

Creating a customer service culture in the public sector

Industry

Local Government
Victorian City Council

Diagnostic Tool

Organisational Culture Inventory

Total Staff

700

Annual Budget

A\$64 Million

The Challenge

Figure 1 shows the culture of the Council before the changes were implemented.

Whilst this is a reasonably healthy culture profile, the organisation was in a state of flux due to a number of changes including CCT (Compulsory Tendering), and the challenge of moving from a public service approach to a more commercially orientated and customer service focus. Large scale redundancies were also causing stress and tension in the workforce and workplace.

The re-test 18 months later (Figure 2) shows a clear increase in the **Constructive Styles** and a reduction in all but the **Oppositional** in the **Aggressive Defensive Styles**.

The **Passive Defensive Styles** also reduced dramatically, a clear shift to a more committed and empowered workforce.

A further re-test 3 years after the first survey (Figure 3) shows continuing improvement in the culture.

Figure 1: N=193

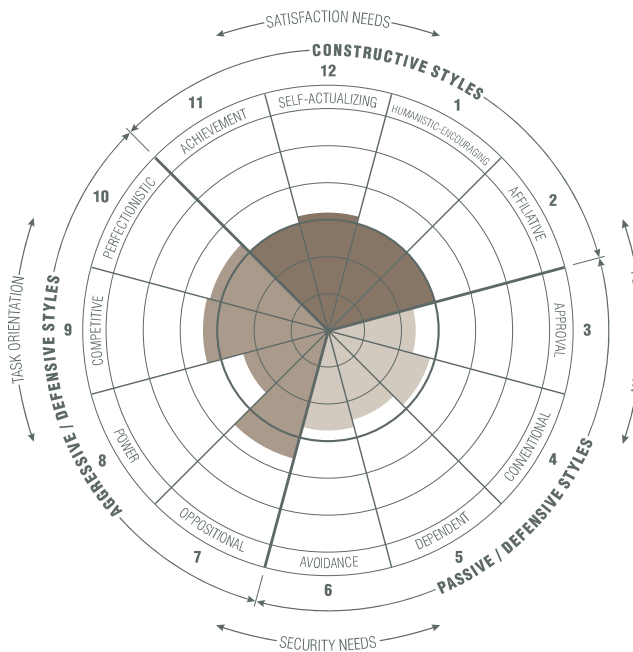
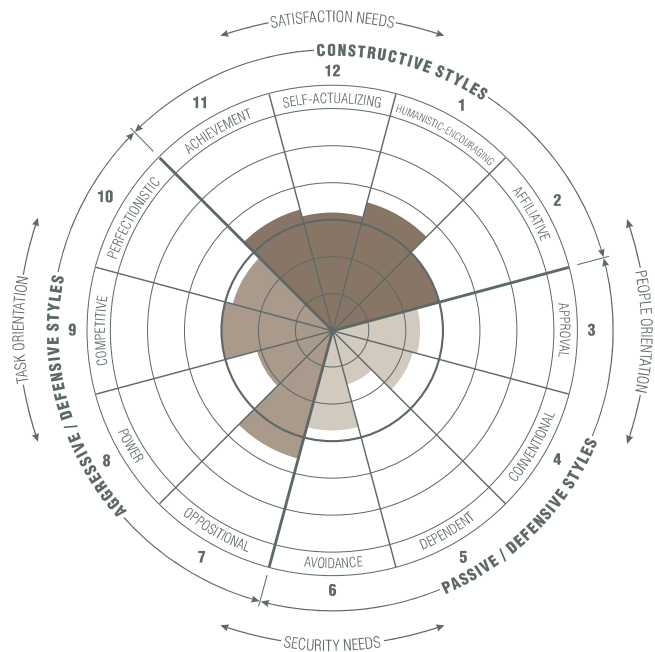


Figure 2: N=207



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Outcomes

The impact of this **Constructive** culture on improved customer service has been dramatic. As a result the organisation has been recognised in two independent customer service awards.

- Winning of the Victorian State Customer Service Award for their Organisation Development and Customer Service division, and subsequent nomination for the National Award.
- Topping 7 of the 11 customer satisfaction categories in an independent State Government review of State Local Authorities.

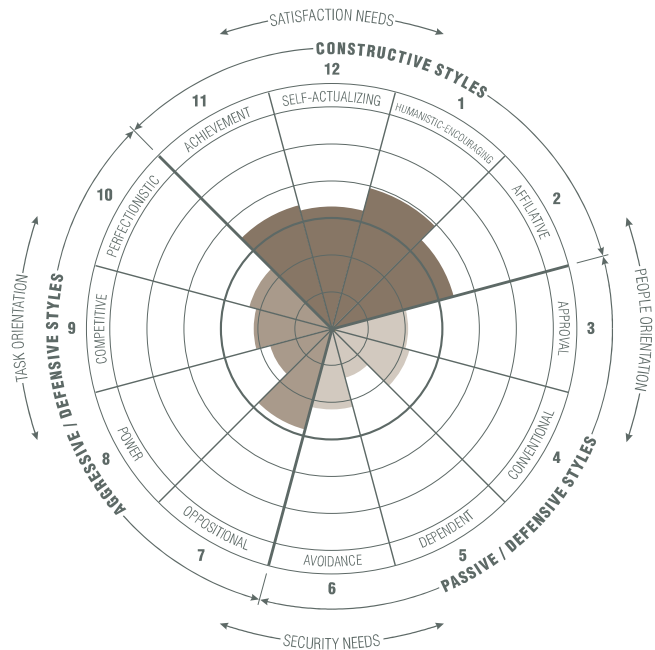
Key Strategies

Key tools used in this intervention include the Life Styles Inventory (LSI), which was used with all Directors and extensively in some divisions.

The Group Styles Inventory was also introduced as a key process to facilitate an understanding of the impact of individual behaviours in group interactions. These were implemented in conjunction with problem solving and decision-making simulations. A lot of work has been done internally on why the organisation needed to change and the benefits of a positive change process.

The morale, turnover rates and staff satisfaction levels are amongst the best measured by Human Synergistics.

Figure 3: N=245



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