



Organisational Culture

Organisational culture has become an ubiquitous term yet what do we mean by it and why is it so important? Organisational culture has been variously described: 'how we do things round here' (Ouchi and Johnson, 1978, quoted in Marshall and Maclean, 1988) and as expressed through symbols (Geertz, 1973, cited in Marshall and Maclean, 1988).

Marshall and Maclean [1988] identify culture as expressed through 'high profile symbols', which are deliberate, stylised and conspicuous, such as slogans, speeches, logos and artefacts. These are the outward and visible signs of culture which we notice easily. But Marshall and Maclean also emphasise the 'low profile symbols' that are harder to see yet which we all feel and experience every day. They see them as creating and re-creating organisational culture and explaining its robustness.

These include:

- the mundane and routine, e.g. meetings and how they work
- what people typically do, e.g., who talks to who and where
- gossip, stories – what is endlessly retold and what is never mentioned
- unwritten rules and codes, e.g. dress, behaviour

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