

Step 2

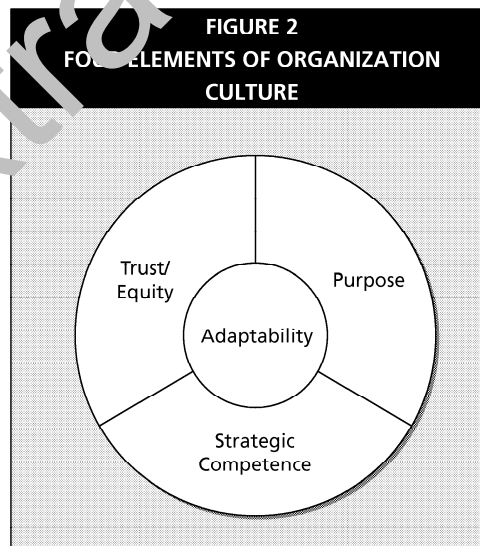
PREPARING THE INITIAL CULTURAL DESCRIPTION

It is usually helpful to have a framework to help sort the initial interview data and identify important gaps in the data. A framework is also helpful when one needs to communicate the results of the audit to key people in the company.

While there are numerous frameworks that can be used to analyze cultural data, one that is useful was developed by Alan Wilkins of Brigham Young University. The Wilkins model provides a very broad framework that can be used to sort the data from almost any organization. The model is also strategic in that it focuses on the four elements of culture that are most likely to contribute to the long-term success of an organization. While all these elements are overlapping and interdependent, they will be discussed separately for the sake of simplicity.

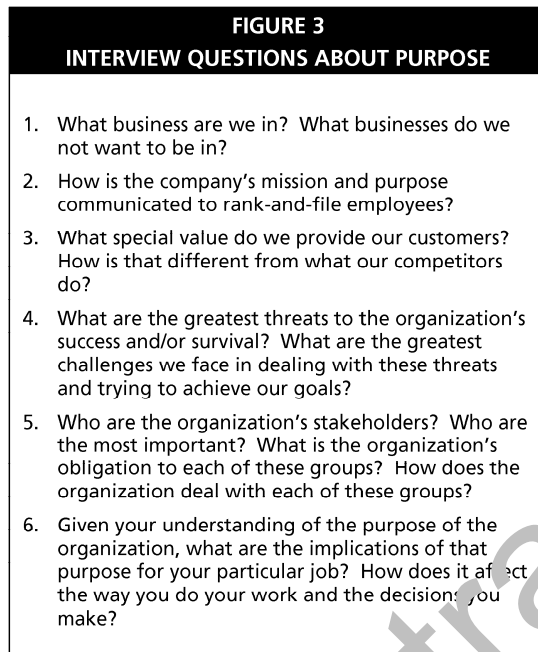
The four elements included in the model are:

- *Purpose*: What is our role, mission, identity?
- *Strategic Competence*: Do we have the unique skills, conventions, qualities, etc., that we need in order to be competitive?
- *Trust/Equity*: Can people trust the organization? “Will I be treated fairly?”
- *Adaptability*: Can the organization successfully adapt to meet the challenges of a dynamic and uncertain environment? “Are we open to new ideas and able to acquire those new skills that may be essential in the future?”



Organization Purpose

A shared sense of purpose provides people with a sense of both pride and direction. This pride, which comes from understanding the company’s reason for being, mobilizes great energy by satisfying a basic human need: the need to be important, to make a difference, to feel useful, to be a part of a worthwhile enterprise. At the same time, when people share an understanding of where the organization is



headed, they can focus their energy on the same goals. In essence, the shared sense of purpose provides people with a compass to guide their actions and decisions. Without a widely shared vision, the business loses focus, energy withers, and the vitality and productivity of the organization declines.

While the model does not define what the purpose should be, it does make it clear that without a shared sense of purpose, the organization is unlikely to experience significant success. In Figure 3 are some questions that could be asked to ensure that major issues dealing with purpose have been covered. They are designed to find out the

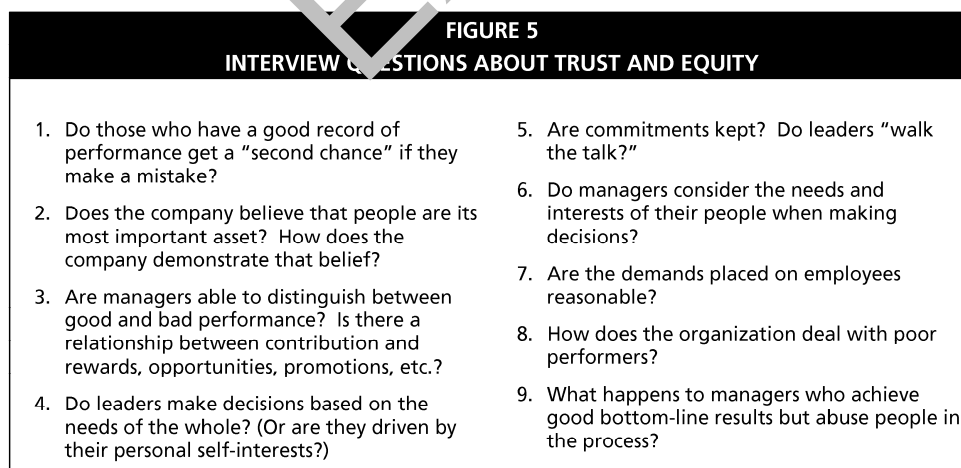
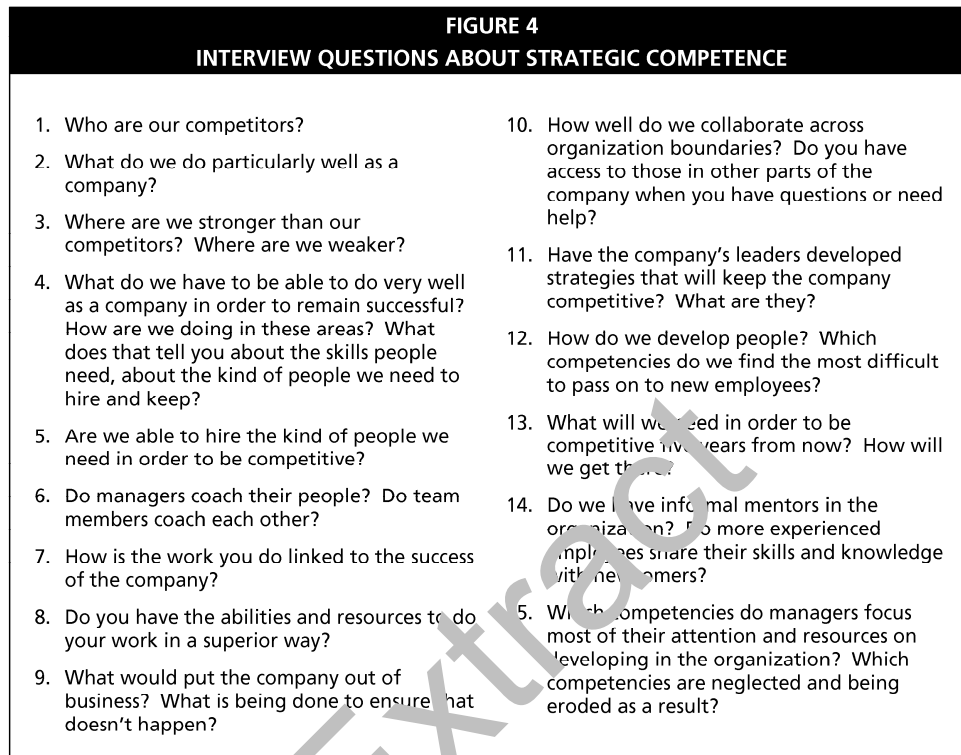
degree to which people share a sense of purpose and the ways in which that purpose directs their behavior.

Strategic Competence

Strategic competence is clearly closely related to and overlaps with the purpose of the organization. To be successful, organizations need to have the skills, structures and systems in place to be able to deliver quality products and services at a price that will win customers away from the competition. Not only does the organization need competencies that will make it competitive, but people within the organization need to believe that they have such a shared set of competencies. Without this belief, people will not invest themselves fully in the goals of the company. Figure 4 lists specific questions one can ask to ensure an understanding of the strategic competencies of the organization.

Trust /Equity

Successful organizations are characterized by cultures in which people believe they can trust the company to deal fairly with them. They believe that the organization will not take more from them than it gives in return over the long term. Their commitment to corporate goals is not continually eroded by a feeling that they are being exploited or abused by the organization.



Employee loyalty and commitment to company goals is highly unlikely when people have strong perceptions of inequity and mistrust. Such perceptions result in the inflexibility and resistance to organization goals that has traditionally been seen in highly unionized settings. Without trust and equity, people resist the goals and

programs of management because they see them as tactics designed solely for the benefit of management. Formal organization controls and sanctions may be used to gain compliance, but commitment cannot be mandated. Commitment comes from having a purpose you believe in, confidence that you have the ability to accomplish that purpose, and a sense that you will be treated fairly.

Figure 5 lists questions that one can ask to determine the level and nature of trust and equity in the organization.

Adaptability

In a dynamic and competitive environment, successful organizations need to be able to adapt. Cultures that resist change, stifle innovation, or fail to closely monitor the environment all too frequently find themselves losing competitive ground. Figure 6 lists some questions one could ask to determine the level and nature of the organization's adaptability.

