

Determining the need for cultural change within the City of Greer Fire Department

Dorian Flowers

City of Greer Fire Department

Greer, SC

**Certification Statement**

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: *Dorian K. Flowers*  
Dorian K. Flowers

### **Abstract**

The problem was that the City of Greer Fire Department's culture had never been defined. The purpose of this applied research project was to determine the current culture of the City of Greer Fire Department and whether change was needed. The research method utilized was the evaluative research method with literature review and an online version of the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) based on the Competing Values Framework developed by Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn. The three research questions were: (a) What is the current culture of the City of Greer Fire Department? (b) Is there a difference between the current culture and the department's preferred culture? (c) If the department's current culture and the preferred culture lack congruence, what can be done to bring about cultural change while maintaining harmony?

The procedures included administering a survey, the OCAI, to the entire department that was based on the work of Cameron and Quinn and a literature review to review how other organizations utilized the OCAI assessment in order to diagnose their culture and create cultural change. Overall, the results of the OCAI assessment determined that the culture of the department was congruent, but there were areas identified that should be addressed as evidenced by the fact that five of twenty-four aspects experienced a difference of ten points or greater.

The recommendations included using the OCAI tool as a baseline and again at a later date after attempts were made to bring about cultural change within the department. Additional recommendations included holding workshops with members of the department to discuss the results and to identify the shared values of the department in order to revise the mission and vision statements so they are more in line with the current culture of the department.

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### **Introduction**

The City of Greer Fire Department (Department) has over 100 years of dedicated service. While the Department has been relatively successful over its existence, in recent years it seems that the drive for change and innovation has all but disappeared. This has not always been the case as evidenced by the volumes of three ring binders neatly organized on the bookshelf in the Fire Chief's office. These multiple three ring binders hold an extensive amount of work completed when the Department was selected to be one of the first beta test sites for the then fledgling fire service accreditation process. Unfortunately, at some point during that process, the Department decided not to pursue accreditation. Since that time there have been three Fire Chiefs, the most recent hired from outside the department and arriving approximately a year ago. The new Fire Chief, being from the outside, is originally from a much larger department and was at a disadvantage when it came to understanding the current cultural environment of the Department. In order to be an effective change agent, the leadership within the Department must be able to determine the current culture of the department and how it corresponds to the desired culture. The problem is the City of Greer Fire Department culture has never been defined.

The purpose of this applied research project is to determine the current culture of the City of Greer Fire Department and whether change is needed. The evaluative research method will be utilized to determine the current culture of the Department and the need to change by answering the following research questions: What is the current culture of the City of Greer Fire Department? Is there a difference between the current culture and the Department's preferred culture? If the Department's current culture and the preferred culture lack congruence, what can be done to bring about cultural change while maintaining harmony?

### **Background and Significance**

Located in the area of South Carolina known as the “Upstate,” the City of Greer (City) is located northeast of Greenville, SC and lies in both Greenville and Spartanburg counties. The City is bisected east and west by both county lines. The most recent Census estimate has the population at approximately 27,167 and a land area of a little more than 21 square miles. Based on this, the population density is approximately 1,200 people per square mile. The City has experienced tremendous population growth since the early to mid-90s. This growth can be contributed to both land acquisitions and the influx of people wishing to live in the Greenville-Spartanburg area, without the feel of living in a larger city. Over the next 15 years, the Greater Greer Area is expected to experience additional significant growth, reaching an estimated general population of 100,000 or more (Greer Partnership for Tomorrow, 2015). The City continues to be a relatively young city with more than 26 percent of the population aged 18 or younger (USA QuickFacts, 2015).

The Department currently responds from three fire stations staffed with career firefighters working a 24 hour shift. One of the three fire stations is owned by a neighboring fire department, Pelham-Batesville Fire Department. Through a partnership, Department staff co-staff a fire engine with staff from Pelham-Batesville. The other two fire stations are owned solely by the City and are staffed with Department personnel. With 33 shift personnel, approximately six call personnel and eight administrative personnel, the Department has 47 personnel. Without understanding the current culture of the Department, there is no bases for change. In order to be effective as an organization, those in the organization must understand the culture within which they work. This applied research project aligns with the fourth year Executive Fire Officer Program course, Executive Leadership based on the course goal of “*The Executive Fire Officer*

*(EFO) will develop the ability to conceptualize and employ key processes used by effective executive-level managers in the exercise of adaptive leadership”* (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2015, p. vii) because defining the culture of an organization is an adaptive problem. In addition to aligning with the fourth year EFO course, this applied research project also meets the fourth goal of the U.S. Fire Administration Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2014-2018. This goal is to “*advance the professional development of fire service personnel and of other people engaged in fire prevention and control activities”* (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2014, p. 13). The U.S. Fire Administration updates this strategic plan every four years.

### **Literature Review**

An organization’s culture is not easy to define from an observer’s point of view, but it is readily sensed or felt. For example, the way organizational members dress, and how they interact with each other and customers are all things that be observable, but can also be sensed. Some organizations like fire departments may require that members wear uniforms, but how the members wear the uniforms may be part of the culture of the department. The organization’s culture influences the way people behave and think. A negative culture may result in frequent negativity among members and a high turnover rate, while a positive culture would have the opposite effect, allowing for stable employment and high morale. In order to determine the culture of an organization, an observer might review the mission statement and goals of an organization, the practices, symbols, rites, ceremonies, and the stories organizational members tell. Another method for diagnosing corporate culture is to categorize the culture based on if it emphasizes flexibility or control and if the focus is internal or external to the organization. According to Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn who defined the four main types of organizational

culture, flexible processes include Clan (a feeling of belonging based on similar values and ethics) and Adhocracy (belonging based on risk taking, innovation and change). Control focused processes include Hierarchy (operations within a strict and well defined set of standards and procedures) and Market (driven, results oriented environment where getting the job done is paramount). Likewise, the Adhocracy and Market cultures are also external in their positioning while Clan and Hierarchy are internally focused and maintained (Bateman & Snell, 2009).

Any assessment tool is only as good as those using it. One must understand both how the tool works, the theory behind it, and its application. In the book, “Organizational culture change: Unleash your organization’s potential in circles of 10,” the author not only continues to describe the theory behind the assessment tool used in this applied research paper as it was designed by Cameron and Quinn, but goes on to give actual application of the tool in real world organizations. It describes what organizational culture is and why it matters. It gives the steps for successful change. The book also describes both the advantages and disadvantages of using the competing values framework. The author describes how you might use the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument in your specific situation and how to communicate the results and need for change. To assist with the communication component, the author makes recommendations on how to organize workshops within your organization. Finally, there are specific case studies given where the assessment instrument has been used and how it was handled (Bremer, 2013).

Organizational culture can make or break the organization, or in the very least reduce its overall effectiveness. Because an organization’s culture may be based at least in part of successes from the past, changing the culture may be extremely difficult. This is due to the members of the organization hanging onto beliefs and personal commitments to the existing

culture with a sense of validation in their behavior due to previous success. This is very true within the fire service. There is a very common tongue-in-cheek statement in the fire service about how centuries of tradition have been unimpeded by progress. When an organization is unwilling or unable to modify its culture in order to realign itself with its environment based on the results of internal and external scans, the organization may ultimately fail. According to Terrance Deal and Allan Kennedy, there are five reasons an organization can justify drastic changes to its culture. Those five reasons are:

1. Strong values that don't fit the environment
2. A very competitive and changing industry
3. The organization is not performing
4. The organization is experiencing rapid growth
5. The organization is in the highest ranks of its competition

In order to survive and to achieve excellence, an organization must develop a culture that is adaptive to change and one that supports innovation (Brown & Harvey, 2006).

Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn are the authors of the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument. This tool has been around for more than 20 years and has been used in many different types of organizations, including for profit and non-profit. Being one of the most researched and validated tools of its kind, this assessment tool was ultimately selected to help diagnose the current and preferred culture within the Department. In order to effectively use the tool, one must be familiar with the theory utilized in its development. The tool is fairly simple

and only requires about 20 minutes to take. This text is considered to be the user's manual for this assessment tool and should be reviewed prior to its use (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

An organization's culture has a number of critical drivers, one of which is ensuring ethical behavior. In order to build an organization that values ethical behavior, the leadership must communicate values that explicitly emphasize ethical behavior within the organization. This could be accomplished by establishing a code of ethics which formally identifies the way an organization must behave ethically. Another method for defining ethical behavior and ensuring that behavior is part of the organization's culture is to include the ethical values within the mission and vision statements of the organization. In order for this process to be successful, an organization's leaders must frequently reemphasize the ethical values and act on them when they are violated. Additionally, there should be a reward system that incentivizes the adherence to the organization's ethical values. This could be in the form of rewards in the way of benefits and pay or even promotions (Hill & Jones, 2009).

In many cases, culture is very difficult to identify and describe within an organization. This is partly due to the fact that culture is based on the norms, values, and the beliefs within an organization, many of which are only noticeable upon observances over time or immersion in the daily operations of the company. By its very nature, something that is considered a norm is likely the result of the organization's culture. For example, the statement often made in response to the question, why do we do it this way, might be, "because this is how we do it." That response does not actually answer the question, but it does serve as a possible example of how culture has affected the organizational processes. The author lists some questions that may be asked in order to help define an organization's culture. Those questions include what are the stories told within the organization? How is power used within the organization? What is or is not talked about

within the organization? What must a person do in order to progress within the organization or what would cause a person trouble within the organization? Are there rules that are unwritten? If so, what are they? What about the morals and values of the organization? All of these questions can help define the culture of the organization (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2009).

Organizational culture can be thought of as the “*organization’s DNA – invisible to the naked eye, yet a powerful template that shapes what happens in the workplace*” (McShane & Glinow, 2010, p. 416). Within an organization, the organizational culture is made up of values and assumptions shared by the group. Each person brings their own set of values, but it is those shared values, the values which are common among the group that are the most influential in the development of an organization’s culture. These shared values work to drive the outcomes within the organization. This is why it is vital that an organization puts effort into identifying the shared values of the group and using them to develop the mission and vision statements of the organization. While these values tend to be stable, large changes within the makeup of the organization such as multiple retirements or mass hiring may have an effect on these values, especially if they have not been previously identified (McShane & Glinow, 2010).

As in any organization, there are competing values. Stated another way, within any organization where there are multiple people, each of those people brings personal values to the culture. Like the differences in values, people also may come to an organization from different cultures. Therefore, an organization’s culture is made up at least partly from the values and cultural influences each person within that organization brings with them. Similar to cultural diversity is the concept of globalization. Globalization is typically a concept saved for very large multinational organizations where people are more interconnected from much more culturally diverse groups. Like with micro and macroeconomics, the concept of globalization can be very

large or small in actual application. The application relevant to this applied research project is that leaders must become better at living and working within organizations that include people who are themselves culturally diverse, but also collectively make up the culture of the organization (Northouse, 2010).

Lending itself to the idea of being an adaptive problem or challenge, the word culture is not easily defined. Within the context used by the author of *Leadership: Theory and Practice* fifth edition, culture is defined as “*learned beliefs, values, rules, norms, symbols, and traditions common to a group of people*” (Northouse, 2010, p. 336).

“*Transformational leaders avoid closely managing their subordinates and organizations. Rather, they exert their influence through social architecture, by working with the basic symbols and core values, or culture of their organizations*” (Rainey, 2009, p. 333). Leaders play a key role in the development, maintenance, and changing of an organization’s culture. According to one researcher, Schein, culture involves many levels. The most basic of these levels are the general assumptions that an organization operates on, namely its norms. These are very difficult to identify in most cases because they tend to be invisible. Often, the rationale behind certain processes can be indefinable even to members, who then resort to “this is just how it is” statements as an explanation. The next level is what members of the organization refer to as the “how it ought to be” statements. These are the opinions of the members of the organization on how things should be handled. And finally, there are the actual observable facts, such as the policies or procedures, how things are done. These are often formalized, but are in the very least observable. Within an organization, its culture can vary from a weak culture to a very strong culture. In a very weak culture, the members of the organization are less committed and lack

general consensus on the organization's values. In contrast, in a very strong culture, the members are much more committed and share the values of the organization (Rainey, 2009).

There are many different theories on organizational culture and how to diagnose it. One such theory is the Competing Values Framework theory by Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn. This theory is based on the assumption that there are two axes, a vertical and horizontal. This arrangement is designed to depict that certain values are in constant tension between each other. This theory allows an organization to identify which culture would be its best fit and its most successful. Based on this theory, there are four quadrants. Those quadrants are: hierarchy culture, market culture, clan culture, and adhocracy culture (Bremer, 2013) (Cameron & Quinn, 2011) (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2015).

Hierarchy culture describes those organizations with a culture that is focused more on stability and control and more on how internal people work with each other. This organization has a tendency to focus more on highly structured environments with formal rules, policies, and procedures. This type of culture tends to be where most governmental organizations fall (Bremer, 2013) (Cameron & Quinn, 2011) (Hughes et al., 2015).

The market culture is a culture which focuses on the external environment, such as customers, hence the name market culture. But like the hierarchy culture, market culture is also focused on both stability and control. The difference is that this culture focuses externally rather than internally. This culture is very competitive and oriented towards results. Results are typically measured in profit. There is an emphasis on winning or beating the competition (Bremer, 2013) (Cameron & Quinn, 2011) (Hughes et al., 2015).

Organizations with a clan culture have a high emphasis on flexibility and discretion. This culture is often thought of as having an extended family environment. Those familiar with the

fire service will quickly identify with this culture as the fire service is often seen as being an extended family. Sharing the inward focus on its members, an organization with a clan culture is in this way similar to the hierarchy culture. This culture is best characterized by having a highly cohesive membership with shared values. This culture also strives to have consensus and a participative team. It is believed among the group that taking care of the team, using teamwork, and being highly loyal is the way to success (Bremer, 2013) (Cameron & Quinn, 2011) (Hughes et al., 2015).

Finally, there is adhocracy culture. This culture is characterized by having a primarily outward focus, similar to that of the market culture, but with flexibility and discretion. This type of culture is the best suited for rapidly changing conditions. This culture is very dynamic and works best for those who are creative, entrepreneurial in nature, and those who desire to stay on the cutting edge. This culture does not bode well for those who tend to need structure and stability (Bremer, 2013) (Cameron & Quinn, 2011) (Hughes et al., 2015).

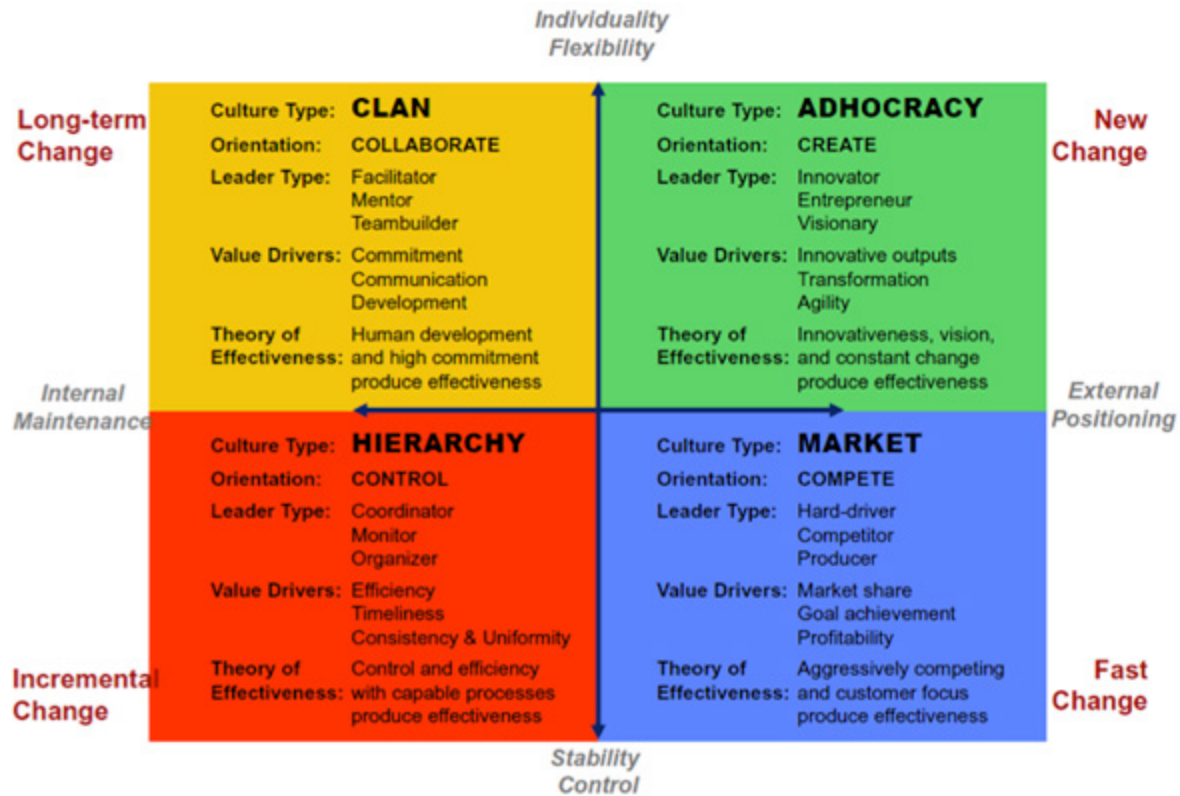


Figure 1. Competing Values Framework - Source: <http://www.artsjournal.com>

In summary, there are many different definitions and theories of organizational culture. Based on the review of available references, the author of this applied research project selected the Competing Values Framework by Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn to diagnose the current culture of the Department and to identify if there is a lack of congruence and therefore a need for cultural change.

### Procedure

The purpose of this applied research project was to determine the current culture of the Department and provide a methodology to makes changes if there were differences between the current culture and the desired culture as identified by the members of the Department. The evaluative research methodology was chosen for this project. In addition to a comprehensive

review of references, an internet search was conducted to identify an online survey that would utilize the chosen theory, the Competing Values Framework Theory. During this internet search, the website: OCAI-Online was found. After evaluating the process for utilizing the assessment tool available through this website, an account was set up and the “pro” account type selected. This type of account allowed for the assessment tool to be delivered to multiple members of the Department, while allowing them to remain anonymous. The assessment instrument can be found in Appendix B of this document.

An email was sent to all 47 members of the department explaining the purpose of the survey assessment tool and that their identity would remain anonymous. Members were given one month to respond. Participation was highly encouraged but was not mandatory as there was no way to ensure that all members participate due to the anonymity component of the assessment instrument. The OCAI is an assessment tool made up of six items or dimensions, each have four alternatives that correlate to the four cultures. Within each of the six dimensions, the person completing the assessment is asked to divide 100 points between the four alternatives, assigning the most points to the alternative that most represents the organization. This process is completed twice, once representing the current situation within the organization and the second representing the desired situation for that person. The total for each dimension must equal 100. Once the assessment is completed, it is scored. In this applied research project, the author utilized a web based system where the scoring was completed automatically, but the scoring process will be explain here for clarification. The person calculating the score will add all of the “A” alternatives for all six dimensions and then divide by six, resulting in the average for that alternative. This will be completed for each alternatives for both the “Now” and the “Preferred” columns. The alternatives are A – Clan, B – Adhocracy, C – Market, and D – Hierarchy. Finally, the results

from these calculations will be plotted on corresponding graphs which will be included within the results section of this paper (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

*What is the current culture of the City of Greer Fire Department?*

The assessment instrument asked four questions within six dimensions. Within each of the six dimensions, the member completing the assessment instrument was asked to divide 100 points over four alternatives that correspond with the four cultural types, hierarchy, market, clan, and adhocracy. The total assigned points must equal 100. The instrument asks the member taking it to first answer all of the questions as they perceive the current culture of the organization. Taking the assessment a second time, the test taker is asked to answer based on how they would rather see the culture of the organization.

*Is there a difference between the current culture and the department's preferred culture?*

When the person taking the assessment is finished with both the first and second attempt based on the current perception of the organizational culture and the desired organizational culture, the online system compares the answers. Based on the work of Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn, the assessment is looking for differences between what currently is and the desired culture, but differences of ten or greater indicate a need for immediate action.

*If the department's current culture and the preferred culture lack congruence, what can be done to bring about cultural change while maintaining harmony?*

Based on the results of the assessment for the entire organization, there are recommendations made on areas that should be addressed if they lack congruence between the current and desired culture of the Department. Several graphs are produced based on the assessment that visually show where there are differences between the current and desired types

of culture. The work of Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn serve as the basis for recommendations on how to modify the culture of the Department.

After closing the assessment, a report was automatically generated that included several graphs and commentary on the current culture and the desired culture of the Department. Since the results of this assessment are driven by the members of the organization, the results will be shared with them. Additionally, steps will be taken to address areas where a lack of congruence is identified between the current and desired culture of the Department.

The assessment tool was offered to all current members of the Department which includes a total of 47 personnel. Of this number, 34 completed the assessment instrument. This works out to approximately 72 percent of the Department. While the participation was well beyond 50 percent of the Department, the fact that less than 100 percent of the Department participated in the assessment could be considered a limitation. Another limitation of this project is the fact that the Department is in a current state of change due to the retirement of the previous Fire Chief and the hiring of a new Fire Chief selected from outside the Department. The new Fire Chief has been with the Department for approximately one year at the time this applied research project was completed. Because of this, some of the responses by the personnel could be a reflection of either the culture under the previous Fire Chief or that of the changing culture under the new Fire Chief. This assessment instrument does not take this transition into account.

Additionally, there are other possible limitations based on the OCAI itself. For example, people on either end of the education scale could find the tool difficult to understand. Those with lower education may not understand or relate to the questions being asked, while those with highly technical educations, such as engineers may find it difficult to understand the meaning behind the questions. Another possible limitation, not directly correlated to the OCAI, is

assessment burn out. While this assessment tool itself is not long, if it follows several other assessments being implemented by the organization, those taking the assessment may be extremely disconnected with the process. Finally, the OCAI can best be used for a zero reference assessment tool. While it will still be useful for the purpose of this applied research project, ideally, it should have been given immediately prior to the retirement of the previous Fire Chief and again sometime after the current Fire Chief had been on the job for a while. In the current scenario, the OCAI will serve as a starting point for the new Fire Chief to gauge how changes made now are affecting the organization's culture in the future (Bremer, 2013)..

### **Results**

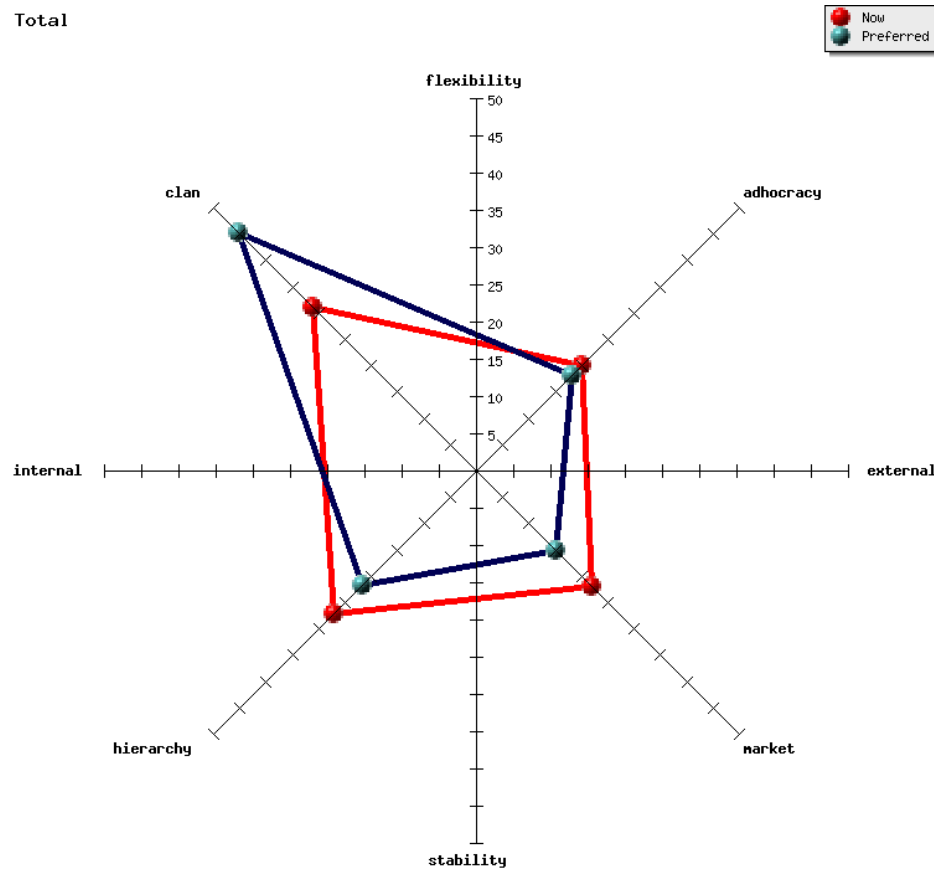
The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) completed as part of this applied research project is included in Appendix A. After the assessment was offered to all members of the Department for a 45 day period, it was closed. Once closed, the system automatically produced a report based on the responses from the members of the Department. This report along with the graphs produced will be discussed at length.

The OCAI allows the Department to take a snapshot of the current culture and to get an idea of what is most important to its members. The results of this assessment can help determine if the organization is content and to assist with internal communications.

*What is the current culture of the City of Greer Fire Department?*

As with most organizations, there is a mix of culture. Not surprisingly, the dominant culture within the Department is clan culture with 31.12 points. Hierarchy culture received 27.10 points, market culture 21.80, and adhocracy received 19.98 points. Based on these results, there is certainly a mix of the four culture types as described by Cameron and Quinn, but the focus is on a people centered work environment where the members feel teamwork is important. These

results are shown in *Figure 2*. Additionally, you can see the differences between the current and preferred values for each of the four culture types. These differences will be discussed in more detail below.



*Figure 2.* City of Greer OCAI Culture Profile

*Is there a difference between the current culture and the department's preferred culture?*

The results of the assessment demonstrated a difference between the current and preferred culture within the Department. Each of the four culture types are evaluated through this assessment. According to Cameron and Quinn, a difference greater than 10 points warrants the

need for taking action to address the incongruence. Based on the results, there is a positive difference of 14.07 points between the current and preferred clan culture dimension.

To determine if the culture of the department is congruent, the assessment is broken down into six aspects. These aspects are dominant characteristics, organizational leadership, management of employees, organization glue, strategic emphases, and criteria of success. Each of the six aspects are broken down further, each with a graph of its results.

*Dominant Characteristics*

Dominant Characteristics

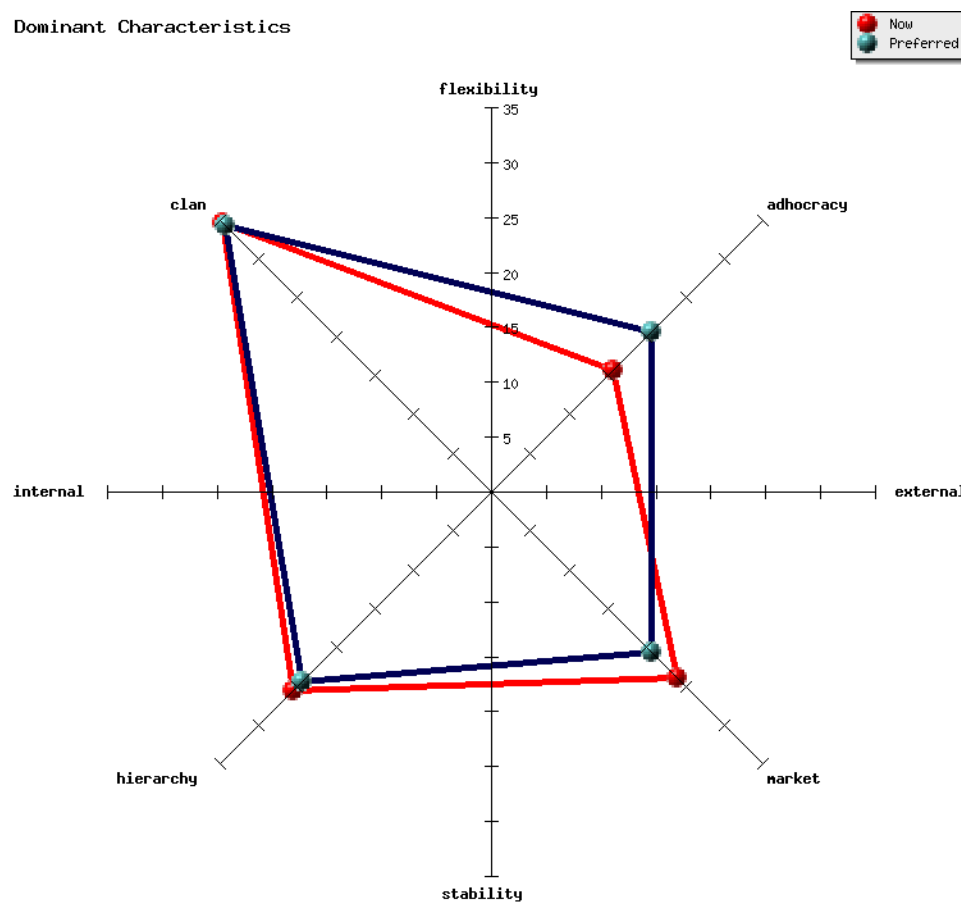


Figure 3. Dominant Characteristics

For each of the four culture types, there are none that have a difference greater than 10 points between the current and preferred. The dominant culture type for dominant characteristics remains clan culture with 34.68 points. Following clan culture, hierarchy culture is 25.62 points, market culture is 23.97, and adhocracy culture is 15.74. The differences between the current and preferred for each culture type is +4.94, -3.32, -1.21 and -0.41 points respectively for adhocracy, market, hierarchy, and clan cultures.

*Organizational Leadership*

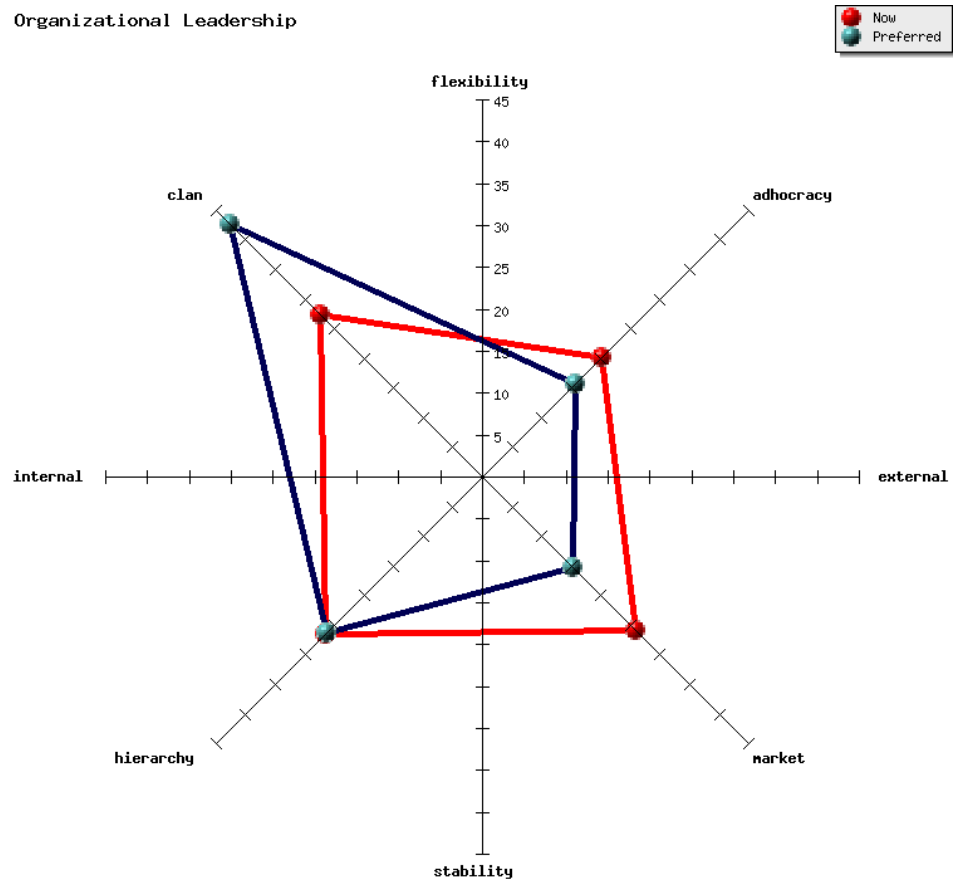


Figure 4. Organizational Leadership

This aspect assesses how the members of the department perceive the leadership of the department based on the cultural types. Again, the assessment looks at the current and preferred situations for each of the four cultures. Overall, the results demonstrate the members of the Department view the leadership as being mentors, coordinators/organizers, and hard drivers. The leadership is not however seen as being risk takers or innovators. The numerical results are 27.32, 26.53, 25.91, and 20.24 points respectively for clan, hierarchy, market, and adhocracy cultures. In this aspect, both clan and market cultures result in a difference greater than 10 points. For clan culture, the difference is 15.41 and for market the difference is -10.65 points. Both warrant attention.

*Management of Employees*

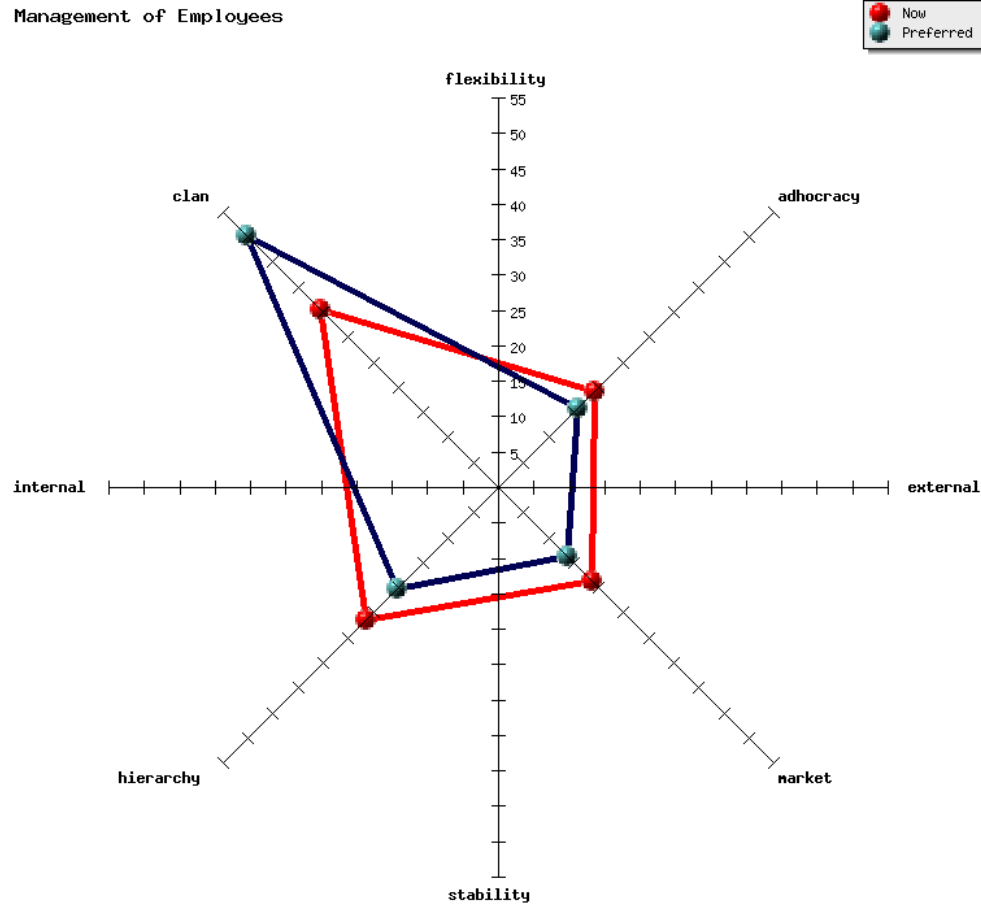


Figure 5. Management of Employees

The current results for each of the four cultures are clan 35.59, hierarchy 26.47, adhocracy 19.26, and 18.68 market. Most prominent is the difference between now 35.59 and preferred 50.29 for clan culture. This is a difference of 14.71, again greater than 10 points. While not as prominent, there is also a 6.35 point difference between the current and preferred for hierarchy. Based on these results, in regards to the management of employees, the Department leadership needs to increase the teamwork and participation of the members while also addressing the need for conformity, stability, and predictability.

*Organization Glue*

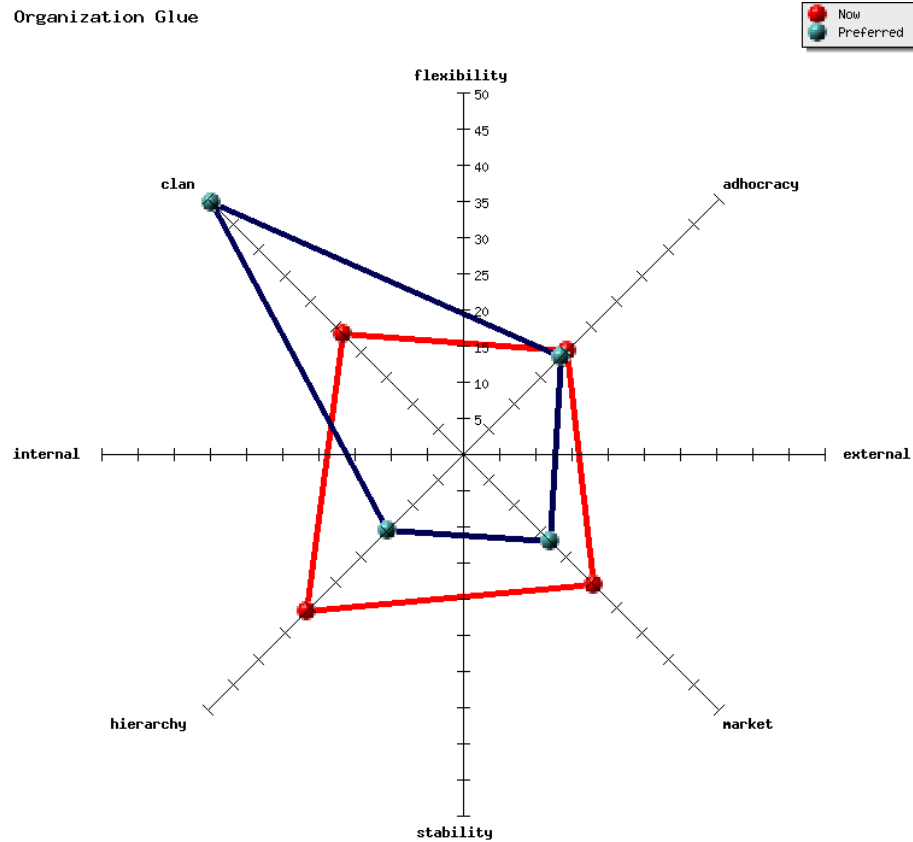


Figure 6. Organization Glue

Hierarchy is the cultural glue that holds the Department together. In this aspect, hierarchy received the most points at 30.59. Beyond hierarchy, market received 25.53, clan 23.68, and adhocracy 20.21 points. Both hierarchy and clan included a difference of -15.85 and 25.47 points respectively. These results demonstrate the need to focus more on clan and less on hierarchy culture. Additionally, market culture experienced a difference of -8.59 points meaning this area should also be reviewed.

*Strategic Emphases*

Strategic Emphases

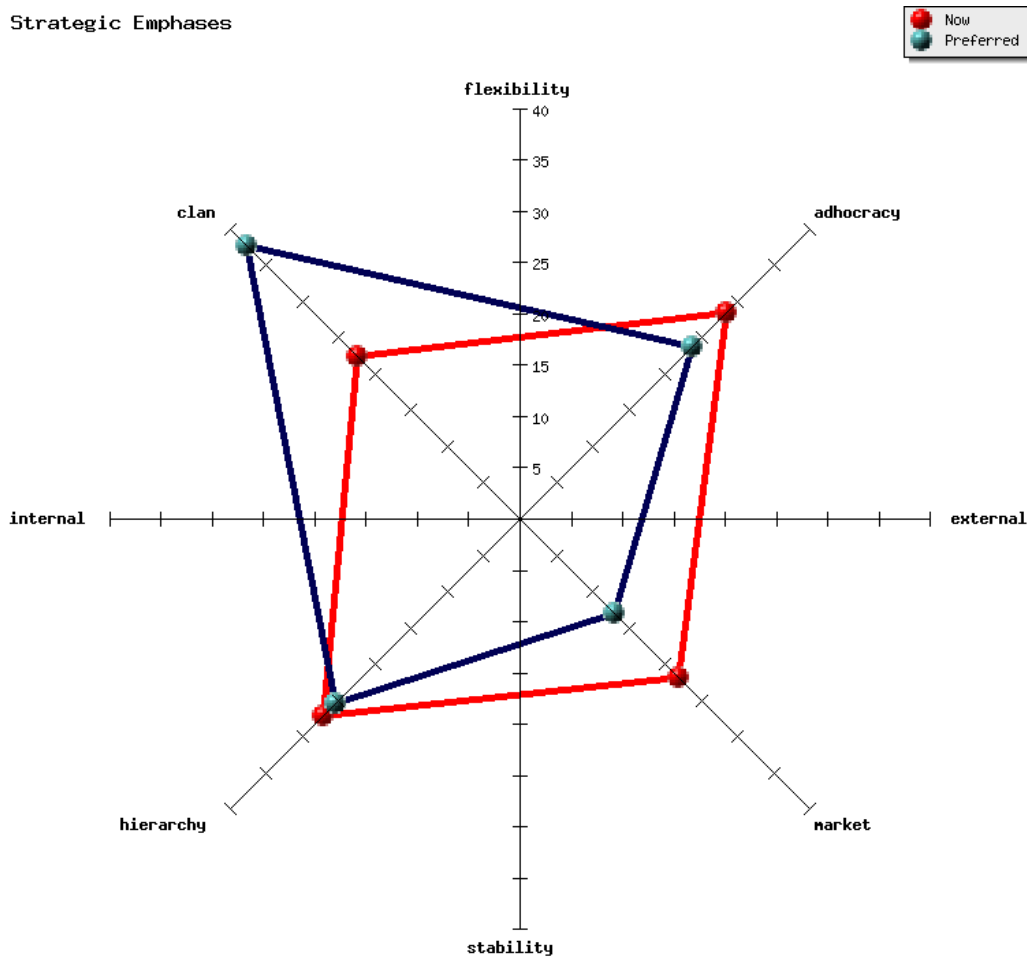


Figure 7. Strategic Emphases

The strategic emphases is on trying new things, creating new challenges, and developing new opportunities. The adhocracy culture received 28.53 points followed by hierarchy with 27.12, clan with 22.44., and finally, market with 21.91 points. Again, there is a need to increase the clan culture due a difference of 15.24 points. Additionally, market culture should be addressed by reducing the focus on in this area.

Criteria of Success

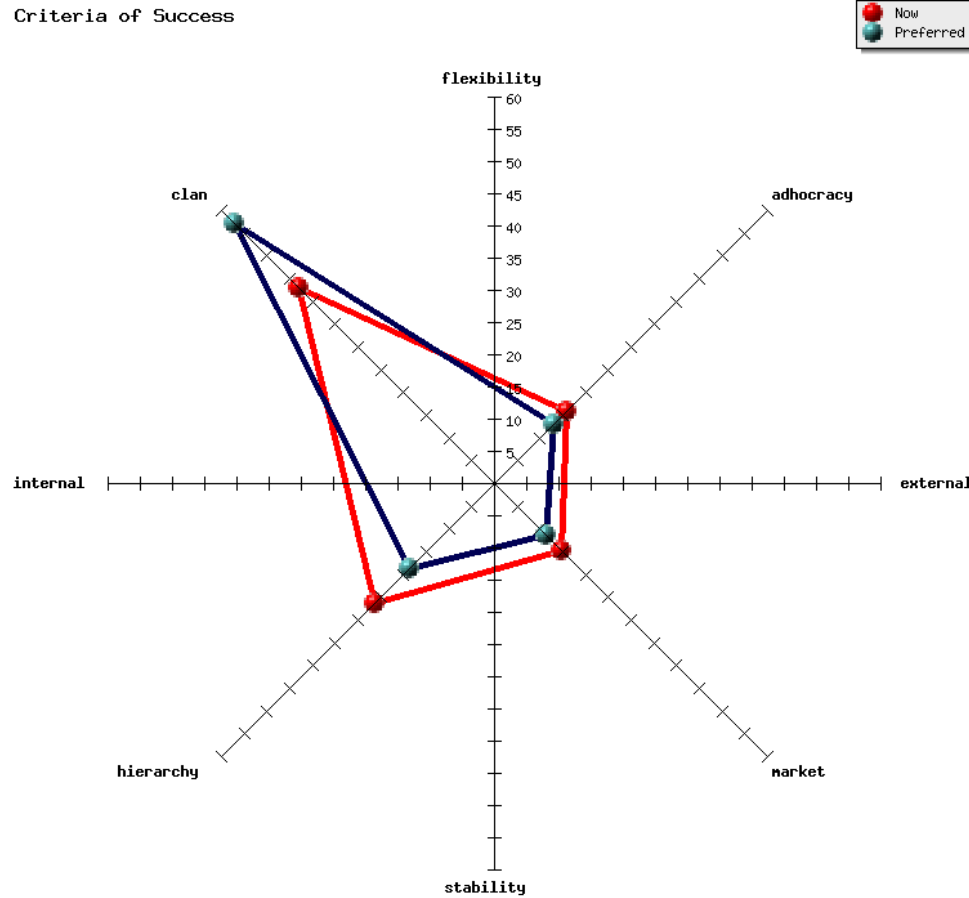


Figure 8. Criteria of Success

The Department defines success based on teamwork, commitment, employees, and concern for those employees. This is evidenced by the result that clan culture received 43.00 points for the current environment. Clan culture was followed by hierarchy, adhocracy, and market with 26.29, 15.88, and 14.82 points respectively. Again, clan culture should increase considerably due to a 14.03 point difference between the current and preferred rankings. Hierarchy also needs attention with a decrease of 7.76 points.

*If the department's current culture and the preferred culture lack congruence, what can be done to bring about cultural change while maintaining harmony?*

While the final results of the assessment demonstrates reasonable congruence within the Department based on the current and preferred cultural types as described by Cameron and Quinn, there is some incongruence. There are a total of 24 differences included in this assessment instrument. Of these, five are equal to or greater than five when compared to the average culture. One, clan culture for Criteria of Success, has a deviation of 11.88 points and should be addressed. The majority of the aspects include clan culture as the dominant culture type, a characteristic that is very prevalent in the fire protection industry.

### **Discussion**

This applied research project was undertaken to determine the current culture of the Department and identify any areas in which there seems to be incongruence between the current culture and the desired culture. While the OCAI ultimately did not find significant issues overall, there are areas of concern. In reviewing the book, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture* based on the Competing Values Framework by Cameron and Quinn, the one particular statement caught the author's eye. *“Change in organizations is pervasive because of the degree and rapidity of change in the external environment. The conditions in which organizations operate demand a response without which organizational demise is a frequent result”* (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 35). In the majority of the areas identified by the OCAI which warranted attention, the underlying theme was a difference between the current and desired levels of clan culture. Remember that clan culture is most readily defined as a culture that includes a family like atmosphere. The desire for a clan like culture in the fire service is not at all surprising. What concerns the author is the perceived disconnect between the clan culture and the market culture. Based on the previous quote, it is vitally important that an organization stays in tune with its environment. In today's political atmosphere where elected officials and the public expect more

for less, the fire service must adapt to this change in its environment. This is not to say that the clan culture should not be embraced, it just means that the members of the Department must be intimately involved in the change process and educated on the types of culture and why we must look at all aspects of what we do. To further illustrate the severity of not keeping abreast of the environment to which an organization belongs, consider that in “the past decade, 46 percent of the Fortune 500 dropped off the list” (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 36).

During the literature review, the author was looking to identify an assessment tool that could readily be used by an organization without the need for an outside consultant. During the literature review, the OCAI instrument seemed to be a recurrent recommendation. By designer’s own admission, the OCAI is not the only tool, nor do they claim it is the best tool. But this tool does have six advantages. The OCAI is practical, efficient, involving, both quantitative and qualitative, manageable, and valid based on more than twenty years of research and empirical literature (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Based on these findings, the author chose the OCAI as the assessment tool.

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations based on the results of this applied research project and the literature review performed include setting up workshops with the members of the Department that will act to facilitate change through openness and collaboration. It will help the members to take ownership in the change process and develop buy-in. The workshops will include team-building exercises to allow the group to support each other during the process of change. The goals of these workshops include gaining consensus on the current culture and to better understand it, assess the future and reach a consensus on the preferred culture. By engaging members from all levels within the Department, they will have more buy-in during the change

process. The workshop will need to have some ground rules including confidentiality, respect, and safety. The leader must manage criticism and encourage the quiet members to be participative in the process (Bremer, 2013).

The results from the OCAI indicate that while there is primarily agreement overall with the current and preferred culture within the Department, there are areas that can be improved. Specifically, there needs to be some attempts made to improve the clan culture, but also educate the need for both hierarchy and market cultural components within the Department. Based on this, the Department should also work to identify the current shared values and utilize these shared values to update both the mission and vision statements. The mission and vision statements and the core (shared) values act as the basis of identity for the Department.

Recommendations for the organization as well as future readers include using the OCAI earlier in the change process to get a better idea of what the zero basis is prior to change. While this project will certainly help the Department, it may have proven to be more beneficial if the process was started sooner as discussed previously in the discussion section. Finally, depending on the size of the organization, the assessment instrument could be used to diagnose both the organization as a whole and by individual units or divisions which may help identify particular areas to focus on within the organization.

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**Appendix A**

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**Report**

# **Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument**

**City of Greer Fire Department**

May 10, 2016

**OCAI** online

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## The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI)

The 'Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument' (OCAI) developed by Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn is a validated research method to examine organizational culture.

Much research went into the development of the OCAI. The American professor Robert Quinn and his colleague Kim Cameron developed the model of the Competing Values Framework. This framework consists of four Competing Values that correspond with four types of organizational culture.

Every organization has its own mix of these four types of organizational culture. This mix is found by the completion of a short questionnaire. This questionnaire is a valid method to indicate handles for change. The OCAI is currently used by 10,000 companies worldwide.

### OCAI-questionnaire

The participant is asked to divide 100 points over four alternatives that correspond to them four culture types, according to the present organization. This method measures the mix of or extent to which one of the four culture types dominates the present organizational or team culture. By taking the test a second time, this time dividing the 100 points over the same alternatives according to what the test taker would like to see in the company, the desire for change can be measured.

The questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

Test takers will judge the six dimensions of their organization:

1. Dominant Characteristics
2. Organizational Leadership
3. Management of Employees
4. Organization Glue
5. Strategic emphases
6. Criteria of Success

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## The results

From Quinn and Cameron's extensive research it was found that most organizations have developed a dominant culture-style. An organization rarely has only one culture type. Often there is a mix of the four organizational cultures.

Conflicts within the Competing Values Framework may be caused by the fact that the values and the corresponding organizational cultures compete with each other. This is because organizations can spend their money, attention and time only once.

Quinn and Cameron found that organizations which are flexible in their structure are most effective, which sometimes leads to contradictions within the organization. The 'best' organizations can handle competition within this framework well.

Every culture type works best in the activities domain corresponding to that particular culture type. So sometimes there is no ultimate 'best' organizational culture, although a specific type may be better than others in particular situations.

## The Competing Values Framework

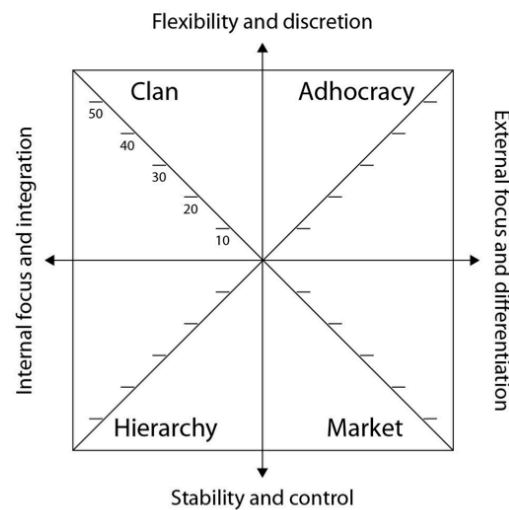
From a list of 39 indicators of effectiveness within the organization, two important dimensions were discovered by statistical analysis.

Cameron and Quinn came up with four quadrants, corresponding to the four organizational cultures that differ strongly:

- Internal focus and integration vs External focus and differentiation
- Stability and control vs Flexibility and discretion

To the left in the graph, the organization is internally focused (what is important for us, how do we want to work) and to the right, the organization is externally focused (what is important for the outside world, the clients, the market).

At the top of the graph, the organization desires flexibility and discretion, while at the bottom, the organization wants the opposite values: stability and control.



## The four culture types

### 1. The clan culture

A very pleasant place to work, where people share a lot of personal information, much like an extended family. The leaders or heads of the organization are seen as mentors and perhaps even parent figures. The organization is held together by loyalty or tradition. Commitment is high. The organization emphasizes the long-term benefit of human resources development and attaches great importance to cohesion and morale. Success is defined in terms of sensitivity to customers and concern for people. The organization places a premium on teamwork, participation, and consensus.

Leader Type: facilitator, mentor, team builder.

Value Drivers: commitment, communication, development.

Theory for Effectiveness: human development and participation produce effectiveness.

Quality Strategies: empowerment, team building, employee involvement, Human Resource development, open communication.

### 2. The Adhocracy Culture

A dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative place to work. People stick out their necks and take risks. The leaders are considered innovators and risk takers. The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to experimentation and innovation. The emphasis is on being on the leading edge. The organization's long term emphasis is on growth and acquiring new resources. Success means gaining

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unique and new products or services. Being a product or service leader is important. The organization encourages individual initiative and freedom.

Leader Type: innovator, entrepreneur, visionary.

Value Drivers: innovative outputs, transformation, agility.

Theory for Effectiveness: innovativeness, vision and new resources produce effectiveness.

Quality Strategies: surprise and delight, creating new standards, anticipating needs, continuous improvement, finding creative solutions.

### 3. The Market Culture

A result-oriented organization whose major concern is getting the job done. People are competitive and goal-oriented. The leaders are hard drivers, producers, and competitors. They are tough and demanding. The glue that holds the organization together is an emphasis on winning. Reputation and success are common concerns. The long-term focus is on competitive actions and achievement of measurable goals and targets. Success is defined in terms of market share and penetration. Competitive pricing and market leadership are important. The organizational style is hard-driving competitiveness.

Leader Type: hard driver, competitor, producer.

Value Drivers: market share, goal achievement, profitability.

Theory for Effectiveness: aggressive competition and customer focus produce effectiveness.

Quality Strategies: measuring customer preferences, improving productivity, creating external partnerships, enhancing competitiveness, involving customers and suppliers.

### 4. The Hierarchy Culture

A very formalized and structured place to work. Procedures govern what people do. The leaders pride themselves on being good coordinators and organizers who are efficiency-minded. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is most critical. Formal rules and policies hold the organization together. The long-term concern is stability and performance with efficient, smooth operations. Success is defined in terms of dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low cost. The management of employees is concerned with secure employment and predictability.

Leader Type: coordinator, monitor, organizer.

Value Drivers: efficiency, punctuality, consistency and uniformity.

Theory for Effectiveness: control and efficiency with appropriate processes produce effectiveness.

Quality Strategies: error detection, measurement, process control, systematic problem solving, quality tools.

## How to utilize the OCAI

Organizations use the OCAI for different reasons:

- The OCAI will provide you with an impression of what the staff considers important. In that sense it can be used to gauge whether employees are content.
- The OCAI can also be used as a zero measurement preceding any company changes. Once these changes have been made, a second assessment can be performed.
- The OCAI helps to improve internal communication, if different cultures are mapped between different departments or locations.
- The OCAI is a useful tool in mergers or reorganizations.
- The OCAI can also be used if there is a high staff turnover or absence through illness.

Cameron has stressed the use prior to mergers: measuring organizational culture should precede any merger in the same way as a financial analysis. The feasibility and, after targeted interventions, the success of the merger depend on it.

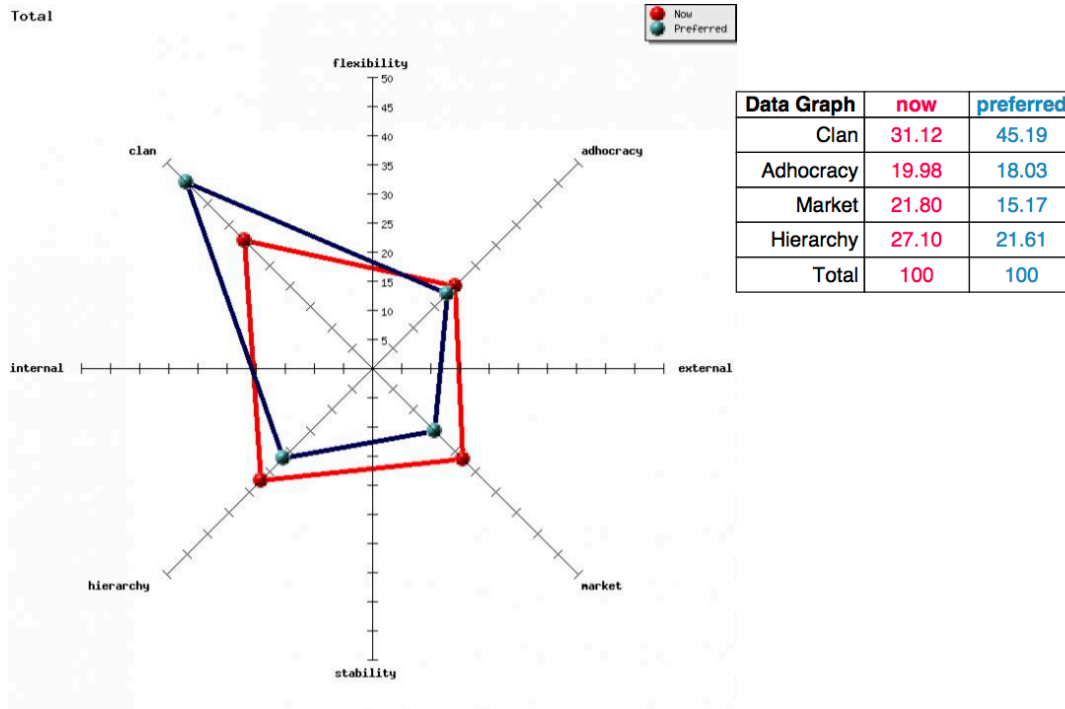
Measuring organizational culture has some major advantages:

- People become aware of the current and of the preferred culture. Where are we now and where do we want to or have to go? This can generate momentum for change.
- It is easier to predict which measures of change will turn out to be effective. Management will get more grip on change.
- Resistance to change can be anticipated; it will not happen completely unexpected.
- It offers starting points to encourage employees and thus use their energy and creativity resulting in more support for change.
- It is the basis for a step-by-step, systematic change plan.
- Successful, lasting change revitalizes everyone; the organization will be given new momentum leading to [causing] all kinds of positive effects.
- The OCAI assessment is the first intervention to initiate change.

Discussing the outcome, dialogue and awareness are very important, as stressed by Cameron & Quinn. It will initiate the mental process required to bring about lasting change: intentions will turn into behavior and actual change is a fact.

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# Results City of Greer Fire Department



Above you will find a diagram or profile of City of Greer Fire Department (34 participants). The culture profile is a mix of the four cultural archetypes. The red lines represent the current culture and the blue lines represent the preferred culture. From this we can deduct the following:

## The dominant culture

The strength of your culture is determined by the number of points awarded to a particular culture type. The higher the score, the more dominant the culture type. Research has shown that strong cultures correspond with homogeneity of efforts, a clear sense of direction, an unambiguous environment and services.

The extent to which a company needs a strong, homogenous culture (instead of a varied, balanced mix of cultures) often depends on the environment: is the environment complex, how flexible should the organization be in order to respond effectively to a changing situation? If a culture is strong, changes will require more efforts.

**In this case we see the following:**

The dominant culture is the type that scored highest, in this case clan culture (31.12 points): a very pleasant place to work where people share a lot of themselves and commitment is high. Followed by hierarchy culture (27.10 points): structure, procedures, efficiency and predictability. Third is market culture (21.80 points): result-oriented, production, goals and targets and competition. The adhocracy culture is present as well (19.98 points): a dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative place to work.

Conclusion: apparently there is a mixture of cultures where an emphasis is placed on a people-friendly working environment where coworkers and teamwork are important.

**Discrepancy between present and preferred culture**

Look at the difference between the current and the preferred culture. Red represents the current culture, blue represents the preferred culture. Differences of over 10 points are especially relevant and should induce the company to take action. This discrepancy yields important information about any preferred changes; which direction should the organization move in?

N.B. As Kim Cameron stated in an interview, if the difference is less than 10 points, this doesn't mean no action is required.

**In this case we see:**

The largest preferred difference can be seen in clan culture, with an increase of 14.07 points: the focus on people could be considerably more. Subsequently market culture with a decrease of 6.64 points could be less focused on results and competition. Hierarchy culture decreases with 5.50 points and adhocracy culture decreases with 1.94 points.

The dominant culture in the preferred situation remains clan culture, followed by hierarchy culture, adhocracy culture, and market culture.

Cameron & Quinn stick to the principle that urgent action is required if the difference is higher than or equal to 10 points: this is valid for clan culture (+14.07 points).

**Cultural Congruence**

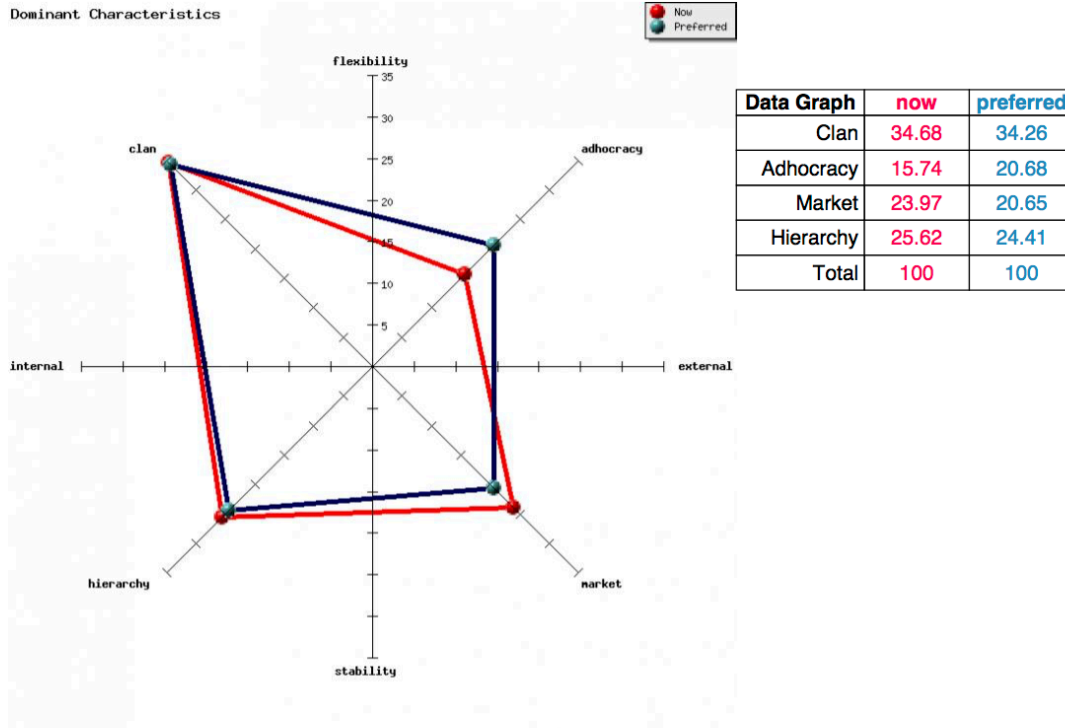
Congruence on the six aspects means that strategy, style of leadership, reward system, management of employees, and organizational characteristics are based on the same values, and fall into the same culture quadrant.

Research shows that successful organizations often have a congruent culture. They experience fewer inner conflicts and contradictions. Cultural incongruence will often stimulate an awareness of the necessity of change. It will take a lot of time and debate; it leads to differences in values, views, targets and strategies.

Sometimes the incongruence specifically occurs between different departments or people. It may be interesting to assess these separately.

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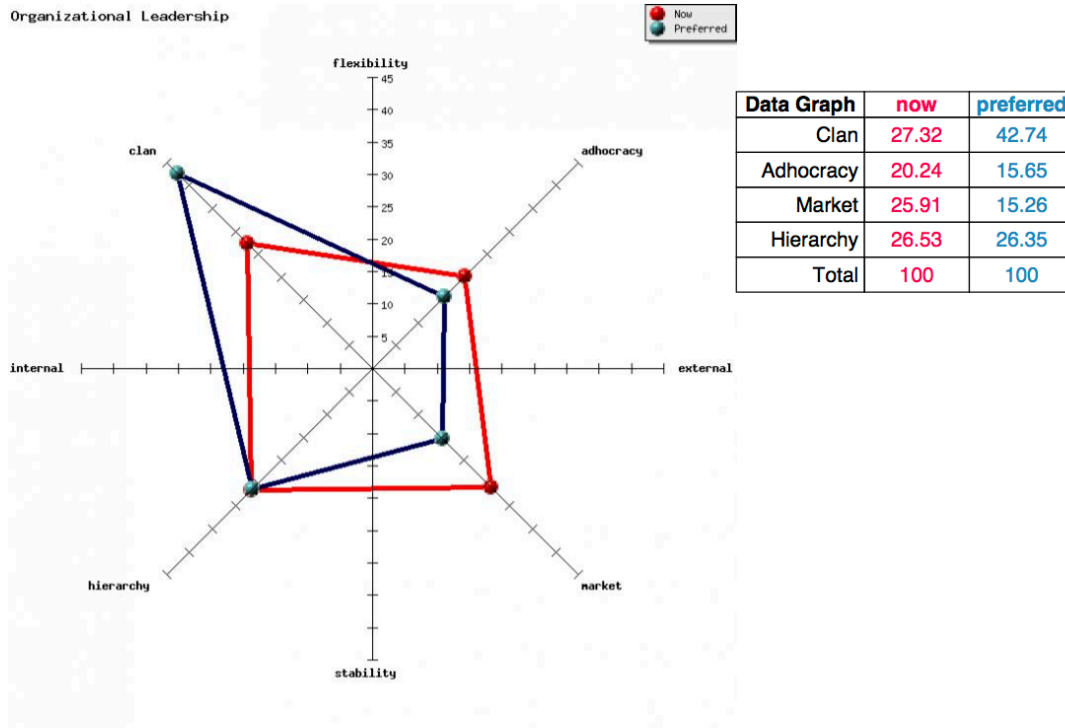
## Dominant Characteristics



For this aspect, clan culture scores highest: 34.68 points. The dominant characteristics are like an extended clan where people share a lot of themselves. The other culture types respectively scored as follows: hierarchy culture (25.62 points), market culture (23.97 points) and adhocracy culture (15.74 points).

The difference between the current and the preferred situation does not exceed 10 points in any of the culture types. There is no obvious necessity to introduce a new mix of culture types. Changes are +4.94, -3.32, -1.21 and -0.41 points respectively for adhocracy culture, market culture, hierarchy culture and clan culture.

# Organizational Leadership

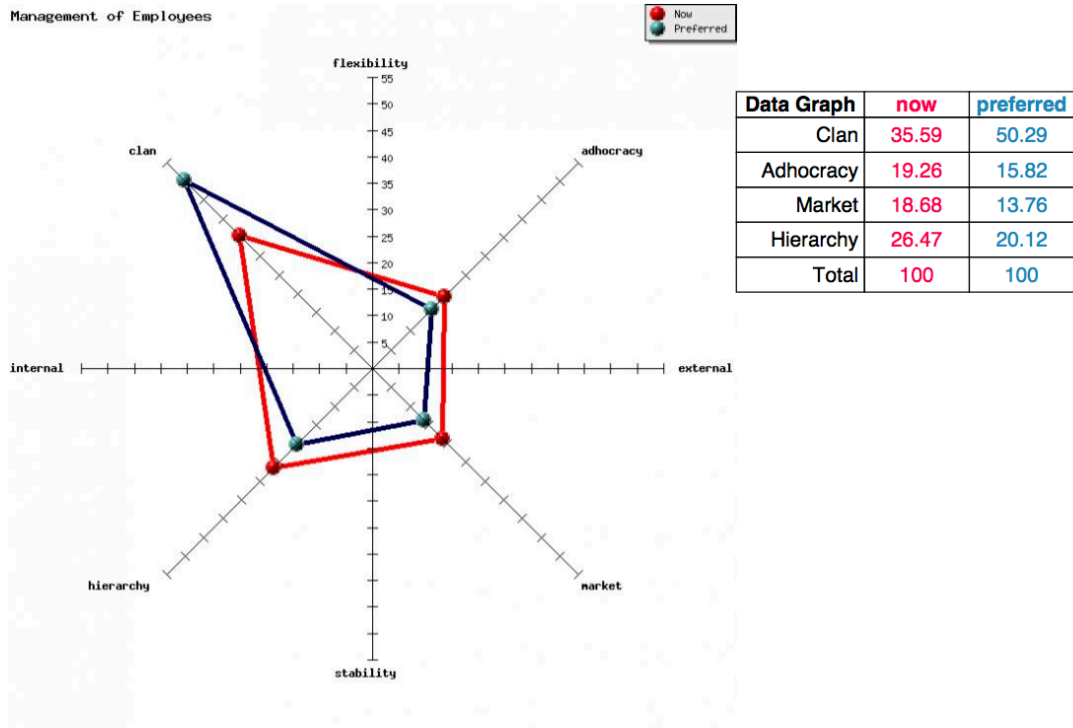


How do employees perceive the leaders or head of the organization, how do they behave? The leaders are considered to be mentors and parent figures (clan culture: 27.32 points). And they have more qualities: coordinators and organizers (hierarchy culture: 26.53 points). They are also considered to be hard drivers, producers and competitors (market culture: 25.91 points). Leaders are least considered to be innovators and risk takers (adhocracy culture: 20.24 points).

Both in clan culture and in market culture the point difference between the current and the preferred situation is greater than, or equal to, 10 (+15.41 and -10.65 points respectively). Adhocracy culture decreases with 4.59 points. Hierarchy culture decreases with 0.18 points.

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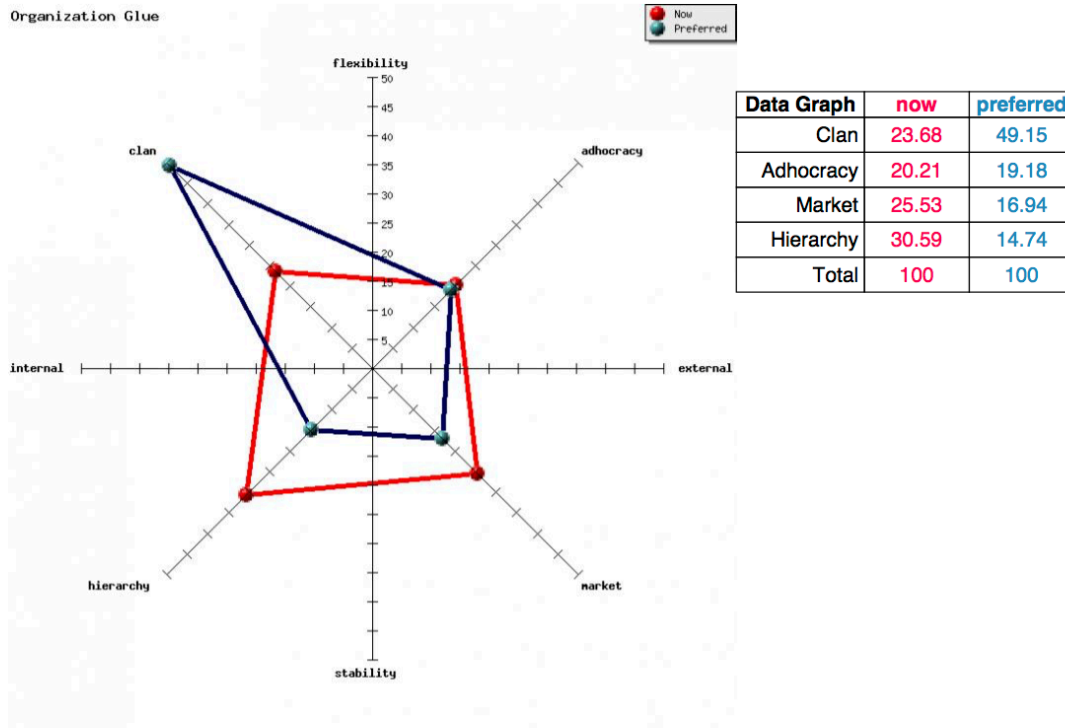
# Management of Employees



Teamwork, consensus and participation are important: management of employees match the clan culture with 35.59 points. Secondly we see hierarchy culture (26.47 points): security of employment, conformity, predictability and stability in relationships. Individual risk taking, innovation, freedom and uniqueness score 19.26 points (adhocracy culture). Hard-driving competitiveness, high demands and achievement are least prevalent, market culture scores 18.68 points.

Most prominent: clan culture should increase considerably, as indicated by the preferred culture situation. With an increase of 14.71 points compared to the current culture, this is definitely a point of interest. Hierarchy culture decreases with 6.35 points which requires attention and market culture decreases with 4.91 points. Adhocracy culture decreases with 3.44 points.

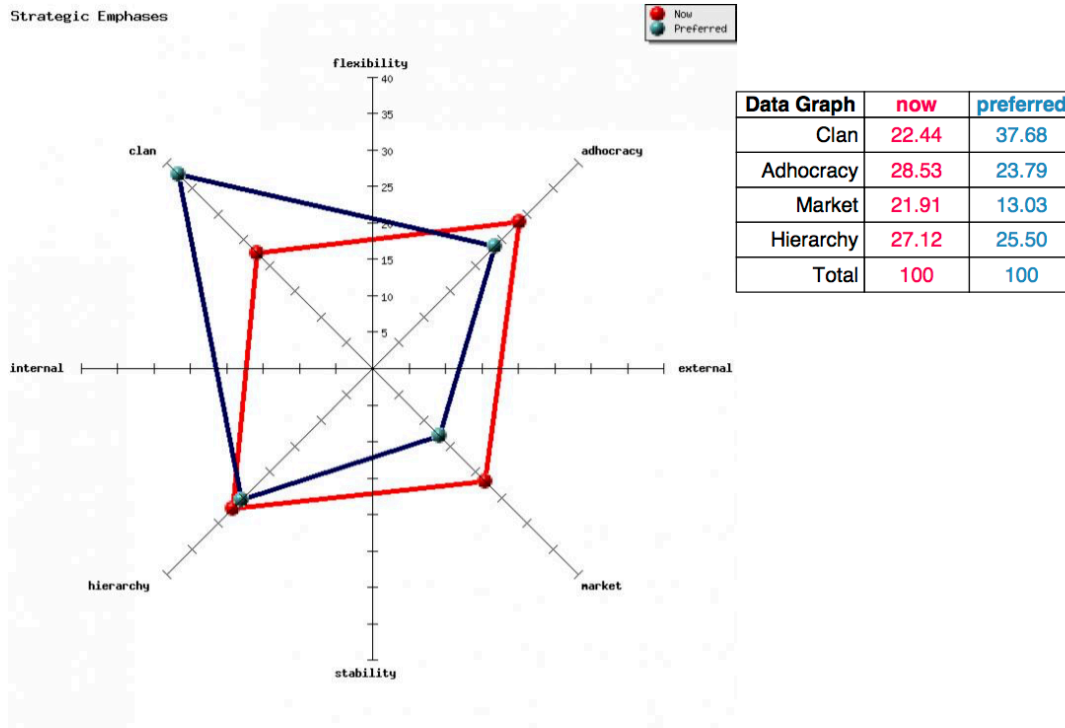
# Organization Glue



The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important (hierarchy culture: 30.59 points). Next we see an emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment. Aggressiveness and winning are common themes: market culture scores 25.53 points. Third we see loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high (clan culture: 23.68 points). Finally we see commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge: adhocracy culture scores 20.21 points.

Both in clan culture and in hierarchy culture the point difference between the current and the preferred situation is greater than, or equal to, 10 (+25.47 and -15.85 points respectively). Market culture decreases with 8.59 points, this also requires attention. Adhocracy culture decreases with 1.03 points.

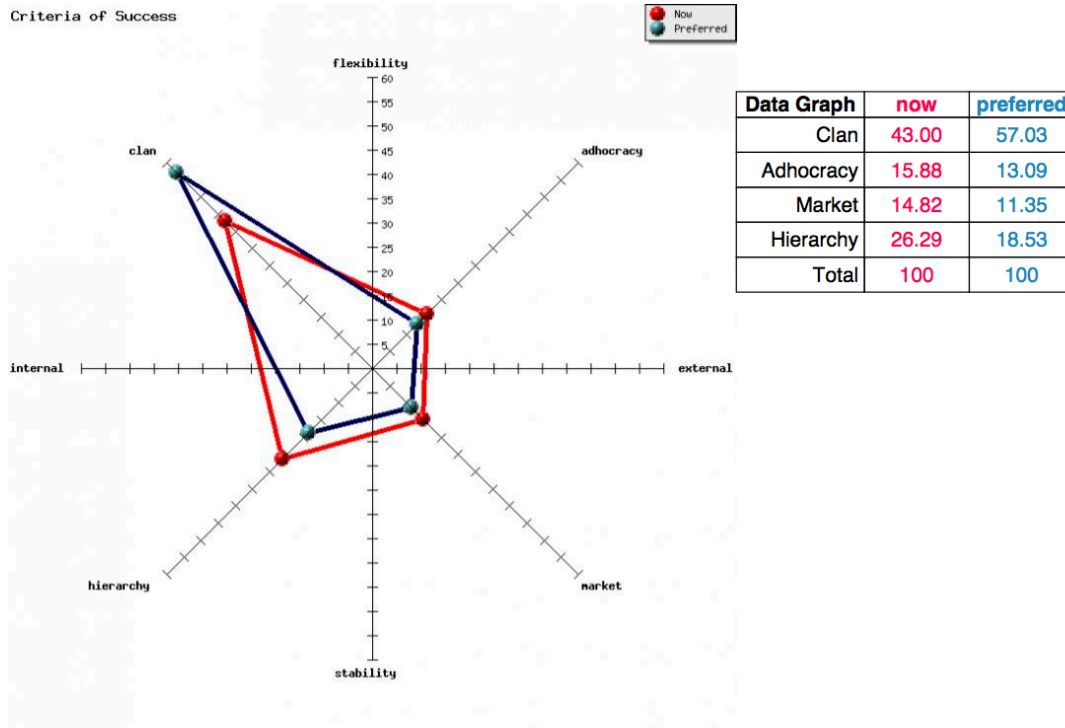
## Strategic Emphases



The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued. These are strategic emphases according to adhocracy culture (28.53 points). Second with 27.12 points we find hierarchy culture. Emphases are on permanence and stability. Efficiency, control and smooth operations are important. Third we see human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist (clan culture: 22.44 points). Finally we see competitive actions and achievement. Attaining targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant (market culture: 21.91 points).

Most prominent: clan culture should increase considerably, as indicated by the preferred culture situation. With an increase of 15.24 points compared to the current culture, this is definitely a point of interest. Market culture decreases with 8.88 points which requires attention and adhocracy culture decreases with 4.74 points. Hierarchy culture decreases with 1.62 points.

# Criteria of Success



Finally, the criteria of success. What are the definitions of success in the organization, and which criteria are used to determine how successful the organization is? The organization defines success on the basis of development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment and concern for people (clan culture: 43.00 points). Additionally, success is determined based on efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low-cost production are critical (hierarchy culture: 26.29 points). Next, the organization values having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator (adhocracy culture: 15.88 points). Finally, the organization is considered successful based on winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key (market culture: 14.82 points).

Most prominent: clan culture should increase considerably, as indicated by the preferred culture situation. With an increase of 14.03 points compared to the current culture, this is definitely a point of interest. Hierarchy culture decreases with 7.76 points which requires attention and market culture decreases with 3.47 points. Adhocracy culture decreases with 2.79 points.

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## Congruence

In conclusion, after closely studying all six aspects, we could postulate that the current working culture is reasonably congruent. Less than 6 of the 24 differences (5) are larger than or equal to 5 compared to the average culture, of which 1 is larger than or equal to 10. For example, clan culture at Criteria of Success deviates with 11.88 points which requires attention. In most aspects (4) clan culture is the dominant culture type.

## Appendix OCAI-questionnaire

### Dominant Characteristics

- A. The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended clan culture. People seem to share a lot of personal information and features.
- B. The organization is a very dynamic entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick out their necks and take risks.
- C. The organization is very results-oriented. A major concern is getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement-oriented.
- D. The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.

### Organizational Leadership

- A. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing.
- B. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk taking.
- C. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify a no-nonsense, aggressive, results-oriented focus.
- D. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency.

### Management of Employees

- A. The management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation.
- B. The management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.
- C. The management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.
- D. The management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.

## Organization Glue

- A. The glue that holds the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high.
- B. The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.
- C. The glue that holds the organization together is an emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.
- D. The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important.

## Strategic Emphases

- A. The organization emphasizes human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist.
- B. The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.
- C. The organization emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.
- D. The organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control and smooth operations are important.

## Criteria of Success

- A. The organization defines success on the basis of development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concern for people.
- B. The organization defines success on the basis of having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.
- C. The organization defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key.
- D. The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low-cost production are critical.

Vrouwenlaan 106, 8017 HS, Zwolle Netherlands +31382301503

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**Appendix B**

(Source: Cameron & Quinn, 2011)

**The Competing Values Culture Assessment**

There are six dimensions listed below, each with four alternatives. For each alternative, you will assign points under the “now” and “future” columns. Please rate each of the alternatives under each dimension by dividing 100 points within the “now” column and then again within the “future” column. Each group of four alternatives must equal 100.

**Dominant Characteristics**

	<b>Now</b>	<b>Future</b>
A. The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended clan culture. People seem to share a lot of personal information and features.		
B. The organization is a very dynamic entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick out their necks and take risks.		
C. The organization is very results-oriented. A major concern is getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement-oriented.		
D. The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.		

**Organizational Leadership**

	<b>Now</b>	<b>Future</b>
A. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing.		
B. The leadership in the organization is generally		

considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk taking.		
C. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify a no-nonsense, aggressive, results-oriented focus.		
D. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency.		

### Management of Employees

	Now	Future
A. The management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation.		
B. The management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.		
C. The management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.		
D. The management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.		

### Organization Glue

	Now	Future
A. The glue that holds the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high.		

<p>B. The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.</p>		
<p>C. The glue that holds the organization together is an emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.</p>		
<p>D. The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important.</p>		

### Strategic Emphases

	Now	Future
<p>A. The organization emphasizes human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist.</p>		
<p>B. The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.</p>		
<p>C. The organization emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.</p>		
<p>D. The organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control and smooth operations are important.</p>		

## Criteria of Success

	<b>Now</b>	<b>Future</b>
A. The organization defines success on the basis of development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concern for people.		
B. The organization defines success on the basis of having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.		
C. The organization defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key.		
D. The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low-cost production are critical.		