

Papers on Organization Culture

Introduction

I have been interested in cross cultural issues since my work in the sixties in the US Peace Corps. That interest was intensified when I went overseas to live and work for an eight year sojourn, beginning in 1968. It was then natural for my keen interest in cultural differences to expand into a concern for the differing qualities of culture to be found in different organizations. "Understanding Your Organization's Culture" was, I think, among the first papers to be published on the subject.

Because few colleagues or clients seemed much interested in organization culture in the seventies, I went on to other things. My interest in issues of organization culture was rekindled by my own response to the work of Tom Peters and his colleagues on excellent organizations. It seemed to me then, and does still, that Peters ignores or too readily accepts the dark side of high performing organizations, and I wrote "Leadership and Strategy for a New Age" in 1982 to provide a more balanced model of organizational values

I revamped the model I had put forward in "Understanding Your Organization's Culture," when it become fashionable to talk about organization culture in the eighties. I was motivated to do so by my need for a way to talk with leaders and managers about love in a way they would find reasonable, if not totally agreeable. The two papers, "Organization Culture and Quality of Service: A Strategy for Releasing Love in the Workplace" (Harrison, 1987*-b) and "Culture and Levels of Consciousness in Organizations" (Harrison, 1990*) are the major fruits of that work. The culture

model I developed in those papers became one of the foundations for the change model in my book on planning and implementing large systems change (Harrison, Cooper, and Dawes, 1991).