



TOKENOMICS

TOOLS FOR MAPPING

OUTLINE

There are many ways for an organization to map out the token transactions that comprise it's culture. Here we've tried to provide a basic guide to some of the easier ones.

MINE EXISTING DATA

Every organization has lots of information that will provide insights into the culture's Tokenomics. Survey data and comments, results of group DiSC analysis, newsletters, previous training and how it was received, and the results of past initiatives both successful and failed will all provide valuable information for mapping your culture.

To gain the most valuable information recruit several colleagues from different parts of your organization to complete the data mining exercises with you. You will all need to emotionally detach yourselves from the organization for these exercises. Imagine that you are archaeologists one hundred years in the future, and you have just discovered previously unseen information about this organization. Look at the information individually and then come back together to discuss your findings. This process of comparison will help you to be more impartial.

As you review the information ask yourself:

- What do people value?
- Are they being rewarded for what they value?
- Are people meeting the standards established by these values?
- Where is there scarcity/abundance?
- What are the tribes?
- Where do the tight/loose matchers reside in the organization?
- What patterns or correlations do you see between groups?
- Are there common themes?
- Who is receiving reinforcement?
- What is being reinforced?
- Who are the social hubs?

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To understand the data mining process better let's explore surveys as information source. Most organizations conduct staff satisfaction or engagement surveys. The data can tell you a story about the tokens that are exchanged within the organization. Here's a sample survey question and what it might reveal:

Learning and development are strongly encouraged in our organization.

A high organization-wide score on this question reveals that this is something that the organization values and that people who share this value are being adequately rewarded. A study of cross-sectional reports might show that the people in one division rate this much lower than the rest of the organization. What does that tell us? Are they outside the dominant tribe? Are they matching more tightly to this token than other groups? (In other words, do they have a more exclusive definition of learning that your measures aren't matching.) Or are the people who provide access to the learning and development not meeting the standards within this division? As you can see, we create a list of possibilities rather than answers. We then want to cross-check with other information from the survey (as well as other sources) in order to create as complete a picture as possible.

OBSERVE CURRENT BEHAVIOR

You can also learn a great deal from observing current behavior. Notice where people congregate and who they gravitate towards, what questions are repeatedly asked in meetings, who attends events and who avoids them. Effective culture watchers ask themselves what's being revealed by every mundane habit their organization supports. Imagine that each activity your staff engage in is an experiment that reveals something about them, and then attempt to clarify exactly what's being revealed.

ENABLE REVEALING BEHAVIOR

After carefully examining the data you already have, ask yourself if you have a complete picture? Have all the questions in the checklist below been answered? If not, you may need to create situations that will provide you with the information you're looking for. We refer to these data gathering exercises as 'interactions'.

What to seek out

It's often best to identify a single question that you don't yet have an answer to and work out what kind of a data gathering exercise would give you insight as to the answer, regardless of how the exercise turned out. Having too loose an idea of what to look for in an interaction often means you don't know how to interpret your results. Similarly, life is sufficiently unpredictable that if you go in with fixed ideas of what you expect to see happen, you're likely to be disappointed.

How to design an interaction

As is also the case in most formal psychology experiments, revealing to participants what kind of data you're trying to collect can badly skew the results you obtain. While mapping your culture, it's best to stay quiet and let the information roll in. After mapping a culture, it's much easier to then engage in far more transparent exercises, and indeed a good idea to do so.



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As you're attempting to model the natural interactions of others, the most organic, and least staged, activities are often the best. The most effective approach is to make use of events that are already planned for other purposes, and to reshape events as little as possible to obtain the data you need.

How to watch

As it's important not to skew observational results, once an interaction has been arranged, it's best to not steer it. If the interaction takes on a form very different from the one anticipated, determining why, and what the factors were that caused things to run off track can be at least as informative as the activity you expected to watch. As with all Tokenomics exercises, it's vital not to let our own expectations, and hunger for validation, get in the way of assisting the organization.

SUGGESTED INTERACTIONS

We classify interactions into two types--passive and active. Passive interactions enable you to gather data without needing to explicitly advertise your intentions and are usually the best place to start.

Passive Interactions

Seating arrangements: Populating a room with tables for an event and having participants file in and take a chair somewhere will give you a sense of the tribal lines in your organization. Taking a picture of the filled room gives you the chance to look over the arrangement later and also scan it for body-language. Watching seating arrangements over the course of multiple events will help reduce noise in the data.

Opportunities for humor: How an organization makes itself laugh, and the number of opportunities for laughter, reveal a huge amount of information about how that group functions. In some cases, simply creating such opportunities can be sufficient to allow the culture to self-regulate and increase it's health and effectiveness.

Organizational recreation: During organizational events, what levels of engagement among staff do you see? What kind of turnout for optional events do you find? When you hold events during work hours, do the employees who don't appear at optional events congregate, attach themselves to other groups, or fail to connect? What kind of themes create the highest levels of staff engagement? Which themes are likely to solicit groans?

Active Interactions

Sometimes, passive data collection is not enough, and culture watchers need to be explicit about their need for organizational dialog. This is where active interactions become useful. They can either take the form of lighthearted training events or discreet, directed data collection exercises. The best active interactions often embed the important questions after topics likely to foster dialog, and before others that will end the interaction on a positive note.

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Tree exercise: Ask participants to try to identify their ‘leaves’ and ‘roots’ using the following questions.

Roots: What do you need to get things done/what’s your perfect working environment like?

Leaves: What’s special about you? What do you like to be appreciated for?

A person’s roots tell you what conditions they work best under, and also which kind of environment they’re most likely to behave least rationally in. Their leaves tell you their channels for personal value, or at least the ones they’re capable of self-articulating and sharing.

What’s not wrong?: With participants working in pairs, one person asks the other ‘what’s not wrong in your life right now?’ and attempts to recall the statements that the other person makes. The game should be played as fast as possible with as much energy as the group can muster. At the end of the exercise, the two work together to write down all the items that came up. The roles are then reversed and the same game played again.

The automatic choices that each participant picks when operating under pressure will produce a picture of their value system, mixed with the value system they’d like their partner to see. Both kinds of information are useful, but more than one exercise is needed to unpick which is which.

Anonymous questionnaires: Sometimes there are explicit questions that you need answers to--for instance if your research has honed in on a specific problem behavior or business area. Under those circumstances, anonymous questionnaires that collect data can be enormously useful. The answers to a few well-chosen questions can yield powerful insights. Particularly useful are open questions, allowing for long answers. For further insights in this area, refer to the Mapping Questions document on the Techneq website.