

The Five-Minute Guide to Culture

CULTURE:

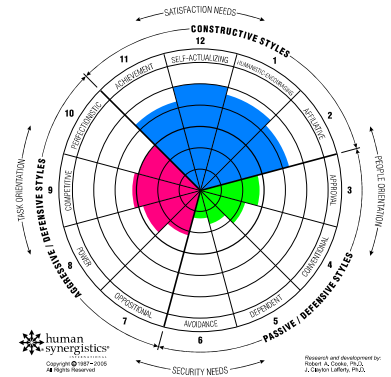
The norms and shared values among a group of people. “The way we do things around here.”

NORMS:

Rules of behaviour (usually unwritten.) Common ways of acting that perpetuate themselves in an organization because people “teach” them to newcomers, rewarding those who fit in with the prevailing norms and sanctioning those who don’t.

CIRCUMPLEX:

A graph used to depict the occurrence of cultural norms, values and beliefs in an organization (or a department) and their intensity.



The Human Synergistics International Circumplex provides a way to “see,” measure, and change the thinking and behavioural styles proven to drive the performance of not only individuals, but also groups and organizations. It breaks down the factors underlying effectiveness into 12 specific styles that are grouped into three general clusters and arranged in a circular manner based on their similarity: Constructive, Passive/Defensive, and Aggressive/Defensive.

The Constructive styles are highly effective and promote individual, group, and organizational performance. In contrast, the Aggressive/Defensive styles have an inconsistent and potentially negative impact on performance, and the Passive/Defensive styles consistently detract from overall effectiveness. The styles describe what’s happening and what’s expected in organizations and, given their impact on performance, provide a direction for change and development.

Originally developed in 1971 by Dr. J. Clayton Lafferty. The power of the Circumplex is found in this integrated, multi-level set of measures as well as the provision of a common language that people can use to describe and redirect the cultures of their organizations.

Clusters of the Circumplex Constructive Styles

Reflect a healthy balance of people and task related concerns and promote the fulfillment of higher-order needs. Styles associated with this orientation are directed towards the attainment of organizational goals through the development of people.

Constructive Styles

account for synergy and explain why certain individuals, groups, and organizations are perfectly effective in terms of performance, growth, and work quality.

Passive / Defensive Styles

Represent an unduly strong orientation towards people as opposed to tasks, fuelled by and reinforcing individual insecurity. The styles characterize people who subordinate themselves to the organization but, in the process, end up creating stress for themselves and allowing the organization to stagnate. Passive / Defensive of styles can produce a predictable and secure situation, but at the cost of learning, adaptability, and ultimately survival.

Aggressive / Defensive Styles

Emphasize tasks over people and are driven by underlying insecurities. In the extreme, these styles lead people to focus on their own needs at the expense of those of the group. Though sometimes temporarily effective, Aggressive / Defensive styles may lead to stress, decisions based on status rather than expertise, and conflict rather than collaboration.

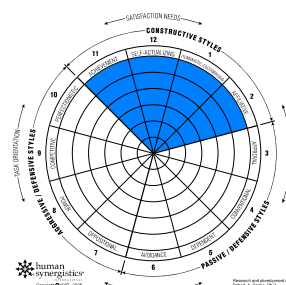
The cultural norms are organized on the OCI Circumplex such that those toward the top reflect expectations for behaviours that are directed toward higher-order needs for growth and satisfaction; those toward the bottom reflect expectations for behaviours that focus on meeting lower-order needs for security.

- cultural norms located on the right side of the circumplex reflect expectations regarding interactions with people;
- cultural norms located on the left reflect expectations regarding task-related behaviours.

The distinctions between satisfaction and security and between people and task define the three clusters of cultural norms measured by the OCI: Constructive, Passive/Defensive, and Aggressive/Defensive.

The 12 points on the circumplex correspond to hours on a clock and represent the following cultural norms or behaviours that people are expected to display:

(11:00) An Achievement culture characterizes organizations that do things well and value members who set and accomplish their own goals. Members of these organizations establish challenging but realistic goals, develop plans to reach these goals, and pursue them with enthusiasm. Achievement organizations are effective; problems are solved appropriately, clients and customers are served well, and the orientation of members (as well as the organization itself) is healthy.



(12:00) A Self-Actualizing culture characterizes organizations that value creativity, quality over quantity, and both task accomplishment and individual growth. Members of these organizations are encouraged to gain enjoyment from their work, develop themselves, and take on new and interesting activities. While Self-Actualizing organizations can be somewhat difficult to understand and control, they tend to be innovative, offer high-quality products and/or services, and attract and develop outstanding employees.

(1:00) A Humanistic-Encouraging culture characterizes organizations that are managed in a participative and person-centered way. Members are expected to be supportive, constructive, and open to influence in their dealings with one another. A Humanistic-Encouraging culture leads to effective organizational performance by providing for the growth and active involvement of members who, in turn, report high satisfaction with and commitment to the organization.

(2:00) An Affiliative culture characterizes organizations that place a high priority on constructive interpersonal relationships. Members are expected to be friendly, open, and sensitive to the satisfaction of their work group. An Affiliative culture can enhance organizational performance by promoting open communication, cooperation, and the effective coordination of activities. Members are loyal to their work groups and feel they "fit in" comfortably.

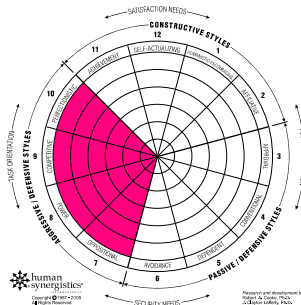
human synergistics

Research and the development of the 'human synergistics' model by Dr. J. J. van der Klok, M.D., J. J. van der Klok, M.D.

human synergistics®
Copyright © 1998-2005
All Rights Reserved

ative, traditional, and

s, and make a good



oppressing innovation

Locally controlled and

ically controlled and
members to do only