

Organisational Performance and Culture in Practice

1. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of both a divisional structure and a matrix structure. Within the evaluation, you should include the reasons underpinning each structure. (AC 1.1)

A divisional structure is often seen within larger companies, whereby each division operates as its own entity, meaning that each division is like a little company (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022). Divisional structure allows for quicker decision making, better customer focus and improved responses. Divisional structure also allows an organisation to have greater control over risks, which decreases the impact on overall business (Donaldson, 2001). People management within a divisional structure can also focus on tailored talent acquisition, which allows for individualised skill development training, thus increase retention rates (Dubey and Singhal, 2016). However, the downfall of the division structure is that it is one of the more complicated structures, there is a risk of duplicating resources, and it may not be as financially feasible for smaller companies (Dubey and Singhal, 2016). An example of a company that has a divisional structure is Samsung as it is divided into many different independent divisions, all of which have their own teams, such as HR and Payroll. As Samsung is a large company, it wouldn't be feasible for them to have just one team (Argus and Samson, 2021).

Within a matrix structure, employee's report to their department head, which functionals similarly to the traditional method, but they also report to project leaders too (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022). There are three different types of matrix structure, weak-functional, balanced-functional and strong-functional. 'Weak', 'balanced' and 'strong' refer to how much authority the team leader has (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022). An advantage of the matrix structure is that it allows multiple skill sets to work together, without needed to reassign the whole company, thus maximising efficiency (Elezaj, Morina and Kuqi, 2020). The matrix structure is very motivating, they can often provide positive work environments where employees can develop new skills (Elezaj, Morina and Kuqi, 2020). Often, when companies allow growth within a team, it leads to less staff turnover and increased job satisfaction (Young, 2024). However, when poorly managed, this can lead to confusion and management conflict due to a lack of clarity (Dubey and Singhal, 2016). Whilst the drawbacks of matrix structure can be detrimental to the company, if the structure is set up and managed well, then the advantages will allow a company to thrive. This structure has worked well for Nike as their standardised operational and communication processes allow employees to know what is expected from them and who they need to report to. The matrix structure has allowed Nike to support their growth and stability (Milos, 2013).

2. Analyse the extent to which the organisational strategy in your organisation (or an organisation with which you are familiar) helps to ensure products or services meet customers' needs. (AC 1.2)

Skybound Therapies is a private-sector company of approximately 50 employees. We use the science of behaviour to upskill and reduce behaviour which challenge in children and adults.

When looking at the organisational strategy, there are 3 core elements: strategic analysis, strategic development and strategic implementation (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022). Strategic analysis involves the leadership team considering the organisations overall mission, purpose and objects at present and for the future (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022). Strategic analysis involves discussion and analysis of a wide range of data and those involved need to think critically. Within Skybound, a vision orbit is used to determine the 1 year, 3 year and 5-year goals for Skybound. Within this, there are many different areas that are looked at, including the operational capacity, expertise and skill set and sector review. These are three main areas of the organisational strategy that relate to customer need as they analyse what services we can provide.

Within strategic development, the leadership and other business functions including people management, work collaboratively (Taylor and Woodham, 2022). Within Skybound, strategic development is aided using tools such as SWOT. SWOT analysis is used to identify what is going well and what barriers are in place that means we are not meeting the need of the customers. We also analyse the quality assurance checks to gain feedback from the customers about the services we are providing. Within these development meetings, the Senior Leadership Team meet to discuss the next actions towards the organisational strategy, however although HR is taken into consideration, they do not always attend the meetings which can have some disadvantages as the team could be missing out on valuable information.

The last step is strategic implementation, which can take many forms depending on the strategy itself and the goals (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022). Within Skybound, from the analysis and development stages, clear, SMART goals are defined and implemented into the company. There will also be review meetings organised to evaluate the implementation of the current goals.

Overall, Skybound's organisational strategy does allow us to ensure that customer needs are being met as much as possible, with a lot of evidence-based practice informing our decisions on this. However, it could be further improved by ensuring that all relevant departments are present during the meeting to provide their insight.

3. Analyse the current impact of interest rates, inflation and one other external factor on your organisation (or one with which you are familiar). Identify organisational priorities arising from your analysis. (AC 1.3)

Within Skybound, when looking at the interest rates, as we do not have loans within the company, interest rates have not directly affected the company. However, there is an indirect effect as the increase of interest rates has meant that there is an increase in any products that we must purchase and thus costing the company more.

Due to inflation, there have been a cost-of-living crisis, which has had a large impact on Skybound. There has been an increase in the employee's wage to match the increase in inflation. This has meant that we have had to increase the price of the services that we offer. The increase of price in our services has meant that there are clients who are no longer able to access our services due to financial difficulties.

Another external factor that has impacted on Skybound are the political factors. The vote to leave the European Union has made it more difficult for us to visit our clients abroad due to requiring VISAs for some countries. Whilst customers understand that this is out of our hands, it has put a strain on the services that we are able to provide to clients abroad and equally, has made it more difficult for clients to visit our Centre.

As Skybound is a small company, these external factors have had an impact on us. As a result, there has been a decrease in the profit margin. Using PESTLE has allowed Skybound to analyse and amend our strategic business planning. PESTLE also allows for Skybound to complete workforce planning (Battista, 2024), for example, ensuring that the behaviour analysts and the behaviour technicians are completing work that is billable to the customers, rather than work that Skybound must pay for. There is ongoing data collection on this and starting February 2025, we will be providing staff with feedback on this.

Skybound have also used PESTLE and SWOT combined, which allows us to analyse the internal and external factors (Battista, 2024) and has prompted Skybound to evaluate our organisation around current workforce capabilities (Battista, 2024). This has included offering online services to our clients abroad when required, decreasing in the number of training opportunities being offered to the staff and ensuring that we broaden our cliental to optimise our staff availability. Whilst the reduced training opportunities may have its own disadvantages, it has provided opportunities for increase in-house staff training. Inhouse staff training has had a positive impact in the company as it has allowed the company to utilise the current staff and has also allowed the staff to gain extra qualifications outside of their main domain.

4. In February 2024, Peter Cheese, current CEO of CIPD stated, “AI is transforming jobs, careers and workplaces. People professionals have a key role to play in encouraging safe experimentation and rapid learning, so that we can reap the benefits and mitigate the risks.” Assess the extent that AI is, or could be, used in your organisation (or an organisation with which you are familiar) and assess how AI impacts work. (AC 1.4)

Within Skybound Therapies, AI isn't currently being used. Although AI couldn't be used for most of the employees, it could be used within HR. Within recruitment, nearly a third of companies use some form of AI, which is an increase from 16% in 2022. 66% of people said it improved hiring efficiency (CIPD, 2023a). Therefore, this could be the initial introduction of AI, with the plan of expanding the use of AI to other forms of HR, including people statistics and talent acquisition.

In line with CIPD professional standards principle, 'people matter', organisations need to take a responsible approach to AI (CIPD, 2023a). It is suggested that organisations should evaluate how AI can enhance business outcomes, whilst supporting engaging and improve job quality (CIPD, 2023a).

Those who have experienced AI have had discussions to ensure that organisations prevent the disproportionate impact on society (CIPD, 2023a). According to Soliman (2024), the real challenge will be finding the right balance between using AI to improve efficiency and maintaining the human touch that is required for building strong work cultures.

However, the use of AI isn't without its concerns. Currently, AI is not regulated safely, which could have negative impacts on the workforce, for example, through AI systems causing risks of inadvertent discrimination. Therefore, ensuring that processes are transparent will be crucial for the use of AI (Mohdzaini, 2024).

In addition AI has the potential to both augment and displace jobs, depending on the job role. It is also vital to ensure that education settings align with the skills requirement of the future workforce (Mohdzaini, 2024).

Overall, if there is buy-in and understanding from the staff about the purpose and boundaries of AI, then it can work effectively within an organisation and improve efficiency. However, AI and employee's need to work hand in hand and we need to ensure that AI is trustworthy.

5. Explain Charles Handy's model of organisational culture and explain David Rock's SCARF theory. (AC 2.1)

Charles Handy's model of organisational culture talks about four different cultures:

Power Culture: This culture is characterised by a central power source influencing the entire organisation. When it is run correctly, decision-making is swift and each decision affects the organisation (Handy, 1993). This culture is often found in small companies (Nasaireh, Abdullah, and Obeidat, 2019)

Role Culture: Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in this culture with a clear pathway for each role (Handy, 1993). This culture's efficiency depends on allocation, so the right person is needed for the right job (Nasaireh, Abdullah, and Obeidat, 2019)

Task Culture: This culture focuses on completing projects or solving problems. In this culture, a senior manager allocates resources and tasks the teams. It values expertise over position and thrives in environments where flexibility is essential (Nasaireh, Abdullah, and Obeidat, 2019).

Person Culture: Here, individuals are the central focus and there is no corporate objective (Handy, 1993). This type of culture may be seen in a hair salon where you can rent a chair and the individual who rents the chair is then motivated to work for

their own income. There is a high degree of autonomy within this culture (Nasaireh, Abdullah, and Obeidat, 2019).

A company can have one type of culture or be formed of a couple of different cultures. The culture(s) of a company can depend on various factors, including the size of the organisation, the skill set that is already embedded in the company and the products and services of the company (Nasaireh, Abdullah, and Obeidat, 2019).

SCARF theory helps communicators recall the 5 domains of psychological safety. The pillars are:

Status – this refers to our relative importance to others. You can make an employee feel threatened if you mishandle feedback. Criticism needs to be delivered in a way that will motivate the employee. Organisations also need to ensure that praise is delivered frequently, and people are recognised for their work (Javadizadeh, Aplin-Houtz and Casile, 2022).

Certainty - this refers to our ability to predict the future. Employees are more likely to feel certain about tasks and the ability to do their job if there are clear expectations rather than a lack of transparency and dishonesty (Javadizadeh, Aplin-Houtz and Casile, 2022).

Autonomy – this refers to our sense of control over events. This can be maximised by ensuring that employees are provided with choice, delegating tasks and self-responsibility. Autonomy can feel threatened if there is constant micromanagement (Javadizadeh, Aplin-Houtz and Casile, 2022).

Relatedness - this refers to how safe we feel with others. This can be maximised by friendly gestures and mentoring programmes compared to fostering internal competition and not allowing socialising in the workplace (Javadizadeh, Aplin-Houtz and Casile, 2022).

Fairness – this refers to how fair we perceive the exchanges between people to be. A organisation should be transparent in their decision and have open and honest communication. Organisations need to ensure they avoid unequal treatment and lack of communication (Javadizadeh, Aplin-Houtz and Casile, 2022).

Each of these pillars can be threatened or reinforced. If a company works towards reinforcing and rewarding the five pillars, then the company is more likely to have a strong values-based culture. When a company threatens any of the pillars, then this moves the company away from their desired culture (Javadizadeh, Aplin-Houtz and Casile, 2022).

6. Assess how employee selection or employee development impacts organisational culture and behaviour in your organisation (or one with which you are familiar). (AC 2.2)

Employee selection can be vital to organisational culture and behaviour. The people hired and how they are hired will have an enormous impact on your company's culture (CIPD, 2021). It is important that the organisations core values are reflected with h the organisation's core values (CIPD, 2021), which is what we do in Skybound.

Employee selection should ensure that the right person is in the right job at the right time to optimise the organisations strategy which creates competitive advantage (Ployhart, Schmitt and Tippins, 2017). Skybound has several processes for recruitment. We start with the CV, whereby we each CV will be marked against a scoring system that was devised based on key qualities that we want in the company, reducing bias where possible.

An information pack provides information to candidates about competitive compensation scheme, which is vital for creating a culture where employee's feel valued (CIPD, 2021). The information pack provides candidates with our mission and values, which set out expectations of their behaviours from the start.

Within the interview, there are value-based questions and questions that cover key components of the job description. The value-based questions allow the candidate to see our values that are outlined in the information pack are 'put into action'.

As Skybound is such a small company, each employee's behaviour often has a knock-on effect, therefore the selection of the right employee is vital. There has been previous employee's where the selection was not correct, the employee did not have the same values as Skybound which led to job dissatisfaction of other employee's and subsequently, us not being able to provide the best services to the client. Although this is a lengthy process to undertake and can be time consuming, as the values align from the start and the candidate is likely to engage in the desired behaviours, there is likely to be less turnover (Gainsford, 2023).

7. An organisation is planning a change relating to hybrid working. Many employees moved to home working during the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst this approach worked well at the time, the organisation now wants all employees to work at least two days a week on site. Explain how Kotter's approach to managing change could be used to successfully implement this change. (AC 2.3)

All of the steps In Kotter's approach to change play a vital role but for change to be completed effectively, these steps need to be taken efficiently and effectively. With organisations continuously evolving, successful management is crucial to any organisation to survive and succeed (By, 2005).

Within the scenario above, the first step is to *create a sense of urgency*, whereby data is needed to create the reason and need for the change. Data should be collected and shared showing positive impacts when working from home and in the office, for example an increase in well-being and work productivity (Pollack and Pollack, 2014).

The organisation then needs to *build a core group* that are on-board with this dynamic and together they should *form a strategic vision* based upon company values (Pollack and Pollack, 2014). After this, the organisation then needs to *enlist a volunteer army* to be able to deliver the positive message about this situation. This volunteer army could start working in the office two days a week and feedback positives to the other staff (Baird, 2019). There is likely to be some push back from employee's who want to continue to work at home, thus it is important to ensure that the right people are selected for this and that they are onboard and can deliver correct information (Baird, 2019). The messages that need to be included are ones that strike value to others, such as increase in wellbeing, increased teamwork and other benefits about being in the office two days a week.

The organisation then needs *to enable action by removing any barriers* (Baird, 2019). For example, if the number of staff have increase, we need to ensure that there are enough desks, chairs etc in the office, a rota system is likely to be needed to be devised so that staff know when they are expected to come into the office. If there are barriers identified that are not able to be overcome, then the organisation must go back to the start of this process.

Once any barriers are diminished, it is time to *generate short term wins* (Baird, 2019). Starting to roll this method out to more employee's and having them identify and show the positive impact it has, including any additional ones that may not have been thought of. If there are no short-term wins, then the organisation must reflect on why (Baird, 2019).. After this, the company must *sustain acceleration* and roll out the change to everyone before *instituting change* to ensure old habits are discontinued and talking about the connections between people coming into the office twice a week and organizational success (Baird, 2019).

8. Using the Kubler-Ross change curve, discuss how change is experienced. (AC 2.4)

The change curve looks at responses to grief and the stages individuals go through when they are faced with this (CIPD, 2024a). An individual may go through some or all the different stages described below.

Often, the initial reaction to the need for change is shock and denial, with employee's questioning and asking why the change is required. This may include individuals denying that the change is needed, or trying to deny that the change will impact them (Malone, 2018)

The second stage involves expressions of anger or frustration at the idea of the change (Malone, 2018). During this stage, the employees may express negative comments regarding the change and be resistant to anything changing. The employee is struggling to come to terms with new information and the reality that things are going to be different (CIPD, 2024a).

The third stage that most people go through a phase of depression, which can be the most difficult time (Malone, 2018). With uncertainty, comes the fear of the unknown,

with people feeling anxious and overwhelmed. This is where individuals may withdraw and experience feelings of hopelessness (Malone, 2018).

Once people have overcome their initial wave of resistance, they're able to make some small moves towards acceptance. This often starts with exploration, where individuals become more curious and start looking at some of the positives of the change (Malone, 2018).

If the exploration stage is successful and the individual does experience some positive changes, then with support, individuals then move into the stage of decision where they choose to embrace the new reality (Malone, 2018).

Finally, they reach integration, fully adopting the change into their work. It is important to encourage experimentation, boost confidence, and cement the new, positive behaviours. (CIPD, 2024a).

Understanding this model helps people professionals prepare to better cope with any emotional reactions to change and allows individuals to know that these are likely to be temporary (CIPD, 2024a). By using the change curve, it focuses on the employees that are affected by the change rather than the project which highlights that the organisation wants to help employees learn to cope with the change (CIPD, 2024a). However, not everyone deals with change in the same way, so following the curve may not be best fit for everyone and it doesn't provide solutions about how organisations can support employees through this change (CIPD, 2024a).

9. The CIPD's Health and wellbeing at work survey 2023 found the percentage of organisations that have a standalone wellbeing strategy has risen from 40% in 2018 to 53% in 2023. Although the percentage has increased, this means that 47% of organisations do not have a standalone wellbeing strategy. Assess the importance of wellbeing at work and assess how good work could impact wellbeing. (AC 2.5)

Within the Wellbeing at work survey, it was identified that the cause of short-term absences is minor illness, while mental ill health, musculoskeletal injuries, acute medical conditions and stress are the most common causes of long-term absence (CIPD, 2024b). Even when a workplace intends to bring positive impacts, there are unavoidable times where it can be difficult. However, overall, good wellbeing at work should remain a priority for companies as it increases the likelihood of employee's working effectively (Health Matters, 2019). Job design and relationships at work could have a positive impact on working lives and performance at work (CIPD, 2024b).

Within the workplace, it is important to look at the domains of good wellbeing, which are; health, good work, values, collective, personal growth, good lifestyle choices and financial wellbeing (Suff, 2024). With there being an increase in mental health illness over the past 10 years, good work is fundamental to employee's wellbeing. It supports a fair society and creates motivated works and productive organisation (CIPD, 2024b). Good work looks at seven different dimensions; pay and benefits, contracts, work-life balance, job design and the nature of work, relationships at work, employee voice and

health and wellbeing (CIPD, 2024b). The good work index discusses how relatively easy changes can make big impacts and how it has been reported that a good line manager can improve an employee's job satisfaction more than a pay rise (CIPD, 2024b).

Good work can affect wellbeing in a positive manner and there are various ways that this could be embedded within a company. Some of the potentially changes could be; an open and inclusive culture, effective people management and improving work-life balance. (CIPD, 2024b). Whilst companies appear to be adopting a diverse culture, it doesn't mean that they have adopted an inclusive culture (Ali, 2024, but inclusion has been shown to enhance creativity and knowledge-sharing (Ali, 2024). If staff feel that they have effective people management, then the organisation is likely to be more successful and models an appropriate culture (CIPD, 2023b). If an organisation improves their work-life balance, then this is likely to reduce turnover rates and increase productivity (Wasay, 2013).

A company does not need to embed all the recommendations outlined in the good work index, they need to ensure that they are listening to what the employee's want and acting on that where possible. The company also must ensure that any changes would be feasible for the company (CIPD, 2024b).

10. Provide a brief overview of the employee lifecycle and discuss people practice roles at the recruitment, development and separation stages of the lifecycle. (AC 3.1)

According to (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022), there are 7 stages of the employee life cycle:

1. Attraction - The employee life cycle starts before the candidate has applied for a job with the company (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022).
2. Recruitment – Recruitment includes writing job advert to supporting new hires post, interviews and preparing employees for their first day of work. This is the employee's first interaction with people in the company, so it is important to ensure that a positive work culture is promoted (CIPD, 2022). People practice roles need to ensure that the company have a strong job advert clearly defining expectations, promoting the positive culture and any benefits of the company to be competitive with similar fields (CIPD, 2022). People practice also need to take into consideration the legal implications, ensuring to control any bias's and ensure that you are complying with all relevant laws – including Diversity, Equality and Inclusion, and GDPR (CIPD, 2022).
3. Onboarding – It is important to ensure that new employees feel welcome and comfortable from day one and show the supportive and proactive culture that the company has (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022).
4. Engagement - This stage involves helping employees to feel motivated during their work tasks. Nurturing continual engagement helps with employee growth

and development, and helps to improve wellbeing, job satisfaction and productivity (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022).

5. Development – In order to improve employee lifecycle, it is important to invest in training the employees. As well as building general soft skills to help them be a valued member of the team, providing your employee with more specific skills training will allow them to grow and take different directions through the career's pathway (Cattermole, 2019). The training can be external or in house, for example they can go on a course and/or the company can implement a buddy system within a workplace (Cattermole, 2019). People practising roles need to ensure that those who are carrying out appraisals are trained to effectively guide development but setting realistic goals and ensure that there are regular check ins about reaching these goals (Cattermole, 2019).
6. Retention – This is a crucial part of the employee lifecycle. After investing time and money into training and developing an employee, it's important to put in the necessary work to retain talent (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022).
7. Separation – When an employee leaves a company, the company needs to ensure that they are keeping employees engaged during their notice period (Fields, 2023). Within people practice, it is important to conduct an exit interview can learn about the companies' strengths and weaknesses from an employee's perspective. Ensuring, where possible, that you part on good terms allows the employee to act as an advocate for the business, sharing positive experiences and recommending the company (Fields, 2023).

11. Analyse how people practice supports organisational strategy through vertical integration and how people practice supports wider people strategies through horizontal integration. (AC 3.2)

Vertical alignment ensures that HR strategies and practice support the organisations overall vision and mission (Armstrong and Brown, 2019). The vertical integration 'draws' a clear line from the companies mission down to individual HR policies (Armstrong and Brown, 2019). People practice need to understand the business strategy and translate the business goals into people practice objectives (Armstrong and Brown, 2019). Within this, people practice needs to develop a way to measure the outcome to ensure that it is evidence based. Clear communication will all staff within the organisation and regular reviews and edits are priority to ensure that the organisation feels well supported and to effectively reduce any barriers that may occur (Armstrong and Brown, 2019). Vertical alignment is an ongoing process that required consistent communication between people practice and the rest of the organisation's leaders and those in charge of people management must be open minded and willing to adapt strategies to evolve (Armstrong and Brown, 2019).

Horizontal alignment focuses on creating consistency among different practises. It's about ensuring that all HR activities from recruitment to performance management and compensation, work together consistently to support the organization (Armstrong and

Brown, 2019). Horizontal alignment ensures that there is clear alignment so that employees don't feel confused, and the strategic goals can be emphasised (Armstrong and Brown, 2019).

Achieving horizontal alignment involves developing a clear people practice strategy and they should be aligned with the business strategy. The current people management practises need to be continuously reviewed and tweaked as deemed necessary (Boselie and Heijden, 2024). Where there are contradictions, one clear answer needs to be found, with the input of all the leaders which it would affect (Boselie and Heijden, 2024). People practice systems should be created to share data and allow teams to work together collaboratively.

A study shows that organizations with high levels of horizontal alignment showed more effective performance and reduced turnover (Martinson and De Leon, 2017). However, achieving horizontal alignment can be difficult, especially in large organizations with complex HR systems as it requires strong communication and at times (Gratton and Truss, 2003).

12. An organisation is planning to introduce a four-day working week. Discuss the processes the people function could use to consult and engage with managers and employees to understand their needs when moving from a five-day to four-day working week. (AC 3.3)

When introducing any type of change, you should have Kubler-Ross change curve in mind. The organisation must be confident in the reasons why they are moving from a five-day to a four-day working week before starting consultation to ensure that it is the companies' best interest. The organisation must be prepared for some resistance to change and to have answers to any potential barriers that may arise (CIPD, 2024a).

When consulting with managers and employee's about reducing from a five-day week to a four-day week, it is important to look at how the change will affect them as an organisation as well as the individual roles too. The company should complete a stakeholders' analysis matrix as a team as this allows everyone to understand the influence of the plan (Kennon, Howden, Hartley, 2009).

The consultation can be conducted through individual or collective channels (CIPD, 2025). An example of an individual channel would be a survey, which allows employees to express and ask questions more freely (Cleave, 2023). An example of a collective channel is a focus group, which has the advantage of employees may have to opportunity to listen to the answers to questions that they may not have thought of (Cleave, 2023)

If the consultation is completed through collective channels, then it is important to ensure that those who will be affected in similar way are grouped together so that they have the correct information (Cleave, 2023).

Once the consultation has taken place, it is important to engage with employees and managers about questions raised to ensure that their questions are answered to the best of their ability (Cleave, 2023). It is a fundamental right for the employee to have a voice throughout this process so that they can express matters that are important to them (CIPD, 2025). When looking at reducing the working week to 4 days, employees may have concerns around decrease in salary, job expectation, reduced working hour etc, so these questions do need to be addressed carefully and professionally.

The organisation must be aware of the risks associated with the consultation going badly, including damaging working relations, valued people leaving an organisation and/or reputational damage to an organisation (ACAS, n.d.). It is important for the company to ensure that throughout the process, they are abiding by all the employment laws to reduce the likelihood of prosecution (CIPD, 2025).

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