Organizational Culture: So why do we do it this way?

Organizational culture refers to the collective values, ethics, beliefs, behaviors, and atmosphere of an organization. Some groups will articulate these elements, other groups will keep them unwritten; most organizations have a combination of stated policies and hidden rules. These elements are frequently a manifestation of the personality of the organizational leader, but are just as often communally created over time by members of the group. They create an overall “look and feel” to an organization, and define the participants expectations -- what is important, what is acceptable, what is celebrated, what’s talked about, what is ignored, etc.

Ways of looking at elements of organizational culture:

**Intentions:**
Mission, values, goals -- why we are here

**Power:**
Decisions, both big and small -- who gets to make them

**Structures and systems:**
Relationships and processes -- how tasks are accomplished

**Aesthetics:**
Facility design, graphics, symbols, dress -- what is conveyed

**Rituals, Stories, Myths:**
Less tangible elements -- how these elements set a tone
The Organizational Culture Inventory: Culture Clusters

Robert A. Cooke, PhD, defines culture as the behaviors that members believe are required to fit in and meet expectations within their organization. He identified twelve behavioral of norms that are grouped into three general types of cultures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Constructive Cluster</th>
<th>The Passive/Defensive Cluster</th>
<th>The Aggressive/Defensive Cluster</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Constructive Cultures, members are encouraged to interact with people and approach tasks in ways that help them meet their higher-order satisfaction needs, needs for affiliation, esteem, and self-actualization.</td>
<td>In Passive/Defensive Cultures, members believe they must interact with people in ways that will not threaten their own security.</td>
<td>In Aggressive/Defensive Cultures, members are expected to approach tasks in forceful ways to protect their status and security.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| The four cultural norms in this cluster are:  
  • Achievement  
  • Self-Actualizing  
  • Humanistic-Encouraging  
  • Affiliative | The four Passive/Defensive cultural norms are:  
  • Approval  
  • Conventional  
  • Dependent  
  • Avoidance | The Aggressive/Defensive cultural norms are:  
  • Oppositional  
  • Power  
  • Competitive  
  • Perfectionistic |
| Organizations with Constructive cultures encourage members to work to their full potential, resulting in high levels of motivation, satisfaction, teamwork, service quality, and sales growth. Constructive norms are evident in environments where quality is valued over quantity, creativity is valued over conformity, cooperation is believed to lead to better results than competition, and effectiveness is judged at the system level rather than the component level. These types of cultural norms are consistent with (and supportive of) the objectives behind empowerment, total quality management, transformational leadership, continuous improvement, reengineering, and learning organizations. | In organizations with Passive/Defensive cultures, members feel pressured to think and behave in ways that are inconsistent with the way they believe they should in order to be effective. People are expected to please others (particularly superiors) and avoid interpersonal conflict. Rules, procedures, and orders are more important than personal beliefs, ideas, and judgment. Passive/Defensive cultures experience a lot of unresolved conflict and turnover, and organizational members report lower levels of motivation and satisfaction. | Organizations with Aggressive/Defensive cultures encourage or require members to appear competent, controlled, and superior. Members who seek assistance, admit shortcomings, or concede their position are viewed as incompetent or weak. These organizations emphasize finding errors, weeding out “mistakes,” and encouraging members to compete against each other rather than competitors. The short-term gains associated with these strategies are often at the expense of long-term growth. |
Aesthetics

Facility:
External
Are you attractive to your target audience?
Who is the audience and what are you trying to convey?

Internal
What type of artist/employee are you looking for?
Are the aesthetics part of the compensation?
Dress code / flexibility / animals
Power

1. Set of established employees tend to make most decisions, never make lower, "protense of decision making"

- what is balance/ institutional history
- how much does it affect you? Other people?
- The back stops somewhere - how do you weigh, as a mgr, not having feelings/making inclusive when a dept head needs to pull the trigger
- how to give people substantive dec. making?
- how to give decision making power that is not taken?

idea: board meeting "mission keeper" keeping board in forefront at all times. needs help to feed board
- what decisions made it to the board? how are these determinations made?
- what is informational/what is notable?
- what is cyo?

2. Staff welcome to come to board meetings?

# for questions about handwriting, see Amy Huffman
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Rituals, Stories, Myths: Less tangible elements - how these elements set a tone

How do we understand our organization's culture through these stories? What do they reveal about our collective values, beliefs, behaviors, and atmosphere?

What is our founding story? How do we tell it? What do we include; what do we leave out?

How do we identify with the personal stories of how our audience members first experienced our organization?

What is the public story of our organization as told through the media?

What is the story of how our organization has impacted the larger community?

What are the events and milestones we celebrate? Why? How do they define us?