

# Experiential Exercise

## What Organizational Culture Do You Prefer?

The Organizational Culture Profile (OCP) can help assess whether an individual's values match the organization's. The OCP helps individuals sort their characteristics in terms of importance, which indicates what a person values.

1. Working on your own, complete the OCP below. The OCP can be found by following this link: <http://www.timothy-judge.com/OCP.htm>
2. Your instructor may ask you the following questions individually or as group of three or four students (with a spokesperson appointed to speak to the class for each group):
  - a. What were your most preferred and least preferred values? Do you think your most preferred and least preferred values are similar to those of other class or group members?
  - b. Do you think there are generational differences in the most preferred and least preferred values?
  - c. Research has shown that individuals tend to be happier, and perform better, when their OCP values match those of their employer. How important do you think a "values match" is when you're deciding where you want to work?

# Ethical Dilemma

## Hiring Based On Body Art

Leonardo's Pizza in Gainesville, Florida, regularly employs heavily tattooed workers. Tina Taladge and Meghan Dean, for example, are covered from their shoulders to their ankles in colorful tattoos. So many of the employees at Leonardo's sport tattoos that body art could almost be a qualification for the job. Many employers, however, are not that open to tattoos. Consider Russell Parrish, 29, who lives near Orlando, Florida, and has dozens of tattoos on his arms, hands, torso, and neck. In searching for a job, Parrish walked into 100 businesses, and in 60 cases, he was refused an application. "I want a career," Parrish says, "I want the same shot as everybody else."

Parrish isn't alone. Many employers, including Walt Disney World, GEICO, SeaWorld, the U.S. Postal Service, and Wal-Mart, have policies against visible tattoos. A survey of employers revealed that 58 percent indicated that they would be less likely to hire someone with visible tattoos or body piercings. "Perception is everything when it comes to getting a job," says Elaine Stover, associate director of career services at Arizona State University. "Some employers and clients could perceive body art negatively."

However, other employers—such as Bank of America, Allstate, and IBM—allow tattoos. Bank of America goes so far as to have a policy against using tattoos as a factor in hiring decisions.

Policies toward tattoos vary because, legally, employers can do as they wish. As long as the rule is applied equally to everyone (it would not be permissible to allow tattoos on men but not on women, for example), policies against tattoos are perfectly legal. Though not hiring people with tattoos is discrimination, "it's legal discrimination," said Gary Wilson, a Florida employment lawyer.

Thirty-six percent of those aged 18 to 25, and 40 percent of those aged 26 to 40, have at least one tattoo, whereas only 15 percent of those over 40 do, according to a fall 2006 survey by the Pew Research Center. One study in *American Demographics* suggested that 57 percent of senior citizens viewed visible tattoos as "freakish."

Clint Womack, like most other people with multiple tattoos, realizes there's a line that is dangerous to cross. While the 33-year-old hospital worker's arms, legs, and much of his torso are covered with tattoos, his hands, neck, and face are clear. "Tattoos are a choice you make," he says, "and you have to live with your choices."

### Questions

1. Why do some employers ban tattoos while others don't mind them?

**Answer:** Tattoos or body art is a choice for individuals and a choice for organizations as to whether they are acceptable or not.

2. Is it fair for employers to reject applicants who have tattoos? Is it fair to require employees, if hired, to conceal their tattoos?

**Answer:** Yes to both questions. Fairness is determined by and based on the policies

of the organization. As long as they are applied consistently, the organization has the right to determine whether or not tattoos, visible or otherwise, are allowed. To avoid any discriminatory issues, whatever policy is in place must be administered fairly.

3. Should it be illegal to allow tattoos to be a factor at all in the hiring process?

**Answer:** No. Many factors contribute to the hiring process, including appearance. An organization has the right to determine the image of their respective company. Just as an organization establishes its culture, the employees reflect the reputation of the company. Legislation on tattoos would impair the organizations' right to choose their own employees.

*Sources:* R. R. Hastings, "Survey: The Demographics of Tattoos and Piercings," *HRWeek*, February 2007, [www.shrm.org](http://www.shrm.org); and H. Wessel, "Taboo of Tattoos in the Workplace," *Orlando (Florida) Sentinel*, May 28, 2007, [www.tmcnet.com/usubmit/2007/05/28/2666555.htm](http://www.tmcnet.com/usubmit/2007/05/28/2666555.htm) >