



CULTURAL NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

*Why Workplace Culture Matters at Your Nonprofit, How to Measure
& How to Improve It*



Learning Outcomes

- ✦ Workplace Culture – What is It Anyway?
- ✦ Why Assess Your Workplace Culture: Making the Business Case
- ✦ Cultural Needs Assessments – Our Approach
- ✦ Elements of an Assessment
- ✦ Leadership & Staff Preparedness
- ✦ Sharing Results
- ✦ Action Planning
- ✦ Keeping Momentum and Engagement
- ✦ Q&A

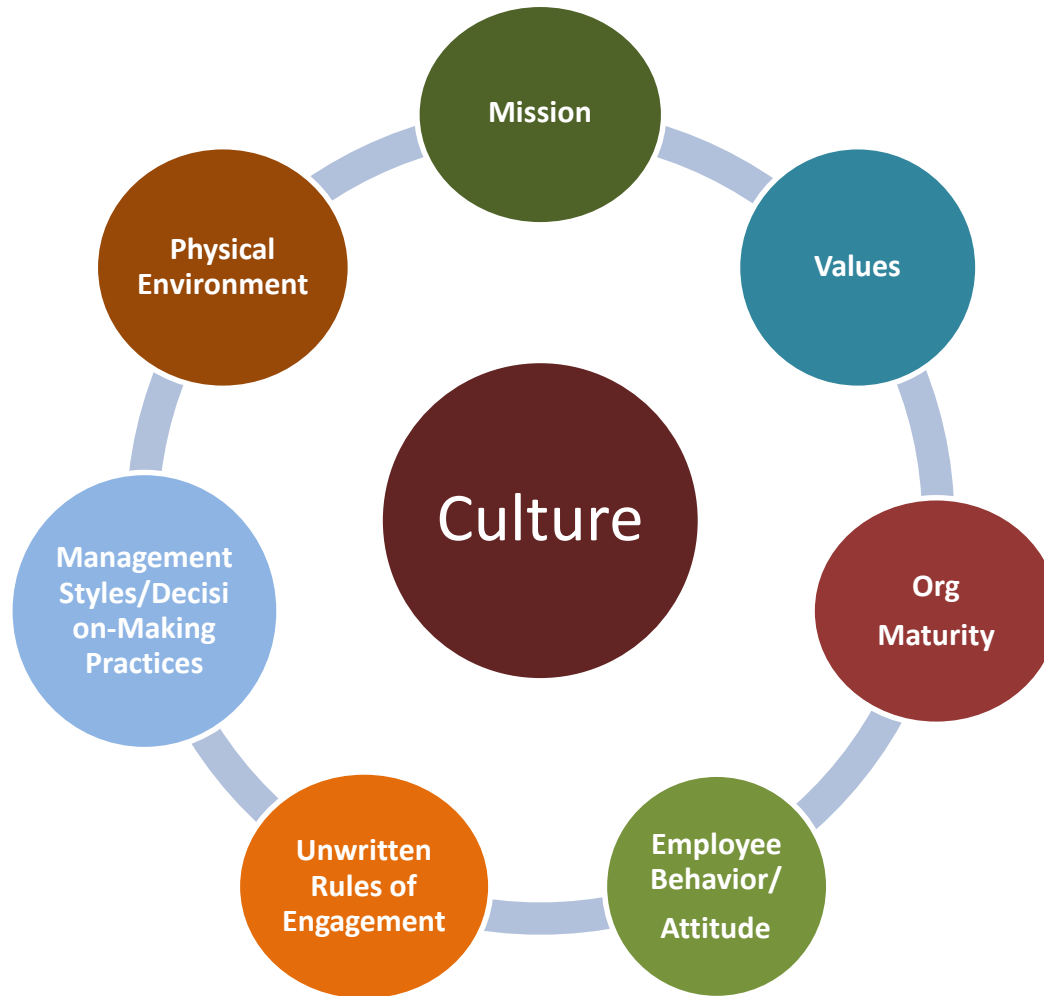
What is Workplace Culture?

“Workplace culture includes employees’ attitudes, belief systems, value systems, work ethics, behavior that characterize the functioning of a group or organization.”

www.wikianswers.com

Why Does Culture Matter?

Key Elements of Workplace Culture



Purpose

- ✦ To obtain an objective assessment of your organization's culture and how its helping or hindering the achievement of the mission
- ✦ To systematically collect data that will help identify workplace factors that may be adversely impacting individual and organizational effectiveness
- ✦ To address workplace concerns in an informed and intentional way

Benefits of Conducting a Cultural Needs Assessment

- ✦ Provide a vehicle through which staff's workplace concerns can be heard through a controlled, intentional process
- ✦ Give voice to staff about their perceptions about workplace culture
- ✦ Raise awareness among leadership about how their decisions and actions affect the workplace and those they lead
- ✦ Create a process of shared ownership for resolution between staff and management
- ✦ Affirm and celebrate those elements of workplace culture that are working and specifically address (and hopefully eliminate) those that aren't

Key Business Drivers

Mission Delivery

Cost of Turnover
(recruitment, onboarding,
intellectual/institutional memory)

Cost of Turnover

Employer brand
management

Program Service
Delivery/Outcomes

Sustainability

Keeping it Simple

**CULTURAL NEEDS
ASSESSMENTS 101**

Methodology Approach

- ✦ Use focus groups (no less than 33% of staff)
- ✦ Ensure focus groups reflect organization's full diversity (length of service, area of work, ethnicity, age, gender)
- ✦ Remember gathering culture feedback is a **QUALITATIVE** **not** a **QUANTITATIVE** process; avoid rigidity

Sample Questions

1. What do you enjoy most about working here?
2. What would you change, if you had the opportunity or the resources?
3. How would you describe our workplace culture?
4. What elements of our workplace culture work really well?
5. What would you say are the barriers to your “individual” effectiveness?
6. What would you say are the barriers to “organizational” effectiveness?

Gauging Readiness

HOW READY ARE YOU?

Organizational Readiness

Conducting a successful cultural needs assessment depends on:

- ✦ Clear communications
- ✦ Effective expectations management (leadership & staff)
- ✦ Limiting number of questions asked to those most critical (i.e. no more than 5-7)
- ✦ Consistent data collection methodologies
- ✦ Objectivity/neutrality by HR (assessment facilitator)
- ✦ Trust/transparency in reporting results
- ✦ Timely, tangible response to concerns
- ✦ Attainable timelines for post-assessment action
- ✦ Confidentiality, confidentiality, confidentiality!

Leadership & Staff Preparedness

BEFORE ASSESSMENT	LEADERSHIP	STAFF
	Get buy-in	Convey that staff feedback is valued
	Prepare them for what might be difficult feedback	Assure confidentiality AND maintain it
	Remind leadership to ONLY proceed if they are prepared to respond to feedback	Try to allay staff concerns about reprisal or retribution (if appropriate)
	Clearly communicate timeline for the process	
	Encourage staff involvement	
	Remind leadership that they are NOT to interfere in the process or attempt to block staff participation	Select staff focus group participants representing organization's full diversity (age, gender, race, length of service, areas of work)

Leadership & Staff Preparedness

DURING ASSESSMENT	LEADERSHIP	STAFF
	Interview leaders individually	Interview staff through focus groups but allow for individual interviews if requested; do not allow any one employee to dominate discussions; actively seek out those who are less vocal
	Maintain confidentiality	
	Communicate Progress	
	Listen more than speak	
	Ask relevant follow-up questions	
	Do not interpret feedback; record as given	

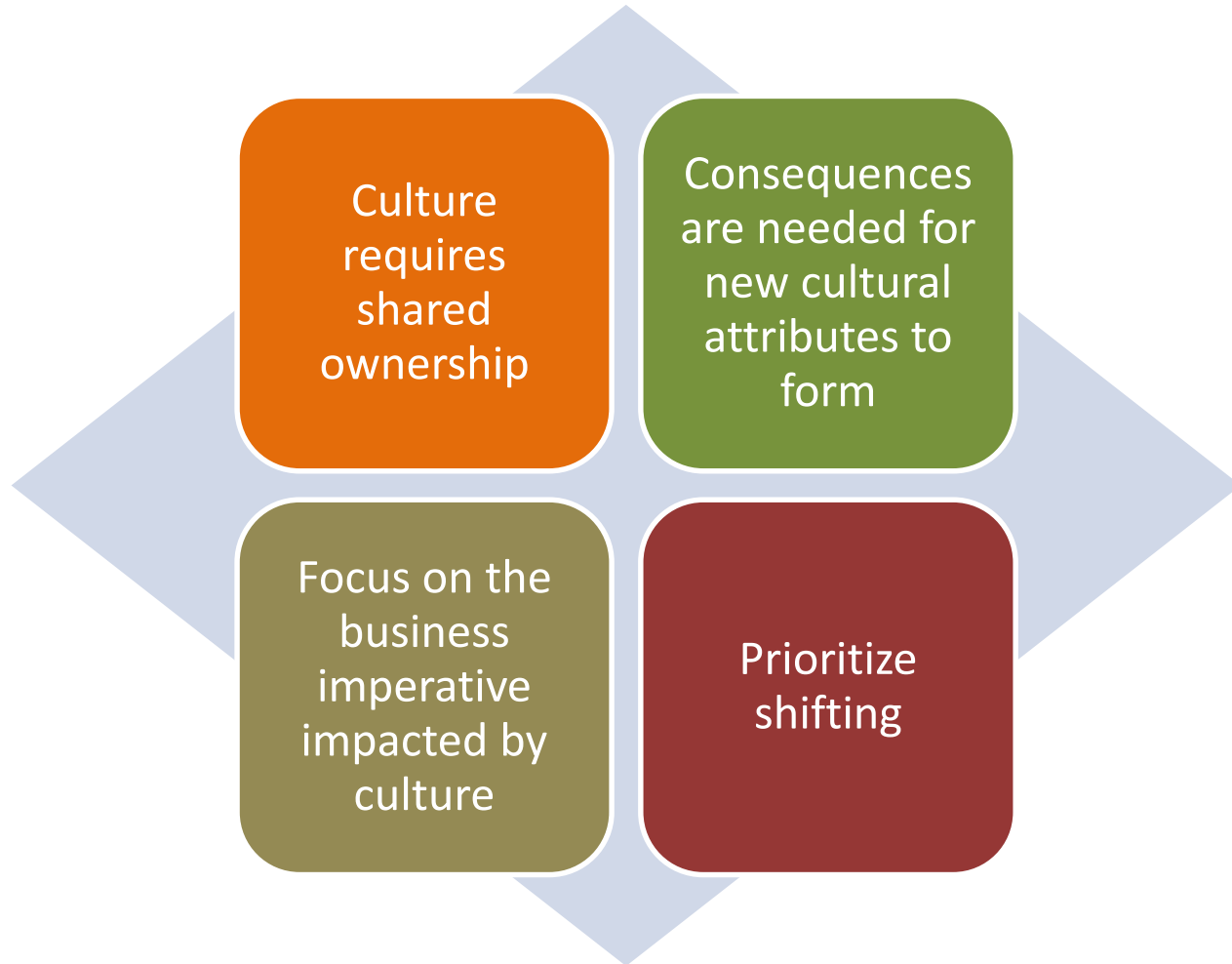
Leadership & Staff Preparedness

AFTER ASSESSMENT	LEADERSHIP		STAFF	
	Thank all participants for their feedback and participation			
	Report findings as quickly as possible after completing interview (small group meetings, town halls, web-based presentations, etc.)			
	Work with leadership to identify appropriate responses to issues raised		Set expectations around what can and will be responded to and what cannot	
	Make space for staff to participate in post-assessment solution-making		Re-engage focus groups to identify solutions and engage in problem solving	
Communicate on and celebrate progress				

Sharing Results

- ✦ Remember to thank everyone for their participation
- ✦ Do not sanitize the results: share the good, the bad and the ugly!
- ✦ Omit only those comments/feedback from interviews that disclose individual identities
- ✦ Share results in person wherever possible; allow for ample time for questions from staff
- ✦ Expect strong responses/feelings from both management and staff
- ✦ Have leadership formulate their responses to feedback and prioritize how they intend support and respond to issues raised
- ✦ Communicate timeline for action planning and stick to it!

Four Culture Fundamentals



Action Planning

- ✦ Re-engage focus groups in action planning/solution making
- ✦ Encourage naysayers and those with negative social power to participate
- ✦ Prioritize & seek agreement on plan
- ✦ Convene action planning teams regularly; set specific, measurable goals in response to concerns raised
- ✦ Emphasize accountability; require regular reporting out to staff and management
- ✦ Modify timelines based on business demands **only as absolutely necessary**
- ✦ Celebrate milestones openly and frequently!
- ✦ Measure and monitor regularly; don't make culture management a one-time effort!

Reflection Questions

- ✦ How might your organization be transformed by engaging in a cultural needs assessment initiative?
- ✦ What challenges might your organization encounter with conducting a cultural needs assessment?
- ✦ What would be the impact of doing nothing at all?



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Have Questions?

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