# Lab 3.1: Defining Your Organization’s Overall Culture

The purpose of this lab is for you to better understand and define your organization’s overall culture. Building a strong security culture is not about changing your organization’s culture but aligning with and embedding security into it. As such, your first step is to better understand your overall culture. For the purpose of this lab, focus on what your workforce feels and believes (the music) and not on what your leadership says (the words).

## 1. Words or Terms That Best Describe Your Organization’s Culture

For this lab, we asked the AI solution ChatGPT for the top 20 words/phrases that describe a conservative company culture and an outgoing company culture. Go through the list and circle the words you feel best describe your culture. You may find yourself circling words in both categories, which is quite normal.

**CONSERVATIVE**

Traditional

Conventional

Hierarchical

Bureaucratic

Rule-bound

Risk-averse

Slow-moving

Resistance to change

Emphasis on stability

Formal

Authoritative

Emphasis on chain of command

Respect for authority

Emphasis on order and control

Emphasis on compliance

Emphasis on preserving status quo

Emphasis on efficiency

Focused on results

Disciplined

Adherence to policies and procedures

**OUTGOING**

Dynamic

Agile

Innovative

Creative

Entrepreneurial

Collaborative

Adaptable

Risk-taking

Experimental

Transparent

Empowering

Open-minded

Diverse

Inclusive

Fun

Energetic

Team-oriented

Results-driven

Flexible

Outspoken

## 2. Conservative or Outgoing?

Did you find yourself circling more words in the Conservative or Outgoing column? On a scale of 1–10 (where 1 is extremely conservative and 10 is extremely outgoing), how would you rate your organization’s overall culture? Why do you feel that is the case?

## 3. How Will Your Organization’s Culture Drive Your Approach to Security?

Now that you have a better understanding of your organization’s overall culture, how will that drive how you engage your workforce? What is or is not acceptable when attempting to communicate to, train, or secure your workforce?

## 4. Past Failures?

Is there a specific training initiative, tool rollout, or communications effort you tried in the past that did not work or was outright rejected by your workforce? Why do you think that may have been the case? Did it go against the culture of your organization, perhaps?

## The lab is complete. Do not go beyond this point.

# Example

Below is an example of what a cultural analysis can look like. This is taken from the example project plan in the back of your lab workbook and is based on the fictional company Linden Insurance.

## 4.2 Cultural Analysis

Overall, the company still has a strong family feel to it, even though it has grown dramatically in the past 35 years. Leadership likes to make sure employees feel taken care of, including having very strong health and retirement benefits. Employees feel safe and trust leadership to take care of them. However, due to the original founders and the nature of the insurance industry and how heavily it is regulated, the overall culture is still conservative, with a focus on stability. As such, edgy humor will most likely not be effective, nor will we attempt to intimidate or scare people. Instead, we intend to leverage the family feel of our company.

Our training will be positive and encouraging. We want to create a sense of how we are all in this together, working as a family, with an emphasis of how the security team is supportive, approachable, and helpful. Many of the events and training will focus not just on work-related topics but on home and family topics, such as securing your kids. We understand there may be cultural differences with our office in Montreal, Canada. As such, we will have a representative from each country on our advisory board guide us on how to best approach each country. We will follow these five principles to guide our program and how we engage and train our workforce:

1. We will understand and align with our family-focused culture. Whenever possible, we will focus on personal/family benefit as well as benefit to the organization.
2. We will clearly communicate what outcomes are expected in an open and transparent way that is easy for people to both understand and follow.
3. We will ensure that the “why” is communicated for each behavior or topic.
4. We will ensure communications are positive, with an emphasis on enabling people to make the most of technology safely and securely.
5. We will use recognition as a primary incentive whenever possible. We want to make heroes out of those doing the right thing.