

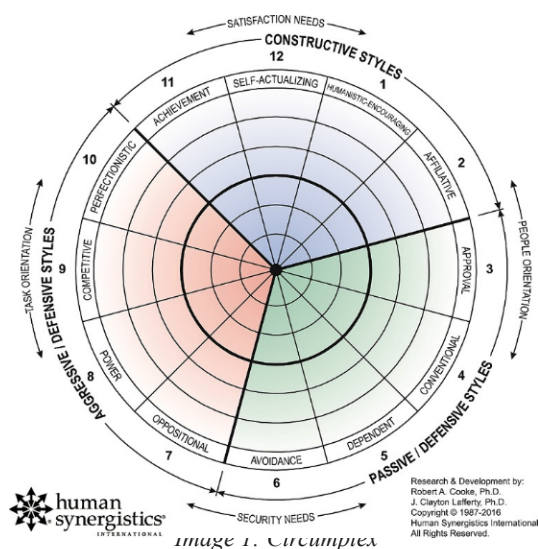
# A Best-Practice Case from Hans Fenner of Capita Consulting GmbH



The following case study provides best-practice insights from Hans Fenner, Managing Director at Capita Consulting GmbH, based on extensive professional experience including over twenty years as a consultant. After heading an international business unit with €400M in sales, Fenner worked for Medtronic, setting up the Education Center EMEA. In 1999, he became self-employed, serving clients around the world, helping them evaluate and develop their leaders and culture.

## BACKGROUND

Taking the OCI® Fenner's interest in culture measurement and development was sparked. After reaching out to Human Synergistics he earned his accreditation in 2006 in the "Culture" tools (Organizational Culture Inventory® and Organizational Effectiveness Inventory®) and in the "Style" tools (Life Styles Inventory™ and ACUMEN® Leadership WorkStyles™). For Fenner, the combination of scientific and statistical rigor of the assessments combined with the visual Circumplex sold him on the tools. "The Circumplex makes it [behavior change] more tangible for the participants and after nine months they can re-measure and really see their change." Being able to refer to the Circumplex makes debriefing easier because it visually illustrates behavioral patterns and provides a common language to foster a shared understanding.



## PROCESS (pre-OCI)

Informed by years of practice, Fenner has developed a process that promotes transparency and success. As Fenner explains; The first step in Culture and Leadership development is to talk with the top management, in order to get a clear understanding of the objectives & goals. With these objectives in mind, we can begin to identify the necessary project scope, or whom to include in the initial assessment. Objectives typically include either performance improvement (ex. increased adaptability & innovation) or the promotion of employee well-being (ex. reduce stress, promote work-life balance, etc.). The scope for culture development is often focused on the entire organization or on key areas, units, teams, and leaders within the organization.

With clarified objectives and scope, Fenner begins talking to the groups who will be asked to complete the OCI®. Here clarity is key: "it is very important that everyone understands the developmental purpose of the OCI® and that their responses are guaranteed to be confidential. This is very important to do, especially if a company already 'sorted people out' after an assessment in the past" Fenner says. Employees might be very sensitive to providing such candid feedback; however HS assurance of confidentiality helps to convince organizational members that the purpose of this assessment is to identify tangible opportunities for improvement and to help leaders improve effectiveness, rather than to single out or blame individuals. Once the developmental purpose and confidentiality are clarified Hans Fenner goes on explain the OCI® and survey process.

## PROCESS (post-OCI)

Once survey data has been collected and analyzed, Fenner leads a workshop to explain the results with the participants. If he does an OCI® to assess culture, the results are transparent and shared with the participating members. However, the results of individual tools (LSI & LWS) are shared only with the individual leader and their coach.

## A Best-Practice Case with Hans Fenner from Capita Consulting GmbH

During the debrief workshop Fenner walks the participants through the OCI report making frequent references to both the current experience and desired project objectives. After this, the participants themselves are tasked with identifying action steps that they can “own”. Additionally, Fenner guides the participants giving them real-life examples to make concepts and solutions more tangible. Of course, it also depends on the OCI® profile itself – participants coming from cultures with a lot of “blue” (Constructive norms) in their culture profiles are much easier to coach and they develop more quickly.<sup>1</sup> While participants coming from cultures with more “green” and “red” (Defensive norms) require much more time and “I first congratulate them because many with such profiles do not even take part.” Fenner says.<sup>2</sup>

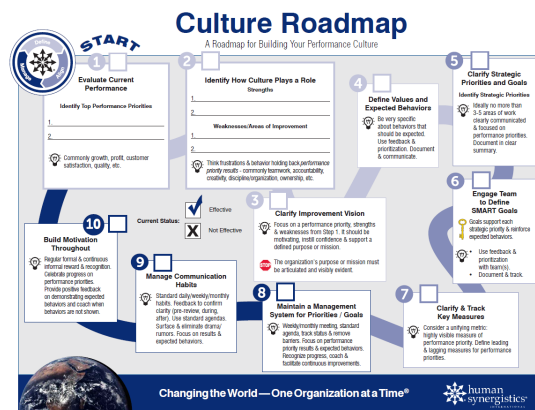
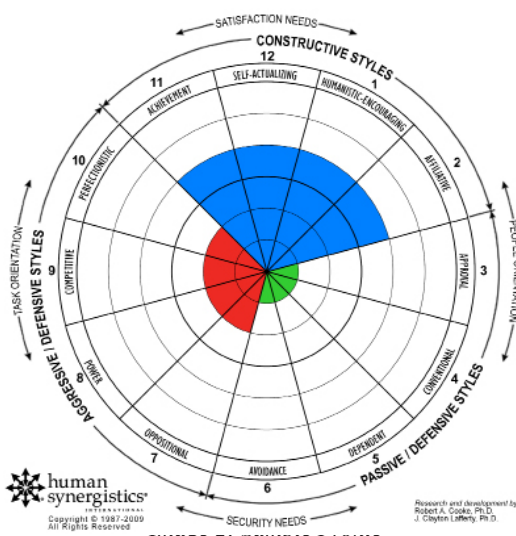


Image 3: Culture Roadmap

## THE RESULTS

When looking into culture, you soon need to look into leadership, which is why as part of the “action steps” Fenner focuses on developing leaders themselves. This is a very good opportunity to use the ACUMEN® Leadership WorkStyles™ (or LWS) tool. Using the same Circumplex model, leaders can receive 360° feedback on their personal leadership style helping them to understand not only how their behavior is perceived by others, but also how that behavior influences their teams and the broader business culture.



Fenner also refers to a culture debriefing- “roadmap” for the client to follow, at each step connecting the current situation and objectives to the OCI® report & data. This structured method helps to create a culture project plan which is both clear and actionable.

This roadmap then translates into an action plan for the participants to implement with clear and measurable action steps – “because it is important that leadership owns this change and does not “shut down” and put the report in a drawer. That’s not what we want. That does not create change”

## Current Leadership Behavior (LWS)

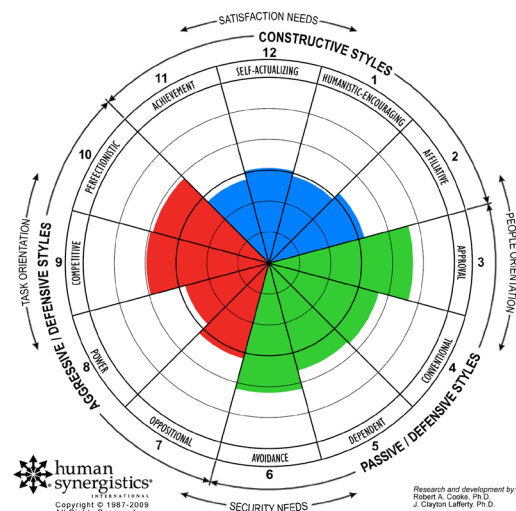


Image 4: Sample LWS Profile

<sup>1-2</sup> Referring to the colors of the HS Circumplex; Constructive (Blue), Passive/Defensive (Green), and Aggressive/Defensive (Red)

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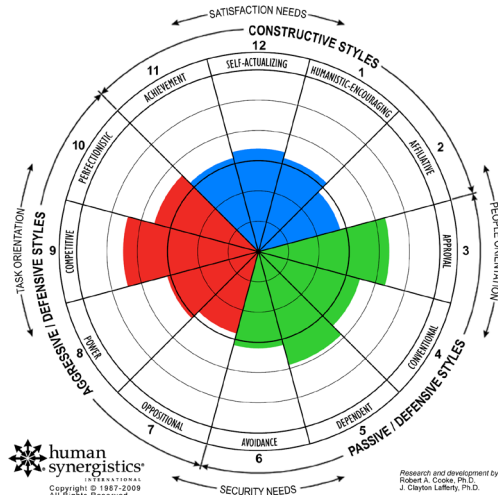
Current Organizational Culture (OCI®)

Image 5: Sample OCI Profile

Fenner compares the LWS for leaders with a doctor's visit: "You go to the doctor because you want to hear that everything is alright – if that is not the case, then you may react critically or with disapproval. But you have to tell yourself; that is my diagnosis. Does this explain how I am feeling? And this input is useful because now we can do something."

Overall, Fenner points out that the Circumplex and its "common language" plays a big role in the entire process as the results and development can be "seen" which creates clarity.

**FIRST CHANGES**

"Every little progress needs to be honored!" Fenner says, encouragement is key. People should not always see the 'bad', but also what 'good' they have already achieved. Encouraging big change means encouraging the small steps along the way. Often organizations with red and green cultures focus so heavily on the negative, that participants need to be reminded of their achievements and positive efforts. It is important that the results of the OCI are acted upon, for example in a weekly meeting briefly talk about what has been achieved, what changes were perceived, what leadership is doing differently, ongoing feedback, etc.

It has to be discussed again and again to remind and align everyone of the goals being pursued. The report debriefs are the initial spark for the process and this process must be kept alive.

**FUTURE CHALLENGES**

In most organizations the topic of "organizational culture" is not well understood – Fenner's recommendations:

- Leadership needs greater awareness of how culture drives business performance, and how leadership drives culture.
- Don't underestimate culture, there is often a lack of preparation when a culture project is initiated for the scope of actions and level of leadership involvement that successful culture change requires.
- "Letting go": Leaders need to get away from the thought of wanting to control everything. This is demotivating and has dramatic and negative impact on the organizational culture.
- Every member counts: The idea that the boss determines the culture is outdated, today Fenner would say:

"Each person contributes to or against the organizational culture, everyone in the culture matters."