All organisations have a culture; they all act in different ways. However world class organisations despite having different cultures, tend to act in almost identical ways. What organisations need to do is identify where they can make improvements to their existing working practices to develop these successful ways of working.

**What we offer**

ABB uses a diagnostic tool called the ‘practices assessment’. The purpose of the assessment is to measure how a company’s full range of business operations practices compares to best practice in their area. It complements our Benchmarking assessment tool (which measures manufacturing performance metrics), to give a balance of the hard and soft metrics. One of our clients dubbed it the ‘psychological profile’ of an organisation.

When used with our benchmarking tool one of the key outputs is a simple diagram (see below) which illustrates how well the organisation is balancing its processes versus its people. In some respects it is a ‘task v team’ picture.

We know that an organisation that drives hard on the metrics will achieve short term success, perhaps at the expense of its people. Similarly if the focus is purely upon the welfare of the employees then the management will be seen to be great people until the business fails due to a lack of financial and operational success. Inevitably a balance of both is the aim.

This is good but in many respects the real power of the assessment is in the process. Data is gathered by means of small groups deciding where their own organisation fits on a word model based continuum.

The organisation is assessed against on the following practices:

- Vision
- Strategy
- Performance measurement
- Safety, health and environment
- Customers
- Competitors
- Markets
- Plan
- Source
- Make
- Deliver
- Product
- Process
- People management
- People development
- Process management
- Project / change management
- Workplace
- Performance focus
- Performance improvement
- Organisational design
- Information systems
- Learning organisation

The assessment provides a measurement of the current working practices holistically and by section, division, function, work group etc. covering the complete organisation.
It gives an opportunity to analyse the differences in business behaviour between each section, division, function, work group etc. and highlights the current management style.

This produces the score that is used in the summary diagram. However, when we run these sessions we always stimulate discussion and then record all their spoken comments (anonymously and with the participants’ agreement, of course).

Our normal approach is to allow the senior team and representatives of all the groups who take part to investigate the data themselves during a feedback workshop. Data in this case means ‘spider charts’ of the responses to the 23 practices and a list of all the comments passed in the data collection sessions.

This aids the cultural shift towards openness and understanding. It emphasises our team based philosophy and allows for everyone to have an input into the top 3 actions that are agreed and then implemented. And it means that the actions are focused upon the activities that everyone believes are important. Which means they get done!

ABB also offer leadership practices assessments focussed on particular areas or functions of an operating business, such as process safety or integrity management. In these cases we examine behaviours, competencies and working procedures that are key to success in, for example, process safety. Many of the principles of leadership practices assessments still apply.

Benefits
- Provides a route map to World Class performance
- Benchmarks current performance against World Class practices
- Measures the improvement in working practices over time
- Helps to define and develop organisation culture, structure and management style

Why ABB?
- Our experience of leadership in operating businesses
- The track record of our approach
- The transfer of skills to our customers to promote sustainability.
- Efficient access to a broad range of relevant technical experts that can support problem solving
- A problem led approach - rather than solution led