SOLUTIONS MANUAL

TENTH CANADIAN EDITION

MANAGEMENT

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Chapter 2

Organizational Culture and the Organizational Environment

Are managers free to do whatever they want? In this chapter, we'll look at the factors that limit the discretion managers have in doing their jobs. These factors are both internal (the organization's culture) and external (the organizational environment). Focus on the following learning outcomes as you read and study this chapter.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

2.1 Discuss the two differing views of how much control managers have.
2.2 Discuss the characteristics and importance of organizational culture.
2.3 Describe what kinds of cultures managers can create.
2.4 Describe the features of the specific and general organizational environments.

CHAPTER VIGNETTE

3M is often used as the quintessential example of a traditional company that has embraced an innovative culture. In the opening vignette students are asked to imagine themselves working for 3M and what their reaction might be. (Do not be surprised if many share that they would be very uncomfortable working in this environment.) Students are then asked to consider the impact in 2001 of moving from and innovative culture to one driven by process improvement and then the challenges in 2006 of returning to the innovative values. This dilemma, process improvement versus innovation, is then raised again in the second vignette In the third vignette students are asked to consider the robustness of an innovative culture when faced with the 2008 financial collapse which was triggered by the sub-prime mortgage crisis.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION
　　Managers must be aware that organizational culture and organizational environments will influence both the way an organization is managed as well as its effectiveness. In this chapter, both organizational culture and organizational environment are explored in order to understand the complexities involved with each.
1.　　THE MANAGER: OMNIPOTENT OR SYMBOLIC?
　　Two positions on the role that managers play in an organization's success or failure have been proposed.
　　A.　　The **omnipotent view of management** says that managers are directly responsible for the success or failure of an organization.

1. This view of managers as omnipotent is consistent with the stereotypical picture of the take-charge executive who can overcome any obstacle in carrying out the organization's objectives.
2. When organizations perform poorly, someone must be held accountable. According to this view, that "someone" has been management.

B. The **symbolic view of management** takes the view that much of an organization's success or failure is due to external forces outside managers' control.
   1. What managers do affect greatly are symbolic outcomes.
   2. Organizational results are influenced by factors outside the control of managers: economy, market changes, governmental policies, competitors' actions, the state of the particular industry, the control of proprietary technology, and decisions made by previous manager in the organization.
   3. The manager's role is seen as creating meaning out of randomness, confusion, and ambiguity.
   4. According to the symbolic view, the actual part that management plays in the success or failure of an organization is minimal.

C. Reality suggests a synthesis. In reality, managers are neither helpless nor all powerful. Instead, it's more logical to look at the manager operating within constraints imposed by the organization's culture and environment. (See **Exhibit 2-1**.)

2. THE ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE.
Just as individuals have a personality, so, too, do organizations. We refer to an organization's personality as its culture.

A. What is Organizational Culture?
   Organizational culture is a system of shared meaning and beliefs within an organization that determines, in large degree, how employees act. This definition implies:
   1. Culture is a perception. Individuals perceive the organizational culture on the basis of what they see, hear, or experience within the organization.
   2. Culture is shared by individuals within the organization.
   3. Culture is a descriptive term, it describes rather than evaluates.
   4. **Exhibit 2-2** outlines the seven dimensions of an organization's culture.
      a. Innovation and risk taking (the degree to which employees are encouraged to be innovative and take risks)
      b. Attention to detail (the degree to which employees are expected to exhibit precision, analysis, and attention to detail)
      c. Outcome orientation (the degree to which managers focus on results or outcomes rather than on the techniques and processes used to achieve those outcomes)
      d. People orientation (the degree to which management decisions take into consideration the effect on people within the organization)

      e.   Team orientation (the degree to which work activities are organized around teams rather than individuals)

      f.   Aggressiveness (the degree to which people are aggressive and competitive rather than easygoing and cooperative)

      g.   Stability (the degree to which organizational activities emphasize maintaining the status quo in contrast to growth)

    5.   **Exhibit 2-3** describes how the cultural dimensions can be combined to create significantly different organizations.

B.   Strong Vs. Weak Cultures.

    1.   **Strong cultures** are possessed by those organizations in which the key values are deeply held and widely shared.

    2.   Whether an organization's culture is strong, weak, or somewhere in between will depend on organizational factors such as size, age, employee turnover rate, and intensity of original culture.

    3.   Most organizations have moderate to strong cultures. There's high agreement on what's important, what defines "good" employee behaviour, and so forth.

    4.   An increasing body of research suggests that strong cultures are associated with high organizational performance.

    5.   Strong cultures do not always yield positive results, however, as strong culture might prevent employees from trying new approaches.

C.   Subcultures.

    1.   A **dominant culture** expresses the core values that are shared by a majority of the organization's members.

    2.   **Subcultures** tend to develop in large organizations to reflect common problems, situations, or experiences that members face. These minicultures are likely to be defined by department designations and geographical separation.

    3.   Subcultures include the **core values** (the primary, or dominant, values that are accepted throughout the organization) of the dominant culture, plus additional values unique to members of the subculture.

D.   The Source of Culture.

    The original source of an organization's culture is usually a reflection of the vision or mission of the organization's founders. It results from the interaction between the founders' biases and assumptions and what the first employees subsequently learned from their own experiences.

E.   How an Organization's Culture Continues.

    1.   Once a culture is in place, practices help maintain it. For example, hiring practices reflect the culture in terms of fit.

    2.   Actions of top executives impact the organization's culture as actions filter down through the organization.

    3.   Employees adapt to an organization's culture through **socialization**—where new employees learn the organization's way of doing things.

    4.   **Exhibit 2-4** summarizes how an organization's culture is established and maintained.

F.   How Employees Learn Culture.
                Culture is transmitted principally through stories, rituals, material symbols, and language.
                1.   Organizational stories are one way that employees learn the culture. These stories typically involve a narrative of significant events or people.
                2.   Rituals are repetitive sequences of activities that express and reinforce the key values of the organization, what goals are most important, which people are important, and which are expendable.
                3.   The use of material symbols is another way in which employees learn the culture, learn the degree of equality desired by top management, and find out who is important and the kind of behaviour that is expected and appropriate.
                4.   Finally, language is often used to identify members of a culture. Learning this language indicates members' willingness to accept and preserve the culture. This special lingo acts as a common denominator that unites members of a given culture.
        G.   How Culture Affects Managers.
                Because the organizational culture establishes constraints on what managers can and cannot do, it is particularly relevant.
                1.   The link between corporate values and managerial behaviour is fairly straightforward.
                2.   The culture conveys to managers what is appropriate behaviour.
                3.   An organization's culture, particularly a strong one, constrains a manager's decision-making options in all managerial functions. (See **Exhibit 2-5**.)
3.   CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ISSUES FACING MANAGERS.
        Three current cultural issues managers should consider:
        A.   Creating an Ethical Culture.
                1.   Content and strength of an organization's culture influence its ethical climate and ethical behaviour of its members.
                2.   A strong organizational culture will exert more influence on employees than a weak one.
                3.   An organizational culture most likely to shape high ethical standards is one that's big in risk tolerance, low to moderate in aggressiveness, and focuses on means as well as outcomes.
        B.   Creating an Innovative Culture.
                This is a good place to connect the discussion with the 3M vignettes and to reference the need to build an adaptive culture.
                1.   What does an innovative culture look like? Swedish researcher Goran Ekvall provides these characteristics:
                        a. Challenge and involvement
                        b. Freedom
                        c. Trust and openness
                        d. Idea time
                        e. Playfulness/humour
                        f. Conflict resolution
                        g. Debates
                        h. Risk-taking

C. Creating a Customer-Responsive Culture.
   1. Research shows the following six characteristics that are routinely present:
      a. Outgoing and friendly employees
      b. Few rigid rules, procedures, and regulations
      c. Widespread use of empowerment
      d. Good listening skills
      e. Role clarity
      f. Employees attentive to customer needs
D. Creating a Culture that Supports Diversity
   1. Today's organizations are characterized by many types of diversity including: gender, race, age, and personality characteristics.
   2. For managers, it is important to recognize the impact that homogeneous vs. a heterogeneous workforce impacts the culture of the organization.
   3. Which culture is best for improving creative solutions and morale?
4. THE ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT.
   There are forces in the environment that play a major role in shaping manager's actions.
   A. The External Environment.
      The **external environment** refers to forces and institutions outside the organization that potentially affect an organization's performance and is made up of three components (See **Exhibit 2-6.**)
      1. The **specific environment** includes those forces that have a direct and immediate impact on managers' decisions and actions and are directly relevant to the achievement of the organization's goals.
         a. The specific environment is unique and changes with conditions.
         b. The forces that make up the specific environment include, customers, suppliers, competitors, and pressure groups.
            1) Customers are the reasons that organizations exist, as they absorb the outputs. Customers represent potential uncertainty, particularly if their tastes and desires change.
            2) Suppliers include firms that provide materials and equipment as well as providers of financial and labour inputs. Managers seek to ensure a steady flow of the needed materials, equipment, financial, and labour inputs at the lowest possible price.
            3) Competitors cannot be ignored, as they are an important environmental force to monitor and respond to. Most organizations have one or more competitors.
            4) Public pressure groups may attempt to influence the actions of organizations. Changes in social and political movements influence the power that these pressure groups have on organizations.

2. The **general environment** includes the broad economic, legal-political, socio-cultural, demographic, technological, and global conditions.
   a. Economic conditions include interest rates, inflation rates, changes in disposable income, stock market fluctuations, and the general business cycle, among other things.
   b. Legal-Political Conditions include the general political stability of countries in which an organization does business and the specific attitudes that elected officials have toward business. Federal, provincial, and local governments can influence what organizations can and cannot do. Some examples of legislation that affects what organizations can do include:
      1) The Canadian Human Rights Act makes it illegal for any employer or provider of service that falls within federal jurisdiction to discriminate on the following grounds: race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex (including pregnancy and childbirth), marital status, family status, mental or physical disability (including previous or present drug or alcohol dependence), pardoned conviction, or sexual orientation.
      2) Canada's Employment Equity Act of 1995 protects several categories of employees from employment barriers: Aboriginal peoples (whether First Nation, Inuit, or Metis); persons with disabilities; members of visible minorities (nonCaucasian in race or nonwhite in colour); and women. This legislation aims to ensure that members of these four groups are treated equitably.
      3) The Competition Act of 1986 created the Bureau of Competition Policy to maintain and encourage competition in Canada.
      4) To protect farmers, the Canadian government has created marketing boards that regulate the pricing and production of such things as dairy and eggs.
   c. Socio-cultural conditions include the changing expectations of society. Societal values, customs, and tastes can change, and managers must be aware of these changes.
   d. Demographic conditions, including physical characteristics of a population, such as gender, age, level of education, geographic location, income and family composition, can change, and managers must adapt to these changes.
   e. Technological changes impact the ways that organizations are structured and the way that managers manage.
B. How the Organizational Environment Affects Managers.
   Environments are not all the same. They differ in the amount of **environmental uncertainty**, which is defined as the degree of change and complexity in an organization's environment. (See **Exhibit 2-7**.)

1. Degree of change is measured as dynamic or complex. If the components in an organization's environment change frequently, it's a dynamic environment. If change is minimal, the environment is called a stable one.
2. The other dimension of uncertainty relates to the degree of **environmental complexity**, which is defined as the number of components in an organization's environment and the extent of an organization's knowledge about its environmental components.
3. If the number of components is minimal and there's minimal need for sophisticated knowledge, the environment is classified as simple. If there are a number of components, they are not similar, and there is a high need for sophisticated knowledge, the environment is complex.
4. Because uncertainty is a threat to organizational effectiveness, managers try to minimize it
5. The more obvious and secure an organization's relationships become with external stakeholders, the more influence managers will have over organizational controls.
    a. **Stakeholders** are any constituencies in the organization's external environment that are affected by, or have a vested interest in, the organization's decisions and actions. (See **Exhibit 2-8** for an identification of some of the most common ones.)
    b. Stakeholder relationship management is important for two reasons:
        1) It can lead to improved predictability of environmental changes, more successful innovation, greater degrees of trust, and greater organizational flexibility to reduce the impact of change.

2) It is the "right" thing to do, because organizations are dependent on external stakeholders as sources of inputs and outlets for outputs and should be considered when making and implementing decisions.

ANSWERS TO READING FOR COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Contrast the actions of managers according to the omnipotent and symbolic views.
The omnipotent view of management believes that a manager's actions are directly responsible for an organization's success or failure. On the other hand, the symbolic view of management is that a manager's actions are not as relevant to an organization's success and failure – external forces play a greater role.

2. *What are the seven dimensions of organizational culture?*
The seven dimensions of organizational culture include; attention to detail, outcome orientation, people orientation, team orientation, aggressiveness, stability, and innovation and risk taking.

3. *What is the impact of a strong culture on organizations and managers?*

Strong cultures have a greater influence on employees and are associated with high organizational performance.

4. *What is the source of an organization's culture? How does organizational culture continue?*
The original source of an organization's culture usually reflects the vision or mission of the organization's founders. This, in turn, strongly influences the criteria used in hiring, the actions of top managers, and the socialization processes for new employees.

5. *How do employees learn an organization's culture?*
Culture is transmitted to employees through stories, rituals, material symbols and language.

6. *What are the characteristics of an ethical culture, an innovative culture, and a customer-responsive culture?*
An ethical culture is one that is high in risk tolerance, low to moderate in aggressiveness, and focuses on means as well as outcomes. An innovative culture is characterized by challenge and involvement, freedom, trust and openness, idea time, playfulness/humour, conflict resolution, debates, and risk-taking. A customer-responsive culture is one that has outgoing and friendly employees, few rigid rules, widespread use of empowerment, good listening skills, role clarity, and employees are attentive to customer needs.

7. *What forces influence the specific and the general environments?*
The specific environment is influenced by; customers, suppliers, competitors, and pressure groups. The general environment includes the broad economic, legal-political, socio-cultural, demographic, and technological conditions that may affect the organization.

8. *Discuss the two dimensions of environmental uncertainty.*
The two dimensions of environmental uncertainty are the degree of change and the degree of complexity in an organization's environment.

9. *What are the four steps in managing stakeholder relationships?*
The four steps include; 1) identifying the organization's stakeholders, 2) determining the particular interests or concerns the stakeholders might have, 3) deciding how critical each stakeholder is to the organization's decisions and actions, and 4) determining how to manage the different stakeholder relationships.

1. *Classrooms have cultures. Describe your class culture using the seven dimensions of organizational culture. Does the culture constrain your instructor? How?*
Answers to this question will vary. Have students look at the seven dimensions of organizational culture described in the text and rate them from high to low for the class. One point you might want to explore is what role the instructor plays in establishing the culture of the classroom. Then, relate this to what role a manager might play in establishing the culture of an organization or organizational unit.

2. *Refer to Exhibit 2-3. How would a first-line manager's job differ in these two organizations? How about a top-level manager's job?*
In Organization A, there's strong attention to detail and little innovation and risk taking. Teamwork would not be encouraged, and employees would be viewed as a means to an end. Strict controls would be placed on workers, and task achievement would be most important. The supervisor would not have much latitude and would do things "by the book."
    In Organization B, innovation and risk taking are highly encouraged. The supervisor would have more autonomy in how to achieve goals. Employees would be given the opportunity to provide input, and a team approach is used. People are viewed as important contributors. The supervisor's job would be more like that of a coach, encourager, and facilitator.

3. *Can culture be a liability to an organization? Explain.*
A culture in which the organization exits (or the organization's culture) could be a liability in extreme cases. In a global environment one can see where this could have an impact. For example, if the society (and organizational cultures) discriminates against certain ethnic groups or on the basis of gender or engages in exploitation of workers, this could create a backlash from consumers in other nations (see for example Reebok and Nike's troubles regarding manufacturing in emerging nations).

4. *Why is it important for managers to understand the external forces that are acting on them and their organizations?*
The external environment consists of many factors that have an impact on the organization. Legal and political factors (government regulations), demographics (that can affect labour supply), technological improvements, and other factors directly affect the management of the organization including planning and decision-making.

5*. Describe an effective culture for (a) a relatively stable environment and (b) a dynamic environment. Explain your choices.*
An effective culture for a relatively stable environment would likely emphasize outcomes such as quality and productivity and have strong attention to detail. It

wouldn't need to have high levels of innovation and risk taking or aggressiveness.

On the other hand, an effective culture for a dynamic environment would likely emphasize aggressiveness, innovation and risk taking, and team orientation. To stay on top of the continual environmental changes, this organization's culture would need to celebrate work behaviours that kept the organization on top.

6. *"Businesses are built on relationships." What do you think this statement means? What are the implications for managing the external environment?*
Organizations depend on their environment and their stakeholders as a source of inputs and a recipient of outputs. Good relationships can lead to organizational outcomes such as improved predictability of environmental changes, more successful innovations, greater degrees of trust among stakeholders, and greater flexibility in order to act to reduce the impact of change. Also, relationship management and the maintaining of good relationships have been proven by many researchers to have an effect on organizational performance. The high-performing companies tend to consider the interests of all major stakeholder groups as they make decisions.

7. *What would be the drawbacks to not managing stakeholder relationships?*
Organizations that do not manage stakeholder relationships may not be as responsive to environmental changes and may not have as much organizational flexibility. As well, organizations that do not consider the interests of stakeholders are often not as successful or perform as well as those organizations that do.

MANAGEMENT FOR YOU TODAY

Dilemma
You are considering organizing an event to raise funds for a special cause (children living in poverty, breast cancer research, illiteracy, or something of your choice.) Think about who you might invite to this event (that is, your "customers"- those who will buy tickets to the event). *What type of event might appeal to them? What suppliers might you approach for help in organizing the event? What legal issues might you face in setting up this event? After considering all these issues, how difficult is the environment you face in holding this event?*

Teaching Suggestions:
During the discussion of this dilemma, have students identify which elements of the specific and general environment that have the most potential to impact the success or failure of the event. As well, you may ask students to discuss the role that stakeholders would play in this event and suggest ways to manage the specific stakeholder relationships.

Assessing the Organization's Environment

Students are asked to examine two organizations in different industries and then describe the specific and general environmental forces that affect each organization. *How are your descriptions different for the 2 organizations? How are they similar?*

Teaching Suggestions:
1.   Have students work in teams of three. To assist students in selecting two companies, the following examples are provided. Encourage them to explore others as well.

■   Innovative Cultures
               3M - http://www.3m.com/
               Apple - http://www.apple.com/
■   Automotive
               Ford—www.ford.com
               General Motors—www.gm.com
■   Athletic Wear
               Nike—www.nike.com
               Reebok—www.reebok.com
■   Beverages
               Coca-Cola—www.cocacola.com
               PepsiCo—www.pepsico.com
■   Electronics
               Panasonic—www.panasonic.com
               Sony—www.sony.com
■   Golf Equipment
               Maxfli—www.maxfli.com
               Titleist—www.titleist.com

2.   Have students use the form below to identify the environmental factors for the two companies that they have selected.

Task Environmental Force/Factor	Company 1.	Company 2
Customers		
Competitors		
Suppliers		
Stakeholders		
Government		
Pressure Groups		
General Environmental Force/Factor	Company 1	Company 2
Economic Conditions		
Legal-Political Conditions		
Socio-cultural		
Technological Conditions		

ETHICS IN ACTION

Ethical Dilemma Exercise: How Far Should a Company Go to Please Investors?
Imagine this is your second day at work as a manager supervising a team of financial analysts in a major technology corporation. Your boss, the chief financial officer, calls you in and asks you to have your team find "creative" ways of improving your sales figures. *What should you do?*

Teaching Suggestions:
This exercise can be used as a class discussion or students can be placed in small groups to discuss. Ask students to identify what they feel is the "right" action to take and then ask them to consider what action they think they would take if they were in this situation – is there a difference in their responses and if so why? Many students may feel that if they were in the situation they would feel pressured to do what is being asked of them because the person asking them is in an executive position. They may indicate concern over what would happen if they didn't follow through on what was being asked of them – in other words, the impact their actions would have on their job and career with the company.

The exercise also provides an opportunity to discuss how students feel in general about what is considered to be "white collar" or what some would refer to as "victimless" crimes.

CASE APPLICATION

Making You Say Wow
1. *Using Exhibit 3–2 and the information from this case, describe the culture at The Ritz-Carlton. Why do you think this type of culture might be important to a luxury hotel? What might be the drawbacks of such a culture?*
    For students, the first dimension of culture that should immediately stand out is "attention to detail." A class discussion could begin on how this quality has created a long standing image of the Ritz-Carlton and how this value aided its growth and place in the market. However, while attention to detail is important, it will be necessary to shift gears and focus on Ritz-Carlton's new set of values which is based on outcome orientation. The idea of not scripting interactions between employees and guests is an important aspect of providing an exceptionally high level of performance. Address the idea of how a script may limit customer service and what impact, positive or negative the new approach may be for employees.

2. *What challenges do you think the company faced in changing the culture? What is The Ritz-Carlton doing to maintain this new culture?*
    On paper, it sounds so easy. "Things to do today, change the organizational culture." For students who do not much experience establishing company policy it may difficult to appreciate the difficulty of actually getting employees to change. Changing a culture is much more difficult than changing rules and procedures. Once the changes are in place, it is then up to the management of Ritz-Carlton to maintain them. Have students think of several ways to reinforce a culture aimed at 'wowing' customers. Answers may include prizes or other incentives.

3. *What kind of person do you think would be happiest and most successful in this culture? How do you think new employees "learn" the culture?*
    For the Ritz-Carlton, the challenge will be to find employees who are naturally good natured and want to make other people happy. Recruiting the right employees is an important element of reinforcing this new value. Ask students how they would go about finding employees with this quality. Are there some places of the country where a smile comes more naturally? Are there any occupations that Ritz-Carlton may draw from where employees are more relaxed and authentic sounding?

The second part of the question could create a new line of discussion. Learning a script is easy. Learning how to do be 'natural' and provide a unique level of service for a broad range of request is difficult. Ask students how they would teach this new culture to employees. Will they learn it in a classroom? How much will have to learned on the job? What part will role models play? How much time will it take for new employees to learn to wow the customer?

4. *What could other organizations learn from The Ritz-Carlton about the importance of organizational culture?*
The Ritz-Carlton has always been an innovative company. They have been an outstanding example of one of the first companies to incorporate participative decision making among their service employees. Discuss with students the potential of leaving organizational culture to develop by chance. How is the Ritz-Carlton's approach of actively instilling the company's culture a positive force inside the organization?

DEVELOPING YOUR DIAGNOSTIC AND ANALYTICAL SKILLS

A Perfect Response to an Imperfect Storm

Questions:
1. *Using Exhibit 2-2, describe the culture at Mississippi Power. Why do you think this type of culture might be important to an electric power company? On the other hand, what might be the drawbacks of such a culture?*
Using the dimensions listed in Exhibit 2-2, the culture at Mississippi Power can be described as having a strong people and team orientation, high attention to detail, an outcome orientation and a culture that supports innovation and risk taking. The organization's culture allowed the company to respond efficiently and effectively in the face of a terrible disaster, and for a power company, this is undoubtedly of great importance. In terms of drawbacks, this type of culture supports a decentralized decision making approach, which sometimes is not the most effective management structure as it can sometimes produce inconsistent results.

2. *Describe how you think new employees at Mississippi Power "learn" the company's culture.*
The use of symbols, rituals and stories are most likely part of the socialization process for new employees in this company. The use of employee identification tags that bear the organization's values provide a constant reminder and symbol of what the company is trying to instill in employees. The use of Steven Covey's books and philosophy in the organization's training systems is a ritual that helps to support the corporate culture. As well, there are employees and managers who will undoubtedly share stories and accounts of how the organization responded to the Katrina disaster to new employees as part of the formal and informal socialization process.

3. *What stakeholders might be important to Mississippi Power? What concerns might each of these stakeholders have? Would these stakeholders change if there was a disaster to which the company had to respond?*
   The stakeholders that would be most important to Mississippi Power include; customers, employees, shareholders, and the government. Customers would be concerned about the quality of services provided. Employees would be interested in working conditions and may also be customers themselves. Shareholders would be primarily focused on the financial position of the company in terms of earnings. The government would also be concerned about how the company was able to attend to consumer needs and in the case of an emergency, how efficiently and effectively the company would be able to react.

4. *What could other organizations learn from Mississippi Power about the importance of organizational culture?*
   Other organizations that are subject to potential disasters or that must be able to respond quickly to external events and/or situations may appreciate the fact that the organizational culture was strong and was able to provide employees with the authority to make decisions and the ability to react quickly when the situation demands it. As well, the fact that the organization had processes and systems in place to help establish the culture is something that other organizations can learn from.

DEVELOPING YOUR INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Reading an Organization's Culture
You have spent the first three years after college graduation as a freelance graphic designer, and now you are looking at pursuing a job as an account executive at a graphic design firm. You feel that the scope of assignments and potential for technical training far exceed what you would be able to do on your own, and you are looking to expand your skills and meet a brand-new set of challenges. However, you want to make sure you "fit" into the organization where you are going to be spending more than eight hours every workday. What is the best way for you to find a place where you will be happy and where your style and personality will be appreciated?

Teaching Suggestions:
This exercise provides an opportunity to have students personalize their understanding of the discussion of organizational culture and to help them understand that they can and should be proactive in choosing where they wish to work. Consider creating a discussion forum in class where students can share their thoughts as well as an online discussion forum.

ADDITIONAL CHAPTER INFORMATION

Ask students to look for different examples of organizational culture in business publications such as the Globe and Mail and Financial Post. The Booz & Co. publication on the Global Innovation 1000 is a great resource for examining innovative cultures (http://www.strategy-business.com/). Students could research *Forbes*, *Fortune*, *Working Woman*, and *BusinessWeek* for current information. You might have students choose either one of the companies to study in depth or look at a number of different companies. Tie this material into your discussion of organizational personalities. Ask students what they expect from an organization and whether organizations that they have researched are consistent with their expectations. You might want to ask students whether they would like to work for the company (companies) they studied, and to tell why or why not.