

28 COMPONENTS TO CONSTRUCTING EFFECTIVE Organisational Culture



There are many **elements** to understanding corporate culture and it's important to be able to **identify** and **understand** them. Consider them the essential **tools, materials** and **equipment** necessary to keep the well-oiled machine running productively.

You get out what you put in, modifying and reconditioning the factors that will make a difference. Know where to start. Consider these **28 key points** for developing a **snapshot** of your organisation's culture:

Communication

1. Messages

What messages are sent to **employees**? (i.e., "you're not good enough the way you are")?

2. Pronouns

What are the prevailing pronouns used? Do they trend toward "we", "us", "our", "ours"? Or are pronouns mostly about "me", "I", "my", "mine"?

3. Meetings

Do meetings have **purpose**? Do they start and end **on time**? Do participants **respect** and **listen** to all voices? Do individuals demand clarity regarding follow-up actions?

4. Language

Are people **human resources** or **human beings**? Do they talk about headcount, direct reports and bosses?

5. Reading material

What literature is available in reception? Are the **mission, vision, values** and **principles** displayed? Are there professional magazines and journals that align with the **mission** and **behaviours**?

6. Innovation

Is everyone free to **ideate** and **innovate**? To generate **ideas** and receive serious, responsible and appropriate **feedback**?

Structure

7. Management structure

How many **management layers** are there? What is the compensation ratio between the highest-paid and lowest-paid employee?

8. Internal stakeholders

Does everyone have a **voice** in decisions that affect them? Or are decisions imposed from above, with or without input?

9. External stakeholders

Does behaviour **reflect** awareness of the **importance** of customers, suppliers, community members, regulators and other external stakeholders?

10. Leadership

Is everyone free to provide leadership as circumstances arise? Does the organisation support and encourage leaders everywhere?

Engagement

11. Work/Life balance

What do working hours look like? Do people typically stay late? Do they go home at a reasonable hour after a **productive** day, ready to refresh and return?

12. Conflict

Do people maintain **trust**, working to **resolve differences** on their own? Or do they delegate resolution to a third party, let conflict smolder, or engage in destructive gossip?

13. Happiness

Do people seem happy, friendly? Do they smile? Say hello? Make new colleagues and visitors feel welcome?

14. Approachability

Do people scatter or scurry when they see a manager? Are people **comfortable** approaching others, regardless of level?

15. Rewards

Does the organisation compensate appropriately and provide **engaging** work, or does it brandish carrots and sticks to provide motivation?

16. Social glue

Does the organisation sponsor **social events** that include families, to foster relationships and goodwill?

17. Benefits and perks

Does everyone have **access** to the same benefits and perks?

Environment

18. Physical facilities and layout

Are workspaces for managers separate from others? Are they **nicer**? Are those spaces located close to the action, where **productive** work occurs?

19. Environmental and hygiene factors

Does **everyone** have access to appropriate lighting, heating, cooling, safety, sanitation, personal security, comfort?

Relationships

20. Professional courtesy

Do people treat each other with **professional courtesy**? Do they **listen**? Do they use appropriate **communication** channels?

21. Credit sharing

Do individuals **share** credit for **success**? Do they point fingers when things go wrong? Do people see failures as **learning opportunities**?

22. Trust

Do individuals fulfill commitments?

Strategies and Policies

23. Dress

Is there a **dress code**? Is it related to work conditions and not to management levels?

25. Professional growth

Does everyone have an **opportunity** for professional growth? Does the organisation **encourage** and **support** education and training?

26. Discipline

Is there a **"progressive discipline"** system in place? If so, who is authorised to administer "discipline" and why?

27. Termination

Are individuals authorised to unilaterally terminate the employment of another? Who is **authorised** to do so and why?

24. Employee handbook

Is it the size of a telephone book, burdened with rules and regulations that require a lawyer to interpret?

28. Evaluation

Does the organisation adhere to the **annual performance review** (which everyone hates, on both sides)? Or does it allow people to **develop** and **communicate** meaningful metrics and **evaluate** themselves and their peers?



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