The Organisational Culture Inventory
THE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE INVENTORY

Matching individuals to organisations is a crucial part of success for any company. The match between people and the companies for which they work is determined by the kind of organisational culture that exists. The degree to which an organisation’s values match the values of an individual who works for the company determines whether a person is a good match for a particular organisation.

Organisational culture is the set of operating principles that determine how people behave within the context of the company. Underlying the observable behaviours of people are the beliefs, values, and assumptions that dictate their actions. Having a positive and aligned culture benefits the organisation in many ways. One important benefit is a high level of productivity. The destructive influence of recruiting someone who does not share the same set of values, goals and commitment espoused by the organisation will weaken a strong chain of links and bonds. An employee’s performance depends on what is and what is not proper among his or her peers, which in turn affects that individual’s behaviour and motivation to participate and contribute within the organisational framework.

Creating an environment where people enjoy and value their work is crucial for success. To do this effectively, leaders must be sure to match the employee with his or her behavioural preferences. Individuals should be given assignments that are consistent with their strengths and interests, and opportunities for continued learning and growth to reinforce those strengths and interests should be provided as well.

The bottom line for managers who want to create a culture of success is to start with creating a positive environment. They need to bring in people whose values are in line with the organisation’s culture, and continue to acknowledge success and involve the whole organisation in maintaining an environment that allows people to enjoy working hard to meet the company’s goals. Managers also need an accurate understanding of the organisation’s culture in order to direct activities in a productive way and to avoid the destructive influence of having employees who are not committed to the company’s goals.

Being aware of an organisation’s culture at all levels is important because the culture defines appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. In some cultures, for example, creativity is stressed. In others, attention to detail is valued. Some cultures are more socially oriented, while others are task-oriented, ‘business only’ environments. In some company’s teamwork is key. In others, individual achievement is encouraged and valued.

All of this is of crucial importance to managers. Senior executives usually set the tone by exerting core values that form the overall dominant culture shared by the majority of the organisation's members. So, if management does not take the time to understand the culture that motivates an organisation, problems are inevitable. New procedures and activities will be very difficult to implement if they do not mesh with the organisation’s culture.

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Some organisational cultures can be very counterproductive for business effectiveness and profits, as well as for the ability to attract and retain the most suitable employees.

Understanding one's own organisational culture and the impact of that culture on the motivation and actions of others, be they customers, suppliers or employees, is essential for effective business interactions.

The ‘Organisational Culture Inventory’ is designed to provide businesses with insights into the ways in which they go about their day-to-day operations and thus enable them to achieve a better understanding of the nature and likely impact of their working culture.

The dimensions identified and interpreted by the Inventory include:

The extent to which the organisation is willing to try out new ideas, encourage creativity and innovation and provide the flexibility and freedom necessary for employees to generate radical and original ways of solving problems and enhancing the business.

The extent to which the organisation is outgoing, dynamic, positive and persuasive, and the ease with which it establishes good rapport with those both inside and outside the business.

The extent to which the organisation is seen as a caring and accommodating employer who values people and has their welfare at heart.

The extent to which the organisation involves its people in important decision making; makes the best use of their skills and experience, and delegates responsibility effectively throughout the business.

The extent to which the organisation adopts an aggressively provocative or confrontational approach to its market place and its willingness to take tough, unpopular decisions in the face of strong opposition.

The extent to which the organisation encourages individuals to be determined, self-reliant, single-minded, practical and forceful to achieve tough business and personal targets.

The extent to which the organisation requires employees to adhere to strict rules, regulations and working practices to ensure that its products and services are provided in a thoroughly professional manner and to a very high standard.

The extent to which the organisation takes a cautious, astute approach to decision making by collecting and carefully analysing available data and thoroughly evaluating all available options.

Responses to the questionnaire help to highlight attitudes and values, and provide a springboard to greater effectiveness. The Inventory is a very powerful tool, but its true potential can only be achieved if those completing it do so with total honesty.