



UNCOVERING AND SHAPING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

OVERVIEW

This workshop teaches elements of organizational culture including purpose, new members, norms, stories, and leadership. A group activity is used to help participants identify elements of culture in their own organizations and decide how they might begin to shape the culture.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Participants will:

- Identify elements of organizational culture in their own organization
- Discuss methods of shaping organizational culture

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Laptop/computer
- Projector Screen
- "Uncovering and Shaping Organizational Culture" PowerPoint

INSTRUCTIONS:

Understanding Organizational Culture (20 min.)

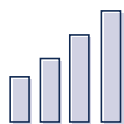
- Let everyone know that today's focus will be on organizational culture and that they should think of a current organization or past organization (club, workplace, etc.) that they have been a member of to use as the context for today's workshop.
- Share with the participants the definition of organizational culture.
- Go over elements of organizational culture and give examples along the way.
- As you go, have everyone jot down as many examples within their organization for each of the five main categories as they can. These may be positive or negative or neutral experiences that shape culture.
 - Purpose of the organization
 - Values of the organization (these may be explicit-well known or implicit-just known by the organization members)
 - Why the organization exists
 - Example: Values and Vision statements
 - New Members
 - Process by which new members join
 - How members become acclimated to the culture (formal training, informal experiences with current members just sharing insight, observation, mentoring, etc.)

TIME



60 minutes

SIZE



Ideal for groups
of 10-60

RISK



Medium-Low

CAUTIONS



Heated discussion may
arise among members of
the same organization



INSTRUCTIONS, Continued:

- Example: the actual process for joining
- Norms/Practices
 - Group rituals (formal like end of year celebrations and informal like going to get pizza after a meeting)
 - Informal roles that people play
 - How the organization has fun
 - Example: Max always brings snacks to meetings or Alicia tries to pull people together outside of formal organizational experiences for socializing
- Stories
 - Heroes of the organization
 - Stories and shared experiences (remember when...)
 - Specialized language (acronyms, slang, etc.)
 - Example: A founder or model member
- Leadership
 - Tone the leader sets (expectations for feedback, how change occurs, etc.)
 - Example: the structure of feedback after someone finishes part of their job like a program
- Then, have them rank order each category from the most influential to the least influential as to how that category shapes the overall culture of their organization. Make sure to let them know that what may be most influential may not be a positive influence on the culture.
- Have them pair up with someone and share their most influential category, the example (s) from that category, and why they put that category first.

“The Way We Do Things” (15 min.)

- Have everyone get out their paper and pen. Tell them they will be identifying and characterizing the culture of their organization.
- Show the “norms and practices questions” and give participants a chance to write some things down. If they are in a group with people they actually work with, have them do this in a pair/share or small group discussions.
- Show the “purpose and values” questions and do the same.
- Show the “assumptions” questions and do the same.
- After participants have taken notes for all three categories, ask them to look for a few words or ideas that come up repeatedly. Have them try to have three or four words or



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INSTRUCTIONS, Continued:

short phrases that represent most of what they have written.

- Ask for a few volunteers to tell the whole group about their organization using the final words/short phrases.
- Process the activity by asking the following questions:
 - What was it like trying to articulate these elements of your organizational culture?
 - Take a look at the final words/phrases you came up with. Do you feel that these accurately capture your organization? Why or why not?
 - Did you write down mostly positive elements, negative, or a mix? How is this reflective of the reality within your organization?
 - How are you contributing to these positive elements of your organization's culture? What about the negative ones?

Shaping Organizational Culture (20 min.)

- Go over ways to shape organizational culture. As you go, ask for or provide examples of what each of these methods can look like.
- Have the students pair up and discuss the following questions:
 - Of these actions to shape organizational culture, what does your organization do well?
 - What does your organization not do well?
 - What can you do as the leader of the organization or a member of the organization to positively enhance your organizational culture? If you are not the leader of your organization, what could the leader do?
- Then, have some volunteers report out how they can change their culture.

Questions and Wrap-Up (5 min.)

- Ask if there are any questions or final remarks.
- Administer evaluations, if applicable.