Drawing Organizational Culture

Drawing Organizational Culture is a visualization tool that can be used to reveal cultural phenomena within an organization, opening up a deeper dialogue.

The Drawing Organizational Culture tool can be used to quickly get to the heart of the current culture and environment in a company, a department or a team. It is an effective visualization tool and can be used as part of bigger culture transformation processes. It is rooted in cultural exploration and can be done with employees, key customers as well as the management and other stakeholders. By comparing the results for the above-mentioned stakeholders, this tool can yield particularly fruitful results.

The facilitator divides participants in small groups and invites them to imagine that their company, department or team just walked into the room and then to describe and draw that person.

The goal of a culture exploration is to make relevant behavior patterns, mindsets and basic assumptions visible and to initiate a good dialogue between important stakeholders (top management, middle management, employees and partners). Drawing Organizational Culture can help people verbalize unwritten cultural rules. In addition, it vividly displays gaps between expected organizational culture (often envisioned by the management) and the true culture (often experienced by employees or even customers). It therefore serves as a good starting point for the further planning of a transformation process.

Duration	Participants	Facilitation
45–90 min	4 to 5 people per group, many parallel working groups possible	pens, one large poster per group, flipchart

Drawing Organizational Culture │ **Process**

Introduction
5–10 min

Before beginning the exercise, clearly define what organizational culture is and give the participants a basic understanding of the topic.

The exercise itself asks participants to imagine their organization (company, department, team) has turned into a person overnight and walked into the room:

- What does the person look like (age, man/woman, distinguishing features...)?
- What does the person wear?
- How does the person behave when entering the room, during contact, when leaving...?
- What does the person enjoy? What is the person interested in?
- What mode of transportation/car does the person use?

Drecribing and Drawing Organizational Culture
20–30 min

Then all participants are divided into groups of 3–5 people. The composition of the small groups can be random or homogenous, based on the makeup and homogeneity of the larger group itself. Each group needs a large piece of paper and pens and is asked to first describe and then draw this person while answering the outlined questions (which should be visible during the work either on a slide or the flipchart).

Description

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Reflection
15 min

The drawings are presented by each group. All participants are invited to ask questions and share insights. Depending on the objective of the exercise, more emphasis can be placed on certain aspects by including questions for the group such as:

- What makes this person attractive? What makes them unattractive?
- What motivates this person in life?
- How does this person deal with change? What qualities does the person show in times of change?

Once all groups have presented their drawings, the common aspects are evaluated: What do these people have in common? Where do we see differences? The facilitator records the main points of the discussion on a flipchart.