

A Simple Personality Test for Organizations

We often encounter a wide variety of people with varying personalities, nature, mannerisms and styles. Have we ever wondered how these individuals shape organizations and organizational cultures when they come together for a common objective?

Since organizations are nothing but collections of individuals, the organizational culture is more often than not a resultant vector of these 'forces' coming together. In many ways culture is the result of the subconscious aligned behavior of people in the organization. When anybody interacts with an organization in different modes – as customer, employee, shareholder, consultant, lawyer etc. this resultant personality (a resultant of the culture) often comes through.

The simplest personality test for any organization would be to convey in one word what it stands for. For example when one thinks of Toyota, quality immediately comes to mind. Today Toyota is synonymous with quality and quality is as a way of life in the company. Conversely, if one thinks of P&G or GE, innovation is the biggest connect. These connects we make are more often than not as an outside observer or at best being one of the millions of customers around the world.

Understanding and nurturing the organization culture and associated identity in the desired direction can help an organization to channelize the energies of the workforce in the desired direction.

For example one of India's leading private sector bank has a very strong work ethic. There is high conservatism and low risk appetite in the way it functions but delivers on the numbers at the end of the day. This is because of the way the bank has gone about inducting and orienting people. On the other hand, another private sector bank has the image of being very numbers-driven and target-oriented. The employees thrive in a high-risk and high-return environment. You can feel the pressure in the air as soon as you enter the premises. This is probably because of how the leadership has nurtured the people.

So how does this personality development or the cultural identity of an organization take place? It cannot happen by chance and is a planned event. The key factor that contributes to creating the identity is "Leadership". They set the tone and example in the present for how the organization's cultural identity would pan out in the future by shaping the constant flux of people - new people or ideas joining in or the old guard moving out.

Coming back to our simple test – what word best conveys the personality of your organization?

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