



# Johnsonville Sausage: Ensuring a Culture for Growth

## Challenge      Solution      Outcomes

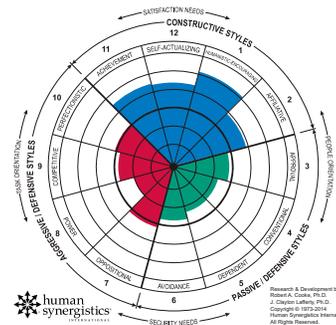
Johnsonville’s vision is to “Be the best company on earth.” Over the past 10 years, Johnsonville has experienced significant growth (170% revenue increase over 10 years) and is on its way to becoming a \$1 billion company. Johnsonville set out to determine whether the culture in Research & Development will support innovation and aggressive growth while maintaining the company’s desired culture.

Johnsonville conducted an *Organizational Culture Inventory*® (OCI®) to assess:

- Is Johnsonville’s current R&D culture Constructive?
- Has growth in Johnsonville R&D members created a diffused culture or non-complementary subcultures?
- Where do we focus to continually improve our culture for innovation and growth?
- Is the OCI a measurement tool that can be leveraged for other parts of Johnsonville?

- Partner with the UW-Madison Center for Professional & Executive Development to conduct an OCI® pilot study in order to understand:
  - the culture of Johnsonville R&D; and
  - the suitability of the OCI for assessing Johnsonville culture more broadly.
- Use the overall and subgroup (tenure, role, function) information to identify sources of cultural strength (constructive cultural expectations) and opportunity (defensive cultural expectations).

**Johnsonville R&D Current Culture Profile (n=80)**



- Johnsonville’s OCI® pilot study confirmed a very Constructive culture for the R&D function overall.
- Johnsonville, with the help of the UW-Madison Center for Professional & Executive Development, conducted a culture “deep dive” session to understand what behaviors were supporting the Constructive cultural expectations and what behaviors might be undermining innovation and growth, for example...
  - Creating a “safe environment” is crucial for Johnsonville members to be able to speak up.
  - Creative tension can be good, at times, as a team deals with the inevitable pitfalls of project execution.
  - Treating each other with respect and skills in managing conflict are critical.
- Subgroup information was provided to R&D leadership by tenure, role, and function to continue to enhance Constructive cultural expectations. For example...
  - Perfectionism within the Project Management Team: Innovation can often be ambiguous, and striving for perfection in execution may not always be possible.
- Next Steps:
  - Continue to define and reinforce Johnsonville’s Constructive culture in behavioral terms.
  - Work with the UW-Madison Center for Professional & Executive Development to apply the OCI assessment to other Johnsonville groups.

**“Use the business to build the people, rather than use the people to build the business.”**

Ralph Stayer, Owner & Chairman, Johnsonville

## Johnsonville Sausage: Ensuring a Culture for Growth

### Poster Session Presenters



**Lisa Yaffe**

As adjunct faculty with the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center for Professional & Executive Development, Lisa is the Program Director for the Executive Leadership Certificate, an instructor, and an executive coach. She has held a variety of roles in HR, applying experience and expertise in leadership development, culture, employee engagement, and change management. She counsels managers, leaders, and executives on how to interpret and apply leadership, culture, and change management concepts and insight.



**Susan Dumke**

Susan Dumke recently retired from Johnsonville Sausage as a Research and Development Senior Project Manager, where she began her partnership with the University of Wisconsin's Center for Professional & Executive Development. Prior to Johnsonville, she served in several Brand and Marketing Management roles in primarily consumer products companies. She received BS and MBA degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

### About Johnsonville



Wisconsin-based Johnsonville is the leading national sausage brand, with products served in all 50 states and more than 40 countries at retail, and also in 135 professional, college, and semi-pro sports stadiums throughout the U.S. Johnsonville employs approximately 1,600 members. Founded in 1945, the privately held company remains family-owned today, with the founder's son, Ralph C. Stayer, serving as chairman. Stayer's philosophy, "use the business to build the people, rather than use the people to build the business," has transformed the company's culture into a unique, engaging environment. We refer to our culture as "The Johnsonville Way." The workplace is one where its members (employees) are responsible for everything—the problems, the successes, and now, its brand campaign. Learn more at [www.johnsonville.com](http://www.johnsonville.com).

### About the University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Professional & Executive Development



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