

Assessing your organisation's culture . . . ?

Try our mini quiz to see how you fare.

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For many years people have wrestled with the concept of organisation culture – we know that what we have got is not what we want, but what do we want, and how do we know when we have got it? Such issues become even more challenging when facing the fact that culture is one of the greatest influences on competitive edge, be it as a 'drag factor' or 'deliverer of competence'.

We have been helping organisations from all walks of life to understand what it is that is stopping them from achieving that competitive edge, how they can get the best from their people, and helping them to engage everyone across their businesses in change. One of the most powerful tools we use is our **Organisation Culture Profile** (OCP).

The great benefit from using this tool is that it helps people to articulate just what they feel and see by using a common language that relates to the everyday things that influence the 'way we do things around here'. In addition it provides a superb way to get people thinking about what they would like to see change, and understand what needs to happen to achieve the 'impossible'.

How does it work? We ask people to select different phrases which best describes how they currently see things against fifteen different elements. The outcome provides the organisation's 'culture profile'. From the same set of phrases, people then select what they would like to see in the future. A picture of what needs to be different emerges and positive steps can be planned to start the process of change. Just involving people in the creation of this vision sends a strong message of change.

As a very brief 'taster', try the following abbreviated questionnaire.

1. At our organisation

- Everyone works in teams and managers are part of the teams. Managers, supervisors and employees work well together.
- The managers are the bosses, and everyone knows it.
- People work closely together and share the same values and hopes for the future. A common understanding of what the customer wants guides people in their day to day work.

2. Our managers

- Concentrate on the longer term, and give people the opportunity and means to manage themselves.
- Are in charge and usually only appear when there is a problem.
- Help people to overcome problems and implement improvements.

3. Individual employees

- Are expected to focus on the job in hand.
- Decide for themselves what needs doing to meet customer needs.
- Get involved in deciding what their job is and what tasks will maximise their effectiveness.

4. **Targets are set by**
 - a. People themselves in relation to what they think their customers need.
 - b. Managers after consultation with individuals and teams.
 - c. Managers based on last year's performance.

5. **Improvement initiatives**
 - a. Are generated by the people who do the job as they know best what needs to change.
 - b. Are part of what everyone does all the time.
 - c. Tend to be the latest fad fed down from the top of the organisation.

6. **Communications at our place are**
 - a. Mostly the bosses giving us bad news.
 - b. Based on what people want to know at the time when they need to know it.
 - c. Simple – if someone knows something that they know someone else would like to know, they tell them.

Circle and count your scores:

Question	A	B	C
1	3	1	9
2	9	1	3
3	1	9	3
4	9	3	1
5	3	9	1
6	1	3	9
Total			

What's the verdict?

- 6-12** You are a fairly traditional organisation, where employees probably do not feel as involved in the business as they could be. You may have difficulty getting people to understand the challenges and accept change.
- 12-36** Most people in your organisation will feel involved in what is going on to some extent and feel supported by their managers. The success of your business may still depend heavily upon effective leadership and sound procedures, but people are probably starting to recognise the importance of change. Building upon this will be your challenge.
- 36-54** You are probably finding that your employees feel valued, enjoy working for you, understand what needs to be done to benefit both the business and its customers, and willingly embrace change.

To complete the full questionnaire and find out more about the practical actions you can take to realise the power of your people, contact ruth.burt@sixsigmagroup.co.uk and ask about the 'Organisation Culture Profile'.