

Progress Checks: Why they are so important



By a Progress Check we mean...

- the renewed measurement,
- within a certain period of time after the first measurement,
- with one of our diagnostic instruments.

It is the best way to understand developmental progress and shows whether the development plan that was established after the first project is moving the project in the right direction - towards the desired behavior and results.

So why is it important to conduct progress checks?

Committing to change. “What gets measured gets done”. Administering a Progress Check will send a clear message that change, development, and improvement are EXPECTED. Culture is all about EXPECTATIONS, and this is one of the best ways to insure that development is seen within the organization as a real call to action with real expectations for improvement.

Understanding the levers of change. One of the main challenges of culture development is the long-term journey that many of the initiatives require. One best practice for insuring that positive change takes place is to assess the culture (or leader or team behavior respectively) via regular Progress Checks. These checks can then focus more on causal factors in OEI (Strategies in L/I, etc.), i.e. The things that cause culture to change. Therefore, we can see whether the development initiatives (such as changes in performance appraisals, feedback and communication training, etc.) are having an effect. This enables leadership to understand which exact measures taken as a part of development initiative are having a positive effect, and which may be falling short. This will allow informed choices regarding the areas in which time and resources invested will have the largest impact on reaching the company's goals.

Creating stages on your journey – and accepting it is never complete. A Constructive Organizational Culture is a JOURNEY, not a DESTINATION. Culture (as well as leadership and team) development is never about arriving at some “perfect” destination... but more about constant improvement and learning, and this requires an environment/culture that promotes effective norms and behaviors. Therefore, for many organizations, the culture JOURNEY is ongoing and the ability to check progress made fits that purpose most effectively.

Data will help you plan and track your steps. The ability to accurately measure culture means that we can also very accurately measure any changes in that culture. Being able to identify positive shifts and the impact that those more Constructive norms have upon performance, wellbeing, engagement, etc. are very powerful to further promote development. You can compare this process to reducing body weight. After all, we don't decide to lose weight today, eat healthier, exercise... and then, two years later, we step on the scale to see if we were successful. We need more regular checkups to see that our efforts are paying off, that we're making progress, and that while we haven't reached our goal (yet), we're moving in the right direction. You'll probably find yourself stepping on the scale more often to see if progress has occurred - so why wait two years on a cultural journey? We can more easily associate what we are doing „right“ (eating well and exercising) with the continued positive results we see on the scale. Being able to measure this positive change in culture (leadership/teams) is a huge benefit.

When is the best time to conduct a Progress Check?

We advise conducting a Progress Check after 12 months for individuals or 18 months for organizations. The participant(s) complete the survey(s) a second time to receive a report comparing the first and second measurements. This will help you determine if your efforts are effective and moving you closer to your goal.

If you have any further questions about this topic, please feel free to [contact us](#).

Click [here](#) to watch the video of our last webinar, where John van Etten goes into more detail about Progress Checks and also relates them to ROI.