

## KEY TERMS

- Organizational culture *p. 510*
- Observable artifacts *p. 511*
- Symbols *p. 511*
- Physical structures *p. 511*
- Language *p. 512*
- Stories *p. 512*
- Rituals *p. 512*
- Ceremonies *p. 513*
- Espoused values *p. 513*
- Basic underlying assumptions *p. 514*
- Fragmented cultures *p. 514*
- Mercenary cultures *p. 514*
- Networked cultures *p. 514*
- Communal cultures *p. 514*
- Customer service culture *p. 515*
- Safety culture *p. 516*
- Diversity culture *p. 516*
- Sustainability *p. 516*
- Creativity culture *p. 517*
- Culture strength *p. 517*
- Subcultures *p. 520*
- Countercultures *p. 520*
- ASA framework *p. 520*
- Socialization *p. 520*
- Anticipatory stage *p. 521*
- Encounter stage *p. 522*
- Reality shock *p. 522*
- Understanding and adaptation *p. 522*
- Person–organization fit *p. 528*
- Realistic job previews *p. 529*
- Newcomer orientation *p. 530*
- Mentoring *p. 531*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 16.1** Have you or a family member worked for an organization that you would consider to have a strong culture? If so, what made the culture strong? Did you or they enjoy working there? What do you think led to that conclusion?
- 16.2** Is it possible for an employee to have personal values that are inconsistent with the values of the organization? If so, how is this inconsistency likely to affect the employee's behavior and attitudes while at work?
- 16.3** How can two companies with very different cultures that operate in the same industry both be successful? Shouldn't one company's culture automatically be a better fit for the environment?
- 16.4** When you think of the U.S. Postal Service's culture, what kinds of words come to mind? Where do these impressions come from? Do you think your impressions are accurate? What has the potential to make them inaccurate?
- 16.5** Think about the last job you started. What are some unique things that companies might do to reduce the amount of reality shock that new employees encounter? Are these methods likely to be expensive?

## CASE: DELTA / UNITED

Although all airlines have an incredibly long list of policies and rules they have to follow in order to be consistent and to guarantee passenger safety and security, two examples show that there can be a great deal of latitude in how employees approach unique and novel situations. On April 9, 2017, a video of United Flight 3411's passenger Dr. David Dao went viral. The video showed Dr. Dao being forcibly removed from the airplane by Chicago airport officers after he refused to leave his seat after the airline had overbooked the flight and needed to sit some of its own employees on the plane. Dr. Dao ended up with a broken nose and two missing teeth. United

ended up with a public relations nightmare, a drop in its stock price, petitions to boycott the airline, and calls for the CEO to resign. Dr. Dao settled with the company for damages, but United is still feeling the impact of what many say were culture-based decisions to this day.

According to insiders and ex-employees, United had developed an efficiency culture to where employees were expected to “follow manuals” and were hesitant to do anything that wasn’t strictly according to written guidelines. On the day in question, once United gate agents had no takers for their offer of \$800 and a hotel voucher, the agents (following the rules) used a computer program to identify the passengers of “least value” to the airline. Once Dr. Dao was identified and refused to de-plane, the agents (following the rules) called for airport security. The airline was vilified on social media for not coming up with other options. United CEO Oscar Munoz called the event a “system failure” and that United hadn’t given employees “the proper tools, policies, and procedures that allow them to use their common sense.”

In contrast, six months prior to that United episode, a computer outage caused all of Delta’s flights to be grounded for an entire day. (Delta was forced to cancel about 1,000 flights on the day of the outage and another 1,000 over the next two days.) Delta employees recall the event being a horrible experience for themselves and all the passengers involved. CEO Ed Bastian credits Delta’s culture for saving the day. Stories of Delta employees’ empathy with passengers and consistent showing of positive emotions seemed to go a long way with customers, some of whom even expressed support in various ways to Delta employees during the outage. Although most expected a decline, Delta’s monthly customer satisfaction scores actually went up following the incident.

- 16.1 Why is an organization’s culture perhaps the most evident during crisis situations?
- 16.2 What causes companies like Delta and United to become so different in regard to organizational culture?
- 16.3 What will it take for United to overcome its culture that has been built up over such a long period of time?

Sources: E. Bastian. “What I’ve Learned in My First Days as Delta’s New CEO,” *linkedin.com*, May 26, 2016: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-ive-learned-my-first-days-deltas-new-ceo-ed-bastian>; D. Bennett. “The United Way,” *Boomerang Businessweek*, January 18, 2016, pp. 50–55; S. Carey. “Behind United Airlines’ Fateful Decision to Call Police,” *The Wall Street Journal*, April 16, 2017: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/behind-united-airlines-fateful-decision-to-call-police-1492384610>; A. Hartung. “Why United Airlines Abuses Customers: The Risks of Operational Excellence,” *forbes.com*, April 10, 2017: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/adamhartung/2017/04/10/why-united-airlines-abuses-customers-the-risks-of-operational-excellence/#78b1a38fbb10>; J. Ostrower. “United CEO Oscar Munoz Is Walking a Tightrope to Fix an Airline,” *cnn.com*, April 18, 2017: <http://money.cnn.com/2017/04/18/news/companies/united-oscar-munoz-employees/>; and J. Roberts. “Delta,” *Fortune*, March 15, 2017, pp. 106–9.

## EXERCISE: UNIVERSITY CULTURE

The purpose of this exercise is to explore how organizational culture is transmitted through observable artifacts. This exercise uses groups, so your instructor will either assign you to a group or ask you to create your own group. The exercise has the following steps:

- 16.1 Using the following table, consider the observable artifacts that transmit the organizational culture of your university.
- 16.2 Consider the sorts of values listed in Table 16-3. If you consider the symbols, physical structures, language, stories, rituals, and ceremonies identified in step 1, what core values seem to summarize your university’s culture? Using a transparency, laptop, or board, list the one value that seems to be most central to your university’s culture. Then list the three cultural artifacts that are most responsible for transmitting that core value. Present your results to the class.
- 16.3 Class discussion (whether in groups or as a class) should center on the following topics: Do you like how your university’s culture is viewed, as represented in the group presentations? Why or why not? If you wanted to change the university’s culture to represent other sorts of values, what process would you use?

Symbols	Think about the logo and images associated with your university. What message do they convey about the university's culture?
Physical structures	Think about the most visible physical structures on campus. What do those structures say about your university's culture?
Language	Think about the jargon, slang, slogans, and sayings associated with your university. What insights do they offer into the university's culture?
Stories	What anecdotes, accounts, legends, and myths are associated with your university? What messages do they convey about your university's culture?
Rituals	What are the daily or weekly routines that occur at your university, and what do they say about the culture?
Ceremonies	What are the formal events and celebrations that occur at your university, and what cultural signals do they convey?

## ENDNOTES

- 16.1** Verbeke, W.; M. Volgering; and M. Hessels. "Exploring the Conceptual Expansion within the Field of Organizational Behavior: Organizational Climate and Organizational Culture." *Journal of Management Studies* 35 (1998), pp. 303-29.
- 16.2** Source: Deal, T.E., and A.A. Kennedy, *Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1982.
- 16.3** Schneider, B., V. González-Romá, C. Ostrof, and M. West. "Organizational Climate and Culture: Reflections on the History of the Constructs in the Journal of Applied Psychology." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 102 (2017), pp. 468-82.
- 16.4** Adapted from O'Reilly, C.A., III; J. Chatman; and D.L. Caldwell. "People and Organizational Culture: A Profile Comparison Approach to Assessing Person-Organization Fit." *Academy of Management Journal* 34 (1991), pp. 487-516; and Tsui, A.S.; Z. Zhang; W. Hui; K.R. Xin; and J.B. Wu. "Unpacking the Relationship between CEO Leadership Behavior and Organizational Culture." *The Leadership Quarterly* 17 (2006), pp. 113-37.
- 16.5** O'Reilly, C.A., and J.A. Chatman. "Culture as Social Control: Corporations, Cults, and Commitment." In *Research in Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 18, ed. B.M. Staw and L.L. Cummings. Stamford, CT: JAI Press, 1996, pp. 157-200.
- 16.6** Chatman, J.A. "Matching People and Organizations: Selection and Socialization in Public Accounting Firms." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 36 (1991), pp. 459-84.
- 16.7** Source: Colvin, G. "Q1A: Whole Foods' Other CEO on Organic Growth." *Fortune*, May 20, 2013, pp. 128-32.
- 16.8** Trice, H.M., and J.M. Beyer. *The Cultures of Work Organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993.
- 16.9** Rowley, I. "What Put Honda in the Passing Lane." *BusinessWeek*, October 19, 2009, pp. 57-58.
- 16.10** Source: Nicolas, S. "The Way We Do