

DIAGNOSING AND MANAGING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN A HIGH GROWTH FIRM USING ATTRACTION SELECTION ATTRITION THEORY

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1. Introduction: Growing an Organizational Culture via Selection, Socialization, and Promotion: An Innovative Approach

A positive organizational culture confers immense strategic advantage on organizations of different types but especially on service organizations which rely on the quality of their human capital to generate value. Empirical research spanning decades has established this fact starting with Kotter and Heskett's (1992) early research associating the stock appreciation of organizations with positive cultures on the order of 300% higher than those with less positive cultures. O'Riley et al's (2014) more recent research confirmed that this effect persists unaltered.

The big question is thus not whether organizational culture is a valuable asset. Rather, the source of uncertainty and debate lies in the degree to which culture can be intentionally enhanced or managed and what constitutes a "competitive" culture (Cameron & Quinn 2011; Akin & Hopelain, 1986; Sorenson, 2002). Some experts, especially those involved in paid consulting and training activities, affirm that simple inexpensive interventions can quickly develop a culture (Mayberry, 2023). At the opposite extreme are those who believe that organizations are profoundly imprinted by founder attributes (Dyer, 1986; Guterman 2023; Pozzer & inello 2019; Schein 1983), dominant institutional patterns in the environment, and broader historical and environmental factors so that change or "management" or culture is difficult and often impossible or impractical (Aldrich, 2012). Yet another group argues that culture varies little by organization, being instead a product of general industry forces (Abrahamson & Fronbrun, 1994; Chatman, 1989; O'Reily et. al, 2014).

All of these perspectives, parameters and research studies doubtless have elements of truth and are worth consideration. However our approach here focuses on a perspective which has been shown to have considerable scientific validity yet is neglected in work on organizational culture, especially in Brazil. Our approach here is arises from with Schneider's (1987) "attraction, selection, attrition" theory (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et. al. 2023; Van Vianen, 2000). According to this research, people are attracted to organizations which seem to share attributes they value and are in turn selected by organizations that perceive similarities between applicants and people in the organization. If people are found to diverge from the values of the organization they leave, either voluntarily or via dismissal. Together, these dynamics predispose organizations to internal uniformity over time.

The connection to theories of culture is intuitive—similar people reinforce and strengthen cultures. However, it was not until Chatman's (1991) research that this intuitive idea was empirically substantiated. She found that members of professional service firms were likely to leave a firm if their personal values were at variance with the corporate culture. Those with consistent values were also higher in job satisfaction and more likely to be promoted. A practical implication of this finding-- that the nature of an organization's culture is highly impacted by its selection processes-- is broadly admitted, but we are unaware of any Brazilian firm that uses an evidence based, empirical approach to connect selection to strategic culture development (Nelson, 2011). This paper partially catalogues our efforts to develop and ultimately implement such an evidence based approach, which is composed of 4 fundamental data collection efforts supported by several novel data manipulations grounded in the relevant scientific literature:

1. Identify the organizational culture that is consistent with firm strategy.
2. Identify the culture desired by the full range of employees in the firm.

3. Identify perceptions of the existing culture from the full range of employees.
4. Identify the personal values of the full range of employees.
5. Identify the personal values of the recent candidate pool.
6. Calculate differences between relevant categories such as candidate pool versus employees, personal values of employees versus observed and desired culture, ANOVAS of values and cultural perceptions cross tabulated by hierarchy, function, and division, correlations or regressions of relevant variables by time of service, age, gender, hierarchy and other relevant factors.

1.1 Data and Calculations

If we assume, based on ASA theory, that the more completely the organization attracts and retains persons possessing a given value profile, the more uniform will be the values of employees and therefore, the stronger the culture, then the correlation between time of service and personal values will be indicative of culture strength and the sign of these correlations and the values accompanied with the highest correlations will indicate the actual profile of the culture (O'Reily et. al. 2014; Pozer & Minello, 2019; Van Vianen, 2000). Similarly, the size and pattern of the difference between the personal values of a general sample of the population will provide another measure of the content and strength of the culture. Once these results have been captured they can be compared to employee perceptions of the desired culture to see whether the selection processes of the organization are in alignment with the culture sought by the organization. Other similar analyses can be used to validate and strengthen the diagnosis of organizational culture. A complete analysis requires considerable time and expertise, but the basics can be implemented easily and speak directly to the needs of the firm.

There is a second step that is also an expression of a major stream in the research. There is long debate about the degree to which cultures are homogenous. The managerially oriented work sees culture as homogenous—depending only on the culture strength (Akin & Hooplain, 1986; Mayberry 2023). The idea here is that strong cultures are uniform by nature. Work of a more sociological orientation sees cultures and institutions as multivocal and conflicted (Martin, 1992; 2002). Yet other views see cultures as ambiguous or fragmented by nature, never achieving total clarity (Hofstede et. al. 2010; Kim et. al. 2022; Martin, 1992). Few would question the existence of multicultural forces in organizations but current diagnostic and intervention practice does little to work with these subcultural forces in any systematic or disciplined way. In this intervention, we innovated by bringing this multicultural perspective into a central position in way that generates actionable knowledge.

Instruments. We used a quantitative inventory involving three interrelated dimensions to approach this study: An inventory of observed organizational culture, desired culture, and employee personal values all anchored in the same 16 variables. We used the Aggregate Value Profile was used to measure culture. The AVP is similar to other measures of organizational culture, but it has the advantage of having been designed with international comparative research in mind and the existence of modest normative data from Argentina, Brazil, India, the US, and more recently Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea (Nelson, 1997; Nelson, Bass and Vance, 1995; Nelson and Gopalan 2003; Nelson, 2005). The AVP is similar to other quantitative measures of culture in that it focuses on values as an important dimension of culture (Chatman, 1991; Dauber, et. al. 2012; Meglione, et. al. 1989; Quinn, 1988; Van Vianen, 2000). Value approaches to culture are limited insofar as they do not consider cognitive or symbolic aspects of culture, but they have excellent face validity and are easily understood by managers (Schein, 2004; Turner, 1986).

The AVP is similar to other value based quantitative instruments with the exception that it was originally developed by simultaneously using cross cultural samples and comparing personal and corporate values. Like almost all quantitative measures of culture, and like the classic leadership studies (i.e. Fiedler, 1967; Blake & Mouton, 1985; Hersey & Blanchard, 1988) the AVP contains a Task or Work Quadrant, and Relations or concern for persons quadrant. The AVP expands the work and relations quadrants by adding four subdimensions each. For work, it includes, Hard Work, Time or Deadlines, Finishing Tasks, and Quality. For relations, it includes Affect, Empathy, Sociability or group orientation and Loyalty. Two other quadrants, Control and Thought, are less dependent on American management thought and were informed by an extensive survey of anthropological and sociological literatures (Nelson and Gopalan, 2003). The Control quadrant deals with Dominance, Status, Politics, and Leadership. The Thought quadrant deals with Abstraction, Planning, Exposition, and Flexibility.

The AVP attempts to measure these 16 variables by ranking 20 sets of four statements like “In this organization good work is rewarded” or “Obeying rules is important in this organization”. For each of the 20 sets, the respondent assigns first, second, third and fourth places to each statement which results in each of the 16 dimensions being confronted with each other dimension exactly once. The resulting response vector has a sum of 200 and each dimension can range from 5 to 20. The ipsative nature of the instrument precludes evaluation using traditional factor analytic techniques (Closs, 1996; Dunlap and Cornwell, 1994) and interitem reliabilities for scales must use monte carlo, or enumerative variance estimation techniques to compensate for negative mean intercorrelations. Using alternative reliability computations, scale reliabilities vary from .6 to .9. Test-retest reliabilities using a testing interval of one month have proven acceptable, ranging from .5 to .9 with average correlations around .7. Predictive validity using seniority, hierarchical level, organization, and other variables of interest is high and well established (Nelson and Loureiro, 1996). Included in the data collected in this project was the Personal Value Profile, which we use extensively here to relate personal inclinations as both a cause and effect of culture per attraction, selection and attrition theory and person-organization fit literatures. These theories assert that persons move into, stay or leave organizations because of isomorphism in personal and collective inclinations, leading to institutional and individual homogeneity over time. In the course of this research we will observe that degree to which person-organization isomorphism and strain are found in within and between subcultural dimensions has deep theoretical and practical implications.

2. Overview of Culture Study Results

2.1 Major Themes

After collecting quantitative and qualitative data from over 80% of the organization's population, we identified 4-5 major issues ATCO faces, all of which are interrelated as might be expected:

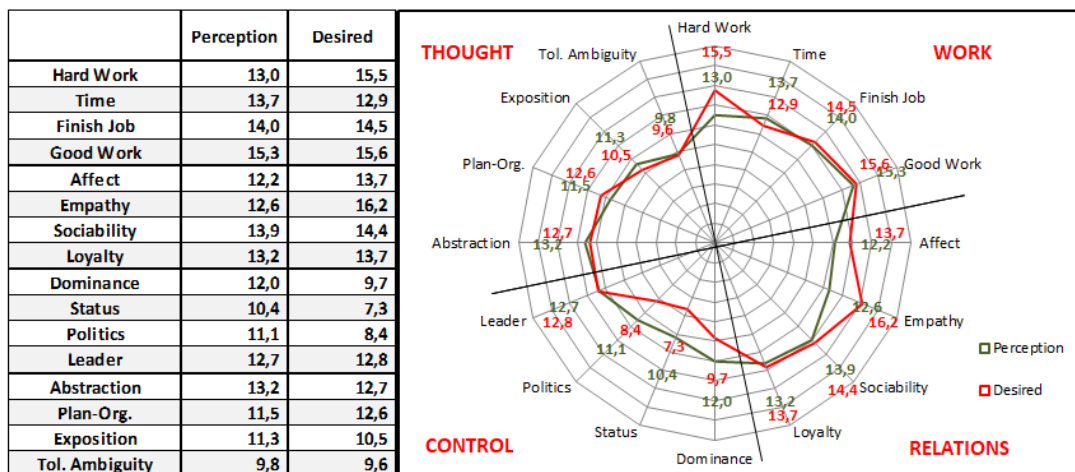
1. **Growth and Continuity:** This is a firm that has a long history and traditions, but recently has grown aggressively. We saw strong indications that the original culture is being seriously diluted, likely as a result of rapid growth
2. **Subcultural Forces:** There is a prominent myth in the popular management press that cultures are homogenous and happy, but the reality is much more complex. Indeed, there is considerable evidence that the stronger a culture is, the stronger will be its subcultures. An important part of our study identified the major subcultural forces at work to help the firm think about how to work with this diversity.

3. **Leadership and Communication:** It was particularly apparent in our interviews that while many at upper levels have a sophisticated view of the both the strategy and culture of the firm and their interrelations, this sophistication is not generally shared throughout the organization.
4. **Cultural Adjustments:** As is general practice, we collected quantitative data of perceptions of the culture as it is and as staff think it should be. There are obvious opportunities for adjustment which merit attention.
5. **Centralization versus Autonomy:** The real versus ideal cultures mentioned in the item above suggest that the physically separate divisions are happier with their cultures than the Sao Paulo divisions as a whole. This bodes well for ATCO's growth oriented agenda but our results suggest that the organization needs more administrative integration and uniformity.

3. Basic Quantitative Results

The first step in speaking to the issues outlined above was a review of the simpler numerical results, moving then to more complex data manipulations and interpretations. The most obvious first step where many studies begin and end, is to compare the overall average perception of the culture collected from employees with the overall average desired culture. Below are these results from 500 plus employees:

Table 1: Results from ATCO Employees' Perceptions and Desired Culture



From examining many of these reports in Asia and the Americas, we concluded that the real-ideal gaps here are instructive but not alarming. We see that the Thought quadrant has small gaps—all below 1 except for Planning, which folks prefer to be a little higher. Abstraction, Exposition and Flexibility are all more or less acceptable. The Work quadrant is also in line with employee preferences except for the glaring exception of Hard Work, with 13 points observed versus 15.5 desired. This is a rather unusual result. Are the employees asking for management to give them more work to do? Reviewing the scales we see that the Hard Work dimension measures the degree to which the firm recognizes and rewards hard work. ATCO employees want to be recognized, acknowledged and rewarded for their efforts. In our interviews there were several observations that intense effort is an expectation, and people seemed generally to be ok with that as long as hard work is recognized and rewarded. Our interpretation here is that clearer performance measures and policies as opposed to generic expectations need to be implemented.

Moving to the **Relations Quadrant**, again we see general satisfaction, again with one exception. Observed Empathy is not low; 12.6, but employees want 16.2—the largest gap in the 16 dimensions. Because empathy is important for customer relations also, this gap merits significant attention. There is also a small gap around Affect—12.2 versus 13.7.

People want the **Control Quadrant** lower on all the dimensions, except Leadership, the only dimension that does not have a gap. This result is very common in most organizations, the major difference being which dimension is most out of line. In ATCO's case, it is Status. Space will not permit discussing the dynamics of the different gaps in this quadrant, but this overall result does not have the significance of the gaps around Hard Work and Empathy. Thus the overall gaps between perceived and desired cultures did not cause major concern.

3.1 Divisional and Demographic Results

There are a host of ways to partition and analyze the Real and Ideal measures of culture and space permits reporting only a few analytical possibilities. These results tabulated by hierarchy, time of service, function, and gender all have significance and useful implications and we looked at most if not all of these cross tabulations, but space will not permit presentation of the results here. The next most useful and easily understood result that has implications for the five issues identified above is a partition by division. We analyzed the culture results partitioned by division and identified major subcultural forces work, but again space will not permit analysis here. Instead we move toward aspects of our results that are more innovative and which have greater general applicability, particularly analyses of personal values at population, applicant pool, and organizational levels, and their implications for selection and culture management.

3.2 Population Level Data

While we spent considerable time looking inside ATCO, the firm is not alone in Brazil. It shares the environment with other organizations, including competitors, regulators, governments and the population at large. Each of these entities or categories is connected to cultural forces and the way they respond to and intervene in the cultural arena has implications for the firm. Most importantly, for an organizational culture to provide a competitive advantage it must be different from the cultures of other organizations. If ATCO's culture is not favorably different from that of its competitors, then the heavy investments required to maintain its culture may not be warranted. For this reason, we attempted to compare the cultural forces available in the environment at large and the industry environment faced.

3.3 Population Real and Ideal Organizational Culture

Below we display data collected from the environment that is relevant to the dynamics of ATCO's culture and strategy. We collected perceptions of real and desired culture from over 400 people working in some 60 firms to get an idea of the averages for the general population of Brazilian firms. The purpose here was not principally to identify an "average" or typical cultural profile of a Brazilian firm; just like a random sample of the personal values of the Brazilian population tells us very little about Brazilians in general, the average values of 60 firms condenses a lot of variation into a small number of indicators. Rather, the intent here is to identify the unique cultural attributes of ATCO vis a vis the population of other Brazilian enterprises.

Table 2: Companies, Real ATCO and Population (AVP)

Perception	COMPANY	ATCO	PVP
Hard Work	13	13	14
Time	14	14	12
Finish Job	14	14	11
Good Work	15	15	15
Affect	12	12	13
Empathy	13	12	15
Sociability	14	13	14
Loyalty	14	13	16
Dominance	12	12	13
Status	10	11	10
Politics	11	12	11
Leader	13	13	12
Abstraction	13	14	12
Plan-Org.	11	11	12
Exposition	11	12	11
Tol. Ambiguity	10	10	10

Table 3: Corporate Culture and ATCO Tables, Real vs Ideal

COMPANY	Perception	Desired	ATCO	Perception	Desired
Hard Work	13,1	14,6	Hard Work	13,0	15,5
Time	13,6	12,8	Time	13,7	12,9
Finish Job	13,8	14,3	Finish Job	14,0	14,5
Good Work	14,9	15,1	Good Work	15,3	15,6
Affect	12,3	13,4	Affect	12,2	13,7
Empathy	13,3	15,7	Empathy	12,6	16,2
Sociability	14,0	14,5	Sociability	13,9	14,4
Loyalty	14,2	14,3	Loyalty	14,0	13,7
Dominance	11,9	9,7	Dominance	12,0	9,7
Status	10,1	7,4	Status	10,4	7,3
Politics	10,9	8,9	Politics	11,1	8,4
Leader	12,9	13,7	Leader	12,7	12,8
Abstraction	12,1	11,9	Abstraction	13,2	12,7
Plan-Org.	11,4	12,3	Plan-Org.	11,0	12,6
Exposition	11,3	10,8	Exposition	11,3	10,5
Tol. Ambiguity	10,4	10,6	Tol. Ambiguity	9,8	9,6

Even a casual examination of tables 2 and 3 reveals that ATCO level cultural means are not substantially different from those of the population sample. For the Real culture, the only statistically significant differences are ATCO's slightly lower Loyalty and slightly higher Abstraction and for Ideal culture, slightly lower desired Leadership and Flexibility and slightly higher Hard Work and Abstraction. This contrasts with differences between the means of ATCO divisions which are substantially larger than the differences between the ATCO and general population means (tables not included here for lack of space). For instance, the range of observed Hard Work values is 12.3 versus 14.7 within ATCO versus 13.1 versus 13.0 for ATCO compared to the population. The ATCO range for Dominance is 9.1 versus 14.5 versus 11.9 versus 12.0 for ATCO compared to the population. The ATCO

range for Leadership is 11.2 versus 13 compared to 13.2 and 14.2 and so on. The contrast between these two sets of results suggests very strongly that the current culture at ATCO is highly fragmented, to the point of likely compromising the strategic integrity and brand identity of the firm. Moreover, this fragmentation appears to be present if not highest within the original firm in Sao Paulo. These numerical results are supported and expanded by our interviews. Several executives observed that wholesale decentralization at ATCO impedes coordination and strategic focus and the distribution of these comments suggests that this is not a geographic issue (i.e. Sao Paulo versus other urban locations) but rather one that may be native to the original firm.

4. Looking at the Pipeline

What corporate mission statements and formal perceptions of a culture say are one thing. The way that organizational culture actually plays out in the life of the organizations and its employees is another. Some organizations say one thing and do another (Alvesson, 2002; Athyde & Santos, 2019). Some organizations say they want a certain kind of employee or leader and hire and promote someone very different. Some organizations intuit that they want a certain kind of person that will “fit in” to the organization but their hiring processes include no disciplined mechanisms for specifying and determining that a given candidate will have values which are consistent with those desired by the firm. One of the most revealing ways to drill down into a culture is by looking at the personal values of the people who work there. In a very real and concrete way, the values of the people who are attracted by and stay with an organization over time express the “real” or operational culture of the organization. Sometimes the people who are attracted and stay in an organization are no different from those outside of it. In this case, we say the organization has no culture per se, although this is admittedly a somewhat extreme position.

In our view, having a weak or no culture is not necessarily bad. Some market niches and strategies tolerate weak cultures well.. In some cases however, it is disastrous. A Christian church in which the values of the members are identical to those who are not members is worthless in Jesus’ estimation—its members are “salt which has lost its savor.” In other types of organization, the mission or strategy does not require that members have a unique set of personal values. UBER and iFood monitor performance metrics relentlessly but do not make any effort to select or socialize drivers with any particular set of values. Hence by a more extreme definition, at least at the operational level they may have assumptions our routines but they do not possess a culture. It seems clear that ATCO could benefit from a strong, positive culture, but it is not clear whether the benefits would exceed the costs.

That said, one of the greatest sources of leverage for organizational performance is the selection function and like any viable firm ATCO needs to recruit and select carefully and its high growth strategy permits its to leverage culture via recruitment, retention and promotion, so there is no reason not to consider the cultural implications of selection dynamics. By the time people reach employable age many of their habits and abilities have been set and are difficult to enhance or correct. Not only do bad hiring decisions cost money when the hiring mistake is discovered soon, marginal hiring decisions that are not corrected because performance is passable can bleed organizational performance and adaptation for years as the liabilities of a poor hire reverberate in the firm. In an organization that is growing quickly or dealing with design weaknesses, leadership competencies can be critical because they mitigate design flaws and uncertainty incident to the growth process. This is moreso the case if the organization does not possess a strong, healthy culture because peers in strong cultures perform maintenance and control functions that devolve on the hierarchy in weak culture

organizations. Given the current configuration of cultural and administrative factors at ATCO, we concluded that anything that is done to favor leader development will be worthwhile.

The data presented below will bolster this argument and also contextualize and defend the assertion that leadership development is needed for ATCO. As will be seen below we invested considerable time and effort in understanding cultural and personal value dimensions of the general environment to better help organizations become more strongly positioned in the market. Not only did we collect extensive data about the values of employees, ATCO HR spent admirable effort collecting the value profiles of job candidates, accumulating more than 2,500 value profiles of candidates. These data constitute an important asset that can be leveraged to develop culture, enhance leadership, and improve selection accuracy. The table below contains three columns with the average value profile of over 300 ATCO employees, over 2,000 people who applied for employment at ATCO, and a subsample of over 20,000 people drawn from the general population of Brazil.

The contrast with the AVP (Aggregate Value Profiles) population versus ATCO table above is noteworthy. While the AVP means for ATCO versus the sample of 60 organizations shows minimal differences, we see that the personal values of ATCO staff are substantially different from those of the population at large on the dimensions of Hard Work, Time, Finish Job, Quality, Affect Empathy and so on. Indeed it is easier to count the dimensions on which no significant difference exists: three of the four Control dimensions, Abstraction and Planning. So while mean perceptions of real and ideal culture at ATCO diverge little from those of other organizations, the personal values of people who work there are substantially different from the population. ATCO employees report a stronger work ethic—they are especially oriented toward Hard Work and Quality—while being much lower on Affect, and lower on the other relational dimensions of Empathy, Sociability and Loyalty. They are similar in the Control Quadrant, but much higher in Planning and somewhat higher in Abstraction.

Table 4: Personal Values ATCO Job Candidates, Employees and General Public

	Candidate Pool	ATCO	PVP
Hard Work	15,0	15,0	13,8
Time	14,0	13,2	12,1
Finish Job	13,5	13,5	11,1
Good Work	16,0	16,0	14,8
Affect	9,3	9,7	13,3
Empathy	13,3	13,8	14,7
Sociability	15,5	15,0	14,1
Loyalty	14,0	14,7	15,8
Dominance	11,3	12,0	12,5
Status	9,3	9,7	10,3
Politics	9,5	9,8	10,5
Leader	11,7	11,3	11,9
Abstraction	11,7	11,3	12,2
Plan-Org.	13,2	13,0	11,5
Exposition	11,3	11,2	11,2
Tol. Ambiguity	11,1	10,8	10,4

While ATCO employees' personal values are distinct from the population, they vary little from the candidate pool from which they are selected. Close examination reveals that they are slightly more similar to the population in general, having slightly higher Dominance scores than the candidate pool but slightly lower values from the population. This pattern is seen for most of the other CVAT variables but the magnitude of differences is small and generally not statistically significant. This result suggests that employees come to ATCO pre socialized. Thus, they have had prior job experience or training in accounting and either rapid growth has prevented ordinary attrition from selecting out those whose personal values do not match ATCO'S culture or, as suggested above, divisional subcultures are so strong that there is no consistent mechanism to select or retain people with values that are unique to the firm. These two results together—absence of difference between the values of the candidate pool and the absence of difference between the mean Aggregate Value Profiles of ATCO in our sample of other organizations—again strongly suggests that ATCO's original culture has been strongly diluted by rapid growth or it is always been highly subcultural because of decentralization and the autonomy granted to partners. This effect has doubtless been compounded by the strong tendency, at least in recent years, to hire key personnel out of big four accounting firms rather than groom internal talent.

For all the similarity between the candidate pool and ATCO employee means, the small but consistent differences between the two categories and our practice of looking within data sets for significant subtypes even when the averages suggest small main effects provoked us to realize cluster analyses on the general population, candidate pool and employee samples to see if any different dynamics were taking place that were masked by diversity within the samples. The results are extremely suggestive.

5. Opening Up the Black Box of Individual Differences

As stressed above we view organizations as subcultural if not multicultural in the same way as even closely knit families and tribes are made up of diverse individuals. Above we highlighted that the divisions at ATCO are culturally divergent if not subcultural. We undertook several statistical analyses of these subcultural aspects and space constraints do not permit cataloging all of these differences here. However, it is revealing to look at pockets of personal values at ATCO compared to the general population because of its importance to the selection and leadership development issues outlined above.

Not only are the personal values of ATCO employees different from those of the population at large, they are distributed differently within samples. Of course, every individual has her own unique set of personal values as well as other traits, attributes and competencies. However, individuals also share attributes in common with other members of the populations. There are extroverted people who are analytical and there are strong negotiators who are highly loyal, but it is less common for extraversion to be accompanied by an analytical orientation, and it is less common for people high in loyalty to be high on negotiation. While it is important to know as much as possible about an individual's uniqueness, it is immensely helpful to know where people fit into the overall topography of the types that exist in a population or organization. By comparing the contours and size of the groups of people in the population, candidate pool and organization, we can get a better idea of the selection and career planning challenges and opportunities the firm faces. The three tables below reveal complex but important interrelations between the types of values found in the population, those that filtered into the candidate pool, and finally those found among the ATCO associates.

Table 5: Sample population of personal values cluster centroids

ATCO	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Hard Work	15	15	13	13
Time	14	15	9	10
Finish Job	12	12	10	10
Good Work	16	15	14	14
Affect	11	14	11	16
Empathy	12	16	14	17
Sociability	11	15	14	15
Loyalty	14	16	15	17
Dominance	13	12	13	12
Status	10	10	11	11
Politics	10	9	13	10
Leader	12	10	15	11
Abstraction	13	11	13	12
Plan-Org.	14	11	12	10
Exposition	12	10	13	11
Tol. Ambiguity	11	10	12	9
N.	929	1213	1008	1317
%	20,8%	27,2%	22,6%	29,5%

The above table contains the cluster centroids (or means) resulting from a computer algorithm (Kmeans Cluster Analysis) which separates responses into four groups which minimize variance within categories while maximizing variance between groups. A brief look reveals that the four clusters are very different from one another. The first group, accounting for 21 percent of the sample, is high in the work quadrant, low in the relationship quadrant, moderate in Dominance and Leadership, and comparatively high in Abstraction, Planning, and Exposition. Group 1 is similar to group 3 except that group three is much less motivated by work, somewhat higher in relations and highest in Leadership. Group three, with 22 % of the total, is similar to Group 1 in the Thought quadrant, except that it is a little lower in Planning, and higher in Exposition, and Flexibility. In studies of managers and executives, more extreme versions of these two types account for the majority of professionals who are leaders, if we define leaders as people who have subordinates. Group three types account for most of the upper level executives. Groups 2 and 4, with 27 and 29 percent respectively, are similar in that they are both relatively low in both the Control and Thought quadrants, but Group 2 is relatively high in both Work and Relations quadrants while Group 4 is relatively low in the work quadrant and highest of the four in Relations.

Moving to the 2000 plus profiles from the ATCO candidate pool (Table 6), we find all 4 clusters comparatively high in the Work quadrant—a result already suggested by the simple averages discussed above. Group 1 of the candidate pool is similar to group 3 from the population but for an additional point in Leadership, Planning and Flexibility and one point less in Dominance and Negotiation. Cluster 3 of the population is also larger than cluster 1 of the pool: 22.6% versus 18.4% of the candidate pool. Group 2 of the candidate pool is similar to group 4 of the population in that it is uniformly high in the relationship quadrant and lower in control and thought. The major difference is the greater work orientation in the candidate pool across the board as already noted. Also, group 4 of the population accounts for 29.5% of all responses while group 2 of the pool is 22.5%-- a full 7 percent lower. Group 1 of the population sample is similar to group 4 of the candidate pool except that it is not as high on the work dimensions and missing is comparatively higher in Leadership, Dominance,

Abstraction, and Exposition. It is as if all of the energy present in the population has been shunted away from thought and dominance and channeled into work and planning. This workaholic cluster of the candidate pool is also substantially larger—35% versus only 20.8 for the population sample. One way of interpreting these results generically is to say that the process of being positioned, motivated, and selected to apply to ATCO attracts and selects out of the general population a larger group of work and planning oriented persons, while reducing relationally oriented people and attracting a slightly smaller leader oriented group than the population. The formal selection process is thus a powerful tool for populating ATCO with certain personal value profiles.

Table 6: Cluster Analysis of 2,066 Personal Value Profiles from ATCO’s Candidate Pool

ATCO	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Hard Work	14	15	15	16
Time	13	15	13	17
Finish Job	13	13	13	15
Good Work	15	15	16	17
Affect	8	13	9	8
Empathy	12	16	15	11
Sociability	15	16	16	15
Loyalty	13	16	15	13
Dominance	12	11	11	11
Status	9	10	9	10
Politics	11	9	9	9
Leader	16	10	11	11
Abstraction	12	11	13	11
Plan-Org.	15	11	13	14
Exposition	12	9	12	11
Tol. Ambiguity	12	10	11	11
N.	381	465	503	717

We move now to the results for people who actually joined ATCO. The cluster analysis of ATCO employees is substantially different from the two previous results both in terms of the value profiles recovered and their comparative size. Cluster 1 bears a fair resemblance to the other two sample clusters with a high Leadership score with substantial Exposition and Planning scores and lower work scores but comparatively low Abstraction. It is somewhat similar in size: 22.6% versus 18.4 % for the candidate pool and 22% for the population. From here on out however, there are surprises. Cluster 2, with only 11% of the sample, bears a tenuous resemblance to the candidate pool group 3 with 24% of the candidate pool sample. Group 3 of the pool does feature modestly higher Leadership, Dominance, Abstraction, Planning, and Exposition in the 11-13 range but Group 2 at ATCO by contrast seems to have traded its lower size for higher scores in Abstraction, Planning, and Exposition—equal to or higher than any other group in the population or candidate pool. We suspect that this cluster provides a unique competitive advantage that supports ATCO’s strategy as a boutique firm.

The last two clusters are less unique, emphasizing either very strong relations orientation without skimping on work (Group 3) or a very strong work orientation (Group 4). These basic patterns are found in all three samples but ATCO substantially favors relations over the candidate pool. Relations swells to 33% at ATCO versus 23% for the candidate pool

and 29% for the general population while maintaining steady group sizes for the more workaholic posture: ATCO: 34%, Candidate Pool, 35%, Population, 21%. Consider the numbers below:

Table 7: Cluster Analysis or Personal Values of ATCO Employees

ATCO	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Hard Work	14	15	15	16
Time	10	11	13	16
Finish Job	12	13	14	15
Good Work	16	16	15	17
Affect	8	8	12	9
Empathy	13	12	16	12
Sociability	16	11	16	15
Loyalty	14	15	17	13
Dominance	12	14	12	12
Status	9	11	10	9
Politics	11	10	9	9
Leader	15	12	10	11
Abstraction	11	14	11	11
Plan-Org.	14	14	11	14
Exposition	12	14	10	10
Tol. Ambiguity	12	11	10	11
N.	88	45	131	135

Hence, for whatever decentralization and chaos characterizes the culture at ATCO the selection process somehow succeeds in attracting an employee corps with values that are distinct from the population and from the accounting labor market. Moreover ATCO retains certain value types over time.

We took the four clusters described above—Traditional leadership (Cluster 1), Unique High Abstraction and Exposition (Cluster 2), High Affect and Relations (Cluster 3), and the Workaholics (Cluster 4), and traced their presence by seniority at ATCO:

Table 8: Chisquared (17,65, df 9 p .039)

	1-2 years	3-4 years	5-6 years	7 plus	Sum
Leaders	6	15	31	12	64
Unique	6	9	15	8	38
Relators	18	49	51	12	131
Workaholics	21	48	34	12	151

We see here that the first two types stay longer at ATCO and in the case of group 1, We observed that they are much more likely to occupy supervisory positions which the Relators and Workaholics do not attain at the same levels of seniority.

6. Slicing into Manageable Thoughts

These excerpts of a much more detailed data analysis have presented a large volume of complex data manipulations in a short space and while we strive for clarity we also understand this report may be difficult to follow especially readers not acquainted with the instruments used. Therefore, in closing we offer a number of concise observations that we believe have important practical implications that may occur in similar high growth organizations seeking to preserve a cultural legacy. ATCO does not have a homogenous or consensual culture, but it does have some core values that are heavily favored. It will be worthwhile to support and develop converging values in a corporation wide even if major resources are not allocated to cultural matters.

1. The contrasting values of Hard Work and Empathy are synergistic and enjoy broad support and are worth planning, executing, and iterating programs to support these values. The combination of these two values support ATCO's strategy to be a growth oriented boutique player.
2. Decentralization and centrifugal forces unconstrained by adequate administrative routines and structures exacerbate subcultural forces at ATCO. Even if the company decides not to work on its culture—which is a viable choice, if intelligently made—it will need to move quickly and clearly to clarify and vigorously to enact organizational controls if it wishes to pursue growth or even stability.
3. Subcultural forces are unavoidable and are not necessarily bad for the organization but they need to be understood, managed, and sometimes weakened.
4. Currently close to one third of ATCO employees support an ideal culture that is strongly contradictory to the culture desired by the majority and by most managers. There is reason to believe that this subculture is not aligned with current corporate strategy or high growth capacity. The presence of this type of subcultural tension in any organization should be taken seriously because of its potential for disruption and miscommunication.
5. Defacto selection processes favor this subculture by selecting a higher proportion of hires with personal values which are consistent this subculture than are present in the candidate pool. Selection processes should be adapted to at least more adequately reflect the composition of the candidate pool.
6. Defacto selection, socialization, and promotion processes also favor a small subgroup of personal values that are highly aligned with the majority ideal culture and with the current strategy. This cluster of values is not immediately visible in the candidate pool and apparently is developed internally via intuitive mentoring and promotion processes. Selection, retention, and promotion processes should be analyzed and adapted to favor the preservation and growth of this value cluster which appears to provide an indigenous source of competitive advantage.
7. Currently ATCO attracts, selects, and retains a cadre of personal values which are consistent with executive leadership functions at about the same rate that they appear in the candidate pool. This is a comparatively small group that cannot internally supply uniform leadership for growth without careful training and mentoring. Hi potential profiles need to be proactively identified, selected, and cultivated.
8. Strong subcultural forces at ATCO mean that for the short term at least, organizational performance will depend on careful formulation and implementation of mechanisms that strike a healthy balance between autonomy and uniformity. These mechanisms need to be managed by a carefully trained cadre of leaders who understand cultural diversity in its various manifestations.

While these results are idiosyncratic to one organization, we believe that the points made above are likely relevant to may firms delivering sophisticated professional services, and especially to those experiencing rapid growth.

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