

# Organizational Culture

The following was constructed from information in:

Hellreigel, Don; John Slocum; and Richard Woodman. "Organizational Culture."  
Organizational Behavior. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. St. Paul, MN: West, 1995. Pages 464-467.

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Organizational Culture, in simplistic terms, may be described as "the way we do things around here". It is an assessment of the climate and behavior of an organization. It is the response you get when you ask someone "So what's it really like to work at \_\_\_\_\_?" Just as different societies (geographic, ethnic, nationalities, etc.) have different cultures, so to do different working organizations.

## Classification

Organizational culture can be classified as one or a combination of four different types:

- **Baseball Team:** attracts entrepreneurs, innovators and risk-takers, pay is performance based, top performers achieve "star status", longevity is rare, successful members often operate as "free agents" hopping from one organization to another for increased personal benefit, examples may include hi-tech companies, consulting firms, software developers, financial services organizations, law firms, etc.
- **Club:** rewards seniority, loyalty and fitting-in, employment is stable and secure, managers often serve in a variety of functional positions across the organization while steadily moving up the ranks over the course of several decades, longevity is common, examples may include government agencies, commercial banks, utilities, military, etc.
- **Academy:** may tend to hire young college graduates, seek to train experts in specific functions, less horizontal mobility than club culture, stress functional expertise, institutional wisdom and continuity of service, examples may include consumer products firms, automakers, pharmaceutical companies, etc.
- **Fortress:** focused on survival, little security, little ability to reward for good performance, may be subject to "up and down" business cycle, recurring layoffs or downsizing, may be an organization that previously held a different culture but has fallen on "hard times", examples may include many small businesses, hotels, oil and gas companies, large retailers, etc.

## Components

Organizational culture is a complex intertwining of numerous components that taken together serve to reflect the personality of the organization.

- **Routine behaviors** when people interact such as standard procedures for communication, language usage, meeting format, etc.

- ***Norms and expectations*** across the organization such as timeliness, “being busy”, information sharing, etc.
- ***Dominant values*** of the organization such as “highest quality”, or “lowest cost”, or “best value”, etc.
- ***Philosophy*** of how both employees and customers should be treated.
- ***Rules of the game*** for fitting-in as a new employee, or for moving up—what management seems to pay attention to and reward.
- ***Feeling or climate*** conveyed by external architecture, interior layout, use of space, formal or unspoken dress code, etc.
- ***Symbols and heroes*** including slogans, mission statements, emblems and icons, mascots, revered former members, company lore, etc.