

Changing Public Organizational Culture: Best Practices

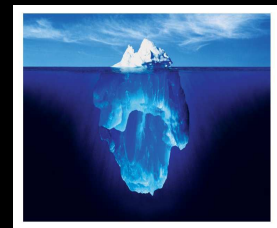
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Key Questions

- *What is organizational culture?*
- *Why is it important?*
- *How is it established?*
- *How can it be changed?*

- Organizational culture is the “way things really work around here.”

- Structure, procedures
- Stated philosophy and strategies
- Unspoken assumptions (source of action and values)



Why is culture important?

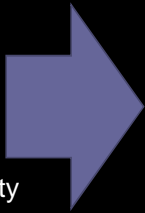
- *All change occurs within a cultural context*
- *Culture guides and controls behavior*
- *In the public sector: higher standards and multiple accountabilities*

Culture eats strategy for
breakfast...

and policy for lunch

Organizations with cultures based on:

- Respect
- Inclusion
- Trust/Safety



Are more
effective,
resilient, and
productive

How is Culture Established?

- Slowly: Culture is established gradually over time
- Collectively: Largely informal, unspoken agreements and assumptions of all members of the organization
- Based on learning: Experiences of group members as organization evolves
- In response to external forces: Beliefs, values, and assumptions brought in from outside

How do People Learn Culture?

- Socialization
- Stories
- Symbols
- Jargon and language
- Statements of principle

How Leaders Change Culture

■ BEST PRACTICES

- Talk about the desired values regularly
- React carefully to critical incidents and crises
- Model behavior
- Reward and highlight desired behavior
- Share successes and tell stories

How Leaders Change Culture

■ OTHER ACTIONS

- Formal statements of policy
- Training
- Organizational structure
- Processes and procedures

Why is There Always Resistance to Cultural Change?

- Loss of what "is"
- Uncertainty about how to succeed
- Past experiences

Managing Resistance

- Positive cultural norms are the most effective
- Negative cultural norms are less effective and cause more resistance
- Consistent and persistent reinforcement of values
- Culture is collective, the more inclusion the better

Approach	Outcome
Education and communication	Most likely to result in commitment to change
Participation and involvement	
Facilitation and support	
Organizational and structural changes	Can make a difference based on intentions and follow-through
Rules	May yield compliance but not commitment
Control/Enforcement	

Key Questions for Leadership

- What are the constructive cultural norms you want to foster?
- What is the greatest source of cultural resistance to change?