



The Clash of Cultures
Managers Managing Professionals
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Book Review -Kanul Goenka



Culture is an instrument wielded by professors to manufacture professors, who when their turn comes will manufacture professors.

-Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots* (1949)

The above quotation contains the pith of the entire book. The profound influence culture has on professionals and how it comes in the way of their absorption in the organizational culture. To gain an understanding in its entirety about culture, professionals and problems faced by management in managing the two, let us start with knowing what culture means.

Culture can be defined as the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that is learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group. *G Hofstede defines culture as 'the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another.'*

Culture is the shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to the social realities around them. A culture is a configuration of learned behaviors and results of behavior whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society. Culture has been defined in a number of ways, but most simply, as the learned and shared behavior of a community of interacting human beings.

Similarly, there is no shortage of definitions for organizational culture. It's been described, for example, as "the dominant values espoused by an organization, "the philosophy that guides an organization's policy towards employees and customers", "the basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization". Edgar Schein defines it as, "the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration," and Peters and Waterman, define it as "a dominant and coherent set of shared values conveyed by such symbolic means as stories, myths, legends, slogans, anecdotes, and fairy tales". These, in turn, create common understandings, a bondage towards the implied relationships among members as to what the organization is and how its members should behave in any circumstance.

Culture definitions have undergone a shift from culture inheritance, management and absorption to cultural creation, assimilation, influencing and impacting for change. There was a time, when culture was told to the new recruit. This is the organization and this is the way we do things out here. These are the stories of the past and having understood our past the recruit's ability to adapt to the future is quite possible. This is unlikely to succeed as a method of socialization. Even traditional methods of induction and socialization would need to be modified. The process of discovery would radically change for the new recruits. Culture, perceptibly, would turn significantly more dynamic in its understanding to people. Individuals would see the organization changing and unchanging periodically given the critical mass of people who are influencing it. As more and more people experience the changing circumstance more cultural exchanges would become real and necessary.

In the book, the author has enumerated the various culture variables by going into considerable detail on the idiosyncrasies of the corporate and professional cultures and the wider social culture. There is a natural conflict between management and professionals



because of their differences in educational background, socialization, values, vocational interests, work habits and outlook. The book helps in gaining a deep understanding of professional motivation and behaviour. Management has to deal with this clash of cultures to achieve the purposes of business and at the same time, allow professionals to achieve technical proficiency and satisfaction.

The root of conflict between managers and professionals stems from a more basic conflict regarding employees' roles. Employees are directly influencing through direct involvement in decisions affecting their work and their departments. Professionals prefer to exercise a choice of their roles and responsibilities. Practical mechanisms like open door policy, open communication sessions, grievance management system, representative groups for unionized staff, task forces on special issues, problem solving work forces have time and again served their utility. Increased collaboration between union and management through employee relations executive forums and participate work groups like Quality Circles, quality of work life programs, safety, health and welfare committees have been used for bringing in a sense of involvement. A natural process of asking individuals is inevitable if their wholesome commitment to their roles and the company is desired. Nevertheless, role differences between professionals and management become more apparent within the confines of bureaucratic organizations.

The manager expects the professional, as an employee, to follow the procedures of the organization and to abide by managers' directives. On the other hand, professionals deviate from managerial expectations from time to time, since they find it difficult to reconcile their role as employees with adherence to the principles and methods of their profession. The more "difficult" employees are referred to as "cosmopolitan" in the book. They are known to have widespread problems integrating into both the formal and informal structure of their organizations. They maintain marginal loyalty to the organization, preferring instead to align themselves for purposes of recognition and evaluation with their professional colleagues and associations.

The author has cited six characteristics that represent professional status as espoused by Steven Kerr, Mary Ann Von Glinow, and Janet Schriesheim:

1. **Expertise:** engaging in prolonged specialized training in a body of abstract knowledge.
2. **Autonomy:** possessing the freedom to choose the examination of and means to solve problems
3. **Commitment:** showing primary interest in pursuing the practice of one's chosen specialty
4. **Identification:** identifying with the profession or with fellow professionals through formal association structures or through external referents
5. **Ethics:** rendering service without concern for oneself or without becoming emotionally involved with the client
6. **Standards:** committing oneself to help in policing the conduct of fellow professionals

Further, the author has included a checklist to find out whether a professional is a cosmopolitan or a local (One professing loyalty to their organizations to the point of using an organizational reference for their social and esteem needs.):

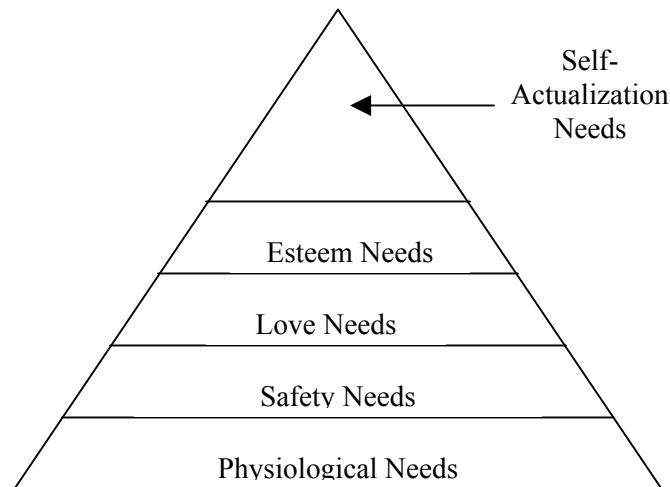
- The person believes he should be able to make his own decisions in regard o what is to be done on the job.
- The person would probably stay in the profession even if his income were reduced
- The person's best friends tend to be members of his profession



- The person has little interest in moving up to a predominantly administrative position in the company
- The person believes his professional colleagues or professional association are better equipped to evaluate his performance than management
- The person is primarily interested in advancing his professional reputation rather than a corporate reputation

From the above checklist, it is evident that in order to manage professionals at any level in the organization, whether, top, middle or lower, it is necessary to appeal to their needs and expectations, which are commensurate with the organizational goals and mission. Also, it is essential to gain a better perspective of the basic line and staff conflict that is also instrumental in giving rise to this particular clash of cultures.

Let us first understand the ways in which the professional can be motivated to contribute optimally to the organization. There are several motivation theories, which basically advocate the same continuum of needs. Beginning with the most elementary model of motivation developed by Abraham Maslow, it states that there is a hierarchy of needs.



When an individual aspires for fulfilling his self-actualization needs, he has already met the needs of acquisition, security, affection, or prestige. The self becomes larger than all aspects of the world. “Self-actualizing people are interested in seeing justice done, doing a perfect job, advancing the truth, rewarding virtue and punishing evil”. For the self-actualizing professional, intrinsic, transpersonal values are of paramount importance. Since one has already developed a healthy sense of self, attention can be refocused on activities outside self, particularly within one’s profession and within the wider community. They are sufficiently confident of becoming devoted to their craft. Some are even capable of looking beyond the processes of the craft to the effects of the profession on society.

Douglas McGregor’s Theory Y calls for establishing a work-environment that will appeal to the employee’s self-centered drive for esteem and self-fulfillment. Allowing the professional complete freedom to pursue the practice of his craft without procedural constraints is



consistent with this approach. Participation, however, need not extend to discretion over the goals of the enterprise. That falls under the purview of the management and will be accepted by the professional as long as the organization's mission does not compromise professional and ethical standards. Allowing them discretion over means will encourage their conformity to organizational purpose.

William Ouchi, in his Theory Z, explains, "The productivity problem will not be solved by monetary policy or by investment/research. It will be solved by learning how to manage people to work more effectively together". When managers show broad concern for their subordinates, relationships tend to be informal, and people relate to each other as individuals, not as superior to subordinate. Consequently, there are no real class distinctions among group members; rather differences are based on competencies and the diverse talents of the membership. When people relate to each other in this way, there is more opportunity to develop trust. Theory Z sees the principal purpose of management as creating a stable, social order. By providing stability, the industrial clan ensures the satisfaction of its workers, who, as a consequence, may then aspire to meet higher-order needs.

Ouchi's principal points for discussion:

- Long-term employment (for life)
- Slow process of evaluation and promotion
- Development of company specific skills- specialized career path
- Implicit informal control mechanisms, supported by formal ones.
- Participation in decision making
- Collective decision making but individual responsibility
- Concern for the welfare of everyone

In his Two Factor Theory of motivation, Frederick Herzberg has a two-factor explanation of motivation: Hygiene factors and Job content factors. Hygiene factors are those that relate to salary, working conditions etc. These factors are the cause of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Job content factors are associated with personal achievement and recognition arising out of job challenge and job enrichment. These act as satisfiers or motivators. Job challenge refers to the opportunity for professionals to make fullest use of their skills. The origin of this challenge is underutilization of time and talents. Professionals, by training and inclination, want to stretch their intellectual abilities to the limit. They desire, particularly early in their careers, to be involved in their work, and to make use of every available minute. They also want to identify with the whole product or service on which they are working. They want to be able to see their contribution.

Challenge has two dimensions for professionals. On one hand, it signifies a horizontal expansion in job duties, This can be achieved in two ways: 1) by giving the professional more of the complete job to be done, or 2) by allowing the professional to spend more time working with teams that are given the opportunity to decide how they will complete the whole job. In each instance, the professional has a chance to do more and different things.



In the team work option, that individual chooses not to change the specific assignment he is working on, but the element of choice presume sufficient challenge in the job to begin with.

For some professionals it is not enough to do more and different things to experience challenge. What many of them truly want in their jobs is authority over the task at hand. This suggests an interest in the content of the work. Herzberg describes this dimension of job challenge as “intrinsic”. Intrinsic satisfaction is derived from the work itself; hence it is necessary under intrinsic motivation to have a high degree of self-control over one’s work agenda. The result is a greater sense of responsibility, achievement, and self-actualization. Job challenge derived from intrinsic motivation comes not from horizontal expansion but from vertical expansion of one’s job duties: not doing more things, but having more responsibility for the things one is assigned to do in the first place.

Of all the motivators of performance for professionals, job challenge stands at the top of the list, precisely because of its association with professionalism itself. Management needs to understand that the professional is a mature worker, and challenge goes with maturity.

Depth of tasks	High	JOB ENHANCEMENT	JOB ENRICHMENT
	Low	ROUTINE JOB	JOB ENLARGEMENT
		Low	High

Frederick W. Taylor’s Scientific Management lays down the principles of time and motion study constituting method study, which he conducted to improve efficiency of workers on the shop floor. He was a pragmatist with the ability to synthesize the work of others and promote them effectively to a ready and eager audience of industrial managers who were striving to find new or improved ways to increase performance. He broke down the activities into specific movements and time elements to find out the “one right way of doing a particular activity”. His belief that man was rational and would make economic choices based on the degree of monetary reward led him to devise payment systems that closely related the kind of effort he sought with the level of reward offered. Not surprisingly, there was strong criticism of this theory, which treats human beings like machines and assumes that workers are satisfied by money alone. The assumptions underlying his work were:

- The presence of a capitalist system and a money economy, where companies in a free market have as their main objective the improvement of efficiency and the maximization of profit;
- The Protestant work ethic, that assumes people will work hard and behave rationally to maximize their own income, putting the perceived requirements of their organization before their own personal objectives and goals.
- That an increased size is desirable in order to obtain the advantages of the division of labor and specialization of tasks.



His views on motivation, management and organization all presupposed certain conditions to be constant, which we now know, they are not

The Hawthorne Effect has been described as the rewards you reap when you pay attention to people. The mere act of showing people that you're concerned about them usually spurs them to better job performance. The Hawthorne Studies (or experiments) were conducted from 1927 to 1932 at the Western Electric Hawthorne Works in Chicago, where Harvard Business School professor Elton Mayo examined productivity and work conditions. The studies grew out of preliminary experiments at the plant from 1924 to 1927 on the effect of light on productivity. Those experiments showed no clear connection between productivity and the amount of illumination. Mayo wanted to find out what effect fatigue and monotony had on job productivity and how to control them through such variables as rest breaks, work hours, temperature and humidity. In the process, he stumbled upon a principle of human motivation that would help to revolutionize the theory and practice of management.

Mayo took six women from the assembly line, segregated them from the rest of the factory and put them under the eye of a supervisor who was more a friendly observer than disciplinarian. Mayo made frequent changes in their working conditions, always discussing and explaining the changes in advance. He changed the hours in the working week, the hours in the workday the number of rest breaks, the time of the lunch hour. Occasionally, he would return the women to their original, harder working conditions.

What happened was that the six individuals became a team and the team gave itself wholeheartedly and spontaneously to co-operation in the experiment. The consequence was that they felt themselves to be participating freely and without afterthought and were happy in the knowledge that they were working without coercion from above or limitation from below. They were themselves satisfied at the consequence for they felt that they were working under less pressure than ever before. In fact regular medical checks showed no signs of cumulative fatigue and absence from work declined by 80 per cent.

Mayo had discovered a fundamental concept that seems obvious today. Workplaces are social environments and within them, people are motivated by much more than economic self-interest He concluded that all aspects of that industrial environment carried social value. He had secured their cooperation and loyalty; it explained why productivity rose even when he took away their rest breaks. The portion of the Hawthorne Studies that dwelt on the positive effects of benign supervision and concern for workers that made them feel like part of a team became known as the Hawthorne Effect; the studies themselves spawned the human relations school of management that is constantly being recycled in new forms today, witness quality circles, participatory management, team building, etc.

Looking at the various motivation theories, it becomes apparent what are the inherent problems in managing professionals. Let us summarize them below as:

➤ **Overspecialization**

Specialization becomes a problem under two conditions. 1) The organizational compartmentalization of professionals who are required to perform fixed and standardized tasks apart from other professionals or managers. 2) Over-professionalization, which signifies the professional's inclination to practice his specialized competence and to serve professional interests without consideration of corporate goals. To overcome this problem,



structural changes are needed to increase interaction between professionals and non-professionals. The former should be given equal opportunity to showcase their talents. The new recruits can be provided with mentors to guide them.

➤ **Autonomy**

Managers tend to over-control the means of professional practice but are lax when it comes to telling the professionals what the company stands for. Meanwhile, some professionals demand autonomy over both means and ends; they expect to fully participate in all decisions that affect them. The “*dual ladder approach*” is a unique way for providing the professional to advance without having to adopt a nonprofessional career track. This approach comprises the usual managerial ladder of hierarchical positions leading to increased managerial authority and another ladder of professional positions that carries comparable prestige in terms of salary, status, and autonomy and responsibility. The principal intent of the dual ladder is to reward professional accomplishment and managerial proficiency comparably.

➤ **Supervision**

The culture of management requires results. If managers are to make their mark in the organization, they have to show a measurable impact on the bottom line. Professionals meanwhile are more comfortable longer-range results, since most of their work entails long-drawn-out thought and action. As a result, there is a tendency for managers to maintain close supervision over the professional staff to try to induce it to perform on time. Professionals find close supervision a nuisance that impedes their progress and hampers their creativity. Management By Objectives (MBO) can be an extremely important tool in supervising salaried professionals. It consists in having professionals decide with their managers what the objectives for their jobs are, how long it will take to meet the objectives, and what criteria should be used in evaluating progress toward or achievement of the objectives. It operates on the foundation of trust. MBO recognizes the dignity and maturity of subordinates in taking responsibility for their work goals.

➤ **Formalization**

Professionals tend to resist formal rules and regulations. Formalization is presumed to reduce autonomy, contravene peer or collegial control based on expertise, and undermine professional standards – all values within the professional culture. Softer control methods need to take into account the relative maturity level of the professional staff. The formal control process can be made less bureaucratic through decentralization and organizational design changes such as the matrix structure. Softer methods go beyond structural change. They suggest a more subtle set of approaches that allow for greater self-control among professionals, like informal communication, deriving a set of common values that appeals to the professional staff as well as to all other employees of the organization.

➤ **Entrepreneurship**

Managers, in the interest of career and teamwork, condone jobs lacking challenge, entrepreneurship, personal attachment and stability. Professionals, on the other hand, in the interest of quality of life and individual initiative, display little regard for real-world practice. What is needed is to establish within the regular bureaucracy for mavericks not



only to survive but also to succeed. Professionals should have the opportunity to try new things or recommend new ways. Some amount of bootlegging can also be allowed as long as it relates to the corporate mission. Any successful entrepreneurial venture should be rewarded appropriately.

➤ Ethical Responsibility

Corporate governance has succeeded in attracting a good deal of public interest because of its apparent importance for the economic health of corporations and society in general. Different people have come up with different definitions that basically reflect their special interest in the field. However, in totality, corporate governance is the system by which business corporations are directed and controlled. The corporate governance structure specifies the distribution of rights and responsibilities among different participants in the corporation, such as, the board, managers, shareholders and other stakeholders, and spells out the rules and procedures for making decisions on corporate affairs. By doing this, it also provides the structure through which the company objectives are set, and the means of attaining those objectives and monitoring performance.

Professionals like auditors, accountants, etc. have been held responsible for the maintenance of legal standards in preparation of company books. However, it is not their responsibility to detect frauds. They should only make sure that the rules and policies are followed. In such a process, if they come across any discrepancy, they should seek information from the management, to rectify the error and get to the root cause of the problem. The professionals may be looked upon as a nuisance then. Since, habits, customs, and attitudes vary widely among organizations and even industries, it is not surprising that some companies have evolved a culture of ethical consciousness, whereas other have not. The problem of variability in the application of ethical consciousness stems from vagueness about when to apply an ethical principle. In promoting ethical consciousness, the impetus has to come from the top. The chief executive and his staff represent the ethos of the corporation.

Most companies that have adopted social audits use them for internal reporting purposes, where they can be used to broadcast and control some of the firm's social activities. The author has espoused three methods to choose from:

1. The descriptive or process audit: In this format, the organization, without adhering to any standard format, simply describes what it is doing and what has been accomplished in the organization's social the ethical activities.
2. The effort audit: This audit lists the expenditures and time devoted to various social and ethical activities. It may also include the cost of programs not undertaken but expected or required.
3. The performance audit: Although the most difficult and expensive, this type of audit attempts to measure the benefits as well as the costs of social programs. Organizations using performance audits need to devise creative ways of measuring nontraditional social outcomes, such as better air quality, fair advertising, safety, even the value of human life.

Professionals should feel relatively assured that any concern they have for social justice or for the ethical responsibilities of their organization will not be overlooked. It has the effect



of making the professional and manager partners in furthering the participative aims and processes of the organization.

Development within the Organization

At the end of the early socialization process with the help of mentors or sponsors, the professionals have a career path to navigate. Subsequent stages of development within the organization present new and different challenges to the more experienced professionals. The research undertaken by the author has revealed different professional work patterns during three distinct career stages, which he calls finding a niche, digging in and entrenched.

➤ Finding a niche

During this early stage, young professionals tend to be idealistic about their profession. They have high expectations and dreams. Just out of their courses, they want to implement their learning in the real world, outside the classroom. Before this, probably summer internships may have provided them with the opportunity to showcase their talent, albeit in a limited way. Most likely they were not satisfied with the kind of work they were saddled with – probably some routine, clerical work or mere assistance on some not-so substantial venture. They seek jobs that provide intrinsic satisfaction. They also tend to be highly mobile, preferring to try different organizations if they do not find what they are looking for in the first. The management should try to reduce the attrition rates, since it is an expensive process to recruit, select, train and replace manpower. For the young professional, his initial work is routine. The need for risk-taking behaviour is blocked somewhat by the nature of his early assignments. It is critical to provide a mentor at this early stage. The mentor can effectively bridge the gap between the graduate school and the organizational experience by providing organizational know-how that cannot be found in syllabus books.

➤ Digging in

This mid-career stage affords the greatest opportunity for expressing one's professionalism. Professionals during this time are committed to their work and put in long hours and their skills are at a peak. Having developed a fair degree of trustworthiness, they must adapt to the organizational culture and make their personal imprint. Professionals still need to reconcile personal standards with bureaucratic requirements. There is still a tendency to resist supervision and to maintain only conditional loyalty to the organization. It is the prerogative of the management to make the professionals to feel at home. One way is to form teams of professionals so that they do not feel left out or isolated. The teams need to keep changing so that the professionals can have maximum exposure to the organization and maximum interaction with the maximum number of people in the organization. The teams can be cross-functional to stimulate interactions among professional and non-professional segments. Their work ideas should be encouraged and even failures should be looked upon as the proverbial stepping-stones to success. By strangling creativity, the management is killing chances of dynamic growth, which is at the hands of these professionals. It is the professionals that symbolize the core competence of the organization.

➤ Entrenched



This last stage of organizational career development raises the specter of obsolescence as the professional gradually loses touch with recent changes in the field. Yet this is also the time when professionals may decide once and for all to accommodate themselves fully to the organization's value system and expectations. By the entrenched stage, the organization and its management have conferred certain rights and privileges on the professional employee, such as steady salary increases, promotions, trust in the professional's performance and dependability, the sharing of organizational secrets and other manifestations of membership, the reliable support of a work group, etc. Two roles are possible, additional to one's own work and responsibilities: mentor and sponsor. The mentor guides young professionals who are finding a niche and may at the same time broaden his own expertise. Sponsors differ from mentors in that they focus more on clearing organizational paths for younger professionals than on giving them technical guidance. Some of the explicit benefits for both professionals and organizations include:

1. Increasing the technical knowledge of the participants
2. Broadening their background and viewpoint
3. Providing an excellent source of new ideas
4. Providing an opportunity to stay abreast of new developments in the field
5. Increasing the reputation of the organization
6. Providing for exchange of ideas, which prevents inbreeding
7. Enabling professionals to meet the leaders in their field and receive inspiration from them

Conclusion

Culture to perform, to culture to learn, contribute, add value and enhance shareholder value is an organizational expectation for the individuals of the future. Individuals in doing their learning and contribution would seek fundamental and basic experiences. A place to work, a working infrastructure, learn as they go along and spend time, an opportunity to create, feel a sense of identity on what they have created and eventually believe that all that they have done has impacted the shareholder. People centric ways in treating people for their potential and human nature to help them feel a sense of belonging, a feeling of achievement and an opportunity to bring out the best in them is essential to this process of attempted transition. The culture provides for failure as much as enjoying its share of success. Clearly the participating managers impact the culture in several ways both in the short and long run.

Placement and hiring decisions would lean in favor of college degrees, professional education, organizational skills and competencies and knowledge that are application and growth based. A natural process of attrition of those who do not "fit in" would emerge for a natural process of elimination. Employees would consider the organizational career plan to consist of a successive set of hurdles to be crossed at every stage of their career with no letting go at any time. Employees would be expected to be at their best at literally all times. Speed would mean a combination of responsiveness and superior quality of input. Effective service at acceptable quality would not be good enough. Managerial actions by itself would no longer determine company priorities on an exclusive basis in this dynamic culture. The managerial act would be either preceded or succeeded by individual or collective intellect providing information based knowledge, sensitivity analysis, etc. The responsibility of managing the company would cut across lines of control and power and would depend on groups of people vested with the correct knowledge of the issue in question.



Thus, to successfully manage the specialist manpower in an organization, the management aims to create an environment conducive to their growth and development. The management is vested with the responsibility of understanding the needs and expectations of the professionals and bridging the divide between the line and staff functioning. The subculture formed by the professionals within the overall culture should be blended effectively with the organization culture. The value of stable employment policies in creating professional loyalty to the organization, the close supervision versus peer review process, hierarchy versus participation, respect for versus defiance of authority, corporate efficiency versus social justice, team player versus individual initiative, career versus quality of life are issues which the management has to deal with on a continual basis. These efforts go a long way in making professionals a part of the organization as much as the management.