

Kilmann-Covin Organizational Influence Survey



*Sample Results and
Interpretive Materials*

**RALPH H. KILMANN
TERESA JOYCE COVIN**

Copyright © 1991 to 2011 by Organizational Design Consultants (ODC).
All rights reserved. This material may not be reproduced, stored in a
retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means—electronic,
mechanical, photocopying, video recording, or otherwise—without the
prior written permission from ODC. Contact: ralph@kilmann.com.

Distributed by
KILMANN DIAGNOSTICS
1 Suprema Drive
Newport Coast, CA 92657
www.kilmanndiagnostics.com
info@kilmanndiagnostics.com
949.497.8766

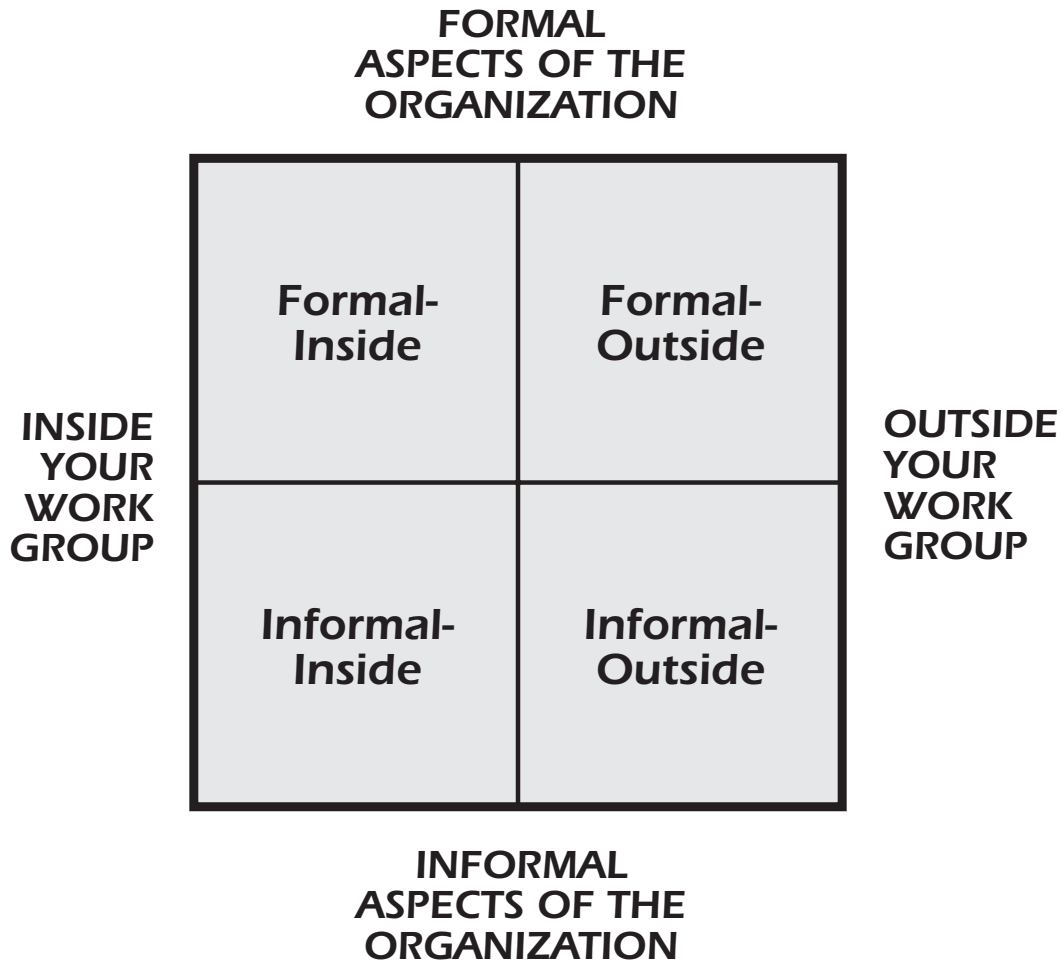
**Kilmann-Covin
Organizational Influence
Survey**

**RALPH H. KILMANN
TERESA JOYCE COVIN**

ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCE SURVEY

Defining Four Influence Domains

As shown below, the four influence domains are defined by two basic distinctions: (1) formal versus informal aspects of the organization that function (2) inside and outside your work group.



ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCE SURVEY

The first distinction recognizes two different kinds of “things” that can be influenced in an organization. The formal aspects include the whole variety of tangible—visible—resources: personnel, budgets, information, documents, buildings, technology, and equipment. The informal aspects include the full variety of human experiences in an organization: how people perceive, feel, think, and make decisions. These informal aspects also include how work groups and departments mirror—and sometimes magnify—interpersonal struggles. This most fundamental formal versus informal distinction ensures that both the “hard” and “soft” aspects of organizational life are included in any balance-of-influence analysis.

The second distinction specifies the location of the formal and informal aspects: inside the work group (including the boss) or outside the work group (including other work units and departments in the organization). This key distinction accepts that most people can influence what goes on inside their own group to a greater extent than what goes on in someone else’s—let alone in other functional areas and hierarchical levels in their organization. Since decisions made by these others can greatly influence the performance and job satisfaction of any individual, however, it is important to include this “outside” perspective. Thus, the outside versus inside distinction ensures that all influence sources on an individual—however removed from the immediate work situation—are included in any balance-of-influence analysis.

ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCE SURVEY

The two key distinctions combine to yield the four influence domains:

Formal-Outside includes documents and systems that affect the whole organization: strategic goals, departmental structures, the allocation of resources, and the reward system.

Formal-Inside considers how these organization-wide documents and systems are formulated into detailed work-group objectives, priorities, budgets, schedules, and job assignments, as well as how the procedures for the reward system are determined and used inside the group.

Informal-Outside includes those organization-wide aspects that pertain to team spirit, cooperation, attitudes about risk taking, willingness to challenge ideas, information sharing, and mutual respect—beyond the jurisdiction of any group or department (for example, the organization's culture).

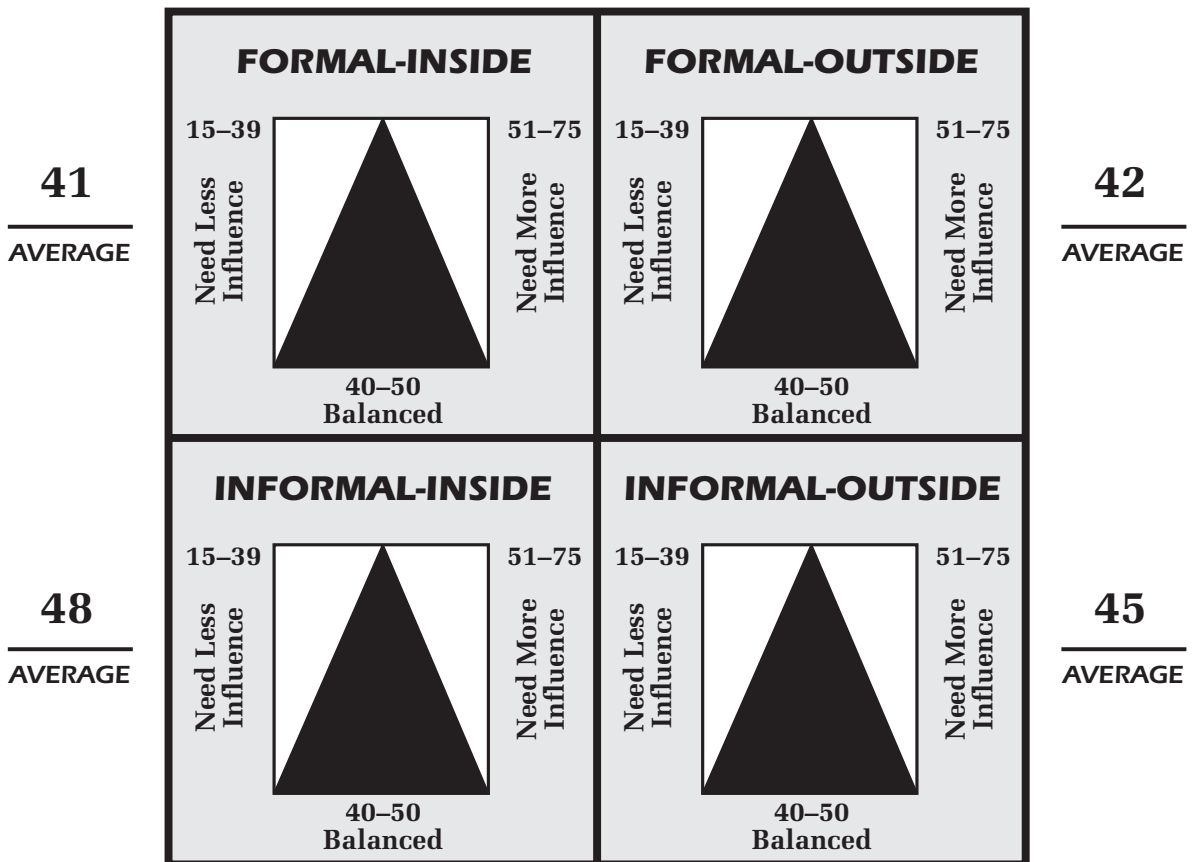
Informal-Inside includes how the work group manages the social and psychological aspects of its functioning by considering the amount of sharing, cooperation, mutual respect, and risk taking that occurs among coworkers in the same work group.

To inspect the specific items that are sorted into each influence domain, you can refer back to the four columns on the scoring sheet (see page 11) where the items composing each influence domain are listed.

ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCE SURVEY

Interpreting Your Scores

The best outcome that can be obtained from this survey is an acceptable **balance of influence** between individuals and their organization, which facilitates all efforts at improving performance and satisfaction. Such an outcome is illustrated in the profile shown below, where only the **middle triangles** are shaded in all four domains.



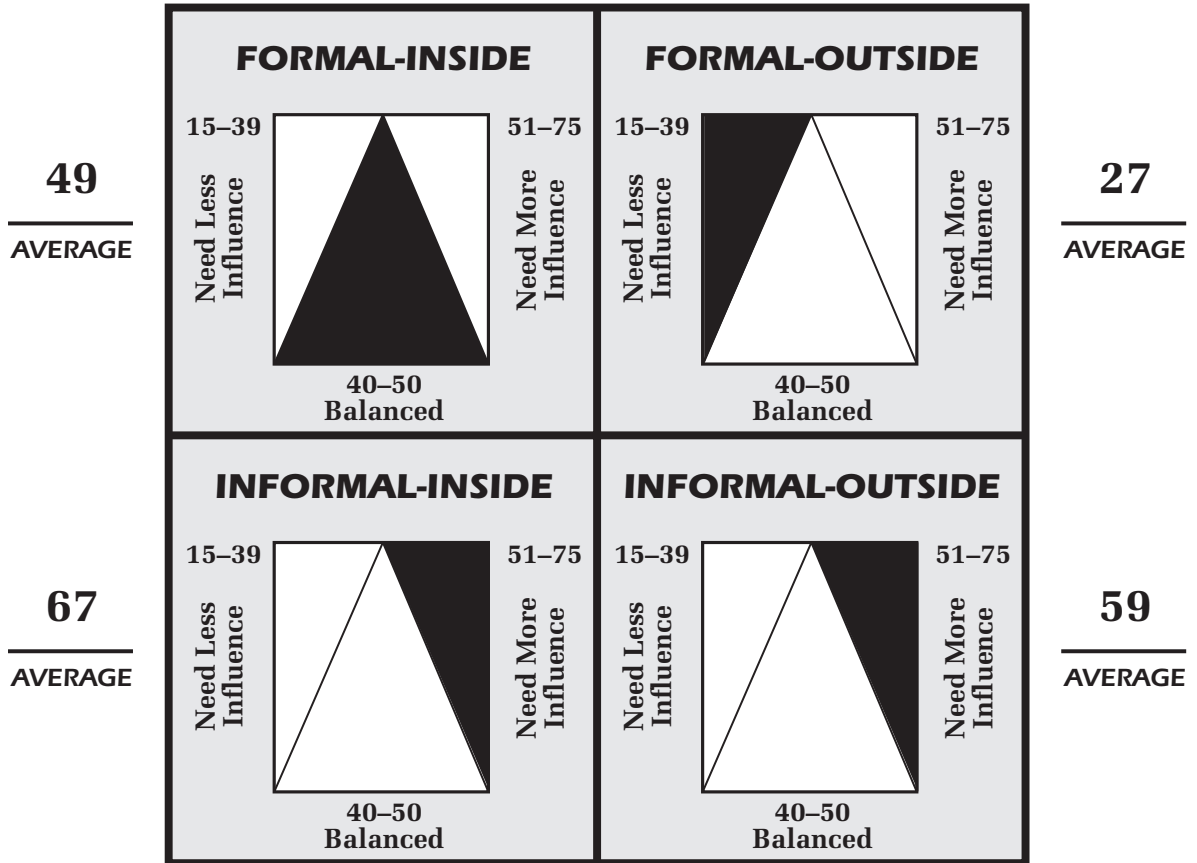
ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCE SURVEY

Most often, however, the “best” profile is not attained. Usually, at least one of the four influence domains deviates significantly from the mid range of the scale (40–50), which suggests that the balance of influence between individuals and their organizations is in need of adjustment. Moreover, when more than one domain of influence falls in either the left or right-side triangles, the imbalance of organizational influence is multidimensional, and, therefore, more complex. An imbalance in the formal aspects of the organization outside an individual’s work group (for example, not having any say in determining what schedule changes are made for the whole department) may be aggravated inside the group by the careless way in which work is assigned on a daily basis (Formal-Inside). Or not only are the Informal-Outside aspects interfering with the quality of the work (for example, not getting the necessary cooperation from other departments), but the coworkers within the same group may mistrust one another (Informal-Inside) and, therefore, do not cooperate with one another either. In the extreme case in which *all four influence domains are imbalanced*, the prospects for creating and maintaining long-term organizational success are slim.

The following page shows a sample profile in which several domains deviate from a balance of influence, which pinpoints the directions for change and improvement: More influence is needed in Informal-Inside and Informal-Outside (perhaps due to a dysfunctional culture throughout the organization), although less influence is desired in Formal-Outside (perhaps due to unnecessary involvement in corporate matters that should be handled—not delegated—by senior executives).

ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCE SURVEY

An Example: Imbalance in Organizational Influence



ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCE SURVEY

Correcting Organizational Imbalances

A complete program for planned change has been designed to improve the formal and informal aspects of the organization—both inside and outside all work groups. The informal aspects are addressed by the first three tracks: (1) the culture track, (2) the skills track, and (3) the team track. The formal aspects of the organization are handled by the next two tracks: (4) the strategy-structure track and (5) the reward system track.

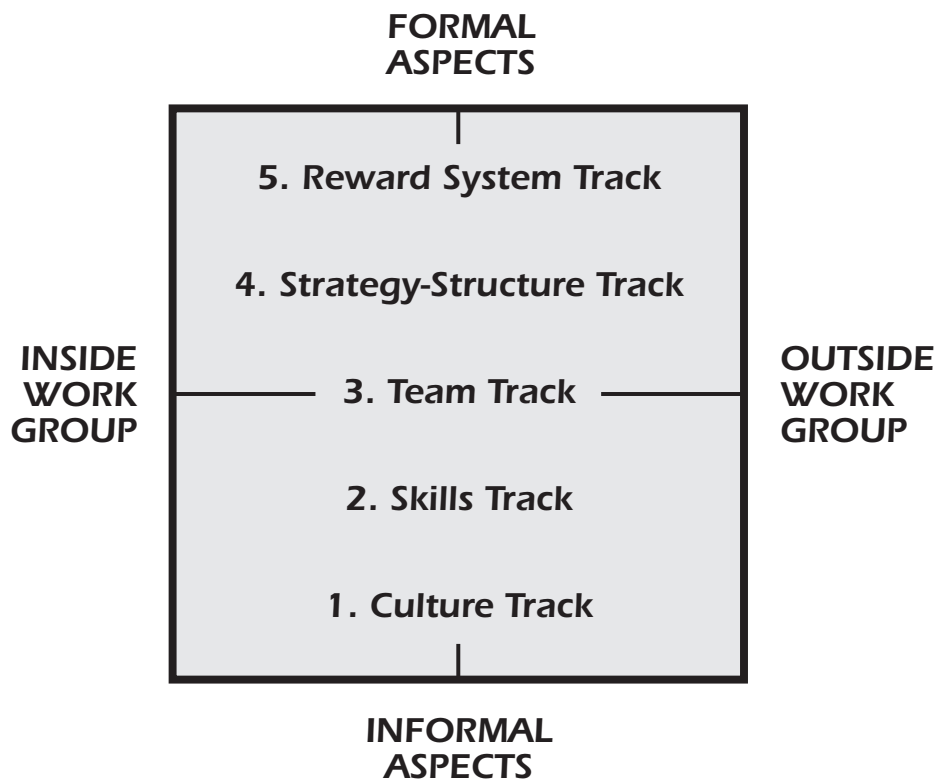
These tracks, in most cases, are scheduled in the prescribed order. The first three tracks improve the manner in which people (and work units) behave toward one another on the job. The next two tracks modify the organization's formal aspects—its documents, technologies, systems, and resources that guide what people in the organization are supposed to do. Without first improving the informal organization—inside and outside all work groups—adjustments to the formal systems would be cosmetic and, therefore, ineffective.

What does each track do for the organization? The culture track first enhances trust, communication, information sharing, and a willingness to change among coworkers—the conditions that must exist before any other improvement effort can succeed. Then the skills track provides all personnel with new ways of coping with people, problems, time, and conflict. Then the team track infuses the new culture and updated skills within and across all work units—thereby fostering cooperation throughout the organization so that complex problems can be addressed with all the expertise and information available.

ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCE SURVEY

Regarding the formal systems of the organization, the strategy-structure track develops either a completely new or a revised strategic plan and then aligns departments, work groups, jobs, and all other resources with the new strategic direction. Lastly, the reward system track establishes a performance-based reward system—one that sustains all improvements by officially sanctioning the new culture, the use of updated skills, and cooperative team efforts within and across all work groups.

The figure below summarizes the important relationship between the four influence domains (the problem) and the five tracks (the solution):



ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCE SURVEY

The Challenge

Organizational influence is a two-way exchange: Organizations cannot accomplish their goals if they cannot influence their members to do the right things. And the members, of course, cannot do the right things—and satisfy their needs in the process—if they can't influence what goes on in their organizations.

On the one hand, those who occupy senior management positions in an organization usually influence much of what goes on—maybe too much. On the other hand, those who occupy nonsupervisory positions may not influence much at all—particularly outside their immediate work area. Rather than guessing whether you and your organization have the most effective balance of influence or not, this survey has enabled you to see which aspects of your organization you need to influence—less or more than you do now. Subsequently, your organization can improve both job performance and satisfaction by actively shifting the balance of influence with an integrated program of planned change. For further discussion of the theories and methods behind the five tracks, the interested reader is referred to R. H. Kilmann, *Beyond the Quick Fix* (Washington DC: Beard, 2004) as well as *Quantum Organizations* (Newport Coast, CA: Kilmann Diagnostics, 2011).