

Chapter 5

Seeing Business Cultures

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the authors focus on the essential elements of culture and consider the factors that may contribute to shaping an organization's unique culture. The authors caution that this is a rich chapter – the goal is to help business managers make the transition from understanding culture at a theoretical level to seeing and managing it on an everyday practical level. In this chapter, the authors explain what we need to know about business cultures. They define business cultures in terms of their structural and dynamic aspects. The authors define three structural levels, including macro-level (global, national), meso-level (organization, unit), and micro-level (individual) culture. For each level, a rich set of dynamic factors are identified. This chapter prepares the manager for describing his/her organization's business culture.

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BUSINESS CULTURES

Chapter 2 provided a foundation for understanding the essential elements of culture. Our challenge in Chapter 3 is to explain how those essential elements translate to the cultures of organizations, teams, and individuals. The elements of culture become visible to us as structural and dynamic factors. By structural factors, we refer to the levels or structure of an organization. An individual is our most basic instance of culture – but in an organizational context, these elements compound and expand with each successive layer. An organization's culture is constructed over layers – beginning with the individual, the team, the community, the business unit, the organization, and

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-4315-3.ch005

Seeing Business Cultures

the organization's national and geographic location. In this text, we refer to these layers as structural elements. Cultural research also tells us that there are dynamic factors that shape an organization's culture at each of these layers. In this text, we refer to these as dynamic factors.

Figure 1. Business cultures in the framework



We need to have a general understanding of the dimensions of organizational culture, including its structural and dynamic elements. Managers need to understand and describe our organization's culture from a structural perspective – by levels. Managers need to understand and describe our organization's culture in terms of its dynamic factors. Changing or shifting an organization's culture involves everyone – not just senior leadership. This means that everyone - needs to be able to “see” culture in a way that allows them to manage it. In this chapter, we present a reference model of an organization's culture that will serve as a tool for strategy development and alignment.

40 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/seeing-business-cultures/256365

Related Content

A Systemic Perspective for Supporting Production and Innovation in Brazilian Micro and Small Enterprises

Marcelo Pessoa de Matos, Ana Arroio and Elaine Borin (2014). *Quality Innovation: Knowledge, Theory, and Practices* (pp. 273-297).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/a-systemic-perspective-for-supporting-production-and-innovation-in-brazilian-micro-and-small-enterprises/96660

Change and Information Value in Military Organizations' Transformation Processes

Carlos Páscoa and José Tribolet (2014). *Rethinking the Conceptual Base for New Practical Applications in Information Value and Quality* (pp. 304-323).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/change-and-information-value-in-military-organizations-transformation-processes/84224

Basic Measures of Risk of Misinforming

(2024). *Quantitative Measures and Warranty Coverage of the Risk of Misinforming* (pp. 111-128).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/basic-measures-of-risk-of-misinforming/338741

Innovation and Value Creation in Emerging African Commercial Agriculture: Evidence from the Ugandan Flower Export Sector

Timothy Esemu and Eric Wood (2014). *Quality Innovation: Knowledge, Theory, and Practices* (pp. 497-521).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/innovation-and-value-creation-in-emerging-african-commercial-agriculture/96673

A Framework to Analyse the Role of Government in Promoting Quality Innovation in Developing Economies: A Case Study

Dilupa Nakandala and Tim Turpin (2014). *Quality Innovation: Knowledge, Theory, and Practices* (pp. 124-142).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/a-framework-to-analyse-the-role-of-government-in-promoting-quality-innovation-in-developing-economies/96651