

Subculture Audit

This audit tool provides a detailed, data-driven approach to help all teams understand their current dynamics, identify areas for growth, and develop actionable plans for enhancing collaboration, communication, and overall effectiveness. By using this tool regularly, all teams can strengthen their alignment, boost efficiency, and better contribute to the organization's strategic goals.

The subculture audit is intended to help teams identify why these elements are important to them, how they look in practice, and what outcomes they would expect when these elements are effectively functioning within their team.

If a team is not comfortable being honest and transparent when completing this audit, allow members to respond anonymously using technological resources, such as artificial intelligence (AI) or external auditors, to conduct both the quantitative and qualitative assessments. The less comfortable team members are, the less trust they have in the safety of the subculture, which will result in team members being less open and honest with one another and with the team leader (if one exists). To maximize the effectiveness of this audit, provide teams with evidence-based strategies to enhance collaboration, trust, communication, and overall effectiveness.

Part 1: Quantitative Assessment

Each team member individually rates each statement on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). After collecting individual scores, calculate the average score for each statement and total the scores for each section. Use the rating interpretation to identify areas for improvement.

Section	Statement	Score (1-5)	Team Average
Norms and Behaviors	1. Team members consistently demonstrate mutual respect in their interactions.		
	2. Our group has clear shared expectations for how we treat each other, even during challenges.		
	3. Unwritten rules within our team generally support positive and productive interactions.		
	4. Our team adapts its norms to meet changing needs and goals.		
	Total Score		
Section	Statement	Score (1-5)	Team Average
Trust	5. Team members feel comfortable being open and honest without fear of repercussions.		
	6. There is a strong sense of trust within our team that fosters collaboration.		
	7. We address mistakes with a focus on solutions rather than blame.		
	8. We trust in each other's expertise, which contributes to effective teamwork.		
	Total Score		

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Section	Statement	Score (1-5)	Team Average
Communication	9. Communication within our team is clear and respectful, minimizing misunderstandings.		
	10. We share important information openly, keeping everyone well informed.		
	11. Team members listen actively and provide thoughtful responses.		
	12. We check for understanding and clarify expectations to avoid confusion.		
	Total Score		
Section	Statement	Score (1-5)	Team Average
Collaboration	13. Our team combines individual strengths effectively to achieve shared goals.		
	14. We frequently exchange ideas and resources, enhancing our collective work.		
	15. Team members are open to feedback and adjust based on collaborative input.		
	16. We engage in joint problem solving and collective decision making.		
	Total Score		
Section	Statement	Score (1-5)	Team Average
Attention to Results	17. Our team consistently monitors progress toward achieving its goals.		
	18. We prioritize collective success over individual achievements.		
	19. Team members hold each other accountable for meeting performance standards.		
	20. We regularly review outcomes and make data-driven adjustments.		
	21. Our focus on results helps us identify growth opportunities.		
	Total Score		

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Section	Statement	Score (1-5)	Team Average
Alignment With Organizational Culture	22. Our team's values align well with the broader organization's core values.		
	23. We actively support the organization's strategic goals and initiatives.		
	24. We communicate our successes and challenges in alignment with the organization's priorities.		
	25. We address conflicts with broader organizational expectations constructively.		
	Total Score		

Scoring and Interpretation Table

Section	Total Possible Score	Your Total Score	Interpretation
Norms and Behaviors	20		17-20: Strong norms 13-16: Moderate <13: Weak norms
Trust	20		17-20: High trust 13-16: Moderate <13: Low trust
Communication	20		17-20: Effective 13-16: Needs improvement <13: Ineffective
Collaboration	20		17-20: Highly collaborative 13-16: Moderate <13: Limited collaboration
Attention to Results	25		21-25: Results-driven 16-20: Moderate <16: Needs focus on results
Alignment With Organizational Culture	20		17-20: Strong alignment 13-16: Moderate <13: Misalignment

Reflection:

- Identify areas where your team scored below the moderate range. These sections represent potential areas for growth you should prioritize in your action planning.
- Use your total scores and average scores to track progress over time and assess the impact of any changes implemented.

Part 2: Qualitative Assessment

Use the table to discuss the following open-ended questions as a team (or individually if there is little to no trust). You can use technology to be more anonymous. These questions mirror the quantitative sections and provide deeper insights into your team's strengths, challenges, and areas for growth.

Use this table during your team discussions. For each question, record key responses and reflections. Summarize any recurring themes, strengths, and areas for growth and document action steps where applicable.

Section	Questions	Team Reflections	Recurring Themes or Key Insights	Action Steps
Norms and Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What unspoken norms influence how we interact? How do these norms support or hinder progress? 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we (as a team) define effective norms and behaviors? What are our team's successful norms and behaviors in practice? What impact will effective norms and behaviors have on the way our team feels and treats one another? What results do we expect when our team abides by effective norms and behaviors? 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What specific behaviors do we need to formalize or adjust to reflect our values better? 			
Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we foster trust within our team? What challenges do we face in building trust? 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we (as a team) define trust? What does trust among team members look like in practice? What impact will high levels of trust among team members have on the way our team feels and treats one another? What results do we expect when trust among team members is high? 			

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Section	Questions	Team Reflections	Recurring Themes or Key Insights	Action Steps
Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways does the level of trust affect our ability to work effectively? 			
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would you describe our team's communication style? What aspects are effective and where could we improve? 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we (as a team) define successful communication? What does successful communication look like in practice? What impact will successful communication have on the way our team feels and treats one another? What results do we expect when communication among team members is effective? 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What barriers to effective communication do we need to address? How can we overcome them? 			
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do we collaborate as a team? What are examples of successful collaboration and in what areas have we struggled? 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we (as a team) define successful collaboration? What does successful collaboration look like in practice? What impact will successful collaboration have on the way our team feels and treats one another? What results do we expect when collaboration among team members is effective? 			

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Section	Questions	Team Reflections	Recurring Themes or Key Insights	Action Steps
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What specific practices can we implement to enhance our collaborative efforts? 			
Attention to Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we ensure our team remains focused on achieving its goals? What strategies have helped us stay results oriented? 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When we fall short of our goals, how do we respond and what adjustments do we make? 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What practices can we adopt to monitor progress and celebrate our successes as a team? 			
Alignment With Organizational Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do our team's values and practices align with the broader organizational culture? What are some other areas of conflict? 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does or will the alignment of our team's norms and practices with those of the broader organizational culture impact the effectiveness of our team? What results do we expect when our team's norms and practices align with those of the broader organizational culture? 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What steps can we take to integrate our strengths into the organization's strategic goals? 			

Using the Table:

- **Team reflections:** Record individual and collective responses during your discussion.
- **Recurring themes and key insights:** Summarize any common points or patterns that emerge. Use this section to capture the essence of your team's current dynamics.
- **Action steps:** Document specific actions your team plans to take to address areas for improvement or capitalize on strengths.

Part 3: Action Planning

1. **Identify areas for improvement:** Use your scores and reflections to pinpoint areas where your team needs to focus on growth. Develop a plan to address the specific issues identified.
2. **Leverage team strengths:** Highlight areas where your team excelled. Plan to build on these strengths to support other aspects of your work.
3. **Create new norms and set goals:** Establish new, agreed-on norms that align with your subculture's values and the broader organizational expectations. Set clear, measurable goals for improvement.
4. **Schedule regular follow-up assessments:** Plan regular check-ins (for example, quarterly) to review progress, adjust strategies, and complete follow-up assessments to track improvements.

Source: Edmondson, A. (1999). *Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams*. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350–383; Hackman, J. R. (2002). *Leading teams: Setting the stage for great performances*. *Harvard Business Review Press*; Katzenbach, J. R., & Smith, D. K. (1993). *The wisdom of teams: Creating the high-performance organization*. *Harvard Business Review Press*; Lencioni, P. M. (2002). *The five dysfunctions of a team: A leadership fable*. *Jossey-Bass*; Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership (4th ed.)*. *Jossey-Bass*; Tuckman, B. W. (1965). *Developmental sequence in small groups*. *Psychological Bulletin*, 63(6), 384–399.