

THE CULTURE RESET EXERCISE

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SMART IDEAS SHARED

*By Cathy "Fitz" Fitzhenry
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THE SET UP

This exercise will work with 5, 10 or up to 20 participants. If you have larger groups, then I would suggest splitting them into smaller sub-groups.

Everyone will need an 8x 11 pad of paper and pen.

(You can also do this online using a tool such as zoom and simply have each participant have open a word document or they can write their answers and then submit the final insights.)

This exercise takes roughly about 90 minutes.

The first 30 minutes of this exercises asks the participants to describe their own family culture. These notes are not collected. The next 60 minutes the participants spend describing the organization's culture. These answers will be collected but there will be not names attached to the answers.

THE KEY RESULTS THIS EXERCISE WILL ACHIEVE.

This is an exercise that is used to determine what positive things employees, volunteers, students, or members see regarding the culture of your organization.

This is an exercise that helps you focus on the "positive" aspects of the culture and not the negative. Why only positive? Because it is those elements of your culture you want to reproduce, leverage and magnify.

The end result will be a variety of perceptions that can be summarized and then used to discuss how to move forward and enhance the culture.

Here are some additional benefits:

- Participants will find a common language to describe what they see, feel and experience in the culture.
- The summary of the answers will provide the initial framework for what words are used to describe the culture and how those words translate into behaviors.
- The discussion will bring forward good discussions on what to do when someone is challenging the culture or does not fit.
- This exercise will also provide a the "story" about the organization for those who are being introduced or onboarded as a new employee, member or volunteer.

PART ONE - 30 MINUTES

WHAT IS CULTURE ?

Part One- What is culture?

Let's take a look at our own personal family culture and ask a few questions (which will be individually and silently answered).

1) What is your family culture? Are they sports minded? Religious? Believe strong in education? Do they love entertainment and music? Every family has a culture and it is defined around what they believe in. So, list 2 -3 things that your family believes in.

2) Now look at those beliefs and ask -what behaviors might one see if they visited your family for a full day on a weekend or for dinner during the weekday? Ask yourself, if this is what we believe in as a family, then most likely you would see specific behaviors that support those beliefs.

(Example: If a family is religious you may find them praying before meals.)

3) Next, we ask how might we see these beliefs and behaviors get imprinted and indoctrinated into the family? This would be like teaching a toddler to fold their hands and pray.

4) Now that we looked at your family's beliefs, behaviors and how they imprint those behaviors we will now observe the attitude that your family has. (Example someone who is religious may enjoy being open and learning about their faith.)

5) Lastly, we look at the ways we might course correct something that challenges our family culture. What would that look like?

As part one is led the facilitator will check in to make sure the participants are grasping the concept. This should take about 15 minutes. Often after each question the facilitator could ask a participant to share or simply begin to describe their own family culture.

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PART TWO - 60 MINUTES

LET'S DESCRIBE THE ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE

Part Two--- What is our organization's culture? Let's look at our own organization and through the lens that you see it. Some of you are from different departments which may give you a slightly different perspective from the rest of us. Each person's view and observation are important. We also want to make sure that when we observe our culture, we keep our viewpoint on the "championism and positivity" in the organization and not the negative stuff. All organizations have things they do great and things they need to improve. For the purpose of this exercise we are going to focus on things we do great. We will be answering similar questions to Part One. Only this time you will be writing the question down on the paper along with your answers and you don't need to put your name on it.

1. What are 3 things that you think, see or feel that our organization holds as our beliefs?

(After everyone has 1-3 things written down have them share what they wrote down. If there are duplicates just simply ask them to announce that it was already mentioned. (If it is a small group the facilitator may also simply capture the information on a whiteboard or large note pad.) While everyone is sharing the facilitator is making the list and numbering each belief which is unique. If there are some that are similar, then simply combine them into one. Normally I end up between 10-15 unique beliefs.

2. Now this second part is the longest and it will take about 20 minutes. You will take each belief one by one and ask the participants to write a "word" describing the behaviors that we may see or experience that demonstrates that belief. For instance, if one of the beliefs are to have fun, we may see people getting silly or playing jokes. If one of the beliefs is that we are always learning we may see people testing, researching, attending webinars. They simply need to think about the belief and wonder ---"what would I see if I walked into an organization" that held this belief?

3. Next look again at the list of beliefs and write down 2-3 ways you see that the organization imprint and indoctrinate these beliefs throughout the organization? How would you teach someone who was coming into the organization that which we believe in?

4. Now have them list 2- 3 attitudes that one might see in the organization. For instance, if have a belief that our organization is a learning organization most likely we would hire people who have an attitude of curiosity, and discovery.

5. Lastly have them list 2-3 things that they may see occur if someone came into the organization that was not demonstrating the behaviors of the culture. How would they course correct the situation?

WRAPPING UP AND GETTING RESULTS

When the exercise is completed have everyone hand in their papers. Next you want to take the answers and sort them by the questions. If anything is duplicated simply merge the answer or thoughts.

What you have now is a snapshot of the current positivity within the culture. It makes sense now to discuss that with participants, stakeholders, and or leadership team.

Build upon the findings by asking key questions such as:

- 1) What did we learn?
- 2) What was surprising?
- 3) Do the findings represent the messages that we say to our customers about who we are as a company?
- 4) Is there anything missing?
- 5) Is there a way that we can become more disciplined in our indoctrination of those beliefs that define our culture?
- 6) How can we celebrate our beliefs?