

Culture Assessment in brief

A quicker, cheaper and more useful approach is to use a valid questionnaire to describe measure and benchmark the effectiveness of a culture- this is what I recommend. However, here are the questions which could be posed as an interim step:

“A quick method for getting a handle on the culture of an organization is to observe and categorize five “indicators.” They are very revealing about how an organization thinks and what an organization believes:

1. LANGUAGE – The language that is used by the decision-makers becomes the organizational norm and passes throughout the structure. Does the organization use words and phrases that support, respect, belittle, or satirize customers, employers, competitors or certain specific groups? These words provide clues about the organization’s “thought process.”

2. INSIDE JOKES – The “jokes” that are relayed among employees reflect the inner workings of the organization. Do certain stereotypes evoke chuckles that can only be fully interpreted if one is an “insider?” What attitudes and beliefs do these inside jokes indicate?

3. RITUALS – What a person must do to be regarded as part of the “in crowd” tells much about an organization. What “tests” or “initiations” must a person undergo before he or she is fully accepted? What other on-going patterns of behavior are institutionalized in an almost-sacred way?

4. SACRED COWS – The accepted “truths” of an organization, even if they are untrue, become the determinants for planning and internal promotions. What truths within the organization go unchallenged even if a valid reason exists for challenging them?

5. MYTHS – What “mythology” has grown up about the way the organization was formed and the heroic actions of its leaders? Do the facts match the myths?

When these indicators are fully cataloged, they provide a unique perspective of the organization and can be included in an action plan for improvement.”