



對外經濟貿易大學  
UNIVERSITY OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

## Unit 15

# Organizational Culture — Competitive Advantage

企业文化—竞争优势

# ✓ Learning objectives

- In this unit students will learn words and expressions related to organizational culture.
- Students will learn to talk the foundation and the characteristics of organizational culture.

# Answers to the comprehension questions

1. What is the definition of organizational culture given in the text?

Organizational culture is defined as *“the set of shared, taken-for-granted implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks about, and reacts to its various environments.”*

2. What are the three characteristics of organizational culture?

First, organizational culture is passed on to new employees through the process of socialization. Second, organizational culture influences our behavior at work. Finally, organizational culture operates at two different levels—visible and less visible.

# Answers to the comprehension questions

3. How does organizational culture operate at both more visible and less visible level? Give examples to illustrate.

At the more visible level, culture represents artifacts. Artifacts consist of the physical manifestation of an organization's culture. Organizational examples include acronyms, matter of dress, awards, myths and stories told about the organization, published lists of values, observable rituals and ceremonies, special parking spaces, decorations, and so on. At the less visible level, culture reflects the values and beliefs shared among organizational members. These values tend to persist over time and more resistant to change. These values tend to persist over time and are more resistant to change.

4. How do you understand Vijay Sathe's Model for observing and interpreting organizational Culture?

It's up to each individual's understanding.

# Part A Business News

## First listening: listen for the gist

- What is the main idea of the first news report?

The first piece of news reports that Unocal is ready to talk with CNOOC on merger.

- What is the main idea of the second news report?

The second piece of news reveals the finding of a survey, which shows the culture is the main reason for merger failure.

# Second listening: listen for specific information

- In this part the teacher has great freedom and flexibility to ask students questions, to clarify any difficult language points, to add in supplementary materials as background knowledge or in-depth understanding of the listening materials.
- Notice how these expressions are related to merger and acquisition.  
waiver, bid for, offer, acquire, engage in, vote on, benefit acquiring companies, underperform, suffer from poor implementation, take account of, meld,
- Ask students to do True (T) or False (F) questions for news item one. Check answers. Explain why it is true or false.

# Third listening: sentences imitation

- Ask students to use the following active vocabularies to form sentences as what they have heard from listening (Dictate then remember).
- Please first write down the following words on the blackboard or computer. Then ask students to listen for sentences with these words in them. You ask them to listen two times and see who has caught more sentences.

# Third listening: sentences imitation

1. Waiver--Unocal Corp. said on Thursday that it has got a waiver from Chevron Corp.
2. to commence--Unocal intends promptly to commence discussions with China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) Ltd. on its proposed merger.
3. Bid for--CNOOC's proposed merger offer is two dollars higher than Chevron's April bid for Unocal a share.
4. to engage in--Unocal got a permission from Chevron to engage in discussions with CNOOC Ltd. and its representatives at any time.



# Third listening: sentences imitation

5. to vote on--Until the date of the Unocal stockholders voting on the proposed merger with Chevron.
6. to contract--He has contracted the habit of talking to himself.
7. to underperform--Surveys have repeatedly shown that about 65 percent of mergers fail to benefit acquiring companies, whose shares subsequently underperform their sector.
8. to take account of--And in about half of those, senior management failed to take account of the different cultures of the companies involved.
9. to meld--It's that the cultures don't meld quickly enough to take advantage of the opportunities.

# Part B Cultural Models of Organization

## First listening: listen for the gist

- What is the main idea of the report?

The first passage is about Stevens' observation of organizational culture.

# Second listening: listen for specific information

- In this part the teacher has great freedom and flexibility to ask students questions, to clarify any difficult language points, to add in supplementary materials as background knowledge or in-depth understanding of the listening materials.

- Notice how these expressions are related to Cultural Models of Organization:

Large/small power distance and strong/weak uncertainty avoidance, tight/loose structure. pyramids, machines, markets, families, formal/informal procedure

1) Ask students to complete the note-taking in two tables.

2) Ask students to complete the Fill-in-blank exercises.

# Third listening: sentence imitation

- Ask students to use the following active vocabularies to form sentences as what they have heard from listening (Dictate then remember).
  - Please first write down the following words on the blackboard or computer. Then ask students to listen for sentences with these words in them. You ask them to listen two times and see who has caught more sentences.
1. to adopt a practice--He adopted the customary practice in business schools.
  2. to file--These orders had to be filed on short notice.
  3. to diagnose--The students were asked to diagnose the organizational problem and make recommendations for solving it.
  4. to take precedence over--The boss makes decisions and his policy takes precedence over formal procedures.

# Part C Cultural Synergy in Shanghai General Motors

## First listening: listen for the gist

- What is the main idea of this case?

There are two basic ways to approach the interaction between different and distinct organizational cultures: Cultural Dominance Model and a Cultural Synergy Model. The example of Shanghai General Motors is a good illustration of the importance of the latter model, in which mutual trust, respect and mutual obligation must be exchanged.

# Second listening: listen for specific information

- In this part the teacher has great freedom and flexibility to ask students questions, to clarify any difficult language points, to add in supplementary materials as background knowledge or in-depth understanding of the listening materials.
- Notice how these expressions are related to **Cultural Synergy**.  
the interaction organizational cultures, a Cultural Dominance Model, the Cultural Synergy Model, culturally synergistic organization, mutual trust, respect and mutual obligation, cooperation value, compromise, hold tight one's ground, to cope with disputes and conflicts, abide by, core values, to reach a consensus for a decision, to reduce the cultural gap, to create a cordial, friendly, and comfortable working atmosphere, to formulate a forceful cohesiveness
- Ask students to fill in the blanks with the correct words.

# Third listening: sentence imitation

- Ask students to use the following active vocabularies to form sentences as what they have heard from listening (Dictate then remember).
- Please first write down the following words on the blackboard or computer. Then ask students to listen for sentences with these words in them. You ask them to listen two times and see who has caught more sentences.

# Third listening: sentence imitation

1. to approach--There are two basic ways to approach the interaction between different and distinct organizational cultures.
2. to dominate--By a Cultural Dominance Model, one cultural system dominates the other within the company.
3. to take the best of--In the Cultural Synergy Model, the culturally synergistic organization takes the best of each culture.
4. to infringe on--Two cultures are melted together without infringing on the other.
5. to hold one's ground--Both parties have learnt to compromise rather than hold tight one's ground.
6. to abide by--Each must abide by the regulations, rules and management systems, which are based on overseas conventions and domestic rooted traditions.



# Acting out

- Debate

This activity can be done after students finish Part B.

- Discussion

This activity can be done after students finish Part C.

- However, for the above activities, it's better to ask students to prepare before the class by surfing on internet or consulting books and magazines for real cases of Chinese companies or foreign companies in China.