



# Situational Outlook Questionnaire<sup>SM</sup>

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**Presented by: Practitioner XYZ, Consulting Firm**

**Team Report**  
***SAMPLE***

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>About Teamwork.....</b>	<b>2</b>
12 Characteristics of Productive Teams.....	3
<b>Part A of the SOQ - Team Climate.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Your Results.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Distribution - The Spread of Responses.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Making Sense of Your Results.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Compare against benchmarks.....	7
Identify your strengths.....	7
Identify important gaps.....	7
Identify targets for development.....	7
Deciding on strategies and tactics.....	7
<b>The Dimensions - What to do if too high or too low?.....</b>	<b>8</b>
Challenge/Involvement.....	8
Freedom.....	9
Trust/Openness.....	10
Idea-Time.....	11
Playfulness/Humor.....	12
Conflict.....	13
Idea-Support.....	14
Debate.....	15
Risk-Taking.....	16
<b>Part B of the SOQ - The Narrative Results.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Complete Narrative Team Responses.....	18

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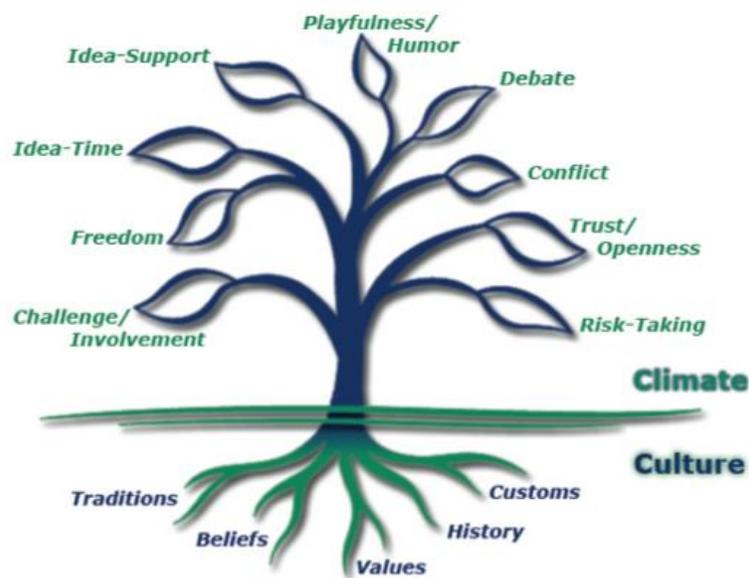
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## Introduction

The work environment within any organization or team is a critical factor in determining its productivity. There are many factors that influence the nature of the work environment, as you will see later in this report, but what do we mean by the term work environment?

*The work environment is everything that surrounds a person's involvement with work – all the conditions that affect an individual or team in accomplishing their purposeful efforts.*

Two common terms associated with the work environment are organizational culture and climate – and they are often confused with each other. Organizational culture includes the values, beliefs, traditions, and history reflecting the deeper assumptions and foundations of the organization. Climate refers to the observed patterns of behavior that characterize life in the team or organization. They are clearly related to each other, but culture reflects what the organization values while climate refers to what members actually experience. Culture is much harder to change, but people can learn new language, skills, and behaviors – the climate. Culture is deeper than climate, as the graphic below illustrates.



## About Teamwork

So much work in organizations today is accomplished by groups and teams. But, is your group really a team? There are a variety of ways to differentiate working groups from teams. One senior executive with whom we have worked described groups as individuals with nothing in common except a zip/postal code. Teams, however, were characterized by a common vision. In their book on *The Wisdom of Teams*, Katzenbach and Smith described a team as "...a small number of people with complementary skills who are mutually committed to a common purpose, a common set of performance goals, and a commonly agreed upon working approach."

# Characteristics of Productive Teams

What does it mean to be a productive team? We have identified 12 characteristics of productive teams. The results and insights provided in this report are presented to help teams develop higher levels of performance.

Characteristics of Productive Teams	
<b>A clear, elevating goal</b>	Having understanding, mutual agreement and identification with respect to the primary task a group faces. Active teamwork toward common goals happens when members of a group share a common vision of the desired future state.
<b>Results-driven structure</b>	Individuals within groups feel productive when their efforts take place with a minimum of grief. Open communication, clear co-ordination of tasks, clear roles and accountabilities, monitoring performance, providing feedback, fact-based judgment, efficiency, and strong impartial management combine to create a results-driven structure.
<b>Competent team members</b>	Competent teams are comprised of capable and conscientious members. Members must possess essential skills and abilities, a strong desire to contribute, be capable of collaborating effectively, and have a sense of responsible idealism. They must have knowledge in the domain surrounding the task (or some other domain which may be relevant) as well as with the process of working together.
<b>Unified commitment</b>	Having a shared commitment relates to the way the individual members of the group respond. Effective teams have an organizational unity; members display mutual support, dedication and faithfulness to the shared purpose and vision, and a productive degree of self-sacrifice to reach organizational goals.
<b>Collaborative climate</b>	Productive teamwork does not just happen. It requires a climate that supports co-operation and collaboration. This kind of situation is characterized by mutual trust...trust in the goodness of others. Organizations desiring to promote teamwork must provide a climate within the larger context that supports co-operation.
<b>Standards of excellence</b>	Effective teams establish clear standards of excellence. They embrace individual commitment, motivation, self-esteem, individual performance, and constant improvement. Members of teams develop a clear and explicit understanding of the norms upon which they will rely.
<b>External support and recognition</b>	Team members need resources, rewards, recognition, popularity and social success. Being liked and admired as individuals and respected for belonging and contributing to a team is often helpful in maintaining the high level of personal energy required for sustained performance. With the increasing use of cross-functional and inter-departmental teams within larger complex organizations, teams must be able to obtain approval and encouragement.
<b>Principled leadership</b>	Leadership is important for teamwork. Whether it is a formally appointed leader or leadership of the emergent kind, the people who exert influence and encourage the accomplishment of important things usually follow some basic principles. Principled leadership includes the management of human differences, protecting less able members, and providing a level playing field to encourage contributions from everyone. This is the kind of leadership that promotes legitimate compliance to competent authority.
<b>Appropriate use of the team</b>	Teamwork is encouraged when the tasks and situations really call for that kind of activity. Sometimes the team itself must set clear boundaries on when and why it should be deployed. One of the easiest ways to destroy a productive team is to overuse it or use it when it is not appropriate to do so.
<b>Participation in decision-making</b>	One of the best ways to encourage teamwork is to engage the members of the team in the process of identifying the challenges and opportunities for improvement, generating ideas, and transforming ideas into action. Participation in the process of problem solving and decision-making actually builds teamwork and improves the likelihood of acceptance and implementation.
<b>Team spirit</b>	Effective teams know how to have a good time, release tension, and relax their need for control. The focus at times is on developing friendship, engaging in tasks for mutual pleasure and recreation. This internal team climate extends beyond the need for a collaborative climate.
<b>Embracing appropriate change</b>	Teams often face the challenges of organizing and defining tasks. In order for teams to remain productive, they must learn how to make necessary changes to procedures. When there is a fundamental change in how the team must operate, different values may need to be accommodated. Productive teams learn how to use the full spectrum of their members' creativity.

## Part A of the SOQ - Team Climate

The questions you answered by indicating how applicable the items were to your team provide you an indication regarding how you and your team see the climate for creativity, innovation, and change.

Each of the 53 items in this section of the SOQ belongs to one of nine dimensions that have been shown to be important factors of a team climate for creative collaboration, innovation, change and productivity.

### Dimension Descriptions

The Situational Outlook Questionnaire® (SOQ) assesses nine dimensions of climate. Each dimension is defined below along with a description of its positive and negative impact.

Dimension	Description	In the BEST case:	In the WORST case:
<b>Challenge/Involvement</b>	Degree to which people are involved, connected, and engaged in operations, goals, and vision of the team	People are energized by the work of the team and show a strong willingness to offer discretionary effort due to their commitment and energy	People are apathetic about the work of the team and seem uninterested or unconcerned about the team's productivity
<b>Freedom</b>	Level or degree of independence and autonomy people experience	Members of the team take initiative – on their own – to make things happen and can define how they contribute to the team's success	People on the team work within strict and confining guidelines – carrying out their work in prescribed ways
<b>Trust/Openness</b>	Level of emotional safety in relationships	Team members are open and honest with each other and can count on each other for professional and personal support	Team members are suspicious of each and closely guard their plans and ideas
<b>Idea-Time</b>	Amount of time people can and do use for elaborating or developing ideas and possibilities	Team members have and use time for exploring new ideas and opportunities – they can test suggestions not included in the given instructions for tasks	Every minute is booked for team members and the time pressure makes thinking outside the instructions and planned routines impossible
<b>Playfulness/Humor</b>	Level of spontaneity and ease displayed in the team	Team members share good-natured jokes and engage in laughter which creates a relaxed atmosphere	Laughter and joke-telling is considered improper and the atmosphere is serious and gloomy
<b>Conflict</b>	Presence of personal and emotional tensions – a negative dimension	Team members behave in a mature manner by controlling impulses and welcome diverse input and people	Team members dislike each other, set traps, engage in power struggles, gossip and slander
<b>Idea-Support</b>	Extent to which new ideas and possibilities are received and attended to	Team members listen and consider new ideas and suggestions in constructive and encouraging ways	Team members seek to find faults and obstacles when new ideas or suggestions are offered – the automatic "no" prevails
<b>Debate</b>	Occurrence of disagreements between viewpoints and ideas – idea tension	Team members are keen to put forward their differing opinions for open discussion and examination	Team members are reluctant to share different points of view and fail to question or challenge new alternatives
<b>Risk-Taking</b>	Tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity in the workplace	Team members take decisions and action when the outcomes are not 100% certain – they go "out on a limb" when needed	Team members are cautious, lack decisiveness, try to be on the "safe side," and seek to cover themselves in many ways

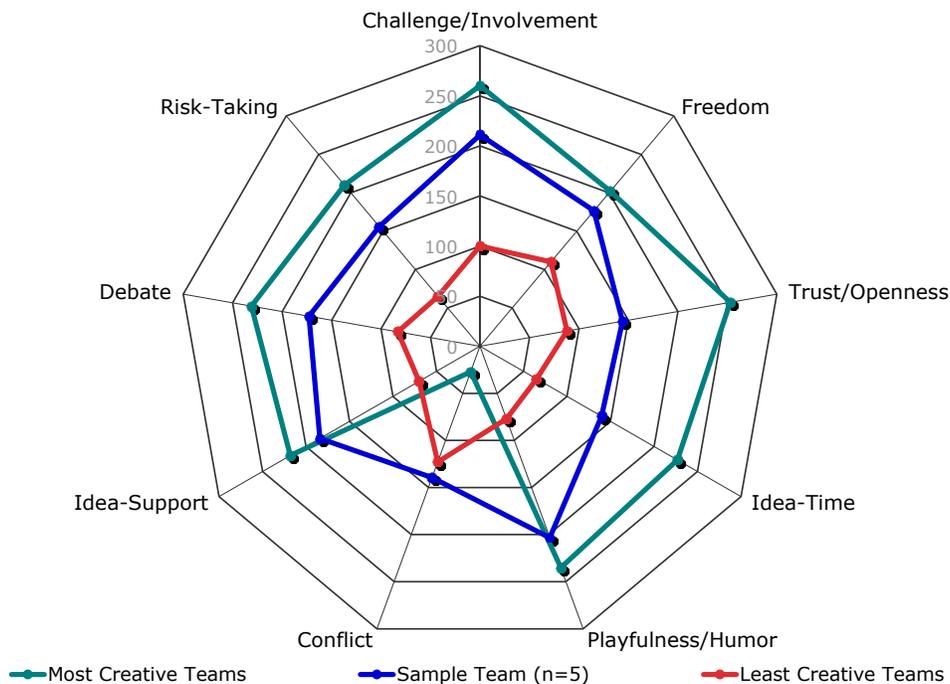
## Your Results

The results for you and your team are provided below. You will find your individual score, as well as the average results for your team. The Standard Deviation (SD) and range for the results are also included. In general, standard deviations (SD) lower than 70 points indicates that the results showed reasonably good agreement. If they are higher, there are likely to be some people who see that dimension differently than others.

Also, differences of more than 25 points between scores may be more meaningful than smaller ones.

Climate Dimensions	Your Score	Most Creative Teams	Sample Team	Least Creative Teams	SD	Range
Challenge/Involvement	200	260	211	100	59	142 - 285
Freedom	250	202	176	110	55	100 - 250
Trust/Openness	140	253	144	88	55	80 - 200
Idea-Time	183	227	140	65	65	83 - 233
Playfulness/Humor	200	235	203	77	28	183 - 250
Conflict	216	27	139	123	83	16 - 216
Idea-Support	240	218	184	70	46	120 - 240
Debate	216	231	173	83	30	133 - 216
Risk-Taking	180	210	156	65	36	100 - 180

Another way to look at your team's results is to see how they compare against the benchmarks plotted on a spider graph (see below). The benchmarks are results on the climate dimensions for those who have assessed both their most and least creative teams.

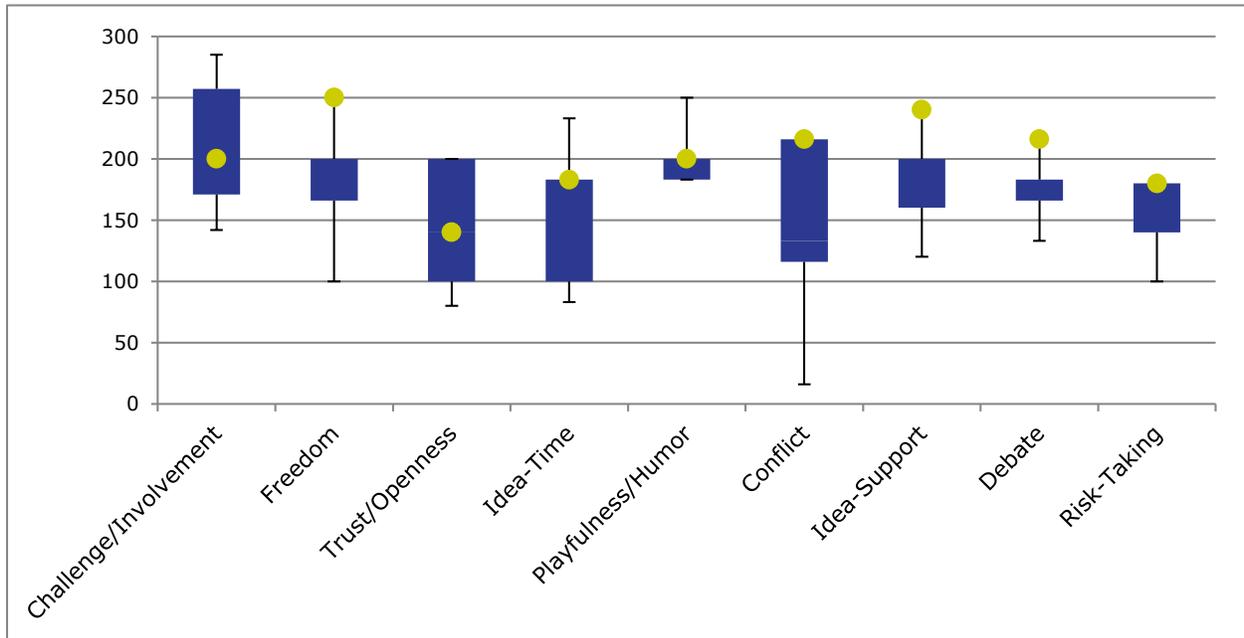


External benchmarks are not absolutes. They are provided merely for comparison purposes and provide some insight into the direction you may like to see your team move. You must consider many other factors in interpreting your team's results.

## Distribution - The Spread of Responses

You will see how your score may be similar or different from other members of your team – and how spread out the results may be for each climate dimension in the boxplots below.

The vertical line indicates the full range of scores for each dimension. For boxplots, the “whiskers” are the small horizontal lines on the top or bottom of the vertical line. The top or upper “whisker” indicates the highest score. The lower “whisker” indicates the lowest score for each dimension.



The larger “box” displays where 50% of the scores are distributed. The space between the top of the box and the upper “whisker” illustrates the upper quartile – the top 25% of the results. The space between the bottom of the box and the lower “whisker” displays the lower quartile – the lower 25% of the results.

Your individual scores are indicated above by the colored dot.

## Making Sense of Your Results

What happens after people get (and understand) their results from the SOQ? In the best-case situation, those who receive the results focus on what is working well, evaluate what needs to be changed, and then plan some ways forward.

There is no such thing as a “perfect” climate score. For example, your goal should **not** be obtaining a score of 300 on Debate and a zero on Conflict. If you have that much Debate, you may find that you can’t get anything accomplished. If Conflict is at zero, you may wonder if anyone has a personal investment in the success of the team.

### Comparing against benchmarks

As with any other form of feedback, you will find it useful to take a few minutes to step back and review your results on both parts of the SOQ. You are in the best position to know the other factors that may be affecting your climate results, and the results you are hoping to achieve. So, we always suggest that people start by reading and reviewing their results.

You can refer to the general benchmarks provided in the table above. Use these as very general guidelines in order to compare your results against other relevant findings. These benchmarks should not be used as “absolutes.” Rather, they can help you focus in on where your results are acceptable, and see where you may need some improvement.

### Identifying your strengths

Whenever you receive feedback, it is helpful to take a positive point of view, and focus first on identifying the good news that emerges. Compare your results with others within your organization, to identify areas you believe to be strong points of your climate. Consider scores where others may have had an average higher than yours, and those where there was close agreement. These strong points are the ones you want to build upon when you consider further development.

### Identifying important gaps

You may want to consider both the benchmarks and the climate you need to create in order to achieve the desired results for your team. In a way, you can set your own benchmarks for comparison over time. If you can recognize important gaps between where you are currently, and where your need to be, it will be easier to focus your change and improvement efforts.

### Identify targets for development

As with all assessments, you need to make your own judgment about what’s working well and areas needing attention. Your scores can be:

- Just about right for you and your team in the current situation
- Too low for you and your team in the current situation
- Too high for you and your team in the current situation

For each of the nine SOQ dimensions, we have included some general strategies that may lead to an improved set of behaviors for your team related to that dimension. In addition, we have identified some likely behaviors you would observe, some probable causes for those behaviors, and a few potential actions you might take if your scores are too high or too low.

You may find it more productive to select one or two climate dimensions that would make the most important difference to your team, rather than working on too many at once. You may also find it helpful to review the narrative results from Part B before making this choice.

# The Dimensions Diagnostic Tool

The following pages include detailed definitions of each of the nine dimensions of climate, as well as behaviors you may observe, probable causes, and potential actions for if that dimension is too high or low.

## CHALLENGE/INVOLVEMENT

Challenge/Involvement focuses on the extent to which individuals and teams are given opportunities to get involved in the daily operations, long-term goals, and vision of the organization. When there is a high degree of challenge and involvement people feel motivated, energized, and committed to making contributions. The climate is dynamic, electric, and inspiring. People find their work to be personally fulfilling and meaningful for themselves, their team, and their organization. In the opposite situation, people are not engaged and feelings of alienation and apathy are present. People lack direction, team members lack interest in their work, and interpersonal interactions are dull and listless.

General strategies to promote Challenge/Involvement include: taking time to cooperatively set group goals and celebrating the accomplishment of key milestones.

	Behaviors Observed	Probable Causes	Potential Actions
<b>TOO HIGH</b>	People are showing signs of 'burn out'.	People may be doing the work of more than one person.	Conduct work elimination sessions to remove unnecessary work. (GE's Work Out, IBM's ACT, etc.)
	People are unable to meet project goals and deadlines.	Work goals are too much of a stretch.	Encourage people to set more realistic and obtainable goals.
	People spend "too many" long hours at work.	People feel like they must do everything because there are no clear strategic priorities.	Examine and clarify strategic priorities and check on clarity of understanding.
<b>TOO LOW</b>	People are apathetic about their work.	People are not emotionally 'connected' to the organization's vision, mission, and goals.	Get people involved in interpreting the vision, mission, purpose, and goals of the organization, for themselves and their work teams.
	People are not generally interested in professional development.	Professional development goals don't stretch people to continuous learning.	Provide real-time coaching and feedback on work related to vision, mission, and goals.
	People are frustrated or unconcerned about the future of the organization.	There is a gap between the stated strategies and day-to-day realities.	Develop a plan to close the gap between the organization's vision, mission, and goals and day-to-day (current) reality.

## FREEDOM

Freedom refers to the degree that people can take initiative or have the liberty to act without constantly referring to higher authorities or 'rule books' for decisions. Individuals and team members exhibit independence in behavior and they are given the autonomy and resources to define much of their work. People are provided the opportunities and take initiatives to acquire and share information about their work. In the opposite climate people work within strict guidelines and are not allowed to take initiative. They carry out their work in prescribed ways with little room to redefine their tasks.

General strategies to promote Freedom include: ensuring that outcomes (projects, deliverables, or delegated tasks) are well defined, but letting individuals or teams develop their own means for obtaining them; and sharing power and decision-making where possible and appropriate.

	Behaviors Observed	Probable Causes	Potential Actions
<b>TOO HIGH</b>	People go off in their own independent direction with more concern for themselves than the work group or organization.	Insufficient explanation, instruction, reinforcement, or involvement in obtaining consensus on vision and desired outcome.	Make consensus or required procedures more clear, visible, and engaging.
	People do things that demonstrate little or no concern for important policies/procedures.	There may be too many policies/procedures or the costs for not following them may be too low.	Prioritize policies and procedures, provide positive reinforcement, and extract costs for non-compliance.
	People perform tasks differently and independently; they redefine how they are done each time.	People may not know the procedures, they could be too difficult to follow, or the need may be too low.	Reward improvement of manuals, process improvements, and ways to communicate and share best practices.
<b>TOO LOW</b>	People demonstrate very little initiative for suggesting new ways of doing things.	Authoritarian or overly bureaucratic leadership practices may be in place.	Employ a leadership improvement initiative - training, 360° feedback, coaching, managing up, etc.
	People spend a great deal of time and energy obtaining permission and gaining support (internally and externally).	Goals, processes, procedures, and improvements are imposed and not explained.	Involve employees in re-engineering efforts, and perhaps some team problem-solving sessions on specific high-priority tasks.
	People perform their work "by the book" and focus on what they are told to do.	The need for individual initiative is unclear.	Send clear messages by product/process owners inviting and specifying creative suggestions for improvement (sell the need as well!).

## TRUST/OPENNESS

Trust/Openness refers to the degree of emotional safety in relationships. When there is a high degree of trust, people are comfortable with one another and feel 'safe' enough to be open and honest with each other, in the spirit of constructive relationships. Individuals and team members are genuinely open and frank with one another. They count on each other for professional and personal support. People have a sincere respect for one another and give credit where credit is due. Where trust is missing, people are suspicious of each other, and therefore, they closely guard themselves, their plans, and their ideas. In these situations, people find it extremely difficult to openly communicate with each other and function as a team.

General strategies for promoting Trust/Openness include: establishing and reinforcing agreed guidelines and practices for working together; and involving others in activities that help people to get to know each other better.

	Behaviors Observed	Probable Causes	Potential Actions
<b>TOO HIGH</b>	Relationships are so strong that a great deal of time at work is spent on personal issues.	Close friends work together and do not separate work from personal issues when necessary.	Clarify priorities and rotate people in positions.
	Lack of questioning or development of suggestions - may lead to mistakes or less productive outcomes.	Individuals do not see the need for outside support, experience, or input in their work.	Create a forum to welcome questions (e.g., newsletters, upper management is visible and open to conversations).
	Cliques may form where there are "pockets" of high trust, but there is low trust across cliques.	People go through a traumatic work experience together and survive (e.g., down-sizing).	Develop opportunities for inter-departmental, cross-functional or inter-group exchange of information and ideas.
<b>TOO LOW</b>	People hoard resources (i.e., information, software, materials, etc.).	Lack of values and/or integrity among people.	Design an intervention to get feelings on the table and establish norms and values.
	People avoid getting feedback on new ideas for fear of having concepts stolen.	Traumatic organization experience - people feel "burned".	Promote a sense of community and a process to resolve tensions related to the stealing of ideas. Also, develop a formal recognition process.
	Management does not distribute resources fairly.	Management does not trust the capabilities and/or integrity of their employees.	Establish norms and values that management can follow regarding the disbursement of resources and a means to assure the resources are used wisely.

## IDEA-TIME

Idea-Time is the time people take to generate new ideas or consider the merits of existing ideas and opportunities. In the high idea-time situation, possibilities exist to discuss and test suggestions not included in the given definitions of the task assignment. There also are opportunities to take the time to explore and develop new ideas. Flexible timelines permit people to explore new avenues and alternatives. In the reverse case, every minute is booked and specified. The time pressure makes thinking outside the instructions and planned routines impossible.

General strategies for promoting Idea-Time include: convening special topic short-term working sessions; and devoting time during each meeting to explore one new idea.

	Behaviors Observed	Probable Causes	Potential Actions
<b>TOO HIGH</b>	People are showing signs of boredom.	People lack an achievement or results orientation.	Keep individuals informed of their personal, as well as the company's, progress on short- and long-term goals.
	Decisions are made through a slow almost bureaucratic process because there are too many ideas to evaluate and so much time dedicated to exploring them.	Individuals, teams, and managers lack the skills to handle large numbers of ideas and then converge or focus on the most practical idea(s) for implementation.	Provide project and program management training.
	The management of new ideas becomes such a task that short-term tasks and projects are not adequately completed.	Management lacks the ability to effectively manage and implement new ideas.	Provide training in creativity and facilitation of creative problem solving.
<b>TOO LOW</b>	People are only concerned with their current projects and tasks and have an unhealthy level of stress.	Project schedules are intense and do not allow time to refine the process to take advantage of new ideas; individuals are physically or mentally drained.	Develop project schedules that allow time for modification and development.
	People see professional development and training as hindrances to their ability to complete daily tasks and projects.	Professional development is not seen as a productive use of an individual's time.	The organization needs to stress the importance of the personal development of their employees to the future of the organization.
	Management avoids new ideas because they will take time away from the completion of tasks and projects.	The value of long-term improvements is not recognized when short-term goals and commitments need to be accomplished.	Provide managers with a means to evaluate new ideas and a method to determine if the long-term benefits of a delayed project are greater than the short-term setbacks.

## PLAYFULNESS/HUMOR

Playfulness/Humor refers to the amount of spontaneity and levity displayed within the organization. A professional, yet relaxed atmosphere where good-natured jokes and laughter occur often is indicative of this dimension. People can be seen having fun within the team and at work. The climate is seen as easy-going and light-hearted. The opposite climate is characterized by gravity and seriousness. The atmosphere is stiff, gloomy and cumbersome. Jokes and laughter are regarded as improper and intolerable.

General strategies for promoting Playfulness/Humor include: having designated places for sharing jokes, funny stories, etc.; and encouraging some wild and silly thinking at times.

	Behaviors Observed	Probable Causes	Potential Actions
<b>TOO HIGH</b>	Personal areas are cluttered with artifacts that impede work.	Individuals see work as a playground designed for their personal pleasure.	Promote a team/community spirit.
	Good-natured joking turns ugly (i.e.: racial/gender jokes, destructive practical jokes).	Lack of discipline or methods to address issues of harassment.	Making the line more clear between what is appropriate and what is not.
	Activities become so numerous that individuals lack desire to do them and participation may actually be viewed as an obligation or mandate.	It has become a policy and part of the organization's bureaucracy.	Make activity voluntary and engage employees in development and coordination of activities.
<b>TOO LOW</b>	Personal areas lack artifacts that provide personal pleasure.	Company policy or individual dislike of their work/company.	Modify policy or work with individual to increase job satisfaction (consider a special project or a transfer).
	People are listless and don't smile or interact beyond business-related discussion.	Excessive workload.	Examine tasks, remove repetition, work simplification.
	Company does not promote extracurricular activities.	Management does not see the business need for Playfulness/Humor on the job.	Encourage management to reflect on their own work environment and provide support from literature for the need and benefit of Playfulness/Humor.

## CONFLICT

Conflict means the presence of personal and emotional tensions. When the level of conflict is high, people dislike and may even hate each other. The climate can be characterized by "interpersonal warfare." Plots, traps, and power or territory struggles are usual ingredients of interacting. Personal differences yield gossip and slander. In the opposite case, people behave in a more mature manner; they have psychological insight and control of impulses. People welcome, accept, and deal effectively with diversity. Conflict is the only negative dimension, for which a lower score is generally better.

General strategies for reducing Conflict include: identifying common goals and expectations among people who are experiencing tension (finding common ground); and helping people see the effects of conflict.

	Behaviors Observed	Probable Causes	Potential Actions
<b>TOO HIGH</b>	Sabotaging of projects and/or undermining efforts of colleagues.	Lack of appreciation of talents and contributions of others.	Make diverse talents of others more apparent and valued.
	Overly sarcastic and nasty (sometimes borderline violent) confrontations	Inability to separate ideas from the people who suggest them, as well as, the inability to distinguish personal from professional relationships.	Conflict resolution intervention – help people to realize and reduce (personal) tensions.
	Invention and spreading of vicious, unfounded, and inappropriate rumors.	Overemphasis on competition and individualistic goals.	Increase the emphasis on and accountability for collaborative and cooperative goals.
<b>TOO LOW</b>	Individuals lack any outward signs of motivation or interest	Raises based on seniority, not merit.	Change the reward system and/or plan alternative forms of recognition.
	Meetings are “tell and forget” rather than seeking consensus.	Hierarchical structure overemphasizing top-down communication.	Change meeting format to develop consensus and seek interaction.
	Deadlines are not being met.	No sense of urgency.	Include employees in decision-making process.

## IDEA SUPPORT

Idea-Support refers to the ways new ideas are considered, taken up, or advocated. In the supportive climate, ideas and suggestions are received in an attentive and professional way. People listen to each other and encourage initiatives. Possibilities for trying out new ideas are created. The atmosphere is constructive and positive when considering new ideas. When Idea-Support is low, the automatic "no" is prevailing; fault-finding and obstacle-raising are the usual styles of responding to ideas.

General strategies for promoting Idea-Support include: developing a deliberate procedure for hearing and responding to new ideas; and keeping the criticism of ideas focused on the idea, not the person.

	Behaviors Observed	Probable Causes	Potential Actions
<b>TOO HIGH</b>	People are only deferring or suspending judgment.	People avoiding conflict - staying "too open".	Train people in the use of affirmative judgment tools.
	Nothing is getting done; there are too many options.	People are afraid to make important decisions.	Clarify roles and responsibilities; provide decision-making skills.
	Too many people are working in too many different directions.	There is no clear focus for thinking and acting.	Clarify project priorities and objectives.
<b>TOO LOW</b>	People shoot each other's ideas down.	People resist novel suggestions.	Train people in how to respond to novel thinking.
	People keep ideas to themselves.	Competition for recognition and reward.	Develop cooperative goal structures.
	A low number of ideas in idea suggestion system(s).	People don't think anything will be done (past experience).	Re-examine idea suggestion systems.

## DEBATE

Debate is the occurrence of encounters and disagreements between viewpoints, ideas, and differing experiences and knowledge. Conflict relates to personal tension while debate is related to idea-tension. In the debating climate all the voices are heard and people are keen to put forward their ideas for consideration, and their merits are openly debated and resolutions reached. Where debate is missing, people follow authoritarian patterns and procedures without questioning them or exploring alternatives.

General strategies for promoting Debate include: actively encouraging people to take and share different viewpoints and perspectives; and modeling effective listening (generously seeking the whole thought being sent before responding).

	Behaviors Observed	Probable Causes	Potential Actions
<b>TOO HIGH</b>	More talk than implementation.	Unclear strategic direction/priorities.	Management should involve employees in building strategic direction and continue to communicate.
	Individuals speak, but with little regard for other points of view.	Lack of listening skills.	Train in listening, non-verbal communication, and dialogue.
	Individualistic rather than organizational goals and visions become the focus of conversation and debate.	Too much diversity or different values.	Discuss and affirm common values.
<b>TOO LOW</b>	Constant moaning and complaining about the way things are rather than how the individual can improve the situation.	Decrease in management/employee interaction.	Increase the formal and informal interactions between management and employees (e.g., eat lunch together, make management more visible, socialize after work).
	One-on-one "secretive" conversations in hallways.	Individuals have small 'cliques' where they feel comfortable voicing opinions and ideas.	Develop and promote team building activities and introduce resources to increase communication.
	Lack of willingness by individuals to engage others in conversation regarding new ideas, thoughts or concepts.	People have had bad experiences when they have interacted in the past.	Clarify the rationale of debate in the organization and begin to model the behavior.

## RISK-TAKING

Risk-Taking refers to the degree to which people can tolerate ambiguity – make decisions and take action when facing uncertainty. People are prepared to live with the potential negative consequences. In the high risk-taking case, people take bold initiatives even when the outcomes are unknown. Individuals and team members feel as though they can "take a gamble" on ideas. They will often "go out on a limb" to put an idea forward. In a risk-avoiding climate there is a cautious, hesitant mentality. People will lack decisiveness, try to be on the "safe side" and often "sleep on the matter." They may set up committees, defer decisions to other teams, and cover themselves in many ways.

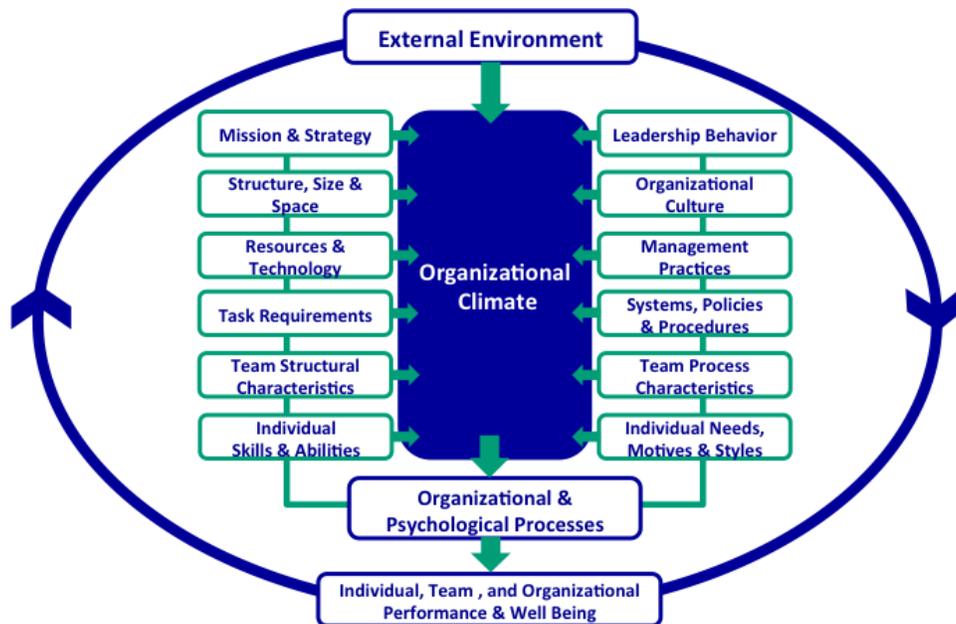
General strategies for promoting Risk-Taking include: reinforcing the importance of learning from mistakes; and provide "stretch" goals for projects and tasks while allowing for some ambiguity and uncertainty.

	Behaviors Observed	Probable Causes	Potential Actions
<b>TOO HIGH</b>	People are confused - there are many ideas, but few are sanctioned.	People have the freedom to come up with new ideas, but there is no structure for putting ideas into action.	Develop a deliberate plan for treatment of ideas.
	People are frustrated because nothing is getting done.	People spend so much time trying new things that day-to-day business gets left behind.	Allow dedicated time during the workday, separate from daily tasks or projects, for individuals to develop or test new ideas.
	There are many loners in the organization and no evidence of teamwork.	Individuals do not feel the need for consensus or buy-in from others within their team, department, or organization.	Provide team-building training and activities.
<b>TOO LOW</b>	Employees offer few new ideas.	In the past, ideas have been met with rejection.	Involve people in learning methods of idea generation that include deferred judgment.
	People complain about boring jobs (i.e., they have little control over their jobs).	Everything stays the same - there are no surprises /excitement in their jobs because it is safer to keep things constant.	Invite people to put forward ideas for change.
	People who put ideas forward are frustrated by a long, tedious process used to get ideas to action.	The organization does not value new ideas or has developed an evaluation system that is bureaucratic.	Develop a company plan that would speed up "ideas to action".

## Part B – The Narrative Results

Comments are often the most valuable part of the feedback process because they pick up where the numbers leave off. The quantitative section (Part A) of the SOQ provides you the numbers so that you can make broad comparisons with other results. Part B, as the narrative section, provides more depth and meaning to those numeric results.

The organizational work environment surrounding any team is complex, as many factors can influence your team's climate.



The narrative section of the SOQ asked you and other members of your team to respond to three open-ended questions:

**1. What aspect of your working environment is most helpful in supporting your creativity?**

Answers to this question help to identify the strengths or positive aspects of the environment that support or nurture change and creativity. Responses to this question identify strong foundation points upon which initiatives to change or improve the environment can take place.

**2. What aspect of your working environment most hinders your creativity?**

Answers to this question identify those aspects of the environment that hinder or interfere with the participants' ability to use their creative potential in promoting change. These blocks or barriers are identified in order to help target those aspects of the environment that may need change or improvement.

**3. What is the most important action you would take to improve the climate for creativity in your working environment?**

Answers to this question help identify what might be done to change or improve the climate for creativity and change. This question provides an array of specific actions participants would take to improve the working environment and can be used as a starting place for initiatives designed to enhance the working climate.

## **Illustrative Comments for the Sample Team Report**

All narrative comments from each team are included for team climate reports.

### **What aspect of your working environment is most helpful in supporting your creativity?**

1. Having freedom to work with people and teams across functions to get a well-rounded perspective. Also, the flexible working schedule. I work a lot of hours, but can do so from home and at night or on weekends. I can focus on my family first and my work schedule is adaptable.
2. With a large number of small projects with shorter cycles, the ability to “try new things” exists and is promoted.
3. In general, the management team allows free reign work environment where new ways to solve problems can be explored.
4. Good support and teaming from the multidisciplinary team.
5. I have a team that is enthusiastic to be creative!

### **What aspect of your working environment most hinders your creativity?**

1. People who at times want to find every reason not to try something. Everyone’s plates are very full, so finding time to think of new ideas or talk to others about them is difficult.
2. Perception by the supporting team that there is too much change caused by simple thinking of new ideas and evaluating whether or not those ideas should be pursued.
3. Too much time spent in meetings
4. Time - people are consumed with things that need to be done, and it usually takes more than one person and more than one meeting to accomplish creative actions.
5. Time is often a luxury we cannot afford. It is usually less time consuming to stick to known process than to venture out in “creativity land”

### **What is the most important action you would take to improve the climate for creativity in your working environment?**

1. I think we need to have a clear top down communications with goals and have a clear leadership team that is in sync with one another in how we are to accomplish those goals.
2. Multiple activities make it hard to be aware of everything that’s going on.
3. CLARITY. Better organizational structure (fewer levels with better defined goals.) At this time, having a manager of only one other manager seems not optimized. Assign clear responsibility and accountability to leaders, allowing them the opportunity to succeed.
4. I am encouraging better up front planning and resource balancing to allow more time to experiment with creative method/procedures, I also plan to continue to reward creativity by publically recognizing individuals for their creative contributions. This encourages others to try. Having an environment where creativity is appreciated sets the stage for it.
5. Reduce the number of critical meetings, so that we can focus and then reduce the distractions during those meetings.