



Impact of Culture on Your Work

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How does group culture impact your work? Do you feel at home at work or like a stranger in a strange land? At the end of the day do you go home invigorated or exhausted?

Group culture is created by the combination of behaviors, values and attitudes. Have you been told, "This is the way we do things around here"? That statement describes culture. It's the mores, traditions - way of life in your work place.

Not everyone agrees with or easily adjusts to a group culture, yet most feel the pressure to conform. In this four part series we are going to use the DiSC® behavioral model to help us understand how individual needs, goals, fears, emotions and behaviors contribute to your feeling of comfort within group culture.

There are many different factors that effect group culture. It is important to identify the origins of your culture if you hope to change it or capitalize on its strengths.

- Leaders style
- Type of work
- Historical culture
- Goals and mission

This month we will focus on the Dominance culture. You will recognize this culture by noting that decisions are quick, answers direct and the atmosphere is highly competitive. The majority of people in this culture value solid results and powerful growth. Interpersonal communication may suffer.

If you are a woman who likes to talk things through and is more concerned about relationships than results, you may be uncomfortable in this environment. More importantly, you may feel disrespected and your contributions ignored.

The Dominance Culture Encourages:

- Independence
- Decisiveness
- Directness
- Victory
- Results

The Dominance Culture Discourages:

- Oversensitivity
- Hesitation
- Over analysis
- Weakness

Advantages of the D Culture:

- A dynamic and engaging environment
- Little time wasted
- Results driven
- Opportunities to prove oneself
- Rewards determination and persistence
- Innovation welcome
- Trust direct and straightforward feedback

Disadvantages of the D Culture:

- High level of tension leading to burnout
- Missing important details from lack of analysis
- Overwhelming to those who are less aggressive
- Power struggles can lead to poor decisions
- Too many risks taken
- Over importance placed on status
- Teamwork discouraged due to competitiveness
- Insensitive feedback

Individually we have tendencies toward each of the four behavioral styles. The following are some of the benefits and challenges you might want to consider for your individual style if you are working in a *D* culture.

Those with a high *Dominance* behavioral style will embrace the aggressive pace of this environment. This could be an ideal place for you to achieve your goals and move your career forward. You believe your desire to win will not only benefit you personally, but will benefit the organization as well. You earn respect from colleagues who share these tendencies, however you also risk conflicts due to your assertiveness.

If you appreciate the high speed in which ideas are implemented and the enthusiasm this environment cultivates, your high *Influencing* tendencies will have fun in this environment. However, you may not receive as many “atta girl’s” as you would like. A high *D* culture expects exceptional results. It will be difficult for you to receive the amount of praise normally comfortable for you. To put it simply “you’re expected to do a great job, that’s what we pay you for”. Find another outlet to get your praise or let your supervisor and team know that praise is important to you and you like to hear it *often*.

Do you find this type of culture cold and harsh? Do you go home at night feeling drained? Odds are you tend to have a high *Steadiness* behavioral style. You may find this culture stressful. Your contribution is that you are a great listener who can offer a sympathetic ear. These behaviors are appreciated in an environment filled with hard-charging negotiations and constant striving.

Are you comfortable in a business culture where achieving goals is a top priority? Do you find small talk a waste of time? As someone with tendencies toward a high *Conscientious* behavioral style, this facet of a high D culture will appeal to you. You will be a valuable asset to the organization due to your dedication to details and analyzing consequences. Remember that this culture rewards decisiveness. It is unappreciative of those who hesitate or over analyze. In order to be taken seriously you will have to adapt to the hectic pace and deliver the immediate results this environment demands.

Next month the *Influencing* culture, an energetic atmosphere that focuses on teamwork, creative approaches to problems, innovation and socializing.

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