

Measuring, monitoring and evaluating cultural change at the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

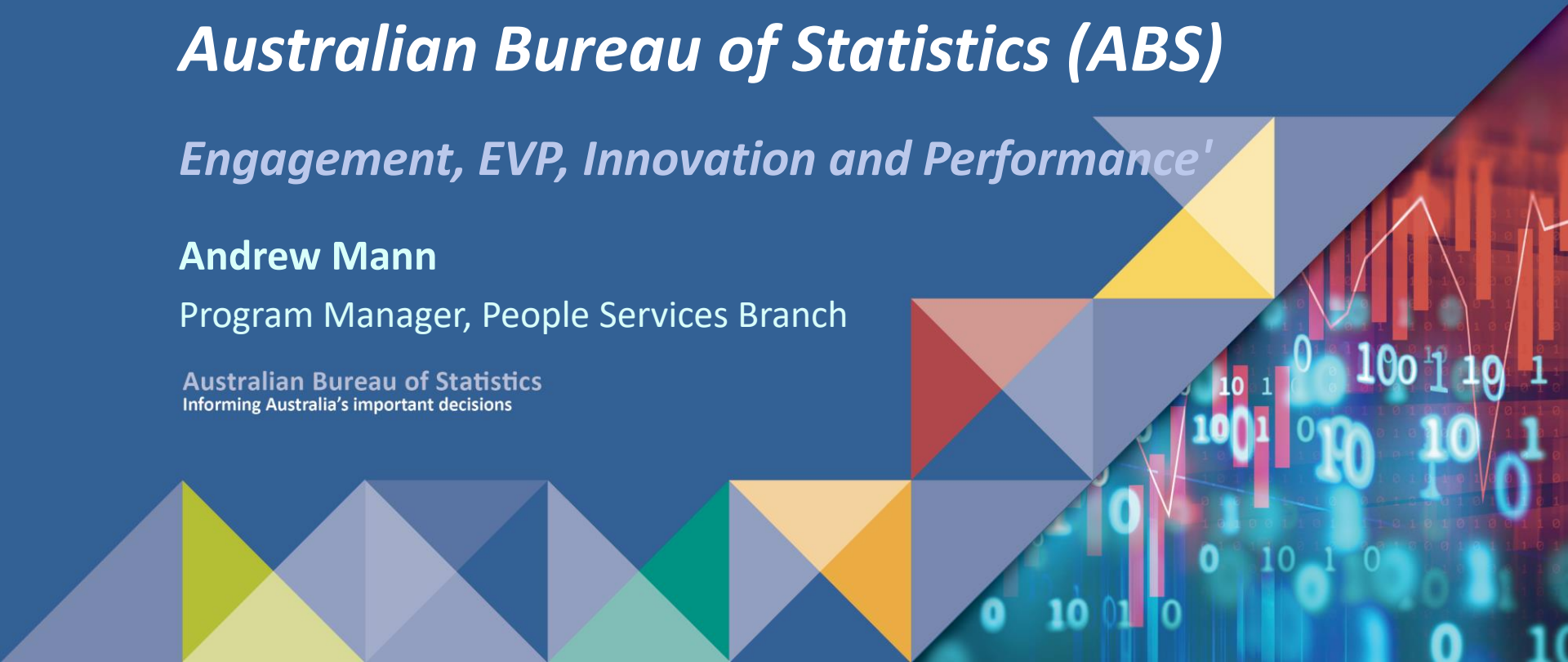


Engagement, EVP, Innovation and Performance'

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Australian Bureau of Statistics
Informing Australia's important decisions



ABS Transformation Goals



Alastair MacGibbon



Culture matters. And the culture of the ABS identified by the APSC in 2013 — insular, inward looking, reactive — affected decisions and performance as the ABS planned and carried out the 2016 Census. Moreover, its reliance on past patterns to guide future strategies doesn't work.

- ‘A key risk is that the ABS doesn’t drive deeply enough into the organisation and instead attempts to achieve cultural change through a discrete set of technical responses, rather than as an integrated strategy.’

(MacGibbon p68)

Challenges

- ▶ Defining Culture
- ▶ Model for Change
- ▶ Benchmarking, measuring and evaluating culture
- ▶ Prioritising resources to drive culture change

What is culture?

“The shared values, beliefs, norms and expectations that govern the way people approach their work and interact with each other.”

Source: Human Synergistics



Purpose of the Culture assessment

When we measured our ABS culture we tried to answer the following questions:

1. What kind of culture do we want?
2. What kind of culture do we actually have?
3. What impact is the current culture having on our employees, customers and ABS as a whole?
4. Why do we have this culture; what factors are causing it?

ABS used multiple data sources to understand our baseline culture

What is our current
and desired culture?

How can we change our
culture in positive ways?

What do our staff
value about
working at the ABS?

What sorts of behaviours
do we need to support
our future culture?



State of the Service Employee Census

Annual survey of the entire
ABS workforce



Organisational Culture Inventory (OCI)

Random stratified sample
of 500 ABS staff 78%
response rate



Focus groups and Interviews

Cross agency
representation
approx. 150 participants

Baseline assessment from all available data sources gave us insight into what our people value about working in the ABS



Our colleagues

- An opportunity to work with some of the brightest and nicest people in an organisation at the pinnacle of its profession
- An environment that is loyal, supportive, collaborative and fun.



What we do

- The opportunity to work in an apolitical agency
- The ability to work in a public sector organisation which interacts with the broader business community
- Challenging and interesting work
- The breadth of work opportunities in the ABS



How we work

- An environment that supports diversity and inclusion
- Flexible working and encouraging a balanced life

We used the Organisational Culture Inventory (OCI) to assess our current and desired culture

The Organisational Culture Inventory measures three clusters and 12 thinking and behavioural styles

Aggressive/Defensive

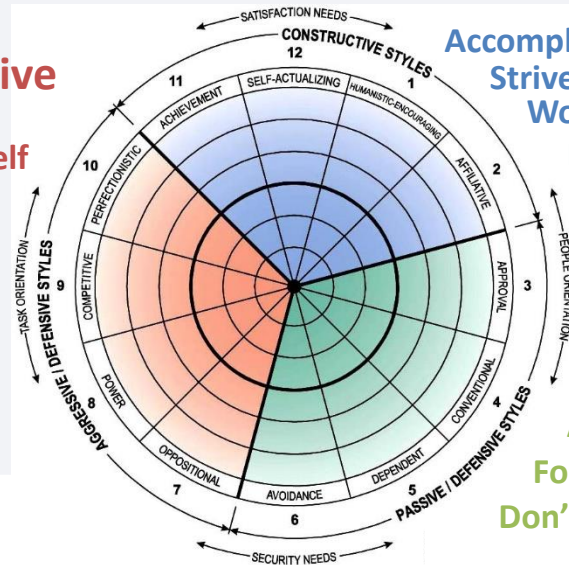
Prove yourself
Look good
Critique ideas and others
Control
Dominate

Constructive

Accomplish goals
Strive
Work well with others
Innovation and creativity
Develop others

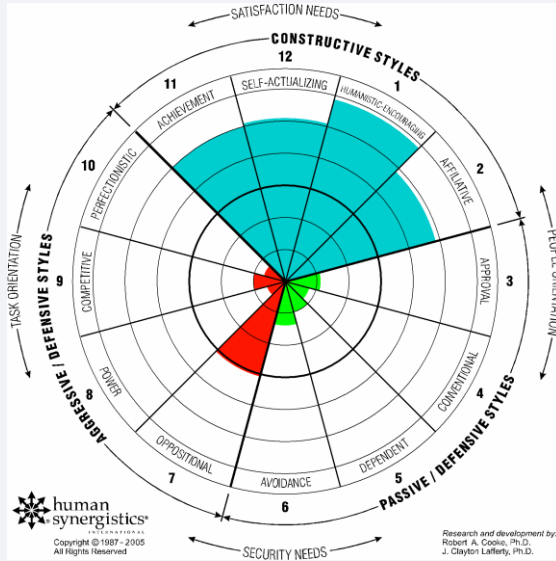
Passive/Defensive

Keep out of trouble
Just do
Avoid conflict
Follow the rules
Don't ask questions

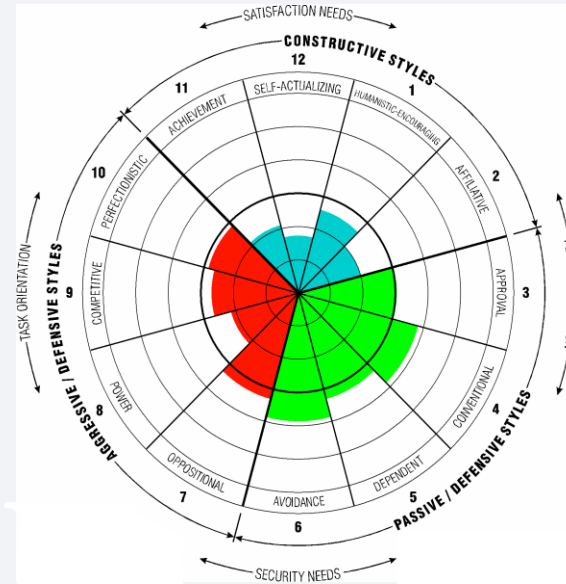


Source: Human Synergistics (2008) "Organisational Culture Inventory"

OCI results showed a gap between the current and desired ABS Culture



Preferred ABS Culture



Current ABS Culture

DESIRED CULTURE

ABS staff identified our preferred culture as one where:



Employees would be expected to :

- know the business, think ahead and plan, pursue a standard of excellence, and take on challenging tasks.
- maintain their personal integrity, communicate ideas, do even simple tasks well, and enjoy their work.
- help others to grow and develop, resolve conflicts constructively, be good listeners, and encourage others.
- use good human relations skills, treat people as more important than things, cooperate with others and deal with others in a friendly, pleasant way.

DESIRED CULTURE

ABS staff identified our preferred culture as one where:



Customers would report that staff:

- take the initiative to solve problems, make things happen and deliver what they promise
- act with integrity, providing innovative and creative products and services
- go out of their way to assist them to satisfy their needs
- make them feel welcome and treat them in a courteous and friendly way.

ACTUAL CULTURE

Staff reported that in order to fit in at the ABS they:

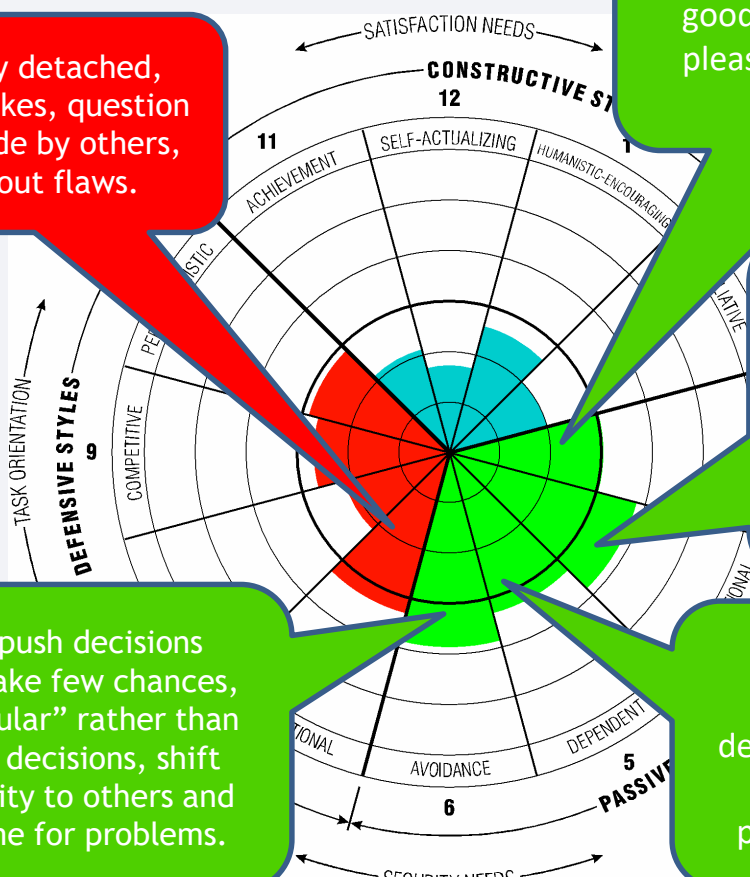
Need to stay detached, look for mistakes, question decisions made by others, and point out flaws.

Need to back up those with the most authority, stay on peoples good side, switch priorities to please others, and “go along” with others.

Need to always follow policies and practices, make a “good impression”, avoid confrontations, conform, and fit into the “mould”

Need to push decisions upwards, take few chances, make “popular” rather than necessary decisions, shift responsibility to others and avoid blame for problems.

Need to do what is expected, check all decisions with superiors, and please those in positions of authority.



ACTUAL CULTURE

Potential Impact on ABS Customers

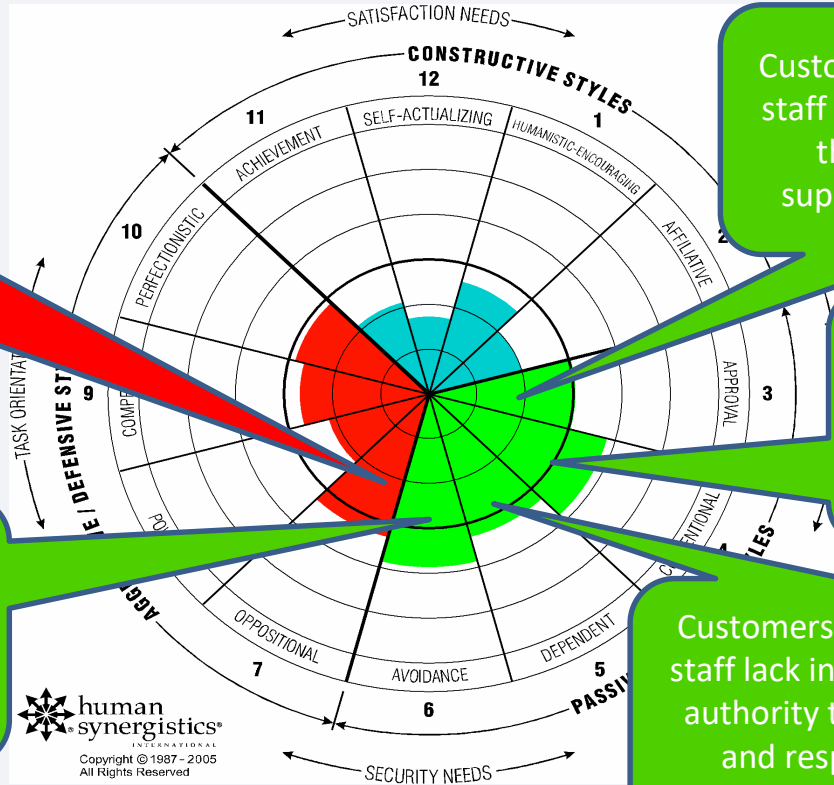
Customers might report that staff are argumentative, critical, and blame problems on them.

Customers might report that staff lack interest avoid making commitments and shift responsibility to others.

Customers might report that staff show more concern for their co-workers and superiors than for clients.

Customers might report that staff are constrained by policies, rules and impersonal procedures.

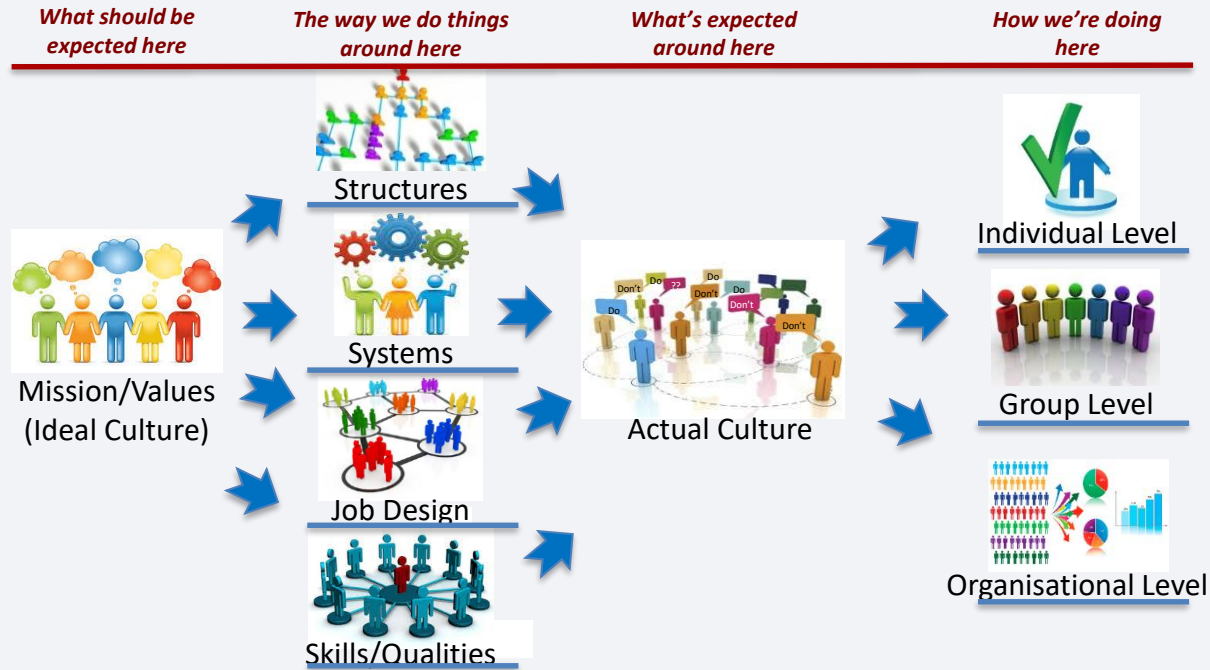
Customers might report that staff lack information and the authority to make decisions and respond to special requests..



Causal Factors of ABS Cultural Issues

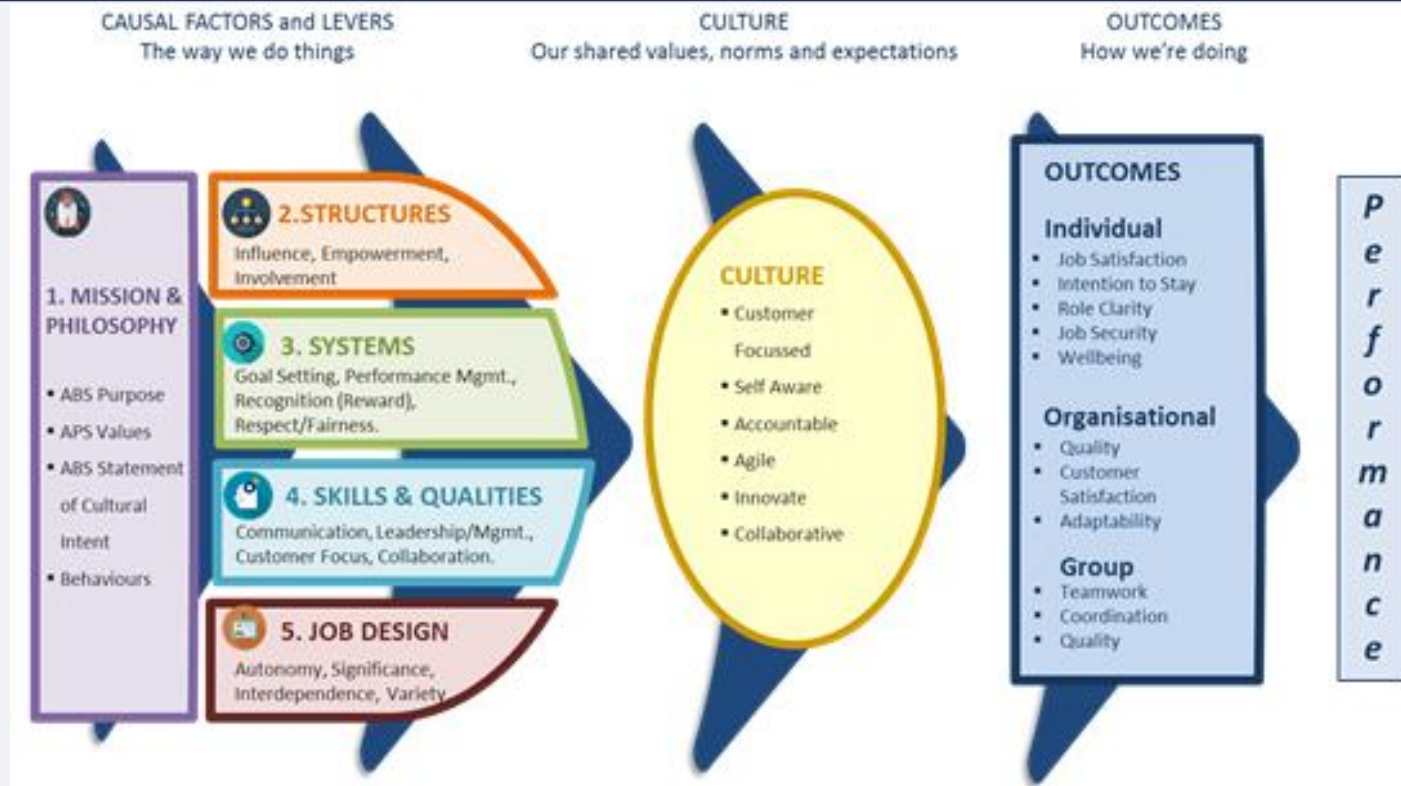
- Significance
- Customer Service Focus
- Empowerment and Levels of Influence
- HR systems
- Appraisal systems
- Job Design

How Culture Works



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ABS Culture Change Roadmap



Statement of Cultural Intent

ABS: Our Culture (2018-2021)

Our cultural intent: The ABS has an inclusive culture that brings out the best in all our people, enabling us to increase our impact through outstanding service delivery.

To achieve this cultural intent, we will all be consistently:



**Customer-
focused**



Collaborative



Accountable



Agile

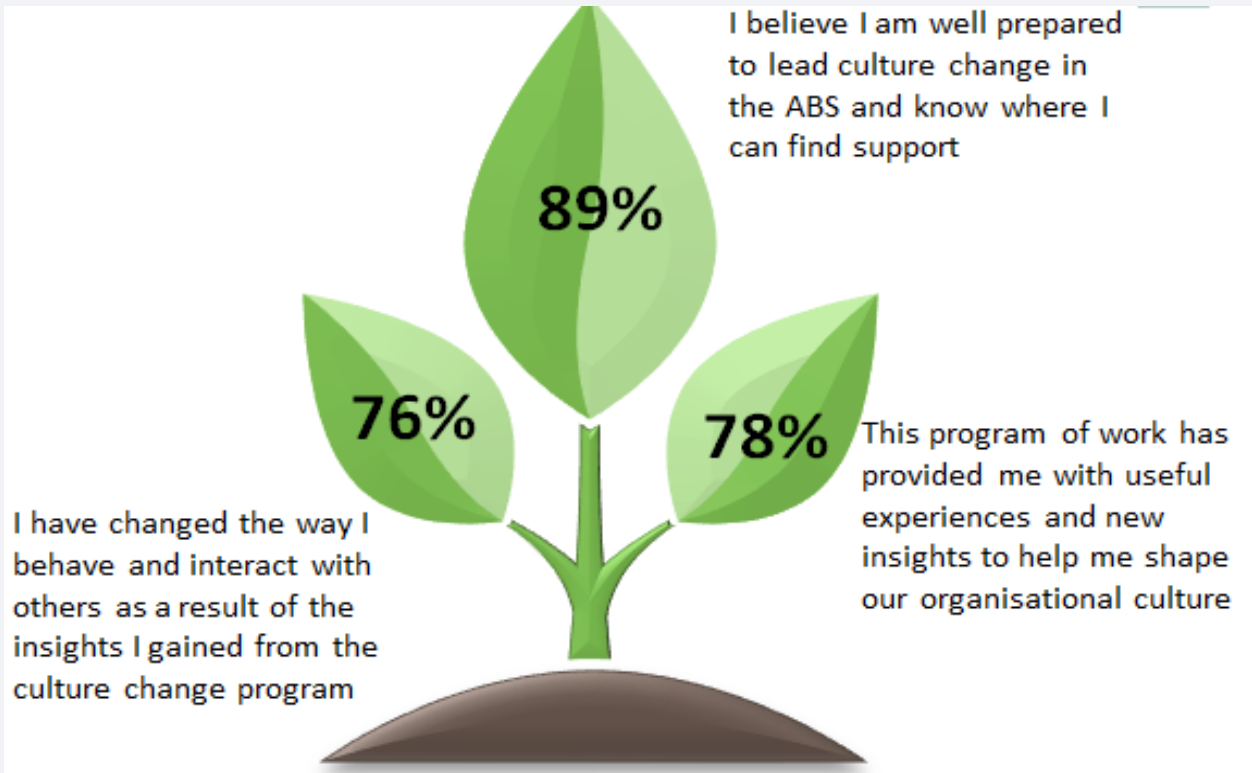


Innovative



Self-Aware

Measuring Progress weith our Senior Leaders



- ▶ ABS is number 1 Agency in 30 (20%) of the 153 items
- ▶ In the top 5 for 53%
- ▶ Number 2 Agency for Supervisor Engagement
- ▶ Number 4 Agency Team Engagement
- ▶ Have been asked to be a case study for the whole of service report

Measuring progress at all levels

State of the Service Employee Census – 2019 ABS Results

	RESPONSE SCALE			% POSITIVE	VARIANCE FROM 2018
The ABS motivates me to help achieve its objectives	71	21	8	71%	+6 ⬆
The ABS is a Customer Focused organisation (i.e. we connect with, understand and respond to the needs of our stakeholders, customers and providers)	75	17	8	75%	+8 ⬆
In the ABS, we collaborate across the organisation (including sharing information and knowledge across work programs)	66	20	15	66%	+7 ⬆
Within my Section, we adopt an Agile approach to our work (i.e. frequently re-assessing and quickly adapting to changing priorities and environments)	75	17	8	75%	+2
I understand what a high performing culture looks like in my Section	81	14		81%	-1
I have a clear understanding of how my Section's role contributes to my agency's strategic direction	91			91%	-
ABS leaders (EL2 and SES) are driving a high performing culture	63	27	10	63%	+6 ⬆
I feel well prepared (i.e. well informed and appropriately skilled) to succeed professionally in the ABS post transformation	62	24	14	62%	+2
My supervisor empowers me by delegating tasks that are both in keeping with competencies required of my level and stretching me to help me grow	77	15	8	77%	-
Overall, how satisfied are you with your ability to access and use flexible working arrangements?	90			90%	+2

KEY



AT LEAST 5 PERCENTAGE POINTS GREATER THAN COMPARATOR



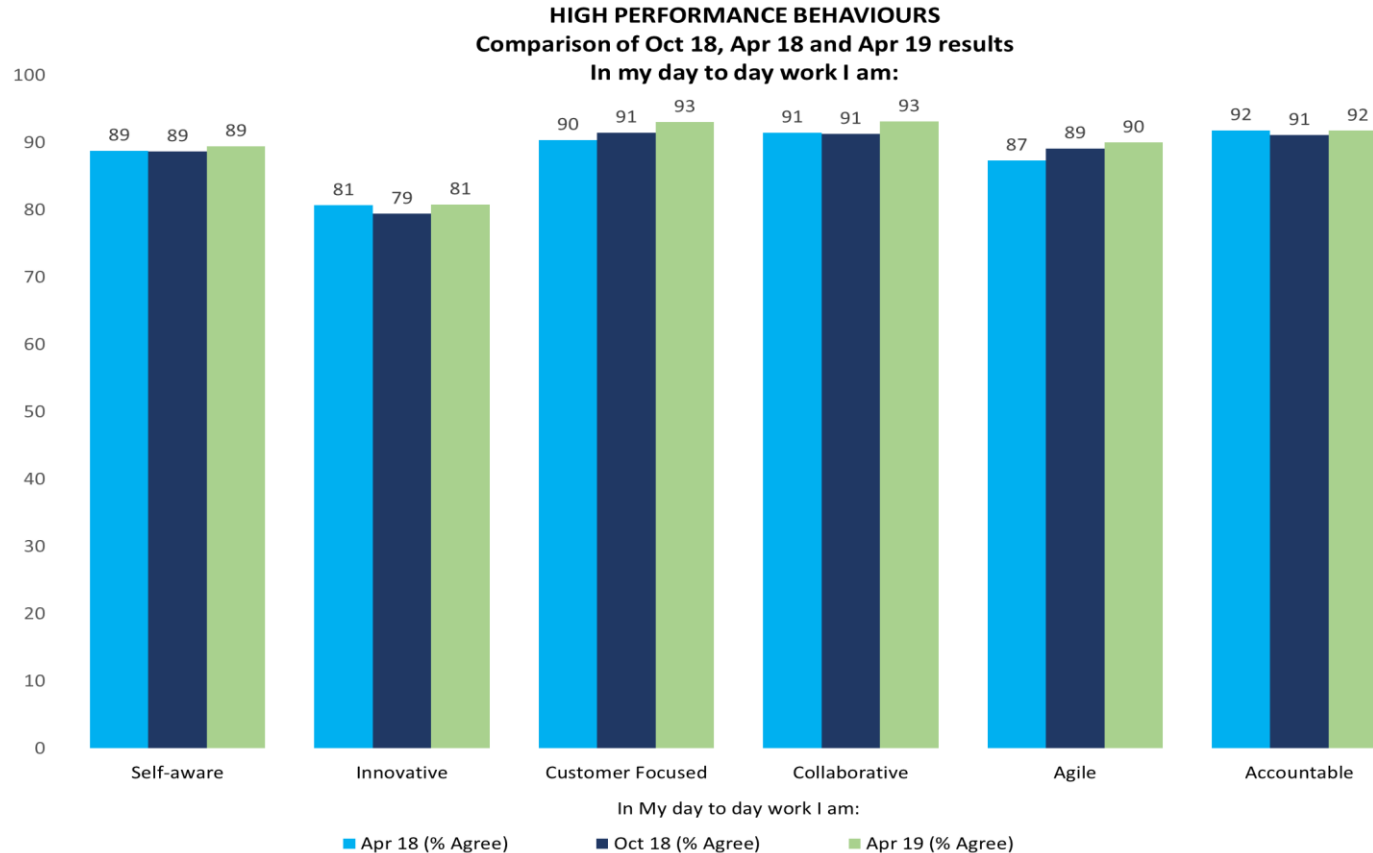
AT LEAST 5 PERCENTAGE POINTS LESS THAN COMPARATOR

Positive Neutral Negative



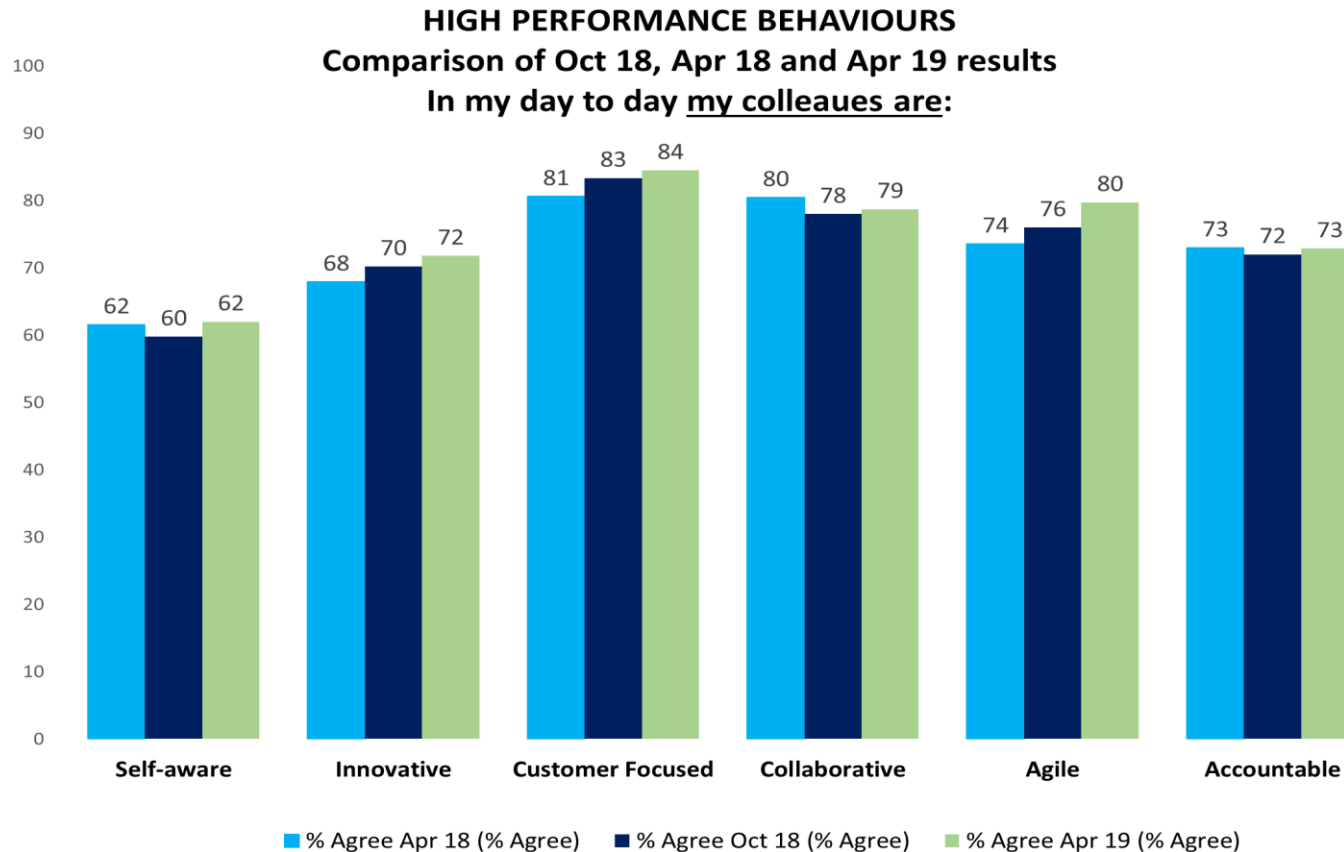
ABS Transformation Survey - April 2019

My behaviours



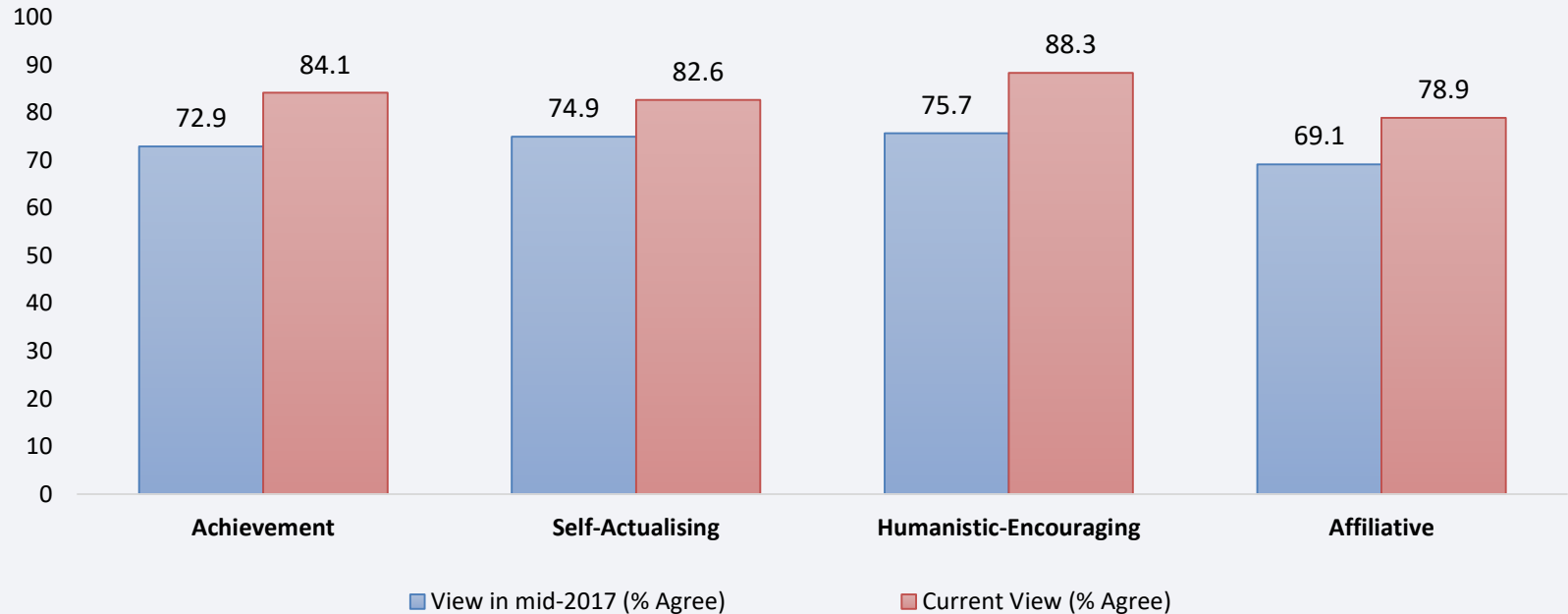
ABS Transformation Survey - April 2019

Behaviours of my colleagues



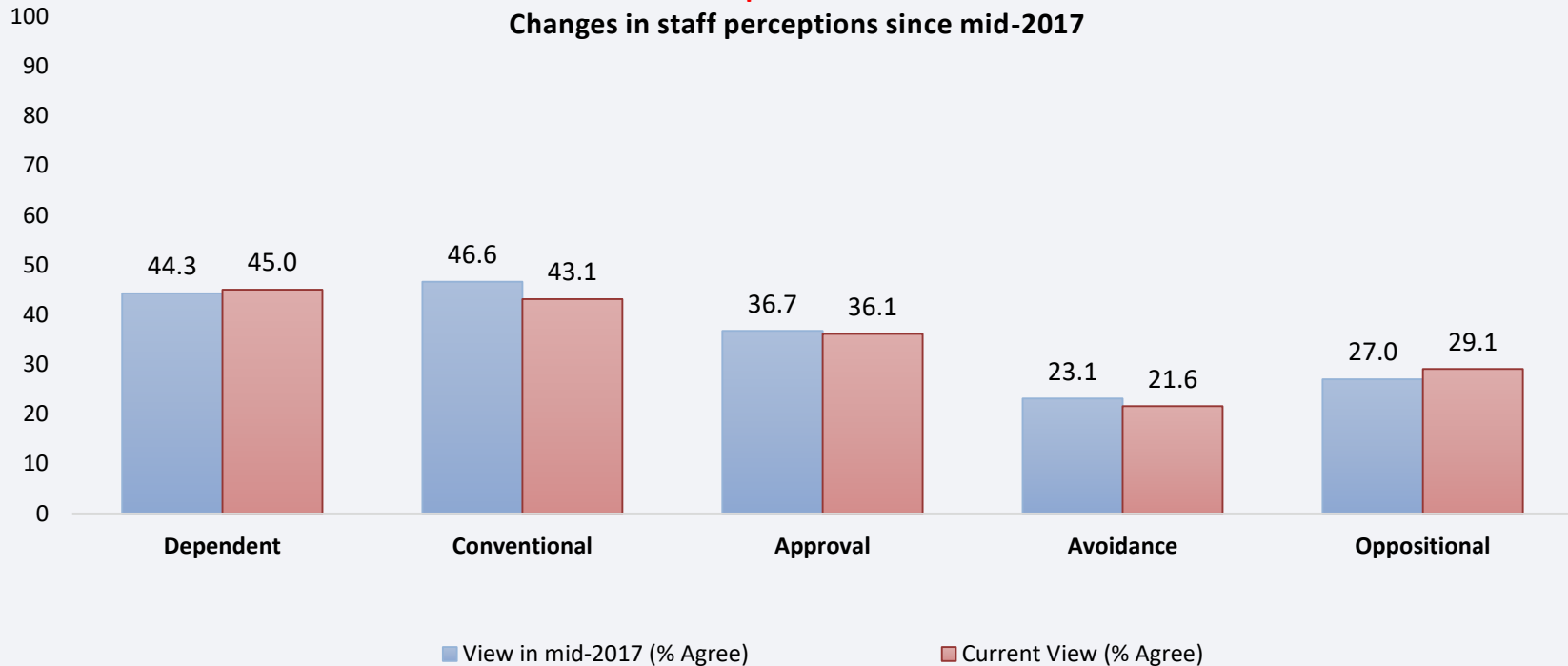
Changes to staff perceptions related to selected Constructive aspects of ABS culture

Constructive aspects of ABS Culture
Changes in staff perceptions since mid-2017

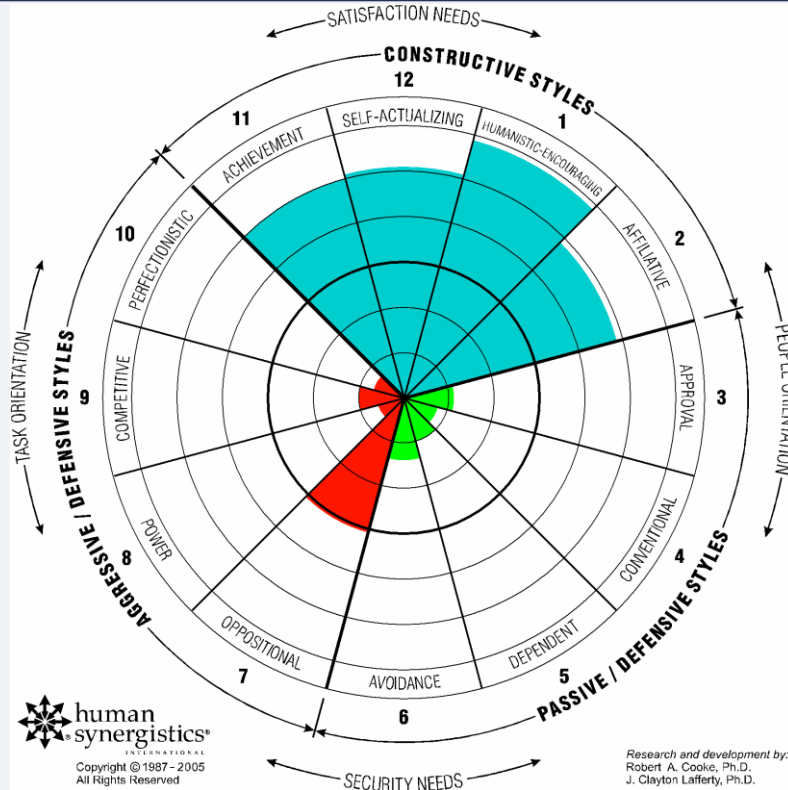


Changes to staff perceptions related to selected Defensive aspects of ABS culture

Defensive aspects of ABS Culture
Changes in staff perceptions since mid-2017



The next OCI is being run as we speak... Lets hope the results will look more like this!



Thank you
Questions?