

2014 Extension North Central Region Organizational Culture Assessment

Summary Report of Findings Ohio State University Extension

“The bottom line for leaders is that if they do not become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them. Cultural understanding is desirable for all of us, but it is essential to leaders if they are to lead.”

Edgar Schein, Ph.D., Professor at MIT and recognized authority on Organizational Culture and Leadership



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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Study Overview

Introduction

This summary presents Ohio results as a part of a regional organizational culture study conducted July 2014.

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Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to establish a foundational cultural framework for the North Central Region and participating states that informs organizational change initiatives through:

- Predicting organizational response to and readiness for change,
- Assessing organizational strengths and weaknesses that are directly impacting organizational performance,
- Identifying a level of synergy in organizational systems and functions, and
- Identifying areas of focus where improvements may be warranted.

Methods

Data were collected through a web-based questionnaire with an overall response rate of 37% across the ten participating states. Ohio had a 41% response rate. See Appendix A for a demographic profile of respondents.

Instrumentation was a modified version of the Denison Organization Culture Survey (DOCS). The DOCS “is designed to assess an organization’s strengths and weaknesses as they apply to organizational performance.” Participants were asked to rate 60 statements referencing four organizational traits and 12 management practices on a scale of ‘1- strongly disagree’ to ‘5- strongly agree.’ Data analysis was conducted through Denison Consulting Services and reported as percentiles against a normed global database of organizations.

Population

The quantitative study was designed to gain personnel perceptions on work related concepts associated with organizational culture. The target population for this study was personnel with 0.25 FTE or greater Extension appointments or equivalent responsibilities as recognized by each individual participating state.

Participating North Central Region States include:



Limitations

- Responses reflect internally held perceptions of our organization, not external,
- Responses may reflect viewpoints of sub-cultures within our organization, and
- Things beyond our control could have influenced responses. Are responses based on living in the Extension world or University culture? How much influence do we have to create change?



Why is Organizational Culture Important?

An organization's culture has been shown to directly influence organizational performance and long-term effectiveness (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). In fact, organizational culture has been deemed critical to an organization's ultimate success or failure (Schein, 2010).

Comprised as a collection of an organization's assumptions, values, beliefs, and artifacts, organizational culture serves as a sense of stability for those within by providing guidelines on how to feel, perceive, and react to various situations (Schein, 2010).

Organizational Culture Defined

...a collection of shared beliefs, values, meanings, and behaviors that a group has adopted over time as a way to survive and succeed.

Or simply put "the way things are done around here."

Adapted from Denison Consulting, 2009

Three levels of Culture

Schein, 2010

Artifacts



What we
CAN see

Values &
Beliefs

What we
CAN'T see



Underlying
Assumptions

"Organizational culture is one of many situational variables that have emerged as pivotal in determining the success of leaders' efforts to implement change initiatives"

Latta, 2009



The culture of an organization exerts varying degrees of influence on overall performance. The most important and likely most challenging influence comes from underlying assumptions which are rarely apparent until directly challenged (Schein, 2010). These assumptions are especially tough to navigate when undergoing any organizational change initiatives (Latta, 2009).

The bottom line is that if leaders strive to create sustainable change in their organizations they must become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded or risk that the cultures will ultimately manage them (Schein, 2010).

Assessing Organizational Culture

Based on decades of empirical research, the DOCS instrument has been designed to assess organizational strengths and weaknesses as they directly apply to the performance of an organization. Particularly the Denison survey and model is structured to reveal underlying beliefs and assumptions in recognizable and measurable ways.

The survey contains 60 items measuring specific aspects of an organization's culture across four traits and twelve management practices. Analysis is done through normative scoring and reported in percentiles. This means that your organization has been compared to thousands of both under and over performing organizations worldwide.

Mission: Defining a meaningful long-term direction for the organization.

- **Strategic Direction & Intent:** Do employees understand the strategies identified by the organization and do they think the strategies will work?
- **Goals & Objectives:** Are there short-term goals that help link what employees do on a day-to-day basis to the strategy and vision of the organization? Do employees understand how their job fits in?
- **Vision:** Do employees share a common desired future state for the organization? Do they understand the vision? Does it motivate and excite them?



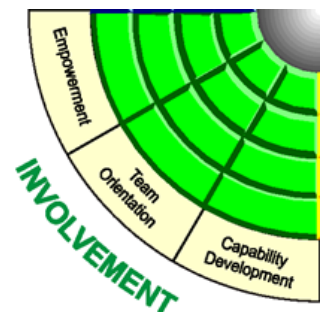
Adaptability: Translating the demands of the external environment into action.

- **Creating Change:** Can employees read the external environment and react to trends and changes? Do employees constantly look for new and improved ways to do their work?
- **Customer Focus:** Do we understand the needs of our customers? Are employees committed to responding to their ever-changing needs? Is customer focus a primary concern throughout the organization?
- **Organizational Learning:** Is importance placed on learning in the workplace? Do we create an environment where reasonable risk taking and innovation can occur? Do we share knowledge across the organization?



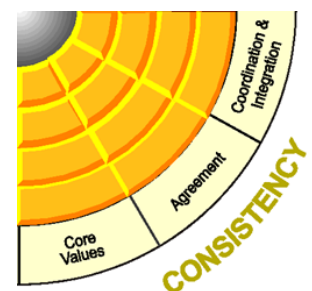
Involvement: Building human capability and creating a shared sense of ownership and responsibility throughout the organization.

- **Empowerment:** Do employees feel informed and involved in the work that they do? Do they feel they can have a positive impact on the organization?
- **Team Orientation:** Is teamwork encouraged AND practiced in the organization? Do employees value collaboration and feel mutually accountable for common goals?
- **Capability Development:** Do employees believe that they are being invested in and that their skills are improving? Is the organization's bench strength improving? Does the organization have the skills it needs to be competitive today and into the future?



Consistency: Defining the values and systems that are the basis of the culture.

- **Core Values:** Do employees share a set of values that create a strong sense of identity and a clear set of expectations? Do leaders model and reinforce those values?
- **Agreement:** Is the organization able to reach agreement on critical issues? Can employees reconcile differences in a constructive way when problems arise?
- **Coordination & Integration:** Do employees from different parts of the organization share a common perspective that allows them to work effectively across organizational boundaries? Do they work to eliminate 'silos' and promote actions that are in the best interest of the organization as a whole?



Moving the Needle



Interpreting the findings

Start looking at the big picture and work toward the details. Here are some steps to get started.

Step 1: Identify your 'big picture' strengths & challenges.

Step 2: Summarize your strengths through examining your higher scores.

Step 3: Summarize your challenges through examining your lower scores.

Step 4: Summarize the insights and their potential impact on organizational performance.

Be mindful to avoid "analysis paralysis!" Spending excessive time on what the numbers mean cannot bring about change by itself.

Strategies for Moving the Needle

Facilitating meaningful conversations within your organization will be a pivotal part in moving the needle of your culture to where you are achieving current and future organizational goals.

Numerous change models are available, providing a variety of frameworks for guiding organizational change. Which model you select is dependent upon the needs and preferences of your organization. Below we have outlined some fundamental elements that are common to most change models.

- Recognize the need for a cultural change
- Gain an understanding of where you are currently
- Assemble a team that can help lead the change
- Collectively identify what your organization's ideal culture looks like
- Establish parameters for the scope of change needed
- Communicate regularly across all levels of the organization and every point of the change process
- Empower those that will be implementing the changes
- Celebrate accomplishments and reward those supporting the efforts
- Collectively create a vision of where you need to go
- Understand what successful change looks like
- Maintain a mindset toward continuous improvement

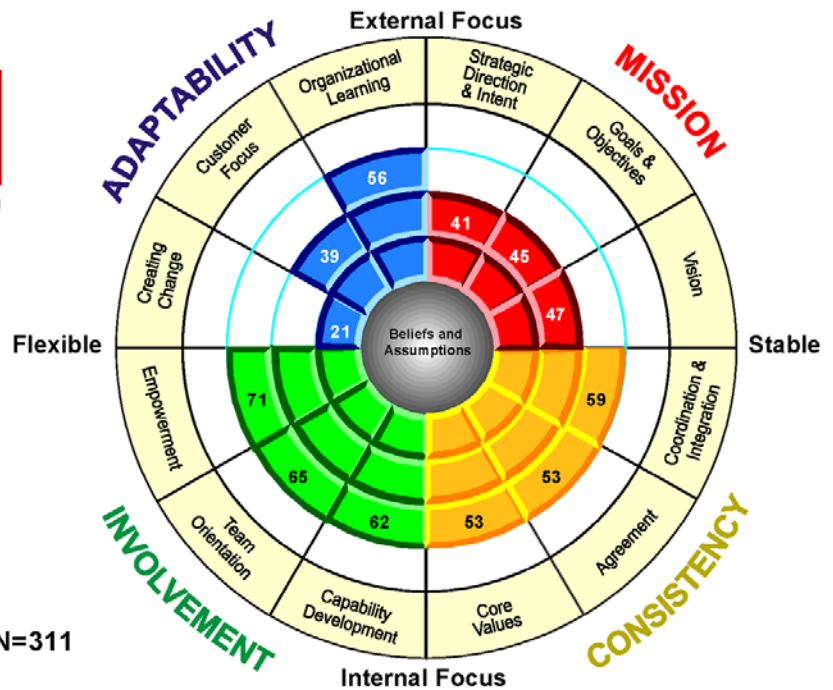
Summary of Findings: Overarching Themes



Strengths

- Team orientation,
- Investment in capability development,
- Encourage direct contact with clientele,
- Learning as a part of day to day work,
- Empowerment & involvement of employees in making an impact.

N=311



Challenges & Opportunities

- Change attempts are met with resistance,
- Creating change in response to external environment,
- Improve decision making particularly regarding difficult issues,
- Increase capability to drive change through greater clientele focus,
- Providing more clarity around management/ leadership expectations,
- Greater clarity on the organizational strategy particularly among short and long term goals and objectives.

Summary of Findings: Individual Items

Individual items and scores are listed in Appendix B

Highest and Lowest Items

- **Highest 5** – these scores are about employees making an impact, engagement in your work, and learning. Quadrants Involvement & Adaptability
- **Lowest 5** – most from adaptability, particularly around relationships and responsiveness to clientele. Compared to other organizations, OSUE is below the 25th percentile in 4 of the 5 individual questions listed.

While OSUE encourages contact with clientele, it appears there is an opportunity to better utilize the interaction in making organizational decisions.

Involvement

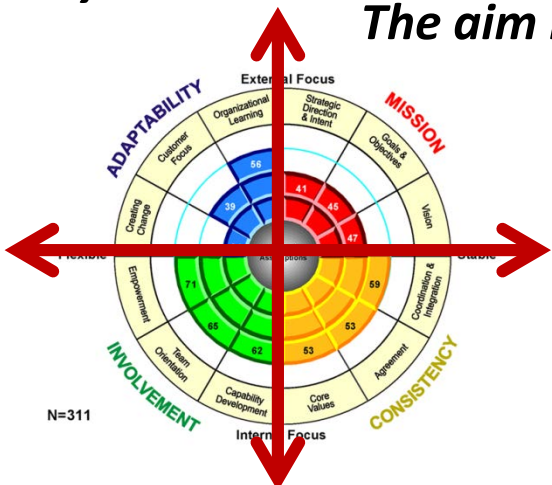
Two of the top 5 highest scores are in Empowerment. The respondents generally believe that OSUE invests in their capability development, are highly involved in their work and can make a positive impact. Decisions being made where the best information is available, and problems resulting from a lack of necessary skills fall below the 50th percentile.

Consistency

Overall, the composite has consistent scores around the 50th percentile. Respondents feel there is a “strong” culture and it is easy to coordinate projects across different parts of OSUE. One of the lowest overall scores was in the area of agreement on having a clear “right” and “wrong” way to do things.

Dynamic Tensions

The aim is to strike a balance...



Flexible vs. Stable OSUE tends to be more stable characterized by some levels of focus and predictability. While there may not be a “clear” direction for the future, the internal tools and systems are in place to get there. A significant opportunity exists for OSUE to become more readily adaptable to the external environment.

Internal vs. External OSUE has a stronger internal focus. Organizations like this are focused on aligning people, processes, and systems. Looking to the external environment and being adaptable to the needs of clientele is a significant opportunity for OSUE.

Adaptability

While 2 of the top 5 overall scores (Encourage direct contact with clientele and Learning as an important objective in the day-to-day work) were found in this Trait, 4 of the 5 lowest scores were also in this Trait.

While OSUE encourages contact with the clientele, it appears as if there is an opportunity to utilize the interaction with the clientele to better understand clientele needs and apply that to decisions.

Mission

Scores suggest there may be a clear mission that provides meaning and direction for the work that employees perform. There also appears to be opportunities to ensure that the long-term vision and strategies are clear. Clarity in Strategic Direction and Intent leads to greater clarity in shorter term goals & objectives, furthering aligning personnel around delivery.

Thoughts to Ponder...

Considering the findings ...

- What was going on in OSUE that would have potential implications on how individuals responded to this survey?
- What aspects of the report help instill confidence in the future of OSUE?
- What aspects of the report merits further exploration within OSUE?
- Looking at the High scores and Low scores...what is it about OSUE culture that puts this here? For high ones, if this needs to stay, what do you need to do to keep this here?
- What can you, and/or your colleagues do to improve OSUE organizational culture?



References

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Latta, G. F. (2009). A process model of organizational change in cultural context (OC³ Model): The impact of organizational culture on leading change. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 16(1), p. 19-37.

Schein, E.H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership* (4th ed.). San Francisco: Wiley.

Thank you for your participation!

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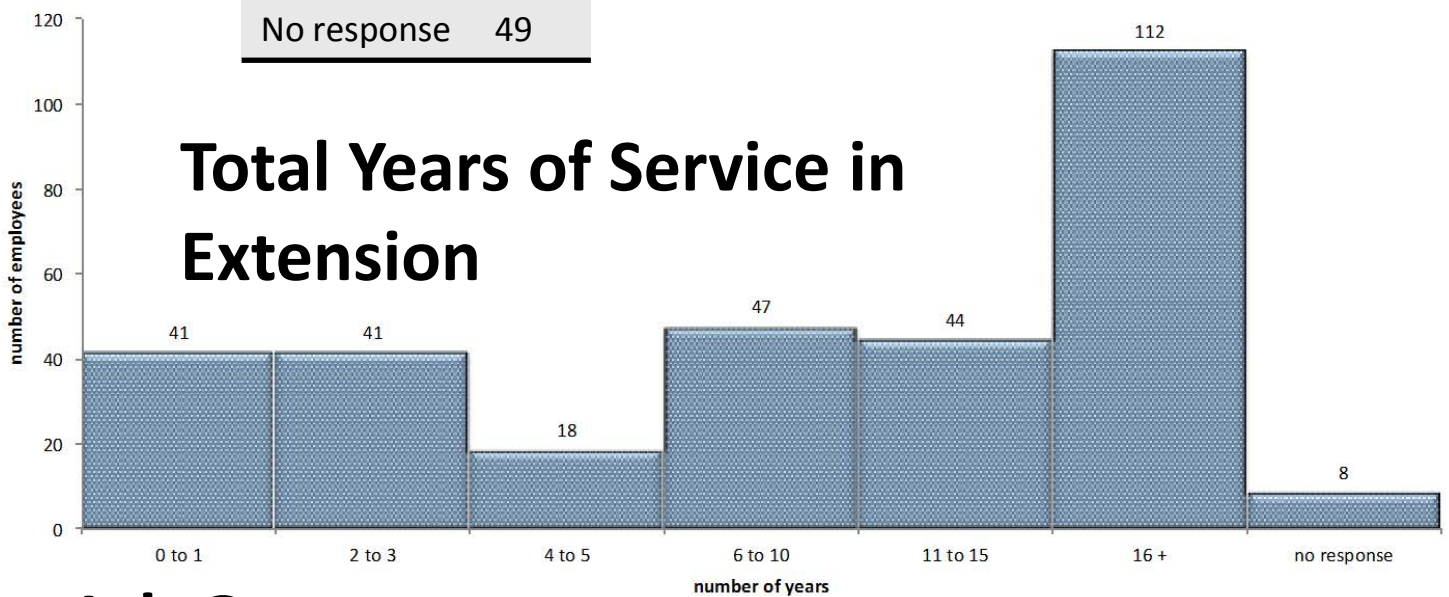
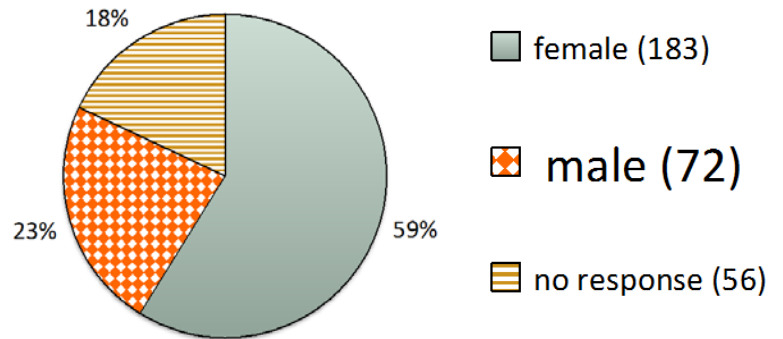
Appendix A

Demographic Profile of Respondents N=311

Age

Range	#
18-29	25
30-39	30
40-49	52
50-59	101
60-69	52
70+	2
No response	49

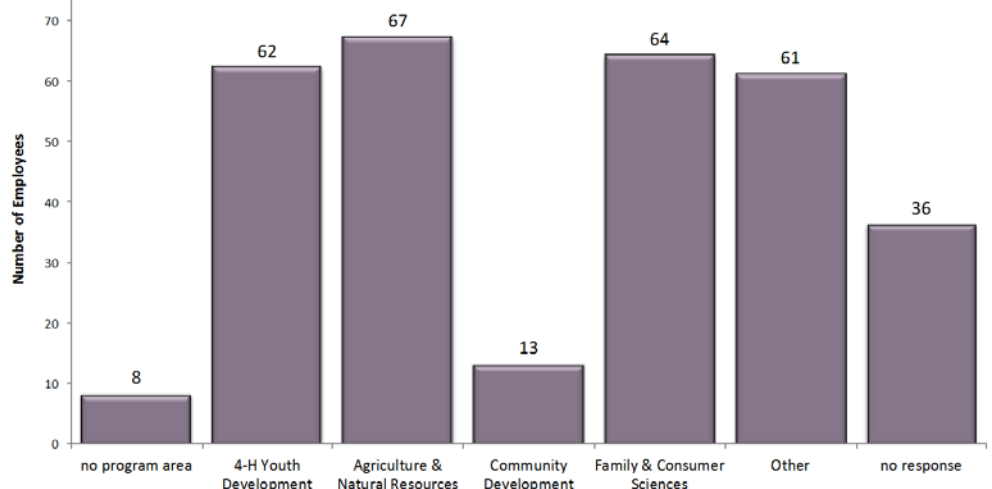
Gender



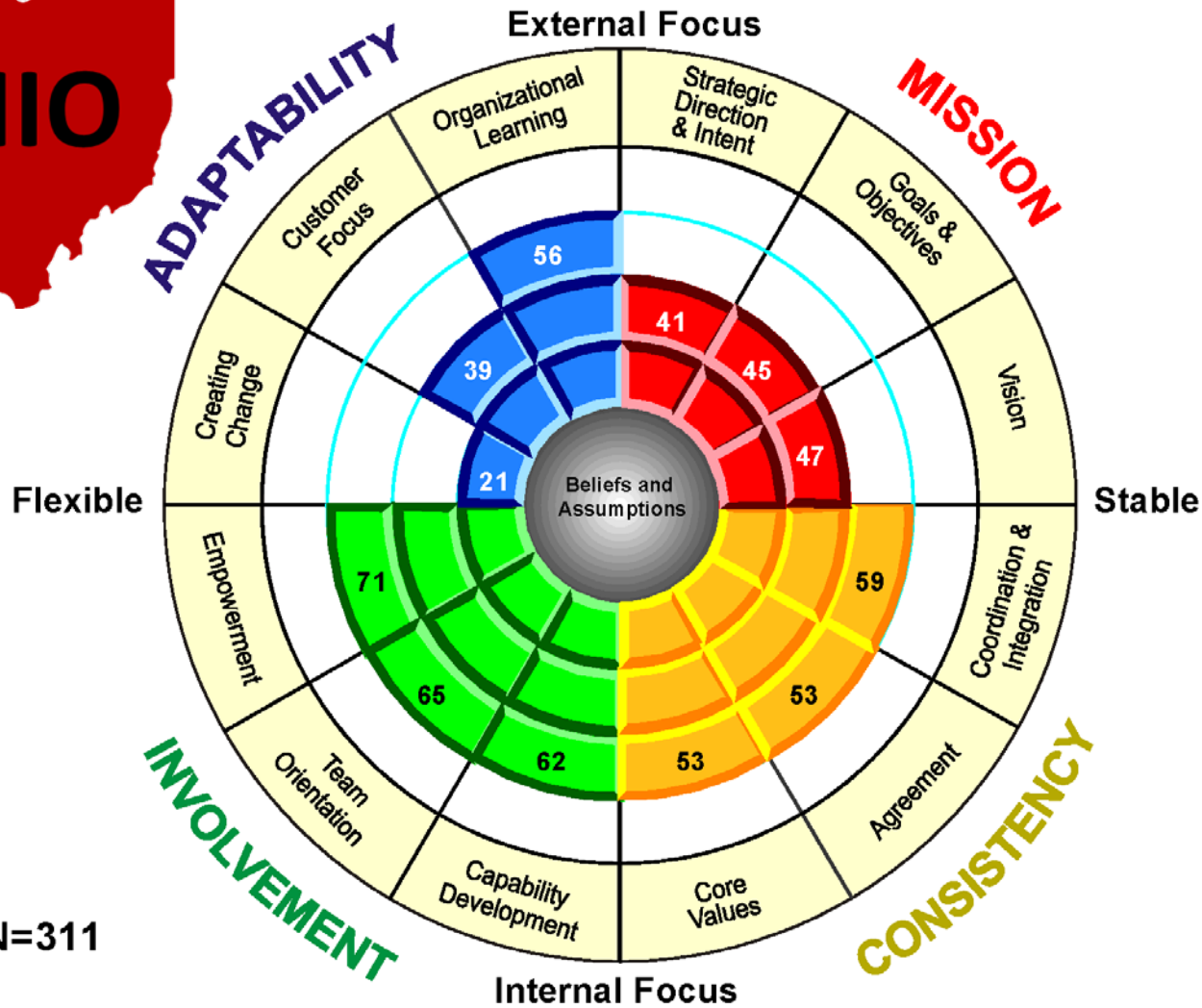
Job Group

Job Group	#
Admin Support (county & state)	53
Educator	109
Program Support	46
CED/Unit head	25
Administration	16
Academic Units	15
No Response	47

Program Area Representation

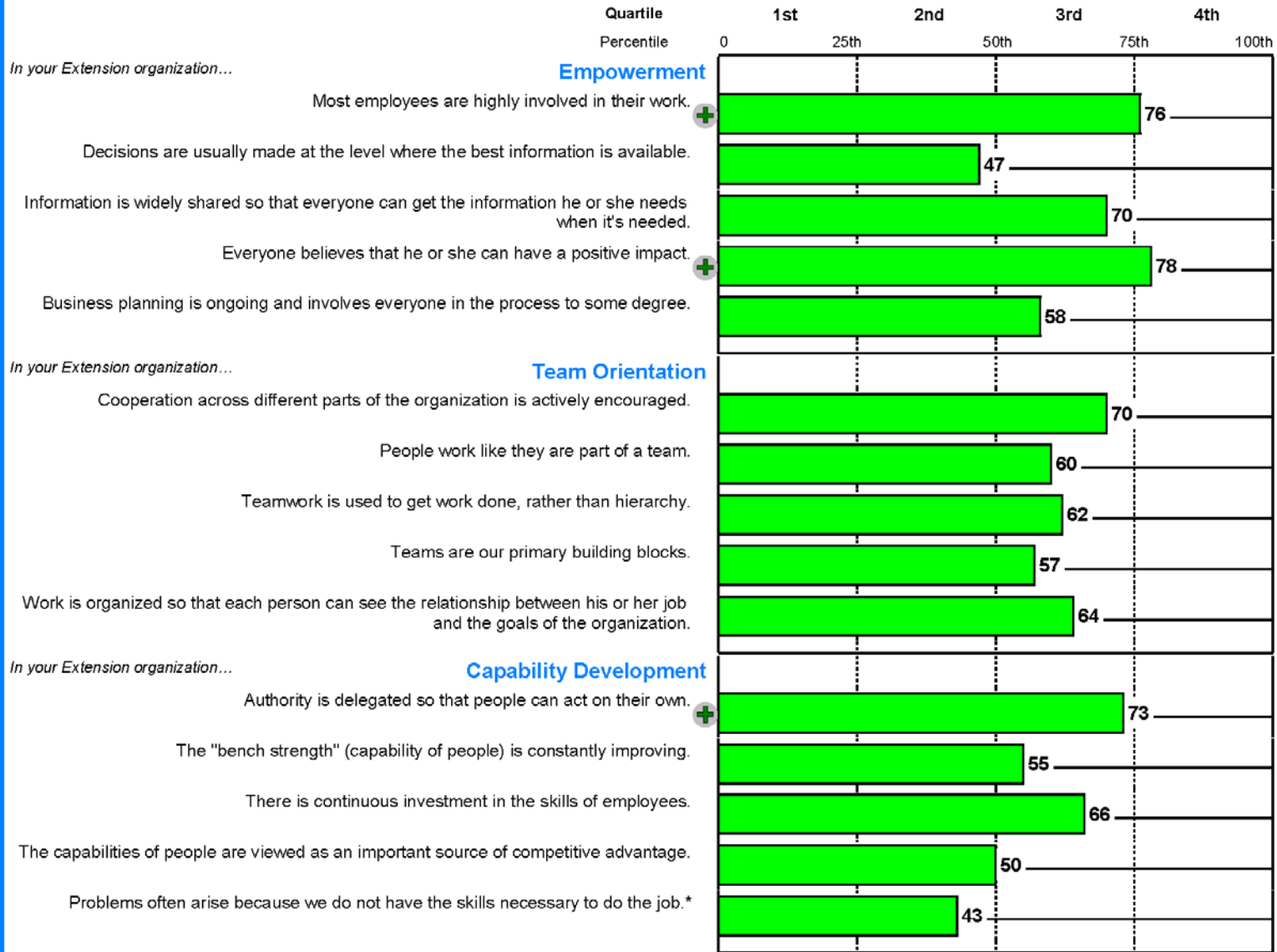


Appendix B



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Involvement



*The raw score has been reversed for this negatively worded item. In all cases, a higher score indicates a more favorable condition.

Consistency

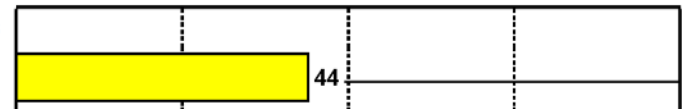
Quartile
Percentile

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	
0	25th	50th	75th	100th

In your Extension organization...

Core Values

The leaders and managers "practice what they preach."



There is a characteristic management style and a distinct set of management practices.



There is a clear and consistent set of values that governs the way we do business.



Ignoring core values will get you in trouble.



There is an ethical code that guides our behavior and tells us right from wrong.



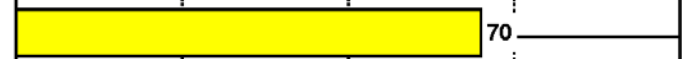
In your Extension organization...

Agreement

When disagreements occur, we work hard to achieve "win-win" solutions.



There is a "strong" culture.



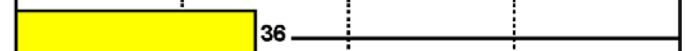
It is easy to reach consensus, even on difficult issues.



We often have trouble reaching agreement on key issues.*



There is a clear agreement about the right way and the wrong way to do things.



In your Extension organization...

Coordination & Integration

Our approach to our work is very consistent and predictable.



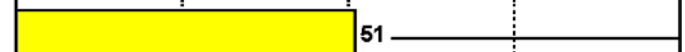
People from different parts of the organization share a common perspective.



It is easy to coordinate projects across different parts of the organization.



Working with someone from another part of this organization is like working with someone from a different organization.*

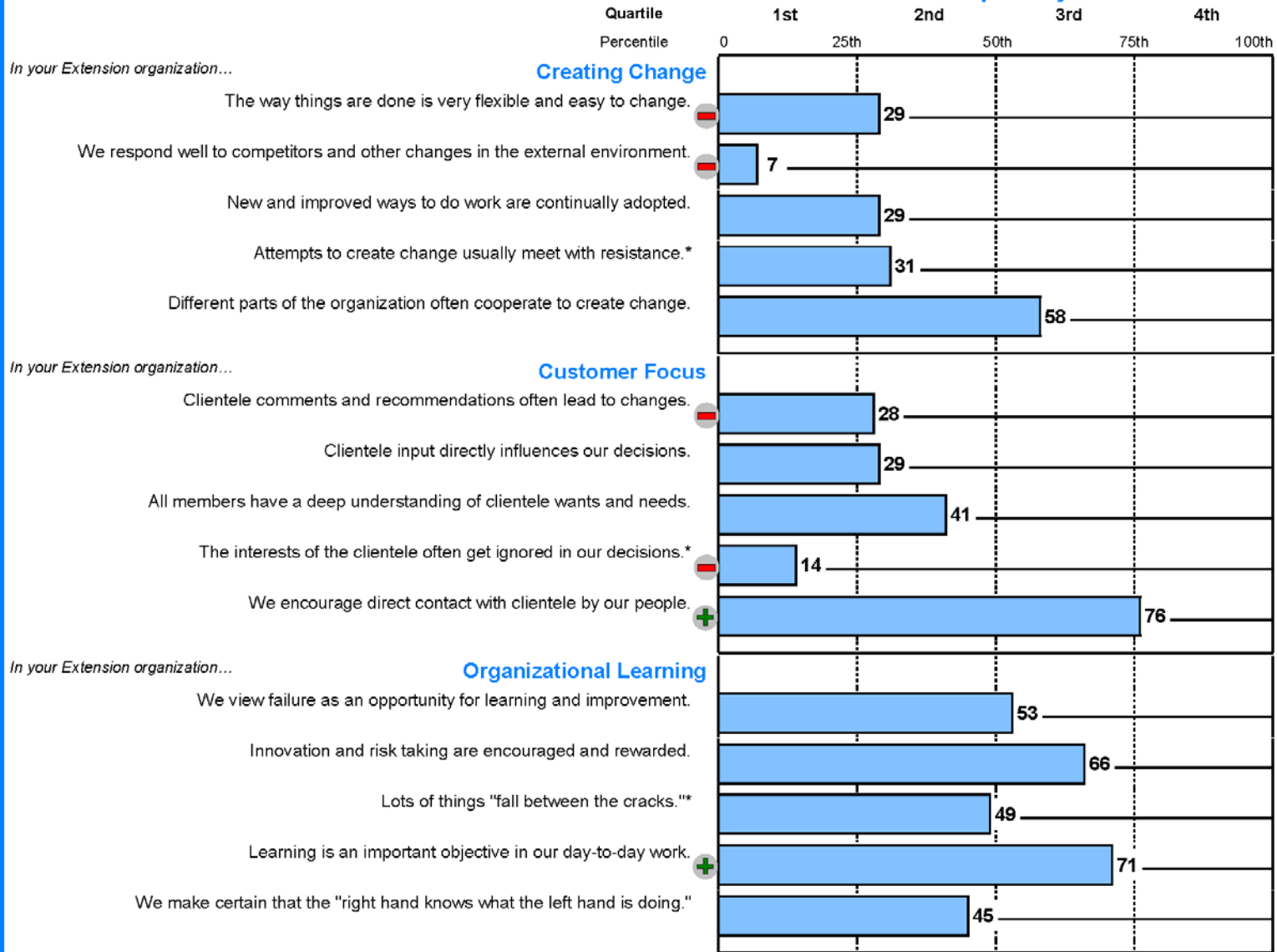


There is good alignment of goals across levels.



*The raw score has been reversed for this negatively worded item. In all cases, a higher score indicates a more favorable condition.

Adaptability



*The raw score has been reversed for this negatively worded item. In all cases, a higher score indicates a more favorable condition.

Numbers denote percentiles

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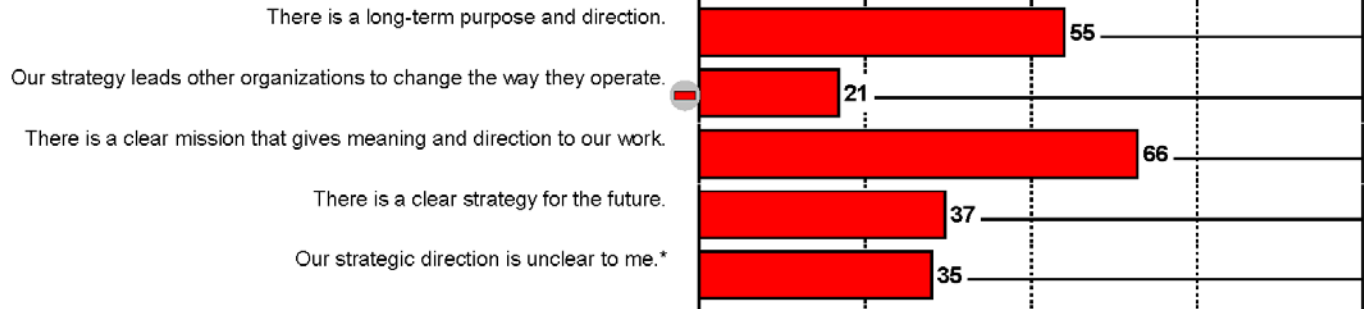
Mission

Quartile
Percentile

0 1st 25th 2nd 50th 3rd 75th 4th 100th

In your Extension organization...

Strategic Direction & Intent



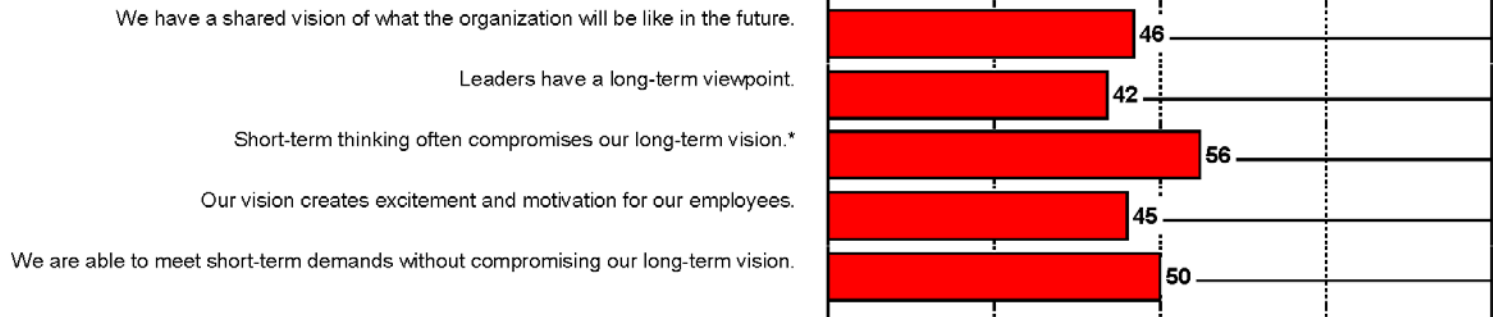
In your Extension organization...

Goals & Objectives



In your Extension organization...

Vision



*The raw score has been reversed for this negatively worded item. In all cases, a higher score indicates a more favorable condition.

Highest Scores

78	Everyone believes that he or she can have a positive impact.
76	We encourage direct contact with clientele by our people.
76	Most employees are highly involved in their work.
73	Authority is delegated so that people can act on their own.
71	Learning is an important objective in our day-to-day work.

Lowest Scores

7	We respond well to competitors and other changes in the external environment.
14	The interests of the clientele often get ignored in our decisions.*
21	Our strategy leads other organizations to change the way they operate.
28	Clientele comments and recommendations often lead to changes.
29	The way things are done is very flexible and easy to change.



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<http://www.DenisonCulture.com>