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# The Water We Swim In: Exploring and Shaping Team Culture

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\*\*\*You will need a paper and a writing utensil\*\*\*



# About the Office of Strategic Consulting

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## Office of Strategic Consulting

Internal UW–Madison consulting office

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Partners with academic and administrative units across campus to enhance organizational effectiveness

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Provides services to support strategic initiatives, change, and improvement efforts while also helping others build knowledge and skills

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### **Services:**

Strategic planning, process improvement, organization design, enhancing culture and climate, leadership coaching, change management, and project management & delivery

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### **More Information:**

**Website:** [strategicconsulting.wisc.edu](http://strategicconsulting.wisc.edu)

**Email:** [strategicconsulting@osc.wisc.edu](mailto:strategicconsulting@osc.wisc.edu)

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC CONSULTING

# SHOWCASE



SHARE. LEARN. CONNECT.

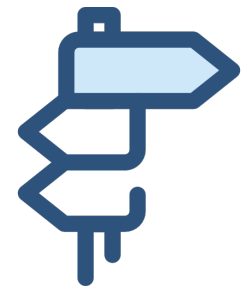
- Save the date: **April 23, 2026, at Union South**
- Free event
- Learn more at [showcase.wisc.edu](https://showcase.wisc.edu)

The action-packed event includes:

- Poster exhibits
- Poster flash talks
- Breakout sessions



# Roadmap For Today



Define and Identify  
Organizational  
Culture



Differentiate  
Between  
Organizational  
Climate and  
Culture—and  
Interpret What  
Assessment Data  
Reveals



Apply a Framework  
to Analyze and  
Shape  
Organizational  
Culture

What is organizational culture?



**Organizational culture** is the pattern of beliefs and expectations that people in an organization share that result in recognizable behaviors.

### True or False:

- ❖ Organizational climate and culture are the same thing..... **FALSE**
- ❖ An organization can have more than one culture..... **TRUE**
- ❖ Organizational culture is invisible..... **FALSE**
- ❖ People in the same organization experience the culture similarly..... **FALSE**
- ❖ Organizational culture can be intentionally shaped over time..... **TRUE**

# Dimensions of Organizational Culture



- Behaviors
- Observable patterns
- Collaborative
- Story
- Collective thinking
- Reflects society
- Variable
- Dynamic
- Diverse

# Why Culture Matters...

- **Employee Engagement:** A strong, positive culture boosts morale and retention.
- **Performance:** Culture can drive productivity and innovation.
- **Change Management:** Understanding culture helps leaders navigate transitions.
- **Recruitment:** Culture fit is often a key factor in hiring decisions.
- **Reputation:** Culture shapes how the organization is perceived internally and externally.



How does organizational culture show up in your day-to-day work?

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Where do you see it? Where do you feel it?

# Organizational culture shows up in our day-to-day work:

- Values statements
- Acronyms
- Brand or logo
- How decisions get made
- Who speaks up at meetings
- How people are praised
- Stories people tell
- The way people dress
- How people feel included (or not)
- How information is shared
- Who gets hired
- Office space
- Vacation time

# Iceberg Model of Organizational Culture



Visible  
Part of Culture



## Artifacts

*Collectively viewed, heard, felt*

- Core values, vision
- Mission, strategy, goals
- Organizational structure, processes
- Office space, dress code
- Logo, brand
- Behaviors

↑ Easy to Change

Invisible  
Part of Culture

## Values

*Usually invisible*

- Philosophies, justifications
- Language
- Historical narratives
- Norms, unwritten rules
- Power, authority status
- Decision-making



## Assumptions

*Hidden beliefs or facts*

- Perceptions
- Thoughts, actions
- Rules for relationships

↓ Hard to Change

Draw a **picture** that represents your organization's culture.



Michelle Lucking's Exhale

With a neighbor discuss:

- What did you draw and why?
- What parts of your culture feel strong or powerful?
- Are there aspects that feel challenging or missing?

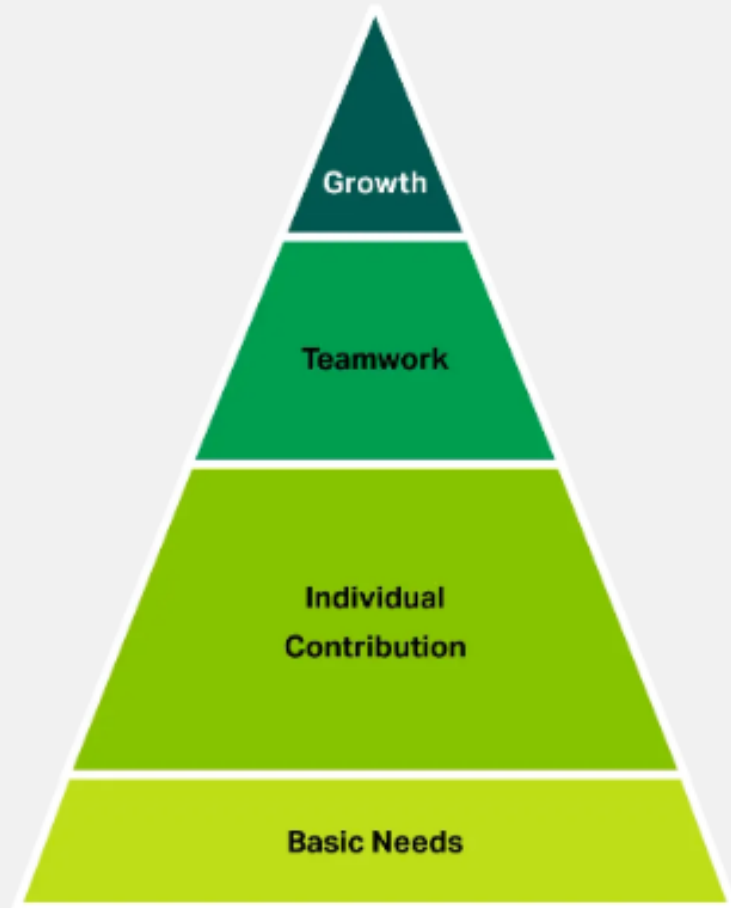
# Culture, Climate & Assessments



# Climate Vs. Culture

- Organizational Climate (Mood)
  - Combined perceptions of the “environment” by the people who work there
- Organizational Culture (Personality)
  - Collectively held beliefs, assumptions, and values held by people in the organization
- Relationship Between Climate and Culture
  - Climate reflects the culture; culture guides the climate

# Gallup 12: Employee Engagement Survey



**Q12.** This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

**Q11.** In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

**Q10.** I have a best friend at work.

**Q09.** My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

**Q08.** The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.

**Q07.** At work, my opinions seem to count.

**Q06.** There is someone at work who encourages my development.

**Q05.** My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.

**Q04.** In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.

**Q03.** At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

**Q02.** I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.

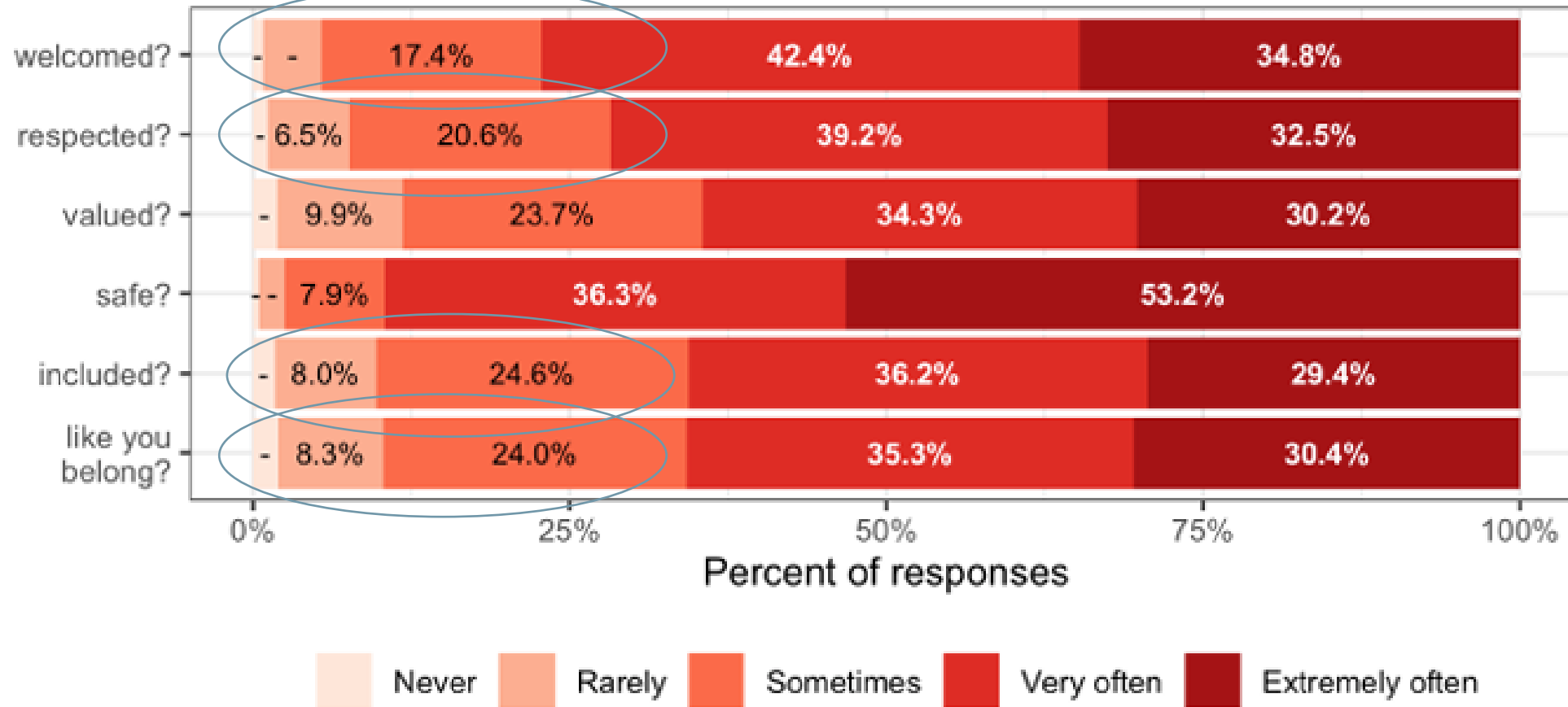
**Q01.** I know what is expected of me at work.

**Q00.** How satisfied are you with your company as a place to work?

# Annual Employee Engagement in the US, World & Best Practice Organizations

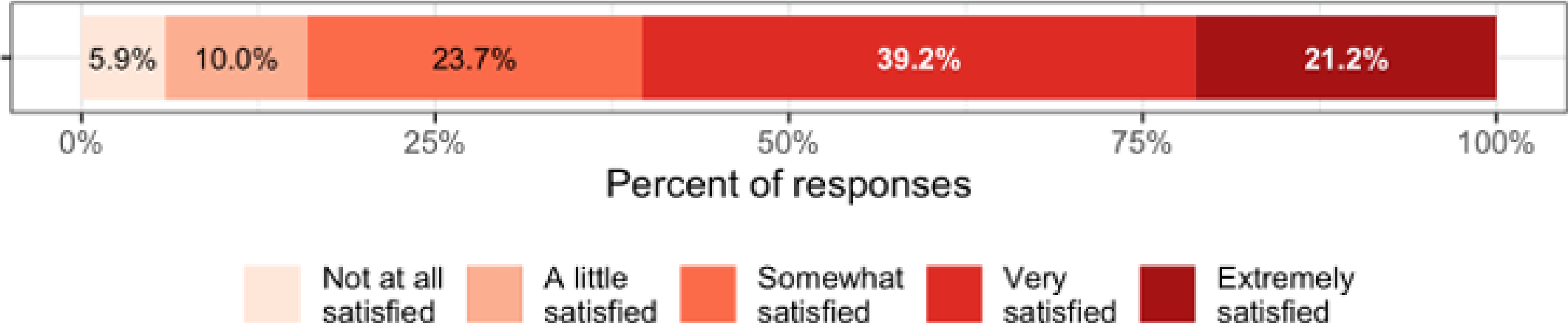


**Question 1:** *Think about your department or work unit. In the last three months, how often have you felt...*



# Department Climate

**Question 5:** *In general, how satisfied are you with the climate in your department or work unit?*



# Shaping Organizational Culture



# How to shape organizational culture:

1. Understand organizational culture



2. Assess current culture

<https://provost.wisc.edu/staff-climate-survey-2022/>

3. Name what you want to change

4. Align leadership and practices.

5. Be the change you want to see.

6. Use stories, rituals, and symbols to reinforce the culture.

7. Listen and adapt

# How to shape organizational culture:

1. Understand YOUR organizational culture

2. Assess YOUR current culture

3. Name what YOU want to change

4. Align leadership and practices.

5. Be the change you want to see.

6. Use stories, rituals, and symbols to reinforce the culture.

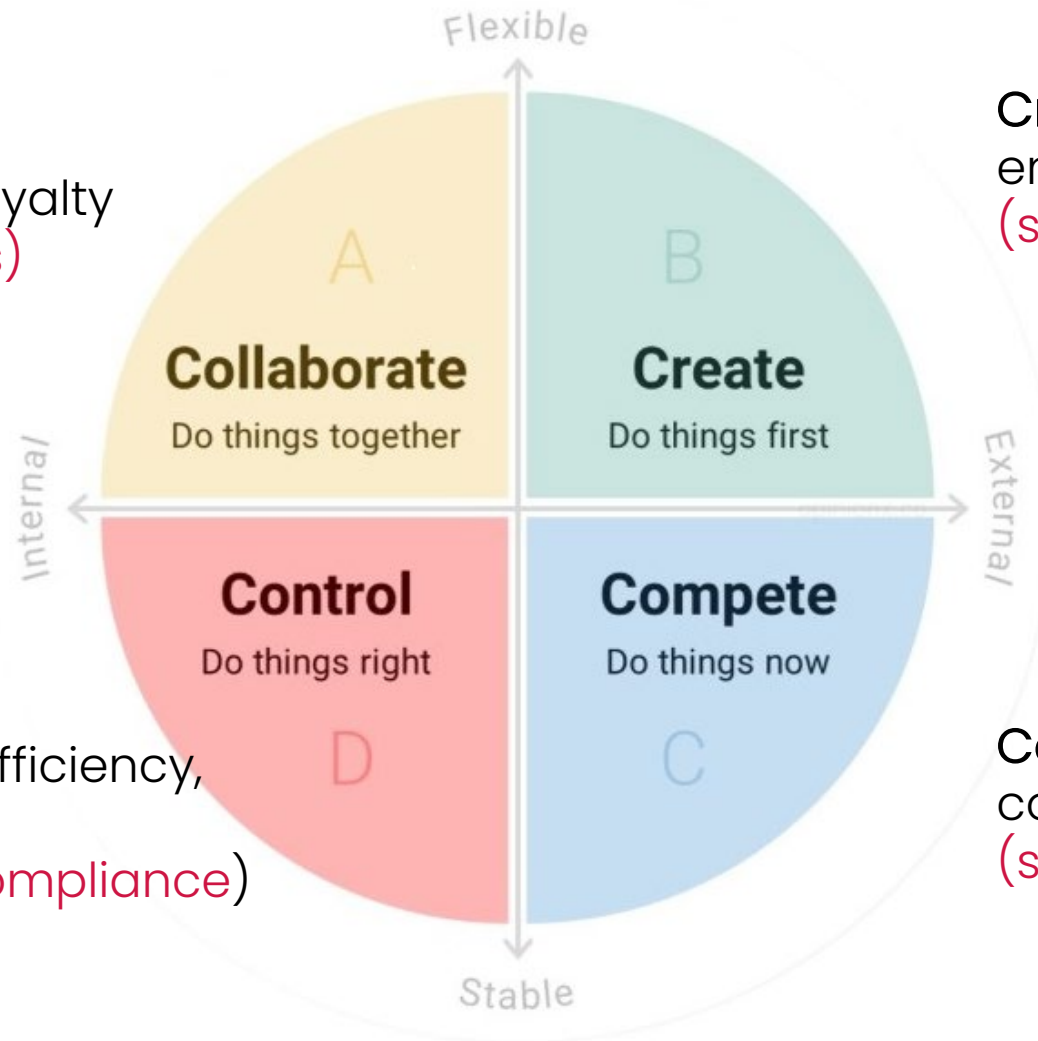
7. Listen and adapt



Deeper Dive:  
Competing Values Framework

# The Competing Values Framework is a powerful tool for understanding and shaping organizational culture.

**Collaborate:** Family-like, mentoring, teamwork, loyalty  
(family/student services)

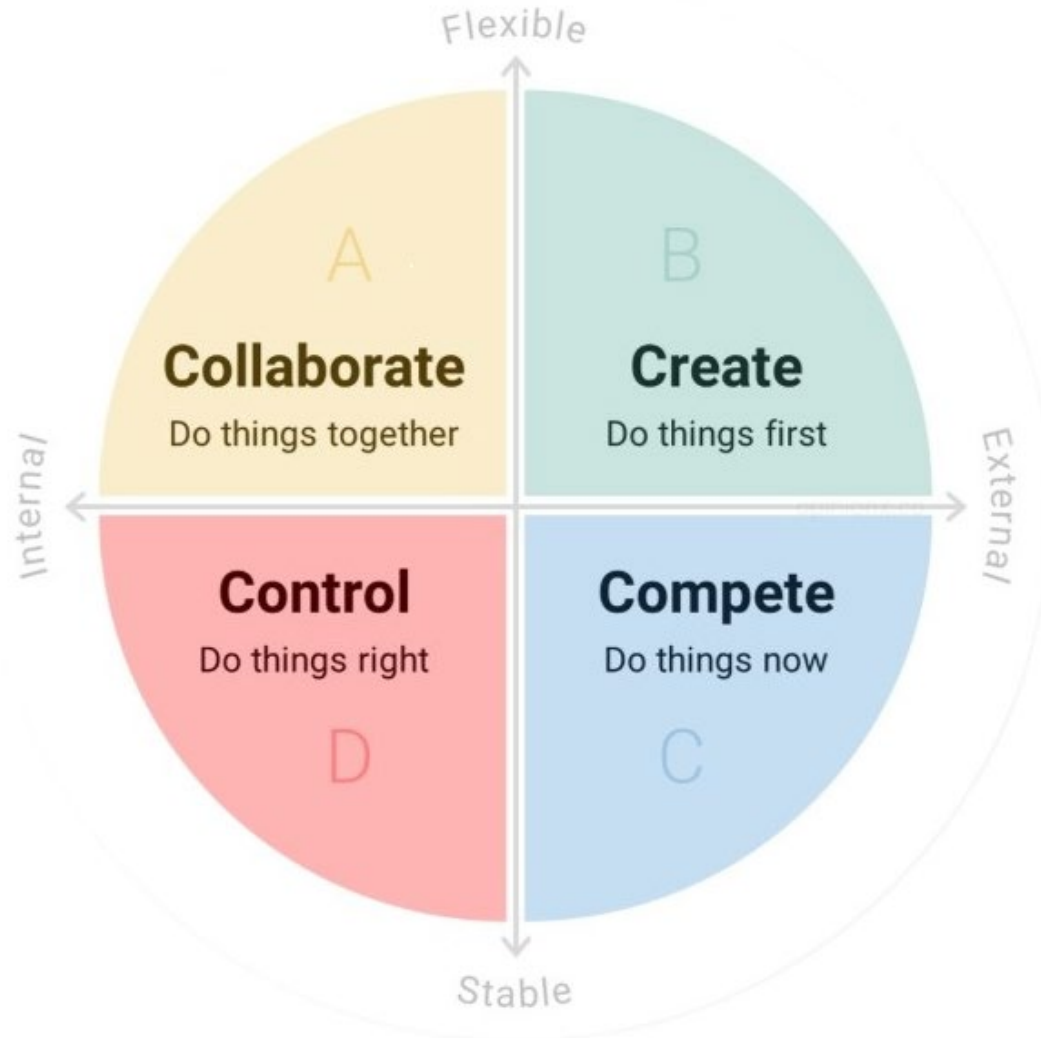


**Create:** Innovation, risk-taking, entrepreneurship  
(start-up/research)

**Control:** Structure, rules, efficiency, consistency  
(bureaucracy/finance/compliance)

**Compete:** Results-driven, competitive, goal-oriented  
(sports/enrollment)

“No culture type is ‘better’—each has strengths and trade-offs.



- Where are you now?
- Where do you want to be?
- Where do you see tensions between these values in your team?

# How to shape organizational culture:

1. Understand organizational culture

2. Assess current culture

3. Name what you want to change

**4. Align leadership and practices.**

5. Be the change you want to see.

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7. Listen and adapt

- Hiring
- Decision Making
- Communication
- Onboarding
- Performance Mgmt

# How to shape organizational culture:

1. Understand organizational culture
2. Assess current culture
3. Name what you want to change
4. Align leadership and practices.
- 5. Be the change you want to see.**
6. Use stories, rituals, and symbols to reinforce the culture.
7. Listen and adapt

- Highlight moments that reflect the desired culture
- Shout-outs
- Advocate for team agreements
- Speak up thoughtfully

# How to shape organizational culture:

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6. Use stories, rituals, and symbols to reinforce the culture.
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# Sharpen Your Strategy with a One-Hour Consultation

## Organizational Office Hours

*Offered by the Office of Strategic Consulting*

- Connect with an expert in organizational effectiveness
- Available to faculty and staff—at *no cost*
- No commitment required

## How to Schedule

- Complete the request form:  
[strategicconsulting.wisc.edu/organizational-office-hours](https://strategicconsulting.wisc.edu/organizational-office-hours)
- Select your **area of interest**
- A consultant will follow up within one week to schedule your one-hour virtual session

## Interest areas

- Change management
- Climate and culture enhancement
- Process design and improvement
- Organization and program design
- Strategic development and planning
- Team development
- Individual leadership coaching (informational only)

**It's simple. It's free. It's designed to help you succeed!**

# Thank you!

For more information, go to:

Website: [www.strategicconsulting.wisc.edu](http://www.strategicconsulting.wisc.edu)

Email: [jennifer.erickson@wisc.edu](mailto:jennifer.erickson@wisc.edu)