ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AUDIT TOOLKIT

A Research-Based Assessment Tool for Organizational Growth

Created by Shanna Peeples, Ed.L.D. 2024 Edition

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Organizations, like living systems, develop their own unique patterns of behavior, beliefs, and practices. This toolkit is designed to help you assess and understand your organization's culture through the lens of systems thinking and organizational learning.

As Senge (2006) notes in *The Fifth Discipline*, organizations excel when they tap into people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels. Recent research supports this view, finding that organizations with strong learning cultures are 92% more likely to develop novel products and processes (Bersin & Zao-Sanders, 2019).

Date of Assessment: Completed By:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This audit is grounded in three key theoretical frameworks:

1. **Systems Thinking**: Understanding how different parts of the organization interact and influence each other (Senge, 2006; Meadows, 2008)
2. **Organizational Learning**: Examining both single-loop learning (improving existing processes) and double-loop learning (questioning underlying assumptions) (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Schein, 2017)

3. **Cultural Web**: Assessing the interconnected elements that make up organizational culture (Johnson & Scholes, 1988; Schein, 2017)

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

Research by Edmondson (2019) shows that successful organizational change requires both assessment and action. Follow these steps:

1. Complete the assessment independently or with your leadership team
2. Use it as a discussion starter for cultural change initiatives
3. Repeat the assessment every 6-12 months to track changes
4. Focus on patterns rather than individual scores

Rating Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

SECTION 1: LEARNING CULTURE

Recent studies indicate that organizations with strong learning cultures are 37% more productive (Dhuper, 2022).

1.1 People feel safe to take risks and try new approaches Rating: [   ]

1.2 Mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities Rating: [   ]

1.3 Innovation and experimentation are encouraged Rating: [   ]

1.4 Time is allocated for reflection and learning Rating: [   ]

Section 1 Total: _____ / 20

Notes: _____
_____
_____

SECTION 2: SYSTEMS THINKING

2.1 People understand how their work impacts others Rating: [   ]

2.2 Cross-functional collaboration is common Rating: [   ]

2.3 Long-term implications are considered in decision-making Rating: [.   ]

2.4 Root causes are explored when problems arise Rating: [   ]

Section 2 Total: _____ / 20

Notes: _____
_____
_____

SECTION 3: LEADERSHIP & VISION

3.1 Leaders model continuous learning Rating: [   ]

3.2 Vision and values guide daily decisions Rating: [   ]

3.3 Leadership is distributed throughout the organization Rating: [   ]

3.4 Change initiatives are clearly communicated Rating: [   ]

Section 3 Total: _____ / 20

Notes: _____
_____
_____

SECTION 4: COMMUNICATION & TRUST

4.1 Information flows freely across levels Rating: [   ]

4.2 People feel heard and valued Rating: [   ]

4.3 Feedback is regularly given and received Rating: [   ]

4.4 Difficult conversations happen respectfully Rating: [   ]

Section 4 Total: _____ / 20

Notes: _____
_____
_____

INTERPRETING YOUR RESULTS

Score Range Interpretation:

16-20: Strong positive culture

11-15: Developing culture with room for growth

6-10: Needs focused attention

Below 6: Critical area for improvement

<u>Overall Results Summary</u>:

Section 1 (Learning Culture): _____ Section 2 (Systems Thinking): _____ Section 3 (Leadership & Vision): _____ Section 4 (Communication & Trust): _____

Total Score: _____ / 80

Primary Strengths Identified: 1. _____ 2. _____3._____

Priority Areas for Growth: 1. _____
2._____ 3._____

RESEARCH-BASED STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Learning Culture • Create psychological safety (Edmondson, 2019) • Establish learning routines (Garvin et al., 2008) • Celebrate learning moments (Dweck, 2006)

Systems Thinking • Map interdependencies (Meadows, 2008) • Create feedback loops (Senge, 2006) • Build in reflection time (Schön, 1983)

Leadership & Vision • Develop shared vision (Senge, 2006) • Practice distributed leadership (Spillane, 2006) • Model desired behaviors (Schein, 2017)

Communication & Trust • Increase transparency (Bennis et al., 2008) • Build listening skills (Stone & Heen, 2014) • Strengthen feedback channels (Scott, 2019)

Action Planning Template:

Priority Area: _____

Specific Goal: _____

Action Steps: 1. _____

2._____
3._____

Timeline: _____

Resources Needed: _____

Success Metrics: _____

References
Argyris, C., & Schön, D. (1978). *Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective*. Addison-Wesley.

Bennis, W., Goleman, D., & O'Toole, J. (2008). *Transparency: How leaders create a culture of candor.* Jossey-Bass.

Bersin, J., & Zao-Sanders, M. (2019). *Making learning a part of everyday work.* Harvard Business Review.

Dhuper, K. (2022). Why are adaptive learning organizations better placed to succeed in the future? Insights from research on adaptive learning organization by NIIT and John Bersin academy. In *Transition and Opportunity: Strategies from Business Leaders on Making the Most of China's Future* (pp. 195-211). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success.* Random House.

Edmondson, A. C. (2019). *The fearless organization: Creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation, and growth.* Wiley.

Johnson, J., Whittington, R., Regnér, P., Angwin, D., Johnson, G., & Scholes, K. (2020). *Exploring strategy.* Pearson UK.

Meadows, D. H. (2008). *Thinking in systems: A primer.* Chelsea Green Publishing.

Schein, E. H. (2017). *Organizational culture and leadership* (5th ed.). Wiley.

Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action.* Basic Books.

Scott, K. (2017). *Radical candor: Be a kick-ass boss without losing your humanity.* St. Martin's Press.

Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization.* Currency.

Spillane, J. P. (2006). *Distributed leadership.* Jossey-Bass.

Stone, D., & Heen, S. (2014). *Thanks for the feedback: The science and art of receiving feedback well.* Viking.

About the Author:

Shanna Peeples, Ed.L.D., is an organizational learning expert specializing in building resilient cultures and developing adaptive leaders. Drawing on her experience as a National Teacher of the Year and Harvard doctorate in Educational Leadership, she helps organizations transform their culture through research-based practices and systematic approaches to change.

Version 1.0 | 2024

Shanna Peeples

Human-Centered Excellence in Education and Leadership

shanna.peeples@protonmail.com

(806) 414-8370

www.drshannapeeples.com