

# Assess

## CLARITY

**Can 100% of employees describe your workplace culture?** · Are there groups that cannot? · How does the organization communicate its culture? · Are there recognizable subcultures, and do they coexist or conflict? · Does employee conduct align with the organization's values and goals?

**How do you negotiate diversity in your workplace?** · Does your firm recruit for diversity, then onboard for sameness? · For an employee to be the "right fit," what differences are allowed and supported, and in what aspects is it expected that one adopt the firm's culture? · Are you asking people to assimilate (lose important differences) or acculturate (retain important differences) in relation to dominant-group thinking and behavior?

## TRUST

**What behaviors are rewarded?** · How are behaviors that contribute to a positive workplace culture supported, evaluated, and recognized, and are all employees enabled to perform them? · Are there new behaviors that can be encouraged and rewarded? · Are people held equally accountable for their actions?

**How are issues managed?** · Is it safe for all employees to take risks, ask for help, and learn from their mistakes? · Are problems communicated and discussed, and is there time and support offered to address and learn from them?

## POWER

**Who shapes culture in your workplace?** · What are the attitudes and behaviors of leaders, and do they align with the business strategy? · Is there a consensus on priorities, and are leaders equipped to lead? · Can you increase opportunities for more people with different identities, experiences, and positions to contribute to decision-making that helps shape culture?

**Who benefits from the culture, and who is disadvantaged?** · Does the culture support everyone to do their best work? · How do the values of the organization relate to those of different individuals, and what are the behaviors through which individual and collective values can be demonstrated? · Does your culture prize some aspects of work (for example, design) over others, causing you to undervalue people who make significant contributions in other areas?

## CONNECTIONS

**How do cultures of your clients affect your firm culture?** · Do you recognize the full range of cultural identities or workplace cultures of your clients? · Are you engaging their cultures effectively in all communications? · Do the needs and values of clients play a role in how teams are managed or individuals are treated? · If so, are those client needs and values congruent with your firm's culture?

**What other cultures impact your workplace culture?** · Is there a legacy culture at your firm that helps or hinders goals for your future culture? · Which local, regional, and national communities do you engage with? · Is there an architecture school or program with which you have close ties and whose culture might affect yours? · Do you pay attention to generational and social changes and adapt to them?

# We have a strong and healthy workplace culture when...

## CLARITY

the workplace culture is deliberately shaped

---

100% of people in the organization can describe its culture

---

clients are aware of and can connect with the firm's values

## COMPLIANCE

risks are controlled to protect workers from physical harm

---

the work environment is supportive, not hostile

---

harassment is not tolerated and has clear consequences

## ALIGNMENT

values and goals of the business align with the workplace culture

---

language and behaviors reinforce positive culture

---

onboarding and ongoing training teach how to be effective within the workplace

---

messaging is consistent from leadership, managers, human resources

---

leaders and employees work together to assess and guide culture

## TRUST

everyone is respected and interacts respectfully

---

everyone is heard when sharing their perspectives

---

some risk-taking is allowed

---

mistakes are managed, not punished

---

problems are met with curiosity, not blame

---

work environment is engaging, not threatening

---

success is a win-win outcome

## ENGAGEMENT

social relationships are fostered

---

everyone takes responsibility for a positive culture

---

leaders model empathy and compassion

---

leaders are seen as fair and able to forgo self-interest

---

the meaning of work is emphasized

---

retention is high, absenteeism is low

---

employee and client referrals are common