

Corporate Culture Gender Diagnosis

New tool analyses gender bias of corporate culture

Research on the position of women in organisations regularly refers to a “male-dominated culture”, i.e. a corporate culture typified by competition, one-upmanship, reluctance to express uncertainty, and long working hours. Cultural aspects such as these may make it difficult for women to move up the company ladder. What can organisations do about it? How can they analyse their corporate culture and then change it? An interview with Annemieke van Beek (VanDoorneHuiskes), who developed the Corporate Culture Gender Diagnosis method.

What is Corporate Culture Gender Diagnosis?

“Essentially, it’s a tool that allows you to identify which of a company’s cultural features are favourable or unfavourable to women’s careers. The diagnosis is based on the Organisational Culture Inventory (OCI), a widely-used assessment developed by Human Synergistics that helps you describe an organisation’s

culture – based on questionnaires completed by employees - in terms of dominant styles. The OCI is used to analyse a wide range of different organisational issues. What we’ve done is add another instrument that allows us to look specifically at how corporate culture impacts the promotion of women.”

How does it work?

“One of the organisations where we’ve used Corporate Culture Gender Diagnosis is De BasisHilverZorg, a large-scale care institution.

We first surveyed the percentage of women in each branch of the organisation and found that the glass ceiling in the upper echelons was close to impenetrable for them. We then had 160 employees – categorised by job title, salary scale, gender, and work location – fill in a questionnaire. We analysed the data, drew up a report on our findings, and discussed them with the management at a special meeting. The result was that we were able to provide a clear picture of the culture and subculture at De BasisHilverZorg, with a summary of cultural features that influence women’s career progress within the organisation. We also made suggestions for follow-ups.”

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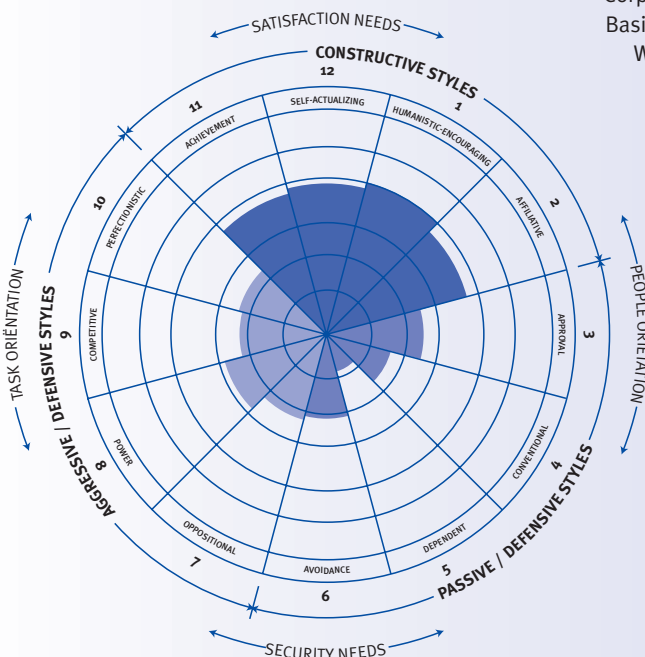


Figure: Profile successful service organisation.

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CORPORATE CULTURE GENDER DIAGNOSIS

VanDoorneHuiskes and partners can perform a corporate culture gender diagnosis for all kinds of organisations, opening up the subject of organisational culture and making it possible to influence that culture. On request, we will look specifically at how your organisational culture influences women's career opportunities.

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What is the value of corporate culture diagnosis?

“The results of the diagnosis are presented as a cultural profile, a detailed description of the organisational culture based on the twelve organisational styles that play a greater or lesser role within the company. For example, there is the Competitive cultural style, the Approval cultural style, the Affiliative cultural style, and the Conventional cultural style. Because the OCI questionnaire specifically investigates behaviour, all twelve styles can be traced to the way people working in the relevant organisation actually behave. That means that culture becomes something tangible that you can talk about. Focusing on culture in this way really raises awareness and makes it easier to take the next step, i.e. to influence that culture.”

And how do you influence organisational culture?

“It’s precisely the process of describing cultural features in terms of behaviour that allows you to redirect organisational culture. For example, let’s say we analyse a company that scores a lot of points on avoidance behaviour – doesn’t take risks, punishes mistakes. That company isn’t likely to appoint a woman to an executive position. As soon as you know that the dominant style is avoidance, you can agree to redirect the culture so that people aren’t so much punished for their errors as rewarded for sticking their necks out and encouraged to learn from their mistakes. You can also use this information to modify the management profile, because in the end it’s the managers who exercise the most influence on corporate culture by the way they deal with their employees and the instruments they use.”



DEVELOPED BY VANDOORNEHUISKES

Corporate Culture Gender Diagnosis was developed by VanDoorneHuiskes as part of the Mixed project. Mixed involves developing, disseminating, and field-testing a range of tools intended to promote women’s careers. Corporate Culture Gender Diagnosis is one of these and is currently being used at the following organisations: De BasisHilverZorg, Grontmij consulting engineers, Randstad Group Netherlands, and the Fund for Amateur Art and Performing Arts. VanDoorneHuiskes worked with project partner Opportunity Advies at the latter two organisations. Mixed is a joint project being carried out by the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (Directorate-General for Equal Opportunities Policy) and seven expert organisations. It is part of the European Union’s EQUAL Programme. For more information, see www.mixed-equal.nl/index.pl/english.

CULTURAL DIAGNOSIS AT RANDSTAD

*Corporate Culture Gender Diagnosis was used at Randstad Group Netherlands to investigate why far fewer women had made it to the top of the Dutch organisation than in other Randstad organisations abroad. According to **Sieto de Leeuw, social and legal affairs director at Randstad Group Netherlands**, “Earlier analyses had already shown us that we respect masculine values more than feminine ones here. Although men aren’t even aware of it, a male-dominated culture keeps women from advancing to the top of the ladder. VanDoorneHuiskes’s Corporate Culture Gender Diagnosis not only allowed us to analyse our corporate culture, it also raised our awareness.”*

“The diagnosis showed that our primary style is one of approval: it’s important to be thought of as nice. That’s all fine and well, but it makes it difficult to express your opinions. Our secondary style could be described as avoidance. People take few risks and avoid conflict. In other words, we have a somewhat defensive culture, and it seems that men do better than women in that kind of culture. We had lower scores when it came to the constructive cultural styles, typified by open channels of communication and a focus on getting results. Yet these are styles in which women thrive. There’s basically nothing wrong with wanting approval, especially when it comes to your dealings with customers. But it’s not a good style for women when it’s combined with macho behaviour and bosses who derive their status from their power rather than the respect they enjoy. I have to say that I recognised the description instantly. When I first started out as a director here, I was struck by the fact that I was held in such awe, even though I hadn’t achieved anything yet.”

“Another notable result of the diagnosis was that one of our operating companies, Capac, differed from the three others, Tempo Team, Randstad and Yacht. Capac had higher scores for constructive cultural styles and lower scores for passive-defensive culture. In fact, Capac is a very flat, no-nonsense organisation, with a woman at the top. This spring we intend organising an internal conference for the board and management focusing on our participation in Mixed. We’ll work on painting a picture of our current culture that we can all agree on, as an awareness-raising exercise. Then we’ll look at how we can influence that culture: which cultural styles do we want to enhance and which ones do we want to mitigate? We’ll look closely at what Capac can teach us, so that we can push the other operating companies towards a more constructive style.”

“Is it possible to influence a company’s culture? I’d say that’s almost a foregone conclusion: a culture is made up of people, and people can always be influenced. We’ve been doing just that since our company was founded in 1960. Randstad is a value-driven company. We have a number of core values and we ask our employees to act in accordance with those values. We ‘coach’ them in that respect in all kinds of ways, for example through internal courses or management development programmes. You have to be persistent, though, because it takes more than a few years of effort to get a culture to change significantly.”

Quality of part-time foster care

A study carried out by VanDoorneHuiskes has shown that children do not need to be taken into care if part-time foster parents are available to care for them at weekends or during holidays, especially when the fostering is flexible and tailored to the child's specific circumstances. The study was commissioned by the MO Groep, which represents the welfare and social services, child welfare, and childcare sector. In the study, we conducted telephone interviews with child welfare agencies, care providers, and parents to discuss how much they knew about part-time foster care and whether they were satisfied with it. We also asked them how they would like to see part-time foster care develop in the future. Those interviewed said that part-time foster care is valuable but that they feel unable to make good use of it, largely because of the limited capacity and number of places available and the fact people are not really familiar with this type of foster care. One of the biggest advantages of part-time foster care is that it gives the child's parents a bit of a break. The foster family sets a good example for the child concerned and helps to extend the child's network of support. The research report offers numerous suggestions for increasing the availability of part-time foster care. What the sector must in any case do is raise awareness of part-time fostering around the country and give parents and child welfare agencies more information about this type of care.

VanDoorneHuiskes and partners regularly conducts studies for clients in both the non-profit and commercial sectors.

TAILOR-MADE MD PROJECTS

VanDoorneHuiskes and partners supports organisations with regard to setting up and interpreting management development paths. The basic premise is that these are custom made. This means that particular attention can be paid to the goal of supporting women towards top management positions within the organisation. Links can be made to their own management development programmes.

45 high potentials in MD programme

Management Development (MD) can help ambitious and talented women break through the glass ceiling. An MD programme can draw attention to their presence in an organisation and prepare them for a successful career in senior management. After many years of research into the causes of the glass ceiling, VanDoorneHuiskes has developed an MD programme that can be tailored to suit the particular organisation. Each programme focuses on the competencies that the relevant organisation requires of its managers. Six organisations have been selected to implement an MD programme as part of the Mixed project (see elsewhere in this newsletter). They are: the Tax Authorities, the local community of Amsterdam (Office of Management Affairs), the local community of Rotterdam, Akzo Nobel, the VU Medical Centre (Amsterdam Free University) and various broadcasting organisations. (We will have more information in our next newsletter, but in the meantime, see www.mixed-equal.nl.)

More women fire-



Not for campaign

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

VanDoorneHuiskes and partners advises on projects and assists in their implementation. We act as the project management on behalf of the client or assist the internal project manager.

fighters

Only 3.3 percent of fire-fighters are women. That was the reason for *Women in the Fire Service*, a recruitment, selection, and training project aimed at increasing the number of women fire-fighters.

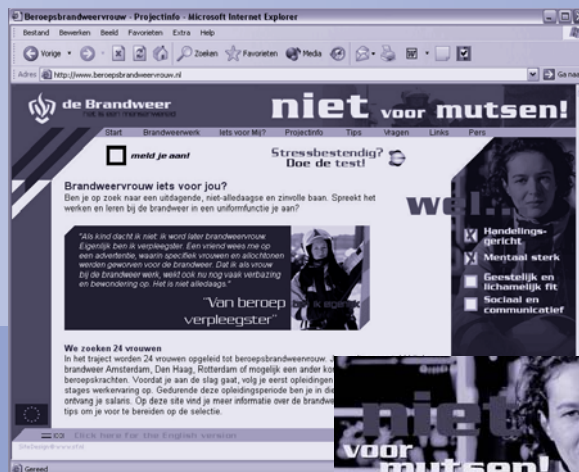
The involvement of several major fire services and the project's targeted approach make it unique. The project participants are also exploring opportunities to set up a joint recruitment and selection centre.

The facts

Project	Women in the Fire Service
Objective	To recruit, select and train 24 professional female fire-fighters
Campaign	Not for Wimps!
Target group	Enthusiastic, energetic women, team players in top physical condition
Media channels	Website (www.beroepsbrandweervrouw.nl/english/default.asp), advertisement, poster, brochure, postcard, and press release
Client	Partnership between the fire services in Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam, the Dutch Association of Fire-fighters (NVBR), the Female Fire-fighters Network, the Ministry of the Interior, and VanDoorneHuiskes and partners
Grants	From the European Social Fund and the Ministry of the Interior
Advertising agency	Bureau Achten, Ewijk, The Netherlands
Project management	VanDoorneHuiskes and partners

The results

	<i>no. of women</i>
■ Expressed an interest via the website (up to 31-5-2003).....	290
■ Attended information meetings in Amsterdam, The Hague, and Rotterdam.....	133
■ Took part in physical fitness selection.....	80
■ Went on to psychological testing.....	44
■ Went on to take part in the fire services' selection procedures.....	44
■ Appointed as professional fire-fighters in The Hague and Rotterdam.....	20
■ Now attending a preliminary course or receiving training in Amsterdam.....	9
■ Expressed an interest via the website between June and December 2003, and available for second project round in Utrecht and The Hague.....	265



TRAINING SESSIONS AND CONFERENCES

When VanDoorneHuiskes and partners is called in to advise an organisation, part of its assignment may involve organising training sessions and conferences aimed at implementing change. It can also organise one-off training sessions, conferences and workshops.

Wimps! successful

Success factors

- Sponsorship by Ministry of the Interior ensured that the subject was placed firmly on the agenda
- Specific objective: the appointment of 24 women fire-fighters
- Fire service commanders demonstrated their commitment in word and deed
- Leading parties in the field joined forces
- Project management was effective, with the necessary expertise
- Targeted campaign attracted quality candidates
- The website (www.beroepsbrandweervrouw.nl) is still producing a steady stream of aspiring female fire-fighters

Transnational conference

A conference organised by VanDoorneHuiskes provides a good example of successful international collaboration. The conference, *Diversification of the workforce in traditionally male-dominated sectors*, was held on 3 November 2003 and formed part of the *Women in the Fire Service* project. The conference participants, who represented partner projects in Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, and the UK, discussed *Women in the Fire Service* and shared tips and information from their own projects. Each of these focuses on bringing more women into male-dominated sectors, such as transport (UK), technical professions (Portugal: the project is aimed specifically at women from ethnic minorities), and human resource management (Italy). The Dutch representatives presented the preliminary results of their EQUAL Project, *Enter*, which aims to increase the number of women entering technical professions and training programmes. The participants also discussed the way in which the Dutch government tackles equal opportunities policy. The formal part of the conference closed with an inspiring workshop, *Integration of women in a male-dominated culture*, which gave the participants the tools they need to successfully integrate women into traditionally male-dominated professions.

Farmers develop competencies



There is no end to the challenges facing farmers today. They have to comply with external rules and regulations and take their own business decisions. VanDoorneHuiskes, dairy management software developers Uniform-Agri BV, and the APS National Centre for School Improvement have developed a personal development programme for farmers in which they learn – at home and in their own time – how important it is to work on personal development and the best way to do so. The programme participants learn to identify the competencies they have and the ones they lack, based on a competency profile (for the farmer of the future) drawn up in consultation with farm sector representatives. The participants also learn to draft a personal development plan and to search out activities that will boost their know-how and experience. The results are assembled in their competency toolkit.

Because farms these days are increasingly run by husband-and-wife teams, the programme has been designed to suit them. Couples

actually work through the programme together, for example by exploring opportunities to share their expertise with each other.

A pilot group participated in the programme in 2003, and a second group will be starting in 2004. The programme for farmers is financed by the European Union's EQUAL Fund, which finances projects intended to improve the labour market position of business people and employees. The European Union is co-financing half the cost of the programme, while VanDoorneHuiskes and the other organisations are covering the rest. The project was recently cited as a *promising practice* by the European Commission. Its results are also being used in a programme introducing competency development in agricultural training and education programmes (see the APS publication *Competenties ontwikkelen, hoe doe je dat?* for more details; to order the publication, go to <http://publicatielijst.aps.nl>).

Introduction Monitor: a ready-made evaluation package

Knowledge transfer is one of the key objectives of the organisational improvement campaign in the Dutch Province of Gelderland. That is one reason why the provincial authorities put so much emphasis on a proper introduction for new employees. After all, it is during this introductory period that a great deal of information is passed back and forth. VanDoorneHuiskes has now developed a monitor which the province can use to evaluate the quality of its introduction programme. The monitor consists of written and electronic questionnaires with a mix of closed and open questions. These are given to new employees to fill in at various points throughout their introduction period. VanDoorneHuiskes also designed a tailor-made format for analysing and reporting on the data collected in this way. The entire procedure stays within the Province's own organisation: the provincial authorities send and receive the questionnaires, analyse the data and write up the reports.

The introduction monitor is in fact a ready-made evaluation package consisting of questionnaires, advice on how to collect and analyse data, and a report format. It runs on the province's own in-house software. The initial results of the monitor have been discussed on-line with management, with the participants making use of the province's digital laboratory. Because the conferencing technology allows everyone to contribute at the same time, it is an ideal environment for brainstorming. Ideas can be organised on the spot and then commented on, leading to concrete policy recommendations in just a short time. VanDoorneHuiskes and partners prepared and supervised the e-discussion.

Evaluation of *Welfare and Care* recruitment campaign

VanDoorneHuiskes was commissioned by the trade unions and employers' associations in the welfare sector to evaluate national recruitment campaigns in the childcare, child welfare, social work, and social and cultural work professions (2000-2003). The evaluation considered both the process and the results of the recruitment campaigns.

We investigated the level of satisfaction with these campaigns by conducting telephone interviews with employers, stakeholders and 'ambassadors' (people who promote careers in the welfare sector) and by talking to a focus group. We also used other evaluation methods, including process analysis based on documents and interviews and secondary analysis of databases.

The results of the study were discussed with key figures in the field during a strategy meeting chaired by VanDoorneHuiskes. One of the conclusions of this discussion was that future recruitment campaigns should focus much more on the image of the sector. Recent labour market research had shown that the priorities for the next four years had shifted; rather than focus on recruiting new employees, the welfare sector needed to work on closer collaboration between the profession and training programmes, so as to increase the number of those graduating who take up jobs in the field. The research results will be incorporated into a new long-term recruitment policy.

VanDoorneHuiskes also carried out an interim evaluation of the care sector's national recruitment campaign *Hard Nodig* (Absolutely Necessary) aimed at people who wish to re-enter the workforce or retrain for a different profession. Despite their initial positive response, large numbers of candidates dropped out during the recruitment procedure, most of them after their intake interview. We were commissioned to investigate the reasons behind this phenomenon by the CAOP, an NGO specialising in public-sector labour relations.

RESEARCH AND ADVICE

Knowing that you have a policy issue doesn't necessarily mean that you know how to go about investigating it. We research policy issues by asking the right questions, so that the results actually give you solutions to your problem. VanDoorneHuiskes and partners can conduct research and advise on the various phases of policy development: foresight studies and diagnosis, strategic development and instrumentation, coaching and monitoring during policy implementation, evaluation and impact reports.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

If you would like to know more about current projects being carried out by VanDoorneHuiskes and partners or if you are interested in what we would be able to do for your organisation, please contact one of our staff members. Details are given below.

IMPRINT

Bird'sEyeView informs the clients and interested parties of VanDoorneHuiskes and partners about developments in various research and consultancy projects.

VanDoorneHuiskes and partners

- research
- advice
- project management
- communication strategy
- management development
- training courses and conferences
- coaching
- international projects

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