



**FIFTH  
QUADRANT**

Service Strategy & Research

# DISCUSSION PAPER

## **Service Centre Cultural Change Programme**

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# 1. Defining Culture

If we look first to define *organisational culture*, the academic literature suggests that culture is:

*A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems. (Edgar Schein)*

In essence, as groups find solutions to problems over time they engage in a kind of collective learning that creates a set of shared assumptions and beliefs that we then call culture.

Elements of organisational culture may include:

1. Stated and unstated values.
2. Overt and implicit expectations for member/employee behaviour.
3. Customs and rituals.
4. Stories and myths about the history of the group.
5. Shop talk—typical language used in and about the group.
6. Climate—the feelings evoked by the way members interact with each other, with outsiders, and with their environment, including the physical space they occupy.
7. Metaphors and symbols—may be unconscious but can be found embodied in other cultural elements.

Key questions to consider when analysing culture may be:

1. What are the shared frames of reference that make the service centre behave as it does?
2. Where do these reference points come from?
3. How were these frames of reference created and how are they communicated and sustained?

In sum, culture is simply defined as an organisation or team's shared beliefs and behaviours related to their work. It is thus important to first understand what has shaped the existing culture prior to developing the new culture.

## 2. Creating a New Culture

For the purpose of this Paper, we will suggest that the problem an organisation seeks to overcome is that the culture, or shared beliefs and behaviours of the service centre are not aligned to the future goals of the leader(s) or of the overarching corporation. As such a programme to re-align the culture should focus on the:

1. Strong articulation of desired goals, beliefs and behaviours through language, written word, infrastructure, symbols and artefacts;
2. Leadership's clear and authentic demonstration of these goals, beliefs and behaviours;
3. The development of supporting infrastructure to embrace, encourage and enhance the goals, beliefs and behaviours of the new culture.

A Service Centre Cultural Change Programme may include the following methodology:

### **Step #1: Strategy, Artefacts and Symbol Analysis**

Analysis of existing strategy, vision, culture, values, behaviours and related documents should be conducted to determine artefacts and symbols which may be perpetuating the current cultural orientation.

### **Step #2: Leadership Team Culture Workshop**

1. Key stakeholders meet to discuss the current culture and processes, people, artefacts, ghosts (previous history that remains in the culture) and other contributing factors to existing culture and behaviours.
2. Workshops should also be used to determine the ideal culture the organisation would like to develop in the contact centre.

### **Step #3: Culture Audit**

1. A Culture Audit should then take place which involves some qualitative interviewing of key employees and the issuing of a Cultural Audit Questionnaire;
2. Fifth Quadrant has a specific employee engagement tool, CCEngage ©, for service centre work that also provides useful information at this stage.

#### **Step #4: A Desired State Programme**

Once the existing culture and its frames of reference have been established and the desired culture (goals, beliefs and behaviours and new frames of reference) have been set by the Leadership team, then the following should take place:

#### **Constructing the Ideal Culture**

Developing and establishing a specific culture in the service centre will involve the following:

1. Revisiting the service centre strategy and stated objectives and goals to reflect desired culture;
2. A Service Charter which prescribes a Service Promise and attributes of service (processes and behaviours) that support the Sales & Service charter should be developed;
3. Service Centre Leadership Team to undertake Service Cultural Orientation programme;
4. Service Centre Team leaders to undertake Service Cultural Orientation programme;
5. Job Design to ensure all aspects of modern service centre job design are incorporated eg variety, discretion, control and aspects of the Service Charter are incorporated;
6. Role Accountabilities should be developed that reflect the Service Charter and cultural orientation;
7. Remuneration packages should reflect revised cultural orientation and encourage behaviours supportive of new culture;
8. Recruitment processes should also reflect new culture and seek to attract candidates who will align to the culture;
9. Induction, training and development processes should reflect new culture;
10. Quality Monitoring processes should measure, coach and develop desired behaviours;
11. Customer feedback programmes should also incorporate measures reflecting the new culture;
12. KPIs and reporting frameworks should reflect and reward the new cultural orientation;

Developing a robust infrastructure such as above will be essential to creating and maintaining the new cultural orientation.

#### **Step #5: Culture Audit: Time Series 2**

A second Culture Audit should take place post-implementation to assess the degree of change in culture and the alignment of the culture to organisational goals.

### 3. About Fifth Quadrant

Fifth Quadrant is a Service Strategy and Research Consultancy and Fifth Quadrant | callcentres.net is our online publishing and social media division.

We are changing the way organisations think about Service Strategy and are dedicated to ensuring that Service has on-going presence at the Boardroom table.

Working across Voice, Face-to-Face, Online, Correspondence and Social Media service channels, Fifth Quadrant delivers an unrivalled level of knowledge, subject matter expertise and proprietary methodologies to ensure organisations have highly effective Service Strategies.

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