) argue that intercultural communication enhances organisational culture by fostering inclusivity, mutual respect, and openness to difference. Their research illustrates how multicultural teams not only generate new ideas but also help organisations adapt more effectively to international markets. By leveraging Intercultural communication, businesses can foster innovation, enrich internal communication, and create a more cohesive and dynamic workplace. This reinforces the view that intercultural communication is both an ethical imperative and a strategic advantage for sustainable growth in today's interconnected world.

In conclusion, the literature demonstrates that interculturality and intercultural communication are not simply supportive elements in organisational life but decisive factors for creativity, innovation, and long-term sustainability. From the perspective of social representations (Bueno & Freitas, 2015), cultural diversity must be understood as a dynamic process of meaning-making that influences cooperation, conflict, and inclusion. At the same time, empirical research confirms that multicultural teams enrich problem-solving, generate innovative solutions, and strengthen organisational adaptability (Braslauskas, 2020; Santos et al, 2025; Ferreira & Rua, 2025). Diversity, therefore, becomes not only a moral imperative linked to ethics and responsibility but also a strategic advantage that enhances performance and competitiveness in global markets.

2.3 Developing Intercultural Competence

Having understood that IC is crucial in organisations with international presence or diverse workforces. It is important to comprehend how this can be developed and what the organisation's role is in this. This text analyses how these abilities can be effectively developed and maximised for individuals and the organisation. It is worth re-noting that this is a continuous process, and every party involved must adjust and study the reality of where their business finds itself. To develop these analyses, we will use references from the work of scholars and interviews.

2.3.1 Individual Development

With the growing interest in Intercultural competences, it raises the question of "how can we develop it?". For intercultural competence to be effectively developed, it cannot rely exclusively on organisational structures or external initiatives. Although companies can and should provide supportive environments, the responsibility ultimately begins at the

individual level. Each person must make a conscious effort to cultivate this competence through key transformative components that enable real growth. These include formal training and structured learning opportunities, experiential learning and direct exposure to cultural diversity, and ongoing self-development and critical self-reflection. While organisational programs can significantly enhance these processes, the foundation lies in the willingness of each individual to engage actively in their own development. This foundation must transcend the simplicity of knowing other cultures, it goes deeper.

This idea brings us to the already mentioned Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence developed by Deardorff (2004). In this model, the focus is placed on attitudes as the foundation for effective intercultural interactions, such as openness, respect, and curiosity, which enable individuals to tolerate ambiguity and engage meaningfully with cultural diversity. The model emphasises both internal outcomes, such as a shift in one's frame of reference, and external outcomes, such as the ability to behave and communicate appropriately and effectively in intercultural situations. By integrating attitudes, knowledge, and skills, the pyramid model demonstrates that intercultural competence is not a static achievement but a capacity that can be continuously deepened through deliberate development. (Deardorff, 2004)

In line with this idea, Deardorff (2004) introduced the Process Model of Intercultural Competence, which takes the pyramid model even further by showing its development as an ongoing and cyclical process. To claim intercultural competence, individuals must dedicate themselves to evolving, studying, and practising the necessary abilities in a continuous process. While containing the same core elements, the process model highlights the movement between personal attitudes, knowledge, and skills, and the interpersonal outcomes of intercultural interaction. This perspective suggests that one can never fully achieve intercultural competence. It is a capacity that can be constantly enhanced through practice, reflection, and renewed engagement with cultural diversity (Deardorff, 2004).

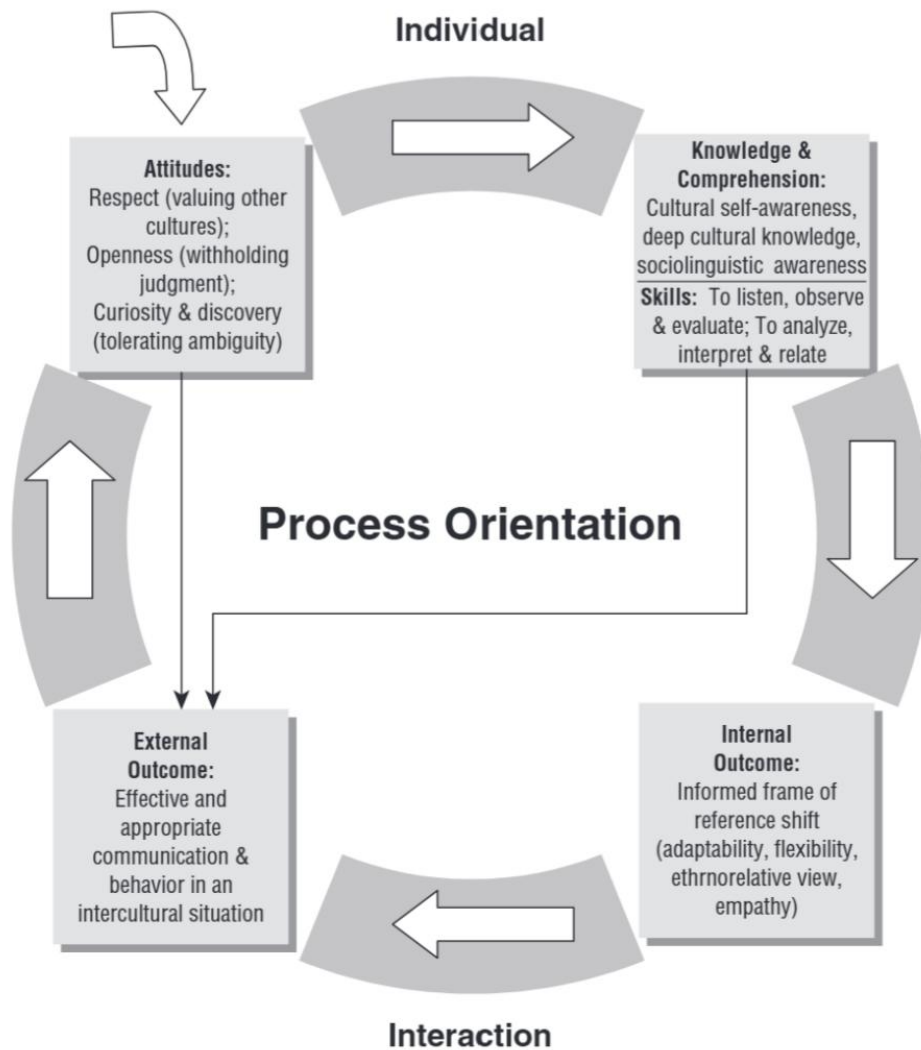


Figure 3 Process Model of Intercultural Competence
 Source: Deardorff (2004) as cited in Deardorff (2006)

These ideas align with the perspective of Moura & Ferrari (2015), who argue that intercultural competence in organisations requires individuals to reinterpret and recreate their social representations as they engage with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds. From this standpoint, intercultural competence is not merely about mastering abstract knowledge but about negotiating meanings and continuously adapting relational practices in everyday organisational life. Social representations, shaped by language, collective memory, and prior cultural conditioning, frame how individuals perceive others and make sense of differences (Moscovici, 2004, as cited in Moura & Ferrari, 2015). Thus, the development of intercultural competence relies on recognising and, when possible, transcending these representational boundaries to create spaces of shared understanding. (Moura & Ferrari, 2015)

To better understand the process through which individuals can develop intercultural competence, we turn to the work of Araújo (2022), who discusses Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as a practical framework. Through this model, we can comprehend how individuals can actively work towards developing IC in a structured way. Pacheco (2024) defines CQ as “an individual's capability to function effectively in culturally diverse settings” (p. 6). The concept was first introduced in 2003 by researchers Christopher Earley and Soon Ang, and since then, it has become a key asset in many management training and cultural awareness programs, allowing for a coherent and measurable development of IC. The importance of CQ lies in its nature of not being limited to one specific cultural context but in its applicability across diverse cultural settings (Araújo, 2022; Moura & Ferrari, 2015). CQ is structured into four core dimensions, often referred to as strategy, knowledge, drive, and action. These dimensions are metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural (Araújo, 2022; Moura & Ferrari, 2015; Pacheco, 2024).

The first dimension, metacognitive CQ, refers to the ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate intercultural interactions. Essentially, it is the capacity to strategise and adapt one’s thinking when interacting with different cultures. This dimension is crucial for developing adaptive thinking strategies in new virtual or physical contexts (Pacheco, 2024).

The second dimension, cognitive CQ, consists of knowledge about cultural norms, practices, and conventions (Pacheco, 2024). This includes understanding the legal, economic, and social systems of other cultures, as well as their values, religious beliefs, and non-verbal communication rules (Moura & Ferrari, 2015).

The third dimension, motivational CQ, relates to the interest and drive to engage with cultural diversity. Individuals with high motivational CQ are more willing to embrace unfamiliar cultural contexts, leading to more effective collaboration and fewer misunderstandings (Pacheco, 2024). This dimension also includes the enjoyment of interacting with people from other cultures and the confidence to handle the stress of cultural adaptation (Moura & Ferrari, 2015). Here, we return to Deardorff’s (2004) perspective on the role of predisposed individual characteristics in shaping intercultural competence and the importance of addressing personal biases and ethnocentric attitudes.

The fourth and final dimension, behavioural CQ, reflects the ability to adapt verbal and non-verbal actions to different cultural settings. It involves modifying one’s behaviour, such as tone of voice, gestures, and facial expressions, to suit specific intercultural

situations. Effective leaders of virtual teams often exhibit high behavioural CQ, which enhances communication and trust, a key asset for remote work (Pacheco, 2024; Moura & Ferrari, 2015).

This model underscores that intercultural competence is not merely an abstract concept but a set of skills that can be systematically cultivated and applied in daily life.

Following in these lines of thought, Bartel-Radic and Cucchi (2025) provide a broader conceptualisation of IC, noting that the field is shaped by a variety of models with different emphases. The scholars categorise existing frameworks into three broad types: compositional models, which outline the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that form the foundation of competence; adaptive models, which stress the importance of communication processes in intercultural encounters; and developmental models, which situate intercultural competence as a staged process of learning and transformation. While diverse in approach, these models converge on several essential traits: openness, empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, and the reduction of ethnocentrism, with ethnocentrism specifically identified as the conceptual opposite of intercultural competence, following the perspective of Deardorff (2006) (Bartel-Radic & Cucchi, 2025).

In the work of Arasaratnam (2016), we are once again reminded that IC is a continuous process and needs to be approached with a sense of progression and development. IC should not and cannot fall into the simplistic ideology of merely “knowing other cultures,” as this would be just “barely scratching the surface of IC.” The “knowing of cultures” needs to evolve into the spectrum of reflection, critical thinking, and practice.

A crucial aspect when it comes to developing IC is experiential learning through contact. Experiences of cultural contact, especially those that challenge one’s assumptions, are critical moments for learning. Arasaratnam (2016) also points out that while training and structured learning can contribute, personality traits and pre-existing attitudes, such as ethnocentrism, strongly shape how individuals approach intercultural situations, once again circling back to Deardorff (2006).

Academic training provides models and concepts, but practical experience requires their application in real, unpredictable, and complex situations. As Bartel-Radic and Cucchi (2025) state, “practical experience is crucial to the individual learning process” (p. 4). Scholars argue that the development of intercultural competence does not primarily depend on the quantity of international experiences but rather on the quality and context

of these experiences. Defending the idea that engagement with practical experience should be approached with a “quality over quantity” mindset. International mobility, work in diverse teams, or cross-cultural exchanges do not automatically provide all the capacities needed for IC, what matters is the type and depth of interaction. Their study highlights that it is through meaningful intercultural contact, where individuals are required to adapt, negotiate, and sometimes manage conflict, that true learning occurs. This aligns with the idea that intercultural competence is best developed not in isolation but in real and often challenging interactions with others (Bartel-Radic & Cucchi, 2025).

However, research also demonstrates that international or intercultural exposure by itself does not automatically translate into competence. Yousef (2024), for instance, shows that students who had international experience did not evaluate themselves as significantly more open-minded than those who had never studied or worked abroad. This suggests that experiential learning becomes meaningful only when individuals approach it with the requisite attitudes identified by Deardorff (2004), namely respect, openness, curiosity, and discovery. Yousef (2024) further adds to this by noting the importance of reflection and a willingness to question one’s own assumptions.

Fantini (2000) contributes an additional crucial dimension by emphasising that the process of learning about another culture simultaneously compels individuals to gain a deeper and more critical understanding of their own. To explain this process, he links it to the expression “looking out is looking in” (p. 26). Experiential learning thus becomes an enriching process, as individuals are not only able to connect with other cultures and perspectives but also allowed transformative self-reflection.

Fantini (2000) also highlights the inseparable link between language and culture, stressing that speaking another language goes far beyond a technical skill; it opens the door to different ways of thinking and perceiving the world. Language not only reflects but also shapes how individuals interpret and interact with reality, making it an essential element in the development of intercultural competence. This reinforces the idea that, in addition to skills, knowledge, and attitudes, it is fundamental to have the ability to communicate across different linguistic and cultural codes.

Language, in fact, both reflects and affects one’s worldview, serving as a sort of road map to how one perceives, interprets, thinks about, and expresses one’s view of the world. This intertwining invites a fresh look at how we conceptualize what

is meant by worldview, its components, and their interrelationships; and at how language and culture mediate (inter)cultural processes. (Fantini,2000, P.27)

Taken together, these ideas show that experiential learning is most effective when it combines quality intercultural interactions (Bartel-Radic & Cucchi, 2025), self-reflection and openness (Arasaratnam, 2016; Yousef, 2024), and the integration of communicative and cultural skills (Fantini, 2000). Developing intercultural competence through experiential learning, therefore, transcends mere contact; it demands a conscious effort to engage, to critically evaluate experiences, and to transform challenges into opportunities for growth.

Through their framework of IC, we can see that developing IC can be split into two parts. One that is teachable, and the other one is dependent on personal dispositions, meaning that not all individuals will progress at the same pace or to the same degree. The person's reach of IC will always be dependent on how they see what living in community is about, how they perceive humanity, and what they consider their role in it.

For one to develop IC, the process must first and foremost be initiated by themselves, beginning with a reflection on their own culture and preconceived perspectives of other cultures. The development of IC is complex, filled with layers that may never be fully mastered. It cannot be reduced to isolated training sessions or international exposure alone. Rather, it requires a deliberate combination of attitudes such as openness and respect (Deardorff, 2004), the reinterpretation of social representations (Moura & Ferrari, 2015), the structured practice of cultural intelligence (Araújo, 2022; Pacheco, 2024), and the capacity to transform experiential learning into meaningful self-reflection (Arasaratnam, 2016; Bartel-Radic & Cucchi, 2025; Yousef, 2024; Fantini, 2000). While some aspects of IC can indeed be fostered through education and structured programs, its full development depends on personal dispositions and the conscious effort to engage with cultural differences constructively. Importantly, the journey towards IC is never complete; it is a continuous and cyclical process that demands ongoing dedication. Although the first step must come from the individual, organisations also play a vital role in the process. When engaging with different cultures and realities, they must encourage their workforce to develop IC, providing them with the means and the tools to do so.

2.3.2 Organisational Development

If at the individual level intercultural competence depends on attitudes, reflection, and experience, at the organisational level its development requires structured strategies, policies, and practices that have interculturality in the daily operations. Organisations that operate in multicultural environments or aspire to expand internationally cannot leave the responsibility for developing intercultural skills solely to their employees. Instead, they must create systems that actively foster, monitor, and sustain this development over time. Most of these practices rely heavily on leadership and human resources, as these functions shape both the strategic and operational dimensions of intercultural development. Companies structure this process through a comprehensive, multi-layered approach that integrates strategic vision, human resources, targeted training, and the cultivation of an inclusive organisational culture. The overarching goal is to transform cultural diversity from a demographic reality into a strategic asset capable of driving creativity, innovation, and global performance (Ferreira & Rua, 2025; Santos et al, 2025).

As the company has the responsibility to encourage and foster intercultural competence in its culturally diverse workforce, it must rely on a clear and coherent framework. To break down and better understand the structure of organisational development of IC, this process can be summarised into five pillars. The first is Strategy and Leadership Commitment, which forms the base of the structure. The second is Talent Acquisition and Selection. The third is Targeted Training and Development. The fourth is Fostering an Inclusive Organisational Culture, and the fifth and final pillar is Evaluation and Continuous Improvement. The following figure illustrates the five main pillars for the organisational development of intercultural competence.



Figure 4: Five pillars for organisational IC development
 Source: Myself

The foundation for the organisational development of intercultural competence lies in the commitment of leadership to integrate cultural diversity and interculturality into the strategic core of the company. It's the base of everything. How would the process even work if the ones in charge aren't willing to do the work themselves? We have already emphasised the importance of leadership in P&E practices and organisational culture; they also play a crucial role in expanding IC not just to an operational purpose but also to a competitive mechanism and success. In a globalised market, companies increasingly view cultural diversity and cultural intelligence (CQ) as key assets that provide a competitive advantage, allowing them to access wider markets, attract international talent, and respond more effectively to the needs of diverse stakeholders (Ferreira & Rua, 2025; Pacheco, 2024).

Leadership is also responsible for fostering a culture of respect that permeates the organisational environment, essential in a diverse workforce. This includes recognising, valuing, and incorporating different cultural norms, communication styles, and working practices every day. As Santos et al (2025) highlight, culturally intelligent leaders encourage openness, empathy, and sensitivity, facilitating innovation and strengthening intercultural communication processes crucial for organisational performance. As the authors note, "Well-managed intercultural communication and the transfer of information

without the loss of newly acquired knowledge represent the key to innovation." (Pikhart, 2014, p. 952, as cited in Santos et al, 2025, p. 8, *my own translation*). On the contrary, negative intercultural communication is known as a direct threat to business opportunities and corporate reputation, underscoring the necessity for strategic leadership in this area (Ferreira & Rua, 2025). IC at the strategic level must be integrated with wider business objectives. Leaders must be aligned with the organisational goals and intercultural strategies, which allow for diversity to be leveraged for innovation, flexibility, and global success (Araújo, 2022; Pacheco, 2024).

The acquisition and selection of talent constitute one of the most critical stages for embedding intercultural competence within organisations. Companies that aspire to compete globally must be intentional in attracting, selecting, and developing individuals who are not only technically skilled but also open to diversity and equipped with intercultural sensitivity. Joana Castro (2025) pointed out the importance of attracting and retaining young talent, noting that the new generations look for companies that offer diversity, development, and a clear sense of purpose. Moura & Ferrari (2015) mention that for there to be IC in a company, the action needs to start from the beginning with recruiting individuals who demonstrate openness to cultural differences, professional international experience, and intercultural skills. This ensures that diversity is present not only at the operational level but also within the strategic layers of the organisation, where key decisions are made.

Within this pillar, Ferreira and Rua (2025) argue that culturally diverse teams foster creativity and innovation by integrating varied skills, perceptions, and approaches to problem-solving. For organisations, this implies that the recruitment process must actively value diversity, prioritising candidates whose personal and professional backgrounds enrich the organisational fabric rather than simply replicate it. In this sense, selection processes cannot be limited to technical competence alone but should also incorporate intercultural qualities that are essential for effective teamwork and innovation (Bartel-Radic & Cucchi, 2025).

Targeted training and development constitute one of the most decisive tools for strengthening intercultural competence within organisations. While recruiting diverse talent is an essential first step, companies must also ensure that these individuals are equipped with the necessary skills to work effectively across cultural differences. It's where the organisation actually manages to have a large impact on the IC development

of their workforce, it's through the realisation that workers gain the tools or enhance the abilities that they already have. When designed with clear objectives and supported by leadership, training initiatives enable employees to transform cultural contact into learning, innovation, and improved performance (Ferreira & Rua, 2025; G. Fátima, 2025; C.Joana, 2025).

As Pacheco (2024) underlines, IC training equips employees to function effectively in culturally diverse environments, both in face-to-face and virtual teams. Alongside this, Santos et al (2025) state that “The implementation of inclusive diversity programs proves to be essential, as it reduces possible resistance from individuals in dominant groups and, consequently, increases the appreciation and respect for the unique contributions that each person can provide” (p. 6). Organisations must create training programs tailored to their own reality, not only to achieve an enhancement of IC but also to build a more harmonious work environment.

Language and intercultural training programs also offer strategic value. Fantini et al (2001) emphasise that combining language acquisition with intercultural scenarios not only prepares employees for international assignments but also strengthens their ability to reflect critically on their own cultural frameworks. This type of training can be viewed as “quite simple,” since its implementation often requires the conventional application of an educational framework. This training can be achieved through language lectures inside the organisation or by workers enrolling in school programs with the support of the company.

Intercultural training directly contributes to organisational creativity and innovation. Ferreira and Rua (2025) highlight that cultural diversity enhances problem-solving and creativity, but only when supported by effective communication and training mechanisms that reduce potential conflicts. Similarly, Braslauskas (2020) stresses that conflict is inevitable in multicultural interactions; however, training employees in collaborative and adaptive communication strategies allows these conflicts to become opportunities for learning and innovation rather than obstacles.

Fostering an inclusive organisational culture is essential for ensuring that diversity is not reduced to numbers or symbolic initiatives but is instead embedded in the daily practices of the organisation. The importance of giving an inclusive organisational culture transcends the goal of business success; it directly affects the well-being of the workers,

a notion that is heavily appreciated by the P&E department of the organisation. Ferreira and Rua (2025) emphasise that cultural diversity enhances workplace communication and problem-solving when teams are encouraged to integrate their varied perspectives into collective processes. By valuing these differences, organisations create an environment that not only prevents misunderstandings but also strengthens decision-making and innovation.

For Santos et al (2025), inclusive cultures depend on deliberate policies that promote equity and respect. They note that these initiatives play a fundamental role in preventing exclusion and empowering employees to contribute with their unique perspectives. Ferreira and Rua (2025) argue that when organisations create inclusive environments, “employees from different cultural backgrounds bring their perspectives, experiences, values, and communication styles to the work environment,” which in turn supports collaboration and creativity (p. 16).

Braslauskas (2020) reminds us once again about all of the conflict and problems that can occur in IC, emphasising that inclusive environments must actively confront challenges such as stereotypes, ethnocentrism, and projected similarities that can harm effective communication. The author points out that employees should be encouraged to “critically evaluate and change their attitude towards alien cultures, accumulate skills and experience of intercultural interaction” (p. 211), thereby transforming diversity into a learning resource rather than a source of conflict.

To complete this cyclical process, there must be an effort for evaluation and continuous improvement, which are fundamental to ensuring that intercultural competence initiatives really reach the workforce and achieve their goals. For there to be an evolution in the organisation and in the program, there must be an active effort to listen to the workers. To do so, several mechanisms can be used, many of which are also applied in People & Experience (P&E). In this phase of the process, we can see measures and strategies that reinforce the idea that IC and P&E should go hand in hand. Feedback mechanisms, such as questionnaires and participation counts, need to be built in a way that tackles all areas of well-being and IC, but without overwhelming employees with repeated surveys.

Regular surveys also give insights into employees’ perceptions of diversity and inclusion. As Santos et al (2025) emphasise, “surveys about diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential to monitor employee perceptions and adapt organisational strategies

accordingly” (p. 7). These instruments make it possible for leaders to see if employees actually perceive progress in intercultural communication and inclusivity within the workplace.

CHAPTER III – INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

3 Internship description

3.1 Presentation of Cork Supply: The Selection Process

Before enrolling in the Master's in Intercultural Studies for Business, I was certain that pursuing an internship was the right path for me. This belief was put to the test when I was faced with the first decision, which of the three options I would choose: an internship, a dissertation or a project. Although I was always sure of what I wanted, for a brief moment, where I was led by fear, anxiety and confusion, I did not know what to do, due to all of the options having such great qualities and merit that would provide me with an experience that would enrich me in an academic and personal way. After collecting my thoughts and calming my nerves, I was back to the certainty that led me to pursue a Master's in the first place and choose to do an internship.

From very early on in my academic career, I knew that having a more practical approach to my studies was more beneficial to me. As I get a more "hands-on approach", I focus solely on the tasks that I am doing, immerse myself in the practices, and observe and analyse the practical side of the studies, allowing me to gather more information and process it faster, engraving the learnings into me. With this in mind, the option of doing an internship seems to be the more logical option for me.

This marks my third experience as an intern, this one being the longest one. My prior experiences, both in the area of Communication and Marketing, allowed me to understand that what we idolise for a job may not always come to fruition, and that an internship, whether it is a positive or a negative experience, will always provide me with valuable insights and work experience, constructing a more realistic future work expectation, needs and wants. As I enter my curricular internship in the master's program, I approach the challenge with confidence, openness and determination.

The second big decision that I was confronted with was "Where was my internship going to be?" a decision filled with nervousness and uncertainty as I found myself at the mercy of the company's acceptance.

I started to answer the question by analysing all of the organisations that would be near my home and looking into the work magazines provided by the ISCAP university. As I started my research, I narrowed my search to companies that would have a designated Communication, Public Relations, Marketing, Research and Development, and Strategy

and Planning departments, ideally with an international market presence. As I gather a list of potential internship hosts, I find myself with a large number of companies in the cork market, as my place of residence (Arouca) is not far from a cork industry “hub”.

Prioritising in-person interactions with multiple organisations, I spent a large amount of time visiting companies, asking for an opportunity to show my abilities and get a learning experience. In addition to these face-to-face contacts, I also contacted the organisations through email, describing my intentions and abilities. During one of the in-person visits, I went to the organisation Cork Supply, the company that took me in.

When I came across Cork Supply, Portugal's second-largest cork producer, I was impressed by their remarkable international presence and their dominance in the cork market, a valuable sector in the Portuguese economy. By analysing the company, I could understand its commitment to social responsibility and the well-being of its employees. Given the organisation's focus on the traditional product of cork, I was pleasantly surprised by what I saw as a modern and forward-thinking approach from the company.

My initial interaction with the organisation was in person, where I introduced and explained the purpose of my visit to the front desk. I was kindly advised to make contact via email. After some time and more contacts with the company, I received an invitation for an interview with Joana Castro (People & Experience) and Fátima Gonçalves (People & Communication). During the interview, I was asked about my academic background and what I was looking for in my internship. A week later, I received the positive news that I was invited to complete my final master's task with them.

With the news of having found a place of internship, and with some time until my journey with the company would start. As I was still dedicated to completing the first semester of my master's, I prepared myself for the internship by looking into the cork market and understanding Cork Supply's position in it. Through their social media presence, I tried to comprehend the company's aesthetic, mission, and values while also understanding how they establish contact with their consumers. All of the information I gathered was to prepare for my journey with them and understand their overall image.

3.1.1 History and mission of Cork Supply and principal areas of action and market

My internship took place at Cork Supply Portugal SA, specifically in their Natural Cork Unit (CSP1) located in São Paio de Oleiros. A leading firm in the cork industry, specialising in the production and distribution of high-quality cork products. Headquartered in São Paio de Oleiros, the company has a strong presence in both domestic and international markets. The company has ensured that its commitment to sustainability and excellence is well-known, and it has earned a reputation for delivering innovative and eco-conscious products. In Portugal, it has four units of production, one in Montijo, São Paio de Oleiros, Santa Maria da Feira and Rio Meão (Castro, 2024; Cork Supply, 2025)

Cork Supply is integrated into the Harve 81 Group, formerly known as The Cork Supply Group, a name change that better represented their growing product and services portfolio. The group encompasses several companies that focus on the wine industry in their different needs, from closures to oak barrels and labels. Starting with the natural cork product, focusing on quality, innovation, and services, they evolved to offering closures for wines and spirits, oak barrels, alternatives, and labels. (Unlock Brands, 2025)



Figure 5: Harv 81 Group
Source: Unlock Brands, 2025

The Harve 81 group comprises several companies, each contributing to its diverse portfolio. Cork Supply, the founding company, is dedicated to providing the highest quality cork stoppers, ranging from natural to technical options. Tonnellerie Ô specialises

in manufacturing oak barrels for both the French and American markets. Creative Oak focuses on developing innovative oak solutions for the wine and spirits industry, offering products that enhance the ageing process and aromatic complexity of beverages. (Cork Supply, 2020)

Studio Labes, based in Australia, produces wine labels and emerged to address the specific needs of the Australian market at a time when existing oak products were insufficient. Talis, one of the group’s newest companies, aims to fulfil the demand for high-quality bar tops for wines and spirits. Bouchons Abel, recently acquired by Harve 81, produces natural cork stoppers in France. Lastly, Legnokaps manufactures wooden caps for the bottle industry. (Cork Supply, 2020)

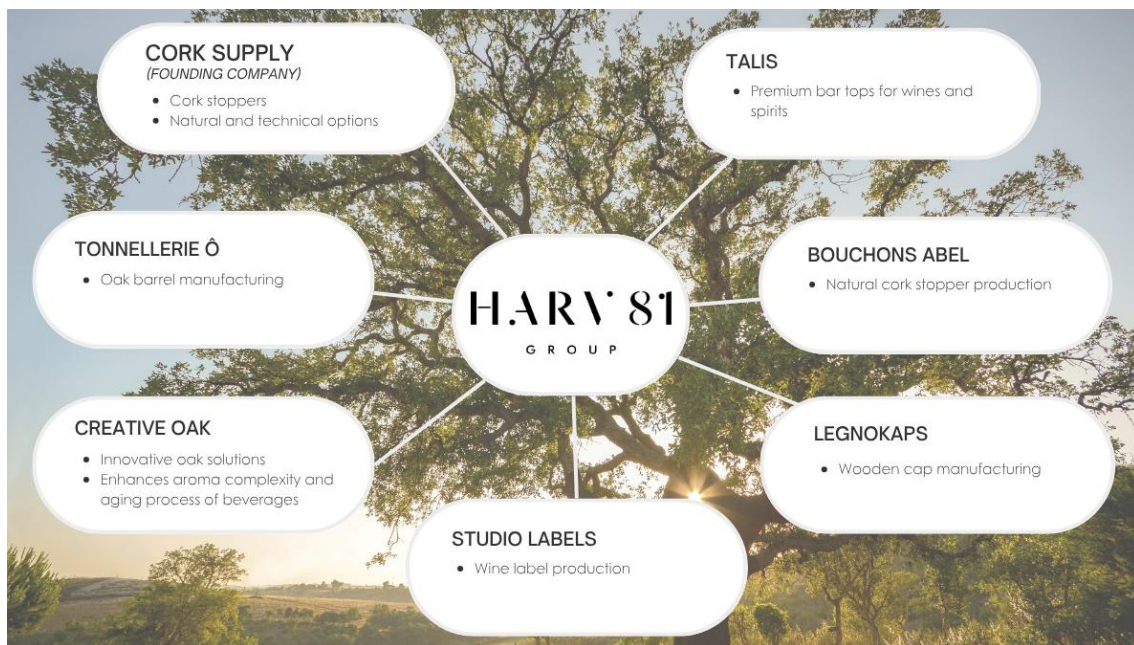


Figure 6: Harv'81 Group Scheme
Source: Myself

The organisation was founded by Jochen Michalski in 1981. The German visionary, who at a young age moved to Cascais, Portugal, saw the potential in the cork industry, especially in the lack of production of premium natural cork products directed to the wine industry. Cork supply started in Northern California, where it had easy access and visibility to one of the biggest wine-producing regions in the world. The company had the objective of only focusing on the production of natural cork stoppers, directing all efforts in this product, distancing itself from the other competitors who were producing multiple cork products at once. (Brands Channel, 2025)

With the focus on the natural cork stoppers market in America, cork supply managed to construct a reputation and gain visibility in the provision of premium services. With the rise in demand, the company saw an opportunity to expand its business into international markets, establishing several partnerships that enabled it to grow and advance even further in the high-quality wine closure market. The alliances that the company managed to solidify, along with its continuous investment in the production of innovative natural cork stoppers, enabled the company to position itself in several parts of the globe and have a vast portfolio of high-quality cork products. (Brands Channel, 2025)



Figure 7: Natural Cork Unit in São Paio de Oleiros
Source: Cork Supply

Since the company's foundation in 1981, it has tripled its employees and expanded through the globe. The company has its Research & Development headquarters in Portugal and offers quality products and services across major production regions, including Australia, South Africa, Portugal, Spain, France, Argentina, Italy, and China. The company produces premium, natural and technical cork stoppers for wines and spirits, all with a focus on innovation and sustainability. Asserting themselves as a trustworthy partner for the wineries, distilleries, and other beverage producers that use cork stoppers. (COTEC, 2024; Cork Supply, 2025)



Figure 8: Global presence
 Source: Internal Documents, 2025

Cork Supply's mission goes beyond creating a sustainable, high-quality Cork stopper. They believe that they are more than a cork producer; they aim to create a sense of family within the company and work towards the dream of becoming the most trusted partner in the cork market. They have adopted the motto *"Work hard, Play hard"*, showcasing that they work towards their internal employees as well as fostering an overall harmonious, productive and motivated workplace. During my internship, the motto was one of the first characteristics that was introduced to me. Although the sentence has a fun connotation to it, the company views it as a commitment to working towards the well-being of the employees, showing respect and value for their work-life balance. (Cork Supply, 2025)

The company also has a very strong display of their purpose, where they characterise themselves as transformative, innovators, brave, passionate, exigent, attentive, resilient, reliable and family. These words could be found multiple times over the different units that I visited.

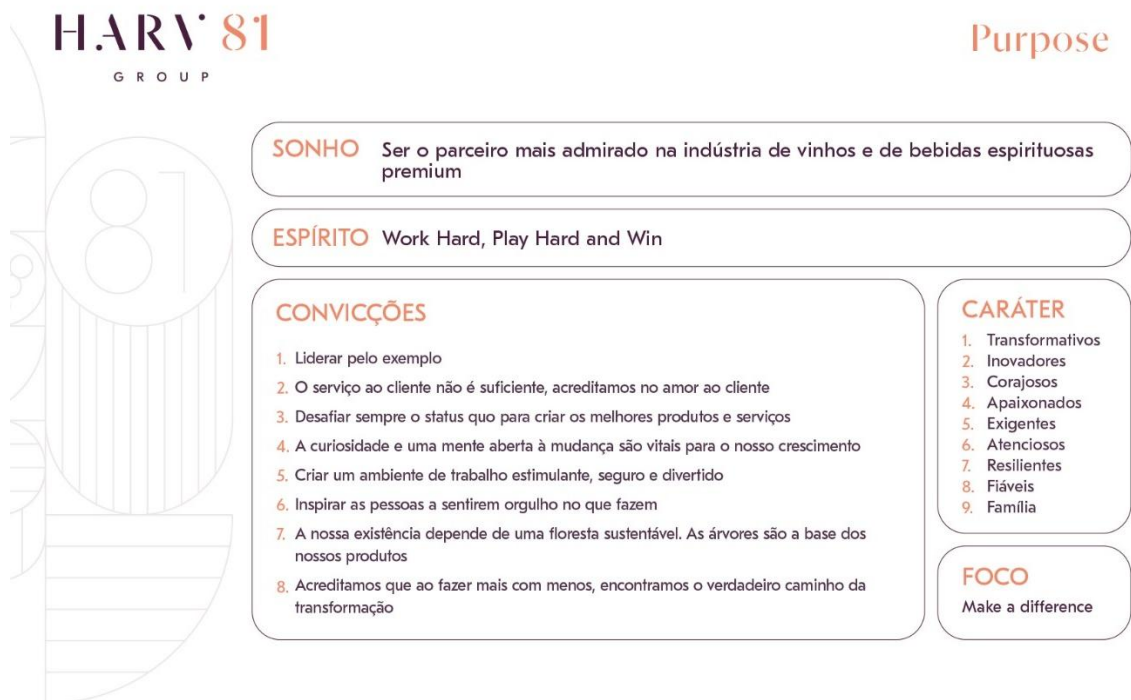


Figure 9: Purpose scheme
Source: Internal Documents, 2025

The company offers a vast number of products. The first group of products that they offer is Individual Guarantees, which are the most luxurious and exclusive items that they provide to the public. From this line, every product is individually tested through non-destructive and non-invasive analyses, highlighting their commitment to quality. The second group of products are the CS standard, which is the cheapest option, nevertheless, they are still Cork stoppers of quality. These items go through a natural process that reduces the microorganisms on the stopper. These are corks that have a natural feel to them, a minimum cork dust content and superior sensory characteristics. (Cork Supply, 2025)

Their commitment to offering the best possible product to the clients can be shown through their dedication to delivering TCA-free cork stoppers. Cork Supply was the first company to develop solutions to detect TCA in natural cork. This sensory defect, also known as 2,4,6-trichloroanisole, is recognised for its musty, mouldy and wet odour, which can ruin the wine even in very low concentrations. These compounds are responsible for 50%-80% of taste and smell-related defects in wine, as they can transfer from the cork stoppers and contaminate the wine during its storage. TCA can also be

found in food and water. TCA is especially concerning in the wine industry due to being extremely noticeable to the human olfactory system, aggravating its existence. Yet its perception can vary due to the different factors composing the wine, the taster's characteristics, the way that it is being evaluated and even olfactory fatigue. (Tarasov et al, 2022)

They differentiate themselves from the market in their continuous investment in innovating their products and their commitment to keeping up with their promise of offering TCA-free products. They do so through a constant quality test from the “forest to the bottle”; they vigorously test the cork at every stage of production. One of their major developments in the technological field that allows them to guarantee maximum quality is the InnoCork, a patented process that uses a controlled combination of water and ethanol to significantly reduce TCA. The reliability of this process can be proven by its ability to reduce TCA by 60%-80 % in wine products. This process is used in all of its corks. Another revolutionary technology is the VAPEX, a disinfecting technology that uses pressurised vaporisation to reduce TCA and other unwanted composites in the granulated cork. (Cork Supply, 2019)

One of the company's most valuable products is the DS100+, a natural cork that is 100% inspected. This is a product that truly made the Cork Supply stand out from its competitors. With the launch of DS100+, the company became the first to offer a natural cork that doesn't have any detectable TCA and has an individual guarantee. During my stay at Cork Supply, I must share that this product and its process of inspection were mesmerising due to its uniqueness and labour-intensive aspect. The process begins with a dry maceration, which is a non-invasive technique to identify sensory deviations, followed by a triple sequential inspection where each DS100 cork is evaluated by three specialists (Cork Supply, 2020).

The last part of the process was the one that stuck with me the most. I was initially introduced to it during my tour on the first day by my supervisor. I entered a warehouse with large tables, all filled with small glass pots containing two cork stoppers each, all going through a meticulous preparation process. But what got my attention was a group of oenologists specialists who would spend all their working hours smelling each pot to detect TCA or other sensorial composites. Due to the complexity of the process, the company offers a bottle buyback guarantee, being the first one to do so.

On the matter of their products, there is a fascinating aspect that is worth mentioning. According to ECO (2024), Cork Supply has invested 11 million euros in the last decade to eliminate TCA acid, which is the molecule responsible for the musty aroma in the stoppers and controls the oxygen that passes through the cork into the wine. The founder has stated that he has been obsessed with the “perfect cork stopper” since the foundation of the company (Castro, 2024).

The company has invested 1,2 million euros to create the most consistent cork stopper in the world. The second biggest Portuguese cork group launched the “Legacy Cork”; this innovation comes from the investment in proprietary technology. This new technology permits the company to analyse the natural corks in batches to detect and remove anomalies that could lead to an unfavourable oxygen number in the cork. This technology goes by the name of X100 technology. (Mar, 2024)



Figure 10: Legacy Natural Cork
Source: Cork Supply, 2025

The company, according to its 2022 report, operates in 24 countries, with direct operations in 9 countries and significant production and distribution capacity, proving its reach in the international market. They produce 600 million natural and technical cork stoppers annually. They employ 469 people, and 15% of the number is dedicated to research and development. In 2022, they registered a turnover of 103.5 million in revenue. On their sustainability efforts, the company has replaced natural gas systems with biomass boilers fuelled by cork dust, reducing reliance on fossil fuels. They have also issued 10 million in green bonds tied to environmental and social goals, including a 35% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2027. COTEC Portugal has recognised the company for advancements in technology and sustainable production. In 2024, the

company was recognised by the Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment in Portugal from CITE, proving the company's commitment to eliminating pay disparities. (Cork Supply, 2023)

3.1.2 Sustainability at Cork Supply: Environmental Preservation, Social Commitment, and Employee Well-being

As I immersed myself in my internship, I could grasp and understand some of the pillars of the company, which were the importance of having a sustainable business. We can understand sustainable business as being economically viable, committed to its social responsibilities and environmentally friendly (Naudé, 2011). This translates to ensuring that the company has everything to secure its present needs while securing the needs of future generations and the world (Scott, 2013, pp. 1–2). During my stay at Cork Supply, I got the opportunity to work to some degree in social responsibility and environmental awareness.

Speaking of a company that is dealing with one of the most sustainable materials on the market, one might think that the company's efforts in the area of sustainability might be shortened since the material they are dealing with is naturally sustainable. But I don't think this is the case. I think we are looking at an increase in environmental responsibility since dealing with a sustainable product doesn't make the company sustainable alone, it makes it more aware in terms of responsible practices. The material closes the door to malpractices, shining the light on the necessity to carry that essence to all of the different departments of the company handling the raw material.

Cork Supply has at the base of all its business, the Cork Oak Forests, which are much more than a source of raw materials. They are among the most biodiverse ecosystems, supporting numerous species, including 24 types of reptiles and amphibians, 160 bird species, and 37 mammals, like the Iberian lynx. They are also home to over 140 plant species (Gil, 2011). Moreover, these Forests also play a significant role in keeping the climate balanced. This is mostly due to its capacity to absorb Carbon dioxide, conserve soil, and regulate the water cycle. (Corticeira Amorim, 2014)

The WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) conducted research that emphasised the importance of Cork Oak forests to the ecosystem. The tree can protect the soil from erosion and landslides. They also enhance the rate at which rainwater infiltrates the soil, supporting groundwater recharge. The Cork Oak plays a vital role in preserving reservoirs

by managing water erosion, which helps to enhance both their capacity and lifespan. Additionally, these forests significantly contribute to carbon sequestration, making them crucial for environmental health. The Cork Oak possesses a remarkable ability to sequester carbon dioxide, contributing actively to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The beneficial impact of Cork Oak Forests on the ecosystem emphasises the importance of sustainable forest management practices. (WWF, 2006)

We can see Cork Supply's efforts to be committed to being environmentally sustainable through their business process, which they refer to as the cork lifecycle—from forest to bottle. Within this process, we can identify three main pillars, which are sustainable forest management, clean and responsible production processes, and waste reduction through precision technology. (Cork Supply, 2024)

One of the most important aspects of the company's commitment to sustainability is through sustainable forest management. They do so by working closely and consistently with the forest owners to guarantee that the forests and the harvesting process can be done in the most suitable way possible. Cork Supply is not shy of investing in scientific and technological endeavours to collect as much data and secure the best quality product. We can see these efforts in the analysis of the corkwood before the harvest, all to ensure the quality of the material and guarantee the health of the forest. As they collect the data, they use it to map the cork oak forests and trace their productivity over time. Understanding the fundamental role that these forests play in our ecosystems, they make it their mission to ensure their health and protect their longevity. (Cork Supply, 2024)

As mentioned previously, the natural cork disinfecting technologies are crucial for ensuring a sustainable processing of the raw material. Those technologies are the innocork and the Vapex, both of which avoid harsh chemical treatments, making them cleaner and safer not just for the environment but also for the employees who handle the product and the machines, all while guaranteeing the quality of the product. (Cork Supply, 2024)

Their commitment to waste reduction and circular use of materials. According to the European Union (2018), the circular use of materials refers to the recovery of materials, reutilising them, and reintroducing them into the economy. The company has made efforts to decarbonise its activities by investing in renewable electricity and generating its electricity. Being aware of the large amount of energy they use, they regularly investigate the areas which consume more energy to identify the areas that need intervention. A big

aspect of their reusable energy comes from their biomass boilers, which use cork dust. With the use of the steam from the biomass boilers for internal use, like grinding and washing, they have the opportunity to reduce their gas by 87%. The use of biomass leads them to continuously enhance their capacity to collect cork dust from their facilities. The success of their practices can be proven by the positive numbers, such as 43% of the energy consumption for their technical cork units coming from their means. (Cork Supply, 2024)

Another area crucial to a sustainable business, and an area that I got the opportunity to work closely with, was social responsibility. As I investigate the social responsibility of the company, I can identify three pillars, which are the support to local communities, commitment to consumers and valorisation of the workforce. Going back to their close relationship with forest owners, we identify their respect and appreciation for the local producers, marking a connection that goes beyond the simple exchange of product and money, as it is a continuous and collaborative partnership. With their approach to collaborate with local forest owners, we see not just an increase in sustainable practices, but we also see a development of the local communities. (Cork Supply, 2024)

Going into the second area, which secures a sustainable business and with which I work closely, we have the social responsibility. Cork supply through their communications with their consumers and their internal behaviour, we can identify a dedication to their civic duties and commitment to their social responsibility. As I analyse the social responsibility of the company, I can identify four key pillars, which are the support to local communities, promotion of educational and skill development, and assurance of a safe and healthy work environment. (Cork Supply, 2024)

The first pillar of their social responsibility is “supporting communities”, where we can see their investment in the communities in which they operate. As a testament to this, we can go back to the company’s close relationship with the cork oak forests, which not only promote sustainable practices it also promote the development of those communities. Within this pillar, we have a *Beyond Us* programme, which was the one that I had the opportunity to work closely with. My activities in the sphere of this programme will be further explained later on in this report. The basis of this programme is to encourage the employees to dedicate four hours per year of their working hours to volunteering activities in an institution of their choice. (Cork Supply, 2024)

Cork Supply also has a large portfolio of organisations that they support, whether it is through donations or collaborations. Some of these organisations that they support are the *Bombeiros voluntarios de Lourosa*, *Fundación Empujar* (an organisation in Argentina that focuses on creating employment opportunities for the youth), and they also help innumerable organisations that dedicate themselves to fighting social issues and the community's needs, such as *Associação Abrigo para a Vida*, *Associação Bagos d'Ouro*. Cork Supply also has an in-kind donation, like the donation of TCA-rejected corks to schools for arts and crafts; these potential products that could go to waste are turned into educational materials (Cork Supply, 2024).

As we go through their different efforts, we can see that they are committed to helping the communities not just on a local level but also globally. Since community support comes from different areas, we see a commitment to help as much as they can with all the resources they have available, being able to actively make an impact in many areas of need.

On the pillar of “promoting education and skill development”, we find three different points that they tackle. The company supports its employees to pursue higher education by aiding them financially and offering scholarships. By doing so, they are actively promoting knowledge and empowerment not only for individuals but also for the company as a whole. Cork Supply offers internship programs in skilled manual professions, especially in the areas of cork selection, quality control, and sensory analysis. Complementary to their promotion of education and skill development, Cork Supply also supports *Fundación Leer*, a nonprofit organisation in Argentina that promotes literacy among children and youth. (Cork Supply, 2024)

The third pillar is “Ensuring a safe and healthy work environment” Cork Supply ensures their employees' well-being, safety and quality of life. The company has a “zero Accidents” policy, which shows their commitment and dedication to the employees' safety. They do so by implementing several preventative measures and educating people. During my internship, one of my tasks was elaborating communication for the internal Television system. I was asked to provide safety-related communication continuously. These sorts of initiatives help in the development of a sense of safety within the company and build a stronger sense of trust with the team. In the matter of health in the company, Cork Supply created the programme We Care, dedicated to the well-being of the employees, with which I had the opportunity to work closely, and I will talk more about

it further on in this paper. The programme is focused on offering mental, emotional, and overall social well-being to its team. It comprehends the need for a healthy work-life balance to build a stronger internal culture that has as its foundation respect and human values.

As previously mentioned, the company created internal programs in the sphere of sustainability and social responsibility: *Taking Care of Tomorrow*, *Beyond Us*, and *We Care*. These three programs have different focuses to help strengthen the well-being of the company employees, environmental practices, and the community.

The logotype for 'Taking Care of Tomorrow' features the words 'taking care' in a dark purple, lowercase, serif font. Below 'care' is the word 'of' in a smaller, lowercase, serif font. Below 'of' is the word 'tomorrow' in a larger, lowercase, serif font. To the right of 'tomorrow' is a stylized green leaf icon with three leaves.

Figure 11: The Logotype of Taking Care of Tomorrow
Source: Internal Documents

Taking Care of Tomorrow is a program dedicated to sustainability and sensitisation of environmental practices. Through this program, the company reflects its commitment to sustainability, promoting actions that impact the organisation beyond the organisation. This program is part of the sustainability department, aligned with its goal of reducing its carbon footprint, supporting the oak tree forest, and collaborating with sustainability institutions. The internal programs also have at their primary focus conscientious employees for the environmental issues.

Taking care of tomorrow, in dedication to educating the employees, focuses on creating environmentally conscious communications for the internal team, providing educational pieces of information through their internal channels, and organising several sustainability-related workshops and events. To help better engage with employees, the program created internal campaigns and game-like activities to spread the environmental problem to its team, like the eco-tips and the sustainable polygraph. Eco-tips is an internal campaign where employees share their sustainable tips with others to promote more environmental practices daily. The sustainable polygraph is a game-like activity where the employee tests their sustainable knowledge, it is set as a friendly competition where those who achieve the highest success rate get acknowledged and a symbolic prize (like a sustainably produced chocolate).



*Figure 12: The Logotype of Beyond Us
Source: Internal Documents*

Beyond Us is a volunteering and social responsibility program dedicated to promoting social consciousness and working towards social causes. The program has as its pillar volunteering, offering 4 hours of the employees' work hours to dedicate to community service. These hours can be used to support various social initiatives, such as environmental clean-ups, solidarity campaigns, or collaborations with local charities. This initiative allows the company to build a stronger sense of community, promoting empathy and civic engagement.

The internal program *Beyond Us* also works closely with institutions, forming partnerships with local organisations, NGOs, and social projects to amplify its impact. These partnerships allow the company to comprehend the community's needs and wants, permitting it to tailor their support. The program aims to work towards and with the community, motivating its employees to engage with them.



*Figure 13: The Logotype of We Care
Source: Internal Documents*

The *We Care* program came about in a time when the well-being of the employees was being threatened due to the global pandemic, COVID-19. The program works to ensure that everyone has the tools to secure or enhance their well-being. They promote these actions centred on health, safety, and quality of life. *We Care* offers several opportunities for employees to participate in activities and workshops, all to help the physical and mental well-being of the employee throughout the year. These activities tackle areas

related to the mind, body, sleep, and nutrition, among others, that have rich educational value. Some of the interesting activities that the company offers to their employees with the *We Care* program are the massages, yoga classes, and the Team 24 app.

The company ensures a better quality of life for their employees; they have several well-being activities that they can enjoy without needing to leave the premises of the organisation. One of them is the monthly massages, for one or two days a month, a masseuse comes to the organisation where the employees can purchase her services and enjoy without spending money on transportation or time. These massages are available merely for relaxation or therapeutic purposes. The yoga class is a popular weekly activity among the employees. It provides the team with a moment of exercise and serenity. Just like the massages, the employee enjoys them without needing to leave the premises of the company. They also don't need to spend money on transport or time to go to the classes.

We Care also provides mental health support. They do so by offering their team free access to the Team 24 app. This app provides 24-hour psychological assistance through phone calls, messages, and video consultations. Team 24 also provides mood tracking, organisational assessments to help identify psychosocial risks, they also have customised workshops and training sessions on mental health. Employees can access this app free of charge, and they can do so anonymously. Once again, the organisation proves its commitment to the well-being of its team.

3.2 Functions performed and activities carried out in a business context

My internship began on April 13th 2025, at Cork Supply, where, over the next three and a half months, I had the opportunity to immerse myself in the company's Internal Communication and Employee experience and also People Development activities. Throughout this period, I contributed to content creation, communication management, event planning, and corporate engagement initiatives, gaining valuable hands-on experience in a dynamic and innovative environment.

Before the commencement of my internship, I was informed that I would be participating in a hybrid work arrangement. This model mostly involved teleworking for one day per week, with exceptions where it would involve more than one day per week. Additionally, I learned that I would primarily be assigned to Cork Supply's natural cork stoppers unit (CSP1), with opportunities to visit other units, particularly the TALIS unit, which focuses on bartops.

My first day at Cork Supply started at 9 am. My supervisor, Joana Castro, went to pick me up at the front door at the reception, where she then proceeded to present me to the people and communication team composed of Daniela Pinheiro, Dulce Mourão, Joana Teixeira and Maria Fátima Gonsalves, the department that I would work the closest to. After the initial introductions, I was invited to participate in the weekly department meeting. During this meeting, I had the chance to get up to speed on all the ongoing projects in the department and their goals for the near future.

Following the department meeting, I was provided with a company computer and smartphone, with which I could develop my work activities without having to resort to my personal items. My supervisor, Joana Castro, provided me with an overview of the various programs developed by the company, each focusing on distinct areas. The *We Care* program is dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of employees, while *Taking Care of Tomorrow* emphasises sustainability. Additionally, *Beyond Us* is centred around volunteering and social responsibility. These introductions were essential for my integration and understanding of my role within the company, as I would be working to advance and enhance these projects. During the meeting, I was also introduced to key tools relevant to my internship, such as the intranet Talentbox and the functionality of Cork TV (Televisions dispersed over the company units to communicate important information).

As I gathered the overall information about the organisation and the ongoing projects, I was given my first tasks. The first task was to develop the weekly newsletter so that during my stay in the company, I would be responsible for all of the information and sending it out to the employees. I was also given the task of growing their partner's list program, developing the activities and communications for Women's Day, Carnival and International Pets' Day, translating internal manuals, developing interesting information to provide to the employees, and assisting in the development of the company's chatbot. These were the initial activities that I was assigned to carry out during the internship. As I worked closely with my supervisor, tasks were assigned to me over the days and were shaped by the department's needs and the employees' requirements.

My first task and primary responsibility during my internship was creating content and managing the communication channel. Based on the company's needs, we can divide this task into four areas: the first involves writing internal communications, emails, and newsletters; the second focuses on creating content for digital and print channels; the third

covers developing posts for the intranet; and finally, the fourth area involves producing institutional and training videos.

To dive into this work, one must first comprehend the importance of content creation for a company. In the modern world, organisations have long realised that a good content creation plan allows them to expand their market, engage with the audience, educate them on their products and strategically position themselves in the market, and that is no different for their internal audience. It is crucial to have a comprehensive, multi-channel strategy. Cork supply already has a great media presence, and my goal is to further expand those channels and amplify their message, reaching most of the employees. (Hall, 2023)

Regular engagement with the different platforms is essential with diverse formats. As the primary goal of the content creation is interaction with the audience, understanding them is crucial, and understanding what their needs are, so that the content created can be tailored to them. My first task before even engaging in this activity is to develop an extensive analysis of the market, competitors and target audience so that I can gather all the needed information to create the most beneficial content for the company (Hall, 2023). To do so, my supervisor held a meeting with me to inform me of all that had been done before my internship, explained the forms of communication that were successful in the past and others that weren't. She also provided me with the material for the employee's overall descriptions. Joana Castro had already done a study in which she divided employees into "tribes" of interest, indicating groups of employees who would be interested in activities not related to work (such as sports, wine and travel). This information allowed me to understand which topics would be relevant to employees and the language that would be most productive for transmitting the message, a great support also in the development of other tasks, such as establishing partnerships.

While creating content and managing the communication channel, I had three major tasks: (1) TV Cork, (2) Talentbox (intranet) and (3) newsletter. To ensure the content was visually appealing and aligned with the company's tone, I used Canva to create custom graphic layouts. I was given from the start a lot of creative freedom, which allowed me to experiment with different formats, styles, and communication strategies. This continuous and dynamic task helped maintain employee engagement, foster internal culture, and reinforce corporate values across departments.

The company, to deliver the corporate message more efficiently and spread important information to the employees, installed televisions in all of the company units. Through these television channels, the employees were informed of upcoming events, information regarding the company, partnerships available, and educational content. I was responsible for planning, designing, and updating the visual content, being on a continuous mission to develop these communications.

While working with the television channels, I had to organise myself through areas of communication. I was responsible for the communications related to the internal programs *We Care*, *Beyond Us* and *Taking Care of Tomorrow*. For the *We Care* program through the television, I informed the employees of all the different partnerships that they had available, provided them with informational content and upcoming events, workshops and activities related to the program. With the *Beyond Us*, I elaborated on multiple content, reminding them of the 4 hours that they are available to work with an institution, organisations that were interested in working with them and also charity events that were occurring internally. With *Taking Care of Tomorrow*, I mainly focus on elaborating content related to sustainable living tips and commemorating sustainable-related days all year round.

On the matter of my work with the intranet Talentbox, my main responsibility was to elaborate on the graphic design and the information texts. My objective with this task was complementary to the information that employees need to know. I focused on creating diverse and appealing content to engage and spark interest among employees. Most of this content had to do with the internal programs, reminding and motivating them to participate in their initiatives. In addition to this, I made content related to thematic days and valuable information. I started this task by making a calendar and mapping all of the content throughout the year, leaving enough space between the materials so that over time, urgent/relevant information could be added, without compromising the information already scheduled. This was crucial as it helped me organise the content and ensure a balanced distribution of the topics of information delivered.

After mapping the content for the year, I proceeded to elaborate on the content for the rest of the year and schedule it in the time where the delivery was intended. This task helped the HR department secure a consistent delivery of information to the employees. In addition to the content, I also made sure that every upcoming event was scheduled in the respective area provided by the Talentbox, so that the employees were informed.

I was also made responsible for making the weekly newsletter. The newsletter is sent every week via email to all of the employees and consists of a series of suggestions. The versions of the newsletter given to me at the beginning of my internship were very compact and simplistic, consisting of only two pages, as illustrated in Appendix III – First Weekly Newsletter. The first page featured the date, the title, and an image considered to be the cover, which related to a piece of information related to the week ahead. Below that image were the three suggestions: an event occurring that weekend, a film, and books. The second page was limited to the weekly recipe with all of the confectionery steps. To end the newsletter, there was a wine of the week section that was provided by a certified sommelier who works at the company, Duarte Perreira.

Given this, after the first two weeks, I came up with the idea to renew and redesign the newsletter, proposing my version and adding some new themes, organising them in a way that would be more aesthetically appealing. My version consisted of a bigger and more noticeable separation of sections, a colour palette that better matches the logo and overall image of Cork Supply, consisting of different shades of green, and added some topics. My goal with this new newsletter was to breathe new life into it and captivate the employees more.

As shown in Appendix IV, my version of the newsletter respected the previous one by keeping the content provided, focusing mainly on changing its graphic design and adding new sections. I made a cover that was separated from the rest of the information, making the title bolder, highlighting the image and adding a quote that also changed every week. The quotes are intended to give an inspirational aspect to the paper and help seal the cover. I dedicated a page to the event, movie and book suggestions, each in a different block of the page demarked with a different shade of green, attracting attention to them individually. I continued with the recipe suggestion, giving it a single page, allowing for the information to be more spaced out and noticeable and allowing for the image of the recipe to be highlighted. I decided to add a section to sustainability, more specifically for the *Taking Care of Tomorrow* program, where I started to display every week a different eco-tip provided by the employees, alternating it with a different valuable, sustainable-related information. Following this section, I added a “Fun fact” one, giving employees every week a curious and fun fact to them. I finalised the newsletter just like the previous one with the wine of the week. The reason why this section is last is not by chance; my supervisor had informed me that this was the section most appreciated by the employees,

so I kept the wine of the week last to ensure that all the other sections were consumed by the employees.

Complementary to the task previously mentioned, I also had to plan and strategise an internal communication plan and course of action for specific projects or campaigns. In this line of work, a lot consisted of attending meetings to identify internal communication needs, emphasising the importance of analysing the organisational culture. It was important to develop communications/campaigns and events that would suit the employees best. The biggest challenge of this task was the fact that the company had some financial difficulties due to the abnormal numbers presented in the previous year. With this in mind, I was given the challenge to come up with activities that would be interesting and creative while being cost-efficient.

This task also consisted of assisting in organising internal events such as lectures, workshops or social gatherings, creating support materials for events (invitations, presentations, flyers), and providing logistical support for events.

In line with this task, the first activity that I could assist with was the wine tasting with a chocolate harmonisation. This was an event that had already been in the works when I entered Cork Supply. During my first week, I was presented with the goals of the tasting and had the opportunity to take part in a meeting with my supervisor and the sommelier Duarte Perreira, responsible for the tasting, to map out the communications, the needs and the outlines of the activity.

I was made responsible for developing the content related to the tasting, such as making the image for the TV Cork and the poster. The wine tasting with chocolate harmonisation was done on two different units, the first was on the natural cork unit in São Paio de Oleiros, and then two days later on the Bartops unit in São João de Ver. On the days of the tasting, I had the opportunity to help in the preparation of the space where it was taking place. I also assisted with the tasting to make sure that everything was going accordingly and assisted whenever needed.

Cork Supply is a long-standing partner of the IPST, the Portuguese Institute of Blood and Transplantation, organising two blood donations in the company. During my internship, I had the chance to help in one of the blood donation events, planning out the internal communication and help in the organisation of the campaign. I am also registering the

event with photographs and videos to develop content to motivate new participants in the next blood donations.

The department, in collaboration with the safety department, wanted to celebrate the 28th of April, which is the World Day for Safety and Health at Work. Seeing that we were limited with money, it was challenging to come up with an activity that was unique, creative and hadn't yet been done in the company, that wasn't expensive. During our search for an activity, a gym contacted us to form a partnership. Through this partnership, we had the idea of celebrating the 28th of April with a workplace exercise program. I had the opportunity to take part in the meeting with the gym and even suggest future initiatives that could be done with them, like outdoor pilates in the summertime. As we had a green light on the activity, I prepared the communication and helped on the day of the event with the logistics and took photographs to share in the internal communications channels.

Another very interesting and crucial aspect of my work was responding to the messages from potential partnerships. I had to evaluate them and present them to my supervisor. If the potential partnership aligned with the company's wants and needs, I would arrange a meeting with them. I had the opportunity to participate in those meetings and observe how the process is handled, even helping to assess whether the partnerships were viable or not. If they were, I would handle the communications regarding the announcement of the new partnership.

As part of my internship, I also had to handle internal documents. At the beginning, I translated some internal papers into English, and with the assistance of online translators, I translated some of them into French, Spanish, and Italian. These translations were crucial as they were meant for employees in Europe. I was also challenged to upgrade some of these documents, such as their code of ethics and initiation code named Start. I had to revise the texts and alter them if needed. I was also asked to make some graphical design changes, making them more appealing and giving them a more modernised feel.

At the early stages of my internship, I was challenged to come up with a creative way to display all the vines of the week used in the weekly newsletter of the previous year (see Appendix V). The intent was to celebrate the work of the sommelier responsible and to offer the employee a remembrance of their favourite section of the newsletter. As I was presented with the task, I wanted to distance the look of the paper from the other corporate documents. I achieved this idea by mimicking a magazine's design. The paper that I

developed had a cover, followed by an introduction explaining the objectives of the paper. I divided the vines by reds and whites, and dedicated a small section to the other vines and spirits.

As I was doing my work with the internal documents and with the internal programs, parallel to my research for this report, I came across a lack of information about the programs, *Taking Care of Tomorrow*, *Beyond Us*, and *We Care*. This led me to a proposal for a paper dedicated to presenting and explaining the programs. My goal was to gather all the information about the programs in a short, simplified document, giving employees a source they could consult whenever they needed it, as we can see in Appendix VII.

To stay true to my goal of keeping it short and simplified, I only made a cover and divided the rest of the document into three sections, each dedicated to one of the programs. The first section was for the first program implemented, *We Care*. I gave a brief introduction and then proceeded to highlight some of the activities offered by the program, like the massages, yoga classes and workshops. The *We Care* chapter was closed with an explanation of the *We Care* month, usually in October, which is dedicated to promoting health and balance among the employees.

The second section is dedicated to *Beyond Us*. I followed the previous alignment and started with an introduction, and then explained some of the activities. I dedicated a part to the 4 hours Beyond Us, the pillar of this program. I made sure that the employees understood that they had the chance to dedicate 4 hours of their work hours to a charity. I also wanted to explain the process of how one needed to proceed in order to use these hours. This was the only part of the document in which I dedicated a section to mentioning partners, given that these partners are associations and institutes, many of which Cork Supply collaborates with regularly.

The last part of the paper was dedicated to *Taking Care of Tomorrow*. This is a program with the least amount of information presented. This is because the program is still being developed and has a smaller number of activities. That said, this section began like the previous ones, with a brief introduction and then a brief explanation of its activities, such as eco-tips, workshops, training and polygraphs, thus bringing the document on internal programs to a conclusion.

As previously mentioned, I worked closely with the internal programs. With *We Care*, alongside working on providing continuous content related to the program to the internal

programs and assisting on helping with the logistics of the events and workshops, I was made responsible for the message schedule. My work regarding the massages, communicating with the masseuse to set a date, after securing a date, I would via email announce to the employees. The email would contain an image that was linked to a Google form, all done by me, where the employees would then register the type and amount of time they wanted the massage to be. After gathering all of the interested parties, I scheduled the messages, while always making sure that it would be at the most appropriate time for the employee. On the day of the massage, I would make sure that the professional had everything needed and ensured that the employees would follow the schedule.

With *Beyond Us*, I developed several pieces of content for the internal channels. During my internship, I was challenged with finding ways to motivate more employees to use their 4 hours Beyond Us. As an answer to the challenge, I came up with the idea of gathering the testimonies of all the employees who had participated in the program. To do so, I elaborated an email asking them to share their experience, and I also made sure to provide some questions for them to answer if the employees didn't know how to structure their testimony. The goal with these testimonies was to display them to encourage other employees to participate. Yet this campaign proved to be a challenge as I didn't gather sufficient testimonies due to the lack of answers. Presented with this obstacle, I had to rearrange the campaign. I proposed to only display one testimony per month, which allowed us to continue with our initial goal and offered us more time to gather more testimonies.

As I had to organise and plan the calendar for the entire year, I came across two dates that could be celebrated through the *Beyond Us* program. The first was the World Book Day on the 23rd of April. To mark this day, I had the idea of organising an internal book donation. With the approval of my superiors, I began the process of making a list of possible associations to whom we could donate the books. I started by contacting some associations, eventually collaborating with the *Ajudais* association, a private non-profit association of a social and humanitarian nature with a national scope. Having secured the collaboration with *Ajudis*, I arranged for all the necessary communications to be made in order to inform and motivate employees to participate.



Figure 14: Book donation for Ajudaris
Source: myself

Another day celebrated within the scope of the social responsibility program was Mother's Day, on May 4th. My approach to this day was a reinterpretation of its concept: instead of celebrating our mothers, we would honour all mothers, especially those most in need. Just like on World Book Day, I started by creating a list of potential associations. This list was then discussed with my supervisors, where we concluded that *Vida Norte* would be the organisation that best aligned with our goals for the day. I then began preparing content to inform employees, as well as a list of the most needed products.



Figure 15: Mother's Day donation
Source: Myself

Continuing my mission to encourage more employees to use their four hours *Beyond Us*, I had the idea of contacting an organisation and communicating its mission to the Cork Supply team. The organisation we collaborated with was *Just a Change*, which is dedicated to the rehabilitation of homes for those in need. This association was selected because it offers specific initiatives tailored for companies.



Figure 16: *Just a change collaboration*
Source: *Myself*

A meeting was scheduled with the organisation to clarify how we should proceed. During the meeting, we were informed that we would have the opportunity to take part in the rehabilitation of a home in Porto. The only challenge was the timing of the collaboration, as it would leave us with just two weeks to inform and motivate employees to participate. However, we were extremely interested in the organisation and believed in its work, so we accepted the date. This left my supervisor and me with the task of putting together a group of five employees for the initiative. We first approached team leaders to help promote the initiative among their teams and created content for internal channels to present *Just a Change* and motivate involvement. Our efforts to gather employees were successful, and the collaboration with the organisation received positive feedback from those who participated.



Figure 17: Just a change campaign
 Source: Myself

The third and final internal program I worked on was *Taking Care of Tomorrow*. At the beginning of my internship, I was responsible for creating a calendar highlighting all the commemorative dates related to sustainability, as well as structuring communication and planning activities to promote the program's goals within the company.

I organised this task by starting with the calendar, where I marked all the relevant thematic dates along with possible initiatives that could be developed. Once the calendar was completed, I met with my supervisor and a colleague from the sustainability department, who were both responsible for the program. The calendar was approved, and I was asked to begin preparing the communications for the entire year. As for the proposed activities, I was asked to simply outline them and not move forward with implementation, as the sustainability colleague was about to leave the company, and there was no immediate replacement. As a result, the program's physical activities had to be put on hold.

3.3 Challenges and lessons learned

Every task presents challenges and obstacles to overcome, but also offers opportunities for learning and valuable experience. Throughout my internship, I faced several challenges, primarily because the department focuses on employee engagement and

operates within an international market. The main challenges I would highlight were creating content and activities that resonated with the majority of employees, maintaining a balanced distribution of initiatives across different units and work shifts, and ensuring that all communications and actions included employees working outside the Portuguese facilities.

One of my main responsibilities during the internship was creating content and activities. The biggest challenge I faced in this area was developing initiatives that were engaging, meaningful, and aligned with both the company culture and the diverse backgrounds of employees. Each employee is different in terms of job roles, interests, age, and cultural context, which made it essential to adopt an inclusive, flexible, and simple approach, constantly adjusting based on employee feedback.

There were some communications where I became my own obstacle, mainly due to the pressure I placed on myself. The campaigns I struggled with the most were the Book Donation for World Book Day and the Mother's Day donation. These were not just informational messages; they were an invitation for employees to donate to meaningful causes. The communication needed to capture attention, inform clearly, and motivate participation, because if the message didn't succeed, neither would the donation campaign.

The pressure I felt was no one's fault but my own. These donation campaigns were my ideas, and I genuinely wanted them to have a positive outcome. To me, they were some of the most meaningful projects I worked on during my time at the company; they weren't about work, they were about something bigger. Although I didn't use any specific tools to overcome this internal challenge, I relied on the feedback and support of my supervisor and the department team, and I ultimately trusted my instincts to carry out the task. Enhancing my teamwork abilities, trust and working under pressure.

Another major challenge I had to face was ensuring that all initiatives reached every unit and work shift in an equitable way. Cork Supply operates across several different shifts, including night shifts, and has four separate units, one located in the south of the country, while the others are relatively close to each other in the northern region of the country. This reality requires careful planning. This challenge has long been a concern for the department, and it was presented to me from the very beginning of the internship. I was asked to explore and propose a new approach to this issue.

This is a problem that will likely never be fully solved, as it is not realistically possible to create a single activity that aligns perfectly with all shift schedules. The challenge regarding the different units is somewhat easier to manage, although it still comes with its own set of obstacles. During my internship, in order to address this issue, I helped develop activities that were repeated throughout the day to reach all shifts and replicated across every unit. Even so, there were still some shortcomings in our approach.

We also held meetings with different departments, first with employees, and later with their supervisors, to find viable solutions. This is a challenge that needs to be continuously addressed through ongoing analysis of schedules, needs, and feedback from the team, always aiming to increase participation and the sense of inclusion among all employees.

With these obstacles also came valuable lessons. Faced with these challenges, I had to push myself to take a step back to find new approaches, to listen and observe my surroundings, to study employees' reactions to communications and activities, and to question each task I developed to ensure it met its objectives. These experiences taught me that trying to create activities that please everyone is a losing battle. People are made up of different dreams, tastes, and life experiences, and designing something that appeals to everyone is nearly unattainable. I realised that my job is not just about developing a single activity that addresses every need and meets every goal, but rather about listening, sharing space, and offering diverse initiatives that cater to different preferences, thus celebrating every employee.

Carrying out my tasks made me more observant, attentive, curious, and persistent. It also taught me a valuable lesson: developing an activity with true impartiality is more difficult than I once thought. Caught in the bubble of our daily routines, we tend to be biased even when we believe we are not. Working in the area I was involved in, my own biases were constantly challenged, forcing me to recognise that to perform my role correctly and professionally, I had to confront and overcome those biases shaped by my habits and personal experiences. This process allowed me to break internalised barriers and grow not only as a professional but also as a person. That is undoubtedly an asset for both my personal life and future career.

This report set out to explore the concepts of People & Experience (P&E) and Intercultural Competence (IC) and to analyse their relevance within contemporary organisations. It did so by combining a theoretical framework with the insights provided by my internship at Cork Supply. The central objective was to demonstrate that P&E and IC are not insignificant or optional elements of organisational strategy but rather crucial aspects that allow companies to thrive in a globalised, competitive, and constantly changing environment.

Throughout the chapters, the report showed how both P&E and IC contribute to organisational sustainability, innovation, and employee engagement, and how they can be effectively integrated into business practices. The internship context provided a practical view that enabled me to connect academic knowledge with organisational reality, observing these theories within a specific company setting.

This internship report began by emphasising the importance of P&E in organisations and its outcomes. This goal was met by investigating how the department influences employee productivity and satisfaction, demonstrating the direct link between P&E and talent retention, as well as low turnover rates within the company, analysing how P&E is implemented in an organisation, and identifying how the department encourages and motivates the workforce. Another goal was to investigate IC as a critical instrument in an increasingly globalised society. To achieve this goal, it was necessary to determine the relevance of IC in multicultural team management, investigate its impact on a company and on each employee's personal level, and propose solutions for growing IC at both the organisational and individual levels. The final goal contextualised Cork Supply's place in the market and culture, reflecting on the internship. This was accomplished by assessing Cork Supply's market position, emphasising its value, mission, and impact. Another important feature of this goal was to reflect on the tasks completed at the organisation and assess their positive impact on my professional development and acquisition of new skills.

The report was constructed to clarify definitions, analyse theoretical models, and discuss the contribution of P&E and IC to intercultural business studies and organisations. It sought to show how these concepts can be translated into practices that improve employee well-being, enhance collaboration, and create sustainable value. The report has also allowed me to reflect on my professional development through the internship, identifying the skills and knowledge gained in applying theory to practice.

The chapters addressed these objectives in a structured way, offering both conceptual depth and practical insights. The first chapter highlighted how P&E has evolved as a response to the limitations of traditional management models. Rather than treating employees as replaceable resources, organisations are increasingly recognising them as central players. Theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the Job Demands–Resources model, and the *Work Design for Health* framework illustrate how employee well-being, recognition, inclusion, and development are directly linked to motivation, engagement, and performance. It is founded on the principle that employees are the greatest success strategy a company has.

Ensuring the basics (safety, stability, and respect) is crucial for building trust, even if this may appear simple and obvious. When addressing employee well-being, we must always safeguard fundamental rights and needs, as only by doing so will there be room for further investment in employees. P&E initiatives must be tailored to each organisation's culture and resources. Promoting optimism and encouragement through well-being programmes, recognition, and inclusive behaviours fosters a culture in which employees feel valued and empowered. At Cork Supply, we confirmed these insights through initiatives such as *We Care*, *Beyond Us*, and *Taking Care of Tomorrow*, which integrate health, volunteering, and sustainability into the company's culture. P&E demonstrates that placing people at the centre of organisational strategy is not only morally necessary but also strategically relevant.

The second chapter turned to IC, showing how globalisation and diversity have transformed it into a core capability for organisations. Models such as Deardorff's pyramid and process, Arasaratnam's cognitive complexity, and Cultural Intelligence (CQ) frameworks reveal that IC is not an innate skill but a competence that must be cultivated through practice, reflection, and organisational support. For those who wish to succeed in the increasingly globalised market, investment in IC is indispensable.

The report emphasised that IC is a continuous process, shaped by self-awareness, openness, and the ability to adapt communication across cultural boundaries. In multicultural teams, IC enhances collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving, while also helping to prevent misunderstandings and conflict. Remote and hybrid work further highlight the importance of IC, as the absence of non-verbal cues can amplify cultural barriers if not managed properly.

Within the internship context, IC was evident in the need to communicate effectively across different departments, units, and cultural backgrounds. Whether through translating documents, designing inclusive internal communication, or encouraging participation in global initiatives, IC shaped the way employee engagement strategies were designed and delivered. Cultural background differences created barriers that IC helped navigate, opening up new opportunities for deeper interconnection within the company.

The analysis reinforced the idea that IC and P&E are areas that benefit from collaboration. Meaningful employee experiences cannot be achieved without cultural sensitivity, and IC flourishes in environments where people feel supported and valued. These areas are interconnected, and for them to maximise their potential, they need to be aware of one another.

The third chapter described my internship at Cork Supply, which provided an invaluable opportunity to observe and participate in the implementation of P&E and IC strategies. Tasks such as managing newsletters, updating intranet content, developing campaigns for internal programmes, and supporting corporate events allowed me to see how employee engagement and communication are structured in practice.

Several challenges emerged, such as designing initiatives that appealed to diverse employee groups, ensuring inclusivity across different units and shifts, and managing my own expectations when leading donation campaigns. These challenges taught me that employee engagement requires adaptability, resilience, and sensitivity to different perspectives. We need to evaluate our work in every situation, reflect on it, and adjust to the current realities of the company.

The internship also allowed me to strengthen practical skills such as communication, teamwork, project management, and intercultural awareness. Importantly, it highlighted the complexity of balancing organisational goals with employee needs, a lesson that will remain crucial for my future professional development. It also reaffirmed basic skills such as listening, compassion, reflection, and mindfulness.

Like any academic work, this report has its limitations. Conducting my internship at a single company restricted the scope of my findings. However, despite the practical experience being limited to 500 hours, my successful stay led to an invitation to remain with Cork Supply beyond my internship. This opportunity allowed me to further develop

my experience and collect additional information that contributed to this report. Alongside these limitations, the qualitative methodology, while providing depth, cannot capture all perspectives or allow for generalisations across industries.

In conclusion, this report has demonstrated that P&E and IC are not separate or secondary concerns but structural pillars of sustainable and innovative organisations. By placing employees at the centre and embracing cultural diversity, companies can foster motivation, inclusion, and resilience, while also enhancing their ability to compete in a globalised world.

The internship at Cork Supply served as a practical case study that illustrated these dynamics, showing how theory and practice can be effectively combined. Through the analysis of P&E and IC, this report contributes to academic knowledge, organisational practice, and personal development, offering a holistic view of how organisations can build meaningful and future-ready workplaces.

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Appendix I – Taking Care of Tomorrow TV Content



Appendix II – Talent box Content Calendar



JUNE 2025

TALENTBOX

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
01 Dia do Sobreiro	02	03	04	05	06	07
08 Dia dos Oceanos	09	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 Dia da Gastronomia Sustentável	19	20	21
22 Santos Populares	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 Tolerância - Team 24	30	01	02	03	04	05

Tipo de conteúdo

- TCOT
- WC
- BU
- Outro

JULY 2025

TALENTBOX

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	01 Relembrar o beyond us	02	03	04	05
06 Ferramentas digitais que facilitam o dia a dia no trabalho	07	08	09	10	11	12
13 Benefícios da hidratação no verão e cuidados com o calor	14	15	16	17	18 Dia dos amigos - team 24	19
20	21	22	23	24 Dia dos Avós	25	26
27 Dia Internacional da Conservação da Natureza	28	29	30	31	01	02

Tipo de conteúdo

- TCOT
- WC
- BU
- Outro

AUGUST 2025

TALENTBOX

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27 Dia Internacional da Conservação da Natureza	28	29	30	31	01	02
03 O impacto do turismo sustentável	04	05	06	07	08	09
10 Dia Internacional da Juventude	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 A importância de uma boa postura no trabalho	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 31	25 Segurança digital: Como proteger os seus dados online	26	27	28	29	30

Tipo de conteúdo

- TCOT
- WC
- BU
- Outro

SEPTEMBER 2025

TALENTBOX

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31	01 Burn out - team 24	02	03	04	05	06
07 Dia Mundial de Combate à Poluição do Ar	08	09	10	11	12	13
14 Como melhorar a comunicação no ambiente de trabalho	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 A importância das energias renováveis no futuro	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 Dia Mundial do Coração	30	01	02	03	04

Tipo de conteúdo

- TCOT
- WC
- BU
- Outro

OCTOBER 2025

TALENTOX

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28	29	30	01	02	03	04
05	06 Dia Mundial da prevenção ao suicídio	07	08	09	10	11
12 Dia Mundial da Alimentação	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 Moda sustentável: Como consumir de forma mais consciente	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 Como adaptar a casa para o teletrabalho de forma eficiente	27	28	29	30	31	01

Tipo de conteúdo

- TCOT
- WC
- BU
- Outro

NOVEMBER 2025

TALENTOBOX

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	31	01
02 Novembro Azul: A importância da prevenção do câncer de próstata	03	04	05	06	07	08
09 Consumo consciente na Black Friday: Como evitar compras impulsivas	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 São Martinho	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 Dicas para gerir melhor as finanças pessoais	24	25	26	27	28	29

Tipo de conteúdo

- TCOT
- WC
- BU
- Outro

DECEMBER 2025

TALENTBOX

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	01	02	03	04	05 Beyond us: Aniversário	06
07	08	09	10	11	12	13
14 Natal sustentável: Ideias para um fim de ano ecológico	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 Como manter hábitos saudáveis durante as festas de fim de ano	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 Reflexão de fim de ano: Como definir metas realistas para 2026	29	30	31	01	02	03

Tipo de conteúdo

TOOT	WC
BU	Outro

SUGESTÕES DE FIM DE SEMANA

A SUA NEWSLETTER SEMANAL



O QUE FAZER



FRÁGUA DE AMOR, DE GIL VICENTE

Janeiro 18, 2025 7:00 PM
TeCA – Teatro Carlos Alberto



NOSFERATU

M16 • Terror | 132m
Cinemas



PEQUENAS COISAS COMO ESTAS

Claire Keegan



RECEITA DA SEMANA

Salmão grelhado com quinoa e ervas



BOM APETITE!

INGREDIENTES

- 160 g de quinoa
- 2 limões
- 2 courgettes
- 1 cabeça de funcho
- Mix de ervas frescas (como endro, salsa, manjeriçã)
- 4 colheres de sopa de iogurte natural
- azeite virgem extra
- 4 filetes de salmão

MODO DE PREPARAÇÃO

- Prepare a quinoa e, em seguida, esprema o sumo de meio limão. Tempere com uma boa pitada de sal marinho e pimenta preta e guarde.
- Pré-aqueça uma frigideira em lume alto.
- Corte as courgetes em tiras finas no sentido do comprimento. Grelhe as tiras de courgette durante 2 minutos de cada lado e reserve num prato. Reduza a temperatura da frigideira para um lume médio.
- Corte o funcho em tiras finas, coloque-o numa tigela e esprema o sumo de meio limão. Escolha e corte finamente as folhas de ervas aromáticas, misture-as com a quinoa e tempere.
- Faça um molho espremendo o restante sumo de limão para uma tigela pequena, depois adicione o iogurte e 2 colheres de sopa de azeite e misture bem. Tempere com sal e pimenta a gosto.
- Tempere salmão, depois cozinhe na frigideira durante 3 a 4 minutos de cada lado, ou até o peixe estar cozinhado.
- Coloque a quinoa num prato e espalhe a courgette grelhada e o funcho, juntamente com os flocos de salmão. Coloque o molho de iogurte e espalhe as restantes ervas e sirva.

VINHO DA SEMANA

Por Duarte Costa Pereira

Beyra Pinot Noir 2021 (Beira Interior DOC)

Um muito agradável exemplar da casta Pinot Noir, apresenta uma cor mais intensa do que é expetável para a casta. Exuberância aromática, onde se realça a tão típica fruta vermelha como cerejas e morangos, uma ténue perceção vegetal e um lado abaunilhado do estágio de 12 meses em barrica usada de carvalho francês. Na boca, denota tanino macio e uma boa acidez que reflete a altitude de onde são colhidas as uvas. Como tinto elegante que é sugiro o seu serviço entre os 14/16 °C. Harmoniza bem com carnes brancas, rosbife e queijos amanteigados.

Preço aproximado: 16,50 euros.



Appendix IV – My Version of the Weekly Newsletter

 Cork Supply

7 A 9 DE FEVEREIRO | 2025

A SUA

Newsletter Semanal

Sugestões para o fim de semana

DIADA

DÁDIVA DE SANGUE

DIADA 24/02

DOAR SANGUE É
SALVAR VIDAS!
PARTICIPE DA NOSSA
CAMPANHA DE DÁDIVA
DE SANGUE. A SUA
DOAÇÃO PODE FAZER
A DIFERENÇA!

PARTICIPE!



BOM FIM DE SEMANA  BOM FIM DE SEMANA  BOM FIM DE SEMANA  BOM FIM DE SEMANA  BOM FIM DE SEMANA

BOM FIM DE SEMANA  BOM FIM DE SEMANA  BOM FIM DE SEMANA  BOM FIM DE SEMANA  BOM FIM DE SEMANA

“YOU CANNOT FIND PEACE BY AVOIDING LIFE”
- VIRGINIA WOLF

Sugestões de Fim de Semana

Evento



I.º TORNEIO DE BASQUETEBOL EM CADEIRA DE RODAS EIXO ATLÂNTICO

08 - 09 Feb 2025 | 15:00H

Pavilhão Municipal de Vila Nova de Gaia
Rua Almeida Garrett - Vila Nova de Gaia

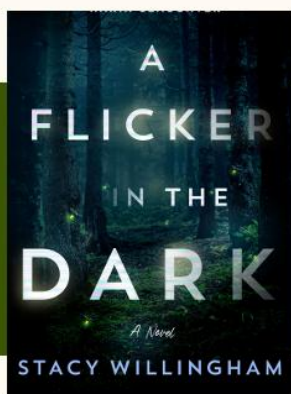
Filme

ANOTHER ROUND

2020 | M14 | Comédia/Drama | 117 Mins
Realizado por Thomas Vinterberg



Livro



A FLICKER IN THE DARK

Suspense/Mistério/Crime
De Stacy Willingham

Robalo assado com ervas e limão

40 MINS | 4 PESSOAS

INGREDIENTES:

- 4 filetes de robalo (cerca de 170 g cada)
- 2 colheres de sopa de azeite de oliva (30 ml)
- 4 dentes de alho picados
- 1 limão, cortado em fatias finas
- 2 raminhos de alecrim fresco
- 4 raminhos de tomilho fresco
- 1 ramo de orégão fresco
- Sal a gosto
- Pimenta-preta moída na hora a gosto
- 1/4 de chávena de vinho branco (60 ml)



MODO DE PREPARAÇÃO:

- Pré-aqueça o forno a 200°C (400°F). Forre um tabuleiro de forno com papel vegetal para facilitar a limpeza.
- Seque os filetes de robalo com toalhas de papel. Meta os filetes no tabuleiro preparado, com a pele virada para baixo.
- Regue cada filete com azeite, temperando com sal e pimenta-preta moída na hora. Distribua o alho picado uniformemente sobre os filetes, pressionando ligeiramente para que adira bem. Coloque fatias de limão em cima de cada filete, seguidas de um ramo de alecrim, tomilho e orégão. Regue o vinho branco ao redor dos filetes.
- Leve ao forno pré-aquecido durante 25 minutos ou até que o peixe se desfie facilmente com um garfo.
- Retire do forno e deixe repousar durante alguns minutos antes de servir.
- Este robalo acompanha bem com arroz ou uma salada

Eco-Tips

ALEXANDRA BARNSTORF

“Compro roupa em segunda mão para as minhas filhas e para mim;
Determinadas peças de roupa são alteradas para nova utilização e panos de loiça e roupa que não está em bom estado de utilização, damos-lhes uma segunda vida”



taking care
of tomorrow



Fun Fact SABIA QUE?

O medo de palavras longas é chamado de **Hipopotomonstrosesquipedaliofobia**

Vinho da Semana

Sugestão de Duarte Costa Pereira



Página Sauvignon Blanc 2021 (DOC, Óbidos)

Não é o estilo de Sauvignon Blanc padronizado, normalmente intenso com um caráter vegetal quando é de clima fresco, ou intensidade tropical de clima mais quente. Este vinho, apresenta uma cor citrina carregada e os descritores aromáticos revelam notas de biscoito pelo prolongado contato com as leveduras (battonage), notas de tosta pelo estágio em barrica usada (sugerindo um Fume Blanc Californiano), e uma ligeira percepção vegetal característica da casta em clima atlântico. Na boca é cremoso e com uma acidez vibrante que o prolonga. Pode parecer estranho, mas este é o típico vinho branco que beneficia ser decantado, pois a oxigenação beneficia o aparecimento da complexidade de aroma. Servir a 12°C.

Harmonizações possíveis: peixes condimentados, carnes brancas e queijos amanteigados.

Preço aproximado: 14 euros.

Appendix V – Vine Magazine



 Cork Supply

BEM-VINDO AOS VINHOS DO ANO 2024!

A revista tem como objetivo reunir, em um só lugar, as sugestões de Duarte Costa Pereira. Uma coleção diversificada, que inclui vinhos tintos, brancos, rosés, champanhes e portos, pensada para proporcionar uma experiência completa. Aqui, você encontrará a orientação perfeita para escolher o vinho ideal para qualquer ocasião e expandir o seu paladar.



CONTEÚDO



3

A Arte do Vinho

Introdução da história do Vinho

5

Vinho Tinto

Lista de recomendações de vinhos tintos, com descrição de características

8

Vinho Branco

Lista de recomendações de vinhos brancos, com descrição de características

13

Vinhos Diversos

Sugestões de rose, porto e champagne

2

A Arte do Vinho

O vinho tinto é uma das bebidas mais apreciadas e tradicionais do mundo, com uma história rica que remonta a milénios

Por Duarte Costa Pereira

Portugal é na atualidade o 10º maior produtor de vinhos no mundo. Sendo um país de reduzidas dimensões consegue desenhar vinhos de variadíssimos perfis, tal deve-se a um grande número de castas autóctones, uma grande diversidade de solos (mesmo em regiões vizinhas: no Douro temos essencialmente o xisto e na Região dos Vinhos Verdes temos granito) e tipos de climas diferenciados, junto da costa o clima de influência atlântico com os ventos marítimos e maior predominância de pluviosidade e na parte interior o clima continental em que as estações do ano são mais definidas, invernos rigorosos e verões quentes.

Portugal consegue assim elaborar vinhos brancos de estilo "leve e frutado", com mais moderado teor de álcool, acidez mais incisiva e aromas mais cítricos e florais, como são exemplos as regiões de Vinhos Verdes, Bairrada e Lisboa (onde se destaca, em Bucelas, a "histórica" casta Arinto). Também se fazem vinhos brancos mais encorpados e persistentes, recorrendo a fermentação ou estégio em barrica e a técnicas como a battonage, como em regiões mais quentes. Portugal também tem tintos "elegantes e frescos" de regiões atlânticas, como a Bairrada (a icónica casta Baga) e Lisboa, ou de regiões de altitude, como a Beira Interior (a menos falada casta Rufete), a Algarvia e a

misteriosa casta Negra Mole. Fazemos também vinhos de potência e macios no "baixo" Alentejo e vinhos de estrutura e mais tânicos, como os que saem da região do Douro e do alto Alentejo, com a grande notoriedade da Serra de São Mamede. Há também vinhos que recorrem a técnicas do passado, como os lagares rupestres na Região de Trás-os-Montes, as talhas no Alentejo, os vinhos brancos de curtimenta (vulgo "orange wine"), estilo "falsete", como o Medieval de Ourém. Vinhos de "Terroir" salinos, como os dos Açores, e o caso à parte da denominação de origem de Colares, com solos em chão de areia. Portugal consegue também, neste pequeno retângulo, ter a capacidade de desenvolver

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quatro vinhos de sobremesa internacionalizados: o Porto, o Madeira, o Carcavelos e o Moscatel, de duas realidades distintas: um mais fresco e elegante, vindo da Península de Setúbal, e um mais macio e encorpado, que chega do Douro, através da uva Moscatel Galego. Na região do Tejo, desenvolvem-se também distintos vinhos de colheita tardia/botritizados, aproveitando a presença do Rio Tejo e as tardes quentes até o final da vindima, utilizando a autóctone e mais plantada casta branca em Portugal, o Fernão Pires. Portugal desenvolveu também a arte da espumantização,

capaz de ombrear com os melhores produtores do mundo. Temos uma região vitivinícola inata para fazer espumantes: Távora-Varosa, e outras onde a frescura é um aliado para fazer este estilo de vinho, como os Vinhos Verdes e a Bairrada. De mãos dadas com a acidez, boa para fazer vinhos espumantes, está a construção de Aguardentes Vinicas e Bagaceiras, em que detemos uma das três únicas denominações de origem exclusivas para a produção deste produto: a Lourinhã, na região de Lisboa. As outras são as francesas Cognac e Armagnac.



"Wine is bottled poetry."
— Robert Louis Stevenson

Vinho Tinto

Reserva das Pedras Tinta Miúda 2020 (Tejo, DOC)



A casta Tinta Miúda é quase desconhecida, por vezes caída em descrédito, pois é irregular na produção e amadurece tardamente, tornando-se um risco para os viticultores que apostam nela. É, no entanto, uma fonte de acidez natural nos vinhos. Basta perceber que os grandes tintos da Rioja, que têm como estrutura a casta Tempranillo (a nossa Tinta Roriz ou Aragonés), são normalmente apimentados pela uva Graciano, que corresponde à nossa Tinta Miúda na Rioja. Este vinho apresenta uma cor rubi intensa, um aroma fresco mentolado que reflete o terroir envolvente, pois a vinha está rodeada de eucaliptos, além de aromas especiados e fumados característicos da casta e alguma fruta negra. Boca leve, com perfil fino de taninos e uma acidez notável. Um belo tinto para a Primavera/Verão. Servir a 14°C.

Harmonizações possíveis: peixes gordos e carnes brancas.

Preço aproximado: 19 euros.

Quinta da Vegia lote 2019 (Dão, DOC)



Lote elaborado com Touriga Nacional e Tinta Roriz. Aroma vinoso, relembrando o vinho a vinificar em lagares, com bagas frescas, framboesa, o floral da Touriga, ligeiro vegetal e um toque lácteo (influência da fermentação maloláctica), que remete para logarite de frutos silvestres. Na boca, enorme frescura e elegância, claramente um tinto que se adequa aos tempos de Primavera que aí vêm. Servir a 16°C.

Harmonizações possíveis: carnes brancas e carnes grelhadas.

Preço aproximado: 15 euros

Quinta dos Termos Touriga Nacional 2019 (Beira Interior, DOC)



Vinho de cor vermelha púrpura. Enorme intensidade de aroma, com notas florais de violetas, bergamota, cereja vermelha e framboesa. Na boca, revela taninos elegantes, frescura, intensidade de sabor e persistência equilibrada. Um excelente exercício pedagógico para reconhecer facilmente a expressão da casta Touriga Nacional. Servir entre 14/16°C.

Harmonizações possíveis: carnes vermelhas e queijos.

Preço aproximado: 9 euros.



Aliás Elegância de Outrora 2018 (DOC, Bairrada)

Em muitas das formações de vinhos que dou, a casta Baga é das menos consensuais. É uma casta difícil, pois, por ter um cacho muito compacto, tem tendência para a podridão. Por outro lado, é uma casta que demora a amadurecer e, muitas vezes, o clima da vindima na Bairrada não é o ideal, devido a chuvas precoces. Para fazer um grande Baga, é fundamental encontrarmos a janela perfeita da colheita da uva, para equilibrar os açúcares e os ácidos. Este vinho reflete a cor da casta com um rubi aberto. No aroma, apresenta notas de fruta vermelha, como cereja, um ligeiro vegetal da casta e um lado melado que lhe confere grande complexidade e explosão de aroma. Na boca, denota a enorme frescura atlântica da Bairrada, com um tanino suave e equilibrado (muitas vezes reside aqui o desequilíbrio destes variedades) e uma enorme persistência. Vinho altamente gastronómico e com grande potencial de guarda. Servir a 16°C. Decididamente, esta colheita de 2018 deu origem a um dos meus tintos favoritos da Bairrada.

Preço aproximado: 15 euros

Vieira de Sousa Unoaked 2021 (DOC, Douro)

Um blend de Touriga Franca e Touriga Nacional. Apresenta uma cor vermelho púrpura. Aroma intenso e direto de frutos vermelhos, framboesa e cereja vermelha. Na boca, revela-se de médio corpo, boa frescura e tanino polido. Apesar do peso do álcool (14%), é um apelativo "tinto de verão". O fato de ser um tinto que não passa por barrica ("unoaked") permite exaltar toda a exuberância do aroma das castas, realçar a acidez do vinho e fazer sobressair o terroir de onde as uvas provêm. Sugiro servir a uma temperatura um pouco abaixo da janela adotada para os vinhos tintos: 14°C. Harmonizações possíveis: carnes brancas, carnes grelhadas ou peixes condimentados.

Preço aproximado: 15 euros



Meruge Tinto 2019 (DOC, Douro)

Vinho de cor rubi clara. Vinho com pouca extração, foge do perfil concentrado, sendo um vinho tinto ideal para a Primavera/Verão. Apresenta aromas de fruta fresca, como cereja e amora, e alguma complexidade de aromas de torrefação, conferidos pelo estágio em barrica (carvalho francês novo), com descritores como chocolate negro e café. Na boca, é fresco e elegante. Tem taninos suaves, fruta fresca que remete para frutos vermelhos, e uma acidez muito equilibrada, que proporciona um final longo e persistente. Servir mais fresco que o habitual num tinto clássico: 13/14°C.

Harmonizações possíveis: sardinhas, polvo, enchidos e carnes brancas.

Preço aproximado: 20 euros

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Preço aproximado: 15 euros



Meruge Tinto 2019 (DOC, Douro)

Vinho de cor rubi clara. Vinho com pouca extração, foge do perfil concentrado, sendo um vinho tinto ideal para a Primavera/Verão. Apresenta aromas de fruta fresca, como cereja e amora, e alguma complexidade de aromas de torrefação, conferidos pelo estágio em barrica (carvalho francês novo), com descritores como chocolate negro e café. Na boca, é fresco e elegante. Tem taninos suaves, fruta fresca que remete para frutos vermelhos, e uma acidez muito equilibrada, que proporciona um final longo e persistente. Servir mais fresco que o habitual num tinto clássico: 13/14°C.

Harmonizações possíveis: sardinhas, polvo, enchidos e carnes brancas.

Preço aproximado: 20 euros

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Pétalos del Bierzo 2020 (Denominação de origem Bierzo)

Este vinho, que é considerado por alguns críticos o vinho de melhor relação qualidade/preço que Espanha faz (com toda a subjetividade que uma avaliação dessas pode conter), vem da região do Bierzo, próxima da Galiza, que se destaca pela casta Mencía (é a variedade que aparece no nosso país com o nome Jaén). Este vinho apresenta uma cor vermelho-violeta e destaca-se as notas de fruta vermelha, como cereja, framboesa e ameixa, além de discretas notas florais. Na boca, apresenta taninos suaves e uma acidez equilibrada que lhe confere frescura. Servir a uma temperatura ligeiramente abaixo de um tinto clássico: 13/14°C. Este vinho é assinado por um dos mais reputados enólogos de Espanha: Álvaro Palacios.

Preço aproximado: 15 euros

Andreza Altitude 2019 (Douro, DOC)

Um típico tinto de Verão, um lote de Touriga Nacional, Tinto Cão e Sousão. Mostra a pureza varietal, com notas de framboesa, cereja e morango, além de um ligeiro toque terroso e de manga que lhe confere elegância. Taninos finos e enorme frescura. Fantástica relação qualidade-preço. Servir a 14°C. Harmonizações possíveis: carnes brancas e peixes condimentados.

Preço aproximado: 12,50 euros



Vinho Branco



Herdade de São Miguel Arinto Esquecido 2022 (Regional Alentejano)

Seleciono novamente um vinho versátil, adequado para a gastronomia típica do Natal. Um branco de estilo encorpado e persistente, que harmoniza na perfeição com bacalhau, peru ou porco. Vinho de cor amarelo-palha, com aroma complexo: notas de frutos secos, carácter melado e alguma perceção mineral. Na boca, revela cremosidade e a frescura típica da casta Arinto. Servir entre 10/12°C.

Preço aproximado: 18 euros

Quinta do Pedregal Encruzado 2023 (Dão, DOC)

Um vinho versátil para acompanhar um bacalhau (um peixe com alguma estrutura) e/ou um peru (uma carne branca). Ambas as iguarias encaixam num "Branco de Outono/Inverno". A casta Encruzado, além de conseguir vinhos volumosos, mantém sempre um equilíbrio de acidez que lhe confere um carácter gastronómico. Este exemplar apresenta aroma cítrico, com um ligeiro toque floral. Na boca, é untuoso, com estrutura ácida que lhe dá persistência. Servir entre 10/12°C.

Preço aproximadamente (excelente relação qualidade/preço): 12 euros



Val Moreira Branco 2022 (DOC, Douro)

Um blend de castas com tradição no Douro, como Viosinho e Rabigato, e castas que adicionam frescura, como a "plástica" Arinto e a cada vez mais "essencial" em climas quentes (Cima Corgo e Douro Superior), como é a uva Alvarinho. Resulta num vinho pleno de aromas frescos que recordam notas cítricas e uma certa mineralidade. Na boca, confirma toda essa frescura, revelando ao mesmo tempo volume de boca (parte do lote fermenta em balseiros de carvalho francês, e a parte que fermenta em recipiente de inox é submetida também a um prolongado estágio "sur lie") e um final persistente e marcadamente mineral. Servir o vinho entre 10/12°C.

Harmonizações possíveis: peixes condimentados e carnes brancas.

Preço aproximado: 12 euros

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Ervideira Invisível Aragonez Branco 2023 (Regional Alentejano)

Talvez o mais famoso e pioneiro vinho no conceito "Blanc des Noirs" que Portugal tem, seguiu o princípio que muitos champanhes e espumantes seguem: fazer um vinho branco a partir de castas tintas, como o exemplo do Pinot Noir e da Baga. Este vinho surgiu em 2009 com uma prudente produção de 3.000 garrafas, chegando à sua 15ª edição com a impressionante tiragem de 135.000 garrafas. Nos muitos cursos de prova que faço, torna-se uma presença constante, pois considero um vinho pedagógico para explicar como, de uma uva com tanta intensidade de cor como o Aragonez/Tinta Roriz, se chega a um vinho quase transparente (dá a origem do nome "invisível"). Ao mesmo tempo, na opinião dos formandos, torna-se um vinho consensual e fácil de beber. Vinho pleno de aroma, com notas de hortelã e lima, sendo, na boca, estruturado (como se espera de castas tintas) e com uma acidez no ponto que o equilibra. Servir a 10°C.

Harmonizações possíveis: mariscos, sushi e saladas

Preço aproximado: 13 euros

Freixo Chardonnay 2023 (Regional Alentejano)

Uma das características da sub região alentejana do Redondo é ser influenciada de forma determinante pela Serra d'Ossa, o que é crucial para a qualidade das uvas e vinhos aqui produzidos. Essa influência permite a ocorrência de maturações mais equilibradas e, consequentemente, vinhos brancos mais cítricos e não tão maduros, muito frescos e aromáticos, como é o caso deste exemplar. O ligeiro estágio em barrica confere-lhe untuosidade na boca e complexidade aromática (um toque de aromas terciários). Servir entre 10/12°C.

Harmoniza com: peixes condimentados e carnes brancas.

Preço aproximado: 10 euros



Duorum Vinha dos Muros 2023 (Douro, DOC)

Um blend muito bem conseguido das castas Arinto e Gouveio. Vinho de cor citrina, com aromas elegantes de lima, uma percepção vegetal e uma nota mentolada, sugerindo a cota de 500 metros de altitude de onde as uvas provêm. Três quartos do lote estagia em depósitos de inox para manter a pureza varietal e a enorme frescura que o vinho transparece, enquanto o restante ¼ envelhece por 4 meses em barricas de carvalho francês de segunda e terceira utilização, alargando a complexidade do vinho, mas sem retirar o caráter mineral e frutado das variedades Arinto e Gouveio. Servir entre 10/12°C. Na minha opinião, um grande vinho de uma edição limitada de 3.300 garrafas.

Harmonizações possíveis: peixes gordos, carnes brancas e queijos amanteigados.

Preço aproximado: 16 euros

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Quinta dos Termos Herdade do Louisal Callum Reserva 2021 (DOC, Beira Interior)

Vinho de cor citrina, elaborado a partir da desconhecida casta Callum, que é a mesma que a pouco conhecida casta Batocha da região dos Vinhos Verdes, onde só conheço um produtor que elabora um vinho desta variedade (Quinta Santa Cristina). Este exemplar remete para um aroma algo exótico, com notas florais e tropicais. Na boca, surpreende pela acidez (característica da Beira Interior), uma textura cremosa e um final longo. Servir entre 10/12°C.

Harmonizações interessantes: peixe no forno ou polvo à lagareiro.

Preço aproximado: 15 euros

Quinta da Lagoa Velha Baga e Chardonnay 2021 (Bairrada, Branco)

Com uma dupla improvável de castas – Chardonnay (branca) e Baga (tinta) –, consegue-se obter um vinho curioso, complexo e "fora da caixa". O aroma é marcado pelo caráter da uva branca Chardonnay, com notas cítricas e um tropical verde, lembrando o ananás. Na boca, a casta tinta Baga trabalha o vinho, conferindo-lhe acidez e cremosidade. É um vinho versátil para a gastronomia. Servir entre 10/12°C.

Preço aproximado: 10 euros.



Quinta da Pedra Escrita 2021 (Branco, Regional Duriense)

Interessante lote de castas de características diferenciadas e não tão presentes na região do Douro, como a casta do Ródano Viognier e a variedade emblemática da sub-região de Monção e Melgaço, Alvarinho. Este vinho apresenta um aroma muito cítrico, com notas de toranja, uma mineralidade muito presente dos solos graníticos e um toque fumado evidente, sugerindo fósforo queimado. Na boca, destaca-se pela frescura, persistência e um sabor mineral e cítrico, que corresponde à prova olfativa. Servir a 10°C.

Sugestões de harmonizações: peixes fumados (harmonização por efeito de semelhança), mariscos e queijos de pasta mole.

Preço aproximado: 11 euros.

10



Beyra Siria 2020 (DOC Beira Interior)

A casta Siria, também designada por Roupeiro no Alentejo, alcança a expressão máxima varietal no terroir da Beira Interior, particularmente na sub-região de Pinhel. Este vinho apresenta uma cor citrina, o aroma é cítrico, com notas de toranja, flor de laranjeira e também intensa mineralidade (definida pela crítica de vinhos, Jancis Robinson, "como um termo de prova impreciso", para mim, é aroma de pedra molhada). Na boca, salienta-se a frescura, revelando a altitude das vinhas. É esta a região vitivinícola em Portugal que produz vinhos de maior altitude, o que lhes confere elegância. Servir a 10 °C.

Harmonizar com peixes grelhados, mariscos ou queijos de pasta mole.

Preço aproximado: 9,5 euros.

Ameixãmar 2019 (IG, Açores)

Vinho elaborado por uma das três castas nobres dos Açores: Arinto dos Açores. As outras são o Verdelho e o Terrantez do Pico. Esta casta autóctone e exclusiva dos Açores tem em comum com o

Arinto do continente apenas o nome e a boa acidez. Este vinho apresentou-se de cor amarela intensa, com aromas cítricos e minerais. Na boca, surpreende verdadeiramente, com um perfil distinto do estilo dito normal dos vinhos "Açores", normalmente mais magros. Mantém os descritores-chave: mineralidade, salinidade e acidez, e junta-lhe também uma enorme untuosidade e cremosidade, o que lhe confere um equilíbrio perfeito. É um vinho muito gastronómico e versátil. Servir a 10°C. Enorme vinho! O preço mais elevado reflete as baixas produções e a difícil

viticultura das ilhas do Pico e do Faial.

A título de curiosidade, a casta Alvarinho, que é a uva mais cara do continente, atinge o valor de 1 euro/kg, enquanto as castas dos Açores são comercializadas, por vezes, a 5 euros/kg!



Muros Antigos 2022 Alvarinho (DOC, Vinho Verde)

Vinho de cor citrina. Grande intensidade aromática, destacam-se os aromas cítricos de tangerina e toranja, com um toque floral lembrando a flor de laranjeira. Na boca, corresponde com as notas cítricas, com uma acidez vibrante e mineralidade. Termina com um bom volume de boca e persistência longa. Servir entre 8/10°C.

Sugestões de harmonização: marisco, peixes condimentados, queijos de pasta mole ou carnes brancas.

Preço aproximado: 10 euros

II



Bacalhóa Sauvignon Blanc 2022 (Regional Peninsula de Setúbal)

Existe uma ligação longa entre a Quinta da Bacalhóa e a região de Bordeaux. Em 1979, é aqui feito o primeiro Cabernet Sauvignon à moda de Bordeaux, "apimentado" com uma percentagem diminuta de Merlot (10%). Estas, juntamente com o Cabernet Franc, são as castas elementares dos tintos bordaleses. A casta Sauvignon Blanc também é a base dos brancos de Bordeaux, em assemblage com o Sémillon. Surge então, este ano, o lançamento deste varietal de Sauvignon Blanc, lembrando mais o perfil vegetal e cítrico de expressão da casta no "Velho Mundo" (Sancerre e Pouilly Fumé) do que propriamente o perfil tropical do "Novo Mundo" (Nova Zelândia, Marlborough), encorpado e concentrado de sabores na boca e com acidez refrescante. Servir entre 8/10°C.

Sugestões de harmonização: comidas especiadas como caril, sushi e, por combinação de gastronomia local, queijos de Azeitão.

Preço aproximado: 12 euros

Cardo 2022 (DOC, Beira Interior)

Vinho de altitude, elaborado exclusivamente da casta Siria, que no Alentejo é conhecida como Roupeiro. É uma variedade que se comporta de forma diferente: em climas quentes e baixa altitude, como é o caso do Alentejo, ou em zonas mais altas, com maiores amplitudes térmicas, como é o caso da Beira Interior. Eu gosto mais deste segundo registo... e não é por acaso que,

juntamente com a casta Rufete (tinta), será a identidade dos vinhos da região. Este vinho apresenta cor citrina e aromas limoados e de maçã verde, além de uma leve mineralidade. Na boca, conserva a acidez típica de vinhos de altitude. É um vinho orgânico, isto é, produzido a partir de uvas em que não foram utilizados herbicidas, pesticidas, fungicidas, fertilizantes ou produtos químicos. Servir entre 8/10°C.

Sugestões de harmonização: mariscos, sushi e saladas.

Preço aproximado: 7 euros



II

Vinhos Diversos

Quinta de La Rosa Rosé 2022 (Douro, DOC)



Cor sugerindo um rosé da Provença: pálida, com pétalas de rosa e nuances brilhantes. Aromas varietais das castas que elaboraram este vinho, traduzindo o lado floral da Touriga Nacional e a intensa fruta vermelha da Tinta Roriz. Na boca, enorme intensidade de fruto vermelho: cereja, morango e groselha, num lado fresco com uma acidez incisiva que lhe dá versatilidade para ser consumido a solo ou acompanhado de gastronomia. Servir entre 8/10°C. Claramente um vinho de perfil de Verão.

Harmonizações possíveis: sushi, mariscos, peixes grelhados, salmão, saladas e massas.

Preço aproximado: 9 euros.

Aliança Baga Reserva Bruto 2021 (Bairrada)

Espumante feito de uvas tintas, um 'Blanc des Noirs', comparado com o estilo de espumante 'Blanc des Blancs', que normalmente confere mais corpo, vigor e estrutura aos espumantes, podendo também dar uma leve percepção de frutos vermelhos. É também um espumante datado (2021), termo designado por 'Millésimé', normalmente associado a um bom ano. O normal em muitos espumantes é não terem data de colheita, o chamado 'Non-Vintage', que basicamente combina em um lote de espumante diferentes colheitas para assegurar a consistência do produto (equilibrar anos menos famosos) ou manter o estilo da casa ano após ano. Este espumante apresenta cor citrina, notas acentuadas cítricas, o habitual toque de panificação dos espumantes feitos pelo método tradicional (segunda fermentação na garrafa), a bolha apresenta-se fina e consistente e, na boca, é frutado, fresco e cremoso. É versátil para toda a gastronomia do Natal, bem como para beber a solo ou acompanhar mariscos. Temperatura de serviço: 8°C.



Preço aproximado: 9 euros.

Andriensen 10 anos (Porto Branco)



Na minha opinião, a harmonização do vinho com as sobremesas pode ser feita por semelhanças de aromas e sabores, razão pela qual resultam muito bem, sobretudo, os vinhos fortificados de estilo oxidativo: Portos Tawnys e Brancos com indicação de idade, Moscatel de Setúbal, Madeira (especialmente os estilos mais doces, como Malvasia e Boal) e, ainda, o versátil colheita tardia. As sobremesas de Natal caracterizam-se pelos aromas e sabores de açúcar caramelizado e doces com notas de frutos secos e frutos cristalizados (exemplo máximo: o Bolo Rei). Este Porto Branco com indicação de idade apresenta cor palha e uma paleta aromática com alguma complexidade: notas cítricas de juventude, frutos secos e um caráter melado proveniente do envelhecimento a que o vinho é submetido. Na boca, é complexo, com sabores de frutos secos de mel, suave e fresco. Servir a uma temperatura entre 10/12°C.

Harmonizações possíveis: foie gras ou sobremesas com base em frutos secos ou leite-creme.

Preço aproximado: 22 euros

B



"Wine makes every meal an occasion, every table more elegant, every day more civilized."
— Andre Simon



B



OBRIGADA!

Appendix VI – Vine Tasting Communication



Junte-se a nós para uma

PROVA DE VINHO DO PORTO

*Degustação guiada por Duarte
Costa Pereira*

*Uma experiência única
com a prova de vinhos do
Porto, acompanhada por
deliciosos chocolates,
enquanto exploramos a
rica história desta
tradição!*

DATA:
27 de janeiro | CSP1 | 16h45
29 de janeiro | TALIS/CSP4 |
16h45

 **Cork Supply**

Appendix VII – Internal Programs Document

Programas Internos

We Care, Beyond Us e Taking Care of Tomorrow _____





Conheça o nosso programa

O cuidado com os nossos Colaboradores

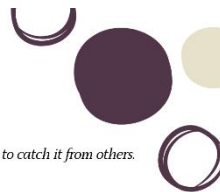
O programa We Care foi desenvolvido com o objetivo de promover a saúde e o bem-estar dos nossos Colaboradores, oferecendo suporte em diversas áreas, desde a saúde física e mental até ao equilíbrio entre a vida pessoal e profissional.

Através deste programa, disponibilizamos acesso a consultas médicas e psicológicas, atividades de bem-estar, workshops sobre saúde e iniciativas de apoio emocional. O We Care reflete o nosso compromisso com um ambiente de trabalho saudável e acolhedor, incentivando hábitos positivos e proporcionando recursos que contribuem para o bem-estar de todos.



Áreas de atuação

*"A healthy attitude is contagious but don't wait to catch it from others.
Be a carrier."
— Tom Stoppard*



Massagens e Tratamentos Terapêuticos

Os nossos Colaboradores podem usufruir de massagens e tratamentos terapêuticos sem sair do local de trabalho.



Team 24

Os colaboradores têm acesso a uma Team 24, uma aplicação que oferece serviços de apoio psicológico de forma confidencial, sem qualquer custo e de fácil uso. A parceria com a Team 24 também nos permite elaborar, anualmente, um inquérito sobre os riscos psicossociais.



Aulas de Yoga

O We Care também proporciona aulas de yoga internas, onde os Colaboradores podem aderir às aulas sem terem que se deslocar do local de trabalho, uma atividade que promove a atividade física e o bem-estar.



We Care: o que oferecemos



Como parte do nosso programa We Care, organizamos diversas atividades de promoção de bem-estar. Desde workshops, atividades de bem-estar, consultas médicas até formações. O We Care procura apoiar os nossos Colaboradores e oferecer todas as ferramentas que precisam para ter o seu bem-estar assegurado, assim como um equilíbrio entre a sua vida pessoal e profissional.



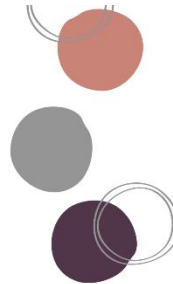
"O We Care teve um impacto transformador na minha vida e na minha equipa, pois aprendemos a controlar melhor a respiração e a gerir as emoções de forma mais eficaz, o que melhorou significativamente o nosso bem-estar e desempenho."
- Marisa Alves



We Care Month

O que é?

"Action is the foundational key to all success."
— Pablo Picasso



O bem-estar dos nossos Colaboradores é uma prioridade.

Na Cork Supply, acreditamos que o bem-estar está diretamente ligado à motivação, produtividade e satisfação no trabalho. Por isso, é um dos pilares fundamentais do programa We Care, que visa garantir o equilíbrio físico, psicológico e emocional da nossa equipa.

Embora o programa We Care promova diversas comunicações e atividades ao longo do ano, dedicamos o mês de outubro exclusivamente a este tema, reforçando o nosso compromisso com o bem-estar de todos.

Durante este mês especial, cada semana será dedicada a uma área distinta do bem-estar. Os colaboradores terão acesso a várias formações, workshops, e atividades dinâmicas e interativas, focadas em promover hábitos saudáveis e um ambiente de trabalho mais equilibrado e positivo.



beyond us ♥



Conheça o nosso programa

O apoio à comunidade

O Beyond Us é o nosso programa de voluntariado e responsabilidade social. Com o programa, os nossos colaboradores têm a oportunidade de dispensar 4 horas do seu trabalho por ano e dedicá-las ao voluntariado numa causa à sua escolha. O programa procura motivar toda a equipa Cork Supply a interagir e participar com causas que são importantes e que têm a capacidade de mudar vidas.

O Beyond Us é responsável também por criar diversas campanhas internas de doação, eventos e inclusão social. Procuramos ajudar quem mais precisa e direcionar os nossos esforços ao apoio das mesmas.



4 Horas Beyond Us

Como funciona?

*"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?"
— Martin Luther King, Jr.*



Para participar e usufruir das suas 4 horas é bastante simples.

O Colaborador deverá selecionar uma instituição ou atividade de carácter social que deseje apoiar. O programa Beyond Us não impõe restrições quanto à escolha, conferindo total liberdade ao Colaborador, desde que a iniciativa tenha um propósito social.

Após a seleção, deverá escolher o dia e a hora em que pretende desenvolver a sua atividade de voluntariado, devendo alinhar com a chefia o dia da iniciativa. Após o voluntariado, deve recolher o comprovativo de presença junto da instituição/organização e entregar à equipa People@Communication.

De forma a poder estar mais informado de atividades de voluntariado, poderá inscrever-se na Bolsa Local de Voluntariado de SMF. Sempre que alguma iniciativa de voluntariado for organizada por esta instituição, será contactado(a) via email para averiguar o seu interesse em participar nas propostas.

Fazer a diferença é mais fácil com o Beyond Us!



Áreas de atuação

Donativos e apoio, Inclusão social e Eventos



Donativos e apoio

Donativos e apoios esporádicos e regulares a Instituições e pessoas, maioritariamente instituições locais.

Também realizamos donativos regulares e/ou empréstimos aos Colaboradores que comprovadamente necessitam de apoio e apoio a campanhas periódicas de algumas instituições.



Inclusão social

Com o Beyond Us procuramos enaltecer a sensibilizar para a inclusão social.

Comprometemo-nos a ser uma força ativa na construção de ambientes de trabalho mais justos e inclusivos para pessoas com incapacidade. Procuramos fazer a diferença através da inclusão de pessoas com incapacidade.



Eventos

Compreendendo o impacto que os eventos podem ter na comunidade, realizamos eventos e seminários no âmbito da responsabilidade social.



Testemunhos

As palavras de quem fez a diferença



"Participar no programa Beyond Us, em colaboração com a Make-A-Wish, foi uma experiência verdadeiramente enriquecedora e que me marcou profundamente. Priorizar o outro, especialmente em contextos tão delicados, é algo transformador – que nos recentra e nos relembra o essencial.

O momento mais marcante foi perceber o impacto que um gesto, por mais simples que pareça, pode ter na vida de uma criança e da sua família. Sentir que, por um instante, conseguimos oferecer esperança, alegria e um sorriso genuíno é algo que não se esquece.

Esta experiência reforçou em mim a importância de estarmos presentes, de nos doarmos, e de fazermos parte de algo maior. Sai-se diferente, mais grato, mais atento, e com vontade de continuar a contribuir."

— Benilde Teixeira

"Participar no programa Beyond Us 2024 foi uma experiência incrível e profundamente enriquecedora. Desde o início, senti que fazia parte de algo maior, um movimento que realmente traz impacto positivo à comunidade. Acredito que o meu contributo, somado ao esforço de toda a equipa, ajudou a criar um ambiente mais acolhedor e solidário na comunidade. Além disso, o programa inspirou-me tanto a nível pessoal quanto profissional, reforçando valores como empatia, resiliência e trabalho em equipa. Sem dúvida, esta experiência despertou em mim um compromisso ainda maior com ações sociais. Recomendo a todos que participem, pois, o impacto é mútuo: ajudamos os outros e, ao mesmo tempo, crescemos como pessoas."

— Antonieta Ribas



Conheça algumas das instituições que apoiamos



taking care of tomorrow



Conheça o nosso programa

Por um mundo mais sustentável

O Taking Care of Tomorrow é o nosso programa dedicado à parte ambiental da sustentabilidade. Com o mundo em decadência ambiental, é necessário agir e ajudar. A mudança pode ser feita com pequenos gestos de todos!

Com o nosso programa interno oferecemos formações, workshops e conteúdos informativos que capacitam os nossos Colaboradores a serem profissionais e cidadãos mais conscientes e responsáveis com o ambiente.



Áreas de atuação

O TCOT em ação



ECO-TIPS



Os Colaboradores são os protagonistas da nossa campanha de sustentabilidade Eco-Tips. O objetivo da campanha é partilhar dicas sustentáveis de Colaboradores para Colaboradores.

POLÍGRAFO DE SUSTENTABILIDADE



O Polígrafo TCOT, o Programa de Literacia da Sustentabilidade, procura através de atividades dinâmicas desvendar alguns dos mitos existentes sobre a sustentabilidade. Uma atividade divertida que envolve todos!

TCOT BEYOND BORDERS



Com o objetivo de amplificar práticas sustentáveis e sensibilizar para a urgência em agir em prol do meio ambiente, o TCOT atravessou fronteiras. Com isto, é-nos permitido uma abordagem universal e dinâmica da questão da sustentabilidade.

ATIVIDADES



O nosso programa Taking Care of Tomorrow promove diversas atividades de formação e workshops. As iniciativas permitem abrir um espaço de aprendizagem inclusivo e divertido.



HARV'81

GROUP

Appendix VIII – Communication Calendar

01

JANUARY
2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29 prova de vinhos	30	31	

TO DO

NOTE

FAMÍLIA | TEMÁTICOS | SUSTENTABILIDADE | EVENTOS | FERIADOS

02

FEBRUARY
2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14 Dia dos Namorados	15
16	17	18	19	20 Dia do animal de estimação	21	22
23	24 Dádiva de sangue	25	26	27	28 Carnaval	

TO DO

NOTE

FAMÍLIA | TEMÁTICOS | SUSTENTABILIDADE | EVENTOS | FERIADOS

03

MARCH 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
	2	3	4	5	6	7 Dia da Mulher
	9	10	11	12	13 Aniversário Harry 81	14
	16	17	18 dia do pai	19 Dia de Felicidade	20 Dia do desperdício zero	21 Dia Internacional das Florestas
30	31	24	25	26	27	28 Dia Mundial da água
						29

TO DO

NOTE

FAMÍLIA | TEMÁTICOS | SUSTENTABILIDADE | EVENTOS | FERIADOS

04

APRIL 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Dia da mentira	2	3	4	5
	6 Dia Mundial da Saúde	7	8	9	10	11
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	20	21 Dia Mundial da Terra	22	23	24	25 25 de Abril
27	28 segurança de saúde e segurança no trabalho	29	30			

TO DO

NOTE

FAMÍLIA | TEMÁTICOS | SUSTENTABILIDADE | EVENTOS | FERIADOS

05

MAY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Dia do Trabalhador	2	3
	4 Dia da mãe	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 Dia Mundial da Reciclagem
17	18	19 Dia Mundial da abelha	20	21 Dia Internacional da Biodiversidade	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 Dia contra o tabaco

TO DO

NOTE

Dia 20- Prova de mel/ imagem sobre a importância das abelhas

Dia 31- imagem sobre os perigos do tabaco e reutilizar a entrevista do ano passado

FAMÍLIA | TEMÁTICOS | SUSTENTABILIDADE | EVENTOS | FERIADOS

06

JUNE 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Dia da criança/ pai/ Sobreiro e da Cortiça	2	3	4	5 Dia Mundial do Meio Ambiente	6	7 Dia Mundial da Segurança Alimentar
8 Dia Mundial dos Oceanos	9	10 Dia de Portugal	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 Dia da Gastronomia Sustentável	19 Corpo de Deus	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

TO DO

NOTE

FAMÍLIA | TEMÁTICOS | SUSTENTABILIDADE | EVENTOS | FERIADOS

07

JULY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 dia do avós
27	28 Dia Internacional da Conservação da Natureza	29	30	31		

TO DO

NOTE

FAMÍLIA | TEMÁTICOS | SUSTENTABILIDADE | EVENTOS | FERIADOS

08

AUGUST 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 Assunção de nossa senhora	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

TO DO

NOTE

FAMÍLIA | TEMÁTICOS | SUSTENTABILIDADE | EVENTOS | FERIADOS

09

SEPTEMBER 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5 Dia da Amazônia	6
7 Dia Mundial de Combate à Poluição do Ar	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 Dia para a Preservação da Camada de Ozônio	17	18	19	20 World Clean Up Day
21 Dia mundial da Gratidão	22	23	24	25	26 Dia Mundial da Saúde Ambiental	27
28	29 Dia de sensibilização para o desperdício alimentar	30				

TO DO

NOTE

FAMÍLIA | TEMÁTICOS | SUSTENTABILIDADE | EVENTOS | FERIADOS

10

OCTOBER 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 Dia Mundial da prevenção ao suicídio	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 Dia Mundial de linguagem gestual	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31 Halloween	

TO DO

NOTE

Dia 23- introdução a linguagem gestual/
imagem com gestos básicos

FAMÍLIA | TEMÁTICOS | SUSTENTABILIDADE | EVENTOS | FERIADOS

11

NOVEMBER 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						Dia de todos os santos Dia Mundial do Veganismo
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

TO DO

NOTE

FAMÍLIA | TEMÁTICOS | SUSTENTABILIDADE | EVENTOS | FERIADOS

12

DECEMBER 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5 Dia Mundial do Solo	6
7 Dia da imaculada conceição	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 Natal	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

TO DO

NOTE

FAMÍLIA | TEMÁTICOS | SUSTENTABILIDADE | EVENTOS | FERIADOS

Appendix IX – Internship Evaluation Form

P.PORTO

INSTITUTO
SUPERIOR
DE CONTABILIDADE
E ADMINISTRAÇÃO
DO PORTO
POLITÉCNICO
DO PORTO

GEE

GABINETE DE ESTÁGIOS E EMPREGABILIDADE
GRELHA DE AVALIAÇÃO DO ESTÁGIO
ESTUDANTE Nº - 2230185

Intercultural Studies for business
Licenciatura/Mestrado

Estagiário

Erika de Oliveira

Nome:

Empresa

Cork Supply Portugal

Nome:

Joana Castro

Tutor:

CLASSIFICAÇÃO

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

1 - ASSIDUIDADE E PONTUALIDADE

a - Assiduidade

b - Pontualidade

				X
				X

2 - AMBIENTE ORGANIZACIONAL

a - Adaptação ao meio (desempenho do Estagiário)

b - Capacidade de integração

c - Capacidade de iniciativa

d - Capacidade de investigação técnica

e - Capacidade de organização

f - Capacidade de trabalhar em equipa

g - Utilização de material informático

h - Aplicação de conhecimentos

i - _____

				X
				X
				X
				X
				X
				X
				X
				X
				X

3 - PLANO DE ESTÁGIO

a - Progressão durante o estágio

b - Componente científica

c - Componente prática

d - Cumprimento do plano de estágio proposto

e - Projeto de Intervenção desenvolvido ^(a)

f - _____

				X
				X
				X
				X

*Nota: para efeitos de classificação considerar: 1 – Mau; 2 – Fraco; 3 – Suficiente; 4 – Bom; 5 – Muito bom

(a) Caso se aplique

ESTUDANTE Nº - 2230185.

4 - POSTURA

- a - Aptidão técnico-profissional
- b - Idoneidade ética e deontológica
- c - _____

1	2	3	4	5
				X
				X

5 - OBSERVAÇÕES A REPORTAR AO ISCAP

O estágio correu muito bem, tendo a Erika cumprido com sucesso todos os objetivos propostos. Demonstrou empenho, profissionalismo e uma ótima capacidade de integração. Foi um prazer trabalhar com a Erika e contribuir para esta etapa da sua aprendizagem

___30___/05___/2025___

Assinatura da entidade de acolhimento:



ESTUDANTE Nº - 2230185,

ISCAP-GEE-MOD013.v15