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# Culture at Work



Introducing the Campbell Tickell CultureScan<sup>©</sup> Aug 2019

*“When the culture is strong, you can trust everyone to do the right thing”*

Brian Chesky, Co-founder and CEO, Airbnb

## CT CultureScan<sup>©</sup> and the seven pillars of positive culture

Pretty much everyone agrees that organisational culture matters. A positive culture creates better performance, innovation and job satisfaction, not to mention competitiveness. You name it, culture does the trick. When things go wrong, negative (or even toxic) culture is often at the root. Much business literature majors on the subject, while inspirational speakers can dine out on it every night of the week.

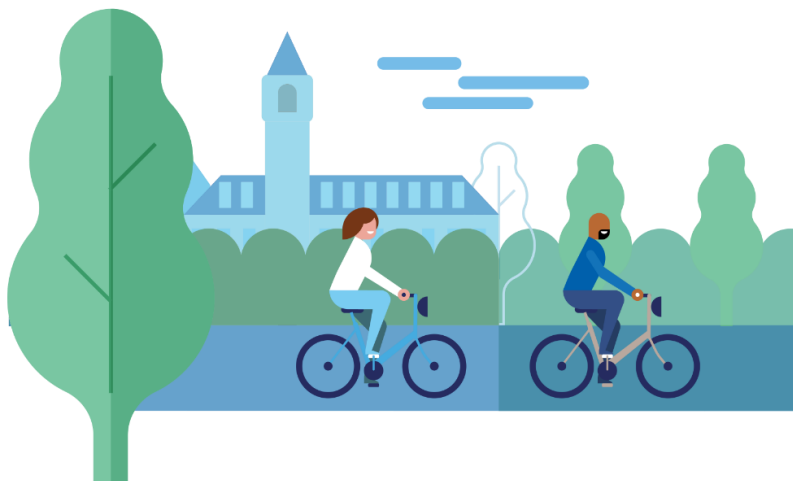
So how good is the culture of your organisation? How do you really know? For a start, in most organisations the top brass has a rosier view than those at the front line. Not surprising maybe, but not widely appreciated. Equally, there may be more than one culture at work – by office, team, length of service or other defining characteristics.

In any case, what are the best metrics and language to define culture? It goes way beyond staff satisfaction of course, but what words can best describe the attributes of the desired positive culture for your various workplaces?

After some eighteen months of research, product development and pilot projects, consultancy Campbell Tickell has now launched its innovative CultureScan<sup>©</sup> tool, which aims to answer these questions for our clients across all sectors.

*“A healthy culture both protects and generates value. It is therefore important to have a continuous focus on culture, rather than wait for a crisis.”*

Sir Winfried Bischoff, Chairman, Financial Reporting Council



Our CultureScan<sup>®</sup> firstly defines and measures culture along seven intuitively devised scales, based on researched psychological principles.

It provides leaders and managers with a simply stated set of assessments for how their different teams are functioning, and above all key insights for improvement and change. Its relevance could include:

- As part of preparation for a merger, to establish what are the differences between the partners, and how best to invest time and resources to bring them together.
- In advance of a major change or transformation programme, to set a benchmark which can be retested after the project is complete as part of the evaluation.
- As a diagnostic tool where performance or morale appears to have dipped, or other concerns are emerging.
- Within a wider group structure, to define the different cultures which exist, and to inform plans better to align them.
- Instead of a more narrowly focused staff satisfaction survey.
- A simple health check as part of 'business as usual'.

Now tried and tested, the tool is available for wider application, whether for a whole organisation, or for particular teams, subsidiaries or groups of colleagues.

*"St Mungo's had been through significant changes from 2015-2017: processes, people, policies, trustees. We'd even changed our branding - twice! But when asked the question 'How has your culture changed?' we were unable to provide an answer. Campbell Tickell worked with us on a short timeframe on a bespoke package, including questionnaires, focus groups and structured interviews. They involved managers, front line staff, commissioners and other key stakeholders to identify in a clear but meaningful way how much our culture had changed (24% on average).*

*Most importantly CT left us with a tool to measure that change going forward, which we will use every two years. This work not only meant we could demonstrate the positive effects of our changes externally, including to regulators, but also brought together people internally as they realised how much the positive effects of their hard work had impacted on the St Mungo's culture."*

Howard Sinclair, Chief Executive, St Mungo's

## The seven pillars of positive culture

We start with our seven defining characteristics of great organisations, noting of course that there can be no ‘one size fits all’ aspirational target. Each organisation needs to be fit for its own mission, activities, time and place. A care home may need a very different culture to a commercial development team, and so on. But all the great ones will have some characteristics in common.

| The pillars                            | Associated key words  |
|--|---|
| <b>Contented</b><br><br>(Dissatisfied) | <b>Happy, friendly, optimistic, upbeat, satisfied, wellbeing, cared-for, safe, valued, recognised, fair, positive, inclusive, welcoming, diverse, accepted, belonging</b><br><br>(Resentful, aggrieved, toxic, pessimistic, downbeat, unhappy, unsettled, negative, neglected, unfairness, stress, rejected, discriminated, demoralised)                            |
| <b>Empowered</b><br><br>(Instructed)   | <b>Autonomy, distributed leadership, flexibility, devolution, personal responsibility, consultation, involvement, bottom up decisions, ownership</b><br><br>(Top-down power, unquestioning obedience, control, leaders’ personality driven, fear, worry, permission, hierarchy, but ... perceived certainty, stability)   |
| <b>Structured</b><br><br>(Sloppy)      | <b>Safety, compliance, safeguarding, basics right, right first time, delivering standards and targets, processes followed, double-checking, assurance</b><br><br>(Corner-cutting, making it up, hiding mistakes, rule-breaking, weak processes & controls, no consequences, maverick, slapdash, mediocrity, lack of structure)                                      |
| <b>Engaged</b><br><br>(Remote)         | <b>Teamwork, belonging, customer focus, inclusive, recognition, informal, respectful, conscientious, responsible, busy, committed, loyalty, pride</b><br><br>(Detached, unsupportive, distant, formal, unappreciative, clock-watching, apathy, no values identification, skiving, taking liberties, “computer says no”)   |
| <b>Agile</b><br><br>(Rigid)            | <b>Decisive, proactive, curious, strategic, quick, open, creative, resilient, ahead of the game, dealing with ambiguity/complexity, diversity of thought</b><br><br>(Slow, closed, process, bureaucracy, duplication, inflexible, ponderous, lack of debate and challenge, job demarcation, group-think)  |
| <b>Progressive</b><br><br>(Defensive)  | <b>Evolving, transforming, learning, improving, results, innovation, performance, communication, consultation, risk aware, personal development, open to influence and feedback, diverse</b><br><br>(Blame/punishment tradition, legacy, reluctant to change, tried & tested, risk averse, inward focus, secretive, defensive, closed, opaque, “not invented here”) |
| <b>Aligned</b><br><br>(Fragmented)     | <b>One team, one culture, confident, trust, fair, consistent conscientious, integrity, values driven, mission, inclusion, the ‘Golden Thread’, cooperation</b><br><br>(Silos, tribal team cultures, no shared purpose, buck-passing, in-fighting, power struggles, favourites, isolated, inconsistent)  |

Each of the seven also has a 'dark shadow' – the corresponding negative or toxic characteristics, see above (in brackets).

It should be pointed out that positive characteristics of a diverse and inclusive culture run through all seven, rather than being defined as a separate characteristic. We have found in practice that this is an underlying enabler for each and all of the seven positive pillars.

*“Having a compelling mission, culture and values are critical when it comes to attracting and retaining top talent in a competitive job market – it is what differentiates each and every employer.”*

Christian Sutherland-Wong, President and COO, Glassdoor

## How does it work?

The methodology is based on a simple questionnaire for all staff, board and committee members and other volunteers; ideally this is supplemented by a number of focus groups and/or interviews, typically conducted once the survey findings have been received, and subjected to initial analysis. There is some scope to adjust the questions for each client, but there are advantages to a standard approach, allowing more comparison with (anonymised) peer group organisations. All respondents are offered a cast-iron guarantee of anonymity, to encourage frank responses.

## Costs and timescales

Our fees will depend on the number of staff, the level of analysis required and the number of focus groups/interviews. A tailored quotation can be produced at relatively short notice. As ever, we focus on providing good value for money, while delivering timely quality results. We offer broadly three levels of service, costs varying according to number of individuals surveyed:

**Basic:** Administration of the standard survey, with preparation of a simple report on the results as above, together with a digest of anonymised comments.

**Standard:** As Basic, but with agreed customisation of the survey, and full analysis of and commentary on the findings; PowerPoint presentation of the results; summary recommended action plan.

**Enhanced:** As Standard, but with focus groups, individual interviews, assessment of past staff surveys etc and a full report with feedback and analysis of all inputs, with detailed suggestions for future action.

In terms of timing, the staff/board survey typically needs to remain open for 3 weeks, so the overall assignment should take from 5-8 weeks, depending on the option chosen.

## The CT CultureScan® report

Our report template follows a semi-standard format, obviously customisable to each client's needs at the outset. This would be confidential, although we would also suggest an approach for wider communication to all staff and perhaps stakeholders. Section headings would typically include:

- Introduction
- Headline findings: evident strengths; potential concerns and pinch-points
- Results: the seven pillars in detail
- Diversity and inclusion in focus
- Consistency between teams and different groups of colleagues
- Reflections on potential concerns
- Conclusions: Is the culture fit for purpose? Suggestions for follow-up and action
- Appendix: Supporting data tables and comments (anonymised)
- Appendix: Proposed summary for wider communication to colleagues.

## More information

For more information, or to discuss your requirements, please contact James Tickell ([james.tickell@campbelltickell.com](mailto:james.tickell@campbelltickell.com)) or Annie Field ([annie@campbelltickell.com](mailto:annie@campbelltickell.com)) both on + 44(0)20 8830 6777.

*“One Housing was going through a period of change and transformation. At the start of the process we wanted to gain some good intelligence about our people – their values and their views of us. We worked with Campbell Tickell to carry out a CultureScan.*

*The work gave us vital insights into how the organisation really works – as opposed to how we thought it did. It highlighted real strengths for us to work with; for example that many staff valued and recognised our commitment to diversity and this was a key part of their work experience. But we also found challenges – our commitment to empowering frontline managers, for example, was not a reality to many, who felt decision making was slow.*

*The scan gave us a better sense of our overall culture, and also identified the pockets where local cultures were different. Perhaps most importantly, it gave us a strong sense of what we need to do to create the vibrant, focused, fun culture that we aim for.”*

Richard Hill, Chief Executive, One Housing Group

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