

Organizational Culture and Its Importance

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### **Components of Organizational Culture**

There are many factors which contribute to an organization's culture, but only three fundamental components, to wit; workers' conduct in the workplace, the attitudes, temperaments, and cohesiveness of staff, and the vision and values of staff and leadership. This structure is further revealed in Lochner's (2020) three-fold method for analyzing organizational culture. Let us examine the first fundamental component, workers' conduct in the workplace. Lochner (2020) details that a method we can use to analyze organizational culture is through what we *see*. How company employees interact together, treat each other, value each other, esteem each other, and interact makes up their conduct, and employee conduct contributes strongly to fundamentals such as teamwork and workplace efficacy. Hastwell (2020) in an article on greatness in company culture lists community and fairness as two strong elements of a great place to work. When employees treat each other well, they form bonds of friendship which extend beyond mere co-worker relations and they develop a cohesiveness that makes them strongly effective as a team and for the organization.

The second fundamental component of organizational culture can be summed up in the attitudes, temperaments, and cohesiveness of staff. Some aspects may seem to overlap with the first, but in fact are distinct and different. Lochner's (2020) second method for analyzing culture is clarified in what is *said*. Just as actions are important, so are words. This comes across in many ways such as the general attitude of individual employees, but also in the way they speak about work assignments, management, and each other. The temperament of individuals is important in how it influences the way they handle emotions, regulate their behavior, and generally, how they feel about those around them (RCN, 2020). A staff is said to work cohesively if teamwork is esteemed highly and if they communicate effectively (Gail, 2021).

The third fundamental component of culture consists of the vision and values of staff and leadership. Lochner's (2020) final method for analyzing culture examined these by analyzing what staff *believed*. Coleman (2013) writes for the Harvard Business Review that corporate culture can account for thirty percent of the differential in corporate performance and places vision and values at the top of the list of elements that make up a corporation's culture. One's vision clarifies their purpose and it is important that the vision of the company, and its constituents, align (Coleman, 2013). Finally, people pursue the things they value and the things they believe in. If employees of a company share a common vision and common values, the team will work together more effectively since they'll be sharing in a common purpose.

### **Importance of Organizational Culture**

As aforementioned, the Harvard Business Review noted that corporate culture accounts for thirty percent of the differential in corporate performance (Coleman, 2013). Organizational culture is important in three essential ways. First, the organization's culture defines the workplace environment. If the employees have good attitudes toward each other, share common values, and have a sense of mutual purpose – a good organizational culture – then the environment will be conducive for teamwork and the workers will be effective together. On the contrary, if the employees don't get along, don't respect each other, and feel as if they cannot relate with each other – a bad organizational culture – then the environment will be hostile, employees will not work together and may spend more mental energy dreading work than thriving at work. This leads into my second point that an organization's culture affects employee productivity and cohesiveness. Kellie Wong, senior content marketing manager for Achievers'

Blog writes that a strong organizational culture causes staff to feel more supported and valued, and thus more comfortable in the workplace which allows the team to make it through difficult times better (Wong, 2020). This is because the team members are more productive individually, and as they work more cohesively, begin to be more productive through the synergistic outcomes associated with working cooperatively. Finally, an organization's culture affects all other aspects of business, from employee punctuality to the tone of employees' verbal and written communications (Wong, 2020).

### **Cultural Diagnosis**

Effective organizational culture can be classified into one of four categories, to wit; clan, adhocracy, hierarchy, or market culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Each classification category has an identifiable set of characteristics which are specific, observable, and measurable and represent the hallmarks of each classification category (Gardner, 2021). The characteristics, successfully identified in a subject organization, are indicative of organizational effectiveness and represent what onlookers' value about the organization's performance (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Clan culture is known for effective collaboration. Adhocracy culture is known for its ability to create and innovate. Hierarchy culture is known for temperance and control. Market culture is known for its competition (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). While clan and hierarchy cultures share internal focus and integration, on the contrary, adhocracy and market cultures share external focus and differentiation; and while clan and adhocracy cultures share flexibility and discretion, on the contrary, hierarchy and market cultures share stability and control (Gardner, 2021). Essentially re-stated, there are some similar attributes that effective cultures share. The attributes of each category make up the corporate culture's quiddity, its foundational and distinctive features (Schorin & Wilberding, 2020).

A great corporate culture is instantly recognizable and when workers find it, they never want to leave. While working at New Hope Ministries church, I experienced a great corporate culture most akin to collaborative/clan culture as identified in the competing values framework documented by Cameron & Quinn (2011). The ministry workers had strong personal values and virtues which aligned with the organization. The staff worked well together and there was a strong sense of teamwork and employee involvement. Organizational and department managers were helpful to the department workers, they took suggestions well, and always equipped and enabled the staff as needed to achieve maximal success. I saw a certain synergy at New Hope Ministries because the staff worked together as one. We would set out to complete tasks with certain objectives that seemed unattainable and we found that working together we could achieve them. Things that hinder other organizations did not seem to get in our way, such as poor attitudes, incompatible personalities, or pridefulness. The vision and sense of purpose of the managerial staff and the workers were in alignment with those of the senior pastor. The values of the staff were a reflection of the religious beliefs shared by all. The organization's team meetings were consistent with the collaborative/clan category in that there was an emphasis on mutual understanding and mutual commitment among the staff and a consensus approach was used in decision making. The hallmark characteristics of the collaborative/clan culture were present at New Hope Ministries, such as great teamwork and employee involvement, as well as a strong emphasis on principles such as participation, loyalty, and commitment (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

### **Cultural Strengths and Weaknesses**

Judging a corporate culture's effectiveness is not binary, but rather it is evaluated on a continuum (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Each corporation's culture may be assessed by its strengths and weaknesses. I found great strengths in New Hope Ministries' corporate culture, namely; great teamwork and unified vision and values. A great example of this was seen when our senior pastor had a vision that our church services would be broadcast on local and national satellite television. During the many team meetings that followed, staff quickly spoke to areas that they had competency in and the staff quickly took to making this vision a reality. The vision came to fruition in less than a year.

If I absolutely had to name a weakness, it would be the general lack of team members' drive toward innovation and competition. It seems kind of ironic that the byproduct of one of the greatest strengths was its most measurable weakness. Perhaps this is because organizations can either excel in competition or in collaboration, but the makeup of each requires different elements that don't commonly operate together. Competition drives innovation, and it is for this reason that the market culture is strongly associated with successful competition in the workplace. As evidence of this I would note that we excelled in teamwork and getting tasks done quickly and efficiently, but for the most part, rarely was new equipment, or new ideas, or innovative ways to accomplish existing tasks ever really pursued unless it was necessary.

### **Strengthening Organizational Culture**

While working for New Hope Ministries, I attended many staff meetings. There was always one practice done by one of the managers, Pastor Steve McGraw, that I appreciated most. After an event or function was concluded in Pastor Steve's department, he would always ask the staff to tell him what they liked best, and *least*, about the event that he had just hosted. I remember he would always take notes and the next quarter or year that he would host a similar event he would review those notes in a team meeting and make changes to continually refine his approach and to continually make his events better and better. Reflection upon this action reminded me of *kaizen* from my Walden University studies. Kaizen is one of the core principles of the Toyota Production System, a pursuit for continuous improvement, and is embodied by their slogan, "Always a Better Way" (Toyota, 2013). Other managers would be wise to implement the same.

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