The Cultural Analysis Kit for Trainers and Facilitators

A TOOLKIT TO START THE PROCESS OF ORGANIZATIONAL EVALUATION AND RENEWAL

Preview

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The **Cultural Analysis** is not magic! It's simply a method of recording what you come in contact with in the workplace daily. Here's how I came up with the design.

As an individual who has worked as a consultant for over 20 years, I have been an observer of the ways in which people act and interact in organizations around the world. After being inside my clients' doors for a relatively short period of time, I began to mentally categorize the culture of each organization based upon the subtle cues which are given by staff members.

When other people asked me how I could make this categorization so quickly (and fairly accurately), I realized that the most basic clues were the words which people in the organization used when describing how they do business.

The 19 Organizational Belief Statements

To formalize this process, I listed all of the statements which gave me information about the culture. My list numbered about 60 such statements. My goal was to create an instrument that could provide a practical, uncomplicated look at culture. So, I pared the list down to 19 statements that, if heard, give an immediate perspective on how that organization's culture functions. The statements are all reflections of what I refer to as "organizational beliefs" which start with top management, filter through the organization, and create an operational environment.

The Cultural Mix

Next came the overall categorization. How do the statements relate to identifiable "cultures?" It became apparent that the statements easily separated the organizations into three distinctly different cultural experiences. These, I refer to as:

• CONTROL CULTURE - As the name implies, this culture is based on power and position. Dominant personalities are rewarded, promoted and seen as the norm during interpersonal encounters.

• COMMUNICATIONS CULTURE - This culture downplays job titles and job descriptions in favor of open communications. It fosters personal growth and readily accepts the need for change.

• CONTENTMENT CULTURE - Managers and executives in this culture are totally agreeable to operating in the same way they have always operated. Very few new ideas are implemented. Those that are have been tried and perfected by other organizations first, ensuring they are safe and will not jeopardize the status quo.

My Personal Perspective

As a former officer in the U. S. Army, I can understand and appreciate the need for a *Control Culture* in certain situations. In a battle zone, little time exists to discuss critical decisions. I have found, though, that many organizations treat their markets as battle zones and their staff members as soldiers who should simply obey orders. While this may work in a war, it has a different type of impact in an organization.

You'll note, then, an admitted preference for the *Communications Culture.* In my consulting and training career, I have personally found that operating within this type of culture, I can accomplish more and generate greater buy-ins to necessary changes.

The *Contentment Culture* is found most-readily (but not exclusively) in closely-held or family-owned businesses that have been successful for a long time. That success often breeds a feeling that "we don't have to change." The basic flaw in this philosophy is that the world is changing at a pace unmatched in human history. To not change is to whither on the vine.

If you have not yet done so, you may want to go to the free downloads on **The Organizational Culture Website** (*www.cultural-analysis.com/download.htm*). There you'll find an article, authored by me, that describes this cultural breakdown in greater detail.

Reproducing the Instrument

The Cultural Analysis is laid out in a four-page (pages A1 through A4 - the page numbers are in the bottom right-hand corners), 11"X17" format. If you have the ability to duplicate material of that size, you may want to create booklets. However, you can also copy pages A2 and A3 back-to-back, then hand out page A4 when your group is ready to score the instrument.

The workbook pages are also numbered sequentially (W1 through W3). They are laid out as right-hand pages. If appropriate, you may want to include them as part of a larger workbook.

You have the rights to unlimited use of the instrument for a period of one year from the date of purchase. Since the Analysis will be updated regularly as feedback is received about its effectiveness, you want to consider purchasing an upgrade annually.

How to Use The Cultural Analysis

By design, The Cultural Analysis is meant to be an instrument that can be completed and scored in 10 to 12 minutes. The instructions for utilization and scoring are at the tops of pages A2 and A4. This is important: Emphasize to the individuals completing the analysis that they are indicating *Organizational Beliefs,* not their own personal beliefs.

What it does:

- It is a vehicle to start the process of organizational evaluation and improvement. Use it to as a basis for discussing and eliciting ideas for improvement.

- It can enable you to make comparisons for perspectives among various departments and different levels of the organization. For example, senior management might view the culture differently than line employees.

What it does NOT do:

- It does not attempt to over-complicate the evaluation process or delineate everything an individual wants to know about the culture.

- By itself, it does not give an "instantaneous" plan for improvement. It must be used in a collaborative environment in which all participants share and interpret the results.

The Workbook Pages

The accompanying workbook pages are designed for use in a workshop or training session. The *Facilitator Instructions* provide guidelines for designing a meaningful interactive program that can lead to an action plan. It is strongly suggested that a planning session for improvement be coordinated as a result of the Cultural Analysis. Use your own material for that follow-up.

Feel free to contact me via email at *jack@pachuta.com* if I can assist you in any way.

Regards,

Jack Pachuta

Cultural Analysis

In the same way that cultures form within society, organizations develop distinct cultures in which people interact, decisions are made, and rewards are given. The issues and emotions which are part of these cultures determine the overall impact of all initiatives.

To help categorize your organizational culture, think of the beliefs which are prevalent within your organization. What do the leaders say and what philosophies determine their actions? Indicate how strongly these beliefs are held by marking the appropriate blocks. *Strongly-held beliefs* should be identified by marks in the far-left blocks. All beliefs which are *not held at all* should be identified by marks in the far-right blocks. The blocks in between the two identify the strengths of beliefs which don't fall at either extreme.

Remember: You are indicating what the organization believes, *not* what you believe as an individual.

Organizational Beliefs	Strongly held belief				Don't believe at all
1. Management decisions are open to scrutiny from all staff members.	☐ B	☐ R	☐ E	☐ G	☐ Y
2. A certain amount of conflict in our organization is expected and healthy.	☐ D	☐ P	☐ J	☐ M	☐ Q
3. Changes are fine, so long as they have been tried by others and have proven to be successful.	☐ H	☐ T	☐ R	☐ E	☐ U
4. Decision-making is the job of management. It should not be diluted.	☐ Y	☐ P	☐ T	☐ B	☐ Q
5. The opinions of employees at all levels are actively sought out and evaluated.	☐ Q	☐ R	☐ J	☐ G	☐ P
6. We believe, "If it ain't broken, don't fix it."	☐ H	☐ Z	☐ R	☐ Y	☐ B
7. The best decisions are made when management is left alone to deal with the facts.	☐ Y	☐ G	☐ T	☐ M	☐ B
8. Most information that top management knows shouldn't be revealed to other staff members.	☐ D	☐ G	☐ J	☐ R	☐ Q
9. People should not expect rewards for doing what they are paid to do.	☐ Y	☐ P	☐ T	☐ M	☐ R

Facilitator Instructions

What to do after the Analysis is scored

After the group has scored the Cultural Analysis, you can do one or several of the following based upon the objectives of the workshop.

• Share perceptions of your organizational culture and discuss why the group members responded the way they did.

• Collect the scoring pages, take a break and develop a composite look at your situation based on the average scores for each type of culture. Discuss the scores after the break.

• Allow the group members to keep their scoring confidential. (If you do this, be prepared to field questions from some individuals as to why you aren't more open with the scores.)

Explain that these scores supply a starting point for your discussion of the three types of organizational cultures. Tell them that "awareness" is the first step in being able to improve the way the organization does business. No matter how vibrant the culture, all of us can do better. **Note:** *If you use the Analysis with various departments or levels of management, you can, compare the differences in the perceptions among the groups.*

How to use the Workbook

Distribute the workbook pages. Explain that the "standard" profile for each culture is given on pages W1 through W3. The Cultural Profiles detail "pure" examples. In reality, most organizations will have cultural mixes, especially those which are in a period of transition. However, *one culture will tend to stand out as the norm in a particular organization.* Use the profiles as tools to help reference how your culture functions. The following information is in each profile.

Philosophy: The underlying belief system upon which the operations of the company are based.

Top Management: The most prevalent role players to be found in the top management of the company.

Unstated Mission: While a company may have a published mission statement which is consistent with current management theory and sound practice, an unstated mission exists which takes priority during periods of uncertainty.
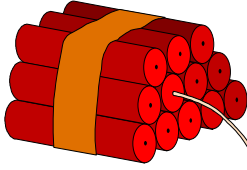
Decision-Making Process: How decisions are made within the organization.

Motivational Climate: How employees are motivated both overtly and in subtle ways.

Employee Rewards: The attitude toward rewards and the types of rewards used by the organization.

Reaction to Change: How top management would respond if a change was proposed to the existing situation.

The Control Culture

Philosophy: The company exists as a profitable operation that will benefit those employees who keep their noses clean and do what top management requires.

Top Management: Power Players and Gatekeepers.

Unstated Mission: To make money.

Decision-Making Process: Behind closed doors with little or no input from line personnel.

Motivational Climate: Staff members are reminded of how much the company is doing for them and of how lucky they are to be working for this company.

Employee Rewards: Since all people are "money motivated," financial incentives are the basic type of reward. Few, if any, recognition programs exist.

Reaction to Change: We understand the marketplace and, of course, are willing to change. But, we must ensure that the change was initiated for the right reasons by the right people. By the way, how much will it cost?

Notes