

Corporate Values Assessment©

Richard Barrett is the creator of the Cultural Transformation Tools®. Prior to starting his consultancy practice, the Barrett Values Centre, he was Values Coordinator at the World Bank from 1995-1997. Barrett developed the Cultural Transformation Tools CTT based on the assumption that there is no significant difference between the way individuals and groups of individuals with a common purpose (communities and organizations) operate. The only differences are in the labels we use to talk about it. An individual expresses who they are through their personality. An organization, or any other group of individuals, expresses itself through its culture. What distinguishes one culture from another, are the beliefs, behaviours and values that the community or organization adopts and displays.

Abraham Maslow proposed that humans operate as if they had a hierarchy of needs; from survival, relationships, self-esteem and self-actualisation. Once we have mastered one level of need, we shift the focus of our consciousness to the next level. Richard Barrett proposes that the state of consciousness that Maslow labelled self-actualisation and Carl Jung termed individuation can be called 'transformation' in an organizational context. He also proposes that this organizational need can be expanded to include four distinct states of consciousness - transformation, internal cohesion, inclusion of others, and unity - in the development of a greater sense of purpose or 'corporate soul'.

Organizations operating from **Level 1: Survival** focus on profits, organizational growth and the safety of employees. At this level, concerns tend to relate to territory, exploitation, caution and control. Once survival concerns have been addressed, organizations operating from **Level 2: Relationships** focus on developing healthy interpersonal relationships between employees and with their customers. At this level, issues to do with blame, interpersonal conflict, and discipline may arise. Organizations operating from **Level 3: Self-Esteem** focus on best practice, organizational effectiveness and performance management. They are concerned about results but bureaucracy, arrogance, power struggles and complacency can occur. As individuals and groups of individuals become skilled at meeting their lower level needs their focus automatically shifts to the higher-level need for self-actualization.

The first level of self-actualization is **Level 4: Transformation**. In organizations, this is the level when we begin to see issues of empowerment, employee participation and diversity being raised. It is also the level of the learning organization and continuous renewal. The next level of consciousness is **Level 5: Internal Cohesion**. This is the level when people come together around shared vision (common meaning) and shared values. There is a strong sense of community in level 5 organizations. Everyone is working for the common good. **Level 6: Inclusion** is the place where meaning translates into action. It is the level of making a difference in the local community and greater environmental awareness and sustainability. This is often referred to as focusing on the 'triple bottom line'.

The final level of consciousness, **Level 7: Unity**, is the place where making a difference becomes a permanent and pervasive way of life. The organization begins to recognize that it not only part of the local community, it is also part of society. The focus at this level is on ethics and social responsibility.

The Corporate Values Assessment can be used to prepare a cultural audit report known as the Merger and Acquisition Compatibility Assessment©. Cultural audits are carried out for each company involved in a merger or acquisition using a common template of values. The personal values, current culture and desired culture values of the two organisations are compared to determine the similarities and differences between the two cultures. A compatibility assessment report is produced to highlight the key issues that should be addressed in implementing the cultural aspect of the merger.

The Barrett Corporate Culture Assessment is available on-line and in twelve languages. It takes about 20 minutes to complete the survey which is usually administered to all employees in the organization. For more information on these tools get hold of the book; **Liberating the Corporate Soul: Building a Visionary Organization** (Butterworth-Heinemann, 1998) or go to the website www.valuescentre.com .