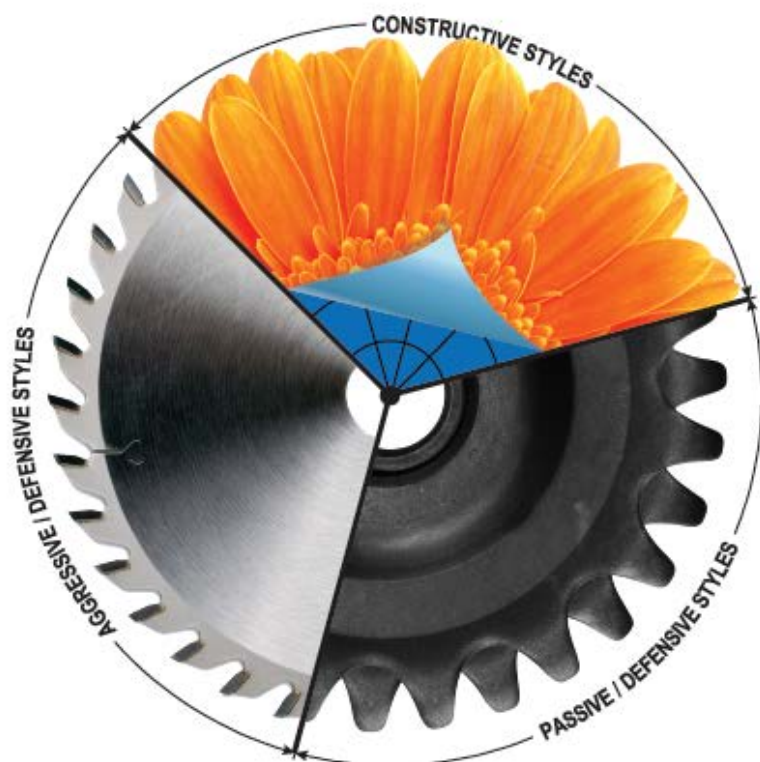


SAMPLE

CREATING CONSTRUCTIVE CULTURES

Leading People and Organizations to
Effectively Solve Problems and Achieve Goals



Janet L. Szumal, Ph.D. with Robert A. Cooke, Ph.D.
Human Synergistics International

Creating Constructive Cultures

**Leading People and Organizations
to Effectively Solve Problems and Achieve Goals**

Janet L. Szumal, PhD with Robert A. Cooke, PhD

2019

Human Synergistics International

Advanced Praise

"In as much as measured constructive culture has been shown to correlate with effective organizational performance, this book spells out with many international case examples how the use of a validated survey measure of the social culture can be effectively integrated into organizational improvement programs."

— **Edgar Schein**, PhD Professor Emeritus, MIT Sloan School of Management, Co-author with Peter Schein of *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*, 3d Ed. 2019

"Reading *Creating Constructive Cultures* will give you new appreciation of how the OCI can help organizations truly understand the culture and climate of their work environment - and to begin removing hurdles to a constructive culture."

— **S. Chris Edmonds**, Founder of the Purposeful Culture Group, Author, *The Culture Engine*

"*Creating Constructive Cultures* is a must-read for all organizational behavior/development academics and professionals, including consultants who want an invaluable tool for improving organizational effectiveness."

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"Using examples of companies from around the globe, leaders can apply learnings that positively impact their business strategy. This book is a must-have in your library for anyone interested in organizational culture."

— **Mary Paul**, President Mary Paul LLC, Director of Leadership Coaching Harley-Davidson Motor Company (retired)

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Introduction

A Different Way of Looking at Your Impact

Out of all the measures in my organization, the one I choose to measure my performance—to do my self-assessment—is culture.

Rebecca Kardos, CEO, Aurora Energy¹

During more than thirty years of research, I have never seen the idea of organizational culture in such a prominent position: leaders are more concerned now with the culture of their organizations than they have ever been. Back in the late 1970s when Drs. Robert A. Cooke (developer of the *Organizational Culture Inventory*®) and J. Clayton Lafferty (founder of Human Synergetics) began working together, the concept of organizations having cultures wasn't discussed beyond the spheres of organizational psychology and academic theory. Since I joined Human Synergetics in 1986, Rob Cooke and I have witnessed and contributed to the evolution of organizational culture to its current state as a widely acknowledged priority and source of competitive advantage. Certainly, some of the attention is due to the increased publicity about the damages caused by organizational cultures gone wrong. However, like Rebecca Kardos, whom we met at Human Synergetics Australia's Twentieth Annual Leadership and Culture Conference, most of the leaders we encounter are primarily interested not in crisis management or damage control but rather in evaluating and improving their organizations' cultures because of the distinct advantages associated with cultures that are Constructive. We focus on such leaders in this book, exploring their experiences as they move the cultures of their organizations in a more Constructive direction and highlighting the levers that you and your leadership team can use to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of your organization.

The Universal Value of Constructive Cultures

We define *organizational culture* as

a system of shared values and beliefs that can lead to behavioral norms that, in turn, guide the way members of an organization approach their work, interact with one another, and solve problems.

Importantly, we distinguish an organization's *espoused* values, which are its stated values, from its *operating culture*, which is the set of norms and expectations that drives the behavior of all members, including leaders, on a day-to-day basis. As you'll see, although operating cultures are influenced by espoused values, the two are not necessarily aligned.

One of the things we've found by measuring and comparing the ideal and the actual operating cultures of thousands of organizations over the past several decades is that the cultures described by leaders and other members as optimal are remarkably similar across organizations and industries. Specifically, the ideal cultures they describe—which reflect their values—are consistent with what we call *Constructive cultures*.

A Constructive culture is one that encourages members to work to their full potential, take initiative, think independently, participate without taking over, and voice unique perspectives and concerns while working toward consensus. In organizations with strong Constructive cultures, quality is valued over quantity; creativity and curiosity are fostered in place of conformity and indifference; collaboration and coordination are believed to lead to better results than competition and silos; the bigger picture is emphasized over minutiae; and doing good is viewed as more important than looking good or “being good.”

Of course, you don't need to be a researcher to notice the similarity in the values that different organizations espouse, given that they are often published on their websites or in their annual reports. As we'll demonstrate in the first chapter of this book, there is a genre of behaviors in organizations that attracts and keeps talent, promotes adaptation and innovation, supports the creation and implementation of effective strategies and business models, and, more generally, increases the capability of people to independently and interactively solve problems and achieve goals. These behaviors, we have found, are strikingly similar across organizations, because all organizations are characterized by a common set of properties that give rise to the same

set of problems, regardless of the industry or the country in which the organization operates. For instance, within all organizations there are interdependencies among members that lead to the universal problem of (and need for) coordination. As another example, all organizations are dependent on the external environment for resources, which gives rise to the familiar problem of adaptation. In addition, all organizations are characterized by partial inclusion of members (who also belong to other groups—such as families, professional associations, volunteer groups, community organizations, and societies) and therefore must address the problem of integrating members into the system.²

Yet knowing what types of cultures are effective and productive doesn't necessarily translate into acting on that knowledge or creating those kinds of cultures. Recent polls of managers, directors, and C-level executives show that over 80 percent feel their cultures are not properly “designed” or managed—and many feel a major overhaul is necessary.³ Perhaps less widely recognized is the fact that senior leaders tend to have a more optimistic view of their organizations' operating cultures than do people at other levels. As we'll show in chapter 2, the behavioral norms that guide the ways in which members approach their work and interact with one another tend to stray further from the organization's values as one moves down the organizational hierarchy. While this tendency might seem to suggest that the origins of *culture disconnects*—where behavioral norms diverge from values—are at the lower levels of organizations, we find that the roots of such problems are usually embedded at the top.

Leaders Affect Culture...and Culture Affects Leaders

Our initial interest wasn't in how leaders affect culture but rather in how culture affects leaders. This interest came out of Rob's early research (he was teaching at the University of Michigan and working as an associate research scientist at its Survey Research Center) on the *Life Styles Inventory*[™]—a 240-item survey originally developed by J. Clayton Lafferty that measures twelve personal thinking and behavioral styles. Clay asked Rob to assess the reliability and validity of the *Life Styles Inventory* and suggest improvements. Rob analyzed data on thousands of individuals who had a) described their thinking styles using the *Self-Description* form of the *Inventory*, and b) received feedback on their behavioral styles from others who had completed the *Description by Others* form for them. Rob discovered that the twelve styles clustered into three general personal

orientations, which he later labeled *Passive/Defensive*, *Aggressive/Defensive*, and *Constructive*. (We describe these sets of styles in more detail later in this introduction.) He then examined the relationship between these sets of styles and indicators of managerial success, health and well-being, and effectiveness.

Rob found that the Constructive styles were strongly correlated with managerial effectiveness, positive interpersonal relations, and interest in self-improvement as rated by others. With Clay and colleagues, Rob also found that teams with members who were more Constructive performed more effectively on group problem-solving simulations (such as Human Synergistics' *Desert Survival Situation*™, *Subarctic Survival Situation*™, and *Project Planning Situation*™) than those with members who were less Constructive. These positive and statistically significant relationships are indicated by the plus marks (+) in the first column of Table I.1.

Constructive ways of thinking tended to be related to organizational level. However, the correlation with salary was not significant (indicated by the zero in the first column of the table), suggesting Constructive styles were not necessarily being rewarded and reinforced by organizations. Instead, those who were rewarded with promotions and pay raises tended to be strongly oriented toward competing with, dominating, and controlling others; being critical of others; and remaining detached, impersonal, and focused on details (see the pluses in the last column of Table I.1). Despite the positive correlation between Aggressive/Defensive styles and material gain, these styles were not related to task effectiveness (indicated in the table by a zero). Additionally, these styles correlated negatively with both interpersonal relations and problem-solving effectiveness (indicated by the minuses in the last column of the table) and with health and well-being. Participants who tended to use Aggressive/Defensive styles showed psychological and physiological symptoms of strain, such as anxiety, ulcers, and heart attacks.

While certainly not mainstream findings at the time, these disconcerting results were consistent with the thesis of the 1975 article "On the Folly of Rewarding A, while Hoping for B." This classic work highlights the short-sighted focus of so many organizational policies and practices, including performance management and reward systems. Author Steven Kerr of Ohio State University noted:

It is *hoped* that administrators will pay attention to long run costs and opportunities and will institute programs which

will bear fruit later on. However, many organizational reward systems pay off for short run sales and earnings only. Under such circumstances it is personally rational for officials to sacrifice long term growth and profit (by selling off equipment and property, or by stifling research and development) for short term advantages.⁴

Table I.1. How Personal Orientations Relate to Effectiveness and Personal Success

	Personal Orientation^a		
	Constructive	Passive/ Defensive	Aggressive/ Defensive
Salary ^a	0	--	+
Organizational Level ^a	+	--	+
Managerial Effectiveness ^b	++	0	0
Quality of Interpersonal Relations ^b	+	++	--
Interest in Self-Improvement ^b	++	+	--
Psychological/Physiological Health ^a	++	-	--
Problem-Solving Effectiveness ^c	+	-	-

Table from the *Life Styles Inventory*™ Leader's Guide, Appendix D.
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Note. Results based on samples ranging from 500 to 1,000 focal individuals. Plusses and minuses denote statistically significant positive and negative relationships, respectively. Single plusses and minuses indicate $p < .05$; double plusses and minuses indicate $p < .01$. Zero indicates no statistically significant relationship.

^a Based on Life Styles Inventory (LSI) Self Description.

^b Based on LSI Descriptions by Others.

^c Based on performance on problem-solving simulations.

Kerr reported a similar inconsistency around what we now call *Passive/Defensive* behaviors. During his interviews with managers, they complained about lower level members' tendencies toward "apple

polishing” and conservatism. However, via brief surveys, he found that subordinates claimed that “always agreeing with the boss” and “going along with the majority” were the “most rational course(s) of action in light of the existing reward system.”⁵ Again, organizations were somehow reinforcing behaviors that were the opposite of what managers were hoping for. However, based on the results shown in the center column of Table I.1, promotions and pay raises apparently are not responsible for these passive behaviors. In fact, the data indicate that these styles are negatively related to these tangible rewards. It seems more likely that the leadership styles of the respondents’ superiors—including their aggressive behaviors and the nature of the feedback they provided—produced passive responses.

Similarly, managers who participated in development programs based on the *Life Styles Inventory* made it clear that they were encouraged to behave aggressively by factors beyond just pay and promotion. They cited various forces within their organizations that signaled the need for these behaviors. As one of them said in a follow-up debrief (with a mix of humor and frustration), those at the top of the organization, along with his peers, would “simply chew me up and spit me out” if he engaged in less aggressive and more constructive behaviors on a day-to-day basis.

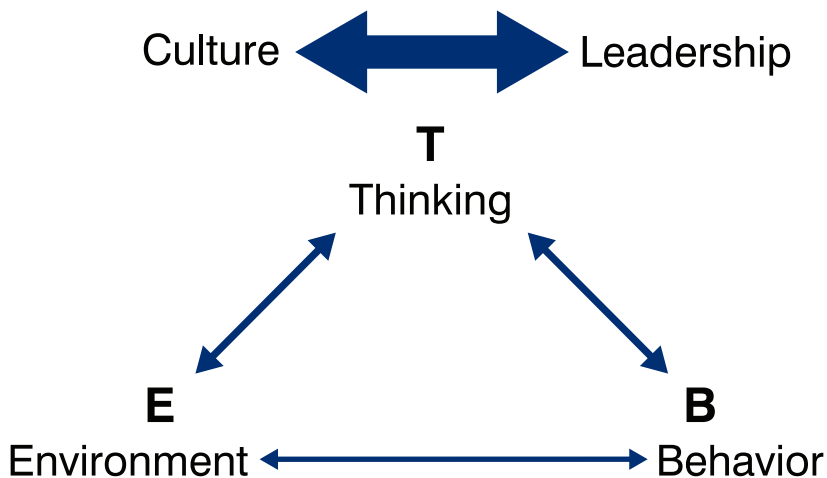
Rob felt it was important for organizations to understand the thinking and behavioral styles they were reinforcing. Though he began by writing a survey focusing on what they rewarded, it struck him that some of the forces leading to these behaviors were more subtle and pervasive—almost cultural. But the cultural forces at play were more at the organizational level rather than the societal level. At the same time, most of the writings on culture by anthropologists such as Edward T. Hall focused exclusively on societies and rarely mentioned organizations.⁶

Consequently, rather than developing a survey that focused just on what was being rewarded, Rob created the *Organizational Culture Inventory* to measure the extent to which members believed their organization expected or implicitly required the sets of styles assessed by the *Life Styles Inventory*. Rob’s original intention was to use the *Organizational Culture Inventory* to provide organizations with a picture of their cultures to stimulate changes consistent with and supportive of the leadership development programs based on the *Life Styles Inventory*. The irony was that for an organization to support leaders in their efforts to think and behave in more effective ways, those leaders often had to

redirect their organization's culture—a “which comes first, the chicken or the egg” conundrum. This is why Rob and I started working together to uncover the various ways in which leaders create cultures that are more strongly Constructive.

Clearly, leadership styles shape culture and, reciprocally, culture shapes the thinking and behavioral styles of leaders. This type of causality is consistent with the notion of *reciprocal determinism* proposed by psychologist Albert Bandura.⁷ Instead of viewing the environment as a one-way determinant of behavior, Bandura pointed out that behavior also influences the environment, and both are influenced by the individual's cognitions and predispositions. Figure I.1 illustrates how this works with respect to leadership and culture. *Environment* includes the organization's operating culture in terms of shared behavioral norms and expectations, as well as the more tangible aspects of organizations such as their structures and systems. *Behaviors* refer to the leader's behavioral styles (such as those measured by the *Life Styles Inventory Description by Others*). *Thinking* includes the leader's task-oriented versus people-oriented patterns of thinking, which are driven by higher-order versus lower-order needs, as measured by the *Life Styles Inventory Self-Description*.

Figure I.1. The Reciprocal Relationship between Culture and Leadership



Adapted from Albert Bandura, The Self System in Reciprocal Determinism, American Psychologist, April 1978, pp. 344-358.

Bandura's work is instructive in understanding the complexity of culture transformation and the difficulty of effecting sustained change. Leaders can change their own behaviors, but such changes are fragile if: a) their thinking doesn't change (such as when leaders are just "going through the motions" or giving "lip service" to change efforts) or b) environmental factors are nonsupportive or point in another direction (such as when leaders are criticized when they're trying to practice something new—for example, behaving in a more Constructive manner). As noted in a recent *Harvard Business Review* article, many leadership development programs today do not have a significant impact on their target organizations because of deficiencies "in the policies and practices created by top management"⁸—who in many cases are the same leaders who initiated the development programs.

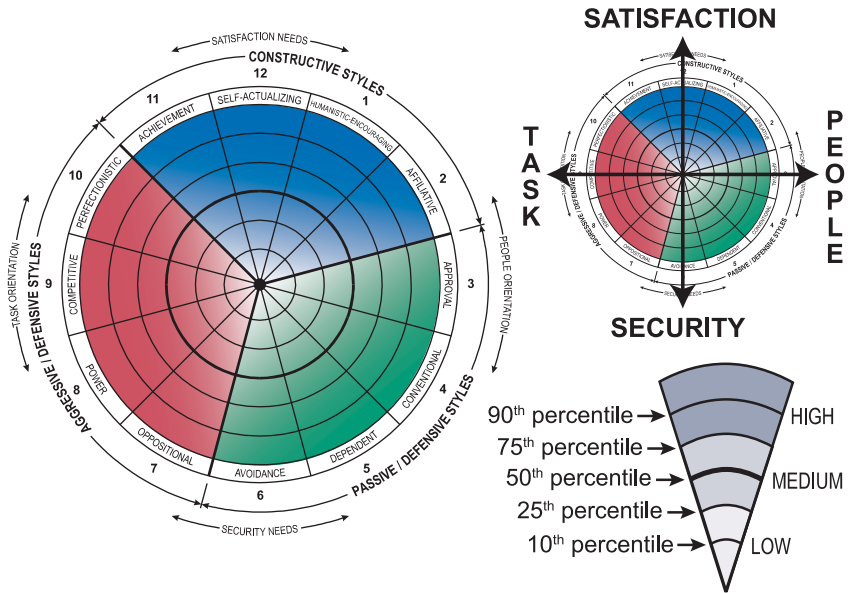
Such behavioral and environmental factors include not only the *skills and qualities* of leaders but also *systems*, such as those around reinforcement, performance management, and goal setting; *structural features*, such as empowerment and the distribution of influence; and *technological factors* influencing the design of jobs. All these factors send signals that translate into the shared beliefs held by members of an organization regarding what's actually expected (i.e., the operating culture). The emergent behavioral norms and expectations may be inconsistent with the organization's stated values and preferred culture and stand in the way of even elegant programs designed to change leaders' behaviors. Consequently, to effectively and sustainably achieve improvements in performance, development initiatives must simultaneously address leaders and members as individuals and the organization as a system in a way that is consistent with the organization's stated values and preferred culture. This doesn't imply that everything has to be changed all at once and right away. Rather, the members of an organization need to see from a leader's initial changes that a different set of behaviors is truly expected and will be supported. This is much easier said than done, particularly when leaders are unaware of their own thinking and behavior and how they affect—and are affected by—the organization's current culture.

A Framework and Language for Describing Leadership and Culture

The language used throughout this book to describe an organization's current and ideal culture, leaders' thinking and behavioral styles, and

the impact of leaders on others is based on the Human Synergistics Circumplex (see Figure I.2), as developed by J. Clayton Lafferty in the 1970s and revised and validated by Rob in the 1980s.

Figure I.2. The Human Synergistics Circumplex



Research and development by Robert A. Cooke, Ph.D. and J. Clayton Lafferty, Ph.D.
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The Circumplex identifies twelve styles that are grouped into three general clusters—Constructive, Passive/Defensive, and Aggressive/Defensive. Styles at the top of the Circumplex are driven by higher-order *satisfaction* needs for growth, development, relationships with others, and achievement; styles at the bottom are triggered by lower-order needs for protecting and maintaining one's own *security*, interests, position, and status. Styles on the right side of the Circumplex reflect a concern for *people* while those on the left side are oriented toward *tasks*. The specific placement of the styles around the Circumplex indicates their degree of similarity to one another. Styles that are more similar and that covary are placed closer to one another on the Circumplex, while those that are less similar or even opposing are placed farther apart.⁹

Throughout this book, you'll see various Circumplex profiles showing results for different leaders and organizations that have used our surveys.

The extent to which each section of the Circumplex is filled with blue, green, or red depicts the extent to which each style describes the focal individual, group, or organization based on comparisons to others who previously completed our surveys. Long extensions represent relatively strong tendencies along a style; short extensions indicate that the style is not characteristic of the individual, group, or organization represented in the profile. In other words, the Circumplex is used to transform raw scores on style measures to percentile scores.

CONSTRUCTIVE (BLUE) STYLES are labeled Achievement, Self-Actualizing, Humanistic-Encouraging and Affiliative and are located—using the analogy of a clock—in the eleven to two o’clock positions on the Circumplex. We use the word *constructive* as consistent with its dictionary definition, “relating to construction or creation” and “promoting improvement or development.”¹⁰

Leaders and organizational cultures that promote and reinforce Constructive styles motivate members toward *self-development* and *doing good*. They also encourage members to pay attention to the development of others and the organization, and to take initiative in solving problems, accomplishing objectives, and building effective work relationships with others. Members are expected to strike a balance between prioritizing tasks and prioritizing people, as well as to balance their own needs and interests with those of their group or organization. More generally, many of the ways of thinking and the behaviors that are activated in Constructive cultures are associated with classic research on higher-order needs and motivation¹¹ and have since been identified as components of *emotional intelligence* and *positive mindsets*. As described in the next chapter and illustrated by the cases that make up the bulk of this book, when Constructive styles are strongly (rather than weakly) supported by an organization’s operating culture, members tend to be more satisfied and engaged; teamwork and synergy are more evident; and individuals, groups, and the overall organization perform more effectively.

PASSIVE/DEFENSIVE (GREEN) STYLES—labeled Approval, Conventional, Dependent, and Avoidance—are found in the three to six o’clock positions of the Circumplex. The word *passive*—defined as “lacking in energy or will,” “lethargic,” “not active,” and “submissive”—and the word *defensive*—defined as “serving to defend or protect”—together capture the essence of the underlying orientation shared by these styles.

Passive/Defensive ways of thinking and behaving are driven by the need to maintain personal security and safety via interactions with *people*. While the underlying motivation is for *self-protection* and *being good*, these styles reflect a tendency to subordinate personal interests to those of the group or organization. Leaders and organizational cultures that implicitly require and activate these styles promote the belief that fitting in, being accepted, following orders (even if they are wrong), and avoiding blame take priority over effectively solving problems or accomplishing tasks. Consequently, regardless of whether the Passive/Defensive styles are intentionally or inadvertently reinforced by leaders or by the cultures they create, these behaviors stifle diversity, creativity, and initiative and allow individual members as well as the overall organization to stagnate.

AGGRESSIVE/DEFENSIVE (RED) STYLES—which include Oppositional, Power, Competitive, and Perfectionistic—are shown in the seven to ten o'clock positions on the Circumplex. These behaviors are characterized by *aggression*, which is defined as “a forceful action or procedure (such as an unprovoked attack) especially when intended to dominate and master” and “hostile, injurious, or destructive behavior, especially when caused by frustration.” Like the passive styles described above, the aggressive styles are driven by the perceived need to defend and maintain a personal sense of security.

While the results of Aggressive/Defensive norms and expectations can be destructive and counterproductive, the underlying intentions are more benign. Leaders in Aggressive/Defensive cultures are motivated by the desire to *look good*. Their priority is *self-promotion*, and, more generally, the protection of their own security and status via task-related behaviors. Individuals who are encouraged by leaders or their organization’s culture to think and behave in these ways tend to place their own interests above those of the group or organization and, in certain ways, use the group or organization as a vehicle or arena for meeting their own needs.

As described in the next chapter and illustrated by some of the cases, organizations with strong Aggressive/Defensive cultures have a more difficult time attracting and retaining talent; they experience more conflicts within as well as between teams; they are more likely to break into silos; and they tend to perform more unevenly or inconsistently than organizations in which these styles are not emphasized.

Brief descriptions of the twelve specific cultural norms measured by the *Organizational Culture Inventory* are provided in Table I.2. As you review





the descriptions, consider the extent to which your organization's day-to-day operating culture currently embodies the characteristics listed.

As noted earlier, the Circumplex framework and terminology are relevant not only to describing an organization's current and ideal culture (measured by the *Organizational Culture Inventory* and *Organizational Culture Inventory—Ideal*, respectively) but also the thinking and behavior of individuals as measured by the *Life Styles Inventory* as well as ACUMEN® Leadership WorkStyles™ (a derivative of the *Life Styles Inventory*). Descriptions of the twelve personal thinking and behavioral styles are provided in Table I.3. As you read the descriptions, consider the extent to which they: a) describe your own thinking and b) reflect how others would describe your behavior.





These inventories provide a structured, quantitative, and comprehensive means of assessing your organization's culture and your personal styles. You may have already noticed some parallels between your own thinking and behavioral styles and the culture of your organization simply by reading these brief descriptions and reflecting on what you have observed in your organization and in your own thinking and behavior. More generally, using the same language and framework to describe what is happening at the individual, group/team, and organizational levels can be pivotal in helping leaders connect their own thinking, behavior, and impact to the interactions within their groups and to the broader culture of their organizations.

The full diagnostic system based on the Circumplex is summarized in the diagram in Figure I.3. In addition to personal styles and cultural norms, the framework and terminology are used to identify the personal impact of leaders and managers on the behavior of other people and the culture (measured by *Leadership/Impact*® and *Management/Impact*®). The framework and terminology are also used to describe members' interaction within groups (measured using the *Group Styles Inventory*™) and with customers (measured by *Customer ServiceStyles*™). Thus, the Circumplex helps leaders to understand how their own thinking and behavior are affected by as well as affect other members, groups and teams, and the organization's culture in terms of styles. Possibly more importantly, the use of a single shared framework and terminology facilitates multilevel change and development that are integrated and mutually reinforcing rather than unrelated, inconsistent, or even mutually exclusive.





Table I.2. The Twelve Cultural Norms Based on the *Organizational Culture Inventory***Constructive Styles**

	An Achievement culture characterizes organizations that do things well and value members who set and accomplish their own goals. Members are expected to set challenging but realistic goals, establish plans to reach these goals, and pursue them with enthusiasm.
	A Self-Actualizing culture characterizes organizations that value creativity, quality over quantity, and both task accomplishment and individual growth. Members are encouraged to gain enjoyment from their work, develop themselves, and take on new and interesting activities.
	A Humanistic-Encouraging culture characterizes organizations that are managed in a participative and person-centered way. Members are expected to be supportive, developmental, and open to influence in their dealings with one another.
	An Affiliative culture characterizes organizations that place a high priority on positive interpersonal relationships. Members are expected to share thoughts and feelings and be friendly, open, and sensitive to the satisfaction of work group members.

Passive/Defensive Styles

	An Approval culture describes organizations in which conflicts are avoided and interpersonal relationships are pleasant—at least superficially. Members feel that they should agree with, gain the acceptance of, and be liked by others.
	A Conventional culture is descriptive of organizations that are conservative, traditional, and bureaucratically controlled. Members are expected to conform, follow the rules, make a good impression, and always follow policies and practices.
	A Dependent culture is descriptive of organizations that are hierarchically controlled and fail to empower their members. Members are expected to do only what they are told, clear all decisions with superiors, and please their superiors.
	An Avoidance culture characterizes organizations that fail to reward success but nevertheless punish mistakes. Members believe they must shift responsibilities to others, take few chances, and guard against any possibility of being blamed for a problem.





Aggressive/Defensive Styles

	An Oppositional culture describes organizations in which confrontation prevails and negativism is rewarded. Members believe they can gain status and influence by being critical, opposing the ideas of others, and making safe (but ineffectual) decisions.
	A Power culture is descriptive of nonparticipative organizations structured on the basis of the authority inherent in members' positions. Members believe they are expected to take charge, control subordinates and, at the same time, be responsive to the demands of superiors.
	A Competitive culture is one in which winning is valued and members are rewarded for outperforming one another. Members operate in a "win-lose" framework and believe they must turn the job into a contest and work against (rather than with) their peers to be noticed.
	A Perfectionistic culture characterizes organizations in which perfectionism, persistence, and hard work are valued. Members feel they must avoid any mistakes, keep track of everything, and work long hours to attain narrowly defined objectives.





From the *Organizational Culture Inventory*®(OCI®) by Robert A. Cooke Ph.D. and J. Clayton Lafferty, Ph.D.
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Table I.3. The Twelve Thinking and Behavioral Styles
Based on the *Life Styles Inventory Styles*

Constructive Styles

	The Achievement style reflects a strong motivation to solve problems and to attain high-quality results. Characteristics include a focus on accomplishment, ambition, enjoyment of challenges, and the ability to set realistic, attainable goals.
	The Self-Actualizing style reflects a way of thinking that results in the highest form of personal fulfillment. Characteristics include concern for self-development, an energetic, interested approach to life, and a desire to know about and experience things directly.
	The Humanistic-Encouraging style reflects a concern for the growth and development of people. Characteristics include the ability to inspire and motivate others, thoughtfulness, and a willingness to help.
	The Affiliative style reflects one's commitment to forming and sustaining satisfying relationships. Characteristics include strong, well-developed interpersonal skills, diplomacy, and a need to build relationships that are meaningful and reciprocal.

Passive/Defensive Styles

	The Approval style reflects one's need to be accepted by others to increase feelings of self-worth. Characteristics include low self-esteem, a preoccupation with the opinions of others, and an over-concern with being well-liked.
	The Conventional style reflects the tendency to act in a conforming way to avoid calling attention to one's self. Characteristics include a tendency to view rules as a source of security, reduced initiative, and obedience to authority figures.
	The Dependent style reflects the need to rely on the guidance and direction of others in order to feel secure and protected. Characteristics include passivity, eagerness to please, compliance, respect for others, and a tendency to be easily influenced.
	The Avoidance style reflects use of the defensive strategy of withdrawal to avoid what is personally threatening. Characteristics include feelings of self-doubt, tension, and avoidance of risks and decisions.

Aggressive/Defensive Styles





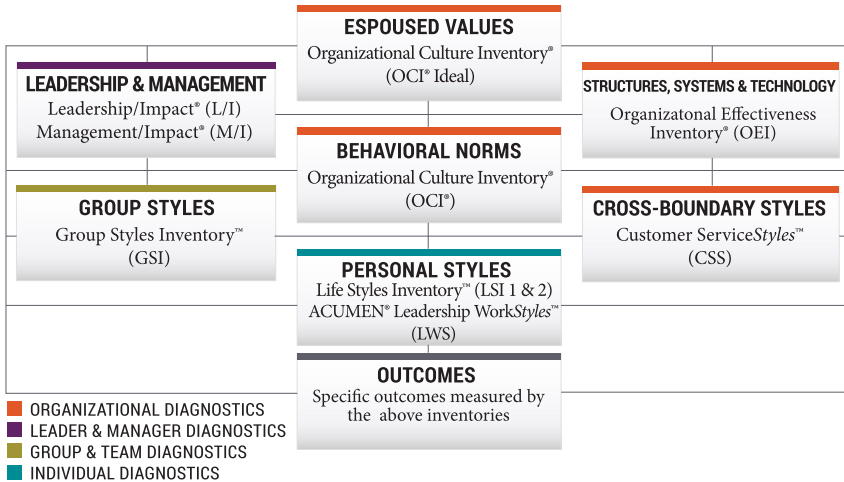
	The Oppositional style reflects the need to seek attention and recognition by disagreeing with others and being overly critical. Characteristics include suspicion, a need to look for flaws in everything, and a negative, cynical attitude.
	The Power style reflects a high need for status, influence, and control. Characteristics include narrow and rigid thinking, abruptness, and a lack of confidence in others.
	The Competitive style reflects the need to establish feelings of self-worth through competing against and comparing one's self to others. Characteristics include a preoccupation with winning, a desire to be seen as "the best," an extreme fear of failure, and a strong need to impress others.
	The Perfectionistic style reflects a driven need to be "perfect" by attaching feelings of self-worth to task accomplishment. Characteristics include a preoccupation with detail and an excessive concern with avoiding mistakes.

Figure I.3. The Human Synergistics Integrated Diagnostic System



Adapted from Robert A. Cooke, Ph.D. (2012).
Presentation at Human Synergistics' Summer Conference, Zurich, Switzerland.
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Overview of This Book

Throughout this book you'll be presented with a variety of examples of how the Circumplex framework and language have been used by organizations as well as researchers around the world to a) understand the relationship between Constructive styles and outcomes, b) uncover misalignments between cultural values and norms, and c) identify how leaders can and do create more Constructive cultures within their organizations.

In chapter 1, we'll review research and highlight some case examples that together demonstrate how important Constructive cultures are to effectiveness and performance. We'll also show how Constructive cultural norms relate to the values espoused by various organizations and to the ideal cultures described by men and women, people of different ages, and organizational leaders in different countries.

Starting in chapter 2, we'll address the question of how leaders directly and indirectly affect and change culture by sharing our findings on how culture works. Through our research and early case studies, we've uncovered more than thirty enablers of operating cultures. For many leaders, this section can be a real eye-opener to the inadvertent impact they have been having on culture and the many potentially constructive changes they have the power to make.

Beginning with chapter 3, we'll share the recent stories of nine different organizations around the globe that illustrate some of the ways in which leaders have used the Circumplex language and framework to a) identify the prevalence of the different styles within their organization, b) define what's ideal, and c) address culture disconnects to strengthen their organizations' capacity to tackle universal business challenges and achieve organizational goals. The leaders, managers, and change agents featured in this book were open and generous in sharing their experiences and the insights they've gained thus far from their organization's culture change journey. They were also courageous in that they resisted approaching change in the manner that one would have predicted, given their organizations' operating cultures at the time they began their journeys. Rather than going through the motions, they chose to change their own thinking and behavior, to actively engage others in the process, and even to implement complementary changes (for instance, to structures, systems, technology, and skills/qualities) to shift the operating cultures of their organizations in a more productive direction. Many organizations and leaders underestimate the value of this kind of integrated multilevel approach.

The most senior-level leaders we interviewed were a diverse group that included

- the first female CEO of the fourth-largest port in the state of California;
- the CEO of an internationally based privately held online retail company headquartered in Germany;
- the CEO of a publicly traded global organization in the dental implant and tooth replacement industry headquartered in Switzerland;
- the founder of a Latin American agricultural biotechnology company;
- the owner of a family bakery in Serbia;
- the former managing director of a Hungarian brewery;
- the managing director of an Australian breakfast and health food manufacturer;
- the CEO of a cooperative owned by the credit unions in Saskatchewan, Canada; and
- the first African American Presiding Bishop of a church headquartered in New York City.

Aside from the first and last case studies—both focused on organizations in the United States—the other seven organizational examples appear in the book according to the length of time they’ve spent so far on their culture change journey. This arrangement helps to underscore a key point of this book, which is that creating an organization in which people can solve a broad swath of problems and adapt to changes is an *ongoing* journey—one that is often bumpy and is certainly not linear. It’s a venture that members of all these organizations have found essential to positioning themselves for long-term sustainability as well as intermediate financial success, customer satisfaction, organizational adaptability and innovation, and employee engagement and loyalty. As you will discover, these facets of success are consistent across organizations ranging from an e-commerce company in Germany to a church in the United States.

Finally, by sharing with you the results of our culture research along with client experiences and insights, this book addresses a key question that is often lost in conversations about leadership and organizational culture:

As a leader, how can you both directly and indirectly influence your organization to ensure that members can independently and interactively solve problems and achieve the organization’s goals more readily and effectively?

As you will see, the biggest obstacle to changing an organization’s culture is its culture! Consequently, to create change, leaders must approach culture and their leadership in a different way—one that consistently reflects and supports the cultural norms they want to strengthen rather than those they want to extinguish.

We begin our journey with an exploration of why Constructive cultures are optimal for most organizations and what leaders aim for when they want to change and improve their cultures.

About the Authors

JANET L. SZUMAL is a Senior Research Associate for Human Synergistics Inc. and is the lead author of *Management/Impact* (M/I), the *Organizational Change Challenge*™, and the *Project Management Challenge*™. She received her PhD in Human Resource Management from the University of Illinois at Chicago.



Janet has developed and codeveloped leader's guides and support materials for many Human Synergistics products, including guides for *Leadership/Impact* and the *Cultural Change Situation*™, feedback reports for the *Organizational Culture Inventory* and *Organizational Effectiveness Inventory*, and the *OCI® Interpretation and Development Guide*. Her research on the reliability and validity of Human Synergistics diagnostic tools has appeared in academic journals such as the *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* and *Psychological Reports*.

Janet's writings on the use and features of Human Synergistics surveys and simulations have appeared in various magazines and books (including the *Team and Organizational Development Sourcebook*), on Human Synergistics' website and the *Constructive Culture* blog, and in workshop manuals for accreditation programs.



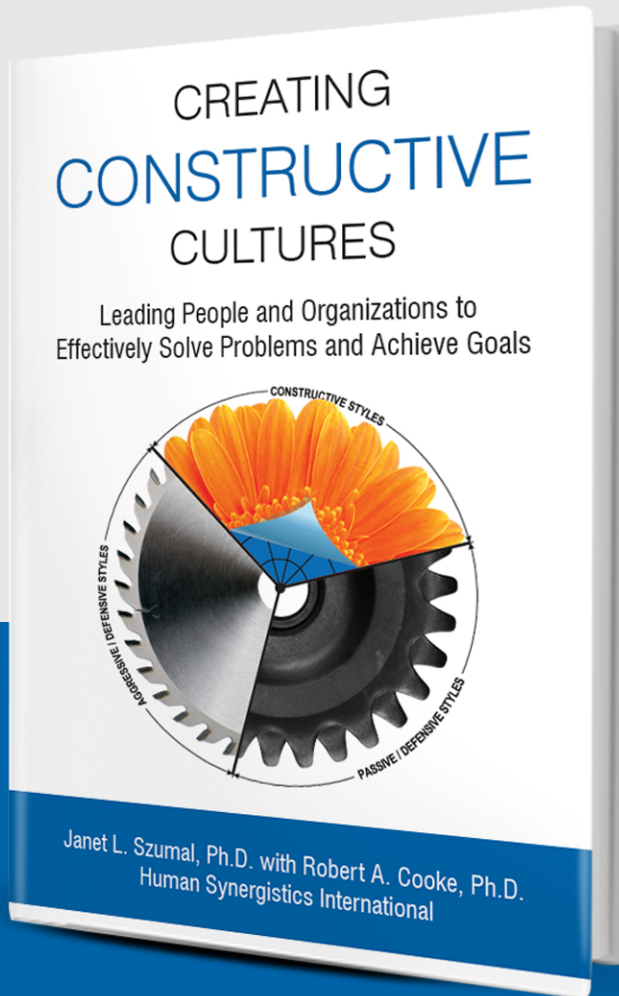
ROBERT A. COOKE is CEO and Director of Human Synergistics International and Associate Professor Emeritus of Management at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Rob was previously an Associate Research Scientist at the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center (Institute for Social Research) and a Visiting Scholar at Stanford University. He received his PhD in Organizational Behavior from the Kellogg School of Management,

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Rob specializes in the development and validation of surveys for individual, group, and organization development. His most widely used surveys include the *Organizational Culture Inventory*, *Organizational Effectiveness Inventory*, *Leadership/Impact*, and *Group Styles Inventory*. These instruments have been translated into numerous languages and are used throughout the world by consultants and trainers for organizational development and research purposes.

Rob is the author of more than seventy-five articles, chapters, and technical reports. His research has been selected for the William J. Davis Memorial Award for outstanding scholarly research and the Douglas McGregor Memorial Award for Excellence in the Applied Social Sciences. His teaching has been recognized with the MBA Professor of the Year Award and the Alumni Award for Outstanding Teaching at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

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