

How to Discover the Culture of an Organisation

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Abstract

The intent of this article starts with the question: how to discover the culture of an organization. The elements of this culture are composed of human behaviors, values, symbols, myths, heroes. The organisational culture remains a long term phenomenon which can be modified but this modification is produced due to a slow evolution and not to sudden changes. The types of behaviours are assimilated by individuals.

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DISCOVERING THE CULTURE OF AN ORGANISATION

The concept of organisational culture refers to everything that means standards of thinking, attitudes, values, beliefs, norms and customs that exist in an organisation. In the cultural component we can distinguish visible elements, such as behaviours and common language, rituals, symbols. Organisational culture is formed through interactions between members of the organisation, bringing together the beliefs and values of individuals composing it, although there are a number of modelling factors that shape it. Among them, we mention the style of management and implicitly the type of decision-making, the level of formality, the organisational structure, policies, and the systems that provide value and support to a particular type of work and a certain type of behaviour (Ionescu & Toma, 2001; Burdus, Caprarescu, Androniceanu & Miles, 2003). A strong organisational culture can be considered the one where there is a strong alignment with the values and principles of the organisation. An organisation with such a culture does not require control systems and bureaucracies. People who make a strong culture do not need additional incentives and thus the organisation manages to form a certain type of desirable employee. In a well-structured organism, the organisational culture is the one joining the organisation in a chain of tacit meanings, offering specific meanings to all human activities and organisational processes. Meanwhile, resistance becomes the most important factor in any attempt to change, regardless of its scale. One of the most important factors in building organisational culture is due to the peculiarities of interactions between employees, the quality of leadership and organisational communication (Batâr, 2004).

Any organisation is characterized by a unique personality, just like people. This can be individualized by several traits, represented, mostly, by the behaviours of the organisation members, by how they approach problems. Those who make up the organisation are the people who bring with them promoted values, new or already known customs and procedures, symbols chosen to represent the organisation.

Organisational culture is transmitted by the same means as those used in the national culture. It is embedded in the most unexpected things, from the name of the organisation and how it promotes its image, to the location and arrangement of furniture in the organisation's headquarters.

To discover the culture of an organisation we should examine several key areas within the organisation, such as: behavioural norms, procedural rules, rules of customary law.

Behavioural norms involve a number of questions about how people act within the organisation, their attitude towards their colleagues, if there is a feeling of satisfaction at work. We add here the desire for continuous improvement, the ability to have an open dialogue with the leader, or the ways in which personal qualities are cherished and valued.

Procedural rules refer to the existence of questions like (Marcu, 2015):

- Are mistakes encouraged??
- People making mistakes are forgiven if they learn from the mistakes?
- Is everyone in the organisation included in the decision making process?
- Are there any procedures to address and resolve sensitive issues? (E.g. sexual harassment)
- Is everyone encouraged to think about solutions to existing problems and help solve them?
- Is authority centralized or there exists any decision-making autonomy at different levels?
- Which are the cultural groups represented in management and/or among the members of the organisation?
- Are there sufficient resources allocated so that tasks could be carried out?
- Are there professional standards whose compliance is required from employees?
- How are conflicts addressed and resolved?
- Are there any functional procedures for consultation and cooperation?
- Is the organisation operating according to a long-term vision?

In their turn, *rules of customary law* presuppose the existence of a series of answers to questions such as:

- Why do people stay in this organisation?
- Why did people leave this organisation?
- What are the legends being said about those who left?
- What are the organisation's relations with those who left?
- Are there any traditional partners of the organisation?

For all these questions should exist relevant answers so that an organisational culture could be revealed (Enachescu & Rosca, 2014; Rahman, Taghizadeh, Ramayah & Ahmad, 2015).

Just like the human personality, organisational culture can change under the influence of internal and external factors of the organisation, which is why preserving a core of symbols, traditions, myths, and ceremonies will help preserve and perpetuate organisational values.

TRANSMITTING AND CHANGING THE CULTURE OF AN ORGANISATION

At the institutional level, it is also a very normal thing to ask: how do you transmit organisational culture?

Organisational culture is transmitted through the perpetuation of organisational *identifying elements* and by keeping certain procedures and standards to which new members must adhere. The identification elements, such as organisation name, logo and representative colours, along with *keeping the organisation's mission* are elements of continuity promoting the organisational culture both for the external environment and for those within the organisation.

Stable decision-making and the continuation of a *way of approaching and solving problems* represent another mechanism for transmitting the organisational culture to newcomers. The consistency of values promoted by the organisation is ensured by certifying the acceptance of these values by the new members of the organisation (Dumitru, Motoi & Budică, 2015)

Those interested in the occurrence, transmission, learning the culture of an organisation, can also ask *how to change the organisational culture*

Organisational culture changes due to the need to adapt to changes in the environment or the desire to overcome old procedures and identities. The change of the organisational culture occurs when the organisation is undergoing a restructuring process which resulted in changing people and operating procedures within the system.

The elements liable to result in changes in the organisational culture are the following:

- Replacing a certain number of employees,
- Establishing a new system of rewards and / or reprimand,
- Changing the management process,
- Redefining the hierarchical relationships,
- Initiating new forms of communication.

The organised and intentional process of changing an organisation requires a careful consideration of elements that will perpetuate change and contribute to its success. First, it requires an analysis on the establishment point of initiating change: people, structure and procedures of the organisation. Organisations identify with individuals within them (Grozea, 2011). People are the ones offering organisations their identity, therefore, for a real change, we need to work on and change the human mind.

As we know, the individual is caught in a core of behaviours, customs, traditions, values, therefore change requires an initial training. It is the same in the case of changing the culture of an organisation. First you must accept the new realities, the new institutional positioning, so that the reception of the new organisational culture could be easy and complete.

CONCLUSIONS

The discovery of the organisational culture has as its first step the knowledge of behavioural, procedural and customary law rules within the institution. Being created by people through the transmission of values, symbols, traditions, the organisational culture is perceived as the personality of an organisation. Therefore, its discovery, transmission or change is made gradually by the individuals employed in the organisational system.

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