Octapace 1 – Excel Sheet Explanation

The OCTAPACE profile is a 40-item instrument that gives the profile of organisation's ethos in eight values. These values are openness, confrontation, trust, authenticity, proaction, autonomy, collaboration and experimentation. The instrument contains two parts. In part I, values are stated in items 1 to 24 (three statements of each of the eight values), and the respondent is required to check (on a 4-point scale) how much each item is valued in his organisation. Part 2 contains sixteen statements on beliefs, two each for eight values, and the respondent checks (on a 4-point scale) how widely each of them is shared in the organisation.

In addition to checking the items on the extent of their importance or sharing in the organisation, the respondent can also check how much they should be valued, or how much the beliefs are useful. Thus both present as well as desired and ideal profiles can be obtained.

SCORING
To make scoring easier, an answer sheet is provided. From the key (appended), the items marked with an asterisk are first reversed so that 4 becomes 1, 3 becomes 2, 2 becomes 3 and 1 becomes 4. This makes all items unidirectional. The rows are then added. The eight rows represent the eight aspects (octapace) in the same order. The scores on each aspect range from 5 to 20. In a group, participants can themselves score their completed answer sheets.

Openness: 1, 9, 17, 25*, 33
Confrontation: 2, 10, 18, 26*, 34
Trust: 3, 11, 19, 27, 35*
Authenticity: 4, 12*, 20, 28*, 36
Proaction: 5, 13, 21, 29, 37
Autonomy: 6, 14*, 22*, 30*, 38
Collaboration: 7, 15, 23*, 31*, 39
Experimentation: 8, 16, 24, 32, 40*

OPENNESS. Openness can be defined as a spontaneous expression of feelings and thoughts, and the sharing of these without defensiveness. Openness is in both directions, receiving and giving. Both these may relate to ideas (including suggestions), feedback (including criticism), and feelings. For example, openness means receiving without reservation, and taking steps to encourage more feedback and suggestions from customers, colleagues and others. Similarly, it means giving, without hesitation, ideas, information, feedback, feelings, etc. Openness may also mean spatial openness, in terms of accessibility. Installing internal E-mailing may be a step in this direction: everyone having a computer terminal has access to information which he may retrieve at any time. Offices without walls are another symbolic arrangement promoting openness. In some organisations, even the chief executive does not have a separate exclusive cabin; floor space is shared by other colleagues at different levels in the organisation. This
willingness to share and this openness results in greater clarity of objectives and free interaction among people. As a result of openness, there should be more unbiased performance feedback. Indicators of openness in an organisation will be productive meetings and improved implementation of systems and innovations.

CONFRONTATION Confrontation can be defined as facing rather than shying away from problems. It also implies deeper analysis of interpersonal problems. All this involves taking up challenges. The term confrontation is being used with some reservation and means putting up a front as contrasted with putting one's back (escaping) to the problem. A better term would be confrontation and exploration (CE). Let us use the term confrontation in this sense of confrontation and exploration, i.e. facing a problem and working jointly with others to find a solution to the problem. The outcome of confrontation will be better role clarity, improved problem solving, and willingness to deal with problems and with 'difficult' employees and customers. There will be willingness of teams to discuss and resolve sensitive issues. The indicators, which are also outcomes, can be improved by periodical discussions with clients, bold action, and not postponing sticky matters.

TRUST. Trust is not used in the moral sense. It is reflected in maintaining the confidentiality of information shared by others, and in not misusing it. It is also reflected in a sense of assurance that others will help, when such help is needed and will honour mutual commitments and obligations. Trust is also reflected in accepting what another person says at face value, and not searching for ulterior motives. Trust is an extremely important ingredient in the institution building processes.

The outcome of trust includes higher empathy, timely support, reduced stress, and reduction and simplification of forms and procedures. Such simplification is an indicator of trust and of reduced paper work, effective delegation and higher productivity.

AUTHENTICITY. Authenticity is the congruence between what one feels, says and does. It is reflected in owning up one's mistakes, and in unreserved sharing of feelings. Authenticity is closer to openness. The outcome of authenticity in an organisation is reduced distortion in communication. This can be seen in the correspondence between members in an organisation.

PROACTION. Proaction means taking the initiative, preplanning and taking preventive action, and calculating the payoffs of an alternative course before taking action. The proact can be contrasted with the term react. In the latter, action is in response to (and in the pattern of) an act from some source, while in the former the action is taken independent of the source. For example, if a person shouts back at his friend's accusation he shows reactive behaviour. However, if he does not use this pattern (of shouting) but responds calmly and suggests that they discuss the problem together, he is showing proactive behaviour. Pro activity gives initiative to the person to start a new process or set a new pattern of behaviour. Proactivity involves unusual behaviour. In this sense proactivity means freeing oneself from, and taking action beyond immediate concerns. A
person showing proactivity functions at all the three levels of feeling, thinking and action.

AUTONOMY. Autonomy is using and giving freedom to plan and act in one's own sphere. It means respecting and encouraging individual and role autonomy. It develops mutual respect and is likely to result in willingness to take on responsibility, individual initiative, better succession planning. The main indicator of autonomy is effective delegation in organisation and reduction in references made to senior people for approval of planned actions.

COLLABORATION. Collaboration is giving help to, and asking for help from, others. It means working together (individuals and groups) to solve problems and team spirit. The outcome of collaboration includes timely help, team work, sharing of experiences, improved communication and improved resource sharing. The indication could be productivity reports, more meetings, and involvement of staff, more joint decisions, better resource utilisation and higher quality of meetings.

EXPERIMENTING. Experimenting means using and encouraging innovative approaches to solve problems; using feedback for improving, taking a fresh look at things, and encouraging creativity. We are so caught up with our daily tasks that we often only use traditional, tried and tested ways of dealing with problems.

While these methods save time and energy, they also blind us from perceiving the advantage of new ways of solving a problem. The more we work under pressure, the less is our inclination to try a different approach as the risk seems to be too high. And yet, complex problems require new approaches to their solutions. Organisational learning does not imply repetitive action; it implies applying past experience to current problems to reach beyond. This can be called creativity. Other terms such as innovations, experiments, new approaches, etc. also convey the same meaning.

There are several aspects of creativity in an organisation. Creativity is reflected in new suggestions generated by employees, attempts at improving upon previous ways of working, trying out a new idea to which one has been exposed, innovating new methods, and thinking about a problem while ignoring so-called constraints. The last one is also called lateral thinking, i.e. thinking aimed at generating alternatives. There is enough evidence that such thinking contributes towards the development of new products, new methods and new processes.

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