

CULTURE AND CONTROL

Control is the management function that is closely tied to planning and organizing. Control involves the monitoring of tasks and activities to determine if they are accomplished effectively and efficiently.

Control involves setting standards (often these are derived from planning goals), using the standards to "measure" or evaluate progress or performance and providing feedback to take corrective action if necessary. Because control is closely tied to planning and organizing (structure is used to control activities), it too is impacted by culture.

Culture appears to affect the general characteristic of the control system used ranging from a systematic-detailed system to an informal one. Culture appears to influence the preference for one of two common types of control methods : (1) *Direct* control which involves personal contact between the manager and the individual(s) sh/e is seeking to control, e.g., face-to-face, phone, fax, e-mail, staffing practices, etc. and (2) *Indirect control* which involves using impersonal forms of control that usually focuses on results, e.g., budgets, schedules, written reports, etc. Finally, the chart reveals that culture may impact some of the content of the standards or control tools used.

Assumptions and Control

Cultures that submit rather than control their environment tend to use informal control systems and direct methods of control. Since the culture assumes people have little control over their actions, they do not invest much in control systems. When they exercise control, they use direct methods rather than developing elaborate written reports etc. Cultures who believe they have control, over their environments invest in developing systematic control systems and use both types of control methods in their systems to make it as comprehensive as possible.

Cultures that believe people are somewhat irresponsible tend to invest in systematic control systems to insure that things will be accomplished as desired. If people are basically responsible, then there is no need to check as frequently since people can be trusted to accomplish their tasks. Informal routine checks are all the control that is necessary.

Monochronic cultures prefer to schedule time and activities and use indirect controls quite heavily which have detailed information on the results desired for any project/task. Polychronic people work on more than one task/project at a time; time is not as valuable so it does not have to be scheduled tightly; instead, they rely on direct controls as they are more flexible to use, and their system requires less detail again for flexibility in working on more than one task at a time.

Managers in public space cultures like to be in the midst of the action so they rely on informal control systems which they can apply directly as needed. Since managers in private space cultures tend to work more on their own isolated from others, they rely on a more systematic control system that includes both formal direct controls as well as indirect controls to evaluate the tasks they have not been able to observe regularly.

Low context cultures have a preference for control systems that provide explicit standards and feedback to act upon; whereas, high context cultures prefer more general goals and indirect feedback as they are able to determine what corrective action is needed from the situation and not just control feedback.

ASSUMPTIONS AND CONTROL

<u>Assumptions</u>	<u>Control Characteristics</u>	- <u>Types of Controls</u>	<u>Control Standards & Content</u>
<u>Environment</u>	Informal	Direct	-

Submit Control	Systematic	Direct/indirect	-
<u>Human Nature</u> Evil	Systematic	-	-
Good	Informal	-	-
<u>Time</u> Mono	-	Indirect	Detailed info, results
Poly	-	Direct	Less details, milestones
<u>Space</u> Private	Systematic	Direct	-
Public	Informal	Indirect	-
<u>Context</u> Low	-	-	Explicit feedback
High	-	-	Indirect feedback

Values and Control

High PD cultures have a preference for direct control methods, for it emphasizes the manager's power to exert control; whereas, low PD managers prefer indirect controls which enables employees to determine for themselves how well they are meeting standards and whether they need to take any corrective action.

UA affects a society's need for order in their lives. High UA cultures require more order due to their intolerance for the unknown. As a result, high UA cultures create order by developing systematic control systems which enables them to more accurately monitor employee progress; use a mix of direct and indirect controls with detailed standards to provide as much certainty in their control efforts as possible.

Cultures that rely on individualist values use individual pressure to control by holding one personally responsible for their organization's performance. Such cultures feel that organizational standards should only be applied to job performance and not to their personal lives. Collective cultures expect the work group to extend beyond the company walls so they expect to be held to company standards affecting their non-work lives as well as their job performance; they rely on group peer pressure to persuade people to uphold company standards (loss of face in the work group).

Cultures that ascribe to feminine values of cooperation, quality and process prefer process approaches to control; they prefer direct control because of the interpersonal processes involved and they focus on process

based standards such as quality, service, convenience, etc. Masculine cultures like results so they use performance (bottom line) standards for control and like to use indirect control methods that rely on such standards such as budgets and profit & loss statements.

Thus, culture affects not only the need for control but also how the control is conducted.

[References: 10, 11, 13, 21, 26, 31]

VALUES AND CONTROL

<u>Values</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Types of Control</u>	<u>Control Standards & Content</u>
<u>Power Distance</u> Low High	– –	Indirect Direct	– –
<u>Uncertainty Avoidance</u> Low High	Informal Systematic	Indirect Direct/Indirect	General Standards Detailed Standards
<u>Self-orientation</u> Collective Individual	Group pressure to keep standards Individual pressure to keep standards	– –	Standards for work and personal life Standards for work
<u>Assertiveness</u> Feminine Masculine	– –	Direct Indirect	Milestones and process standards Performance based standards

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