

Organizational Culture

Friend or Foe?

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An organization's culture is its dominant driver—its most powerful force to either help or hinder change. Culture is a combination of attitudes, values, norms, traditions, precedents, and past practices. All that has occurred before comes together in one imposing voice that speaks to each person in the organization about how to behave, how to interact, how to communicate, how to make decisions. Is your organization's culture friendly to change efforts, or does it suppress needed improvements?

The Importance of Culture

To reach its fullest potential, an organization must create an environment that allows its people to thrive.



tank often enough. The pH balance is off. The result is fish that are a little sluggish and not quite as healthy as they could be.

The other tank, by comparison, is clean and contains fewer fish with sufficient food. pH is balanced, creating and maintaining an environment where the fish thrive. Their colors are vibrant; they are active and involved in their environment.



Further, if you take a fish from the clean tank and drop it into the dirty one, it will begin to show signs of stress and maybe even illness. Conversely, if you take a sluggish, unhealthy fish from the dirty tank and drop it into the

clean one, before long you will notice rejuvenated behavior. The fish will become healthy, mirroring its surroundings and the healthy fish around it.

The same principle holds true for human beings. Regardless of the talent, skills, and abilities of people within an organization, the surrounding culture always has a profound effect—negative or positive—on the productivity, creativity, and well-being of those individuals. If a company's culture does not support an open exchange of ideas, creativity, and innovation, then employees become sluggish and lose their vibrancy. An organization that supports its people with a sound and healthy culture that promotes passion and commitment is one that excels in today's economy.

A Methodology for Changing Organizational Culture

Grid's culture-change methodology is supported by decades of research and real-world experience.

Grid addresses "how to change" rather than "what to change." Most executives focus on "what to change": well-known items such as strategy, products, and processes. Often, however, even the best new strategy can fail to take root in the long term—because the organization's culture won't allow it. The new strategy is widely trumpeted and the organization marches off in a new direction, only to revert to its old ways when it encounters the first roadblock or sign of trouble. Most executives don't understand that for a new strategy to work in the long term, the culture must be changed first. Even those who do understand this typically don't know how to change something as amorphous as organizational culture.

Grid doesn't provide prescriptive solutions to this problem. What it does provide is a process—a roadmap for building a culture of mutual trust, respect, and candor that unleashes an organization's latent creativity. This healthier culture, in turn, enables the organization to reach its fullest potential and deliver unprecedented performance.

Grid The Power to Change.®