

SELECTING FOR THE ORGANISATION

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This section describes selecting people for organisation or culture fit. It includes:

- Person/Organisation fit
- Corporate Culture
- ASA Theory
- The Facet5 model of culture

SELECTING FOR THE ORGANISATION

Person-Organisation fit

Traditional selection processes have concentrated on determining whether a person has the personal skills to enable them to perform the job successfully. This approach is described in the previous section of the Facet5 User Manual. However an alternative approach is becoming widely accepted as organisations focus more on the development and management of a corporate culture which is appropriate for the markets they serve. This approach is referred to as “Person-Organisation fit” and is described as selection that is designed to achieve

“Compatibility between individuals and organisations”¹

Compatibility can be said to exist where the organisation or the person supplies something to the union that the other half needs. Alternatively compatibility can be said to exist when the person and the organisation share fundamental characteristics.

This compatibility can be achieved in two, philosophically different ways. There is one school of thought that says that organisations should be trying to achieve a well-rounded workforce by employing a wide range of people with different values, beliefs and operating styles. New people should be selected to broaden the base of people in the organisation. This is referred to as “Complementary” selection where an individual “adds what is missing” to the environment.

The alternative approach suggests that people should be selected whose values, beliefs and operating styles are similar to those who are already there. Such people will then embellish and enhance the values of the organisation. This approach is referred to as “Supplementary” selection.

Limits of Person-Organisation fit

P-O fit clearly needs two stable elements - the Person and the Organisation. Most modern views of personality suggest that at an individual level it is a relatively stable set of characteristics that remain across different situations. This is the “behavioural consistency” model that underpins most modern assessment techniques.

Organisations however may not be as clear cut. If the organisation does not have a dominant or demonstrable culture, it can be problematic to try to determine whether a particular person “fits”. Therefore it would appear that selecting for P-O fit is only likely to succeed where there is a clearly defined corporate culture or where the organisation is knowingly trying to create one.

Benefits of Selecting for P-O fit.

Although most selection processes have concentrated on Person-Job fit, there has been considerable research into the effectiveness of P-O fit. For example Bowen notes that

P-O fit is essential for long term corporate success. He found that the approach resulted in a flexible work force with great job mobility. Researchers have found that as P-O increases work attitudes improve, job satisfaction increases, and there is a greater feeling of personal success and an increased concern for the stakeholders in the business. Self-appraisal of performance increases and there is longer tenure and greater job satisfaction. Even the number of promotions and salary increases is greater.

Conversely when P-O fit is low there is a greater perception that politics dominate the organisation which in turn leads to lower moral and a reduction in customer focus.

Risks of using P-O fit

Some have suggested that continued use of P-O fit leads to a reduction of creativity in organisations, of stultification in decision making and an inability to adapt to change. However some researchers who found that creativity did not decrease have challenged this. P-O fit seems to be more important for people who have strong social needs which is not surprising.

Summary

It appears that P-O fit is a powerful method for selecting individuals. It is clear that many measures of individual performance improve when P-O fit is high although there are some questions about the long term effect for organisations. One solution that has been suggested is that organisations should strive for high levels of P-O fit at lower levels and to encourage greater diversity at higher levels. Given the known problems associated with poor P-O fit however it might cause difficulties if the board of directors suffered from low morale and reduced customer focus.

Determining P-O fit

Determining whether this compatibility exists is often a somewhat hit and miss affair. Judgements are made on the basis of comments made during the selection process, on inferences drawn from previous experience and from other people's views gained through references etc. However this is clearly a very judgmental process and as such is prone to subjective bias. What is needed is a method of "commensurate measurement" i.e. a process which allows organisations to understand the corporate values and beliefs and individual values and beliefs using the same underlying concepts. Facet5 allows organisations to do this. Facet5 can give a broad overview of the culture, values and beliefs in an organisation that allows direct comparison to be made.

What is culture?

When a large group of people link together over a period of time they gradually create ways of behaving which are unique to that group and which therefore differentiates them from other groups. They share values, attitudes and opinions and it is this shared set that is referred to as a 'corporate culture'.

In fact the concept of a corporate culture has been researched and debated for many years. Some theorists would say that the differences are stable and obvious and allow companies to be classified into one of a number of broad types that can be identified using a questionnaire. Others would react strongly against this and state that a corporate culture is so complex that a typing approach is simplistic and the belief that it can be measured through a questionnaire is naïve. They argue that to understand fully the culture of an organisation you need to spend considerable time uncovering the attitudes and beliefs that are held in common. These are frequently reflected in the traditions and sagas in a company and may be so deeply held that the individuals themselves are unable to explain them freely. Adrian Furnham² has suggested the concept of 'PCV' rather than culture as a way of getting at the view which people have of their organisation. He would agree that broad typing seems rather simplistic and would be happier suggesting a limited number of 'dimensions' which could be applied to all organisations and where differences are attributed to different positions on these scales, i.e. different companies have different 'profiles' on a common set of dimensions.

What dimensions should be used? Furnham himself suggests an 11-factor structure and has constructed a questionnaire to measure them. Others have different approaches to the problem. For example,

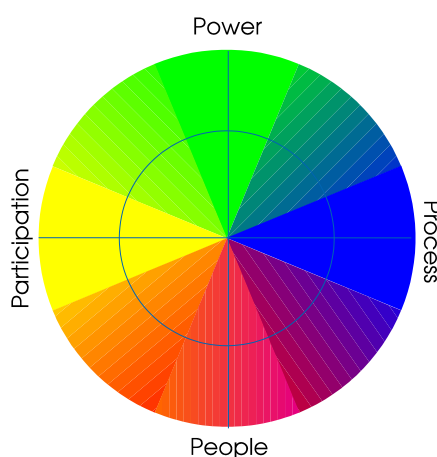
Cultural Styles			
Tough Guy Risk Taking Individualistic	Power Entrepreneurial Values Ability	Barbarian Ego-driven Workaholic	Power Competitive Personality not Expertise
Work/Play Hard Persistent Sociable	Achievement Personal Intrinsic	Presidential Democratic Hierarchical	People Consensus Rejects mgt control
Bet Your Company Ponderous Unpressurised	Support Mutuality Trust	Monarchical Loyalty Doggedness	Task Competency Dynamic
Process Bureaucratic Protective	Role Order Dependable	Pharoanic Ritualised Change	Role Legitimacy Bureaucracy
<i>Deal & Kennedy (1982)</i>	<i>Schein (1985)</i>	<i>Graves (1986)</i>	<i>Handy (1979) Harrison (1972)</i>

Each of these researchers has produced a model and a questionnaire to measure it. The use of dimensions rather than types helps to answer some of the accusations of over simplifying the area since organisations can have a score on each dimension in the same way that people have scores on each personality factor. However most still

concentrate on the surface level and spend little time looking more deeply into the traditions and sagas that are the visible reflectors of the culture.

Regardless of the appropriateness of the measurement process we still seem to have a rather messy situation regarding the number and content of the dimensions held. This is just the same as the individual psychological differences. Is there some help here? Let's look at the different models to see if there are common threads running through them. The following table, adopted from Furnham, shows four of the better-known culture models.

It certainly would appear that these four researchers, (the most popular of whom would be Schein), have produced models which overlap strongly. They have each produced four factor models and it is a simple step to link the four factors to the individual difference field, particularly in the five-factor model.



It would appear then that these models of culture at least closely fit the five-factor model of individual differences.

Where are the Emotional cultures?

We should not be surprised by this link from individual to corporate. Culture theorists talk about culture reflecting the values and attitudes of the people who are instrumental in forming the company and personality variables underpin the individual's values and attitudes. However, if there is such a good fit then what has happened to emotionality? If a group of **E+** people produce a Participative culture over time, what has happened to the organisations full of **Em+**? Why haven't they produced Emotional climates?

The answer may go right back to the nature of Emotionality. Brand suggests and many agree that it is wrong to view Emotionality as a single factor in the same light as the other four. For a start it contributes much more to the sum of differences between individuals at around 27%. Given that IQ contributes in excess of 60% then the others are sharing around 13%. Emotionality is therefore much more important than any of the others alone or combined. Brand's suggestion is that it should be viewed as an interpreting factor, flavouring and colouring the way the other dimensions are seen.

Secondly, Emotionality itself is very hard to evaluate via judgment or interview. Stewart et al showed that even teachers, who should know their charges quite well, were unable to estimate levels of emotionality with any accuracy at all. Extended to the workplace

this suggests that hiring decisions that may easily change the flavour of a company by emphasising behavioural traits such as Will, Energy, Affection and Control, (perhaps possible to assess at interview), would fail to get any handle on Emotionality at all. Therefore Emotionality is introduced to an organisation randomly and would spread normally through the group. It would therefore cease to be a discriminating factor and would not emerge in culture diagnostics.

If this is true then Emotionality becomes, in the case of corporate culture, a moderating or interpreting factor. A group of people all of whom are highly emotional may produce a culture where it is the negative elements of overall style which are seen more. A recent TV documentary on the Royal Opera House in London showed much evidence of low control behaviour (budget over runs etc) which are not unexpected in highly creative environments. However also highly visible were dramatic outbursts of emotion that would not normally be seen in other corporate environments such as marketing and sales.

Sub Cultures

As organisations get larger, it is increasingly likely that sub cultures will form. Individuals who are a little different from the mass can establish themselves and form a counter-culture. Others who are feeling uncomfortable may find that they relate better to that individual than to the group at large and so a new set of values develops. Many companies talk in terms of functional differences, i.e. *'You'd expect that from sales'* or *'That's typical of R&D'*. It is well known that different personality types gravitate to different professions so the development of functional sub cultures is to be expected. In fact it is possible for an individual to fit closely to a sub-culture but not very well to the main organisation.

ASA Theory

How does one get a distinctive culture? A growing body of knowledge suggests a process called ASA theory is responsible. This approach states that individuals will form companies with a defined personal agenda. This agenda reflects the values, goals and aspirations of the founder.

The next step is to recruit others to join the embryonic organisation. These are hand picked usually by the founder and are chosen because the founder believes they are the 'right' sort to work with. It is well accepted that, given a free rein people will choose to work with people who are like themselves.⁴

So now we have a small organisation: founder plus first employees. The culture will still be a close reflection of the founder since all of the employees are. The founder sets out to attract like-minded people through corporate communications that explain his way of thinking, his vision. Occasionally a founder will deliberately bring in someone who seems the 'opposite', a foil to compensate for perceived shortcomings. However such relationships are under huge stress in the early stages and frequently fail. Even when operative it would be wrong to think that the resultant culture is an amalgam of the individual values. It is usually the dominant ones who prevail, hence amplifying the feeling of alienation of the foil.

As organisations grow, so the founder and original small team take on more staff. Because of the similarity of style they continue to recruit similar people but the styles are not so homogeneous. Gradually the group broadens as people join who are somewhat different from the rest. However it is at this stage that stage two of the ASA cycle comes into play. The original team is still in control and they make their preferences known. Sometimes this is specific, sometimes less so. Behaviours that are valued get people promoted, actions that fit the values get talked about positively (and vice versa) and traditions start. The company outing becomes a night at a Dog Track for one company or hot air ballooning for another. This is how the less obvious but more powerful aspects of culture make themselves felt.

ASA theory states that as the style of the company becomes known so like minded people become 'attracted' to it. At the same time, people who are already employed find that 'some people seem to be favoured' while others don't seem to 'fit'. So the '*Selection*' and '*Attrition*' elements of the cycle come into play as those who don't fit choose to leave, either because they feel passed over or because of a sense of alienation from the core of the company.

The net effect of this is that over a period of time organisations start to stabilise in style and develop set ways of doing things. Myths, sagas and rituals have developed and through the regular recounting of these employees are able to see what is valued and draw comparisons with their own ideas. These are the mature companies. They have clear recruitment processes that have stood the test of time, distinctive ways of portraying themselves and are even structured in specific ways. They reward particular patterns of behaviour in idiosyncratic ways. They are secure and well set. They could be referred to as mature.

The Facet5 Model of Culture

Facet5 provides a clear indication of the cultures that will emerge when there is a preponderance of a particular personality characteristic. This will be reflected in the way the organisation goes to work, the way it is structured, the way decisions are made and the expectations it has of its people and business partners. For example:

- a major computer supplier has a mission statement which talks of “having fun”, and “beating the competition by changing the rules”. It is predominantly a **C-**, **E+** organisation.
- a well known financial services company created a motivational technique called the “Yellow Skoda”. The lowest performing sales person of the month got to drive the Yellow Skoda. The company also had an approach for office based sales staff - they took the chairs away from the low performers so that they had to stand. Clearly they valued competition and were happy to humiliate people. There would not appear to be much Affection in this company.
- a Quaker company places great emphasis on supporting people, doing something worthwhile and working on the basis of trust and understanding. As expected they are predominantly **A+**.

The characteristics of Facet5 Cultures are as follows.

W+ Culture - Power

W+ Where Will is the predominant characteristic of an organisation, the emphasis is likely to be on power and influence. Individual achievement is valued, targets are demanding and leadership, influence and decisiveness are seen as core management traits. Decision processes tend to be centralised and emphasis is placed on delivery of simply defined targets and objectives. Such cultures are created by driven, purposeful and entrepreneurial people and are similar to the Power oriented cultures identified by Schein and Handy.

W- climates may not be very common. They are characterised by a tendency to reflect on problems, absorb information and come to collective decisions. They dislike people who are seen as conceited or self-important and will tend to operate through committees. They may easily appoint people to head these committees but this will be a formality: a process designed to avoid dispute and to ensure representation of views.

Public service bodies are strong in this. They are consultative and slow to decide. They refuse to be rushed and will ask for more information. They will keep copious records so no individual can be held responsible. Our own research some years ago suggested that the amount of decision making reduced as you went up the Civil Service tree. An Executive Officer in the Department of Employment makes many important decisions a day while Principals and higher grades may make very few individual decisions. It might therefore be assumed that independent decision making is less important at higher levels in the Civil Service.

E+ Culture - Participation

E+ cultures place a great emphasis on action and group activity. They encourage change and innovation and welcome new approaches. They see value in activity and involvement and will structure themselves to encourage it. Structures tend to be flatter, often set up on the basis of short term project teams. They enjoy public recognition and high profile activities. They also tend to get bored quickly so need to spread their interests broadly. Project managers, advertising companies and theatres would tend to fall into this group.

It is clearly Energy that is behind this. The exuberance, activity and innovation is typical as is the group participation. As a result, decisions tend to be made rather impulsively with novelty rewarded and conservatism discouraged.

E- cultures are found in more specialised places where there is an emphasis on unique skills and individuals rather than teamwork. Academe and similar scientific/technical areas stand out. Technical operations within governments employ some of the finest scientific and engineering minds in the world, including a large number of introverts. They can apply themselves to complex fields and survive time alone in strange places providing there is interesting work to be done. Cleaning up the Former Soviet Union's nuclear waste problems is all in a day's work.

Other government departments such as military, meteorology and cartography are probably similar. As they present themselves to a waiting market they can rely on a very high level of scientific and technical credibility to pave their way. Over time, however, they may need to broaden their style to become more marketing led and responsive to their customers.

A+ Culture - People

A+ These cultures place value on the role people have to play. They tend to emphasise the search for agreement and consensus. They avoid diktat and project themselves as caring, considerate and understanding. They achieve through the development of close relationships with all stakeholders. They tend to take a very broad view of their corporate responsibilities and are quick to create community links.

They succeed in long term coalitions where strong personal relationships are seen as more important than short-term advantage. In salesman parlance they are the 'farmers' rather than 'hunters' and are known for their tolerance and consideration. Some will view them as soft and unfocused and they may make easy short term targets. A corporate predator should be aware however of the strength of the personal relationships that form between the organisation and its clients. The clients value the commitment and service orientation and will quickly become disillusioned if there is a change in style.

A- cultures emphasis immediate short-term gain and success by cutting a deal. They are quick to see advantage and take it. They believe 'It's a dog eat dog world' and 'You've got to look after No 1'. People are made individually responsible rather than collectively and rewards - and punishment - are on an individual basis. Assigning the worst performing salesman of the month the yellow Skoda until he/she got off the bottom of the ladder is seen as inspirational. In some places this cultural style would be referred to as 'Machiavellian' with an emphasis on looking good, taking the credit and avoiding contamination. Competition can be very strong but somewhat negative.

C+ Culture - Process

The underpinning of this pole is **C+** and Cattell once described **C+** as 'having internalised the social and political milieu'. They are proper, exacting and professional. They espouse conservative values and can appear somewhat self righteous. Such cultures can appear sanctimonious because of their belief in their own moral certainty. Schein and Handy recognised this under the title of *Role based* but a more colourful title was given by Graves who termed the style 'Pharoanic' to reflect this rigidity with which roles are allocated. In ancient Egypt under the Pharaohs such a culture existed.

A **C-** culture emphasises a lack of roles and boundaries. Freedom is encouraged and the rulebook thrown out. Such cultures see themselves as radical, new age and alternative. They remove structure and innovate frantically. Decisions are quick but may be opportunistic without much planning or process. The creative end of advertising follows this approach whereas the media buying and placement tends to be the opposite. Does this explain the constant debate between media and creatives in ad agencies?

The sheer unwillingness to impose on others can leave **C-** cultures exposed. They tend to react on an ad hoc basis and therefore are prey to coordinated, planned attack.

REFERENCES & NOTES

¹ Kristof, Amy L, "Person-Organisation Fit: an Integrative review of its Conceptualisations, Measurement and Implications", Personnel Psychology, Vol 41, No 1, 1996, p3

² From Furnham & Gunter - International Review of Industrial & Organisational Psychology. 1993 Vol 8

³ From Furnham & Gunter - Op cit

⁴ It does appear that there is a variation to this. In our own work we have regularly found that this holds true for people with low to average Emotionality. However, for higher levels of Emotionality people tend to choose people who are the opposite of themselves. Similarly people who were low in self-esteem (an Em+ characteristic) tended to choose organisations which are unlike them.