EQUENTI

LEADERSHIP & LEARNING

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE
HEALTH CHECK

Culture is the shared values, norms and expectations that help employees make decisions about how they should behave to fit in and succeed (in some cases, survive).
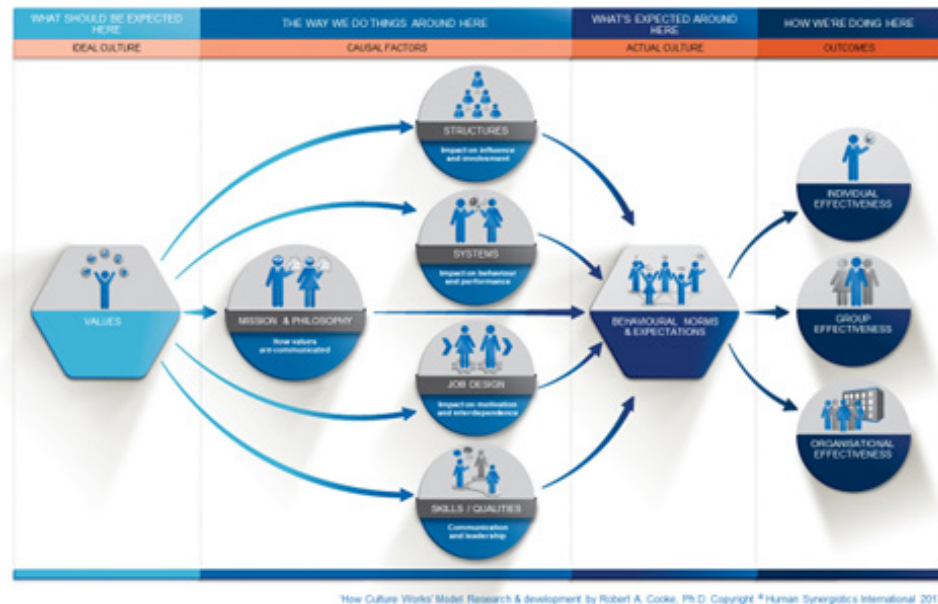

If employees are struggling with a "what should I do here?" question, this is where they default to the norms of the culture for guidance and direction. In doing so they reference:

- what they have heard their leaders say,

- they recall past experiences (their own and stories of others) and

- the consequences of those past experiences (whether they were rewarded or whether they were punished).

The Organisational Culture Inventory® (OCI) by Human Synergistics is the world's most widely used tool for measuring organisational culture. Angela Koning is fully trained and accredited Human Synergistics consultant, using OCI to help organisations understand and reform culture.

HOW CULTURE WORKS

Measuring culture reveals what you're really asking of your employees and how it affects their performance, motivation and job satisfaction – ultimately providing a foundation stone for achieving successful, sustainable cultural change.

'How Culture Works' Model Research & development by Robert A. Cooke, Ph.D. Copyright ®Human Synergistics International 2017

There are five causal factors or drivers that shape an organisation's culture. These are measured using the survey "Organisational Effectiveness Inventory" (OEI). These causal factors include:

- Mission and Philosophy – the extent to which the organisation has successfully defined its identity and value to its members

- Structures – the ways in which people, roles and activities are ordered or coupled to create the organisations structure

- Systems – the inter related sets of procedures that an organisation uses to support its core activities and to solve problems such as human resource management, appraisal and reinforcement and goal setting

- Technology – how jobs are designed to achieve the organisation's goals and the degree of interdependence among members

- Skills / Qualities – the skills and qualities exhibited by organisational members, particularly those in leadership positions, such as communication, leadership and sources of power within the organisation

Which of the five causal factors for organisational culture are effective in your organisation?

| EFFECTIVE	NOT EFFECTIVE

HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND CULTURE?

The Human Synergistics Circumplex provides a way to see, measure and change the thinking and behavioural styles that drive the performance of not only individuals but also groups and organisations.

Three general clusters break down the factors underlying effectiveness into 12 specific styles. They are arranged in a circular manner based on their relationship to needs (satisfaction vs. security), orientation (task vs. people) and themselves.

Research shows that organisational (motivation, satisfaction), group (collaboration) & individual (task/ interpersonal effectiveness) outcomes are increased when the primary styles are constructive.
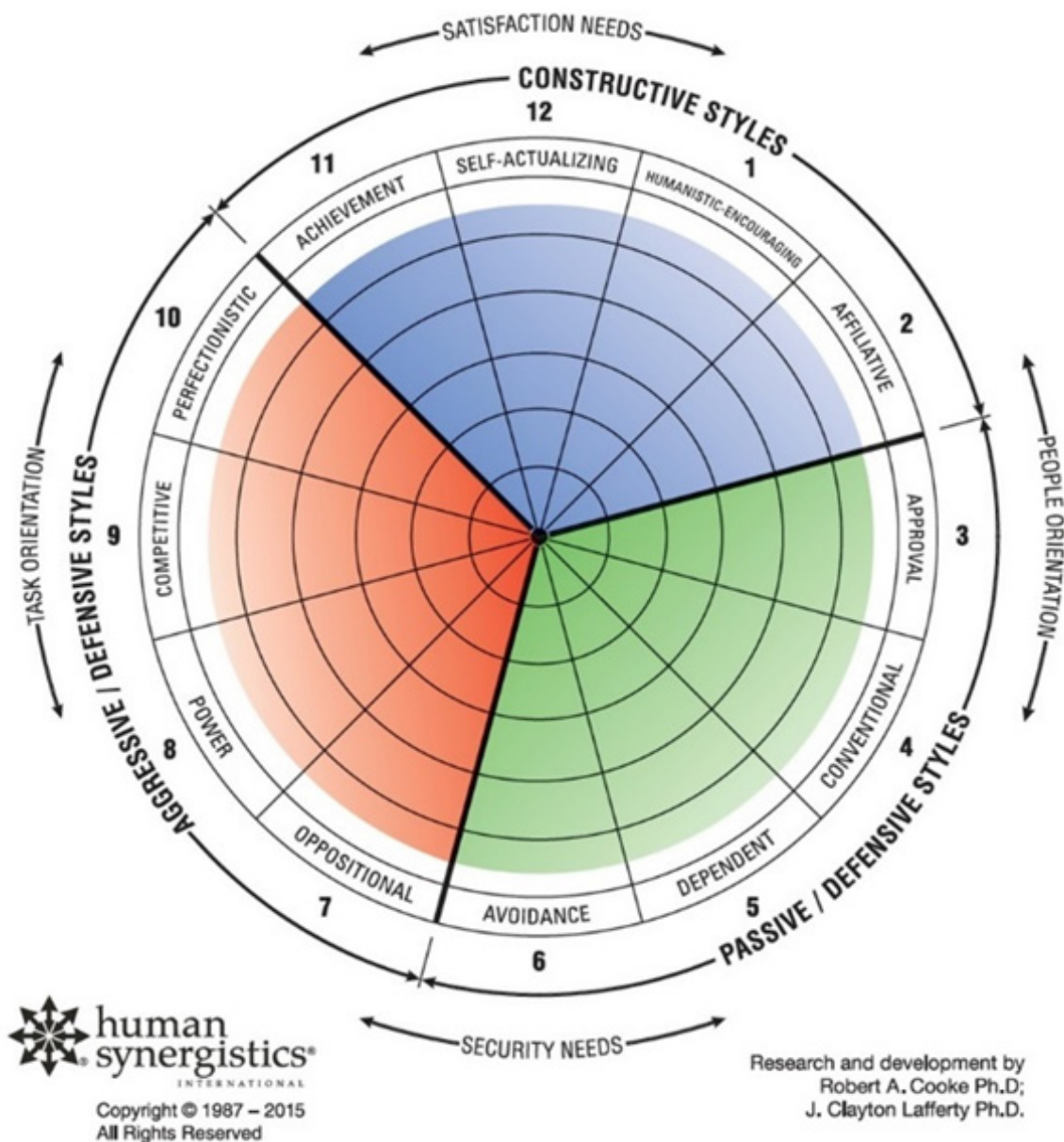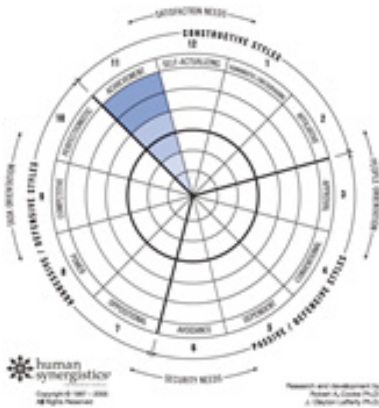
Culture can be measured with real data, and reflected on a circumplex like this, by completing an Organisational Culture Inventory survey.

CONSTRUCTIVE CULTURAL NORMS

(Promote Satisfaction Behaviours)

- Pursue a standard of excellence
  - Maintain personal integrity
   - Be supportive of others
    - Cooperate with others

(11:00) An Achievement culture characterises organisations that do things well and value members who set and accomplish their own goals. Members of these organisations establish challenging but realistic goals, develop plans to reach these goals, and pursue them with enthusiasm. Achievement organisations are effective; problems are solved appropriately, clients and customers are served well, and the orientation of members (as well as the organisation itself) is healthy.

(12:00) A Self-Actualising culture characterises organisations that value creativity, quality over quantity, and both task accomplishment and individual growth. Members of these organisations are encouraged to gain enjoyment from their work, develop themselves, and take on new and interesting activities. While Self-Actualising organisations can be somewhat difficult to understand and control, they tend to be innovative, offer high quality products and/or services, and attract and develop outstanding employees.

(1:00) A Humanistic-Encouraging culture characterises organisations that are managed in a participative and person-centred way. Members are expected to be supportive, constructive and open to influence in their dealings with one another. A Humanistic culture leads to effective organisational performance by providing for the growth and active involvement of members who, in turn, report high satisfaction with and commitment to the organisation.
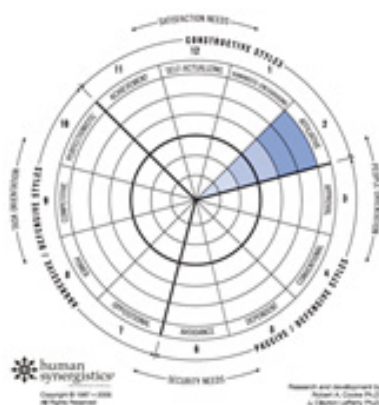
(2:00) An Affiliative culture characterises organisations that place a high priority on constructive interpersonal relationships. Members are expected to be friendly, open, and sensitive to the satisfaction of their work group. An Affiliative culture can enhance organisational performance by promoting open communication, co-operation, and the effective co-ordination of activities. Members are loyal to their work groups and feel they "fit in" comfortably.

PASSIVE / DEFENSIVE CULTURAL NORMS

(Promote People/Security Behaviours)

- Go along with others
- Not rock the boat
- Please those in positions of authority
- Wait for others to act first

(3:00) An Approval culture describes organisations in which conflicts are avoided and interpersonal relationships are pleasant—at least superficially. Members feel that they must agree with, gain the approval of, and be liked by others. Though possibly benign, this type of work environment can limit organisational effectiveness by minimising constructive differing and the expression of ideas and opinions.
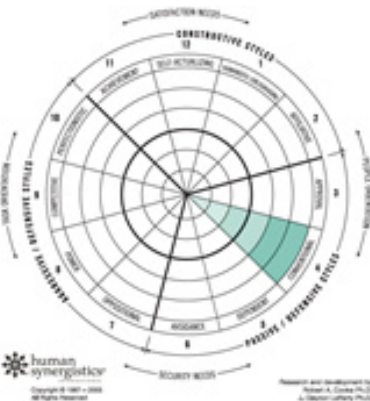
(4:00) A Conventional culture is descriptive of organisations that are conservative, traditional, and bureaucratically controlled. Members are expected to conform, follow the rules, and make a good impression. Too Conventional a culture can interfere with effectiveness by suppressing innovation and preventing the organisation from adapting to changes in its environment.

(5:00) A Dependent culture is descriptive of organisations that are hierarchically controlled and non-participative. Centralised decision making in such organisations leads members to do only what they're told and to clear all decisions with superiors. Poor performance results from the lack of individual initiative, spontaneity, flexibility, and timely decision making.

(6:00) An Avoidance culture characterises organisations that fail to reward success but nevertheless punish mistakes. This negative reward system leads members to shift responsibilities to others and to avoid any possibility of being blamed for problems or errors. The survival of this type of organisation is in question since members are unwilling to make decisions, take action, or accept risks.

AGGRESSIVE/DEFENSIVE CULTURAL NORMS

(Promote Task/Security Behaviours)

- Oppose new ideas
- Play politics to gain influence
- Compete rather than cooperate
- Appear competent and independent

(7:00) An Oppositional culture describes organisations in which confrontation prevails and negativism is rewarded. Members gain status and influence by being critical, opposing the ideas of others, and making safe (but ineffectual) decisions. While some questioning is functional, a highly Oppositional culture can lead to unnecessary conflict, poor group problem solving, and "watered-down" solutions to problems.

(8:00) A Power culture is descriptive of non-participative organisations structured on the basis of the authority inherent in members' positions. Members believe they will be rewarded for taking charge and controlling subordinates (and being responsive to the demands of superiors). Power-oriented organisations are less effective than their members might think; subordinates resist this type of control, hold back information, and reduce their contributions to the minimal acceptable level.

(9:00) A Competitive culture is one in which winning is valued and members are rewarded for out-performing one another. People in such organisations operate in a "winlose" framework and believe they must work against (rather than with) their peers to be noticed. An overly Competitive culture can inhibit effectiveness by reducing co-operation and promoting unrealistic standards of performance (either too high or too low).
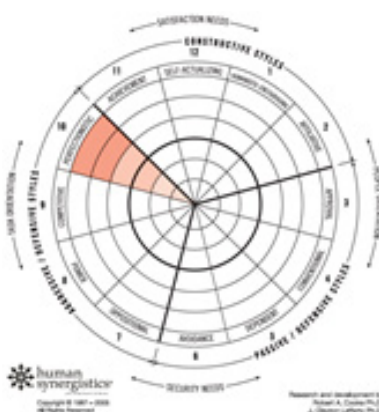

(10:00) A Perfectionistic culture characterises organisations in which perfectionism, persistence, and hard work are valued. Members feel they must avoid all mistakes, keep track of everything, and work long hours to attain narrowly-defined objectives. While some amount of this orientation might be useful, too much emphasis on perfectionism can lead members to lose sight of the goal, get lost in details, and develop symptoms of strain.

LET'S REVIEW YOUR ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Answer these two key questions:

1.   Are the people in your organisation mostly focused on Satisfaction (job satisfaction, learning and growth) or Security (keeping our jobs, getting paid, fitting in)?

2.   Are the people in your organisation mostly focused on Task (getting the job done) or People (maintaining good professional relationships)?
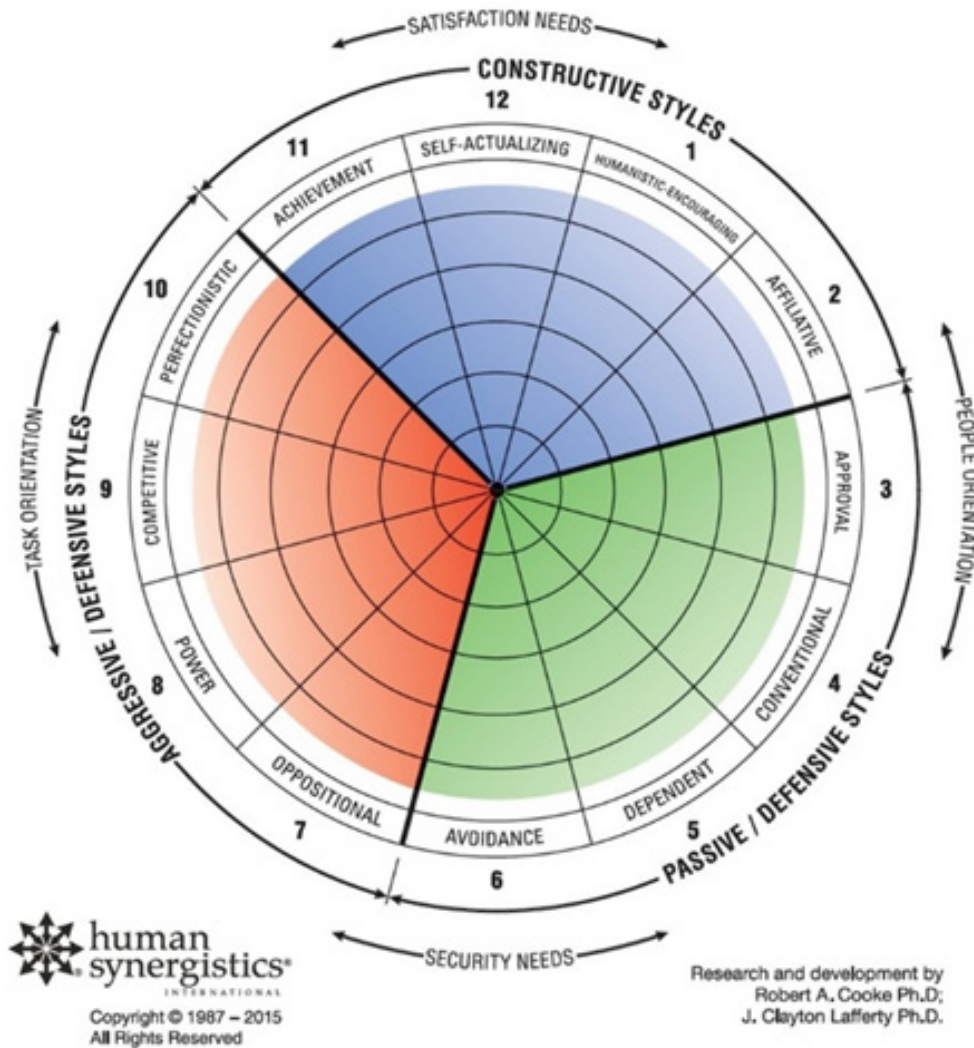
Is your organisation's culture mostly:

☐ Constructive   ☐ Passive / Defensive   ☐ Aggressive / Defensive

Why do you believe this to be the most likely cultural style? What evidence do you see / hear?

_____

_____

_____

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Managing organisational culture change can be complex and intensive, and requires a united leadership team with an unwavering commitment to progress.

Reach out for a conversation about how to reform your culture for better bottom line results.

ANGELA KONING

EQUENTI LEADERSHIP & LEARNING

Angela believes that with better self-awareness, everyone can improve their self-belief, change the way they think and reimagine how they see themselves in the world. She brings together 20 years of experience in leadership development, team building and human resource management to deliver insightful programs via experiential learning, equine-assisted learning and corporate workshops.

Angela's formal qualifications include a Bachelor of Business Management, Graduate Certificate in Business Administration, Diploma of Arts (Teaching & Learning), Certificate IV in Competitive Systems and Practices and Certificate IV in Training and Education. Her professional accreditations include the LifeStyles Inventory (LSI), Team Management Systems, DISC Advanced and ProSci Change Management.