“Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC)”

The purpose of this paper is to provide an analysis on an organization based on its culture, values and ethics, organizational effectiveness, and context in relation to change within the organization. In my evaluation, I have utilized tools such as assessment instruments to analyze scores assigned to the organization as well as theoretical models and case studies to help identify patterns and any relevant relationship between these patterns. As a result, I have come up with a change plan design consisting of a maintenance of best practices the organization can implement in order to consistently retain its current culture, values, ethics, organizational effectiveness and context over time.

The organization I chose to conduct my analysis on is the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC). “AFRC currently consists of approximately 71,400 personnel in 37 states and 11 countries. Headquartered at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, AFRC became an Air Force Major Command (MAJCOM) on February 17, 1997.”¹ Its main purpose is to “defend the United States through control and exploitation of air and space by supporting Global Engagement. It plays an integral role in the day-to-day Air Force mission.”¹ AFRC is one of 10 MAJCOMs. (Refer to Exhibit 1 in the Appendix for illustration of all the MAJCOMs, including AFRC).

AFRC, like any other branch of the military, has a strong sense of culture, values and organizational effectiveness. Its culture thrives upon developing and inspiring others, looking out for one another (also known as the “wingman” concept), by fostering collaborative relationships, building teams and coalitions, negotiating, developing self, and many other aspects. The human nature of this type of structure is driven by higher duty and expectations.

Referring to the article, “Towards a Collaborative Community” author’s Adler and Heckscher state “when the dominant principle of social organization is hierarchy, community takes the form of Gemeinschaft. The coordinating mechanism for this type of environment is authority with control as the primary benefits.”

This type of traditional community has a “hierarchical structure in which individuals and subunits are related in clear chains of subordination to the subordinate leader whose authority derives from tradition or charisma. The core values are therefore those of loyalty and deference. The organization is setup with a mechanical division of labor coordinated by common norms and through vertical dependence.” This theory of a Gemeinschaft community in the shadow of hierarchy fits perfectly with AFRC’s culture.

Author’s Adler and Heckscher’s theory also matches with item one of the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) called the “Dominant Characteristics” of the Competing Values Framework (CVF). The highest “Now” score was given under alternative D, where the

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3 OCAI originated from the CVF and research done by John Campbell on the topic of organization effectiveness. The CVF is known as a theoretical model used to interpret various known culture types within an organization. The model is categorized into four CVF that define four dominant Cultural Types with four main clusters or 2 main dimensions based on John Campbell’s 39 indicators of organization effectiveness. 1) Effectiveness based on flexibility, dynamism and discretion versus stability, order and control. 2) Effectiveness that emphasizes internal orientation, integration and unity from external orientation, differentiation and rivalry. The four quadrants represent two pairs of four conflicting values 1) Flexibility versus stability and 2) Internal versus external.
organization is a highly controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do. Additionally, 30 out of 100 points was given under alternative C, for the organization being very results-oriented. A major concern is getting the job done and ensuring the mission comes first is priority--this can create a very results driven type of environment.

II Values & Ethics

The values of the military focus on ethical leadership qualities. This set of ethical values is known as the “Air Force Core Values”¹ which consist of the following: Integrity First, Service before Self and Excellence in All We Do. Integrity First is doing what is right even when no one is looking. Service before Self is putting the mission first, and Excellence in All We Do is consistently putting forth one’s best efforts and setting an example for others to follow.

Secondly, the military also focuses its ethical values on what is known as the Airman’s Creed.¹ This creed is a statement of beliefs that reflect the pride of Air Force and what is done to support and defend the nation. This creed, more importantly, is a reflection of the Air Force’s heritage and war-fighting ethos that embodies the Air Force’s culture.

As mentioned in the article “Towards a Collaborative Community”, author’s Adler and Heckscher refer to the values of a Gemeinschaft community where “the bedrock of trust in the traditional order is honor, or duty-the fulfillment of a status role defined by the social order.”² The military environment is heavily focused on this type of community of social order, honor and duty fulfillment through its Air Force Core Values and the Airman’s Creed.

This type of theory also falls in line with the scores on number four of the OCAI called the “Organization Glue” of the CVF. The highest “Now” score of 70 out of 100 was given under alternative D, where the glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies.
Maintaining a smooth running organization is important as also previously addressed in number one for Dominant Characteristics of the OCAI of the CVF.

III Organizational Effectiveness

AFRC’s organizational effectiveness depends on its clear set of expectations, goals, mission and vision that are aligned with the business strategy. Their mission is to “fly, fight and win in air, space and cyberspace.” Additionally, AFRC is tasked with providing “combat-ready units and individuals for active duty when there are not enough trained units and people in the Regular component of the Air Force to perform national security missions.” Lastly, AFRC’s mission is also to provide the “world’s best mutual support to the Air Force and our joint partners-flying and fighting as an Unrivaled Wingman.”

In order to manage and lead organizations and resources efficiently and effectively, it is imperative that members of AFRC understand their mission and are adaptable to their ever changing environments. Additionally, the organization must first have a climate conducive to change. By conducting climate assessments, on an annual basis, human relations factors can be assessed within the organization to properly assist with gauging organizational effectiveness.

This type of organizational effectiveness falls in line with the four integrative principles that address the influence of organizational culture on effectiveness in Denison’s article “Corporate Culture and Organization Effectiveness.” He explains four principles of organizational effectiveness, which are involvement, consistency, adaptability and mission hypothesis. The integration of mission and consistency form stability and direction and the integration of adaptability and involvement form change and flexibility. All of these elements

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are what AFRC’s environment consists of and what is needed to sustain the effectiveness of the organization’s mission.

Denison’s hypothesis also falls in line with item two and five of the OCAI called “Organizational Leadership” and “Strategic Emphasis” of the CVF. Within “Organizational Leadership,” the highest “Now” score of 60 out of 100 was given under alternative D, where the leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency. The second highest “Now” score of 20 out of 100 was given under alternative A, where the leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing. In both cases, leadership is keen on smooth-running efficiency, sense of mentoring and facilitating type of environment.

Within “Strategic Emphasis,” the fifth section of the CVF, the highest “Now” score of 70 out of 100 was given under alternative D, again, where the organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control, and smooth operations are of utmost importance. Because the military, in general, is a controlled and structured environment, they thrive on the efficiency, control and smooth operations of their formal procedures.

IV Context

With regards to context, significant shifts in downsizing efforts have taken place throughout the military, not just AFRC. The military has moved to a more lean organization across the board. Advancements in high technology airplanes have been a factor in downsizing portions of the workforce to fund such efforts.

This type of shift and its influence on the military’s organizational operations falls in line with Kanter’s integrated theory on changes in the industrial context. In her article “Men and Women of the Corporation,” she talks about the how business context has changed over the last
two decades and there are six important shifts of emphasis that affect corporate jobs and careers.⁵
(In this case, we are referring to AFRC as the corporation.)

Here we will focus on just one important shift out of the six which focuses on “From Fat to Lean: the New Staffing Principle.”⁵ This shift coincides with the context the military has taken on in recent years. Kanter addresses how shifting from a fat to leaner emphasis, organizations are imposing “overtime and overload on existing staff before adding others. This makes organizations more flexible and cost efficient but also strains people’s endurance while undermining their security.”⁵ As a result, AFRC’s ability to operate and function effectively within its organization falls in line with using fewer resources for more productivity.

Additionally, author Kanter’s theory also matches item three and six of the OCAI called “Management of Employees” and “Criteria of Success” of the CVF. Under Management of Employees of the CVF, the highest “Now” score of 60 out of 100 was given under alternative A, where the management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation. The second highest “Now” score of 20 out of 100 was given under alternative D, where the management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.

The management style of employees under alternative A is correct within AFRC. There is a sense of teamwork, consensus and participation; however, a lower “Now” score was received for alternative D. Due to the shift, sustaining security of employment, predictability and stability in relationships has become much leaner by doing more with less.

The third highest “Now” score of 15 out of 100 was given under alternative C, where the management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement. The last “Now” score of 5 out of 100 was given under alternative B,

where the management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk taking, innovation, freedom and uniqueness.

Shifting to Criteria of Success, the highest “Now” score of 60 out of 100 was given under alternative D, where the organization defines success based on efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling, and low-cost production are critical. The shift continues to be based upon ensuring mission critical tasks are sustained as efficiently as possible.

Next, the second highest “Now” score falls under alternative A, where the organization defines success on the basis of the development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concern for people, this alternative received a lower “Now” score of 30 out of 100. AFRC defines success based upon the areas mentioned above as long as it does not compromise or negatively impact the mission.

These two alternatives received lower scores as the military environment can hard-driving. However, when there is clear communication maintained with management, by informing them the status of tasking(s), there will continue to be fostering of teamwork, consensus, and participation within the organization.

\[ \text{Change or Maintenance?} \]

We have now assessed the highest “Now” and “Preferred” scores for each of the six key dimensions of the OCAI of the CVF to include: Item 1: Dominant Characteristics; Item 2: Organizational Leadership; Item 3: Management of Employees; Item 4: Organization Glue; Item 5: Strategic Emphases and Item 6: Criteria of Success. (Refer to Exhibit 3 in the Appendix for illustration of AFRC’s Competing Values Graph displaying all the “Now” and “Preferred” scores).
Each of these items has four alternatives (A through D) that add up to a cumulative score of 100 points. These scores “relates to a type of organizational culture.” The “Now” column is the current organization’s culture type and the “Preferred” column refers to the preferred culture type. In computing the sum and average score for each alternative in the “Now” and “Preferred” column for all six items of the OCAI, the total highest sum score for each is 380 and the total highest average score for each is 63.3, under D, associated with the Hierarchy culture type.

Since both the “Now” and “Preferred” assessment scores of AFRC are the same, I did not indicate a need for change. However, in reviewing both scores, I am recommending a maintenance of best practices change plan design consisting of a top down leadership led approach which will result in AFRC consistently retaining its current culture, values, ethics, organizational effectiveness and context over time.

In order to implement the top down leadership led approach effectively, the organization must first begin by concurrently focusing its efforts on newly assigned airmen and airmen currently serving the Armed Forces. Since these airmen are the future generations of AFRC, they should, regularly, receive proper guidance and mentorship regarding AFRC’s purpose, mission and what it stands for. Additionally, by encouraging involvement through developing and inspiring others, utilizing the “wingman” concept, fostering collaborative relationships, teamwork, and consensus these airmen will gain a sense of satisfaction and autonomy within their role as members of AFRC.

Moreover, despite shifts to a leaner organization, airmen can be inspired to think of new ideas and make more cost efficient and effective decisions in their daily operations when it comes to the mission. All of these efforts mentioned will help create value within the

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organization and best practices will be maintained through currently serving airmen and orienting newer airmen in the culture, values and ethics of AFRC.

As a result, by adopting a top down led approach to newly assigned airmen and airmen currently serving the Armed Forces, they will receive proper guidance, mentorship, have a sense of satisfaction, autonomy, and ultimately set a good example for others to follow. These airmen will also learn to properly lead, inspire others, build strong ethical leadership standards, and adapt to ever changing environments within the organization. If this top down led approach is not adopted, newly assigned airmen and airmen currently serving may have difficulty embodying the Air Force’s culture, values, ethics, and its contribution to organizational effectiveness in order to retain and apply them for future generations to come.
Appendix

Exhibit 1: Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC)

Exhibit 2: Competing Values Framework (CVF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flexibility and Discretion</th>
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<tr>
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<td>MARKET</td>
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Stability and Control
Exhibit 3: AFRC Competing Values Graph displaying all the “Now” and “Preferred” scores

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<th>Culture Type</th>
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References


