Organizational Culture Audit: Quality Comprehensive Health Center

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Executive Summary

Access to grant funding and financial resources has created limitations for nonprofit organizations. These limitations have led to each organization competing for grants at a city, state, and national level. In addition, nonprofit organizations are adopting more commercial branding strategies. One tactic to remain competitive amongst others offering similar services, is to develop effective organizational culture. One method to develop an advantage is to act as a "metaphorical lens projecting the values of the organization" (Stride, 2006). This can be achieved through a communication audit of the organization.

A communication audit examines the organization's structure, hierarchy, communication programs and products, pub-lics, and strategic partnerships with other organizations. It also examines, analyzes, and assess past communication efforts to determine their effectiveness. An audit focuses on both the internal and external communication efforts of an organization (Diggs-Brown). This is essential when evaluating organizational culture as this will lead to greater collaboration efforts both internally and externally.

Upon conducting the communication audit for QCHC, I was quite surprised at the data received from both internal and external stakeholders. In the nonprofit sector, it requires the organization to display its mission and vision statement to its audience. This will result in more followers and supporters. Results from the audit shows that internally employees do not feel heard amongst members of leadership. This has created low employee engagement, and lack of trust between employees and leadership. Without clear HR department employees are often left to resolve matters on their own. By introducing a HR department, the organization can address some of the current practices in place. In addition, utilizing feedback from current employees, strategic planning can take place to improve conditions.

External communication practices struggle as data shows clients unaware of future events. This created a bad experience for clients looking to engage with the organization. Upon evaluating current social media analytics, the organization has an opportunity to improve. By implementing more social media campaigns, the organization can reach a younger demographic. In addition, the organization can add more tick-tock videos, or tutorials on safe sex practices.

Introduction

QCHC is a multi-faceted, one-stop shop organization, with two locations, one in Concord, NC and has been anchored in the West End, Charlotte, NC, community for over 17 years. As a brief overview of Quality Home Care Services, DBA Quality Comprehensive Health Center, (QCHC) we will review the organization's mission and purpose. QCHC mission is to promote wellness and health equity for those living with health disparities in the Carolinas.

QCHC provides services to patients within the West End community and the surrounding area. By removing barriers to care for individuals and families and providing the highest standard of primary and specialty healthcare to patients. By providing a "one stop shop" style of service delivery for the community, QCHC reaches those in need. This will be achieved through the vision of being an exemplary health services organization with global impact. Key figures include the current Chief Executive Officer, Lisa Wigfall. In addition is the current Deputy Director, Ra'Shawn D. Flournoy (QCHC, 2023).

Competitors include other local nonprofits with similar offerings. Competing organizations are RAO Community Health, RAIN, and Amity Medical Group. The organization's main competitor is another community agency, RAIN. By hosting a variety of events, RAIN can attract a broader range of supporters. This typically leads to unrestricted funds that has allowed access to more culturally diverse content. RAO Community Health Center is the next competing provider in the area. By offer an all-inclusive health care system, the organization provides a more comprehensive solution to those in care. The final competitor of QCHC is Amity Medical Group also offering similar services the organization includes a pharmacy as well.

Having knowledge of their current communication practices can provide leverage for reconstructing organizational practices. We will examine current practices of QCHC through a communication audit that will serve as a guide for developing future strategies. By first identifying organizational culture, QCHC will be able to reconstruct current communication practices while creating future frameworks. We will then examine the culture audit process by

Defining Organizational Culture

While there have been several attempts to create a definition for organizational culture, there still isn't a definitive answer or method to measure performance. In addition, business culture varies depending on the organization's background. A past study conducted by Watkins revealed more than 300 responses including rich and varied perspectives and opinions on organizational culture, its meaning and importance (Watkins, 2013). This process included a collaborative process of creating shared awareness and understanding of different individuals' perspectives and varied interests. **Results show X Y Z. Start second study information.** This allows comparison of organizations/cultures based on internal and external variables.

Table 1 provides a summary of the various definitions of culture provided in the research.

Author	Definition
Keyton (2010)	"Is a primary means for understanding organizations and their communication practices"
Watkins (2013)	"It gives us a handle on how to diagnose problems and even to design and develop better cultures"

Table 1 Definitions of organizational culture

Utilizing the above definitions, I was able to create my own organizational culture.

"a company's internal values driven by employees' actions (behaviors, communication styles, etc,.) within the organization, these framework(s) are governed by cultural norms"

This definition identifies how important employees' actions impact an organization's overall culture. It is important to first examine cultural artifacts and then determine their consistency with espoused values and assumptions, identify conflicts in espoused and actual beliefs and values, re-examine deeply held assumptions and identify their validity, and develop an action plan for addressing inconsistencies in any of the cultural levels.

Inclusiveness:
- Inclusiveness: offering content that portrays viewers to identify with the organization
- Criteria: A "brand diamond" is an example of a brand portrait which moves beyond simple identification of what has been somehow lodged or stored in the mind about the brand, towards an identification of some of what this means to the consumer (Owen, 2002). Inclusiveness is important when constructing an organization audit. This will lead to viewers making a connection to the brand itself.

Effectiveness:
- Effectiveness: the measurement of an organization's productivity
- Criteria: In the conclusion of Sipe and Testa's research analysis, we learn of a five-step model for analyzing ten cultural areas (Sipe & Testa, 2011). This example provides a detailed guide to consider the objectives of an audit and effective organizational strategies.
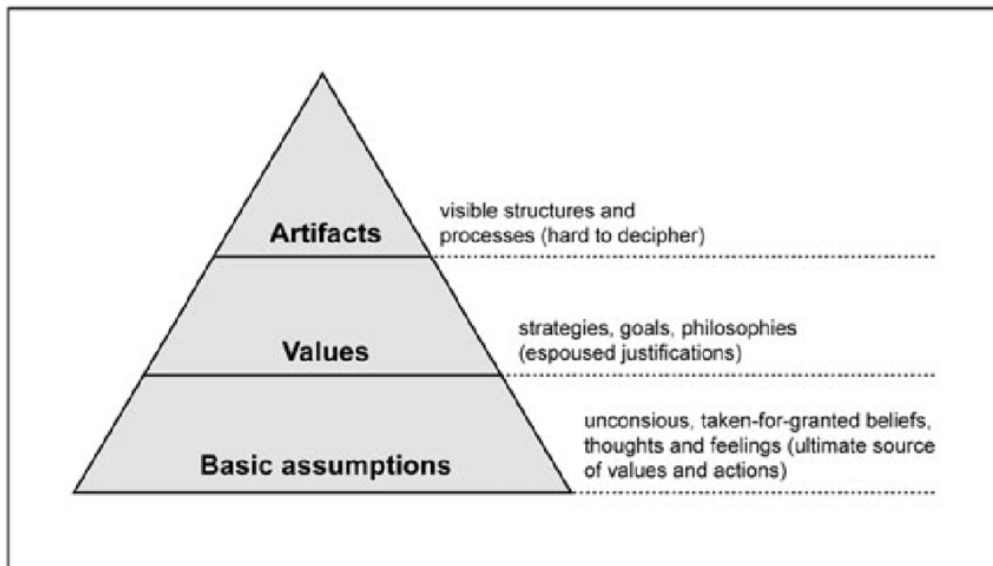

Figure 1: Culture audit process based on levels of culture model

At the initial point of organizational culture are artifacts. Artifacts often include tangible things that one may see, feel or hear. These items can be easily observed by individuals and then interpreted into symbolic representation. This often leads to misconceptions of what represents organizational culture as it's left for interpretation. At the next point, we have values which include things that are often viewed both internal and external. For example, strategic goals for the organization. Lastly, we have basic assumptions which are unspoken thoughts or feelings. This can be gathered through a variety of research instruments such as surveys, observations, and questionnaires.

Methodology

The research instruments used to conduct the audit includes a variety of methods that were driven by internal and external factors. It is important to have knowledge of available instruments to gather data from stakeholders. For example, these include questionnaires, interviews, rating and attitude scales, and tests. These tools will be essential in capturing information from individuals.

First, I determined the best possible instruments to help identify the current organizational culture within QCHC. With QCHC being a federal not for profit organization, access to funding was limited however it didn't take away from the data obtained. I decided to use instruments such as interviews, surveys, and questionnaires. After selecting the research instruments, I started creating questions for the interviews and questionnaires. I found this to be unique as interviews typically provide information for a response. whereas questionnaires aim to gather data. While these two processes were very similar, it allowed me to gather data in a different format with the same goal in mind.

Lastly, the surveys were mainly conducted through an online portal, Jotform. This method was used for both internal and external stakeholders. This allowed me to check data easily by being housed in one space. They also allow me to obtain data anonymously to protect the identity of the individual.

Audit Diary

March
- Created brand analysis
- Determined if organizational culture and brand are in alignment
- Created permission form for interviewees
- Created a checklist for observing organizational culture
- Identified relevant organizational communication theories to inform the analysis and recommendations
- Gathered resources about organizational culture and brand identity

April
- Created surveys using Jotform (see links in Appendix)
- Started interviewing with internal and external stakeholders
    - April 8: At the community event, I was able to speak with both current employees and clients. This allowed me to gather information about the organization but I noticed where individuals were reluctant to sharing in a group setting
    - April 12: I visited the organization for testing and had the chance to talk to a few employees at that time
    - April 22: I attended a block party hosted by the organization. I was able to speak with volunteers who organized the event. This allowed me to gain more perspective on external affairs
- Started evaluating the obtained data

Results of the Audit Process

The Audit includes the following steps:

1. Identification of the organization's vision, mission, values, and strategic goals
2. A brief narrative on the desired culture
3. Selection of the audit team
4. Data collection
5. Interpretation and reporting

Step 1: Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Goals

The initial step of conducting the audit requires a thorough evaluation of the organization's current practices and future vision for evolution. This includes the vision, mission, values and goals, which will play a role in determining future efforts. For example, an organization seeking to reach individuals in need of health care, must have a culture that supports this goal.

Vision: *"to be an exemplary health services organization with global impact"*

Mission: *"To promote wellness and health equity for those living with health disparities in the Carolinas"*

Values: *"provide the highest standard of primary and specialty healthcare to all our patients"*

Step 2: Culture Narrative

The purpose of the cultural audit is to determine opportunities to improve the organizational culture. In addition, it will identify areas of opportunities that will strengthen the current culture. Therefore, an initial step must be a clear description of the desired culture.

Questions to consider in this step are as follows:

1. How do you want employees to view QCHC?
2. How do you want clients to view QCHC?
3. What feelings do you want to come to mind when thinking about QCHC?
4. What narratives best illustrate what QCHC stands for?

This section should contain enough information such as values and beliefs. In addition, concise details that allow cultural diversity.

Step 3: Selection of the Audit Team

To determine cultural deficiencies, selecting a group of employees from separate areas will allow more diverse feedback. The purpose of the audit is to examine the impact of artifacts, policies, and practices. These all contribute to organizational culture. It's important to include staff from all areas of the organization to ensure feedback is received from everyone.

Step 4: Data Collection

A diverse range of methods seeking to gather data for the communication audit. A variety of methods focusing on a variety of areas should be used to collect the data for the culture audit. Taking a patchwork approach, leaders should not rely on one or two pieces of information to assess the culture but should examine multiple aspects over multiple instances from multiples sources. This could include employee interviews, manager interviews, guest interviews and focus groups. To assess the physical artifacts of the culture, focused walk-throughs and physical plant reviews would be useful. To capture deeper components of the culture, observation of employee-employee, employee-guest, and employee-leader interactions would be revealing. Finally viewing various documents such as training manuals, orientation manuals, standard operating procedures may provide insight.

Step 5: Interpretation and Reporting

The last step for the audit is evaluating data and research obtained throughout the process. Results of observations can be summarized in spreadsheets that allows visual analysis of the culture audit. Figure 2 offers an example of infographic material that shows data from QCHC.

Culture Category	Areas to Observe	Areas of Opportunity
Artifacts	Website:www.qchealth.org/ Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Newletters	More posts regarding cultural beliefs, more social media engagement
Values	Employees, volunteers, clients, stakeholders	Create open door policy, more employee and client engagement initiatives
Assumptions	Employee morale, repeat client, conversion rate for retention	More surveys for feedback, create strong outreach strategies

Conclusions and Recommendations

Many organizations view branding as an external communication activity that is unrelated to the internal activity of an organization. My analysis of organizational culture within QCHC will allow the organization to reach a broader audience. This could potentially lead to more donors and funders who will further support the organization. Support can include monetary donations, networking opportunities, and even more volunteers with the organization. QCHC's is unique, and that it is the only African American CDC funded organization within the Carolinas. In addition, the organization is in a lower socioeconomic community within the Charlotte metropolitan area. This is a strength as the organization aims to attract more black and brown clients. Given the grant requirements of minority clients, it is important to meet individuals where they are, and the organization is big on doing so.

The organization has an opportunity to improve both internal and external communication methods. First, we will examine the current practices for internal communication. After having the chance to interview several employees most felt the organization lacked a clear policy for contacting members of leadership. Most astonishingly I've found it interesting that three out of five employees didn't know the organization's mission statement. This is a major opportunity to address internal communication practices as the mission statement plays a huge role in constructing organizational culture. In addition, QCHC lacks a Human Resources team which contributes to lower employee retention. By implementing several human resource strategies QCHC can first discover the needs of current employees. Utilizing this feedback, the organization can then develop policies to ensure a safe place for employees.

The organization has a huge opportunity to connect with younger generations. I recommend that QCHC implement more social media campaigns. This will allow individuals that are new to the Charlotte area an opportunity to receive healthcare services. By increasing social media presence QCHC can broaden current audiences. This can be achieved by boosting a variety of content geared towards younger demographics. Based on a social media analysis, on average QCHC posts 4 posts monthly on its Instagram account over the past year. For example, competitors of QCHC generally post more content aside from healthcare. This has resulted in more followers as viewers are able to connect to relevant information. For example, posting "employee of the month" can showcase individual's accomplishments while introducing them to followers online.

The final recommendation includes creating a drop-in center for individuals that identify as LGBTQ. This drop in space can offer individuals a safe space to express who they are. This can also lead to more testing and educational information to prevent STI's and sexually transmitted diseases. Not only would this space offer healthcare needs, but also lifestyle resources as well. This will further improve both internal and external communication as the agency has more accessibility to the clients being served.

Appendix

The appendix includes all items used to perforn1 the audit, such as questionnaires, surveys, interview transcripts, and analyzed products. It should also include the raw data gathered.

Items Used

- Questionnaires:
- Surveys:

Internal	External
Employee Engagement: https://form.jotform.com/231167453001141	Client Feedback: https://form.jotform.com/221766553287162

- Interview Transcripts:

Interviews:

Employee: Kevin - I was able to gain valuable insight on how the organization works internally. This will be beneficial when implementing ideas to reconstruct the organization.

Volunteer: Terrance - I was able to get more details on the history of the organization and what attracted them to the brand itself. This will be important when working with nonprofits specifically.

- Analyzed Products: Trello project management tool
- Raw Data Gathered: Social Media Analytics

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