

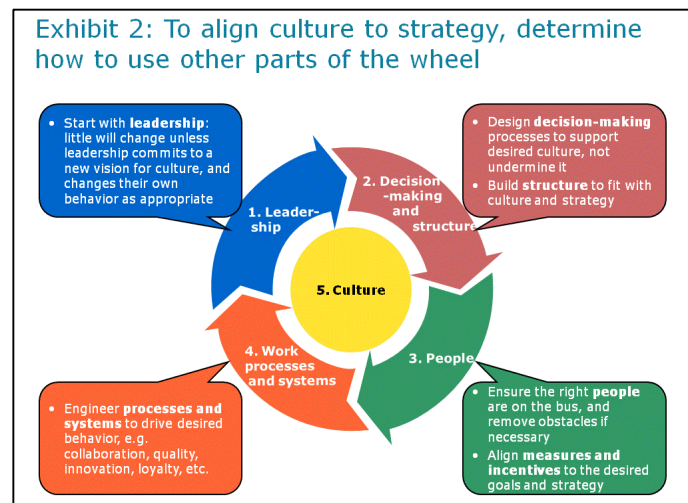
Key Elements of Effective Organizations: Bridgespan’s Organization Wheel

High performing nonprofits think about their organizations as much more than the boxes and lines on an “org chart.”

Bridgespan finds that truly effective organizations exhibit strengths in five key interrelated areas: leadership, decision-making and structure, people, work processes and systems, and culture (see Exhibit 1). Effective organizations pay attention to 10 key characteristics across these five areas. For example, effective leadership requires having a clear vision that is translated into well understood priorities, and supported by a cohesive and aligned leadership team.



Culture is linked to and affected by each area of the organization wheel. As such it enables organizations to meet their strategic goals to achieve impact. In fact, because it is about how people in the organization behave, it can be either a powerful ally or a real barrier to implementing a strategic change. Because of its linkages to other areas of the organization wheel, Bridgespan has found that levers that change behavior are often found within these other areas of the



organization wheel (see Exhibit 2). Therefore, leaders who need to change culture to support strategy need to determine what levers in other areas of the organization wheel will support the right behaviors. For example, these may include choices about what people to have in the organization, how to align them to priorities and motivate them, who has what decision-making authority, how people are expected to

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work together using key processes, etc. To see this process in action, please read the article, [“Strategies for Changing Your Organization’s Culture,”](#) in which two nonprofit leaders share their stories of aligning their cultures to support new strategies.

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