

Survey Complete

After completing this self-assessment, the student will be able:

To identify a corporate culture in which you would most want to work, based on your preferred work environment and the values and priorities of your employer.

Sources:

- 1 GST Website (www.gst.com), April, 2001.
- 2 Justin Hibbard, "Culture Breakthrough," Information Week, September 21, 1998 (online)
- 3 Southwest Airlines Website (www.southwest.com), April, 2001.
- 4,5 Daintry Duffy, "Cultural Evolution," CIO Enterprise Magazine, January 15, 1999 (online).

In each pair of statements, select the one that you mostly agree with.

"What do we mean by a work, or a corporate, culture? Basically, it is the sum total of the formal and informal systems by which things happen in an organization. It is the information that precedes the statement '...and that's the way things are around here.' The work culture reflects not only the organizational flowchart, but also who really has the power to make things happen, and how that power is used." ¹

A corporate culture can have a positive or negative influence on employee productivity. As an example of a negative influence, you come to work as a new hire and discover that employees work slower than their capabilities. If you do the minimum, no one bothers you, but your peers ostracize you if you strive to do your best. On the other hand, better results may be achieved when employees believe in their company and the goods or services it offers. In building a corporate culture, managers' actions may be more important than their words. If the managers are insincere and employees sense that they are only being manipulated to work harder, then this attempt at a corporate culture will fail.

1. I would prefer to work in an organization...

Where employees work well together in teams.

That provides highly respected products or services.

2. I would prefer to work in an organization...

Where top management maintains a sense of order in the workplace.

That listens to customers and responds quickly to their needs.

3. I would prefer to work in an organization...

Where employees are treated fairly.

Where employees continuously search for ways to work more efficiently.

4. I would prefer to work in an organization...

Where employees adapt quickly to new work requirements.

Where corporate leaders work hard to keep employees happy.

5. I would prefer to work in an organization...

Where senior executives receive special benefits not available to other employees.

Where employees are proud when the organization achieves its performance goals.

6. I would prefer to work in an organization...

Where employees who perform the best get paid the most.

Where senior executives are respected.

7. I would prefer to work in an organization...

Where everyone gets their jobs done like clockwork.

That is on top of new innovations in the industry.

8. I would prefer to work in an organization...

Where employees receive assistance to overcome personal problems.

Where employees abide by company rules.

9. I would prefer to work in an organization...

That is always experimenting with new ideas in the marketplace.

That expects everyone to put in 110 percent for peak performance.

10. I would prefer to work in an organization...

That quickly benefits from market opportunities.

Where employees are always kept informed of what's happening in the organization.

11. I would prefer to work in an organization...

That can respond quickly to competitive threats.

Where most decisions are made by the top executives.

12. I would prefer to work in an organization...

Where management keeps everything under control.

Where employees care for each other.

Results

Control Culture



If your score is 2 or less, this may indicate you have a low preference for that type of organizational culture. If your score is 3 or 4, this might indicate you have a moderate preference for that type of organizational culture.

If your score is 5 or 6, this might indicate you have a high preference for that type of organizational culture.

Persons who prefer a control culture value the role of senior executives to lead the organization. Its goal is to keep everyone aligned and under control.

While we provide no specific company examples of a control culture (it is probably no fashionable for companies to emphasize a more traditional style of running a business), this approach has served many organizations well. Especially when a product does not change frequently or significantly, some manufacturers have produced high quality, reliable products through a strong chain of command with strict guidelines and rules for every stage of production.

Range
0 to 6

The following statements are related to a control culture.

I would prefer to work in an organization ...

- ... where top management maintains a sense of order in the workplace.
- ... where senior executives receive special benefits not available to other employees.
- ... where senior executives are respected.
- ... where employees abide by company rules.
- ... where most decisions are made by top executives.
- ... where management keeps everything under control.

Performance Culture

Performance
Culture

2/6

0

2

6

Your Score: 2

Range
0 to 6

If your score is 2 or less, this may indicate you have a low preference for that type of organizational culture. If your score is 3 or 4, this might indicate you have a moderate preference for that type of organizational culture.

If your score is 5 or 6, this might indicate you have a high preference for that type of organizational culture.

Persons who prefer a performance culture value individual and organizational performance and strives for effectiveness and efficiency.

Here are two examples from real companies.

1. GST Corporate Culture: "We are a company which meets our customers' needs for knowledge with innovative applications of science and technology.

With the work we do for our high technology customers, our employees' skills are continually being tested and applied to different situations. No one at GST is pigeonholed into one specific task, providing a satisfying and stimulating environment in which their learning curves are higher, and opportunities are unlimited.

GST's management organization is responsive and adaptable. The GST management team is technically focused, has long-term experiences and is recognized for quality technical work." (1)

2. "When new employees accept a job offer from PeopleSoft Inc., they call an interactive voice response system and enter their personal information, which is fed into the software company's human-resources system. On their first day, the company issues them a notebook computer and a backpack. In addition, every employee has access to tools for posting a personal Web page on the company intranet. Newcomers see veteran employees using their standard-issue tools to perform daily tasks and realize they are expected to follow suit. 'Woven throughout the fabric of

PeopleSoft is technology,' says Steve Zarate, the company's CIO. 'As new people arrive, they see what's been done before. There's an unstated expectation that this is how things are done at the company.'" (2)

The following statements are related to a performance culture.

I would prefer to work in an organization ...

- ... that provides highly respected products or services.
- ... where employees adapt quickly to new work requirements.
- ... where employees are proud when the organization achieves its performance goals.
- ... where employees who perform the best get paid the best.
- ... where everyone gets their jobs done like clockwork.
- ... that expects everyone to put in 110 percent for peak performance.

Relationship Culture

Relationship
Culture

4/6

0

4

6

Your Score: 4

Range
0 to 6

If your score is 2 or less, this may indicate you have a low preference for that type of organizational culture. If your score is 3 or 4, this might indicate you have a moderate preference for that type of organizational culture. If your score is 5 or 6, this might indicate you have a high preference for that type of organizational culture. Write your feedback for this range here.

Persons who prefer a relationship culture value nurture and well-being. They consider open communication, fairness, teamwork, and sharing a vital part of organizational life.

Southwest Airlines is example of a highly successful and well-known company with a strong relationship culture.

"The mission of Southwest Airlines is dedication to the highest quality of Customer Service delivered with a sense of warmth, friendliness, individual pride, and Company Spirit.

To Our Employees: We are committed to provide our Employees a stable work environment with equal opportunity for learning and personal growth. Creativity and innovation are encouraged for improving the effectiveness of Southwest Airlines. Above all, Employees will be provided the same concern, respect, and caring attitude within the organization that they are expected to share externally with every Southwest Customer." (3)

The following statements are related to a relationship culture.

I would prefer to work in an organization ...

- ... where employees work well together in teams.
- ... where employees are treated fairly.
- ... where corporate leaders work hard to keep employees happy.
- ... where employees receive assistance to overcome personal problems.

- ... where employees are always kept informed of what's happening in the organization.
- ... where employees care for each other.

Responsive Culture



Your Score: 3

Range
0 to 6

If your score is 2 or less, this may indicate you have a low preference for that type of organizational culture. If your score is 3 or 4, this might indicate you have a moderate preference for that type of organizational culture.

If your score is 5 or 6, this might indicate you have a high preference for that type of organizational culture. Write your feedback for this range here.

Persons who prefer a responsive culture value its ability to keep in tune with the external environment, including being competitive and realizing new opportunities.

Home Depot is a good example of a company with a responsive culture.

“At Atlanta-based Home Depot, for example, keeping all employees interested in the business is a top priority. All new employees, even executives, spend two weeks working on the sales floor, learning what customers want and need, and receiving a ground-zero view of the company’s core business. In the stores, employees also rub shoulders with Home Depot’s customer base of do-it-yourselfers, whose entrepreneurial spirit the company has deliberately tried to build into its corporate culture.” (4)

One piece of innovative technology also illustrates Home Depot’s customer-focused responsive culture. Instead of ordering inventory in a back office, managers will stand in an aisle and view product shelves from a customer’s perspective, and then place orders on a wireless pen-pad. (5) One possible consequence is that the manager will place a bigger-than-expected inventory reorder to maintain a larger product display preferred by customers.

The following statements are related to a responsive culture.

I would prefer to work in an organization ...

- ... that listens to customers and responds quickly to their needs.

- ... that is on top of new innovations in the industry.
- ... that is always experimenting with new ideas in the marketplace.
- ... that quickly benefits from market opportunities.
- ... that can respond quickly to competitive threats.

As you read about each culture, keep in mind that none of these cultures is inherently good or bad. Each is effective in different situations. However, when choosing a job, consider working for an organization with a corporate culture that is compatible with your personal preferences and values.

You may also find that a corporate culture is influenced by the industry, geographic region or country in which the organization operates. For example, in high-tech “Silicon Valley,” many companies embrace a culture where employees work long hours, exhibit a strong enthusiasm for their work, seek job autonomy and embrace technology as the key to attracting customers and generating profits

There is no “right” or “wrong” corporate culture. However, many people have clear preferences as to which type of corporate culture they value. From an employer’s perspective, this means that you want to be careful about the people that you consider for employment. If you're called on to participate in a hiring decision, it is a good idea to first understand the kind of culture that describes your organization and then to attempt to determine if the applicant whom you are considering fit with that culture. Employees whom do not fits with the culture are more likely to be dissatisfied and to perhaps be worse performers.

From the perspective of a person who is looking for work, it is very helpful to know what kind of culture you prefer. This will help you as you evaluate organizations and types of careers to pursue. You can learn a great deal about an organization from publicly available information. Your search should include information published by the organization itself and information that others write about the organization.

One thing to keep in mind is that larger organizations often have different cultures in different divisions, different departments, and different geographical locations. Thus, you should pay particular attention to information you can gather from the interview experience itself which often is specific to a particular supervisor and work group.

Remember your score on this self-assessment, while useful for self-understanding, should not be overinterpreted. First, every person is complex and it is impossible to fully capture your uniqueness in a short self-assessment. Second, you may well find your culture preference may change over time. Third, culture is not hard and fast. Many organizations will consist of various kinds of culture.