



Culture Maturity Model

Workplace culture unfolds in the way people think, act and understand the world around them. It manifests through day-to-day interactions with team members, observations of others' behavior, processes, systems, traditions, leadership's ability to communicate and hold people accountable to certain behavior, and so much more. As cultural norms come to fruition, evolve and perpetuate within individual behavior, the organization sends messages through its processes, systems and reactions to individual behavior that signal what behavior it will tolerate from those individuals.

Over the years of executing [climate assessments](#) and partnering with our clients to help them define and perpetuate their company culture, we've found that the evolution and maturity of workplace culture play a pivotal role in shaping employee engagement, productivity, and the overall organizational identity. Recognizing the significance of this, we developed a Workplace Culture Maturity Model—a roadmap that delineates the progressive stages an organization may traverse in cultivating and refining its culture.

Stage 1 Foundational

- No formalized culture. Culture is implicit and based on the personalities and behaviors of individuals.
- Employees and leadership don't actively consider or discuss company culture. There's no understanding regarding the positive impact it has on the bottom line.
- There's minimal alignment between stated core values (if any values exist) and actual behaviors exhibited by the workforce and the organization itself.

Stage 2 Emerging

- There's a growing acknowledgment of the importance of culture. Conversations around values and behaviors, and their alignment with organizational goals, begin.
- Some initiatives to define and possibly improve culture emerge, such as leadership training, employee recognition programs, or attempts to define core values.
- Beginning stages of evaluating current cultural strengths and weaknesses emerge (e.g., exit interviews, workforce surveys).

Stage 3 Maturing

- Clear values and expected behaviors are articulated and communicated. They are integrated into the organization's processes, and leaders actively promote and embody these values.
- The culture is evident in day-to-day operations. Employees understand and embrace the culture, resulting in higher engagement and a sense of belonging.
- There is formal documentation of expectations for behavior that aligns with the culture and core

Stage 4 High Performance

- Organizational culture is ingrained in every aspect of the organization. It's a central part of decision-making, hiring, accountability measures, and strategic planning.
- The culture is one of constant evolution and adaptation. Feedback loops exist and are used, allowing for the refinement of culture based on changing needs.
- Leaders actively champion the culture and serve as role models for its embodiment, including holding even the best performers

- There is little to no communication regarding the importance of culture or its impact on the organization.
- There are no measurements or evaluations of cultural aspects of the organization.
- Individuals behave in the ways that work for them, with little understanding of how they might impact others or the organization positively or negatively. —

- Culture-related efforts are one-off initiatives, but not fully integrated into business operations.
- When an individual acts in ways that don't align with the culture, others notice (including managers and possibly leaders) but aren't sure what to do about it and so they do nothing.

values in employee handbooks and guidelines.

- Formal accountability exists for behaving in ways that align with the culture, including within performance management, hiring, onboarding and decision-making.
- Learning and development programs are in place to ensure individuals are well-equipped to give and receive feedback, coach one another, and maintain psychological safety.
- Systems (e.g., surveys, formal and informal feedback loops) are in place for collecting feedback and making adjustments to the culture based on employee input.
- When an individual acts in ways that don't align with the culture (e.g., gossip, make inappropriate comments), others readily notice and do something about it.

accountable to behavior that aligns with culture.

- Departments and teams can easily define not only the ways in which the team members themselves engage in the culture, but how their processes and systems are also inline with the culture.
- The organization is recognized externally for its strong and positive culture.
- The culture is flexible and adapts quickly to changing business environments and needs.
- There's an emphasis on a culture of learning and improvement where failures are seen as opportunities for growth.
- Individuals are acting in ways that add to and influence the culture positively. When behavior feels out of place, the individuals discuss it and can readily move forward.

Each stage represents a different level of maturity, from the basic understanding of culture's importance to its integration into the organizational DNA. Assessing where your workplace falls within these stages can help identify areas for improvement in solidifying your culture and gauge progress over time.

Consider developing assessment criteria or indicators for each stage to help your organization understand where it stands and what steps can be taken to progress further. Regular assessments and feedback from employees can also provide valuable insights for refinement.



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