



What is Organizational Culture — and Why Does it Matter? While not always easy to capture or define, culture is an observable, powerful force in any organization. Made up of its members' shared values, beliefs, symbols, and behaviors, culture guides individual decisions and actions at the unconscious level. As a result, it can have a potent effect on a company's well being and success.

The Role of Organizational Culture. Some consider culture the glue that holds everyone together. Others compare it to a compass providing direction.

However you look at it, culture creates a common ground for team members. It reduces uncertainty by offering a language for interpreting events and issues. It provides a sense of order so that all team members know what is expected. It contributes to continuity and unity. And it offers a vision around which a company can rally. Culture is an asset that should be managed in support of organizational goals.



Understanding an Organization's Culture.

Anthropologists have spent decades developing methods for categorizing and diagnosing organizational culture. Today, to identify culture, we look for clues in the people, products, and processes we can observe, leadership's espoused values, and perhaps most difficult, the unconscious, underlying assumptions shared by the team.

Based on decades of study, professors Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn have identified four basic types of organizational culture: Collaborate, Create, Control, and Compete. Each one carries different attitudes, behaviors, and work patterns that must be recognized to enhance effort and performance.



Collaborate

- Open, friendly, and sharing
- Group loyalty and sense of tradition are strong

Create

- Dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative
- Encourages individual initiative and freedom

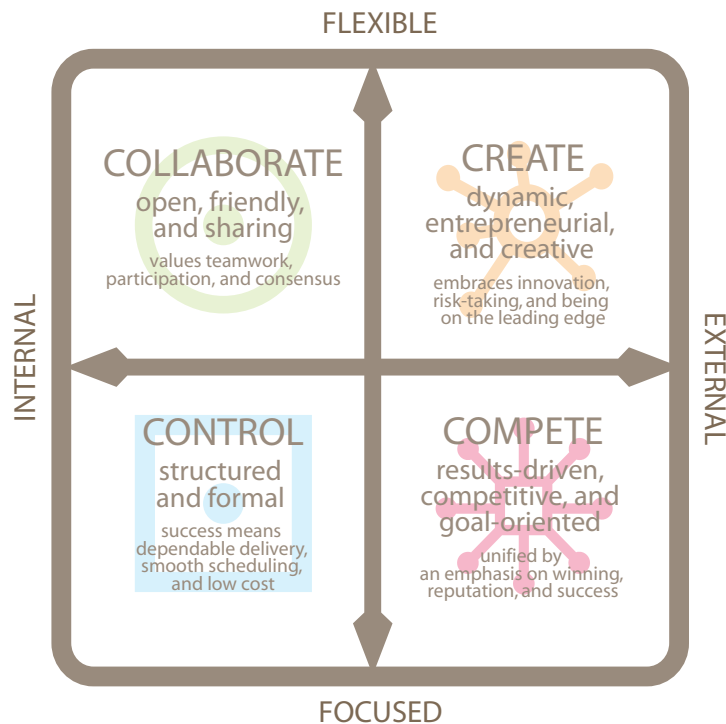
Control

- Highly structured and formal — rules and procedures reign
- Focus on stability, performance, and efficiency

Compete

- Results-driven, competitive, and goal-oriented
- Defined by market share and achieving market leadership

ONE FACT No culture type is better than another. The value is in understanding an organization or team's culture and how that culture helps support business goals. Only then can the workspace truly provide the support team members need.



How Space Can Support an Organization's Culture. Because each culture type is distinct, the same workspace could not support each one effectively. A Collaborative organization, with its emphasis on teamwork, needs spaces that foster interaction. A more controlled culture thrives on structure and stability, and calls for continuity from space to space. A culture based on competition needs to operate openly and be able to quickly adapt to change. Creative cultures must foster innovation, risk-taking, and individual initiative, with as little structure as necessary.

It's also important to note that within a company, culture is not uniform. Various subcultures will exist in departments or teams — some even contradicting the overall organization's culture. By looking at culture and subculture throughout an organization, space planners can begin to structure solutions to the workstyles they will support. By starting with a meaningful cultural assessment, planners can resolve complex and often competing issues with creative, constructive solutions that benefit team members and improve business performance.

One Haworth Center Reflects and Enhances Our Organizational Culture. In developing our new headquarters, Haworth did our best to create a welcoming environment that reflects our loyalty to our members, supports collaboration and communication, and enhances cohesion throughout the organization.

At the same time, we intentionally shifted from a safe, rigid design to one that reflects our flexibility, innovation, and global customer focus. Our new space nurtures the collaborative, competitive team we need to be in order to ensure success in the years ahead.