

**What is the Cultural Benchmark Assessment?**

The Cultural Benchmark assessment is an on-line multi-source feedback tool designed to give direct insights into the function of a team or organization. It helps identify, report and measure the efficacy of a team's performance in three fundamental areas: efficiency & effectiveness, emotional intelligence and high energy. It views the team as an active system that has traits that transcend those of any individual member. The team itself is seen with its own collective needs, beliefs, behaviors and actions that all represent the culture of the team.

The world is continuously increasing in its complexity and cultural diversity. When looking at an organization's culture, we have to take into account that up to four to five different generations may now be working together, all with many contrasting values. Adding this to an already differing racial, ethnic and economic difference between people can make leaders jobs even more challenging. By not understanding the common values that these groups share, organizations can end up creating an environment that doesn't fully support or leverage its employees in the best way.

Through our research and experience, we have found that organizational culture is the fundamental driver that influences the majority of business results. An important piece of research that we apply, done by Albert Mehrabian in the field of communication, is the "93/7 Rule". This rule states that 93% of our communication is composed of our body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice; while only 7% of what gets communicated comes from our actual spoken or written words. This shows us that the more subtle (and typically unconscious) factors that most of us do not usually have proper distinctions or language for, end up being the driving aspects of how we communicate.

The way people in an organization communicate largely represents what the culture of an organization actually is. Traditionally, this has been something that has been ambiguous and misunderstood on how it fully impacts results. This is similar to how body language, facial expressions and tone of voice can be misunderstood and negatively impact others when we are not aware of it. The Cultural Benchmark Assessment helps clarify, define and distinguish three core areas, made up of twenty-one critical success factors that all represent organizational culture, or the 93% of what creates your results:

- **Efficiency & Effectiveness:** This is the foundational area that a team must excel at in order to begin to operate at its potential. These factors support the team in allowing them to achieve results, accomplish tasks and stay on course in order to reach their stated goals and objectives. A team that scores well in this area is one that has a disciplined execution in its business processes and procedures.
  - *Accountability & Results:* having a sense of ownership, responsibility and commitment to each other and the goals and objectives.
  - *Alignment:* being on the same page with roles, responsibilities and expectations while moving in the same direction and prioritizing along the way.
  - *Planning & Organizing:* creating the right structures with the proper resources and plans to handle recurring activities and potential changes.
  - *Collaboration:* listening and incorporating others ideas to support accomplishing shared goals together.
  - *Decision Making:* having the appropriate processes that help make good decisions over the long term.
  - *Problem Solving:* having the appropriate processes that help solve difficult problems that stand the test of time.
  - *Constructive Interaction:* being helpful and receptive when working with others while giving and receiving feedback to help improve results.

- **Emotional Intelligence:** This area is the key to developing a consistent level of high performance. These factors support the team in leveraging the strengths of key team members, handling stress along with managing conflict and emotionally charged situations effectively. A team that scores well in this area is one that consistently performs at a high level and can be very responsive to changing business conditions.
  - *Personal Awareness:* having a high personal awareness of personal strengths and challenges, understanding stress patterns and the impact of personal working styles.
  - *Emotional Awareness:* being aware of your own emotions as well as the emotions of others and how they impact performance in working together.
  - *Trust:* having the confidence that your opinions are heard and that you can count on each other to get things done.
  - *Respect:* holding each other in high esteem and positive regard while acknowledging other's abilities to perform at a high level.
  - *Relationship Management:* being able to handle conflict effectively while being proactive in developing relationships with others.
  - *Adaptability:* having the flexibility in your thinking while being able to anticipate and respond to change by incorporating new ideas.
  - *Positivity:* maintaining an optimistic attitude, focusing on solutions and regularly appreciating team accomplishments.
  
- **High Energy:** This is the area where team and personal performance can reach optimal levels and achieve the greatest results. These factors support teams in putting the highest intention and purpose into every action they take. They have the ability to proactively solve issues before they fully arise, remain present with changing market dynamics and are actively innovating. Teams that score high in this area are already performing high and are commonly the market leaders.
  - *Organizational Awareness:* understanding the vision, mission and values of your organization and how you fit into it.
  - *Generosity:* being sensitive and open to ideas while assuming the best about others.
  - *Compassion:* maintaining a high level of patience while letting go of past difficulties and judgments by focusing on lessons learned and the good in others.
  - *Authenticity:* having transparency, clarity in your motives and consistency in your actions while doing work that is fulfilling.
  - *Presence:* being aware of the impact of your experiences and adjusting your actions to keep things in a state of growth.
  - *Inspiration:* having a strong sense of belonging to the team and to be powerfully motivated and influenced by leadership and their stated mission.
  - *Innovation & Agility:* leveraging intuition and taking balanced risk allowing you to adjust and adapt to change quickly while maintaining a competitive edge.

The assessment gives you a starting point that measures and quantifies the team's perspective of the conditions of its current culture. By leveraging the collective intelligence of all the team members, you can quickly find the areas that have the greatest potential for improvement and development. It also allows you to create a quantified benchmark for your performance so that you can track on-going progress and changes over time.

### Why it does it work?

The Cultural Benchmark assessment is of profound value because it is built from a very broad range of ideas and personal experiences. There is no other assessment that gives as clear of distinctions on how effective culture really works, as well as what most important concepts are in order to optimize your business. This is because it looks at measuring the behaviors and processes that are more primary to creating your results. Each of the following areas below help make up the different success factors:

- *Generational understanding*: using personal experience and applying generational research done by Tamara Erickson allows us to use ideas that are effective and resonate strongly with people ranging from the many different generational groups in the workforce today.
- *Real-world experience*: leveraging our personal experiences from working in positions from the bottom of an organization all the way up to executive and CEO level positions, we apply an insider's view and 'real-world' approach that is proven successful.
- *Systems theory*: applying relationship and team dynamics research done by John Gottman, Arnold Mindell and the Organizational and Relationship Coaching (ORSC) materials from the Center for Right Relationship, allows us to incorporate the best materials in understanding how the dynamics of teams and interpersonal relationships work most effectively.
- *Emotional intelligence*: applying psychological research done by Albert Mehrabian, Daniel Goleman, Marshall Rosenberg and Martin Seligman helps us understand the best practices in how to work with others constructively in emotionally charged situations, managing personal emotions in times of stress and in relating to others to produce consistent results.
- *Consciousness*: applying research done by David Hawkins in human consciousness helps us to become aware of our unconscious personal patterns, the intention and purpose we put into the actions we take as well as understand what are the most powerful principles we must apply to operate at the highest levels of human potential.
- *Quantum science*: applying scientific research in physics, biology and chemistry done by Bohr, Wheeler, Schrödinger, Einstein, Lipton and Prigogine gives us the language, distinctions and reasoning why focusing on the energetic or qualitative aspects of your organization are the most primary factors to your success.
- *Integrated with practices*: all the success factors we have identified are fully integrated and mapped to custom processes and practices we have developed. They are based on business best practices and are easy to apply into your current environment and structure. This gives your team a place to start, along with a practical approach to quickly improve results.
- *Positive worded statements*: all of the statements in the assessment are behaviors that are worded in a positive action. This reinforces the behaviors that teams are looking to incorporate instead of looking at behaviors you do not want.
- *Customizable assessment*: the team can pick and choose what sections or factors to include or not include depending on their goals as it moves forward. Specific open-ended questions can be added or taken out as well.

### What are the Benefits?

Awareness of the cultural climate allows for better alignment between team members and teaches them how to adapt seamlessly to change while still being at their best. This is the key to creating an inspirational, innovative and highly efficient and effective organization. As a team becomes more self-aware after taking the assessment, it can more easily identify where it wants to focus to improve. The assessment helps provide key insights into the inner workings of your organization. These insights can have a profound impact and allow for many of the following improvements:

- Increases motivation, satisfaction, and engagement of team members through providing a higher awareness of the key behaviors that impact results.
- Helps quickly flush out the most primary issues of the team, making it easier for them to set priorities and goals for improvement.
- Facilitates learning in a meaningful and helpful way.
- Better aligns team members in times of increasing organizational complexity.

### How does it work?

Team members are sent an email with instructions and a list of the people making up the specific team along with a link to access the assessment. The assessment contains 106 statements that are rated using a 6-point horizontal scale; the far left of the scale indicates that you **strongly disagree** with the statement and the far right of the scale indicates that you **strongly agree** with the statement. The answers should represent and describe the normal behaviors and actions team members observe on their team as a whole. They should also reflect only the most current experiences with the team.

It should take approximately take 30 minutes to complete. Individual assessment answers will remain completely confidential and anonymous. Team members are encouraged to be as honest, candid and objective as possible in order to enable the team to surface important issues in service of improving team dynamics. The combined feedback from all the team members' individual assessments will form an overall team profile that will be used to help in the development and performance of the team. The combined data from all the responses is sectioned out to create specific data points:

- *Mean*: there is a cumulative average score taken for each of the twenty-one factors in the three fundamental areas. The averages are presented in both a bar chart format for each of the sections as well as in a list format from highest average to lowest average. This statistic helps show the team their strengths and possible areas to start improvement projects in.
- *Standard deviation*: there is a cumulative standard deviation score taken for each of the twenty-one factors in the three fundamental areas. The standard deviations are presented in a list format from lowest deviation to highest deviation. This statistic shows how closely team members agree or disagree with their answers to the statements.
- *Benchmark differences*: if this is a follow up assessment (one is recommend 3-6 months into a project), a percentage increase or decrease is included with the averages and standard deviations.
- *Open-ended questions*: the short answers are compiled and put into a bulleted list for review. This gives the team a more detailed perspective about specific strengths and/or challenges.

Once all the data is compiled and formatted, the results are provided to the team members independently to review and interpret. Then a facilitator will review the statistics together with the team for further interpretation and development of an improvement plan.