

Development of Creative Cultures: Different Organizational Cultures' Way to Support Creativity

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Creativity is often referred to as an effective means for organizations to sustain and further develop their success. As a response to this, this thesis presents an analysis and discussion of how archetypical cultures can be developed to better support creativity. Creative problem solving was used as the main structural process approach.

The authors first examined theoretical perspectives on creativity, organizational change management, and organizational cultures. These perspectives were used to analyze and discuss how the different archetypical cultures from Quinn & Cameron's (2006) cultural framework combined with corresponding leadership styles from the organizational change management literature (such as Burns 1978; Weick, 1995 & Jacobsen, 2005) can be developed using Creative Problem Solving version 6.1 (Isaksen, Treffinger & Dorval, 2000). Therefore, CPS was used as a framework to examine how to develop archetypical cultures to better support creativity.

The overall conclusion of the analysis and discussion is that various organizations will have various premises for how creativity is best promoted. For Creative Problem Solving this means an increased focus on the meta-cognitive component "Planning your Approach" – i.e. different cultures should not develop creativity the same way.

The Hierarchy Culture

Those organizations with a hierarchy culture are very formalized and structured places to work. Procedures govern what people do. The leaders pride themselves on being good coordinators and organizers, who are efficiency-minded. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is most critical. Formal rules and policies hold the organization together. The long-term concern is on stability and performance with an efficient, smooth operation. Success is defined in terms of dependable delivery, smooth scheduling, and low cost. The management of employees is concerned with secure employment and predictability.

A *hierarchal culture* should have a somewhat structured approach to developing creativity. The process should be facilitated by using leaders as front figures, and as examples through a combination of standard project management with elements from mindful management to avoid environmental drift. Furthermore, dedicated room and time for creative thinking are to be considered. This might be difficult in a culture

characterized by optimization of known procedures. Therefore stimulation to create blind variation becomes an important part in the Generating Ideas stage.

The Market Culture

The market culture is a results-oriented organization. The major concern is getting the job done. People are competitive and goal oriented. The leaders are hard drivers, producers, and competitors. They are thorough and demanding. The glue that holds the organization together is an emphasis on winning. Reputation and success are common concerns. The long-term focus is on competitive actions and achievement of measurable goals and targets. Success is defined in terms of market share and penetration. Competitive pricing and market leadership are important. The organizational style is hard-driving competitiveness

Given the culture's focus on achievement creating the driver for idea generation among both leaders and employees ideas should not be pooled, but people should develop their ideas on an individual basis. In Preparing for Action progress reports and burning platforms become important parts of organizational change management, due to the drive toward results.

The Clan Culture

A clan culture reflects a very friendly place to work, where people share a lot of themselves. It is like an extended family. The leaders, or heads of the organization, are considered to be mentors and, maybe even, parent figures. The organization is held together by loyalty or tradition. Commitment is high. The organization emphasizes the long-term benefit of human resource development and attaches great importance to cohesion and morale. Success is defined in terms of sensitivity to customers and concern for people. The organization places a premium on teamwork, participation, and consensus.

Since there is a focus on support and encouragement of creative thinking, work in the Generating Ideas stage should pool ideas, avoid focus on single employee, and promote anonymity. Preparing for Action should focus on storytelling, unity, and a pronounced transformative leadership style.

From the cultural point of view the thesis concluded that not all creativity and organizational change management theories are equally relevant in all contexts. It is primarily this conclusion where the thesis can serve as inspiration for how a unique organization can evolve to support creativity better. If the culture in your organization has strong similarities with one or more of the archetypical cultures, you may even be inspired directly by the thesis' conclusions.

References:

Cameron, K. S. & Quinn, R. E., (2006). *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture: Based on the competing values framework*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Quinn, R. E., & Cameron, K. (1983). Organizational life cycles and shifting criteria for effectiveness: Some preliminary evidence. *Management Science*, 29, 33-51.

You can find the thesis on the Copenhagen Business School Library (Thesis in Danish): <http://theses.cbs.dk/cbsweb/handle/10417/567>