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CRITERIA FOR LOCAL HUMAN RESOURCES REFORM CHAMPIONS

DELIVERABLE NUMBER 3A, MYRA HOWZE SHIPLETT

**Contract No. DFD-I-00-08-00070-00
A Task Order under the ENGAGE IQC**

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CONTENTS

Purpose.....2

Why is Appointing Human Resources Reform Champions a Critical Successful Factor ...2

Criteria Used to Identify the Local HR Reform Champion3

Process to Select and Appoint HR Reform Champions.....4

Incentives Provided for Those Selected to Accept and Perform Well.....5

Implementation Steps5

Other Observations6

Annexes

 Annex A Article on Culture and Change7

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to:

- Explain why appointing Human Resources (HR) Champions is a critical successful factor for reforming the human resources functions of the Office of the Attorney General (AGO).
- Define the role of HR Reform Champions.
- Define the criteria the Office of the Attorney General, Republic of Indonesia, should consider when selecting champions for human resources reform.

Also included are:

- Alternatives methods to select and appoint local Human Resources Champions
- Incentives the AGO may want to consider providing to the individuals selected
- Steps to implement the local HR Champion Program
- Observations about the long term value of the local HR Champion Program

WHY IS APPOINTING HR CHAMPIONS A CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR?

The AGO is in the midst of profound change in the human resources policies, programs and procedures. Success in developing and implementing modern human resources policies, programs and procedures requires a significant change in the culture of the AGO. The leaders of the AGO – the Attorney General, the Vice Attorney General, the six Deputy Attorneys General and the other leaders, such as the Director of the Personnel Bureau – have a significant role to play in both defining the changes that need to occur in the human resources policies, programs and procedures and the leading the actions and activities required to make the changes a reality. The key to successful change is changing the organizational culture to both expect and accept a different way of doing business.

What does the term “organizational culture” mean?

“One of the primary responsibilities of strategic leaders is to create and maintain the organizational characteristics that reward and encourage collective effort. Perhaps the most fundamental of these is organizational culture. . . .

*Organizational cultures are created, maintained, or transformed by people. An organization's culture is, in part, also created and maintained by the organization's leadership. **Leaders at the executive level are the principle source for the***

generation and re-infusion of an organization's ideology, articulation of core values and specification of norms. (emphasis added) **Organizational values** express preferences for certain behaviors or certain outcomes. **Organizational norms** express behaviors accepted by others. They are culturally acceptable ways of pursuing goals. **Leaders also establish the parameters for formal lines of communication and message content-the formal interaction rules for the organization.** (Emphasis added) Values and norms, once transmitted through the organization, establish the permanence of the organization's culture.¹

The full article discussing the role of strategic leadership in changing and managing culture and cultural values is reproduced in Appendix A.

As the quote above highlights, an organization's leaders must be actively involved in defining the changes that are required, articulating the reasons the changes are necessary, and communicating the changes to subordinate leaders (executives, managers and supervisors) and to every employee of the organization.

It is for these reasons that identifying and appointing HR Reform Champions is important to the successful transformation of the human resources program in the AGO.

CRITERIA USED TO IDENTIFY THE LOCAL HR REFORM CHAMPION

The local reform champion should:

- Be a respected leader of the AGO who knows the vision and goals of:
 - Indonesia's government wide reform.
 - AGO system reform as articulated in the AGO Blue Print and other documents.
 - Human resources reform and the contribution that each of the human resources programs can make to the AGO specifically and more general government wide reform.
- Be a respected leader who is known for his/her ethical behavior, leadership capabilities, performance and ability to accomplish the strategic goals and objectives of the AGO.
- Be able to articulate these goals and explain the programs to the various audiences in the PPOs, DPO and headquarters organizations of the AGO. These audiences include:²
 - Prosecutors and others in leadership positions.
 - Prosecutors and others who are not in leadership positions.
 - AGO leaders, managers and supervisors who are not prosecutor.

¹ <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ndu/strat-ldr-dm/pt4ch16.html>

²These audiences need to be translated into the AGO system structure of echelons and the like.

- Employees.
- Understand the importance of talking about these goals and HR programs, and inspiring the employees at all levels to understand their role in making reform successful.
- Is able to both explain and be persuasive about the need for a substantial focus on improving the AGO's overall performance and productivity.
- Is able, on an ongoing basis, to talk about reform, seeking employee views on what is working and what is not, and then is able to adjust the implementation to correct the problems or difficulties encountered while still adhering to the agreed upon reform agenda.
- Is willing and able to invest the time required, which will be substantial over the next 3-5 years, to assume these critically important responsibilities.
- Can participate in the periodic evaluations of HR reform program reviews that should be conducted annually to check on the progress of the HR reform efforts.

PROCESS TO SELECT AND APPOINT HR REFORM CHAMPIONS

Three options for a suggested process to identify and appoint local HR reform champions are presented below. The selection process should include:

- Identify the selection criteria using the above suggestions or other criteria the AGO leadership believes is appropriate.
- Develop a selection process – the steps in the selection process are listed in Options 1-3 below.
- Decide how many HR champions are needed.
- Decide if a pilot test of the HR champions is needed or if all appointments can be made at the same time. Pilot testing is strongly recommended.
- If the AGO leadership decides that it wants to test the HR Champion program and processes, a time period for testing and criteria to measure success should be established. The test period should be at least 1-2 months.
- An organization and a specific individual should be assigned responsibility for managing the HR Champion program and assuring that it works as intended.
- Celebrate successes and share the information about the successes across the entire AGO.

- The AGO leadership should decide on a tentative end date for conclusion of the program so that it does not take on a life of its own and continue to exist long after the purpose and need for which it was created have disappeared.

With this selection process there are three options:

Option 1

- Share the proposed criteria with appropriate AGO prosecutor office leaders and ask for their input and reaction.
- Consider the responses that are submitted and make a final decision on the criteria.
- Ask the AGO and prosecutor office and other leaders whose views are valued to suggest names of individuals who meet the criteria and would be effective and efficient champions for HR reform.
- The Attorney General and his top leadership team can then meet as a group to decide on who will be selected, or the Attorney General can appoint a small group of key leaders to review the nominations and make recommendations to the leadership. Ultimately, the Attorney General, or his designee, should decide who these individuals will be.
- The person identified is vetted with the DAG or Chief Prosecutor of the individual AGO organization or PPO/DPO who then speaks with the candidate to explain what is required, the length of the appointment, and the performance expectations and incentives that accrue to the responsibility. If the individual is willing to accept the assignment, he/she received a formal letter or certificate of appointment. This rather formal process can be used to signify that this is a very important responsibility.
- Provide incentives and rewards for those who perform well in this role.

Option 2

Follow the same general steps, but delegate the decision to DAGs in the AGO and to the heads of PPOs in the field structure.

Option 3

Establish the policy and process through a formal Attorney General directive and delegate the authority to the DAG and/or the head of the PPO.

Regardless of the option chosen, there should be a periodic accountability and review process that assures that those who are chosen are carrying out their responsibilities effectively and efficiently.

INCENTIVES PROVIDED FOR THOSE SELECTED TO ACCEPT AND PERFORM WELL

Because this is a very important duty and responsibility, the AGO leadership may want to consider incentives for those who carry out these duties effectively. The incentive could be monetary or it could be honorary. If monetary, the incentive could take the form of an allowance similar to other allowances that are paid.

An alternative incentive could be that successful performance in this assignment is considered positively when the individual comes up for promotion or an alternative incentive could be the opportunity to take a professional development course, or some other work related activity that might otherwise be unavailable.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Step 1: The AGO leadership meets to decide on the criteria and process they will use for selection and appointment.

Step 2: Upon agreement the information on criteria and process are shared with all.

Step 3: Selections are made.

Step 4: Training is provided.

Step 5: The appointee begins his/her duties as the HR Reform Champion.

Step 6: At least annually, the performance of these individuals is assessed.

Step 7: Quarterly the HR Champions in a particular DAG or PPO, or all HR Champions in a particular geographical area, for example, meets to share lessons learned and decide on changes that need to occur.

Step 8: These lessons learned are provided to a central point accessible to all in the AGO/PPO/DPO to be reviewed and used to improve the various human resources programs and processes.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

The selection and the reward of HR Reform Champions can model the process and behavior that the AGO leadership wants to see in other selection and reward processes – for appointment, for reassignment and for promotion. Leading by example is one of the most effective and powerful forms of leadership and it will shape the organization culture to consider new ways of thinking and conducting HR policies, programs and processes.

The individuals who perform well as the HR champions could form a nucleus for the talent pool the AGO wants to develop in order to strengthen its overall leadership capability.

The individuals who perform well as the HR Champions expand the group of committed leaders and prosecutors who understand and support both the HR reform agenda and the larger reform agenda of the AGO.

This, or a similar process, could be used to establish Champions for other areas AGO/.PPO/DPO reform.

Annex A

Role of Leadership on Culture Change, National Defense University

<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ndu/strat-ldr-dm/pt4ch16.html>

Strategic Leadership and Decision Making

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

One of the primary responsibilities of strategic leaders is to create and maintain the organizational characteristics that reward and encourage collective effort. Perhaps the most fundamental of these is organizational culture. But what do we really mean by organizational culture? What influence does it have on an organization? How does one go about building, influencing or changing an organization's culture?

THE IMPACT OF CULTURE

*Why is culture so important to an organization? Edgar Schein, an MIT Professor of Management and author of *Organizational Culture and Leadership: A Dynamic View*, suggests that an organization's culture develops to help it cope with its environment. Today, organizational leaders are confronted with many complex issues during their attempts to generate organizational achievement in VUCA environments. A leader's success will depend, to a great extent, upon understanding organizational culture.*

Schein contends that many of the problems confronting leaders can be traced to their inability to analyze and evaluate organizational cultures. Many leaders, when trying to implement new strategies or a strategic plan leading to a new vision, will discover that their strategies will fail if they are inconsistent with the organization's culture. A CEO, SES, political appointee, or flag officer who comes into an organization prepared to "shake the place up" and institute sweeping changes, often experiences resistance to changes and failure. Difficulties with organizational transformations arise from failures to analyze an organization's existing culture.

WHAT IS ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE?

There is no single definition for organizational culture. The topic has been studied from a variety of perspectives ranging from disciplines such as anthropology and sociology, to the applied disciplines of organizational behavior, management science, and organizational communication. Some of the definitions are listed below:

A set of common understandings around which action is organized, . . . finding expression in language whose nuances are peculiar to the group (Becker and Geer 1960).

A set of understandings or meanings shared by a group of people that are largely tacit among members and are clearly relevant and distinctive to the particular group which are also passed on to new members (Louis 1980).

A system of knowledge, of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting . . . that serve to relate human communities to their environmental settings (Allaire and Firsirotu 1984).

The deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are: learned responses to the group's problems of survival in its external environment and its problems of internal integration; are shared by members of an organization; that operate unconsciously; and that define in a basic "taken -for-granted" fashion in an organization's view of itself and its environment (Schein 1988).

Any social system arising from a network of shared ideologies consisting of two components: substance-the networks of meaning associated with ideologies, norms, and values; and forms-the practices whereby the meanings are expressed, affirmed, and communicated to members (Trice and Beyer 1984).

This sampling of definitions represents the two major camps that exist in the study of organizational culture and its "application strategies." The first camp views culture as implicit in social life. Culture is what naturally emerges as individuals transform themselves into social groups as tribes, communities, and ultimately, nations. The second camp represents the view that culture is an explicit social product arising from social interaction either as an intentional or unintentional consequence of behavior. In other words, culture is comprised of distinct observable forms (e.g., language, use of symbols, ceremonies, customs, methods of problem solving, use of tools or technology, and design of work settings) that groups of people create through social interaction and use to confront the broader social environment. (Wuthnow and Witten 1988). This second view of culture is most relevant to the analysis and evaluation of organizational culture and to cultural change strategies that leaders can employ to improve organizational performance.

BEHAVIOR AND ARTIFACTS

*We can also characterize culture as consisting of three levels (Schein 1988). The most visible level is **behavior and artifacts**. This is the observable level of culture, and consists of behavior patterns and outward manifestations of culture: perquisites provided to executives, dress codes, level of technology utilized (and where it is utilized), and the physical layout of work spaces. All may be visible indicators of culture, but difficult to interpret. Artifacts and behavior also may tell us what a group is doing, but not why. One cartoon which captures this aspect shows two executives sitting at their desks in an office. Both have large billed black and white checked hats. One is saying to the other, "I don't know how it started, either. All I know is that it's part of our corporate culture."*

VALUES

*At the next level of culture are **values**. Values underlie and to a large extent determine behavior, but they are not directly observable, as behaviors are. There may be a difference between stated and operating values. People will attribute their behavior to stated values.*

ASSUMPTIONS AND BELIEFS

*To really understand culture, we have to get to the deepest level, the level of **assumptions and beliefs**. Schein contends that underlying assumptions grow out of values, until they become taken for granted and drop out of awareness. As the definition above states, and as the cartoon illustrates, people may be unaware of or unable to articulate the beliefs and assumptions forming their deepest level of culture.*

*To understand culture, we must understand all three levels, a difficult task. One additional aspect complicates the study of culture: the group or **cultural unit** which "owns" the culture. An organization may have many different cultures or subcultures, or even no discernible dominant culture at the organizational level. Recognizing the cultural unit is essential to identifying and understanding the culture.*

*Organizational cultures are created, maintained, or transformed by people. An organization's culture is, in part, also created and maintained by the organization's leadership. Leaders at the executive level are the principle source for the generation and re-infusion of an organization's ideology, articulation of core values and specification of norms. **Organizational values** express preferences for certain behaviors or certain outcomes. **Organizational norms** express behaviors accepted by others. They are culturally acceptable ways of pursuing goals. Leaders also establish the parameters for formal lines of communication and message content-the formal interaction rules for the organization. Values and norms, once transmitted through the organization, establish the permanence of the organization's culture.*

WHAT RELEVANCE DOES ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE HAVE TO LEADERS IN FEDERAL AGENCIES?

*One of the most perplexing issues facing leaders within the Department of Defense and other agencies of the federal government can be classified under one rubric-**change**. Government organizations' responses to events such as the "re-invention of government", downsizing and defense conversion, shrinking operating budgets, acquisition reform, and the military's expanded role in operations other than war are requiring leaders to make course corrections. Leaders in these organizations are being challenged to think differently, to:*

- **Reconceptualize** the role their organization plays in government
- **Reconceptualize**, the goals of their organization, and
- **Reconceptualize** how people in their organizations will work together to achieve these goals.

*The term **reconceptualize** is emphasized here because **the 21st century challenges for strategic leaders in this country involve interpreting what appears to be the same world in radically different ways**. For example, not only must the Department of Defense work to make "jointness" achieve its potential, it must also reconceptualize how it can effectively operate with domestic and foreign civilian agencies in activities other than war. So DOD's goals of providing global deterrence and warfighting capability must be reconceptualized into simultaneously providing the capability for coalition building, peacekeeping, and humanitarian operations.*

Strategic leaders have an additional set of challenges. They have to create the means and the opportunities to infuse their employees with new ways of looking at themselves and their capabilities. Leaders' new ideologies and values need to be communicated effectively, internalized by employees, and then translated into productive methods of thinking and working. The useful techniques for overcoming these challenges fall within the domains of evaluating and transforming organizational cultures.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IS ALSO A SYNTHESIS OF SUBCULTURES

Sociologists Gary Fine and Sherryl Kleinman discuss how distinct societies are composites of interacting subcultures rather than a single overarching culture. Organizations consist of

subgroups that have specific characteristics and a sense of identification. Within organizations, people can easily classify themselves and others into various social categories or groups based on identification with their primary work group, occupational or professional skills, union membership, or age cohort. (Ouchi 1980, and Ashforth and Mael 1989). Subgroups in organizations can and do create subcultures that comprise specific networks of meaning; yet, at the same time, they remain associated with the ideologies and values of the organization's leadership. For example, at a macro level the culture that is attributed to the Department of Defense comprises the distinct cultures of the different military services and the corps of civil servants assigned to each service agency (Builder 1989). A closer examination of each service culture reveals still greater cultural differentiation among occupational specialties, specific units within the service, and between line and staff personnel. Yet all of these subcultures adhere to the core ideologies, values and norms of the DOD.

Numerous studies of organizational culture have highlighted that the formation and maintenance of culture requires interpersonal interaction within subgroups. For example, research led by Meryl Louis (Louis, Posner, and Powell 1983) demonstrated the benefits of subgroup interaction to newcomers "learning the ropes" of the jobs. Survey respondents in their first job experience reported that the three most important socialization aids were:

- *Interaction with peers*
- *Interaction with their supervisor*
- *Interaction with senior co-workers.*

Interaction with peers on the job was viewed as most important in helping newcomers becoming effective employees. Interaction is important for the acculturation of newcomers. However, to get a grasp on how cultures are formed and promulgated we need to ask: "what is the content of interpersonal interaction in work settings?"

Research conducted by John VanMaanan and Steven Barley (1984) provides some insight to this question. They discovered that the content of the interaction is behavioral and cognitive in nature. During initial interactions with newcomers, the established occupational community transmits to new members those shared occupational practices (including norms and roles), values, vocabularies and identities—all examples of the explicit social products that are indicative of culture in organizations. These findings were reinforced by Sonja Sackmann's research on subcultures in a medium sized conglomerate in the United States. She found that subcultures were found to form on the basis of functional domains; principally in their biased knowledge of events in the organization, in their biased explanations of cause and effect relationships, and in their patterns of behavior. The conglomerate's production division consisted of three subcultures: electronics production, shop floor production, and product inspection. Sackmann reported:

Each subgroup was influenced by the nature of its particular work. This "local" orientation also differentiated each group from the others. All three groupings clearly distinguished between "we" and "them". This distinction was supported by my observations of them. They dressed differently, and they worked in distinctly different work spaces that were furnished differently. They took separate breaks during the day, and the tone in which they interacted varied in its degree of roughness. The electronics group talked about "job security," "a small company," and "health and dental insurance." The shop floor production group talked about "more work," "upgrade of assembly," and "being in control of the job." [Discussion] themes in the shop floor production group were oriented toward people, growth in the division/company, and strategy. The inspection group mentioned an "expanded inspection department," "improvements in quality control," the

"quality control system," or "partnership." Some [other discussion] themes in the group were growth of the division/company and orientation toward people (Sackmann 1992).

Organizations do not, however, always have homogeneous subcultures. The explicit social products produced by subcultures within organizations can be widely diverse and even result in countercultures. Such was the case of the Army Air Forces as its early proponents, such as Brig. General Billy Mitchell, tried to assert the value of airpower against the resistance of the traditional warfighting cultures of the Army and the Navy. The culmination of the airpower counter culture's assertiveness, both through word and deed resulted in the formation of the Air Force as a separate service in 1947. Similar examples of military counter cultures also exist in the Navy (e.g., Admiral Rickover's nuclear submarine counterculture) and the Army (e.g., General Hutton's skunkworks that created the armed helicopter)(Zald and Berger 1978).

*In a more contemporary example, researchers Joanne Martin and Caren Siehl from Stanford University (1983) conducted an analysis of the events and stories related to John Delorean's tenure as division head at General Motors. They concluded that Delorean created a subculture **counter** to the corporate GM culture based in the core values of loyalty, hierarchy, and conformity. Executives were expected to show deferential respect for authority and accept deferential treatment from subordinates; openly express loyalty to the corporation; and to be conservative in their choices of wardrobe and office decoration.*

Delorean took steps to create a counter culture that would try to force innovations when he could not get his ideas accepted by his superiors. Capitalizing on the support of his followers, Delorean and his people expressed a new culture with an alternative set of core values, preferring productivity to deference, objective measures of performance to subjective measures of conformity, and independence to blind loyalty. They dressed in contemporary styles, redecorated their offices in bright bold colors and modern furniture, and discarded GM's bureaucratic procedures for streamlined decision making processes. Delorean also refused to participate in the ceremonies and rituals of deference that were widely practiced in the corporation. As an ultimate rejection of GM's core values, Delorean attacked a GM icon, the Corvair (before Ralph Nader) for faulty construction, its unsafe performance and persistent maintenance problems. For a while, Delorean was able to maintain a delicate balance within the dominant culture's latitude of tolerance, but eventually met with disfavor; he was asked to leave the company and the counter culture disintegrated.

These examples illustrate that countercultures can have both productive and unproductive outcomes. Perhaps the key to a counterculture's success (i.e., the promulgation of its ideology, values and norms) is the group's ability to demonstrate how its idiosyncrasies are consonant with the core ideologies, values and norms of the dominant culture. The counter cultures in the military services still possessed the ethos of warfighters, albeit through different forms of warfighting technology. Overtime, the strategic bomber, the nuclear submarine, and the attack helicopter were embraced by their respective service cultures. The Delorean analysis illustrates how counter cultures can be dysfunctional and ultimately extinguished when they advocate a complete rejection of the dominant culture's ideology, values, and norms.

THE SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN THE ORGANIZATION'S OVERALL CULTURE AND ITS SUBCULTURES

Some people may debate which comes first in an organization: the organizational culture or the organization's subcultures. The question that is relevant to this chapter is how do the ideologies,

values, and norms of subcultures compliment the organizational culture advocated by leadership? Explaining this relationship requires an understanding that cultures provide members with a reliable means to interpret a highly ambiguous environment. It is the leader's responsibility to specify the features of the environment that are relevant to the organization and then provide the supporting assumptions and rationale for its operating strategies.

The leader's cultural messages should address ambiguities that are beyond the scope of any organizational subculture to explain to employees. Returning to Sonja Sackmann's research with a U.S. conglomerate, she found that the top management team "defined and framed the slice of reality in which organizational members behaved in their role as employees." Top management consistently made highly visible business and personnel decisions that reinforced the business' ideologies, values and norms for success. Her interviews throughout the organization revealed that the functional subcultures shared the top manager's conceptualizations of how tasks were accomplished in the organization; how employees could advance; the ways employees related to each other; the ways adaptation and change were accomplished; and how new knowledge was acquired and perpetuated. The bottom line is that distinct subcultures in the organization were united in their understanding of how they had to perform to produce successful organizational outcomes.

Sackmann's findings provide important insight for leaders who are trying to influence organizational culture in light of the potential influence of organizational subcultures. **Leaders should recognize that their cultural messages should specifically address cultural ambiguities associated with subculture practices within the organization, and limit their attempts to eliminate distinctions that are important to subculture's identities.** In other words, leaders have a better chance of creating or transforming an organizational culture if they accept and foster productive organizational subcultures and consistently communicate **how** employees must perform in order for the organization to achieve its objectives.

Cultural change then relies on leaders' communication techniques that cross subcultural boundaries and carry messages about ideologies, values and norms that can be internalized by all employees. Memos and vision statements cannot achieve all of these objectives. Leaders, however, have a variety of sophisticated cultural communication techniques at their disposal to link subcultures to overarching cultural objectives of their organizations.

CULTURAL FORMS AS LINKING MECHANISMS

Cultural forms function as the linking mechanism by which networks of understanding develop among employees. (Trice, 1988) The cultural forms shown in the table on pages 293-94 act as a medium for communicating ideologies, values, and norms. Cultural forms enable leaders to transmit messages about desirable culture to influence thinking and ways of behaving. Cultural forms also address the emotional aspects of organizations that are commonly referred to as cohesion or camaraderie. Organizational scholars Janice Beyer and Harrison Trice elaborate on this point:

Cultural forms not only aid sensemaking through the meanings they convey; they also aid the sensemaking process through the emotional reassurances they provide that help people persist in their coping efforts. Forms provide a concrete anchoring point, even if the meaning they carry are vague and only imperfectly transmitted....Also many cultural forms involve the expression of emotion and, by this venting of emotions, help people to cope with stress.

*Federal agencies are replete with cultural forms that serve these purposes. However the challenges facing strategic leaders of these agencies involve creating and orchestrating cultural forms that can foster change and have longevity beyond their tenure. **Cultural forms that have longevity by their nature such as rites and ceremonies reaffirm the organization's core ideologies, values and norms.***

HOW CAN LEADERS DETECT DESIRABLE AND UNDESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE?

Productive cultural change will occur if leaders correctly analyze the organization's existing culture, and evaluate it against the cultural attributes needed to achieve strategic objectives. Consequently, leaders must first possess a clear understanding of the strategic objectives for their organization and identify the actions needed to reach those objectives. These two tasks by themselves are difficult, particularly for the federal agencies that are experiencing volatile rates of change and reorientation. Nevertheless, without these specifications, any cultural transformation is a blind exercise.

Next conduct an analysis of the organizations existing ideologies, values and norms. Two critical questions that leaders should ask are: (1) Are existing explanations of cause and effect relationships, and acceptable beliefs and behaviors applicable to the organization's achievement of strategic objectives? (2) Are organizational members facing ambiguities about the external environment and internal work processes that can only be clarified by organizational leadership?

FORMULATING STRATEGIES FOR TRANSFORMING CULTURES IN ORGANIZATIONS

Strategic leadership needs to be transformational if it is to serve the organization. Transformational leaders must operate from a foundation of high morality and ethical practices and

A List of Definitions that Distinguish

Frequently Studied Cultural Forms

Rite *Relatively elaborate, dramatic, planned sets of activities that consolidates various forms of cultural expressions into one event, which is carried out through social interactions, usually for the benefit of an audience.*

Ceremonial *A system of several rites connected with a single occasion or event.*

Ritual *A standardized, detailed set of techniques and behaviors that manage anxieties, but seldom produce intended, technical consequences of practical importance.*

<i>Myth</i>	<i>A dramatic narrative of imagined events, usually used to explain origins of transformations of something . Also, an unquestioned belief about the practical benefits of certain techniques and behaviors that is not supported by demonstrated facts.</i>
<i>Saga</i>	<i>An historical narrative describing the unique accomplishments of a group and its leaders-usually in heroic terms.</i>
<i>Legend</i>	<i>A handed-down narrative of some wonderful event that is based in history but has been embellished with fictional details.</i>
<i>Story</i>	<i>A narrative based on true events-often a combination of truth and fiction</i>
<i>Folktale</i>	<i>A completely fictional narrative.</i>
<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Any object, act, event, quality, or relation that serves as a vehicle for conveying meaning, usually by representing another thing.</i>
<i>Language</i>	<i>A particular form or manner in which members of a group use vocal sounds and written signs to convey meanings to each other.</i>
<i>Gesture</i>	<i>Movements of parts of the body used to express meanings.</i>
<i>Physical</i>	<i>Those things than surround people physically setting and provide them with immediate sensory stimuli as they carry out culturally expressive activities.</i>
<i>Artifact</i>	<i>Material objects manufactured by people to facilitate culturally expressive activities.</i>

Adapted from Trice, 1984.

have a fundamental understanding of the highly complex factors that support and make possible collective effort in an organization. They must personally act in accord with productive values and beliefs, and they must teach others to do the same. They must promulgate the culture. The key method strategy leaders should follow to transform cultures is to teach symbolically. This type of strategy involves the artful crafting of new stories, new symbols, new traditions, and even new humor so that the ambiguities surrounding organizational life can be productively managed by all members of the organization. Without collective understanding-shared networks of revised meaning- the new ways of acting and thinking cannot be internalized by organizational members.

Culture is deep seated and difficult to change, but leaders can influence or manage an organization's culture. It isn't easy, and it cannot be done rapidly, but leaders can have an effect on culture. Schein outlines some specific steps leaders can employ:

- **What leaders pay attention to, measure and control.** *Something as simple as what is emphasized or measured, over time, can have an effect on an organization's culture. One example of this is an emphasis on form over substance. If leaders pay more attention to form, an organizational culture can develop where people start to believe that the substance of a recommendation is less important than the way it is presented. One can recall when more attention*

was paid to the format of viewgraphs used in a briefing than what was said; what we characterize as "eyewash."

- Where do you think people will focus their effort once it becomes accepted that a slick presentation is what the leaders are looking for? How could you go about changing that aspect of the organization's culture? Consider cultural assumptions and beliefs underlying a "zero defects" organizational mentality. "You must always be perfect; mistakes aren't allowed." If this assumption reflects a dysfunctional aspect of an organization's culture, how would you go about changing that perception?
- **Leader reactions to critical incidents and organizational crises.** The way leaders react to crises says a lot about the organization's values, norms and culture. Crises, by their nature, bring out the organization's underlying core values. Often, this is where rhetoric becomes apparent. Reactions to crises are normally highly visible, because everyone's attention is focused on the incident or situation. Disconnects between actions and words will usually be apparent, and actions always speak louder than words. Additionally, a crisis not only brings a great deal of attention, it also generates a great deal of emotional involvement on the part of those associated with the organization, particularly if the crisis threatens the organization's survival. This increases the potential for either reinforcing the existing culture, or leading to a change in the culture. Such a crisis can provide an opportunity for a leader to influence the organization's culture in either a positive or a negative way.
- **Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching.** Nothing can take the place of leaders "walking their talk." The personal example of a strategic leader can send a powerful message to the members of an organization, particularly if it is ethical and consistent. Reinforcing that example with teaching and coaching will help others to internalize the desired values.
- **Criteria for allocation of rewards and status.** The consequences of behavior-what behavior is rewarded and what is punished-can significantly influence culture. If the organization reacts to new ideas by ridiculing the ideas and those who propose them, it won't take long before people believe that new ideas are not welcomed or desired. One belief of perceived organizational culture is reflected in the statement: "Don't raise questions or suggest improvements, because nothing will come of it and you will just get in trouble." If you were in an organization's strategic leader, what steps could you take to alter the reward system to change this aspect of the culture?
- **Criteria for recruitment, selection, promotion, retirement and excommunication.** One of the powerful ways of changing an organization's culture is through the type of people brought into, retained, and advanced in the organization. You should be able to establish a desired culture base in an organization by bringing in and advancing individuals with the values you want, and eliminating those with undesired value bases.

That is what organizations are attempting when they propose tightening up admissions standards to screen out undesirables. This strategy is consistent with the belief that the problems experienced by the organization result from a few "bad apples" and do not reflect systemic problems. However, if a strong culture bias exists, it may be too strong to be changed by selection alone.

The military academies are organizations which change over one fourth of their membership every year, which should provide an opportunity for changes to the organizational culture as new

members are brought in. The catch, however, is that the socialization of those new members rests in the hands of those who are already part of the existing culture. How could the military academies make systemic culture changes not negated by the socialization process new members go through?

- **Organizational design and structure.** As we mentioned earlier, modifying the organization's basic structure may be a way of changing the existing norms, and hence the culture. For example, a culture of mistrust between the leaders and the members of an organization may be exacerbated by a "line" structure that discourages vertical communication.
- **Organizational systems and procedures.** The simplest definition of culture is "that's the way we do things around here." Routines or procedures can become so embedded that they become part of the culture, and changing the culture necessitates changing those routines. We can all think of organizations where a weekly or monthly meeting takes on a life of its own, becomes more formalized, lengthy, and elaborate, and becomes the only way information moves within the organization. Changing the culture to improve communication may only be possible by changing the meeting procedures or eliminating the meetings altogether.
- **Design of physical space, facades, and buildings.** The impact of the design of buildings on culture can easily be illustrated by considering the executive perks in an organization. Which organization do you think will have a more open and participative culture, one where top executives have reserved parking spaces, top floor offices, a special elevator and an executive dining room, or one where the executive offices are not separated from the rest of the company and executives park and eat in the same place as their employees?
- **Stories about important events and people.** This is a way that culture is perpetuated in an organization, in that it helps define and solidify the organization's identity. By what events and stories they emphasize, leaders influence that identity.
- **Formal statements of organizational philosophy, creeds, and charts.** This is the way leaders most often try and influence their organizations, and encompasses the vision or mission statement and statements of the organization's (or the leader's) values and philosophy. By themselves, however, formal statements will have little effect on the organization's culture. They must be linked to actions to affect culture.

Schein has five guidelines for the leader:

1. *Don't oversimplify culture or confuse it with climate, values, or corporate philosophy. Culture underlies and largely determines these other variables. Trying to change values or climate without getting at the underlying culture will be a futile effort.*
2. *Don't label culture as solely a human resources (read "touchy-feely") aspect of an organization, affecting only its human side. The impact of culture goes far beyond the human side of the organization to affect and influence its basic mission and goals.*
3. *Don't assume that the leader can manipulate culture as he or she can control many other aspects of the organization. Culture, because it is largely determined and controlled by the*

members of the organization, not the leaders, is different. Culture may end up controlling the leader rather than being controlled by him or her.

4. Don't assume that there is a "correct" culture, or that a strong culture is better than a weak one. It should be apparent that different cultures may fit different organizations and their environments, and that the desirability of a strong culture depends on how well it supports the organization's strategic goals and objectives.

5. Don't assume that all the aspects of an organization's culture are important, or will have a major impact on the functioning of the organization. Some elements of an organization's culture may have little impact on its functioning, and the leader must distinguish which elements are important, and focus on those.

CONCLUDING THOUGHT

An understanding of culture, and how to transform it, is a crucial skill for leaders trying to achieve strategic outcomes. Strategic leaders have the best perspective, because of their position in the organization, to see the dynamics of the culture, what should remain, and what needs transformation. This is the essence of strategic success.

<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ndu/strat-ldr-dm/pt4ch16.html>