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Consulting Partner: Razum d.o.o., Zagreb, Croatia | kompare.hr

93RD PERCENTILE CULTURE. 200% PROFIT GROWTH. SAME COMPANY, SAME YEAR.

How Two Denison Assessments in 12 Months Turned a PE Acquisition Into a Proof Point for Culture-Driven Performance

KEY METRICS

Industry: **Insurance comparison platform (InsurTech) |** Employees: **230+ (doubled in 18 months)**
Region: **Croatia (HQ), multi-site |** Context: **PE acquisition by Invera Equity Partners**
Denison Grand Culture Index: **92nd → 93rd percentile |** Profit growth (H1 2025): **~200% YoY**
Department turnaround: **26th → 99th percentile in 12 months**

The Challenge

Most organizations measure culture when things go wrong – after key people leave, after engagement craters, after a merger stalls. kompare.hr did the opposite.

In a compressed period, several forces converged. Invera Equity Partners acquired a stake in the business, bringing heightened performance expectations. The company launched an aggressive growth and efficiency strategy. Headcount nearly doubled, from approximately 140 to over 230 employees across multiple locations. All of this happened simultaneously.

The leadership team recognized that the culture that had made kompare.hr successful – built on trust, flexibility, close relationships, and a distinctive six-hour workday – was designed for a smaller, more intimate organization. The question was not whether they could preserve this culture unchanged, but whether it could function effectively as a system at twice the scale, under the structural pressures of a PE acquisition.

This is an uncommon decision. Organizations in the middle of M&A transactions rarely invest in systematic culture measurement – the urgency of deal integration typically crowds out the diagnostic work. kompare.hr chose to treat culture as a business process that needed to scale, not a legacy asset to protect.

Why the Denison Model

The leadership team considered several measurement approaches before selecting the Denison Organizational Culture Survey. Their reasoning was specific to their situation and reveals why a structural diagnostic was essential rather than a conventional engagement survey.

A standard engagement or satisfaction survey would have told them whether people were happy at a point in time. It would not have shown them where the system would fracture under the pressure of rapid growth. They needed a tool that could identify structural causes rather than surface symptoms – particularly where coordination would break down between new and existing teams, where the voice of the customer was getting lost in scaling operations, and where declared values diverged from daily practice.

Three capabilities of the Denison model were decisive. First, the direct link between culture dimensions and business outcomes – growth, profitability, innovation – gave them a language that resonated with the new PE stakeholders. Culture was not positioned as an HR initiative but as a business risk to be managed. Second, the global benchmarking allowed them to see their position relative to comparable organizations worldwide, not just track internal year-over-year changes. Third, the four-dimension structure (Mission, Consistency, Involvement, Adaptability) provided a diagnostic framework that mapped directly onto the organizational challenges they were facing.

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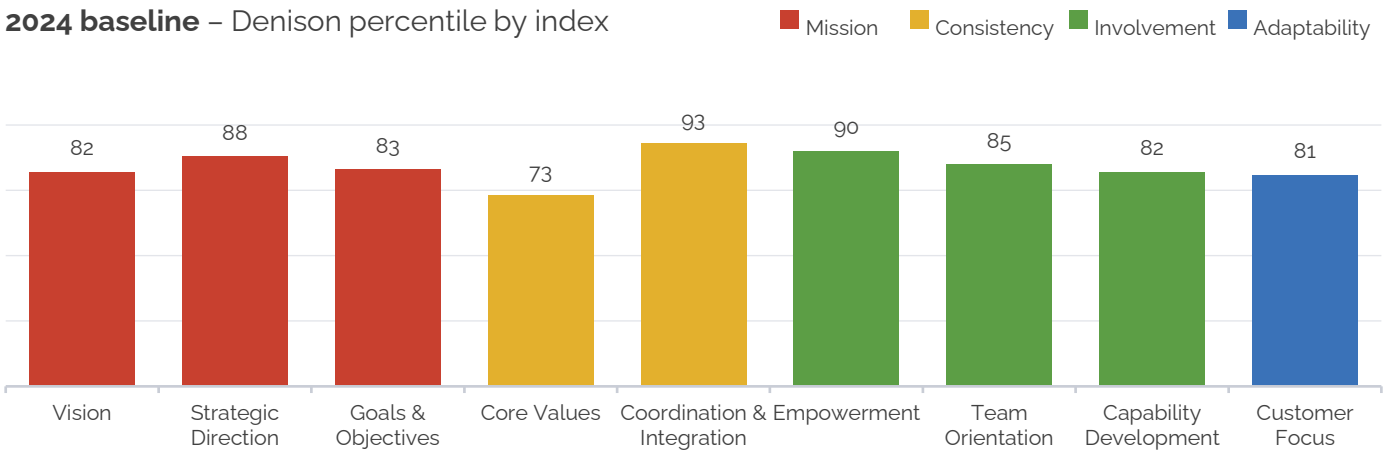
Year 1: The Baseline (2024)

The first Denison assessment was administered to all employees (N = 140) and interpreted in depth with the leadership team by consulting partner Razum. The overall Grand Culture Index placed kompare.hr at the 92nd percentile globally – a strong foundation. But the dimension-level and index-level data revealed four structural risk areas that required targeted intervention.

Identified Risk Areas

- **Mission – Strategic Direction gap:** Frontline employees and mid-level leaders perceived significantly less clarity about strategic direction and organizational mission than the executive team and team leads. Open-ended responses confirmed that employees frequently learned about business changes through informal channels, with delay. Team leads were absorbing frustration from below rather than transmitting clear messages from above. (Strategic Direction: 88th percentile; Goals & Objectives: 83rd; Vision: 82nd)
- **Consistency – Values-practice disconnect:** The lowest-scored items across the entire organization concerned the existence of a clear ethical code and the consistency of lived values. Open responses confirmed a perception that rules were applied unevenly across teams and locations. (Core Values: 73rd percentile – the single lowest index in the profile)
- **Involvement – Back-office marginalization:** Support, administrative, and back-office functions reported the weakest results in the company, particularly around empowerment and fair recognition of their contribution. One department scored at the 26th percentile overall – a stark contrast to the organizational average. (Empowerment: 90th; Team Orientation: 85th; Capability Development: 82nd)
- **Adaptability – Customer voice disconnect:** The lowest percentile scores in the entire profile related to how much customer feedback actually influenced organizational decisions – a signal that the voice of the customer was not reaching the people who worked with clients daily. (Customer Focus: 81st percentile)

2024 baseline – Denison percentile by index



The Intervention Layer

Rather than treating the Denison results as a report to be filed, kompare.hr built a structured, data-linked action plan across seven workstreams. Each intervention traced directly back to a specific finding from the assessment.

1. Closing the communication gap (Mission)

The company introduced "Parlaonice" – direct, unfiltered sessions where groups of 10 employees met with the CEO and founders. These were not town halls; they were small-group dialogues designed to give employees the strategic context that had been missing. All Hands meetings were established two to three times per year, alongside a new annual strategy event called "Kompareovo." The CPO began sending monthly implementation reports to all team leads, visibly showing what had been acted on from employee feedback – closing the loop that had been open.

2. Formalizing rules and accountability (Consistency)

The company translated its values into explicit, documented behavioural standards. Internal processes were formalized, and standards were aligned across teams and locations to reduce the space for differential interpretation. Roles, responsibilities, and escalation paths were clearly defined – directly addressing the perception that rules were not applied equally.

3. Rebuilding back-office inclusion (Involvement)

Targeted focus groups were conducted specifically with back-office departments to understand the root causes of their weak scores. The most significant action: for the first time, a formal bonus system was introduced for support, administrative, and back-office functions, with predictable and fair variable compensation. This was communicated at the end of 2025 and implemented from 2026.

4. Cross-functional collaboration (Involvement)

Product and Tech teams adopted cross-functional agile practices – joint sprints, planning sessions, and retrospectives that included perspectives from multiple departments. An initiative called "Reci nam sve" ("Tell Us Everything") became an institutionalized weekly bridge between IT/Product and sales verticals, where changes resulting from these conversations were visibly documented. At the management level, leaders from different functions began actively aligning priorities and making joint decisions.

5. Institutionalizing the customer voice (Adaptability)

Customer feedback collection moved from ad hoc to systematic. Employees received visible communication about what specifically changed as a result of customer input. The agile working model in Product accelerated the organization's ability to respond to market and client changes.

6. Bridging locations (cross-cutting)

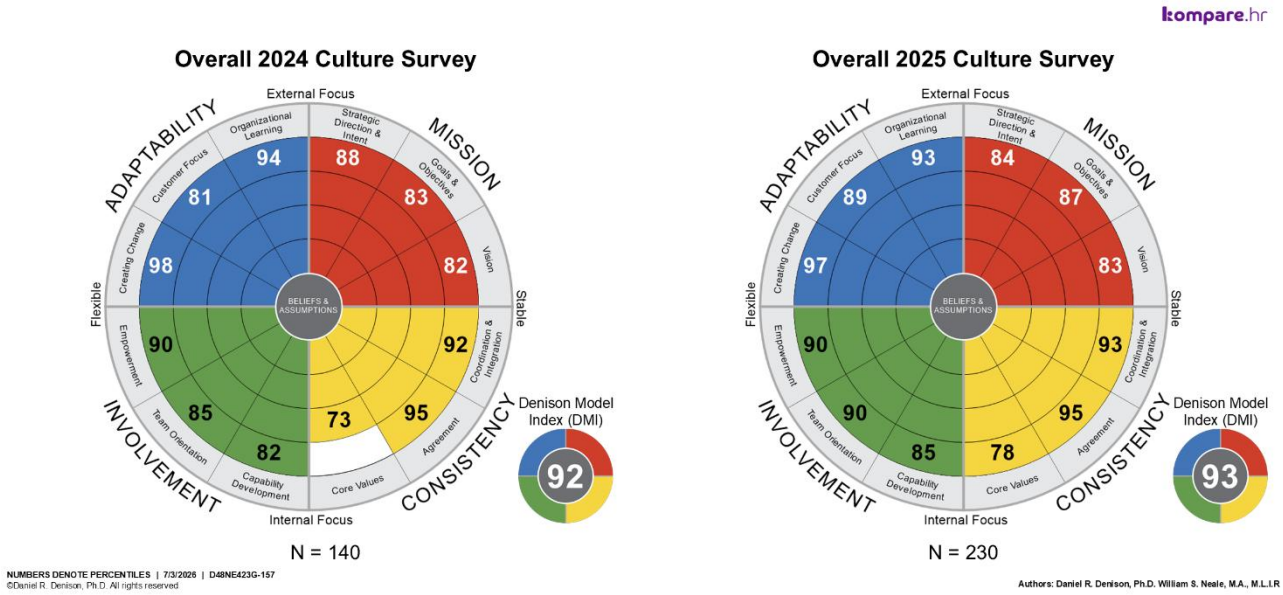
The 2024 analysis revealed a gap in inter-departmental and inter-city collaboration, particularly between teams in Rijeka and Osijek. The company created structured opportunities for connection – for example, in auto insurance, agents with over 18 months of experience from both locations were merged into a joint Senior team with shared meetings and knowledge exchange. Team-building activities and internal competitions were designed specifically to maintain cohesion during headcount growth.

Year 2: Measuring Impact (2025)

The second Denison assessment was administered to 230 employees – nearly double the Year 1 sample – with an 80% response rate. The response rate itself signalled growing employee trust in organizational processes. The results confirmed that the targeted interventions had produced measurable shifts in every dimension.

OVERALL PROFILE SHIFT

92 → 93 Grand Culture Index - Maintained top-decile performance while nearly doubling headcount



Dimension-Level Results

- **Mission – Operational alignment strengthened:** Goals & Objectives rose from the 83rd to the 87th percentile, reflecting greater clarity and buy-in around targets. Team leads showed the strongest improvement across all segments, with the most visible progress in Mission – directly attributable to the Parlaonice and All Hands formats that gave them context and language for team conversations. A slight dip in Strategic Direction (88th to 84th percentile) is consistent with the expected Denison pattern when organizations grow rapidly and onboard many new employees who have not yet internalized the long-term strategic narrative.
- **Consistency – Accountability for values:** Core Values moved from the 73rd to the 78th percentile - still the profile's relative weakness, but with a meaningful five-point shift. The clearest gain was in the establishment of consequences when values are violated, which had been one of the lowest-scored items in 2024. Coordination & Integration held at the 93rd percentile. The formalization of rules and cross-location standards directly addressed the "rules aren't the same for everyone" perception from the first assessment.

- **Involvement – The largest single gain:** Team Orientation jumped from the 85th to the 90th percentile – the biggest index-level shift in the entire profile, reflecting reduced silos and a stronger sense of working together across functions. Capability Development rose from the 82nd to the 85th percentile. The "Reci nam sve" initiative and structured cross-team collaboration showed employees that their input genuinely changed how the organization operated.
- **Adaptability – Customer focus as the standout:** Customer Focus rose from the 81st to the 89th percentile – an eight-point gain, the largest single-index improvement in the entire assessment. Systematic customer feedback collection, combined with visible communication about what changed as a result, closed the loop that had been open in 2024. Creating Change held near ceiling at the 97th percentile.

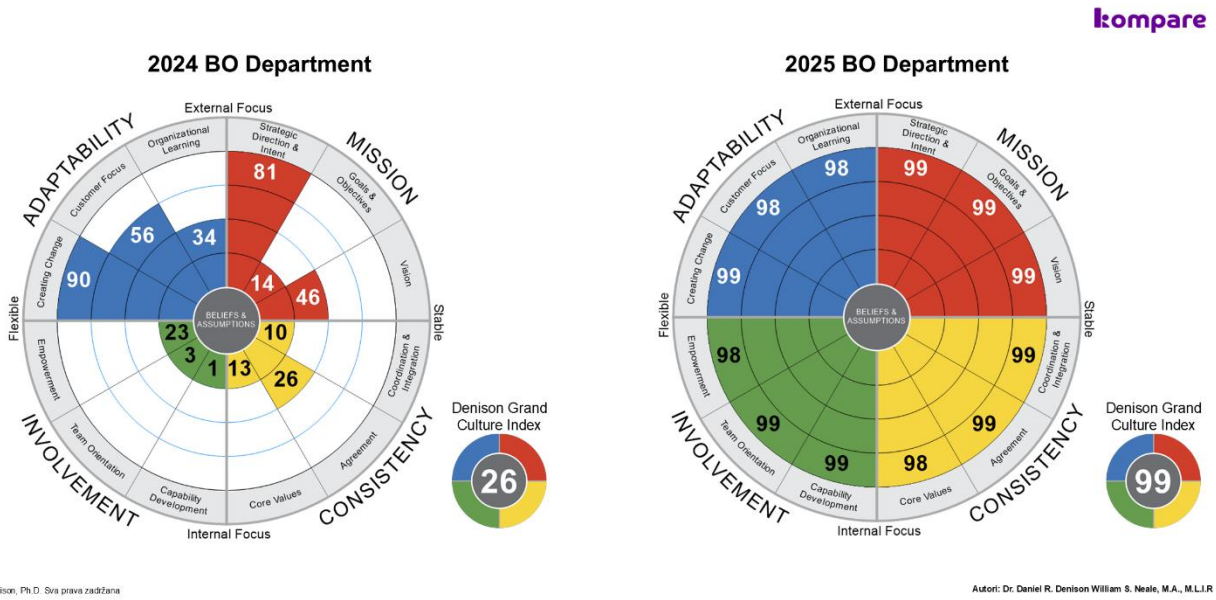
The Department Turnaround: 26th to 99th Percentile

The most dramatic result in the entire two-year project was not at the organizational level. It was in a single department.

In 2024, one back-office department – support, administration, and operational functions – scored at the 26th percentile on the Denison Grand Culture Index. This was a department in crisis: Empowerment at the 3rd percentile, Team Orientation at the 1st, Capability Development at the 13th, Core Values at the 10th. Nearly every index was below the 30th percentile. In an organization that averaged the 92nd percentile, this was a glaring structural fault line.

In 2025, the same department scored at the 99th percentile. Every single index moved to the 98th or 99th percentile. Empowerment: 3rd to 98th. Team Orientation: 1st to 99th. Core Values: 10th to 98th. Customer Focus: 56th to 98th. Grand Culture Index: 26th to 99th.

This was not a statistical anomaly. It was the result of a deliberate, data-driven intervention: targeted focus groups to understand root causes, followed by the introduction of the first formal bonus system for back-office functions, combined with cross-functional integration that gave these teams visibility and voice. The department that had been the organization's weakest link became one of its strongest – in twelve months.



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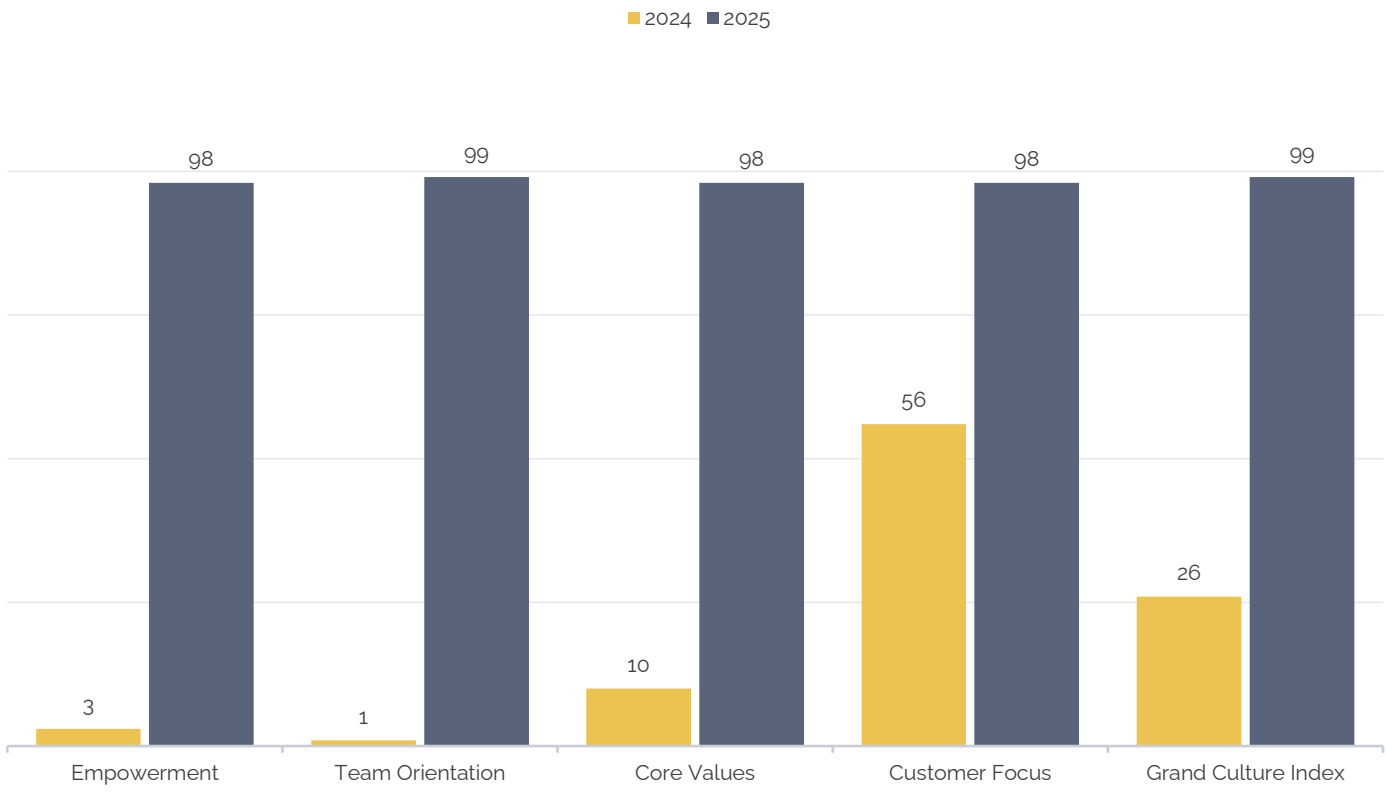
The Business Case: Culture and Profit Growing in Parallel

The Denison model is built on a core premise: that high-performing cultures produce better business outcomes. kompare.hr provides a rare opportunity to test that premise with concurrent data – culture scores and financial performance measured in the same organization, during the same period, under the same conditions.

In the first half of 2025 – the same period covered by the second Denison assessment – kompare.hr reported nearly 200% profit growth year-over-year. The company projected a doubling of total revenue by year-end. Its consumer lending vertical recorded nearly sevenfold growth. Over fifty new hires were onboarded during this period, and the company expanded into new markets including Slovenia. AI-powered tools were deployed to reduce administrative burden on agents, further accelerating operational efficiency.

This convergence is significant. The organization did not choose between investing in culture and delivering financial results. It did both, simultaneously, during one of the most structurally demanding periods a company can face – a PE-backed growth sprint with rapid headcount expansion. The Denison data suggests this is not coincidental: the culture interventions directly addressed the operational friction (silos, unclear accountability, disconnected customer feedback loops) that would otherwise have slowed growth.

Back-office department – Denison percentile, 2024 vs. 2025



~200%
profit growth, H1 2025 vs. H1 2024

2×
total revenue projected by year-end

~7×
growth in the consumer lending vertical

50+
new hires onboarded; expansion into Slovenia

What Makes This Case Distinctive

- **Proactive timing:** The assessment was launched during the PE acquisition – before problems materialized in turnover, engagement decline, or conflict. This level of organizational maturity is rare; most companies reach for diagnostics after damage has already occurred.
- **Culture as business infrastructure:** This was not an HR project. It was a strategic initiative driven by the new executive team, with HR as facilitator and Razum as external partner. The Denison data gave culture a language that PE stakeholders and board members could engage with – linking it to growth, profitability, and risk.
- **Concurrent culture and financial evidence:** Few case studies in any region can show Denison culture scores and business performance data from the same period in the same organization. kompare.hr provides both: 93rd percentile culture and ~200% profit growth, measured in parallel.
- **Two measurements in twelve months:** The repeat assessment created something few organizations in Southeast Europe can demonstrate: empirical evidence of how PE acquisition and rapid scaling actually affect culture, and what changes when culture is managed intentionally through the process.
- **Pioneer regional application:** The Denison model is globally established but its application in Southeast Europe remains exceptionally rare. Its use during an active M&A transaction – when pressure on culture is highest and the need for objective data most critical – is rarer still.
- **External recognition:** At the inaugural Adriatic HR Awards, held in Rovinj in September 2026, kompare.hr won the award for Best Project in the Company Culture category for its initiative "Rast bez gubitka identiteta – kako kompare.hr svjesno upravlja kulturom" ("Growth Without Losing Identity – How kompare.hr Intentionally Manages Its Culture").

Strengths Preserved Through Growth

Both assessments confirmed that kompare.hr successfully maintained the cultural foundations that define its employer brand and competitive position: genuine flexibility (including a six-hour workday as standard practice), high trust and autonomy without micromanagement, strong interpersonal relationships and team spirit, and an approachable, human leadership style. These are not incidental perks – they directly affect how long key specialists stay, how fast decisions are made, and how the organization performs under pressure.

About the Consulting Partner

Razum d.o.o. is a Zagreb-based boutique consultancy specializing in organizational culture, employer branding, leadership development, and M&A Culture Due Diligence. As a certified Denison consulting partner, Razum works with mid-to-large companies at board and C-suite level across Croatia and the wider region. The Denison Organizational Culture Survey is Razum's primary diagnostic tool for culture measurement and development.

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