

BUSINESS INSIGHTS

Understanding Organizational Culture

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Our organizations are a reflection of society at large. Some of the main dysfunctions of our institutions or the whole society are visible in the way organizational cultures have developed. Therefore, an effort to understand organizational culture

requires an awareness of these assumptions.

The main dysfunctions in institutions are: 1. fragmentation, 2. competition, and 3. reactivity. We are a product of our success after thousands of years of conquering our physical world. Fragmentation refers to dividing problems into ever-smaller increments. This is done to create solutions that are easy to understand. What is lost in the process is a comprehension of

the system as a whole. In addition, we see the resulting warring factions such as sales, product design and production, all with their own mental models.

Competition is the accepted model for change and learning. We do not change or learn unless it is a direct result of the competition forcing us to this point. This fosters an atmosphere of competing with the people we sometimes need to collaborate with. The attitude created is proving what is right, proving others wrong and trying to look good.

We have learned to be primarily reactive to outside forces. This means we are changing only as a result of outside events and conditions, not as a result of imagination and aspiration. All motivation is external, not internal. This turns management into problem-solvers and leaves out the sense of self-worth that is developed in individuals from the creative process of bringing something into being. The result is that we feel people will only change as a result of a crisis or problem, the reality of which must be dealt with, again an outside force.

It is important to understand these factors when trying to make sense out of organizational culture. These factors are pervasive in the deeply underlying assumptions on which our organizations are lead and provide the motivation for the organi-

zations to learn and perform. Thompson observed that culture was, "a dependably consistent system of shared beliefs about common interests of the working community and about standards and criteria used in it to judge results."

There are two major problems groups are striving to solve. They are: 1. survival, growth and adaptation to the environment, and 2. integration that permits daily functioning and the ability to adapt. These concepts are important in determining needs of the group that can fashion pressure points to potential learning approaches. They are also significant aspects of motivation when viewed from the adult learning perspective.

The group culture implies a structural stability for patterning integration of adaptation to the environment. Rituals, values, climate and behavior bind together to form a coherent whole. This reflects the human need for consistency, meaning and stability. What is needed is a paradigm within which the group can operate successfully.

The culture of an organization contains the "how" and "why" of an organization's actions. Transformation to a higher level of performance comes from self-awareness of the dysfunctionality of its basic assumptions. ■

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Developer offering reduced priced condos



COURTESY PHOTO
The Villas at Venezia, a new Mediterranean-style condominium community located in Fort Myers, is selling seven 2 bedroom/2 bath homes for \$159,000.

Villas at Venezia, a new Mediterranean-style condominium community located in Central Fort Myers, has released seven 2-bedroom/2-bath homes for sale at an affordable price of \$159,000. This special offer also includes three percent back to the buyer that may be used towards closing costs.

This special offer is in direct response to the lack of affordable homes in Southwest Florida, said Sales Director Ines Gandica.

"We want everyone to have the opportunity to purchase a new, well-designed home in a desirable location and are going the extra-mile to make it possible," Gandica said.

Available for immediate occupancy, these seven condominium homes encompass 1,083

total square feet and feature two bedrooms, two full baths, combination living and dining area, kitchen with all-electric appliances, and an adjoining lanai and storage area. Standard interior features include carpet in living area and bedrooms, ceramic tile floors in kitchen and baths, washer and dryer, European-style cabinetry, decorative lighting fixtures, walk-in closet in master bedroom, and dual sinks in master bath.

Villas at Venezia is located at 4101 Metro Parkway just north of Colonial Boulevard. The on-site sales center is open Monday through Saturday 10-6 and Sunday noon to 5. For more information call 275-8511 or go to www.thevillasatvenezia.com. ■