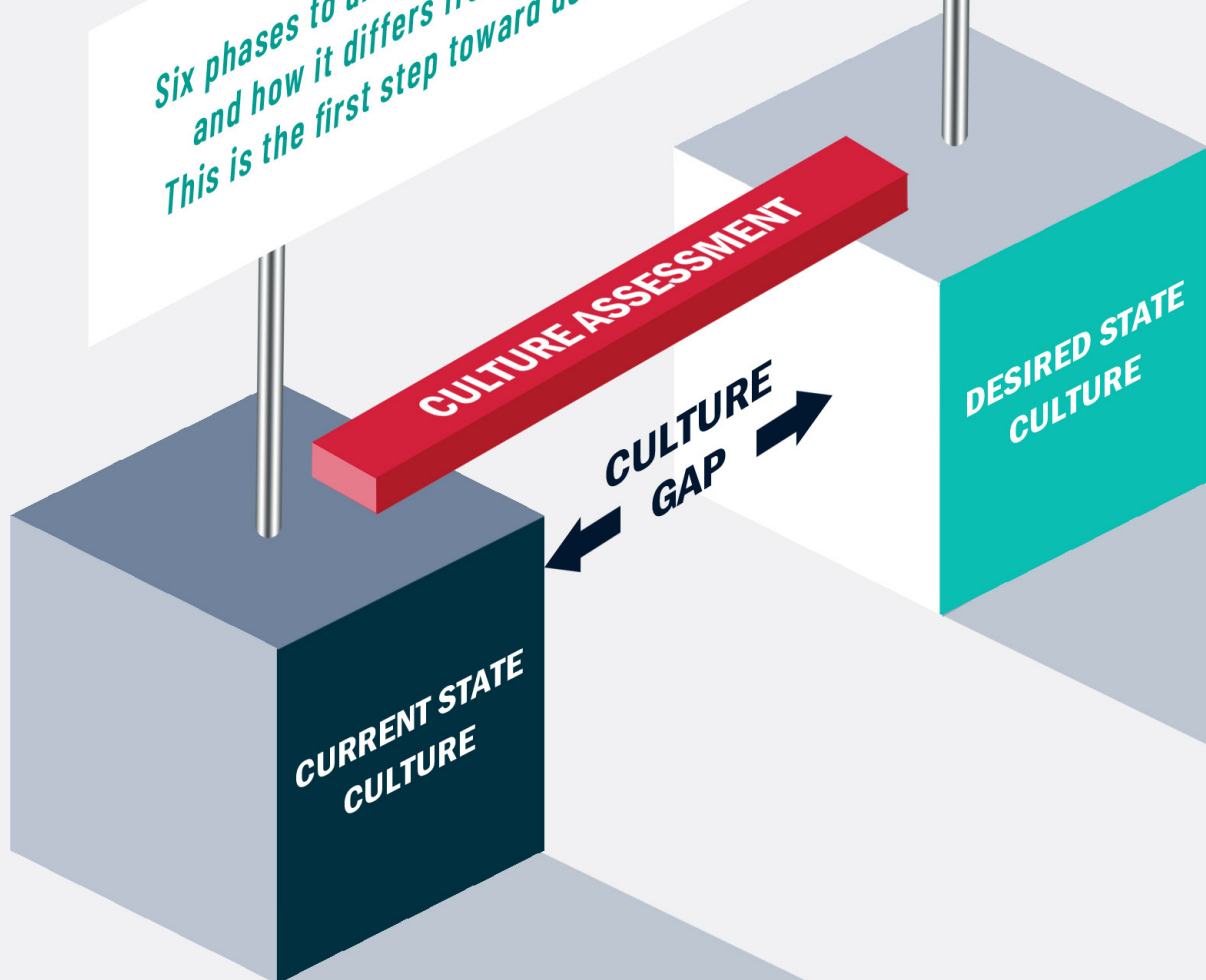


THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ASSESSMENT

*Six phases to understanding your organization's current culture
and how it differs from your desired organization culture.
This is the first step toward defining and improving a culture.*



Organization

Fundamentally, an organization is a collective of people working together and applying resources to accomplish a common goal. More granularly, an organization can be thought of as the structural framework of functional units, job functions, and responsibilities of people whose actions are performed to achieve a set of unified, common goals that have been defined to deliver value and create a sustainable competitive advantage.

The common element woven into any definition of an organization is **people**; every organization's most valuable resource. Even when you consider the most widely accepted set of elements of an organization—common purpose or goals, coordinated activities, division of labor, and reporting relationships—every element involves and requires people. Therefore, it is our opinion that Organizational Culture is fundamentally about an organization's people, as they are the element most impacted by culture (this is represented in the diagram below). For this reason, our Organizational Culture Assessment is internally-focused, with an emphasis on a culture's impact on its people, their engagement, performance, and well-being.



I believe that an organization's culture is grounded in its people; and people—especially leaders—think and behave in a way that has served them well throughout their careers. To them, the way *they* act and treat people is the “right” way to act and treat people, even if their modus operandi is anachronistic. For this reason, culture change often requires *behavioral change* in an organization's people. Human nature, however, leans toward habits, which can become ingrained over the years, making individual behavioral change—and therefore, culture change—challenging. Good luck trying to *believe it* into existence.

—Tab Edwards

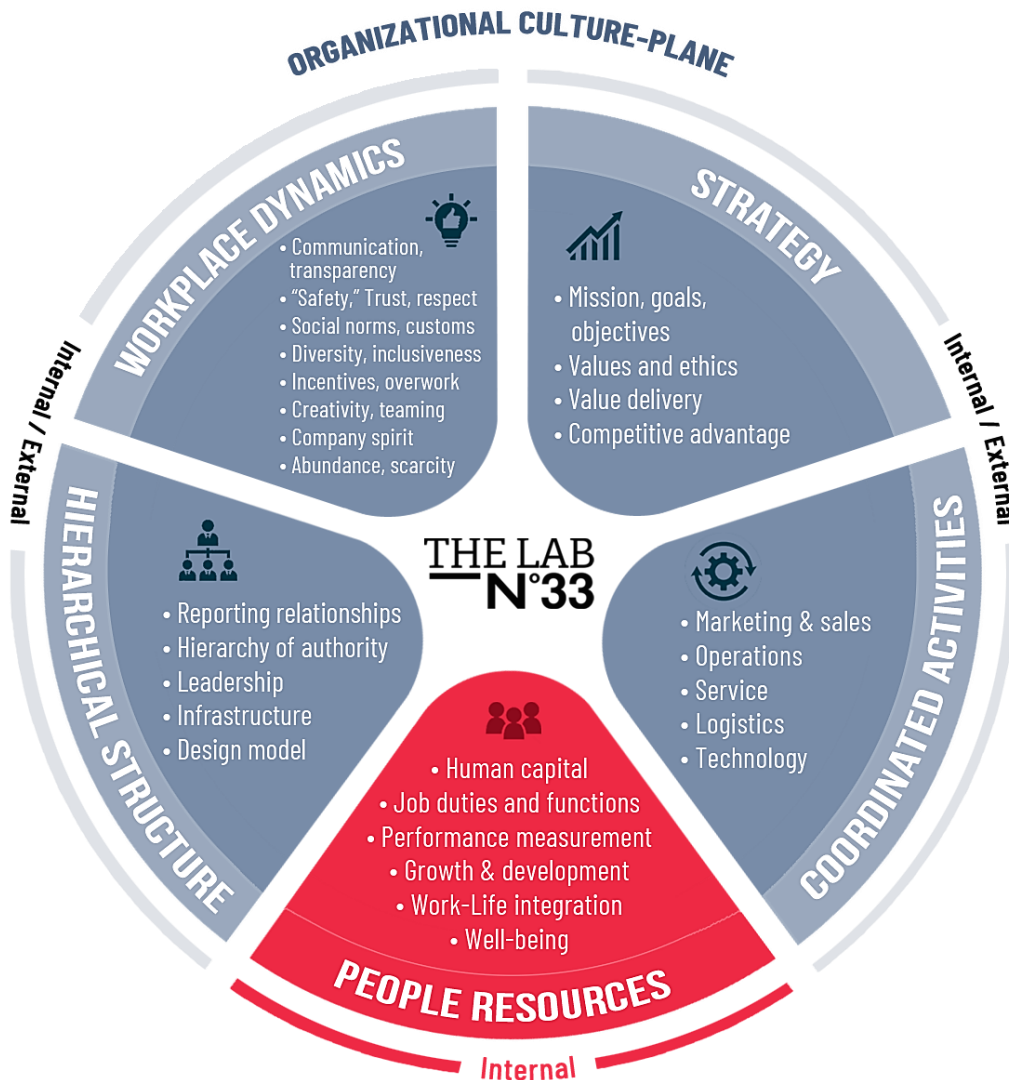
Bestselling author of *MBI: Management By Initiatives*

Organizational Culture-Plane

A *plane* is a surface with endless possibilities on which two entities are joined. A plane is also a level on which ideas, thought, and behavior exists. A “Culture-Plane” is term we use to represent the plane on which the characteristics, traits, or artifacts of an entity that exists on that plane (e.g., an organization) inform the thoughts, behaviors, and actions—the *culture*—of the people within that entity.

Our Culture-Plane diagram below represents what we believe are culture-drivers related the primary elements of an organization: the Strategy, a set of Coordinated Activities, the People, the Hierarchical Structure, and the Workplace Dynamics within the organization.

In our experience, when an organization embarks on an effort to understand and, ultimately, improve its *culture*, they are mostly interested in the internal, human aspect of their culture more so than the macro, external environmental aspect. Also, an organization’s culture most significantly impacts its most valuable resource: its people. For these reasons, our Culture Assessment focuses internally on understanding an organization’s culture and its impact on its people resources.



What is “Organization Culture” Anyway?

A simple way to consider an organization’s “culture” is as follows: First, think of the way a member of that organization would describe the way the people in the organization—especially the organization’s leadership—think, behave, act, treat others, and the things the leaders allow. Next, imagine that person describing these things to their best friend. Good or bad, the way the person describes the organization to his or her friend is likely a reasonable reflection of the organization’s culture. But a culture can be many things. Fundamentally, we believe that an Organization Culture is any mix or form of at least ten things:

DESCRIPTIONS OF ORGANIZATION CULTURE

Something that is neither defined nor controlled by one person or group	The way members of the organization describe “the people” in the organization
Something that can develop both intentionally and unintentionally	An accepted way that people interact with and treat each other
The way a collective’s paradigm, its purpose, its leaders’ demonstrable behaviors, its accepted practices, its traditions, its structure, and its processes influence and shape the thoughts and behaviors—spoken or unspoken—of its members	It’s like smell: We can’t smell ourselves, but others can; people who have become assimilated into the culture become blind to it, but the unassimilated are aware of it
An image produced by unified, pervasive behavior	It is, “How people in this company treat people!”
An attribute that can impact an organization’s success	“I’m not sure, but I know it when I experience it”



Customers will never love a company until the employees love it first.

Simon Sinek,
author, *Start with Why*

There’s no magic formula for great company culture. The key is just to treat your staff how you would like to be treated.

Richard Branson,
Founder, Virgin Group

Organization Culture Types

It is quite possible that the number of organizational culture types is infinite, because much of culture is based in behaviors, mindsets, and social norms which are often unspoken and covert. This creates a challenge for leaders trying to get a handle on their organization's culture, knowing that one of the first steps in addressing culture is identifying your organization's *existing* culture type.

There are, however, many prominent culture types that we find exist within organizations of all forms, within all sectors, of all sizes, and across all geographies. We have listed eighteen (18) such culture types in the table below. Which type of culture do you **think** defines your organization?

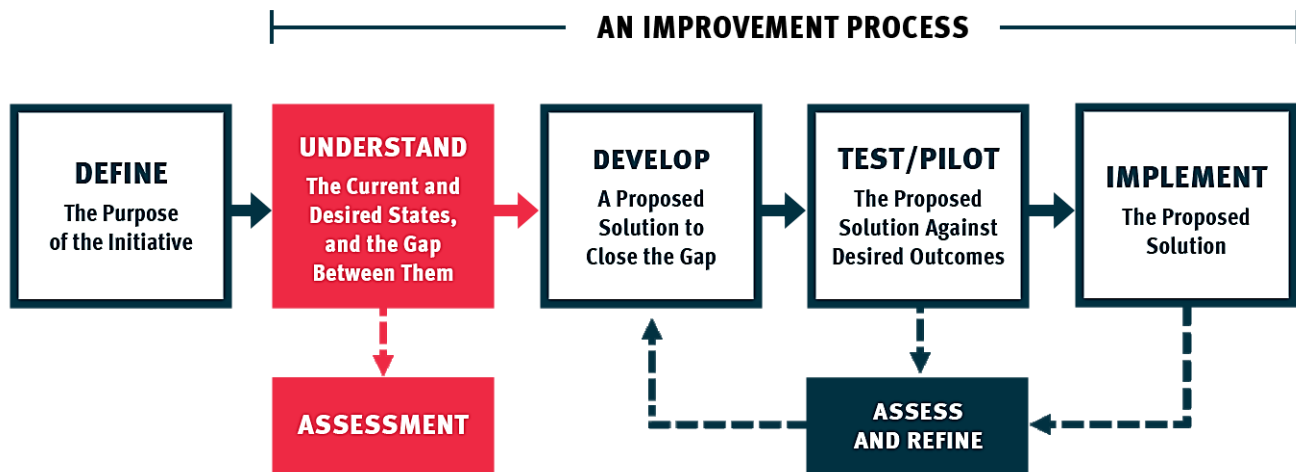
Inbred: Hiring clones and people with similar or the same characteristics as the leader and other insiders. Lacks diversity. More “who” you know than “what.”	Authority: Emphasizes hierarchy, strong control, and rules. People work through official channels. Seeks competitive advantage.	Compete: An aggressive environment focused on competition and achievement, driven by profits; “do or die.” People: either winners or losers.
Innovative: People are experimental, adaptable, and creative. Job titles and hierarchy are downplayed.	Government: People don't go the extra mile, work 9-to-5, and do the minimal work required. A “Not my job,” inefficient, uninspired, disengaged workforce.	People-Oriented: Emphasizes fairness and respect for the individual. Friendly, inclusive, and diverse. Leaders treat employees with dignity & respect.
Results-oriented: Emphasize achieving success, quantifiable metrics; supported by a merit-based reward system. High level of accountability. Competitive.	Learning: People characterized by curiosity, inventiveness, exploration, creativity, and knowledge. Emphasizes growth & development, and engagement.	Enjoyment: Characterized by stimulation, fun, and excitement, yet, focused on results and achievement. Fun-loving people, seek work that brings happiness.
Purpose: Driven by accomplishing a goal or higher cause than personal accomplishments (e.g., human rights). Most common for non-profits.	Collaborative: Teamwork is emphasized over individual projects. High-knowledge-sharing & mentoring. Positive working relationships, caring, openness.	Create: An entrepreneurial, creative, dynamic environment. Innovative, experimental, and risk-taking. Promotes initiative. Visionary & future-focused.
Clan: People behave as one big family. People are friendly and helpful, with leaders viewed as non-threatening. Group-think is common.	Paternalistic: Limits liberty, regulates autonomy, and perpetuates disparities in opportunities, promotions, and compensation. Discriminatory.	Stable: A bureaucratic environment. Performs best when things are stable and predictable. Inflexible. Slow to act and react to change.
Petty: People police what everyone else does. “Your skirt is short! I'm reporting you to HR.” People are critical, gossipy, catty, and selfish. They diminish others to get ahead.	Anachronistic: Thought-diversity, beliefs, strategies, and ways of conducting business are stuck in a bygone era. Non-competitive. People have sub-par tech skills.	Unsafe: people are risk-averse, afraid of making mistakes for fear of punishment or retaliation. They do not speak openly or truthfully. Lack of trust and honesty. Stress.

Improving an Organization's Culture

ALL IMROVEMENT REQUIRES CHANGE...

And change is not possible without actionable knowledge. Our assessment is the approach by which we help organizations acquire knowledge. It is a systematic approach for gathering evidence on how well performance matches expectations and standards. It incorporates the analysis and interpretation of the evidence so that the resulting information can be used to document, explain, and improve performance.

The diagram below represents a general improvement process; the phase of the process highlighted in red is the assessment.



Our Culture Assessment is a systematic approach for gathering evidence on how well performance matches expectations and standards

The Lab N°33 Culture Assessment Methodology

Our process for conducting a Culture Assessment consists of six (6) phases:

PHASE 0: Pre-Assessment Planning Session

PHASE 1: Define the Scope of Work

PHASE 2: Collect Qualitative and Quantitative Data

PHASE 3: Perform a Process Study

PHASE 4: Analyze the Data and Define the Organization Culture

PHASE 5: Present the Findings

PHASE 0: PRE-ASSESSMENT PLANNING SESSION

The pre-assessment planning session is a meeting with the organization and project team leaders to discuss the Assessment effort, explain the methodology, discuss the support and logistical requirements from all parties, confirm the communication plan and approach, and ensure that the client has a solid understanding about all aspects of the Assessment effort.

In addition, the planning team will articulate the desired outcomes of the Assessment and define the project purpose, which will partly determine how the Assessment is conducted and reported.

PHASE 1: DEFINE THE SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

Assessing large organizations—those with multiple locations in different countries, regions, and states, with tens-of-thousands of employees spread across different physical locations—can be challenging and resource-consuming; they can also be a waste of time and other resources.

To optimize the assessment data gathering effort, we recommend defining and assessing a “*Representative Study Group*.” The “study group” (also known as the “sample group”) is the group of workers and offices that will be analyzed in detail. A representative study group is a purposefully-defined subset of the organization that incorporates the various employee types, work process characteristics, and mores that can be found throughout the broader organization. The representative study group’s findings and results will be extrapolated to represent the organization’s total population.

Defining the scope:

- Determine the locations to be studied
- Determine the user population to be studied
- Define the information requirements that result from the Assessment
- Determine the Representative Study Group
- Confirm the duration of the on-site data gathering activity

PHASE 2: COLLECT QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

As appropriate, we will gather qualitative and quantitative data through a combination of data-gathering approaches, including web-based surveys, in-person interviews, focus groups, on-site process study, and assisted-quantitative-data-gathering sessions*.

*Not applicable for all assessments

PHASE 3: PERFORM A PROCESS STUDY

For Assessments where it is agreed that an organization's internal processes drive workers' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, we will perform a study of the process(es) in question to understand where in the process—if at all—the culture-drivers, traits, and artifacts exist, why they exist, and the impact on workers' culture-related behaviors.

If there is indeed a process, we will map the process for easy analysis and review. The mapping will be included in the final Assessment Findings Report.

PHASE 5: ANALYZE THE DATA AND DEFINE THE ORGANIZATION CULTURE

After the data-gathering activities have been completed, we will compile, synthesize, and analyze the data to identify elements that inform and contribute to the definition of the organization's culture.

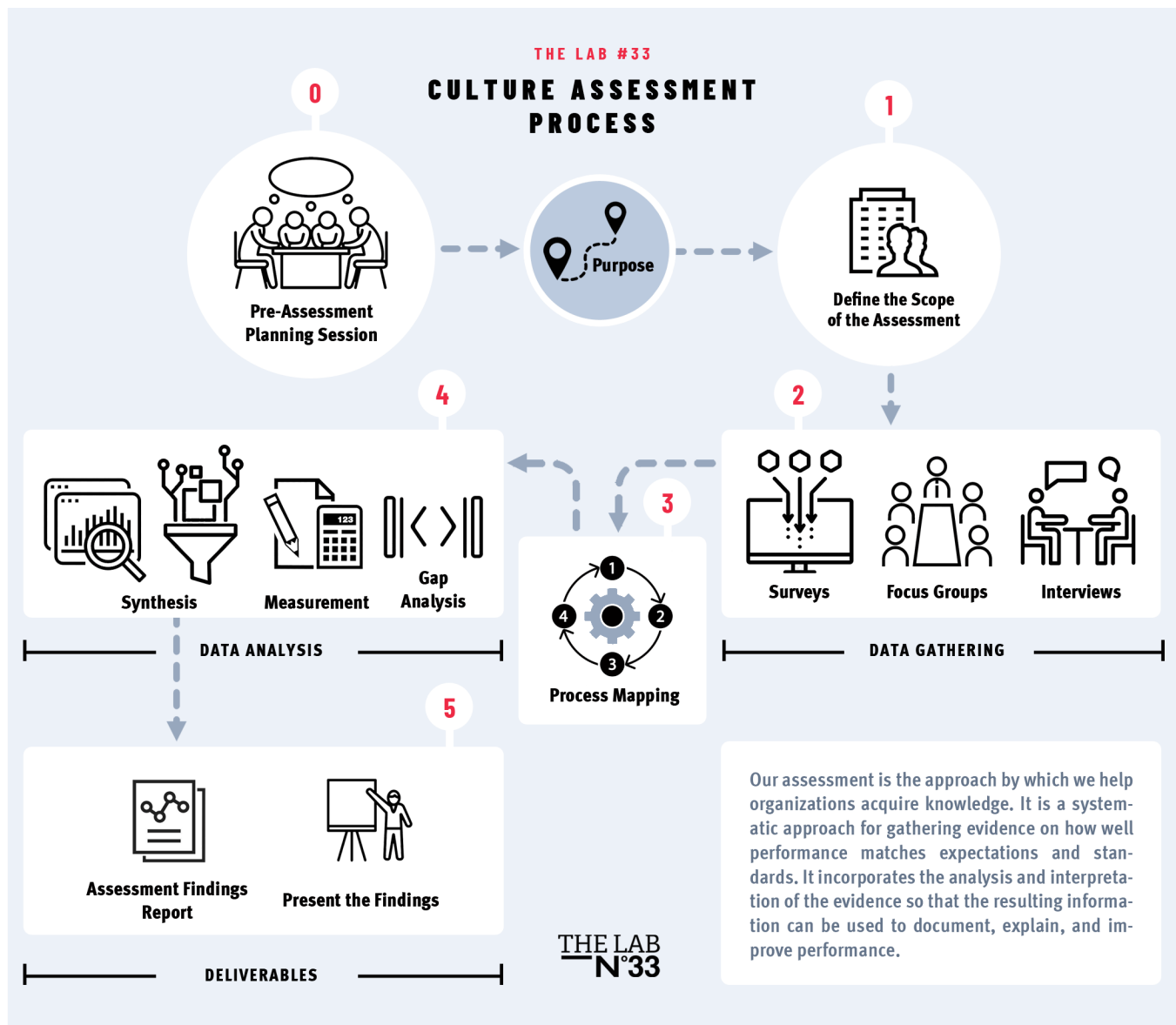
We will also perform a gap analysis to compare the Current Culture State to the Desired Culture State.

We will use the resulting insights and findings to create a Cultural Map (which will identify where the organization's culture exists on a quadrant of culture-influencers) and, ultimately, a definition of the organization's culture as determined by the data.

PHASE 5: PRESENT THE FINDINGS

The Assessment approach, synthesized data, general findings, Cultural Map, and the organization's cultural definition will be developed into an Assessment Findings Report and reviewed in-person with the organization's culture team; a written report will also be delivered electronically in a portable document format (pdf).

**All improvement requires change,
and change is not possible without knowledge**



For More Information, Please Contact Us: Info@Thelab33.Com

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