

CULTURE INSIGHT 2025

Spain, SMEs & Leadership Futures

By Beth Camprubí on 04/12/2025

The Economic Reality: SMEs Are the System

Recent Spanish data highlights a structural truth:

- **99% of all Spanish companies are SMEs** (INE & Ministerio de Economía).
- **72% of employment** is generated by SMEs.
- Micro-enterprises dominate: **more than 80% have 0–2 employees**, making agility crucial yet difficult (INE, DIRCE 2024).
- SMEs contribute **around 65% of the business-sector GDP**.

This means the health of Spain's economy is directly tied to how SMEs evolve, adapt, communicate, and lead.

Cultural Foundation: High PDI + High UAI

According to **Hofstede's cultural** dimensions:

- **Power Distance (PDI): 57**
Leadership is expected to sit at the top; hierarchy guides decision-making; speaking up is culturally discouraged.
- **Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI): 86**
Spanish culture seeks clarity, predictability, and detailed structure; risk and ambiguity create discomfort.

This cultural profile naturally pushes for centralisation, caution, and control.

But SMEs require the *opposite* > flexibility, shared responsibility, innovation, and open communication.

The "Frustration Gap": Misaligned Systems

When a highly hierarchical, rule-driven culture meets an economy based on micro and small enterprises, a unique tension appears:

- Leaders feel the pressure to "decide everything."
- Teams avoid stepping into uncertainty or proposing bold change.
- Innovation slows because psychological safety is low.
- Communication becomes reactive instead of creative.

Frustration does not come from a lack of talent, it comes from the cultural operating system.

This is why so many Spanish business owners and teams feel "blocked" even when the will and skills are there.

How to Lead Inside This Reality using SF approach

A Solution-Focused approach can shift teams from frustration to progress with three simple but powerful questions:

- *What is already working, even in a small way, that we can build on?*

This reflections reduces anxiety and activates clarity in high-UAI environments.

- *Who needs to talk to whom more regularly?*

This is key in high-PDI cultures where communication often stops at hierarchical boundaries.

- *If we imagine our preferred (better) future for 2026, what is one small step we can take before end of the year?*

SMEs change not through revolutions but through consistent micro-moves. Therefore, project and plan having the following in mind: a) **Small wins create momentum**, b) **Momentum builds culture** and c) **Culture shapes the future**.

Looking Ahead: Leaders Create Micro-Cultures

Spain's national culture won't suddenly become low-PDI or low-UAI and it doesn't have to.

What matters is what **leaders create inside their organisations**:

- shared leadership
- clarity without rigidity
- psychological safety
- curiosity and co-responsibility
- future-oriented conversation habits

SMEs *can* become agile, innovative spaces, even within a high-UAI, high-PDI culture, when leaders intentionally design their internal micro-culture.

If You Want to Explore This Further

At **bethcamprubi.com**, I share tools, reflections, and leadership insights to help teams and SMEs create the communication and culture they want, even when the larger system feels heavy.

**Culture won't change overnight,
but your organisation's experience can start changing today.**

Beth Camprubí

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