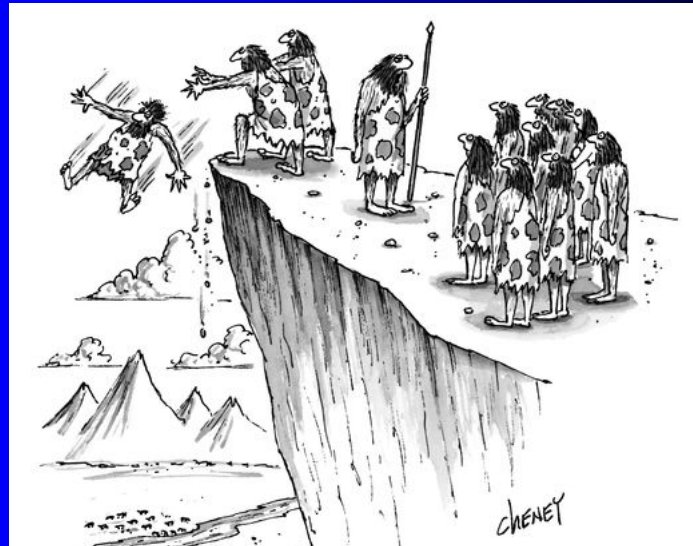


# ***MOVING TO A PROJECT MANAGEMENT CULTURE***

2004 PMI Regional Symposium  
Deborah Lipman Slobodnik

# One Way to Change the Culture

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*“So, does anyone else feel that their needs aren't being met?”*

# What Do We Mean by Culture?

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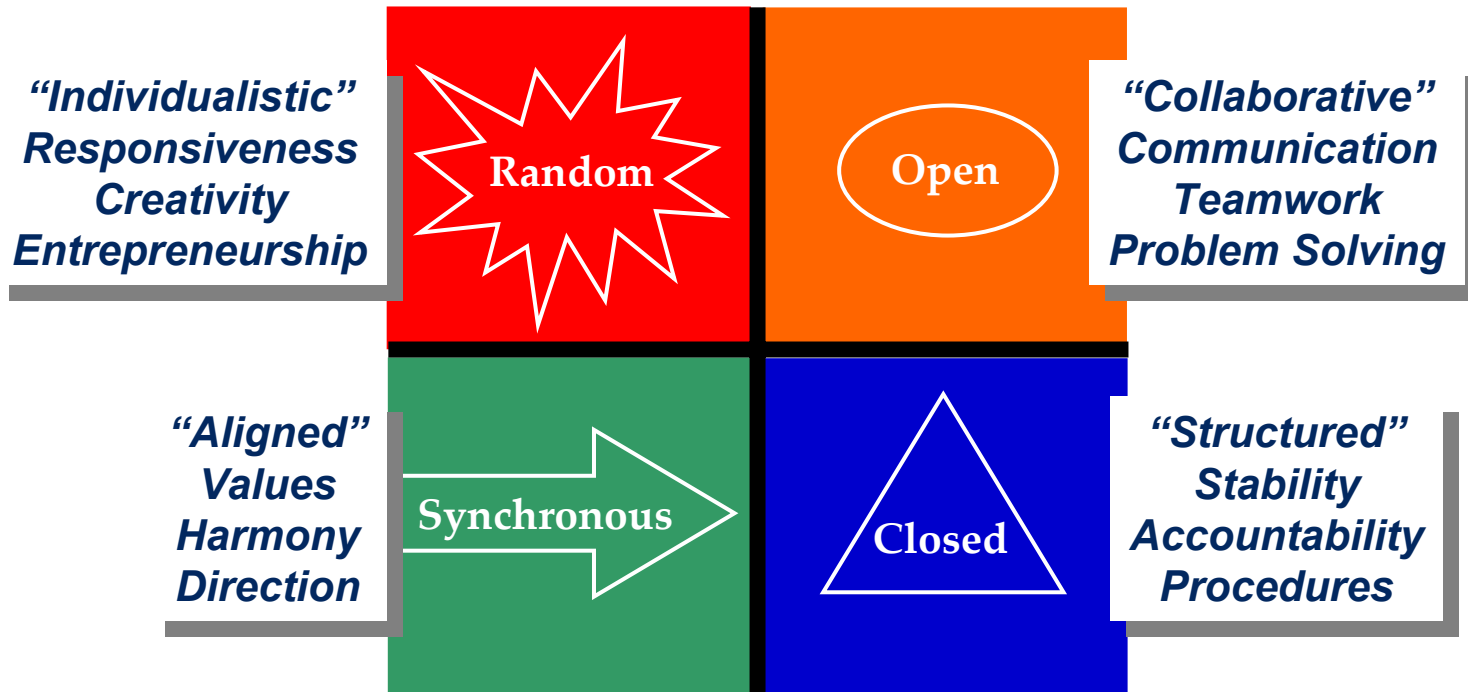
- Collective values and beliefs
- Rewarded behaviors
- Learned norms
- Recurring rituals

# Why is Culture Important?

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- **McKinsey:** “Over half of the mergers we studied went straight downhill in productivity, profits or both due to cultural factors.”
- **John Kotter:** “When new practices made in a transformation effort are not compatible with the culture, they will always be subject to regression.”
- Collective behavior rules
- Need critical mass to change
- Culture change happens at the ground level

# Four Culture Types



Based on the Kantor System Typology and Communicational Domains™ - used by permission

# Closed Descriptors

## Enabled (functional)

- Clear chain of command
- Strong leadership
- Quick decisions
- Efficient work processes
- Commitment to goals
- Predictable service
- Specific performance metrics

## Disabled (extreme)

- Tyrannical leadership
- Disempowerment
- Secrecy
- Fear
- Resistant to change
- Lack of innovation and creativity
- Rule-bound and bureaucratic

# Random Descriptors

## Enabled (functional)

- Entrepreneurial
- Responsive
- Competitive
- Flexible
- Respectful of individual needs
- Innovative
- High energy

## Disabled (extreme)

- Chaotic
- Conflict-ridden
- Duplication of effort
- No mutual problem solving
- Crisis oriented
- Hard to get closure
- Lack of direction

# Open Descriptors

## Enabled (functional)

- Inclusion
- Diversity
- Empowerment at all levels
- Trust
- Direct communication
- Negotiated outcomes

## Disabled (extreme)

- Can't make a decision
- Too many meetings
- All talk, no action
- Members frustrated
- Only vocal few reach "consensus"
- Lack or strong leadership

# Synchronous Descriptors

## Enabled (functional)

- Strong purpose and vision
- Aligned values and beliefs
- Harmonious interactions
- Low maintenance
- Efficient and effortless teamwork
- Roles implicit and understood

## Disabled (extreme)

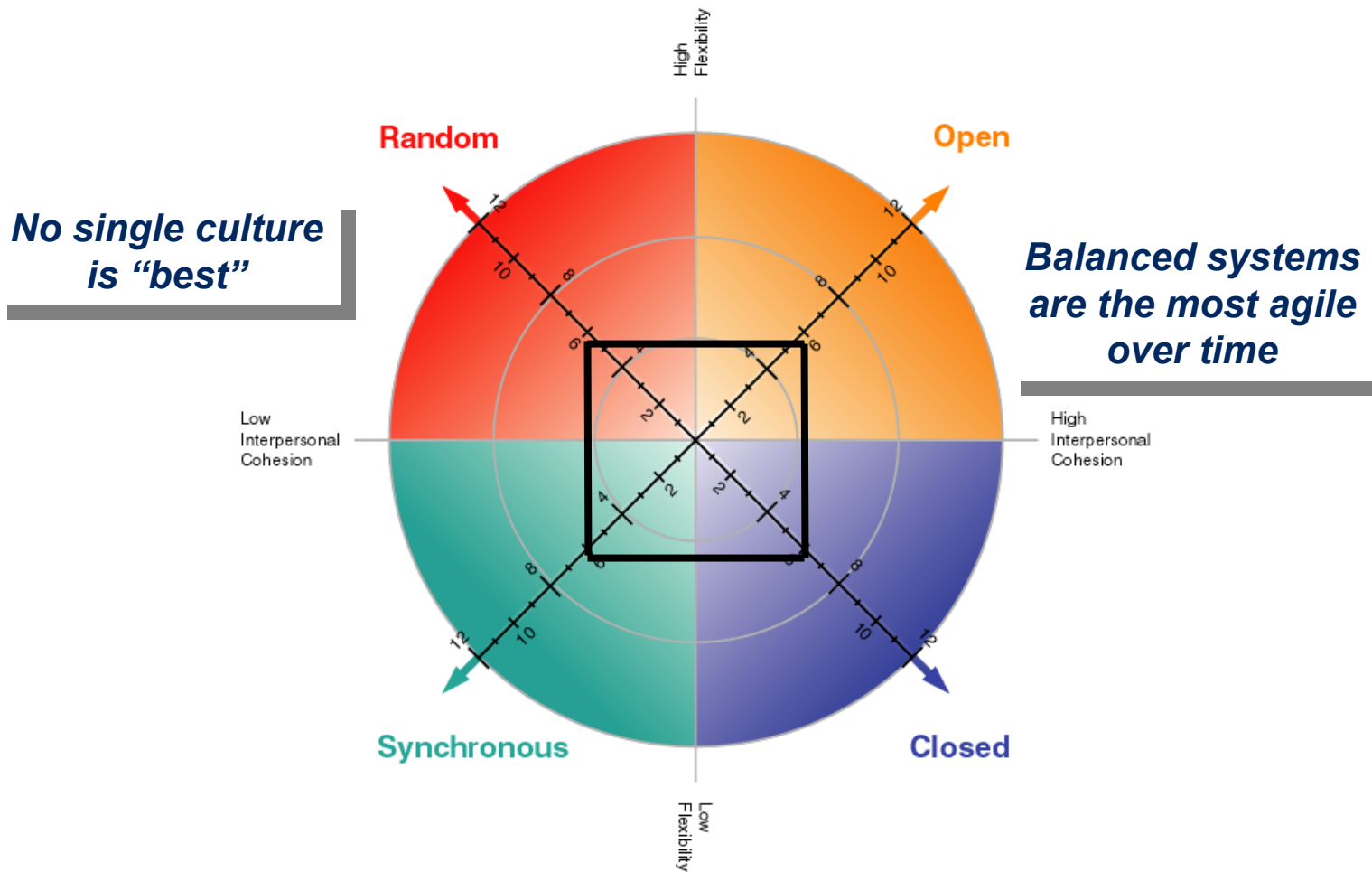
- Cult-like
- Inbred
- Discounts individual differences
- Minimal communication
- Low tolerance for ambiguity
- Early closure on problems

# Case Study: Top Financial

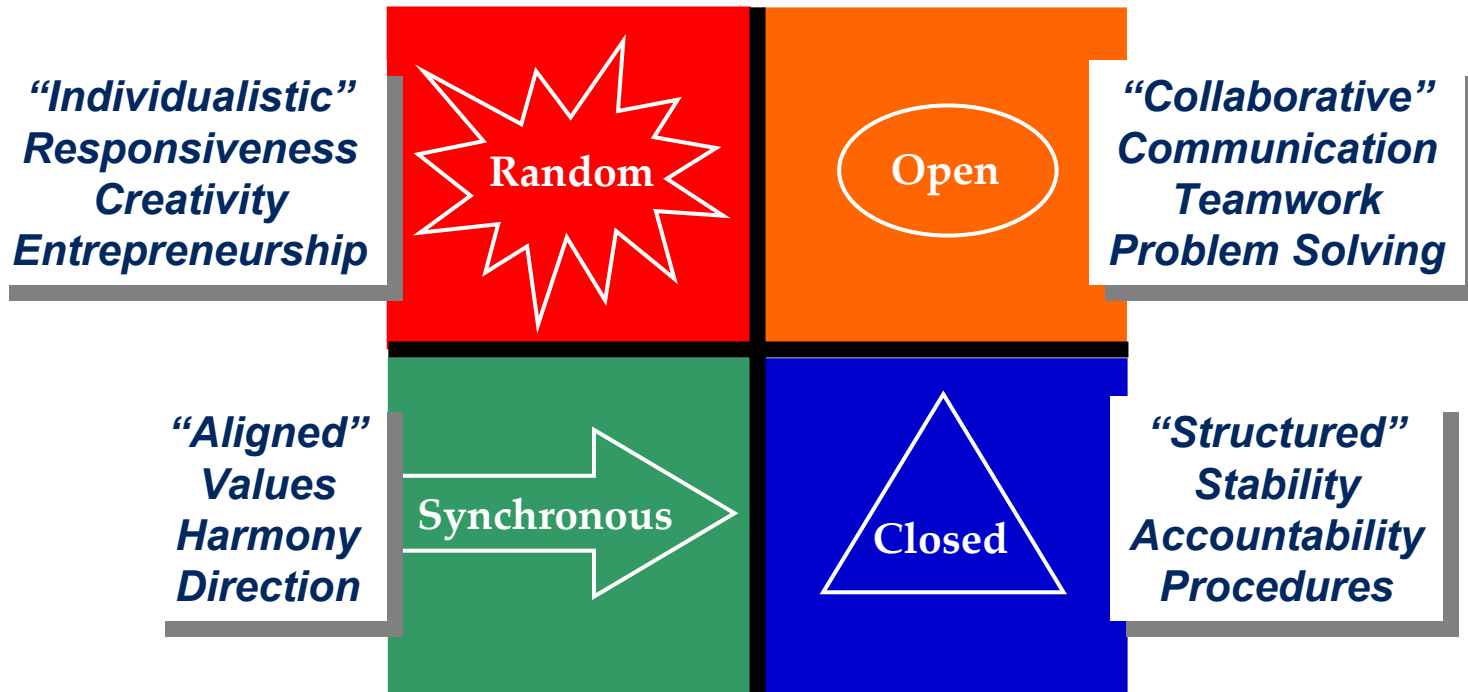
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- Large financial company lost \$100m FY1999 because of failed projects
- Old “strategy” – technology “fix”, resisted by Random culture, overcorrected with Closed
- New – internalized Closed processes through “attraction” strategies – voluntary compliance, high communication, rewards and recognition
- Result – caught on and created need for centralized Project Management Office

# Ideal Project Culture



# Changing vs. Balancing



Based on the Kantor System Typology and Communicational Domains™ - used by permission

# Closed Balancing Strategies *for Structure*

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- Top-down goal setting
- Multi-level phase review process
- Accountability measures
- Multi-project tracking and reviews
- Linking to performance reviews
- Metrics
- Leadership directs and holds accountable

# Random Balancing Strategies *for Creativity*

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- High energy events
- Rewards and recognition for team and MVP
- Out-of-the-box thinking
- Competition
- Creative websites and PR
- Leadership challenges and sets limits

# Quick Assessment

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- What is your dominant culture at this stage?
  - Closed
  - Random
  - Open
  - Synchronous

# Synchronous Balancing Strategies *for Alignment*

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- Vision and values
- Repeatable processes
- Consistent methods and tools
- Software
- PMO's
- Leadership models desired behaviors

# Open Balancing Strategies *for Collaboration*

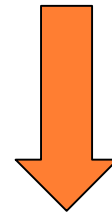
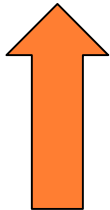
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- Customer/stakeholder involvement
- Communication plans
- Meetings and concalls
- Collaborative platforms
- Conflict resolution, consensus decision making, facilitation skills
- Leadership coaches and facilitates

# Performance Gap

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**Increasing  
Expectations**



**"Team  
Traps"**

***Most Teams Underperform  
by 33-50%***

# Team Trap Definition

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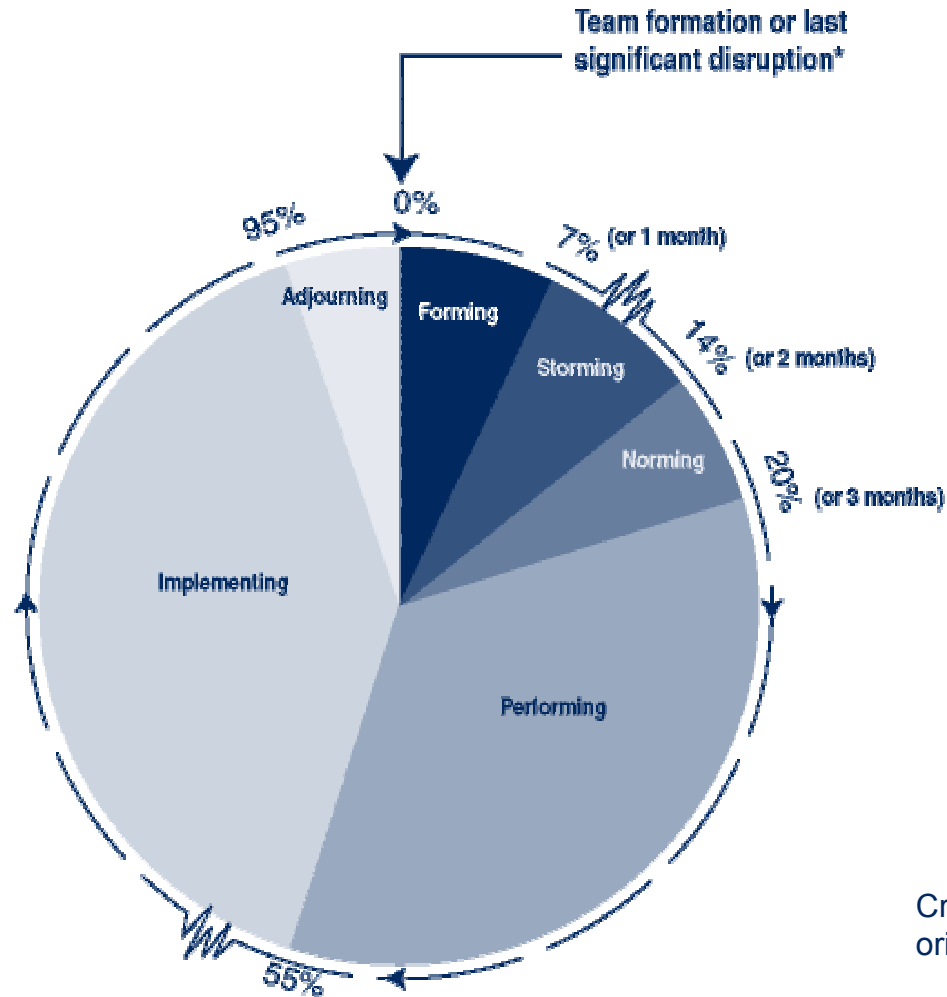
- Dysfunctional behaviors (norms/habits) that slow teams down, get them stuck or de-railed from achieving their goals

# Common Team Traps

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- False Consensus
- Inability to Reach Closure
- Rigid Hierarchy
- Weak Leadership
- Uneven Participation
- Lack of Cohesion
- Lack of Mutual Accountability
- Unrealistic Expectations
- Forgotten Customer
- Left Out Stakeholders
- Overt Conflict
- Covert Conflict

# Points of Turbulence



Credit to Tuckman for the original stages model

# What Can You Do?

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- Set *Rules of Engagement* with your team
- Develop the project plan collaboratively
- Set realistic expectations
- Hold people and yourself accountable
- Communicate directly up, down and around
- Set personal boundaries
- Ask for support when needed

# What Can You Do?

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- Respect different functions and styles by being inclusive
- Rotate facilitation at meetings
- Keep participation balanced
- Resolve conflicts respectfully and timely
- Start real conversations at leadership level
- Use *Culture Compass*™ to show science of culture change