

# Organizational Courage Assessment



*Sample Results and  
Interpretive Materials*

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# **Organizational Courage Assessment**

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## ORGANIZATIONAL COURAGE ASSESSMENT

### Defining Four Types of Organizations

Now that you have graphed your two *courage scores* (and also graphed the average scores for your work group, department, and organization), let's define four types of organizations that are possible: (1) Courageous Organizations, (2) Quantum Organizations, (3) Fearful Organizations, and (4) Bureaucratic Organizations—as shown on the opposite page. Of course, if either of your *courage scores* is near the midpoint (40) of the scale, your organization is a mixture of these different types.

If you have observed frequent acts of courage in your organization and yet these acts were performed even though there was considerable fear of receiving negative consequences for not following the organization's accepted ways of doing things, your organization is **courageous**. Thus, the *possible* acts of courage are indeed *actual* acts of courage, because they were performed despite the fear: *the defining quality of courage*.

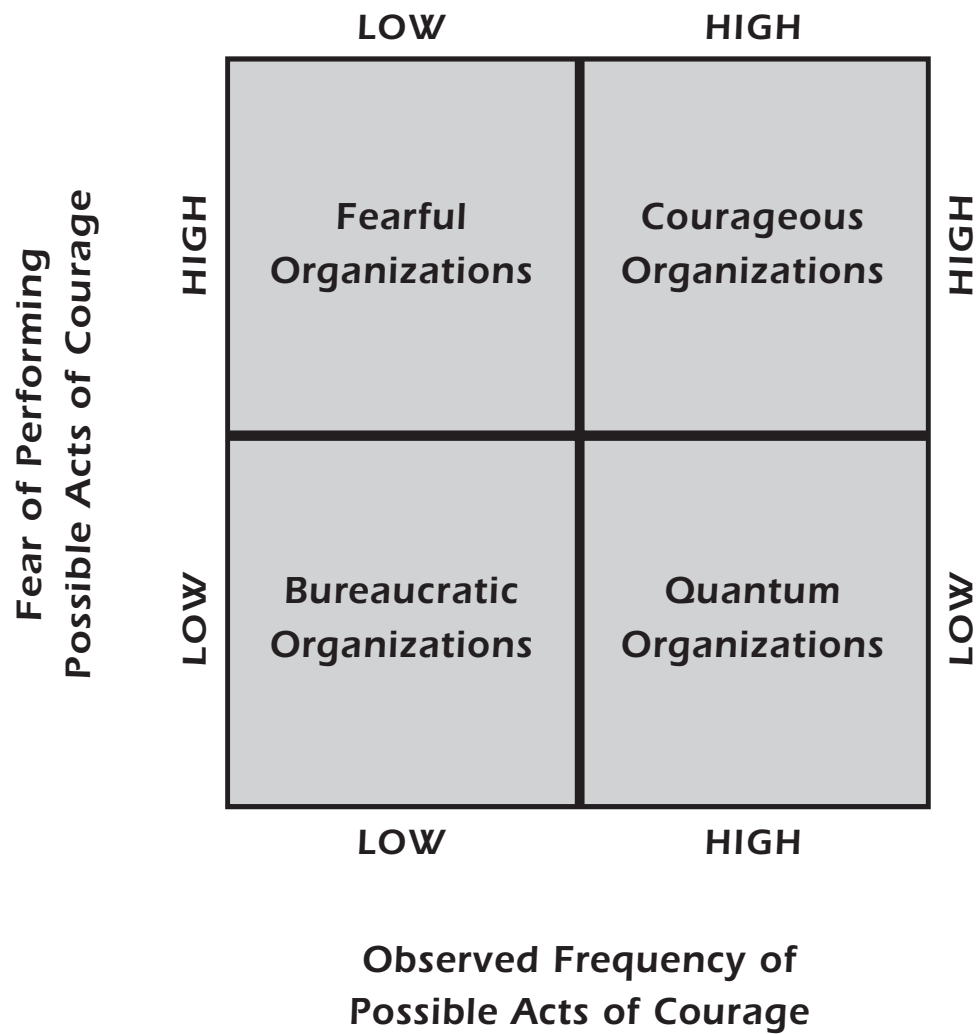
If you have observed frequent acts of courage while there is little fear of receiving negative consequences for performing these acts, then your organization is defined as **quantum**. The necessary acts were performed, but members did not have to act with fear: *they were supported!* Better yet, *many acts of courage aren't even necessary* because being quantum means that the organization already has a healthy/supportive culture.

If you have observed few acts of courage, and yet there is considerable fear present, then your organization is **fearful**. It is fear that is keeping members from doing what needs to be done for the long-term success of their organization and their own psychological well-being. Unless this fear is removed, members may continue doing what is required by the organization for short-term survival, but long-term success is at risk.

If you have observed few acts of courage and do not experience the fear of receiving negative consequences, your organization is **bureaucratic**. Apparently, members have resigned themselves to doing only what is officially and clearly outlined in their jobs; members are doing what is expected. Fear is not felt when people have given up trying to improve “the system.” Sadly, no one is fighting for the organization's future.

# ORGANIZATIONAL COURAGE ASSESSMENT

## FOUR TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS



## ORGANIZATIONAL COURAGE ASSESSMENT

### Interpreting Your Results: Three Examples

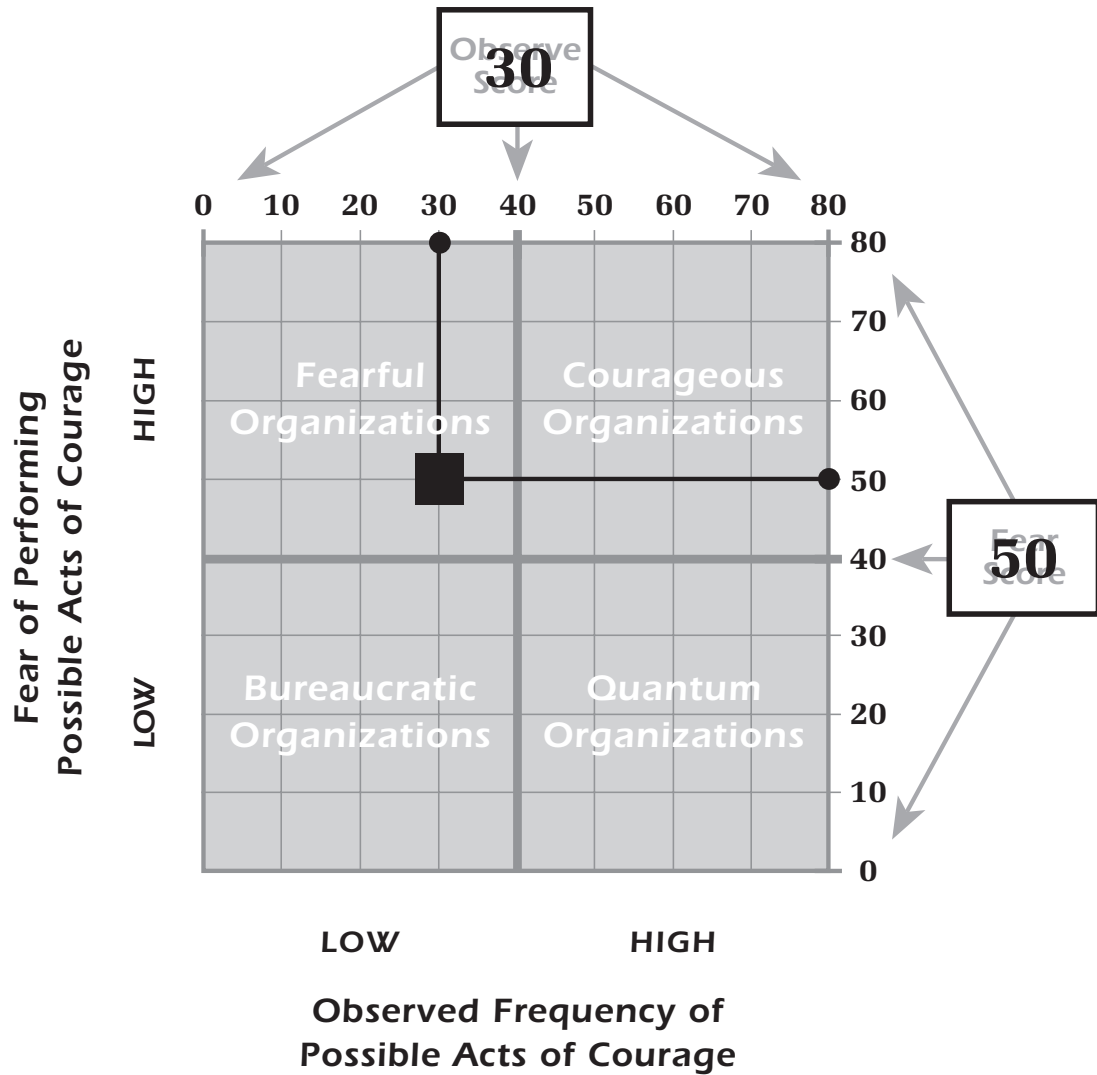
When work group, department, and organizational averages have been calculated and graphed, it is easy to pinpoint directions for change that will improve the success of the organization as well as the psychological well-being of its members. Three examples (with graphs) are provided on the next several pages.

The opposite page illustrates the averages for an organization as a whole. Here the graph shows a ***Fearful Organization***, in which members do not provide the acts of courage that are necessary—because members may be afraid of receiving negative consequences. Both the organization and its members thereby lose: The organization is not doing what is in the best interests of its customers because, in all likelihood, it is thwarted by old management practices, outdated procedures and job descriptions, and a dysfunctional culture. Indeed, this culture might be perpetuating fear—thereby members feel intimidated, cautious, and defensive about trying to do what customers really want. If the current situation is allowed to persist, the organization will gradually lose its customer base (especially in a competitive industry). Moreover, the organization may also lose its best people, who eventually leave to take jobs in a more satisfying—and successful—organization.

One alternative, however, is for the organization to accept its problems and discuss the results and implications of the *Courage Assessment*. By finding ways to enable members to take the necessary chances to do the right thing for their stakeholders *and themselves*, despite the fears that may be reinforced by an unhealthy culture, the organization will become more courageous. This ***personal transformation*** in members' behavior will be evident with another administration of the *Courage Assessment*.

# ORGANIZATIONAL COURAGE ASSESSMENT

Average Scores for My  
**ORGANIZATION**  
N = 750



## ORGANIZATIONAL COURAGE ASSESSMENT

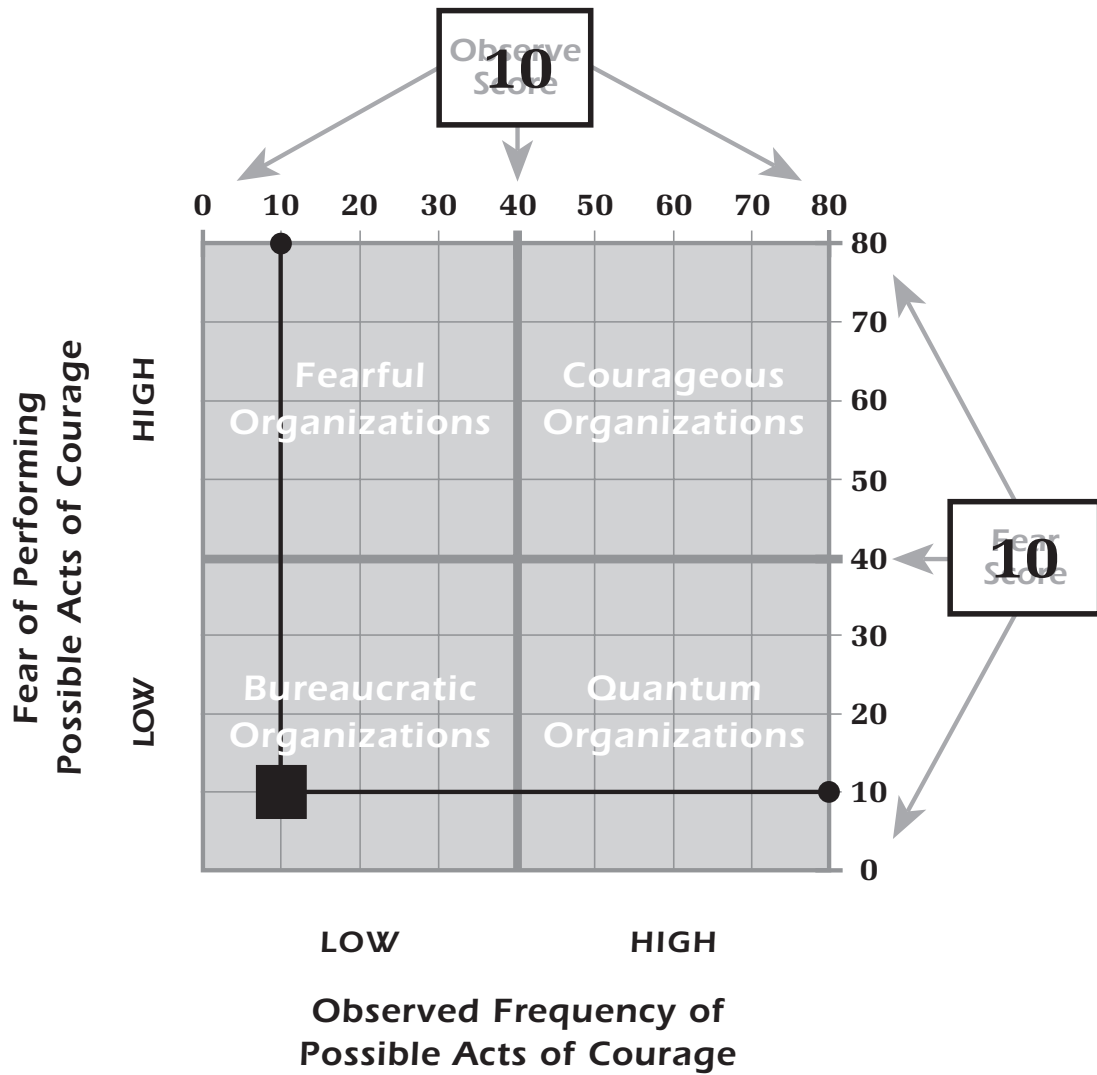
The opposite page provides a second, but different, illustration. Here the results point to a ***Bureaucratic Organization***, in which members do not provide the necessary acts of courage *and they are not afraid of receiving negative consequences*. Essentially, the members have given up on the organization. They are not afraid to act—since they don't even consider taking chances! Not only is this organization rooted in bureaucratic red tape and out-of-date operating procedures, but its long-standing reward system along with a dysfunctional culture have also convinced members to do only the bare minimum to remain employed. Not surprisingly, this organization is unlikely to survive in the future (nor will it retain its best people) in a competitive industry with alternative job opportunities.

If the organization can recognize its predicament before it is too late, it can embark on a systemwide program of ***organizational transformation***. By establishing a more empowering and candid culture, by redesigning its formal procedures and reward systems, and by creating an engaging, participative, and professional work environment, the organization can become *quantum*. Members would receive the ongoing support they need from their work units—and from the whole organization—in order to do the best for their key stakeholders, without any fear of receiving negative consequences. Members would not have to become courageous, as such, in order to satisfy customers (and themselves): a ***quantum organization*** ensures its long-term success and the well-being of its members. Another administration of the *Courage Assessment* will undoubtedly confirm the positive results of a systemwide transformation.



# ORGANIZATIONAL COURAGE ASSESSMENT

Average Scores for My  
**ORGANIZATION**  
N = 825



## ORGANIZATIONAL COURAGE ASSESSMENT

The graph on the opposite page offers the third example for interpreting the results of the *Courage Assessment*. Here the average scores reveal a ***Courageous Organization***, in which members perform the essential acts of courage *even though they are afraid of receiving negative consequences*. Although performing these acts of courage ensures the long-term success of the organization, it does so at a considerable price: All the enthusiasm and talent that the members can bring to the workplace are being drained by their having to overcome fear on a regular basis. Ultimately, members will have less energy available to use for productive ends; they may also get burned out if they must continually fight “the system.”

Although members being courageous and also being part of a Courageous Organization are both desirable, there is a much better alternative—*if a systemwide transformation to a Quantum Organization is implemented*. By conducting a change program for renewing the organization’s culture, skills, teams, strategy-structures, reward systems, and business processes, a *Courageous Organization* can thus become a ***Quantum Organization***. Now members can do what is essential for the long-term success of their organization without having to live with—and overcome—fear. Both the informal and formal systems of the organization will be in sync with the needs of all internal and external stakeholders: the defining quality of a Quantum Organization.

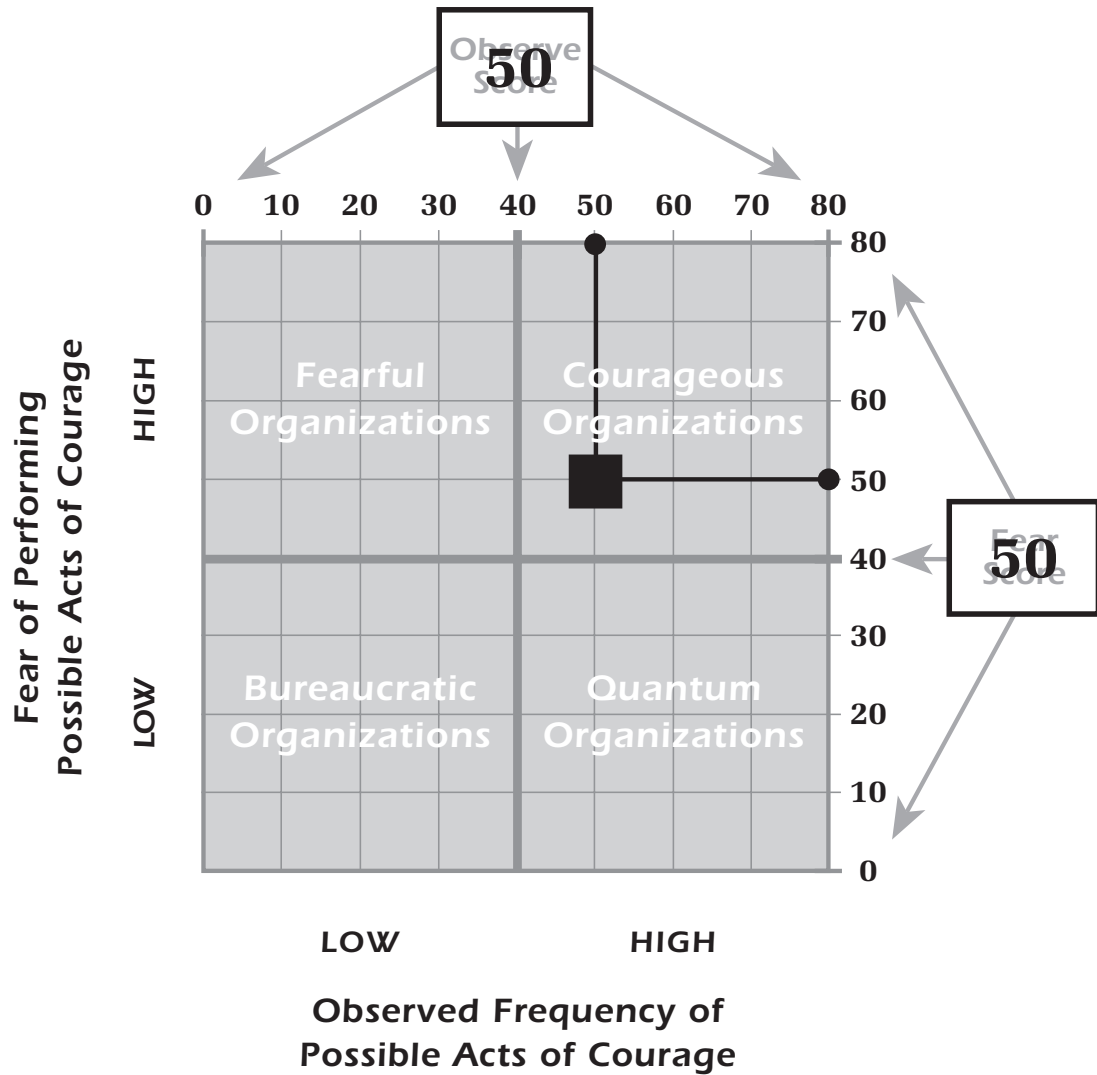
*Note:* For the latest theories and methods for transforming bureaucratic, fearful, and courageous organizations into quantum organizations (also involving a personal transformation of all members), see: Kilmann, R. H., *Quantum Organizations: A New Paradigm for Achieving Organizational Success and Personal Meaning* (Newport Coast, CA: Organizational Design Consultants and Kilmann Diagnostics, 2010, 2011).

# ORGANIZATIONAL COURAGE ASSESSMENT

Average Scores for My

**ORGANIZATION**

N = 455



## ORGANIZATIONAL COURAGE ASSESSMENT

### Transforming Organizations and People

All organizations are enmeshed in an increasingly dynamic, competitive environment. It is difficult if not impossible, therefore, to specify exactly what is required of every member on a daily basis. As a result, traditional practices and standard operating procedures are no longer sufficient to guide work behavior. People must internalize what behaviors are best for the short-run as well as the long-run success of their organization—and perform these acts as needed. Hopefully, the organization will support—empower—its members to act mindfully and appropriately. However, in those cases when an organization remains entrenched with bureaucracy, members must act despite the possible negative consequences for taking responsibility for their organization. Either way, ***to succeed in the long term, an organization must become more quantum or its people must act with more courage.*** The other sad alternatives involve (1) members living in fear and (2) resigning their hopes for the future—either of which hurts the organization, its members, and society.

Two action recommendations can be offered that derive from the results of the *Organizational Courage Assessment*: First, an organization that is assessed as bureaucratic can become a quantum organization—applying the available programs and processes of ***organizational transformation***. Thereby, members will be empowered to act on their internalized sense of what is in the best interests of the organization, both in the short term and the long term. These members can also be empowered to reinvent the organization's systems, processes, policies, procedures, and management practices in order to be more in sync with today's dynamic world.

If an organizational transformation is just not feasible, then the members in either a bureaucratic or fearful organization will have to become more courageous: to do what is needed for long-term success despite the risks of receiving negative consequences for challenging traditional practices, confronting their managers and co-workers, and ignoring official policies and procedures. Without performing the necessary acts of courage in a fearful organization (or in a bureaucratic organization), and thus without a ***personal transformation*** of the members, the danger arises of people living with fear or, worse yet, giving up all hope for the future.