



Culture Audit

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These questions can be used to ferret out the “real” culture of an organization versus the “espoused” culture. They are intended to be used in a focus group setting where employees can respond and interact with one another as they uncover the “shared assumptions” or the “actual” culture that guide behavior within the organization.

The questions are broken down into two facets of culture, both of which are needed for an organization to survive. The first set of questions deals with how the organization adapts and survives in the larger marketplace. The second set has to do with internal integration how the organization develops and maintains relationships among its members. Both facets are interrelated. The external environment sets limits on what the organization can do and internal solutions are limited by characteristics of its members and what the environment will reward.

The questions are not intended to be all inclusive but a starting point. Other questions can be developed and asked based on what the study is intended to discover. And, it goes without saying that perhaps the most important question to ask during a culture audit is “why.” This will provide an even deeper level of understanding of what assumptions are really in operation and what they mean.

External Adaptation

Mission and Strategy

- How would you describe the company’s mission (reason for being, purpose) based on the priorities it sets and the tradeoffs it makes?
- To what degree does the stated mission really guide behavior within the organization?

Operating Goals

- When choosing what path to pursue, what functional area wins?
- Based on these decisions, what seems to matter around here?

Methods

- How do important decisions get made in this organization?
- When it comes to getting work done, what do people care about most?
- How do important projects or other work tasks get completed in this organization?

Measuring Results

- What does the organization look at to measure success?
- Who determines success?

Corrective Action

- If the company, department etc is off target, how does the company respond to the problem?
- How does the company respond in times of real crisis?

Internal Integration

Communication

- How do people communicate with one and other around here?
- How does conflict get resolved?

Inclusion

- What do you look for when hiring a new employee?
- How do hiring decisions get made?
- Who gets promoted around here?

Power and Status

- How does one acquire power and status in this organization?
- What would you tell a new hire about how to really succeed in this organization?
- What groups around here get the best space, the most resources, and the most respect?

Peer relationships

- How do peers demonstrate closeness and support for one and other?
- How do people act if they disagree with one and other?

Rewards

- What gets rewarded around here?
- What gets punished around here?

Alignment

- What matters most to people around here?
- What, if anything is different about the walk compared to the talk?