



MENTORÉ



Culture **Assessment**

How to Assess Your Culture

FIVE ADJECTIVES - Assessment and Discussion Guide

Culture answers the question, “*what’s it like to work here.*”

As the leader of a team, function, or organization, determine:

1. What five adjectives do you think best describe your organization’s culture?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

2. Gather your team.

Describe the purpose of this activity:

“The purpose of this activity is to understand how we – individually and collectively - characterize the culture of our organization. Culture answers the questions of what it’s like to work here, how we do business, how we relate and interact among ourselves and with others.”

Once we have those impressions, let’s determine if this is how we want to operate, and if not, what we have to do to create the culture we want.

I also want us to conduct the same activity with critical individuals outside our organization to understand how they see us and characterize what we are like to work with. We will contrast to our own results, discuss the implications, and determine how best to move forward.”

Also, explain it is important that neither you nor your team members judge someone's responses. This is not about agreeing or disagreeing with how someone else sees the organization. It is about understanding their perceptions and why these see it that way.

A final note. Sometimes people will use a short phrase, like “easy to work with.” These are ok because if it were only “easy,” it’s hard to know what that means.

3. Ask each team member to write down their 5 adjectives.

Tell them to be prepared to discuss each one with a rationale or examples for their choices.

4. Next, ask each person to describe their 5.

Write each person's on a white board or any means to make them visible to the whole team. Ask for examples and clarifications as you're going through these. Team members can also ask for clarification or additional information.

Remember – clarification is good. Judgement, not good.

5. Once each team member has listed their 5, then share your responses, also with a rationale and examples.

6. Now the fun begins.

Use these questions as a guide to facilitate the discussion:

I: The Data

- What are the similarities across the responses?
- What are the differences? For example, someone may use “trustworthy” as a descriptor. Someone else may say “untrustworthy.” You have to discuss that.
- To what extent do your characterizations as the leader and those of your team members align?
- Were there any surprises? How so?
- Anything missing (something that came up through the discussion)?

II: Implications

- What are the implications for the organization based on the similarities, differences?
- Collectively what do these 5 adjectives say about your organization - “what it’s like to work here?”

III. Determine your current state 5 adjectives.

- Pick the 5 that best describe the current state.
Remember – no judgment. Call it like it is.

IV. Determine the 5 adjectives that best describe what you want to be?

Hang on for more data.

7. Select 3-5 business partners whose opinions you value and trust. They need to know who you are and what you do.

- You or one of your team members individually interview each business partner.
- Tell them what you're doing (understanding how you as an organization describe your culture (your group, not the overall business), and how others describe your culture.
- Ask them to choose 5 adjectives. Clarify and get examples.

8. Get the team back together.

- Discuss the business partner feedback.
- Compare to your own responses.

9. Determine if action is required.

- Keep it simple.
- Decide on 3 next action steps.
- Do it!